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From Orchestral Positions to Specialized Training: The Institutionalization of the Double Bass in Modern Shanghai

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Abstract: Taking Shanghai as its principal case, this article examines how the double bass acquired identifiable positions in professional orchestras and specialized music education from the 1930s through the 1950s. Orchestral development from late nineteenth-century Shanghai provides the institutional background; materials from the Central and Sichuan conservatories serve only as comparisons or later extensions. Using a document-based historical approach, the study evaluates concert programs, education and admissions documents, archival publications, institutional histories, specialist research, and performers' recollections according to their evidentiary limits. The evidence shows that Shanghai's professional orchestral environment provided named double-bass positions and conditions for professional practice. A 1934 record places the instrument in activities organized by the National Music Institute, while a student case beginning in 1943 documents specialized technical instruction, orchestral-part study, and ensemble training. The Central Conservatory's 1950 education plan separately demonstrates formal curricular inclusion at another institution. Later cases trace conservatory-trained musicians entering orchestras, performers taking teaching posts, and musicians returning to teach after interinstitutional study. Two relationships are most clearly supported. Teachers who worked across orchestras and conservatories brought professional materials and experience into instruction. Different training arrangements addressed learners with distinct occupational backgrounds, while interinstitutional study created a separate route of teacher succession. These findings identify connected components of institutionalization rather than a continuous national system. Available sources do not establish the annual continuity of posts, curricula, or graduate pathways, but they show how orchestral practice, specialized training, and teacher succession acquired local institutional support in the Shanghai-centered cases examined here.

Keywords: Double bass; Shanghai music history; Professional orchestra; Specialized music education; Institutionalization; Personnel continuity

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1. Introduction

The arrival of the double bass in China cannot be understood simply as the geographic transfer of a European instrument. As the lowest string section of a symphony orchestra, the instrument depends on ensemble staffing, rehearsal, score-based training, and professional positions. Without these organizational conditions, it may be used intermittently, but a sustainable performance practice is difficult to establish. Research on the global diffusion of orchestras has shown that symphony orchestras often entered new regions alongside Western-style institutions such as conservatories and examination systems, where they assumed functions shaped by local social conditions [1]. This article therefore begins not with the instrument's first appearance, but with the institutional support of performance and the incorporation of professional experience into specialized training.

Modern Shanghai provides a critical setting for this inquiry. The history of the Shanghai Public Band extends back to the late nineteenth century, and the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra that subsequently developed relied for many years on expatriate professional musicians [2,3]. The National Conservatory of Music, founded in 1927 and later known as the National Music Institute, brought Western music training into a Chinese-led institution of advanced professional education. Existing scholarship shows that the institution was not isolated from the city's musical life: orchestral musicians taught there, while Russian émigré teachers and their Chinese students formed important networks for the transfer of specialized knowledge [2,4,5]. The orchestra and the conservatory were thus not parallel lines but connected settings in which the double bass acquired both an organizational and a pedagogical position.

Specialized histories of the double bass preserve important leads for this inquiry. Wang Peng's doctoral dissertation systematically surveys expatriate teachers, early Chinese performers, conservatory teaching, and pedagogical materials [6], while Chen Ziping discusses the development of the instrument in China from the perspective of professional history [7]. These studies provide a basic chronology for otherwise scattered careers and institutional events, and they identify routes toward primary materials. Building on them, this article asks a question that remains insufficiently developed: through what concrete relationships did orchestral employment, conservatory teaching, and personnel movement become connected? Because professional histories, commemorative profiles, and later dissertations may repeat the same recollection, frequency of citation does not constitute independent corroboration. Claims about the "first" performer, a founder, or the complete establishment of a program in a particular year still require support from rosters, student files, curricular documents, or contemporary concert programs.

