

Natali Tolstova
Zhang Yaru

The experience of mastering the european vocal repertoire by chinese students on the basis of the Ukrainian vocal school

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Natali Tolstova

Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences,
Associate Professor,
Senior Lecturer at the Department
of Theoretical,
Musical, Instrumental and Vocal Training
State Institution "South Ukrainian National
Pedagogical University named after
K. D. Ushynsky"
ORCID: 0000-0003-4802-512X
Researcher ID: D-3878-2018

Zhang Yaru

Postgraduate Student at the Department
of Music Art and Choreography
State Institution "South Ukrainian National
Pedagogical
University named after K. D. Ushynsky"
ORCID: 0009-0000-8807-7579

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The article provides a theoretical analysis of the experience of mastering the European vocal repertoire by Chinese students on the basis of the Ukrainian vocal school. The relevance of the study is determined by the internationalisation of arts education, the intensification of academic mobility, and the need for scholarly understanding of the difficulties that Chinese students encounter in the process of acquiring European vocal and performance traditions while studying at pedagogical universities in Ukraine. The aim of the article is to identify the main factors that complicate Chinese students' mastery of the European vocal repertoire and to substantiate the scientific approaches and principal methods for overcoming these difficulties.

The article analyses the essence of the phenomenon of the "vocal school" as an integral pedagogical and performance system that combines the technical, artistic-stylistic, and methodological foundations of forming a singer's performance mastery; it also outlines the specific features of the Ukrainian vocal school and its formative and educational potential in work with Chinese students.

The methodological framework of the study is based on cultural, comparative, anthropological, technological-systemic, innovative-creative approaches, the combination of which makes it possible to consider the problem as a multidimensional intercultural, artistic, psychophysiological, performance-technological, and pedagogical phenomenon. The main difficulties experienced by Chinese students in mastering the European vocal repertoire are characterised as those related to differences in artistic mentality and musical thinking; intonational and auditory experience; phonetic and orthoepic skills; types of voice production and stylistic and interpretive concepts, ways of emotional, and creative self-expression. It is proved that the effectiveness of mastering the European repertoire is ensured through facilitating the sociocultural adaptation of international students, student-centred organisation of the educational process, the systematic development of basic vocal and phonatory skills, performance-related orthoepic culture, auditory self-control, reflective thinking, and the ability for independent interpretive and creative music-making. The principal forms and methods of overcoming the difficulties typically faced by singers from the People's Republic of China in the process of working on the European repertoire are characterised. It is emphasised that the Ukrainian vocal school functions as an effective pedagogical system capable of ensuring not only the technical improvement of Chinese singers, but also their profound artistic and interpretive adaptation to European vocal art.

Keywords: Chinese students, Ukrainian vocal school, European vocal repertoire, vocal training, intercultural adaptation, vocal performance mastery, orthoepy, interpretation, musical thinking, pedagogical conditions.

Problem Statement. In modern conditions of the internationalisation of higher art education, students from China actively use the opportunities of academic mobility and seek to obtain vocal education in countries whose vocal schools have gained recognition in the global artistic space (Yu Henyuan, 2019; Yu Henyuan & Koehn, 2021). One of such countries is Ukraine, whose vocal art is represented by the names of outstanding singers of past centuries and a constellation of contemporary performers—winners of numerous international competitions—who have achieved high artistic results due to a highly developed vocal and performance culture (Antoniuk, 2007, 2017).

At the same time, vocal teachers note the presence of a number of complex problems they encounter in their everyday practice when working with Chinese students. Most of these are characteristic of a significant part of young vocalists and are caused by a number of objective factors, the study of which is reflected in the works of N. Koehn, H. Usova, Xia Jing, Tan Sai, and other scholars. Among them are factors

related to anatomical and psychophysiological features, artistic mentality and worldview characteristics of young singers, differences in their musical-speech and genre-stylistic experience, the specifics of musical education acquired in other cultural traditions, as well as features of previous vocal training and performance experience formed within the framework of the national vocal school (Koehn, 2018; Xia Jing, 2019; Usova & Tan, 2023; Yu Henyuan, 2019).

