Research Article

The Development of a Vocal Teaching Model Based on Verdi Art Songs for Undergraduate Level in The People's Republic of China

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Abstract

This research aimed to develop a comprehensive vocal teaching model grounded in Giuseppe Verdi's art music, tailored specifically for undergraduate music students in the People's Republic of China. Recognizing the increasing emphasis on culturally diverse and pedagogically sound vocal instruction, the study addressed a growing need for more effective and contextually relevant teaching methodologies in classical singing education. It responded to the limited exploration of Verdi's lesser known yet pedagogically rich repertoire of art songs, which offered significant value in technical and expressive development for young vocalists.

The primary objectives of this study were threefold: 1) to construct a vocal teaching model centered around Giuseppe Verdi's art music, 2) to critically examine the validity and pedagogical appropriateness of this model through expert input and practical feedback, and 3) to implement and assess the model within undergraduate vocal instruction settings. Through these objectives, the study sought to bridge the gap between historical vocal literature and modern educational practices, enriching students' learning experiences with repertoire that is both artistically substantial and pedagogically effective.

The research followed a qualitative methodology, employing semi-structured field interviews, expert evaluations, and practical trials. A total of 15 vocal instructors from five distinguished music universities across China were interviewed. These instructors, selected

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based on their professional experience and familiarity with classical vocal repertoire, provided insights into current practices, challenges, and opportunities in undergraduate vocal education. Their feedback contributed to shaping the content and structure of the proposed model. Additionally, five vocal music experts with backgrounds in vocal pedagogy and performance were invited to evaluate the initial version of the model. Their critical assessments were instrumental in refining its design, particularly in instructional clarity, repertoire selection, and student engagement. Then, ten vocal teachers participated in the trial implementation phase, testing the model in their respective institutions and offering further evaluation based on their classroom experiences.

The outcome of this comprehensive developmental process was the "APPE" vocal teaching model, which comprises four interrelated phases: Analysis, Practice, Performance, and Evaluation. Each component guided students through a systematic and holistic learning journey.

In the analysis phase, students engaged in an in-depth study of the selected Verdi art songs. This included textual interpretation, historical and stylistic contextualization, and structural analysis. This phase aimed to build foundational knowledge and deepen the student's interpretive understanding of the repertoire. The practice phase emphasized technical vocal training aligned with Verdi's music demands. Exercises focused on breath control, phrasing, diction, dynamic variation, and stylistic authenticity. Here, the selected repertoire served as a vehicle for targeted skill development. The performance phase encouraged students to apply their analytical and technical knowledge in live or recorded performances. This component enhanced stage presence, interpretive confidence, and communicative effectiveness, preparing students for public performance and professional settings. The evaluation phase incorporated both formative and summative assessments. These assessments included peer reviews, instructor feedback, and self-evaluation methods. Evaluation criteria were developed in consultation with expert vocalists to ensure they aligned with educational standards and professional expectations.

The findings from the expert evaluation and classroom trials revealed that the APPE model was both pedagogically valid and practically effective. Expert reviewers commended the model's clear structure, relevance to student needs, and innovative incorporation of

lesser-known Verdi art songs, providing technical diversity and expressive richness. Teachers involved in the implementation phase noted observable improvements in students' vocal technique, interpretive insight, and overall musicality. Moreover, they reported that the model offered a fresh and engaging approach to vocal training that encouraged deeper student involvement and critical reflection.

The results of evaluation by 5 authoritative experts and classroom practice by 10 teachers show that the APPE teaching model has received high praise in five aspects: teaching design, teaching methods, curriculum setting, teaching media, and teaching evaluation. It has a clear structure, closely follows student needs, and innovatively incorporates little-known Verdi art songs, which not only maintains technical diversity but also enhances musical expressiveness. Through teaching students, it is found that students' vocal skills, depth of interpretation, and overall musical literacy have all been significantly improved. This novel teaching method not only makes vocal training interesting, but also inspires students to participate deeply and think critically.

By integrating Verdi's underutilized art songs into a structured teaching framework, the APPE model enriched the existing vocal curriculum and offered a unique cultural and pedagogical perspective. It promoted a more comprehensive understanding of Italian vocal tradition while remaining adaptable to the educational context of Chinese undergraduate institutions. This balance between tradition and innovation was essential for cultivating technically skilled, artistically aware, and culturally sensitive vocal performers.

In conclusion, the study contributed to the field of vocal pedagogy by presenting a model grounded in both scholarly research and practical application. The APPE model demonstrated that vocal education could be more effective, dynamic, and inspiring with thoughtful integration of historical repertoire and contemporary teaching strategies. Future research may explore the application of this model across different musical styles and educational contexts, further expanding its relevance and utility in global vocal training.

