

# *Piano Performance Style and Piano Music Teaching*

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**Abstract:** Because of its wide range, the piano shows different musical performance styles, from classicism to Romanticism, from Baroque period to Impressionism period, and then to contemporary music in the new century, all of which embody the beauty of piano performance style. The style of piano performance is not only related to the music works themselves, but also to the performers' playing skills, and also to the composers' aesthetic views. Exploring the different styles of piano playing will bring us new enlightenment in piano music teaching. This paper chooses Schubert's improvisations and musical moments as research models, and analyses and imitates the theme construction, harmony vocabulary, texture technique, musical form structure and tonal layout. It also combs the development of improvisation and briefly states the general characteristics of improvisation. Through the analysis of all Schubert's improvisations and musical moments, this paper concretely analyses and summarizes Schubert's improvisations from the aspects of musical form, texture, voice line and harmony vocabulary, studies Schubert's improvisations, teaches simulated piano improvisations, shapes and develops his musical motivation, and develops Schubert's improvisational style. The thinking process of imitation and creative thinking are summarized and summarized.

## **1. Introduction**

Piano, as an important musical instrument, not only affects the development of music teaching activities, but also affects the improvement of students' music literacy (Colombo, B., & Antonietti, Alessandro. (2017)). Through research, it is found that the perfect combination of piano music and piano playing technology has become the focus of current piano music teaching (Fourie, C., van der Merwe, Liesl, & Swart, Inette (2016)). Piano playing technology is not only an important means of

expression of piano music, but also an important way for listeners to feel music emotion through rhythm changes (Heil, & Leila. (2017)). The proficiency of piano playing directly affects the emotional resonance between listeners. Through the research of piano playing technology, this paper thinks that there are the following problems in piano playing technology that need attention (Jeremy, D. (2016)).

First of all, piano music is an important part of piano playing technology. Players pass music to the audience by tapping the keys, but different fingering methods have an important impact on the performance of piano music (Kilic, D. B. C. (2018)). In order to truly convey the connotation of music, performers should not only have a thorough understanding of the music, but also master the piano playing skills. Only in this way can performers better convey their emotions and understanding of the connotation of music through playing, can they deduce more perfect music (Simones, L., Rodger, Matthew, & Schroeder, Franziska. (2016)). Secondly, different ways of playing the same song will also convey different feelings, naturally will show people a variety of spiritual feelings (Şirin, A. D. (2016)). Therefore, only by constantly combining their music knowledge with performance technology, can piano performers effectively guarantee the diversity of music style, truly reflect the real world through music, and truly show people's pursuit and love for life. There are many styles of piano music (Toptas, B. (2016)). In the process of playing piano music, ideological innovation should be guaranteed, so as to ensure the diversified development of piano playing technology, but at the same time, it should also be combined with traditional Chinese culture, so as to enhance the appeal of piano playing and present the musical characteristics of the Chinese nation. Finally, with the development of the times, our country's piano music performance technology presents new features, not only stressing the importance of innovation, but also using modern science and technology to continuously improve the proficiency of performers, only in this way can we truly realize the rational development of Contemporary Piano Performance technology (Yazici, T. (2016)).

The performance of piano works requires both hands, feet and eyes of the performers. When performing, the performers need to devote themselves wholeheartedly to it and interpret the works according to their own feelings, understandings and understandings of music. The style of piano works is constantly changing with the accumulation of time, and every change of style will bring about the change of expressive techniques. Imagine if the style of a work has been changed and the performance techniques have not been adjusted accordingly, then the performance will not be the best result. Piano style and performance techniques have a one-to-one correspondence. A successful performer needs to determine which performance techniques to use according to the style of the work. The technique of piano is related to the performer's understanding of the work, his music accomplishment and his control ability. At the same time, it is the change of piano style that occupies a more important position.

The style of piano performance is not only related to the music works themselves, but also to the performers' playing skills, and also to the composers' aesthetic views. Exploring the different styles of piano playing will bring us new enlightenment in piano music teaching. This article will focus on the classical style, Baroque style and Romantic style of piano performance.

