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Approaches for Vocal Music Teachers to Guide Students to Form Their Own Singing Styles

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Abstract

In this paper, the author mainly proposed the issue of laying particular emphasis on technique and neglecting characteristic in the present teaching of singing against the phenomenon of “a thousand pieces of the same tune” existing in the field of vocal music performance at present. The author expected to give rise to everyone’s attention by virtue of this paper, so as to put the cultivation of students’ unique singing style as an important position, and propose approaches used to guide students to form their own singing styles.

Key words: Singing style; Voice condition; Character & temperament; Sing technique; Territorial advantage

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INTRODUCTION

At present, the phenomenon of “a thousand pieces of the same tune” has already become an issue that cannot be neglected in the field of vocal music performance. With the continuous improvement of living standards, students’ physical qualifications and learning conditions are better and better. At the same time, singing techniques also become better and better accordingly. However, we often sigh with emotion the phenomenon: there are often good voices, but it seldom has really touched voice. The reason

is that everyone sings in the same tune. As a result, singers lose passion. Of course, it is also impossible for listeners to have resonance. Singing is an art of auditory sense. It is impossible for voice without character to stimulate our auditory nerves. Then, it becomes particularly important for approaches used by vocal music teachers to guide students to form their unique singing styles. Everyone has respective characters, including the structure of vocal cords, somatic function, tone, temperament and character. These factors decide the following: It must be the fact that a thing with a certain style fits you and that some styles are unfit for you. Then, we can judge a singer’s characteristics mainly from the following aspects.

1. VOICE CONDITIONS

A singer’s inborn somatic function and structure of vocal cords decide his sound volume, voice register, tone and tone quality. This cannot be changed. For instance, some people were born with large thoracic cavity and adequate breath. On the contrary, some people were born with small thoracic cavity and relatively weak breath. Certainly, the vital capacity can be increased to some extent through certain physical exercises. Generally speaking, however, those people still have small thoracic cavities. Such characteristics decide that those people with smaller sound volume cannot sing songs full of power and grandeur. Or, it is impossible to present the effects of these songs. Moreover, audiences will be also let to feel laborious. On the contrary, the audiences will think that the singers are of limited capacity. It is really a thankless task.

Voice register is also a factor deciding voice conditions. A person with wide voice register absolutely will have stronger singing expression than a person with narrow voice register. Through scientific training, the voice register can be broadened to some extent. However, it can be only broadened to a limited range. A person with long and wide vocal cords can not reach the same

performance effect when compared with a person with short and narrow vocal cords. Therefore, some people still cannot sing high E even through how many exercises. This has scientific basis. Many students thought that they must sing this high E, so as to demonstrate their capacity. Therefore, they practiced high pitch every day by overlooking their conditions. As a result, the effect was by no means good even through they reluctantly sang this high pitch. More seriously, they even damaged their vocal cords. At last, the loss outweighs the gain. Above all, they wasted time, and overlooked the importance of exploring for their advantages. At last, they compared with their advantages with their disadvantages. Undoubtedly, this is a thankless task.

At last, tone and tone quality are also crucial factors deciding a person's singing style. Tone is an important factor deciding whether you are soprano or mezzo-soprano or whether you are tenor or baritone. Some people have bright tone; while some people have simple and honest tone. Some people have sweet tone; while some people have tough tone. Some people have pure tone; while some people have husky tone. All these factors are decided by inborn conditions of vocal cords. For example, a person with thin vocal cords has relatively flexible voice, good at some brisk coloratura songs with large register fluctuation. However, a person with thick vocal cords is just opposite, suitable for some songs with moderate tempo and continuous breath. Therefore, the former should make great efforts in veracity and mood expression of songs, letting people get a refreshing sense. However, the latter should make great efforts in the order of priority and mood expression of songs, so as to express incisively and vividly emotions of songs. Additionally, tone will also vary with the change in age. Therefore, we should also pay attention to such change, so as to make the corresponding adjustment. For instance, Mr. Domingo, a famous tenor singer, began to select some baritone songs with the increase in age. In the opera, he began to act as some baritone roles. This is also adjustment made by him upon his correct understanding of his characteristics. At the same time, we also need to learn about and use for reference to this point.

