

“Falsetto Tenor” in vocal music Teaching in China

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Abstracts

The theory of falsetto tenor training is a relatively weak link in Chinese vocal music teaching theory, which is related to the practice of falsetto tenor singing in China. The overall quality of China's vocal music industry and the tradition of emphasizing practice and light theory. Whether training vocal teachers or cultivating singing actors, Vocal music teaching is a theoretical, technical, and practical art. More theoretical learning is needed to become a singer, but the lack of correct theoretical guidance often leads vocal learners astray. With the development of the times and the continuous improvement of the requirements for teaching, the ways and methods to achieve the purpose and complete the task are also constantly updated, and the teaching theory of falsetto tenor singing will continue to improve with the progress of society. Since the origin and development of the falsetto tenor are all in foreign countries, foreign scholars have studied the historical development of the singing technology and style of the falsetto tenor relatively perfectly. Most of their research has been analyzed from the identification, development history, characteristics, training methods, and other aspects of the falsetto tenor.

Keywords: Falsetto Tenor; Vocal Music; Vocal Teaching; China

Introduction

Vocal art has experienced many development eras in the development of human society, and now the world's singing industry is still developing in a rapid trend, whether in singing methods or singing artistic expression are constantly improving. In recent years, with the increase of scientific, technological, and cultural exchanges between countries, the internationalization of art has also been significantly strengthened, western art culture has gradually spread and penetrated China, and more and more Chinese have gradually come to know the high tenor part. However, there are still fewer people engaged in the research and singing of the high tenor part. Due to the limitations of conditions, many domestic studies on falsetto tenor still stay at the level of foreign language translation. Although more and more people in China have begun to recognize and understand the falsetto tenor in recent years, it is still in the initial stage, and there are still relatively few professors and singers of the falsetto tenor in major music academies.

Baroque comes from French, and its origin is Portuguese "Barroco" which means "irregularly shaped, deformed pearl." Some critics first used it to comment on this period's music and art at the end of Baroque. The Baroque period was still when religious spirit dominated, and religious thought deeply penetrated people's thoughts, words, and deeds. After the principle of perfection, balance, and harmony of the classical form were disturbed, synthesis, harmony, triviality, and deliberate modification became the style of the new generation. The church formed a magnificent, exquisite and magnificent style in the

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architectural form, which also left its cultural imprint on the baroque music at this time. Most of the music in the Baroque period pursues grand scale and brilliant effects. The author often uses as many notes as possible to express his feelings, including decorative sounds and modal shapes. Its rhythm is mostly divided into free and strict regularity, and the Baroque period's music texture is mainly polyphonic. Baroque music has the following characteristics—first, the fluency of melodic voice. One of the characteristics of music in the Baroque period is that the church mode was replaced by major and minor. Second, the simplicity of accompaniment texture. In the baroque period, a prominent feature of music was "digital bass," which formed a typical baroque music texture - composed of melody and harmonic accompaniment. Third, playing bass. Through bass is one of baroque music's most important features, also known as digital bass. Its use constitutes a typical baroque music texture. In other words, it is composed of melody and harmonic accompaniment (Pan, 2021 : 96-97).

Baroque music

1. Baroque instrumental music

There was a very important stage in the history of western art. Historians in the late 19th century used the word baroque to express the artistic characteristics of the whole period. Baroque art is full of gorgeous and exaggerated colors and tends to be expressionistic. Compared with the solemn and elegant music before, the music of this period has a gorgeous melody, jumping rhythm, and other characteristics of the times. With the continuous improvement of people's aesthetic awareness, vocal music works in the Baroque period showed a large-scale trend. It was not only adding solo and ensemble singing forms but also adding the accompaniment of many musical instruments, which provided a great space for developing instrumental music. Pure instrumental music appeared, such as the prelude at the beginning of opera and divine drama. This makes the composers have to deliberately focus on instrumental creation in composition, which makes instrumental music get real attention. Therefore, many new pure instrumental genres emerged in this period, such as Toccata, Fugue, Sonata, and Concerto (Jiang, 2022 : 49-51).

