

The Analysis of French Art Songs to Improve Voice Students' Music Accomplishments

By

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Abstract

In our voice teaching, concert repertoire and singing competitions nowadays, French art songs are always given inadequate attention contrast with Italian songs and German Lieders. Students give more focuses on technique training than music accomplishments. This essay will analyze the value of French art songs to improve voice students' music accomplishments in four parts—perfect voice exercise 、 refine poem 、 explore style and emphasize accompaniment.

Key words: French art songs; vocal students; music accomplishments

Introduction:

Music training is increasingly valued by our musicians. A musician who has singing and performance skills alone and lacks profound musical accomplishments cannot be called everyone or a master. Western music education attaches great importance to the comprehensive cultivation of musical accomplishment, and technology must always be supported by good accomplishment. During the three years that the author studied in the UK, the teacher who gave the most advice was not only talking about music but also exploring the details of music. The timbre and sound quality that a work should be sung with is directly related to the era background and musical style of the work. If an art song is a fresh landscape painting, then an opera must be an oil painting with heavy makeup. Opera arias are always exciting because they are combined with the plot and reflect the characters' inner emotions. She uses the most luxurious lineup to bring singers and listeners the most splendid melody experience; while art songs are leisurely or descriptive An atmosphere, or a state of mind, restrained voice, pure poetic language, and subtle and restrained style, using a piano and vocals to create a romantic and aesthetic world written by the composer, which often tests one more. The singer's singing skills, literary attainments and musical accomplishments. In our current vocal music teaching and singing competitions, the emphasis on opera arias and light art songs is probably partly caused by the above reasons.

Among the foreign art songs, Italian works are the most popular, which can be seen by opening our high school vocal music textbooks, *Bel Canto* teaching compositions and other scores. It is true that the coherent and straight characteristics of Italian pronunciation determine that it is the best introductory song for beginners to bel canto. German and Austrian art songs have a long history, from Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven to Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Richard Strauss, Wolf, Mahler, etc., have contributed a vast ocean of vocal music literature to the world .

As a result, French art songs, one of the three major languages in the international vocal music industry, had to be squeezed out to the bottom, because compared with German and Austrian art songs, France seems to lack the name of the famous composer and the daunting French. Voice makes students unfamiliar with French art songs. In fact, a good singer will never exclude classic French art songs from the repertoire. The French art song—*Mélodie* we are talking about here was first used by Berlioz in his works. It is a concert solo piece composed of exquisite famous poems, exquisite and beautiful melody structure, piano accompaniment and vocal melody complementing each other and portraying the music content to a certain extent. (Chunni Zhu 2011:) French art songs are pure poetic music, a model of the trinity of elegant, romantic and delicate poetry, voice and qin, which is different from the tradition of German and Austrian art songs that absorb the nourishment of national folk music. Therefore, it has a value that cannot be underestimated for training and improving the comprehensive musical accomplishment of our vocal students. At present, French art songs are often marginalized in vocal music teaching, concert repertoire and various competitions in higher normal schools. The author discusses the following four aspects one by one based on my own teaching experience.

Pure and Coherent - Perfect Voice

In the training of *Bel Canto*, the primary emphasis is on steady breathing and consistent voice. As the most outstanding representative of French art songs, Fauré's works always require smooth voice lines, stable breath control and restrained emotions, and are required for every vocal student. In the classic masterpiece *Après un rêve*, the gentle melody is sung in a low voice with the support of poetic piano chords, and many three-bar one-sentence, crescendo and fading melodies fluctuate in the middle range, which is the training breath, maintaining the mask and head. It is an excellent teaching material for the resonance of the tune. The highest note of the whole song is sung twice with *f*-force on the second group of G sound in small characters. Special attention should be paid not to be too enthusiastic, and to marvel at the momentary disillusionment of the beautiful dream, and the beautiful image in the dream disappears in the mysterious dark night.

Rencontre is the first piece of *Poème d'un Jour* written by the Countess of Gowell. Fauré incorporates his complex feelings of doubt, longing, and urgency about the arrival of love into the continuous singing. The song is a bipartisan with reproduction. The sound range is from the first group of small letters to the second group of small letters. The singing should maintain a calm feeling, and the texture accompaniment of the broken chords contains the echo of the melody, which is very suitable for beginners and intermediates. Students' practice repertoire.

Another famous song *En Prière* is a typical style of Fauré - the simple melody in one octave creates a pious, sincere and touching atmosphere, depicting the image of a believer who prays to God and is determined to teach the truth of salvation. The delicate and slender melody requires pure and beautiful sound quality, and the sound is kept on the mask. It is a masterpiece of vocal music that students of all parts should learn.

