

# *The Left Hand Training Strategy in Piano Performance Teaching*

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**Abstract:** The training of performance skills is very important in piano learning and performance, which directly determines the performance quality and effect of the performer. As a multi-voice instrument, the piano requires the joint control of the left and right hands to obtain the ideal performance effect. In this regard, the performer should improve the attention to the left hand performance training, and show the beautiful and moving piano performance. Based on this, the paper briefly describes the importance of piano left hand performance, analyzes the existing deficiencies of piano left hand performance training, puts forward the training method of combining learning and thinking, and selects the targeted training method; enrich the left hand performance training materials, form a perfect knowledge system of left hand performance, innovate the left hand performance training mode, improve the performance training system; adhere to the polyphonic piano performance training, exercise the flexibility of the left hand finger, and show the overall effect of piano works to the greatest extent.

If you want to be an excellent piano player, you should leave no shortcomings, realize the importance of left-hand piano performance and actively train them. Although the flexibility and control of the left hand are lower than that of the right hand, a good left hand playing can foil the right hand playing, improve the playing effect, and form a moving musical atmosphere.

## **1. Piano Left-Hand Performance Overview**

Usually, the piano music is composed of two or more parts, with different parts controlled by the left and right hands respectively, the left hand mainly controls the harmony accompaniment part, and the right hand mainly controls the melody part. However, some special piano music will also turn the control role of the left and right hands. In daily piano performance and training, the players pay more attention to the right hand and ignore the left hand. However, the skill and ability of the left hand also affect the effect of piano performance, so the importance of the left hand is beyond doubt. In the development history of the piano and its repertoire, the evolution of the left-hand performance is shown in Table 1:

The importance of the Baroque and romantic periods shows the left hand. In the late Baroque-early classicism, polyphonic music gradually went to the edge and the bass disappeared. Although the left hand performance gradually became a variation, the left hand performance was

still very important. In the romantic period, the left hand part is gradually complicated, and a large number of disharmony are used, which can fully show the romantic feelings of music [1].

Table 1: Role played by the left hand in each historical period

period of history	On behalf of music	representative personage	The evolution of the left-handed playing
baroque	polyphony	Bach, Hendall	The left and right hands have the same position in the piano performance, and they are both responsible for a melody
Late Baroque and early classicism	Classical music	Beethoven, Haydn	The left-hand music form is a non-melodic texture, but becomes the accompaniment texture (triad)
Romantic period	Romantic music	Chopin	The left hand performance becomes a large arpeggio structure with special sound effects, which is the main way to show romantic music.

## 2. The Importance of Left-Hand Training in Piano Performance Teaching

To sum up, piano performance requires the player of both hands. Although the right hand assumes the main melody, the control effect of the left hand still affects the overall performance effect. Its specific functions are as follows:

### 2.1 Undertake the Accompaniment

If you want to play a beautiful music, you must have a moving and beautiful atmosphere foil, that is, "red flowers and green leaves" effect. If a piece of music lacks a moving accompaniment, the melody is pale, empty, and unattractive. When playing classical music, the left hand controls the accompaniment part. The main melody of the classical music sonatas is composed of single tone, and the accompaniment part is mainly fixed tone. In order to highlight the main melody, the volume of the accompaniment part should be lower than the main melody part, which means that the player's left hand should be weaker than the right hand. At the same time, the left hand also needs to control the transfer, bass, etc. In the period of romanticism, the texture and harmony of the accompaniment part were greatly enriched. When playing the emotional music such as nocturturne, if you want to fully express the sadness and expectation in the music, the performer should use the left hand to play the texture against the theme of the right hand. Taking Chopin's nocturturne in E major as an example, Op9No2 mainly expresses meditation and sadness. When playing, the player needs to control the playing part with the left hand, not only to control the volume with the left hand, but also playing the bass accurately and clearly, and control the speed of the whole piece of music. Thus, the left hand performance is crucial in the accompaniment part control [2].

### 2.2 Undertake the Melody

Composers use the method of "setting the melody in different vocal areas". When writing music, the melody is either in the high voice part or in the low voice part. In order to play a good low-part melody, players should pay attention to their left hand. Take Tchaikovsky's November—in the carriage as an example, the theme of the music initially appeared in the loud part, and then in the low part in the 51 bars, as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. The player is required to control the left hand and use the same method and strategy as the right hand.



Figure 1: Tchaikovsky's "November — in the carriage" music works



Figure 2: Tchaikovsky's "November — in the carriage" music works

In the loud part of the left hand, the player should play like a wanton, bright song, while the low chord should play like a bell. If the player wants to make the left and right hands have the same performance effect, he should pay attention to the connection of the left hand, and enhance the rhythm and dance of the left hand performance.

