

# *A brief analysis of emotional expression in vocal music performance*

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**Abstract:** In vocal music performance, the singer put emotion that echoes the theme into singing which can be said the finishing touch in vocal music performance .However, they usually only pay attention to the training of vocal methods and vocal skills in learning of vocal music, and do not fully aware that the ultimate expression of music is the artistic expression triggered by their own musical sense and inner emotion, so it can move the audience and let the audience form emotional resonance in the performance. Based on this, this article takes “Motherland, Kindly Mother” as an example to explore the emotional expression in vocal singing and discusses the methods of emotional expression in singing from the two aspects of lyrics and melody in the end, hopefully that will help us to understand the connotation of “Motherland, Kindly Mother”, the use of singing skills, emotional expression better.

## **1. Introduction**

Vocal music performance is an art form that integrates techniques and practicality. The difficult is the vocal organ is inside the body, and you can't see whether the vocal states is correct visually .The correct vocal state is the basis of the completion of a vocal musical compositions , emotional expression is the method to enhance the appeal and expression of music [1]. This method can make the song more emotional, more infectious. At the same time, technique and the singer's emotional expression complement each other in vocal performance. If the singer just blindly "show off", without emotion, will only make the audience feel exaggerated and boring and it doesn't create an emotional connection with the audience [2]. Therefore ,only by adding their own understanding of the music on the basis of professional singing skills can the singers attract the audience and let the audience into the music works realize the expression of the beauty of the music, .Based on this, this paper take “Motherland, Kindly Mother” as an example to analyze the emotional expression of songs[3]. This make the singers have access to perform better and convey the beauty of the music on stage.

## **2. The significance of emotional expression in vocal music performance**

### **2.1 Imagination and representation in vocal performance**

A mature vocal music work contains the historical background and mood of the creators, so it is a kind of composition with strong emotional properties [4]. Then when the singer sings the song it is natural to convey the emotion given by the creators. This requires the singer to imagine in the vocal singing practice, feel this emotion, and then to show it on the stage. Of course this is also the original intention of song art [5]. That is to express the emotions behind the vocal music works and achieve the purpose of showing the emotional connotation of the work in the stage performance [6].

### **2.2 Thinking and imagination in vocal music performance**

When the singer tries to figure out the work, he will have his own musical imagination in the melody and lyrics of the song. At this time, the singer's own emotions will also get spiritual satisfaction because of the performance of the song. This will be directly transmitted to the audience in the singing, so as to arouse the audience's emotional resonance[7]. This musical imagination is different from the one mentioned above, what it wants to create is a connection with the audience, so the audience can quickly find the emotional properties when the music starts and be affected by the singer's voice.

### **2.3 The level of emotional fusion in singing**

This idiom is often used to describe singing. This also shows that one of the important requirements of the general public for vocal singing is emotion incorporation. When the singer performs by using vocal skills and adds their own understanding of the song to express the emotion of the lyrics at the same time, the listener will be addicted quickly into the song and feel immersive. It is the emotional integration that gives musical works an artistic soul. Emotional expression cannot be developed overnight. It takes a long time to practice breathing, enunciation, pronunciation and body language [8]. As a good singer needs to express her emotions in a way that doesn't interfere with the use of technique or embarrass the audience. Therefore, the other significance of emotional expression in vocal singing is to test the singing level of the singer.

## **3. Correct expression of emotion in singing “Motherland, Kindly Mother”**

### **3.1 The emotional connotation of “Motherland, Kindly Mother”**

“Motherland, Kindly Mother” was created by the famous Shanghai composer Zhang Hongxi in the 1980s. It was in a new period of reform and opening up. Under the premise of rapid development of economy and humanities, people's thoughts and emotional expression were also liberated and enhanced. This work is a representative of the vocal music works at that time and its main theme is to praise the motherland, both lyrics and songs are full of rich patriotic emotion connotation. This song integrated the creative ideas of the older generation, western vocal music techniques and national harmony characteristics. Once created, it was widely loved by the people at that time. The work was excellence that could not only be elegant, but also be accepted by ordinary people.

