

## A Study on the Law of Breathing in the Playing in the Piano Teaching in Colleges and Universities

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### Abstract

The piano is one of the world-class instruments, and it is also a basic musical instrument. Many art institutions have offered piano courses. Breathing is the basic activity for the continuation of human life, and it is of equal importance to the music. In the piano playing, the correct mastery of breathing rhythm is the key to the perfect interpretation of piano music. At the same time, it helps the performer to stabilize his mood and ensure the normal performance, so that the performer can express his emotions and utterances through his breath in the playing. However, many colleges and universities have neglected the teaching of breathing in the playing during the course of teaching, and paid too much attention to the skills of playing the piano. The teachers should recognize the importance of breathing in the playing in the piano performance, and let the students adjust the rhythm of performance with the breathing in the playing, so as to achieve the ideal effect of performance. Starting from the piano teaching in colleges and universities, this paper analyzes and explores the law of breathing in the playing.

### Keywords

Piano teaching; breathing in the playing; breathing and playing emotion; law exploration.

### 1. Introduction

The playing of piano works is a kind of movement composed of different music phrases. In the course of performance, the player should divide the long and short phrases by good sense of musicality and theoretical knowledge of music, and to make the breathing and the music phrases to bring out the best in each other. In this process, the inner part of the music will be displayed, so that the emotions and breathing in the playing cooperate with each other, thus presenting a more perfect work.

### 2. The Role of Breathing in the Playing

#### 2.1. Stabilize the Emotion of the Performer Himself

The skills of playing the piano are quite important, but the breathing of the performer also has a great influence on the final performance of the work. The mastery of emotion is the key to a good grasp of breathing in the playing. Therefore, for the performer, the skilled use of breathing in the playing can not only bring a perfect performance of the work, but also adjust the performer's emotion to the best so as to perform the work with the fullest enthusiasm. It is the most difficult thing for a piano player to perform a smooth piano performance for a long time, so the pianist's own physical state is very important, and they can neither be too relaxed nor overstressed. During the performance, they should maintain a natural state of relaxation and breathe smoothly in order to play the work louder and faster for a long time. Whether the physical state is relaxed or not mainly depends on whether the player can accurately grasp the

breathing in the playing and breathe naturally and relax, so that the player can truly integrate himself into the work and to be in his element to achieve the best performance effect.

## **2.2. Show the Connotation of Piano Works in Many Aspects**

Each piano work has its own artistic style, which is mainly reflected by the performer's breathing in the playing. In the performance of piano works, skills and techniques, musical emotions and wonderful timbre are all expressions of the works themselves. However, the unique artistic characteristics of each work can not be separated from the use of breathing in the playing. It is a practice of attending to trifles and neglecting the essentials to pay too much attention to the technique and rhythm of piano playing, which leads to the neglect of the role of breathing in the playing. According to the style of piano music, such as emotional control, the length of phrases and so on, the performer needs to grasp the breath with their own performance experience to make a reasonable interpretation of the music works, and then show what the music works want to express to the public. Take Bach's works and Chopin's works as examples. Bach's works focus on the structure, while Chopin's works pay more attention to the refinement of timbre. Therefore, performers need to use different breathing to perform their works. Bach's works require the performer to have good control over the breath and reflect the hierarchy of the work through the use of breath. For Chopin's works, the performer needs to pay more attention to the performance of touch keys and the application of pedals, and use timbre to express its details, so as to arouse the resonance of the audience and express the author's musical purpose.

## **2.3. Shape the Image of Music**

For the performer, how to successfully create a musical image in the secondary creation by understanding the inner world of the composer requires the breathing training of the performance as the basis. Although there are no specific characters in the whole process of piano playing, the piano music contains multi-level emotions and different character images. When performing, the performer should not only have a skilled technique, but also learn to integrate the breathing rhythm with it and bring himself into the works. In this way, the performer can successfully shape the image of music in the world of the audience through the inner understanding of the piano works. For example, the performer may express a majestic and grand image through a calm and powerful breath, while the performer may express a quiet and gentle work by breathing smoothly and relaxing. For the performer, his breath at this time not only represents his own playing emotion, but also represents the image of the characters in the work. Therefore, the breathing of the performer is very important for shaping the image of music, at the same time, it is also beneficial to the audience's understanding of the music works, so that the audience can indulge in it.

## **3. Study on the Law of Breathing in the Playing in the Piano Teaching in Colleges and Universities**

Since 2006, nine-year compulsory education has been implemented in our country. Piano is not included in the compulsory education curriculum. Therefore, most students who study piano have not received systematic piano training in the stage of compulsory education, and they received the piano training through their own training institutions. These training institutions rarely carry out comprehensive piano instruction to them, so the problems aroused in the breathing during the playing is even more obvious. When the students enter the colleges and universities, the teacher ignores the basic training of breathing in the playing, but directly enters a higher level of teaching, which leads to the failure of the students to master the breathing in the playing and affects the piano performance of the students. Through the study of the law of breathing in the playing in the piano teaching in colleges and universities, this

paper hopes to arouse the importance of breathing in the playing in the teaching of colleges and universities, so as to cultivate students' breathing skills.

