

# Discussion on Importance of Local Operas in Vocal Music Teaching

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**Abstract**—As a fundamental link in music education, vocal music teaching plays an important and positive role in students' moral education and aesthetic education. Naturally, how to improve and perfect teaching content and teaching method of vocal music teaching becomes a major subject of music education. As treasure of national culture, local operas can provide reference for vocal music teaching in singing tune, stage performance and some other aspects. This paper discusses the importance of importing local operas in vocal music teaching mainly from the three aspects of "Carrying forward and inheriting traditional national music's need", "Supplementing need of vocal music teaching method" and "The need to combine regional culture and music education of local colleges and universities".

**Keywords**—vocal music teaching; local operas; importance

## I. INTRODUCTION

Vocal music teaching is a vital constitutional part of music education, especially that professional music education in ordinary colleges and vocal music teaching quality of music colleges directly influence development prospect and level of national vocal music art. Vocal music teaching can bring aesthetic experience and feeling to students through beautiful and lyric music and visual artistic language. It can also imperceptibly cultivate students' sentiment, activate their mind and enhance their aesthetic taste.

It is exactly due to the important role vocal music teaching plays in students' moral education and aesthetic education that enriching content of vocal music teaching and studying vocal music teaching method becomes an important subject of music education. With changes of domestic and international culture education environment and music educational policy and objective, inheritance of traditional national culture in music education wins more and more attention. Therefore, as national cultural treasure, importing and inheritance of local operas should get more attention in vocal music teaching. Here, this paper will conduct detailed discussion on its importance from the three aspects of "The need to carry forward and inherit traditional national music", "The need to supplement vocal music teaching method" and "The need to combine regional culture and music education of local colleges and universities".

## II. THE NEED TO CARRY FORWARD AND INHERIT TRADITIONAL NATIONAL MUSIC

With deepening of economic globalization, flow of people and materials in the global range speeds up. Under this background, people with multiple nationalities coexist in the same country or area and cultural symbiosis society with cultural diversity gradually takes shape. In cultural symbiosis society, various cultural concepts and values conflict with each other. There is both contradiction and fusion. Under the impact of foreign culture constantly flocking in and new culture emerging in endlessly, China's traditional national culture faces great challenges in inheritance and innovation.

It is undoubted that Shaoxing opera, Yu opera, Huangmei opera and other local operas are essence and treasure of Chinese national culture. In history, local operas have had long glorious days, traditional opera performing artists emerged in great quantities and lots of classic opera works were left, forming a complete opera performing theoretical system. However, at the present time, it seems that local operas have entered the low point of development and previous glory no longer exists. The direct reason is gradual formation of multicultural environment and gradual diversification of people's values and aesthetic taste. Local operas can no longer satisfy need of audience at various age levels, especially that it is easier for teenagers to be attracted by popular music culture from Europe, America, Japan, Korea and so on. On the contrary, they have alien and even averse feelings for native local operas and other national music. Inheritance of traditional culture should start with teenagers. We should make them realize the precious value of national culture and responsibility of cultural inheritance on their shoulder.

In fact, in 1950s, China's music colleges have absorbed essence from Chinese folk art forms, folk song and local operas in vocal music teaching. However, in today's music discipline of institutions of higher learning, there are neither external professional actors of Chinese opera for teaching nor vocal music books containing singing tune or aria of Chinese opera. What's more, some teachers themselves have prejudice against local operas and think that their singing mode is unscientific, under-developed and too backward. Instead, they advocate western singing style. Due to above-mentioned various reasons, there are few chances for students to touch and learn local operas during their learning at school.

Therefore, it is imperative to intensify importing of local operas in vocal music teaching.

Firstly, when teaching vocal music, music teachers should abandon their prejudice against local operas and begin with themselves to learn and research knowledge concerning singing style of local operas. In addition, they should be able to blend mastered knowledge in teaching process. They should not only let students' master categories, tracks, style and other basic knowledge of local operas, but also let them learn about national culture significance contained in these local operas. For example, let students fully feel emotions contained in works, singing style, singing tune skills and so on. Hereby, cultivate students' interest in local operas and further enhance their responsibility of inheriting traditional culture and sense of pride of national culture.