## **2. The Relationship between the Style of Piano Works and the Techniques of Piano Performance**

Since the advent of piano works, the style of piano works has been changing with the accumulation of time. This change is related to the aesthetics of the times, the background of the

times, and the understanding of the whole work by the performers. With the constant change of the style of piano works, the playing techniques of piano are also constantly changing, and both of them are constantly developing in the process of mutual change.

The change of piano style leads to the change of piano playing techniques. The change of the style of piano works is mainly controlled by our external environment. When a piano piece comes out, no one will study how to change its style. They will guess its meaning according to the author's style, and then the performer will interpret it perfectly. With the change of the external environment and people's understanding of this work, when the performer performs, he adjusts and inclines his feelings slightly, then the style of this piano music will change. When the style of a piano music changes with the external environment, it makes the performer need to spend time to guess the specific feelings, and need to adapt with the new style of performance. Therefore, the change of the style of the piano works is driving the change of the piano playing techniques. The change of piano playing techniques has changed the style of piano works. When a piano work is interpreted by the performer, the performer is the soul and core of the work. A piano work must have the emotions, meanings, understanding of the work, implications for the performer and so on. Before performing, the performer will have a general control over the whole work. When performing, the performer will add his own understanding of the whole work, and then interpret it. The performer's piano performance techniques are closely related to his own musical literacy, his perception of music, his feelings for external things and his control over music. Among these factors, every minor factor will affect the change of performance techniques when it changes. The appearance of a piano work mainly depends on the performers' performance. Therefore, the performers' performance techniques play a decisive role. The change of piano performance techniques results in the change of piano work style.

### 3. The Evolution History of Piano Works Style

1. Baroque Period. In the early period of Baroque, some classical works of music were transmitted by word of mouth among the people, basically without forming a specific paper-based works, resulting in the absence of information, omission or misunderstanding of works in the process of transmission, etc. Therefore, music works in the early period of Baroque are guaranteed. So far, it is very little. Although Baroque's early music works did not form a paper-based work, they laid a solid foundation for the arrival of the Baroque period and accumulated many musical materials. Piano music works in Baroque period are mainly represented by clavichord. The music works in this period are mainly about palace and religion. The feelings to be expressed are simple, down-to-earth and original. There is a large span in the jumping proportion of notes. The melody is very bright and fluctuant. It's very sexual and can make people sound happy. The music works of Baroque period mainly express a kind of living state of people at that time, concentrate this state, express the concentrated feelings with notes, and form a concrete music work.

2. Classical period. From the Baroque period to the classical period, the performance style of the piano has changed. After entering the classical period, compared with the music works of Baroque period, the music works at this time are more targeted. In the piano, there are keys specially for music works. In the emotional transformation of music works, the feeling of freshness and brightness in the Baroque period has been used. In the classical period, the representatives are Haydn and Mozart. The publication of these two works has epoch-making significance. In the works, there are more creators' feelings and new insights into the music works, and more spiritual things are interpreted in the music works. It can be said that the representative works of this period

have been published until now. It has great influence. There are many representative works in classical music works, mainly aiming at the emotional needs of people at that time, and integrating these factors into the production of music works.

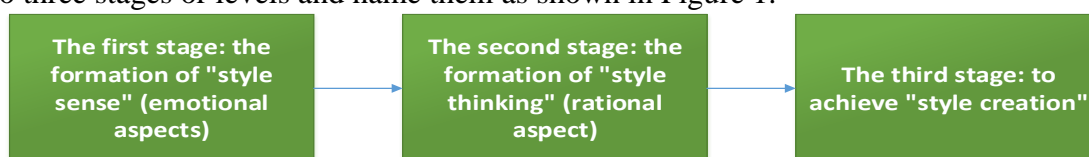
3. Romantic period. In the period of Romanticism, the performance works of the piano are different from the previous ones in essence. The creator broke the original fixed creative thinking and began to add more emotional colors to the music works, and made corresponding changes in tone and timbre in the music creation. Compared with the piano works of the previous period, the style of music works of the Romantic period has a strong personal emotional color. Chopin, known as the "piano poet" by later generations, is the representative figure of this period. The style of piano works in the period of Romanticism has been recognized by most people in a very short period of time. The main reason why the piano works have a high sense of identity is that the creator has integrated more personal feelings and emotions into the music works, which enables the listeners to find their own miniature. In the works of Romanticism period, the tone conversion is frequent, the melody is melodious and the rhythm is free, and the whole performance process of the works can be relaxed.

