

Introducing jazz into music education in China:
A teaching method for Chinese children, its implementations and outcomes

by

Xiang Shang

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Statement of Originality

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Abstract

In the last 20 years, jazz education in China has been increasingly appreciated among most music conservatories and universities with a music department. Thus, Chinese jazz educators have paid more attention to college jazz education in higher education and jazz education for adults. However, the pedagogical methods, teaching materials, literature, and empirical studies on jazz education for children in China are limited. Significant knowledge gaps remain for music researchers to explore. Hence, this study develops a pedagogical method for jazz music for children at different levels of basic music knowledge and performance skills. This study mainly focuses on individual and collaborative piano teaching. Moreover, the study designed a series of teaching materials (including sheet music, teaching plan, and listening materials) based on prior studies and jazz learning and teaching experience, which have been tested as a teaching method. This study innovates suitable teaching methods and materials for Chinese children to learn jazz and ascertains whether they could benefit from jazz learning by improving their musical abilities and creativity. The study author was the only tutor throughout the whole action plan and employed interviews and questionnaires as the main research instruments to probe the effects of jazz learning on Chinese children. The participants were eleven Chinese children aging between seven and ten years old and their parents also accompanied them throughout every process of this study. The main findings are that jazz learning has positive effects on Chinese children's music abilities and creativity and the learning efficiency is based on a suitable jazz teaching plan, the proper guidance from the jazz tutor and the cooperation from parents. The main relevance of this study is its application of the developed teaching materials to music education for Chinese children, offering music teachers familiar with jazz music a fresh new option for music education for children.

Keywords: music education for children, jazz music, China, pedagogical method



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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

As one of the most famous and complex music styles in the world, jazz music has already had a history of more than one hundred and twenty years. Jazz music is often referred to as “America’s classical music” because New Orleans (a city in the United States) is its birthplace, and almost all of the critical periods of its development happened in the United States, such as the big band period, bebop period and cool jazz period (Pareles, 1999; Sales, 1984; Taylor; 1986). Jazz evolved rapidly between 1897 and 1957, still developing (DeVeaux, 1991; Vaartstra, 2016). From Ragtime, blues, swing, and bebop to cool jazz, modal jazz, hard bop, free jazz, and fusion, various jazz styles, and jazz musicians' unique performances have attracted jazz fans of all ages all over the world. During its development, jazz gradually incorporated more contemporary and social elements, which further derived a variety of popular music styles such as rock, funk, and rap. Finally, it formed an artistic characteristic that paid attention to integration and modernity (Qian, 2016).

Although jazz music was resisted by educators, especially secondary school teachers and administrators, for a long time in the first half of the 1920s because of the morally corrupting influences of jazz on young people, these educators gradually gave up their efforts and accepted the existence of jazz in the latter part of the 1920s (Hardesty , 2016). While jazz music became more and more welcome in the bars and concert halls, jazz education underwent a period of pronounced growth between the 1960s and 1970s (Murphy, 1994; Prouty, 2013; Prouty, 2005). As a result, since jazz music began its entrance into formal music education in the 1960s in the United States, jazz education has become a popular music education field for music educators and music learners to choose from. This situation exists in jazz education in China as well. In the recent ten



years, a lot of managers of shopping malls, convenience stores, and even food markets have chosen jazz music as background music in their stores in China. Meanwhile, some Chinese pop singers, such as Jay Chou, Wayne Lim Jun Jie, David Zee Tao and James Li Quan, have composed original jazz-style songs and successfully adapted traditional Chinese and pop songs into jazz versions. These situations obviously improve the development of jazz music and jazz education in China. And these situations improved the development of jazz music and jazz education in China, enabling most Chinese citizens with no musical background to distinguish jazz from pop music (Qian, 2016). Although jazz education restarted developing in China in the 1980s after many twists and turns, the path of its development has not been smooth yet. On the one hand, western classical music and Chinese traditional music are the two main forces dominating the mainstream music education market in China. On the other hand, jazz education in China has some disadvantages, such as outdated music teaching materials, the lack of professional jazz teachers, and gaps in the music education curriculum. What's more, there are fewer people who know how to appreciate and analyze jazz (such as the complicated jazz chords, jazz scales, and jazz rhythm), and the quality of jazz audience in China is very limited due to the short development history of jazz in this country (Liu, 2020).

Except for the complicated situations mentioned above, there is also a lack of existing research and pedagogical materials for jazz learning in Chinese music education, primary school music education in particular. Some Chinese music universities, such as Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Beijing Contemporary Music Academy, Nanjing Arts Academy and etc., have already had formal jazz courses for college students, and more and more music universities are planning to set jazz courses to attract jazz learners (Xiang & Siu, 2021). Also, there are some researches on jazz which were conducted in Chinese music universities, and some Chinese jazz musicians have

made corresponding introductions to the development of jazz and the evolution of jazz in the world and in China. With the change of times, music has gone beyond the boundaries of the country, and the research on jazz has become more and more detailed from various angles of jazz communication, jazz history, literature and art, cultural communication, and so on (Qian, 2016). However, almost all of these researches, literature, and introductions are pretty complicated and are mainly designed for grown-up learners, adults, and professional musicians, which is impossible for children of any age to understand. Furthermore, very few Chinese jazz educators pay attention to the teaching materials and the systematical teaching method of jazz education for Chinese children, which makes the development of jazz music incomprehensive in China because music education for children is the beginning of everything in music education. Although the results of previous studies that can be used for reference in China are relatively limited, it also proves to a certain extent that there is an ample space and research gap existing in the development of jazz in China.

Because of the current situations and difficulties, jazz education for children in China is still an under-explored area. However, this means there are more possibilities existing in jazz music education for Chinese children. At the same time, there are more and more jazz music educators and researchers in other foreign countries, especially America, who are trying to or have already tried to bring jazz music into primary and secondary school music education curricula in their countries. And their researches cover many aspects which are worth learning from, such as forming students jazz bands in primary schools and secondary schools, teaching young children jazz improvisation by using a simple jazz blues scale and practicing jazz melody and jazz improvisation using Play-A-Long (a kind of electric music accompaniment which has the sound of a live jazz band including piano, guitar, drum, and bass). Some of these foreign jazz music



educators and researchers even consider that jazz education has become one of the most important and relevant aspects of their current music education curriculum (Brumbach, 2015). Their teaching perspectives and their research outcomes are what we can learn from as well as apply in both individual and group teaching classes in Chinese local (schools and music training centers) music education. By bringing jazz into music education for Chinese children and into the life of the Chinese people, we can provide a better development space and environment for jazz and further accelerate the revival and localization process of jazz in China. Some Chinese jazz educators also believe that jazz will play a vital role in the future of Chinese music education, and there is no doubt that jazz music and jazz education will not only convey the spirit of music and art to the Chinese people but also bring more memories, surprises, and moves to the Chinese people (Qian, 2016). Therefore, to spread jazz music more widely and more comprehensively in China, it is necessary, meaningful, and one of the essential steps for all the jazz educators and music researchers in the world to find out how to develop jazz education for Chinese children.

1.2 The aim of this research

In this research, the author aims to discover some of the possibilities hiding in jazz music to make music learning more fruitful for Chinese primary school age children whose ages are between seven years old and ten years old. He has designed a teaching method that is suitable for Chinese children to start jazz learning and has selected several appropriate and simple jazz teaching materials (such as sheet music, teaching plans, accompaniment recordings and etc.) which is easy for children to understand and practice with, based on the prior studies conducted by other jazz educators and his jazz learning and teaching experience. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic in mainland China in the recent three years and the consideration of the feasibility of

conducting jazz teaching in different educational institutions, the author chose to conduct this research in a music training center for children in his hometown in mainland China instead of in the local primary schools. The main teaching way was individual jazz lessons which used the piano as the primary teaching instrument, supplemented by several group lessons and a learning outcome showcase concert. The main purpose of this study is not only to apply his jazz teaching method into music education for Chinese children, but also to find out how music abilities and creativity of these children are affected by jazz education.

1.3 Summary

This chapter has briefly introduced the background of jazz in the world and in China and the significance, purpose, and aims of the research. In the next chapter, this thesis will discuss the details of the development of jazz music and music education for children in China and the advantages, benefits, and possibilities of jazz learning. And after addressing the research gaps and research questions, it will go on to the details of this research, such as the information about the music training center, the introduction of the children who have participated in jazz piano lessons, and the specific explanation of each step of jazz teaching plans, etc. Then it will analyze the data coming from the research, including the complete recordings and some short clips collected from each lesson, the questionnaire, and shot interview answered by the participants and their parents. Finally, it will draw a conclusion after discussing the results of the research and point out some suggestions and the teaching method which is suitable for Chinese children to learn jazz as well as for Chinese music teachers to teach jazz. Also, the limitations of this research will be considered, and the expectation of the author and some ideas for future research will be proffered for other researchers to consider at the end of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 A brief history of jazz music

As was mentioned in the introduction part, jazz was born in New Orleans in Louisiana, in the south of America. In the past, New Orleans was a busy port, and there were a large number of different types, races, and nationalities of people. Because of this, jazz was created by the mixture of many different cultures, including Europeans, Creole (Children of Spanish and French landowners and African slave women), African, and Caribbeans.

There are two of the most irreplaceable cultures which the original art of jazz developed from.

The first one is African influences. From the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century, tens of thousands of African indigenous were smuggled by human traffickers and colonists, and then they were brought to America to be forced to work as slaves. After that, the black people who were direct descendants of these slaves created the first jazz musical ideas (Green, 2009). The earliest forms of black religious music in the United States were poussette songs (a kind of dance in which many people hold hands and move up or down the set to change positions), which are commonly known as "Spirituals." The song tradition of the black religion has been passed down to this day in the form of scripture and spirituals. Many jazz and Blues music masters were exposed to the chants of the choir in their childhood, which was the beginning of their real contact with American music and African American culture (Qian, 2016).

The second one is European influences. **Ragtime**, as one of the earliest jazz musical styles, originated in the southern United States at the end of the nineteenth Century (late 1800s). It enjoyed about 25 years of popularity, until the jazz genre took over around 1920 (Marie, 2016). However, traditional Ragtime music gradually evolved from the songs and dances sung by early European

immigrants. The piano was the only instrument used in the whole performance, and the primary purpose was to maintain the harmony state in European classical music (Qian, 2016). Musicians used the piano for performance with the left hand of the player playing the beats of the accompaniment to create a syncopation in which the melody anticipates the beat and the right hand carrying out a complex and changeable melody and its transformation. This new music form with pronounced syncopation rhythm is favored by the black people of the lower class in the late nineteenth century (Qian, 2016). When Ragtime music became commercially available in 1895, more and more ordinary Americans, including not only blacks but also a large proportion of whites, began to enjoy Ragtime music in regular entertainment venues such as bars and cafes (Green, 2009; Qian, 2016).

Take this as an opportunity, Ragtime, Blues, and Boogie Woogie, another early jazz piano music style that is similar to Ragtime, became the first batch of jazz music that went into the view of Americans. Then, **New Orleans jazz** came onto the historical stage as a prototype, and the first jazz band, "King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band," was formed in New Orleans in 1923. The members of this band unprecedented included:

Johnny Dodds, the clarinetist, who came to be known as the maestro,

Louis Armstrong, the most famous trumpeter and singer with a distinctive voice,

Baby Dodds, the drummer,

Honore Dutrey, the trombonist,

Bill Johnson, the bass player,

Jelly Roll Morton, the pianist and composer who was quite well-known in the Ragtime field.



The emergence of “King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band” propelled the development of jazz. The ensemble between instruments further deepened the value and intrinsic properties of jazz and enriched the characteristics of jazz itself, and their impromptu performance evolved into improvisation, which improved the freedom of jazz performance (Qian, 2016). Overall, the jazz music in the New Orleans period mainly has the following characteristics:

1. The whole melody was no longer in a sorrow and silent mood but full of dynamic and vitality. The performance speed changed from medium speed to a speed between medium speed and fast speed.
2. The emergence of jazz bands further enriched the instruments used in jazz, such as trumpet, trombone, bass, piano, banjo and so on.
3. Jazz in the New Orleans era paid more attention to the connotation of improvisation. In certain harmony parts, each player could change the original score according to the actual portrayal of his feeling.
4. The integral sense of music was enhanced, and the cooperation between band members was increased.

The next period is **Chicago jazz**, which was the golden age of jazz music that happened between the early twentieth century and the late 1920s. Compared with New Orleans jazz, Chicago jazz had an essential change in the playing style and performance form. The addition of the saxophone made the variety of instruments more diverse, and Chicago, the windy city in the north of the United States, became known for jazz. Stylistically, the jazz of the Chicago period was basically the same as that of the New Orleans period, but the fusion between jazz and classical blues was further enhanced (Qian, 2016). After this, **New York jazz** appeared between the late 1920s and the early 1930s during the economic crisis which swept across Europe and the United

States (This period of American history is known as “the Great Depression”). The leading figure of jazz swing music, Fletcher Henderson, established a large jazz Band with more than ten members in New York, which was the first jazz big band in jazz history. Instead of using the collective improvisation of New Orleans jazz, the jazz big band of Fletcher Henderson was divided into two different sections: the horn section, including trumpet, brass, saxophone and the rhythm section, including cello, piano, and drums.

The appearance of the first jazz big band represented the beginning of a new jazz era in New York, the “**Big Band Era**” (being popular between the early 1930s and the late 1940s and is also known as the “**Swing Era**”). Overall, the jazz music in this period mainly has the following characteristics:

1. The number of band members was basically more than ten people, and many bands even reached 20 or even 30 people, playing instruments mainly with: trumpet, trombone, saxophone, piano, double bass and jazz drum, etc.
2. Musicians can perform according to the music score and then add their personal improvisation one by one.
3. The music with a strong sense of rhythm, with a strong dance feeling and was often used as the accompaniment of dance music.
4. The harmonic part is relatively simple, mainly using triads and seventh chords.
5. The structure is relatively neat, mainly composed of phrases of four or eight measures.

So far, a brief overview of the birth and early development of jazz in the United States has been expounded. It is not difficult to find out that the emergence and the development of jazz went through many periods, from New Orleans to Chicago and then to New York. At the same time, the influence of jazz has not been limited to the United States. From the south coast of the United

States to the distant eastern continent, jazz, with its unique artistic charm and diversified means of communication, gradually penetrated every corner of the world.

In the late 1930s, jazz began to develop rapidly and branch off into different unique styles. The first one is **bebop** which appeared in the early 1940s. In this much more technologically challenging jazz style, jazz players need to place more emphasis on individual improvisation in a swift tempo and changing rhythms, and the pulse of the rhythm lies on the second and the fourth beat instead of stomping all the four beats. Another style that arose at just about the same time as bebop is “West Coast Jazz”, also known as “**Cool Jazz**”. This style is just the opposite of “cool,” and elegant, warm and soothing tunes are the symbol of Cool Jazz. Its music structure pays attention to stability and symmetry through the sound and musical instruments' harmonious performance to create a sense of soft music (Qian, 2016). Next comes the “East Coast Jazz” in the 1950s – **Hard Bop**, which is more robust with a sense of wildness in the performance, and **Free Jazz**, appearing in the 1960s, has an entirely free performance with an uncontrolled performance under irrational conditions. After these styles, **Latin Jazz** became popular in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. Based on traditional jazz with a lot of percussion as accompaniment, supplemented by the fast melody, its strong sense of percussion and full of rhythmic rhythm not only brought a different appeal to jazz but also let people feel the Latin flavor full of exotic wind in jazz. Following Latin jazz, **Fusion jazz** emerged in the United States in the late 1970s, and it is based on traditional jazz with a large number of electronic and electro-acoustic instruments. **Bossa Nova** is one of the most representative music styles among Fusion jazz, and it is a combination of traditional jazz and the rhythm of Brazilian music style with South American characteristics.

In conclusion, jazz is the classical music of America (Taylor, 1986), which represents the soul of American music culture and the essence of American folk music. It is a unique musical



language expressed through the form of band combination and the fusion product of African folk music culture and American immigrant music culture. Jazz has a deep historical and cultural background. Among the essential attributes of jazz, what it shows the audience is the spread and intervention of a kind of culture, and it is a music type with solid attraction. The inherent artistic attributes and unique artistic spirit of jazz are the internal reasons for the continuous evolution and change of jazz for a long time (Qian, 2016).

2.2 A brief introduction to jazz education

The history of jazz education is not as long as classical music education. As was mentioned by Murphy in his article, which was published in *Jazz Educators Journal* and was widely accepted in American schools and colleges, the development of jazz between the 1920s and 1930s was the prehistory of jazz education (Murphy, 1994). The early jazz instruction, teaching, and learning during this prehistoric period were primarily through oral transmission and self-learning (McDaniel, 1993). The learning condition was not manageable for jazz learners in early jazz era, as there were little to no musical arrangements, method books, and published systems for instruction (Murphy, 1994).

The way that early jazz learners used to learn jazz and jazz improvisation seems to be very “simple,” and there are only four steps. Firstly, they listened to the live performance and recordings (recordings, starting from 1917, had the most significant impact on the spread of jazz and served as the first “method books”) of other jazz musicians, including intro, melody, improvisation, ending and etc. After listening countless times, they transcribed every single note, rest and ornament played by the jazz musicians in the performance into sheet music or even by memorizing them. This step is the most challenging part of the learning process because of the poor situation

of the recording technology at that time. The next step is practicing what they listened to and transcribed. In order to fully master the technique of jazz improvisation and use transcriptions at any time, most of the early jazz learners did modulation exercises and turned every piece of music into twelve keys. After practicing over and over again, they could finally perform in a bar or a club, and this was the most effective way to find out whether they had any progress in jazz learning. The early jazz learners passed this learning way to the next learner, and at the same time, the jazz melodies and improvisation used in the performance were passed from jazz musicians to jazz learners aurally. And actually, in the early jazz community, most of the famous jazz musicians, such as Charlie Parker, Bill Evans, and Miles Davis, all learned by themselves using this learning way at that time. They did not have any systematical teaching method or teaching materials written in paper to teach others to learn jazz and improvisation and the only thing they can do was repeating listening and playing in an informal learning way. For instance, Louis Armstrong learned jazz harmony and jazz embellishments from singing in an African American barbershop group and used them in his trumpet playing (Hobson, 2018). This four-step learning way (listening, transcribing, practicing and performing) is commonly used in jazz learning, and even today, many jazz students in music universities are still using it.

The first recognized jazz education programs were established at North Texas State University and the Berklee College of Music in the birthplace of jazz, United States, in the late 1940s and it is considered as the true beginning of formal jazz education. The condition of jazz education got better because some conservatory-trained musicians, who also played jazz, began to teach jazz in major cities and method books of jazz learning (often written or endorsed by celebrities) became available. The development of jazz education got on the right track between the 1960s and 1970s, and it developed at a pretty rapid rate since then. In the 1950s, over 30



colleges and universities added jazz courses to their curricula in the United States, and the number increased to 41 in 1964 and 228 in 1974 (Murphy, 1994). By the early 1980s, there were more than 500,000 high school and college students involved in jazz activities and over 500 colleges offered jazz-related courses. Also, Master of Music Performance in Jazz and doctoral degrees in jazz were developed and set up in the United States in the 1980s. From the 1980s to the 2000s, the institutional development of jazz education spread across the world, with more and more music universities and schools in Europe, Asia and Africa establishing their own jazz programs and courses. These programs and courses include many areas of jazz education, such as individual instrumental jazz lessons, jazz ensemble, jazz history, jazz harmony, jazz composition, jazz improvisation, jazz appreciation and analysis (Xiang & Siu, 2021).

In recent years, mainstream music educators no longer consider jazz a passing trend, and jazz is affirmed as both a highly expressive style of music and an appropriate topic for serious study. In the meantime, studies related to jazz have enhanced the historical, theoretical, and pedagogical knowledge of jazz. The number of available jazz education materials, such as books, computer apps, and YouTube videos, continues to increase, and there are hundreds of jazz-related educational materials which are available on the Internet. What's more, general music students and college students in music universities are receiving more and more opportunities to get in touch with jazz. An increasing number of middle schools have formed their school jazz ensembles, and this phenomenon even occurs in elementary schools (jazzinamerica.org, 2023).

2.3 The development of jazz and jazz education in China

The initial development of jazz music in China was twenty years later than in America. The current Chinese academic music circles have some different opinions on the origin of jazz in

China. Some scholars believe that jazz first arrived in Wuhan, China, in the 1930s, while others believe that jazz first came to Shanghai, China, in the 1920s. However, what is agreed is that during the 1920s and 1930s, jazz began to spread in Shanghai, Wuhan, Guangzhou, and other main cities in China (Qian, 2016).

The earliest jazz band in old Shanghai, which has been recorded By Mr. Xiong in his book, was the one managed by Mario Paci in 1920 (Xiong, 2003). This Italian pianist and conductor had been living in Shanghai since 1919 as the conductor of the “Orchestra of Shanghai Bureau of Industry and Commerce,” which was the predecessor of the “Shanghai Symphony Orchestra.” He was one of the leading promoters of classical music in old China and also trained many local Chinese musicians. In the 1930s, jazz bands in Shanghai were mainly composed of foreign musicians because this coastal city was mainly controlled by foreign colonial powers. All-Chinese-members jazz bands, such as “The Clear Wind Dance Band” and “Yu Yuezhang Band,” formed in the middle of the 1930s, and the growth of jazz music in this country became more and more rapidly (Xiang & Siu, 2021). Although the severe damage of the Second World War badly affected its growth, jazz still continued its development slowly under terrible circumstances until 1954.

Since China was in the initial period of establishment in 1949, foreign culture was primarily seen as some “unhealthy” ideas among Chinese citizens. In addition, Mao Zedong, the first president of the new People's Republic of China, claimed that all things coming from foreign countries must be suppressed. As a result, jazz, as well as other western music, were included among the “unhealthy” cultures and were forbidden to perform at that time (Xiang & Siu, 2021). Thus, all dance halls and music centers in China were closed by the Chinese government in 1954, and jazz, which once swept the whole of Shanghai Beach, disappeared overnight. During the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, following President Mao’s completely wrong guidelines,



the development of music and music education (including jazz and jazz education) in China was stopped for more than 30 years and even destroyed (Xiang & Siu, 2021; Cox, 2012; Ho, 2011).

In 1978, thanks to the Reform and Opening Up policy which was put forward and promoted by Premier Deng Xiaoping, China finally opened up to the world again. Trade and travel restrictions were lifted. Jazz clubs and local jazz bands began to pop up in cities such as Shanghai and Beijing, and other main cities in China (Qian, 2016). Also, many foreign jazz performers, educators, and jazz bands, which had been to China before, began to come back to China. For example, Jamey Aebersold, one of the most well-known American jazz performers and educators who created a very unique and valuable play-a-long learning system for jazz learners to do some self-learning and practice improvisation on their own, has come to China several times and has held jazz camps, master classes, and jazz concerts at China Conservatory of Music (in Beijing) and Shanghai Conservatory of Music (in Shanghai) for Chinese jazz fans and jazz learners (Aebersold, 2013). Because of this, Chinese citizens have got more opportunities to reconnect with jazz music, foreign jazz musicians and jazz recordings (Zhang, 2013).

Over the past two decades, jazz education has gained significant traction among music conservatories and universities with music departments in China. An increasing number of Chinese students are showing a preference for formal and systematic jazz education over self-study and practice. This trend has been observed for more than 20 years, dating back to the inception of the first jazz music course at the Beijing Conservatory of Modern Music in 1993, marking the commencement of formal jazz education in China (Pan, 2014). Consequently, Chinese jazz educators, university jazz program leaders, and policymakers have started to focus more on jazz education in colleges and adult jazz education. Despite the absence of any government policy regarding the integration of jazz education into school music education, several music



conservatories, such as the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Nanjing University of the Arts, and Beijing Conservatory of Modern Music, have implemented their own jazz education policies (Xiang & Siu, 2021).

The curriculum of these jazz programs mirrors that of music universities in the United States, encompassing specialized instrumental courses, jazz big band and small band, jazz history, jazz theory, jazz composition, and improvisation lessons. Many graduates who have completed a four-year undergraduate jazz program at these universities opt to further their jazz education (e.g., pursuing master's degrees and even doctoral degrees in jazz performance and jazz education) at music universities in America and other countries. These universities boast some of the world's most prestigious jazz departments, including those at Berklee College of Music, University of North Texas (College of Music), and New England Conservatory of Music.

2.4 Music education for children in China

Music education for Chinese children is bifurcated into two forms for historical and social reasons: recessive and dominant (Yang & Xie, 2019). Recessive education primarily relies on the family environment to nurture children's music appreciation and skills through various activities. Dominant education, on the other hand, aims to develop children's musical skills through school-based music courses. School music education, the most prominent and intuitive form of music education, is the primary medium of the music curriculum. However, this form of education is somewhat monolithic (Yang & Xie, 2019). Most Chinese children are introduced to Western classical music and Chinese traditional music at the onset of their music-learning journey, with limited exposure to jazz music. Currently, Chinese children primarily embark on their music-learning journey through two avenues: school music learning and extracurricular music learning.

The first and most common method involves participating in school music lessons and music-related events held in kindergartens and primary schools. However, this form of children's music education has certain limitations. It often lacks sufficient attention from school managers (including principals, administrative teachers and school course designers), teachers (especially main subject teachers such as math, English, and Chinese teachers), and some parents (Huang, 2020). For instance, music lessons are frequently commandeered by main subject teachers for their teaching purposes, particularly before midterm and final exams. Additionally, a severe shortage of music teachers and a lack of music teaching equipment pose significant challenges to enhancing the quality of school music education (Cai, 2020).

Moreover, the teaching mode of school music education, which primarily involves teaching and singing (when learning a new song, the music teacher always sings first and students imitate sentence by sentence), is overly traditional. "Due to the lack of adequate attention and support for music education from schools and parents, music teachers often resort to infusing music theory knowledge into students to complete the education task in the limited time allocated for school music lessons" (Li, 2020, p. 254). Music appreciation, listening, and singing (in chorus and solo form) are the three main teaching methods in school music education. These rigorous methods, which have remained unchanged for over 20 years, have rendered what should be a vibrant and interesting music class into a dull one. Consequently, some children lose enthusiasm for music learning and do not cooperate with teachers' educational activities (Li, 2020). The simplistic course activities offered in school, mainly in the form of singing rhythm and elementary instrumental performance, fail to captivate children's interest as they grow, leading to a "marginalization" crisis of school music courses. The single educational form makes it difficult to disseminate high-quality music among children.



An alternative approach to music education involves enrolling in a music training class or an instrument lesson, such as individual piano, violin, and traditional Chinese instruments lessons, including group lessons for electronic organ and music theory. Typically, these lessons are offered by music training centers outside of schools. A limited number of schools offer interest-oriented music classes, but these are usually held during after-school hours, including weekdays (Monday to Friday) and weekends (Saturday and Sunday), resulting in inflexible scheduling. Thus, most parents opt for music training centers over school-based interest-oriented music classes. Over the past decade, an increasing number of parents have chosen this route because of the limitations of school music education. According to a survey report, nearly 70% of Chinese parents have a music education plan for their children, indicating that music education is a significant market in China. In this sector, it was found that large music centers are typically established by professional music universities or their training departments, while traditional music institutions account for less than 3% of the music education market. The remaining 97% of the organizations are small, self-developing, and spread across the country (Yang & Xie, 2019). However, there are some issues with the music education provided by these music training centers. First, music education institutions have proliferated in the past decade, and some operators who lack an understanding of music education run classes indiscriminately (Gu, 2017; Li, 2019). The absence of unified after-school education and training management has led to a less-than-satisfactory market situation (Liu, 2018; Li, 2019). Second, the quality and competence of music teachers in China's music training centers vary significantly (Gu, 2017; Li, 2019). Finally, some parents, with a utilitarian mindset (focusing on results rather than the process), force their children to attend instrument lessons. Most of these parents view music learning as a series of music grading tests, such as Shanghai Conservatory of Music grading tests, Central Conservatory of Music grading tests and Associated



Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM). and they see passing these tests as the ultimate goal. This attitude makes it difficult for music training center teachers to implement their teaching plans. Consequently, after passing the grade ten instrument grading test, some children can perform only a limited amount of music outside of the grading test books, and their actual music skill is much lower than the standard required in the music grading test books.

According to a study conducted by Yang and Xie (2019), with the improvement in living standards in China, 84.2% of Chinese parents are willing to invest in their children's musical enlightenment, and 64.6% of these families have already enrolled their children in music education. Art education, including music education, for children is considered a sunrise industry in the 21st century in China. According to the sixth Chinese census statistics, the number of children in China has reached 256 million. Based on a conservative estimate that urban families invest 50 CNY per month for art education for their children, the consumption amount of art education for children in the next few years could reach 70 billion CNY. Regarding family income, the survey results show that 67.4% of families have an average monthly income of more than 8,000 CNY; 58.95% of parents chose 500-1,000 CNY, and 31.58% chose more than 1,000 CNY for their children's enlightenment education or interest cultivation (Yang & Xie, 2019).

Among Chinese music education, piano is one of the most welcome instruments that Chinese parents would like to choose for their children. In China's piano teaching system, Hanon finger exercises, Thompson's piano courses, Beyer's instruction book, and the series of Czerny Etudes are the mainstream teaching materials used by most regular piano teachers (Chen & Ji, 2013). These materials include John Thompson's Easiest Piano Course and John Thompson's Modern Course for the Piano, The Virtuoso Pianist in Sixty Exercises and Scales and Finger Exercises by Charles-Louis Hanon, Elementary Instruction Book for Pianoforte by Ferdinand

Beyer, and Practical Exercises for Beginners, Op. 599, Op. 718, Op. 849, Op. 299, and Op. 740 by Carl Czerny. Most amateur learners do not have the opportunity to practice Czerny Etudes Op. 718 and Op. 740 throughout their piano learning journey because of the professional-level musical ability required by the pieces in these two books. In fact, very few Chinese children continue their piano learning after mastering the first 10 pieces in Czerny Etudes Op. 299. This is because, at this stage of piano learning, they are of middle school age and must focus on the heavy study tasks of their main school subjects, such as Chinese, Math, and English.

Indeed, music education for Chinese children requires significant enhancements and concerted efforts. In the information age, it is a novel concept to foster the growth of children's music education by exploring more suitable methods for their musical communication, development, and innovation. As the medium of music, the resources of music courses should be accessible. Curriculum materials, teachers, parents, social welfare activities, etc., should all be fully exploited resources. Children's music education should be more practical, thus music education should "avoid the narrow trap of utilitarianism, put an end to stylization, actively integrate diverse resources, innovate effective communication media of music education in life, and increase music education curriculum resources for school education" (Yang & Xie, 2019). Furthermore, this is also why jazz music has not been incorporated into music education for Chinese children. Relative to Western classical music and Chinese traditional music, researchers and teachers have not paid sufficient attention to this particular genre of music. In 2020, the State Council of China added the musical ability test to the high school entrance exams to strengthen and improve aesthetic education in schools in the new era. This indicates that the Chinese government is placing greater emphasis on school music education, and this presents an excellent opportunity for us to introduce jazz into children's music education.

2.5 The bibliographic search of articles related to jazz education for children

The author's extensive search of libraries and websites yielded some, but not sufficient, literature related to jazz education for children, with most of the literature originating from the United States. Notable jazz educators like Aebersold (2011) and Goodkin (2004) have proposed several effective methods for teaching children jazz. Aebersold (2011) developed the model of the beginning improviser using his play-a-long system, emphasizing that "improvise for fun" and "anyone can improvise" (Aebersold, 2011). Goodkin (2004) suggests that children can practice within a single scale, such as the pentatonic scale or blues scale, until meaningful improvisations emerge, and work with forms, like the 12-bar blues form, where a single scale can be used over all chords (Goodkin, 2004). The author has incorporated these ideas into his teaching plans, which will be detailed in the subsequent chapter.

In contrast, the state of jazz education for children in China is still in its infancy, as evidenced by the author's search through academic article websites in China. For instance, the China Knowledge Resource Integrated Database (CNKI), one of the largest and most renowned Chinese academic article databases, has approximately **4500** articles related to jazz topics as of November 2022. However, a search using "jazz education" as the keyword yields only about **300** articles, most of which pertain to the current state of jazz education in Chinese higher education. Alarming, no studies relating to jazz education among children were found. This trend is also observed in another Chinese academic article database, the Chinese Dissertation Full Text Database, which archives undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral dissertations from Chinese universities. The number of articles related to "jazz music" is approximately **2000**, while those therein related to "jazz music education" are approximately **90**. Narrowing down the search further reveals only **two** articles that mention jazz and children, but these are respectively related to



teaching Chinese children jazz dance and promoting jazz drum sets and, thus, do not pertain directly to jazz education. The absence of articles related to jazz education for children underscores the need for Chinese music researchers, and even foreign jazz music educators and researchers, to pay attention to this area. There is ample room for music researchers worldwide to explore this field. Therefore, the author plans to introduce jazz music into music education for children in China.

2.6 The irreplaceable elements in jazz teaching and learning

Having an improvisation brain can be helpful not only for jazz music learners but also for all other music learners, including classical music learners. Improvisation is a main characteristic of jazz music, and some jazz musicians even consider improvisation as the "soul" of jazz music.

In Monk's article, he tried to use his own jazz teaching experience to formulate a method that can be taught to high school, undergraduate jazz students and even some non-jazz musicians who are seeking to develop improvisation skills. Monk considered the learning of jazz improvisation as the process of acquiring stylistic vocabulary and procedural skills, and in this process, jazz learners can gradually understand the features of this particular music category by applying them to their instrument learning and focusing on the performance area of improvisation (Monk, 2012). He summarized five aspects to describe his model of improvisational intelligence from the literature related to improvisational cognition, which includes the skilled performance of the material, creation of material, continuation ideas, structural awareness of the improvised work and temporal awareness of the improvised events (Monk, 2012). These five aspects represent the five improvisation "brains," which are the performance brain, the creative brain, the continuation brain, the structural brain and the temporal brain. And as was explained by Monk, these "brains" can also be considered as the ways of thinking in the learning of jazz improvisation. By presenting

some examples created by himself and the learning model to explain how to practice the linking of these “brains,” the author wanted to make the learning of jazz improvisation “a more holistic process that embraces cognitive aspects other than technical and stylistic vocabulary acquisition” (Monk, 2012). He argued that it is essential for jazz educators and learners to develop their own ways or models of exercising and practicing, connecting the ideas of imitating other jazz musicians’ improvisation or guidance from their jazz tutors to avoid the situation of learning jazz and improvisation without students’ own personalities.

As was said by Henry in his article (1993), improvisation can be taught to anyone. He outlined an improvisation learning approach with a number of recommended learning resources, and this approach contained five practicing parts, which included scales, patterns, learning the theory, improvising and learning by listening. Henry considered that the inclusion of these five components within a program of study could provide a balanced approach and also can keep jazz learners having a fresh feeling instead of letting them do one thing over and over. And he claimed in his study that his approach had been successfully used from both a teacher’s and a student’s perspective (Henry, 1993).

Henry mentioned a trap that may cause some problems during the learning of jazz improvisation. As is known to most jazz learners, the key to studying improvisation is to learn from other successful jazz musicians’ solos (improvisation), and most of them choose to improvise over blues changes and develop melodic lines derived from the blues scale, which may be one of the easiest and quickest ways to start jazz improvisation learning (Henry, 1993). However, this way might result in all of their solos sounding like the style of blues, whether it is appropriate or not. To help them avoid this learning trap, Henry came up with a solution, which is to start working on improvisation over different recordings by connecting the scales or modes with what they have



studied and practiced and this solution is also related to the first three steps: scale practice, pattern practice and jazz theory learning (Henry, 1993).

After this step, the author added another step, which is soloing on standards. "Soloing" is the same meaning as improvising, and this is what jazz musicians name their improvisation. "Standards" means jazz standard music pieces, and almost all jazz concerts, bars and gigs have some of these "jazz standards" on their program notes. Some easy jazz standards that contain many chords and chord progressions correlating to the level of technical study can be added to the learning of jazz improvisation, eventually increasing the complexity of their improvisation (Henry, 1993). In this step, the teachers will play an important role because they need to choose exercises and tunes which are within their student's capabilities and correlate to their studies. Although the choices that teachers make will challenge students' abilities, they will also inspire them and promote an interest in their continued study of jazz and improvisation. In the last listening part, Henry thought listening is the best way to understand the ongoing conceptualization of jazz, and he considered that the categories of students' listening materials should cover all the jazz instruments, all the jazz configurations (from solo performance to small jazz bands to big jazz band to expanded jazz orchestrations), all the jazz styles and all the different jazz eras (Henry, 1993). At the end of this article, Henry emphasized that his teaching approach should include each of the five parts in a balanced form, and the jazz learners should use materials appropriate to their level of capabilities, such as their basic music knowledge and music performance abilities. And the author also suggested that it is necessary for jazz tutors to spend a little but not too much time guiding their students by following his teaching approach because he, as well as his colleagues, had already had many successful cases in teaching jazz and improvisation by using this approach (Henry, 1993).

