

Summary

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Selected problems of sound production in choir singing as reflected in the concepts of selected teachers in Poland, based on personal observations and experience, and their practical application.

Doctoral dissertation

In over 25 years of pedagogical activity, I have made many observations relating to vocal training and voice problems. These problems, and also a lack of awareness regarding various aspects of vocal technique in choristers, are influential on the quality of singing and the sound of an ensemble. I have also noted the improper use of ideas connected with voice production and their interpretation.

The abovementioned motives have become the starting point for formulating the main questions for my doctoral dissertation, while a set of five CD and DVD recordings illustrates the results of my own experience and research, which was carried out according to my own concept of choral sound production.

The fundamental idea used in the dissertation is ‘voice production’ (emisja głosu). It is discussed in various aspects and from different viewpoints, with a differentiation being made between: speech production (emisja mowy), vocal production (emisja śpiewu), individual production (emisja indywidualna) and group production (emisja zbiorowa).

The term ‘theory and performance practice’ (teoria i praktyka wykonawcza) is used in reference to the academic debate concerning voice production and its practical application. I was particularly interested in the application of specific methods of voice production.

Ensemble sound – denotes the efforts to achieve a unified, blended timbre, and to utilise the results from having developed in an ensemble the ability to convey the emotional aspect of the music. I discuss the methods for producing choral sound as exemplified by the work of selected choral coaches, based on my own observations and experience, as well as the practical application of my own concept in the recordings.

Dissertation structure. Topic selection criteria

I have based my research solely on the problem of group projection in choirs, while ignoring individual voice training, the vocal technique of singers, and the issue of correct speech, as these are beyond the scope of the present dissertation.

In the Introduction, which *de facto* is Chapter 1, I explain the motives behind my research project, define the key ideas and the research goal, outline the applied research methods, and give a synthetic summary of the subject literature and pinpoint the dissertation’s target audience.

Chapter 2 contains a review of academic publications on voice production that have appeared in Poland since World War II, with emphasis on those I consider to be of particular importance. While the majority of them focus on individual voice training, they also play a role in teaching practice, and for this reason I have included summaries of these publications, albeit without

discussion of their content, as they are not of major importance for the subject of the dissertation.

In contrast, the publications devoted to group voice production are small in number. Hence my selection is confined to four studies which may be regarded as full, comprehensive approaches to the subject. Chapter 3 contains an overview of their authors' concepts, including descriptions of specific functions of the so-called vocal apparatus.

Chapter 4 is the first of two chapters based on my own experience and practical observations. It deals with vocal warm-ups and their role in shaping choristers' awareness, the production of sound in a choir, and erroneous theories and mistakes in vocal training methods. Chapter 4 also includes a critical analysis of bad practices used during projection exercises.

Chapter 5 presents the results of my long-standing work with choirs achieved through personalised methods.

In the Conclusion, I summarise and stress the importance of work on the vocal training of choristers, and their preparation for performance through the use of a considered and methodologically organised warm-up routine and the appropriate planning of rehearsals.

Aim of the dissertation

A theoretical reflection upon the analysis of a vocal ensemble's sound, and a description of my own working methods in its production is the key tenet of this doctoral dissertation.

On the basis of my own practice, I have devised a concept for developing choral sound. My work has been a kind of testing ground, which has allowed me to search for new solutions, verify my assumptions and eventually arrive at final conclusions, the ultimate goal being to achieve a uniform, pure and radiant sound.

The aim of the dissertation is therefore to describe the methods that I use in my work on voice production. All these methods contribute to the developing of a choral ensemble's sound on the basis of my own experience and observations.

Target audience of the dissertation

The present dissertation is aimed at the following professional groups: vocal technique coaches in choirs, teachers of group and individual voice production in music schools at all levels, as well as vocalists and choral conductors. It may also be useful for students of music institutions, particularly the departments of musical education, choral conducting and choral singing, as well as for postgraduate students of voice production.