Institutionalization is used here as a working concept for analyzing these relationships, not as a completed historical outcome. The inquiry addresses three dimensions: whether the double bass acquired an identifiable place in orchestral staffing; whether relevant skills were converted into organized specialized training; and whether traceable forms of succession emerged among students, professional performers, and teachers. Stable positions, continuous admissions, instrument-specific assessment, and repeatable pathways into employment would provide the further evidence needed to establish institutional consolidation. The sources presently available do not confirm all of these conditions. This definition allows individual careers to serve as evidence of institutional connections rather than substituting personal reputation for institutional analysis.

The article asks three questions. First, in what kind of urban orchestral environment did the double bass acquire identifiable section positions and conditions for professional practice in Shanghai? Second, how did orchestral experience enter conservatory training through principal-study lessons, orchestral parts,

and ensemble work, and in what documents did the instrument obtain a formal curricular position? Third, which traceable personnel pathways show that specialized training began to extend across orchestras, conservatories, and regions? These questions address organizational position, training arrangements, and personnel continuity, respectively. Their purpose is to explain how components of institutionalization became connected, not to infer a continuously operating national system from several isolated points.

The first section examines the organizational position of the double bass in Shanghai's professional orchestras. The second considers school-based practice and specialized instruction at the National Music Institute, using the Central Conservatory of Music's formal education plan as a comparison from another institution. The third analyzes traceable personnel continuity among conservatories, orchestras, and interinstitutional training programs. The discussion situates these findings in relation to earlier professional histories and concentrates on two connections supported by the evidence: how teachers who held both orchestral and academic roles brought professional experience into teaching, and how training for different groups of learners and interinstitutional teacher preparation separately addressed personnel needs. Instrument making, material technology, consumer markets, and generalized international cooperation fall outside the scope of the article.

2. Materials and method

Shanghai serves as the principal case because the available literature makes it possible to trace professional orchestras, specialized music institutions, and overlapping personnel within the same city. This concentration permits an examination of how section positions, teaching arrangements, and personnel continuity became connected. The core period is the 1930s through the 1950s: a 1934 record of school-based activity, recollections of study beginning in 1943, and teaching succession in the 1950s form the principal evidentiary sequence. Orchestral history from the late nineteenth century through the 1920s establishes the organizational background. Educational documents from the Central Conservatory of Music and a program history from the Sichuan Conservatory of Music are used for comparison or extension and do not support national generalizations.

Sources are used in layers according to their proximity to the research questions. Peer-reviewed studies of Western music in China and Shanghai's urban musical history, together with specialized double-bass research, establish the historical background and provide research leads. Contemporary concert programs, admissions documents, and education plans identify section names, institutional provisions, and admissions categories. Articles published by archives from their holdings and institutional program histories help reconstruct organizational arrangements. Performers' recollections and biographical reporting are used only when they provide specific dates, persons, and activities. Education plans and admissions regulations show what an institution intended to organize; they do not by themselves demonstrate that admissions, teaching, or assessment were implemented continuously, and they must be distinguished from student records, timetables, and grade reports.

The search for publicly available materials concluded on September 28, 2026. Search routes included journal and book pages linked to publication DOIs, university repositories, conservatory and archive websites, and biographical materials published by institutions or media organizations. The sources were used in the forms available to this study: full texts where obtainable, publisher or repository records for bibliographic verification, public institutional and media webpages, and later reproductions or transcriptions

of archival items not examined in the original. Claims were limited to the content accessible in each form. The 1946 program is used through the material published by Utz [8]; the 1934 Music Weekly record through Xiao Yang's study [9]; and the 1950 education plan and 1951 admissions materials through articles prepared by the Central Conservatory of Music Archives from its holdings [10,11]. References in the text to contemporary records therefore denote content published or transcribed in later sources and do not imply that the authors examined the originals.

Materials were included when they directly addressed at least one of three issues—section positions, training content, or personnel continuity—and identified an author, institution, date, or original documentary lead. The accounts by Chen Ziping, Wang Peng, and Zheng Deren may rely on the same recollection for certain facts and are not treated as three independent confirmations. When sources differ, priority is given to contemporary, object-specific programs, administrative documents, and signed records. Exclusive claims such as "first performer" or a definitive founding year remain open when primary evidence does not resolve them. Failure to locate a record in the publicly available materials indicates only that this study did not obtain the evidence; it does not demonstrate that the activity never occurred.

