

ISSUES IN COMPREHENSIVE CHINESE AND WESTERN VOCAL TEACHER TRAINING

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Abstract. The article deals with the issues in comprehensive vocal teacher training utilizing the traditional Chinese and Western vocal techniques. Chinese vocal music is closely linked with the aspect of nation and ethnicity; it is intertwined with the Chinese language, and can be viewed as both art and science. The synergy of the traditional ethnic and Western vocal teaching methods helps to develop a vocal professional's singing competence.

Keywords: vocal, folk vocal, Western vocal, teacher training.

ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЕ КИТАЙСКИХ И ЗАПАДНЫХ ВОКАЛЬНЫХ МЕТОДИК В ПОДГОТОВКЕ ПЕДАГОГОВ-ВОКАЛИСТОВ

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Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются вопросы комплексной подготовки учителей вокала с использованием традиционных китайских и западных вокальных методик. Китайская вокальная музыка тесно связана с этнической принадлежностью, с китайским языком и может рассматриваться как искусство и как наука. Синергия традиционных китайских и западных методов обучения вокалу способствует формированию компетентного педагога по вокалу.

Ключевые слова: вокал, народный вокал, западный вокал, педагог по вокалу.

For almost a century, tertiary music education in China has been constantly exploring its unique path to synergy of world-best achievement and practices in music education with traditional Chinese culture and locally specific techniques and values. Practice has proved that it is not enough to master the vocal skills of ethnic singing simply through the study of traditional music as well to master classical vocal as it is. It is important to create synergy of the traditional ethnic and Western vocal singing to comprehensively develop a vocal professional's signing competence.

Chinese national singing is rooted in the fertile soil of traditional Chinese music; therefore it has a strong national style. The quality of being national and traditional is the outstanding feature of Chinese national singing, and it also explains the survival and flourishing of Chinese national singing. The concept "folk" or "ethnic" means that this music is deeply rooted in the Chinese national culture and conforms to the aesthetic requirements of the Chinese people. The "national" character of Chinese vocal music

implies that it reflects the emotional aspects of Chinese national singing. Music is an emotional art, and this emotion should be vividly expressed via performance. At the same time, Chinese people are simple, kind-hearted and hard-working, so the traditional music goes in line with these characteristics.

Secondly, the specifics of Chinese vocal music is reflected in the diversity of Chinese national singing styles. As Gan Xiaofen claims, “Middle China is a multi-ethnic country, and different ethnic groups have different music styles. For example, Xinjiang folk songs are passionate and unrestrained, Mongolian folk songs are long and slow, Miao folk songs are beautiful and moving, Tibetan folk songs are bright and loud” [2].

Another specific feature of Chinese vocal singing is its connection to the language. The Chinese national singing method is based on the Chinese language. The Chinese language includes three elements: sound, rhyme and tone, namely initial consonants, finals and four tones. So, the articulation aspect of current Chinese national singing is strongly connected with the tonal and syllabic aspect of the language. In the articulation process of Chinese national singing, we often emphasize the spout of the prefix and the long vowel of the character. The rhyme at the end of the word is particularly important, and the characteristics of using the word to express the tone and the tone of the word are preserved in singing.

Charm, in its turn, is the essence of Chinese national singing, the soul of the nation. Without charm, there would be no Chinese national singing. It is based on the melody, rhythm, harmony, structure, etc. of the vocal work performed by the singer. There is an intriguing special style and charm in the singing. First, it uses various decorative embellishment techniques, singing techniques that help to create intensity and pattern, conversion of speed, slight rise and fall of pitch, etc., all these make the singing tune fall and fly. The ups and downs help to achieve a deeply touching effect.

The performance procedures in Chinese opera are the essence that have been continuously summarized and accumulated by artists of all generations. The ethnic singing method draws on elements that are conducive to singing performance in the opera performance program, forming the concept of “creating the spirit with form” [2].

Some researchers claim, that in Western music, “the combination of elegance and vulgarity has become increasingly blurred with the maturity of composition technology theory” [1]. The author explains, that Western music first seemed very unnatural and alien to the Chinese ear. In the 27th year of Kangxi Emperor’s reign (17th century), a French missionary traveled thousands of miles to China and brought many things. Among them was a clavichord that he showed to the Emperor. After the performance, Kangxi said that it did not match the Chinese rhythm, so the Western music had to take a break before returning to China again.

