

The Application of Piano Accompaniment in Chorus Teaching

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Abstract

Piano accompaniment, as one of the important components of chorus teaching, is indispensable. Starting from the status and role of piano accompaniment in chorus teaching, this paper focuses on the analysis of the basic qualities that a piano accompanist should possess in chorus teaching, and discusses the application range of piano accompaniment in chorus teaching.

Keywords

Piano accompaniment, Chorus teaching, Application range.

1. Introduction

Chorus is an art form for a choir to perform a multi-part vocal work, and is also one of the most participatory and popular music performance forms among all art forms. Chorus plays an important role in the development history of western musical culture, and piano accompaniment is an integral and indispensable part of chorus training and teaching. As early as the late stage of Western Classicism, adding accompaniment to chorus was a common creation means used by composers.

Chorus was introduced into China one hundred years ago. Dating back to the development of chorus in China, it is easy to tell that the cooperation and assistance of piano accompaniment are indispensable for both the "mass singing"-like training in the early stage and the increasingly mature chorus teaching state. In the process of training to stage under the guidance of the conductor, an excellent choir, with the hardships of the growth and the brilliant achievements, are always accompanied and supported by the piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment in chorus teaching is different from other accompaniment forms. The accompanist should have certain performance ability of piano and good comprehension ability of music. What's more, he or she needs to cooperate with the conductor and chorus as appropriate to promote chorus teaching to proceed smoothly, improve the efficiency of chorus training, and promote the maturity of the choir.

2. The Status and Role of Piano Accompaniment in Chorus Teaching

2.1. The Relationship between Piano Accompaniment and Chorus

There are two main accompaniment forms in chorus teaching: one is band accompaniment and the other is the piano accompaniment. Piano accompaniment is a common, practical and convenient form of accompaniment, especially suitable for the training process of daily chorus teaching. It is also a rehearsal aiding instrument for all kinds of chorus training in early stage while the band accompaniment is mainly used in opera performance and other large-scale stage art forms.

Piano, for its varied timbre, broad diapason and inclusive performance (sometimes a piano can even play the role of a whole symphony orchestra), has become an ideal accompaniment instrument in chorus teaching. The organic combination of piano and chorus teaching can not only enrich the performance forms of the chorus and broaden the novel artistic expression

space for chorus, but also give full play to the unique expressiveness and potential performance ability of piano, so as to form a complementary organic combination of the two.

2.2. “First Assistant” in Chorus Teaching

Music teaching is like a boundless ocean, and chorus teaching is like a ship sailing in it. Under the guidance of the conductor who is like the captain, the piano accompaniment naturally becomes the “first assistant” of chorus teaching. In the journey of music, as the “first assistant”, piano accompaniment should not only act as the right-hand assistant of the conductor, but also skillfully combine the accompaniment with the vocal part. During the whole teaching and training process, it should cooperate with the conductor to present the music work in a better state. In the stage practice of chorus teaching, only when the foil, assistance and cohesion function of piano accompaniment are organically integrated with the chorus performance, can the chorus work present a perfect artistic effect on the stage.

In chorus teaching, piano accompaniment and voice jointly build a distinctive artistic image for the musical work to be expressed which is a necessary complement to voice, an indispensable detail section of the complete interpretation of the musical work, and an important artistic means to create artistic conception, depict musical situation and reveal the feelings of the work in the stage practice of chorus teaching.

3. The Application of Piano Accompaniment in Chorus Teaching

3.1. Basic Qualities

3.1.1. Master Certain Technical Ability of Piano Performance

The basic ability of the piano accompanist in chorus teaching is the solid technical ability of piano performance. It is the foundation of piano accompaniment skills for choral to master the relatively superior piano performance skills, especially the ability to read music notations of piano. In the training of chorus teaching, when receiving a new piano accompaniment work, the piano accompanist should play it quickly and accurately to meet the requirements of daily chorus training, and also to completely master the correct music style required by the chorus work in a short time. Sometimes, there are some newly created choral music without formal piano accompaniment notation in the training of chorus teaching. For example, some Chinese chorus works are written in numbered musical notation, so piano accompanist also needs a good ability of improvisation and adaption of accompaniment notation and improvisational accompaniment. The improvisation in chorus training requires the piano accompanist to master the ability to quickly and accurately configure accurate chords as well as the accompaniment texture suitable for the music style according to the chorus work. All of the above require the piano accompanist to have solid piano playing skills in order to complete the accompaniment task in chorus teaching.

3.1.2. Have a Good Understanding of Music

The piano accompanist in chorus teaching needs a good music understanding ability. The chorus accompanist in training should fully arouse the emotion and enthusiasm of the choir. Some works need full passion and vitality, so the piano accompanist needs to have a sensitive and rich sense of music, so as to understand the chorus work more accurately, cooperate with the conductor and chorus, and add color to the final presentation of the chorus work.