3. Organizational positions in professional orchestras

The sustained presence of the double bass in China depended on more than the purchase or occasional use of the instrument. An orchestra had to maintain a low-string section, recurring rehearsals, and mechanisms of employment. The spread of orchestras beyond Europe often accompanied the establishment of music-education institutions [1]. Viewed in this way, the early history of the double bass is first an organizational history: only when ensemble practice recurred, section responsibilities became identifiable, and successive performers could occupy those responsibilities could isolated performances develop into professional positions.

The Shanghai Public Band offers an important early instance of these organizational conditions. Drawing on municipal archives, concert programs, and newspapers, Yang traces the ensemble's predecessor to 1879, its transformation into a full orchestra in 1907, and the formal adoption of the name Municipal Orchestra and Band in 1922 [2]. Mario Paci's tenure from 1919 to 1942 spanned the ensemble's transition from the Public Band to the Municipal Orchestra. A Stanford University exhibition account of Paci also connects him to the orchestra, the participation of Chinese musicians, and the founding of the National Conservatory of Music in 1927 [12]. These sources show that the double bass entered not an abstract space of "Western music," but an urban institution sustained by municipal administration, employment relations, regular performance, and professional training.

This institutional point of departure was marked by colonial inequality. The Shanghai Municipal Orchestra consisted largely of foreign musicians for many years, and Chinese listeners and musicians were at times excluded from particular performance spaces. Chinese musicians and students from the National Music Institute participated more frequently in orchestra-related performances only from the late 1920s onward [2]. The orchestra's history therefore cannot be narrated as a linear diffusion of a European model to China. Professional standards, racialized employment, urban public culture, and Chinese elite aspirations for modern education operated simultaneously and sometimes in tension. The formation of double-bass positions may therefore have been shaped by these conditions, although section rosters and personnel files are still needed to establish specific appointments.

For the double-bass section itself, current evidence establishes its existence but not its early continuity. A program for the China Symphony Orchestra dated March 1, 1946, reproduced by Utz, lists a section labeled "Contrabass" [8]. The China Symphony Orchestra was not the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra. The program demonstrates only that the double bass was a publicly named section in the same urban musical environment. It cannot supply the section history of the Municipal Orchestra or establish the number, stability, or terms of double-bass appointments before or after that performance. Wang Peng's reconstruction of earlier section personnel offers leads for locating contemporary rosters, but the relevant conclusions still require verification against original records [6].

Zheng Deren's career provides a traceable case connecting orchestral employment with specialized education. Available sources record that he began studying the double bass at the National Music Institute in 1943, entered a professional Shanghai orchestra in 1946, and assumed double-bass teaching duties at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in the mid-1950s[6,7,13]. At this stage, the sequence confirms only his movement among roles; the pedagogical content and its implications for career pathways and teacher succession are considered in Section 5. The exclusive designation "the first Chinese double bassist" is not used as evidence.

The historical position of the double bass in professional orchestras should therefore not be measured by its first appearance. Existing sources confirm that Shanghai's urban orchestral system provided a named double-bass section and an environment for professional practice, and that at least one trained performer moved between orchestra and conservatory. Whether positions were maintained annually, appointments were stable, or such personnel movement recurred cannot yet be determined without continuous rosters and employment records. The following section's movement "from position to curriculum" is thus an institutional connection to be tested item by item, not a causal sequence assumed in advance.

4. From orchestral positions to curriculum

The phrase "from orchestral positions to curriculum" describes a direction of relationship traceable in the sources. It does not mean that orchestral labor demand has been established as the sole cause of curricular provision or admissions. Here, curriculum encompasses the placement of students within admissions or registration categories, relatively defined teaching responsibilities, the division of professional competence into principal-study and ensemble training, and the assessment or performance of learning outcomes. The available sources do not show that these arrangements began as an independent program or studio. Early teaching may instead have operated within the orchestral-instrument department and through individual teachers. An isolated performance, evidence that one teacher taught the instrument, or the existence of an orchestral department cannot independently demonstrate continuous implementation of a double-bass curriculum.