There is one thing mentioned by Henry in his article which is also similar to Monk's concept. Henry considered that practicing scales is not only for developing technical proficiency but also for helping jazz learners develop an awareness of the relationship between the jazz scale and the jazz chord. And Monk mentioned that it is essential for jazz improvisation learners as well as jazz teachers, to come up with and decide their own ways of thinking instead of constantly pursuing the acquisition of more basic music knowledge and higher music performance abilities like the classic music learners. Their viewpoints show the differences between jazz education and traditional music education. In classic music education and Chinese traditional music education, students just need to follow their teacher's guidance, and they barely even do not need to have their own thoughts during their music learning. While in jazz education, except for jazz history learning and jazz theory learning, students will have more chances to think, listen, and practice by themselves, and this process needs little guidance provided by their teacher. As was said by Henry, jazz teachers can help design their pupil's routine of self-teaching practice, and this learning way does not require much of the teacher's lesson time (Henry,1993).

In another article written by Grigson, which is also similar to the five parts of learning jazz in Henry's article, he considered jazz harmony as one of the most important elements in students' jazz learning, not only for all the jazz learners but also for classic music learners. And he also noticed that both jazz learners and classic music learners often seem to underestimate the concept and the knowledge of underlying harmonic form (Grigson,1985). The author explained why jazz musicians have a stronger sense and grasp of harmony while classical musicians do not have such a grasp of harmony. The reason is that jazz learners have to master and use the knowledge of jazz harmony and chords actively and constantly in order to be creative during their improvisation. In contrast, classic music learners do not need to be creative and understand the classical music

harmony during their practice and performance because they already have the scores with everything written on it. As a result, they do not have such a practical motivation to try to learn and understand musical harmony.

Grigson's basic approach to teaching jazz and improvisation is to teach his pupils the changes in each chord progression and then teach them how to improvise on these chords and chord progressions. His teaching approach has three parts, including active listening to different jazz recordings (one hour), the small jazz ensemble and cooperation (two hours) and the lesson on jazz harmony and improvisation (two hours). Grigson mentioned that the two main problems impeding jazz learners from doing some fluent improvisation are understanding the linear and horizontal aspects of the jazz harmony (which is also known as the voice-leading in the jazz music field) and the memorization the complete harmonic progression of the jazz music piece. And he also suggested that the best way to solve these two problems is to use a keyboard (piano or electric piano) as the main teaching tool, even for those jazz learners without the piano learning experience. The main reason for this suggestion is that the usage of the keyboard during jazz improvisation teaching makes jazz chords more intuitive for students to listen, observe and learn, and it will help jazz learners develop their understanding of jazz harmony so that they can consolidate the performance on their original instruments.

In the conclusion part, the author considered the learning of jazz harmony as the best solution to help music learners perform better, more rhythmically as well as more melodically. As was said by Grigson, music harmony is the "key" to musical creativity in both improvisational learning and compositional learning (Grigson,1985). And he thought that his teaching approach could be used to teach much younger jazz learners. As was written in the article, if his research can encourage a few jazz teachers to try to use a similar teaching approach to teach children in



high schools, middle schools and even elementary schools, “it will have been well worth the effort of writing” this article (Grigson, 1985, p. 193). This also means further research can find out if this teaching approach can be used to give younger children more chances to start their jazz learning or if some adjustments to the teaching approach are needed before using it to teach children.

2.7 The opinions about jazz teaching from Chinese music educators and researchers

In addition to professional music conservatories and music institutions mentioned in 2.4, there are some Chinese music educators and researchers who are concerning about jazz teaching and the improvement of the quality of jazz music teaching in China. And this is a suitable direction for Chinese music teachers who have already been teaching jazz or begin to teach their students jazz music.

For example, in Zhang’s article, he thought that there are two principles can be used in jazz teaching.

Firstly, in order to maintain the integrity of jazz music education, teachers should fully realize that the task of jazz music teaching includes not only the theoretical knowledge and music performance techniques passed on by teachers to students in classroom teaching, but also the extracurricular jazz music practice activities (Zhang, 2013). Due to the limitations of the current Chinese education system, most jazz music teachers will limit jazz music education to classroom teaching itself according to the traditional teaching mode, which is teaching students the basic knowledge of jazz music history, jazz music classification (distinguishing between different styles of jazz music), jazz music characteristics analysis and jazz music performance skills in class. However, the art practice content of jazz music outside the classroom is often ignored, such as leading students to participant in the real music practice activities in jazz venues or jazz music

field observation activities, such as jazz concerts, jazz music exhibitions and jazz band performance. Zhang considers that from the perspective of the development of jazz music, jazz teaching is not a purely theoretical research subject, but more from the process of artistic practice. In particular, it is worth mentioning that jazz music itself has a strong "improvisation" feature and this special element is far from the characteristics that teachers can let students appreciate deeply during the process of classroom teaching. Therefore, in order to let students fully appreciate the connotation of jazz music and personally experience the unique features of jazz music, a jazz music educator should grasp the integrity of jazz music education and extend the classroom out of the fixed classroom. "Where there is jazz music, it can be used as a jazz lesson," so that students can experience jazz music personally instead of confining to the scope of music textbooks or the teaching experience from their music teachers, so as to achieve the purpose of jazz music teaching.

Secondly, in order to promote the development of jazz music education to a deeper level, teachers should pay attention to the combination of jazz music education theory and practice, and they should grasp the "degree" in the process of theoretical teaching and artistic practice (Zhang, 2013). Neither can students play or create jazz music works according to the script and textbooks, nor can students completely break away from the characteristics of jazz music genre and perform or create whatever they want. During the process of jazz teaching, how do music teachers allow students to flexibly apply the theoretical knowledge learned in the process of jazz music improvisation, which is crucial for improving the quality of jazz music education.

At the end of the article, Zhang concluded that when carrying out the work of jazz music teaching, music teachers should conform to the trend in other countries, especially in the United States and the development of the music education in China, adapt to the characteristics of current jazz music learners, actively study and analyze the theoretical research results of pedagogy, and



flexibly apply them to the practice of jazz music education, so as to break through the constraint of the traditional teaching mode based on teachers' own learning and work experience. The practice of jazz music education can be established on the basis of educational theory, so that jazz music can maintain a scientific, healthy and sustainable development (Zhang, 2013). Although he has not mentioned jazz education for Chinese children, some of his concepts can be applied in jazz education for Chinese children, especially the idea of “where there is jazz music, it can be used as a classroom”. Jazz teaching does not have to be conducted inside the classroom and it can be taught in an informal way.

Compared with foreign countries, the development of jazz piano music in the early 21st century has tended to be mature, with the characteristics of folk, commercial, professional level and so on. Not only those music conservatories and music universities, but also most colleges and normal universities have set up compulsory or optional piano courses that can meet the needs of contemporary music market and meet the requirements of high difficulty and strong improvisation piano performance (Liu, 2020). Since jazz piano was introduced into China in the 1930s and 1940s, although its distinctive tunes, harmonies and rhythms are deeply loved by young people, it has not been rapidly developed and paid attention to because of the problems of the general music teaching mode and system in China. Some music schools only set theoretical knowledge such as the history of jazz music and music techniques as curriculum subjects, and practice performance is still dominated by classical music. So, it still needs efforts to let jazz piano education into the classroom. In the continuous development of our music education, some piano educators and researchers also realize the importance of the diversification of piano teaching. Also, they consider that professional music conservatories should send out enthusiastic and innovative musical talents to the society, which undoubtedly enhances the academic value of jazz from the other side (Liu, 2020).



For another example, as was written by Liu in his article, he considered that jazz piano has aroused many young people's taste for music and has gradually been introduced into college music classes because of its unique tune and distinctive rhythm, harmony. However, due to the limitation of teaching system in China infused by traditional music theory and single subject setting, jazz teaching has not really reached its value in teaching (Liu, 2020).

He firstly pointed out three aspects of the practical improvement of jazz piano in piano teaching for students.

The first aspect is jazz piano learning can establish the concept of varied rhythm playing (Liu, 2020). Rhythm is an indispensable part in determining the success or failure of music, and the complexity of jazz rhythm is one of the most prominent musical types among all musical types. At the same time, it has an impact on classical music, which attaches importance to the beginning of the strong beat and regularly repeats the strong and weak beat and liberates the players who were originally confined to ignore the importance of rhythm and follow the rules of classical music. In the performance of jazz piano, each note is independent, mainly eighth notes, with many different combination lines and rest to enhance the emotional burst of music, without repeated reinforcement. With the addition of the syncopated tone, the habit of using fortis to emphasize the strong beats, but the fortis is uniquely placed on the weak beat, which enhances the overall sense of hierarchy and the listener's auditory memory (Liu, 2020). For example, in the classroom, teachers can play the traditional syllable rhythm and syncopated syllable rhythm, so that students can distinguish through the actual hearing experience, and effectively realize the distinct uniqueness of jazz piano music. Syncopation will be just right impulse to disrupt the original regular syllables, making the music appear unrestrained and free. There are three main rhythm types in jazz, which need students to master and apply to actual performance. One is flat rhythm,

which uses crossbar syncopation to increase students' sense of musical rhythm. Pay attention to the temporary change between the fixed rhythm, by adding triplets, give the audience a sudden emotional impact, enhance the rendering of music; The use of swing rhythms, such as triplets instead of a large number of eighth note combinations or the addition of accents to a smooth rhythm, brings out a dramatic effect.

The second aspect is jazz piano learning can enhance the perception of melody (Liu, 2020). “The melodic beauty, also known as melody, is the musical line that arranges and combines a series of notes in the higher register to give listeners inner pleasure and cohesion (Liu, 2020, p. 161). Jazz revolves around a stable mode center, pushing the emotional escalation in the music, and moving forward around a goal, and finally reaching or surpassing the goal at the end of the song, so that the listener can get a sense of peace. Compared with other music, jazz melody is the richest. Apart from the use of a large number of connecting notes, more innovative chord combinations are used in the music arrangement, such as the occasional insertion of blues notes and the use of blues scales to enhance the melancholy color of the melody. When learning jazz piano, let students know how to listen to the full emotional content of the music melody, and lay an emotional foundation for self-performance and creation in the future, so that students can create emotional music (Liu, 2020).

The third aspect is jazz piano learning can stimulate the self-innovation consciousness of students (Liu, 2020). Jazz music is generally "half-finished works", which leaves sufficient space for self-improvisation and re-creation. This is because composers want to provide the performers with a clear thematic cue and to make use of unrestricted musical material, so that multiple elements can often be captured in jazz piano music, such as classical music, popular music, folk music, etc. (Liu, 2020, p. 161) The theme also has a high improvisation component when

performing, and the performers can carry out multiple variations on the theme according to their own psychology and life experience. Jazz composers provide the performers with great respect. According to the individual understanding of music theory and music melody, jazz learners can freely combine and adjust notes, series, chords and other music patterns. They can also perform jazz music with a strong sense of self. While the same jazz songs played by the same person at different times, he or she can show his or her different charm, which makes every performance as fresh as the first time for the performer. Therefore, jazz piano music helps to enhance the interest in music of students, helps them break the rules and make their own music with their true feelings, and it is also helpful for cultivating their independent personality, examining themselves and discovering themselves in music. This kind of music class is dynamic, overturning the mechanical procedures, so that students are full of innovative expectations in each class, combining inspiration with art (Liu, 2020).

Liu also provided several suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the jazz piano classroom in China.

The first suggestion is to enrich the classroom teaching content (Liu, 2020). Teachers need to expand the artistic form of jazz piano, set clear goals for each lesson, guide students to actively explore the rich contents of jazz music, and make the teaching process clearer and more comprehensive in a scientific and reasonable way. At the same time, schools should pay more attention to jazz piano music, provide their music teachers with the jazz music training way, let teachers know and reflect on their shortcomings in actual teaching, improve themselves, and let them take a professional attitude to teach students. In terms of classroom content, teachers can fully use the regional advantages in connection with local conditions and inspire students how to integrate local characteristics into Chinese traditional music based on original excellent jazz music

works. This is not only in line with the students' emotional value cognition, but also in the professional level of music to improve the teaching, the classroom has been transformed into a creative classroom.

The second suggestion is to use a diversified piano teaching approach (Liu, 2020). In addition to traditional harmony training, improvisation training should be added to the teaching content. Most of the gaps in jazz piano learning are different from classical music, which has formed a fixed performance style, and requires the performer to improvise, achieve recreation, and use personal parts to make the music complete. Also because of this, jazz piano music is an appropriate choice for training students' **creative ability**. Students will increase their creative confidence and believe that they can do it when they personalize the music. In addition to enriching the content of music education, the music teaching method should also be diversified. The individual teaching emphasized in the tradition should be changed, and the group teaching should be introduced into the classroom, so that students can have more time to communicate with each other and produce the collision of their fruitful ideas. Create more innovative performance attempts under the cooperation or interaction of many people, and also activate the classroom atmosphere, so that students can learn in a dynamic and passionate music environment.

The third suggestion is to improve the teaching proportion of creative ability (Liu, 2020). He thought that the music related policymakers in China can set up adapted jazz piano music courses to cultivate the music style awareness of students and transform the teaching form from traditional theoretical knowledge teaching to creative teaching. So that the teaching content can not only be more suitable for the needs of social practical talents, but also be more helpful for students to master piano performance skills through their own perception, and constantly explore the potential of personal piano skills. At the same time, it also truly shows the unique improvisation



part of jazz piano, guiding the musical thinking of students to the original lyric self-expression, which is the true meaning of music (Liu, 2020). Secondly, as a part of the national music in the world, jazz contains the regional colors of many nationalities and countries. The attempts to adapt jazz and localize it are being carried out all over the world. This also means that jazz music education has gradually moved towards the trend of diversified creation, and the music related policymakers in China should also make efforts to push Chinese culture to the world. Students' creation can be based on local culture and can enhance the diversity of performance themes, performance styles and performance skills, etc. It can also make students form a new aesthetic consciousness when they are having fun with jazz music learning. As a music style is mastered, it can then be recreated on the basis of this music style. With the improvement of musical accomplishment, its combination and application ability will also be greatly improved, creating more vitality and national world music.

The last suggestion is to complement classical music instruction with jazz music (Liu, 2020). Adding jazz piano music to the classic music teaching activities not only broadens the performance horizons of students, but also applies the complex finger-performing and variation in jazz piano to the performance of classical piano music. It can help students to improve their personal work style and technical ability faster and better, and most importantly, help students to establish a variety of music styles and closely related creative concepts. In daily teaching, for the training of the finger practicing skills of students, the complex and changeable jazz rhythm puts forward high requirements on the balance and coordination of their fingers, and they must master various playing modes, such as intervals, octaves, chords, scales and arpeggios. Therefore, this kind of non-legato training plays a significant role in improving the stability and the strength of



the metacarpal joints of students and the support points of their knuckles, and the rich and varied speed and rhythm of jazz music can improve the flexibility of their fingers as well.

As a unique musical form, jazz piano music has written romantic improvisational variations in the history of music and brought vitality to the development of music. In the process of jazz learning, it not only deepens the understanding of a variety of foreign musical styles, but also improves how Chinese musicians integrate Chinese cultural characteristics into music, which is a process of continuous exploration and innovation. Because of this, Liu considered that it is urgent to promote jazz piano music in Chinese music education (Liu, 2020).

2.8 The benefits of jazz learning

The research and literature related to the benefits of jazz learning for younger children are limited. Furthermore, most music researchers and writers, who have worked in this area, only consider jazz can be used in children's music education and raise some teaching materials or plans but have not mentioned enough evidence to prove what children can benefit from. Nevertheless, we can still find some evidence related to the influence of jazz learning on secondary school, high school students, and adults.

According to several foreign studies, some professional jazz musicians consider jazz to be one of the music styles that every musician should study, and there are many reasons to explain why they think this way. Vaartstra provided four reasons (Vaartstra, 2017). Here are two of them that are helpful even for a music beginner:

1. Jazz can expand one's knowledge of music harmony, not only the default seventh chords but also their extensions and alterations. The harmonic theory is one of the most irreplaceable music theories for every music learner to study.

2. Jazz can improve one's ear because "jazz is traditionally learned by ear," and jazz musicians always learn repertoire, solos, licks, and phrases by ear. Learners can hear more musical elements, such as chords and scales (Vaartstra, 2017).

And the rest two of them are particularly relevant for advanced music learners:

3. Jazz can force music learners to be proficient on their instruments because of the harmonic complexities in jazz, the range of slow to fast tempos in different styles of jazz music, and the language of jazz music itself. "If there are gray areas on your instrument or basic fundamentals you are missing, jazz will let you know what those are (Vaartstra, 2017).

4. Jazz can help a musician become a better composer when he/she comprehends all of the harmonic knowledge and understanding of chords and chord progressions. It can ceaselessly provide musicians with different ideas of how to connect chords in both diatonic and non-diatonic ways (Vaartstra, 2017). The rich melodies of Jazz Standards are also worth studying.

Jazz invites one to learn music aurally. One has to keep track of form, hear and analyze instantly and needs to create an internal understanding of the whole piece and then listen and respond in real time, including responding to substitute harmonies or unexpected changes (Thibeault, 2022). In Hendricks' article, he found that jazz musicians can respond faster to unexpected changes than non-musicians, as well as musicians trained in classical music (Hendricks, 2018). Similarly, another research comparing jazz and classical musicians by using brain scans also showed that jazz musicians can react to an unexpected chord change in a chord progression faster and with less mental effort than classical musicians (Bianco et al., 2018; Woody & Lehmann, 2010).

In Brumbach's research, participants (25 students from a high school jazz band, grades 9 – 12) rehearsed fifty minutes a day in a jazz band, and they practiced 12-bar blues and some

improvisation (solo) within the blues progression. By using jazz standards' improvisation, such as "Straight No Chaser" and "Caravan" in students' improvisation, the author guided them to connect Miles Davis's creativity (by using his "All Blues") in the blues with the improvisation they were playing. Brumbach used recorders to record the pretest (initial improvisation) and post-test (final improvisation) and his assessment rubric when grading the pretest and posttest improvisation. Then, he transformed these data into a rating to determine what percentage of students have achieved the four different possible ratings: Failing, Needs Improvement, Proficient, or Distinguished. He also conducted a survey of jazz band directors from the Mid-Atlantic States to determine their criteria for selecting repertoire. Both director outcomes and student outcomes have been listed clearly by Brumbach, and he also comes up with cultural development (Brumbach, 2015). Here are some of the beneficial outcomes worth further research:

1. The band directors thought that students were exposed to another music style that was unfamiliar to them, and they must learn how to play their part well, such as the rhythm section and horn section.
2. The understanding of stylistic nuances specific to each style has increased; an understanding of the breadth of the music encompassed by the term "jazz"; "increased literacy with reading syncopated rhythms; enjoyment and enrichment through the performance and exploration of a large body of cultural history" (Brumbach, 2015).
3. The students, who played a part in the jazz band in this research, considered that playing a solo in front of a crowd was not as scary as they thought before the performance, and improvisation made them learn "how to be a team player and how to peacefully solve conflicts."

4. Jazz bands pushed these students outside of their comfort zone, and this also gave them a better sense of the music, emotion, struggle, and culture of the musicians who created it (Brumbach, 2015).

Jazz learning can affect one's musical abilities and the mental activities in their brain, such as inspiring their creativity and self-expression ability. Klemm (2014) said that the most apparent effect of listening to jazz is stress reduction. Less stress creates more fun for listeners, and fun promotes happiness. Happiness leads to a chain reaction that listeners' brains can learn better and even live longer (Klemm, 2014). Many jazz artists in New Orleans still perform sophisticated music in their 80s, which is hard to find anywhere else in the world. Klemm also found that jazz players experience enormous mental stimulation. They have to engage their brains in various ways when they are doing improvisation or call-and-response, which classical musicians usually do not do during performance. As he wrote in the article, learning jazz may help train young children to think critically and creatively. Jazz training has brought advantages to their abilities, such as hand-eye coordination, memorizing music, following discipline, being patient, thinking creatively and critically, "high-speed intellectual engagement with the ideas of others, and self-actualization and confidence" (Klemm, 2014, para. 4). Similarly, Norgaard considers that jazz improvisation instruction may improve learners' executive function, which includes cognitive flexibility, inhibition, and facilitation. He suggests that music educators and teachers should add some improvisation activities to school music education (Norgaard et al., 2019).

Coss (2018) investigated jazz educators' experiences in teaching jazz improvisation in his article. He sought to understand the teaching experiences of expert jazz performers and educators when they taught jazz improvisation. Coss identified five themes that describe these participants' common experiences in teaching jazz improvisation. Two of these themes are relevant to this

research: Teacher as Guide and Teacher as Motivator (Coss, 2018). At the end of his article, Coss (2018) provided some suggestions for future research. He believed that exploring the implications of his study for teaching younger learners, including elementary-age learners, could be a worthwhile research direction. He also highlighted the importance of balancing formal and informal educational paradigms in jazz education (Coss, 2018).

Virkkula (2015) also expressed concern about the relationship between informal and formal learning in popular and jazz music. By examining popular and jazz music workshops in Finland, which were implemented in collaboration with professional musicians and primarily aimed at facilitating informal learning in jazz and popular education, Virkkula (2015) sought to understand how informal learning could be integrated into formal music education. In his conclusion, he argued that music educators and researchers must pay more attention to the proportion of students' informal learning in their formal music education to enhance their musicianship as effectively as possible. He believed that music education, especially in jazz and popular music, cannot achieve its teaching objectives solely through teacher-directed methods, which aligns with "Teacher as Guide," the first theme mentioned by Coss (Virkkula, 2015). Furthermore, based on his research, Virkkula emphasized the importance of creating a suitable learning environment. Teachers of jazz and pop music should focus on providing their students with adequate freedom to make music (similar to the improvisation aspect of jazz learning) independently, rather than always instructing and guiding them at every step during the lesson. Learners should be given the opportunity to discover solutions related to music-making on their own, rather than always learning and being influenced by teaching. Virkkula also stated that it is essential for music teachers, especially jazz and pop music teachers, to consider how to help their

students apply music skills and benefit from these skills, rather than just teaching skills without allowing students to use them (Virkkula, 2015).

Like Coss's article, Virkkula provided some suggestions for future research. He suggested that other music researchers could explore additional ways for students to learn jazz and pop music outside formal education, such as learning in a music training center, participating in a music workshop or a music summer camp, or finding a private music tutor. They could also investigate how these informal learning methods can be beneficial in music education institutions (Virkkula, 2015).

Except for the ideas which have been put forward by foreign researchers mentioned above, there are also some Chinese researchers and educators who consider that it is significant to set up jazz courses in Chinese higher education, such as universities, professional music conservatories and higher vocational colleges.

Meng (2021) thinks that jazz culture has a long history, and it shows a diversified development trend. Thus, jazz music also has a certain commercial, and it meets the needs of the market of Chinese music education. She concluded two benefits of bringing jazz into Chinese higher education. The first one is it can enhance the professional quality of students (Meng, 2021). Through the study of jazz music, students can:

1. Improve their aesthetic concepts and music performance skills, develop a rich sense of rhythm and deepen their understanding of the theory of harmony.
2. Better understand the characteristics of jazz and jazz music.
3. Break away from the shackles of the concepts that music needs to be complete structure, orderly harmony and relatively regular techniques.
4. Integrate and sort out the connections and differences between classical and jazz music.

5. In turn, it will give students a better interpretation and understanding of classical music. The second one is it can promote the reform of music teaching in higher education (Meng, 2021). First of all, traditional music teaching mainly uses classical music and traditional Chinese music works, which have the integrity of the version and the relative certainty of emotional processing. Jazz music emphasizes the special point of individuation and requires the performer to improvise or create again. Jazz teaching can break the limitations of the traditional music classroom and provide students with a free and divergent music space through the creative practice of performance. Secondly, many jazz works need to be performed in a group or band form, which requires multi-person interaction and emphasizes cooperation between members. The jazz ensemble is helpful in developing students' ear sensitivity to the lines of each voice part and the tacit understanding between group members, which is also the lack of the traditional "one-to-one" music teaching mode. Thirdly, there are differences in the emotional mobilization of music classrooms. "Compared with the traditional music class, the atmosphere of jazz class is sometimes more relaxed and creative because jazz music pursues the release of the spiritual world through free rhythm. During teaching, music teachers and students need to improve dynamic performance and create an open and relaxed classroom atmosphere" (Meng, 2021, p. 31).

Similarly, Wang (2021) considers that in order to promote the reform of music teaching in higher vocational colleges and conform to the needs of the music market, it is necessary to change the previous curriculum setting mode and add some courses suitable for the development direction of music teaching in higher vocational colleges. As the students in these schools, their future employment direction is mainly for music performance venues, popularizing music education at the grass-roots level and music editing. Popular music content should occupy a significant proportion of the courses they learn, and the special status of jazz in popular music makes it



essential for them to understand and master jazz. The reasons Wang gives in his article are also similar to what is mentioned by Meng:

1. Jazz has had an important influence on the development of popular music around the world, such as building the foundation of the modern harmonic system, subverting classical and traditional rhythms and promoting the idea of improvisation.
2. Learning jazz helps to develop students' creative musical thinking ability, which is an integral part of the core of higher vocational music education and provides students with broader ideas and space for their future development.
3. Setting up a jazz course will contribute to the future development of higher vocational music education. Through the course of jazz harmony and improvisation, students can not only master systematic theoretical knowledge and improve their comprehensive music quality but also cultivate their strong practical ability, innovation and entrepreneurial ability, which paves the way for the students to work in the future post in the society.

He also concludes that jazz courses will not only fulfill the educational concept of higher vocational music education reform and market demand but also expand students' artistic vision and space for entrepreneurial development as well as explore a positive and feasible educational idea for higher vocational music education reform (Wang, 2011).

Although all these research and articles are based on secondary school, high school, and college students and jazz musicians, the benefits of jazz learning can also be applied to music education for primary school and even younger children. The depth of jazz learning for them does not need to be that complex, but more research is required.

2.9 The possibility of jazz music in music education for children

Jazz is a distinct genre of music, a fusion of cultures, elements, and vibrations that resonate with the soul of every jazz musician who has played improvisation on it. It encompasses a spectrum of sounds and emotions that can be characterized as “ebullient, cool, enthusiastic, doleful, or any of a thousand other sensations, pulsations, and lo-o-o-ng bluesy notes” (Darwin et al., 2016, p. 20). This statement encapsulates the essence of jazz music. The act of creating music in jazz is marked by “a resistance to, and often a triumph over, limitations imposed by both sociological conditions and notes preserved on the page” (Custodero, 2008, p. 24). This statement elucidates the significance and benefits of jazz music. Both these statements are relevant for all ages, including children. Custodero also posits that music educators and teachers could enhance their teaching in early childhood music education settings by adopting a jazz-like sensitivity (Custodero, 2008).

Despite the presence of excellent jazz performance programs in many American secondary schools, Ferguson notes that few secondary school students participate in them. Even fewer students are inclined to engage in the jazz components of these programs (Ferguson, 2004). She advocates for exposing as many children as possible to jazz music and suggests that elementary general music classes are “the most likely place for all students to be exposed to jazz styles and to come to understand the genre” (Ferguson, 2004, p. 29). Consequently, she proposes several strategies for integrating jazz into elementary general music, such as creating simple play-along arrangements, using listening maps with short excerpts of jazz music pieces, extensive listening, and fearless improvisation. She concludes that when music teachers employ a comprehensive teaching method during jazz instruction, considering how to incorporate this musical style into the existing class repertoire is more crucial than making a significant change in teaching practice. Viewing jazz pieces as a core component in the learning syllabus rather than a unique, fun “extra”

allows music teachers to introduce the rich culture of jazz to general music students without sacrificing time or content (Ferguson, 2004).

Scimonelli (1999) observes that children at all grade levels enjoy participating in music-making activities, and an increasing number of school systems are recognizing this fact. Thus, general music and performing ensembles in school music classes are becoming more common. As children become more confident in their music-making abilities, they seek more creative ways to express themselves. “They tend to become drawn irrevocably to jazz and the one component that sets this art apart from all others: improvisation” (Scimonelli, 1999, p. 30). Scimonelli also notes that jazz education is becoming an integral part of the general music curriculum. General education classroom teachers have successfully taught improvisational techniques to young children. However, they need not sound like Miles Davis or John Coltrane (both renowned jazz musicians). He asked some children who participated in summer jazz camps and started jazz-infused bands why jazz appeals to them, and they responded, “Improvisation.” Scimonelli suggests that teaching jazz and improvisation in general music or private lessons, whether vocal or instrumental, has become a fully creative outlet for both music teachers and students (Scimonelli, 1999). He also likens the process of learning jazz for children to opening a box of chocolates, “You might wind up having too much fun!” After presenting his ideas and findings of jazz development for children in schools and society, he recommends several jazz books with the exception of the Willie Thomas method and also explained why he chose these books. Although this article doesn’t contain any research method part or data analysis part, the author has provided the ideas of bringing jazz music into school and teaching young children improvisation to let them take part in this kind of music-making activities and be more creative. There is a limitation in it which has been mentioned by Scimonelli, “All of these books require a good deal of musical sophistication in both reading and



playing skills ... All of them presuppose the user has at least a senior high school-level reading ability” (Scimonelli, 1999, p. 32). This means all the books recommended by the author might not be suitable for young children to use. Therefore, trying to find or create some more materials which are applicable to children’s jazz learning may be a good choice for jazz educators and researchers to study.

There are a number of studies focusing on improvisation in childhood which are worth discussing, although some of them may not be related directly to jazz improvisation.

For example, Brophy conducted an examination of the melodic improvisations of a group of children for three years, aging between seven and ten. Participants improvised as part of a class rondo for Orff instruments and each participant improvised three melodies per year (Brophy, 2005). He collected 558 improvisations in his study and all these improvisations were examined for the presence of the following features:

1. Melodic features: repeated melodic motives and developed melodic motives,
2. Structural features: phrases, and antecedent/consequent phrases,
3. Rhythmic features: pulse adherence, repeated rhythmic motives and developed rhythmic motives (Brophy, 2005).

All these features were primarily determined by listening to the performance played by the participants in his study.

Brophy found that the seven-year-old children were more likely to create a short melodic pattern on the instrument and play this pattern repeatedly and there was a lesser tendency to improvise repeated melodic motives as the children grew older. While the results showed that there was an increasing tendency for these children to improvise repeated rhythmic motives as they aged. Moreover, the participants were increasingly interested in the pulse and the rhythmic features of

their improvisations may have become more obvious as they grew older. As concluded by Brophy, the features of melodic improvisations of children changed significantly when they grew up. The rhythmic and structural features in their improvisation changed to some more organized, conventional musical expressions as they aged. While the melodic features in their improvisation did not change too much as they grew up (Brophy, 2005). At the end of his study, Brophy also provided some suggestions related to the future research that “future studies should explore children’s improvisations in many settings and contexts, and longitudinally when possible. Researchers should also gather evidence of children’s thoughts and reflections on this important creative process and the melodies and rhythms that result” (Brophy, 2005, p. 131).

For another example, in Rowe, Triantafyllaki and Anagnostopoulou’s research, they tried to use an interactive improvisation system called “Musical Interaction Relying On Reflexion (MIROR)-Impro” for six weeks to improve the improvisational skills of 19 young classical piano learners aged between 6 and 10 from the UK and Greece (Rowe et al., 2015). This interactive improvisation system engages participants in a musical dialogue. It can answer participants in the same style as their input and create a reflection of their own musical ideas. The authors mainly focused on analyzing the recorded musical data collected by the interactive improvisation system in both countries and each data consisted of at least six 20-minute sessions for each child. They used two levels of analysis: listening to all musical sequences of interaction between participants and the interactive improvisation system, and focusing on the large cohort of “dialogues” in more detail. They also presented the data from the four children’s musical interactions with the interactive improvisation system as case studies. At the end of the study, the authors considered that this system can offer music teachers and students “an opportunity to reflect, together or individually, on the process of learning to improvise, either by looking on-screen in real-time or

later at its recording” (Rowe et al., 2015, p. 128). The research indicated that improvisation skills are not sufficiently encouraged in participant’s instrumental lessons due to several reasons, such as “teachers’ unfamiliarity with improvisation techniques and how to teach them, time pressures, and the absence of such requirements from most examining boards’ curricula” (Rowe et al., 2015, p. 128). And they also considered that comparing with the western music tradition, improvisation workshops hardly become the part of the music courses in higher music education institutions. This situation exists not only in both UK and Greece, but also in China.

Kong Hongwei, a leading figure among the new generation of Chinese jazz musicians and one of China’s best jazz pianists, has expressed concern about the future of jazz in China and the need to sow the seeds of jazz on Chinese soil. He has successfully mentored a young jazz pianist, Abu, who began learning jazz at the age of nine and is now hailed as the “Chinese jazz piano prodigy.” Kong notes that while the West has a well-established jazz music teaching system, Chinese children lack opportunities to learn jazz. The mainstream music education in domestic music conservatories still focuses on classical and modern romantic music. Jazz has not been integrated into the education system, and children interested in jazz must often learn it independently. When Kong and other jazz musicians perform for music conservatory students, they find that the students lack basic concepts. “How can they compare with foreign kids? Do Chinese musicians and educators provide this kind of environment and atmosphere for children to learn jazz music?” He likens the growth of jazz education in China to a chopstick (thin and weak), while in the West it resembles a pyramid (more comprehensive from amateur jazz learners to professional jazz musicians). Kong hopes to cultivate more young jazz learners of good quality, with an international perspective, and a broad musical repertoire, like Abu. He believes that giving these young musicians an international presence and influence, akin to Lang Lang, might prompt



Chinese government policymakers and influential musicians to take jazz education more seriously. As Kong states, “Although this is only a temporary measure, it is imperative to cultivate the next generation of Chinese jazz musicians” (Kong et al., 2012, p. C14).

2.10 Summary

This study focuses on the initial stages of jazz education for Chinese children to understand how this form of learning influences their musical abilities and creativity. Given that improvisation is a unique and essential aspect of jazz education, representing a child’s creativity, the author is also interested in determining whether and how jazz education impacts these children’s creative capacities. The author designed a series of jazz lessons to teach participants based on his own jazz teaching experience, the teaching concepts from Doug Goodkin (Goodkin, 2004), and the prior studies conducted by Lionel Grigson (Grigson, 1985), Laura Ferguson (Ferguson, 2004), Lori Custodero (Custodero, 2008), and Chad West (West, 2015). And according to the suggestions in Brumbach’s research (Brumbach, 2015), the author planned to use a smartphone and a voice recorder to record the learning progress of each participant and a rubric to assess their jazz learning. Unlike the advanced repertoires (“Straight No Chaser” and “Caravan”) chose by Brumbach, the author chose a series of blues songs written with both right-hand part and left-hand part as teaching repertoires, which were arranged by himself and were much easier than advanced jazz repertoires for jazz beginners to learn. The main purpose of this study is to find out how they respond to jazz teaching and how jazz learning affects their musical abilities and creativity. Consequently, the main research question is raised based on the main purpose of this study.

Moreover, to support the main research question, the author has raised several additional questions. As was mentioned above, Scimonelli considers that the abilities of musical

sophistication in both reading and playing skills are necessary in jazz education (Scimonelli, 1999). Therefore, the author planned to find out the effect of basic music knowledge and performance skills and what should be necessary at the beginning of jazz education. Recognizing the individual differences in musical ability and creativity among children, he has gathered two main types of information from the participants to answer the **second research question**. The first type of information pertains to their basic music knowledge, such as their understanding of different chords, scales, and rhythm patterns (e.g., syncopation, dotted note, triplet, an 8th note with two 16th notes, and two 16th notes with an 8th note). The second type of information relates to their performance skills, such as the duration of their piano learning, which can indicate their familiarity with piano learning, and the progress of their music learning, which can directly reflect their performance skills.

