

SCIENCE IN THE ART OF SINGING

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Abstract: *In the art of singing, the focus on good breath, phrasing and enunciation, tone and poise, text and character is a mental act. Studied autonomously without filtering through the emotional Self, the mental act will not rise to true feeling. This mental component fits into a greater dynamic configuration in order to define interpretation, communication and artistic beauty in singing.*

Key words: *art, science, singing, emotion.*

It is normally stated, in science, that any act starts in the human's brain constantly stimulated by its perceptions of sound, sight, and so on, and concludes also in the brain with construction of images. The persistent thinking combined with the products of the imagination will ultimately generate physically felt actions. In these continuous cerebral events, the results, the felt actions, structure the identity. A mental self-awareness and a sense of subjectivity are developed this way from the mind's realm. Feeling becomes a complex phenomena processed in and by the brain through our own mind.

The artistic behavior in singers is mainly explained and developed by mentors today within this frame of extensive reasoning. The cold scientific approach to the art of singing has become an accepted principle desired not only by the academia but also by the novices. The skeptics of this method adopt the antagonist model based on instinct, neglecting any form of rationalized or moral singing. If the first method creates seekers of mental pleasures or lure of feelings inspired by so-called concrete situations, the second model

pushes to the other extreme towards the animal behavior.

Corroboration by factual outcomes from personal experiences of singing and teaching is that between or beyond the two models mentioned above, there is the concept of "nature". Pertaining to each performing individual, natural breathing, natural poise, natural feelings, and natural communication with audience, all based on both rational and intuitive knowledge should be taken in consideration when studying the art of singing.

As biological advanced entities, nature gifted and allowed us to express and communicate using an elevated common language. Based on internal perception of any out coming occurrences, this language was unfortunately, separated, even suppressed for century from our mental facilities. Functioning as a sensor or antenna, capturing or sending out signals this phenomenon acts as an unseen channel for communicating between beings. The emphasis here is not at all on the animal instinct, as we are, by design superior to them, but on the language of a highly specialized human organ, the heart.

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Subconsciously, this language activates and creates subtle links between us, prior to any cognitive mechanism and any mental pleasuring. The heart's brain sends us sensory information about all our surroundings. It is our heart's brain, which, by listening, learns to develop techniques of scanning, filtering and processing this information and ultimately turns them into our emotions and feelings. This form of awareness is the Emotional Intelligence and it resides in our heart.

Due to our mental superiority and formalized responses, we have learnt to identify this emotional information as irrelevant material, therefore it remains in many cases in its raw form: unfiltered and unprocessed. The emotive processing is not an act of heightening the exciting features, but a form of perception in order to control the emotional streaming.

The seed of creation in singing originates in the human feeling. Organically interdependent of the mental mechanism, this experience must be rationally objectified in order to reach its audience while maintaining its original source, the heart. Influenced by society's culture and expectations, the art of singing has been displaying manifestations in two directions both with the same consequence: the corruption of feeling.

One channel of artistic manifestation nowadays is the approach through cognitive mechanisms and complete detachment from the emotional source during the performance. This experience will transform the interpreter in a robotic feeling-simulating machine, and the objective act of performance, if technically accomplished, in a mentally pleasuring event for the singer and his audience.

At the opposite pole of artistic expression, yet identified as being one, it is to consider the complete neglect of the heart and mind's intelligence, resulting in a performance with total emotional and

mental detachment where the driving force of creation is annihilated. The inward vision and true experience is replaced by an egotistic, formless, confused, overwhelmed, overreacted behavior of the interpreter. The so-called act of singing becomes an artistic perversity and its interpreter a clown with behavioral issues.

Would these two occurrences be a paradox today when everyone seems to fit and function within the frames of a mind-controlled society, which simultaneously is behavioral, overwhelmed? Perhaps, for the general audience, there is no concern, but for the seekers of artistic truth there is, a real one.

To better understand interpretation and artistic beauty in singing we must see the two streams: emotional and mental, intimately connected in the physical body through singer's spiritual energy. Expression is an educated feeling, which objectified in the mind, is reproduced through voice, words, phrasing, and gesture. How much is enough in the artistic expression and how much is ridicule is another heart perception one must find, develop and trust while communication is occurring. It is this internal blueprint that makes us unique in the art of interpretation, although we may all possess the same voice type and singing the same role. The non-sense disappears and becomes clean science, when we sincerely know ourselves, understand and listen with our hearts.

The level of achievement in interpretation is measured by how well one emotion objectified through one thought creates the expression desired and needed at the right moment. Unless required by the character's psychological development, the singer's focus should be on one emotion and one thought at the time in order to keep transparency in the message he is conveying. The urge to express an excitement for example must be

thoughtfully managed so that one does not crowd the heart with unclear feelings that eventually will lose clarity when processed and objectified by the mind. In this instance, excitement is not just a mood or an attitude mentally prefabricated. It is a real feel with clear colors, direction and vibration frequency. One must choose the color and the direction depending on the instructions found in the scene and in character's psychology. Then, the artistic expression is shaped accordingly and deeply touches audience.

