Creating Soprano Practicing Guidebook for Teaching for First-year Bachelor Students at Shandong University Arts, Shandong, the People's Republic of China

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Abstract

The purpose of this study are: 1. to study the soprano singing technique. 2.To create a soprano practicing guidebook for teaching.3.To experiment with teaching by using the soprano practicing guidebook.4.To evaluate the effectiveness of teaching by using the soprano practicing guidebook.

This study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. In the qualitative study, experts were interviewed and the repertoire suitable for freshman sopranos was developed based on the experts' interviews with the aim of improving students' interest in learning vocal music and their singing ability. In the quantitative study, six students were selected from the freshman soprano students of Shandong University of the Arts to conduct the experiment through the evaluation of the Soprano Practice Guide Book by IOC. In conjunction with the Soprano Practice Guide Book, test scores were collected and compared through formative and summative tests to examine the learning effect of students using the Soprano Practice Guide Book.

The results show that the Soprano Practice Guide Book covers vocal history, singing techniques and other contents. In terms of content, the guidebook takes the soprano's learning characteristics into full consideration, making the exercise book more practical and operable. The results of the two tests show that "Soprano Practice Guide Book" is a good guide to improve the learning of soprano in Shandong University of the Arts. This "Soprano Practice Guide Book" is successful and can provide some reference experiences for other universities.

Keywords: Creating; Soprano Practicing Guidebook; Teaching; First-year Bachelor Students; Shandong University Arts; the People's Republic of China

* Received: February 15 2024; Revised: February 27 2024; Accepted: February 29 2024

Introduction

Bel canto singing, with its rich history spanning hundreds of years, has evolved into a comprehensive singing system, constituting a significant aspect of vocal music artistry. However, bel canto teaching in colleges and universities is relatively complicated. In the minds of many students, bel canto singing is a classic singing method that is difficult to master. The teaching method of bel canto vocal music is relatively simple and many teachers overemphasize the teaching of singing skills, which makes it difficult for students to obtain better emotional experience in music classes. Bel canto singing has entered China for nearly a hundred years, and has now become a part of the vocal music teaching system in colleges and universities, occupying an important position in the teaching of vocal music in colleges and universities. With the deepening of cultural integration, the popularity of Bel Canto singing is getting deeper and deeper, so it is more necessary to lay a good foundation when college students are enrolled. Because students are more like a blank salte at the beginning of their freshman year, it is easier to lead them on the right path. Therefore, this paper analyzes how to teach soprano in the first year of undergraduate, aiming to lay a solid foundation for promoting and popularizing Bel canto singing (Chen, 2023).

In recent years, the teaching of the Bel canto singing method has begun to heat up. The lack of relevant practice among domestic music teachers has led to some problems in our country's vocal music teaching.

First, under the influence of the traditional concept of exam-oriented education, some teachers ignore the expression of musical emotions and pay too much attention to the training of singing skills, which is a kind of practice. This will cause students in the process of learning Bel Canto to experience boredom, a loss of learning enthusiasm; Secondly, some teachers overemphasize students' bel canto singing skills, which will lead to some students' weak basic skills in music and poor comprehensive quality. As a result, although some students have good performance in Bel canto singing skills, they do not have enough professional knowledge and full emotions. In the performance process, the integration of emotions and songs is not enough, and it is difficult to have emotional resonance with the audience. As a result, their singing is purely for showing off and lacks the injection of artistic emotions. Some students even go out of tune and forget their lines because of emotional tension (Bai, 2022).

At present, there are some problems in the teaching of Bel Canto vocal music base course in our country. The lack of correct teaching of basic knowledge by Bel Canto vocal music teachers in colleges and universities leads to the serious lack of basic knowledge for students. Students do not have a thorough understanding of the essence of American vocal music, and most college students think that the sound is the characteristic of Bel Canto singing. Some students in bel canto singing performance is not skilled enough, singing in the process of pronunciation is too unfamiliar. Many students' understanding of the concept of Bel canto is not accurate enough, and it is difficult to understand and master bel canto correctly. At the same time, many students learn bel canto without proper breath support, resulting in poor articulation. At the same time, many colleges and universities also have many problems in the teaching of singing skills, such as not singing in a high position, and students can not properly adjust their own breath according to the characteristics of the actual work and singing requirements, it is difficult to obtain the ideal singing effect (Guan, 2005).