2. CHARACTER & TEMPERAMENT

This is decided by a person's appearance and character. Singing is an aesthetic process and an art of beauty. Therefore, it must be a perfectly unified thing from singer to the song. In the singing process, human body is actually served as an instrument serving the performance of a song. Therefore, the person and the song should be consistent and integrated. If you are elegant and classical in appearance and restraining and gentle in character, then, it is relatively difficult for you to sing a bright song. Certainly, it is another pair of shoes in the training process. For thorough performance, however, the effect cannot

reach the best. However, it will be artificial if a careless person is asked to sing a euphemistic song. In a word, it is easy for audiences to leap out of the performance, if a person's temperament is of a great contrast to the style of a song. It is not an integrated and unified piece of work.

It's worth noting that a person's character and temperament will change to some extent in different stages as time goes on. Therefore, we should have a correct understanding of our temperament characteristics and choose appropriate songs. A good singer will make proper adjustment to his style according to his temperament in different stages. For instance, Peng Liyuan gave incisive and vivid expression to lively and nifty characters of Xiao Qin in *Clear Water and Blue Sky* when she was in the twenties. With the increase in age, she gave expression to magnificence of those songs like *Country and Waving Bonfire*. In my opinion, she must have no such dignity and details, if she sings *Country* in her twenties. Therefore, we should consider this issue while selecting songs. Some people still said the following words even through they have sung many things: I sang very well a song in the college. Now, I have more experiences. I certainly will sing better. Actually, this should be judged by actual conditions. Maybe, your overall temperament has already been changed at present. On the contrary, you are unfit for that song.

3. SINGING CAPACITY

Singing capacity includes your capacity of finishing techniques of songs and capacity of aesthetic processing of songs. The technical capacity is obtained through postnatal training. This includes your capacity of controlling breath, applying resonance chamber, stabilizing the singing position, and pronunciation. Singing capacity undoubtedly is an important basis for the selection of songs. However, we should not blindly select too difficult songs no matter in daily practice or in a competition. Some students thought that they could make faster progress by practicing too difficult songs. Actually, this depends on actual conditions. We should also select according to our sound conditions. For instance, your throat is relatively tight at present, and it is difficult for high pitch. As a result, you should not always practice pitch songs. Instead, you should choose some stable songs in the alto voice area, so as to gradually relax and stabilize your throat. You can get your register expanded after getting a stable and relaxed throat. Or, you can only hold on firmly despite extreme adversity with your vocal cords. Consequently, your throat becomes tighter and tighter, and your breath becomes higher and higher. Therefore, it is not always true that you will make greater progress by singing more difficult songs. We must make selective choice according to our conditions. Certainly, it fails to reach the training effect by selecting too simple songs. For example, some sopranos thought that high pitch would naturally become better by

more practices of moderate and low pitch. This is also incorrect, because the high pitch function of vocal cords is not basically used in ordinary times. The state of positive excitement and flexibility can be reached by continuous training. High pitch will not be achieved without training. This is a process from quantitative change to qualitative change. Therefore, it is necessary for scientific training.

Moreover, the capacity of song processing is also included. We often judged someone as a good singer. Actually, we meant his capacity of song processing. The capacity of song processing is correlated with your cultural background, knowledge structure, social experience, emotional experience and other factors. Therefore, each person should have his own understanding and expression of a song instead of blindly imitating masters or processing according to teachers' techniques. It is more important for teachers to recognize this issue, so as to daringly encourage students to process songs according to their own understandings and gradually cultivate students' capacity of song processing.

4. TERRITORIAL ADVANTAGES

Actually, our birth and growth environments have a great effect on our character and temperament. Northern people are rough, bold and unconstrained; while southern people are gentle, fine and smooth. These are our characteristics. These characteristics will become advantages, if we know how to ingeniously apply them. On the contrary, it is just the opposite of what we wish. Besides, regional languages are also advantages. Many people sing folk songs in their hometowns with high proficiency. The most typical examples are minority singers who have lingering charms by singing songs of their nations. It always lacks lingering charm by letting a Han person sing Tibetan songs. Therefore, this is also a good method used to choose songs. Our singing performance will be wonderful by mastering our regional advantages.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, style is consciously found and explored for by us. At the same time, it is also formed by conscious training. At first, we should let students realize the importance of selecting songs according to their characteristics. Secondly, we should allow students to learn about how to objectively inspect and understand them, so as to form habits, transfer characteristics into advantages and then realize perfect combination of songs with singers. This is also an issue that it is the most difficult to be solved. In most cases, students are we became subjective in the process of learning and teaching. We often sang fresh songs. As a result, everyone sings Maira Variations and Beautiful Homeland. At last, it becomes "a thousand pieces of the same tune". Therefore, teachers should pay much attention to students' personalities and characteristics in the teaching process, help them to have a correct understanding of themselves, give correct guidance, maximize their advantages, and form their unique singing styles.

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