### **3.2 Combined with the control of singing breath to express emotion**

In the field of vocal music, breath refers to the combination of sound and breath that we use in

sing which is the force that the singer uses when it happens. In the “Motherland, Kindly Mother”, the use of breath in section A should transition from full flow of breath to reduced breath, the singer needs to adjust the breath in the process of interlude, "Dear Motherland" in section B brings the whole song to a climax, which needs to be stretched out and played steadily. The final "la" part of the epilogue is simple but requires the singer's breath to weaken steadily and gradually, bringing the love of the motherland to the heart of the audience.

### **3.3 The correct use of singing style to express emotion**

In the presentation, we must keep the state of opening the cavity to phonate and sing. Opening the cavity is to increase the resonance of the voice. In “Motherland, Kindly Mother”, the opening of the cavity is mainly in the climax, where the singer's high voice is very crucial, and the chest and head cavity should be completely opened to maintain a positive state. Although the epilogue is not as emotional as the climax, it must not ignore the opening of the cavity position, but also maintain the positive state of singing to bring the work to a perfect end.

## **4. The emotional expression method in perform “Motherland, Kindly Mother”**

### **4.1 An analysis of the background of composition and lyricist**

This work shows the people's deep love for country. The composition of the whole work is simple and easy to understand with beautiful rotation. It is like narrative and also like a passionate expression of patriotic feelings.” Motherland, Kindly Mother” was first performed on a large stage in 1983 by the famous tenor Zhang Jianyi at the Spring Festival Gala. It was so popular and sung unprecedentedly, and was also included in the teaching materials of vocal music in Chinese music colleges. And become part of the repertoire of many singers in concert. The song is vigorous and passionate in the arrangement, concise and allegorical in the lyrics, which can be called perfect. In the lyrics, the motherland is compared to the mother by the anthropomorphic method, which is more profound in emotional expression. In the composition, the creator is very clever in the continuous texture of a variety of voices in the same melody and formed and integrated perfected with second mode .The opening scene is full of strong and warm emotions, and the expression of patriotic feelings is more deeply rooted in people's hearts as the melody is eased.

### **4.2 Get the lyrics accurately**

Singing is not only based on the beautiful voice and skilled technology, the first step is to understand the meaning and connotation of the lyrics, so as to accurately understand the true emotion of the song .This requires the singer to fully understand the creation background of the work in order to lose themselves in the composition. As we know, the creators always put a great deal of effort and emotion of the work and work represents their thoughts. Therefore, the singer must study the lyrics repeatedly and combined with the creation background to figure out the social emotion behind the lyrics. A good understanding of the artistic conception of lyrics and firmly remember the content of the text can be transformed into the singer's own emotion ultimately. With the strong opening of the song, the sentence "Who does not love his mother", with a rhetorical question and slightly confused emotion, the patriotic thoughts and feelings in the anthropomorphic way of rhetoric instantaneously pushed the song into the climax, while reflecting the main melody of the song and laying the emotional foundation of the song. In the middle part of the lyrics, with the sentence "Dear motherland, kind mother", the author began to explain and praise the patriotic feelings gradually. In fact, it is a very real, realistic expression of emotion, as we describe in life:"

Who does not love his mother, mother how kind ah", and then in the "Yangtze River and Yellow River jubilant deep feeling", "blue sky and sea store full of store full of loyalty" in praise of mother, thus adding the sense of reality of patriotic feelings, so it add reality of patriotic feelings, which makes the patriotic feelings appear unadorned, sonorous and powerful. Instead of dragging out more lyrics, it's good to end with a hum. This is the joy and happiness after expressing the love for "mother" and a continuation of emotion. This design also make the emotion of the song to be sublimated at the end of the song, and also lead the listener to recall the song better. Obviously the author has considered the melody of the vocal music carefully, harmonyed the patriotic feelings perfectly into the melody of the vocal music and performed the love of the motherland incisively and vividly.