In recent years, vocal music education in the People's Republic of China has developed significantly, supported by the sustained efforts of educators and performers since the 1920s. Despite this progress, vocal instruction at art colleges continues to emphasize technical training, often to the exclusion of broader pedagogical approaches that foster musical artistry and holistic student development. This singular focus has limited the diversity of teaching models and hindered the introduction of innovative practices in vocal education.

For undergraduate students, who are typically in the early stages of vocal and artistic development, it is essential to select repertoire that supports healthy vocal growth and fosters a comprehensive understanding of musical expression. The art songs of Giuseppe Verdi are widely regarded as suitable for vocal instruction due to their pedagogical accessibility and musical richness. Verdi's collection of 17 published art songs features clear structural design and moderate technical demands, making them particularly accessible for undergraduate-level study. Their manageable length, lyrical clarity, and moderate vocal requirements provide an effective introduction to Verdi's compositional style while supporting the development of foundational singing techniques. These include breath control, legato phrasing, and consistent tone production—skills that are essential for early-stage vocal training.[1]

In Giuseppe Verdi's creative genre, 26 operas were written, and art songs were written mainly during his early creative career (1838 -1850). According to the researchers' investigation, only 17 works have been published.[2] These works exhibit moderate vocal range and technical demands; however, their suitability varies depending on the specific voice type and level of student development. While some of Verdi's art songs may be appropriate for undergraduates, especially those with lighter vocal qualities, not all pieces are universally suitable. Careful selection based on vocal range, tessitura, and technical challenges is essential to ensure healthy vocal development. Therefore, instructors should match repertoire to the individual student's vocal characteristics, drawing upon established pedagogical practices and repertoire

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[1] Mary Kathryn Brewer, "A Comprehensive Guide to Verdi's Art Songs with Applications for Teaching and Performing" (DA diss., Ball State University, 2016), 3.

[2] Federica Balluchi, Arianna Lazzini, and Riccardo Torelli, "The Role of Giuseppe Verdi in Shaping the 19th Century Culture Industry" (MA thesis, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 2021), 19-22.

guidelines. Although Verdi's art song output is limited, each piece offers valuable learning opportunities and is well worth studying and performing by bel canto singers.

Although Verdi is small, each capital is worthy of learning and singing by bel canto singers. These works all have the early Verdi writing style, with the typical style of sound use and musical performance in the Bel Canto period.[3] Verdi is a world-renowned composer, and his musical style must be mastered. Moreover, these 17 art songs are relatively accessible and suitable for progressive skill development in undergraduate vocal training, which is very helpful for undergraduates to master the composer's style and singing skills. Verdi's creative tunes include distinct melodic and emotive elements. His early fascination with Shakespeare's dramatic literature was a significant source of inspiration for him. He fully incorporated the qualities and spirit of Shakespeare's plays into his original songs. He developed a keen understanding of the dramatic elements of music, which is why music has power and coherence.[4] From this, we can see that Verdi added dramatic elements to his works based on the beautiful melodies of Italian art songs, which directly improves students' emotional expression and stage performance.

The primary objective of this research was to develop a vocal teaching model based on Giuseppe Verdi's art songs, tailored for undergraduate students in the People's Republic of China. The study also aimed to evaluate and refine the model's accuracy and practical applicability through expert assessment. Finally, the research sought to implement the Verdi Art Songs Vocal Teaching Model within undergraduate vocal education and assess its overall effectiveness in enhancing students' vocal performance and interpretative skills.

Through consulting materials, observation, and interviews, the researchers found that Verdi art songs are rarely used in undergraduate music majors in the People's Republic of China, and most of the academic research on them focuses on the analysis of music, creation, and singing. There is no research on teaching Verdi art songs, and relatively few textbooks are

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[3] Lei Sun, "The Performance of the Verdi Chamber Music Song Brindisi" (MA thesis, Northwest Normal University at the People's Republic of China, 2018), 4-5. (in Chinese)

[4] Rendi Yi, "A Study on the Singing Art of Verdi's Art Songs," *Modern Music Journal* 11, 7 (2021): 130. (in Chinese)

published. Undergraduate students also have relatively little artistic practice of Verdi's art songs. Teachers also generally believe that researching teaching Verdi art songs among Chinese music undergraduates can help enrich the diversity of learning for music undergraduates in the People's Republic of China. Verdi art songs not only enrich students' repertoire selection and expand the diversity of learning but also use Verdi art songs' technical points and unique musicality. It can improve students' singing skills and music comprehension through comprehensive analysis and practice combined with a classified teaching model. Therefore, this paper explores the content, accuracy, and applicability of the vocal teaching model based on Verdi art songs through the survey results.

Research Methodology

This research will use qualitative research.

