



SINGING AND COLLOQUIAL VOICE OF A MUSIC TEACHER. ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF ARTISTIC QUALITIES IN A MUSIC TEACHER'S ACTIVITY

*ANTRENAMENTUL VOCAL SI DECLAMATOR AL PROFESORULUI DE
MUZICĂ. ROLUL ȘI IMPORTANȚA CALITĂȚILOR ARTISTICE ÎN
ACTIVITATEA PROFESORULUI DE MUZICĂ*

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Acest articol ne demonstrează noi metode de pregătire și antrenament vocal și declamator a profesorului de muzică. Deasemenea sunt prezentate rezultatele grupelor experimentale și de control pentru dezvoltarea vocii la studenți. Această lucrare metodologică elaborează noi probleme importante de pregătire a profesorului de muzică (tehnică pedagogică, artistism).

В данной статье кратко изложены новые методы вокальной и речевой подготовки учителя музыки, приводятся результаты некоторых экспериментальных исследований, а также рассматриваются вопросы педагогической подготовки учителя музыки, включая его педагогическую технику и артистизм.

The known methods of vocal training do not offer us the necessary skills and achievements in a certain way. We consider that the improvement of a teacher vocal training must be carried out in three directions:

- Vocal training;
- Voice speech training;
- Readiness to work in conditions of great vocal training.

First of all the vocal training must provide teachers with the ability to perform musical compositions of any vocal genre:

- Romances and arias which suppose an academic manner of singing;
- School songs, executed to the teacher's accompaniment, which generally refers to the so-called declamatory manner

of singing (based on colloquial sound formation method).

Another important skill for a music teacher is the ability to work in conditions of difficult vocal training. Music teachers, just like other representatives of the vocal-speech professions (educators in kindergartens, operetta's singers, musicals' singers etc.), use, in their every day activity, both singing and colloquial voice. Vocal apparatus is getting tired very quickly if switching from singing to speech and from speech to singing. This has been proved by a modern phoniatriests studies and throat specialists.

"Vocal invalid" - a new term which has recently appeared and which means "a teacher who has almost completely lost his voice after 8-10 years of working at school".

The newly suggested methods are connected both with the improving of vocal training itself and mastering of the academic manner of singing as fast and qualitative as it can be. The next elements should be mastered during a vocal lesson:

- Colloquial voice training;
- Training of the declamatory manner of singing;
- Training of the vocal apparatus in the correlation “singing – speech”.

For mastering the academic manner of singing we use both traditional vocal methods (concentric and phonetic methods, the method of direct influence on the timbre etc.) and the new methods elaborated by us, namely: “bridge notes method” and “manual method”, which help us to master sound rounding and sound covering technique in short time and therefore to develop and to balance the voice along the whole range. The old school masters used to say that “the art of singing is the art of breathing...” Taking into account the importance of the old truths and the role of breathing in singing, we state the following: “the art of singing is the art of sound rounding and sound covering”

When mastering the basics of the academic manner of singing we continue to improve the vocal technique (voice mobility) and interpretative expressiveness. We master gradually some other skills as well: colloquial speech technique and declamatory singing manner skill, and finally the singing-speech and speech-singing switching technique.

In order to master the singing-speech switching technique we practice some mixed exercises

“reading-singing-reading” along the whole range. It is very important that both singing and colloquial speech should be exercised in the same position, with the same articulation.

We exercise colloquial speech training with the help of tongue-twisters, reading phrases (taken from complicated musical compositions) and partly with the help of independent work. As the practice shows, paying more attention to the colloquial speech of the students during the vocal lessons when reading texts or communicating, makes them speak more distinctly, with a good breathing. It also makes the students think of what they are reading or speaking. So the colloquial voice will gradually grow stronger, it will extend its range, and the articulation will be improved as well.

School songs, pop and some folk songs of a small range can be a good stuff for mastering this manner of singing. Such material, along with arias and romances, is being always included in the student’s term repertory.