The National Conservatory of Music supplied an organizational space into which double-bass teaching could enter. Yang notes that within several years of its founding in 1927, the institution had established five divisions: theory and composition, keyboard, orchestral instruments, voice, and Chinese music. The orchestral division initially concentrated on violin and cello and later expanded to other instruments [2]. This evidence confirms that orchestral-instrument training had entered the institution's structure, but it does not establish continuous double-bass admissions, fixed instructional hours, or instrument-specific assessment during its earliest years. The more defensible conclusion is that the orchestral division served

as an institutional container for double-bass teaching, whose exact place must still be identified through contemporary student, faculty, and curricular records.

The double bass became visible in school-based practice before the 1943 date often used in professional histories. From a 1934 issue of Music Weekly, Xiao identifies a list of performers associated with the National Music Institute's Educational Music Broadcasting Committee that records Man Fumin alongside voice, piano, and double bass [9]. This contemporary lead is sufficient to show that 1943 should not be described as the instrument's first entry into the institution. Because the list combines multiple instruments with voice, however, it does not establish Man's principal field, enrollment category, or teacher, nor does it demonstrate a continuously operating curriculum. It confirms school-based use rather than the founding of a program.

One teaching pathway found in the available evidence involved expatriate musicians who held positions in both orchestras and the conservatory. Studies of Russian émigré musicians in interwar Shanghai show personnel networks between the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra and the National Music Institute; it was not unusual for orchestral performers to teach at the institution [4,5]. A Shanghai Conservatory historical notice identifies J. Shevtzoff as the first head of the "instrumental and orchestra section" [14], while specialized double-bass histories state that he taught the double bass alongside his work as a cello teacher [6,7]. The former establishes his institutional title; the latter supplies the instrument-specific connection. Because published institutional histories do not provide the dates of his double-bass teaching or annual student lists, this case cannot determine which category of teacher predominated in double-bass instruction at the time or establish continuous implementation.

Among the specialized student cases that can presently be identified, Zheng Deren's first-person recollection preserves relatively detailed pedagogical information. In the memoir he wrote in 2015, Zheng states that after entering the institution in 1943, he studied primarily from Zhdanov's double-bass method and an American collection of études. His work began with bowing, fingering, shifting, scales, and intervals before progressing to études, concertos, and variation works of increasing difficulty [13]. This account indicates that, at least in Zheng's case, lessons followed a technical progression rather than serving merely as emergency preparation to fill an orchestral part. The recollection nonetheless documents one student after 1943; it cannot replace timetables, registration books, or records for his cohort, and it does not encompass the school-based practice documented in 1934.

A more direct indication of professional practice entering instruction appears in the use of orchestral parts and chamber music. Zheng recalled that Shevtzoff borrowed double-bass parts from the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra for him to study. The institution also arranged chamber-music instruction using works by Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Schubert, and Saint-Saëns [13]. In this case, basic technique, orchestral parts, and chamber music addressed individual performance, section reading, and collaborative competence, respectively. The source demonstrates that some orchestral resources and experience entered teaching. Interpreting this training as a functional decomposition of professional competence is the authors' interpretation, not a curricular rationale explicitly stated in an institutional document.

Assessment requires a distinction between school-wide policy and instrument-specific evidence. Citing the Regulations of the National Conservatory of Music and the National Music Institute, Xiao reports that the institution held a concert each semester from 1928 onward to "display students' achievement"; after a 1930 revision, the number increased to between one and four each semester [9]. Wang also notes the

existence of semester examinations at the National Conservatory [6]. These sources establish mechanisms of assessment and public presentation at the institution in which double-bass lessons occurred, but they do not demonstrate an independent and continuous assessment regime for the instrument. The present search located no contemporary double-bass examination repertoire, grading criteria, or results; school-level assessment is therefore not treated as proof of a verified instrument-specific examination system.