The **third and fourth research questions** are associated with the progress and quality of their jazz learning. As mentioned in the literature review, the four-step learning method (listening, transcribing, practicing, and performing) may also be suitable for children. However, the author has omitted the transcribing step in his teaching plan, as it may be too challenging for children to transcribe jazz improvisation performed by jazz musicians.

According to Zhang's article, jazz teachers should not only teach theoretical knowledge and music performance techniques imparted to students in classroom teaching, but also consider extracurricular jazz practice activities for students to complete by themselves (Zhang, 2013). Therefore, teachers must strike a balance between motivating and over-guiding. The **fifth research question** concerns the role of jazz teachers, with the author serving as the teacher in this research.

The **sixth research question** is directly linked to the main research question, focusing on the changes in participants' musical abilities and creativity. Brumbach asked participants to



explain the choices they made in their pretest and posttest improvisation to find out students learning outcomes (Brumbach, 2015). On the contrary, the author himself analyzed the strategies and ideas of improvisation used by the participants due to the large jazz ability gap between jazz learners in high school jazz band and jazz beginners. The analysis focused on the recordings and videos recorded during lessons and performance.

2.11 Research questions

The **main research question** is:

1. How do participants respond to the jazz education approach, and how does jazz education influence their musical abilities and creativity?

The **additional research questions** are:

2. How do basic music knowledge and performance skills influence the children during their jazz learning? What should be included in the basic music knowledge and performance skills if a Chinese child wants to start jazz education?
3. According to the students and their parents, how effective is the author's teaching plan for their jazz learning?
4. What proportion of their lesson time is spent on listening, practicing, improvising, and performing with accompaniment (played by the teacher or the play-along)?
5. What proportion of their lesson time is spent on guiding (instructing students all the time) and motivating (inspiring students and giving them more time to think, practice, and improvise independently)?
6. Are there any changes in participants' musical abilities, particularly in the strategies and ideas of jazz improvisation and creativity after learning jazz, and what are these changes?

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The research was conducted from June to August 2022 in Liyang, a small fifth-tier city in mainland China, which is also the author's hometown. The participants were selected from Xin Le Music Training Center, the top-ranked local music training center in Liyang. The author obtained permission from Mr. Xiang, the owner of the center, to conduct the research there.

Xin Le Music Training Center was chosen for this study because it is not only the top-ranked music center in Liyang with nearly 300 music students, but it has also successfully trained over 13 students who have passed the entrance examination of top-ranking Chinese music conservatories. These include the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Central Conservatory of Music, Zhejiang Conservatory of Music, Sichuan Conservatory of Music, and Nanjing Art Academy. Notably, five out of six students who have entered or graduated from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, including the author, are majoring in jazz piano performance. No other local music training center in Liyang has achieved such a high level of success.

3.2 The details of the participants

The research targeted the following participants:

1. Eleven children aged between seven and ten years old.
2. Individuals with varying levels of music knowledge and piano performance skills (to address the first secondary research question).
3. All participants and their parents who could participate in interviews and a questionnaire before and after the teaching plan.

According to the requirement, the participants were chosen from Xin Le Music Training Center. Mr. Xiang, who is the owner and one of the leading piano tutors, Ms. Zheng, who is another principal piano tutor, and the author discussed and selected the participants together because the first two tutors are more familiar with the level of music knowledge and piano performance skills of the students in their center. And another purpose of this step is to compare the information and find out the answers to the second research question. According to the record in this music training center, most of these children started piano learning since they were three to four years old. And the reason of choosing Chinese children between seven and ten years old was because they were grade one to grade five primary school students, who had already comprehended different levels of basic music knowledge and performance skills. More importantly, unlike grade six primary school student who must prepare for the middle school entrance examination, they had plenty of time for extracurricular activities. At last, they chose **eleven** children from all the students in the center. To protect the privacy of these participants, this research only uses their surnames and participation numbers. All the participants, their parents and the teachers who took part in this study have read and signed the form of “CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH”, which has been mentioned in the next section. Here is some information about each participant (Table 1):

Table 1. The information of the participants

Music ability level	Basic music knowledge	Piano performance skills
Advanced level	Surname: Huang, Participant Number: 1, Age: 9	
	Knows most of the triads and some seventh chords, all the major and minor scales, and all the basic rhythm patterns.	Learns the piano for five years and is practicing Czerny Etudes 299, No. 5.

Surname: Mei, Participant Number: 2, Age: 9

Intermediate level Knows some of the triads and few seventh chords, all the major and minor scales, and all the basic rhythm patterns. Learns the piano for four years and is practicing Czerny Etudes 299, No. 2.

Surname: Pan, Participant Number: 3, Age: 10

Advanced level Knows all the triads and most of the seventh chords, all the major and minor scales, and all the basic rhythm patterns. Learns the piano for six years and is practicing Czerny Etudes 299, No. 2.

Surname: Rui, Participant Number: 4, Age: 10

Advanced level Knows most of the triads and some seventh chords, all the major and minor scales, and all the basic rhythm patterns. Learns the piano for five years and is practicing Czerny Etudes 299, No. 8.

Surname: Rui, Participant Number: 5, Age: 7

Beginning level Knows some triads and very few seventh chords, all the major and minor scales, and all the basic rhythm patterns. Learns the piano for two years and is practicing Czerny Etudes 599, No. 76.

Surname: Shi, Participant Number: 6, Age: 7

Beginning level Knows few triads and doesn't know seventh chords, knows half of the major and minor scales and most of the basic rhythm patterns. Learns the piano for one year and is practicing Czerny Etudes 599, No. 25.

Surname: Chen, Participant Number: 7, Age: 7

Beginning level Knows some triads and few seventh chords, all the major and minor scales, and all the basic rhythm patterns. Learns the piano for two years and is practicing Czerny Etudes 599, No. 80.

Surname: Zhong, Participant Number: 8, Age: 8

Beginning level Knows some triads and few seventh chords, all the major and minor scales, and all the basic rhythm patterns. Learns the piano for two years and is practicing Czerny Etudes 599, No. 80.

Surname: Sun, Participant Number: 9, Age: 10

Advanced level Knows all the triads and most of the seventh chords, all the major and minor scales, and all the basic rhythm patterns. Learns the piano for six years and is practicing Czerny Etudes 299, No. 8.

Surname: Wu, Participant Number: 10, Age: 8

Beginning level Knows some triads and few seventh chords, all the major and minor scales, and all the basic rhythm patterns. Learns the piano for two years and is practicing Czerny Etudes 599, No. 60.

Surname: Zou, Participant Number: 11, Age: 10

Intermediate level Knows most of the triads and some seventh chords, all the major and minor scales, and all the basic rhythm patterns. Learns the piano for three years and is practicing Czerny Etudes 849, No. 1.

Although participants no. 1, no. 3, no. 4 and no. 9 have played some songs sounded like jazz, all these songs are written in the music scores and there is no improvisation part in them. As a result, all of these participants have not played real jazz songs before jazz learning.

3.3 Ethical issues

An ethics form has been approved by my principal supervisor and the Human Research Ethics Committee of The Education University of Hong Kong.

This study involved human participants, and there was no potential risk during the research. As the research only instructed the participants to learn jazz music and improvisation, answer interview questions and questionnaires, and do some performance, there was no known risk in any aspect, such as financial, physical, or psychological.

All the participants, including the eleven children, their parents and Mr. Xiang (the manager of Xin Le Music Training Center), were asked whether they were willing to take part in this research, and they had been informed of all the contents of the study in detail. They and their parents had received a consent form (three different types, one for children, one for parents and one for the manager, Appendix E) which explains the study, the teaching plan, the interview and questionnaire, as well as the contact details from the author and his principal supervisor. The consent forms had been signed by the participants, their parents and the manager of the music center and had been returned to the author. All research data, audio recordings, video recordings and transcriptions have been kept no longer than needed, stored anonymously in a file on the home hard drive belonging to the author with confidentiality, and will not be transferred to a USB or be worked on in public spaces. Participants can access their data at any time, and their names will be replaced by their surname or a number for the reason of anonymity, and they can withdraw from the study at any time. Anonymity was kept at all times, and no information was used to identify either institution or individual. Participants will be provided with the findings and the summary of this research at any time if they request to know them.

3.4 Research methodology

This study used action research as the research methodology which included four research instruments: an action plan, interviews, questionnaires and video observation.

According to the statement of Koshy et al. in their article, action research is, “a method used for improving practice. It involves action, evaluation, and critical reflection and – based on the evidence gathered – changes in practice are then implemented” (Koshy et al., 2010, p. 2). Action research is usually conducted within a specific and practical context, and it typically focuses on a small sample of either one or a few organizations (Wolman, 2013). Bargal (2008) presents several rules of action research in his article and here are some of them which are related to this study:

1. Combining a systematic study, sometimes experimental, of a social problem as well as the endeavors to solve it.
2. Including a spiral process of data collection to determine goals, action to implement goals, and assessment of the results of the intervention.
3. Requiring feedback of the results of intervention to all parties involved in the research.
4. Implying continuous cooperation between researchers and practitioners.
5. Serving to create knowledge, to formulate principles of intervention, and to develop instruments for selection, intervention, and training (Bargal, 2008, p. 19).

In this study, **the sample size is eleven (n=11)**, which is a small one and meets the requirement of the action research. As is mentioned by Kock in his article, “the researcher uses participant observation and interviews as key data collection approaches” (Kock, 2011, para. 33.2.4). While in this study, the author used interviews, questionnaires and video observation as the main ways of data collection. The researcher also played the role of a jazz teacher and he taught

and observed all participants in lessons as well as in the concert. Koshy et al. make the further explanation about the purpose of action research, which is to “learn through action that then leads to personal or professional development” (Koshy et al., 2010, p.4). While many research methods aim to generate knowledge, Kock states that the main purpose of the action research is to “both generate knowledge and improve the subject of the study” (Kock, para. 33.1). Therefore, the main purpose of this study is not only to apply his jazz teaching method into music education for Chinese children, but also to find out how music abilities and creativity of participants are affected by jazz education.

The action plan comprised teaching plans, teaching materials designed by the author (also based on the teaching concepts from Doug Goodkin, the prior studies conducted by Lionel Grigson, Laura Ferguson, Lori Custodero, and Chad West) and the details of each lesson. Given that the participants were children aged between seven and ten, the author asked their parents for help during interviews in case some children did not understand the questions. There were two interviews and two questionnaires which have been conducted by the author before the teaching plans started and after the teaching plans were completed. And after completing all the lessons, a jazz performance concert was presented by the students to show what they had learned in this research. The author and the participants used Chinese (Mandarin) as the interview language, and the questionnaires were also in simplified Chinese because all the children and their parents speak Mandarin and read simplified Chinese. There are translated versions of all the interview questions (Appendix A) and all the questionnaire questions written in English (Appendix B) and are given in the appendix part. All the materials and documents are included in the action plan, and there is no access consideration.



The action plans were conducted from 26th June 2022 (the first lesson) to 28th August 2022 (the final concert) and the details of each lesson plan will be presented in the next section (section 3.4.1). Based on the statement raising by Koshy et al., the action, evaluation, critical reflection, and changes in practice will be presented in the rest part of this chapter and in the next chapter. The evaluation and the goals of each lesson plan will also be covered in each lesson presented in section 3.4.1. There was an extra part designed by the author for more advanced students to learn in case some of the participants learned faster than other participants. The core tasks were designed for all participants and the extra parts were prepared for those who completed the core tasks and left enough time to learn more tasks. The teacher's reflection on each lesson and the jazz learning details of each participant will be presented in the next chapter in section 4.2. Changes during each lesson were made according to the learning progress and learning quality and they will also be mentioned in the next chapter.

A smartphone and a voice recorder were used to record all the interviews and the performance show to ensure high-quality and accurate recording. The author noted some specific moments when students were learning jazz songs and working on their improvisation. To analyze their improvisation and learning progress, the video recorder was used to capture short clips of the students' performances during the lessons, and all performances in the final concert were recorded. After each lesson, the participants were asked about their thoughts, feelings, challenges, and rewarding moments, like a quick interview.

The video observation was used to analyze musical language and improvisation strategies performed by participants in the specific moments. As mentioned in the last chapter, the author himself conducted the observation the analysis of the video recorded by the smartphone to try to find out what musical language and improvisation strategies participants used during their

performance. Each participant had at least two videos, one recorded during the lesson and one recorded during the final concert. All the musical language and improvisation strategies were new to them and were the proof of their learning outcomes because they learned classical piano and did not have jazz learning experience before this action plan as mentioned in the section 3.2. Consequently, the analysis of video observation can be used to discuss the main, the third and the sixth research questions.

3.4.1 The action plan

3.4.1.1 The teaching plan

The first part of the action plan is the teaching plan of this research. The teaching plan was designed by the author, drawing on the research outcomes from other jazz educators in the United States, including Doug Goodkin's book "Now's the Time: Teaching Jazz to All Ages" (Goodkin, 2004), the teaching approach designed by Lionel Grigson (Grigson, 1985), and the ideas of Laura Ferguson, Lori Custodero, and Chad West. The teaching plan included eight individual lessons, a group lesson (during the eight lessons), and a concert (after all lessons). Each individual lesson lasted 40 minutes, the group lesson took two hours, and the concert lasted an hour and a half. A WeChat group was created for communication with parents, and the music scores, play-a-long accompaniment, and learning tasks of each lesson were distributed to parents to convey to their children before each class. There was also a section for faster learners in each lesson, providing teachers with extra teaching options when some students completed all the learning tasks within 40 minutes and had more time left before the class ended. This ensured that the classes were more fulfilling and students received more learning tasks.



The author conducted these eight individual lessons separately, with one lesson per week during the summer holiday, so that the participants did not have too many other learning tasks or lessons. This allowed the participants to have enough time to learn and practice jazz songs and improvisation at home and be well-prepared for each new lesson. The group lesson was conducted between the fifth and sixth lessons, and the concert was held after the eighth lesson. The details of each lesson are as follows:

First lesson

The date of this lesson: Sunday, 26th June 2022

The goal of this lesson:

1. Playing a unique C major scale using different rhythm patterns;
2. Introducing more information about the improvisation in jazz music, the variation in classical music and the jazz elements in some pop music;
3. Introducing swing, jazz blues, the accompaniment part in jazz and iReal Pro;
4. Trying to play Baby Blues and Lazy Blues.

For every participant:

Step 1 (takes approximately 10 minutes):

Use the C major scale as a starting point. Unlike the even note and tempo used in classical scale practice, the teacher encourages students to try to play the C major scale differently and guides them to use different rhythm patterns, such as syncopation, dotted note, triplet, an 8th note with two 16th notes, two 16th notes with an 8th note, and an ornament. The teacher then introduces four rhythm patterns commonly used in improvisation, trillo (Figure 1), surrounding note (also known as the inverted turn, Figure 2), dotted note (Figure 3), and triplet (Figure 4), letting students

try to play C major scale again by using them (and their combinations) and using their left hand to play the original C major scale slowly as an accompaniment.



Figure 1. Trillo



Figure 2. Surrounding note (inverted turn)



Figure 3. Dotted note



Figure 4. Triplet

Step 2 (takes approximately 10 minutes):

The teacher asks the students about their knowledge of jazz and improvisation, followed by a succinct introduction to jazz music. A comparison is drawn between improvisation in jazz and variation in classical music to provide a familiar context. To illustrate this concept, the teacher performs several sections from Mozart's "12 Variations in C, K 265," also known as the variation of the nursery rhyme, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." This piece serves as an example of development in classical music, which parallels improvisation in jazz. Subsequently, the teacher plays "Mojito," a pop song widely recognized by Chinese citizens, including children. This song, originally performed by Jay Chow, a renowned Chinese pop singer, incorporates numerous jazz elements. After demonstrating these two contrasting pieces, the teacher introduces the jazz swing style. This includes the basic rhythm pattern of swing, where eighth notes are played like triplets instead of straight eighths (as depicted in Figure 5), and jazz blues. This comprehensive approach provides students with a tangible understanding of the intersection between classical and jazz music.



Figure 5. The basic rhythm pattern of swing

Step 3 (takes approximately 20 minutes):

The teacher initially presents the students with the first musical score, “**Baby Blues**” (a blues form in F key, see Appendix E), and encourages them to attempt playing it. The piece can be performed in either a straight eighth note form or a swing style. The teacher then informs the students that blues music is typically played in a swing style. Students are then asked to clap the rhythm of the song and play it again on the piano. Once the students are comfortable with the song, the teacher demonstrates how to play the bass line of the song with the left hand and the chord progression with the right hand as an accompaniment. This is done step by step, starting with the bass line, then gradually adding the chords. The students are then asked to play the melody line. Following this, the teacher introduces a jazz play-along software, **iReal Pro** (see Figure 6), which automatically generates an accompaniment. As some students may be unfamiliar with this type of accompaniment, the teacher demonstrates its use and how to follow the beat (by listening to the bass). The students are then encouraged to try it themselves. Initially, the tempo of the play-along is set to a slow pace of 60 to 80 beats per minute (BPM) to accommodate the students’ first experience with this type of electronic accompaniment. The same procedures are then applied to the second musical score, “**Lazy Blues**” (a blues form in C key, see Appendix E). After all the practice, the teacher reviews the material covered in the first lesson and provides a recording of the play-along accompaniment for the students to practice at home.



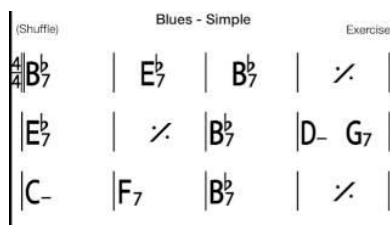


Figure 6. iReal Pro and its play-a-long

For more advanced students:

The teacher can introduce the C blues scale to the students, guiding them to practice it note by note. Following this, the students are directed to apply the procedures used in practicing the C major scale (as outlined in step 1) to practice simple improvisation on the C blues scale. This can be achieved by using various rhythm patterns and combinations. The teacher can accompany the students by playing the bass line and the chord progression of the 12-bar blues form in the key of C. Alternatively, the teacher can provide a play-along track in the key of C blues using the iReal Pro software for the students to practice independently.

Second lesson

The date of this lesson: Sunday, 3rd July 2022

The goal of this lesson:

1. Reviewing the contents in the last lesson and checking the completion of core learning tasks;
2. Introducing the C key blues scale and how to play it in swing style;
3. Using the notes in the C key blues scale to improvise with the accompaniment in iReal Pro;
4. Presenting Gentlemen Blues and Children Blues.

For every participant

Step 1 (takes approximately 15 minutes):

The teacher begins by reviewing the material covered in the previous lesson, focusing primarily on the students' improvisation on the C major scale. The goal is to assess whether they have mastered the four rhythm patterns and their combinations. The teacher then checks the students' understanding of the swing style and their proficiency in playing the two jazz songs, "Baby Blues" and "Lazy Blues." The teacher can initially practice with the students by playing the bass line and chords and using the electronic play-along feature in iReal Pro (at suggested tempos of 60 BPM, 80 BPM, and 100 BPM, depending on students' proficiency) to allow the students to practice independently. Some students may require additional guidance if they have not had sufficient practice time at home. "Baby Blues" can be considered mastered and need not be revisited in future lessons, while "Lazy Blues" must be reviewed in subsequent lessons.

Step 2 (takes approximately 20 minutes):

Upon completion of the previous lesson's learning tasks and ensuring all students have understood the concept of electric play-a-long, the teacher may proceed to the primary task of this lesson: blues scales. The teacher first presents the score of the C key blues scale (Figure 7), guiding students to locate each note on the piano. It would be advantageous if the teacher could provide one or two appropriate fingerings of the scale to facilitate practice. After several rounds of practice using the straight eighth note, students can then experiment with the swing rhythm. They can also employ the four rhythm patterns (trillo, surrounding note, dotted note, and triplet) and their combinations for step-by-step practice. Subsequently, the teacher introduces the electric play-a-long of the 12-bar blues form in C Key in iReal Pro (recommended tempo: 60 BPM). This allows students to practice the blues scale in C key and encourages them to improvise on the C key blues scale using the four rhythm patterns and their combinations. To enhance comprehension, the teacher should demonstrate how to improvise on the C key blues scale, explaining the use of each

of the four rhythm patterns and their combinations during improvisation. At this stage, students are advised to use only their right hands to practice the scale and improvisation. This approach is more convenient and accelerates the learning process when playing the piano.

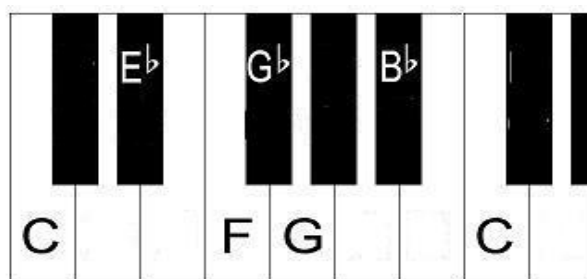


Figure 7. The blues scale in the C key

Step 3 (takes approximately 5 minutes):

The teacher provides students with two new pieces of blues music for home practice: “**Gentleman Blues**” (in the key of F, blues form, see Appendix E) and “**Children Blues**” (in the key of C, blues form, see Appendix E). Students are also encouraged to utilize the electric play-along feature of the 12-bar blues form in the keys of F and C on iReal Pro. This will enhance their musical abilities and provide experience in playing with a band or accompaniment. The teacher should first demonstrate these two songs, allowing parents to record the demonstration for their children to emulate and practice.

For more advanced students:

The teacher can guide students to identify all the notes in the blues scale in some commonly used and beginner-friendly keys, such as F, G, and B-flat (B \flat). This is not only because one of the new blues songs is in the key of F but also because blues music often varies in key. Students can further practice simple improvisation in these keys by following the procedures outlined in step 2.

Third lesson

The date of this lesson: Sunday, 10th July 2022

The goal of this lesson:

1. Reviewing the contents in the last lesson and checking the completion of core learning tasks;
2. Doing improvisation exercises together using the electric play-along;
3. Presenting Knife Blues.

Step 1 (takes approximately 20 minutes):

In this lesson, the teacher first reviews the students' understanding of the blues scale in the key of C, learned in the previous lesson. The teacher ensures that all students have thoroughly mastered the C key blues scale and the application of the four rhythm patterns within this scale. Next, the teacher assesses the students' practice of "Lazy Blues," "Gentleman Blues," and "Children Blues," both with and without the electric play-along feature in iReal Pro. Most students practice at tempos of 60 BPM and 80 BPM, but those who learn faster may use tempos of 100 BPM or even 120 BPM. If some students have practiced the two new songs using the straight eighth note at home, they may need guidance to switch to the swing rhythm. The teacher can help these students understand this by clapping the rhythm of the melody, singing the melody, and then practicing the melody on the piano using their right hands and the bass line using their left hands separately. The accompaniment of "Children Blues," played by the left hand, is composed of chords, which differs from the single-note bass line in the other two songs. Therefore, additional effort is required to practice this song. The teacher should remind students to pay attention to the unique right- and left-hand rhythm patterns in even-numbered bars (for example, the second bar). When practicing in swing rhythm, some students may play the right-hand note C with the left-hand chord together, but the chord should be played slightly later than the note C (as shown in Figure 8). These bars should be practiced repeatedly until the rhythm is correct. After this, the



teacher should encourage the students to play the two new songs in swing style using both hands. “Lazy Blues” can be passed, while “Gentleman Blues” and “Children Blues” must be reviewed in subsequent lessons.



Figure 8. The second bar of Children Blues

Step 2 (takes approximately 15 minutes):

The primary learning objective of this lesson is to familiarize students with simple improvisation in the 12-bar blues form in the key of C, using the notes of the C major scale and the four rhythm patterns. The teacher can guide students through improvisation exercises. For example, when using the electric play-along of the 12-bar blues in the key of C in iReal Pro, the teacher can play one or two bars of their own improvisation or jazz blues phrases, and then have the students echo the same notes and rhythm. After several rounds of this exercise, the teacher can encourage the students to try their own improvisation. By following and imitating the teacher’s improvisation, students can learn basic improvisation concepts and gain an initial understanding of the combination of blues notes and rhythm patterns. The teacher should ensure that the improvisation or jazz blues phrases they play in this section are **simple, concise, and easy** for students to follow. The teacher can start with one or two C blues notes with simple rhythm patterns and then use three or four blues notes with the four rhythm patterns (trillo, surrounding note, dotted note, and triplet) to create different combinations. The teacher can also encourage students to play the “improvise and imitate” game with their parents at home, with the students playing the teacher’s role and the parents imitating them.

Step 3 (takes approximately 5 minutes):

The teacher demonstrates the new song, “**Knife Blues**” (in the C key blues form, see Appendix E), and allows parents to record the demonstration for students to practice at home. The teacher should place particular emphasis on explaining the introductory (Figure 9) and ending (Figure 10) parts. These sections are more technical and complex than the others, requiring separate practice.

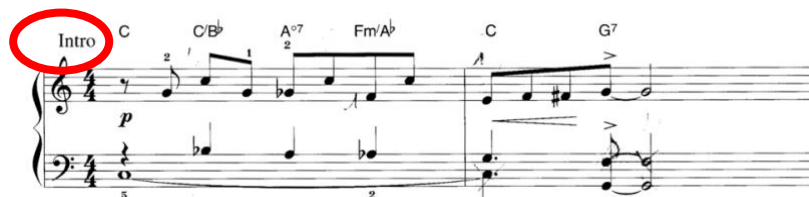


Figure 9. The intro part of Knife Blues

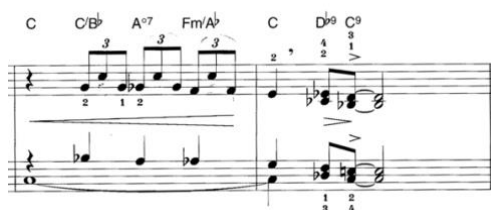


Figure 10. The ending part of Knife Blues

For more advanced students:

The teacher can allow the students to combine the previous blues songs (Lazy Blues) with the blues scale improvisation and practice them together. The order of the performance is as follows:

The main **melody**



The **improvisation** (any time of 12-bar blues form they want)



Back to the **melody** again

This performance order is commonly used in jazz performances. Students must use the electric play-a-long of 12-bar blues in the C key in iReal Pro during this practice to make the beat of their performance steadier.

Fourth lesson

The date of this lesson: Sunday, 17th July 2022

The goal of this lesson:

1. Reviewing the “Improvise and Imitate” exercise and blues songs learned in the previous lessons;
2. Introducing a new improvisation strategy of using one to three notes from the C ket blues scale;
3. Checking the practice of Knife Blues.

Step 1 (takes approximately 20 minutes):

The teacher assesses the students’ understanding in the third lesson, focusing on the “Improvise and Imitate” exercise. Initially, the teacher guides the students to mimic the one- or two-bar improvisation, as practiced in the lesson. Subsequently, the roles are reversed, allowing the students to improvise first, followed by the teacher imitating their improvisation. After several rounds of this exercise, the students are encouraged to attempt a more extensive improvisation using the complete C blues form under the teacher’s guidance. The teacher then reviews the two songs introduced in the second lesson, Gentleman Blues and Children Blues. The teacher initially plays the accompaniment part, followed by the use of the electric play-a-long. If the students can perform these songs without significant errors, they are considered proficient. However, if they struggle, the teacher advises them to practice at home and reassesses their performance in the subsequent lesson.

Step 2 (takes approximately 10 minutes):

The lesson continues with the introduction of a new improvisation strategy. Initially, the students are asked to improvise using only one note from the C key blues scale, a technique referred to as “one-note improvisation.” The teacher demonstrates this once, after which the students practice using the 12-bar blues form. Although this exercise allows for the creation of various rhythm patterns, the sound may be monotonous given the use of a single note. To add variety, the students then practice “two-note improvisation,” using two notes from the C key blues scale. This exercise increases the possibilities for rhythm and note combinations. The process is repeated for “three-note improvisation” and “four-note improvisation.” However, using more than four notes may be overwhelming for the students, so it is not recommended. The teacher’s demonstration and the use of the electric play-a-long are integral to the entire process.

Step 3 (takes approximately 10 minutes):

The teacher allows students to perform the newly introduced song, “Knife Blues,” mentioned in the last lesson, without any accompaniment, ensuring that the notes and rhythm are accurate. Once the students have mastered the piece, the teacher adds the accompaniment part, which includes the bass line and chords, and may also use an electronic play-along for accompaniment. Toward the end of the lesson, students are encouraged to preview another new song at home, “**Spring Blues**” (in C key blues form, see Appendix E). This blues song is more complex than previous ones, as it uses triplets to form the main melody, with an incomplete triplet (the third beat of the triplet, see Figure 11) at the beginning of almost every bar. Students are advised to practice the right- and left-hand parts separately to standardize the rhythm. After explaining the complexities, the teacher demonstrates this song and allows parents to record the demonstration for home practice.

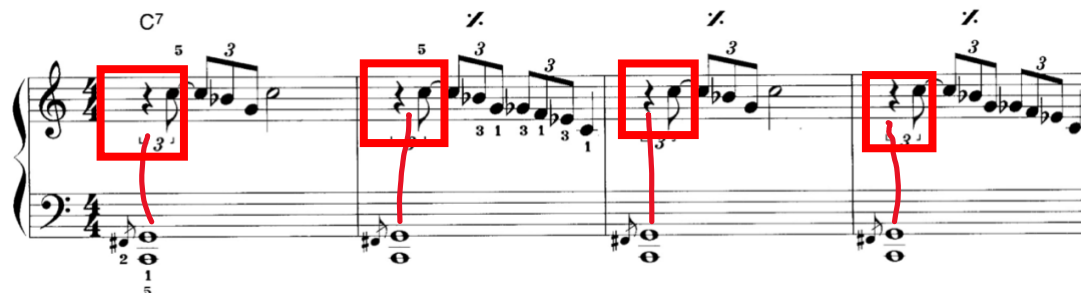


Figure 11. The incomplete triplet in Spring Blues

For more advanced students:

The teacher may then request students to perform “Children Blues” and “Knife Blues” (both in C key blues form) in the order discussed in the previous lesson: melody, improvisation, and melody. Students can choose to use either the teacher’s accompaniment or the electronic play-along. Subsequently, the teacher provides a list of jazz blues riffs (see Appendix E) for practice. These riffs, selected by the author, include 12 short jazz phrases commonly used by many jazz performers. Some are so popular that they can be heard in blues improvisations almost everywhere. The teacher demonstrates several of these riffs and guides students to practice them repeatedly with the electronic play-along of 12-bar blues in the C key. As most of the short riffs are written in two bars, students can practice each riff six times in one 12-bar blues form at home.

Fifth lesson

The date of this lesson: Sunday, 24th July 2022

The goal of this lesson:

1. Reviewing the improvisation strategy and blues songs learned in the previous lessons;
2. Introducing Spring Blues;
3. Learning some simple but commonly used jazz improvisation phrases;
4. Presenting Turtle Blues and Boogie Woogie style for home practice.

Step 1 (takes approximately 25 minutes):

The teacher reviews the students' understanding of the blues songs in the fourth lesson that have not yet been mastered. The teacher ensures that students have proficiently learned all the blues songs from previous lessons, both with and without accompaniment from the teacher and the electric play-a-long. These songs include Lazy Blues, Gentleman Blues, Children Blues, and Knife Blues. Some students may struggle with Knife Blues, requiring additional practice time.

The teacher then introduces a new song, Spring Blues. As a preparatory exercise, students first practice the descending part of the C key blues scale in triplet form, which forms the melody of this song. The teacher follows the same teaching procedures as in previous lessons once students are familiar with the melody.

Step 2 (takes approximately 10 minutes):

The teacher then introduces a new song, Spring Blues. As a preparatory exercise, students first practice the descending part of the C key blues scale in triplet form, which forms the melody of this song. The teacher follows the same teaching procedures as in previous lessons once students are familiar with the melody. The teacher emphasizes the importance of improvisation in 12-bar blues and provides students with simple, commonly used jazz phrases that are similar to the riffs given to faster learners. These jazz phrases, primarily based on two to four C key blues notes with various rhythm combinations, are designed to be repeatable during improvisation. This teaching strategy is challenging for students and the teacher, necessitating advanced preparation of these jazz phrases by the teacher.

Step 3 (takes approximately 5 minutes):

The teacher also introduces another new song, Turtle Boogie (a 16-bar F key boogie, Appendix E), and allows parents to record the demonstration for home practice. Although Turtle Boogie is a

blues-style song, it differs from previous songs as its left-hand part comprises more notes with fixed rhythm patterns, specifically one of the Boogie Woogie rhythm patterns (Figure 12). The teacher provides some background information about Boogie Woogie.



Figure 12. The rhythm pattern of the left-hand part of Turtle Blues

For more advanced students:

Students are encouraged to practice the 12 jazz riffs from the last lesson and incorporate one or two of them into their improvisation. The teacher demonstrates this process and lets students try it out. The teacher then introduces **Bossa Nova**, which will be a focus for faster learners in upcoming lessons. It includes the basic rhythm patterns for the right- and left-hand parts of Bossa Nova (see Figures 13 and 14), including representative songs of the Bossa Nova style. Students are asked to practice the basic rhythm patterns of Bossa Nova's right and left-hand parts at home by clapping their hands. The students are then instructed to practice these basic rhythm patterns at home, clapping their hands to mimic the right- and left-hand parts of Bossa Nova separately.



Figure 13. The basic rhythm pattern of the right-hand part of Bossa Nova



Figure 14. The basic rhythm pattern of the left-hand part of Bossa Nova

The group lesson

The date of this lesson: Sunday, 31st July 2022

The goal of this lesson:

This lesson, which is scheduled between the fifth and sixth lessons, aims to foster communication and peer learning among students. It provides an opportunity for students to showcase and perform what they have learned in the preceding five individual lessons. Details of this group lesson will be communicated to the students in advance to facilitate preparation.

Step 1 (takes approximately 60 minutes):

Students are required to choose one jazz song they have previously learned, such as Lazy Blues, Gentleman Blues, Children Blues, Knife Blues, or Spring Blues, and perform it before all participants, including their parents. Both the teacher and fellow participants are expected to provide feedback on each performance. Students have the option to perform the complete order of performance (melody, improvisation, and melody) or play the melody and improvisation separately, as some may not have learned the complete performance order. After each performance, the teacher can initiate a discussion by asking other students to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the performance. Parents, despite potentially lacking an understanding of jazz and improvisation, are encouraged to share their impressions of each performance. This feedback process helps performers and other students understand what aspects of their performance should be retained and what areas need improvement.

Step 2 (takes approximately 30 minutes):

The teacher will invite students who have advanced more quickly to demonstrate additional learning tasks, such as playing different keys of the blues scale (G key, F key, and B-flat key), improvising on these keys, practicing and applying the 12 short riffs from the list of jazz blues riffs, and playing the basic rhythm pattern of Bossa Nova. The teacher will explain each task as



the student demonstrates it and encourage other students to try it afterward. If students express interest in these additional tasks and wish to practice them at home, the teacher can provide the necessary learning materials. However, students should be informed that these tasks are challenging and optional, and they should practice them according to their own musical abilities.

Step 3 (takes approximately 30 minutes):

The teacher will also invite all students to participate in an improvisation game called “trade eights, trade fours, and trade twos” using the 12-bar blues form in the C key and its corresponding play-along cycle in iReal Pro. This game is a variation of “trade fours,” a common form of performance in jazz improvisation used by jazz bands with drummers, pianists, horn players, and guitarists. In “trade fours,” band members take turns improvising four measures, often alternating with the drums. This can be extended to “trade eights” or reduced to “trade twos” depending on the desired length of the improvisation. The teacher will start with “trade eights,” improvising the first eight bars on the piano before passing it to the next student. This process will continue until every student has had several turns at improvisation. The game will then proceed to “trade fours” and finally “trade twos.” This game allows students to learn directly from each other by observing and incorporating others’ improvisation techniques into their own performances. By combining the music game with the traditional jazz performance form, students can have fun when learning new jazz blues phrases from others in the group teaching.

Sixth lesson

The date of this lesson: Sunday, 7th August 2022

The goal of this lesson:

1. Reviewing blues songs in the fifth lesson;

2. Introducing Turtle Blues;
3. Using different strategies introduced in the previous lessons to do improvisation;
4. Performing one blues song and improvising at least once using the electric play-a-long, following the traditional order of jazz performance
5. Presenting September Swing Boogie and the new style of bass line.