Mastering of these two manners of singing as well as of these mixed exercises is much easier for the lower voices, since their singing and speech functions are quite similar in timbre and range. It is quite difficult for some types of voices (as for example for lyrical and coloratura soprano) to sing in declamatory manner. So they can content themselves with its partial mastering. However, vocal apparatus training in the “singing-speech” system is necessary for all types of voices.

Another method suggested by us is the so-called “speech-intonational” method. We use it for mastering the declamatory reading/singing technique, covering the

lowest and the highest notes of the registers. This method, along with old traditional methods, helps us to develop and strengthen the singing and colloquial voice, as well as to master the two manners of singing. This should prepare the teacher's voice to the specific conditions of school work.

We've used these techniques and methods with the fourth year students of the Faculty of Music and Music Pedagogy, "A. Russo" University, Beltsy. Two groups of students were created. The students from the first group (control group) had traditional vocal lessons; the second group (the experimental one) practiced our new methods during the vocal lessons.

A vocal lesson of the experimental group of the students had the following structure:

1. A 7 – 10 minutes long **warm up**;
2. **Reading** of simple proverbs, tongue-twisters, phrases from vocal compositions, which make part of the term repertory;
3. **Singing** of more complicated vocal **exercises** for voice range development, development of breathing technique, cantilena and voice fluency (10 – 15 min.);
4. **Work on the vocal composition** (20 – 25 min.).

The working data of every student of both experimental and control groups were fixed in a specially elaborated evaluation chart:

- The tone, its timbre, amplitude, colloquial and singing voice range, blend between registers, vibrato, vocal pitch development level etc;

- Singing manner;
- Ability to switch easily from singing to speech and back, from one singing manner to another and then to speech etc. This criterion should be considered the most important one in a music teacher's training, for the work in schools and lyceums is very specific.

Each of these criteria was evaluated according to a ten-point system. We marked both the initial vocal (speech) level of the data and then the subsequent level. Finally we calculated an average mark. The lessons were evaluated by a special commission that included competent teachers and final-year students. As it turned out, the students from the experimental group gathered more points than those from the control one (4112 points to 2808 points correspondingly).

Generally the students from the experimental group were more interested in pedagogical work during the practical work in schools. They did some extra lessons. The interpretation level of these students (their singing and speaking abilities) was much higher than that of the students from the control group. The theoretical part of the lessons (musical theory, composers' biography etc) was very qualitative as well.

The interest of the students from the experimental group was showed also in their great desire to prepare well the pupils for the concert performance.

We keep in touch with our former students from the experimental group (65% of them went on working in schools, lyceums, kindergartens as

music teachers) in order to check the effectiveness of our methods.

A music teacher should not only teach his pupils how to comprehend and interpret music, but he must also teach them the musical means. It is known that the activation of positive emotions of the pupils improves the theoretical and practical assimilation of received skills and knowledge. A music teacher's activity in this context is very similar to the artistic creativeness of an actor or a producer, for they have many things in common in their emotional-communicative sphere.

While preparing to a lesson, a music teacher elaborates a plan of educational influences on the pupils in the process of learning. What a music teacher really needs for a good effectiveness of the influence on the pupils is:

- To perform very expressively and emotionally the studied musical composition;
- To comment brightly and vividly upon a musical composition after its performance or listening;
- To create an artistic atmosphere during a lesson;

RPG (role play game) me-

thod is a very useful method when developing artistry of a music teacher. The essence of this method is the following: imagine a person you would like to be like (your favorite pedagogue, singer, actor), who is always self-confident or whatever. Then begin to play his role! Try to imitate his manner of laughing, talking, gesticulation, behavior to any reaction in the room etc. It will help one to get rid of that feeling of weakness, vulnerability, diffidence.

The psychological purpose of such lessons should be following: "Renew yourself every day (your human image in front of the others). Do it over and over again". It is very important to develop such ability like – to be happy about any hardships of life (however strange it would sound) and overcome them if necessary.

Gradually the role you are playing will blend or merge with yourself, it will become your essence and you will finally feel comfortable and self-confident. That is, as experienced actors and producers say, "...behave yourself confident and happy, and you will feel yourself happy".

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