2. Chamber music

From the 16th to the early 18th century, western music can be roughly divided into three types: church, drama, and chamber. Among them, church music has an obvious religious belief color. When it is played, it is grand and solemn, and most of it is performed and appreciated by believers. Drama music, which integrates performance, singing and dancing, and music, is a large-scale music form with many viewers. As European nobles liked music, performed at regular banquets, enjoyed their families, or found like-minded friends to play music, the embryonic form of western chamber music was formed.

In the practice of baroque music, the ensemble of chamber music and instrumental music is a very important musical performance, which is the embodiment of the enthusiasm of the baroque period. Therefore, instrumental music works of different styles and genres were more widely used in the Baroque period. Since the 16th century, many Italian artists have been devoting themselves to studying string instrument performance and works creation, making them famous throughout Europe (Li, 2020 : 167-169). Chamber Music, literally translated as the music played in the room, originated from the European nobles' banquet performance in the living room or the ensemble of family members, which is small in scale but rich in forms. Western chamber music, in the modern sense, mainly refers to the form of a small instrumental ensemble, including the ensemble of about ten people, small chamber music. Sonata also

belongs to the category of western chamber music (Wang, 2022 : 79-81). In the Renaissance, instrumental music was generally used in the accompaniment of singers, or string ensemble was used to cooperate with singers in singing rhythm. Many scholars believe that the origin of classical instrumental music may originate in the chamber sonata or the church sonata. These two forms are composed of various instruments (Fan, 2020 : 23). At this time, Western chamber music's connotation and performance form have undergone profound changes. It is no longer "family style" music but refers to the ensemble and small instrumental ensemble, mainly string quartet, and is no longer restricted by performance venues (Wang, 2022 : 79-81).

3. Instrumental Ensemble

The Baroque period is an important transitional period that inherits the Renaissance and the Classicism. Not only in the development of productivity but also in music. The Renaissance advocated the revival of ancient Greek music, and the music form, expressiveness, and creative techniques were relatively simple. However, in the classical period, all aspects of music were mature, which could not be separated from the development of the Baroque period. Its creative styles can be divided into early, middle, and late. In the early period, from 1600 to 1640, the style of the Baroque period was formed. It inherited the late Renaissance and made bold innovations. Instead of using traditional polyphony methods, composers began to use the main tune and vocal texture. In the middle period, from 1640 to about 1690, the baroque music style developed maturely during this period, and the composers began to use a unified and typical approach. The period from 1690 to 1750 was the late period of the Baroque period. The music masters represented by Bach and Handel brought this style to the extreme. Also, in the 17th century, one of the most important music genres in the Baroque period came into being, concertos. There are three categories of instrumental concertos in this period. One is the grand concerto, a musical form in which small groups of solo instruments compete with large music groups. The grand concerto originated in Italy and was developed based on the genre of the triple sonata. It is an early form of an instrumental concerto. The other type is the band concerto, a form of the concerto that developed later. The whole band performs the whole performance process of the concerto, and there is no independent and prominent individual instrumental music to echo with the band to play some of the main melodies. There is also a kind of solo concerto. A solo concerto is a form of the concerto that came into being at the end of its development. A single instrument plays it in cooperation with the whole band, and the single instrument also serves as the most important melody part of the whole musical performance. It mainly follows the fast-slow-fast playing form (Ma, 2020 : 10).

Baroque Vocal Music

For analyzing the characteristics of vocal music singing in the Baroque period, the first obvious thing is the flexibility of singing. The composers at that time began to emphasize the musicality and melody involved in the theme when they created, so they put forward higher requirements when they expressed their works and emotions. It is precise because of the high vocal requirements that the overall sound line of the works at that time was very smooth, and most of the music works were in a sweet style. Singers would clearly express their emotions in the songs when singing. In actual singing, the singer will pay more attention to the expression of integrity and perfection and accurately control the song's rhythm. In addition, it can flexibly control the breath so that the whole process of singing is full of charm and appreciation mood. The second aspect of singing is decorative. In the Baroque period, most music works have obvious decorative characteristics, which is also one of the important symbols of the song itself.

The creator integrates decorative features into his song creation, which can effectively promote the development of music in the Baroque period.