Step 1 (takes approximately 20 minutes):

The teacher reviews the students' understanding in the fifth lesson, particularly focusing on the blues songs, "Knife Blues" and "Spring Blues," which some students may struggle with. It is common for students to play the blues melody at an inconsistent tempo when not using the electric play-a-long. To improve their sense of tempo and rhythm, the teacher encourages them to clap the rhythm, sing the melody, and play the accompaniment part simultaneously. While some students may struggle to play "Spring Blues" at a fast tempo, this is understandable given the song's complexity, as discussed in the fourth lesson. The teacher can consider the songs mastered when the students can accurately play the notes and rhythm at any tempo. The teacher then introduces a new song, "Turtle Boogie," and instructs the students to practice the left-hand part first to ensure they understand the basic rhythm pattern of this new jazz style. Once the left-hand part is correct, students can combine it with the right-hand part. The teacher should remind them to pay attention to all the syncopations in the right-hand part while maintaining the regular rhythm of the left-hand part. These syncopations add complexity to the song (Figure 15).



Figure 15. Some of the syncopations in the right-hand part of Turtle Blues

Step 2 (takes approximately 15 minutes):

The teacher also guides students in improvising in the key of C blues, asking them to reflect on what they learned from the group lesson. Some students may continue to use the C blues scale in their improvisation without varying the order of notes or rhythm combinations. To address this, the teacher can suggest improvisation techniques such as using triplets, repeating a short phrase with two or three blues notes, and creating variations based on the original melody. By demonstrating these strategies and allowing students to imitate them, the teacher can gradually enhance their improvisation skills. This guidance is necessary in every lesson to ensure students are progressing in their improvisation. The teacher may record short clips of the students' performances, including the melody and improvisation parts, for research purposes. In this lesson, all students are expected to follow the traditional order of jazz performance (melody, improvisation, melody) and choose one blues song to perform at least once using the electric play-a-long. The teacher should record the entire performance.

Step 3 (takes approximately 5 minutes):

The teacher demonstrates the next song, “**September Swing Boogie**” (a C key boogie in standard 12-bar blues form, Appendix E), which is also a Boogie Woogie style song. Parents are encouraged to record the demonstration for students to review and practice at home. As the left-hand part introduces a new style of bass line (Figure 16), the teacher guides students to practice two or four bars at the end of the lesson to ensure they can play this basic rhythm pattern correctly.



Figure 16. The bass line (left-hand part) of September Swing Boogie

For more advanced students:

The teacher first verifies the students' mastery of the fundamental Bossa Nova rhythm pattern to ensure its accuracy. This involves examining the right-hand part, the left-hand part, and the complete rhythm played with both hands, each assessed individually. Once the students demonstrate proficiency, the teacher introduces "Autumn Leaves," a renowned jazz standard song in the Bossa Nova style. The students are provided with a jazz piano score of this song (Appendix E), which has been rearranged and transcribed by Prof. He, a jazz piano tutor and professor at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. This version adheres to the traditional sequence of jazz performance, encompassing an introduction, melody, improvisation, melody, and ending. Prof. He has infused the improvisation section with his unique ideas and improvisation strategies, offering a learning opportunity for the students. Subsequently, the teacher performs the entire song, highlighting and demonstrating all the challenging aspects. The students are given suggestions for home practice, such as practicing the right- and left-hand parts separately, working on them section by section, and repeatedly practicing the difficult parts. Additionally, the teacher provides an electronic play-along of "Autumn Leaves" in iReal Pro, enabling students to practice both the melody and improvisation sections.

Seventh lesson

The date of this lesson: Sunday, 14th August 2022

The goal of this lesson:

1. Reviewing unmastered blues songs;
2. Introducing September Swing Boogie;
3. Choosing one song as the final concert piece;

4. Learning to apply the left-hand parts of boogie songs to other blues songs;
5. Presenting Rain in July Boogie and introducing the Walking Bass line in this song.

Step 1 (takes approximately 15 minutes):

The teacher first reviews the blues songs that were not mastered in the previous lesson, ensuring that all students have understood the six blues songs previously taught. The focus then shifts to “Turtle Boogie,” with students practicing the left-hand part to solidify the song’s basic rhythm pattern. The teacher can play the accompaniment while students practice the right-hand part. After practicing each part separately, students are encouraged to play both hands together. Next, the teacher introduces a new song, “September Swing Boogie,” and encourages students to perform it with both hands. If students struggle, they are advised to practice the left-hand and right-hand parts separately.

Step 2 (takes approximately 20 minutes):

Students are then asked to select one of the jazz songs taught in the previous lesson to perform in the final concert. They are guided to perform this song using the electric play-a-long and follow the order of jazz performance. The teacher records these performances and compares them with those from the last lesson, encouraging students to identify their improvements and areas for development by comparing the two recordings. The teacher then guides students to practice improvisation in the C key blues form several times using the electric play-a-long. Another method of practicing boogie and blues songs is introduced. Given that the left-hand parts of boogie songs are more complex than those of blues songs, students are instructed to apply the left-hand parts of boogie songs to other blues songs by changing the accompaniment style of blues songs into a boogie style. For instance, students can combine the melody part (right-hand part) of “Lazy Blues” with the accompaniment part (left-hand part) of “September Swing Boogie” (Figure 17) to

form a new song, as they are both in the same C key. The teacher can also encourage students to use this strategy to practice other blues songs and boogie-style songs in the C key or even in other keys, such as applying the bass line of September Swing Boogie (in C key) into Turtle Blues (in G key) by modulating the C key bass line into G key. This strategy can also be used in the practice of other jazz songs with similar styles.



Figure 17. The combination of the melody part of Lazy Blues and the accompaniment part of September Swing Boogie

Step 3 (takes approximately 5 minutes):

The teacher demonstrates the last new song of this series of lessons, Rain in July Boogie (C key blues in standard 12-bar blues form, Appendix E). Parents are encouraged to record this demonstration, enabling students to practice the piece at home. This song features an introductory and concluding section (refer to Figure 18), similar to the structure of “Knife Blues.” This provides an opportunity for the teacher to draw comparisons between the two pieces, highlighting common elements found in the introductions and conclusions of blues and boogie-style songs. A significant aspect of “Rain in July Boogie” is the left-hand accompaniment (see Figure 19), which employs a traditional bass line known as the **“Walking Bass”** in jazz music. This style, characterized by a regular quarter-note movement, mimics the rhythmic alternation of footsteps during a walk. It is a common technique used by bass players in jazz ensembles.



Figure 18. The intro and the ending of Rain in July Boogie



Figure 19. The bass line of Rain in July Boogie

For more advanced students:

The teacher can provide feedback on the students' full performance of "Autumn Leaves," offering suggestions for improvement in areas such as the basic rhythm pattern, the main melody, and the improvisation section. Given that the improvisation concepts in Bossa Nova songs differ significantly from those in blues songs, students need not improvise in "Autumn Leaves." Instead, they can practice the improvisation section composed by Prof. He, ensuring they understand the basic rhythm pattern of Bossa Nova and this particular song. To stimulate interest in improvisational music and further develop their improvisation skills, the teacher can inquire about the students' favorite pop songs and whether they would like to perform them on the piano. If so, the teacher can guide them in playing the main melody and the accompaniment part of one of their favorite pop songs. The teacher can then provide the chord progression of the pop song for students to practice improvisation at home, using the techniques and strategies learned in previous lessons. It may be easier for students to improvise on a song with which they are familiar.

However, during the practice of this pop song, students should refrain from using or searching for the music scores of the song. Given the provided chord progression, they should

listen to the song repeatedly to accurately reproduce the melody on the piano. This approach can significantly enhance their music listening skills and even their transcription abilities, which are crucial in jazz learning. The teacher should guide them through one section of the song step by step, allowing them to complete the rest at home.

Eighth lesson

The date of this lesson: Sunday, 21st August 2022

The goal of this lesson:

1. Reviewing unmastered boogie songs;
2. Playing the improvisation game, called “trade eights, trade fours, and trade twos”;
3. Practicing the final concert piece in its entirety.

Step 1 (takes approximately 20 minutes):

The lesson begins with the teacher reviewing the first two boogie-style songs, Turtle Boogie and September Swing Boogie, before shifting focus to the new song, Rain in July Boogie. The teacher ensures that students can accurately play the introduction, ending, walking bass line, and melody without the aid of the electronic play-along or teacher’s accompaniment. Once students can perform the song independently, the teacher provides accompaniment, eventually transitioning to the electronic play-along for further practice. Mastery of this song allows the teacher to guide students in applying the walking bass line to other blues or boogie-style songs, following the procedures outlined in the previous lesson.

Step 2 (takes approximately 10 minutes):

To enhance students’ improvisation skills, the teacher engages them in a “trade eights, trade fours, and trade twos” game, commonly used in group teaching. As this is the final lesson in

the teaching plan, students are not expected to make significant changes to their improvisation style. Instead, the teacher provides hints and advice for future consideration.

Step 3 (takes approximately 10 minutes):

Students are then asked to perform their chosen song for the final concert in its entirety. This performance is recorded for research purposes. Post-performance, the teacher provides feedback and instructs students on stage etiquette, such as bowing upon entering and exiting the stage, continuing to perform despite any mistakes, and maintaining the beat and tempo by listening to the electronic play-along. The lesson concludes with a summary of the jazz learning series and an opportunity for students to ask questions related to their jazz learning and songs.

For more advanced students:

The teacher reviews the students' performance of the pop song chosen for improvisation in the previous lesson, offering assistance in rearranging it if necessary. Areas of focus may include the introduction, ending, accompaniment, and the transition between the melody and improvisation. After the rearrangement, students have the option to select an additional song for the final concert from their extra learning tasks. This could be a short jazz blues riff, Prof. He's version of Autumn Leaves, a favorite pop song, or other jazz songs learned independently. Students are encouraged to submit videos of their performances for unfinished extra tasks to the teacher for feedback at any time following the conclusion of the lessons.

Final concert

The date of the final concert: Sunday, 28th August 2022

The concert, scheduled to take place at the Xin Le Music Training Center, aims to showcase the progress and achievements of the participants throughout the series of lessons. It also seeks to

demonstrate the potential for jazz learning and improvisation among Chinese children. The concert was live-streamed on WeChat, expanding the audience to include music learners and educators from across the country, in addition to the students, parents, and teachers at the Xin Le Music Training Center. To ensure a successful concert, the teacher conducted several rehearsals one or two days prior. The order of performances, determined by the complexity of the chosen songs, was established in advance and adhered to during both the rehearsals and the concert. The teacher, who is also the author, hosted the concert, providing introductions and explanations for each jazz and pop song, the electronic play-along used in the performance, and other relevant details to enhance audience understanding and enjoyment. The concert concluded with all students participating in the “trade eights, trade fours, and trade twos” game on stage, further promoting exposure to jazz music and improvisation ideas among the Chinese population. The outcomes of the learning process and details of the actual final concert were presented in the subsequent chapter for data analysis.

3.4.1.2 The teaching materials

The teaching materials for this research include music scores used in the teaching plan, short jazz blues riffs, and a list of pop songs learned by the participants. The music scores, selected and edited by the author, comprise six blues songs (Baby Blues, Lazy Blues, Gentleman Blues, Children Blues, Knife Blues, and Spring Blues), three boogie-style songs (Turtle Boogie, September Swing Boogie, and Rain in July Boogie), one Bossa Nova song (Prof. He’s version of Autumn Leaves), and one standard jazz song (Lullaby of Birdland, rearranged and written by the author). The 12 short jazz blues riffs were sourced from William T. Eveleth’s book, “Blues, Jazz,



and Rock Riffs” (Eveleth, 1993). The list of pop songs includes eight pieces composed or performed by various Chinese pop singers, all chosen by the participants based on their interests:

The Blue and White Porcelain, The Red Dust Inn, and The Rice Fragrant, composed and sung by Jay Chow,

The Wind Rises, sang by Wu Tsing Fong,

The Daylily Flower, sang by Zhang Xiaofei,

The Big Fish, sang by Zhou Shen,

Wishes, sang by Faye Wong,

The Lone Brave, sang by Eason Chan Yick Shun.

3.4.2 Interview

To find out the answers to the third and the fifth research questions, the author used short interviews (Question & Answer) during each lesson to let participants as well as their parents reflect on the situation and the quality of self-practice and learning when participants practice at home. The main short interview question is related to the duration and the frequency of at-home practice. The interview questions, which are included in Appendix A, were designed by the author based on Richardson (2022), the research questions of this study, and the concerns regarding the quality of participants’ jazz teaching. Five interview questions were posed before the first lesson and five after the eighth lesson. The main interview questions asked both before and after jazz learning are as follow:

1. What do you (your child) think is jazz music?
2. What do you (your child) think is improvisation?

The follow-up questions which were asked before jazz learning are as follow:

1. Have you (your child) ever listened to jazz music? If so, what was the name or style of the music?
2. Have you (your child) ever played jazz music? If so, what was the name of the song? Who is the writer of the music?
3. How do you (your child) find jazz music different from other music (such as classical music)?

The follow up questions which were asked after jazz learning are as follow:

1. How do you (your child) feel about jazz and improvisation learning? What is your favorite (least favorite) part? Why?
2. How has your (your child's) musical knowledge and performance ability changed after learning jazz? Please tell me the changes.
3. Did you (your child) learn anything different about jazz music than you did about classical music? If so, tell me what you got.

The author invited the eleven participants and their parents to participate in the interviews. The participants primarily answered the questions in Chinese, with their parents assisting if they did not understand the question or were unsure how to respond. This is why the parents were also invited to the interviews. Therefore, the eleven children were the main participants who answered interview questions and their parents assisted during interviews and provided supplementary information and statements which children forgot to say. The responses were recorded, and the data was collected and translated into English by the author for data analysis.

3.4.3 Questionnaire

The questionnaires were designed to analyze and reach the answer to the main and the sixth research questions. The questionnaire, found in Appendix B, was designed by the author based on the “Musical Child Questionnaire” (Buren, Müllensiefen, Roeske, & Degé, 2021) and the “Creativity Styles Questionnaire” (Kumar & Holman, 1997). The musical ability section of the questionnaire was adopted from the “Musical Child Questionnaire” because of its successful assessment of musical ability in children and its strong correlation with the main and sixth research questions of this study. The creativity section was adopted from the “Creativity Styles Questionnaire” as some questions were suitable for assessing children’s creativity and correlated with the main and sixth research questions of this study.

A Chinese version of the questionnaire was provided for the participants and their parents to complete together. The author encouraged the eleven children to answer the questions independently first, then seek help from their parents if needed. The questionnaire was designed on a professional Chinese questionnaire design website, Wenjuan Net, and distributed through a WeChat group that the parents joined prior to the first lesson. The participants completed the questionnaire twice, once before the first lesson and again after the last lesson, with the assistance of their parents at home. Their responses were recorded on Wenjuan Net, and the data was collected and translated into English by the author for data analysis.

3.5 Data analysis

The author used comparative analysis as the main analytical approach to compare the differences between the data collected from the interviews and questionnaires which were conducted before and after the teaching plans. Comparative analysis is a way to look at two or more similar things to see how they are different and what they have in common. Comparative

analysis is important if the researcher wants to understand a problem better or find answers to important questions. It is used in many ways and fields to help people understand the similarities and differences between products better (Liza, 2024). The answers of interviews were presented in detail in the next chapter. The author focused on analyzing the changes in the main interview questions before and after the teaching plan, and comparing answers of follow up questions provided by participants. Then, he categorized the changes in the responses to the interviews before and after jazz learning into different areas for further discussion. The data of each questionnaire question was presented in the next chapter. The author mainly did some comparisons between average scores of all the questions in the pre- and post- interview to find out the increases and decreases in the average scores of each response. The Changes in each average score were used for the discussion in the subsequent chapter.

The data of each lesson and the final concert was presented in detail in the next chapter. The author connected and compared these details with the status of completion of core tasks and extra tasks of each participant to analyze their learning outcomes and the differences in their learning outcomes. The information collected in Table 1 was also used to analyze the correlations between learning outcomes and the basic music knowledge and piano performance skills of each participant. After observing the video recordings, the author mainly focused on analyzing the improvisation part of each video clip to find out the skills and strategies used by each participant. These learning outcomes, the differences in the learning outcomes, and improvisation strategies of each participant can also be used as the data to discuss the main and sixth research questions.

3.6 Triangulation and Reliability

Triangulation refers to findings going in a similar direction. However, it is unlikely that the multiple methods used for this study would produce findings converging on the same point of true reality (Denscombe, 2007). Obtaining a more complete view by using triangulation can give more confidence in research findings (Denscombe, 2007). For this research, data was triangulated by using multiple data sources to “build a coherent justification for themes” (Creswell, 2009).

The two piano tutors, Mr. Xiang and Ms. Zheng, from Xin Le Music training Center helped improve the reliability of this study because they were the principle teachers of the eleven participants and knew the basic information and music ability of these children better and more comprehensive than the researcher. They were invited to assist the author during the conduction of the first lesson in the jazz teaching plan and the final concert. Moreover, they checked the questions in interviews and questionnaires and made sure that all questions were appropriate for their pupils and all these participants were able to offer their ideas and answers to interviews and questionnaires. What’s more, to make this research more trustworthy, four Chinese jazz educators, Prof. He, Mr. Zhou and Mr. Wan from Shanghai Conservatory of Music and Ms. Ding from Zhejiang Conservatory of Music, were invited to watch the final concert. All of them made some comments on participants’ learning outcomes and improvisation after the final concert. Mr. Wan was invited and was also willing to make some further comments and more detailed analysis of each participant’s performance, improvisation and learning outcomes, and the teacher’s jazz teaching outcomes.

3.7 Summary

An action plan was used in conjunction with interviews, questionnaires and video observation. The action plan was designed to bring a fresh new way of music education to the

eleven Chinese children. The interviews, questionnaires and video observation explored the differences in music ability and creativity of participants before and after the action plan to produce indepth understandings and contribute to knowledge of the individual, group or organization.

The data, the data analysis and the findings of the action plan, interviews, questionnaires and video observation will be presented in the next chapter.



Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the jazz learning experiences of each participant involved in the teaching plan. It includes reflections, findings, and data derived from interviews, questionnaires, and video recordings of the participants' performances. The chapter is structured into four primary sections: the teaching plan, the interviews, the questionnaires, and the video clips. The analysis of the data and findings is presented on a lesson-by-lesson and question-by-question basis within each section.

All individual and group lessons, including the final concert, were successfully conducted in accordance with the teaching plan. Furthermore, all interviews and questionnaires were completed by the participants and their parents without any issues. Notably, no participant expressed a desire to withdraw at any point during the research process.

4.2 The reflection on the conduction of the teaching plan

4.2.1 Participants' jazz learning outcomes and teacher's reflection on his jazz teaching

The following tables show the details of each participant's jazz learning in core tasks, including 1. Blues scales, 2. Swing rhythm, 3. Blues songs, 4. Boogie-style songs and 5. improvisation, and extra tasks, including 6. short jazz blues riffs learning and their usage, 7. Bossa Nova and Autumn Leaves learning and 8. bop song learning. The teacher's reflection on the jazz learning of each participant is presented below each table and there is the teacher's reflection on the final concert at the end of this section as well.

Table 2. The status of completion of core tasks and extra tasks of participant no. 1

1 Completed blues scales in C, G and F.	2 Completed very well.	3 Completed all six blues songs.	4 Completed all three boogie-style songs.
5 Can use jazz phrases learned in the lessons freely and skillfully and can also create his own jazz phrases by using some interesting basic rhythm patterns when improving.	6 Comprehended all twelve jazz riffs and can apply them to his own improvisation by directly using some of them and combining some of them with his own jazz phrases.	7 Can play the basic rhythm pattern of Bossa Nova and the melody part of Autumn Leaves. With more practice time after the teaching plan, he can complete the whole song.	8 Comprehended one of the pop songs, The Lone Brave, and can do some simple improvisation based on the chord progression provided by the teacher.

Participant no. 1 demonstrated exceptional performance in both the lessons and the concert. Prior to the jazz lessons, he had played two jazz songs using music scores and could respond promptly to the teacher, completing most of the tasks during the lesson. His dedication was evident as he willingly spent ample time practicing lesson tasks at home. Consequently, he mastered all the core tasks and most of the additional tasks, except for “Autumn Leaves.” His jazz blues improvisation was particularly noteworthy, featuring innovative ideas such as the use of triplets and a combination of jazz riffs with his own phrases. He selected “Rain in July Boogie” and “The Lone Brave” (with improvisation) for his concert performances.

Table 3. The status of completion of core tasks and extra tasks of participant no. 2

1	2	3	4
Completed the C blues scale.	Can play it correctly and can do better with more practice time.	Completed all six blues songs.	Completed all three boogie-style songs.
5	6	7	8
Can do some simple but changeable improvisation based on her jazz learning and can also imitate the jazz phrases learned from the teacher and played by other participants.	Did not have spare time to learn this part.	Did not have spare time to learn this part.	Could play one of the pop songs, The Blue and White Porcelain but did not have spare time to learn and do improvisation.

Participant no. 2, despite having no prior experience with jazz, proved to be a quick learner. She dedicated her spare time to practicing the lessons and demonstrated a knack for imitating jazz phrases, especially repeated and jazzy riffs. She successfully completed all the core tasks and even managed to learn a pop song without improvisation in her extra learning tasks. Her concert selections were “September Swing Boogie” and “The Blue and White Porcelain” (without improvisation).

Table 4. The status of completion of core tasks and extra tasks of participant no. 3

1	2	3	4
Completed blues scales in C, G, F and B \flat .	Completed very well.	Completed all six blues songs.	Completed all three boogie-style songs.
5	6	7	8
Can use jazz phrases learned in the lessons freely and skillfully and can also create his own jazz phrases by using some interesting basic rhythm patterns when improving. However, more effort is needed to make the rhythm of his improvisation not too free and follow the beat of the music.	Completed all twelve jazz riffs and can apply them to his own improvisation by directly using some of them and combining some of them with his own jazz phrases.	Completed the basic rhythm pattern of Bossa Nova and completed all the parts of Autumn Leaves, including the intro part, the melody part, the improvisation part and the ending part.	Completed one of the pop songs, The Red Dust Inn, and can do some simple improvisation based on the chord progression provided by the teacher.

Participant no. 3 exhibited a strong understanding of jazz and pop music, likely because of his habit of listening to various types of music daily. He had previously played several jazz songs using music scores and was even capable of transcribing and playing the melody part of some pop songs without a music score. He quickly grasped all the core tasks and completed all the extra tasks to a high standard. Despite occasional instability in his tempo during improvisation, he made significant improvements with the teacher's guidance. His performance of the basic rhythm pattern

of Bossa Nova and the complete version of “Autumn Leaves” was commendable, and he even assisted the teacher in demonstrating this extra learning task in the group lesson. His concert selections were “Autumn Leaves,” “Lullaby of Birdland,” and “The Red Dust Inn” (with improvisation).

Table 5. The status of completion of core tasks and extra tasks of participant no. 4

1	2	3	4
Completed blues scales in C, G and F.	Completed very well.	Completed all six blues songs.	Completed all three boogie-style songs.
5	6	7	8
Can use jazz phrases learned in the lessons freely and skillfully and can also create her own jazz phrases by using some interesting basic rhythm patterns when improving.	Completed all twelve jazz riffs and can apply them to his own improvisation by directly using some of them and combining some of them with his own jazz phrases.	Can play the basic rhythm pattern of Bossa Nova and the melody part of Autumn Leaves. With more practice time after the teaching plan, she can complete the whole song.	Completed one of the pop songs, The Rice Fragrant, and can do some simple improvisation based on the chord progression provided by the teacher.

Participant no. 4’s situation and learning outcomes were similar to those of Participant no. 1. She had an excellent foundation in classical music and pop songs, but her improvisation skills needed further development. More effort was required to combine different basic rhythm patterns

and form new rhythms. Her concert selections were “Rain in July Boogie” and “The Rice Fragrant” (with improvisation).

Table 6. The status of completion of core tasks and extra tasks of participant no. 5

1	2	3	4
Completed the blues scale in C.	Can play it correctly and can do better with more practice time.	Can play all six blues songs correctly.	Can play Turtle Boogie and September Swing Boogie correctly but need more time to practice Rain in July Boogie.
5	6	7	8
Can do some simple improvisation based on his jazz learning and can also imitate the jazz phrases learned from the teacher. However, more effort is needed to make the improvisation more changeable and fruitful.	Did not have spare time to learn this part.	Did not have spare time to learn this part.	Did not have spare time to learn this part.

Participant no. 5, who had no prior experience with jazz and was new to learning music outside of classical music, showed a quick response to the teacher during the lesson. Despite not having spare time to learn extra tasks, he was willing to spend enough time practicing blues songs and boogie-style songs to meet the requirements of the core tasks. His improvisation was simple, but he learned several interesting jazz phrases from the teacher and consistently used them in certain bars during improvisation, demonstrating a good improvisation strategy. He chose “Knife Blues” as his concert song.

Table 7. The status of completion of core tasks and extra tasks of participant no. 6

1	2	3	4
Completed the blues scale in C.	Can play it correctly and can do better with more practice time.	Can play all six blues songs correctly.	Can play Turtle Boogie and September Swing Boogie correctly but need more time to practice Rain in July Boogie.
5	6	7	8
Can do some simple improvisation based on her jazz learning and can also imitate the jazz phrases learned from the teacher. However, more effort is needed to make the improvisation more changeable and fruitful.	Did not have spare time to learn this part.	Did not have spare time to learn this part.	Did not have spare time to learn this part.

Participant no. 6's situation was akin to that of Participant no. 5. She learned a repeated triplet jazz blues riff from the teacher and understood its application during improvisation. However, her improvisation was not as proficient as Participant no. 5's. This was because of her lack of equipment to play the electric play-a-long provided by the teacher for home practice, resulting in less effective practice sessions. Consequently, she relied heavily on repeated notes of the C key blues scale without any rhythm changes or combinations in her improvisation. She did not have spare time to learn extra tasks. Her concert selection was "Lazy Blues."

Table 8. The status of completion of core tasks and extra tasks of participant no. 7

1	2	3	4
Completed the blues scale in C.	Can play it correctly and can do better with more practice time.	Can play all six blues songs correctly.	Can play Turtle Boogie and September Swing Boogie correctly but need more time to practice Rain in July Boogie.
5	6	7	8
Can do some simple but changeable improvisation based on her jazz learning and can also imitate the jazz phrases learned from the teacher and played by other participants.	Did not have spare time to learn this part.	Did not have spare time to learn this part.	Could play one of the pop songs, The Daylily Flower but did not have spare time to learn and do improvisation.

Participant no. 7's situation and learning outcomes were similar to those of Participant no. 2. Although her learning pace was slower than Participant no. 2's, she exhibited excellent improvisation ideas and a good sense of tempo. She also used combinations of different basic rhythm patterns. Additionally, she spent some spare time learning the main melody and the accompaniment of a pop song she favored. Her concert selections were "Children Blues" and "The Daylily Flower" (without improvisation).

Table 9. The status of completion of core tasks and extra tasks of participant no. 8

1	2	3	4
Completed the blues scale in C.	Can play it correctly and can do better with more practice time.	Can play all six blues songs correctly.	Can play Turtle Boogie and September Swing Boogie correctly but need more time to practice Rain in July Boogie.
5	6	7	8
Can do some simple improvisation based on her jazz learning and can also imitate the jazz phrases learned from the teacher. However, more effort is needed to make the improvisation more changeable and fruitful.	Did not have spare time to learn this part.	Did not have spare time to learn this part.	Could play one of the pop songs, The Big Fish but did not have spare time to learn and do improvisation.

Participant no. 8's situation and learning outcomes were similar to those of Participant no. 7. The usage of notes and combinations of basic rhythm patterns in her improvisation was also similar to that of Participant no. 7. However, she needed to develop a better sense of tempo and listen to the beat of the electric play-a-long to stabilize the tempo of the melody parts and the improvisation part. Like Participant no. 7, she spent some of her spare time learning the main melody and the accompaniment of her favorite pop song. Her concert selections were "Lazy Blues" and "The Big Fish" (without improvisation).

Table 10. The status of completion of core tasks and extra tasks of participant no. 9

1	2	3	4
Completed blues scales in C, G, F and B \flat .	Completed very well.	Completed all six blues songs.	Completed all three boogie-style songs.
5	6	7	8
Can use jazz phrases learned in the lessons freely and skillfully and can also create his own jazz phrases by using and combining some interesting basic rhythm patterns when improvising.	Completed all twelve jazz riffs and can apply them to his own improvisation by directly using some of them and combining some of them with his own jazz phrases.	Completed the basic rhythm pattern of Bossa Nova and completed all the parts of Autumn Leaves, including the intro part, the melody part, the improvisation part and the ending part. At the same time, more effort is needed to practice the chords in the right-hand part of Autumn Leaves.	Completed one of the pop songs, The Wind Rises, and can do some simple improvisation based on the chord progression provided by the teacher.

Participant no. 9, like Participant no. 3, had a good sense of jazz and pop music. He played several jazz songs using music scores prior to jazz learning. His improvisation in blues was varied and rich, and he understood how to apply jazz riffs and combinations of different basic rhythm patterns to his improvisation. He also comprehended all the core tasks and extra tasks. One area that needed attention was the chords in jazz songs and pop songs, as he sometimes played the right melody with some incorrect chords, which made the harmonic feeling of the song strange. His

concert selections were “Autumn Leaves” and “The Wind Rises” (with improvisation). He was the only participant who performed “Autumn Leaves” together with the teacher in the jazz piano duet form, which is a test of mutual understanding between two performers and their ability to improvise.

Table 11. The status of completion of core tasks and extra tasks of participant no. 10

1	2	3	4			
Completed the blues scale in C.	Can play it correctly and can do better with more practice time.	Can play all six blues songs correctly.	Can play Turtle Boogie and September Swing Boogie correctly but need more time to practice Rain in July Boogie.			
5		6	7	8		
Can do some simple improvisation based on her jazz learning and can also imitate the jazz phrases learned from the teacher. However, more effort is needed to make the improvisation more changeable and fruitful.		Did not have spare time to learn this part.	Did not have spare time to learn this part.	Did not have spare time to learn this part.		

Participant no. 10’s situation and learning outcomes were similar to those of Participant no. 6, but her sense of tempo was better because she used the electric play-a-long when practicing jazz songs at home. Her improvisation was also better, but sometimes she played too many notes in a bar during improvising, and there was no rest space. This was one point that needed improvement, and resting for one or two beats in several bars can bring her improvisation a sense of space. Another point was that she did not know where to go back to the main melody when following the

traditional jazz performance order. In the last lesson, she found a way to count the bars and successfully completed her last core task. She chose “Children Blues” as her concert song.

Table 12. The status of completion of core tasks and extra tasks of participant no. 11

1	2	3	4			
Completed the blues scale in C.	Can play it correctly and can do better with more practice time.	Can play all six blues songs correctly.	Can play Turtle Boogie and September Swing Boogie correctly but need more time to practice Rain in July Boogie.			
5		6	7	8		
Can do some simple improvisation based on her jazz learning and can also imitate the jazz phrases learned from the teacher. However, more effort is needed to make the improvisation more changeable and fruitful.		Did not have spare time to learn this part.	Did not have spare time to learn this part.	Did not have spare time to learn this part.		

Participant no. 11’s situation and learning outcomes were similar to those of Participant no. 10. Despite having no prior experience with music types other than classical music, she could understand the core tasks and new jazz music knowledge faster than other participants with similar situations and years of learning the piano, likely because of her being older than those participants. The tempo and rhythm sense of her improvisation were commendable, although the combinations of rhythm and the usage of notes were somewhat monotonous. Her concert selection was “Lazy Blues.”

Overall, all the participants successfully completed the core tasks in each lesson of the teaching plan. Four of them did not learn any extra tasks in the “for more advanced students” part. Two of them finished all the extra learning tasks. Another two completed most of the extra learning tasks except for “Autumn Leaves,” and the remaining three completed the pop song learning without improvisation, which is one of the extra learning tasks. All of them were willing to spend their spare time practicing new songs and reviewing new knowledge. However, a few of them sometimes did not follow the teacher’s recommended instruction, which led to a delay in their learning progress and slowed down the teaching plan. Moreover, all the participants can do some improvisation in different degrees during their performance. The different degrees of improvisation in the case of children were based on the melodic features, structural features and rhythmic features of their improvisation, which were raised by Brophy (2005) in his study mentioned in the literature review. The analysis of these features in participants’ improvisation were conducted by the author and were presented in section 4.5.

The final concert was held on the afternoon of August 28th, 2022, in the concert hall of Xin Le Music Training Center and lasted approximately 90 minutes, from 14:00 to 15:30. It was streamed live on WeChat Live. There were around 120 live audience members, including other young music learners, their parents, and friends, and there were around 500 audience members who watched the concert online. The performance of the participants went smoothly, and they all incorporated varying degrees of improvisation during their performance based on their jazz learning and their own ideas of improvisation. The author had to divide the concert into two halves, one jazz music special and one pop song special. This was because seven participants, including a student from the music center who did not have spare time to take part in the lessons in this research but learned some pop songs and improvisational skills with the author in the classical piano lessons,

wanted to perform pop songs in the concert. Six of them, including the one who had not taken the jazz lessons, even did some improvisation based on the chord progressions of the pop songs. The audience also sang the song when they played the main melody. All the participants took part in the “trade eights, trade fours, and trade twos” game, and the audience clapped the second and the fourth beats of each bar, which are the two strong beats (accent) in the music with Swing style, following the teacher’s instruction. The atmosphere of the concert was exciting, free, and lively, and both the performers and the audience enjoyed it.

4.2.2 The reflection on each jazz learning activity during the lesson time

According to the information provided in Table 1 and the similarities in the learning outcomes of the eleven participants, the author divided them into three groups based on their levels of basic music knowledge and music performance skills. The table showing the average percentages of listening, practicing, improvising, and performing by cooperating with the accompaniment (played by the teacher or the play-along) during the lesson time of these three groups is presented at the end of this section (Table 13).

The first group comprises participants with a low level of basic music knowledge and performance skills, including participant nos. 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10. According to the recordings of these five participants’ first two lessons, the average distribution of time was as follows: listening and practicing each accounted for approximately 37.5% (around 15 minutes in each 40-minute lesson), while improvising and collaborating with the electronic accompaniment and collaborating with the teacher each accounted for approximately 12.5% (around 5 minutes in each 40-minute lesson). While according to the recordings of their remaining six lessons, the average distribution of time was as follows: listening accounted for approximately 12.5% (around 5 minutes in each

40-minute lesson), practicing accounted for approximately 37.5% (around 15 minutes in each 40-minute lesson), improvising and collaborating with the accompaniment accounted for approximately 37.5% (around 15 minutes in each 40-minute lesson), and collaborating with the teacher accounted for approximately 12.5% (around 5 minutes in each 40-minute lesson).

The second group comprises participants with medium levels of basic music knowledge and performance skills, including participants no. 2 and 11. The structure of their first two lessons was similar to the previous group, with similar proportions for each part. The differences emerged in the remaining six lessons. According to the recordings of these two participants' lessons three to eight, the average distribution of time was as follows: listening accounted for approximately 12.5% (around 5 minutes in each 40-minute lesson), practicing accounted for approximately 25% (around 10 minutes in each 40-minute lesson), improvising and collaborating with the accompaniment accounted for approximately 37.5% (around 15 minutes in each 40-minute lesson), and collaborating with the teacher accounted for approximately 25% (around 10 minutes in each 40-minute lesson).

The third group comprises participants with a high level of basic music knowledge and performance skills, including participants no. 1, 3, 4, and 9. According to the recordings of these four participants' eight lessons, the average distribution of time was as follows: listening accounted for approximately 12.5% (around 5 minutes in each 40-minute lesson), practicing accounted for approximately 37.5% (around 15 minutes in each 40-minute lesson), improvising and collaborating with the electronic accompaniment accounted for approximately 25% (around 10 minutes in each 40-minute lesson), and collaborating with the teacher accounted for approximately 25% (around 10 minutes in each 40-minute lesson).

