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CROSS-CULTURAL MUSIC EDUCATION THROUGH SAXOPHONE PERFORMANCE: TEACHING CHINESE ELEMENTS IN ZHOU LONG'S SAXOPHONE COMPOSITIONS ANTIPHONY AND TEMPLE BUGLER

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ABSTRACT

Cross-cultural music education has become a core direction of global music pedagogy in the context of globalization, with a key focus on the organic integration of Chinese musical aesthetics and Western instrumental performance systems. Zhou Long's saxophone works Antiphony and Temple Bugler are landmark creations of Chinese-Western cross-cultural musical fusion, which systematically integrate traditional Chinese musical elements (ancient melodies, ritual music, modal systems, and instrumental timbre aesthetics) with Western compositional techniques and saxophone performance language. Existing academic research has conducted in-depth analysis of the musical ontology and performance techniques of these two works, but there is a clear research gap in transforming these research findings into systematic, operable cross-cultural saxophone teaching strategies. This study aims to explore the practical path of cross-cultural music education through saxophone performance, conduct a targeted pedagogical analysis of Zhou Long's Antiphony and Temple Bugler based on in-depth musical ontology and performance practice research, and construct a three-in-one teaching framework of "technical mastery - cultural interpretation - aesthetic expression" for integrating traditional Chinese musical elements into saxophone performance teaching.

KEYWORDS: Saxophone, Cross-Cultural Music Education, Zhou Long, Traditional Chinese Musical Elements.

1. INTRODUCTION

Against the backdrop of accelerating globalization, cross-cultural music education has evolved from a marginal exploratory direction to a core concept in global music pedagogy, focusing on how to achieve the integration of diverse musical cultural traditions in instrumental teaching while maintaining the authenticity of cultural connotations and the standardization of technical systems (Guan et al., 2025). The integration of Western instrumental performance with Chinese traditional musical aesthetics has become a key practice field of cross-cultural music education, which not only involves the technical adaptation of instrumental performance, but also the transmission of cultural connotation and the cultivation of aesthetic cognition (Hu, 2024). As a Western woodwind instrument with rich timbre plasticity and wide range of expression, the saxophone has become an important medium for the integration of Chinese and Western musical cultures since the 20th century. However, in the current saxophone teaching practice in both Chinese and international contexts, there is a widespread dilemma: educators often face the dual challenge of balancing the technical standardization of Western saxophone performance system and the authentic interpretation of Chinese musical aesthetics, and most of the existing teaching practice either focuses on pure technical training and ignores the cultural connotation behind the works, or simply labels Chinese elements without in-depth technical and aesthetic teaching design (Xin, 2021; Zhipeng, 2022).

As a representative of Chinese-American composers, Zhou Long is a landmark figure in the cross-cultural integration of Chinese and Western music. His works are renowned for the deep integration of traditional Chinese musical elements with Western modern compositional techniques and have become important materials for exploring the cross-cultural expression of Western instruments (Chung, 2024). Among them, *Antiphony* (2008) for saxophone quartet and Chinese traditional instruments (erhu, ruan, Chinese percussion) and *Temple Bugler* (2015) for soprano saxophone and orchestra are the most representative saxophone works in Zhou Long's creative career. These two works are not only a superficial splicing of Chinese musical elements and Western instrumental language, but a deep integration of traditional Chinese modal systems, ancient melody materials, temporal aesthetic concepts, and instrumental timbre aesthetics with Western post-tonal compositional techniques and saxophone extended performance techniques.

Existing academic research on these two works has mainly focused on musical ontology analysis and performance practice research: scholars have conducted in-depth discussions on the application of traditional Chinese elements in the works, the structural characteristics of the music, and the implementation of saxophone performance techniques (Ma, 2019; Gao, 2016). However, there is a clear research gap in transforming these mature musicological and performance research results into systematic, operable cross-cultural saxophone teaching strategies. Most of the existing research on cross-cultural saxophone pedagogy remains at the macro theoretical level, and there is a lack of repertoire-specific teaching research targeting *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler*, which makes it difficult to translate the academic research results of these two-landmark works into practical teaching outcomes.

In this context, this study takes Zhou Long's *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler* as the core research objects, based on the author's in-depth doctoral dissertation research on the musical ontology analysis and performance practice of the two works, and uses a systematic literature review combined with music analysis and practice-based research methods to explore the practical path of integrating traditional Chinese musical elements into saxophone performance teaching.

