A Study of Vocal Performance Inventiveness

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Abstract. Music performance is a re-creation activity in music, and vocal performance is one of the areas of music performance. The vocalist communicates the song to the audience by knowing what he or she wants to say through collaboration with instruments. As a result, cultural, social, and intellectual advancements have enhanced our knowledge of music, giving it new vitality. The article discusses the aim and role of creativity in music performance, the variations between vocal works from different times, the present state of creativity in vocal performance, the questionnaires on vocal learners' learning experiences from different regions and perceptions of creativity in traditional vocal works, the issues that exist, and the remedies that are proposed.

Keywords: voice music · performance · inventiveness

1 Introduction

Previously, the majority of the literature on vocal music was devoted to the analysis of the repertoire and expression of a specific opera or art song, but the process of promoting the development of music frequently involves the creation, not only the transition of a certain style to a certain period but also the creation of traditional works, which is still an indispensable part of our study or development of music. However, there are few studies in the literature on the formation of vocal works, and certain works are still misunderstood in Asian nations that are not the birthplace of classical music. The main point is represented in the works' inventiveness. In the traditional view, classical works do not allow any variations and must be sung strictly according to the score. A part of the population believes that composition exists only in modern popular music and that it is a great challenge for classical works, especially for non-native speakers, to perform secondary compositions. The purpose of this paper is to compile and propose solutions to the problems in vocal performance from the point of view of the styles of works from different periods, starting from the extant literature from abroad and today's society on the current state of development.

2 The Purpose and Role of Creativity in the Presence of Music Performance

Pidgeon et al. have said, [1] "Creative thinking is not only important for technological progress but also music, art or other artistic fields." Creativity in the field of music is not

only reflected in the emergence of new works, but also in the creation of traditional works or works that have already been released, based on the composer's intentions and personal understanding. And it is true that some composers are dissatisfied with presenting a work in a single form; instead, they prefer to have a wider range of performers, even from different countries, interpret the same work in different cultures. For example, in Baroque, the composer simply wrote out the standard framework and left the rest to the singers in this type of aria, which we call da capo. The reason for doing so is entirely due to the aesthetic style of that period. When we attend a concert, we listen not only to what the composer has written but also to what the performers have composed. And in the final section, the composer does not even rewrite it because he gives the composition to the singer after the repetition. This has resulted in the ability to hear various versions of the work online or in concert halls and has contributed significantly to the advancement of comparative studies.

In terms of style, classical music is serious, ornate, and must be sung strictly according to the form of the score; however, we cannot always go into a detailed examination of composers from hundreds of years ago, and must instead analyze and sing from the surviving literature. In comparison to operas, Mozart's art songs, for example, do not appear to have received much attention. *The Mozart Chronicle* demonstrates that [2] the art song form was not established until Schubert's time and that there was no such concept in Mozart's time when the works were merely a way of recording life with no real emotional significance. In response to this point of view, musicologist Chitose Murata, a professor at Tokyo College of Music in Japan, demonstrates in his article *Mozart's German: A Study of Solo Songs: Centered on Poetic Choice, Meter, and Language* that [3] Mozart's art songs were closely related to his life, and thus I argue that Mozart's art songs are not serious, but rather dramatic. There is no shortage of famous singers in today's opera performances or concerts who alter the seriousness of classical vocal works and create them secondarily by adding subjective colors. Although this method of creation subverts the traditional aesthetic, which is considered too avant-garde for many listeners to understand, it opens up more possibilities for the development of music and gives music creators more creative directions. As a result, we can conclude that the creation of vocal works is based on a subjective sense.

3 The Differences in the Creation of Vocal Works Over Time

People have formed inherent ideas about how vocal works from different periods should be sung as a result of the influence of traditional aesthetics of vocal works from different periods. For example, works from the Baroque period, which were influenced by the Renaissance, should be sacred and serious. However, Winton Dean's article *The Performance of Recitative in Late Baroque Opera* states that [4] contrary to popular belief, Baroque music should be flexible and fluid. It should be fluid and able to speed up or slow down in response to the lyrics. Nowadays, German composers are accustomed to allowing singers to sing strictly according to the score, rather than allowing singers to adjust to their abilities. Some operas, particularly the recitativo, require the singer to be familiar with the score and to make some changes. And, in my opinion, such changes must be novel and within the realm of modern aesthetics.