Table 13. Average percentages of time spent on various activities during the lesson (40 minutes)

	Listening	Practicing	Improvising and cooperating with the electric accompaniment	Cooperating with the teacher
Participant nos. 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10				
The first	15 minutes	15 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes
two lessons	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%
The rest six	5 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes	5 minutes
lessons	12.5%	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%
Participants no. 2 and 11				
The first	15 minutes	15 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes
two lessons	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%
The rest six	5 minutes	10 minutes	15 minutes	10 minutes
lessons	12.5%	25%	37.5%	25%
Participants no. 1, 3, 4, and 9				
All eight	5 minutes	15 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes
lessons	12.5%	37.5%	25%	25%

4.2.3 Analysis

Participants who had prior experience playing jazz songs learned at a faster pace than those without such experience. Seven participants advanced to the “for more advanced students” section. Two of these, Participant nos. 3 and 9, completed all additional tasks. Participant nos. 1 and 4 nearly finished all tasks, excluding the Bossa Nova song. The remaining three, Participant nos. 2,

7, and 8, completed the pop song task, which was part of the additional learning tasks. Four participants, nos. 5, 6, 10, and 11, did not reach the “for more advanced students” section and progressed at a slower pace. For instance, they required more time and teacher guidance to practice the right- and left-hand parts of a new song, while some faster learners could complete the songs using both hands with minimal hints from the teacher within one lesson.

There were also variations among the faster learners. Participants with a better understanding of triads, seventh chords, scales, and basic rhythm patterns learned and responded more quickly than those with less knowledge. Their improvisations were more diverse, fluent, and dynamic during performances. Participant nos. 3 and 9, who were familiar with all the triads, most of the seventh chords, all the major and minor scales, and all the basic rhythm patterns, were the quickest learners and completed all the additional learning tasks. Participant nos. 2, 7, and 8, who knew some of the triads, a few seventh chords, all the major and minor scales, and all the basic rhythm patterns, had not learned the short jazz blues riffs and the basic rhythm pattern of Bossa Nova, which were the two most challenging tasks in the additional learning tasks. Participant nos. 1 and 4, who knew most of the triads and some seventh chords, all the major and minor scales, and all the basic rhythm patterns, completed all the additional tasks except the basic rhythm pattern of Bossa Nova, which was the most challenging task among all the additional learning tasks. However, Participant nos. 1 and 4 completed this part and Prof. He’s version of Autumn Leaves at home after all the teaching, and their performance videos were confirmed and reviewed by the teacher. Differences also emerged among participants with varying levels of piano performance skills. Participants who had been learning the piano for more than five years learned significantly faster than those who had been learning for less than three years. In contrast, the age of the participants had less impact on jazz learning than their piano learning age.



The differences in the learning outcomes of these participants and the differences and similarities in the percentages of each jazz learning activity during the lesson time will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, and the strategies and skills of improvisation used by the participants will be analyzed in the final part of this chapter.

4.3 Interviews and analysis

4.3.1 The results of interviews before the teaching plan

The interview questions asked before the teaching plan are as follow:

1. What do you (your child) think is jazz music?
2. Have you (your child) ever listened to jazz music? If so, what was the name or style of the music?
3. Have you (your child) ever played jazz music? If so, what was the name of the song?
Who is the writer of the music?
4. How do you (your child) find jazz music different from other music (such as classical music)?
5. What do you (your child) think is improvisation?

The answers to each question provided by each participant are as follow:

Participant no. 1:

1. It is very infectious. The melody has a lot of personality.
2. Yes. Blues.
3. Yes. The Pelican Jazz. It was written by Melody Bober.
4. Jazz music is very accessible, passionate, and unrestrained.



5. Without preparation, playing at any time and expressing their emotions at the moment of music!

A creation of one's own.

Participant no. 2:

1. The rhythm is changeable and fruitful.
2. Yes. "It's you," and it is romantic style.
3. No.
4. Jazz is more active.
5. You can play it however you want.

Participant no. 3:

1. I think it is Blues.
2. Yes. "The Lion King" in the jazz version.
3. Yes. The Pelican Jazz. It was written by Melody Bober, an American musician.
4. Jazz has a strong sense of beat and pronounced rhythm.
5. Follow the main melody along with the harmony you feel fit and use the accompaniment of musical instruments to create a new work.

Participant no. 4:

1. It is the swing style, and the sense of rhythm is solid.
2. Yes. Blues.
3. Yes. 12 Variations in C, K 265 which was written by Mozart.
4. Jazz has a strong sense of beat and rhythm.



5. Give you some elements and use them to improvise.

Participant no. 5:

1. Swing. Strong sense of rhythm, beautiful fashion. Gorgeous. Sound good.

2. No.

3. No.

4. The rhythm of jazz is much more robust, and jazz is more complimentary.

5. Use different jazz elements to improvise and form a tune.

Participant no. 6:

1. I do not know.

2. No.

3. No.

4. Jazz music feels a little slow.

5. Just play it randomly.

Participant no. 7:

1. It is an improvisational music that originated in the United States.

2. Yes. Mojito.

3. No.

4. Jazz is casual and free.

5. Play according to your mood and feelings.



Participant no. 8:

1. It originated in the United States, a combination of black and white culture.
2. Yes. Mojito.
3. No.
4. Jazz is happier.
5. Creating new things on the spot.

Participant no. 9:

1. I think jazz music is different from classical music, and it has a different rhythm and a different way of performing.
2. Yes. Autumn Leaves, and it is Bossa Nova style.
3. Yes. The Pelican Jazz. It was written by Melody Bober.
4. I think there are a lot of discordant notes in jazz and improvisation is you have to create your own rhythms that are different from other kinds of music.
5. I think it is to use your own feelings to create a piece of music.

Participant no. 10:

1. It is just a type of music with improvisation.
2. Yes, but I don't know the title or the style.
3. Yes, but I don't know the title or the style.
4. Jazz music is more romantic, and classical music is more elegant.
5. Just add some different elements to the original song.



Participant no. 11:

1. It is similar to pop music.
2. Yes. Moon River.
3. No.
4. Jazz has different styles and different characteristics.
5. Add a different rhythm to the original melody.

4.3.2 The results of interviews after the teaching plan

The interview questions asked after the teaching plan are as follow:

1. What do you (your child) think is jazz music?
2. How do you (your child) feel about jazz and improvisation learning? What is your favorite (least favorite) part? Why?
3. How has your (your child's) musical knowledge and performance ability changed after learning jazz? Please tell me the changes.
4. Did you (your child) learn anything different about jazz music than you did about classical music? If so, tell me what you got.
5. What do you (your child) think is improvisation

The answers to each question provided by each participant are as follow:

Participant no. 1:

1. I think it is Blues.
2. The improvisation part is my favorite! Because you can play the music you like, it's fun.
3. Learned:



- Blues swing rhythm and Boogie Woogie rhythm,
 - Blues scale and how to improvise
 - How to find chords in pop songs and how to improvise better
4. Improvisation, which is a kind of ability but also a way to express your inner music! I love music, and jazz music is so fun!
5. Improvisation is music that can't be copied and can be created at any time.

Participant no. 2:

1. It is a swing rhythm.
2. Good. Improvisation is my favorite. Feel free to play anything.
3. Be more confident.
4. Know the blues scales and variations on different rhythms.
5. It is what I can make up and create following the beat.

Participant no. 3:

1. It has a swing beat.
2. Good. I like the improvisation part best because you can play it free.
3. Learn to improvise in a short time. Learn Bossa Nova and swing rhythm.
4. I learned improvisation, blues and Bossa Nova rhythm that classical music does not have.
5. Play it freely based on the original melody.

Participant no. 4:

1. It is a type of music composed of jazz scales.



2. It's good. I like jazz because it has a different rhythm and sounds good.
3. I have a deeper understanding of music knowledge, and my performance ability has been strengthened.
4. Yes, the sense of rhythm becomes stronger.
5. Play in random combinations of jazz scales.

Participant no. 5:

1. It is the swing style, and it sounds good.
2. I like improvisation because it can be made up by yourself and can be created by yourself.
3. Broaden the horizon, the exposure to different types of music and the learning ability becomes stronger.
4. I learned about swing rhythm and improvisation.
5. You can make your own music and play it freely.

Participant no. 6:

1. It is joyful.
2. Anything I learned in the lesson. I like jazz because it's not the same as usual.
3. Learn new knowledge faster.
4. I find playing jazz more enjoyable
5. Play at random by using some prescribed notes and rhythm.

Participant no. 7:

1. It is free, swing and random.



2. I like it very much, especially the improvisation part, which can show my personality charm.
3. I used to study classical music. Now I'm exposed to a new kind of music. I have more control over the rhythm and more confidence on the stage, and I want to show my own personality.
4. Classical music needs to play according to the music score, and jazz is freer, which can enrich my music learning and improve my ability to innovate.
5. Improvisation is trying to create something according to the mood of that moment.

Participant no. 8:

1. Afro-American music of origin with a swing rhythm.
2. I like it very much. I like the jazz part best because the music is cool and beautiful.
3. Can master some jazz rhythm and music performance ability of a few jazz styles.
4. There are four types of common basic rhythm patterns in improvisation.
5. You can play according to your own ideas in the prescribed rhythm.

Participant no. 9:

1. I think jazz is different from classical music. In classical music, when I play a classic piece, I have to play everything exactly written in the music score. While in jazz music, I can play everything differently.
2. I think it's good. I prefer improvisation, which can increase children's imagination and development.
3. I know more about music and that you don't have to look at the music score to play music. I have greatly improved my music performance ability, and I have my own imagination when playing the piano.

4. Yes, when playing the piano, I can be more imaginative and do not have to be so rigid to look at the music score to perform.

5. It is to create a new tune according to your imagination.

Participant no. 10:

1. It is a rhythmic music with an improvisational feel.

2. I like improvisation because I can play anything I want freely.

3. Know the swing rhythm.

4. I learned a new way to perform music.

5. Use the C key blues scale to improvise anything.

Participant no. 11:

1. It has a swing beat.

2. It feels light and free.

3. The understanding of music and the processing of timbre has been improved.

4. I experienced the different styles of music.

5. It is free and relaxing.

4.3.3 Analysis

The participants' perceptions of jazz and improvisation learning underwent noticeable changes, as evidenced by the interviews conducted before and after the teaching plan, which encompassed all lessons and the final concert. Prior to their jazz education, their responses were primarily influenced by their initial impressions and information gathered from others or the



Internet. A comparison of the responses to the first question in both interviews reveals a variety of initial ideas about “what jazz is.” Some participants were already familiar with the origins of jazz, its rhythm, and improvisation, while others equated jazz with blues or a type of pop music. However, after their jazz education, most participants identified swing as the most representative style in jazz music. This is likely because the rhythm of swing was a constant throughout their jazz learning experience, leaving a deep impression on the students.

According to the responses to the second and third questions in the pre-learning interview, nearly all participants had listened to jazz songs or pop songs with jazz elements. However, most had not played jazz songs, and those who had merely followed the music score and performed the songs without any improvisation yielded results similar to classical music. These responses also provided insight into the participants’ level of musical knowledge and piano performance skills, which were necessary for the participant information table (Table 1).

As indicated in the responses to the second and third questions in the post-learning interview, all participants enjoyed their jazz learning experience. Most of them favored improvisation, primarily because it allowed them to play music more freely and create music using their own ideas. Some parents also observed that jazz learning had enhanced their children’s performance ability, learning ability, musical knowledge, and imagination. These responses affirm that jazz learning has a positive impact on children, with improvisation potentially being the most representative and exciting aspect of jazz education for children.

By comparing the responses to the fourth question in both interviews, it is evident that their answers became more specific and diverse. The focus of their responses shifted from improvisation, which was the sole focus prior to jazz learning, to several key points and elements of jazz music, such as different basic rhythm patterns, scales, and performance methods. These changes

demonstrate that the participants' knowledge and understanding of jazz music became more evident and comprehensive after their jazz education, further validating the value of jazz learning for children.

In the final questions of the pre- and post-learning interviews, participants' responses also became more specific. Their understanding of improvisation evolved from "playing freely and randomly" to "creating new tunes using prescribed notes and rhythms." These changes in their understanding of improvisation reflect the progress they made during their jazz education. By correlating these changes with the analysis of their improvisation strategies and ideas, we can answer the fifth secondary research question.

Overall, the changes in the responses to the interviews before and after jazz learning can be categorized into three areas. The first area pertains to the participants' understanding of jazz music. The second area is associated with the progress they made during their jazz learning. The third area involves their thoughts and feelings about jazz learning. While a few similar responses to the interviews before and after jazz learning make the change less noticeable, the majority of the changes in the responses appear to be positive. These changes will be discussed in detail in the next chapter to determine the effects of jazz learning on children's musical abilities and creativity.

4.4 Questionnaire and analysis

The questionnaire comprises eight questions related to the participants' musical abilities and eight questions related to their creativity. All the questionnaires are scored, with a rating scale from 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=unsure, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree). Consequently, the maximum score for each question is 5.00 and the minimum score is 1.00. The data tables and bar charts provided below contain two main pieces of information: the content of each question

and the average score for each question. This data will provide valuable insights into the participants' musical abilities and creativity.

4.4.1 Results of the questionnaire before the teaching plan

Figures 20 and 21 and Tables 14 and 15 present the details of the questionnaire before the teaching plan.

Figure 20. Questionnaire results on the musical abilities of participants before jazz learning

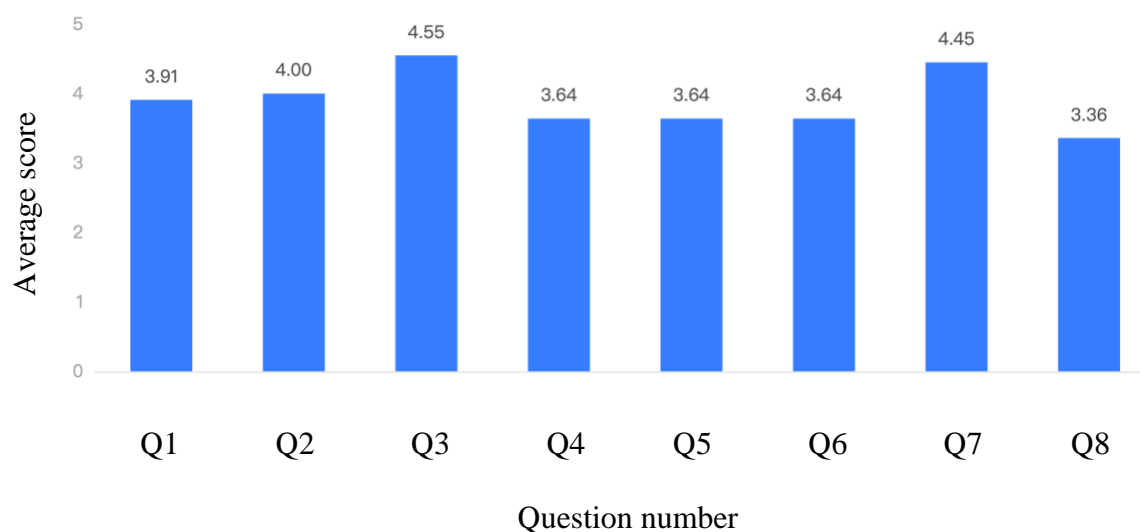


Table 14. Questionnaire questions and scores on the musical abilities of participants before jazz learning

Question	Average score
Q1: You can distinguish between different musical rhythms.	3.91
Q2: You can distinguish between different genres of music.	4.00
Q3: When you hear familiar music, you can hum along to the melody or sing it in your mind.	4.55

Q4: You can distinguish the sounds of different instruments.	3.64
Q5: You can hear the pitch of the note or the tonality of the music.	3.64
Q6: You can tell if someone is good at playing music and if their musical abilities are exemplary.	3.64
Q7: How confident you are when you are performing (on the stage or in front of many people).	4.45
Q8: You can do some improvisation.	3.36

Figure 21. Questionnaire results on the creativity of participants before jazz learning

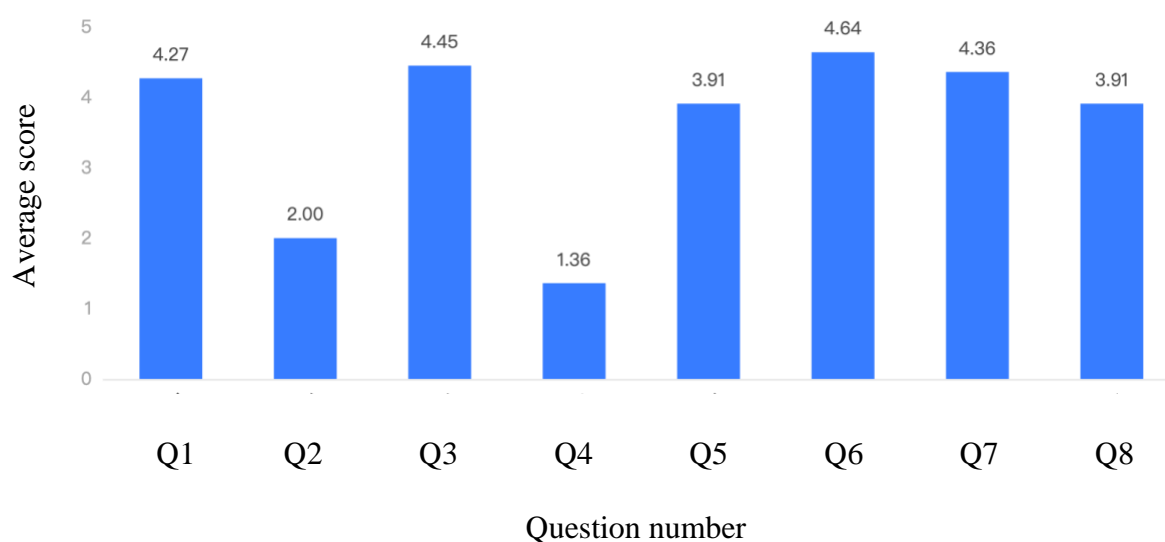


Table 15. Questionnaire questions and scores on the creativity of participants before jazz learning

Question	Average score
Q1: Improvisational, innovative teaching can stimulate your interest in learning.	4.27

Q2: I find that it is hard for me to create something new.	2.00
Q3: Learning jazz and improvisation can improve my creative ability.	4.45
Q4: Developing creative capabilities is a waste of time.	1.36
Q5: I consider myself a creative person.	3.91
Q6: Creativity comes from effort and experimentation.	4.64
Q7: Your creative thinking and new ideas are based on previous knowledge and abilities.	4.36
Q8: During the lesson, you always think about how to make the improvisation part differently.	3.91

4.4.2 Results of the questionnaire after the teaching plan

Figures 22 and 23 and Tables 16 and 17 present the details of the questionnaire after the teaching plan.

Figure 22. Questionnaire results on the musical abilities of participants after jazz learning

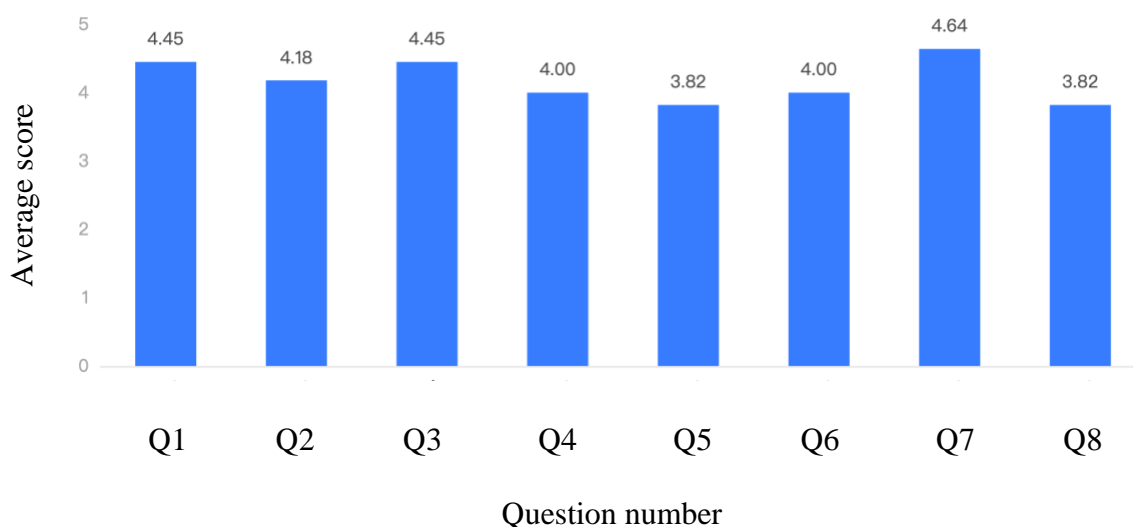


Table 16. Questionnaire questions and scores on the musical abilities of participants after jazz learning

Question	Average score
Q1: You can distinguish between different musical rhythms.	4.45
Q2: You can distinguish between different genres of music.	4.18
Q3: When you hear familiar music, you can hum along to the melody or sing it in your mind.	4.45
Q4: You can distinguish the sounds of different instruments.	4.00
Q5: You can hear the pitch of the note or the tonality of the music.	3.82
Q6: You can tell if someone is good at playing music and if their musical abilities are exemplary.	4.00
Q7: How confident you are when you are performing (on the stage or in front of many people).	4.64
Q8: You can do some improvisation.	3.82

Figure 23. Questionnaire results on the creativity of participants after jazz learning

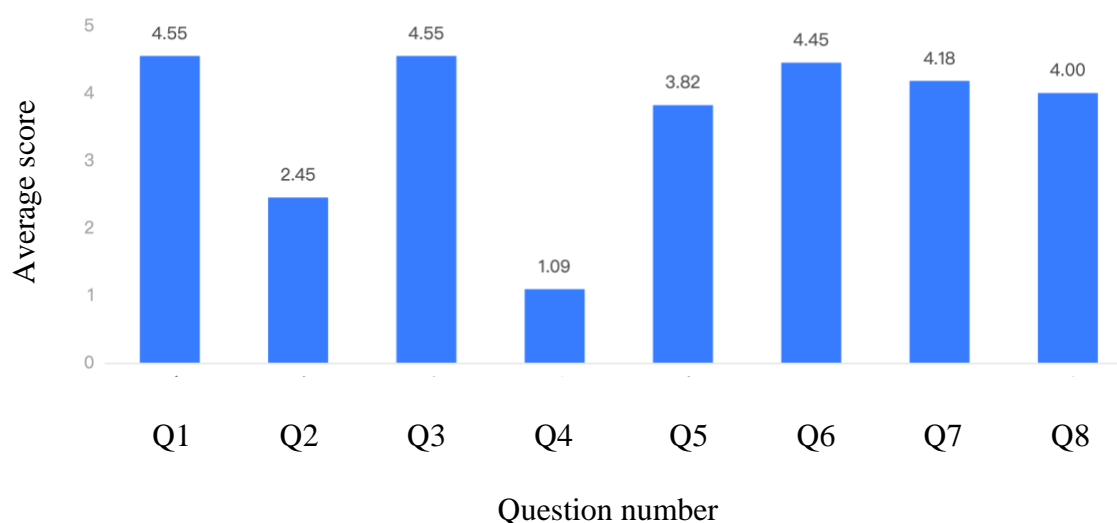


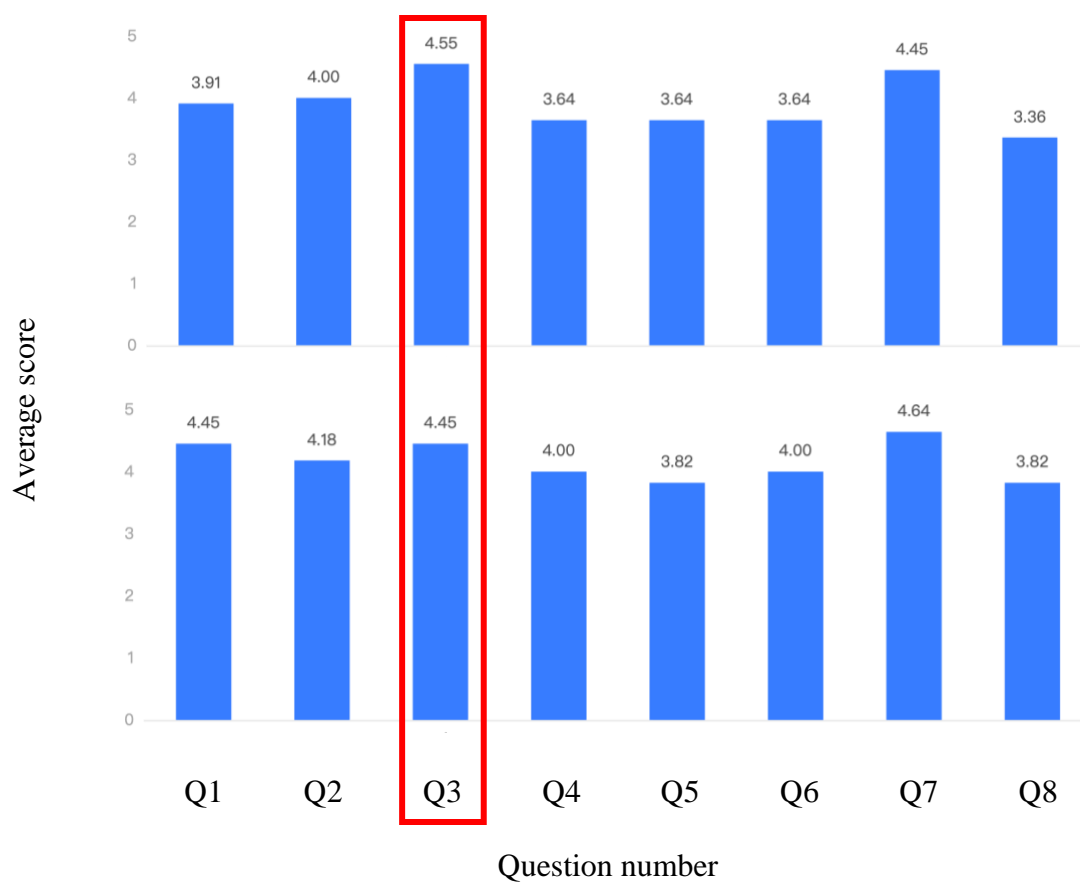
Table 17. Questionnaire questions and scores related to the creativity of participants after jazz learning

Question	Average score
Q1: Improvisational, innovative teaching can stimulate your interest in learning.	4.55
Q2: I find that it is hard for me to create something new.	2.45
Q3: Learning jazz and improvisation can improve my creative ability.	4.55
Q4: Developing creative capabilities is a waste of time.	1.09
Q5: I consider myself a creative person.	3.82
Q6: Creativity comes from effort and experimentation.	4.45
Q7: Your creative thinking and new ideas are based on previous knowledge and abilities.	4.18
Q8: During the lesson, you always think about how to make the improvisation part differently.	4.00

4.4.3 Analysis

From the figures and tables above, every questionnaire question exhibits differences, indicating some significant changes in the participants' musical abilities and creativity before and after their jazz learning.

Comparing Figures 20 and 22



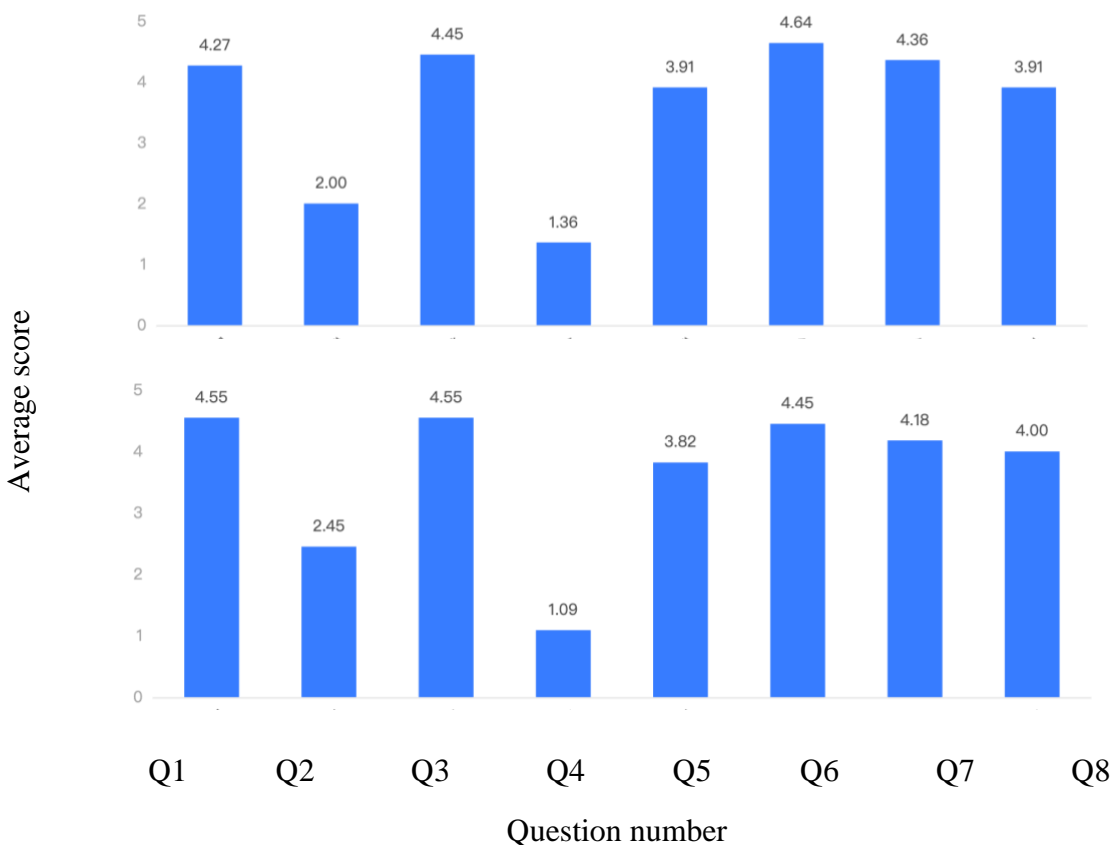
The bar charts of two questionnaires (Figures 1 and 3), filled out by participants before and after jazz learning, reveal varying degrees of growth in musical abilities. The only exception is the third question, “When you hear familiar music, can you hum along to the melody or sing it in your mind?” highlighted with a box. The eighth question, regarding participants’ improvisation ability, has the lowest average score. This is likely because the most variable and challenging aspect of jazz learning is improvisation. Conversely, the seventh question, regarding participants’ confidence during performance, has the highest average score.

Four questions (the first, fourth, sixth, and eighth) show significant growth in average scores, with increases of more than 4% (0.2). The first question, related to participants’ sense of rhythm, shows the most substantial growth, with an increase of 10.8% (0.54), from 3.91 to 4.45. The fourth and sixth questions, related to participants’ ability to distinguish different instruments

and assess the performance quality of others, respectively, both increased by 7.2% (0.36), from 3.64 to 4.00. The eighth question, related to participants' improvisation ability, increased by 9.2% (0.46), from 3.36 to 3.82.

Three questions (the second, fifth, and seventh) show slight growth in average scores, with increases of less than 4% (0.2). The second question, related to participants' ability to distinguish different types of music, increased by 3.6% (0.18), from 4.00 to 4.18. The fifth question, related to participants' ability to distinguish the tonality of the music and the pitch of the notes, increased by 3.6% (0.18), from 3.64 to 3.82. The seventh question, related to participants' confidence when performing songs in front of others, increased by 3.8% (0.19), from 4.45 to 4.64. The third question, related to participants' singing ability and reaction to hearing a familiar song, is the only one that showed a slight reduction in its average score, decreasing by 2% (0.10), from 3.64 to 4.00.

Comparing Figures 21 and 23



The bar charts of two questionnaires (Figures 2 and 4), filled out by participants before and after jazz learning, reveal changes in the average scores of responses related to creativity. These changes differ significantly from those observed in questionnaires related to musical abilities, with varying degrees of increase and decrease in the average scores. Notably, the second and fourth questions differ from the rest as they are negatively phrased, while the others are positively phrased.

As depicted in the bar charts, four questions (the first, second, third, and eighth) show an increase in their average scores. The first question, which explores the relationship between the participants' learning interest and improvisation learning (innovative teaching), shows a substantial increase of 5.6% (0.28), from 4.27 to 4.55. The second question, concerning the participants' self-assessment of their creativity, also shows a significant increase of 9% (0.45), from 2.00 to 2.45. However, this increase is considered negative given the negative phrasing of the question. The third question, which examines the relationship between the participants' creativity and jazz learning (improvisation teaching), shows a slight increase of 2% (0.10), from 4.45 to 4.55. The eighth question, related to the participants' creative ideas during their jazz learning, also shows a slight increase of 1.8% (0.09), from 3.91 to 4.00.

Conversely, four questions (the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh) show a decrease in their average scores. The fourth question, which pertains to the participant's feelings about developing their creativity, shows a significant decrease of 5.4% (0.27), from 1.36 to 1.09. However, this decrease is considered positive given the negative phrasing of the question. The fifth question, related to the participant's feelings about their own creative ability, shows a slight decrease of 1.8% (0.09), from 3.91 to 3.82. The sixth question, which pertains to the participants' thoughts about essential components of creativity, shows a slight decrease of 3.8% (0.19), from 4.64 to 4.45. The

seventh question, related to the participant's evaluation of the sources of their new ideas, shows a slight decrease of 3.6% (0.18), from 4.36 to 4.18.

The potential reasons and implications of these increases and decreases in the average scores of each response to the questions in the pre- and post-jazz learning questionnaires will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

4.5 Video recordings and analysis

4.5.1 Short clips during the lessons

The author recorded numerous short clips during his jazz teaching sessions to analyze and identify the improvisation strategies and ideas employed by the participants during their performances. Each clip is assigned a unique number, and every participant recorded at least one short clip throughout the course of the lessons. In this section, the author will highlight and discuss several specific highlighted moments in each participant's clips. The analysis will focus on why these moments are musically appealing and will delve into the students' improvisation strategies and ideas showcased in each clip. This comprehensive review will provide valuable insights into the creative process of jazz improvisation.

4.5.2 Summary of the specific moments in each short clip

Table 18 shows information about the short clips and the good moments in each.

Table 18. Information on clips and the highlighted moments therein

Clip number	Whose clip	Performance	Highlighted moment
1	Participant no. 1	Complete performance	1:11 ~ 1:16, 1:32 ~ 1:37
2	Participant no. 1	Complete performance	1:13 ~ 1:17, 1:23 ~ 1:41

3	Participant no. 1	Complete performance	1:14 ~ 1:19
4	Participant no. 1	Only improvisation	1:03 ~ 1:09, 1:13 ~ 1:18
5	Participant no. 1	Only improvisation	1:08 ~ 1:12
6	Participant no. 2	Only improvisation	0:38 ~ 0:49
7	Participant no. 2	Only improvisation	0:37 ~ 0:42
8	Participant no. 3	Only improvisation	0:07 ~ 0:12, 0:44 ~ 0:50
9	Participant no. 3	Only improvisation	0:32 ~ 0:42
10	Participant no. 3	Complete performance	0:56 ~ 1: 06
11	Participant no. 4	Only improvisation	0:28 ~ 0:38
12	Participant no. 4	Complete performance	1:24 ~ 1:32, 1:42 ~ 1:58
13	Participant no. 4	Complete performance	1:03 ~ 1:11, 1:21 ~ 1:29
14	Participant no. 4	Complete performance	2:54 ~ 3:04
15	Participant no. 5	Clapping the rhythm	Do not have the improvisation part
16	Participant no. 5	Complete performance	1:18 ~ 1:28, 1:45 ~ 2:03
17	Participant no. 6	Complete performance	1:42 ~ 1:46
18	Participant no. 7	Complete performance	1:11 ~ 1:20, 1:24 ~ 1:30, 1:36 ~ 1:40
19	Participant no. 8	Complete performance	1:52 ~ 2:03, 2:16 ~ 2:23
20	Participant no. 9	Complete performance	1:11 ~ 1:19, 1:24 ~ 1:30
21	Participant no. 9	Complete performance	1:08 ~ 1:14, 1:24 ~ 1:32, 1:38 ~ 1:46

22	Participant no. 10	Only improvisation	The teacher improvised, and the participant imitated his phrases
23	Participant no. 10	Only improvisation	The participant improvised, and the teacher imitated her phrases
24	Participant no. 10	Complete performance	1:29 ~ 1:45, 2:10 ~ 2:16

4.5.3 Analysis of specific moments in each short clip

Participant no. 1's improvisation strategies and ideas are notably effective and stimulating. In the improvisation segment of Clip no. 1, recorded during the second lesson, he executed four triplets in one bar and several standard basic swing rhythm patterns between 1:11 and 1:16. He utilized C key blues notes to construct a phrase with a distinct blues feel. Subsequently, he employed a descending blues scale, repeating each note in the C key blues twice between 1:32 and 1:37, to create another blues-infused phrase. In the improvisation segment of Clip no. 2, recorded during the third lesson, he sequentially used two, three, and four blues notes between 1:13 and 1:17, and five and six blues notes between 1:23 and 1:41, thereby creating a sense of gradual progression. The moment between 1:14 and 1:19 in Clip no. 3 (recorded during the sixth lesson) mirrors the first moment in Clip no. 1, as he again combined four triplets with some standard basic swing rhythm patterns. However, the application of C key blues notes differed. The moments in Clip no. 4 (recorded during the seventh lesson) and Clip no. 5 (recorded during the eighth lesson) showcased effective combinations of short blues riffs, particularly riff nos. 3 and 4, during an additional learning task. He successfully incorporated these riffs into his improvisation by combining several basic rhythm patterns that he found aesthetically pleasing with his jazz phrases. All these combinations were his original creations.