In our higher normal vocal music textbooks and various other vocal music anthologies, there is always a handed down song *Elégie* by Massenet. In a short space, creative use of downward musical motives is used to express the sadness, grief and sorrow of losing a lover forever. depressed. The frequent contrast of strength and weakness in the melody vividly depicts the ups and downs of the lovelorn's heart. When singing, the voice is always based on

the breath, and the timbre can be dimmed. When singing the bass, adjust the resonance of the chest properly, and do a good job in the mid-bass area. through. Massenet's other song Open Your Eyes has a completely different atmosphere from the previous song. In a warm and sweet mood, a pair of lovers express their sincere feelings to each other. The two passages represent the confession of young men and women respectively. The girl candidly confided her true feelings, and bluntly said that the song of victory in her heart is the light of love that burns the two. When learning to sing, different timbres and tones should be designed according to different passages to achieve the character modeling written by the composer, which is an excellent exercise for the vocal modeling ability of the learner. Hahn's song Si mes Vers avaient des Ailes! is also a very serene and excellent art song. Hugo's poems gave Hahn infinite creative inspiration. Beauty, a few trebles need to be weakly controlled, the sound pattern and rhythm of the three passages change, the singing should be accurately grasped, and the volume should be compared with the different levels on the score. This song is more suitable for students above the intermediate level. See sample 1:

假如我的诗歌有翅膀
Si mes Vers avaient des Ailes!

V. 雨 作词
Victor Hugo
R. 阿 恩 曲
Reynaldo Hahn
蒋 英 译 陈 琳 配

Andante moderato *dolciss. e molto espress.*

Mes vers fui-raient, doux et fré- les,
我 甜 蜜 温 柔 的 诗 歌,

Vers vo- tre jar- din si beau, Si mes vers a-
飞 向 你 美 丽 的 花 园, 假 如 诗 歌

L. H.

Pure and Beautiful - Deliberate Poetry Rhyme

French art songs are the perfect fusion of poetry and music. French itself is a very pure language: there are far more vowel phonemes than Italian and German, unique nasalized vowels, silent consonants at the end of words, generally linked with the first vowel letter of the following word to form a joint recitation, the word stress generally falls on the last syllable. Combining these phonetic characteristics, that is why French always sounds so elegant, euphemistic, and cadenced. Just like the Chinese Su-Wu dialect, it is always described as Wu-Nong soft dialect. These two can be said to have the same effect. From the perspective of language, French art songs are indeed difficult to sing, because the lyrics are poems, and many of them were poems by the most important symbolists at the time. And the French phonetic rules we generally learn are not enough for many lyrics. When studying the works, if we can carefully consider the rhythm of the poems, we can master the lyrics faster and better, and become familiar with the rhythm. Fauré's *Au Bord de l'Eau* uses Prudhomme's poems,

depicting a pair of lovers sitting on the bank of the river with their thoughts fluttering in the wind, everything will pass away, but the love between the two will last forever. In the lyrics, pay special attention to the rhyme at the end of each sentence, which alternates between weak vowels [ə] and closed accents [e]: passe, passer, l'espace, glisser, chaume, fumer, embaume, embaumer, murmure, murmurer, dure, durer, profonde, s'adorer, monde, ignorer, lasse, laisser, passe, passer, the first and last words echo each other, and the sound quality can be well maintained when singing. *Prison* is a self-portrait poem by Verlaine, who was once imprisoned for a time. Faure perfectly infiltrated and integrated the depressive and sad atmosphere in the poem with the music, and made two rare emotional vents in the music. The rhyme of the whole song is at the end of the sentence: calme, palme, tinte, plainte, tranquille, ville, cesse, jeunesse, pay attention to the weak vowel [ə] at the end of the word, you can better rhyme each phrase, so that the song Presents a balanced and harmonious aesthetic.

