

Application of Etude in Vocal Music Teaching

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Abstract. Etude plays an important role in vocal music teaching. It is helpful to solve articulation problem of learners, and also can help teaching of various types of music and raise learners' initiative. Nevertheless, etude is always ignored in vocal music teaching practice. To bring the function of etude into full play, it is necessary to make a comprehensive analysis of it. This paper is intended to analyze the main function of etude on vocal music teaching on the basis of introduction to vocal etude teaching, and put forward the specific methods of applying etude in vocal music teaching.

Introduction

With the constant development of research on vocal music teaching in China in recent years, researchers of this field have accumulated a lot of teaching theories and practice methods, and made remarkable achievements. According to related literatures and my own teaching practice experience, it is found that Chinese researchers have got somewhere in researching vocal music. However, few researches have been made on how to apply etude in practical vocal music teaching. Therefore, it is necessary to study etude that is widely applied in practical vocal music teaching, to promote vocal music teaching to further develop.

Overview of Vocal Etude Teaching

Vocal etude plays an extremely important role in vocal music teaching. Learners can completely grasp register and related skills and become capable of performing vocal music with vowel only after having had systematic training. On this basis, learners also must master vocal performance based on the combination of letter sound. Those who lack patience and attempt to spend a little time in learning will never grow into a singing artist. This shows how important vocal etude is in vocal music teaching. In recent years, some vocal music educators thought that vocal etude didn't make a big difference, except that it just wasted the valuable time. In fact, however, good teaching effect can be made as long as vocal etude is applied in teaching in accordance of learners' actual situation. However, quite a number of teachers don't realize the significance of vocal etude in vocal music teaching. Of course, learners themselves also don't correctly recognize the role of vocal etude, but only regard it as one of the means of opening voice. For vocal music learners, vocal etude can largely reflect their foundation, and the level of vocal etude will decide their singing ability in future. Therefore, vocal etude is helpful for learners to develop accurate articulation. Although different music researchers hold different viewpoints on musicality and practice, they all take vocal music training is of great importance. Thus, vocal music educators should give proper guidance to learners, so as to help them realize the value and importance of vocal etude.

Role of Vocal Etude in Vocal Music Teaching

Vocal etudes are compiled according to the rules of articulation of singing and learners' learning patterns. It conforms to learners' habit, and also can help adjust learners' singing skills and manner of

articulation. It plays an important role in vocal music teaching. Firstly, it is helpful to consolidate learners' singing skills and standardize learners' singing method. The voice of artistic value cannot be achieved in an action. In stead, it can be realized through long-time practice and exploration. Generally speaking, voicing practice must will develop from being natural to being unnatural, and then to be natural again. Only in this way, an artistic voice expression ability can be formed. In vocal music teaching, voicing practice essentially is for warm-up for better performance, so it is of considerable practical application value. The etude for voicing practice is exactly the ideal teaching materials for voicing practice. For example, the Concone Vocal Etude focuses on practice of the medium register. In this etude, the main range is from unaccented octave c to one-line octave f. According to the characteristics of this range, different tones can be employed for practice, but attention should be paid to the fluency and coherence of vocal music melody. Secondly, it is helpful to develop learners' potential and skills of singing. If vocal music teaching is a building, voicing practice can be said to be the foundation of the building, and singing skills are the characteristics of the building. in classroom vocal music teaching, most teachers and learners both attach importance to technical training, but ignore overall harmonization. Thus, they often will select primary scale model for practice. Such type of etude doesn't contain much technical content, and its musical conception is also not comprehensive, which is adverse to improving singing ability and raising learners' ability of control. In view of this, it is far enough to adopt simple vocal etude for voicing practice. Besides, harmonization practice is also required. Only in this way, learners' singing ability can be greatly improved. High-level vocal etude should be composed via daily practice, for which details and standardization should be emphasized, to improve learners' singing ability and lay a solid foundation. Thirdly, it can help learners to develop a right vocal music viewpoint, and then develop a distinct singing style. A good voicing practice is based on an accurate voice viewpoint. Etude can push learners to pay attention to their voicing status and methods, and make proper adjustment and analysis, so as to form a good vocal music viewpoint and distinct singing style. For example, the Verse for Concert Vocal Practicing gathers well-known etudes from countries all over the world, in which there are proper etudes for practicing rhythmic features, breath application and descant practicing. It is useful and helpful for learners to do progressive and systematic vocal music learning, and is of great significance to the formation of vocal music viewpoint and singing style of learners.