3.1.3. Have a Sensitiveness of Cooperation

The piano accompaniment in chorus teaching is different from the piano accompaniment in other art forms. Chorus is a music performing art played by many people. Whether in the training and the rehearsal in the early stage or the performance practice in the mature stage of the chorus, the piano accompanist should not only read the score carefully and show his or her

playing skills and sense of music, but also pay attention to the guidance of the conductor and the needs of the chorus in all aspects. Therefore, the piano accompanist in chorus teaching needs keen insight and cooperation ability.

For example, during the training of chorus teaching in the early stage, the piano accompanist must understand the meaning of every signal of the conductor, including strength, speed, etc., and express the strength and emotion that the conductor wants to express as much as possible. In the stage practice, the speed, emotion, style and artistic conception of the start of the whole chorus work are fully reflected in the piano part of the prelude. In the short prelude of dozens of seconds, the communication and cooperation between the piano accompanist and the conductor are the first step. The piano accompanist must pay close attention to the intention of the conductor when the conductor starts the signal, show the style and speed of the whole work as early as in the prelude part, and lead the choir to start singing naturally.

Another aspect of sensitiveness is the ability of the piano accompanist to handle appropriately. In chorus teaching, the piano accompanist should pay attention to the ratio of the piano sound to the choir voice, making sure the piano sound will not precede over the voice. Also, he or she should be always listening to the voice of the choir, keep the unity of music, and has the situation well in hand when playing. When the music enters the crescendo stage and the choir needs to sing with high emotion, the piano accompanist needs to use appropriate strength to drive the choir and push the music to the climax. In the process of live performance, if the choir makes any kind of mistake (not in order, poor intonation of individual members, etc.), the piano accompanist should act according to circumstances at any time, make corresponding adjustments and make up for various problems on the spot. For example, when some chorus members have serious intonation problems, the piano accompanist can add the melody of this part on the basis of the original accompaniment notation to prompt the member who has made the mistake and lead them to come back quickly.

3.1.4. Be able to Analyze and Prepare Carefully

If a good sense of music and the ability of cooperation are the perceptions of a piano accompanist in chorus teaching, the self-preparation is the indispensable knowledge base. An excellent piano accompanist needs to do a lot of preparatory work before participating in the training of chorus teaching or the practice on the chorus stage. Except for the temporary improvisational accompaniment and the chorus training, the piano accompanist must spend some time preparing separately, understand the content, form, style characteristics of the chorus music work, and carry out document analysis from the structure of the musical form, tonality arrangement and theme genre; during the chorus training, it is necessary to discuss with and acclimatize the conductor, keep the understanding of the music work unified, and know well about the characteristics of the chorus to be accompanied.

4. Application Range

The piano accompaniment in chorus teaching is widely used in chorus rehearsal, choir training, rehearsal of chorus in opera, professional chorus concert and the art form of mass chorus performance as well as music education. The most typical two application forms are as follows:

4.1. The Application of Chorus Teaching in Primary and Middle Schools in China

At present, piano accompaniment in chorus teaching is widely used in professional and non-professional chorus training and stage practice, especially in music education in primary and middle schools. Chorus teaching plays an important role in music education in primary and middle schools. As a part of quality education in primary and middle schools, chorus training is conducive to cultivating the spirit of cooperation and collectivism of primary and middle school

students, shaping their healthy character and improving their aesthetic ability. The piano accompaniment in the chorus teaching of primary and middle schools provides significant assistant cooperation for the music teaching in class, and plays a very important role in the basic chorus training of primary and middle school students. Music teachers in primary and middle schools should have a certain ability of piano accompaniment. In the chorus training of classroom teaching of music in primary and middle schools, music teachers often take the work of conducting, teaching of songs and piano accompaniment of chorus. For example, in the teaching of a two-part chorus work in the music class in the primary school, the music teacher often plays every part with the piano in the early stage of training to guide the students to practice the melody of each part. Sometimes, when it is difficult to master the melody of the low part, the teacher will play the two parts melody with both hands respectively, and focus on guiding the students to be familiar with the melody of the low part, so as to improve the efficiency and effect of teaching in music class.

4.2. The Application of Chorus Teaching in Stage Practice

The stage practice of chorus teaching cannot be separated from piano accompaniment. Piano accompaniment is the most common and convenient form of cooperation in professional choral art concerts, choral competitions and various occasions requiring chorus performance. The chorus performance with piano accompaniment is also very popular with the audience. Many composers at home and abroad are also very keen to write challenging choral works with piano accompaniment notations.

5. Conclusion

Piano accompaniment is an indispensable part of chorus teaching, and it is also one of the necessary charming and magic keys of chorus art. The analysis of the status and role of piano accompaniment in chorus teaching and the in-depth discussion of the basic quality and application range of piano accompaniment will promote the development of chorus teaching.

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