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VIOLIN EDUCATION IN CHINA AT THE PRESENT STAGE

The article is devoted to the analysis of the modern system of violin education in the People's Republic of China, which functions as a multi-level and structurally variable model that takes into account the socio-cultural, regional and educational realities of the country. The study identifies three main educational trajectories that determine the training of primary and secondary violinists. The first path involves studying at state specialised schools, which are modelled on the European model of music schools at conservatories. This option is characterised by a high level of professionalism, a clear structure of curricula, a system of exams, and the inclusion of theoretical disciplines and general education. However, this form is available only to residents of large metropolises.

The second way is based on a combination of private training and further education in secondary professional schools of the arts, which have an interdisciplinary profile and include not only music but also other areas such as painting, choreography, and theatre. This pathway is more accessible, but admission to it is accompanied by the lack of unified state standards at the initial stage, which leads to uneven levels of student training. Nevertheless, professional schools of art play an important role in the system of training musicians and provide opportunities for continuing education in higher education institutions.

The third way – studying exclusively in private without integration into the official system – is the least effective in terms of forming a full-fledged musician. Applicants who choose this option mostly receive fragmentary instrumental training without proper theoretical and ensemble education, which significantly limits their opportunities to enter leading art academies. At the same time, this model is widespread due to its accessibility and flexibility, especially in regions lacking institutionalised art education. The article concludes that the Chinese system of violin training is characterised by its polystructure, mobility, and focus on adaptation to the social environment, but its effectiveness needs to be improved by standardising the content of primary education, integrating the private sector into the public education network, and strengthening the requirements for basic musical literacy at all stages of education.

Key words: violin education, music schools in China, professional training, private education, educational models, conservatories.

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СКРИПКОВА ОСВІТА В КИТАЇ НА СУЧАСНОМУ ЕТАПІ

Статтю присвячено аналізу сучасної системи скрипкової освіти в Китайській Народній Республіці, яка функціонує як багаторівнева і структурно варіативна модель, що враховує соціокультурні, регіональні та освітні реалії країни. У межах дослідження виокремлено три основні освітні траєкторії, що визначають підготовку скрипалів початкового й середнього рівнів. Перший шлях передбачає навчання у державних спеціалізованих школах, які діють за зразком європейської моделі музичних шкіл при консерваторіях. Цей варіант характеризується високим рівнем професіоналізму, чіткою структурою навчальних програм, наявністю системи іспитів, включенням теоретичних дисциплін та загальноосвітньої підготовки. Проте така форма доступна лише жителям великих мегаполісів.

Другий шлях базується на поєднанні приватної підготовки з подальшим навчанням у середніх професійних школах мистецтв, що мають міждисциплінарний профіль і включають не лише музику, а й інші напрями – живопис, хореографію, театральне мистецтво. Цей шлях вирізняється ширшою доступністю, однак вступ до нього супроводжується відсутністю єдиних державних стандартів на початковому етапі, що зумовлює нерівномірність у рівні підготовки студентів. Незважаючи на це, професійні школи мистецтв відіграють важливу роль у системі формування музикантів-практиків та забезпечують можливість продовження освіти у вищих навчальних закладах.

Третій шлях – навчання виключно в приватному порядку без інтеграції в офіційну систему – є найменш ефективним з точки зору формування повноцінного музиканта. Здобувачі, які обирають цей варіант, переважно

отримують фрагментарну інструментальну підготовку без належної теоретичної та ансамблевої освіти, що суттєво обмежує їхні можливості щодо вступу до провідних мистецьких академій. Водночас така модель поширена через доступність і гнучкість, особливо в регіонах, де бракує інституціоналізованої мистецької освіти. У статті зроблено висновок, що китайська система скрипкової підготовки відзначається поліструктурністю, мобільністю й орієнтацією на адаптацію до соціального середовища, однак її ефективність потребує підвищення за рахунок стандартизації змісту початкової освіти, інтеграції приватного сектору в державну освітню мережу та посилення вимог до базової музичної грамотності на всіх етапах навчання.

Ключові слова: скрипкова освіта, музичні школи Китаю, професійна підготовка, приватне навчання, освітні моделі, консерваторії.

Introduction. The violin is one of the most popular European instruments in China, which leads to an extremely high demand for its study among the population. Given the rapid growth of interest in classical music and professional performance, the number of people wishing to study violin far exceeds the available resources of the state educational infrastructure. In particular, the current system of formal educational institutions is unable to meet the growing demand for professional violin training, which creates a certain deficit in primary and secondary music education.

The network of specialised violin schools remains limited and concentrated mainly in the country's largest metropolitan areas, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Wuhan, Xi'an, Nanjing, Shenyang, Tianjin, Guangzhou and Chengdu. There are music schools in these cities, but their number is insufficient to meet the needs of the population. A similar situation is observed with music colleges and secondary vocational schools, which are also too few to provide for everyone.