Specific Methods of Applying Vocal Etude in Vocal Music Teaching

Teaching Step by Step

Usually, learners are required to learn simple musical scale and pitch interval, and practice every pitch in voicing practice, so as to tell the difference among notes based on their physical sensations and psychological insight. In this way, they can identify the balance point among pitches and between pitch and breath. There are many subcategory etudes for third, fifth, or twelfth scales and pitch intervals. It seems to be simple, but actually is hard. For example, learners are usually required to be able to sing immediately after inspiration, start accurately as far as possible, ensure coherence of pitches, rational volume, and not to place all pressure on the muscoli laryngis, keep breath balance, and retain the position of downward voice. Scale exercise from above down is to make comprehensive exercise of voicing. In this way, learners are easy to remain in a relaxed state psychologically. For beginners, the most ideal method is humming, with mouth closed or opened (which will not affect the timbre). In the natural state of crooning, people's voice can rise along the rear pharynxwall through the opened cavum pharyngis. Humming is required for every beginner, which is helpful for voice opening, and helps singers to relax their jaw, neck and mandibular joint. Singers can develop deep breath support via humming, produce acoustic resonance via the resonance chamber, and develop a good habit through trainings, to become able to produce mellow voice once opening mouth.

In the process of voicing practice, vowel training is also greatly important. All vowels will be applied in voicing practice process. How to apply vowels should be determined by teachers according

to the actual situation of learners. Unification of registers is another key to voicing practice. For learners who frequently apply falsetto can start from low register, and try their best to sing the low registers with true voice. As pitch rises, falsetto is gradually applied, and the counter force of breath becomes larger and larger. Thus, the cavity should be opened gradually to make voice stand up. Meanwhile, excellent learners are suggested to start from a relatively high register downwards, to transform from falsetto to mixed voices. In this case, the downward pitches should be produced via the uvula at the upper apertures, to ensure that the sound position will not drop. High attention should be paid to the points of sound changing that are perceptible, so that the support force of breath can be enhanced. The singing conduit should be kept unblocked as far as possible, and it is required to sing via sorption. The process of realizing the unity of registers is complicated and requires much practice. To this end, constant exercise and practices must be done, so as to obtain a good effect. The singing of all kinds of etudes, deep breath is required for support, which is another key point of voicing practice. I think vocal music practice is a scientific and standard process of muscular practice, and a particular instrument created by human; if learners act with undue haste, the functions of the instrument cannot be played, but also the instrument may be damaged.

Rationally Selecting and Applying Vocal Etude Teaching Materials

In the process of vocal etude education, an important task is to select and apply proper vocal etude teaching materials. In present classroom vocal music teaching, the vocal etudes usually include two types. The first type is easy and simple, and also of high randomness. Besides, most vocal etudes are short. This type of etudes are mainly for practicing moving up and down of semitone, and has accompany of fixed form. Such type is usually selected and used according to learners' articulation. In practical teaching process, this type of etudes are widely applied. The second type is relatively standard, is suitable for practicing various vocal trainings, and have proper piano accompaniment. For such type of etudes, not only vowel but also lyric can be employed for practice. It is of great importance to select proper vocal etude teaching materials. Teachers must have definite and rigorous teaching ideas, to solve the problems in practice well, and raise the overall quality of etude teaching. Vocal music educators, for selecting vocal etude teaching materials, should take account of learners' actual situation and follow the teaching objectives. Meanwhile, educators also should refer to etudes selected by experienced teachers to enrich their own vocal etude system. In other words, educators should select etude teaching materials according to learners' actual situation, so as to help learners in scale, pitch range, coloratura and sound intensity exercises from easy to difficult. In the process of applying etude teaching materials in teaching, attention should be paid to both articulation and language, so as to combine articulation and music properly. Furthermore, the actual situation of school running and learners also should be taken into consideration.

Applying Vocal Etude in Voicing Practice Teaching

It is universally recognized in the music circle that every one can learn to sing as long as he knows how to breathe. This implies that breathing is of great importance in vocal music singing. As to breathing, breath must be kept stable. Meanwhile, deep inspiration must be made to ensure the breath remains stable. Meanwhile, the force of controlling breath also should be kept stable throughout the whole process of voicing. Only in this way, a good singing ability can be developed. Legato etudes are helpful for learners to produce coherent and beautiful sound, to perform the melody well. Etudes combining legato and staccato is helpful for practice of combining points and spheres, making the sound coherent, and for learners to keep stable breath.

Individualized Teaching

For human, a special instrument, although the difference in physical structure of human is relatively small, the timbre and voice part vary from individual to individual due to difference in gender, vocal cords and resonance chamber. For example, there are tenor, soprano, baritone, mezzo-soprano, bass and alto. Soprano also can be classified into lyric, coloratura, and opera, while tenor can be classified into opera and lyric. Individualized teaching is the basic requirement in vocal music teaching. For

learners, every one has their own timbre features and rational range. Thus, vocal music training should be based on their part features. Presently, most vocal etude teaching materials in China are mainly for part training. For example, the Siebel and the Spiegel Etudes can be included into the list of teaching reference books, and even put into use.

Conclusion

In brief, in the whole vocal music teaching process, vocal etudes can be said to be one of the parts, and an important vocal music training mode. Scientific and rational application of vocal etudes in teaching is helpful to improve learners' singing skills and comprehensive singing ability. Music teachers should make a comprehensive summarization and study if they intend to introduce any new vocal etude into classroom teaching, and fully absorb the essence of traditional vocal music teaching in China and the achievements of vocal music development all over the world, to form a real diversified teaching idea, and maximize vocal music teaching efficiency.

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