

Supervisor's Report on Diploma Thesis

**Tackling Primary Music School Students' Practicing Issues Using  
Contemporary Piano Teaching Methods**

**Author:** Bc. Beibei Hu

**Supervisor:** MgA. Ena Stevanović, Ph.D

In her Master Thesis Bc.Beibei Hu attempts to tackle primary music school students' piano practicing issues using contemporary piano teaching methods. Submitted thesis is focusing on relatively new approaches that are used both in China and worldwide. The choice of topic reflects candidate's need to improve her own teaching abilities by means of analysis of these methods and comparison with other Chinese practitioners. Therefore, I find this topic actual and beneficial for Beibei Hu's further academic development.

The thesis has 97 pages and includes four chapters: *Introduction, Theoretical Background and Related Contemporary Piano Methods, Research and Conclusion*. In the *Introduction* chapter the author explains the main aims of the thesis and why it is important to investigate piano practicing issues from physical, psychological, and, most importantly, educational perspective. *Theoretical background* makes up about two-thirds of the thesis in which the author defines common piano practicing issues and divides them into three categories: technical, interpretative and general practicing and performing aspects. Furthermore, in this chapter the author offers practicing suggestions for both teachers and learners using various piano methods such as Suzuki Piano School, Faber's Piano Adventures, Bastien's Piano Basics, Emonts's The European Piano Method, John Thompson's Easiest Piano Course, Michael Aaron's Piano Course, Alfred's Basic Piano Library, Wang's Chinese Style Primary Piano Method, Clark, Holland and Goss's The Music Tree, Hall's Piano Time, as well as Czech methods by Janžurová- Borová, and Bohmová- Grunfeldová- Sarauer. I was missing more references to Chinese methods, as the survey was referred to them, as well as methods that were published from 2010 onwards.

The *Research* chapter investigates common piano practicing issues from Chinese piano teachers' perspective using a survey questionnaire. This chapter is well structured and contains all necessary subchapters such as previous research on the topic, main research questions, methodology, research sample and results. All three previous research papers that were mentioned on p.70 are related to piano teaching methods, and not to piano practicing issues in primary level. Therefore, this chapter could still be complemented with articles of S. Hallam, A.C. Lehmann, J. Ginsborg, R. Chaffin and G. Imreh, and others, as well as with Chinese authors that were researching similar topics.

Positive aspects of the thesis are:

1. The organization of chapters conforms to an existing standard. The text is written in a logical and straightforward fashion, although with occasional repetitions;
2. Graphic representation of the examples and research results is very well done and it facilitates readers' orientation in the text;
3. Topic of the research is very relevant and useful for music education practice;
4. The main aim of the thesis was fulfilled.

Negative aspects of the thesis:

1. Grammar, stylistic problems and very simplistic use of English language. However, as Beibei's supervisor I have to praise her effort to write clearly, in shorter sentences and in a more understandable fashion, due to her lack of experience in academic writing.
2. Small mistakes in quotation style ( p.1: Leerplan is a Dutch word for Study plan, so it should not be part of the title; author Nikolaev was mentioned on p.3 but his method is not in the Bibliography; the year of publication of Alfred's Basic Piano Library is missing on p.39 and 40, as well as in Bibliography; reference to internet source is different on p.53 than on all the other places; ISBN has no „:“ after it; the print of the thesis is double-sided, that is not very common.)

Despite these small recommendations and a reproach to Beibei for not respecting deadlines set by her supervisor and submitting everything in the last possible moment, I have to show my deep appreciation of Beibei's effort to complete her first serious piece of academic writing. Beibei managed to fill the gaps in her knowledge of research methods, improve her writing abilities significantly, she learned how to express her ideas more logically and systematically, and how to use and properly quote various types of literature.

Taking into account all the above mentioned, I recommend this thesis for the defence.

MgA. Ena Stevanović, Ph.D

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