1. Key Informants

1.1 To assess the accuracy and applicability of the research findings, five distinguished educators and professors specializing in bel canto singing were selected to evaluate the results. All experts were affiliated with institutions located primarily in Western China, specifically Xi'an and Sichuan provinces. While their insights were highly valuable, it is essential to note that the findings of vocal pedagogy practices across all regions of the People's Republic of China.

1.2 The expert panel included: 1) Zhou Ling: Retired Professor, Ph.D., soprano, former doctoral supervisor, and renowned vocal music educator from Xi'an Conservatory of Music. 2) Bai Meng: Retired Professor, tenor, former doctoral supervisor, and esteemed vocal music educator previously affiliated with Xi'an Conservatory of Music and Shanghai Conservatory of Music. 3) XianYu YueGe: Professor, Ph.D., soprano, doctoral supervisor, and Deputy Director of the Vocal Music Department at Xi'an Conservatory of Music. 4) Bai JuYe: Associate Professor, Ph.D., tenor, master tutor, and Director of the Bel Canto Teaching and Research Section, Vocal Music and Opera Department, Sichuan Conservatory of Music. 5) Fan Ping: Professor, soprano, master tutor, and Director of the Bel Canto Teaching and Research Section, Music Education Department, Xi'an Conservatory of Music.

1.3 Trial Implementation Group of the 15 interviewed vocal teachers, 10 were selected to implement and evaluate the teaching model in practice.

2. Research Instruments

2.1 Interview Questionnaire: To gain deeper insights into the teaching methodology, structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted using a 10-question questionnaire with 15 vocal instructors. The duration of each interview was approximately one hour, taking place from September 2023 to January 2024.

2.2 Evaluation Questionnaire: The questionnaire was used to collect feedback from five renowned bel canto experts, forming a summarized report based on their assessments. The evaluation questionnaire was developed through a systematic process aimed at ensuring content validity and reliability. Initially, the questionnaire items were designed based on the research objectives and reviewed by academic advisors for content relevance and clarity. To assess item validity, the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) method was applied, with expert reviewers evaluating each item for alignment with the intended learning objectives. Based on their feedback, several items were revised or removed. The final version of the questionnaire achieved a Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.92, indicating a high level of agreement among experts and suggesting strong content validity. The finalized questionnaire focused on five key areas: (1) completeness of teaching steps and methods, (2) logical coherence and practicality of the teaching design, (3) relevance and specificity of the curriculum, (4) appropriateness of teaching materials such as images and musical scores, and (5) effectiveness of learning assessment methods. In addition, feedback was gathered from teachers who implemented the model, further informing the evaluation of its practical applicability.

3. Data Collection

The data collection process followed these sequential steps:

3.1 Conducting a questionnaire-based survey to gather insights from 15 vocal teachers regarding the Verdi art song teaching model.

3.2 Assessing the correctness and applicability of the model through expert evaluations.

3.3 Interviewing teachers using the model to obtain their feedback through evaluation questionnaires.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 The responses from 15 vocal teachers were systematically analyzed in conjunction with relevant literature on vocal pedagogy and curriculum design to extract key insights for refining the teaching model. According to Creswell and Poth,[5] qualitative studies often rely on small, purposeful samples to gather in-depth perspectives. In this study, the inclusion of 15 participants was therefore deemed appropriate for exploratory research of this nature.

4.2 Five experienced bel canto educators evaluated the Vocal Teaching Model for Giuseppe Verdi's Art Songs using a structured questionnaire focused on its applicability and accuracy. Their expert assessments and recommendations were analyzed to refine and enhance the model.

Research Results

The development of the vocal teaching model was carried out in three key stages:

1. Creating a Vocal Teaching Model Outline

1.1 Importance of Teaching Models: Through interviews with Chinese vocal teachers and subsequent data analysis, two primary challenges faced by undergraduate vocal students were identified. First, there is an overemphasis on frequently taught art songs by well-known composers, which are often technically demanding and difficult for students to master within a limited timeframe. Second, students are generally not exposed to art songs by lesser-known composers, as these works are often undervalued or perceived as unnecessary for study, leading to a narrow and imbalanced repertoire.

Teachers agreed that Giuseppe Verdi's art songs possess strong coherence, dramatic depth, and emotional expressiveness through unique rhythmic structures. While some of Verdi's art songs may be appropriate for advanced undergraduates, their technical

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[5] John W. Creswell, and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches,* 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2018), 157-158.

demands, stylistic complexity, and linguistic requirements generally necessitate a certain level of vocal maturity. Therefore, careful selection is essential to match individual student skill levels, making only selected pieces suitable for undergraduate study based on vocal readiness and pedagogical objectives. Verdi's works help improve singing techniques, breath control, and stage presence. Among Verdi's art songs, "Non t'accostare all'urna" and "Ad una stella" were most frequently recommended by vocal instructors. "Non t'accostare all'urna," in particular, is widely used in undergraduate vocal programs in China due to its moderate vocal range, clear melodic structure, and manageable phrasing, making it accessible for developing voices. Additionally, both songs offer pedagogical value by allowing students to focus on essential bel canto techniques such as legato singing, breath control, and Italian diction, without the extreme technical demands found in Verdi's operatic arias.

