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MODERNIZATION OF APPROACHES TO VIOLIN EDUCATION IN CHINA IN THE CONDITIONS OF GLOBALIZATION CHANGES

The article presents a comprehensive reinterpretation of the contemporary system of violin education in the People's Republic of China, which operates as a multilayered, dynamic, and regionally differentiated model shaped by the country's sociocultural and educational landscape. The analysis highlights three dominant trajectories through which young violinists typically receive their initial and intermediate training. The first pathway is associated with state-run specialised institutions modeled after European conservatory-affiliated music schools. This structure is distinguished by its strong professional orientation, clearly regulated curricula, systematic assessment procedures, and integration of theoretical and general-education subjects. However, this option remains accessible mainly to students living in large urban centers. The second trajectory combines private introductory instruction with subsequent enrollment in secondary-level arts institutions that embrace an interdisciplinary framework, merging music training with visual arts, dance, theatre, and related fields. Although this route offers broader accessibility, the absence of unified national standards at the early stages produces substantial variation in students' preparedness. Nevertheless, these arts schools serve as an essential element in the national training system, enabling graduates to continue their studies at higher education institutions. The third model – entirely private, conducted outside any formal educational structure – provides the most flexible yet least comprehensive preparation. Learners who follow this path typically acquire fragmented instrumental skills without systematic theoretical grounding or ensemble practice, which greatly diminishes their chances of admission to leading conservatories and arts academies. Despite its limitations, this form of training is widespread due to its affordability and the lack of institutionalised arts education in many regions. The article concludes that China's violin education landscape is characterised by structural diversity, adaptability, and responsiveness to social realities. At the same time, its further advancement requires the standardisation of foundational curricula, deeper integration of the private instructional sector into the national education system, and the reinforcement of basic musical literacy requirements across all stages of study.

Key words: *violin training, individualized learning, professional formation, Chinese arts institutions, pedagogical educational structures.*

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МОДЕРНІЗАЦІЯ ПІДХОДІВ ДО СКРИПКОВОЇ ОСВІТИ В КИТАЇ В УМОВАХ ГЛОБАЛІЗАЦІЙНИХ ЗМІН

У статті окреслено загальну картину сучасної системи підготовки скрипалів у КНР, що постає як багаторівнева та динамічна структура, тісно пов'язана із соціокультурними та регіональними умовами країни. Музичне навчання у сфері скрипкового виконавства формується в умовах значної варіативності, де поєднуються елементи державного, приватного та змішаного навчання, що створює широкий спектр освітніх можливостей, але водночас спричиняє нерівність у рівнях підготовки. Державні спеціалізовані заклади, побудовані за європейськими консерваторськими моделями, забезпечують високопрофесійну й структуровану підготовку майбутніх музикантів. У їхніх програмах поєднано практичне навчання, системні теоретичні курси та загальноосвітні дисципліни. Однак доступ до цих освітніх можливостей значною мірою залежить від місця проживання, адже подібні заклади зосереджені переважно у великих містах. Поряд із державною системою активно функціонує середня мистецька освіта, що поєднує музичні дисципліни з іншими видами мистецтва, серед яких хореографія, театр тощо. Така міждисциплінарність сприяє ширшому культурно-мистецькому розвитку учнів, але відсутність єдиних вимог до базової підготовки призводить до неоднорідності академічних результатів. Помітну частку становить приватний сектор, який через свою доступність та гнучкість відіграє значну роль у ранньому освоєнні інструмента. Водночас навчання, що здійснюється поза рамками формальної системи, часто не забезпечує необхідної теоретичної бази та досвіду ансамблевої роботи, що ускладнює подальший вступ до провідних мистецьких навчальних закладів. Узагальнюючи результати аналізу,

автор зазначає, що система скрипкової підготовки у Китаї вирізняється структурною різноманітністю та високою адаптивністю до соціальних реалій. Разом із цим акцентується потреба в посиленні інституційної узгодженості між різними освітніми ланками, щоб забезпечити більш передбачувану та якісну траєкторію професійного розвитку молодих виконавців. Разом із тим, підвищення її ефективності потребує унормування змісту базової музичної освіти, посилення взаємодії між державними та приватними секторами й формування єдиних вимог до музичної грамотності на всіх етапах навчання.