### **4.3 Accurately grasp the change of melody speed and intensity**

The variation of melody is in response to emotional expression, and the conversion between melody and intensity reflects the theme of vocal music, but the conversion of melody must also require the singer to grasp the strength of their own voice and the change of vocal range. It takes a lot of practice for the average singer to reach this state, it is more difficult to show the emotional content of a song through the strength of the melody. For example, in singing "dear motherland, kind mother", the singer needs to maintain the high position of the voice, the breath support should be more positive .It also requires the singer to follow the melody to more closely to understand the emotion then make more subtle adjustments in the details of the sound.

As shown in the opern, under the melody of A, the singer's emotion needs to appear more abundant. With "who does not love their mother, with the hot heart of the child" lyrics, patriotic feelings, home emotion is needed to be express with strong emotion. Just like praising mother's greatness and kindness in life which is a sincere expression .The lyrics of the second sentence are the same as those of the first, but the melody is changed, and the expression is changed from asked to statement, and the mood is softened slightly. Here the composer also marks the notes such as breath exchange and syncopation, which is also a reminder that singers should pay attention to the change of breath here, so as to better reflect the emotion of the song.

Specific analysis can be found, in the two consecutive paragraphs of the two "child mind", the first one is more excited and more emotional. As mentioned above, it is from the initial strong intention of emotional expression to formal emotional expression, so the arrangement here is softer and more stable, which is more appropriate to the real life emotion expression in reality. Also, the vocal range in singing starts from the natural vocal area, and we know that it's easier to show emotion in the natural vocal area, because the vocal area is more like normal speech. In terms of the rhythm of the melody, the A verse alternates with 2/4 beats and 3/4 beats, which also makes the melody smooth and harmonious. The piano-based accompaniment also adds a lot to the emotional connotation to this song, which is mainly based on the arpeggio of the triplet decomposition chord, so the singer needs to better grasp the atmosphere and the whole song is full of emotion while not losing the feeling of smooth. In section A, the singer needs to maintain a continuous soulful singing style and must be full of emotions, so as to form the foundation for the rest of the part.

The development of interlude music is a kind of reverse chromatic scale by using the superposition of sounds, gradually pushing the melody towards the climax of the B section to stimulates the emotion that the subsequent music wants to express, which is important for the singer and the audience. In the process of interlude, the singer needs to adjust the breath at this time, maintain the singing mood as always, and do a good job of the climax of the singing. Then, to the "Dear motherland" part which the pitch goes high, melody and emotion need to move to another height at this time. Here, the singer's treble needs to be quickly and simply, breath to elongated and

maintain stability, so as to be able to show the deep feelings of love for the motherland incisively and vividly. The song climaxes with love for the motherland. Singing to the "kind mother" in the last, the melody slowly leveled off again, the singer at this time should also pay attention to the emotional recovery, let the mood to return to deep sedate. Then in the "Yangtze River and Yellow River jubilation with deep feeling, we are deep feeling for you" part, the singer on the strength of the voice also need to appear to have strength and width, but cannot be too high over the climax. At the same time there is a shift in the rhythm, so it is necessary for the singer to sing slightly faster, grasp the characteristics of the rhythm, in order to continue the emotional climax, but cannot cover the emotional expression of the climax, more to reflect lyric rather than passionate.

Finally, the song ends with "La". Although this part is easy to sing, it aims to show the same emotion as the previous part. The singer needs to firmly grasp the timbre and the stability of the breath, so that the melody weakens in the fluctuation of the range gradually and the deep love for the motherland in the deep love of the vowel to the heart finally.

## 5. Conclusions

In vocal music singing, the importance of perfect and accurate expression of singing emotion is self-evident. Meanwhile, it can be seen from the above analysis that: Emotional expression and singing skills are not independent of each other but coexist with each other. If the emotions are not in place in vocal music singing, there must be problems of singing skills. Only when the two maintain a good consistency and understand the lyrics and melody from the creation background of the work itself, can we sing the vocal music of moving people. Through the discussion of the emotional expression in "Motherland, Kindly Mother", this paper can help us better understand the connotation of the work. Use singing skills to better express emotions, so that we can perform this song better.

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