

From “teaching” to “learning”:

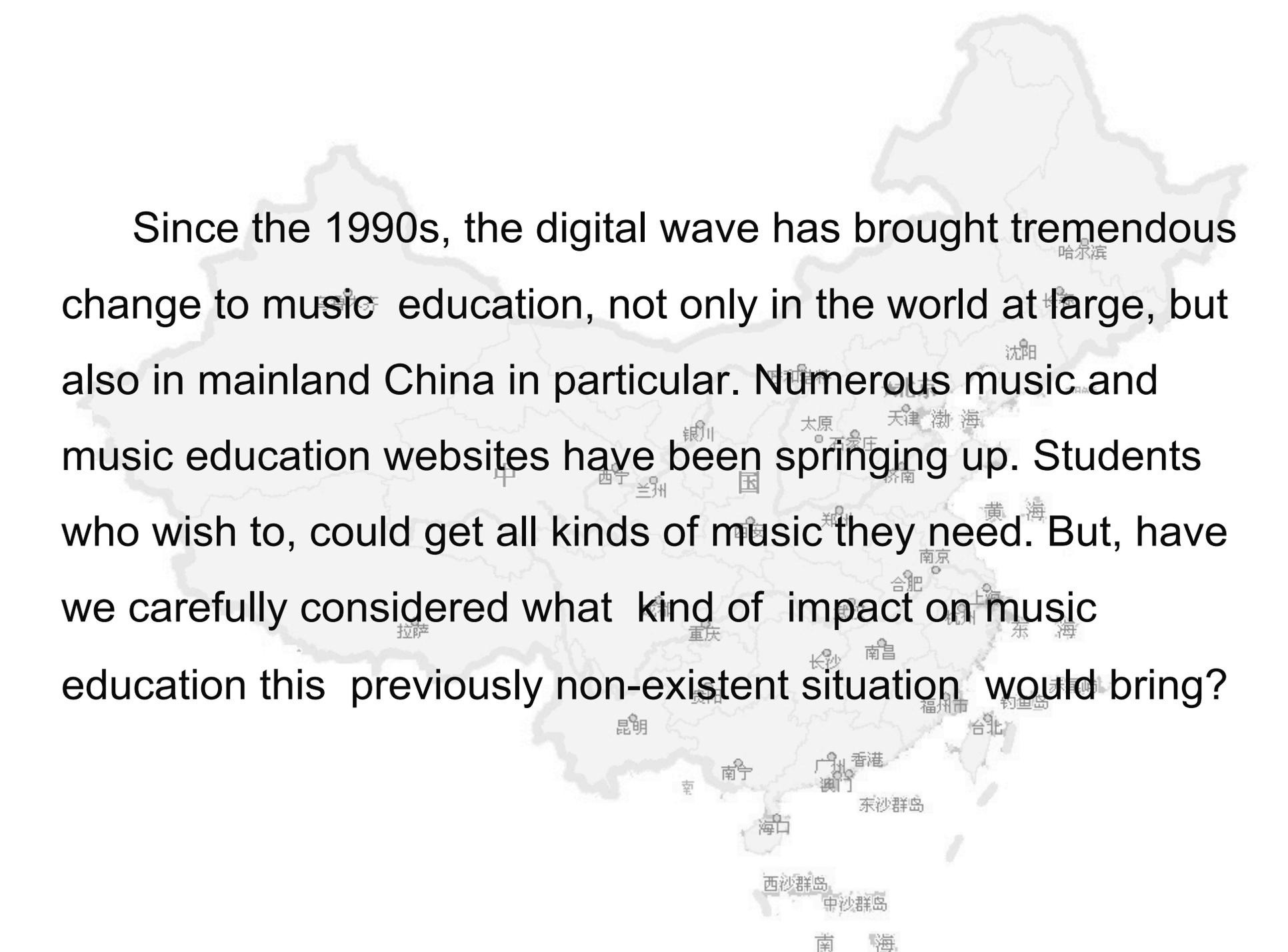
E-learning has changed the focus of music education

The digital music education trends in mainland China

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Since the 1990s, the digital wave has brought tremendous change to music education, not only in the world at large, but also in mainland China in particular. Numerous music and music education websites have been springing up. Students who wish to, could get all kinds of music they need. But, have we carefully considered what kind of impact on music education this previously non-existent situation would bring?