Bel canto singing is a kind of singing which pursues beautiful sound, clear and precise technique, and occupies an important position in the music industry. As a technical school of vocal music, Bel canto singing emphasizes the resonance and clarity of the sound, as well as the accurate expression of the music. In Bel canto singing, the soprano part is one of the most eye-catching parts, with its wide range and high timbre, giving people a noble and bright feeling. Bel canto singing emphasizes the correct vocal skills, breathing control and articulation clear, through the correct breathing and vocal cord control to achieve the beautiful and full sound, so that the singer can make an infectious and expressive voice. At the same time, it also emphasizes the resonance of the sound, that is, the resonance of the sound in the cavity, in order to produce a richer timbre and the penetration of the sound, requiring the relaxation and control of the vocal cords, avoiding excessive force or tightening the vocal cords. In the teaching process, freshman sopranos will have fewer bad habits due to less training before, coupled with the teacher's correct guidance, will get unexpected results.

In the process of learning vocal music, especially in the foundation of the time, breath training is very important. In vocal music teaching, if only for the pursuit of singing power, the use of real voice singing for a long time will wear out the vocal cords and cause vocal cord lesions. But with breath control, our vocal cords can be protected to a certain extent. Especially in singing, we not only need the support of the breath, but also need the control of the breath, if there is no support and control of the breath, the vocal position will not be unified, the timbre will not be beautiful, and the enunciation will not be rounded.

The role of breathing is very important in singing. When we breathe in, the air is against the diaphragm, and the two are against each other to create pressure, this pressure will continue to sing with each line, line by breath, and so on until the entire song is finished. Breathing runs through singing and directly affects the complete effect of the entire work, so we should pay attention to the following points in the process of singing (Wu, 2017).

First, the preparation of breathing before singing. Breathing too shallow or too full will cause some problems, shallow suction, the sound will be raised; If you suck too much, your voice will freeze. The singer can try to imagine opening his chest to breathe naturally, with a general feeling of enjoyment.

Second, the problem of air leakage in singing. In singing, singers will encounter breathing is not easy, in the faster and longer phrases, it is too late to inhale or cannot complete the phrase well, this is precise because many times there is no reasonable distribution of breath, at the beginning of the repertoire has spent a lot of breath. Therefore, when singing, you should exhale evenly at the beginning of the song and learn to sing in a controlled manner.

Third, the combination of sound and breath. In our singing, the sound and the breath are inseparable, we should let the sound on the breath, the breath supports the sound, and every word and sentence are like a babbling water, and it is sent out continuously. For practicing breath, the singer can practice with the aid of auxiliary tools. For example, the famous soprano Cabaye breath exercise, first lie flat on the ground, and then put about ten pounds of heavy iron tray placed in the upper abdomen. The singer first naturally inhales to lift the iron disk in the abdomen, feel the support of the diaphragm, and expand the waist and abdomen. The exhalation and inhalation of singing are relatively maintained and then slowly and evenly exhaled (Zou, 2004).

In sound teaching, the problem of "high notes have sound, low notes do not sing" often appears. Some singers ignore the training of middle and low notes and the establishment of singing state to pursue the high notes of "big, loud and sustained", thus causing problems such as disconnection between vocal areas and disunity of position state. In a soprano work, the middle and low notes are often the majority, which is the core of the whole piece, so singing the middle and low notes well is the key.

In the current vocal music teaching in Chinese colleges and universities, due to the deep influence of traditional vocal music teaching, they often copy the training methods of folk music and cultivate bel canto teaching skills, neglect to introduce the history and development background of Western music to students, ignore the cultural differences between the East and the West, and fail to distinguish the differences between Chinese folk music and Western bel canto vocal music in the aspects of enunciation, vocalization and use of atmosphere. It cannot make students fully understand Bel canto music, nor can it cultivate students' comprehensive ability of music and artistic quality. For example, under the influence of exam-oriented education and the "baton" of the college entrance examination, some students in the conservatory of music have low cultural quality, and the school only attaches importance to the cultivation and training of musical skills, resulting in the low comprehensive knowledge ability of students such as cultural knowledge, historical knowledge and social knowledge, unable to deeply understand the artistic conception of the lyrics of western Bel canto singing, and difficult to accurately grasp the rhythm of mode. So that when performing music works with bel canto singing, it is only satisfied with imitation and stays at the level of resemblance. Analyzing the reasons, the main reason is that teachers only pursue superficial and piecemeal skills when cultivating students, the theoretical foundation of teaching vocal music is weak, the depth of teaching materials is not enough, and they can not give students detailed professional guidance in sound, rhythm, melody and even pronunciation and words. The teaching of bel canto in colleges and universities only emphasizes its form, not its spirit, which is the direct result of ignoring the basic music theory education. It is inevitable that the students' vocal music quality is not high and their artistic appreciation is not strong.