Participant no. 2's primary improvisation strategy is imitation. She excelled at replicating the improvisations performed by the teacher and other participants, incorporating those jazz phrases she found appealing into her own improvisation. In Clip no. 6, recorded during the third lesson, she used four groups of surrounding notes and some standard basic swing rhythm patterns between 0:38 and 0:49. This clip demonstrates her mastery of this core learning task. In Clip no. 7, recorded during the seventh lesson, her improvisation was more fluid and adept than in Clip no. 6. She emulated Participant no. 1's combination of four triplets in one bar and some standard basic swing rhythm patterns between 0:37 and 0:42. Her improvisation strategy proved highly successful, with imitation significantly enhancing and diversifying her improvisation content.

Participant no. 3's improvisation strategy is distinct from the other participants, largely because of his background in self-taught pop music and jazz, which places him significantly ahead of his peers. He demonstrates the ability to create novel jazz phrases and unique combinations of basic rhythm patterns in his improvisation. In Clip no. 8, recorded during the first lesson, he improvised based on the chord progression of the C key blues and crafted two impressive phrases using notes outside the C key blues scale. The first phrase occurred between 0:07 and 0:12, and the second between 0:44 and 0:50. In Clip no. 9, also from the first lesson, he constructed a remarkable jazz phrase between 0:32 and 0:42 using a "call and response" technique. This advanced element of jazz improvisation, not included in the teaching plan given its complexity, showcases his advanced skill level. In Clip no. 10, recorded during the fourth lesson, he used a combination of ascending and descending forms of the C key blues scale to create a new jazz phrase between 0:56 and 1:06. The only issue with his improvisation was the stability of the beat, which he significantly improved in subsequent lessons. His improvisation strategy mirrors that of a seasoned jazz musician, such as improvising based on chord progression, using notes outside the

C key blues scale, and employing advanced jazz improvisation techniques. This level of proficiency is quite challenging for children of the same age to achieve.

Participant no. 4's improvisation strategy is largely guided by the teaching plan and teacher's advice. Her strong sense of rhythm contributes to the steady tempo of her performance and improvisation, facilitating her collaboration with both the teacher's accompaniment and the electronic play-along. She adeptly employs combinations of the basic swing rhythm pattern and various types of triplets, consistently applying these combinations throughout her improvisation. In Clip no. 11, recorded during the first lesson, she initiated her improvisation with one triplet, followed by two bars of basic swing rhythm patterns (seven in total), and then repeated this simple phrase by playing the same triplet at the last beat of the second bar between 0:28 and 0:38. In Clip no. 12, recorded during the second lesson, she used two triplets (two beats) and some rest beats (one or two beats) in three bars between 1:24 and 1:32, and again used one or two beats of rest between 1:42 and 1:58. The use of rest beats is an effective strategy to create space for performers to pause for one or two beats (or even one bar) after playing several bars during improvisation, preparing for the subsequent improvisation. This skill was introduced to all students in the last three lessons of the improvisation teaching part, as most students tended to use too many jazz phrases when improvising, resulting in improvisations full of blues notes with no rest space. Participant no. 4 was among the students who excelled at using rest beats during improvisation. In Clip no. 13, recorded during the third lesson, she performed exceptionally well in the first turn of improvisation. Between 1:03 and 1:11, she used the last phrase of the main melody of Knife Blues as a motif to start her improvisation and developed it into another version by using the same rhythm with different notes, including using a triplet to connect two short phrases. Between 1:21 and 1:29, she used two triplets to form an ascending phrase, and after three beats of rest, she played another

similar ascending phrase and used two repeated, basic swing rhythm patterns as the ending of the first turn of her improvisation. In Clip no. 14, recorded during the sixth lesson, although she forgot to improvise one turn and returned to the main melody at the fourth turn, she quickly recovered and returned to the last turn of improvisation, using the blues scale with a repeated note C in each beat as the ending of her improvisation between 2:54 and 3:04. Her improvisation strategy, which involves following the teacher's guidance, developing a strong sense of rhythm, and mastering several improvisational skills (e.g., the usage of triplets and rest beats), is commendable and can significantly enhance a student's performance and improvisation.

Participant no. 5's improvisation strategy, similar to Participant no. 2's, is based on imitation. However, the jazz phrases he imitates are shorter and simpler given his lower level of piano performance skills (his piano learning experience is shorter). His improvisation primarily consists of basic swing rhythm patterns, triplets, and simple combinations of these rhythm patterns. In Clip no. 15, recorded during the third lesson, the teacher guided Participant no. 5 to clap the rhythm of the main melody of Children Blues while singing the notes of its main melody. This rhythm practice aimed to train his sense of rhythm and familiarize him with the rhythm patterns of this blues song. Participant no. 5 performed excellently in this clip, quickly mastering this song after the rhythm practice. In Clip no. 16, recorded during the seventh lesson, he used two triplets to form a descending phrase and four triplets to form an ascending phrase, connecting these two phrases with some basic swing rhythm patterns and four beats (one bar) of rest between 1:18 and 1:28. In the second turn of his improvisation between 1:45 and 2:03, he used three different short phrases with five blues notes in basic swing rhythm patterns and connected them with two beats (half bar) of rest, and he used four triplets to form an ascending phrase again as the ending of his improvisation. His improvisation strategy demonstrates the importance of imitation ability in jazz

learning and during improvisation. With proper guidance and practice, it may be suitable not only for students with high levels of music performance skills but also for students with medium or even low levels of music performance skills to improve their ability to improvise and create their own music phrases.

Participant no. 6's improvisation strategy involves continuous play using blues notes, scales, and one or two simple jazz phrases. Due to her limited piano learning experience (only one year), she lacks the basic music knowledge and piano performance skills to perform complex jazz riffs or imitate long phrases from other participants. Thus, she can only play some basic rhythm patterns and one or two combinations of these rhythm patterns, which were taught by the teacher. In Clip no. 17, recorded during the seventh lesson, she attempted to imitate the combination of several triplets in one bar and some normal basic swing rhythm patterns in the next bar from Participant no. 1 by using two triplets and stopping at a single note between 1:42 and 1:46. Although she chose the wrong note to stop at when trying to take a rest beat, this was a great experiment for her. The only problem in her performance is that she did not have enough rest beats during improvising, and this has been mentioned above in the part of Participant no. 4. During her two turns (24 bars) of improvisation, there are only five beats of rest in total and in other parts of improvisation, she kept using the basic swing rhythm patterns without any rest beats which made her improvisation full of blues notes and scales. Her strategy of improvisation may be suitable for those children who are still at the entry level of music learning and cannot learn and play their instruments skillfully. It is useful for her to improvise by mastering the basic rhythm patterns of the specific jazz style, such as the basic swing rhythm patterns, and adding one or two different rhythm patterns to make the phrases more informative. And more importantly, her strategy of improvisation can be better with a little improvement. She can simply use more rest beats after



improvising a long but easy phrase or just after one or two bars of improvisation to create a sense of space. These rest beats are necessary for the performer and the audience.

Participant no. 7's improvisation strategy is an advanced version of Participant no. 6's strategy. Her basic music knowledge and piano performance skills are slightly superior to Participant no. 6's, given her additional year of piano learning experience. Although she still cannot perform complex jazz riffs or imitate long phrases performed by other participants, she has mastered two of the four basic rhythm patterns taught in the first lesson: the trillo and the triplet, and can incorporate these two rhythm patterns into her improvisation. Moreover, she understands the appropriate timing for using rest beats during her improvisation, instead of continuously playing, which results in improvisations full of blues notes. In Clip no. 18, recorded during the seventh lesson, she played two short phrases that resembled a simplified version of the "Call and Response" style (this improvisational skill has been mentioned above in the part of Participant no. 3) and used a set of trillo as the end of these two phrases between 1:11 and 1:20. There are two moments in this clip where she played a short phrase with several triplets. The first one is between 1:24 and 1:30, where she played four identical triplets using two semitones, note F# and note G, and then used two triplets to form a descending phrase as the ending of the first turn of her improvisation. The second one is between 1:36 and 1:40, where she played four identical triplets again but with three different C key blues notes, F, Eb, and C, as a link between two phrases formed by several basic swing rhythm patterns. Her strategy of improvisation is more comprehensive than Participant no. 6's strategy. Her strategy also proves that it is a good choice for students in entry-level jazz learning to apply some of the four basic rhythm patterns (trillo, surrounding note, dotted note, and triplet) into their improvisation. It is not only because these rhythm patterns are easy to



play but also because they can simply make the improvisation sound jazzier by using one or two blues notes.

Participant no. 8's improvisation strategy is similar to Participant no. 7's strategy because they have a similar piano learning experience. She can apply some of the four basic rhythm patterns and the rest beats into her improvisation. However, her sense of rhythm is not as good as Participant no. 7's. In Clip no. 19, recorded during the seventh lesson, the tempo of the main melody she performed in the clip was good and followed the electronic accompaniment. However, when the performance proceeded to the improvisation part, especially in the beginning part, the tempo of her performance became unstable, and it was obviously faster than the electronic accompaniment. After improvising around eight bars, she realized the unstable tempo and slowed down to follow back to the tempo of the electronic accompaniment. She improvised a very jazzy phrase between 1:52 and 2:03 by combining the C key blues scale and the repeated note C. She used note C as the first note of the basic swing rhythm patterns and used each note in the C key blues scale as the second note of the basic swing rhythm patterns, and then played a short descending scale at the end of this phrase. She tried to create another jazz phrase between 2:16 and 2:23 by using the four triplets and a trillo. Although the tempo of this phrase was not very stable, which made some of these basic rhythm patterns sound unclear, it was still a good experiment for this child. Her strategy of improvisation proves the usefulness and importance of applying the four basic rhythm patterns again. Similar to Participant no. 3, the biggest problem during Participant no. 8's improvisation is also the stability of the beat and the tempo. It also proves the importance of the tempo and the sense of rhythm in jazz learning. With more practice and listening, this problem will be easily solved.



Participant no. 9's improvisation strategy involves the integration of four fundamental rhythm patterns with well-timed rest beats, accompanied by bodily movements such as full-body swinging and foot-tapping in sync with the rhythm of the electronic accompaniment. His six-year experience in piano learning has endowed him with a strong sense of rhythm, a high level of basic music knowledge, and proficient piano performance skills. In Clip no. 20, recorded during the second lesson, he played a simple phrase consisting of three blues notes and one rest beat, repeating this combination three times in the form of basic swing rhythm patterns between 1:11 and 1:19. Following an ascending blues scale, he crafted a descending phrase using a combination of triplets and basic swing rhythm patterns, concluding the phrase and the first turn of his improvisation with a trillo between 1:24 and 1:30. In his first clip, Participant no. 9 appeared somewhat nervous, which resulted in minimal body movement throughout his performance. However, in Clip no. 21, recorded during the third lesson, he displayed increased confidence, performing more naturally and relaxed. He began to sway in time with the electronic play-along and used his right foot to follow the rhythm of the bass and emphasize the strong beats during the performance, particularly during the improvisation section. He initiated his improvisation by grouping three semitones of the C key blues scale (notes G, Gb, and F) with one rest beat, repeating this group three times between 1:08 and 1:14. Then, between 1:24 and 1:32, he played an interval using the notes G and C in the C key blues scale, along with one rest beat, three times. Notably, he played these three intervals not on the first half beat but on the back half beat (off-beat rhythm). This rhythm, which aligns well with the basic swing rhythm pattern, is commonly used by jazz musicians in the main melody, improvisation, and comping sections. However, it can be challenging for children and even classical musicians to adapt to the off-beat rhythm, as they typically use the on-beat rhythm during their music learning, forming a habit that is difficult to change. Therefore, the teacher did



not include off-beat rhythm learning and practice in the teaching plan. It was unexpected that Participant no. 9 found his own way to practice and adapt to the off-beat rhythm and apply it to his improvisation. Between 1:38 and 1:46, he used the off-beat rhythm again, combining three other notes of the C key blues scale (notes G, Bb, and C) with two rest beats. Participant no. 9's improvisation strategy demonstrates the potential for children to learn jazz and reaffirms the importance of tempo stability and rhythm sense in jazz learning. His spontaneous body movement during improvisation, a highlight of his performance style, offers another effective approach for children to enhance their performance ability and rhythm sense.

Participant no. 10's improvisation strategy mirrors that of Participant no. 7, likely because of their similar piano learning experiences. While her sense of rhythm matches that of Participant no. 7, her basic music knowledge is not as extensive. This results in her ability to play simple basic rhythm patterns but a lack of understanding of how to incorporate them into her improvisation. Consequently, she tends to use basic rhythm patterns directly during improvisation, which, sometimes, sound abrupt and, at other times, do not. In Clip no. 22, recorded during the third lesson, the teacher guided Participant no. 10 to discover the feel and methods of improvisation by having her mimic and play the exact phrase (one or two bars) first played by the teacher. This "follow and imitate" practice, mentioned earlier in the second step of the third lesson in the teaching plan, is designed to enhance participants' basic improvisation ideas and their understanding of the combinations of blues notes and basic rhythm patterns. All participants have tried this practice several times with the teacher in class. In Clip no. 23, also recorded during the third lesson, the teacher and Participant no. 10 switched roles. This time, Participant no. 10 improvised one or two bars first, and the teacher mimicked and played the exact same phrase. Although her swing rhythm was not entirely accurate in this clip, the teacher could correct the rhythm of her phrases by playing

the correct rhythm when repeating them. By Clip no. 24, recorded during the seventh lesson, the basic swing rhythm patterns in her improvisation were correct and stable. She used a set of trillos and a triplet with many basic swing rhythm patterns and some rest beats between 1:29 and 1:45, and created a simple phrase surrounding the note C using some basic swing rhythm patterns between 2:10 and 2:16. The only issue with her improvisation is that the phrases she improvised were not very legato, and she used too many staccato rhythms in one phrase. Although this performance style made the rhythm of her improvisation sound somewhat strange and not very swing-like, the problem was resolved through diligent practice for the final concert. Most of her improvisation strategies were from jazz lessons and guidance from the teacher, underscoring the importance of imitation ability and proper guidance for entry-level students in their jazz learning.

Participant no. 11's improvisation strategy is also similar to Participant no. 7's strategy. Despite having one more year of piano learning experience than Participant no. 7 and possessing a higher level of basic music knowledge and piano performance skills, both have a good sense of rhythm and can apply some of the basic rhythms to their improvisation. Unfortunately, given equipment issues, there are no short clips of Participant no. 11's performance during the lessons. However, complete voice recordings of each lesson and video recordings of Participant no. 11's full performance in the final concert are available. Her improvisation will be analyzed in the subsequent section.

4.5.4 Complete video recording of the final concert and its details

The video recording of the final concert has been split into two sections given the limitations of the video recorder, which cannot record for more than 46 minutes at a time. The first section encompasses the complete performances of all 11 participants' jazz music pieces, while

the second section includes the complete performances of eight participants' pop music pieces. The author plans to upload all these video recordings, including all the aforementioned sound recordings, to a cloud drive. These will be accessible for online viewing and listening to anyone with the link. Table 19 presents a summary of the details and information about this video recording.

Table 19. Details of the video recording of the final concert

The first section: Jazz music special			
Order	Performer	Timeline	Name of the song
1	Participant no. 6	2:00 ~ 5:40	Lazy Blues
2	Participant no. 10	7:10 ~ 10:05	Children Blues
3	Participant no. 8	11:12 ~ 14:52	Lazy Blues
4	Participant no. 5	15:24 ~ 18:24	Knife Blues
5	Participant no. 7	18:49 ~ 21:19	Children Blues
6	Participant no. 11	21:42 ~ 24:38	Lazy Blues
7	Participant no. 2	25:15 ~ 28:15	September Swing Boogie
8	Participant no. 1	29:06 ~ 33:11	Rain in July Boogie
9	Participant no. 3	33:54 ~ 37:50	Autumn Leaves
10	Participant no. 4	38:36 ~ 42:40	Rain in July Boogie
11	Participant no. 9	43:18 ~ 2:36 (next video)	Autumn Leaves
12	A professional jazz learner	3:44 ~ 6:12	Pfancing (No Blues)
13	Participant no. 3	6:40 ~ 10:40	Lullaby of Birdland

The second section: Pop music special

1	Participant no. 8	12:20 ~ 15:20	The Big Fish
2	Participant no. 7	15:37 ~ 18:28	The Daylily Flower
3	Participant no. 2	18: 58 ~ 22:16	The Blue and White Porcelain
4	Participant no. 9	22:41 ~ 25:58	The Wind Rises
5	The learner who has no time to take lessons	26:23 ~ 29:44	Wishes
6	Participant no. 4	30:21 ~ 33:24	The Rice Fragrant
7	Participant no. 1	33:45 ~ 37:43	The Lone Brave
8	Participant no. 3	38:08 ~ 42:17	The Red Dust Inn
9	A professional jazz learner	43:20 ~ end	Magic Waltz

4.5.5 Analysis of each participant's performance in the final concert

Participant no. 1 successfully incorporated all four basic rhythm patterns into his improvisation and skillfully used numerous short jazz riffs and his own jazz phrases. Here are some moments when he used the four basic rhythm patterns: 30:19 ~ 30:24 (triplets), 30:53 ~ 30:59 (triplets), 31:14 ~ 31:30 (numerous triplets and blues scales), 31:48 ~ 31:53 (triplets), and 32:05 ~ 32:09 (two sets of trillos). He also used short jazz riffs at the following moments: 30:27 ~ 30:34 (short jazz riff no. 1), 30:44 ~ 30:52 (combination of triplets and short jazz riff no. 3), 30:59 ~ 31:05 (variation of short jazz riff no. 5), and 31:34 ~ 31:43 (variation of short jazz riff no. 2). His strong sense of rhythm was evident, and he made no tempo mistakes during his final performance, including the melody part, the improvisation part, and the pop music performance.

He also demonstrated a good command of rest beats, using them extensively in his jazz improvisation and the improvisation in the pop song.

The highlight of participant no. 2's improvisation was her successful application of two short jazz riffs that she had learned. The first one, short jazz riff no. 5, was used between 26:34 and 26:43. The second one, short jazz riff no. 4, was used between 27:03 and 27:10. Her sense of rhythm was also commendable, and she made no mistakes in tempo and rhythm during her final performance, including the melody part, the improvisation part, and the pop music performance. She also has a good command of rest beats.

Participant no. 3's Bossa Nova and swing feeling were impressive, which facilitated his faster learning and acquisition of new skills. He performed three different types of songs in the concert, a challenging feat that he executed excellently. There was a minor issue with his performance of Autumn Leaves. If he could perform this song using more legato articulations instead of too many staccato articulations, the sense of Bossa Nova would be enhanced, and the rhythm would sound more authentic.

Participant no. 4 delivered a remarkable improvisation, which was an improvement over her improvisations during the lessons. She mastered the application of short jazz riffs to her own jazz phrases and successfully used elements from the short jazz riffs instead of using them in their entirety. Here are some examples of her application of elements from short jazz riffs. The first example is between 39:48 and 39:58, where she used the first two intervals of short jazz riff no. 1 as the motif of this phrase. The second example is between 40:18 and 40:26, where she combined the first two intervals of short jazz riff no. 2 with the notes in the first two beats of short jazz riff no. 3 to create a new jazz phrase. The third example is between 40:49 and 40:59, where she used a combination of the notes in the first two beats of short jazz riff no. 5 and the C key blues scale.

All these phrases represent the improvement in Participant no. 4's creativity, and the final concert may have been a major motivation for her to try new combinations during improvisation.

Participant no. 5 introduced a new element in the improvisation section, which had not been previously utilized in the lessons leading up to the final concert. From 16:29 to 16:38, he initiated his improvisation with a bar of simple blues notes, followed by a bar of rest beats in response to the chords played by the piano in the electric accompaniment. This type of interaction is commonly seen in jazz bands, where the soloist (saxophone or trumpet player) listens to the chords played by the pianist or the bass line played by the bass player and responds accordingly. This serves as a form of communication within the live jazz band. Furthermore, Participant no. 5 improvised a phrase reminiscent of the "call and response" technique, using the high register to play the first half of the phrase and the lower register to play the remainder. These new elements demonstrate an improvement in his improvisation skills.

Participant no. 6 delivered a steady performance during the concert. She correctly used basic rhythm patterns during her improvisation, and her sense of swing rhythm significantly improved. This resulted in a more stable tempo and rhythm in her improvisation, and the content of her improvisation became more organized. She repeated the combination of two triplets and a single note, which appears to be one of her favorite jazz phrases. She used this phrase twice, first between 3:27 and 3:33, and then between 4:15 and 4:21.

Participant no. 7 appeared somewhat nervous during the final concert. She only improvised once in the 12-bar blues form after playing the main melody, forgetting to improvise a second time, as is usually required by the teacher. Despite this oversight, her improvisation was of good quality, and she incorporated many interesting triplets in this 12-bar improvisation. At the start of her improvisation, she used several basic swing rhythm patterns to form an ascending phrase, followed

by six triplets with one basic swing rhythm pattern to form a descending phrase between 19:49 and 19:59. This combination created a very jazzy and organized sound.

Participant no. 8 struggled to keep up with the tempo and the beats of the rhythm during her improvisation. As noted in part 4.5.3, her biggest challenge in learning jazz is her sense of rhythm. While the tempo of the main melody she performed in the concert was correct, her rhythm became unstable when she began to improvise. Despite her well-chosen notes, the unsteady rhythm affected the texture of her improvisation. She did not return to the normal rhythm until the second round of her improvisation.

Participant no. 9 was the only participant who performed the selected jazz song in collaboration with the teacher (jazz piano duet). The Bossa Nova rhythm of his performance was steady, and their cooperation was excellent. Moreover, Participant no. 9 successfully played the comping chords as accompaniment while the teacher was improvising. This performance was a significant challenge for him to test his ability to cooperate with others while playing the piano, and he successfully met this challenge.

Participant no. 10 resolved a minor issue, mentioned in part 4.5.3, during her improvisation in the final concert. Her basic swing rhythm patterns became more legato instead of using staccato articulation, which greatly enhanced the swing feeling of her improvisation. Although she chose some unusual notes in her improvisation that do not belong to the C key blues scale and may have been played inadvertently, the improvement in the basic swing rhythm compensated for this minor deficiency.

As noted at the end of part 4.5.3, Participant no. 11's entire performance in the final concert was successfully recorded, and a brief analysis of her improvisation is provided here. The tempo and basic swing rhythm patterns of her performance were steady, and she could incorporate some

of the four basic rhythm patterns. In the first video of the final concert, between 22:50 and 23:10, she successfully integrated two of the four basic rhythm patterns into her improvisation. The first pattern is a triplet. She played three identical triplets using two blues notes, Gb and G, for the first time, and played four triplets using two groups of blues notes, C, Bb, and G as one group and F, Eb, and C as the other group. The second pattern is a trillo, and she played a set of trilloes using two blues notes, Gb and G. Between 23:25 and 23:32, she used two groups of triplets again. Although the first group of triplets was slightly faster than the electric accompaniment, she quickly regained the original rhythm in the next bar.

4.6 The evaluation and comments from other Chinese jazz educators

Four Chinese jazz educators from Shanghai Conservatory of Music and Zhejiang Conservatory of Music, Prof. He, Mr. Zhou, Mr. Wan and Ms. Ding, were invited to watch the final concert. They also provided their evaluation and comments on participants' performance and their improvisation part at the end of the final concert. After they all expressing their overall comments, Mr. Wan was recommended as the representative of these four jazz educators and was also willing to provide his further evaluation of the performance, improvisation and jazz learning outcomes of each participant in detail.

4.6.1 The overall comments from these Chinese jazz educators

As the leader of the jazz piano programme in Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Prof. He firstly affirmed the learning outcomes and the performance, especially the improvisation part, of each participant and the author's teaching outcomes. The overall comment he made was that "it is a good attempt to teach these children jazz music and improvisation, and this is an interesting and

fruitful children's jazz concert. Some of the jazz phrases they developed in their improvisation were mainly suitable for jazz blues and some of them were really unexpected and surprisingly jazzy." He also made some detailed comments, which included two aspects:

1. Some of these children, especially those with less piano learning experience like participant no. 6, need to improve their sense of rhythm to keep up with the electric accompaniment. They can practice by slowing down the tempo of the electric accompaniment and clapping with the beats of the drum line and the bass line of the electric accompaniment separately.
2. The teacher should tell students pay attention to some special chords in the jazz chord progressions, such as the D minor seventh chord in the ninth bar of the jazz blues progression. The teacher can provide them with some specific notes, which are more suitable when improvising on these particular jazz chords, to make sure their improvisation follows the rule and sounds jazzier.

As the jazz piano teachers in Shanghai Conservatory of Music and Zhejiang Conservatory of Music, Mr. Zhou, Mr. Wan and Ms. Ding all highly praised participants' performance in the final concert and the author's jazz teaching outcomes. Each of them also provided detailed comments in different aspects.

Mr. Zhou mainly focused on the tempo of participants' performance. He firstly pointed out that some children used 120 BPM (beats per minute) to play the jazz melody and improvise, which made some notes in their improvisation not strong enough to express their jazz phrases clearly. He then considered that not only children with less piano learning experience, but also those with enough piano learning experience should practice the slow version of the jazz melody and

improvise by using the electric accompaniment in a slow tempo, such as practicing jazz blues in 60 BPM.

Mr. Wan found that most of these participants had one or two unfamiliar bars when they played the main melody of the jazz song. Although these little unsolved problems did not affect the performance this time, they may have some negative effects on the following jazz learning and the future performance. He suggested that like the normal practice way in classical piano learning, all participants should concentrate on every unfamiliar bar by practicing it repeatedly from slow tempo to fast tempo step by step until they completely solving these little problems.

Ms. Ding mainly raised the importance of the strong beat in jazz rhythm and she used swing as an example. She pointed out that some participants, especially those with less piano learning experience, played strong beats on the first and the third beats of one bar in a swing style jazz song and this was the exact opposite of a correct swing style. The strong beats of a swing style song should be placed on the second and the fourth beats of one bar. The mistaken strong beats can result in a wrong and strange sense of jazz rhythm. She suggested that the teacher should firstly guide these children to clap the strong beats and feel the rhythm of the jazz song by following the beats in the electric accompaniment to make sure they understand where the strong beats are. Then, they can apply what they have learnt from clapping into melody and improvisation practice.

4.6.2 The detailed evaluation and comments from Wan

Mr. Wan mainly focused on eight aspects of each participant based on the similar sets of rigorous criteria and the questions in the questionnaire of music abilities and the questionnaire of creativity used in this research, including:

1. the rhythm and the tempo of the melody,

2. the highlight of the improvisation,
3. the integrity of the performance,
4. how confident during the performance,
5. the overall musicality,
6. the ability of improvising,
7. the advantage,
8. the disadvantage.

Therefore, his evaluation and comments also revolved around these eight aspects, and the following tables (Table 20 ~ 30) present his evaluation and comments in detail. The original evaluation form is included in the appendix (Appendix C).

Table 20. Wan's evaluation and comments on participant no. 1

1	2	3	4
Understand the basic rhythm characteristics of jazz piano performance. The overall speed of the performance is stable, and the cooperation with the accompaniment is neat.	The use of accent in improvisation is more standardized.	The integrity is very well.	Full of confidence and play the whole piece while enjoying the music.
5	6	7	8
Basically grasp the rhythm and characteristics of blues style music.	Improvise using repetition patterns and can use them freely in different rhythmic patterns.	Focus, be serious, and can play while enjoying the music.	The contrast of Piano and Forte is not obvious, and the lack of body movement.

Table 21. Wan's evaluation and comments on participant no. 2

1	2	3	4
The rhythm is slightly accelerated and is not completely combined with the accompaniment sometimes. The use of repeated patterns is rich.	Use improvisation skills that make good use of intervals combined with blues scales.	The integrity is good.	Basically be confident during the performance.
5	6	7	8
Basically understand the characteristics of blues style music.	Have a good command of the use of the blues scale and be able to improvise skillfully within the harmonic structure.	Play the whole piece completely and relaxed.	The rhythm deviates slightly from the accompaniment.

Table 22. Wan's evaluation and comments on participant no. 3

1	2	3	4
Smooth tempo and better grasp the rhythm of blues style triplets.	Have the ability to improvise using melodies.	The integrity is basically good.	The melody is confident while the improvisation is a little tense.
5	6	7	8
The melody part has better understood the characteristics of blues style music, but the improvisation part needs to be improved.	Improvisation with repetitive melodies and a good grasp of the blues scale.	The whole is more relaxed, can feel the strong interest in improvisation piano.	The ending is a bit hasty.

Table 23. Wan's evaluation and comments on participant no. 4

1	2	3	4
The tempo is stable. Better reflect the rhythm of the triplet.	Improvise freely using the blues scale.	The integrity is good.	The melody is more confident, while the improvisation is a little restrained.
5	6	7	8
Good grasp of blues music style characteristics. Accurately use triplet in the improvisation.	The ability to improvise using blues scales flexibly.	Have more experience in single melody improvisation using blues scales.	The overall patterns are relatively simple.

Table 24. Wan's evaluation and comments on participant no. 5

1	2	3	4
The rhythm is slightly forward, and the speed can be adjusted in time according to the accompaniment.	The blues are clearly structured and the scales are used correctly.	The integrity is basically good.	Basically confident and can correct the deviation of rhythm in time.
5	6	7	8
Good grasp of blues music style characteristics, familiar with the blues scale within the characteristics of the tone and can use it flexibly.	The ability to improvise using repetitive patterns and vary the tempo.	Under the same tempo, the rhythm changes more abundant.	Need to strengthen the overall rhythm control ability.

Table 25. Wan's evaluation and comments on participant no. 6

1	2	3	4
Smooth rhythm. Use the standard triplet rhythm pattern.	Have a clear blues structure. Skilled use of adjacent notes in the improvisation.	The integrity is good.	Basically confident.
5	6	7	8
Basically understand characteristics of blues music style. Familiar with the blues scale.	Improvise with adjacent notes and be proficient in modulating on the basis of scales.	Smooth tempo and clear structure.	Too many repetitive patterns in the improvisation.

Table 26. Wan's evaluation and comments on participant no. 7

1	2	3	4
Basically understand the jazz rhythm characteristics. The overall tempo of the performance is stable, and the cooperation with the accompaniment is neat.	Know the structure of blues clearly. Make use of different registers of piano to improvise.	The integrity is very well.	Full of confidence.
5	6	7	8
Have a good grasp of the blues music style, and familiar with the blues scale.	Use characteristics of the piano and techniques, such as vibrato and different registers to play.	The tempo is stable, the structure is clear, and the performance ability is strong.	Body movements need to be strengthened.

Table 27. Wan's evaluation and comments on participant no. 8

1	2	3	4
The rhythm is slightly forward, but the overall tempo is smooth.	Improvise using varying blues scales.	The integrity is basically good.	A little nervous.
5	6	7	8
Basically understand blues music style and blues scales.	Use varying blues scales.	The structure is clear and the tempo is stable.	Need to perform more relaxed.

Table 28. Wan's evaluation and comments on participant no. 9

1	2	3	4
Smooth rhythm. Can use the standard triplet rhythm pattern.	Know blues structure clearly Use blues scales correctly.	The integrity is basically good.	Basically confident.
5	6	7	8
Basic grasp of blues style music rhythm characteristics.	Repetitive rhythmic improvisation using characteristic notes within the blues scale.	Have a basic grasp of the characteristics of the blues scale and be able to play it freely.	Left hand can play some basic jazz chords.

Table 29. Wan's evaluation and comments on participant no. 10

1	2	3	4
Basically understand rhythm characteristics of jazz, and the overall tempo is stable.	Know blues structure clearly Use blues scales correctly.	The integrity is basically good.	A little nervous.

5	6	7	8
Basic grasp of blues style music rhythm characteristics.	Skilled use of blues scales and triplet variations.	Basic grasp of the blues scale. Use different piano registers to play.	Triplets sometimes change to dotted rhythm when improvising.

Table 30. Wan's evaluation and comments on participant no. 11

1	2	3	4
Smooth rhythm. Can use standard triplets.	The blues are clearly structured. Scales are used correctly.	The integrity is basically good.	A little nervous.
5	6	7	8
Good grasp of blues music style. Can play the standard triplet rhythm pattern.	Can use a variety of blues scale improvisation skills and the characteristics of the piano to improvise.	Make use of different registers of the piano. The logic of music phrases is clear.	Keep using the sequential mode of the blues scale, which makes the improvisation slightly monotonous.

As Wan written in the end of the evaluation form, he considered that through the analysis of the outcomes of the improvisation piano teaching in this research, the teacher used professional improvisation teaching methods, rigorous theoretical framework and diversified student training modes to enable young children of different ages, degrees and personality characteristics to learn and perform jazz music and improvisation freely. He also mentioned that this research is a successful practice of “learning music in enjoyment and happiness”, which has been a difficulty in piano teaching for many years in China. “Under the guidance of this jazz teacher, the children

underwent a systematic and professional jazz training program, combined with teaching methods tailored to their different personalities at different ages, and innovatively incorporated elements of improvisation. What's more, it significantly improve the teaching level of jazz music, improvisation, and even the whole piano teaching in China.”

4.7 Summary

To ensure the reliability of the data, the teacher (who is also the author) and 11 participants, including their parents, were involved in the entire process of the eight jazz lessons and the final concert. All parents were invited to accompany and assist the participants in completing all the processes of the interviews and questionnaires. The two piano tutors in Xin Le Music center offered their help throughout the conduction of the action plan as well as the check of the questions in interviews and questionnaires. Four Chinese jazz educators were also invited to provide their evaluation and comments on the participants' performance and improvisation in the final concert, and one of them wrote a more detailed evaluation form as the representative.

This chapter provided a detailed account of the lessons, final concert, interviews, questionnaires, and video observation along with their corresponding data and results. The analysis of these elements was also included. There were some differences and similarities in the learning outcomes of each participant, which mainly existed in the completion of core tasks and extra tasks, and the strategies and skills of improvisation. All these differences and similarities will be discussed in detail in the next chapter to determine the effects of jazz learning on children's musical abilities and creativity. The summary of the percentages of each jazz learning activity during the lesson time will be used to support the discussion the fourth research question. Some perspectives provided by the participants in the interviews before and after jazz learning appeared to be similar

which made the changes not very obvious, while the majority of the changes in their responses can be considered as positive changes. There were also different degrees of increases and decreases in the average scores of each response to the questions in the pre- and post-jazz learning questionnaires. All the findings presented in this chapter will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, in conjunction with the findings from the literature review.



Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

Following the findings presented in Chapter 4, the discussion section addresses the research questions. To answer the primary question, it sequentially discusses the remaining five questions. After presenting the conclusions of the discussion of all six research questions in this study, it then concludes with the implications of the jazz teaching plans. The chapter also acknowledges its limitations and suggests areas for future research, providing valuable insights for other music researchers and jazz educators.