Ключові слова: скрипкове навчання, індивідуальна освіта, фахове становлення, китайські мистецькі заклади, педагогічні освітні структури.

Introduction. In contemporary China, the violin has become one of the most sought-after Western instruments, generating an exceptional public demand for instruction. The rapid rise of interest in classical performance and academic music culture has resulted in a situation where the number of aspiring violin students vastly exceeds the capacity of the national educational system. The existing network of state institutions is unable to absorb this expanding interest, creating noticeable gaps at the elementary and intermediate stages of violin training.

Specialised schools offering structured violin education are relatively few and are concentrated predominantly in major urban centres such as Beijing, Shanghai, Wuhan, Xi'an, Nanjing, Shenyang, Tianjin, Guangzhou, and Chengdu. Although these cities maintain music schools, their overall quantity remains insufficient for the size of the population seeking formal instruction. A comparable shortage exists within the system of secondary arts colleges and vocational music schools, whose limited numbers restrict broader access to institutionalised training.

Consequently, many beginners resort to alternative, non-institutionalised forms of learning, most commonly private violin lessons conducted outside the official educational framework. While such options broaden access to instrumental tuition, they also underscore the urgent need to strengthen and expand China's formal infrastructure for music education.

At present, China employs several distinct organisational models for early and intermediate violin instruction. Each model carries its own pedagogical logic, strengths, and weaknesses, which calls for a differentiated examination of how violin performance skills are formed within these varied educational environments. The following sections will explore these models in greater detail.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Existing publications examine only certain components of this topic. For example, the article by M. Khoma, M. Shunevych, P. Tabakov, and T. Mazera (Хома, Шуневич, Табаков, Лі Янь Лун, Мазера, 2023) considers cultural interactions in the development of violin music in China, while the study by Wang Ke (Ван Ке, 2023) examines the activities of

Liu Shikun as the founder of the system of private education in China.

Other researchers analyse broader issues related to Chinese violin performance and musical culture. Questions of European influence, stylistic transformation, and intercultural synthesis in Chinese music are reflected in the works of Li Huaxin (Лі Хуаксін, 2023), O. Huzhva (Гужва, 2007), Li Yanlong (Лі Янлун, 2021), Chen Menwei (Чень Меньвей, 2024), among others. A distinct group of studies concerns the development of Chinese orchestral music, including contributions by Liu Shiye Qing (Liu Shiye Qing, 2008), Deng Jiakun (Ден Цзякунь, 2017), and several other authors.

Objective of the work. To investigate the distinctive characteristics and current configuration of China's contemporary system of violin training.

The methodological basis is grounded in a dialectical and systems-oriented methodological framework typical of cultural research. It employs a range of general scientific and logical approaches, including analytical and synthetic procedures, inductive and deductive reasoning, as well as historical and comparative methods for examining the issue.

Presentation of the main material of the research. In contemporary China, violin instruction for beginners and mid-level students is organised in several distinct formats, one of which represents the most academically rigorous and professionally oriented model. This pathway, rooted in the Russian pedagogical tradition and largely comparable to the conservatory-affiliated children's music schools of Europe, is accessible only to those living in the country's largest urban centres. Typically, young learners aged eight or nine enrol in a state-run primary music school, where a six-year programme of study awaits them. Instruction is centred on individual violin lessons, supplemented by additional musical and general-education subjects. Unlike the unified curriculum characteristic of Russian institutions, Chinese schools allow for considerable flexibility: each pupil progresses at an individually determined pace, while repertoire selection and the degree of technical difficulty are set exclusively by the teacher.

