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Tension and Psychological Adjustment Strategies in Vocal Performance

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Abstract: Vocal performance is a highly artistic and technical form of performance, and performers often experience tension during the performance process, which affects the quality and effect of the performance. This paper analyzes the causes of tension in vocal performance from three levels: physiological, psychological and external environment, and discusses the effects of tension on vocal performance, including positive and negative effects. In order to alleviate tension and improve vocal performance, this paper proposes a series of psychological debugging strategies, such as cognitive restructuring, relaxation training, emotion regulation, concentration training and psychological suggestion.

Keywords: Vocal performance; Tension; Psychological debugging.

1. Introduction

With the prosperous development of social culture, vocal performance art is getting more and more attention in China. The high skills and passionate performances shown by vocal performers on the stage bring wonderful enjoyment to the audience. However, in the process of performance, many singers are troubled by nervousness, which has a certain negative impact on the quality of performance and psychological state of the singers. Therefore, it is of great theoretical and practical significance to study the tension in vocal performance and its psychological debugging strategies. This study helps singers to better understand their psychological state in the performance process, recognize the causes and effects of nervousness, so as to provide singers with targeted psychological debugging methods to improve their psychological quality and performance level. Secondly, this study also has reference value for vocal educators and psychological counseling workers, and can provide theoretical basis and practical guidance for their teaching and counseling. Finally, this study enriches and develops the theoretical system in the field of vocal performance psychology and contributes to the development of vocal performance art. In conclusion, this study aims to reveal the causes, effects and debugging methods of nervousness in vocal performance, to provide psychological support for singers and to improve the standard of vocal performance art. It is hoped that this study will provide useful insights for vocal performers, educators and psychologists, and contribute to the development of the field of vocal performance psychology.

2. Causes of Tension in Vocal Performance

2.1. Physiological factors

In vocal performance, the generation of tension is closely related to individual physiological factors. Physiological factors mainly include hormone levels, nervous system status and body functions. First of all, hormone level has an important influence on mood fluctuation. Before a performance, nervousness leads to an increase in the secretion of hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol, which triggers physiological responses such as rapid heartbeat and elevated blood pressure. These physiological responses help to stimulate the individual's stress capacity to a certain extent, but excessive hormone secretion will put the individual into a tense state and affect the normal performance level. Secondly, the state of the nervous system will also have an impact on the nervousness. In the process of vocal performance, individuals need to precisely control their voice and movement through the nervous system. However, nervousness can lead to nervous system tension, affecting nerve conduction and muscle coordination, and thus affecting performance quality. Research has shown that nervousness increases an individual's sensitivity to pain, which can also lead to distraction, further affecting performance. In addition, physical function is also an important factor that affects tension. Vocal performance requires long periods of standing and vocal movement, which places a certain burden on the respiratory and circulatory systems. Under tension, individuals breathe rapidly and their heart beats faster, resulting in insufficient oxygen supply to the body and excessive energy consumption. This makes the performer easily feel fatigued during the performance and affects the performance effect.

In order to alleviate the tension brought about by physiological factors, vocal performers can make adjustments in the following ways: eating a reasonable diet, maintaining good work and rest habits, carrying out targeted physical training, as well as learning some relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, meditation and so on. Through these methods, the impact of tension on physiological state can be reduced and the level of vocal performance can be improved.

2.2. Psychological factors

In vocal performance, psychological factors play an important role in the performer's tension. First of all, the performer's self-evaluation and expectation will have an effect on the nervousness. If the performer lacks confidence in his or her own ability or has high expectations of his or her performance in the performance, it is easy to produce tension during the performance. Secondly, the performer's fear of failure is also an important cause of tension. Performers are afraid of not being able to achieve the desired goal or are worried about making mistakes, and this concern can lead to an increase in tension. In addition, the performer's evaluation

and expectations of the audience can also create tension. Performers may be overly concerned about the audience's reaction and worry that they will not be able to fulfill the audience's expectations, which can lead to tension [1]. In addition, psychological factors include the performer's emotional state and psychological quality. The performer's emotional state, such as anxiety, excitement, and frustration, can affect his or her nervousness during the performance. And the performer's psychological quality, such as the ability to cope with stress and self-regulation, also has an effect on tension. Performers with stronger psychological qualities are more likely to remain calm during their performances, thus reducing the effect of tension.

