



# COMMENT ON “DEVELOPMENT OF MARXIST PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS ON MUSIC EDUCATION”


*Yaokun Yang*

Associate professor. School of Music, Liaoning Normal University, Dalian, 116029 - China.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3340-8075> |  [yyang@lnnu.edu.cn](mailto:yyang@lnnu.edu.cn)

**Commented article:** WU, H. Y.; ZHU, L. Development of Marxist philosophical thoughts on music education. **Trans/Form/Ação:** revista de filosofia da Unesp, v. 47, n. 5, “Eastern thought 2”, e02400136, 2024. Available at: <https://revistas.marilia.unesp.br/index.php/transformacao/article/view/15086>.

Received: 10/08/2024 | Approved: 15/08/2024 | Published: 30/09/2024

 <https://doi.org/10.1590/0101-3173.2024.v47.n5.e02400268>



This is an article published in open access under a Creative Commons license.

## COMMENT ON “DEVELOPMENT OF MARXIST PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS ON MUSIC EDUCATION”<sup>1</sup>

Yaokun Yang<sup>2</sup>

**Commented article:** WU, H. Y.; ZHU, L. Development of Marxist philosophical thoughts on music education. *Trans/Form/Ação*: revista de filosofia da Unesp, v. 47, n. 5, “Eastern thought 2”, e02400136, 2024. Available at: <https://revistas.marilia.unesp.br/index.php/transformacao/article/view/15086>.

The main content of Marxism includes three major components: Marxist philosophy, political economy, and scientific socialism, which are interrelated and interpenetrating, forming a unified Marxist theory. The reason why the People’s Republic of China was able to complete the path of industrial revolution that Western countries had taken hundreds of years to complete in just a few decades is due to the guidance of Marxist thought, especially Marxist philosophy, which provided a scientific worldview and methodology for the rapid development of New China. Wu and Zhu (2024) take Marxist philosophy as the guiding ideology, analyze the problems existing in music education in New China, and put forward suggestions to promote the development of music education.

Wu and Zhu (2024) first elaborate that the purpose of music education is to cultivate students’ interest and hobby in music, and they focus on the promoting effect of music education on individual physical and mental development. However, from a social perspective, music education has a deeper social function. “The Book of Filial Piety Guangyao Daozhang” states: “Music has the function of changing customs and traditions” (Ruan, 1980), indicating that music education has a strong social and educational function. There are many records in Chinese history of related examples, such as Han Yanshou.

---

<sup>1</sup> This comment was supported by a grant from China Scholarship Council in 2024 Art Talent Training Special Project, named “Sino-US Joint Training Program for Composite Applied Talents of College Music Majors” (n. YSRC20230028).

<sup>2</sup> Associate professor. School of Music, Liaoning Normal University, Dalian, 116029 - China. ORCID: 0000-0002-3340-8075. E-mail: yyang@lnnu.edu.cn.

The governor of Yingchuan during the reign of Emperor Xuan of Han. In response to the customs of local people reporting against each other and forming grievances, he applied ritual and moral education. Through folk songs, he understood the customs and customs, as well as the political and religious conditions reflected by them. He also promoted ancient rituals such as weddings and funerals to gradually cultivate the moral emotions of the people. After a long period of ritual and music education, he gradually transformed people's customs and habits and improved their moral standards (Ban, 1962, p. 72).

Next, Wu and Zhu (2024) briefly introduce the origin of music education. In this section, the author closely follows the dialectical materialism view of Marxism that “material determines consciousness”, and views the development of music education from the perspective of the degree of development of productive forces. The author attributes the development of music education to the development of productive forces and has a distinct dialectical materialism view. Regretfully, the writer failed to offer a thorough overview of the evolution of music education in China and other nations. We can learn more about this in two books. Feng and Wang (2020) introduce the early recorded music education venue “Cheng Jun” in the history of Chinese music education, and discuss it from various aspects such as music education venues, music education systems, and music education ideas; In the history of Western music education, starting from the ancient Greek music education model, the long history of Western music education is outlined. In comparison, He Yu (2017) provides a more detailed discussion on the development of ancient Chinese music education. The book is divided into chapters based on Chinese dynasties, introducing the state of music education from the pre-Qin period to the Qing Dynasty.

