

On Practice of Non-vocal Techniques in Vocal Music Teaching

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Abstract: Innovative teaching is advocated in Chinese education, and vocal music teaching is no exception. Application of non-vocal techniques in vocal music teaching is an innovative teaching method and also a new challenge for both students and teachers. Usually, in vocal music training, vocal techniques have been in a primary learning position and can even be seen as all content of vocal music teaching. This paper will analyze and discuss about the practice of non-vocal teaching techniques in vocal music teaching to clarify the importance of such application.

Key words: non-vocal techniques, application, vocal music teaching, practice

At present, China and parents attach great importance to art training for students, so that students could develop comprehensively and learn from different aspects to promote future social development. Correct grasp of the relationship between theories and practice is particularly important in vocal music teaching, as mistakes of rationalism and empiricism would easily be caused once theories and practice are applied inappropriately during teaching. So, vocal music teaching shall be carried out by certain methods. The application of non-vocal teaching techniques in vocal music teaching plays an important role in promoting students' learning of vocal music and lays a foundation for students' development in vocal music.

I. Development background of vocal music

For development background of vocal music, the origin of music shall be discussed first. "Theory of Heterosexual Courtship", "Theory of Nature Imitation" and "Theory of Labor Origin" etc are currently accepted by world academia, but no matter in which theory, the origin of music is inseparable from human life.

Since the emergence and initial development, vocal music art has been influenced by cultural thoughts, painting art, carving art, and poetry literature etc of European Society. No matter in which period of time, vocal music art leaves later generations footprints of great vocal music art explorers of that time. In terms of famous vocal music works and writers, there are a lot of unforgettable vocal music works and admirable vocal music writers at home and abroad. For Chinese vocal music artists, Wu Yanze, a well-known Chinese national vocal music artist, has unique creativity in vocal music, and he is the most distinctive vocal music artist among Chinese tenors. In 1960s, he attracted attention of the music world and numerous audiences by “A Song of Good” in “The East Is Red” of Hubei Edition, and this song became famous throughout the country since then and left descendants deep footprints. His representative works also include “Rising from the Prairie Sun Does Not Set Down” and “Flowing Water” etc, and still enjoy popular support so far and leave meaningful afterthoughts. For another example, Handel, a composer of Baroque music, made a lot of achievements in music for descendants, such as “Alcina” and “Orlando” etc. There are countless well-known artists and works in vocal music in the world. Some vocal music works have topics including wars, love, labor or conflicts etc. Such rich content with rural, imperial or folk themes etc is created under specific environment, atmosphere and emotions, and is full of composers’ feelings, thoughts, sentiment and temperament at that moment. From a certain perspective or in a sense, vocal music works are miniatures of social situation, people’s life and artistic aesthetics at that time, and could not only reflect people’s views about society but also their inner activities in that period of time.

In terms of the development of music, modern scholars shall never learn vocal music rigidly, grasp certain techniques, understand composers’ emotions in works, know about situation and social contexts of works, express composers’ feelings soulfully in performances, and never sing songs in form, but to make audience understand singers’ feelings conveyed in songs.

II. Analysis of vocal music teaching techniques

(I) Matters that students shall grasp when learning vocal music

It isn't easy for Chinese students to learn vocal music art of Europe and America. So, during learning, students shall know about emotions and social background of works, and learn about correct vocal methods and techniques which are also basic requirement of vocal music learning. For example, to learn opera aria, students shall not only learn and understand opera aria itself, but also try to grasp and know about its style and plot, and learn about the year of production, era of prevalence, period and regions etc as well as composer's life and composition style. All these are discussed from the perspective of students, and vocal music teaching techniques shall also be described from the aspect of teachers.

(II) Teachers' teaching techniques

Students' learning of vocal music shall not only rely on their understanding of vocal music works, but also require teachers to grasp certain methods and techniques in vocal music teaching, as vocal music is different from other scientific and cultural knowledge and its essence and true meaning cannot be obtained through simply diligent learning.

1. Pay attention to training of students' psychological quality in vocal music teaching

Good and strong psychological quality of singers is essential in singing. A famous psychologist has once said that: "singing is one of advanced psychological activity phenomena". It can be seen that psychological quality is very important for a singer. Thus, in vocal music teaching, teachers shall train students' psychological quality to make students have a strong heart and the courage to express constantly, so that they could sing emotionally. One could not have correct vocalization if he isn't fully concentrated and is flagging during training or sings without feelings. In fact, singing shall not be done simply by mouth but by heart.