Romantic works emphasize the subjectivity of the repertoire, which is influenced by the Enlightenment and emphasizes subjective colors. There are over fifty versions of the tenor aria *una furtiva lagrima* from Donizetti's opera *Lelisir d'amore*, for example. The main features are the ornament's increase and decrease, the melody's repetition, and the cadenza of the melody before it ends. This period's aesthetic style can be said to have pushed "creation" to new heights.

Composers have been able to create works that are "open" to the singer's understanding while keeping the work streamlined in modern compositions. The composer wishes to grant some rights to the performers to give them more space to express themselves and to broaden the work's diversity. While this is undoubtedly difficult for the performer, it emphasizes the importance of creativity in music.

4 The Current State of Creativity in Vocal Performance and the Issues that Exist

First and foremost, the term "creation" emphasizes novelty and distinction. Creativity in vocal works sometimes inevitably gives the performer an individual label that is not accepted by the public. The German style, which is known for its rigor, requires the performer to be more rigorous, which differs from the Italian style of singing. However, there is no specific definition of "rigor," and Geeves et al. argue in their article *The Performance Pleasure of Imprecision: a Diachronic Study of Entrainment in Music Performance* that [5] the presence of an audience leads musicians to produce a performance that is more exciting than their absence from the audience and that their performance on stage differs from their performance in rehearsal due to factors such as the individual performer's psychology. And, from the standpoint of the work, no opera has a completely correct version, and we cannot be certain which version is correct. Every version was accepted by the audience back then, which is very different from how we think now. In addition, nowadays, some people believe that there may be contradictions in the performers' interpretation of musical works. Nowadays, when a performer interprets a piece of music, he or she has to understand the style of the piece of music in the context of the society of the time, and modern artists are not able to perform the piece with empathy and understanding of the cultural consciousness of the time. For this reason, I believe that a new creation should be made, in which the performer should combine the historical spirit of the musical work with modern civilization to realize the full exploitation of the appreciation value of the musical work in the performance. In other words, it is a creation based on respecting its authenticity, preserving the original style of the musical work, incorporating the creator's understanding of musical aesthetics, and integrating the aesthetic concepts of the times to ensure that the artistry of the performance of the musical work is highlighted.

Secondly, the approach to a piece varies according to the individual's musicality. These various treatment approaches are inextricably linked to the performer's accumulation, lifestyle, cultural differences, and so on. Singers sang in this manner not out of arrogance, but because it was the aesthetic of the time, and it was what the composer desired. Singers in Bel Canto had to compose as well as sing from a score, and the further back in time you go, the more specific the composer wrote on the score. Every

day, audiences at the time heard a different version of the opera. Because the singers sang a different song at each performance. That is what the audience anticipated. In the case of sustaining notation, for example, he would not come up according to the score, but would instead add a cadenza or sing an octave higher. However, we must be cautious not to show all of the works from different periods in the same style, as this would be unreasonable. The works of each period are both the result of that period's culture and a reflection of that culture. For example, some vocal students and even singers nowadays believe that Baroque works should be sacred and solemn rather than dramatic, owing to Renaissance influences. They prefer to express their tone in oratorios in a light manner rather than changing it to suit their moods. The truth is that Baroque music is devoted to expressing more complex emotions. And the emotional expression in baroque music is characterized by patterned, fixed emotions. The expression of emotions such as joy, anger, sadness, and so on is consistent in Baroque music. For example, in the Baroque period, when the basso continuo was popular, sadness would be expressed in a chromatic downward scale of the bass, whereas happiness would be expressed in a high melody or instrument. This is what we call today's music rhetoric, which is in a fixed form in the vocal works of the Baroque period. For example, in the aria *Lascia, ch'io pianga* from the opera *Rinaldo* by the Baroque composer Handel, the accompaniment part is worthy of our attention, in addition to the use of the most famous baroque composition of column chords, the accompaniment part and the melodic part. The work uses a lot of downward melodic progressions. As we know from the lyrics and the context of the piece, it is sung by the character Almirena in the garden, lamenting her misfortune, which is in line with what we call the use of the downbeat to represent sadness. A special feature of the piece is that the lyrics are e che sospiri, which means that Almirena is looking forward to freedom, so Handel uses an upward melodic progression for this line to show the longing, the anticipation. The composer does not use melodic and accompaniment variations to express the emotions of the work, but rather the performer's understanding. Take the Romantic works as an example, for example, the tenor aria *una furtiva lagrima* from Donizetti's opera *Lelisir d'amore* mentioned above, of which there are more than fifty versions, let us compare the versions by the Italian tenor Caruso and the Italian soprano Gilli. Although the two singers have the same timbre and vocal range, they have their characteristics in terms of expression. The version sung by Caruso is faster and more passionate, with a strong expansiveness in the transitions and individual changes in the coloratura, while the version sung by Gigli is much slower than Caruso's, with a downward slope in each note, and the characteristics of his tone, which gives the work a sing-along feeling and a sudden change of mood in the transitions. Romantic works are more of a test of the performer's musicianship. Or in the case of classical works, such as Ottavio's aria dalla sua pace from Mozart's Don Giovanni, classicalism seems to be more serious in the traditional sense than romanticism, but in fact, the mood changes in classical works are not expressed in the melody and accompaniment, and they are not so straightforward as in romanticism. The change of mood in classical works is more a change of rhythm or key. In the dalla sua pace, the Peruvian tenor Flores does not sing the piece exactly as it is written, especially in the recapitulation, which is more like the da capo of the Baroque period, adding more ornamentation to make the recapitulation