Literature analysis further highlighted that an effective teaching model should possess several key qualities. It must be targeted, aligning closely with both the defined teaching goals and the expected learning outcomes. Additionally, the model should be specifically adapted to the unique musical and vocal characteristics of Verdi's art songs. Finally, it should be designed to integrate these distinctive features into a structured, goal-oriented teaching framework that supports systematic skill development and artistic interpretation.

1.2 This teaching model outlines information according to the following topics.

1.2.1 Teaching Model Overview: This teaching model seamlessly integrates theory and practice, beginning to explore Verdi's art songs' historical background and musical style. It helps students solidify their understanding of fundamental vocal theories and techniques. Students develop essential vocal skills by engaging with Verdi's distinctive stylistic features, including sustained legato lines and expressive use of accents. Working with piano accompaniment further enhances their musical sensitivity and interpretive skills. This approach not only strengthens students' vocal technique and artistic expression but also expands their repertoire and prepares them for the demands of more advanced operatic roles.

1.2.2 Teaching Objectives: The primary aim of this teaching model is to introduce greater diversity into undergraduate vocal training. By studying Verdi's art songs, students will encounter a distinctive musical style and develop the technical prowess

necessary for mastering more complex operatic works. The specific objectives of the training model are structured to guide students through a comprehensive learning process. First, work analysis serves as the foundation, where students explore the historical and musical context of Verdi's art songs. This understanding provides essential theoretical foundations for informed and effective vocal training. Next, the focus shifts to improving singing skills, with students developing specific vocal techniques found in Verdi's works—such as sustained phrasing, proper stress placement, and mastery of double-dotted rhythms—through systematic and targeted practice. Following this, students work on enhancing artistic expression by engaging in collaborative practice with piano accompaniment, which supports the refinement of both stage presence and interpretive depth. Finally, the model aims to expand the repertoire, allowing students to internalize Verdi's unique musical language while strengthening their vocal technique and preparing them for the demands of more advanced operatic repertoire.

The primary aim of this teaching model is to enrich undergraduate vocal training by introducing stylistic and technical diversity through the study of Verdi's art songs. These works expose students to a distinctive compositional style that supports the development of advanced vocal technique and interpretive skills, serving as a foundation for more complex operatic repertoire. The model's objectives are organized to guide students through a structured and comprehensive learning process. It begins with repertoire analysis, where students examine the historical background, text setting, and musical structure of selected art songs. This analytical foundation equips students with the theoretical and stylistic understanding necessary for informed performance. The next phase focuses on targeted vocal training, emphasizing specific techniques drawn from Verdi's works such as sustained legato phrasing, precise accentuation, and control of rhythmic nuance, including double-dotted figures. Students then apply these techniques in collaborative practice with piano accompaniment, refining their stage presence, musical interaction, and expressive delivery. Ultimately, the model seeks to expand each student's repertoire while cultivating technical proficiency and artistic maturity in preparation for advanced operatic performance.

1.2.3 Teaching Approach: Verdi's art songs, inspired by poems from various renowned poets, encompass diverse musical styles and varying difficulty levels. The teaching approach should be progressive, adapting to students' abilities and allowing them to

tackle increasingly complex pieces. The methodology is structured into several progressive stages to support students' comprehensive development. The first stage, Initial Analysis and Appreciation, introduces students to the stylistic qualities and historical context of Verdi's art songs, fostering a foundational understanding and appreciation of the music. In the second stage, Technical Practice, students engage in focused training to develop the specific vocal techniques required for Verdi's compositions, working intensively on each component. The third stage, Collaborative Performance, involves working with piano accompaniment to deepen interpretive skills and enhance the integration of voice and music. The final stage, Comprehensive Evaluation, includes a thorough assessment of both vocal technique and artistic performance. This step-by-step approach ensures students develop a well-rounded understanding of Verdi's art songs while steadily refining their vocal abilities and emotional interpretation and stylistic nuance.