A defining feature of the Chinese beginner-level curriculum is the emphasis on etudes, which serve as

the primary material for mastering a wide range of technical skills. This focus is not incidental: as will be discussed later, technical refinement forms the ideological and methodological core of China's violin education system. Alongside etudes, most programmes include a selection of pieces, whereas scale practice is not compulsory at the initial stage and appears only at the teacher's discretion. Likewise, polyphonic repertoire and sonatas are considered optional for early-stage learners.

The musical curriculum is complemented by courses in solfège and music theory, and primary music schools also provide a full set of general-education subjects, including Chinese language, mathematics, English, and political studies.

Upon completing the initial six-year cycle, the most promising students advance to a secondary-level state music school for an additional six years of training, the final three of which correspond – by European classification – to college-level study. At this stage, the curriculum expands to include harmony, world music history, and Chinese music history, while lessons in solfège and theory continue. Some institutions also offer ensemble and orchestral training. Specialisation classes are held once or twice weekly, accompanied by mandatory annual evaluations and examinations. Each year begins with a technical audition, typically scheduled for the second month after the summer break, to reinforce discipline and intensify students' study efforts. During this assessment, students demonstrate their command of scales, double stops, and etudes. Notably, even at the second tier of education, the cultivation of technical proficiency remains central, with the technical examination serving as the primary benchmark of progress.

In addition to the annual technical audition, violin students sit for two performance examinations each year. The winter assessment typically features a programme consisting of works by both Chinese and international composers, whereas the summer examination is devoted to larger-scale repertoire such as a sonata or concerto.

The culmination of violin training in China is higher education. After completing the secondary stage, more than half of the graduates continue their studies at conservatories, while others enrol in university music departments or pedagogical institutions. A portion of students, however, pursue alternative professional paths outside the field of music (Chen Yu, 2010)

The second major avenue for violin training in China is considerably more accessible to the wider population and, for residents of most cities, often represents the only realistic path to obtaining a solid

musical education. Because specialised music schools are absent in the majority of Chinese urban centres, children typically begin their musical studies while attending a regular secondary school, supplementing this with private one-to-one violin lessons.

Once students complete their initial stage of instruction, they may continue their education at secondary professional schools of the arts – independent institutions that are not directly affiliated with conservatories. The programmes offered by these schools are interdisciplinary in nature and encompass a broad spectrum of artistic fields, including music, painting, choreography, theatre, and others. Depending on regional conditions and chosen specialisation, the course of study may last from four to six years. Those who achieve outstanding performance results receive the opportunity to continue their education at the nation's leading conservatories (Chen Yu, 2010).

The chief strength of this educational route lies in its availability, which is not limited by geographical location. Nevertheless, the system presents several notable weaknesses. The earliest stage of study occurs entirely outside the formal educational framework, without standardised requirements or unified pedagogical guidelines. As a result, the quality of instruction depends almost entirely on the competence and pedagogical culture of individual private teachers. Although many of them are highly qualified and capable of providing structured foundational training – including technical studies, large-form repertoire, and scale work – there are frequent cases in which students encounter a very narrow repertoire focused mainly on small pieces, which restricts their overall artistic and technical development.

Another significant challenge is the near-absence of theoretical and general music subjects at the beginning level. Disciplines such as solfège, music theory, and music history are rarely taught privately, leaving students with noticeable gaps that complicate their transition into more structured educational settings.

The subsequent stage of this pathway involves admission to a professional art school – an institution comparable in status to a college. Such schools exist in nearly all large Chinese cities, making them a popular choice for students from various regions. Their curricula include specialised music subjects analogous to those taught in second-level state music schools: individual lessons in the major instrument (twice weekly), solfège, harmony, ensemble, orchestral practice, and more. Assessment consists of two compulsory examinations each academic year. The winter exam focuses on etudes and small pieces, occasionally including works by Bach, while the summer exam typically requires the performance of part of a

sonata or concerto. However, the examination criteria are generally less rigorous than those applied in conservatory-affiliated schools.

Upon graduating from a professional art school, students may pursue different pathways: admission to a conservatory or pedagogical university, further professional training as performers or educators, or immediate entry into the music industry, such as employment in orchestras. Nevertheless, statistical data show that approximately half of graduates eventually choose careers outside the field of music.