Overall, psychological factors play an important role in tension in vocal performance. Understanding and analyzing these psychological factors will help performers cope with tension better and improve their performance.

2.3. External environmental factors

External environmental factors have a non-negligible influence on tension in vocal performance. First of all, the influence of the audience is significant. The audience's expectation, evaluation and reaction will directly affect the performer's psychological state. When the audience has high expectations of the performer, the performer may feel more pressure and thus develop tension. Audience reactions can also affect the performer's mood, e.g., audience applause and cheering can boost the performer's morale, while booing and negative comments may cause the performer to feel frustrated and nervous. Secondly, the stage environment and facilities also have an impact on the performer's psychological state. Factors such as the size of the stage, its arrangement, lighting and acoustics can affect the performer's mood. For example, a stage that is too large may make the performer feel lonely and helpless, while an overly complicated stage arrangement may distract the performer. Uncomfortable lighting and sound effects may also make performers feel nervous. In addition, the attitudes and evaluations of competitors and judges are part of the external environmental factors. In a competition or judging event, the performance of competitors and the evaluation of judges may have an effect on the mental state of the performer. Performers may feel nervous because of the fear of losing to competitors or getting an unsatisfactory result.

In summary, external environmental factors have a significant impact on tension in vocal performance. The influence of the audience, the stage environment and facilities, and the attitudes and evaluations of competitors and judges are all factors to be considered. In order to reduce the impact of these factors on the performer's psychological state, some measures can be taken, such as audience adaptation training, optimization of stage layout and facilities, and establishment of a fair judging mechanism. Through these measures, an external environment more favorable to the performer's performance can be created, thus reducing the generation of tension.

3. Effects of Tension on Vocal Performance

3.1. Positive influence

Although tension is often regarded as a negative emotional experience in vocal performance, it actually has certain positive effects. First of all, moderate tension can stimulate performers' sense of excitement and concentration, so that they can focus more on the expression of music and the play of skills. Tension can increase performers' alertness, enabling them to maintain a high level of concentration and nuance during the singing process [2]. In addition, tension can enhance performers' level of self-motivation, making them work harder to prepare and complete their performances. Tension can be used as a kind of motivation to push performers to continuously improve their singing level and pursue higher artistic achievements. In addition, tension can facilitate the interaction and connection between the performer and the audience. Appropriate tension can make performers closer to the audience, enhance their expressiveness and infectiousness, and make the audience more easily moved by the performers' music and emotions.

To summarize, tension also has certain positive effects in vocal performance, which can stimulate performers' excitement and concentration, enhance the level of self-motivation, and promote interaction and connection with the audience. Therefore, in vocal performance, we should correctly view and deal with nervousness, and try to exert its positive influence to improve the singing effect and artistic expression.

3.2. Negative Influences

Vocal performance is a highly expressive art form in which the performer needs to convey the emotions and stories in the work through voice, expression and body language. However, during performance, nervousness often affects the performer's performance. Tension may lead to problems such as forgetting words, walking out of tune, and stiff movements, thus affecting the overall effect of the performance [3].

First of all, nervousness can affect the performer's vocal organs, leading to tension in the vocal cords, difficulty in enunciation, and even rupture of the voice. This will not only affect the performer's pitch and timbre, but also make the performance lose its original infectious force. Secondly, nervousness will affect the performer's breathing and rhythm, leading to shortness of breath and rapid heartbeat, which in turn will affect the rhythm and stability of the performance. Performers may have problems such as wrong rhythm, too fast or too slow speed, etc., making the performance look unnatural. In addition, nervousness affects the performer's expression and body language. Performers may have problems such as stiff facial expressions and unnatural body movements, thus affecting the vividness and expressiveness of the performance. Finally, nervousness may also lead to psychological problems for the performer, such as low self-esteem and anxiety. This will make the performers doubt their own performance and affect the performers' self-confidence and stage performance.