The sustainable development of Bel Canto teaching in colleges and universities is not only limited by the system, the gap of students' basic skills and other factors, but also has many problems in the application and innovation of its teaching mode. Bel canto teachers in colleges and universities usually do not change the traditional singing methods of national vocal music, but directly "transplant" them into the process of bel canto singing. They only train students' singing ability, ignoring the cultivation of students' bel canto music accomplishment, such as exploring the connotation of songs, forming singing style, showing song skills, etc. At the same time, they have a vague understanding of the international trend of the prosperity and development of the modern music market, which is seriously inconsistent with the contemporary students' musical preferences and psychological identity. As a result, students receive bel canto singing education in a mechanical passive situation, with low interest and difficulty in capturing the inspiration of bel canto singing (Ji, 2009).

Research Objectives

1.To study the soprano singing technique.
2.To create a soprano practicing guidebook for teaching.
3.To experiment with teaching by using the soprano practicing guidebook.
4.To evaluate the effectiveness of teaching by using the soprano practicing guidebook.

Research Methodology

This study uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Adopted: Interview form; Observation form; Formative Test Form; Summative Test Form; Performance Test form.

Population

20 first-year soprano students from Shandong University of the Arts

Samples

Students voluntarily sign up for vocal class

Work process

1) Refer to relevant literature.

2) Interview key informants

Create an interview form and have key informants answer it. Conduct in-depth interviews with key informants to further master the methods of teaching and improving singing abilities, as well as how to develop a vocal practice plan.

3) Compilation and evaluation of the Vocal Practice Book.

Based on the interview opinions of researchers and participants, a vocal exercise book was prepared. After the assembly was completed, the three main informants were asked to evaluate it.

4) Conduct experiments

After passing the evaluation, it will be used for teaching. This book provides important knowledge for new freshmen soprano students to improve their music education, including understanding the historical development of vocal music, singing techniques, and some pieces, helping students master vocal performance and pass vocal exams.

5) Student formative testing and summative testing forms.

After studying the vocal exercise book, students are tested, and the test results are compared to test the effectiveness of the exercise book.

6) Summary exam

Students will conduct a summary test and compare it with previous test results.

7) Data analysis and summary

Through testing, analyzing data, and summarizing data.

Conceptual Framework

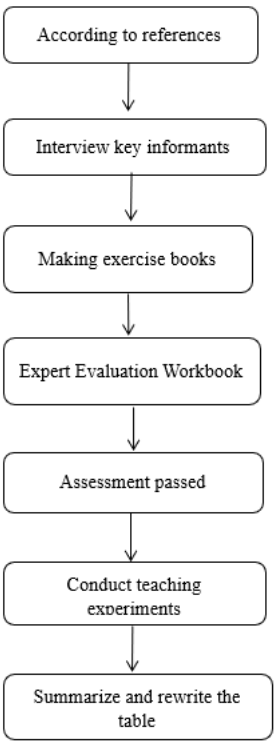


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Findings

1. To study the soprano singing technique.

The researcher reviewed literature on the concepts, practice techniques, and teaching of vocal music, and conducted interviews with three key informants. The researcher interviewed 12 key informants and provided a detailed analysis of the answers to these 12 questions. The vocal exercise book should include: the history of vocal music, vocal techniques, breathing resonance techniques, and representative songs. Each performance technique has corresponding performance exercises.

Vocal lessons are very important for first-year soprano students. They can master techniques faster when learning vocal music. The exercises designed for them should have been more concise and targeted, but unfortunately, there is no vocal exercise book specifically designed for first-year soprano students. Regarding the content of "Vocal Score", it is recommended to include three parts: 1. Overview of the History of Vocal Music: The Development of Vocal Music. 2. Vocal singing techniques: the position of the body, mouth, and vocal organs, breathing, chest voice area, middle voice area, head voice area, voice strength and breath pressure intensity, etc. 3. The main representative tracks of different music styles.