Moreover, the singer hopes to win the audience's favor after adding his singing characteristics in the process of singing. Generally speaking, the singer will end the song with a trill. Various factors make the whole song more gorgeous and interesting and bring more wonderful music appreciation to the audience. The decorative performance of songs enables singers to express their emotions better and enables the audience to understand the music content sung by singers. However, along with the evolution of the times and the excessive performance of various singers, the songs for a long time later were too grandiose, the overall performance and decoration techniques had no emotion to speak of, and the overall content was too empty. In the baroque period, in addition to the normal singing performance, improvisation was another way of performance that the composers liked very much. At that time, people regarded it more as a form of vocal art, and its essence was decorative singing. At that time, when composing and performing works, the composer created a working framework based on determining the theme of the works and then performed impromptu singing to express the works. At that time, the singers had taken impromptu singing as a main form of expression, and the new singing form was also a test for the singers at that time, which was used to check their singing ability and performance ability (Zhou, 2021 : 64-66).

Among the music works of the Baroque period, the subject matter of vocal music involves a wide range of contents, which are mainly divided into the following categories—first, religious themes. "Amaryllis" by Kacini is based on the lyric poem in the Middle Ages, which describes the author's love for Amaryllis. Kacini perfectly combined beautiful and moving melodies with poetry to create a vocal song with the characteristics of classical religious music. Victory is Karisimi's solo cantata with typical church music characteristics, mainly used for religious activities.

Second, secular life theme. The song "Nina" describes a mother's deep sorrow for her dead daughter, which is gentle and has strong appeal. Angry When You Get Angry is an aria sung by the heroine in the opera Maid as Lady. The play mainly describes a comedy story about a young, beautiful maid who uses her intelligence to make the master finally marry her. The song "Although You Are Heartless" describes a lovelorn who is faithful to love. The music is euphemistic and moving, and the lyrics are touching.

Third, the theme of Greek mythology. I Am Full of Enthusiasm is a famous aria in the opera Paris and Helen, which mainly shows the scene that Paris falls in love with Helen at first sight and sings for her. Violet is a famous aria in the opera based on the story of Tristan and Isolde. The main tune music is different from the multi-line feature in polyphony music. It mainly states the lines of a certain voice part, and the rest of the voice parts serve as other functional textures, such as harmony filling and rhythm supplement. The music is vivid, emotional, and direct. For example, after the song Don't Expect was adapted by Karisimi, the composer changed the tonal color, musical structure, and other aspects and has the characteristics of keynote music. For another example, the vocal music work "Amari Li" is created with more obvious characteristics of the theme music style. At the beginning of the music, some melodies are performed in the downward direction, and in the middle, the melodies are performed in the upward direction. The intensity also changes from weak to strong, making it have a music style similar to the recitation and recitation characteristics in the theme music at that time (Jia, 2020 : 33-34).

1. Solo

"Monody" is a single melody solo song with continuous bass accompaniment. It stresses the relationship between words and music and adopts the main melody style with harmonic accompaniment. It was popular in the late Renaissance and early Baroque and is often translated into a "single song" in the Chinese context. This kind of music carries a new kind of music ideal at that time, deeply affecting many music genres and styles, including pastoral, aria, recitative (and opera in the overall sense), and cantata, which have important historical significance. As a professional term, Monody is very flexible in applying Chinese and Western music academic contexts: sometimes as a music genre, sometimes as a music style, and sometimes as a form of music texture or music performance. The musical structure of vocal music works in the Baroque period is very complex, which not only continues the magnificence and magnificence of music works in the Renaissance to a certain extent but also contains a strong emotional expression in combination with the social conditions at that time. When using Bel canto to sing vocal music, works of this period involve more complex singing skills, including some common Bel canto characteristics and using some coloratura art to perform. For example, some arpeggio techniques are used in the vocal work *In My Heart*. The performer needs to use the strength of the abdominal muscles to maintain the fluency of the breath in the chest cavity while covering part of the breath in the throat. The shape of the mouth is used to control the sound, so the voice is more continuous and has certain elastic characteristics. At the same time, this work also uses the creation method of the ascending scale, which requires the performer to control the voice and gradually increase the pitch, ensuring continuity and strengthening the control of the voice. In the magnificent vocal music works, repeated way was used to strengthen the expression of the works' emotions, making this period more classic (Liu, 2022 : 34-36). Analyzing the characteristics of vocal music singing in the baroque period, the first obvious is the song.