In conclusion, nervousness has a negative impact on vocal performance, affecting the performer's vocalization, breathing, rhythm, expression and psychology. Therefore, the study of tension in vocal performance and its psychological debugging strategy is of great significance for improving performers' stage performance [4].

3.3. Analysis of the degree of influence

Tension is a common phenomenon in vocal performance, and it has different degrees of influence on performers' performance. In some cases, moderate tension can motivate the performer and improve concentration and focus, leading to a better performance. Excessive tension, however, can lead to performer errors and affect the quality of the performance.

First of all, the extent to which tension affects vocal performance is influenced by a variety of factors. The performer's age, experience, personality and psychological quality all have an impact on the degree of tension. Generally speaking, younger performers are more likely to be affected by tension, while experienced performers are better able to cope with tension. In addition, performers with cheerful personalities and strong psychological qualities tend to cope with tension better. Second, the extent to which tension affects vocal performance is also related to the nature and occasion of the performance. In important competitions or performance occasions, performers tend to feel nervous more easily and the degree of influence is greater. Whereas in general practice or small performances, the degree of influence of tension may be less. At the same time, different types of vocal works affect tension to different degrees. For example, works with higher difficulty or more intense emotional expression may be more likely to cause tension in performers [5]. Further analyzed, the degree of influence of tension on vocal performance is also related to the performer's psychological adjustment ability. Performers with strong psychological tuning ability can better control their nervousness and turn it into positive performance motivation. They can effectively reduce the effects of tension through various psychological adjustment strategies, such as cognitive restructuring, relaxation training, and emotional regulation. On the contrary, performers with weaker psychological debugging ability may not be able to control tension effectively, resulting in compromised performances.

In conclusion, the extent to which tension affects vocal performance is influenced by a variety of factors, including the performer's age, experience, personality, and psychological quality. At the same time, the nature of the performance, the occasion, and the ability of psychological adjustment also have an important impact on the degree of influence of tension. In order to improve the quality of vocal performance, performers should pay attention to the cultivation of their own psychological quality and adopt effective psychological adjustment strategies to cope with nervousness.

4. Psychological Adjustment Strategies for Vocal Performance

4.1. Cognitive Reconstruction Strategy

Cognitive restructuring strategy is a psychological intervention method, which aims to help individuals identify and change negative thinking patterns, so as to improve their emotions and behaviors. In vocal performances, artists often face tension and anxiety, which may affect their performance. Cognitive reframing strategies can help artists better cope with these emotions and improve their performance.

The core idea of the cognitive reframing strategy is that an individual's emotions and behaviors are influenced by the way he or she thinks. In vocal performances, artists may have negative self-evaluations, such as “I didn't sing well,” “The audience is laughing at me,” etc. These negative thoughts can lead to nervousness and anxiety. These negative thoughts can lead to nervousness and anxiety, which in turn can affect the performance. Cognitive reframing strategies can help artists recognize these negative thoughts and change them into positive ones, such as “I did my best” and “The audience is appreciating me”.

The implementation of the cognitive reframing strategy consists of several steps: first, artists need to recognize their negative thinking and write it down. Then, they can try to understand the source of these negative thoughts and think of more positive perspectives. Next, artists can try to replace negative thinking with positive thinking and observe changes in their emotions and behavior. Finally, artists can gradually build up positive thinking patterns through repeated practice.