       1.2.4 Course Design: The course is structured to span nine weeks, each dedicated to a specific aspect of Verdi's art songs. The weekly topics and content are outlined in the following table: In the first week, "Analysis", students will use the method of explanation to analyze the historical background and musical terms of the song and will be checked and evaluated in the second week. In the 3-6 weeks, "Practice", students will use the method of explanation and demonstration to practice language logic stress, "legato" singing, special rhythm, high notes, and will be checked and evaluated in the fourth to seventh weeks. In the seventh to eighth weeks, "Performance", students will use the method of explanation and demonstration to teach how to cooperate with piano accompaniment to improve stage performance. In the ninth week, "Evaluation", students will be evaluated based on their usual classroom performance, homework completion and live singing. This comprehensive Course Schedule provides students with a structured pathway to mastering Verdi's art songs, combining technical development with artistic expression (Table 1).

       1.2.5 Evaluation: Students' progress will be assessed through a comprehensive evaluation process involving both vocal instructors and piano accompanists. While teachers lead the assessment of technical and artistic development, accompanists provide supplemental feedback on musical collaboration, phrasing, and ensemble coordination during rehearsals and performances. Evaluation criteria focus on three key components. First,

classroom performance will be assessed based on students' vocal technique, interpretive skill, and engagement during in-class singing sessions. Second, students will be required to submit regular assignments, including practice logs and audio or video recordings of their rehearsal work, which will be reviewed on a weekly basis to monitor consistency and improvement. Finally, a culminating live performance will serve as a capstone assessment, allowing students to demonstrate their technical growth and expressive interpretation before an audience. This multi-dimensional evaluation approach ensures that students receive ongoing, constructive feedback that supports their continued development and artistic maturity.

Table 1   Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Focus
1	Introduction to Verdi's Art Songs	Historical background, poetic inspiration, and stylistic analysis.
2	Vocal Techniques – Breathing and Diction	Mastering breath control and proper pronunciation for Verdi's Italian lyrics.
3	Singing Continuous Phrases	Developing stamina and fluidity in long vocal lines.
4	Rhythm and Accent Placement	Emphasize the accuracy of dotted rhythm and accented rhythmic position
5	Melodic Interpretation	Understanding Verdi's melodic phrasing and emotional nuances.
6	Vocal Range and Expression	Expanding the vocal range and integrating expressive dynamics.
7	Collaborative Performance Practice	Working with piano accompaniment and refining stage presence.
8	Emotional Expression and Drama	Enhancing interpretive skills through character portrayal.
9	Final Performance and Evaluation	Live performance and assessment of technical and artistic development.

2. Development Concept of the Teaching Model

Drawing from interview data and a review of relevant literature, the researchers developed a structured teaching model to address the vocal characteristics of Verdi's art songs and the specific educational needs of undergraduate students. The teaching model emphasizes a systematic approach to skill development, interpretive understanding, and vocal health within the context of bel canto training. To implement this framework effectively, the researchers designed a model abbreviated as "APPE," which consists of four key components: 1) Analysis (A): Focused on detailed study of musical structure, text, and stylistic elements. 2) Practice (P): Emphasizes targeted vocal exercises and rehearsal strategies. 3) Performance (P): Provides opportunities for interpretive application through guided performance. 4) Evaluation (E): Involves feedback and assessment to monitor progress and reinforce learning. This model integrates both pedagogical structure and artistic exploration, aiming to support student development in technique, expression, and repertoire familiarity. The "APPE" model has the following steps and processes:

2.1 Analysis: Verdi's art songs integrate intricate musical elements including melody, harmony, rhythm, and text, all of which require careful examination to support effective learning. A thorough analysis enables students to identify technical and interpretive challenges while deepening their understanding of the composer's stylistic language. Drawing on analytical criteria outlined by Kimball (2005), this stage emphasizes the study of text setting, melodic construction, harmonic language, rhythmic design, formal structure, and accompaniment. Additionally, students explore unifying elements within each piece and consider Verdi's unique stylistic influences. This comprehensive approach to score study and lyrical analysis fosters critical listening, stylistic awareness, and informed performance preparation.

2.2 Practice: While Verdi's art songs are often more demanding than standard undergraduate repertoire by composers such as Schubert, Schumann, or Fauré, they offer unique pedagogical value for Chinese students by bridging Italian operatic style with structured technical training. These songs require the development of advanced vocal techniques, including breath control, legato phrasing, dynamic nuance, and precise Italian diction.

2.2.1 Breath Control and Support: Mastering breath control and support is essential for performing Verdi's art songs, particularly in phrases that contain wide intervallic leaps. These passages demand precise breath preparation to maintain tonal accuracy, phrase continuity, and vocal stability. In the APPE model, targeted exercises are introduced to help students develop diaphragmatic support and controlled airflow, which are crucial for navigating such intervals effectively. as shown in Example 1. It illustrates a typical example from Verdi's repertoire where strategic breath management is necessary. Through guided practice, students learn to anticipate these technical demands, reinforcing proper breathing technique as a foundational element of vocal performance.