4. The period of impressionism. After the change of piano style in the previous several periods, it has entered the period of impressionism, which is a period of great change in the style of music works. Before that, what people pursued was the enjoyment of their spiritual world and the expression of their inner feelings, and there was no excessive modification in the way of expression. Into the period of impressionism, the creators began to pursue the stereo sense of music and the hierarchical sense of the form of realization. For the stereo sense of music, the creators need to add more notes in it. In the transformation stage of each note, they need to be skillfully connected, and there cannot be a larger and more obvious pause, so as to realize the whole period for the whole. The pursuit of perfection. For the hierarchical sense of expression, compared with the previous button need to force, the Impressionist period for the hierarchical sense of music works does not need to press too hard, dragonflies point water, so far, is to appear a real and fantastic feeling, passing by. The style of piano works in the period of impressionism, whether music creators or performers, has made unprecedented changes in their own fields.

#### **4. On the Style and Method of Piano Performance and Teaching**

Perhaps the highest praise for a musical performer is that his interpretation of the work is faithful to the style of the composer. Therefore, the greatest piano educators give "faithful interpretation of style" great significance. Igumnov, one of the representatives of the Russian piano school, said, "Style precedes everything." Twisting style can distort the author's appearance. This is the most serious crime, the crime of sin." When trying to solve the problem of "faithful style", teachers will face another phenomenon: there are many kinds of interpretations of style, and they often differ from each other. This fact is incomprehensible to the dogmatic teachers. Beethoven's works, for example, raise extremely diverse stylistic questions in front of the performers. One of the most difficult is to reproduce the composer's rich musical emotions in the logical expression of music itself, so that the passionate emotions, direct lyrics and artistic architect-like rationality, will and skills form a harmonious blend. In past or present concerts, the pianist's practice is based on the combination of perceptual and rational point of view, to make a variety of interpretations of Beethoven's works. But whether it is a free interpretation or a serious one, whether Romanticism prevails or Classicism dominates, it can still conform to the composer's style. This involves how we understand the style of music. A complete, transparent, accurate and open understanding of musical

style constitutes the necessary prerequisite for faithful interpretation of the style of works. The basic characteristics of the cognitive process of music style are the basis for dividing teaching order and assigning teaching tasks. The understanding of music style is a complex and long process, which can be divided into several stages. However, knowledge is also a process of unity, integrity and integration of various elements. Teachers should see the integrity of "knowledge", which is an integral part of the whole in all respects. Therefore, teachers should be aware that, on the one hand, they should not teach like blind people, confined to a part and sticking to one end; on the other hand, the division of stages is only relative, not absolute. In the process of understanding music style, different stages can be combined to form a dialectical relationship; different types of understanding can act synchronously and form different levels. To achieve full conformity with style, we must have psychological goals, which are formed on the basis of the integration of all aspects of personality. The so-called aspects of personality include physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual fields. At different stages, according to the different levels of understanding style, this field is sometimes put first, and sometimes another field is the main focus. In view of this, we divide them into three stages or levels and name them as shown in Figure 1.



*Figure 1. Three stages of piano performance style*

The first two stages are based on two styles of research methods, namely emotion and reason. In fact, they are not only difficult to distinguish, but also need to be considered comprehensively. Nikoz once said: "A person who can only feel art is always an art lover; a person who can only think about art will become a researcher and a musicologist;". However, in order to determine the dominant teaching tasks in each phase, the analysis must be so divided in order to make the analysis step-by-step, clear and clear. In the first phase, the goal is to complete an emotional understanding of a certain period or a composer's music. Students need to accumulate a style of "auditory experience" or some of the works of a certain style. This requires the creation of a corresponding "style environment" (similar to the "linguistic environment" of linguistics), including listening to music at concerts, playing with teachers, playing double pianos, viewing music, etc., all of which contribute to hearing. The accumulation of experience. In this environment or process, a simple, primary "style" (some common, stable and unified results in different musical instruments) has begun to form. At the same time, different methods of style are divided from the form and sound of music: individual tones or structural methods. It is under this framework that the style begins to form, "choose" and "attract" similar or contrasting sound phenomena, and is formed by fragments. On this basis, the "standard code" and "personal code" are formed, of course, the former is dominant. In this stage of understanding style, it is reminiscent of understanding the first level of text, that is, the understanding of emotions. Therefore, the problem at this stage is to form a directed, emotionally specific style. Practice has shown that when students are exposed to and master a new style, they feel uncomfortable and fearful, just like being in an unfamiliar language environment and fearing to exert their emotions. These fears are produced for a reason. In fact, each style has its own set of emotions and its own characteristics. It is this kind of fear that first leads to the lack of self-confidence of the performers. It is often the fear of this phenomenon that causes resistance or sorrow in the style teaching. The specific performance is that the performance is dull, stunned,