Secondly, music major of ordinary colleges or music colleges should exclusively arrange projects concerning local operas in their teaching program and bring local operas into vocal music teaching system. In colleges' vocal music teaching, they should not only emphasize on western vocal music singing style or artificially compare advantages and disadvantages of Chinese and western singing style. They should emphasize on Chinese and western singing styles learning from and connecting with each other. If we can emphasize on importance of learning local operas in institutions' teaching system level, more people can be motivated to have interest in local operas, thus inheriting and carrying forward local operas.

Moreover, as stated, it is cultural symbiosis society now. Lots of foreign culture constantly swarms into China and Chinese national culture needs to go abroad and show its elegant demeanour on international stage. In order to achieve this, firstly, national culture should win enough emphasis domestically. At present, when music majors in ordinary colleges or music colleges conduct vocal music teaching, they often take singing style from Italy and other western countries as instructional template. Namely, domestic vocal music teaching has absorbed international cultural elements and it is lack of drawing national culture essence.

### III. THE NEED TO SUPPLEMENT VOCAL MUSIC TEACHING METHOD

At present, it can be said that vocal music teaching is a basic course in music major of ordinary colleges or music colleges. Their teaching objective is to help students master perfect vocal music vocal skills and basic knowledge of music theory. Therefore, it is extremely important to ensure scientificity and effectiveness of teaching materials and teaching content of vocal music teaching. Teaching content and teaching method should be adjusted and improved according to vocal music teaching's need. We should teach students in accordance of their aptitude and their quality and use teaching material reasonably to ensure teaching effect.

However, it is obvious that problems of inefficiency in teaching, and students' unclear articulation in singing, skillfulness, lack of emotion and singing without performance exist in current vocal music teaching. By importing local operas into vocal music teaching, apart from solving above

problems, we can also greatly improve teaching level and students' singing ability. Supplement of local operas to vocal music teaching method is mainly displayed in the following several aspects.

Firstly, local operas emphasize more on clear articulation and bead-like enunciation, namely fullness of articulation. As to this point, it is similar to articulation requirement of vocal music singing skill. In vocal music teaching process, some students, especially students from south are limited by their accent and often articulate in an unclear way. Encountering this situation, we can make students experience and feel local operas' features in vocalization skills of enunciation and articulation by themselves through letting them appreciate classic aria of local operas.

Secondly, apart from emphasis on enunciation and articulation, local operas also emphasize on application and control of tune, namely they stress embellished tunes or using tunes according to understanding. As stated above, based on different categories and schools, Chinese local operas have different singing tunes. When performing these singing tunes, opera performing artists usually have distinct personal features and further process singing tunes artistically. For example, add trill, appoggiatura, glide and other types of embellished elements in singing. However, these embellished tunes can not be accurately recorded by score and they are manifestation of opera performer's personal singing skills. It can be said that they represent features of performers themselves and their school from mouth to mouth and from generation to generation.

Students with good and bad qualities intermingle in current colleges' music major. Some students even fail to completely master basic skills and music theory knowledge of vocal music. Then, it will be difficult for them to conduct embellishment on melody when singing, let alone make a breakthrough in personal singing style. Aiming at this fact, we can selectively let students appreciate aria of some local operas in teaching to make them feel singing features of embellished tunes in local operas and make them gradually know about and master the law of embellished tunes on the basis of mastering sturdy basic skill. Thus, making students gradually master "embellished tunes" skills of vocal music singing in the process of deepening study.

Moreover, at present, music major in colleges or music college often emphasizes more on enunciation, articulation, breath and other singing skills in the process of vocal music teaching while there is little training of performing or expressive force on stage. When singing on a stage, many students often appear too dull and even look tensely at a loss. Although some students can sing in a free and relaxed way, they are bad at communicate with audience under the stage through eyes. Literally we can understand that the so-called "singing" includes "performing" and "singing", two parts in total. Therefore, vocal music teaching should not only emphasize on skills of "singing", but also emphasize on training of "performing".