#### **4. Division and Rational Use of Musical Phrases**

In the world of music, simple notes can only play sounds and cannot express any contents of the music. Only the notes composing the phrases can demonstrate the connotation of music through the performance. Therefore, the players must know how to understand the music phrases so as to express the meaning contained in music. In the musical tone, breathing is a unique way of expression and explanation. The role of tone and phrase in the playing should not be underestimated. The player not only needs to deal with the music phrases according to the mark requirements of the score, but also needs to deeply understand the creators and creation background of related works, so as to make a correct division of musical phrases and adjust the breathing with the works to make the playing more expressive and infectious.

##### **4.1. Make A Correct Understanding and Division of Musical Phrases**

As far as the understanding of an article is concerned, only by correctly dividing the sentence structure and understanding each sentence can the article be thoroughly understood by combining the context meaning. It is the same for music. In order to really understand the works to be played, we must learn to divide the phrases reasonably and understand them. The teachers must pay attention to the cultivation of the students' music perception ability, which is an important basis for dividing musical phrases for piano players. In some piano works, the structure of musical phrases are very neat, and the division is easy for the players to understand. However, in the works that are not very neat in structure, the division of musical phrases requires the players to have a strong music perception ability. It is necessary to make a thorough understanding of the writing background, artistic style and the author's characteristics before the works can be played, so as to lay a good foundation for the correct division of the musical phrases.

However, for the piano works with souls, the division of its phrases is different from the sentences in the book. As long as the phrases are reasonably divided, the piano music can be endowed with beautiful melodies. Therefore, the players should not only have an in-depth understanding of the background of the music, but also carefully choose the way of dividing the musical phrases. In this way, the appropriate way of dividing musical phrases can not only enable players to better perform the work, but also deepen the player's of understanding of the work. In addition, the performer also needs to pay special attention to the notes that are not connected but need to be expressed coherently in the performance, such as long-distance notes, martellato, staccato and the notes separated by rests.

##### **4.2. Reasonably Apply the Playing Breathing Between Musical Phrases**

In the piano teaching in colleges and universities at the current stage, the students' grasp of breathing in the playing is naturally revealed, and they do not adjust their breathing according to the content that the musical works need to express, so the work can not be displayed in the best state. These are the focus that teachers should pay attention to. Conscious breathing is best represented by the proper use of the breath between musical phrases. After the correct understanding of the musical phrase, the reasonable use of these understandings becomes the key point that the performer needs to grasp. At the beginning of playing, the performer must correctly understand the original intention of the creator, and can not try to fathom at will, or they may deviate from the creator's intention. For example, the famous piano song Swan Lake is mainly to express perfect love and human pursuit of beauty. Then the performer needs to use smooth and comfortable movements to drive the whole body to gently interpret the work in the performance process. Only in this way can it reflect the perfect love and human pursuit of

beauty. Later, there is also a part concerning the author's expression of struggle. At this time, the performers need to perform with high emotions, so as to be coordinated and touching and perfectly present what the author wants. Thus it can be seen that playing a good piece of music requires not only the same kind of breathing, but also several kinds of breathing to complement with each other so as to accurately express the scene in the music.

Every piano song is the painstaking work of the creator, which contains all the emotions that the creator wants to express. For the performer, it is far from enough just to express it through playing skills, but the breathing during the performance is the more important way to convey. Piano works are the same as human beings. People use different breathing rhythms when expressing their emotions, so piano performance also needs different playing rhythms. The breathing in the playing can make the piano performance alive, so that the audience can go deep into the soul of the works to feel the emotions and artistic conception that the author and the performer want to convey.

## **5. Comprehensive Application of Playing Breathing, Listening and Playing**

Listening and playing are of equal importance with playing breathing in the piano performance. Below, this paper will give a brief explanation of how the two should cooperate.

### **5.1. Listening and Playing**

Listening and playing are the two most important steps for piano playing. Listening is to make a more accurate grasp of the rhythm in the work, just as children learn to speak. The first to do is to listen to how people around them speak, and then they can imitate and finally form a language system of their own. The same is true of piano performance works. Before playing music, the performer should first taste every note involved, judge and adjust his own breathing in the playing. All of these are accomplished by listening to music. Playing is a practical activity compared to listening. Without the playing as a basis, the performer can't listen to the works, so each performer must have skilled playing skills. In the teaching of playing methods, the teachers should not only let the students repeat the practice of the works mechanically, but should give students sufficient time to think, so that the students can think independently which way is more reasonable to express the music. In this way, the teachers can fully cultivate the students' perception of the music works, and avoid them from copying to the maximum extent.

### **5.2. The Practice of Breathing in the Playing**

The proficient playing skills will play a favorable role in the cultivation of breathing in the playing. After mastering the piano skills, the teacher should focus on the breathing training of the students in the playing. In the course of training, the teacher should let the students analyze a piece of music independently, then the teacher can make a supplement to the students' understanding, and then let the students carry out related training. For example, in the expression of depressed and discontented emotions, many students can not express this kind of short and powerful breath very well; at this time, the teacher should guide the students to practice more, so that the students and music can be combined.

## **6. Conclusion**

For the piano teaching in most colleges and universities, the breathing in the playing is not given enough attention, and some schools even skip the training in this aspect. Therefore, in the later teaching, we hope that the colleges and universities can pay more attention to the training of breathing in the playing and strengthen the students' own attention to the breathing in the playing, so as to make the piano playing more in line with the requirements of the composers and greatly improve the quality of piano playing.

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