Taking these factors into account necessitates the improvement of the vocal-methodological system based on a systemic approach to the organisation of vocal education for students of this category, built on teachers' conscious understanding of the nature of the emergence of difficulties and the development of methods for their successful overcoming. Solving this task requires focusing pedagogical attention on the deep cultural and mental characteristics of foreign singers, facilitating the adaptation of students to new artistic-aesthetic, linguistic-phonetic, and performance norms, and improving the methodology of

vocal teaching based on harmonising the requirements of mastering European repertoire with consideration of the peculiarities and sociocultural needs of their home country (Wu, 2012; Tan Sai & Yan Penfei, 2023; Usova & Tan Sai, 2023).

The purpose of the article is a theoretical analysis of the experience of mastering the European vocal repertoire by Chinese students under conditions of study at pedagogical universities in Ukraine and substantiation of effective scientific approaches and methods for overcoming the problems that arise in this process.

Analysis of Recent Research. In modern musicology, the concept of a vocal school is considered as a historically formed, culturally conditioned system of training a singer, which encompasses technical-phonatory, artistic-interpretative, and pedagogical foundations of voice formation and performance mastery. In scholarly works, the vocal school is interpreted as a purposeful, organised, and holistic system of training singers and vocal teachers for professional activity, combining artistic-stylistic and methodological-technological principles. Their totality includes issues of a vocal-phonatory nature, in particular breathing, sound production, resonance, orthoepy, as well as the tasks of interpretative-artistic performance, stylistic adequacy, and expressive embodiment of the artistic and figurative content of musical works (Antoniuk, 2007, 2017; Hryn, 2012).

In the research of Johan Sundberg, the vocal school is also interpreted as a system of acoustically and physiologically grounded principles of singing sound formation, which ensure the efficiency and health preservation of vocal activity (Sundberg, 1987). Thus, the vocal school is formed under the influence of national culture and vocal traditions, but it is equally important that its effectiveness presupposes consideration of changing sociocultural conditions and the combination of traditions with the needs dictated by the development of musical art and modern innovative pedagogical achievements (Koehn, 2018; Xia Jing, 2019).

In the contemporary international scholarly discourse, studies devoted to the role of reflection, somatics, conscious practice, student-centred approach, and student autonomy in the formation of musical performance mastery are of great importance. These works create an important scientific basis for understanding vocal training as a holistic process that combines technical, cognitive, emotional, and reflective components and contributes to enriching the methodology of vocal education with new forms and methods of its improvement (Georgii-Hemming et al., 2020; Huhtinen-Hildén & Pitt, 2018; Bonneville-Roussy & Evans, 2025; Jossberger et al., 2025).

The involvement of appropriate innovative methods and techniques is especially important for enhancing the effectiveness of work with Chinese

students, aimed at improving their vocal-phonatory and artistic-performance development, taking into account individual and culturally conditioned features of the vocal apparatus, sound production, speech culture, and musical thinking.

Considerable attention is also paid to the features of vocal schools that determine methods and techniques of forming vocal-phonatory technique. Thus, Richard Miller associates the characteristics of different vocal schools with a holistic concept of sound production, which includes breathing coordination, resonance organisation of the voice, and stylistically appropriate phrasing (Miller, 1996, 2004).

Thus, under a vocal school we understand a historically formed and culturally conditioned pedagogical-performance system that ensures the transmission of professional experience to new generations of singers, the formation of perfect vocal-technical skills, developed artistic-interpretative thinking, and the individual performing style of a singer. As a result, the vocal school appears as an integrative phenomenon that combines cultural-aesthetic, psychophysiological, phonatory-acoustic, and linguistic-orthoepic components.

The aim of the article is to identify the main factors that complicate Chinese students' mastery of the European vocal repertoire and to substantiate the scientific approaches and principal methods for overcoming these difficulties.

