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Theoretical Principles of the Russian Vocal School in the 19th Century

Yulia Martynova¹, Dmitry Martynov², Alina Sukhova³

Abstract

This article is devoted to formation of the Russian vocal school by examining the examples of M. Glinka, A. Varlamov, and H. Nissen-Saloman's pedagogical techniques. Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka by right is considered the founder of the Russian school of singing. Alexander Varlamov for the first time tried to generalize theoretically practical experience of training in singing art. Henriette Nissen-Saloman, one more prominent representative of vocal pedagogics in Russia, made a lot of things for realization of experience of the European schools, first of all, French and Italian. Article leans on a complex of methods of the humanities, first of all historical and genetic and biographic. Its materials are of interest to historians of culture, researchers of the Russian music of the 19th century and experts in vocal pedagogics.

Keywords: Culture history, Russian vocal school, M. Glinka, A. Varlamov, H. Nissen-Saloman.

¹ PhD in History, associate professor, Institute of International Relations, Kazan Federal University. E-mail: juliemartynova82@gmail.com

² Doctor of History, professor, Institute of International Relations, Kazan Federal University. E-mail: dmitrymartynov80@mail.ru

³ Student, Leo Tolstoy Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication, Kazan Federal University. misisia@yandex.ru

1. Introduction

During the 19th century, activity of many outstanding European performers who moved to Russia became sources of formation of the Russian vocal school. Synthesis of the European and Russian traditions was carried out, as was the base of education of singers of the St. Petersburg and Moscow conservatories. The St. Petersburg and Moscow vocal schools remain still the most significant in the history of the Russian vocal education. The vocal pedagogics in Russia, mainly, relied on the best achievements of the Italian and French schools. The best of foreigner teachers apprehended features of the Russian classical music and could combine these style features with the Italian singing culture creatively. M.I. Glinka, A.E. Varlamov, and H. Nissen-Saloman's vocal pedagogics were based on this base.

2. Methods

The research implements historicism to uniform musical and educational space as well as to complete elements of musical and pedagogical system in the course of its reconstruction. Also in this work, the critical method - the theoretical analysis of the pedagogical ideas and approaches was used. In addition, the historical biography represents the historical research presented through the historic figure; this personality is interesting not in itself, and depending on the status and situation in the sociocultural environment of the corresponding era.

3. Results and Discussion

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka (1804 - 1857)

M.I. Glinka (1804 - 1857) is one of the most famous Russian composer who founded the Russian school of signing. He was one of the first who put a "concentric" method of development of a voice into practice. Besides practical work with singers he was engaged in development of a technique of voice training, drawing up vocal and technical exercises. M.I. Glinka is the author of the major work on vocal art - "Exercises for improvement of a voice, explanations and vocaleses solfeggio, methodical to them (for an average voice)" [2].

The work "Exercises for Improvement of a Voice, Explanations and Vocaleses Solfeggio, Methodical to Them" includes 18 exercises (etudes); 10 etudes on mordenta, gruppetto and trills. Further 7 vocaleses - solfeggio with accompaniment follow.

Before exercise (etude) M.I. Glinka gives methodical explanations. The main objective of etudes is in that the singer could learn to operate voice. Glinka explains that all voices are by nature imperfect, therefore, obligatory work on voice which is aimed at elimination of shortcomings and improvement of the voice device is necessary. At elementary education of the singer, M.I. Glinka recommends to improve at first working range, and then to start other sounds. As exercises he recommends to pull scales on the letter "and" (slightly covering a sound). Executing this exercise it is necessary to pay attention to the next moments:

- 1) to get directly to a note;
- 2) to pay attention to fidelity, and then to ease of a voice;
- 3) to sing not loudly and not quietly, but "is free";
- 4) not to do crescendo as teach it the master of old school, but opposite, having sung a note, to keep it "in equal force" (that as M.I. Glinka much more difficult and more useful considers);
- 5) to try to sing sounds in all registers equally on sounding force [2, p. 7].