2. Stimulate constantly students' learning interest during vocal music teaching

As the saying goes, interest is the best teacher. During vocal music teaching,

teachers shall stimulate students' learning interest by all means, influence students continuously with personal charisma, be more tolerant towards students, restrict less, care more, blame less, and be more patient and less fickle, as all these can affect students' learning. Therefore, teachers shall make appropriately the atmosphere of vocal music classes more cheerful, so that students could participate actively and initiatively in vocal music training with great interests, feel teachers' sincerity and learn vocal music better.

3. Guide students to learn vocal music actively by adjusting formation and changing training environment

At present, innovative teaching methods are required in teaching of both vocal music and common scientific and cultural knowledge. There are a lot of innovative teaching techniques for vocal music teaching. For example, teachers could adjust formation, students may not necessarily be arranged in a row when practicing vocalization, and could form a triangle or herringbone. Moreover, students may not necessarily vocalize together, and may do this one by one. Teachers could also give each student a number and call out numbers to let corresponding students vocalize. This could not only make students concentrated, but also enhance students' learning interest and change originally boring and dull classes into very funny ones.

III. Exploration of practice of non-vocal techniques in vocal music teaching

In a sense, it is an innovative teaching method to apply non-vocal teaching techniques to vocal music teaching. Vocal music relates closely to language, and so language shall be mentioned when it comes to music style. Vocal music teaching has been advocating singing in source languages. Italian, German and French are three common languages in bel canto works. There are increasingly more vocal music works in English because of rapid rise of musicals in recent years.

(I) Application of languages in vocal music teaching

One couldn't sing with language barriers. Most often, when appreciating singing, one would always feel that the singer's language is not authentic or that singing is not like musical work of that country. This is because the singer hasn't

grasped some special rhythms of language of that song and lyrics and music are not completely combined in the song, so that the audience feels that the content of song is somewhat inauthentic. For example, if a person couldn't speak mandarin well, he will not sing Beijing Opera authentically although lyrics are correct. So, one shall learn a language before learning vocal music. Language teaching is one kind of non-vocal teaching, and plays an important role in vocal music teaching and can help students master learning techniques of vocal music better. As a symbol that expresses human emotions, language could promote interpersonal communication, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and play an extremely important role in improving people's abilities.

(II) Application of poetry and paintings in vocal music teaching

Most of art songs have lyrics in the form of poetry, while some are created based on paintings with melody determined according to verve of poetry or paintings. To determine melody of vocal music through verve of paintings and poetry, singers shall grasp creative atmosphere and emotions conveyed in songs. Actual vocal music teaching shall contain training for students' poetry and painting skills and apply appropriately to practical teaching, so that students could learn and master techniques of vocal music while grasping poetry and painting skills, know about vocal music from many aspects, master implied meanings of vocal music lyrics, start from historical background and composers' composition styles, and better convey feelings contained in vocal music.

(III) Application of appeal of stage performances in vocal music teaching

In vocal music teaching, teachers shall train students' vocalization techniques and stage performance ability, so that students could have very strong stage appeal during performances besides attracting the attention of audience with beautiful voices. For a performer, the key of performance is to be the focus of attention on stage alone or in an opera performance. It is said that "as an opera singer, the happiest thing is just to bring breath of all audience with you." Thus, stage appeal is the bloodline of the entire performance for a performer, and he could be accepted by audience and go further on the road of vocal music with strong stage

appeal. So, teachers shall focus on training students' stage appeal and apply skills of stage appeal to vocal music teaching, so that students learn how to have more stage appeal while performing besides studying on campus, bring others' thinking to their performances and make the audience have emotions changing with changes of their performances.

Stage art is a very integrated art, and singers shall have not only very strong singing abilities but also vivid performance ability on stage. To attract attention of audience for a long time, mere vocal music singing techniques are not enough, and singers shall learn to interact with audience while singing, so that the audience would always focus on singers and hope to enjoy every minute of their performances. Thus, stage appeal is very important for learners and teachers shall attach great importance to it in vocal music teaching.

IV. Conclusions:

With continuously strengthening economic strength of China in recent years, it has been one of important tasks of current social development to train students to develop comprehensively. As a form of education for students' talent and skills, vocal music teaching is extremely important for students' future development. However, teachers shall have sound vocal music teaching methods and stimulate students' interest in learning vocal music by innovative teaching methods. For example, students' learning interest would be stimulated to a great extent by applying non-vocal teaching techniques to vocal music teaching, and they would feel that learning vocal music is full of fun and challenges. Vocal music, as a form of art, has very important significance for training students' practical ability and exploring spirit, and also plays a critical role in promoting future social development.

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