They were singing flexibility. The composers at that time began to emphasize the musicality and melody involved in the theme when they created, so they put forward higher requirements when they expressed their works and emotions. It is precise because of the high vocal requirements that the overall sound line of the works at that time was very smooth, and most of the music works were in a sweet style. Singers would clearly express their emotions in the songs when singing. In actual singing, the singer will pay more attention to the expression of integrity and perfection and accurately control the song's rhythm. In addition, it can flexibly control the breath, so the whole singing process is full of charm and appreciation mood. The second aspect of singing is decorative. In the Baroque period, most music works have obvious decorative characteristics, which is also one of the important signs of the song itself. The creator integrates decorative features into his song creation, which can effectively promote the development of music in the Baroque period.

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2. Chorus

Choral art began in the religious music of the Middle Ages in Europe. Baroque comes from Portuguese Barocco, which refers to pearls with strange shapes. It was originally used in Italian architecture in the 17th century. The music in the Baroque era is balanced, great, and charming. At the same time, the chorus also develops rapidly. In 1597, European opera was born. Its landmark masterpiece is the pastoral drama, *Daphne*. This is an opera by Rinuccini and Perry. What followed was that chorus was valued in opera. In the 17th century, Monteverdi, the most important opera composer of the period, wrote such operas as *Orfeo*, making great contributions to early Italian opera. The representatives of composers from the end of the 17th century to the beginning of the 18th century include Lurie and Ramo.

Moreover, the rise and prosperity of British and French operas promoted the prosperity of choral singing. With the development of opera, many vocal music genres have appeared in Europe, such as oratorio, cantata, and suffering music. The works of the Baroque period are dramatic and colorful. The rise of the bourgeoisie, the formation of opera, and the prevalence of court music greatly impacted the music creation of this period. Various ancient and conservative traditional styles coexisted with various new radical, innovative styles (Yang, 2017 : 71).

In the process of western music, the Baroque period is extremely important. The tonal harmony system was finally established in this period, which became an important period for forming common writing principles. At the same time, this period is also important for the maturity of the western classical chorus. As a development process of western chorus technology, it is extremely solid and brilliant (Li, 2020 : 167-169).

To sum up, the theme of music works in the Baroque period is relatively broad, which leads to the richness and diversity of music rhythm, especially in vocal music works. Only diversified music rhythms can adapt to different lyrics and themes. The baroque period, one of the most important periods in the development of western music, its music art had an unprecedented development at that time. The vocal music works of this period have very high use value in vocal music training and have universal significance for the standardization and science of sound. With the development of the times, the vocal music works in the Baroque period have maintained a strong vitality in the teaching system at home and abroad, which cannot be separated from their standardized and scientific aesthetic concepts. It is extremely important to scientifically select vocal music teaching materials and sing more works with strong artistry and a more uniform style. Singing works from the Baroque period can help singers improve their vocal music skills and their music accomplishments, laying a good foundation for future singing.

Eunuch singer

In the development of early opera, the role of circle singers had to be mentioned. They operated in childhood to maintain the range of children's voices. At that time, opera performances had formed a set of rules. The first leading role must be a soprano, most of whom were played by eunuchs. The second leading role was a soprano or a contralto, which was the majority of the circle. Male voices played the third type of supporting role. Only in the late 18th century did famous professional female singers and tenors emerge. Circle singers were generally loved at that time because of their special sound quality. They were more common in the Baroque period, such as Monteverdi's opera "Open," Chandel's opera "Caesar the Great," and Gluck's opera "Open and Eurydice." Although the cabinet singers have made great achievements in singing skills, their performances ignored the content. They deviated from the aesthetic principles of the founders of the Bel canto School, which is an inhumane historical phenomenon. The abolition and elimination of the circle singers is progress in music history. The era of eunuchs in Europe is very special in the history of vocal music development. At that time, eunuchs dominated the singing stage in Europe for nearly two centuries (the 17th and 18th centuries). However, eunuch singers eventually went to extinction, which is difficult to reproduce in later generations, let alone rise again, and the extinction is so thorough. It is so special in the history of vocal music development that it is not difficult to find out the experience and lessons that significantly impact the development of vocal music in later generations when studying its rise and fall.