The research objectives of this paper are as follows:

1. To systematically sort out the cross-cultural characteristics of traditional Chinese musical elements in Zhou Long's *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler* and clarify their core value as a carrier of cross-cultural saxophone music education.
2. To analyze the dual teaching requirements of technical precision and culturally informed interpretation of the core saxophone performance techniques in the two works, based on in-depth performance practice research.
3. To construct a hierarchical, operable teaching framework and practical strategies for integrating Chinese musical aesthetics into saxophone performance teaching, targeting the characteristics of these two works.

This study has important theoretical and practical significance: in theory, it bridges the gap between music ontology research and music pedagogy research on *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler*, and enriches the theoretical system of cross-cultural instrumental music education; in practice, it provides a systematic, repertoire-specific teaching model for saxophone educators, and helps learners to master

the technical requirements of the works while accurately interpreting the Chinese cultural connotations and aesthetic characteristics behind the music, so as to cultivate learners' intercultural musical competence.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. *Cross-Cultural Music Education and the Integration of Chinese Musical Elements into Western Instrumental Teaching*

Existing research has fully confirmed the core value of cross-cultural music education in promoting cultural identity formation and intercultural competence cultivation. Guan, Liu and Luo (2025) explored the development of cultural identity in Chinese primary school students in orchestras and found that learning and performing Chinese music works in Western orchestral settings can promote the multi-dimensional development of students' behavioral, emotional and cognitive cultural identity. This research confirms that cross-cultural music education is not only a technical adaptation of instrumental performance, but also a cultural and social practice that helps learners understand traditional culture in a contemporary context. Hong (2020) took the cello, a Western string instrument, as the research object, and found that the integration of the cello with Chinese traditional music can expand learners' stylistic interpretation ability and aesthetic cognition and verified the feasibility of Western instruments as a carrier for the transmission of Chinese traditional music aesthetics.

In terms of the specific practice of cross-cultural instrumental teaching, existing research has also identified the core challenges and practical paths. Xie, Woramitmaitee and Chuangprakhon (2024) examined the application of Chinese folk music elements in Western flute performance, and found that the biggest challenge in cross-cultural instrumental teaching is how to capture the microtonal subtleties and timbre aesthetic characteristics of Chinese music through Western instruments, and pointed out that instrument-specific pedagogy must address the technical adaptation and cultural interpretation of cross-cultural musical elements. Zhao (2024) took contemporary Chinese piano works as the research object and found that excellent cross-cultural works can not only strengthen learners' cultural identity but also break the Western-centered bias in the current music education curriculum system, which provides an important reference for this study to explore the teaching of Zhou Long's saxophone works.

However, most of the existing research in this field focuses on orchestral music, piano, and cello, and there is a lack of in-depth research on the specific path of integrating Chinese traditional musical elements into saxophone teaching, especially the lack of repertoire-specific teaching research targeting representative works.

2.2. *Research On Zhou Long's Works*

Existing research on Zhou Long's musical works has systematically sorted out his creative style and the integration of Chinese and Western musical elements in his creations. Chung (2024) pointed out that Zhou Long, as a representative of Chinese émigré composers, has formed a unique creative style that integrates traditional Chinese musical culture with Western modern compositional techniques, and his works have realized the deep integration of Chinese cultural connotation and Western musical language, rather than superficial exotic splicing.

For the two saxophone works focused on in this study, existing research has mainly focused on two dimensions: musical ontology analysis and performance practice research. Ma (2019) conducted a performance analysis of the saxophone part of *Antiphony*, sorted out the structural characteristics of the work and the special performance techniques of the saxophone part, and explored the fusion of the saxophone with Chinese folk instruments in the work. Gao (2016) systematically cataloged contemporary saxophone works by Chinese-born composers, including *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler*, and briefly commented on the integration of traditional Chinese musical elements in the works, but lacked in-depth musical analysis and pedagogical discussion.

However, the existing research on these two works is limited to the field of musicology and performance practice, and there is no research that transforms the existing musicological and performance research results into systematic cross-cultural saxophone teaching strategies. This research gap not only limits the popularization of these two landmark works in saxophone teaching but also makes it difficult to translate the academic research results into practical cross-cultural music education outcomes.

2.3. *Pedagogical Approaches for Integrating Chinese Musical Aesthetics into Saxophone Performance Teaching*

Existing research has fully confirmed the importance of aesthetic education and cultural

literacy cultivation in instrumental music teaching. Lian (2020) pointed out that excellent instrumental music teaching should not be limited to technical mastery but should extend to the cultivation of emotional expression and cultural cognition, which requires the transformation of the current Western-oriented technical training model in saxophone teaching to an interpretive system based on Chinese musical aesthetics. Meihuan (2023) found through empirical research that music teachers who have an in-depth grasp of Chinese traditional aesthetic traditions can better integrate cultural narrative into instrumental music teaching, which confirms the importance of teachers' cultural literacy in cross-cultural instrumental music education.

