

From Point to Surface Explore the Teaching Method Suitable for Children's Vocal Music Beginners

-- Empirical Research to Overcoming Stage Performance Tension

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Abstract: This paper reviews theories of performance anxiety, the causes of performance anxiety and some related treatments. It discusses the measurement of performance anxiety and research on performance anxiety in children. As there is little research on performance anxiety in non-professionals and child beginners, the authors used this as a starting point to design a study on performance anxiety in child beginners. The subjects were all children aged 6-12 years who had been learning to sing for less than 2 years. A total of 120 children participated in the study. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather information about the background and anxiety levels of the children in the study, using a questionnaire developed by the authors. This work falls within the realm of empirical research. The aim of the study was to investigate the causes of overcoming the nervousness of singing beginners. It also proposes solutions and quasi-experiments. The aim of this study was to investigate the causes of overcoming nervousness in singing beginners in order to propose appropriate solutions that will hopefully be useful for children's singing training institutions.

Keywords: Children's Vocal Music for Beginners; Stage Performance Anxiety; Children's Vocal Music.

1. Introduction

Since 2013 I am teaching singing to children, and in the winter of 2020 I had the good fortune to read the Oxford University book *Theory and Research on Music and Emotion* - published in 2001 and written by two prof Partrik N. Juslin and John A. Sloboda. "Although some theories of emotion claim that the study of music can contribute to a detailed understanding of emotional phenomena (Gaver & Mander, 1987), to date there is no psychology of music or psychology of emotion that examines the emotions of music, and even the most definitive music psychology textbook, *Psychology of Music* (Deutsch, 1999), has no separate chapter on emotion, and the most detailed emotion psychology textbook, *Handbook of Emotion*, has no separate chapter on music. *Music and the Study of Emotion* is therefore the definitive book on the psychology of emotion in music. The book is 500 pages long and is divided into 20 separate sections in Italian. The author read it in two months and felt very strongly about it. Chapter 13 on negative emotions in music making: *The Problem of Performance Anxiety* (Andrew Steptoe, 2001) is a good illustration of the problem of anxiety when performing that's experienced by both professional and non-professional music students. How does this happen? Is it age related? What are the causes? Can anxiety be avoided? And so on. With these questions in mind, the author did further research in the literature.

On the 10th of January 2021, the author held a vocal debriefing performance at the Bayannur City TV. There were 54 students, 80% of whom were child singing beginners (less than 2 years of study). In their singing performances, mispronunciations and forgotten lyrics were common. Some even gave up singing. Why did the students perform so differently in the concert than in their regular singing lessons? Was it because of nervousness? Is performance anxiety

related to age and gender? Is it related to song factors, audience composition, etc.? Do non-professional children have less anxiety than professional music students?

The above series of questions remained in my mind. I decided to study the anxiety of non-professional children's singing in order to clarify the origin of the facts and to find out the relevant countermeasures. On the one hand, I conducted a systematic review of the relevant literature in the field of performance anxiety. On the other hand, I used an empirical research method to design and implement a questionnaire survey, resulting in a complete Master's thesis.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Research on Literature Related to Children's Vocal Music Teaching Abroad

The book *Theory and Practice of Music Education for Preschool Children*, edited by Professor Wang Lan'e of Beijing Normal University, writes that vocal music educator Trujina, based on her research on children's music education in the Soviet Union, believes that the education of children's music should be conducted in groups and she also spread choirs and other forms.

The book "Children's Singing Pronunciation" by Japanese scholar Saburo Shinagawa is also a guide to teaching singing to children in China. He explains that early music education is important for a child's lifelong education in vocalisation and resonance.

2.2. The Special Significance of Studying Children's Performance Anxiety

The author has found from a large number of research reports that research on the proprioception of musicians, the characteristics of the performance environment and related music therapy dominate the field. This is despite the fact that

accurate measurement of performance anxiety is central to the research. However, relevant research in the literature on measures of performance anxiety, especially experiments on children's musical performance anxiety and performance anxiety in non-professional music learners, has not received much attention. The most authoritative international core journal databases - including the IIMP Full Text Database, International Performing Arts Index, RILM Abstracts of Music Literature, Art Abstracts (EBSCO), Google Scholar Toolbar, PsycINFO (EBSCO), Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC), etc. currently have no standard scales or experiments to measuring performance anxiety in children. The few experimental studies have included children with adults in the total sample (Wolfe, 1989; Kendrick et al., 1982) or selected performers in professional youth instrumental groups or choirs, but the mean age of all samples was over 11 years old (Ryan, 1998, 2004). With regard to family research on children's performance anxiety, the author conducted academic searches using Google, Wikipedia and China Knowledge Network, and there was zero research on children's performance anxiety. Does a child have performance anxiety regardless of whether any child music learner goes through grade exams, concerts and cultural events, large or small, in the process of learning music? Are amateur piano children dropping out of school associated with performance anxiety? How does this performance anxiety differ from performance fear in adults? Is performance anxiety in children related to other factors? What are the developmental trends? If these questions can be addressed, it will be a beacon of light for Shu Liqin's instrumental performance, inspiring them to perform music and laying a solid foundation for further development.