5.2 Discussion of the second research question

As highlighted in the literature review, listening practice is a crucial component of jazz learning (Vaartstra, 2017) and is the best way to understand the ongoing conceptualization of jazz (Henry, 1993). This implies that the proficiency of a learner's listening skills can influence their jazz learning experience and determine the pace at which they acquire and master new jazz knowledge. Listening ability encompasses basic music knowledge and includes four main aspects: triads, seventh chords, scales (major and minor), and basic rhythm patterns. The understanding of the seventh chord is considered more advanced musical knowledge relative to the other three aspects. While it may not be essential for young jazz learners, it is a prerequisite for any jazz learner aspiring to delve deeper into their jazz studies (Vaartstra, 2017). According to the pre-teaching plan interview, all participants, except for the youngest one (Participant no. 6), had exposure to jazz music or pop songs that utilize basic jazz rhythm patterns. Their responses indicate that children in China can listen to jazz, given that listening materials and opportunities are more readily accessible than in the past. The decision to listen to jazz boils down to personal preference,

which can be influenced if parents are willing to listen to jazz-related music and have the thoughts to share these kinds of music with their children in their daily life.

The knowledge of the four main aspects are not only pertinent to listening ability but also to improvisation skills. Therefore, they are included in piano performance skills and can be distilled down to basic piano performance skills. Despite being classified as basic, these skills are not easily mastered by children and require a significant duration of piano learning. According to the piano teaching syllabus designed by Mr. Xiang, the principal piano tutor at Xin Le Music Training Center, it typically takes piano students a minimum of six years to learn and master all the basic piano performance skills. This duration may seem lengthy for every music learner. However, barring a few Chinese children whose parents require them to take some piano examinations in a short time, this is the only method for other Chinese children to learn piano scientifically and systematically. Adapting from the main teaching materials in China's piano teaching system mentioned in the literature review (Chen & Ji, 2013), Mr. Xiang's piano teaching syllabus categorizes the mainstream teaching materials into three different levels. Thompson's piano courses, Beyer's instruction book, and Czerny Etudes Op. 599 are classified under the fundamental level of piano learning. Czerny Etudes Op. 718 and Op. 849 are categorized under the intermediate level of piano learning. Czerny Etudes Op. 299 and Op. 740 are classified under the advanced level of piano learning. Hanon finger exercises can be used across all three levels of piano learning because of the significance of basic practice in piano learning. To maintain the confidentiality of this syllabus, the author has refrained from directly using or citing its content.

As previously mentioned, the level of knowledge of triads, seventh chords, major and minor scales, and basic rhythm patterns can also influence participants' jazz learning. A comparison of all the participants' levels of basic music knowledge and their learning outcomes

reveals that the higher the level of this knowledge, the deeper the degree of jazz learning. The learning outcomes of Participant nos. 3 and 9 serve as perfect examples, demonstrating that not only middle school and high school students can excel in jazz music, but primary school-aged children can also perform well. These two examples underscore the importance of accumulating basic music knowledge and practicing music performance skills in the preparation stage before jazz learning.

However, it is worth noting that Participant no. 6 had the lowest level of basic music knowledge (knowing few triads, having no knowledge of seventh chords, knowing half of the major and minor scales and most of the basic rhythm patterns) and the lowest level of piano performance skills (having only one year of piano learning experience, practicing Czerny Etudes 599, no. 25, and having no experience of playing any songs related to jazz before jazz learning). According to the piano teaching syllabus in Xin Le Music Training Center, Participant no. 6 only reached the fundamental level of piano learning before starting jazz learning and was in the early stage of this level. Her finger movement ability was extremely limited, and the tempo of her practice and finger running was far slower than other participants. Despite these limitations, she could still learn the jazz swing melodies and basic swing rhythm patterns, cooperate with the jazz accompaniment, do some simple improvisation, and perform several jazz songs by following the complete jazz performance order. Regardless of the difficulty and how many improvisational skills Participant no. 6 can use in her improvisation part, her learning outcomes serve as good examples to prove that young children in early primary school age with a low level of basic music knowledge and music performance skills can also commence their jazz learning.

As demonstrated in the methodology section, Participant nos. 3 and 9, who had fully mastered five aspects, learned faster than the other participants in all the lessons. This can be

attributed to their longer piano learning experience. Both started their piano learning journey at the age of four and had been learning for over six years. A comparison of the basic music knowledge of Participant nos. 3 and 9 with that of Participant nos. 1 and 4 reveals that six years of piano learning equips children with a more comprehensive understanding of triads and seventh chords than five years of piano learning. Furthermore, Participant nos. 3 and 9 had played more jazz songs prior to their jazz learning relative to Participant nos. 1 and 4, who had played one or two jazz songs. This additional knowledge and experience gave Participant nos. 3 and 9 an advantage, enabling them to learn slightly faster than Participant nos. 1 and 4.

As discussed in the data analysis section, the age of the participants has less impact on jazz learning than the number of years of piano learning. This conclusion was drawn from analyzing the situations of Participant nos. 10 and 3 (including Participant no. 9). Both participants are 10 years old, but Participant no. 3 has three more years of piano learning experience than Participant no. 10, resulting in significantly different jazz learning outcomes. Another factor contributing to the differences in the learning outcomes of these two participants is the habit of listening to different types of music. This unique habit, developed by Participant no. 3, was also mentioned in the data analysis section and contributed to his distinct learning efficiency. His learning progress during the eight lessons was the fastest among all the participants and was even slightly faster than Participant no. 9, who had a similar situation but did not listen to as many types of music in his daily life. This underscores the importance of listening ability in jazz learning and suggests that listening to different types of music is a beneficial habit for children to develop during their jazz learning.

Except for age, the situations (the level of their basic music knowledge and piano performance skills) of Participant nos. 5, 7, 8, and 10 were similar, leading to similar jazz learning

outcomes. These include similar learning progress, similar usage and choice of improvisational skills, and similar choice of songs in the final concert. Their similar jazz learning outcomes further prove that age has less impact on young jazz learners whose ages are in the early primary school period between seven and ten years old.

As mentioned in the literature review, the five improvisation “brains” stated by Monk (2012) are necessary for high school and undergraduate jazz students. While after conducting this research, having two out of five improvisation “brains” in advance might be helpful for Chinese children who wants to start jazz learning to develop. The first one is the performance brain, which should be equipped in their prior classical music learning. The second one is the temporal brain, which includes a good sense of tempo and keeping up with the rhythm and the speed of the music melodies as well as the accompaniments. The creative brain, the continuation brain, and the structural brain, on the other hand, are three “brains” that Chinese children need to develop during their jazz learning. The jazz teaching approach raised by Henry (1993) is similar to Monk’s idea, including practicing scales, patterns, learning the theory, improvising, and learning by listening. However, the content of his approach is more specific than the concept of five improvisation “brains”. Except the learning of the jazz theory which needs a systematic jazz theory teaching, other four parts were covered in the teaching plan raised by the author in this study. Another representative element of jazz music is jazz harmony and the importance of jazz harmony learning was mentioned by Grigson (1985). While among all kinds of jazz harmony, the author only includes the knowledge of triads in the part of basic music knowledge because the harmony learning of most participants in this research only reached the level of triads learning.

Overall, children with higher levels of basic music knowledge and music performance skills can learn jazz at a faster pace and apply more jazz improvisational skills during their learning



process. The level of a learner's basic music knowledge can determine the speed and efficiency of learning a new jazz song, understanding the basic rhythm patterns of a new jazz style, and playing with different kinds of accompaniments (electronic or in collaboration with others). Similarly, the level of a learner's music performance skills can influence the usage of different improvisational skills, such as applying basic rhythm patterns, using short jazz riffs, and creating new jazz phrases.

Basic music knowledge and performance skills encompass various aspects. The main aspects include the knowledge of triads, seventh chords, scales (major and minor), and basic rhythm patterns. Apart from seventh chords, learners should have some basic concepts and practice of triads, scales, and basic rhythm patterns. Listening ability is another aspect that can be improved before jazz learning. However, it is not a prerequisite for young learners as they can have more opportunities to engage with jazz music and cultivate their listening ability during their jazz learning. Additionally, the finger movement and finger running ability is a necessary aspect, and some very basic finger practices are a good preparation before starting jazz piano learning.

5.3 Discussion of the third research question

Based on the interview data and participants' learning outcomes, the analysis of this question, as discussed in Chapter 4, can be bifurcated into two segments.

The first segment pertains to the interview data from participants and their parents. According to the illustration of participants' responses to the second question of the interviews conducted post-teaching plan in section 4.3, these responses provide direct insight into the students' thoughts and their parents' perceptions of the jazz teaching plan. All participants and their parents expressed a liking for the teaching plan, citing various reasons for their preference for jazz learning. Most of them (seven out of eleven) stated that improvisation was their favorite aspect of the jazz



teaching plan. This result is similar to the finding in Pual's study (1999), that improvisation is the reason why jazz attracts the children participating in the summer jazz camps and started jazz-infused bands. The primary reason for this preference is the freedom jazz learners must play any notes or phrases they desire during improvisation. The remaining participants cited other reasons for their interest in jazz learning, including the diverse rhythms in jazz, unconventional learning methods, and the appealing sounds of jazz music.

For these participants, and other Chinese children learning music and musical instruments, they must typically adhere to their music tutors' instructions and play the exact notes written in the music scores. This is a common scenario for classical music learners and traditional music learners worldwide. However, jazz learning introduced a novel learning approach to the participants, where they were not required to constantly refer to the music scores, follow their teachers' instructions, or repeatedly perform the same music pieces. As per the participants, this approach provided them with more freedom to think and practice independently. The participants' responses to the fourth interview question post-teaching plan, as shown in section 4.3, also highlighted these differences between jazz learning and classical music learning. One participant's response encapsulates this difference succinctly: "Classical music requires playing according to the music score, whereas jazz is freer, enriching my music learning and improving my ability to innovate." Unlike the long-standing instructions from classical music teachers and traditional music teachers, jazz teachers (including the author) can simply demonstrate to ensure their pupils understand the new knowledge, and then encourage these children to practice and experiment with different basic jazz rhythm patterns and jazz phrases on their own at home. This teaching strategy proved effective for the eleven participants and may also be suitable for other Chinese children of the same age.



The second segment discusses participants' learning outcomes after attending eight lessons and the final concert. As presented in part 4.2, all participants completed all the core learning tasks, with some also completing all or several extra learning tasks. Some participants demonstrated higher learning efficiency, learning faster in each step of the teaching plan, which afforded them more time to practice improvisation skills and extra learning tasks. Others, however, did not learn as efficiently, resulting in slower progress in jazz learning, leaving them with no time to practice other skills and tasks during each lesson. Despite the varying learning progress in each lesson, the design of each lesson in the teaching plan was generally suitable for most participants.

However, to ensure the teaching plan's suitability for all children, the teacher had to make minor adjustments to the contents of several steps in the lessons. While extra learning tasks were prepared for faster learners, there was no specific instruction for participants who could not keep pace with the normal progress of the teaching plan. Therefore, minor adjustments were necessary for these slower learners. For instance, Participant no. 6, the youngest with the least piano learning experience, had a slower learning progress during the jazz lessons. Her progress was comparable to other participants in the first two lessons but lagged slightly in the third and fourth lessons. To align her progress with others in the remaining four lessons, the teacher adjusted the teaching plan, allowing Participant no. 6 to proceed to the next song even if she could not perform the previous jazz song proficiently, especially songs requiring higher-level music performance skills such as Spring Blues, September Swing Boogie, and Rain in July Boogie. These adjustments were suitable for Participant no. 6 and other slow learners, as they all completed the core tasks in the teaching plan and achieved the final learning goal: performing a jazz song using the complete jazz performance order and doing simple improvisation in the final concert.

Overall, based on the participants' responses to the interview questions and their learning outcomes, and the evaluation and comments from the four Chinese jazz educators, the teaching plan was generally suitable for the eleven participants. However, minor adjustments were necessary to ensure slower learners could keep up with the normal learning progress of the teaching plan. This situation is considered a limitation of this teaching plan, and the teacher implemented specific measures to assist these slow learners during the lessons. According the statements raised by Henry (1993), jazz teachers can help design their students' routine of self-teaching practice. Therefore, in addition to the adjustments made during the lesson time, the design of self-teaching practice for students could also be one of the solutions to handle with the limitation of this teaching plan. Another advantage of this solution is that it does not even require much of the teacher's lesson time and saves more time for both the teacher and the student to carry on with the main tasks of each lesson.

5.4 Discussion of the fourth research question

The answer to this question varies based on individual circumstances, including the participant's foundational music knowledge and performance skills, and the percentages of each jazz learning activity during the lesson time presented in Table 13. These factors can influence their learning progress and the proportion of each learning method employed in each lesson. The discussion can be segmented into three parts, as the 11 participants can be grouped into three categories based on the similarities of their circumstances and the three levels of teaching materials mentioned in the piano teaching syllabus in Xin Le Music Training Center.

The first group comprises participants with a low level of basic music knowledge and performance skills, including Participant nos. 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10. In the initial two lessons, a slightly

higher emphasis could be placed on listening, as these participants were not yet familiar with jazz music and improvisation. The teacher should provide and demonstrate more examples of jazz music to acclimate their ears to the genre, especially during the introductory part of the first lesson. The teacher's guidance for practicing new blues songs was also crucial for these participants in the first two lessons to ensure they did not misinterpret the jazz rhythm initially. More importantly, this guidance was intended to establish a foundation for participants to practice new jazz songs correctly at home independently. Improvising and collaborating with the accompaniment, however, proved challenging for this group of participants to learn in the first two lessons, and the teacher only allocated them a brief period to attempt it. The purpose of this arrangement was to provide these participants with a basic understanding of improvisation and the electronic accompaniment played by the play-a-long, including the teacher's role in jazz learning.

After the initial two lessons, to optimize class time, listening materials can be provided to the participants' parents, enabling participants to complete listening tasks at home. The only listening content was the demonstration and explanation of new jazz songs played by the teacher at the end of each lesson, as outlined in the teaching plan. Practicing was the primary focus throughout the entire teaching plan, including practicing songs taught in the previous lesson and new songs introduced in the current lesson. Improvising and collaborating with the accompaniment were combined into one part because accompaniment was always required when participants were improvising. They could practice the main melody of a jazz song without accompaniment, but they could not improvise without it. The content of these two parts was significantly increased to practice and enhance the participants' improvisation skills and develop their habit of collaborating with the accompaniment simultaneously. The part of collaborating with the teacher remained brief, allowing participants to try different types of accompaniments.



The second group comprises participants with medium levels of basic music knowledge and performance skills, including participants no. 2 and 11. The structure of their first two lessons was similar to the previous group, with similar proportions for each part. The differences emerged in the remaining six lessons. The listening part was reduced for the same reason as the previous group. The practicing part also had a smaller proportion, not only at home but also during the lesson, because these two participants could complete and master a new jazz song more quickly than the previous group of participants. Due to these reductions, this group of participants had more time to enhance their improvisation skills and develop their habit of collaborating with the electronic accompaniment and the teacher's live accompaniment.

The third group comprises participants with a high level of basic music knowledge and performance skills, including participants no. 1, 3, 4, and 9. These participants already had some experience learning songs related to jazz styles and pop songs in the form of jazz rhythm. Therefore, the introductory part in the first two lessons did not consume much time, and the listening materials were sent to their parents for participants to listen to at home. The lesson time was allocated for the remaining parts, and the proportions of each part in all eight lessons were similar. The practicing part was different from that of the previous group. Although these four participants were fast learners and could complete core learning tasks in a short time, they still needed more time to practice the extra learning tasks, which were much harder than the core learning tasks. The parts of improvising and collaborating with the accompaniment were different from the low-level and medium-level groups because, in addition to collaborating with the electronic play-a-long, this group of participants had more opportunities to collaborate with the live accompaniment played by the teacher. The teacher's live accompaniment was more challenging and more variable than the electronic accompaniment played by the play-a-long, but the participants can learn how to

interact with the teacher during their performance to enhance the appreciation of their music creation.

Overall, the teacher should collect the detailed information of the student's basic music knowledge and performance skills and know the level of these music abilities before the first jazz lesson. As Henry concluding in his research (1993), the jazz teaching approach should include each of the jazz learning activity in a balanced form, and the jazz learners should use materials appropriate to their level of capabilities, such as their basic music knowledge and music performance abilities. Therefore, when introducing jazz to Chinese children without enough basic music knowledge and performance skills, the jazz teacher should spend more time of the first several lessons on the steps of "listening" and "practicing" during the lesson time. After these children getting familiar with jazz learning, teachers can focus on the steps of "practicing" and "improvising". While for those with enough basic music knowledge and performance skills, more time should be spent on the steps of "practicing", "improvising" and "performing with accompaniment (played by the teacher or the play-along)".

This conclusion is similar to the principles mentioned by Zhang (2013) to be used in jazz teaching, that teachers should fully realize the theoretical knowledge and music performance techniques of their students. While the difference is that the author did not spend much time on jazz music theory during the lesson time because unlike the purpose of promoting the development of jazz music education to a deeper level, the participants in this research were only in entry level. There is also a similarity between this conclusion and the suggestions raised by Liu (2020) to improve the effectiveness of the jazz piano classroom in China. One of the suggestions is improving the teaching proportion of creative ability, which also includes the step of "improvising".

It is important to note that the percentage of time dedicated to the step of “listening” during the lesson may not appear sufficient, given the crucial role of listening in jazz education. However, all participants were eager to undertake the primary listening tasks at home, thereby maximizing class time. Consequently, the actual percentage of time spent on listening in their overall jazz learning exceeded that during the lesson time. Calculating the time spent on each activity while learning jazz at home proved challenging for these young learners. Moreover, it was impractical for their parents to assist with these calculations given their busy schedules and work commitments. This situation once again proves the importance of designing a routine of self-teaching practice for students (Henry, 1993). The step of listening could occupy a major proportion in students’ home practice because they have plenty of time at home, unlike the limited time during each lesson.

5.5 Discussion of the fifth research question

The discussion of this question is related to the previous one. The prior question pertains to the proportion of each participant’s jazz learning during the lesson, which the teacher should design for each participant before each lesson. This question, however, concerns the proportion of guidance each participant receives from the teacher during the lessons, which the teacher should also consider before each lesson. Therefore, similar to the previous question, this question’s discussion can be divided into three parts based on the participants’ musical abilities.

Drawing on the insights from the studies conducted by Coss (2018) and Virkkula (2015) which were mentioned in the literature review, the teacher (who is also the author) paid careful attention to the design of the teaching solutions in each lesson, particularly the balance between guidance and free practice time for participants at different levels. The balance issue in Coss’s article (2018) is similar to the fifth research question at hand because formal learning represents

the instruction and guidance from the teacher (Teacher as Guide), and informal learning represents the inspiration and hints provided by the teacher (Teacher as Motivator).

For participants with lower musical abilities, constant instruction and guidance from the teacher are necessary. This is largely because many Chinese children are accustomed to following directives from parents and teachers in all aspects of their lives, including academic learning and music education. As discussed earlier, most Chinese children are required to strictly adhere to their music teachers' instructions when they begin learning classical music. This habit makes it difficult for them to start learning jazz without sufficient guidance. The proportion of this guidance in the initial lessons should be comparable to that in classical music teaching.

Once these children become familiar with swing rhythm and blues notes, the teacher can gradually allow them some freedom to practice and improvise independently, providing appropriate guidance when they encounter difficulties, such as incorrect rhythm patterns in the main melody of a new jazz song, incorrect notes in the improvisation section, or questions about jazz phrases and combinations of different rhythm patterns.

According to the recordings of eight lessons for this group of participants, the teacher had to provide constant instruction during the first two lessons, including during the five minutes allocated for improvisation attempts and accompaniment cooperation. After the first two lessons, the teacher gradually introduced periods of free practice (approximately three to five minutes per lesson), particularly during the improvisation and accompaniment cooperation sections. This allowed the students to explore new jazz songs, different jazz rhythm pattern combinations, and even some additional learning tasks.

Participant nos. 7 and 8, for example, completed the pop song learning task among the extra learning tasks given their keen interest in a specific pop song and their strong desire to

perform it on stage. Despite not having mastered the core learning tasks when they expressed their wishes to start learning the pop song at the end of the fifth lesson, the teacher accommodated their interests. The teacher first allowed them to listen to and perform the pop song based on its recording and the chords provided by the teacher. The teacher then suggested several modifications to their original performance, such as the accompaniment style of their left hand, the order of each part of the song, and the introduction and conclusion of their performance.

For participants with medium musical abilities, the teacher also needed to provide sufficient instruction and guidance in the first two lessons, similar to the low-level group. Instruction and guidance were particularly necessary in the introduction section, including the listening and practicing parts, to ensure these participants did not misunderstand the basic principles of jazz music and did not make too many mistakes in jazz rhythm practice at the beginning of their jazz learning. Given the higher musical abilities of this group, the teacher encouraged them to think and practice the new content taught in the introduction section by allocating three to five minutes of free time in each of the improvisation and accompaniment cooperation sections of the first two lessons. In the remaining six lessons, an additional three minutes of free practice time was added to the practice section.

Based on the recordings of the first two lessons, Participant no. 2 could quickly adapt, accurately grasp the sense of jazz rhythm, and perform simple improvisations based on the four basic rhythm patterns during free practice time, following the teacher's instruction in the listening and practicing parts. In contrast, Participant no. 11 required additional guidance from the teacher to practice the basic rhythm patterns of jazz swing and needed examples of different combinations of the basic rhythm patterns to imitate and perform simple improvisations during free practice time.



The primary reason for the differences between these two participants, both in the medium-level group, is that Participant no. 2 had a longer piano learning experience (one year longer) than Participant no. 11. This factor led to an increasing gap in jazz learning progress between Participant nos. 2 and 11 in the remaining six lessons. Notably, Participant no. 2 completed all the core learning tasks very well and even completed the learning of a pop song, one of the extra learning tasks, while Participant no. 11 only accomplished all the core learning tasks and did not have spare time to learn the contents in the extra learning tasks. The difference between these two participants in the same group underscores the importance of piano learning experience, suggesting that sufficient piano learning experience may be one of the main prerequisites before starting jazz education for children.

For participants with high musical abilities, the teacher aimed to determine whether these participants could create more original jazz phrases in the improvisation part independently. Therefore, the teacher allocated more free time (around three minutes) in each part of each lesson (including the first two lessons) except the listening part, where the teacher's guidance was strongly needed to demonstrate the new learning contents of each lesson. The increase in free practice time allowed these high-level participants to practice specific parts of new jazz songs that they found important or challenging, imitate and review the jazz phrases and combinations of basic rhythm patterns introduced by the teacher in the improvisation part, and have more opportunities to cooperate with the accompaniment, especially with the live accompaniment played by the teacher. The teacher also allocated three minutes of free practice time in the learning of the extra tasks to ensure they understood these extension contents and would not practice them in the wrong direction. As shown in part 4.2 in the previous chapter, the learning outcomes of these high-level

participants were noticeably more fruitful and complex than those of participants in the other two groups.

Overall, similar to the discussion of the fourth research question, “teaching as a guide” or “teaching as a motivator” should also depend on the situations (the level of musical ability) of the participants. As suggested by Virkkula (2015), music teachers must think about how to help their students be able to apply music skills and get benefits from these music skills rather than just teaching skills but never letting students use these skills. This perspective is similar to the teaching method in this research, which is giving participants several minutes of free time to think, practice, and improvise by themselves during the lesson time. This method was meant to encourage young jazz learners to revise the knowledge and the improvisation skills taught in each lesson and allow them to try to apply these knowledge and skills into their own performance. The learning outcomes of eleven participants achieved the purpose of this method and some participants even developed some new improvisation skills and phrases during their free learning time. Table 21 presents the conclusions of the fifth research question.

Table 31. Role of the teacher, the guidance, and the free practicing time for participants with different levels of musical abilities during the lesson

For participants with low levels of musical abilities	
Mainly teaching as the guide with little motivation. The proportion of the teacher’s guidance is far more than the teacher’s inspiration.	
The first two lessons	The teacher should guide them all the time.
The rest six lessons	The teacher can give them three to five minutes for them to think, practice, and improvise by themselves in each lesson.

For participants with medium levels of musical abilities

Teaching is a combination of guidance and motivation. The proportion of the teacher's guidance decreases a little bit, and the proportion of the teacher's inspiration increases a little bit.

The first two lessons	The teacher should guide them all the time in the practicing and listening parts and give them three to five minutes of free time to think, practice, and improvise by themselves in the improvising part and cooperate with the accompaniment part.
The rest six lessons	Based on the above, the teacher should give another three minutes of free time in the practicing part.

For participants with high levels of musical abilities

Teaching as the motivator with the proper guidance. The proportion of the teacher's guidance decreases a lot, and the proportion of the teacher's inspiration increases a lot.

All the lessons	The teacher should give them around three minutes of free time to think, practice, and improvise by themselves in each part of the lesson except the listening part.
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5.6 Discussion of the sixth research question

The analysis of this topic can be segmented into three sections, each corresponding to a different aspect of the chapter on data analysis. They include the learning outcomes of the eleven participants, evolution of responses to specific interview questions before and after jazz instruction, and changes in the average scores of questionnaire responses before and after jazz instruction.

First, the data analysis and the results of the participants' learning outcomes clearly indicate that all participants made varying degrees of progress in jazz learning, developing a diverse range of strategies and ideas for jazz improvisation.

Participants with low to medium musical abilities, who had no prior exposure to jazz music, found this learning experience entirely new. Thus, the strategies and ideas of jazz improvisation they developed, which were discussed in the previous chapter, were also new to them. From a zero basis to a preliminary understanding, listening, and practicing of jazz music and improvisation, they initially formed the rudiment of their own jazz strategies in the first half of the eight lessons and gradually developed these strategies in the remaining lessons. Their newfound learning outcomes, such as the ability to perform jazz-style melodies and improvise in several jazz songs, are among the main differences in their musical abilities before and after their jazz learning.

For participants with high levels of musical abilities, although they had some experience with jazz-style songs, they could only practice these songs in the same manner as classical music pieces. Except for Participant no. 3, who had an interest in jazz and pop music and practiced them regularly, they rarely had the opportunity to systematically learn the scales, chords, and other musical skills used in these songs, let alone improvise in these jazz pieces. Therefore, most of these participants' strategies and ideas of jazz improvisation after the jazz learning were new to them as well, similar to the participants with low to medium musical abilities. From initial exposure to further listening, understanding, and practicing of jazz music and improvisation, they quickly formed the framework of their jazz strategies in the first two lessons and developed these strategies into a more mature form based on their own situations.

In conclusion, all the participants' strategies and ideas of jazz improvisation developed during their jazz learning, including their learning outcomes, represent the differences in their



musical abilities. The strategies and ideas of jazz improvisation presented by the participants in this research show some similarities to the features of jazz improvisation concluded by Brophy (2005). The “Melodic features” and “Rhythmic features” were more frequently used by most participants, while few of them with a higher level of music abilities applied some “Structural features” into their improvisation. Moreover, both participants in this research and in Brophy’s study (2005) showed their obvious intresets in the pulse and the rhythmic features of their improvisations. A summary of their strategies and ideas of jazz improvisation will be provided at the end of this part based on the discussion.

Second, the analysis of the participants’ and their parents’ responses to specific interview questions before (nos. 1, 4 and 5) and after (nos. 1, 3, 4, and 5) jazz learning reveals differences in the participants’ views on jazz music learning, improvisation learning, and classical music learning.

The discussion is as follows:

1. By comparing responses to the first and last questions in the interviews before and after jazz learning, it is evident that the participants’ understanding of jazz music and improvisation has deepened. This is reflected in the increased specificity and length of their responses. For example, most participants initially identified rhythm as the most representative element of jazz music. However, after jazz learning, most could specifically point out swing rhythm as the most representative jazz rhythm, a concept emphasized and regularly used in the lessons. Similarly, while most participants initially described improvisation as performing freely and playing anything they wanted, after jazz learning, most realized that improvisation also involves many rules and strategies. They learned to improvise freely based on these specific rules and their own strategies developed during the lessons.

2. By comparing responses to question no. 4 in both interviews before and after jazz learning, which pertains to their opinions toward jazz music learning and classical music learning, it is clear that their responses have become more comprehensive. They evolved from describing their initial knowledge of jazz (which has a stronger sense of rhythm) to comparing jazz music with classical music and describing their jazz learning outcomes. One response encapsulates the differences well, stating that while classical music learning requires adherence to the music score, jazz music learning offers more freedom by allowing the performance of preferred music styles and the creation of new music phrases using their own musical language.
3. Based on responses to question no. 3 in the post-learning interview, the author received more direct insights about the changes in participants' musical abilities after jazz learning from both the participants and their parents. Some noted that jazz learning exposed them (or their children) to different types of music and music styles, some of which they had mastered. Others felt that jazz learning had enhanced their (or their children's) imagination during performance and improved their ability to learn new musical knowledge faster. Some even mentioned deeper changes related to their (or their children's) personality. For example, some participants (or their parents) mentioned that they (or their child) became more confident and more willing to express their own personality during performance. Unlike classical music, they need not fear making mistakes during improvisation. For all music learners, performing on stage in front of others, especially a large audience, is a significant challenge. Besides musical abilities, the performer's confidence on stage also determines the quality of their performance.

In conclusion, based on the discussion of responses to specific interview questions before and after jazz learning, the differences have been directly and indirectly pointed out by the participants and their parents. These differences will be summarized at the end of this part.

Third, the alterations in the average scores of the responses to the questions in the two questionnaires, which are related to the participants' musical abilities and creativity before and after jazz learning, directly mirror the differences in their musical abilities and creativity.

Regarding the changes in the participants' musical abilities, all the average scores of the responses to the eight questions have shown varying degrees of growth, except for question no. 3, which is the only one that has seen a slight reduction in its average score. Question no. 3 pertains to the participants' singing ability and their reaction to hearing a familiar song. The slight reduction may suggest that jazz learning has less or no effect on participants' ability to sing familiar songs. However, despite the decrease from a high score (before the teaching plan), this level of score is still high (after the teaching plan) because the average score of the response to this question changed from 4.55 to 4.45 out of a full score of 5. This implies that the average singing ability of all the participants was quite good before learning jazz, and there is very little room for them to improve any further. Therefore, it is hard to determine if jazz learning makes any difference to a jazz learner's ability to sing when they hear a familiar song.

From the average scores of the responses to the other seven questions, there are four questions (nos. 1, 4, 6, and 8) that have seen significant increases in their average scores, each representing different aspects of musical abilities. Question no. 1 represents the ability to distinguish between different musical rhythms. Question no. 4 represents the ability to distinguish different musical instruments. Question no. 6 represents the ability to judge the quality of the music played by others. Question no. 8 represents the ability to improvise. All the average scores of these

questions have increased from a relatively low score (3.91, 3.64, 3.64, and 3.36) before jazz learning to a reasonably high score (4.45, 4.00, 4.00, and 3.82) after jazz learning. Hence, there is a high probability that jazz learning may have a positive effect on these four musical abilities of a jazz learner, and the positive effect can be quite strong. Moreover, there are three questions (nos. 2, 5, and 7) that have seen some but not slight increases in their average scores, each representing different aspects of musical abilities. Question no. 2 represents the ability to distinguish different music types. Question no. 5 represents the ability to identify the pitch and the tonality of different music. Question no. 7 represents the ability to maintain confidence when performing on stage. Since the growth rates of the average scores of these three questions are not as high as that of the previous four questions, the positive effect of these three questions may not be that strong, but they can still prove that jazz learning has a positive effect on these three musical abilities of a jazz learner.

Regarding the changes in the participants' creativity, the average scores for half of the eight questions showed an increase, specifically question nos. 1, 2, 3, and 8, while the remaining questions showed a decrease, namely question nos. 4, 5, 6, and 7. The positive growth in the average scores of question nos. 1, 3, and 8 may indicate the beneficial effects of jazz learning on stimulating the participants' interest in learning, enhancing their improvisation and creative abilities, and encouraging them to explore more potential methods and strategies in jazz improvisation.

The positive decrease in the average score of question no. 4 represents the solidification of the participants' belief in the value of developing creativity, which can also be considered as the ability to improvise. The reductions in the average scores of question nos. 6 and 7 initially appear to be negative. However, upon analyzing the meaning of these two questions, it becomes clear that

they each only consider one aspect of creativity. By connecting these two questions, participants most likely developed their critical thinking skills to better answer these two questions. It is crucial to combine a diligent work ethic with the knowledge and skills acquired during lessons when developing creativity and the ability to generate new ideas. Therefore, the reductions in the average scores of these two questions can be considered positive reductions.

However, the increase in the average score of question no. 2 represents a negative effect, as this increase indicates that the participants found it more challenging to improvise and create new musical phrases. Despite the change from 2 to 2.45, a 9% (0.45) rate of change, the average score has increased from a relatively low point to another relatively low point, suggesting that these participants can still improvise and create. Question no. 5, which has a similar meaning to question no. 2, has decreased slightly from 3.91 to 3.82, a 1.8% (0.09) change rate. This decrease indicates that the participants' perception of themselves as creative individuals has weakened, but most still consider themselves creative after jazz learning.

By connecting questions nos. 2 and 5, it becomes apparent that the main factor leading to the negative but not detrimental results of the average scores of these two questions is that their learning of jazz music and improvisation has shown the participants, including their parents, the possibilities and challenges inherent in jazz learning. These challenges might have slightly affected and shaken their thoughts about jazz learning and creativity. However, they still wanted to face the challenges and be creative individuals after encountering these difficulties during jazz learning because the final average score of question no. 2 was still at a low point, and there was not much reduction between the average scores of question no. 5 before and after jazz learning.

Therefore, based on the discussion of the average scores of the answers to the questions in the two questionnaires before and after jazz learning, the differences have been directly shown in the average score of each question.

Overall, the study observed significant differences in participants' musical abilities and creativity before and after jazz learning. These differences, as reflected in the learning outcomes, interview data, and questionnaire data, are primarily evident in four areas:

1. Prior to jazz learning, some participants had no experience with jazz pieces, and most of those who did lacked improvisation opportunities and strategies. Post-learning, all participants developed their own jazz strategies, which can be categorized into three types: using specific combinations of rhythm patterns and short jazz riffs, imitating high-quality jazz phrases played by others or the teacher, and employing advanced elements and skills widely used by professional jazz musicians, such as "Call and Response" and "back half beat (off-beat rhythm)."
2. Jazz learning deepened participants' understanding of jazz music and improvisation and broadened their perspectives on the differences between jazz and classical music. It exposed them to various music types and styles, enhanced their imaginative performance, strengthened their music-learning ability, and improved their learning speed and efficiency when encountering new music knowledge. Moreover, it boosted the confidence of participants when performing in front of large audiences.
3. Jazz learning positively impacted four aspects of participants' musical abilities: distinguishing between different musical rhythms, identifying different musical instruments, judging the quality of others' music, and improvising. It also positively

affected three other aspects: distinguishing different music types, identifying the pitch and tonality of different music pieces, and maintaining confidence when performing on stage.

4. Jazz learning positively influenced five aspects of participants' creativity: stimulating interest in learning, improving improvisation and creation abilities, encouraging exploration of more improvisation methods and jazz strategies, reinforcing the idea of developing creativity, and fostering critical thinking about combining hard work and persistence with the knowledge and skills learned during the lesson. However, it slightly negatively affected participants' perception of being a creative person and their recognition of the difficulty of creativity and improvisation, but this negative effect does not necessarily indicate a poor outcome.

5.7 Discussion of the main (first) research question

A potential approach for Chinese children to initiate their jazz education is to utilize the curriculum developed by the author, adhering to the guidelines provided across eight sequential lessons. This curriculum offers an abundance of sheet music and auditory resources to facilitate their understanding of jazz and improvisation. Based on the outcomes observed from teaching eleven Chinese children using this curriculum, it is reasonable to conclude that this jazz teaching plan is appropriate for Chinese children aged seven to ten who are receiving music education in extracurricular training centers. It is noteworthy that strict adherence to every step in the curriculum is not mandatory. Beginners lacking sufficient foundational music knowledge and performance skills can break down the content of each lesson into two or three segments for easier comprehension, and may even omit complex steps and tasks that remain challenging despite persistent practice.



The curriculum provides a solid foundation for Chinese children embarking on their jazz education journey. However, given the complexity of jazz rhythm and improvisation, self-learning without any teacher guidance is unrealistic for most beginners. Therefore, it is essential for these novice jazz learners to seek a competent jazz music tutor or at least a music tutor with a strong understanding of jazz, to prevent misguided efforts during their learning process. Additionally, parental support, both during home practice and lessons, is a crucial factor in their jazz education journey.

In summary, a suitable jazz curriculum, proper tutor guidance, and parental cooperation are the three key elements for most Chinese children beginning their jazz education. The impact of jazz education on Chinese children's musical abilities and creativity was discussed in response to the sixth research question in section 5.6.

