

THE ROLE OF THE CONDUCTOR'S PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS IN INTERACTION WITH A CHOIR

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ABSTRACT

Conducting and choral art is unique in its essence. Professional activities of the choral conductor is communicative, as he acts as an organizer and a “guide” of the artistic idea of choral work from the first choir rehearsal to the final stage implementation. Unlike an instrumentalist musician, the choir is the “instrument” of the conductor, which consists of voices’ owners – living, thinking and feeling people, with different training level, different personalities and temperaments, having a creative relationship with the conductor and with each other. The study of the communicative process between the conductor and the choir on the basis of the level nature of communication (by K. S. Stanislavsky) is carried out by the authors of the article from the position of the activity, structural-functional and integrated approaches.

Based on the study of scientific literature, observation of professional activities of choral conductors and personal choirmaster experience, the complex of seven professional communications of the conductor, used in the process of creative interaction with the choir, is suggested and detailed characteristics of their content are presented. In the result of the conducted research and generalization of the received results, a functional of visual, verbal, manual, and mime, willed, auditory, musical-expressive communication of the choral conductor is identified and proposed for discussion. Mastering the complex of professional communications in a high degree will improve the skills of the choral conductor and to achieve successfully the main goal of the musician – artistic result.

Keywords: conductor, choral conductor, communication, choir, creative interaction.

INTRODUCTION

Choirmaster activity is a special kind of creative relationship of a leader and a group of singers-performers. The feature of conducting and choral music lies in the fact that manual movements of the conductor are not 100% management tool for sonority of the choir. As it is noted in the works of native music psychologists and conductors-practice – G. L. Erjemskiy [1], V. L. Zhivov [2], S. A. Kazatchkov [3] and others- during the performance of the choir on the stage, the conductor manages the performing actions of his creative partners through the integrated use of a conducting gesture, a strong-willed gaze, expressive mimicry and plasticity of the body.

A review of the scientific literature has revealed the relevance of the issues and interest in its various aspects. At the moment the subject of research are: effect of conductor verbalization, dynamic markings, conductor gesture, and choir dynamical level on singers' dynamic responses [4], communicative culture of the future choir conductor [5], conducting communication [6], facial expressions as a component of conducting apparatus and choral communication [7], nonverbal communication in the system of verbal communication and vocal art [8], charisma of conductors [9], artistic and non-verbal communication and its refraction in conducting the performance [10], visual communication [11].

However, as it is shown by the analysis of the works, the studies have not defined the range of the communications, professionally significant for the choirmaster activity, their characteristics are missed, the functions are not identified. We have attempted to fill this gap.

METHODS

As methodological basis of the research on the concrete scientific level, the *activity-based approach* was elected, which allows to investigate the processes of communication between conductor and choir members; the *structural-functional approach*, submitted for consideration of professional communication of the choral conductor as a system, consisting of interrelated components with a specific functionality; the *integrated approach* to the study of complex object "communication" based on the findings of a number of inter-related sciences.

The theoretical basis of the study was the *theory of self-disclosure* (disclosing your personal information to another person) and the *theory of social penetration* (mutual behavioral responses between interacting people) to investigate the communication of the choral conductor and choir singers at three levels: technological, semantic and performance level.

The research methods were:

- analysis of the choral conductors professional activity, based on observations, interviews, analyses of specific communicative situations;
- self-analysis of professional choirmaster and conductor activity with homogeneous and mixed choirs;
- theoretical analysis of research materials on the research problem;
- synthesis, description, generalization, deduction.

RESULTS

The term "communication" is understood as an act and a process of establishing contacts between the subjects of interaction through the development of a shared sense of the perceived the transmitted information. The model of communicative process can be represented as the following sequence: 1) "a sender" – the person who is generating the idea or collecting information and transmitting it; 2) "a message" – information for the recipient; 3) "a channel" – a means of information transmission; 4) "a beneficiary" – the person to whom the information is sent and who interprets it; 5) "effect" - outcome evaluation of the communication process in achieving the goal.