The cognitive reframing strategy is an effective method of mental adjustment for vocal performers. By recognizing and changing negative thought patterns, artists can better cope with tension and anxiety and improve their performances. However, the cognitive reframing strategy requires artists to practice and persevere for a long period of time in order to achieve significant results. Therefore, artists need patience and perseverance to achieve better results in vocal performance [6].

4.2. Relaxation Training Strategy

The relaxation training strategy is a method to help individuals relieve tension and increase psychological comfort, and is applicable to psychological debugging in vocal performance. The following is a detailed description of the relaxation training strategy.

Relaxation training strategies mainly include deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation and meditation. Deep breathing is used to bring the body and mind to a state of relaxation by adjusting the breathing rhythm. When performing deep breathing, one can try to expand the abdomen on inhalation and contract the abdomen on exhalation so as to achieve a balance between the body and mind. Progressive muscle relaxation, on the other hand, involves tensing and relaxing muscle groups so that the individual feels a state of relaxation. This can start with the toes and gradually work up to the head, tensing and then relaxing each muscle group. Meditation is used to relieve anxiety and tension by focusing on the breath or an object to bring the mind back to the present moment. In addition, imaginative relaxation, which involves visualizing a scene in your mind that makes you feel comfortable and peaceful, such as a beach or a forest, can also be used to divert attention and reduce tension. At the same time, music, yoga and other aids can be combined to further enhance the relaxation effect.

In vocal performance, the use of relaxation training strategies can help performers relieve tension and improve performance quality. Through long-term practice, performers can gradually improve their ability to control their nervousness and make themselves more relaxed and confident on stage. At the same time, the relaxation training strategy can also help performers build up good psychological quality and lay a foundation for their future performing career.

In conclusion, relaxation training strategies are an effective method of psychological adjustment in vocal performance. By mastering and applying these strategies, performers can better cope with the nervousness on stage and give their best performance. In practical application, performers also need to flexibly adjust and choose appropriate relaxation training methods according to their own situation in order to achieve the best relaxation effect [7].

4.3. Emotion regulation strategy

Emotion regulation strategy is an important part of the psychological debugging of vocal performance, which can help performers effectively deal with nervousness and improve performance level. The following are several common emotion regulation strategies:

First, cognitive restructuring strategies can help performers change their perception of nervousness and regard it as a normal physiological reaction rather than a threat. This can be accomplished through mental training; for example, performers can regularly engage in self-suggestion, telling themselves that nervousness is normal and that it can help them stay focused and excited. Secondly, relaxation training strategies can help performers learn to relax their body and mind and reduce tension. This includes techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and other techniques that can be used before and during a performance to relieve tension. Further, emotional regulation strategies include emotional catharsis and emotional suppression. Emotional catharsis can be accomplished by confiding in others, journaling, etc., and can help reduce negative emotions. Emotional suppression, on the other hand, is a more positive form of emotional regulation, which can help performers control their emotions and avoid the effects of emotional fluctuations on their performances. In addition, the strategy of psychological suggestion is also an effective method of emotion regulation. Performers can set some positive psychological hints for themselves, such as “I can do it”, “I am well-prepared”, etc., in order to enhance self-confidence and reduce nervousness.

To summarize, emotion regulation strategies are of great significance in vocal performance. By applying these strategies, performers can better cope with nervousness and improve their performance level. In practical application, performers can flexibly choose a variety of strategies according to their own situation in order to achieve the best psychological debugging effect [8].

4.4. Concentration training strategy

Concentration training strategy plays an important role in vocal performance, which can help performers better control their nervousness and improve their performance level. The following are several effective concentration training strategies.

