

# The “China Spirit” in Piano Music and Its Value and Practice in Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities

Lanju Li\*

Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Haikou 571137, Hainan, China

*\*Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

**Copyright:** © 2026 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

---

**Abstract:** The spirit of China is the cultural essence accumulated over five thousand years of Chinese civilization and an important driving force for social progress. With the development of the times, the piano, as a form of Western classical music, has gradually integrated with traditional Chinese culture, becoming an important artistic medium for expressing the spirit of China. This paper aims to explore the “spirit of China” in piano music and its value and practical application in ideological and political education in universities. By analyzing the deep integration of piano music and the spirit of China, it elucidates the role of piano education in promoting socialist core values and enhancing students’ ideological and political literacy, and further proposes relevant practical paths and specific methods.

**Keywords:** piano music; China spirit; ideological and political education in colleges and universities; value; practical research

---

**Online publication:** January 26, 2026

## 1. Introduction

In the context of globalization, cultural exchanges have become increasingly frequent, and Western musical art forms have gradually been integrated into China’s music education system. As a typical Western instrument, the popularity and development of piano in China reflect the process of cultural exchange and integration. However, piano music is not merely a Western musical form; it can carry and express the ideas and values of China’s traditional culture. In this context, exploring the “Chinese spirit” in piano music holds significant theoretical and practical importance. Meanwhile, with the deepening of the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, ideological and political education in universities also faces new challenges and opportunities. How to enhance students’ ideological and political awareness through artistic means, especially through the medium of piano music, has become an urgent issue for educators to address.

## 2. An overview of the “china spirit” in piano music

As an important component of the Western classical music system, piano music can be traced back to European court culture and ceremonial occasions, carrying profound historical and artistic traditions. Its performance techniques, musical

---

structure, and aesthetic orientation differ significantly from those of traditional Chinese music in terms of expressive forms and artistic concepts. However, with the increasing frequency and depth of global cultural exchanges, as Chinese and Western cultures continue to integrate, more and more Chinese composers and pianists are beginning to attempt to combine the unique cultural elements of China with piano art. The spirit of China, as a macro and profound cultural theme, encompasses Confucian values such as benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness, Taoist philosophy of the unity of heaven and humanity, and the indomitable national spirit, which is now gaining new expression spaces and dissemination channels through the piano, a Western instrument.

### **2.1. The connotation of the spirit of China**

The spirit of China is rich and multi-layered in connotation, encompassing not only patriotic sentiments and collectivist values, but also reflected in the national character of the Chinese people—diligent, brave, and self-reliant—as well as their pragmatic and truth-seeking attitude in dealing with the world. Especially in the context of the new era, the spirit of China further emphasizes firm belief in the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, high recognition of the theoretical system, full confidence in institutional advantages, and conscious efforts to inherit and innovate China's excellent traditional culture. Expressing the “spirit of China” in piano music is not merely about using national modes or folk melodies, but rather about conveying through musical language a deep respect for the profound heritage of Chinese civilization, an identity with cultural roots, and an artistic expression of active participation in the mission of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation<sup>[1]</sup>.

### **2.2. The chinese exploration of piano music**

In recent decades, China's piano music composition has achieved remarkable results on the path of nationalization. A series of representative piano works, such as the majestic “Yellow River Piano Concerto” and the “Collection of Folk Music Piano Works,” have successfully embedded the aesthetic characteristics and spiritual essence of Chinese culture into piano art through the integration of traditional Chinese pentatonic modes, imitation of the timbre and performance effects of traditional Chinese instruments, and innovations in rhythm, harmony, and structural forms. These works not only expand the expressive boundaries of piano music and enhance its artistic value, but also convey the cultural confidence and spiritual pursuits of the Chinese nation through the flow of melodies and emotional tension.

## **3. The connotation of the spirit of china and the deep integration of piano music**

The “China spirit” in piano music is not simply about transplanting traditional Chinese musical elements or melodies directly into piano works. Instead, it requires a profound understanding of the core essence of Chinese culture, creatively transforming it to integrate into the Western musical language system, forming an artistic form that is both ethnically distinctive and internationally expressive. The “harmony” concept in traditional Chinese culture, the philosophical idea of the unity of heaven and humanity, and the social values emphasizing collectivity and family can all find deep resonance and artistic expression in piano works through the structure, harmony, rhythm, and emotional expression of music.

### **3.1. Confucianism and the expression of piano music**

Confucianism emphasizes “benevolence,” “ritual propriety,” and moral cultivation, striving for harmony between individuals and society. This philosophy of inner order and ethical relationships finds expression in piano music through its gentle melodies, nuanced tonal layers, and restrained emotional delivery. For instance, composer Chen Qigang's “Qin Se” not only echoes the Confucian ideal of “harmony between qin and se” in its thematic composition, but also conveys the Confucian vision of harmonious coexistence through polyphonic techniques and harmonious musical arrangements.