Example 1   Breath Control and Support: Excerpt from the C section of "*Non t'accostare all'urna,*" mm. 41-43.
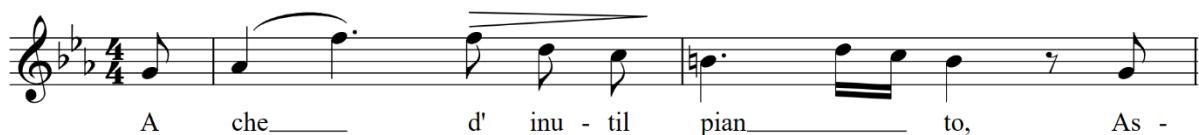
2.2.2 Expansion of Vocal Range: Verdi's art songs often feature a wide vocal range and phrases that begin in the upper register, presenting both a challenge and an opportunity for vocal development. These musical characteristics are particularly effective in training students to expand their usable vocal range with control and confidence. Within the APPE teaching model, such passages are used to introduce targeted vocal exercises that focus on resonance placement, breath support, and gradual extension of pitch range.

Example 2   Expansion of Vocal Range: Excerpt from the B section of "Ad una stella" mm. 19-20.
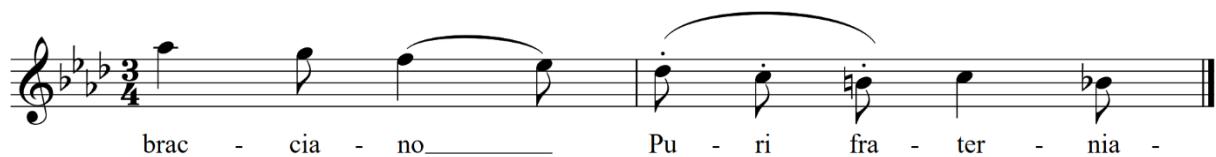
From example 2 provides an example of this pedagogical application, illustrating how Verdi's writing encourages singers to develop flexibility and strength in the higher tessitura. Through structured practice, students learn to approach high notes with technical security, supporting long-term vocal growth.

2.2.3 Nuanced Changes in Timbre and Dynamics: Verdi's art songs are characterized by rich emotional depth and frequent shifts in dynamics and vocal color. The scores often include detailed expressive markings—such as crescendos, decrescendos, and timbral indications—that require the singer to develop nuanced control over vocal tone and intensity. In the APPE teaching model, these elements are used to train students in dynamic variation, tonal shading, and expressive delivery.

Example 3   Nuanced Changes in Timbre and Dynamics: Excerpt from the C section of "Non t'accostare all'urna," mm. 27-29.

From example 3 demonstrates how such markings guide students in shaping phrases with emotional sensitivity and technical precision. By engaging with these dynamic and timbral demands, students enhance their interpretive skills and gain a deeper understanding of expressive communication in vocal performance.

Targeted vocal exercises based on these pieces help students Refine their technique in areas such as legato, phrasing, and diction, while developing expressive singing abilities. Regular, structured practice sessions enable students to overcome technical difficulties and enhance musical interpretation.

2.3 Performance: The dramatic intensity and emotional depth of Verdi's art songs offer students valuable opportunities to enhance stage presence and expressive delivery. This stage emphasizes emotional interpretation, character portrayal, and musical

collaboration through performance with piano accompaniment. Students also receive guidance in stage movement and interaction with accompanists, helping them perform with greater confidence, engagement, and sensitivity to ensemble dynamics.

2.4 Evaluation: A structured evaluation system ensures continuous improvement and refinement of teaching methods. The assessment process consists of both formative and summative components. Formative assessment involves continuous feedback provided through in-class discussions, individual coaching sessions, and the evaluation of homework assignments. Summative assessment is conducted through final performance evaluations, live recitals, and graded assessments that focus on the technical proficiency and expressive quality of each student's performance.

3. Verifying and Improving the Teaching Model Outline

To assess the applicability and accuracy of the teaching model, the researchers developed an evaluation questionnaire and invited five renowned bel canto experts to provide feedback. The questionnaire evaluated five key aspects of the teaching model: 1) Completeness of teaching steps and methods. 2) Logical coherence and practicality of the teaching design. 3) Relevance and specificity of the curriculum. 4) Appropriateness of teaching materials such as images and musical scores. 5) Effectiveness of learning assessment methods.

The experts expressed general satisfaction with the outline, mainly commenting on the teaching media and evaluation methods. While they also acknowledged the strengths of the teaching steps, design, and curriculum targeting, they provided valuable suggestions for improvement.

3.1 Expert Feedback on the Teaching Model

3.1.1 Completeness of Instructional Sequence: Experts agreed that the model presents a well-rounded instructional framework from pre-class preparation to post-class review with clear, adaptable steps that promote student engagement and participation.