As a result, a significant number of beginners are forced to turn to private forms of music education, in particular to individual violin lessons in an informal environment. This approach, while contributing to the expansion of access to instrumental training, also points to the need for further development of the official educational network.

As of today, there are three main directions of organising the educational process for primary and intermediate violinists in China. Each of them has its own characteristics, advantages and limitations, which necessitates a separate analysis of each of these ways of forming performing skills. Below we will consider them in more detail.

Analysis of recent research and publications. There are no special holistic studies of Chinese violin education in Ukrainian. Among the works devoted to its individual aspects, let us mention the article by M. Antoshko [1], which focuses on the problem of the development of music education in China in the early twentieth century; Chen Yu., whose work is devoted to the development of violin education in China from 1900 to 1949.

Other works deal with the problems of Chinese violin art in general. The problems of European influence and style connotations in Chinese music are the subject

of works by Li Huaxin (Лі Хуакін, 2023), O. Guzhvi (Гужва, 2007), Li Yanlong (Лі Яньлун, 2021), Chen Menwei (Чень Менвей, 2024) and others. A separate stratum of works is devoted to Chinese orchestral music. Among them: Liu Shiye Qing (Лю Шие Цин, 2008), Deng Jiakun (Ден Цзякунь, 2017) etc.

Objective of the work. To study the peculiarities of violin education in China at the present stage.

The methodological basis is the dialectical and systematic methodology used in the field of cultural research. General scientific and logical methods of analysis, synthesis, induction and deduction, historical and comparative research of the problem are used.

Presentation of the main material of the research. At present, there are three paths of music education for beginning and intermediate level violinists in China. The **first path** is the most professional variant. It is based on the Russian model and in many respects corresponds to the system of music schools at conservatories. In China, this option of education is available only to residents of the largest cities. Beginning Chinese violinists at the age of 8–9 enter a state primary music school, where they study for 6 years. The training programme includes, first of all, individual lessons in the speciality, as well as lessons in other subjects, including non-musical ones. Unlike Russian music schools, Chinese schools do not have a unified programme for violinists: each student studies at his or her own pace, the choice of pieces and the level of difficulty required for a given student is determined by the teacher himself or herself (Антошко, 2019).

The most essential element of Chinese elementary violin training are etudes, which become the material for mastering all types of technique. Let us pay special attention to this: as we will see later on, the polishing of technique is the cornerstone of the Chinese violin education system. In addition to etudes, the basis of most students' programmes are pieces. Playing scales at the initial stage of training is not obligatory and their presence in the programme depends on the teacher's settings. Polyphonic works and sonatas are also optional for beginning violinists (Антошко, 2019).

In addition to violin playing, the curriculum includes other musical subjects: solfeggio and music theory. The primary music schools also offer gen-

eral education subjects, including Chinese language, maths, English and politics, among others.

After completing the 6-year programme, the best pupils continue their studies at the state music school of the second level, where they spend another 6 years, the last 3 years being, by European standards, college education. New music subjects are added to the programme of study at the second-level music school: harmony, history of world music and history of Chinese music. In addition, solfeggio and music theory classes continue. Some of the second-level public music schools also teach orchestra and ensemble. Speciality training here involves lessons in the speciality once or twice a week and compulsory auditions and examinations every year. The audition is usually held at the beginning of the second academic month after the summer holidays and is intended to intensify the work of the students. Here they demonstrate their technical preparation by performing scales, chords and etudes. Thus, even in the second stage of training, the development of the students' technical competence is of great importance: every year, as the first control event, a technical test is organised.

Every year violinists also take two speciality examinations. The programme for the winter examination usually includes pieces by Chinese and foreign composers, while in the summer examination students perform a sonata or concerto.

The last stage of violin education is higher education: after the second stage, more than half of the students enter conservatories, some enter music faculties of universities or pedagogical colleges, and the rest choose other professions (Чень Ю, 2010).

The second way of obtaining violin education in China is much more accessible to the general population, and for residents of most cities in the country, it is in fact the only realistic opportunity to receive high-quality musical training. Given that there are no specialised music schools in the vast majority of Chinese cities, students begin their studies at a general secondary school and, at the same time, receive individual violin training in private.

After the initial stage of training, students enter secondary professional schools of the arts, which are independent educational institutions and are not directly subordinated to conservatories. The curricula of such schools are interdisciplinary and cover not only music, but also other areas such as painting, choreography, theatre, etc. The duration of study at professional art schools varies from four to six years, depending on the region and specialisation. The best graduates, having demonstrated a high level of performance training, have the opportunity to enter the country's leading conservatories (Чень Ю, 2010).