3. Conceptual Framework

3.1. Characteristics of Vocal Music Learning in Childhood

Childhood refers to a person from birth to the basic maturity of this period, that is, refers to a person from birth to 17,18 years old this stage, can be divided into: infancy, early childhood, childhood, juvenile period. This paper mainly discusses the physiological and psychological characteristics of the development of childhood (school age) of children aged 6-12 years old and the influence on vocal music learning.

3.2. Physiological Characteristics of Vocal Music Learning in Childhood

The anatomy of the human vocal organs is very complex, and the coordination between these structures is also very delicate. All the instruments are composed of the excitation source, vibrator and resonator. The human body is like a musical instrument, which is also composed of the excitation source is the respiratory system, the vibrator is the vocal cord, and the resonator is the laryngeal cavity, pharyngeal cavity, oral cavity and nasal cavity. A special and important function also has is the bite function, which other instruments. Thus, it is crucial to be familiar with children's vocal music and physiology. The mastery of their "instrument" is related to whether the singers can practice, sing and protect their "instrument" scientifically, so that children can properly protect their "instrument" when singing and adapt to the state of singing.

3.3. The Psychological Characteristics of Vocal Music Learning in Childhood

The general characteristics of psychological development in childhood are: on the one hand, the strong curiosity and curiosity for the things around them, while on the other hand, the attention is not easy to concentrate, easy to be new things. Attracted, interest is easy to transfer, willpower is not strong enough, in short: curious, fun, active, Victory is their characteristic of the music. All kinds of beautiful music melodies have aroused their strong curiosity and thirst for knowledge. Singing the feeling of the melody directly is the simplest and most convenient way for them to express their love for music, so children like music from the moment they are born.

4. Data Gathering Procedure

4.1. Sampling and Grouping

The questionnaire objects randomly selected 100 students taught in the group class of 6-12 years old vocal music beginners in Bayannur City, Inner Mongolia as the research objects. This choice better covers the children at all stages of primary vocal music in the city, so it can more comprehensively reflect the distribution of psychological tension in stage singing in the above groups, which is helpful to draw objective and effective conclusions.

4.2. Questionnaire Data Processing and Analysis

First, the options of each problem are converted to 12.3.4 according to the different nature and degree. The value (different values represent the problem according to the specific significance), and the results are calculated by professional statistical software, and then the significance of the statistical results is judged, and finally the relevant conclusions at the statistical level are finally derived. The commonly used preliminary statistical analysis is frequency statistics, through professional statistical software SPSS19.0.

5. Conclusion

1. From the questionnaire results, it can be seen that cognitive anxiety plays a major role in stage anxiety, probably according to the stress theory, cognitive evaluation plays an important mediating role in stressful events affecting mental health and cognitive anxiety (Zheng Hui, 2009). Therefore, when intervening to address stage anxiety, the focus should be on changing the misconceptions of children's beginning vocalists about stage performance, so that students can fully understand the causes and manifestations of stage anxiety and change their perceptions of stage anxiety in order to form correct perceptions.

2. Experience, i.e. years of study, and the number of stage appearances in the last year had a significant effect on stage anxiety, while gender, age, and performance style did not have a significant effect on stage anxiety, probably because more experienced child vocal beginners are better able to control their anxiety, and because they have more performance experience they are less likely to see anxiety as a threat and learn to see it as a part of the show (Li Zhongeven, 2010). Therefore, when intervening to address stage anxiety, the influence of experience on stage anxiety among university students in arts clubs should be taken into account, and combining dance therapy with drama therapy to set up

different scenes, problems and characters to interpret can help to improve students' expressiveness, clinical response and ability to deal with stage mishaps.

3. Performance style is the factor that has the greatest impact on stage anxiety, with self-confidence levels coming second. This may be due to the fact that different performance styles have different ability requirements for stage performance, for example, vocal students should have certain physical, psychological, verbal and performance foundations (Li Li, 2015). Secondly, the direction and content of different performance styles also differ, for example, vocal performers need purposeful vocal practice, familiarity with lyrics, singing melodies, and reasonable breath changes while piano performers first need enough practice time to get themselves used to the keyboard and ensure finger dexterity. All these factors can lead to different stage anxiety. At the same time, low self-esteem is one of the psychological factors that cause stage performance anxiety, which often seriously affects performers' stage anxiety and leads to their performance malfunction, while these failed performance experiences further increase their psychological stress and fear of the stage, forming a vicious circle (Zheng Hui 2011). Therefore, when intervening to address stage anxiety, it is important to take into account the specificity of performance styles and to

propose strategies for different performance styles, as well as to fully consider the impact of self-confidence on stage anxiety, so that students can learn to see themselves from different perspectives and develop a comprehensive understanding of themselves in order to overcome low self-esteem.

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