3.1.2 Alignment of Teaching Design: The instructional design was praised for its logical structure and alignment with course objectives and student needs. It balances depth and accessibility, ensuring systematic knowledge progression tailored to the learning characteristics of undergraduate students.

3.1.3 Curriculum Relevance and Focus: Experts highlighted that the curriculum is well-targeted, integrating the technical, musical, and expressive challenges of Verdi's art songs. It fosters both theoretical understanding and practical skill development, particularly in areas such as breath control, phrasing, and Italian diction skills essential for undergraduate vocal growth.

3.1.4 Effectiveness of Teaching Media: The use of scores, visual aids (such as annotated images of vocal techniques or staging), and audio examples was deemed generally effective in supporting student comprehension. However, experts recommended refining media selection to ensure clarity, enhance engagement, and reinforce key learning objectives.

3.1.5 Application of Learning Evaluation: The evaluation approach was viewed as too outcome focused. Experts recommended broadening the criteria to include formative aspects such as learning progress, student effort, and participation. This would provide a more balanced and comprehensive view of student development over time.

3.2 Experts' Suggestions for Improving the Teaching Model

3.2.1 Evaluation Criteria: Experts recommended incorporating more detailed evaluation criteria that assess learning outcomes and evaluate the learning process. This would provide a more comprehensive picture of students' development.

3.2.2 Individualized Teaching Approaches: Experts emphasized the need to account for student differences. They suggested offering personalized guidance on tonality for different voice types and providing a more challenging repertoire for advanced students. These adjustments would better cater to the specific needs of students and ensure more tailored instruction.

3.2.3 Enhanced Teaching Media: Experts proposed increasing intuitive and demonstrative teaching media to improve teaching clarity and effectiveness. This could include more visual aids and multimedia resources to ensure students can better understand the material.

3.3 Improving the Teaching Model Outline: In response to expert feedback, several improvements were made to the teaching model:

3.3.1 Refining Evaluation Criteria: The evaluation system was revised to include process and final assessments. The process evaluation, accounting for 40% of the total score, will consider attendance and homework completion. The final review, making up 60% of the total score, will focus on students' live performances in the ninth week, assessing technical skills, emotional expression, and stage presence.

3.3.2 Addressing Individual Differences in Voice Types: The model now includes detailed recommendations on tonality to meet the needs of students with different voice types. These adjustments ensure that students sing in the most suitable key for their voice, promoting better vocal health and practical training.

3.3.3 Optimizing Teaching Media: The researchers enhanced the clarity and precision of music scores and images used in the teaching materials based on expert suggestions. Music notation software was utilized to ensure the visual components were clear and accurate, while additional music scores were incorporated to facilitate teaching.

4. Evaluation of the Teaching Model by Teachers

The researchers introduced the teaching model to 10 teachers over 9 weeks. These educators agreed that the teaching model, which focuses on Giuseppe Verdi's art songs, not only addresses the practical needs of undergraduate music education but also accommodates students' differences. The model provides tailored exercises that comprehensively enhance students' language skills, vocal techniques, stage presence, and abilities. It is seen as more than practice for specific repertoire; it offers a structured teaching methodology for bel canto instruction. By establishing a complete teaching framework, the model provides a replicable and scalable solution for undergraduate vocal education.

This teaching approach reflects recent developments in Chinese music education, which emphasize integrating classical traditions with globally informed pedagogical practices (Xiao, 2022). By incorporating Verdi's art songs into the curriculum, the model contributes to enhancing the diversity and professionalization of undergraduate vocal training in China. It supports students in developing not only technical proficiency but also independent learning skills and critical thinking through structured analysis and performance practice. Additionally, the model provides educators with practical tools and strategies for expanding students' exposure to a broader range of vocal repertoire, thereby enriching the overall learning experience.

Discussion

Based on the research results, the following key points were discussed:

1. Development of the Verdi Art Song-APPE Teaching Model: The researchers designed a comprehensive teaching model, titled "Verdi Art Song-APPE," specifically tailored for undergraduate vocal education within selected institutions in the People's Republic of China, with particular focus on application in Western regions such as Xi'an and Sichuan. This model integrates analysis, practice, performance, and evaluation. This is consistent with Xiao Junni's emphasis that the vocal teaching model involves the theory, principles, content, and progress schedule of vocal teaching, which helps students form a systematic teaching concept and clearly understand the overall steps of vocal pedagogy.[6]

2. Analysis of Verdi's Art Song Elements: Through detailed analysis of Verdi's art songs including musical scores, language, and terminology the researchers aimed to support students in deepening their understanding and enhancing their learning outcomes. This approach aligns with Jia DaQun's view that music is inherently complex, capable of expressing multiple concepts and emotions simultaneously. Jia emphasizes the importance of examining music from diverse perspectives and historical contexts to provide objective insights that inform both scholarly research and performance practice.[7]