Wu and Zhu (2024) also analyzed the current development status of music education in China. Firstly, people are gradually realizing the importance of music education, and the social demand for music education is increasing; Secondly, the current teaching methods used in music education are not scientific enough, and music teaching methods are constantly being innovated to meet the needs of society; Thirdly, the level of music education workers varies, and the problem of cultivating high-level music talents needs to be solved. In addition to the three points pointed out by the author, I believe that the significant gap in the development level of music education in different regions is also a major problem. As far as I know, the development of music education in developed regions such as Beijing and Shanghai has reached an internationally advanced level. But even full-time music teachers for elementary and secondary schools are hard to come by in the vast regions of Northeast and Northwest China.

When it comes to the relationship between Marxist philosophical thought and music education. Wu and Zhu (2024) believe that the combination of Marxist philosophy and music education will be beneficial for students to understand music and help them form

correct values, outlook on life, and worldview. In terms of promoting and popularizing music education, music education activities should follow the Marxist ideology of emphasizing social equity and class equality, targeting all students and ensuring that each student has the opportunity to access music. As Marx said, human beings are the sum of all social relationships. When analyzing the current situation of music education, we cannot view it in isolation but should analyze it from the perspective of social development.

Wu and Zhu (2024) propose seven problems in the development of music education. However, they failed to come up with an effective solution to solve them from the perspective of Marxist philosophy. Matter determines consciousness. There is a significant gap in the development level of music education in different regions of China, and problems such as relatively backward teaching concepts, outdated teaching equipment and facilities occur more often in economically underdeveloped areas. In these areas, strong support should be given to their economic construction, and the already developed economy should be used to feedback music education. It does not, however, imply momentarily giving up on the advancement of music education. The superstructure is determined by the economic base, while the economic base is influenced by the superstructure. We need to gradually improve the level of music education in economically underdeveloped areas within a reasonable range, in conjunction with economic development.

Wu and Zhu (2024) state that human development is different, proposing that music education should implement a personalized teaching model. It can also be reflected in Confucius' proposal, that is, teaching according to one's aptitude. There are many similarities between Marxism and traditional Chinese culture, such as the saying in “The Book of Rites” that “The highest political ideal is that the world is shared by people, and people pursue the selection and appointment of talented individuals. Everyone values integrity and harmonious coexistence. Therefore, people should not only support their loved ones and children but also provide support for those who are lonely and helpless” (Sun, 1277). The Great Harmony Society promoted in “The Book of Rites” has inherent similarities with the communist society advocated by Marx. Marxism has advanced significantly in China because it is highly compatible with traditional Chinese culture in addition to having revolutionary theoretical characteristics.

In short, Marxist philosophy provides people with a scientific worldview and methodology. Wu and Zhu (2024), guided by Marxist philosophy, propose a series of problems in the development of Chinese music education and explore development strategies that are beneficial to Chinese music education, inspiring contemporary music educators. We believe that Marxist philosophy can also bring some inspiration to educators around the world.

## REFERENCES

- BAN, G. **Han Shu**. Beinin: Zhonghua Book Company, p. 3210-3211, 1962.
- FENG, X. G.; WANG, Z. **A Concise of Chinese and Foreign Music Education History**. Soochow: Suzhou University Press, 2020.
- HE, Y. **History of Ancient Chinese Music Education**. Sichuan: Sichuan People's Publishing House, 2017.
- RUAN, Y. K. **Annotations on the Thirteen Classics**. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1980.
- SUN, X. D. **Annotations to the Book of Rites Volume 49**. Confucius' Idle Residence, 1277.
- WU, H. Y.; ZHU, L. Development of Marxist philosophical thoughts on music education. **Trans/Form/Ação**: revista de filosofia da Unesp, v. 47, n. 5, "Eastern thought 2", e02400136, 2024. Available at: <https://revistas.marilia.unesp.br/index.php/transformacao/article/view/15086>.