### 2.3 Affect the Performance Effect of Dance Music or Dance Music

No matter in dance music or dance music fun, the rhythm is very important, which directly reflects the key characteristics of the theme of the music. If you want to control the rhythm, the player should accurately control the rhythm of his left hand. If the rhythm of the player is different in proportion, even the same type of dance music has different performance effects. For example, although the minuet and waltz are both three beats, the former is a very elegant dance music, with a gentle and steady rhythm, often showing elegant and slow dance movements. When playing the third beat with the left hand, the player should accurately control the sound. The first beat is longer, and the second beat and the third beat are more stable. The latter is a lively, light dance music, and its third beat playing has distinct differences. When playing the third racket with the left hand, the player should enhance the strength of the first beat and play the second and third beats lightly and smoothly.

### 2.4 Both the Left and Right Hands Have the Same Position in Polyphony

The importance of polyphonic music in music is obvious, which does not distinguish between the main and secondary parts, melody and accompaniment. In polyphonic music, each part is very important and unique, and there are independent development lines. To sum up, polyphonic music is each independent melody in each part at the same time and harmonious fusion. Among the famous pianists, Bach was very good at creating polyphonic works. However, it should be noted that the key to playing the polyphonic music works lies in the "left hand vocal part", which is the key and difficult point of the performance, and directly affects the performance effect. Take No8, Bach's two creative works, as an example, as shown in Figure 3:



Figure 3: Bach's second creative music collection No8

This work mainly adopts the canon imitation technique, and both the left and right hands have themes, so the player is required to flexibly control the hands, so that the left hand can flexibly imitate the smooth and free descending notes of the right hand. However, because some players ignore the training of the left hand, the left hand cannot keep up with the speed of the right hand, and the sound speed of both hands is inconsistent, which eventually leads to the chaos of the music and the messy rhythm. In this regard, the performer should not only overcome the conventional technical difficulties, but also exercise the hearing, so as to enhance the coordination of the left and right hands and have their own melody line development.

### 3. The Existing Problems of Left-Hand Training in Piano Performance Teaching

#### 3.1 The Left Hand Finger is not Flexible Enough

In general, the finger of people's right hand is far more flexible than the left hand, which is mainly caused by two problems:

##### 3.1.1 Physiological Problems IT Is Well Known that People's Right Hand Is Naturally Flexible.

At present, two main criteria are used to measure finger flexibility. The first criterion is finger compliance; the second criterion is finger strength. In daily production and life, people use their right hands to control all kinds of things or do various activities, according to the instructions issued by the brain to write, pick up items, etc. Therefore, when playing the piano, the right hand is easier to accept and implement the brain instructions, and the playing is more easily and freely. At the same time, the right arm, wrist, finger strength is strong, it is easier to complete the piano performance and training tasks. For example, most players can find that the right hand is more likely to raise, while the left hand is weak and fragile.

##### 3.1.2 Training questions

In the field of piano music, the quantity and quality of the right hand piano music far exceed those of the left hand, and the relevant textbooks lack professionalism and system.

#### 3.2 Lack of rich training materials

At present, most players choose Cherney etude series and Moshkovsky etude when training their playing skills. There are problems such as few training materials and large proportion of right hand performance training, which lead to the lack of effective basis for the left hand performance training,

which improves the difficulty of training by [3].

### 3.3 The left hand playing lacks the singing sex

According to the above, some piano music is played by the left hand. However, because most players ignore the left hand training and their skills are not good, they cannot successfully complete the theme playing task. The broken, incoherent and lack of singing and emotional expression make the piano performance lack vitality and coherence, and reduce the performance effect.

### 3.4 Left and right playing lacks independence

In most cases, the left hand mainly undertakes the accompaniment part, which believes that it only needs to follow the melody of the right hand, ignoring the rhythm of the accompaniment part itself, which leads to the lack of vitality and appeal of piano performance. Taking Chopin nocturne as an example, as shown in Figure 4, although the player should weaken the accompaniment part of the left hand, he should not play all the sounds weakly, and should reasonably distinguish the levels of bass and harmony. In this regard, the performer should strengthen the left hand training, adopt the appropriate accompaniment part processing method, enhance the accompaniment part to the melody part of the coordination and foil, and finally play a beautiful and moving music.