The advantage of this pathway is its wide availability, which does not depend on the place of residence of the student. At the same time, this system has a number of significant drawbacks. In particular, the initial stage of private education takes place outside the official educational system, without uniform standards and methodological regulations. The quality of training at this stage largely depends on the professionalism and personal qualities of the teacher. Among private teachers, there are truly highly qualified specialists who are able to provide students with full-fledged initial training, including work on large form, technical studies, scales, etc. However, there are often cases when training is limited to learning individual small pieces, which significantly narrows the performance base of students.

Another problem is the almost complete absence of teaching general music disciplines at the initial stage, including music theory, music history, and solfège. This complicates further studies in more structured educational institutions, as students experience a significant deficit in basic music-theoretical knowledge.

The next step on this educational path is to enter a professional school of art, which is similar in status to a college. These institutions operate in almost every major city in China, making them particularly attractive to young people from different regions. Educational programmes at these schools include specialised music disciplines similar to those taught at second-level music schools: individual lessons in the speciality (twice a week), solfège, harmony, ensemble, orchestra, and others. The current control of knowledge is carried out through two compulsory exams per year. The winter exam usually involves the performance of etudes and small pieces, sometimes Bach's works. The summer exam includes a performance of a part of a concerto or sonata. However, the examination requirements in these institutions are usually less stringent than those set by conservatoire schools.

After completing their studies at a professional school, students have several options for their further trajectory: entering conservatories or pedagogical universities that train performers and teachers, or directly entering the professional scene, including employment in orchestras. At the same time, statistics show that about half of graduates do not connect their future life with music, changing their professional vector after graduation.

Thus, the second educational route in the Chinese violin training system represents a compromise model that combines accessibility and relative efficiency, but at the same time requires improvement in terms of standardisation of initial training and comprehensiveness of the educational process.

The third way of obtaining music education in the field of violin performance in China is based on individual, private training. In this case, children receive a general education in secondary schools (primary and secondary levels), and in their free time attend private violin lessons. This form of training, despite its widespread use, has a number of significant limitations in the context of a musician's comprehensive professional development.

As a rule, students who receive only private training do not cover the full range of musical training, including basic theoretical disciplines, solfege, music literature, ensemble and orchestral performance, which is an integral part of professional music education. Their training is mostly limited to purely performing skills within a specific repertoire, which results in a specialist with a narrow profile.

In the context of further professional training, such graduates are most often focused on entering universities with music faculties with a predominant focus on pedagogical training. However, it is difficult for them to enter highly professional music academies and conservatories, as these institutions require a thorough preliminary academic preparation in accordance with generally accepted educational standards.

In most cases, graduates who have completed their education exclusively through private education choose to continue their careers in the field of individual or group teaching at a basic level, working with beginners. However, examples of achieving a high professional performance level in such conditions are rare.

Thus, the system of violin education in China is characterised by its diversity and flexibility. In contrast to the Russian model, where educational trajectories are often unified, the Chinese system of higher music education clearly separates the areas of training for performers and teachers. At the primary and secondary levels, there are several alternative forms of education, among which the most accessible and widespread is the system of private lessons, which at the same time offers basic learning opportunities but limits the prospects for academic and performing growth.

Conclusions. The study allows us to conclude that the violin education system in China is multi-level, variable and adaptive to the country's socio-cultural and regional characteristics. It is represented by three main educational routes, which differ in terms of the

level of professionalisation, curriculum structure, accessibility and final results (Антошко, 2019).

The first educational pathway, which represents the state system of specialised music schools, is focused on highly professional performing training based on a model similar to the Russian one. This option provides the most comprehensive training for future violinists, covering both specialised and general education disciplines, and provides for a clear progression from primary school to higher music education.

The second option – studying through secondary professional schools of art after a private initial stage – is a compromise model that combines relative accessibility and the possibility of further professional development. Despite the absence of a unified methodological framework at the first stage, the system of secondary art schools allows students to compensate for the shortcomings of their previous training and provide them with entry to conservatories or orchestral practice.

The third way – individual, non-institutional training – remains the least effective in terms of comprehensive music education. Its participants usually receive a limited amount of knowledge, focused mainly on instrumental technique. This reduces their chances of entering professional music academies and limits the possibilities for further performance development, leaving them mainly in the pedagogical or amateur vector of implementation.

In general, the Chinese model of violin education demonstrates flexibility and versatility, which allows for the adaptation of training to different social groups and regional conditions. At the same time, this system requires further standardisation, especially at the initial training stage, to ensure equal access to quality professional training for all (Чень Ю, 2010).

Prospects for further research include studying the regional peculiarities of violin education programmes in China, analysing the effectiveness of private education in comparison with public models, and investigating methodological approaches to teaching at different stages of training. It is advisable to consider the possibilities of integrating the private sector into the official educational system and studying the impact of digital technologies on the content and forms of education in the context of globalisation and cultural exchange.

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