In terms of specific pedagogical practice, existing research has explored the feasibility of transplanting the aesthetic and performance techniques of Chinese traditional instruments into Western instrumental teaching. Yeye (2023) took the pipa as the research object, and found that the phrasing, articulation and timbre control techniques in pipa performance can be transferred to Western instrumental teaching, which provides a practical path for the integration of Chinese musical aesthetics into saxophone teaching. Lin (2022) compiled a performance practice guide for saxophonists on Chinese traditional music in the 20th century, and sorted out the application of tonal inflection, timbre shading and rhetorical phrasing techniques in saxophone performance, which laid a technical foundation for the cross-cultural teaching of saxophone.

However, most of the existing research in this field remains at the macro theoretical level, and lacks repertoire-specific, operable teaching framework and practical strategies for *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler*. It is this research gap that this study aims to fill, based on the author's in-depth doctoral dissertation research on the two works.

3. LITERATURE GAP

In summary, the existing research has laid a solid theoretical foundation for this study, but there are three clear research gaps:

1. Existing research on cross-cultural music education mostly focuses on macro theoretical discussion and general instrumental teaching practice, and lacks in-depth, instrument-specific research on the integration of Chinese traditional musical elements into saxophone teaching.
2. Existing research on Zhou Long's *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler* is limited to musical ontology analysis and performance practice research

and has not yet transformed the mature research results into systematic, operable cross-cultural teaching strategies.

3. Existing research on the integration of Chinese musical aesthetics into saxophone teaching lacks repertoire-specific teaching framework design and cannot effectively solve the practical dilemma of the imbalance between technical training and cultural connotation transmission in current teaching practice.

This study aims to fill these gaps by taking the two works as the core carrier, combining the author's doctoral dissertation research results, and constructing a systematic cross-cultural saxophone teaching framework and practical strategies.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on two core theoretical frameworks: Cultural-Hybridity Theory and Constructivist Learning Theory, which together provide a solid theoretical foundation for the cross-cultural saxophone teaching research in this paper.

4.1. Cultural-Hybridity Theory (Bhabha, 1994)

In the context of saxophone teaching, this theory breaks the binary opposition between "Western technical standardization" and "Chinese cultural authenticity", and points out that cross-cultural saxophone teaching should not be a one-way indoctrination of Chinese cultural knowledge on the basis of technical training, but should guide learners to construct the interpretation of Chinese musical elements in the "third space" of performance practice, so as to realize the organic integration of technical mastery and cultural interpretation. This theoretical perspective provides a core guiding ideology for the teaching framework constructed in this study.

4.2. Constructivist Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978)

Constructivist Learning Theory emphasizes that learning is a socially and culturally mediated process, and learners actively construct the meaning of knowledge through interaction, scaffolded learning and reflective practice in specific contexts. Different from the traditional "skill-based" instrumental teaching model, which takes technical proficiency as the core goal, constructivist learning theory points out that excellent instrumental music teaching should be a process of guiding learners to co-construct the meaning of music through the interaction between teachers, learners and repertoire.

For the teaching of Zhou Long's *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler*, this theory requires that the teaching

design should not be limited to the teaching of saxophone performance techniques, but should create a contextualized learning environment, guide learners to understand the cultural background of the works, the aesthetic characteristics of Chinese traditional music, and the composer's creative intention through scaffolded teaching steps, and actively construct the interpretation of the works through practical performance and reflective practice. This theory provides a methodological basis for the hierarchical teaching strategies constructed in this study.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed qualitative research design, combining a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), musical ontology analysis, and practice-based research methods. This design not only ensures the rigor and standardization of the research in line with the norms of music education academic journals but also realizes the in-depth connection with the author's doctoral dissertation research, meeting the requirements of the relevance between the small thesis and the doctoral dissertation.

Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

This study follows the PRISMA framework to conduct a systematic literature review, which aims to

systematically sort out the existing research on cross-cultural music education, the integration of Chinese musical elements into saxophone teaching, and Zhou Long's musical works, and clarify the research gap.

5.1. Data Collection

Databases: The literature search was conducted in five core academic databases: JSTOR, Web of Science (WOS), Elsevier, SpringerLink, and ResearchGate, which cover the mainstream peer-reviewed academic literature in the fields of music education, musicology, and saxophone performance research.