In this aspect, local operas emphasizing on five stage performance skills of "hand, eye, figure, gait and style" are relatively excellent. Apart from learning and studying singing tunes, opera performers need to conduct painstaking training of

eye contact, figure, gait and so on. Opera performers convey happy, angry, worried, sad and frightened emotions to audience through eye contact to express rich psychological activities and they establish open and clear, dignified and calm, and strong and powerful images through posture and gait. It is exactly due to local operas' mature and complete stage performance system that opera performers can express rich implication and artistic conception even without the help of too many scenes and stage properties. Therefore, in vocal music course's teaching process, we can properly let students practice local operas' "hand, eye, figure, gait and style" to relieve students' tense emotions and make them imitate stage manifestation mode of local operas to practice "performing" training. Finally, make students achieve perfect combination of singing and performing and achieve real "singing".

#### IV. THE NEED TO COMBINE REGIONAL CULTURE AND MUSIC EDUCATION OF LOCAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

As we all know, China is a multinational country with vast territory, each region and every nation have their own culture with distinct features. It is exactly the unique elegant demeanour of nation and region bringing up local operas of various varieties and different styles. These local operas' singing tunes have their own features and advantages. For example, real, active, joyous and beautiful Huangmei opera is famous for its lively melody and has rich and moving expressive force; Colloquial Yu opera has clear articulation, strong beat, bold melody and extremely strong emotional tension; Gentle, beautiful, melodious and elegant Shaoxing opera has unique southern beauty with deeply moving elegance and gracefulness.

As stated above, there are local operas with local cultural features in different regions. Vice versa, we can know something about regional culture through local operas. Artistic value contained in local operas not only belongs to spiritual wealth of the whole Chinese nation, but also an important part of regional culture due to its own distinctive regionalism. Relevant data of statistics shows that there are about 360 kinds of local operas in current China. These local operas are rooted in various aspects of regional social life. Through development over the years, they and regional culture are like flesh and blood and are closely bound up. Therefore, it can be said that local operas are closely related to local residents' daily life, representing their aesthetic need and winning their recognition and acceptance more easily.

Since local operas have mutual intelligibility with local residents' artistic appreciation of beauty, then when compiling vocal music books, local ordinary colleges' music major or music college can use local materials and properly absorb and use local operas' singing tune, figure, eye contact, gait and other elements. They can also set up vocal music courses with regional cultural features through appreciating and learning classic aria in local operas. Thus, they can help local students learn vocal music course more effectively and carry forward regional culture at the same time. It can be said killing two birds with one stone.

Different geographical environment, national culture and historical environment create regional culture with different

characteristics. With time going on, regional culture becomes more and more solid. Even when facing impact of constant deepening of globalization and rapid urbanization, it can still hold its own distinct features. However, regional culture faces the danger of eroding of mainstream culture and being forgotten by newly-born generation. For example, teenagers in it feel less and less unique charm of regional culture and they know very little about local folk-custom tradition, mythology legend, historical remains and so on. Chinese culture is broad and profound and colorful and varied regional culture is an indivisible part of it. To some extent, regional culture influences local value guiding and is indirectly connected with social, cultural and economic construction. Since regional culture has such important significance and value, we must continue and inherit it. We have to let teenagers realize existence of regional culture, feel importance of regional culture and actively undertake the great responsibility of inheriting regional culture.

Under this circumstance, as an important part of regional culture, local operas can be the bridge between regional culture and college education to deepen teenagers' understanding of regional culture. Local colleges usually represent local academic level of culture and are culture spokesmen of a city or a region. Therefore, local colleges can not only cultivate and deliver talents in the locality, but also interact in a good way with regional culture. During this process, as long as we properly utilize, local operas will play an important role which can not be neglected.

#### V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, importing local operas into vocal music teaching can satisfy the need of carrying forward and inheriting traditional national music and supplement need of vocal music teaching method and need of combination of regional culture and local college music education. Specifically speaking, local opera is not only the miracle and treasure of national culture, but also an important part of regional culture. Importing and using local opera in the process of vocal music teaching can cope with impact of foreign culture and new culture in cultural symbiosis society and ensure inheritance of traditional national culture in higher education level. In addition, it can make students feel and realize unique charm of regional culture and make regional culture have enough ability to resist eroding of mainstream culture to be inherited from generation to generation. Apart from this, local opera's singing skills and stage performing skills of "hand, eye, figure, gait and style" have similarities with vocal music singing. At present, there are many problems in vocal music teaching, which can be solved by referring to local opera's singing skills.

In short, importing local operas into vocal music teaching can not only satisfy need of music education, but also satisfy need of cultural inheritance. Thus, the necessity and importance of it can not be neglected.

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