lifeless, and even overwhelmed. An error occurred. The teacher helps the student understand the main theme of the new work. First, he must strive to direct his performance emotions to the necessary style channels. For example, when playing a Bach's work (for example: f minor prelude), students often "try" and "experience" the melody in each part, and he will naturally play a dynamic or sensuous and flexible rhythm. Impromptu freedom. Behind the beautiful melody and harmonious expression, the image he perceives is so close to him, and he is attracted to it, like a lyrical piece. However, this type of performance is contrary to the Bach style because the students failed to understand Bach's emotions. Lack of emotional understanding of the composer's spirit and style, first affecting the main elements of music: sound and rhythm. At this time, the teacher should help the students to rebuild and sublimate their emotions and establish the spirit of Bach. In other words, comprehending the height and seriousness of Bach's music world requires the reconstruction and sublimation of emotions, rather than the arbitrary and casual nature of emotions.

The main task of the second phase is to understand the style rationally. If the first stage mainly occurs on the level of "emotional intuition", then the latter stage is characterized by the addition of "rational intuition". Psychologically speaking, the relationship between excitement and inhibition, excitement is the need of intuition, and inhibition is rational. Control. With the help of teachers, students explore the styles of different angles and levels, including melody, rhythm, harmony and style. At the same time, students need to understand the personality traits of the composer and understand the cultural background of the music creation. Because this kind of "intelligent" learning process is necessary to improve students' cognitive ability, it is a typical feature of this stage. Therefore, the style "rule code" and "personal code" are formed, and the latter dominates. This stage is similar to the rational cognitive stage in psychology. Its essence is to establish the connection between the elements of the situation in order to grasp the original content of the music. At this stage of the cognitive style, students should analyze the style of the works they perform. In the analysis of musical forms, teachers should teach students to think and analyze the style of different works. For students, it is especially important to analyze the texture of the performance, because it is the framework of the style, and the performers deal directly with it. In the texture, like in the mirror, the regularity of reflection is the characteristic of the style direction, and the reflected individualized artistic style is related to the style concept of the composer. However, the form of the texture may have a commonality to the style, especially when it involves the boundary between styles. Therefore, students must strictly follow all the information on the score, such as: cannot confuse Scriabin's work with the works of French harpsichords. However, in works with close creation time and different creative styles, the form of the texture may have similar possibilities. This stage is not so much the characteristic of the "learning" stage of the style, but rather the characteristics of "life" in style and music art. The process of understanding style is as endless as knowing the truth. At this level, combined with previous achievements, a sense of style in the true sense is formed. This is the feeling of intellectualization and the emotion of rationalization, which arises from the process of deep understanding. At this time, feelings and emotions have undergone a "knowledge transformation" that can be dialectically developed rather than simply returning to itself or simply returning to the original place. That is to say, the initial feelings and emotions have been "disappeared" through the intellectual field, resulting in different, deeper and higher-level rational emotions. This involves the relationship between perceptual experience and rational dialectic transformation: "The perceptual experience in music appreciation needs to rise to rational understanding, and rational cognition is further transformed into a more profound perceptual experience. The sensibility and rationality in music appreciation is in this dialectical combination is constantly deepening. The purpose of the cognitive style is to recreate it in a living voice, that is, to

put the knowledge into practice, so it cannot stay in the second stage and must go to the third stage - To achieve "style creation." According to Gadamer's hermeneutics, "understanding is always a process of fusion that is mistaken for a field of view that exists alone.