Methodological Foundations of the Study. The methodological foundations of the study are based on a combination of several scientific approaches that ensure a comprehensive analysis of the problem of mastering the European vocal repertoire by Chinese students.

The culturological approach makes it possible to consider vocal training as a process of interaction between different cultural traditions, within which the integration of national artistic values, stylistic norms, and performance practices takes place. This approach allows for understanding the peculiarities of the formation of the artistic thinking of Chinese students in the process of mastering the European vocal repertoire.

The comparative approach provides an opportunity to identify the differences between European and Chinese systems of music education, to determine their strengths and limitations, and to outline ways of their productive interaction in the process of professional training of vocalists.

The anthropological approach focuses on the individual characteristics of the student, taking into account their psychophysiological, cognitive, and emotional features, which determine the specifics of vocal training and require the individualisation of the educational process.

The technological-systemic approach allows considering vocal training as a holistic pedagogical

system that includes interconnected components: goal, content, methods, forms, and means of teaching, as well as the expected results of educational activity.

The innovative-creative approach is aimed at the implementation of modern pedagogical technologies, the development of creative thinking, and the formation of students' ability for independent artistic activity, self-improvement, and self-realisation.

The combination of these approaches ensures the integrity and scientific validity of the study and makes it possible to comprehensively consider the process of mastering the European vocal repertoire by Chinese students.

Results and Discussion. The analysis of the educational process of Chinese students studying in Ukrainian pedagogical universities allows identifying several main groups of difficulties that arise in the process of mastering the European vocal repertoire.

First of all, these are difficulties related to psychological adaptation, which manifest themselves in uncertainty, emotional constraint, fear of public performance, and insufficient level of communicative openness. Such features are often associated with cultural traditions of upbringing and educational systems that emphasise discipline and accuracy of reproduction rather than individual artistic expression.

A separate group consists of vocal-technical difficulties, among which the most common are insufficient development of breath support, instability of sound production, tension of the articulatory apparatus, limited dynamic range, and lack of smooth legato. These shortcomings significantly affect the quality of performance and complicate the process of mastering works of the European vocal repertoire.

No less significant are difficulties related to musical hearing and intonation, which manifest themselves in insufficient development of harmonic hearing, instability of intonation, and difficulties in perceiving tonal relationships. This complicates the process of conscious mastering of musical material and reduces the level of independence in working on a piece.

An important problem is the mastering of European vocal orthoepy, since differences in phonetic systems lead to distortions of pronunciation, insufficient clarity of diction, and reduced expressiveness of performance. This is especially noticeable when performing works in Italian, German, and French.

In addition, a certain part of students demonstrates a tendency towards mechanical reproduction of musical material, which is expressed in copying performance samples without deep understanding of the artistic content of the work. This indicates an insufficient level of development of interpretative thinking and requires special pedagogical work.

A separate group of difficulties is associated with artistic and stage expression, including limited emotional expressiveness, insufficient development of

imaginative thinking, and difficulties in embodying the artistic image.

The identified difficulties are interconnected and require a comprehensive pedagogical approach to their overcoming.

Ways to Overcome the Identified Difficulties. The solution to the outlined problems involves the implementation of a system of pedagogical measures aimed at the comprehensive development of the student's vocal and performance abilities.

First of all, it is necessary to develop auditory self-control, which ensures awareness of sound production processes and contributes to the improvement of vocal technique.

An effective means is the use of audio and video recording of performance, which allows students to objectively evaluate their own results, identify shortcomings, and determine ways to correct them.

Important is the use of creative and interpretative tasks, which stimulate the development of imaginative thinking, artistic imagination, and individual interpretation of musical works.

It is also necessary to ensure the integration of theoretical knowledge and performance practice, which contributes to a deeper understanding of the musical text and the conscious construction of the artistic image.

Particular attention should be paid to the development of emotional expressiveness and stage behaviour, which ensures the integrity and persuasiveness of performance.

An important condition for successful training is the creation of a supportive and culturally sensitive educational environment, which promotes the psychological comfort of students and their adaptation to new educational conditions.