In summary, this second educational route within China's violin training system represents a balanced but imperfect model – one that successfully broadens access to musical education yet still requires significant improvement, particularly in standardising early instruction and ensuring a more comprehensive and coherent curriculum.

The third model of violin education in China is built entirely on private, individually organised instruction. In this format, children pursue their general academic studies in regular primary and secondary schools while receiving violin lessons during their free time. Although this approach is widespread and convenient, it presents substantial limitations when viewed through the lens of comprehensive musical and professional development.

Students who rely exclusively on private lessons typically do not encounter the full spectrum of subjects that constitute a complete music curriculum. Essential components such as music theory, solfège, music literature, ensemble practice, and orchestral performance are usually absent. As a result, their training tends to be confined to mastering selected pieces and acquiring practical performance skills, which leads to a narrowly focused artistic profile.

When considering continuation into professional music education, such students often orient themselves toward university music faculties with a predominantly pedagogical focus. Admission to high-level conservatories or specialised music academies is usually difficult for them, as these institutions require thorough preliminary preparation that aligns with unified academic standards – preparation which private instruction rarely provides in full.

Consequently, many individuals educated solely through private lessons pursue careers in basic-level instrumental teaching, working primarily with beginners either individually or in small groups. Although isolated cases exist of students achieving a high level of performance exclusively through private instruction, such outcomes are exceptional rather than typical.

Overall, China's violin education landscape is marked by considerable heterogeneity and adaptabil-

ity. Unlike the Russian system, where educational trajectories are more standardised, Chinese higher music education clearly distinguishes between performance-oriented and pedagogy-oriented programmes. At the foundational levels, multiple alternative forms of training coexist, with private instruction being the most accessible and widespread. However, while this model introduces many students to the violin, it simultaneously restricts their potential for broader academic development and advanced artistic growth.

Conclusions. The analysis makes it possible to assert that China's system of violin training is multilayered, highly diverse, and capable of adapting to the country's socio-cultural and regional conditions. It encompasses three principal educational trajectories, each characterised by a distinct degree of professional orientation, curricular organisation, accessibility, and expected outcomes.

The first trajectory – state-run specialised music schools – constitutes the most academically rigorous and professionally oriented model. Built on principles similar to those of the Russian system, it offers future violinists the broadest range of educational opportunities, integrating specialised instrumental instruction with theoretical and general-education subjects and providing a clear line of progression from the primary level to higher music education.

The second trajectory, which involves initial private lessons followed by enrolment in secondary professional art schools, represents an intermediate, compromise option that balances accessibility with the possibility of later professional advancement. Despite the absence of standardised pedagogical requirements at the introductory stage, these art schools often enable students to compensate for earlier instructional gaps and prepare them for further study at conservatories or participation in orchestral training.

The third trajectory – fully private, non-institutional instruction – proves the least efficient in terms of forming comprehensive musical competency. Learners within this model typically acquire only a narrow set of performance skills, focusing primarily on instrumental technique without exposure to the broader spectrum of theoretical and ensemble disciplines. This significantly reduces their chances of entering high-level professional academies and limits their future prospects, often directing them toward pedagogical or amateur pathways.

Overall, China's violin education framework exhibits considerable flexibility and the ability to serve diverse social and regional contexts. Nevertheless, the system would benefit from greater standardisation, particularly at the introductory level, to ensure more equitable access to high-quality professional training for all students (Chen Yu, 2010).

Promising directions for future research involve a detailed examination of how violin education varies across China's regions, as well as an assessment of the comparative effectiveness of private instruction versus state-supported models. It is also important to explore the methodological principles applied at different stages of violin training and to evaluate how

these approaches influence students' artistic development. Further attention should be given to the potential mechanisms for integrating private educational services into the formal institutional framework, along with an investigation of how digital technologies reshape the structure, content, and pedagogical strategies of modern violin education.

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