An account published by the Central Conservatory of Music Archives from its holdings provides more direct support than personal recollection for the double bass's formal place in an education plan. The conservatory's 1950 plan placed the instrument within the undergraduate orchestral-instrument department, specified a three-year course of study, and divided the institution's curriculum into theory, technique, and practical experience. Principal instrument and chamber music or small ensemble were listed among the department's major courses [10]. The document demonstrates that the double bass was incorporated into a plan encompassing program length, course categories, and credit allocation. It identifies institutional provisions but cannot by itself show how the plan was implemented each year. Enrollment, instruction, and assessment must still be matched to student and administrative records.

The Central Conservatory Archives' account of the institution's first undergraduate admissions, based in part on holdings classified as "1951—Teaching and Academic Affairs—9," further reports that applicants to orchestral strings were expected either to have studied for at least one year or to show advanced ability on another instrument together with strong reading and aural skills. The examination included scales, an étude, a piece, and sight-reading [11]. String admissions had therefore translated technical preparation and score-reading into operational selection criteria. The prospectus, however, stated requirements for strings as a group rather than for individual instruments, and the published admissions list does not identify each student's principal instrument. The source establishes an admissions mechanism for the curricular category to which the double bass belonged, but it does not independently prove that a double-bass student was admitted in 1951.

By the mid-1950s, the Shanghai evidence shows clearer teaching succession and differentiated forms of training. Zheng recalled that he succeeded Shevtzoff as teacher in 1955 and that the Shanghai Conservatory began admitting double-bass students at both its affiliated middle school and undergraduate levels in 1956. He also taught in-service cadres and military students, adapting instruction to the positions they would resume in their home units [13]. The recollection suggests two parallel pathways: middle-school and undergraduate admissions offered long-term degree-oriented training, whereas in-service or assigned study responded more directly to personnel shortages in orchestras and performing organizations. The 1955 teaching succession and the 1956 admissions are separate claims. Exact cohort size, program length, and student names for the latter still require corroboration from the conservatory's admissions prospectus and registration books for that year.

The movement "from orchestral positions to curriculum" therefore cannot be reduced to a single founding date. A 1934 Shanghai record confirms the double bass in activities organized by the National Music Institute, while the Shanghai case beginning in 1943 preserves details of specialized lessons and orchestral-part study. The Central Conservatory of Music's 1950 plan supplies evidence that another institution formally incorporated the double bass into its curriculum [10]. The three items address school-based use in Shanghai, concrete training in Shanghai, and formal provision at the Central Conservatory, respectively. They may be compared as different levels of evidence but cannot be arranged as a continuous

institutional chronology. Nor can the Central Conservatory plan replace annual admissions, registration, and instrument-specific assessment records for Shanghai. The next section therefore turns to documented career pathways and teacher succession across conservatories and orchestras.

5. Personnel continuity across conservatories, orchestras, and interinstitutional training

Personnel continuity refers here to three observable pathways: conservatory-trained musicians entering professional positions, professional performers assuming teaching duties, and musicians returning to teach at their home institution after interinstitutional training. The term identifies ways in which professional competence extended across institutions. It does not presume clearly bounded membership, unified occupational standards, or the existence of a national professional community. The following analysis asks which sources support each pathway and how far their evidence extends.

Zheng Deren's career forms a traceable sequence of role transitions: he studied with Shevtzoff at the National Music Institute beginning in 1943, subsequently joined a professional Shanghai orchestra, and assumed double-bass teaching in the mid-1950s[6,7,13]. The case matters not because it establishes a founder narrative, but because one person successively occupied the positions of student, orchestral performer, and conservatory teacher. Zheng's recollection further indicates that he later incorporated orchestral parts, basic technique, and the requirements of professional positions into his teaching [13]. Existing evidence confirms this sequence of roles but cannot establish from a single case that the same cycle operated stably on a larger scale.