Apart from the ethnicity, language reference and charm, Chinese national singing method has the characteristics of “scientific” and “fashionable”. Chinese national singing

inherits the essence of traditional Chinese music and scientifically draws on Western vocal method, thus forming a singing method that combines Chinese and Western styles.

“Scientific nature” means that vocal music singing must follow the inherent laws of vocal music art, because only things that conform to the rules are correct and scientific. “Fashionable” means that vocal singing must adapt to the development of the times, exhibiting trends and constantly innovating to keep up with the development of vocal art.

China’s national vocal music teaching system has been around since the 1950s. Since its gradual formation in the late 1990s, educators engaged in Chinese national singing have continuously summarized and innovated gradually developing scientific and fashionable national singing path. At that time, Western vocal music education had entered the Chinese music education classroom, and the collision and integration of ideas between Chinese and Western cultures broke out, especially during the reform and opening up. Since then, foreign vocal music experts have come to China to give lectures more and more frequently, which has broadened the horizons for the development of Chinese national singing methods.

Far-sighted educators have gradually realized that Chinese national singing must scientifically learn from Western vocal methods on the basis of inheriting the essence of tradition, and find a vocal development path suitable for their own nation. In the long-term exploration, a series of new professional terms have emerged in Chinese national singing methods, such as 深呼吸 “deep breathing”, 高位置 “high position”, 元音咬字 “vowel enunciation”, U 通道 “U channel”, 焦点集中 “focus”, 混合声 “mixed voice”, 歌唱共鸣 “Singing Resonance”, etc. These are all manifestations of the increasingly scientific and fashionable Chinese national singing method [2].

All the specific features mentioned above must be considered in the process of vocal teacher training in China. Vocal teachers are participants, organizers and performers of vocal education in colleges. Their professional quality and teaching ability directly determine the quality of vocal education in colleges.

In order to improve the professional quality and teaching ability of vocal teachers, colleges should regularly organize related training activities; teachers’ professional qualities should be incorporated into important content such as teacher evaluation and promotion; colleges need to encourage vocal teachers explore vocal teaching experience and learn from each other; regularly invite well-known vocal teachers from music colleges to teach at the school to promote the improvement of their teaching ability; provide vocal teachers with as many vocal teaching and research opportunities as possible.

In teaching practice, vocal teachers can increase the proportion of national vocal works according to the content of the lessons. Based on the current small number of national vocal works in most vocal textbooks, vocal teachers should either develop school-based textbooks of national vocal works under the leadership of the school, or collect and organize national vocal works as teaching courseware or teaching cases. It should be

emphasized that when teaching vocal works to students, vocal teachers must not only teach the singing skills of the works, but also their cultural implications.

The holistic approach to vocal training integrates knowledge, skills and attitudes at personal, professional, and cultural levels. It implies the unity of theory and practice, improving knowledge and skills, broadening of the repertoire and mastery of new techniques, improving teaching skills and methodology, improving performance skills, as well as sustainable development of emotions, self-reflection, attitude, and value system.

To maintain the unity and comprehensive character of vocal teacher training, it is necessary to consider the following principles: unity of theory and practice; combining essentials with demonstration; combining Chinese and Western music and techniques; constant engagement and positive reinforcement; broadening repertoires; combination of classroom and stage performance; multi-faceted skills development; improving singing skills and emotional expression.

So, we can conclude that China's national vocal music art has a long history and rich heritage. It is a wonderful flower growing in the fertile field of Chinese national culture. Chinese national singing styles are diverse and have strong national colors, which represent the cultural characteristics of the nation. It comes from life, reflects the sincere and simple feelings of the Chinese people, and is accepted by hundreds of millions of people.

To organize effective vocal teacher training, we need to consider general didactics principles as well as private foundations of vocal teaching. Chinese vocal music is closely linked with the aspect of nation and ethnicity, it has a range of specific characteristics due to the connection to the Chinese language, its phonetics and word structure. There is also a clear representation of vocal teaching as art and as science. Science refers to scientific pedagogical approach to teaching with regard of physical, psychological and educational aspects of education, while artistic dimension comprises the power of expression and the ability of a vocalist adapt to contemporary changes in the sphere of the vocal art.

The synergy of the traditional ethnic and Western vocal teaching methods and practice will help to comprehensively develop a vocal professional's singing competence and contribute to the sustainable development of vocal education in China.

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