Can we say that this change is not only one of technical means, but also of educational perspectives and paradigms?

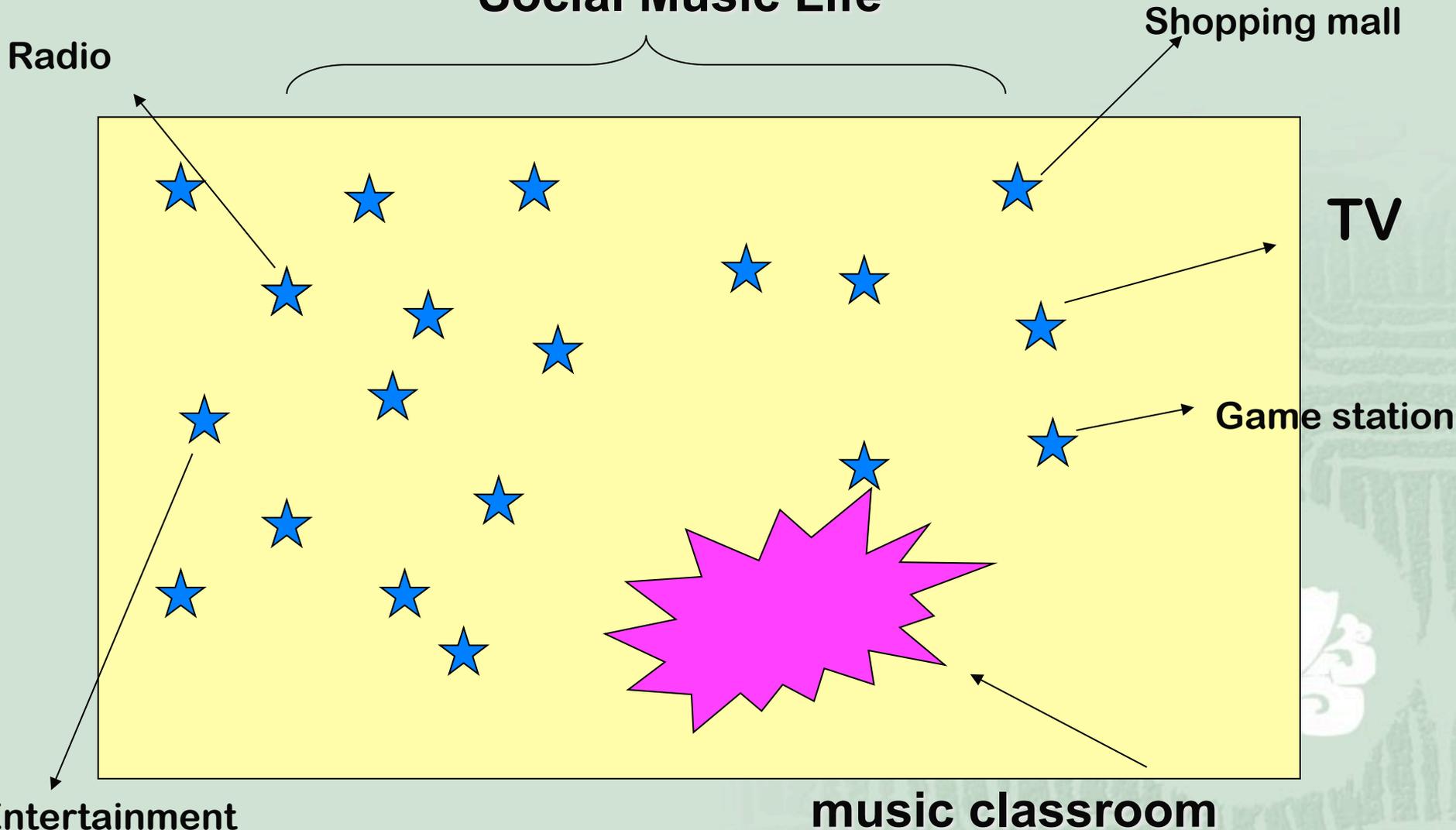


- Of course, as you know, E-learning, simply said, could be online study or network study. But if extended further, it should include multi-media study, use of database, long distance study, and long distance interaction. In this short report, we won't talk too much about definition, but rather focus on the profound changes brought to music education by this new study style, and the deep changes happening between teachers and students, as well as in “teaching” and “learning” caused by this technological revolution.



Information has made society into an ocean of music;
our music classroom is more like an isolated island

Social Music Life



Music Education in Mainland China: A huge system

This question is a more urgent one for Chinese music teachers. The reasons are not only because there are 200 million primary, middle school and higher education students, and more than 200,000

School music & teacher education

Elementary school	Junior high school	Senior high school	School of Music education
394,200	63,757	15,998	388
112,462,300	65,275,100	22,203,700	86,208
120,000	67,000	6024	

School: 473,955
 Student: 199,941,100
 Teacher: 200,024

but also because the music class cannot suit the students' needs. Many students complain that they love music, but that they hate music class.



- I also used to say that the 21st century is the century that only the outstanding teachers could survive. The online courses given by many outstanding teachers (of course not only music teachers) attract a large number of students. For example, in recent years, the online courses from Harvard and Yale are very popular in mainland China. But I don't think this is the heart of the matter; this is just offering the possibility for students to choose good courses that are still taught in the traditional way.



- It seems to me that the fundamental changes brought by E-learning that people take for granted are:





1. Huge inexhaustible (network and database) music information resources, and virtually unlimited access.



2. The electronic media has brought the convenience of imitation learning, and flexible human-machine dialogue (Q & A).



A folk song from Shanxi



3. New styles of music and new musical expression (e.g. blog, website, twitter)
4. Long-distance interactive lessons and interactive music making