A communicative process between the conductor and the choir relies on the level nature of communication: "The first stage –is the entrance of the actor on stage, looking at all those present, orientation and choice of object. The second stage – is the approach to the object and attracting his attention. The third stage - is the sensing of the soul of the object with the tentacles of eyes. The fourth stage –is the transfer of one's visions to the object. The fifth stage – is the response of the object and mutual exchange with radiation and acceptance of spiritual currents"[12].

From the perspective of our research, the conclusions of Russian conductor, pedagogue, psychologist G. L. Erzhemsky are of the interest, who notes that "the situation of communication occurs when the condition of contact-communications between participants of this process is on. They are based on visual perception with each other, auditory contacts and contacts internal (purely psychological) that contribute to their understanding"[1, P. 43].

Based on the analysis of the literature on the research problem, monitoring the activities of the leading choral conductors and personal choirmaster experience, we distinguish seven types of communications that are implemented by the choral conductor in the process of professional interaction with choir: visual, verbal, manual, and mime, strong-willed, auditory, musical and expressive.

The visual communication. The most important body carrying out the interaction between the conductor and the group are eyes. A look has the controlling influence, provides feedback on the actions of the

partner and the degree of his involvement in the communication process. We look into the eyes of other people, because we want: 1) to obtain specific information; 2) to demonstrate our attention and interest; 3) to encourage cooperation and monitor its progress; 4) to express our superiority, threat, or to have psychological impact on the opponent; 5) to express our reaction in the process of communication; 6) to determine the condition and installation of the partner.

Conducting gestures may not be entirely clear, if they are not supported by the expressiveness of the eyes. The measure of the visual interaction between the conductor and the choir in each case is individual. It is undisputed that the conductor, who has charisma, originality, bright psychological personality, with a strong energy of a bio-field of view, is easily able to attract and hold the views of one or a whole group of performers [9]. Outstanding conductors are peculiar in a hypnotic gaze, "strong-willed", "magnetic", which is able to "capture", voluntarily and consciously obey the singers to the will of a master.

However, conductors do not think they need to look closely at the singer, eyes should be used at the right time, in the right direction, not restricting and not inhibiting the contractor.

The verbal communication. The activity of the conductor in rehearsal is fundamentally different from the activity at the concert. In the initial period of work on choral work of art, the main way of communication between the conductor and the singers is speech. During this period, the conductor must tell about art idea of the work, describe the images, describe the nature of the work, identify the nuances, structural features, etc. The verbal communication during the work on the details of the composition is of particular importance, when choral singing is punctuated by estimates and judgments of the master. It can be the exact guidelines, effective allegory, vivid metaphors, the conductor often conveys his intentions through a vocal or an instrumental show when it accompanies his performance with comments.

The manual communication. The art of conducting is based on a historically developing system of gestures, based on the movements, commonly encountered in the practice of life, which gradually formed the system of bars. Manual communication is based on conducting technique –a single complex, which includes the system of bars, conducting techniques, and expressive gestures. By his movements, the conductor conveys to the performers the information about the tempo, agogic, dynamics, phrasing, character of singing breath, etc.

For understanding the essence of manual manipulation of the conductor with the group, S. A. Kazachkov proposed a theoretical analysis of the gesture. The researcher identifies three main facets of the conductor's language - conditional, expressive and artistic. *Conditional gesture* consists of different kinds of metric schemes and conducting techniques (aufbar, movement, which mark pauses, etc.). The meaning of this gesture becomes clear after the appropriate explanations. The source of the *expressive gesture* is a musical work, the conductor's language is filled with "universal" sign language. *Artistic gesture* is subordinated to expressive, it displays the performing motions, methods of sound production, articulation, timbre and imagery and genre features of the work performed [3, P. 16].

The pantomimic communication. In an embodiment of the content of a musical work, a look, facial expressions, posture and even the whole shape of the conductor are of great importance. Therefore, in their theoretical works, the conductors and teachers of conducting consider conducting technique wide: arms, body (head, torso, legs), face (eyes, facial expressions and articulatory apparatus). The facial expression of the conductor, his plastic behaviour of head rotations and movements of the body are of great importance in the process of impact on the choir. The so-called "visual artistry" is an effective means of energetic "intrusion" of the performers. This aspect of conducting is studied a little, as the pantomime is very individual and is difficult to generalize.