First, performers can develop concentration through meditation. Meditation can help performers shift their attention from tension to breathing, body sensations, etc., so as to achieve the purpose of relaxing the body and mind and improving concentration. In the process of meditation, performers can gradually learn how to observe their inner world, understand their tensions and take corresponding measures to regulate them. Secondly, performers can carry out visual tracking training. Visual tracking training can help performers improve their concentration, eye contact and stage performance. Through visual tracking training, performers can pay better attention to the audience and the stage environment, and reduce the interference of nervousness on the performance. In addition, performers can also use dynamic concentration training. Dynamic concentration training refers to the development of concentration in a constantly changing environment. Performers can do some exercises like running and jumping rope to improve their concentration and adaptability. This kind of training can help performers stay focused in the complex environment on stage and better cope with various unexpected situations. In addition, performers can try to use psychological suggestion to improve concentration. Psychological suggestion is a way to regulate emotions and behavior through self-persuasion and positive thinking. Performers can set some positive cues for themselves, such as “I can do it well” and “I am confident”, to improve their self-confidence and concentration. Finally, performers can also practice concentration training by simulating performance scenes. Simulated performances can help performers familiarize themselves with the stage environment and reduce their nervousness. During the simulated performance, performers can try different concentration training methods to find the most suitable strategy for themselves.

In conclusion, concentration training strategies are of great significance to vocal performers. By adopting a variety of concentration training methods, performers can effectively control their nervousness and improve their performance level. In the actual training process, performers should select and use concentration training strategies according to their own characteristics and needs in a targeted manner to achieve the best training effect [9].

4.5. Psychological Suggestion Strategy

Psychological suggestion strategy is an effective method to regulate tension in vocal performance. Psychological suggestion is a kind of influence on the individual's psychology through language, action or other ways, so that he or she acts or thinks in accordance with the implied way. In vocal performance, the strategy of psychological suggestion can help performers adjust their mentality, relieve tension and improve their performance level.

First, performers can adjust their mindset through self-suggestion. Before the performance, performers can say to themselves, “I am fully prepared and I can cope with any challenge.” This positive self-suggestion can help performers build confidence and reduce tension. Second, performers can use mental cues to adjust their breathing. Nervousness often leads to shortness of breath, which affects vocalization and performance. Performers can adjust their breathing rhythm by suggesting that they should “breathe slowly and stay calm” to relieve tension. In addition, performers can also improve their concentration through psychological suggestion. Concentration is a key factor that affects the quality of performance. Performers can suggest themselves to “focus on the music and ignore the audience”, so as to make themselves more involved in the performance and reduce tension [10]. The application of psychological suggestion strategy in vocal performance requires performers to have certain psychological quality and suggestion skills. Performers can improve the effect of psychological suggestion through daily training, such as positive self-talk, breathing training and concentration training. At the same time, performers can also seek professional psychological counseling to improve the application of psychological suggestion strategies.

In conclusion, psychological suggestion strategy has an important role in vocal performance, which can help performers adjust their mindset, relieve tension and improve their performance level. Through reasonable training and application, psychological suggestion strategy will become an indispensable companion for vocal performers.

5. Conclusion

Tension is unavoidable in vocal performance, but it can be transformed into performance motivation through effective psychological tuning strategies. In this study, we systematically explored three aspects of the causes and effects of tension as well as psychological debugging strategies. First, we analyzed the physiological, psychological, and external environmental factors of nervousness in vocal performance,

and provided an in-depth analysis of its effects. Second, we proposed five psychological debugging strategies, including cognitive restructuring, relaxation training, emotion regulation, concentration training and psychological suggestion. The results show that the psychological debugging strategies have a significant effect on relieving tension in vocal performance, and can help performers better exert their strengths. However, there are some shortcomings and limitations in this study due to the limitations of research time and resources. Future research can be expanded in the following aspects: first, to explore more psychological tuning methods applicable to vocal performance to meet the needs of different performers; second, to study the application effects of psychological tuning strategies in long-term training and their differences among performers of different ages and genders; and third, to validate the mechanism of the role of psychological tuning strategies in vocal performance by combining more empirical studies. In conclusion, this study provides a series of practical psychological tuning strategies for vocal performers, which can help them better cope with the tension in performance and improve their performance level. It is hoped that the results of this study can shed light on the field of vocal performance and contribute to the development of vocal performance in China.

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