On-stage experience becomes a natural and almost self-perpetuating creative act when the singer maintains inner contact with the Self and with his "Outside" - his on-stage partners and his audience.

What is the singer suppose to create through singing, in a performance? Firstly, one must take off his judgmental coat and honestly embrace the belief of creation: despite all the physical, mental and emotional preparation there is always an unknown factor before the creative act starts shaping on stage. One must not fear the unknown, but accept it as part of the challenge. Secondly, embracing the "unknown" will fashion the element of wonder and surprise throughout the entire performance, datum that is in essence creative and necessary for the performer and for his audience. The performance must appear as a spontaneous act that just took place for the first time, not that it has been rehearsed every night for the past two weeks. Humbly dressed with this feel and fueled by the character's studied emotions, objectified in his mind, the performer will be able to transport himself and his audience in the realm of singing art.

Knowing how to choose to create the right feeling and how to react to your own or others' feeling in a given time frame on stage, while maintaining an objective mind on your own felt subjectivism defines the science of emotions in the art of singing.

If the software programmed to run is completely detached from any inner-life experience, the result will be just a symbolic representation of a character or a mass of undefined and meaningless gesture.

In this psychical continuum of feel-awareness, is it possible to program the emotions for the performing event? Is it possible that emotional data could be recorded and stored in the brain's heart and would one be able to recognize it and pull it out when needed?

This is a paradox, since emotions are activities, not final products of the Heart. The creative source is found at this level in the act of performing and mind's imagination is only harmonizing with it.

Creation is a continuous spiral movement, with no return to the initial point, so is the emotion. Relating to the statement: "once an emotion is experienced, it becomes a powerful motivator of future behaviors" [1], it should be appropriate to affirm that, once he experienced a successful creative act, the singer will never return to it the same way since it has already occurred. To avoid sinking into a routine or meaningless performance, the singer must continue his journey to deeply explore the Self and find multiple - if not endless - possibilities of expression within the frame designed by the composer. The one capable of maintaining a fresh sense to the same repeatedly performed piece is the successful performer.

In the process of expressing prior and during the performing act, the young singer undertakes emotions manifesting separately or simultaneously on three different levels.

On the surface level, generally impinged by anxiety rises the nervousness. Commonly, nervousness is a short-term emotion. Miller divides it in "panicky and creative" [2]. Its occurrence may be brief

or sporadic throughout the entire act of performance, but its intensity may affect biologically the way the voice organ functions. One may accept the panicky nervousness and internally fuel the creative one.

On the next podium, the singer identifies symbols of the feelings he must communicate through his character. These feelings are investigated, filtered, practiced and once on stage they become real moments, objectified within mind's imagination and expressed to the audience. Through one's ability to communicate, these long-term feelings indicate the singer's inner-life experience. Trusting their existence within the Self is one source of confidence. Once the performance is accomplished, one may fully detach from them, maintaining just the past or future gratification of having to live through them again.

On the third and probably deepest level in the brain's heart lies the belief in the creative act of singing manifested through the Self. The profound conviction that "this is right" should be a permanent emotional activity for the professional singer. Occasionally, it may vary in its intensity, but it always holds the answer to "why am I doing this and why do I love it?" Consciously or subconsciously we individually know the answer.

Operating as an interdependent system in the art of singing this set of emotional conditions aligned with the performer's mental and physical practices, fuels the performance with the right energy.

The base of this claim is the experience. However, an investigation from a biological standpoint by measuring electro-magnetic fields and chemical levels of the

performer's body during the act of high-level performance is cogitated.

Born from the concept of feeling or perhaps manifesting, as a natural emotional phenomenon governing the Self in the performing act, is one's on-stage magnetism or charisma. This personal appeal belongs to the heart's behavior. It is an "inner-life" blueprint encompassed in one's natural being. It is never a mental manifestation and only touches and intensifies when one's mental judgments and pre-conceived ideas are completely removed. Entirely lost in the moment of creation and believing in it, the Self should govern the persona in the artistic act. Few in numbers, these artists function as on-stage magnets. At the risk of challenging the science, I shall briefly adduce that on-stage magnetism has its source in the spiritual realm but it does manifest physically within the body's electro-magnetic fields.

Charisma is more than an artistic feature, which gives someone inner strength. It is a choice for being and feeling. Normally one is not aware, unless told about it.

The Human Voice is One's Self.
Understanding the Self is Wisdom.
Performing the Self is an Art.

References

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