The auditory communication. A specific feature of conductor management is being ahead of the actions of performers. Internal music at the conductor's is at a time ahead of the actual sound at performers, so the

inner ear is of particular importance for the conductor. Based on his acoustical representation, the choirmaster is able to create the perfect project of sound of the choral composition, which acts as the goal in the rehearsal and concert activities. The more perfect is the conductor's inner hearing of music formed, the easier it is for the band to tune to the tasks of the conductor, to align their performance and actions and to develop a collective response.

In dealing with the choir the conductor always carries auditory perception of the sounds, which is called by the conductors the “choir feeling”. Here the ear is an analytical tool for evaluation of performance. Taking into account that the musical ear is multi-component, the activity of all components is required professionally for the conductor: internal, metro-rhythmic, timbre, melodic and harmonic and vocal and choral ear, inherent for the choir conductor. The last variation of hearing is the ability for integrity and differentiated auditory perception of choral sonority.

The strong-willed communication. In psychology the will is treated as a function of a person, capable of managing the psyche and actions to achieve the goal. Choir conducting is a specific type of performance – non-contact (remote), in which the conductor’s will acts as a special ability of the conductor to impact on the performers. As Russian conductor I. A. Musin writes: “All the essential for the conductor knowledge and skills can be like some sort of mechanism, without the engine, if the conductor has no volitional qualities. They are the force, which moves all the rest of the conductor's abilities, knowledge and skills” [13, pp. 135-136].

To achieve the result the choral conductor uses the volitional impact on all stages of work with the group, in different forms. While management process the conductor becomes a “pivot”, around which all the thoughts and aspirations of the musical group are concentrated. Most clearly, this ability manifests itself in a concert performance [14].

The musical- expressive communication is based on the process of empathy, which is the conscious empathy for the current emotional state of music. In a concert performance, in the process of creative communication it is necessary for the conductor to transfer his understanding of the work to the chorus and to bring the performing interpretation to the sound. The musical-expressive communication is started by the mechanism of “infection”, when all the performers are imbued with a unified emotional experience and express it in choral sonority.

DISCUSSION

The conducted study allowed us to generalize the results of this work and identify the functions of the reviewed professional communications of the choral conductor.

1. Functions of visual communication:

- setting of interaction between the conductor and the choir;
- continuous communication of information via the visual channel;
- receiving the response of the choir to the actions of the conductor;
- support for collective attention and performance tone.

2. Functions of verbal communication:

- message of information on the organization and managing the rehearsal process with the help of speech;
- rhetorical influence on the participants of a choir;
- transfer of methodological information;

- evaluation of the results of the rehearsal work.

3. Functions of manual communications:

- setting the creative interaction between the conductor and the choir;
- organization of the performing process;
- continuous communication of information at a manual channel;
- managing the elements of choral sonority;
- showing the performance techniques.

4. The functions of the pantomimic communication:

- psycho-emotional impact on the choir;
- support of the collective performance tone;
- evaluation of the results.

5. The functions of the will communication:

- support of active performing tone and emotional state;
- psycho-emotional impact.

6. The function of auditory communication:

- circulation of analytical auditory assessments.

7. The functions of musical-expressive communication:

- transfer of the musical performing plan;
- management of the emotional state of the performers;
- aspiration of creative expressions of artists in a single direction.

CONCLUSION

The profession of choral conductor is characterized from a position of multi-activity that combines several related occupations: a director, a musician, a teacher, an art director, an actor that places special demands on professional training.

Possession of a complex of professional communications of the conductor allows the use of large-scale functionality in the rehearsal process and in the conditions of concert performance, provides the creative confidence for the conductor and ensures a multi-profile communication (interpersonal, group, public), pursuing a common goal of a shared emotional experience of a choral composition.

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