Glinka devotes eight exercises to a third interval that makes nearly a half of its exercises of the first part. In the course of the student teaching he came to a conclusion that these exercises are very effective. M.I. Glinka considered that the third is the easiest interval, therefore, its coordination with the movement of a voice has to form the basis of training in vocal art. Further, when at the singer the feeling of each tone in the hearing and voice aid will be created, it is possible to begin work on exercise No. 5 on rise and descent to quart. Then M.I. Glinka advises to execute exercises No. 6,7,8 in a third limit. The system of alternation of rise and descent to intervals meets in the following exercises, namely: No. 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16.

Each group of new exercises (etudes) is added to pass gradually, owing to strengthening of the voice and hearing aid. Having studied all intervals within an octave, Glinka offers the following exercise (No. 17) on rise and descent of a voice to second that, according to him, is difficult for the vocalist. About this exercise the note is made: "this exercise promotes the voice equation most". Glinka recommends undergoing this exercise for the end of a course. In the technique M.I. Glinka uses the principle from simple to difficult. He considered that "a voice and its movement depends on hearing, and therefore ease of stay by voice of intervals follows as harmonious affinity of tones, but not on steps of diatonic scale, i.e. as I, III, V, VI, IV, II, VII, but not I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII" [2, p. 4].

All exercises are based on a natural sound row which has to sound without any tension. Gradually other sounds which expand voice range subsequently join a natural sound row. Glinka noted that "the tones of the average register, the more imperceptibly are more strong and more loudly executed, more closely with them tones of adjacent registers will merge and will begin to sound more freely and light" [2, p. 5]. All exercises level the register, strengthen a voice, lighten a timbre, and promote free diction.

M.I. Glinka critically approached a method of falsetto singing [2, p. 5]. The author subdivided voices into two types: "one sound without any tension, others, demands not strengthening of a breast, by all means throat tension" [2, p. 6]. However Glinka noted need at execution of high notes of some activation of the voice device in particular of muscles of epiglottal cavities (throat) [2, p. 6].

Alexander E. Varlamov (1801 - 1848)

One of the first Russian methodical leaders in the field of vocal pedagogics belongs to A.E. Varlamov (1801 - 1848) [7, pp. 633-634]. A.E. Varlamov, M.I. Glinka's contemporary, studied vocal teaching in his book "Full School of Singing", published in Moscow in 1840. This school of singing is the remarkable management when training in singing. This work, in Russia was the first in which theoretically the composer tried to generalize basic provisions of vocal pedagogics. The book serves for training in singing.

In the theoretical part of the book, A.E. Varlamov expressed the principles and approaches to performing art which consisted in expressiveness and naturalness of singing. The book implements 50 exercises for voice, which ordered on difficulty degree [10]. The book consists of three parts subdivided into chapters. In chapter 1 the author tells about singing in general, acquaints with singing history, considers a way of teaching, and notes the teacher's duties. Also it touched issues of phonation, range of voices and registers and also main objectives in training in singing.

A.E. Varlamov considered that the teacher of singing has to own both theoretical, and practical knowledge. The teacher has to support all theoretical knowledge with practical examples that is "to be a good example for imitation" [10, p. 17-18]. Pedagogical task, according to him, is not only voice training, but also "training in free reading at sight the piece of music and also training in its art and musical execution" [10, p. 18]. According to Varlamov, the teacher has to know physiology, a structure of the voice, respiratory device, etc. In that case the teacher will be able to warn the pupil against various losses.

Also Varlamov notes importance of theoretical knowledge for the singer, in particular understanding of a form, the invoice of the work.

Among recommendations which Varlamov makes to singers, we will celebrate occupations recitation, reading aloud the vocal work, work on diction and a musical phrase. The author notes importance of occurrence of the singer at image of the executed work and also indicates the need to inform of the idea put by the composer the listener.

As a result of work as the singing teacher in the St. Petersburg singing chapel, Varlamov arrives at an idea that it is possible to begin training in singing with children's age. He claimed that these occupations do not harm the young vocalist, and on the contrary carry by to the child big advantage, but demand from the teacher of more responsible and careful approach to training at this age.

In the second part of "School of singing" the author places forty exercises for a voice. Exercises are located on complexity degree. Exercises cover various singing receptions (exercises on various intervals, scales, a staccato, legato, of a syncope, etc.).