Debussy's *Ariettes Oubliées* composed of a group of poems by Verlaine have different attitudes, and the song—*Green* exudes a crystal clear fragrance. The charm of the poem can only be understood after reading it over and over again. The branches, blanches, rosée, reposée, tête, and tempête all end with [ə], while baisers and reposez have the sound of [e]. *Absence* in Berlioz's vocal cycle *Les Nuits D'été* is one of his most famous songs. It is completely based on Gautier's three-section poem. The same three refrains should be sung with different levels of intensity. The first two paragraphs of the following interlude are completely the same, and some changes can be made in mood. The rhymes are soleil, vermeil, and the two paragraphs after the interlude are slightly passionate. The rhymes are baisers, inapaisés and hâmeaux, chevaux. If the singer ponders the language carefully, he will surely be able to convey the charm contained in the lyrics well, and achieve the perfect blend of poetry and music. In addition, there is a masterpiece *Oh! quand je dors (When I fall in a dream)* by Liszt and composed from Hugo's poem, that cannot be ignored. Liszt himself has a very profound literary accomplishment. He has composed 11 French art songs. This beautiful poem *Oh! quand je dors* with a wonderful melody is a repertoire of many singers. In the poem, Hugo imagined himself as the poet Petrarch (with Dante and Boccaccio as the three masters of Italian Renaissance literature), compared his lover to Lore, and expressed his spiritual love with whimsy. The elegant artistic conception of the poem and the charming charm of the music complement each other, making it a masterpiece in French art songs. The rhymes in the phrase alternate between [ə] and [a], couche, Laura, touche, S'entrouvrira, s'achève, dura, s'élève, Rayonnera, flamme, épura, femme, S' éveillera, Laura. Mastering the rhythms of poems can more accurately grasp the characteristics of song creation, and is more conducive to understanding and memorizing lyrics, which will benefit all vocal students. Once the poetic rhyme is thoroughly researched, the literary foundation of singing will naturally improve gradually.

Sophisticated and Elegant - Mining Style

French art songs are poems with wings and flying. Some works are warm and elegant singing love for a long time, and some are subtle and restrained to describe the atmosphere and express the mood. Among these more than 200 songs written by Gounod, the most widely circulated is *Sérénade*, which is based on three stanzas of Hugo's poems with a sweet and smooth melody, singing the tenderness and sweetness of his lover. The three melody are basically the same, and the festive phrases in the third paragraph are slightly different from the first two paragraphs. When singing, you should make corresponding comparisons according to the lyrics and the tips on the score. The graceful image of the eight or six beats should be well grasped. It's a great piece for intermediate level learning to sing. Fauré's *Les roses d'Ispahan* has all the qualities of his composition: fine melody, romantic mood, lyrical air, and in the

poems of Leconte de Lille, the music touches it with an incomparably keen tentacle. The inspiration of the original poem is released and sublimated. The pure singing and piano accompaniment are a little lazy and leisurely, and they blend together beautifully and add radiance to each other. When studying this piece, the author's teacher repeatedly emphasized not to sing too slender and sweet, because the melody itself is already too touching, this is Fauré! There is a famous saying in ancient Zen (deep meditation) that 'point directly to the heart', listening to Fauré's music, you may be able to understand the deep meaning of this sentence. See sample 2:



There are also some very individual composers in French art songs. Delibes' works are very distinctive. The exotic *Les filles de Cadix* is his representative work. Cadix city is a coastal city near the Atlantic Ocean in southwestern Spain. The song uses the Spanish Bolero rhythm to vividly shape the image of Cadix city girls. After watching the bullfight, Bolero jumped on the grass on the way home. Facing the aristocratic lure, the girl was unmoved at all, and she would never go against her love for greed for money. When singing this song, you should pay attention to the subtle and delicate features that are different from the general French art songs. On the whole, it is more lively and enthusiastic. The lyrics are aristocratic tones with gold and silver as a temptation. The images of the two characters should be accurate and vivid, showing the Spanish style in the music. There is also a Bizet's classic song *Ouvre ton Coeur* with a similar style, and its subtitle is - Spanish Serenade. Bizet's keen eye for melody and color is remarkable in his songwriting, as evidenced in his monumental opera *Carmen* and other songs. Bizet has a unique love for Spanish music and dance. In *Ouvre ton Coeur*, the piano accompaniment always imitates the rhythm of the Spanish Bolero. The law of strength and weakness of the Lero dance music, the lively and clear characteristics of the song can be interpreted vividly. See sample 3:

12. 敞 开 你 的 心

Ouvre ton coeur

路易·德莱特词
Louis Delâtre
乔治·比才曲
Georges Bizet

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system shows the piano accompaniment starting with a soft piano (pp) prelude in G major and 3/4 time. The second system shows the vocal line with lyrics 'La mar-gue-rite' and '那 雄 菊 花儿', accompanied by the piano accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *ben marc.*, *sfz*, and *p*.