### **3.2. The intrinsic compatibility of taoist philosophy and piano music**

Taoist philosophy reveres nature and advocates “governance through non-action,” emphasizing adherence to the way of heaven and returning to authenticity. This philosophical concept is often expressed in piano music through relatively free form structures, lively melodic lines, and improvisational performance styles. For example, Liu Tianhua’s work “Autumn Waters and the Vast Sky in One Color” not only draws on the classical poetic essence of China in its title but also utilizes the rich tonal variations and acoustic space of the piano to create an ethereal and tranquil natural ambiance, vividly interpreting the Taoist philosophy of “harmony between heaven and humanity” and the spiritual pursuit of transcending worldly concerns<sup>[2]</sup>.

## **4. Innovative application of piano music in ideological and political education in colleges and universities**

As a refined art form, piano music serves as an effective tool in ideological and political education at universities. Its integration not only enhances students’ cultural literacy but also effectively cultivates patriotic sentiments and collectivist values through the unique emotional resonance and expressive power of music. By combining piano music with theoretical instruction, educators can deliver more immersive and engaging learning experiences. This approach significantly improves the appeal and effectiveness of ideological education, ultimately achieving the educational goal of fostering moral character and nurturing well-rounded individuals.

### **4.1. Deepening the education of patriotism by using the piano music works**

Many classic piano works, such as “My Motherland”, “China Heart”, and “Yellow River Concerto”, are rich in elements of China culture and national spirit. They can evoke students’ love and identity with the motherland through beautiful melodies and profound emotional expressions. These works not only depict the magnificent landscapes of the motherland but also express the fervent hope for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, enabling students to perceive the historical trajectory of national development through music and enhance their national pride and cultural confidence<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **4.2. Using piano ensemble to cultivate the spirit of collectivism**

The spirit of collectivism emphasizes the unity of individuals and the collective, prioritizing collaboration and shared objectives. In piano education, ensemble performances, group playing, and accompaniment provide students with an excellent platform for teamwork. Through group rehearsals and performances, students not only enhance their musical skills but also develop communication, coordination, and teamwork abilities in practical settings. This experience allows them to deeply appreciate the power of collective effort and the responsibility and value of individuals within a group, thereby fostering and strengthening the spirit of collectivism.

### **4.3. Promoting the integration and dissemination of piano music with socialist core values**

As a widely influential art form, piano music artistically conveys socialist core values—such as “prosperity, democracy, civilization, and harmony” and “freedom, equality, justice, and rule of law”—through melodies, harmonies, and rhythms. For instance, composing and performing piano pieces aligned with these values enables students to intuitively grasp and embrace them, fostering their internalization and externalization in actions. This approach further enhances the appeal and impact of ideological and political education<sup>[4]</sup>.

## **5. Practical exploration and case analysis**

In some universities, there are already many practical cases of combining piano education with ideological and political

education. For example, a university regularly holds piano concerts and lectures on ideological and political education, inviting professional pianists and ideological and political teachers to jointly explore the “China spirit” in piano music, and combining the content of ideological and political education with piano works for vivid classroom demonstrations.

Case analysis shows that such interdisciplinary collaboration not only enhances students’ artistic appreciation but also helps them deeply understand and feel the connotation of the socialist core values with Chinese characteristics. Especially in the practical part, through organizing the performance and discussion of piano works, students’ patriotic feelings and collectivist spirit have been effectively stimulated.

## 6. Conclusion

The “China spirit” in piano music is not only an innovative expression of musical art, but also a profound interpretation of China’s traditional culture. Integrating piano music with ideological and political education in universities can not only enhance students’ ideological and political awareness, but also strengthen their national pride and social responsibility through artistic means. In the future, we should further explore and improve the application paths of piano music in ideological and political education in universities, providing more artistic expressions and practical experiences for ideological and political education in the new era.

## Funding

This study is a research outcome of the 2025 Ministry of Education Industry–University Cooperative Education Program. Project Title: Exploration of a New Liberal Arts Education Model through the Three-Dimensional Integration of Music, Ideological and Political Education, and Emerging Fields—An Innovation of Immersive Education Pathways Based on Industry–University Collaboration(Project No.: 251200234221244).

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

## References

- [1] Feng JH, 2025, Strategies for Identifying and Integrating Ideological and Political Elements into Piano Courses in Normal Universities. *Journal of Anshan Normal University*, 1-6.
- [2] Zhao Y, 2025, Threefold Logic of Integrating Red Music Culture into the Integrated Construction of Ideological and Political Education Courses in Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education. *Beijing Education (Moral Education)*, (11): 37-42.
- [3] Liu Y, 2025, Discussion on Strengthening Ideological and Political Construction in Music Education in Higher Education Institutions. *Journal of Social Sciences, Jiamusi University*, 43(12): 165-166+170.
- [4] Chen Y, 2025, Construction and Implementation Effects of the “Three Integrations and Three Advances” Educational Model for Ideological and Political Education in Music Major Courses. *Modern Vocational Education*, (32): 53-56.

### Publisher’s note

Whoice Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.