The link between conservatory education and professional staffing also developed through parallel long-term and in-service training. In Zheng's recollection, students at the affiliated middle school and undergraduate levels received extended technical and ensemble training, whereas in-service cadres and military students entered with specific occupational needs and returned to their original units after study [13]. The Central Conservatory's 1950 education plan likewise distinguished among undergraduate study, a youth class, a general course for working music cadres, and short-term training; it defined the general course as a means of improving the basic musicianship and technical skills of musicians already in service [10]. These materials do not provide complete numbers of double-bass students, but they distinguish two arrangements: longer degree-oriented study and shorter or in-service training for personnel already employed by cultural organizations. The extent to which each arrangement corresponded to particular positions still requires graduation and receiving-unit records.

Interinstitutional mobility provides a second kind of evidence for teacher succession. A program history published by the Sichuan Conservatory's Department of Orchestral Instruments states that when the institution established its double-bass program in 1978, it sent two musicians to study at the Shanghai and Shenyang conservatories; both returned to teach after graduation [15]. The record establishes a pathway of external study followed by a return to teaching and identifies Shanghai and Shenyang as nodes in that training. It does not state why the external training was arranged or show how methods, repertoire, or assessment practices were brought back to Sichuan. Answering the latter question would require timetables, teaching plans, and examination records.

A later case also allows the trajectory from student to performer and teacher to be checked. A China Daily interview reports that Yuanxiong Lu entered the middle school affiliated with the Shanghai

Conservatory in 1977 and studied with Zheng Deren for seven years, through his graduation from the institution [16]. A TCU Magazine profile further states that Lu briefly joined the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra after graduation and later continued his study, performance, and teaching in the United States [17]. This career demonstrates how extended conservatory training could lead to an orchestral position and then to a new teaching environment. It is evidence of one complete pathway, not a proxy for the destinations of all graduates in the same period.

These personnel pathways warrant analysis as institutional connections because the sources also identify transferable content. Zheng's account places bowing, fingering, shifting, scales, and études alongside orchestral parts and chamber music in his learning and teaching [13]. The Central Conservatory's 1950 plan, in a formal document from another institution, likewise lists principal instrument and chamber music or small ensemble [10]. The two kinds of sources show that basic technique and ensemble work held a place in both individual practice and formal curricular planning. No direct transmission between the institutions is established, however, and the comparison does not justify an inference of uniform training standards across conservatories.

For the second half of the twentieth century, the available materials therefore identify three career and teacher-succession pathways: Zheng's movement from student to orchestral performer and conservatory teacher [6,7,13]; one Sichuan Conservatory initiative in which externally trained musicians returned to teach [15]; and Lu's trajectory from extended conservatory training into an orchestra and later teaching [16,17]. The sources differ in evidentiary scope, but collectively show that specialized training extended beyond a single teacher or institution in several cases. The scale, duration, and representativeness of these pathways still require alumni records, employment destinations, and appointment files.

6. Discussion

Unlike earlier specialized histories of the double bass, this article does not construct another chronology of notable performers. Wang and Chen have already assembled important leads concerning expatriate teachers, Chinese performers, conservatory teaching, and professional activity [6,7]. The present contribution lies in changing the question asked of those materials: what enabled individuals to move among orchestras, conservatories, and regions, and what institutional connections can their careers actually demonstrate? Viewed in these terms, the entry of the double bass into urban musical life, its appearance in school activities, its inclusion in a formal education plan, and the succession of teachers are events supported by different kinds of evidence. They cannot be collapsed into a single origin through the language of "first appearance," nor can chronological order alone establish stable institutionalization.