After interviewing three vocal experts, the researchers compiled several opinions on the creation of the Vocal Practice Book, which are summarized as follows:

1) The vocal exercise book should include an overview of the history of vocal music and its development. Vocal singing techniques: The main representative pieces of different music styles.

2) The vocal exercise book should be taught slowly, and students should complete the music processing and skill exercises for each song according to reasonable requirements.

3) Students should be tested after the course ends. The final exam results can be used to evaluate students.

4) According to expert opinions, you can choose songs as trial songs, such as "The Wandering Moon", "How I Cry", and "Although You Are Cold and Heartless".

2. To create a soprano practicing guidebook for teaching.

According to interviews with experts, the production of the Vocal Practice Book has been completed. The exercise book starts with the history of vocal music, explains basic techniques such as breath, and explains the singing techniques of vocal music, and matches corresponding exercises based on various vocal techniques. Based on the evaluation of three experts on the content of this exercise, and the evaluation of the International Olympic Committee on the Vocal Practice Book (0.78>0.50), it is indicated that this exercise book can be used for teaching practice, and it is believed that this exercise book has strong practicality for vocal teaching.

3. To experiment with teaching by using the soprano practicing guidebook.

By voluntary selection, 5 out of 20 first-year sopranos in the vocal major of Shandong Academy of Arts were selected for vocal teaching. Conduct teaching experiments using these 5 students as teaching samples, and conduct stage and final tests during this process. After each test, students' grades are compared to understand their learning situation and improve teaching methods.

4. To evaluate the effectiveness of teaching by using the soprano practicing.

Teaching evaluation. After two stage tests, the grades of all five students have been improving. In the first formative test, four students scored D (60-69) and one student scored C (70-79), with an average score of 63.8. The second formative test: Four students scored C (70-79 points), and one student scored B (80-85 points) with an average score of 73. Finally, through a summary test, the test results are as follows: A (>85) has 2 people, B (80-85) has 3 people, with an average score of 86.6. By comparing these data, the students' grades have greatly improved, indicating that this exercise book has a good guiding role in improving their vocal singing level.

Discussion

According to the research objectives, the discussion content is as follows:

1. To study the soprano singing technique.

Bel canto singing is a singing technique that pursues beautiful, clear, and precise techniques, and occupies an important position in the music industry. As a genre of vocal techniques, bel canto emphasizes resonance and clarity of sound, as well as accurate expression of music. In bel canto singing, the soprano voice is one of the most eye-catching parts, with a wide range and high-pitched tone, giving people a noble and bright feeling. The soprano section consists of the high, mid, and low sections, with the low section being an important component of the soprano section, referring to the lower range of the soprano

section, including the mid low and low sections. Training skills and stability in the low range is crucial for the development of the soprano voice. It not only increases the range of the soprano voice, but also provides a solid foundation for the production of the upper range (Ji, 2009).

Bel canto singing is a singing technique that focuses on beautiful voices, precise techniques, and rich expressive power. It is also known as classical singing or opera singing. It originated in Italian opera art in the 17th century and gradually developed into a widely used singing technique internationally, used for singing classical music, opera, and choral art forms. Bel canto singing emphasizes the correct technique of vocalization, breathing control, and clear articulation. Through correct breathing and vocal cord control, the beautiful and full voice is achieved, aiming to enable singers to produce infectious and expressive voices. At the same time, it also emphasizes the resonance of sound, that is, the resonance of sound in the cavity, to produce richer timbre and penetration of sound, requiring relaxation and control of the vocal cords, avoiding excessive force or tightening of the vocal cords (Chen, 2023).

2. To create a soprano practicing guidebook for teaching.

Compared with traditional Chinese ethnic vocal singing, bel canto singing is an "imported product". Bel canto originated in Europe and has long been an important vocal method in the world music industry. It not only enriches and enlivens stage art forms, but also a key focus of vocal teaching in universities. Therefore, in order to achieve the level of vocal teaching in Chinese universities in line with international standards, it is necessary to objectively analyze the problems existing in current vocal teaching, solve the factors that hinder the improvement of bel canto teaching level and restrict students from improving vocal skills, establish a system for singing, pronunciation, enunciation, and breath processing of bel canto singing that is consistent with the teaching outline and educational training objectives, and endow bel canto music with new vitality in secondary creation.