The third part includes ten exercises (vocalese) reflecting specific features of creativity of A.E. Varlamov. The receptions considered in the second part find the generalized expression here. Vocalese are songs without words in which the bright melodic talent of the author, his individual manner where methodical tasks are subordinated to an art form was shown. Work was calculated on a wide range of vocalists. By drawing up the composer was guided by the best compositions and works by the teacher D.S. Bortnyansky [10].

Henriette Nissen-Saloman (1819 - 1879)

Henriette Nissen-Saloman (1819 - 1879) was one of the most famous vocal teachers who worked in Russia about twenty years [3, p. 275]. She is famous Swedish singer, pupil of the largest European vocal school, schoolgirl of the famous teacher and theorist of vocal art Manuel García son [1, p. 7]. In 1860 A.G. Rubenstein invited Nissen-Saloman to teach singing in the St. Petersburg Musical classes RMO [9, p. 97]. In 1862 with opening of the St. Petersburg conservatory, it becomes one of her first professors of a class of solo singing where fruitfully worked before the death [1, p. 7]. In the last years of life at the request of the composer A.G. Rubenstein, Nissen-Saloman created the school of singing differing in the detailed and systematic nature of statement. The edition was published after her death in 1881 [1, p. 9].

Vocal and pedagogical views Nissen-Saloman are based on the school received by it at the famous teacher and the theorist of vocal art of M. García son. Vocal and pedagogical beliefs Nissen-Saloman are harmoniously combined with the traditions of the Russian vocal school put by M.I. Glinka and A.E. Varlamov. Nissen-Saloman considers that the singer needs initially to seize the vocal equipment, uniform for all national schools.

"The school of singing" Nissen-Saloman consists of three parts. In the first part is considered theoretical aspects of vocal pedagogics - the mode of occupations, the basic principles and the sequence of development of the voice device, an order of development of the repertoire. Also the first part contains references to the second in which the most extensive meeting of exercises for development of a voice is placed. All exercises are placed in a systematic order for usability by singing teachers.

The third part includes examples of popular arias of V. Bellini, J. Rossini, G. Donizetti, and J. Meyerbeer in the transposed options and with examples of cadences of the famous singers and Nissen-Saloman [4].

Let's consider briefly the main methodical instructions from "School of singing" H. Nissen-Saloman. Nissen-Saloman considers that in Russia, generally there is an abundance of deep voices, as among men,

and women. However the insufficient number of highly skilled teachers capable well is observed to train a singing voice.

She warns that without preparation singing of opera arias and romances is unacceptable. Among the technical moments the author notes, the following: 1) the tool of the teacher has to be adjusted on a tuning fork, 2) the room in which the teacher is engaged, has to be not too resounding as it will be difficult to teacher to listen to distinctness of passages and purity of singing [1, p. 10]. She recommends paying more attention to quality, but not the number of occupations as the excess can do much harm. The author recommends to be engaged, controlling himself on hours, practicing no more than two-three minutes in a row, repeating exercises on six-seven times daily. The teacher has to watch that the voice device of the pupil did not get tired. The voice also playing a piano, singing in chorus, long occupation of solfeggio tires. Also Nissen-Saloman advises to be engaged in hardening, that is not to accustom an organism to excessive overheating, to have a shower bath daily cold water in the morning and in the evening, to keep up with healthy nutrition - to exclude from a diet the sour, fat, hot dishes, oil, cheese in a large number drying products, such as almonds, nuts, etc. Advises daily to make walks, but does not recommend walk in cold and dampness, during walk does not advise to conduct excessive conversations. Also writes about advantage of an early dream and rise. She does not advise to sing and tire pupils during cold or a disease [1, p. 22-23].

Nissen-Saloman attaches great value to the general musical development of pupils. The beginning vocalist, according to the author, has to be trained in the musical relation, know music basics, sight-read, and be able to play freely a piano.

Occupations have to be organized so that the pupil developed the ear for music. Therefore, the teacher should not repeat, the pupil has to execute the played fragment on memory from the first. Accompaniment should not muffle the performer at a learning stage, has to be easy and rhythmical, it is also impossible to accustom to duplication in vocal lines in accompaniment. It is very useful to sing without maintenance, as a last resort, the author recommends duplicating the melodic drawing of a vocal line an octave below. She recommends singing all exercises at the top of the voice, singing on piano is very tiresome for a voice, however the excessive diligence will not give the expected results, and development of a singing voice has to be consecutive [1, p. 12].