Search Keywords: The core search keywords include Cross-Cultural Music Education, Chinese Musical Aesthetics, Saxophone Pedagogy, Zhou Long, Antiphony, Temple Bugler, Chinese Traditional Musical Elements, Saxophone Extended Techniques. Boolean operators were used to combine keywords, such as "Chinese traditional musical elements AND saxophone pedagogy", "Zhou Long AND Antiphony OR Temple Bugler", "cross-cultural music education AND saxophone performance".

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: A strict inclusion and exclusion criteria was formulated to ensure the quality and relevance of the literature, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Inclusion And Exclusion Criteria.

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publications	Peer-reviewed journal articles, doctoral dissertations, academic monographs	Non-academic publications such as magazines, blogs, news reports
Research Type	Qualitative research, case studies, performance practice research, music education empirical research	Purely technical acoustics papers, non-music education research
Language	English	Non-English literature
Publication Time	2020-2026	Literature published before 2020
Research Focus	Chinese musical elements in music education / saxophone performance, Zhou Long's musical works research	Research unrelated to the core research objectives

5.2. Literature Selection Process

Following the PRISMA framework, a total of 126 relevant literatures were initially identified through database search. After removing duplicates and screening by title and abstract, 68 literatures were retained for full-text review. After full-text screening according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 18 literatures were finally included in the systematic qualitative synthesis of this study. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that the included literatures can provide effective support for the three core research objectives of this study.

5.3. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the included literature: first, the literature was read

repeatedly to familiarize with the core content; second, the relevant content was coded according to the three dimensions of cross-cultural music education, Zhou Long's works research, and saxophone pedagogy strategies; third, the codes were grouped into core themes aligned with the research objectives; finally, the themes were interpreted critically to clarify the research gap and lay a foundation for the subsequent analysis.

5.4. Musical Ontology Analysis

This study draws on the core findings of the author's doctoral dissertation research, and uses musical ontology analysis to systematically sort out the integration characteristics of traditional Chinese musical elements in *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler*, including:

1. Modal system: the integration of Chinese pentatonic modes, hexatonic and heptatonic derivative modes with Western post-tonal pitch-class set techniques.
2. Formal structure: the integration of traditional Chinese *san-man-zhong-kuai* temporal concept with Western ternary structural form.
3. Musical materials: the application and transformation of ancient Chinese melody *Yangguan Sandie* and Zhihua Temple Jing music in the two works.
4. Performance techniques: the musical function and cultural connotation of the four core extended saxophone techniques (microtones, slap-tongue, glissando, vibrato) in the two works.

This method ensures that the teaching analysis and strategy construction of this study are strictly based on the musical text of the works and realizes the in-depth relevance with the doctoral dissertation.

5.5. Practice-Based Research

This study adopts the practice-based research method used in the author's doctoral dissertation, which verifies the feasibility and effectiveness of the teaching strategies through systematic saxophone performance practice of the two works. The practice research focuses on the implementation of the four-core extended techniques and tests the effectiveness of the progressive practice methods and teaching steps constructed in the study, so as to ensure that the teaching strategies proposed in this paper are operable in practical teaching.

5.6. Ethical Considerations

This study strictly follows the ethical guidelines

for academic research: since the systematic literature review uses publicly available peer-reviewed academic literature, there is no issue of informed consent and confidentiality; the musical score excerpts of *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler* used in this study have been authorized by the composer Zhou Long and Oxford University Press; all sources are accurately cited in the text and reference list to avoid plagiarism; the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the literature are applied transparently to ensure the objectivity of the research and reduce selection bias.

6. RESULTS

Based on the systematic literature review, musical ontology analysis and practice-based research, this study identifies three core themes for the cross-cultural teaching of Zhou Long's *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler* and constructs a systematic teaching framework and practical strategies. The results are presented below according to the three core themes.

Theme 1: The Core Carrier of Cross-Cultural Education - Cultural Hybridity Characteristics of Antiphony And 6.1. Temple Bugler

The musical ontology analysis based on the doctoral dissertation research shows that *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler* have a deep cultural hybridity characteristic, which is not a superficial splicing of Chinese musical elements and Western musical language, but a multi-dimensional integration at the levels of modal system, formal structure, musical materials and timbre aesthetics. This hybridity makes the two works an ideal core carrier for cross-cultural saxophone music education, and their educational value is mainly reflected in three dimensions, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Cultural Hybridity Characteristics of the Two Works and Their Educational Value.

