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THE IMPORTANCE OF BREATHING TECHNIQUES AND EXERCISES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOCAL TECHNIQUE

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Abstract

This article examines the importance of proper breathing techniques and special breathing exercises in the process of improving vocal technique. It is substantiated that breathing is a decisive factor in the formation of vocal strength, range, stability, and performance quality. The study analyzes the influence of exercises on strengthening the diaphragm, controlling exhalation, and ensuring the natural and continuous production of the voice.

Keywords: *academic singing, breathing technique, diaphragmatic breathing, vocal exercises, voice resonance*

Introduction

In academic vocal performance, breathing technique is considered one of the key factors determining the quality of the voice. The correct direction of breath, its stability, and its coordination with the resonator system are the most important conditions in the vocal process. Breathing technique serves as the fundamental basis of vocal performance. «In academic vocal performance, by mastering breathing and systematically practicing special exercises, a performer can make the voice free, stable, and rich in timbre» (Barvinskaya, E. M., 2022). Types of breathing exercises include:

1. **Static exercises** – controlling inhalation and exhalation.
2. **Dynamic exercises** – exhaling in rhythm (with the help of a metronome).

3. **Phonetic exercises** – proper voice placement using vowel sounds.

4. **Complex exercises** – ensuring harmony of breathing, articulation, and diction.

Main Part

Singing has developed as one of the most ancient forms of art in human history and has served as the foundation for all types of music and performing arts. From the earliest times, it has been an important component of moral and spiritual education, passed down from generation to generation, serving as a means of social adaptation and the preservation of cultural heritage. At the same time, singing is not only an aesthetic or social process but also a complex **psychophysiological activity**. To manage this process

effectively, a performer must possess not only musical knowledge and skills but also abilities that ensure healthy physiological processes. Among these, one of the most fundamental is **proper breathing technique**.

Breath serves as the foundation for strength, timbre, stability, and emotional expression in the process of sound production.

The role of breathing technique in singing:

1. It serves as the physiological basis for voice production.
2. Correct breathing significantly expands the performer's vocal possibilities.
3. The breathing process regulates not only vocal stability but also the performer's psycho-emotional state.

Discussion

The process of adapting breathing to singing differs fundamentally from ordinary breathing. This process affects not only the strength and clarity of the voice but also the performer's endurance and vocal range. Therefore, in vocal pedagogy, breathing exercises and specialized methodological approaches (including diaphragmatic breathing, dynamic exercises, and complex gymnastics) occupy a central place. "The strength, duration, timbre, articulation, and dynamics of the voice depend on proper breathing. Developing breathing skills in vocal performance is a highly demanding process. For this reason, special breathing exercises must be practiced systematically in every lesson" (Kulikovskaya, E.V., 2021). In this regard, A.N. Strelnikova's breathing gymnastics is highly effective. Her exercises, coordinated with various movements of the arms, legs, head, and body, effectively train the respiratory muscles, activate blood circulation, and significantly facilitate the process of singing.

Such exercises are important not only for developing future vocal mastery but also for strengthening students' health. Regular practice of breathing gymnastics helps eliminate dizziness, increases lung capacity, develops diaphragmatic muscles, and reduces the risk of respiratory diseases. For this reason, breathing exercises are now increasingly applied in psychology, medicine, sports, and

various training practices as a means of improving health. «Breathing exercises enhance physical endurance as well as the primary qualities of voice production – brightness, strength, flexibility, duration, and range. Exercises aimed at developing the respiratory system are considered one of the essential elements of vocal performance. This is because proper breathing technique not only improves the process of voice production but also positively influences a person's overall physiological and psycho-emotional well-being» (Vlasova, L.I., 2020). The importance of breathing exercises in the process of vocal training, their health-promoting effects, and their role in enhancing performance skills require special study. Breathing exercises benefit the human body in the following areas:

- **Healthy respiratory system:** strengthening the lungs, bronchi, and nasal functions;
- **Diction and articulation:** improving clarity of speech and vocal resonance;
- **Internal organ function:** through deep exhalation, the diaphragm positively influences internal organs;
- **Nervous system stability:** deep breathing reduces stress and ensures psychological balance.

However, performing breathing exercises requires caution:

1. It is necessary to prevent excessive strain and fainting.
2. At the initial stage, it is recommended to perform 3 types of exercises, each repeated 4 times.

"From melodiousness and harmony is born the song, as a symbol of the unity of the origins of poetry and music. A simple tune is the initial stage of these connections" (Ashurov B. 1997).

For vocalists, breathing exercises can be conditionally divided into several groups:

1. Training the correct type of breathing.
2. Practicing stable exhalation.
3. An example of such an exercise is performed as follows:
4. First, the exercise is done in a lying position; later, it can also be performed standing.
5. To increase difficulty in the next stage, a small weight of 1–2 kg (for example,

2–3 books) is placed on the lower abdomen.

6. Spread the arms to the sides, inhale deeply through the nose, and try to raise the weight by expanding the abdominal wall.

“The above exercise ensures the stability of exhalation and contributes to continuous and natural vocal resonance. In vocal performance, special exercises are used to develop proper breathing technique” (Samoldina, N. A., 2015). Below are examples of exercises that can be performed independently at the beginner level:

Exercise 1

1. Place the hands on the diaphragm area.
2. Inhale through the nose and feel the expansion of the diaphragm.
3. Exhale the air:
 - o slowly,
 - o in short and sharp bursts.
4. Feel the contraction of the diaphragm. (Repeat 4 times).

Exercise 2

1. Inhale through the nose.
2. Hold the breath briefly.
3. Exhale slowly. (Repeat 4 times).

Exercise 3

1. Bring the palms close to the face.
2. Inhale deeply through the nose.
3. Open the mouth wide, exhale slowly, and feel the warm air heating the palms.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that these exercises serve to strengthen the respiratory apparatus (lungs, diaphragm, and abdominal muscles), develop the skill of stable and controlled exhalation, and ensure the beautiful and uninterrupted resonance of the voice. In particular, the “*candle blowing*” exercise activates the diaphragm, the “*flower smelling*” exercise teaches breath control, while the “*pump*” exercise coordinates the muscular movements involved in inhalation and exhalation.

“Singers have the qualities necessary for a performer to perceive the sound and timbre of music, it is considered an impossible task to master European academic vocal performance techniques in a short period of time” (Tashpulatov M., 2023). Furthermore, proper breathing techniques and specialized exercises occupy a central place in the development of vocal technique. They not only contribute to the powerful and beautiful resonance of the voice but also ensure the performer’s overall health and physiological stability. Therefore, breathing gymnastics is considered an integral part of the vocal training system, and its consistent and gradual application forms the foundation of high-level performance skills.

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