sound different from the first part, and also showing a variety of mood changes in one piece. There are many different mood changes in one piece.

In some countries, word composition appears to be prohibited in traditional music. As a result, we conducted a questionnaire survey of vocal students. A total of 50 vocal students aged 15 to 30 from various institutions in various regions were polled about the works they sang and the methods they received. Eighty percent of the vocal learners were not permitted to make any changes to the score, and their ideas were based on how they had been taught to sing and were not asked to add any elements to make the piece sound better in the case of Romantic arias, whereas for Romanticism, players would add leaning notes from time to time to legato between notes, to connect more smoothly; when connecting the last note at the end of the penultimate cadenza, they used to add portamento, to emphasize the thematic nature of the song.

To create vocal performances, we must adhere to the principles and refrain from deviating too far from the original composition. This is true only for arias and art songs. When singing arias or art songs, it is a special sign of performance technique to appropriately transform the consciousness of thought generated by the composer, to fully comply with the emotional terms in the score, and to master the intensity, rhythm, and style of performance. Composers have different styles in the creation of their works, mainly because of the musical education they have received, the musical traditions they have inherited, the artistic ideas they have developed, and the aesthetic views they adhere to. In the performance of musical works, conformity to the basic requirements of the score is the expression of the authenticity of the work. However, when it comes to the singing of recitativo, Tosi, an Italian composer, stated that "expression is the soul of vocal performance" in the case of recitativo singing. In contrast to the aria, the recitativo is both a musical and a literary form in the theater. When singing a recitativo, the performer should prepare ahead of time with the conductor and sing as freely as possible, switching between moods and states based on the characters in the play and smooth plot development and characterization are more important compared to pitch. It is not always appropriate to place too much emphasis on the pronunciation of the lyrics and the bite of the words, rather than driving the work through one's understanding.

5   Conclusion

To summarize, vocal performance creativity is an art of reproduction, Any piece is born in a certain social environment and the composer's situation. As a result, these works emerge with the stylistic and aesthetic characteristics of the historical era. It is mainly expressed in the score, which is the authenticity of the original composition. In vocal performance, we should deal with a pair of relationships, i.e. the relationship between creativity and the style of the original work. True musicians try to grasp the musical styles of their works from a historical perspective and restore these styles more authentically. They try to be as familiar as possible with the composer's living environment and try to feel the inner thoughts of the composer at that time. However, different people have different interpretations of the same musical work, and different periods have different expressions, all of which contribute to music's richness. The breakthrough of traditional music aesthetics has brought us more imagination as music has evolved. The breakthrough should not only meet the requirements of the theme and content of the work

but also, and more importantly, require the singers to inject their creative thinking in all aspects to inject their creative thinking in all aspects to meet the artistic expression of the content. The term "creation" in vocal performance is not an accident; it is unavoidable.

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