In the third stage, reconstructing the style in the sound means that the result of "fusion of the field of view" is presented, which is the effect of the player and the composer, the past and the present as a whole, which leads to the integration of the individual subject and the theme of the score. It should be born by the emotions of the performers and penetrate into the emotional world of music. The initial reflection in understanding sound materials is emotional reflection. The content and essence of understanding styles are required to join the intellectual process, and the deeper style can only be recognized through the spiritual realm of the individual. These areas determine the type and level of musical style, namely emotional, intellectual and spiritual. What should be explored in the material of music in order to correctly understand the style of the composer? If a student plays a work of a composer, the teacher must point out the most obvious characteristics in his research process, that is, the elements of the style system. In the analysis of tonal meaning, teachers are also needed to help, because students who are not familiar with new works often miss many elements that have "meaning bearing". We can divide the objects studied in understanding the style into two areas: text and information outside the text. This led to two studies: internal research and external research. "Text" research belongs to "internal research" and "extra textual information" research belongs to "external research". The text field is based on musical scores, including the structure of the work, the characteristics of the language - melody, harmony and rhythm; also includes the descriptions marked by the author, such as speed, strength and weakness. In other words, this field contains the text content of all composers recorded in the spectrum. Information outside the text, that is, information about the composer himself, including the cultural background of his creation, the nature of musical instruments, the fixed tradition of musical works, the dominant playing traditions at the time, and various publications of performances. It should be pointed out that the information outside the text is equally important, and it is the only way to enter the style. As Sigmund Stokhovsky believes, in addition to "the study of the work, grasp the structure of the work, the rules of music and the necessary keyboard technology", "to uncover the mystery of the composer's intentions." In order to get in touch with his creative personality, he must also study his living environment, investigate the historical background of his writing, understand his emotions, and cultivate a deep and sincere sympathy for his ideas. For example, in the study of Bach's works. The specific means of performance—the rhythm, speed, strength, fingering, melody, harmony, and texture, still need to grasp the information outside the text: the Christian mythology and the gospel story, so that we can deeply understand the meaning of the Bach music world. Really understand the "Bach-style" pain, so as to correctly understand Bach's style. Finally, based on the comprehensive text and information outside the text, in the student's mind should be established in the students' comprehensive thinking of this work, reflecting the author's The overall style image, thus forming a plan, and according to the program to form a "performance method score", this is the "working draft" of future performance

## **5. The Use of Schubert's Piano Music Style in Piano Improvisation Teaching**

Among Schubert's improvisations, OP90N03 is the only one that adopts the structure of variations. This song is divided into five themes and five variations. The theme is the melody of the song. The five variations have different personalities. It is a set of lyric and skillful classics. The reason for choosing this song as a teaching case is that the music image between the theme and the

variations is distinctly contrasted. Each variations in the process of variations are smaller and easier to operate and master in practice. The playing scene is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Plays schubert improvisations

It has the theme melody of simplicity, high recognition, development and large space for change and deformation, and defines the music image, music character, basic harmony and structure frame in the limited theme. OP90N03 is a two-stage body with a small tail. The theme melody is homophone repetition and square sentence structure. The texture is simple in form and expressive in harmony with vocabulary. In this paper, Schubert improvisation style imitation, the use of this song as a template, do variation structure practice. Schubert wrote 634 German-Austrian art songs, so a considerable number of his instrumental works have song-like melody. Therefore, when conceiving a theme, it is also necessary to present a song-like theme melody that can be expressed by voice lines and lyric. The theme image is clear as a soft, melodious theme image, which conforms to the characteristics of Schubert's Lyric Art songs. Harmony should be as simple as possible, but it can be developed by replacing chords in the future development of melody. The structure adopts a two-stage body of the lifting-carrying and switching type.