Dimension	Integration Characteristics in the Works	Core Educational Value
Modal System	Integration of Chinese pentatonic modes (gong, shang, jue, zhi, yu) and their derivative modes with Western pitch-class set theory (core sets (014), (016) and whole-tone scales and octatonic collections. The pentatonic mode is not only a decorative color, but the core structural material of the works.	Guide learners to break the binary opposition between Western tonal system and Chinese modal system and understand the integration logic of Chinese and Western musical pitch organization.
Formal Structure	Integration of traditional Chinese <i>san-man-zhong-kuai</i> (free-slow-moderate-fast) temporal aesthetic concept with Western ternary structural form. The overall form of the works follows the Western ternary structure, while the internal tempo design and structural development strictly follow the progressive acceleration logic of Chinese traditional music.	Cultivate learners' understanding of the differences between Chinese and Western musical structural thinking and master the cross-cultural interpretation of musical form and tempo.
Musical Materials	Deep transformation of traditional Chinese musical materials: <i>Antiphony</i> takes the ancient guqin melody <i>Yangguan Sandie</i> as the core melodic material; <i>Temple Bugler</i> integrates the <i>Six-sentence Chant</i> from Zhihua Temple Jing music and reconstructs the imagined sound world of Tang Dynasty ritual music.	Help learners understand the cultural connotation of Chinese traditional music (ancient literati music, Buddhist ritual music) and realize the transmission of traditional culture through performance practice.

Timbre Aesthetics	The saxophone is endowed with the timbre aesthetic characteristics of Chinese traditional instruments: imitating the portamento of erhu, the pizzicato of ruan, the vocal characteristics of guanzi, and the spatial sense of temple bells and ritual chanting through extended techniques.	Guide learners to break the inherent timbre aesthetic of Western saxophone performance and master the timbre expression of Chinese musical aesthetics.
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This theme clarifies that the cross-cultural teaching of these two works should not be limited to the teaching of saxophone performance techniques but should take the cultural hybridity characteristics of the works as the core and run the cultural context and aesthetic connotation of Chinese traditional music through the whole teaching process. This is the core difference between the teaching of these two works and the traditional Western saxophone repertoire teaching, and the core value of the two works in cross-cultural music education.

Theme 2: Dual Teaching Requirements of Technical Precision and Culturally Informed

Interpretation

Based on the practice-based research in the doctoral dissertation, this study finds that the four core extended saxophone techniques in *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler* have clear dual attributes: they are not only technical requirements for saxophone performance, but also the core medium for expressing traditional Chinese musical elements and cultural connotations. Therefore, the teaching of these techniques must meet the dual requirements of technical precision and culturally informed interpretation, and the specific teaching points for each technique are sorted out in Table 3.

Table 3: Core Performance Techniques and Their Teaching Points in the Two Works.

Technique	Application in the Works	Technical Teaching Focus	Cultural Interpretation Teaching Focus
Microtones	<i>Antiphony</i> : Used to imitate the sliding tones of erhu and the vocal nuances of Beijing Opera, appearing in the antiphonal passages with erhu; <i>Temple Bugler</i> : Used to construct the spatial sense of temple bells and ritual chanting, superimposed on the stable fundamental tone of the orchestra.	1. Master the “dual mechanism” of microtone production: alternative fingerings plus embouchure and oral cavity fine-tuning.2. Progressive training of pitch discrimination and stable control of quarter tones and eighth tones.3. Master the coordination of microtones with dynamics and rhythm changes.	1. Guide learners to distinguish the different expressive functions of microtones in the two works: concrete timbre imitation versus abstract spatial construction.2. Understand the microtonal nuance characteristics of Chinese traditional opera and bowed string instruments.3. Master the use of microtones to express the “Runqiang” aesthetic of Chinese traditional music.
Slap-Tongue	<i>Antiphony</i> : Used to imitate the pizzicato timbre of ruan, forming an antiphonal dialogue with Chinese plucked instruments; <i>Temple Bugler</i> : Used to strengthen the ritual rhythmic pattern and climactic outbursts, simulating the sound effect of temple percussion.	1. Master the four core action steps: touch, adhesion, suction, slap.2. Progressive training of tongue muscle endurance and explosive force.3. Master the control of timbre, dynamics and tempo of slap-tongue.	1. Guide learners to understand the role of slap-tongue in bridging the saxophone with Chinese plucked and percussion instruments.2. Master the timbre imitation of ruan pizzicato and percussion.3. Understand the rhythmic aesthetic of Chinese traditional opera and ritual music.
Glissando	Only used in <i>Antiphony</i> : mainly used to imitate the portamento technique of erhu, appearing at the end of phrases and wide interval transitions, to realize the linear aesthetic of Chinese melodic phrasing.	1. Master two glissando methods: oral cavity modulation for narrow intervals; combined fingering and oral modulation for wide intervals.2. Progressive training of seamless connection between finger movements and oral cavity adjustment.3. Master the coordination of glissando with trills and other techniques.	1. Guide learners to understand the “weeping” and “sighing” aesthetic connotation of erhu portamento in Chinese music.2. Master the use of glissando to break the stepped pitch mechanism of the saxophone and restore the linear fluidity of Chinese melodic lines.3. Understand the “Runqiang” technique of Chinese traditional music.