In the current vocal teaching in Chinese universities, due to the deep influence of traditional vocal teaching, traditional vocal training methods are often rigidly applied to cultivate teaching skills of bel canto, neglecting to introduce students to the history and development background of Western music, ignoring cultural differences between the East and the West, and failing to distinguish the differences between Chinese folk music and Western bel canto in terms of pronunciation, vocalization, and breath application, thus failing to enable students to fully understand bel canto music, It is also unable to cultivate students' comprehensive music abilities and artistic qualities. For example, under the influence of exam-oriented education and the "baton" of the college entrance examination, some music college students have low cultural quality, and schools only attach importance to cultivating and training music skills, resulting in low comprehensive knowledge and abilities of students in cultural knowledge, historical knowledge, social knowledge, etc. They cannot deeply understand the lyrics and artistic conception of Western bel canto singing, and it is difficult to accurately grasp the mode and rhythm. As a result, when performing music works with bel canto singing, they are only satisfied with imitation, Staying at the level of resemblance. The main reason for this is that teachers only pursue superficiality and one-sidedness in cultivating students' skills. The theoretical foundation of teaching vocal music is weak, and the depth of exploring textbooks is not enough. They are unable to provide students with detailed professional guidance in sound, rhythm, melody, and even pronunciation and pronunciation. The direct consequence of neglecting basic music theory education is that the teaching of bel canto in universities only focuses on its form and not on its spirit. It is inevitable that students

have low vocal literacy and weak artistic appreciation (Xu, 2004).

3. To experiment with teaching by using the soprano practicing guidebook.

The vocal teaching in some universities lacks targeted design of teaching objectives and classroom teaching plans for bel canto. Teachers cannot explore textbook content and innovate teaching methods based on their own teaching experience, skill development goals, and the characteristics of student knowledge structure. Therefore, the overall quality of bel canto teaching in vocal education in Chinese universities is still at a relatively low level. Some universities focus on cultivating backbone music teachers in vocal education, resulting in a reversal of the main position of students and the leading position of teachers in vocal teaching; Some universities have a serious utilitarian ideology and focus their main energy on cultivating a few outstanding students, hoping to win major awards in international vocal competitions and compete for honor for the school. This erroneous guiding ideology only focuses on improving the musical performance of a few students, while neglecting the education of the vast majority of students. This phenomenon of deviating from educational goals is quite common. Some universities neglect the use of multimedia, integrated media teaching methods, and electronic teaching aids under modern network conditions in their teaching of bel canto. They still use traditional methods such as teacher led singing, student follow-up singing, and oral instruction. Therefore, the level of bel canto teaching in Chinese universities needs to be strengthened.

4. To evaluate the effectiveness of teaching by using the soprano practicing.

The teaching effectiveness can be evaluated through formative and summative side tests. Each test can play a piece of music or an exercise track. By comparing and analyzing the results of each experiment, the effectiveness of use can be determined.

Vocal lessons are very important for first-year soprano students. They can master techniques faster when learning vocal music. The exercises designed for them should have been more concise and targeted, but unfortunately, there is no vocal exercise book specifically designed for first-year soprano students. Regarding the content of "Vocal Score", it is recommended to include three parts: 1. Overview of the History of Vocal Music: The Development of Vocal Music. 2. Vocal singing techniques: the position of the body, mouth, and vocal organs, breathing, chest voice area, middle voice area, head voice area, voice strength and breath pressure intensity, etc. 3. The main representative tracks of different music styles.

Recommendation

1. Practical Recommendations

According to our research results and experience in writing exercise books, in order to ensure the best effect of exercise books in teaching practice, we put forward the following suggestions: Provide training and lectures for vocal educators to enable them to use exercise books clearly and correctly, understand correct teaching methods, and use them correctly in teaching practice. Encourage students to register for vocal singing courses, improve their understanding of vocal music, and enable them to master correct singing skills, improve their singing ability, and continuously enhance their vocal level.

2. Recommendation for future research

Continuous improvement: Evaluate the teaching effectiveness of the exercise book from time to time, listen to feedback from teachers and students, and continuously improve and perfect the content and teaching methods in the exercise book.

On the whole, the compilation of this "Vocal Practice Book" provides valuable teaching resources for educators and students of vocal courses at Shandong Academy of Arts. I hope this book can help students better understand the techniques and knowledge of vocal music, and better promote the development of vocal art.

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