- These changes have led to the awkward position in which music teachers find themselves:



- 1. The “monopoly” position of music teachers as information resources has been completely lost. A student is no longer “an empty vessel” before entering the classroom, but “a property owner” or even “a rich person”. They have their own musical interests, their own music idols, and even their own aesthetic tastes.
- **If the music teacher is not simply a music resource provider, what role should the music teacher then play?**
- 2. Multimedia allows students to have a more perfect imitation of objects, from audio to video. The traditional mode of learning music through scores has been completely broken.
- **What can music teachers do? What approach should they take?**
- 3. New music making styles, including music videos and composition with software, are young people's strengths.
- **Is the music teacher outdated?**
- 4. Interactive distance courses and interactive music making are greatly expanding the “class concept”. “The World is Flat” (Thomas L. Friedman) is not just a business concept, but also a concept of classroom teaching. For music learning, geographical space is no longer a problem: language and culture are all there is to consider. For teachers, this is also a new topic.
- **What are the advantages for local teachers?**

- Superficially, it is probably an old question whether education should be “teacher” or “student” centered. But in fact, as I said before, the problems caused by the media revolution that music teachers are encountering are much deeper than this.
- Therefore, this paper proposes the following possible solutions for the problems.



1、 To answer the first question

If the music teacher is not simply a music resource provider, what role should the music teacher then play?

One possible answer is:

The transformation of the teacher's characteristic role
From a provider to a guider



From a provider to a guider

- In Mainland China, many music teachers have realized the change. They observe that although society has been supplying the multitude with a large amount of music, it does nothing to inform them how to handle music.
- Therefore, music teachers are not only to make music, but also to guide students to incorporate music into their daily lives. The role of music teachers should be transformed from a provider of music resources to an instructor of musical lives.