Conclusions. Thus, the analysis of the experience of mastering the European vocal repertoire by Chinese students studying at Ukrainian pedagogical universities has shown that this process is accompanied by a complex of interconnected difficulties of a psychological, vocal-technical, intonational, linguistic, and interpretative nature.

These difficulties are conditioned by a combination of objective factors, among which are differences in cultural traditions, peculiarities of musical education systems, specific features of vocal training, as well as psychophysiological and mental characteristics of students.

The effectiveness of overcoming these difficulties depends on the implementation of a systemic pedagogical approach, which involves taking into account individual characteristics of students, the use of modern methods and technologies of vocal training, and the creation of conditions for the development of their creative potential.

It has been established that an important role in this process is played by the development of

vocal-technical skills, improvement of auditory control, formation of interpretative thinking, and enhancement of emotional and artistic expressiveness.

A significant condition for successful mastering of the European vocal repertoire is the formation of students' ability for independent work, self-analysis, and self-improvement, which ensures their professional growth and readiness for future artistic activity.

It has been proven that the Ukrainian vocal school, due to its integrative nature, acts as an effective pedagogical system that facilitates the adaptation of Chinese students to European vocal traditions and ensures the formation of a high level of vocal-performing culture.

Thus, the experience of mastering the European vocal repertoire by Chinese students can be considered as a process of intercultural interaction, within which not only professional competencies are formed, but also the artistic worldview of the future performer is developed.

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Наталя Толстова

кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент,
старший викладач кафедри теоретичної,
музично-інструментальної та вокальної
підготовки

ДЗ «Південноукраїнський національний
педагогічний

університет імені К. Д. Ушинського»

ORCID: 0000-0003-4802-512X

Researcher ID: D-3878-2018

Яжу Чжан

аспірантка кафедри музичного мистецтва
та хореографії

ДЗ «Південноукраїнський національний
педагогічний

університет імені К. Д. Ушинського»

ORCID: 0009-0000-8807-7579



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У статті здійснено теоретичний аналіз проблеми опанування європейського вокального репертуару китайськими здобувачами в умовах навчання в українських закладах вищої освіти на підґрунті української вокальної школи. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена інтернаціоналізацією мистецької освіти, активізацією академічної мобільності та необхідністю наукового осмислення труднощів, що виникають у китайських студентів у процесі засвоєння європейських вокально-виконавських традицій. Метою статті є виявлення основних груп труднощів, які ускладнюють опанування європейського вокального репертуару китайськими здобувачами, та обґрунтування методологічних підходів і педагогічних умов їх подолання.

Методологічне підґрунтя дослідження становлять культурологічний, компаративний, антропологічний, технологічно-системний та інноваційно-творчий підходи, що дають змогу розглядати означену проблему як багатовимірне міжкультурне, мистецьке, психофізіологічне та вокально-педагогічне явище.

У результаті теоретичного аналізу виокремлено основні групи труднощів, характерних для китайських здобувачів у процесі опанування європейського вокального репертуару: соціокультурно-психологічні; вокально-фонаційні й мовно-орфоепічні; інтонаційно-слухові та музично-теоретичні; інтерпретаційно-стильові; сценічно-комунікативні. Обґрунтовано, що ефективність цього процесу забезпечується за умов сприяння соціокультурній адаптації здобувачів, студентоцентрованої організації навчання, системного розвитку базових вокально-фонаційних навичок, слухового самоконтролю, орфоепічної культури, інтерпретаційного мислення, самостійності та емоційно-сценічної виразності. Наголошено, що українська вокальна школа завдяки своїй інтегративній природі виступає ефективною педагогічною системою міжкультурної взаємодії та виконує функцію адаптаційного мосту між китайською та європейською вокальними традиціями.

Ключові слова: китайські здобувачі, українська вокальна школа, європейський вокальний репертуар, вокальна підготовка, міжкультурна адаптація, вокально-виконавська майстерність, орфоепія, інтерпретація, музичне мислення, педагогічні умови.