<p>Vibrato</p>	<p>Only used in <i>Temple Bugler</i>: used to imitate the timbre of guanzi (the “lead pipe” in Zhihua Temple Jing music) and the undulating contour of Buddhist monastic chanting, with controllable rate and extent.</p>	<p>1. Master the jaw vibrato technique, with symmetrical oscillation centered on the standard pitch.2. Progressive training of independent control of vibrato rate and extent.3. Master the flexible switching between straight tone and vibrato, and the coordination of vibrato with dynamic changes.</p>	<p>1. Guide learners to understand the difference between Chinese traditional wind instrument vibrato and Western classical saxophone continuous vibrato.2. Master the “straight tone to vibrato” technique to imitate the human-like weeping timbre of guanzi.3. Understand the ritual atmosphere of Buddhist temple music through the contrast between bell-like straight tone and chant-like wide vibrato.</p>
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This theme clarifies that the teaching of performance techniques in the two works must break the traditional "technical first" teaching model and integrate the cultural interpretation of the techniques into the whole process of technical training. For each technique, learners should not only master the accurate execution method but also understand the musical function and cultural connotation behind the technique, to realize the organic integration of technical precision and culturally informed interpretation.

Theme 3: Hierarchical Teaching Framework for

Integrating Chinese Musical Aesthetics into Saxophone Teaching

Based on the above analysis and guided by Constructivist Learning Theory and Cultural-Hybridity Theory, this study constructs a three-level hierarchical teaching framework for *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler*, which realizes the progressive teaching from basic technical mastery to cultural connotation interpretation, and then to cross-cultural aesthetic expression. The specific content of the framework and practical teaching strategies are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Three-Level Hierarchical Teaching Framework for the Two Works.

Teaching Level	Core Teaching Objectives	Key Teaching Content & Practical Strategies
<p>Level 1: Basic Technical Mastery</p>	<p>Help learners master the accurate execution of the core performance techniques in the works and complete the accurate reading and performance of the musical score.</p>	<p>1. Progressive technical training: Use graded microtone, slap-tongue, glissando, and vibrato exercises from the dissertation to build basic control before studying the pieces. 2. Phrase-by-phrase learning: Divide the works into short phrases to address intonation, rhythm, articulation, and fingering step by step. 3. Technical assessment: Use digital tools to monitor intonation, rhythm, and technique execution to secure a solid technical foundation.</p>
<p>Level 2: Cultural Connotation Interpretation</p>	<p>Guide learners to understand the cultural background of the works and the traditional Chinese musical elements contained in them and master the culturally informed interpretation method of the music.</p>	<p>1. Cultural context: Present the works’ background, Zhou Long’s ideas, and the meanings of <i>Yangguan Sandie</i> and Zhihua Temple Jing music, and have students listen to the original melodies and erhu, ruan, and guanzi to build Chinese aesthetic listening skills. 2. Musical analysis: Guide students to examine pentatonic modes, san-man-zhong-kuai structure, and ancient melody materials in the works to understand how Chinese and Western elements are integrated. 3. Phrase work: For key phrases, discuss how timbre, dynamics, and technique can convey Chinese musical aesthetics and develop specific interpretive plans.</p>
<p>Level 3: Cross-Cultural Aesthetic Expression</p>	<p>Cultivate learners’ cross-cultural musical thinking, and guide them to form a personal, reasonable interpretation of the works in the “third space” of Chinese and Western musical cultures and realize the aesthetic expression of the works.</p>	<p>1. Comparative listening: Have learners hear multiple performances of the works and compare how Chinese musical elements are interpreted. 2. Reflective practice: Arrange staged performances with peer discussion and teacher feedback to refine the balance between technique and cultural expression. 3. Extended cultural study: Explore other works by Zhou Long and cross-cultural pieces by Chinese composers to deepen understanding of Chinese-Western musical integration.</p>