Further we will consider recommendations of Nissen-Saloman the concerning attacks of a sound. She recommends hearing initially internal hearing a sound but only then to start its execution, the sound has to be reproduced without collateral tones at once, but if nevertheless the executed sound sounds not absolutely purely, then to make this exercise until this habit not to be eradicated. The teacher has to show right sound education repeatedly. Nissen-Saloman advises to apply also concordants ("t", "n") before a vowel as distinct pronunciation of the concordant facilitates formation of a vowel [1, p. 12].

About voice registers. "The school of singing" is devoted to statement of female voices, respectively in chapter about registers Nissen-Saloman mentions only registers of female voices. Female voices possess three registers which significantly differ on a timbre. Nissen-Saloman calls these registers chest (from extreme lower notes to fa the first octave), a falsetto (the average register from fa the first to a d flat of the second octave) and head (the d flat of the second octave is higher). She notes that "in effect, it is necessary to distinguish only two registers, differing from each other with a characteristic timbre: chest and falsetto" [1, p. 13]. To processing of sounds of the chest register Nissen-Saloman advises belongs with care and discretion as it is tiresome for a voice much more, than processing of other registers [1, p. 13].

When the chest register is processed, it is necessary to begin exercises on connection of the chest register with sounds of the average register. She recommends exercises which cornerstone intervals a fifth and an octave. Advises the lower sounds of intervals to take in the chest register, and top - a falsetto. Nissen-

Saloman writes: "The schoolgirl has to take surely a sound of the chest register in its appropriate timbre and then at once - a sound of the falsetto register already with its timbre (so different from a timbre of the chest register), and then already to maintain the last steadily". At the same time it is necessary that the teacher repeatedly showed by voice the correct connection of two registers [1, p. 14].

About a voice timbre. Henriette Nissen-Saloman distinguishes two main timbres in singing: dark and light. Experience and well developed hearing of the teacher is essential for their distinction. The light timbre gives to a voice bright, sonorous, kind of steel character. The dark timbre (sombiring) gives a voice incomparably more than strength, and gives to chest sounds completeness. The use of these timbres differing from each other promotes creation of different shades for transfer by voice of various feelings, states of mind, that is has huge value for expressiveness of singing.

About singing breath. At the school of singing Nissen-Saloman pays much attention to questions of singing breath, recommending breastbelly breath. At first the author advises to take a slow breath and an exhalation, and further - short and fast breath. The teacher has to watch closely that from the first simplest exercises the pupil was accustomed correctly and imperceptibly, is not noisy to breathe [1, p. 15]. Singing breath amplifies and develops owing to correctly carried out technical exercises. Those who by nature have no long breath should develop it gradually, with big precautions [1, p. 16].

About intonation and scales. Nissen-Saloman emphasizes that practical development by voice of intervals is necessary. Intoning of diatonic major and minor scales, and especially chromatic scale demands continued exercises, just theoretical knowledge is not enough here.

About pronunciation of the text in singing. Nissen-Saloman devotes several chapters of the "School of singing" to an important problem of pronouncing the text in singing where he gives a lot of practical advice concerning features of pronouncing the German, Italian and French words, notes features of different languages, reveals the found specific difficulties [1, p. 18].

4. Conclusion

Thus, having considered work of Nissen-Saloman, it is possible to note that its "School of singing" is relevant and presently. In spite of the fact that since its issue passed more centuries, this work is of great value for modern vocalists and teachers of classical singing. It should be noted that "School of singing" Nissen-Saloman combines the best traditions of the Western European vocal schools that in turn formed strong base for formation and development of domestic vocal traditions.

Thus, considering works of the famous vocal teachers, we will note that M.I. Glinka, A.E. Varlamov's, and H. Nissen-Saloman exercises are based on the principle of consecutive training - from simple to difficult. Above-mentioned authors note that development of a voice is the difficult and labor-intensive process demanding regular jobs. Considering works in general it is possible to note that teachers tried to differentiate such concepts as voice registers, a timbre, a voice and. etc. M.I. Glinka, A.E. Varlamov, and H. Nissen-Saloman's works are today fundamental for beginners, young teachers and vocalists-performers. Works of great teachers of vocal art are the strong base of classical vocal school.

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Footnotes

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