Figure 4: Chopin nocturne

## 4. Effective strategies for left-hand training in piano playing teaching

### 4.1 Choose training methods based on the combination of learning and thinking

Want to improve the level of left hand playing training, should be combined with learning theory oriented, to let the players master the basic knowledge, skills, etc., should also teach professional knowledge of playing theory, increase the proportion of practice training, encourage their reflection, analysis of the shortage of left hand playing and take effective improvement methods, so as to promote their piano playing level to a higher level. In the process of teaching and training, the players should be led to feel the connotation and emotion of the piano music, and analyze the content and characteristics of the music, so as to enhance the players' perception ability and improve the aesthetic level. At the same time, different training methods should be selected according to different types of players. For minor players, left-handed playing knowledge should be promoted, the importance of the left hand should be emphasized, basic types should be introduced, key touch training should be used, simple piano teaching materials should be used, and the proportion of left-handed training should be appropriately increased, which requires the emotion and expression of players, that is, singing performance. For the players with a certain foundation, the proportion of theoretical teaching and practical teaching should be adjusted reasonably, the

subjective initiative should be stimulated, the left hand playing skills should be actively trained, and the [4] such as polyphonic works should be introduced.

#### 4.2 Enrich the training materials of left hand performance and form a perfect knowledge system of left hand performance

According to the analysis of piano works in various historical periods, it can be seen that most piano works are mainly played by the right hand, and the players lack the left hand playing habits and professional skills, so it is difficult to complete professional, high-quality and beautiful piano performance. In this regard, appropriate left-hand performance teaching materials should be selected based on the teaching objectives and standards of piano performance, so as to ensure that such teaching materials resources are scientific and targeted, a perfect teaching system should be constructed, and reasonable and effective training programs can be formulated according to the situation of players to meet the diversified training needs. For example, "Hanon Piano Finger Practice" and "Twelve Daily Piano Technical Practice", the former includes piano playing finger fingering and techniques, pointed out that the player should ensure flexible fingers, especially to strengthen the training of left hand skills training, which has professional and systematic left hand training knowledge, can improve the training level of left hand performance training. During the teaching and training, the players should be guided to increase the left and right performance at the same time or alone, enhance the playing strength and optimize the brain conditioning, so that the left hand can smoothly accept and implement the instructions issued by the brain. As a professional training book, the latter mainly contains a variety of training skills and knowledge, which can guide the players to conduct left-hand training, so as to improve the level of piano performance [5].

#### 4.3 Innovate the left-hand performance training mode and improve the performance training system

In order to achieve the ideal training effect of left hand performance, we should change the traditional demonstration + practice teaching mode, introduce advanced technology and methods, stimulate the initiative and enthusiasm of the players, and take the initiative to participate in the left hand training activities.



Figure 5: The Autumn Moon of the Pinghu Lake

On the one hand, the training method of singing skills can be adopted. Due to the few repertoire and textbooks for the left hand, most players have low levels of timbre and intonation control in their left hand. In this regard, we should choose the left-hand repertoire to train the players' coordination ability, so that they can master the company method and understand the difference between melody and accompaniment. Take "Autumn Moon on Pinghu Lake" as an example, as shown in Figure 5, one or two passages are different. The accompaniment part is mainly divided into bass and middle part. The former should play a low and distant sound, just like a boulder



falling on the lake. The latter should play a distant, clear sound, like a lake to microwave. In this regard, the player should adopt the company playing method and improve the performance effect with the help of singing playing.

On the other hand, audio-visual media equipment should be introduced to play the left hand, enlarge the analysis fingering, etc. to bring it into the vivid performance scene and improve the training effect [6].

#### 4.4 Adhere to the polyphonic piano music performance training, exercise the flexibility of the left hand finger

According to the above, polyphonic works are very important in music, and they are also one of the important carriers of finger skill training. When carrying out the training of left hand skills, various polyphonic works should be introduced to help the performer exercise the left hand fingers and understand the primary and secondary voice levels. Because the polyphonic works are not clearly divided into primary and secondary parts, primary and secondary melodies, etc., so the requirements for the left and right hands are the same, only the players with superb left hand playing skills can successfully complete the whole work. During the training process, the players are required to break up and perform voice division training, and then increase the proportion of left hand training appropriately according to the training situation of the players. In addition, Bach's two creative songs can also be used to exercise the hand brain control, enhance the strength and flexibility of the performer's left hand, so that the two parts of the left and right hands can be harmoniously echoed, highlighting the distinctive characteristics of the polyphonic works.

## 5. Conclusion

To sum up, the piano left hand performance is slightly weak, which affects the future development and performance effect of the players. At present, want to improve the playing skills and level, players should strengthen the left hand training, strengthen the brain control, the introduction of polyphony, and should choose the appropriate training materials, actively participate in all kinds of left hand training activities, to enhance the accuracy of the left hand, improve the playing pitch and timbre, finally show the professional, high quality, beautiful piano performance.

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