In addition to the hierarchical teaching framework, this study also proposes three supporting teaching strategies to ensure the effectiveness of cross-cultural teaching:

1. Teaching Resource Development: Based on the doctoral dissertation research, develop targeted teaching resources, including the graded practice exercises for core techniques, the score excerpts with performance and teaching annotations, the audio-visual materials of Chinese traditional instruments and ancient melodies, and the analysis courseware of the works' musical ontology.
2. Dual Competence Training for Teachers: For saxophone teachers, it is necessary to strengthen the training of both the professional saxophone performance ability and the cognitive reserve of Chinese traditional music culture, to meet the dual requirements of technical teaching and cultural interpretation teaching.
3. Diversified Teaching Evaluation: Break the traditional evaluation model that only focuses on technical accuracy and establish a diversified evaluation system that includes three dimensions: technical mastery, cultural interpretation, and aesthetic expression, to comprehensively evaluate learners' learning outcomes.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1. Interpretation Of the Research Findings

The findings of this study confirm that Zhou Long's *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler* have important value as a core carrier of cross-cultural saxophone music education. Different from the general saxophone works with Chinese elements that only use pentatonic scales or Chinese folk melodies as decorative elements, these two works realize the deep integration of traditional Chinese musical elements and Western musical language at multiple levels, which makes them not only excellent performance repertoire, but also ideal teaching materials for cross-cultural music education. Through the teaching of these two works, learners can not only master the advanced extended techniques of saxophone performance but also have an in-depth understanding of the aesthetic connotation and cultural background of Chinese traditional music, to effectively cultivate their intercultural musical competence.

For the core challenge in current cross-cultural saxophone teaching, which is the imbalance between technical precision and cultural connotation

transmission, the findings of this study provide a practical solution: the teaching of extended techniques in the two works must integrate technical training and cultural interpretation. Each technique has a clear expressive function for Chinese musical elements in the works, so the teaching should not only stay at the level of technical execution but also guide learners to understand the cultural connotation behind the technique and realize the organic integration of "technique" and "Tao" in the teaching process. This finding breaks the traditional "technical first" instrumental teaching model and provides a new idea for the cross-cultural teaching of Western instruments.

The three-level hierarchical teaching framework constructed in this study, guided by Constructivist Learning Theory, realizes the progressive teaching from technical mastery to cultural interpretation, and then to aesthetic expression. This framework follows the law of instrumental learning, and at the same time takes the construction of cultural meaning as the core of teaching, which can effectively help learners avoid the dilemma of "playing the notes correctly but not expressing the charm" in the learning of cross-cultural repertoire. The practical teaching strategies proposed in this study are all based on the in-depth musical ontology analysis and performance practice research of the two works, which have strong operability and can be directly applied to practical saxophone teaching.

7.2. Comparison With Previous Studies

The findings of this study are both aligned with and expanded on previous research in the field of cross-cultural music education and saxophone pedagogy.

In terms of cross-cultural music education research, the findings of this study are consistent with the research of Guan et al. (2025) and Hu (2024), which confirm that cross-cultural instrumental music teaching can effectively promote the formation of learners' cultural identity and intercultural competence. However, most of the previous research in this field focuses on orchestral music, piano and cello, while this study extends the research to the field of saxophone teaching, and fills the gap of instrument-specific cross-cultural teaching research for saxophone. At the same time, different from the previous macro theoretical discussion, this study constructs a repertoire-specific, operable teaching framework, which makes the research results more able to guide practical teaching.

In terms of research on Zhou Long's works, this study is based on the existing music ontology

analysis and performance practice research (Ma, 2019; Bian, 2026), and for the first time extends the research from the field of musicology and performance practice to the field of music education. The previous research on these two works focuses on "how to analyze and perform the works", while this study further explores "how to teach the works", and transforms the existing academic research results into systematic teaching strategies, which fills the research gap between musicology research and pedagogy research on these two works.

In terms of saxophone pedagogy research, the findings of this study are consistent with the research of Lin (2022) and Yeye (2023), which confirm that the performance techniques and aesthetic characteristics of Chinese traditional instruments can be effectively transferred to saxophone teaching. However, the previous research in this field mostly stays at the level of general technical guidance, while this study constructs a systematic teaching framework targeting specific repertoire, and realizes the deep integration of Chinese musical aesthetics and saxophone teaching at the level of specific works. At the same time, this study also enriches the existing saxophone teaching repertoire and provides a complete teaching plan for the popularization of *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler* in saxophone teaching.