The first mechanism supported by the evidence is that teachers who combined orchestral and academic roles brought professional practice into specialized training. Research on Russian émigré musicians and a Shanghai Conservatory historical notice establish the personnel conditions under which Municipal Orchestra musicians participated in conservatory teaching [4,5,14]. Zheng's recollection of Shevtzoff borrowing orchestral parts and organizing technical and ensemble work provides double-bass-specific detail [13]. Together, these sources show that orchestral resources and performance experience entered one documented course of study. In the absence of continuous timetables, lesson plans, and contemporary student records, this case cannot be generalized into a curriculum that operated uniformly throughout the period. A cello teacher's concurrent instruction of the double bass is documented in this case; its cause cannot be determined from the available

evidence.

The second finding comprises two distinct relationships. First, the Shanghai Conservatory's affiliated middle-school and undergraduate programs served different learners from its in-service and military-student training. Zheng's recollection indicates that the latter two groups were expected to return to positions in their home units [13]. The Central Conservatory's undergraduate, general, and short-term programs provide a comparison showing how another institution differentiated long-term and in-service training [10], but they do not establish that the two conservatories implemented the same model. Second, the Sichuan Conservatory used external study followed by return employment as a form of interinstitutional teacher preparation [15]. The first relationship concerns training arrangements and learners' occupational backgrounds; the second concerns how an institution obtained local teachers. Both are supported by personnel or institutional evidence, but they cannot be combined into a single mechanism driven by a unified staffing plan.

These connections did not unfold sequentially within an unchanging institutional environment. From the late nineteenth through the first half of the twentieth century, Shanghai's municipally administered professional orchestra, expatriate performers, and the National Music Institute supplied early positions and teaching resources while reproducing inequalities in colonial employment [2–5]. After 1949, the Central Conservatory's education plan shows the double bass entering the program and curricular documents at another institution [10,11], while the Shanghai materials document a case in which Chinese performers assumed teaching and long-term study existed alongside in-service training [13]. In the second half of the century, external teacher preparation created another route of teacher succession [15–17]. These points register changes in the providers of resources and the organization of training; they do not constitute proof of an uninterrupted linear history.

The study's evidentiary limits fall into three areas. First, insufficient early Shanghai section rosters and personnel records prevent an assessment of employment continuity. Second, incomplete double-bass registration, timetable, and instrument-specific examination records at the National Music Institute mean that school-wide regulations and individual recollection cannot replace evidence of annual implementation. Third, limited records of graduate destinations and appointments make the representativeness of the identified personnel pathways uncertain. Performers' recollections, biographical journalism, and institutional program histories provide valuable leads but are affected by source dependence and retrospective narration. The article therefore confirms specific organizational positions, training arrangements, and personnel connections without making further claims about their duration or reach.

7. Conclusion

The central conclusion of this Shanghai-based study is not that the double bass completed a stable process of institutionalization in modern China, but that several components of that process emerged and became connected. Shanghai's professional urban orchestras provided recognizable section positions, rehearsal resources, and conditions for professional practice. Activities at the National Music Institute in 1934 and a student case beginning in 1943 show that the double bass had entered school-based practice and specialized training. The Central Conservatory's 1950 education plan offers a comparison in which another institution formally included the instrument in its curriculum; it is not a subsequent stage in the continuous development of Shanghai's teaching system. Personnel evidence from the second half of the twentieth century further identifies trained musicians entering orchestras, professional performers assuming teaching

duties, and externally trained musicians returning to teach at their home institutions.

The article's principal contribution is to identify two concrete relationships within existing biographical and institutional materials. Dual orchestral and conservatory appointments enabled professional experience to enter teaching. Training arrangements for different groups addressed learners with distinct occupational backgrounds, while interinstitutional teacher preparation created a separate pathway in which musicians returned to teach after study elsewhere. For cultural and arts research, these cases suggest that when an artistic practice circulating across regions acquires local continuity, the organization of positions, the pedagogical decomposition of knowledge, and personnel succession can provide important forms of institutional support. This conclusion is limited to the Shanghai-centered cases and cross-institutional comparisons represented in the available evidence. The continuity of positions and curricula, and the representativeness of personnel pathways, require further testing against contemporary rosters, student records, academic-administration files, and appointment documents.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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