3. Targeted Vocal Exercises: The researchers emphasize that mastering the correct singing techniques is essential for performing art songs and conveying emotions. Fu Jie noted that art songs and opera arias require proper singing techniques, ensuring the voice remains natural and fluid throughout the performance and soft during the singing process.[8] As Hou Lisong suggested, teachers should select appropriate repertoires based on student needs to provide individualized development. Teachers should tailor their song selections to the student's age and emotional needs, applying the principle of teaching students according to

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[6] Junni Xiao, "Exploring the Importance of Vocal Music Teaching Method to Vocal Music Learners," *Contemporary Music Journal* 12, 3 (2022): 65. (in Chinese)

[7] Daqun Jia, "Re-identification of "Music Analysis"," *Music Creation Journal* 10, 9 (2019): 85. (in Chinese)

[8] Jie Fu, "Analysis of Different Methods of Singing Foreign Art Songs and Foreign Opera Arias," *Art Appraisal Journal* 7, 4 (2022): 38. (in Chinese)

their aptitude. During training, it is necessary to combine the students' situations and select an appropriate repertoire for students to learn to ensure the personalized development of students. Teachers pay attention to teaching students by aptitude and should combine students' characteristics.[9]

4. Student Characteristics and Teaching Case Design: The researchers analyzed the characteristics of undergraduate music students in China and incorporated corresponding teaching cases into the model, which can aid teachers in their instruction. The main goal of this study is to help students master Verdi's art song performance methods and styles while improving their vocal abilities. Cooperation with piano accompaniment is critical in achieving a complete emotional and musical interpretation of the works. Xiao Ping points out that piano accompaniment should intertwine with the melody, enhancing the overall musical expression, supporting the creation of the musical image, and becoming an indispensable part of art songs.[10]

5. Evaluating students' performance on Verdi's art songs serves not only to measure academic progress but also to provide meaningful feedback for refining instructional strategies. The researchers adapted and improved the teaching model in response to challenges observed during student implementation. Similarly, Xiao Junni emphasizes that well-designed evaluation methods play a critical role in offering constructive feedback and fostering student improvement a perspective that corresponds with the researchers' approach and findings.[11]

Conclusions

Through extensive literature consultation, on-site interviews, and systematic analysis of existing challenges in undergraduate vocal instruction, the researchers developed the APPE teaching model—featuring clear objectives, targeted methods, defined target students, structured curriculum design, case-based learning, and comprehensive evaluation strategies.

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[9] Lisong Hou, "A Summary of Research on Chinese Modern Music Teaching Method," *Art Appraisal Journal* 3, 2 (2022): 114. (in Chinese)

[10] Ping Xiao, "On the Style and Singing Features of European Art Songs," *Explorations in Music Journal* 8, 2 (2008): 76. (in Chinese)

[11] Junni Xiao, 63-65. (in Chinese)

Implemented over a 9-week course, the model addressed key components of vocal training, including breath control, diction, legato phrasing, dynamic variation, stage presence, and interpretive expression, within the stylistic framework of Verdi's art songs.

Evaluation by five expert vocal pedagogues and classroom application by ten instructors demonstrated specific outcomes: notable improvement in students' technical accuracy, vocal stamina, stylistic authenticity, and emotional communication, alongside increased engagement and reflective learning. The model's effectiveness lies in its structured yet adaptable framework, ensuring technical skill-building while promoting artistic maturity. Its dynamic quality emerges from the flexible sequencing of Analysis, Practice, Performance, and Evaluation phases, enabling teachers to tailor instruction to different skill levels and learning paces. Its inspiring nature is rooted in the emotionally rich and dramatic qualities of Verdi's repertoire, which stimulate students' creativity, interpretive depth, and cultural appreciation.

Nevertheless, several limitations remain. The model is still in the experimental stage and was tested in a relatively small sample of institutions—primarily in Western China which may limit its generalizability. Variations in teachers' instructional styles, students' linguistic preparation, and institutional resources could affect outcomes. Furthermore, while Verdi's art songs are pedagogically valuable, they may present linguistic and stylistic challenges for students without sufficient Italian diction training, requiring additional support materials.

Future research should broaden implementation to diverse regional and international contexts, refine multimedia and digital resources to support self-directed learning, and explore adaptation of the APPE framework to other repertoires and genres. Cross-disciplinary collaboration with language, drama, and music history specialists could further enhance interpretive authenticity and student engagement. Continuous evaluation and feedback from both educators and learners will be essential for optimizing the model's pedagogical and artistic impact.

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