7.3. Theoretical Implications

This study has important theoretical implications for cross-cultural music education research and saxophone pedagogy research.

First, this study verifies the applicability of Cultural-Hybridity Theory in the field of instrumental music teaching. The research findings show that excellent cross-cultural musical works create a "third space" for the integration of Chinese and Western musical cultures, and cross-cultural instrumental teaching should guide learners to construct the meaning of music in this "third space", rather than sticking to the binary opposition between "Western technical standardization" and "Chinese cultural authenticity". This expands the application scope of Cultural-Hybridity Theory and provides a new theoretical perspective for cross-cultural instrumental music education research.

Second, this study enriches the application of Constructivist Learning Theory in the field of professional instrumental music teaching. Different from the traditional skill-based instrumental teaching model, the three-level teaching framework constructed in this study takes the active construction of musical meaning by learners as the core, and emphasizes the contextualized, scaffolded

and reflective characteristics of learning. This provides a new theoretical model for the reform of professional instrumental music teaching in the context of globalization, and breaks the traditional "teacher-centered, skill-based" teaching paradigm.

Finally, this study constructs a theoretical framework for the cross-cultural teaching of Western instruments with Chinese elements, which includes three core dimensions: the cultural hybridity of the repertoire, the dual teaching requirements of technology and culture, and the hierarchical teaching model from technical mastery to aesthetic expression. This framework can be extended to the cross-cultural teaching of other Western instruments and other Chinese element repertoire and has universal theoretical reference value for cross-cultural instrumental music education.

8. CONCLUSION

This study takes Zhou Long's *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler* as the core research object, based on the author's in-depth doctoral dissertation research on the musical ontology analysis and performance practice of the two works, and uses a mixed qualitative research design combining systematic literature review, musical ontology analysis and practice-based research methods, to explore the practical path of cross-cultural music education through saxophone performance.

The main research findings are as follows: First, *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler* have deep cultural hybridity characteristics and realize the multi-dimensional integration of Chinese and Western musical cultures at the levels of modal system, formal structure, musical materials and timbre aesthetics, which makes them an ideal core carrier for cross-cultural saxophone music education. Second, the four core extended saxophone techniques in the two works have clear dual attributes, which are both technical requirements for performance and the core medium for expressing Chinese musical elements. Therefore, the teaching must meet the dual requirements of technical precision and culturally informed interpretation. Third, the three-level hierarchical teaching framework constructed in this study, which includes basic technical mastery, cultural connotation interpretation and cross-cultural aesthetic expression, can effectively solve the dilemma of imbalance between technical training and cultural connotation transmission in current cross-cultural saxophone teaching, and has strong operability in practical teaching.

This study makes important contributions to the field of cross-cultural music education: it bridges the

gap between music ontology research and music pedagogy research on Zhou Long's *Antiphony* and *Temple Bugler*, and transforms the existing academic research results into systematic, operable teaching strategies; it constructs a theoretical framework and practical model for the cross-cultural teaching of saxophone with Chinese elements, which enriches the theoretical system of cross-cultural instrumental music education; it provides a replicable practical path for the integration of traditional Chinese musical elements into Western instrumental teaching, which can help to promote the global dissemination of Chinese traditional music culture and cultivate learners' intercultural musical competence.

8.1. Limitations of the Study

This study has some limitations: first, the teaching framework and strategies proposed in this study have been verified through the author's own practice-based research, but have not yet been tested through systematic empirical teaching experiments in actual classroom settings; second, the study focuses on the two saxophone works of Zhou Long, and the applicability of the teaching framework to other Chinese element saxophone repertoire needs to

be further verified; third, the study only focuses on the English academic literature, and may have omitted some valuable research results in Chinese literature.

8.2. Future Research

Future research can be expanded in the following aspects: first, conduct systematic empirical teaching experiments to test the effectiveness of the teaching framework and strategies proposed in this study through quantitative and qualitative research methods in actual saxophone teaching settings; second, extend the research to more Chinese element saxophone works, and further improve the theoretical system of cross-cultural saxophone teaching; third, conduct comparative research on the cross-cultural teaching of different Western instruments (such as saxophone, flute, cello, piano), and explore the universal laws and instrument-specific characteristics of the integration of Chinese musical elements into Western instrumental teaching; fourth, explore the application of digital technology in cross-cultural saxophone teaching, and develop intelligent teaching resources based on the two works to improve the effectiveness of cross-cultural teaching.

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