2、 To answer the second question

What can music teachers do? What approach should they take?

One possible answer is:

Music teaching should be closer to the essence of music



- In fact, this electronic age takes us back to the essence of music learning. I summarize this kind of study as:
- Listening, humming, singing, and practicing
- In the paper media age, in an atmosphere of European centered music culture, keyboard-based score learning is taken as the primary path to learning music, but is actually against the laws of music learning. Music learning must start from listening; scores are the complement. Even a complex piece can also start from listening. Chinese people pay attention to the charm of music. Let's listen to an excerpt of the flowing dialogue of Peking opera. Scores can capture nothing, but one can learn it through listening.





京剧韵白(Peking Opera)

我看孙家大姐颇似有情于我，
我不免将玉镯留落一只， 她若将此镯收下
， 这婚姻就有八九了……



3、 To answer the third question
Is the music teacher outdated?
One possible answer is:

The music teacher should be a learner



- In this media age, music teachers should not only work hard on learning media technology, but also on collecting database resources.



4、 To answer the fourth question
What is the advantage for local teachers?
One possible answer is:

Work hard on finding local resources, and
become the inheritors of their own culture



- Every culture has its own excellent tradition and there are valuable resources in one's own culture. Working hard on finding resources, will lead to more ability and capital to communicate with other nationalities. Just as a man won't realize he is a man if he doesn't make friends with women, so one will never know the value of one's own culture without communicating with foreign cultures. Local knowledge and international perspectives are the best way to open our horizons.



Since 2009, the China Conservatory has been holding the annual Beijing Traditional Music Festival, which is committed to promoting the organization and rehabilitation of various traditional musics.



2009 Beijing Traditional Music Festival



校友龚琳（右）娜演唱诸宫调《凭栏人缠令》



我院华夏二团担任开幕式乐队伴奏



元杂剧《单刀会》片段

- At the same time, we are also discussing long distance interactive performing with other countries. This past May, I visited New York University and discussed with Professors John Gilbert and David Elliott about projects such as IMPACT (Interactive Multimedia Performing Arts Collaborative Technology) and other interactive technology-based collaborations. I hope to realize an interactive performance in a future Beijing Traditional Music Festival.



From “teaching” to “learning”:

- My educational aim is to foster the following abilities:

Reading, Listening, Speaking, Presenting, Writing and Doing:

- My teaching paradigm is to establish a self-organized course
- My question is how to Improve students’ abilities through a self-organized course



- Here, I want to give an example of informal music learning. One of my students, a young composer, still does not read scores, but depends completely on electronic media and listening for learning o :



- Finally, I want to say that “learning”, as a key focus of music education, not only belongs to students, but also to teachers. The change is not just the result of the technology revolution, but also belongs to the “change of society” revolution. The content of musical and social change should be profound. If one just looks at the past half century of Chinese musical life, one can feel the deep meaning of this change. Maybe, teachers should learn more from the students?



Conclusions

- 1. The transformation of the teacher's role – how music teachers shift from being the providers of musical resources to being music instructors for musical life;
- 2. The alternation of teaching patterns - how educational patterns alternate from cramming and teacher-centered approaches to conversational and interactive styles of education;



- 3. A heavy emphasis on the awareness of teaching resources - how the content of music education achieves the fundamental change from a “teaching” focus to a “learning” focus through the construction of resource pools and networks;



- 4. The construction of interactive long distance learning – long distance education developed with the emergence of multimedia and internet technology. The interactive technology of media and the internet promoted the formation of a global music education network;



Questions?

- **A.** How should music teachers complete the transformation from being providers of music resources to instructors of musical life?
- **B.** How does one achieve interactive music education by means of multi-media?
- **C.** How does one establish a multi-media database and related networks in music teaching?