5.8 Conclusions and implications

In the past, jazz education may have been a challenging subject for Chinese children because of limited resources, outdated teaching methods, and a lack of listening materials. However, over the past two decades, the rapid development of jazz music and formal jazz education in Chinese music universities has made jazz education a significant area of interest for Chinese music teachers and researchers.

This study aimed to validate the feasibility of the jazz teaching plan designed and implemented by the author. It also explored the potential of jazz music and improvisation in music education for Chinese children, including the positive impact of jazz learning on their musical abilities and creativity.

The study found that all Chinese children, even those with only one year of piano learning experience, could play jazz rhythm, perform jazz music pieces (in Blues style, Boogie Woogie style and Bossanova style), improvise, and develop effective jazz strategies. However, it would be better if the jazz learner have some basic concepts and practice of triads, scales, and basic rhythm patterns in advance. Because the level of their basic music knowledge can determine the speed and efficiency of learning a new jazz song, understanding the basic rhythm patterns of a new jazz style, and playing with different kinds of accompaniments (electronic or in collaboration with others). And the level of their music performance skills can influence the usage of different improvisational skills, such as applying basic rhythm patterns, using short jazz riffs, and creating new jazz phrases. Jazz teachers should design a teaching plan with each of the jazz learning activity in a balanced form and use teaching materials appropriately based on learners' level of capabilities. They should also consider the balance between teaching as a guide and teaching as a motivator, which depends on the situations (the level of musical ability) of their pupils.

Among all the strategies of jazz improvisation presented by the participants, imitation proved to be a beneficial starting point for children of all ages. When improvising, most children were more likely to use melodic features (including repeated melodic motives and developed melodic motives) and rhythmic features (including pulse adherence, repeated rhythmic motives and developed rhythmic motives). Few of them with a higher level of music abilities developed some structural features (including phrases, and antecedent/consequent phrases).

In addition to the music abilities, the efficiency and outcomes of jazz education for Chinese children can also be influenced by suitable teaching plans, proper tutor guidance, and parental cooperation. Therefore, the choice of the jazz tutor and parental involvement should be considered by both the children and their parents before starting jazz learning. With careful consideration, jazz



learning can provide a new avenue for music education and broaden children's understanding of different music genres.

According to the bibliographic search of articles related to jazz education for children in China, this study is the first one to introduce jazz into music education for Chinese children by using a pedagogical teaching method and materials to teach them jazz and improvisation. Other Chinese jazz teachers and music educators, who have the will to contribute to jazz education and introduce jazz into music education for Chinese children, can directly use this teaching method in their jazz teaching. To ensure the quality of teaching, they can also combine the teaching materials in this research with other teaching materials which they are more familiar with.

When following the procedures of this teaching method, the teaching plan and materials used in this study, including sheet music and listening materials, can be directly applied to each lesson. Most of these materials can also be used in other introductory jazz teaching plans, as they are entry-level and have been proven feasible and practical by this study. Each lesson can be broken down into smaller steps for phased learning, allowing children with lower music abilities to learn gradually (phased learning). Unlike the limited time frame of this study, novice jazz learners need not rush to complete all core and extra learning tasks in eight lessons. Instead, they can spend two or three lessons learning one jazz piece by practicing melody line (the right-hand part) and bass line (the left-hand part) separately to ensure full mastery. After this, they can then work on the cooperation with the accompaniments and the improvisation part. Listening materials can be provided after the lesson as the self-learning materials for at-home practice. It is also important to document the process of their jazz learning by recording the performance and special ideas for further analysis and improvement, especially during the improvisation part.



5.9 Limitations of this study and suggestions for further research

As outlined in the introduction, the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on mainland China over the past three years has led the author to conduct this research at a music training center in their hometown, rather than local primary schools. Consequently, the teaching plan may be more suited to individual and small-group instruction at music training centers, rather than large-scale school music education. Moreover, most music teachers in schools and tutors in music training centers in mainland China have backgrounds in classical music and traditional Chinese music. Few have had the opportunity to learn or experience jazz music, making it challenging, if not impossible, for them to teach jazz music and improvisation to students. These two factors represent the primary limitations of this study and are of significant concern to the author.

Another limitation existing in this research is that the author did not have the chance to find and invite another jazz teacher to help him conduct the action plan. He had no choice but playing the role of the jazz teacher in this research. This is the main limitation because the author was more familiar with the teaching plan and materials in his pedagogical teaching method. While others may not fully understand each part of this method, but they can make the jazz teaching and learning outcomes more objective. Moreover, the author directly taught the eleven participants and this might have some degrees of influence on the participants' performance in each lesson. As the participants getting more and more familiar with the author after each lesson, it may also influence their responses to the questions in the interviews and the questionnaires after the teaching plan.

Considering these limitations, and with the aim of genuinely integrating jazz music into music education for Chinese children, the author proposes three suggestions for further research:

1. Incorporate jazz music into the teacher training system for Chinese music teachers. All music teachers in China must pass a teacher qualification examination, and most choose

to receive formal education at normal universities in China. Future research could explore ways to cultivate these future music teachers' jazz knowledge and related abilities. Music teachers should at least have a foundation in jazz and familiarity with the genre before they can effectively teach it to children. It may not be realistic to make jazz a core course in every normal university in China, given the current music teacher training system.

However, other music researchers could explore the possibility of offering jazz education as elective courses for those interested in learning and teaching jazz. These elective courses could be modeled after jazz courses in professional music universities, such as the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and would require both imitation and redesign to make them suitable for normal music teachers. This suggestion requires not only the attention of other music researchers but also cooperation from policymakers in normal universities.

2. Integrate jazz music into general music education in Chinese high schools, middle schools, and even primary schools. This suggestion is contingent upon the successful implementation of the first suggestion. Once some music teachers are prepared to teach jazz, we can then consider ways to incorporate jazz into Chinese general music education. This could involve including jazz pieces with various rhythms and styles in music textbooks for children, popularizing the history of jazz music, and forming school jazz bands. As with the first suggestion, this would involve imitating and redesigning the jazz curriculum in foreign schools, particularly in America.
3. Separate the role of jazz teaching from the research. To avoid being the researcher and the teacher at the same time in the research, which may cause some unexpected influence on the participants, the researcher should find other jazz teachers in advance and invite them

to conduct the jazz teaching part for him/her. Then, the researcher can participate in the research as the observer and observe the conduction of the action plan. This could make the learning outcomes and the responses of the participants be more objective.

Once jazz education for children matures in China, the author believes that a combination of jazz music, classical music, and Chinese traditional music will make music education more engaging, suitable, flexible, fruitful, and diversified for Chinese children embarking on or continuing their musical journey.



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Appendix A: Interview questions and answers

Before the teaching plan

Question 1:

What do you (your child) think is jazz music?

Question 2:

Have you (your child) ever listened to jazz music? If so, what was the name or style of the music?

Question 3:

Have you (your child) ever played jazz music? If so, what was the name of the song? Who is the writer of the music?

Question 4:

How do you (your child) find jazz music different from other music (such as classical music)?

Question 5:

What do you (your child) think is improvisation?

After the teaching plan

Question 1:

What do you (your child) think is jazz music?

Question 2:

How do you (your child) feel about jazz and improvisation learning? What is your favorite (least favorite) part? Why?

Question 3:

How has your (your child's) musical knowledge and performance ability changed after learning jazz? Please tell me the changes.

Question 4:

Did you (your child) learn anything different about jazz music than you did about classical music?

If so, tell me what you got.

Question 5:

What do you (your child) think is improvisation?"



Appendix B: Questionnaire questions

English version

The questionnaire related to music abilities

The number of the question	Question
1	You can distinguish between different musical rhythm.
2	You can distinguish between different genres of music.
3	When you hear familiar music, you can hum along to the melody or sing it in your mind.
4	You can distinguish the sounds of different instruments.
5	You can hear the pitch of the note or the tonality of the music.
6	You can tell if someone is good at playing music and if their music abilities are good.
7	How confident you are when you are performing (on the stage or in front of many people).
8	You can do some improvisation.

The questionnaire related to creativity

The number of the question	Question
1	Improvisational, innovative teaching can stimulate your interest in learning.
2	I find that it is hard for me to create something new.

3	Learning jazz and improvisation can improve my creative ability.
4	Developing creative capabilities is a waste of time.
5	I consider myself a creative person.
6	Creativity comes from effort and experimentation.
7	Your creative thinking and new ideas are based on previous knowledge and abilities.
8	During the lesson, you always think about how to make the improvisation part differently.

Chinese version

即兴课前小问卷

小朋友和家长你们好，这份问卷有一些关于即兴与爵士音乐的问题，请根据小朋友自身的实际情况填写，谢谢！

1、你（你的孩子）姓什么？（无需全名）【填空题】

2、你（你的孩子）今年几周岁了？【填空题】

3、你（你的孩子）觉得什么是爵士音乐？【填空题】

4、你（你的孩子）听过爵士音乐吗？如果听过，那段音乐叫什么名字或者是什么风格呢？【填空题】

5、你（你的孩子）弹过爵士乐曲吗？如果弹过，曲名叫什么呢？乐曲的作家是谁呢？【填空题】

6、你（你的孩子）觉得爵士音乐和其他音乐（比如古典音乐）有什么不同呢？【填空题】

7、你（你的孩子）觉得什么是即兴呢？【填空题】

8、这一部分是关于音乐能力的问题。请从 1 到 5 打分(1=非常不同意, 2=不同意, 3=不确定, 4=同意, 5=非常同意)。【矩阵打分题】(请填写 1-5 数字打分)

	打分
你能区分不同的音乐节奏。	
你能区分不同的音乐类型。	
听到熟悉的音乐, 你可以跟着旋律哼唱或在心里唱。	
你能区分不同乐器的声音。	
你能听出音乐的音高或调性。	
你能判断一个人弹奏音乐是否好听, 技术是否高超。	
你演奏的时候是否自信。	
你会即兴弹奏一些音乐。	

9、这一部分是关于创新能力的问题。请从 1 到 5 打分(1=非常不同意, 2=不同意, 3=不确定, 4=同意, 5=非常同意)。【矩阵打分题】(请填写 1-5 数字打分)

	打分
即兴、创新教学能激发你的学习兴趣。	
我觉得自己很难创新。	
学习爵士和即兴能提高我的创新能力。	
发展创新能力是浪费时间。	
我觉得自己是个有创新能力的人。	
创新能力来自于努力和尝试。	
你的新想法是结合以前所学的知识能力而来的。	
在课堂中, 你会想如何弹奏不同的即兴。	

即兴课后小问卷

小朋友和家长你们好, 这份问卷有一些关于即兴与爵士音乐的问题, 请根据小朋友自身的实际情况填写, 谢谢!

1、你（你的孩子）姓什么？（无需全名）【填空题】

2、你（你的孩子）今年几周岁了？【填空题】

3、你（你的孩子）觉得什么是爵士音乐？【填空题】

4、你（你的孩子）觉得爵士和即兴的学习怎么样？哪个部分是你最喜欢（最不喜欢的）？为什么？【填空题】

5、学习完爵士之后，你（你的孩子）的音乐知识和演奏能力有什么变化呢？请写出这些变化。【填空题】

6、相比于学习古典音乐，你（你的孩子）在学习爵士音乐中有什么不一样的收获吗？如有，请说出收获是什么。
【填空题】

7、你（你的孩子）觉得什么是即兴呢？【填空题】

8、这一部分是关于音乐能力的问题。请从 1 到 5 打分(1=非常不同意, 2=不同意, 3=不确定, 4=同意, 5=非常同意)。【矩阵打分题】(请填写 1-5 数字打分)

	打分
你能区分不同的音乐节奏。	
你能区分不同的音乐类型。	
听到熟悉的音乐，你可以跟着旋律哼唱或在心里唱。	
你能区分不同乐器的声音。	
你能听出音乐的音高或调性。	
你能判断一个人弹奏音乐是否好听，技术是否高超。	
你演奏的时候是否自信。	
你会即兴弹奏一些音乐。	

9、这一部分是关于创新能力的问题。请从 1 到 5 打分(1=非常不同意, 2=不同意, 3=不确定, 4=同意, 5=非常同意)。【矩阵打分题】(请填写 1-5 数字打分)

	打分
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即兴、创新教学能激发你的学习兴趣。	
我觉得自己很难创新。	
学习爵士和即兴能提高我的创新能力。	
发展创新能力是浪费时间。	
我觉得自己是个有创新能力的人。	
创新能力来自于努力和尝试。	
你的新想法是结合以前所学的知识和能力而来的。	
在课堂中，你会想如何弹奏不同的即兴。	



Appendix C: Wan's evaluation form

向尚博士论文研究实践点评

	旋律的 节奏和速度	即兴的 亮点	演奏完 整性	自信程 度	整体音乐 性	即兴能 力	优点	不足
黄子杰	基本掌握爵士钢琴演奏的律动特点、演奏整体速度平稳、与伴奏带配合整齐。	即兴演奏中重音的使用较规范。	非常完整	充满自信，在享受音乐中演奏完整首乐曲。	基本掌握布鲁斯风格音乐的节奏与律动特点。	使用重复音型即兴并可以在不同的节奏型中自由运用，	专注、认真、在享受音乐中演奏。	强弱对比不够明显，缺乏肢体动作。
梅译丹	节奏稍有加快，没有完全与伴奏带和上，重复音型的使用较为丰富。	较好地使用音程与布鲁斯音阶结合的即兴演奏技法。	完整。	较为自信。	初步掌握布鲁斯风格音乐的特点。	较好地掌握布鲁斯音阶的使用方式，能够熟练地在和声结构内进行即兴演奏。	完整、放松的演奏整首乐曲。	节奏与伴奏带稍有偏差。
潘译谋	速度平稳，较好地掌握布鲁斯音乐风格三连音的节奏律动。	能够使用改编旋律的方式进行即兴演奏。	较完整。	旋律部分充满自信，即兴段落稍有紧张。	旋律部分已较好地掌握布鲁斯风格音乐特点，即兴部分有待提高。	会使用重复旋律及较好地掌握布鲁斯音阶的即兴方法。	整体较为放松，能感受到对即兴钢琴的浓厚兴趣。	结尾稍显仓促
芮梓涵	速度稳定，较好地体现三连音的节奏律动。	自如地使用布鲁斯音阶进行	完整。	旋律部分较为自信，即兴部	较好地掌握布鲁斯音乐风格特点，能够准确的	能够灵活使用布鲁斯音阶进	使用布鲁斯音阶进行单旋律即兴演	整体音型较为单一。

		即兴演奏。		分略显拘谨。	使用三连音节奏进行即兴演奏。	行即兴演奏。	奏经验较为丰富。	
芮梓晨	节奏略微往前赶，能够根据伴奏带及时调整速度。	布鲁斯结构清晰，音阶使用正确。	基本完整。	较为自信，能够及时地对节奏的偏差进行现场改正。	较好地掌握布鲁斯音乐风格特点，熟悉布鲁斯音阶内的特征音并灵活运用。	能够使用重复性音型进行即兴演奏并能够变化节奏。	在统一的速度下节奏变化较为丰富。	需要加强整体的节奏把握程度。
史紫琄	节奏平稳，能够标准的使用三连音节奏型。	布鲁斯结构清晰，熟练使用相邻音进行即兴。	完整。	较为自信。	基本掌握布鲁斯音乐风格特点，熟悉布鲁斯音阶。	能够使用相邻音进行即兴，熟练掌握在音阶的基础上进行模进。	速度平稳，结构清晰。	即兴段落重复性音型稍多。
陈梓钰	基本掌握爵士钢琴演奏的律动特点、演奏整体速度平稳、与伴奏带配合整齐。	布鲁斯结构清晰，能够使用不同的音域进行演奏。	非常完整。	非常自信。	较好地掌握布鲁斯音乐风格特点，熟悉布鲁斯音阶。	能够使用钢琴的特点即兴即兴演奏，并使用颤音、音域变化等钢琴技法来演奏。	速度平稳，结构清晰，表现能力强。	肢体动作有待加强。
钟央	节奏略微往前赶，整体平稳。	使用变化布鲁斯音阶	较为完整。	略显拘谨。	初步掌握布鲁斯音乐风格特点，能够	使用变化的布鲁斯音	结构清晰，速度平稳。	需要更加地放

		进行即兴。			进行布鲁斯音阶的变化演奏。	阶进行演奏。		松演奏。
孙洋博	节奏平稳，能够标准的使用三连音节奏型。	布鲁斯结构清晰，音阶使用正确。	基本完整。	较为自信。	基本掌握布鲁斯风格音乐的节奏特点。	使用布鲁斯音阶内的特征音进行重复性节奏的即兴演奏。	基本掌握布鲁斯音阶的特点，并能自如地演奏。	演奏即兴段落时左手需要加上和声。
吴铱羽	基本掌握爵士钢琴演奏的律动特点、演奏整体速度平稳。	布鲁斯结构清晰，音阶使用正确	基本完整。	略显拘谨。	基本掌握布鲁斯风格音乐的节奏特点。	熟练使用布鲁斯音阶与三连音变化节奏。	基本掌握布鲁斯音阶的特点，使用不同的音域进行演奏。	即兴段落有时三连音节奏型会变为小符点节奏型。
邹子茵	节奏平稳，能够标准的使用三连音节奏型。	布鲁斯结构清晰，音阶使用正确。	基本完整。	略显拘谨。	较好的掌握布鲁斯音乐风格特点，能够演奏标准的三连音节奏型。	能够使用多种布鲁斯音阶即兴技法，运用钢琴的特点进行即兴演奏。	音域使用广泛，乐句语句逻辑清晰。	较多的使用音阶的顺阶进行，略显单一。

通过对于向尚博士即兴钢琴演奏教学成果的研究，向尚博士运用专业的即兴演奏教学方式、严谨的理论架构、多元化的学生培养模式，使得不同年龄、不同程度、不同性格特点的青少年学生能够自如地演奏即兴音乐，并成功的实践了“在享受与快乐中学习音乐”这

一多年来钢琴教学中一直存在的教学难点。孩子们在向尚博士的带领下，通过正规、专业的训练方式，结合针对各个年龄不同性格特点的教学方式，创新式地加入了即兴演奏元素，真正意义上提高了我国即兴钢琴乃至钢琴演奏的教学水平。



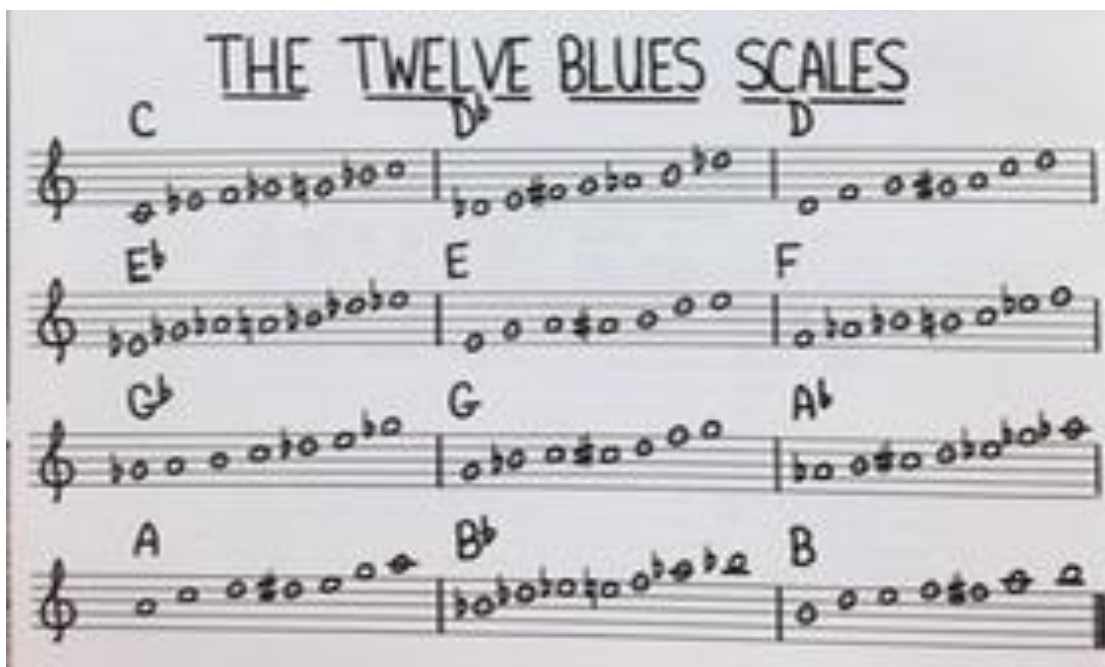
Appendix D: The link of the cloud drive

The name of the link	Video and sound recordings of jazz teaching
The link of the cloud drive	https://pan.baidu.com/s/1QIXVuUok44T0Z12p9pwEGA
The password of this link	hfcf
The contents of this link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice recordings of each lesson and the final concert • Video recordings of the final concert • Video recordings of improvisation during the lessons • Photos of the final concert • The program note of the final concert

Appendix E: Teaching materials

Music scores selected and edited by the author

Blues scales



Baby Blues

BABY BLUES

Mouvement métronomique souhaité : ♩ = 120

The musical score for "Baby Blues" is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is indicated as 120 beats per minute. The score consists of three systems of music, each with a piano (right hand) and bass (left hand) staff.

System 1: The piano staff begins with a whole note chord of F7. The bass staff starts with a half note chord of F7, followed by a half note chord of Bb7. The piano staff has a whole note chord of F7. The bass staff has a half note chord of F7. The piano staff has a whole note chord of F7. The bass staff has a half note chord of F7.

System 2: The piano staff begins with a half note chord of Bb7, followed by a half note chord of F7. The bass staff has a half note chord of Bb7, followed by a half note chord of F7. The piano staff has a whole note chord of F7. The bass staff has a half note chord of F7. The piano staff has a whole note chord of F7. The bass staff has a half note chord of F7.

System 3: The piano staff begins with a half note chord of C7, followed by a half note chord of Bb7. The bass staff has a half note chord of C7, followed by a half note chord of Bb7. The piano staff has a whole note chord of F7. The bass staff has a half note chord of F7. The piano staff has a whole note chord of F7. The bass staff has a half note chord of F7.

Lazy Blues

LAZY BLUES

Mouvement métronomique souhaité : ♩ = 100

First system of musical notation. Treble clef, 4/4 time. Chords: C7, F7, C7. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The bass line has whole notes. A finger number '5' is written below the first bass note.

Second system of musical notation. Treble clef, 4/4 time. Chords: F7, C7. The melody continues with eighth and quarter notes. The bass line has whole notes. A finger number '2' is written below the first bass note.

Third system of musical notation. Treble clef, 4/4 time. Chords: 1. G7, F7, C7, G7. The melody includes a repeat sign at the end. The bass line has whole notes. Finger numbers '1' and '2' are written below the first two bass notes.

Fourth system of musical notation. Treble clef, 4/4 time. Chords: 2. G7, F7, C7. The melody continues with eighth and quarter notes. The bass line has whole notes.

Gentleman Blues

GENTLEMAN BLUES

Mouvement métronomique souhaité : ♩ = 92

The musical score for "Gentleman Blues" is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The tempo is marked as 92 beats per minute. The score consists of four systems, each with a piano (piano) part in the left hand and a guitar part in the right hand.

System 1: The piano part starts with a bass line of F2, Bb2, F2, Bb2. The guitar part features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes (F4, A4, Bb4) followed by a quarter note (F4), a quarter rest, a quarter note (F4), and a quarter note (Bb4). Chords indicated above the staff are F7, Bb7, and F7.

System 2: The piano part continues with a bass line of F2, Bb2, F2, Bb2. The guitar part features a melodic line with a quarter note (F4), a quarter note (A4), a quarter note (Bb4), and a quarter note (F4). Chords indicated above the staff are C7, Bb7, F7, Bb7, C7, F7, and C7.

System 3: The piano part continues with a bass line of F2, Bb2, F2, Bb2. The guitar part features a melodic line with a quarter note (F4), a quarter note (A4), a quarter note (Bb4), and a quarter note (F4). Chords indicated above the staff are F7, Bb7, and F7.

System 4: The piano part continues with a bass line of F2, Bb2, F2, Bb2. The guitar part features a melodic line with a quarter note (F4), a quarter note (A4), a quarter note (Bb4), and a quarter note (F4). Chords indicated above the staff are C7, Bb7, F7, Bb7, C7, and F7.

Children Blues

CHILDREN BLUES

Mouvement métronomique souhaité : ♩ = 100

Comme une ballade

The musical score for 'Children Blues' is written in 4/4 time and consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system contains two staves of music, and the second system contains two staves of music. The score includes various chords and fingerings for the left hand.

First System:

- Staff 1: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Chords: C (5), C7. Fingerings: 1, 3, 5.
- Staff 2: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Chords: F7, C. Fingerings: 1, 3, 5.

Second System:

- Staff 1: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Chords: 1. G7, F7, F, C, G7. Fingerings: 1, 3, 5; 1, 3, 5; 1, 2, 5; 1, 3, 5; 1, 2, 4.
- Staff 2: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Chords: 2. G7, F7, F, C, C. Fingerings: 1, 3, 5; 1, 3, 5; 1, 2, 5; 1, 3, 5; 1, 2, 4.

Knife Blues

à Matthieu

KNIFE BLUES

Mouvement métronomique souhaité : ♩ = 80

Intro C C/B^b A^o7 Fm/A^b C G⁷

p

C F⁷ C

C C⁷ F⁷ C

simile

C G⁷

F⁷ C F F^o C/G G⁷

knife blues 02

C F⁷ C

mp

C C⁷ F⁷ /

C / G⁷

mp

F⁷ C C/B^b A^{o7} Fm/A^b C D^{b9} C⁹

Spring Blues

SPRING BLUES

Mouvement métronomique souhaité : ♩ = 116

The musical score for "Spring Blues" is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of 116 beats per minute. It consists of two systems, each with a first and second ending. The piano part is in the right hand, and the guitar part is in the left hand. The score includes various chords (C7, F7, C, Ab7, G7, D7) and triplets. The first ending of the first system ends with a repeat sign, and the second ending of the first system ends with a double bar line. The first ending of the second system ends with a repeat sign, and the second ending of the second system ends with a double bar line.

First System:

- Measure 1:** C7 chord, piano part has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), guitar part has a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3).
- Measure 2:** C7 chord, piano part has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), guitar part has a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3).
- Measure 3:** C7 chord, piano part has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), guitar part has a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3).
- Measure 4:** C7 chord, piano part has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), guitar part has a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3).

Second System:

- Measure 1:** F7 chord, piano part has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), guitar part has a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3).
- Measure 2:** F7 chord, piano part has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), guitar part has a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3).
- Measure 3:** C7 chord, piano part has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), guitar part has a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3).
- Measure 4:** C7 chord, piano part has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), guitar part has a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3).

First Ending:

- Measure 1:** 1. G7 chord, piano part has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), guitar part has a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3).
- Measure 2:** F7 chord, piano part has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), guitar part has a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3).
- Measure 3:** C7 chord, piano part has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), guitar part has a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3).
- Measure 4:** Ab7 G7 chord, piano part has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), guitar part has a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3).

Second Ending:

- Measure 1:** 2. G7 chord, piano part has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), guitar part has a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3).
- Measure 2:** F7 chord, piano part has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), guitar part has a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3).
- Measure 3:** C7 chord, piano part has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), guitar part has a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3).
- Measure 4:** D7 C7 chord, piano part has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4), guitar part has a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3).

Turtle Boogie

TURTLE BOOGIE

Mouvement métronomique souhaité : ♩ = 132

The musical score for "Turtle Boogie" is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as 132 beats per minute. The score is divided into four systems, each containing a piano (left) and treble (right) staff. The chords G, C7, and D7 are indicated above the treble staff. The dynamics *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *f* (forte) are marked. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. The score ends with a double bar line.

September Swing Boogie

SEPTEMBER SWING BOOGIE

Mouvement métronomique souhaité : ♩ = 120

The musical score is written for piano and bass in 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of music. The first system starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The piano part has a melody with fingerings 2, 1, 2. The bass part has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment, with a key signature change to one flat (Bb) indicated by a flat sign on the bass line. The third system includes a first ending marked '1. G7' and a second ending marked '2. G7'. The fourth system includes a key signature change to two flats (Bb, Eb) indicated by a flat sign on the bass line, and a final chord of C7 sus2. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

Rain in July Boogie

RAIN IN JULY BOOGIE

Mouvement métronomique souhaité : ♩ = 144

Intro G⁷ F⁷ C⁷ G⁷

1. G⁷ F⁷ C G⁷

2. G⁷ F⁷ C C/G A⁷ G⁷/B C C⁹

The musical score is written for piano and bass. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as 144 beats per minute. The score is divided into an Intro and two main sections, each with two endings. The Intro consists of four measures with chords G7, F7, C7, and G7. The first section has two endings, each four measures long, with chords C, F, C, and G7. The second section also has two endings, each four measures long, with chords G7, F7, C, and C/G A7 G7/B C C9. Fingerings and articulation marks are provided throughout the score.

Autumn Leaves (original version)

36.

AUTUMN LEAVES — JOHNNY MERCER

(MAP. JAZZ)

Chords and notation details:

- Staff 1: A-7, D7, Gmaj7
- Staff 2: Cmaj7, F#-7 b5, 1. B7, E-
- Staff 3: 2. B7, E-, F#-7 b5, B7 b9, E-
- Staff 4: A-7, D7, Gmaj7, F#-7 b5, B7 b9, E-7, E7, D-7, Db7
- Staff 5: Cmaj7, B7 b9, E-, FINE

BILL EVANS — "PORTRAIT IN JAZZ"

Autumn Leaves (Prof. He's version)

秋 叶

Composed by Jomny Mercer
贺 乐 编 曲

Allegro ♩ = 152

p

7

13

19

24

29 *a tempo*

rit.

34

38 *mf*

43

48

53

- 2 -



58

63

68

73

77

81

mp

85

89

93

97

101

106

mf

p

112

118

124

129

134

139

mf

rit.

- 5 -

Lullaby of Birdland (rearranged and written by the author)

Lullaby of Birdland

swing ♩ = 120

George Shearing 作曲
向尚 改编

Intro

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time with a swing feel at 120 beats per minute. It consists of an 8-measure introduction followed by two 8-measure sections (A and B) and a final 4-measure section. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the tempo is marked as swing ♩ = 120.

Intro (Measures 1-8): The piece begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand plays chords, and the left hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

Section A (Measures 9-16): This section starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth notes, while the left hand continues with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Chords indicated above the staff are Am, B⁷, E⁷, Am, Dm⁷, and G⁷.

Section B (Measures 17-24): This section begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. It includes a first ending (1.) and a second ending (2.). The right hand has a more active melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. Chords indicated above the staff include Cmaj⁷, Am, Dm⁷, G⁷, Cmaj⁷, F⁷, E⁷, and Dm⁷.

2

26 G⁷ C^{maj7} **A** Am B⁷ E⁷

30 Am Dm⁷ G⁷ C^{maj7} Am Dm⁷ G⁷

34 C^{maj7} G⁷ C^{maj7} **A** Solo Am B⁷ E⁷

38 Am Dm⁷ G⁷ C^{maj7} Am Dm⁷ G⁷

42 C^{maj7} F⁷ E⁷ **A** Am B⁷ E⁷

46 Am Dm⁷ G⁷ C^{maj7} Am Dm⁷ G⁷

50 Cmaj7 G7 Cmaj7 **B** Am Dm7 3

54 G7 Cmaj7 Am Dm7 3

58 G7 Cmaj7 **A** Am B7 E7

62 Am Dm7 G7 3 Cmaj7 Am Dm7 G7 3

66 Cmaj7 G7 Cmaj7 **A** Am **B** B7 E7 *p*

70 Am Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Am Dm7 G7 *mf*

4

74 1. Cmaj7 F7 E7 | 2. Cmaj7 G7 Cmaj7

78 **B** Am Dm7 G7 Cmaj7

82 Am Dm7 G7 Cmaj7

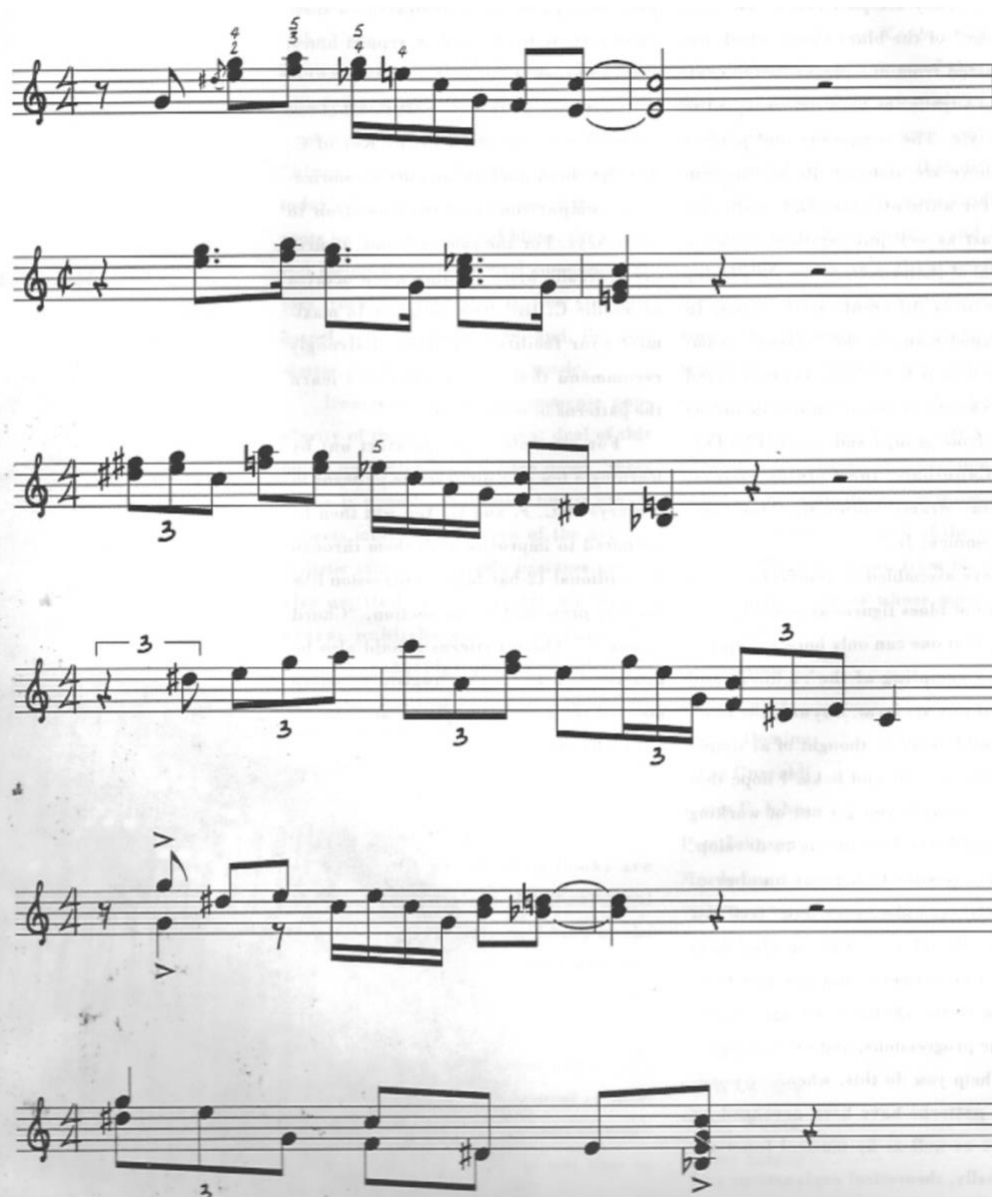
86 **A** Am B7 E7 Am Dm7 G7

90 Cmaj7 Am Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 G7 Cmaj7

94 **Ending** mp



Twelve short jazz blues riffs (written by William T. Eveleth)



Handwritten musical score for guitar in 4/4 time. The score consists of six staves, each containing a single line of music. The notation includes various chords, triplets, and melodic lines. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The music features a variety of chords, including triads and dyads, and includes several triplet markings. The second staff continues the melodic and harmonic development, with more complex chordal structures. The third staff shows a sequence of chords and a triplet. The fourth staff features a triplet and a melodic line. The fifth staff includes a triplet and a melodic line. The sixth staff concludes the piece with a triplet and a melodic line. The handwriting is clear and legible, with some corrections and annotations visible.