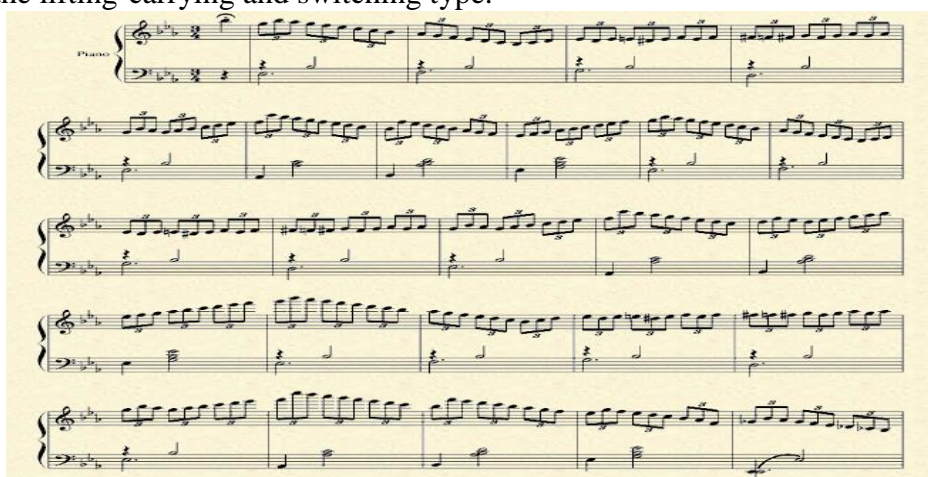


Figure 3. Schubert impromptus



E Major is the main tone. Considering that the range of the melody range mainly moves between the small word group G and the small word group e, the theme range is temporarily set to be narrower, which is conducive to the further expansion of the vocal range after W. When it comes to the theme, consider whether the theme can be sung out loud and catchy. This theme is used repeatedly in the later development of melody, and it must be audible, and the theme can be developed upward or downward at any time (die-in); it is also easy to operate when the major and minor tunes alternate; it can be arranged with different harmony connections, etc., in the choice of rhythm, the common rhythm, Schubert improvisational style in the rhythm side. However, there is no change in the process of music. After setting the beat, the rhythm is almost in line with the rhythm of the beat itself - and because of the need for rapid response in improvisational development, the basic rhythm of the beat is converted to unconscious action. 2/4 rhythm stress cycle is the fastest, so the speed will be very active; 3/4 of the most commonly used technique is the dance rhythm, rhythm with logical stress will become an important link to consider the melody, so the above two rhythms are the first to be excluded, because they do not conform to the music character of the theme music image. Set the theme slowly, without obvious rhythm rebound. Therefore, focusing on the following two choices 4/4, 6/8, the common point is that they are duplex, the capacity of a section is larger than that of a single beat, and the sentences in lyric melody will be longer. The final reason for choosing 4/4 is that the set music image needs a gentle and warm Song-style melody in the theme melody construction, while the 6/8 rhythm has a relatively faster sense of mobility, and the swaying sense of rhythm is not available in other quadruple rhythms. In terms of harmony, the nine chords are simple to use, with basic vocabulary. The sentence pattern of square structure should convey music character plainly and clearly, and 4/4 is more in line with the desired rhythm. The theme melody is constructed by homophonic repetition in a circuitous direction. The first paragraph: Sentence structure is 2 + 2 + 4, 2 bars are short sentences which are mutually changeable and repetitive, and 4 bars have the meaning of summary while strengthening the preceding sentence. The second passage is a short deviation of direction, which is then absorbed in the reproduction of the change of the preceding sentence. At the same time, the transverse imitation of OP90N03 has a very short ending. The design of thematic form is extremely critical, which indicates the basic trend of variation after the introduction of structure, harmony, musical character and harmony rhythm. After the theme is determined, the foreshadowing is laid for the subsequent music development. Variations of variations also need to establish character. The important link between variations is thematic melody, and the value of the existence of multiple variations is mainly change and contrast. Schubert's variations in OP90N03 are all ornamental variations, that is, around the backbone of the melody, the theme melody is ornamental variations. After the establishment of variation techniques, the number of variation is determined in the speed layout, mode and tonality layout, climax settings, etc.