1. Origin

In Europe in the 17th century, the main choral style represented by the Venetian School emerged with the development of multi-tone music. The music was closer to the lyrics. Composers paid more attention to the expression of music with the simple melody of the single part accompanied by the voice. The fixed melody voice part has lost its religious significance, the upper voice part has become more important, the melody of the high voice part is more emotional and decorative, and the rhythm is more flowing. As a result, singing soprano voices have higher requirements on technology and timbre, and their roles are becoming increasingly important. In the 16th century, women were forbidden to participate in church choirs, perform on the stage (especially in Catholic countries) to fill their vacant positions, and maintain the increasingly popular multi-voice chorus. At the same time, in order to maintain the soft, sweet, bright, and clean voice of the soprano, the choir sang the soprano voice with the boys. However, children will always grow up and face natural elimination in the changing period. Their singing life is not long. The church tried to replace the falsetto singer. Because the falsetto singer's singing method is special, the timbre is less beautiful than that of boys and can only reach the range of a mezzo-soprano. In order to sing some difficult chants of contrapuntal techniques, the church tried to use eunuchs to sing soprano voices. Early Christianity strongly opposed such castration and sentenced those who performed such operations to death or expelled those who participated in such things from the church. Due to the prohibition of the church and the state, these operations are usually performed in secret somewhere (Zhou, 2022 : 64-66).

2. The demise of eunuch singers

The main reason for the disappearance of eunuchs is that since the 19th century, the music interest in Italy, the hometown of opera, has gradually tended to be more frivolous in the artistic interest of light opera, and gradually disliked the serious opera that eunuchs used to survive (while the era of grand opera has not yet come). Secondly, since the French Revolution, the first bourgeois constitution, the Napoleonic Code, was published (in 1804, and the more

enlightened middle class (originally the main audience of serious opera was nobles) emerged in the Napoleonic Wars). They were not interested in eunuchs and boring serious operas. In terms of humanity, more and more people are against the castration of boys for human enjoyment, and more and more people are disgusted with the singing of eunuch singers who are physically abnormal due to evil people. After Pope Leo XIII took office in 1878, he formally proposed that the castration of boys be strictly prohibited, and the eunuch singer died (Guan, 1993 : 78-84). The eunuchs in history are the origin of falsetto tenors. The famous eunuchs have clear and bright voices, but this inhumane way will eventually be eliminated by history. It is difficult for us to hear the real eunuchs sing songs again, so the study of falsetto tenors has more practical significance

Countertenor

In the 14th and 15th centuries, the singing skills of adult males could have been better, especially the combination of true and falsetto voices when singing high notes. This technology was gradually formed at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. In the 15th century AD, male singers imitated and pretended to be female voices to sing high notes beyond the male natural voice area. In order to define this sound, the musical term "Falsetto" came into being. Male singers who sing with this tone are called "Falsettista." In the Middle Ages, the Pope's regulations on the imprisonment of women prohibited women from singing hymns in churches. For a long time, especially before the period of classicism, the word "Soprano" referred to a voice part with female voice color and range or a male singer with this imitation ability, which is not necessarily related to the singer's gender. "Soprano" is only the definition of a tone and voice part characteristics and does not point to the singing by "women." Therefore, from the Middle Ages to the Baroque period, the voice part of "Soprano" was not sung by female singers.

Conclusion

The falsetto tenor can be roughly divided into two types according to the range: Male alto with a range equal to the mezzo-soprano and Male mezzo-soprano with a sub-soprano range. Of course, there are rare voices, such as boy soprano and soprano. The range of voice is one of many standards to distinguish falsetto tenors. According to the difference in individual physiological conditions, falsetto tenors can also be divided into drama, lyric, and coloratura, just like general voice parts.

The timbre of the falsetto tenor is closer to that of a mezzo-soprano, and the author has seen different types of falsetto tenors. Some tenors are more like sopranos, and others are more like mezzo-sopranos. However, the author believes that the falsetto tenor is the application of men to falsetto vocal cords. No matter what classification, its timbre differs greatly from that of women.

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