Poetry and Piano - Attach Importance to Accompaniment

For an outstanding singer, choosing a solid accompaniment is as critical as a pianist choosing the piano to play. For our students, while learning to sing, we must learn to read piano accompaniment scores at the same time, and study the accompaniment of songs. This is a compulsory homework. A wonderful song is an organic combination of poetry, voice and piano. In the treasure trove of French art songs, there are too many such masterpieces. Fauré's Clair de lune is undoubtedly the most famous piece. This is the first Mélodie that the author has come into contact with. It is so elegant, quiet and elegant, which makes people mesmerized. The twelve-bar soft piano prelude brings people into the hazy moonlit night, the human voice slips in without knowing it, and the melody of the piano gives the singing voice a heart-to-heart interaction. The lunar night image of the slightly sentimental soul in the poems of the Symbolist poet Verlaine is movingly displayed in Fauré's slender and subtle musical brushstrokes. The singer's crystal clear timbre should try his best to adapt to the rich and changeable harmony colors in the piano accompaniment. The artistic conception created by the wonderful poems creatively endows the singing with multi-dimensional imagination. The lyrics sing: 'It (moonlight) urges when a bird falls into a dream, it makes the fountain weep with infinite longing, and the big fountain sprays its slender water threads among the marble sculptures.' (Yu Yixuan and Chen Yu 2004: 108) How can such music not make people sigh "this song only It should be there in the sky, how can I hear it in the human world." As far as I know, this Clair de lune and Fauré's other famous song Après un rêve are the admission examination repertoires of the Royal Academy of Music in London, which shows that the comprehensive assessment of musical skills and cultivation is unusual.

Berlioz was the first person to call French art songs as the title of Mélodie. His most important vocal set Les Nuits d'été included the Le spectre de la rose, which was loved by plenty of soprano. Gautier used his amazing imagination and great The romantic and magnificent fantasy was swayed into poetry, and completed the self-narration of a rose soul: it is very grateful that it can have such a beautiful situation and can wear it on the chest of the person who appreciates it to go to the dance, and even come to his pillow after death It dances lightly, and its grave is on the chest of the admirer, and on this white jade, inscribed with a kiss: Here lies a rose, the envy of all kings. (Yu Yixuan and Chen Yu 2006: 9) What an amazing creativity! Berlioz's infinitely tender tunes and symphonic accompaniment are highly consistent with the original poetic mood. The piano accompaniment of this piece has a few crescendos in 'You are the cause of my death' and 'I am from heaven', a few chords are *ff*, *sf*,

and other times are kept in p-pp to create a light and mysterious music atmosphere. If a singer wants to deeply shape the soul image of this rose, the pitch of the melody, the stability and weak control of the breath, and the detailed processing of the strength and weakness are the prerequisites. The most important thing is to figure out the poetry of this work. The story of the real world is a kind of whimsy of the poet. In singing the charm, we must strive to show the extraordinary, graceful and noble temperament. Our seniors and all cultivated singers will find their way forward in this immortal song.

A masterpiece that cannot be ignored and especially mentioned is Duparc's *L'Invitation au Voyage*, the musical prodigy who gave up writing due to incurable mental illness and ranks among the three most important in France with only 14 songs. It is a miracle in the history of modern music that he is one of the composers of art songs, and has become a song composer as great as Schubert, Schumann and Brahms in the history of vocal music. Duparc's musical inspiration and Baudelaire's poetic mood are in harmony, with dreamy oriental tones, showing people the ideal paradise: tranquility, harmony, beauty and abundance. (Chunni Zhu 2011:) The whole piece uses two basic materials as variations, the musical structure is A + A1 + B + A2 + A3 + B1, in the slightly melancholy C minor, interweaving the harmonic progression of G major and C major, the singing is long and wide, and the volume control needs to be very careful. The piano accompaniment of this piece requires a very deep musical accomplishment. Its rich harmonic texture has an orchestral effect, giving the singing voice a mysterious mood and a counterpoint melody. This piece gives the singer and accompanist a technical Both control and musical connotation will be a huge test. Because of this, many music critics consider *L'Invitation au Voyage* to be a perfect example of French art songs. See sample 4:

14. 邀 游

L'Invitation au Voyage

夏尔·波德莱尔词
 Charles Baudelaire
 亨利·迪帕克曲
 Henri Duparc
Doux et tendre

Presque lent

Mon en -
我的

fant, ma soeur, Songe à la dou -
孩 子、姐 妹, 让 我 们 同

Conclusion

The art of vocal music, literally explicated, is a good singer who has both voice and

music. If our students want to step into the highest state of singing art, they can only listen, think, and sing with heart, and study French art songs, so that students can better understand how to grasp poetry, voice and piano accompaniment from another perspective. Of course, our own Chinese art songs, Italian art songs, German and Austrian art songs are not unimportant, but the author feels that the current students are exposed to relatively few French art songs, and vocal music students in European and American music schools are required to study a lot of pieces without exception. French Art Song Documentation. When I was studying in the UK, I once prepared a French art song concert for an applied performance lesson module. When I finished singing fifteen pieces, I couldn't calm down for a long time. What is the highest level of musical accomplishment achieved? In the author's humble opinion, it is not the same as the composer, in the palace of music, to have a deep understanding and message from the composer's soul?

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