Velocity arrangement is a progressive principle, and the overall shape is an arch structure. Schubert in Variation 3, using the same name minor, mainly rhythm, full of sadness, slow speed. Other variations have no obvious speed markers, but they all take the sixteenth note as the main tone type, which can confirm that the overall speed is relatively fast and dexterous. Therefore, the choice of overall music materials is mainly based on the sound pattern of dexterous running, which requires the touch of the fingertips with granularity. In the pre-layout, the variation 4 is set as the climax of the whole repertoire, and in the character design of the variation, the contrast with the basic image is the greatest, based on the position of golden section point 0.618. Schubert's harmony arrangement is very traditional, with the alternation of tonality and homonym. The main theme is in E major, and the tones of variations are E-E-E-E-C-E. In Variation 1-3, the tone of the theme is

fully consolidated, and the harmony of the theme is also maintained. The main tone type changes are the main ones. In Variation 4-5, the contrast of scale, mode, tonality and personality is further enlarged: Variation 6 summarizes the musical image of the theme skillfully. Because Schubert's variation technique is decorative variation, the change of theme in variation mainly embodies in the aspects of sound type, sound area, color and rhythm, while the change of basic harmony, rhythm and musical structure is relatively small.

In this concerto, the piano is the dominant part, and the orchestra accompaniment is relatively clear, which usually sets off the piano in harmony. This work is full of romantic fantasy both in the use of musical form, harmony and in the change of melody. It has very unique artistic features. Mozart's works are full of sunny colors. Therefore, when playing his works, it is necessary to use graceful and smooth rhythm, clear and even grains to convey lively breath. His works show brilliant and transparent timbre effect, showing elegance, simplicity and simplicity. Therefore, the sound of piano keys should be crisp. Lightness, not retardation, not adhesion, to use bright, uniform, glossy tone color to play the clavichord crisp "granular" feeling, sound like a series of springs Baotu Spring, continuous flow out. As can be seen from Figure 4, especially for young people, a large proportion of them are willing to continue learning the piano by playing this work.

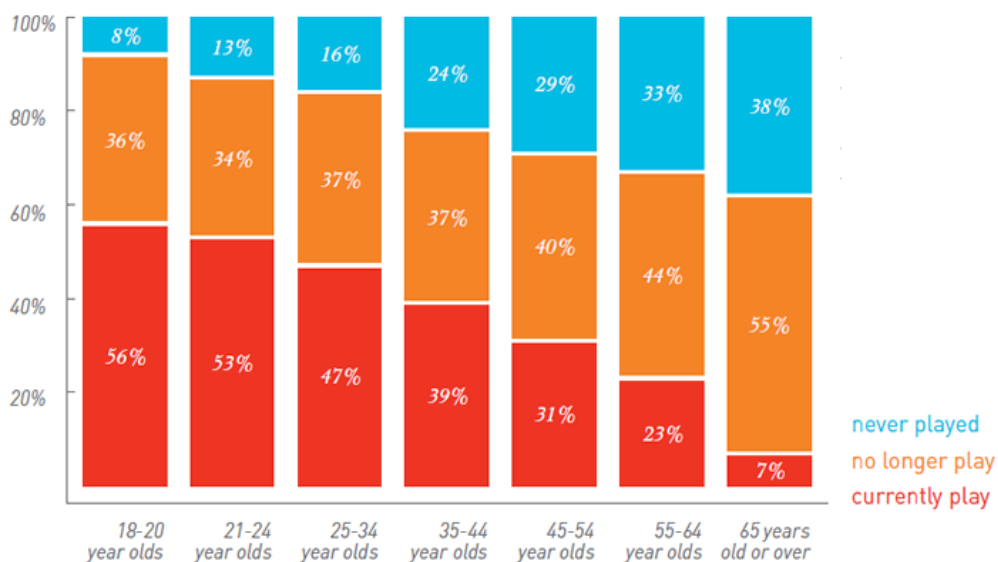


Figure 4. The promoting effect of playing style on piano music teaching

## 6. Conclusion

With the accumulation of time, the style of piano works is constantly evolving, and its evolution is also affecting the continuous transformation of piano techniques. To a certain extent, the two have mutual influence, but the key role is the style of piano works. In the process of style evolution, we can see the process of music creation more clearly. And the gradual mastery of techniques. All the above-mentioned stages and methods of understanding and realizing style, as mentioned above, are a dynamic and open whole process. Different aspects of piano teaching and performance achieve concrete unity rather than abstract unity; form a dialectical connection rather than mechanical addition. The comprehensive result of this whole process is to form a high-level "sense of style", so as to solve the problem of being faithful to style in piano performance and realize style

creation.

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Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

### Conflict of Interest

The author states that this article has no conflict of interest.

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