

The Role of the Character Structure in Performer's Psychological Preparation to Concert Performance

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research is to examine the correlation between performer's personal characteristics and the features of his/her artistic activity. The authors analyze various interpretations, proving that the character and temperament influence the properties of the performed musical material, including: the nature of sound; an attitude to the author's text from literal repetition of the author's text to prevalence of own performance vision etc. It is established that the musician is required to have an ability to clearly and lucidly convey the content of compositions being performed to the listener, to tell about them in layman's terms, to find an approach to any audience. The practical value of the research is that developed methodological guidelines open up prospects for scientific comprehension of a musician as a subject of performing activity, contributing to the improvement of the system of performer's preparation in terms of the formation of musical thinking to study the mechanisms of interaction of interpreting personality, in particular, his psychology and established typology of performance interpretation.

KEYWORDS

Performing Activity, Psychological Types Of Personality, Temperament And Character, Musician's Psychological Preparation, Emotional Expressivity Of Performing Activity

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Introduction

The issue of musician's psychological preparation to concert performance is one of the most important in performing art: it is not enough to explain the emergence of a certain scenic state of a performer, taking into account only the features of the nervous system or only intellectual and creative qualities (Chaffin & Logan, 2006). It's necessary to consider all sides of a creative personality's dynamic structure. An important component of the musician's psychological preparation to concert performance is the technique of self-regulation of a scenic state (Mc.Pherson & Mc.Cormick, 2006). The problem is that musicians rarely write scientific works on the issues of stage performance

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due to insufficient knowledge in the field of psychology, and psychologists apprehensively approach this topic as they are not experienced in concert and performing activity (Barenboim, 1969).

In order to understand the essence of performing art, it is necessary to examine its roots, hidden in the depths of the human psyche. They make it possible to understand the advantages or disadvantages of a particular performance. The qualities that influence the performing activity are temperament, character, intelligence; these constituent elements, manifested in various quantitative and qualitative indicators form the personality of a musician (Barenboim, 1969).

It is pertinent to point out that different types of character are formed depending on the «music performed under the influence of personal qualities» (Shuter-Dyson & Gabriel, 2012). Character is a set of manifestations of scenic behavior, aimed at conveying an artistic information to the listener, enlightening a musical image by means of external and internal manifestations of creative activity (Platonov, 2008); the capability of transformation, getting into the character, feeling the mood of the music, engaging into a dialogue with own self; developing the most appropriate ways for the stage presentation of musical material; manifesting the creator's activity, as a powerful means of musical and psychological influence (Briggs & Briggs Myers, 1985).

A lot depends on the musician's assessment of own interpretation of the composition; if he believes that his interpretation represents aesthetic value and will definitely arouse the public's interest, the performance will pass with an emotional upheaval (Connolly & Williamon, 2004). The musician should be able to carry out a psychological control, regulate own emotional arousal, create preconditions for emergence of a special state of mind, feelings of encouragement, creative enthusiasm, all that is called inspiration (Mc.Pheron & Mc.Cormick, 2006).

Considering the psychological types of personality from the perspective of the performer, we can say that the personality of talented individual doesn't stay within any particular type. There is a dominant trait that, coupled with additional traits in certain proportions, determines the uniqueness of the master, his life, views and creative style (Deliege, 2004).

Thus, it is important to analyze the psychological structure of the performer's personality and the processes of emotion regulation in order to determine the best ways of performer's psychological preparation for the concert performance.

Literature Review

Scholars determine there are sthenic emotions, enhancing organism's vital functions (joy, delight, etc.) and asthenic emotions – depressive (sadness, disappointment) emotions (Wundt, 1978; Squire, 2010).

A.F. Losev (1982) observes that «melodies don't exist without emotions, without expression», we must consider its live semantic expression – emotional, melodramatic, passionate, pleading, defiant, rude or gentle, reserved, calm...». Moreover, O.S. Akhmanova & V.V. Veselitsky (2011) highlights a close interrelation of expressiveness with the emotionality; considering these concepts synonymous, the author does not find a principled distinction in them. E.M.

Galkina-Fedoruk (1990) interprets the expression in a broad sense as an expressiveness.

We also reveal the connection of the emotional and the expressive in V.V. Vinogradov's work (1988): «It's rather difficult to delimit emotionality and expression, since the amplification of expression of a certain meaning amplifies the emotional part either». Expressiveness is often achieved by «emotional or logical amplification of sound means, using expressive sound forms developed by musical practice» (Galperin, 1970).

V.A. Zvegintsev (1962) links the process of creating expressiveness within a certain context with an amplification; he doesn't only exclude emotionality, figurativeness, and evaluativity to a certain extent, but contraposes them against expressiveness. At the same time L.S. Perezman (1978) refers the categories as figurativeness and evaluativity to expressiveness and interprets the expression as «expressive and figurative qualities of expressive means that distinguish it from conventional, stylistically neutral means and make it bright, expressive, and emotional». The author believes that these categories bring «diverse and very subtle evaluative and characteristic shades accompanying and complicating sound texture» into a sound fabric, as well as contribute to emergence of «pictures and images follow the sounds».

It follows from the above mentioned that emotional expression is a kind of fuel for intense performing activity; being transformed into the energy of different forms of nonverbal communication, it is conveyed to the audience in recognizable forms (Wundt, 1978). Positive emotional reactions related to performing activities can be classified into the following: group of emotional feelings, associated with significant changes occurring in the living organism in the process of performing activities; group of emotions associated with high level of perfection in the mastery of professional skills; group of aesthetic emotions (development of a sense of beauty, behavior on stage, the suggestion that each performance is a feast, that arises the listeners' aesthetic pleasure); group of emotions related to moral feelings, with a deep sense of public values, responsibility (Squire, 2010).

According to classification of personality types by K.G. Jung (2001) and his theory, a personality combines two tendencies – extraversion and introversion. The researches of personality characteristics allowed the author to expand his typology, including psychological functions such as thinking, sensation, feeling and intuition, where thinking and feeling perform rational functions, for example, a thinking type determines the values by logical thinking, while the feeling type relies on emotions.

The four prevailing features and two types of character - introversion and extraversion – make up eight descriptive psychological types that were reflected in the classification of K.G. Jung (2001), K. Briggs & I. Briggs Myers (1985): Extroverted – Introverted; Thinking – Feeling; Intuitive – Sensing; Rational – Perceiving or Irrational.

Typology in the art represents a classification of creative manners, styles, individuality and artistic images. Emotions, will and mind are "the engines of spiritual life", "...they are unique, integral; emotions (feelings) are the preceptors and the rest echo it under breath, in other cases– the mind or will are the initiators of creativity» (Stanislavski, 1957). The musician reveals his

individuality in art manifesting his features, putting oneself into a certain frame of the situation and adjusting oneself to a certain image.

It is widely documented that the degree of mental and emotional activity determines such properties of thinking as "rationality and emotionality; dominance of the former or the latter in the structure of musical performing vision significantly adjusts the nature of interpretation and the degree of prominence of certain manifestations" (Squire, 2010; Akhmanova & Veselitsky, 2011).

Scholars also argue that at a stage performance it's important to take into account such aspects of personality traits as: psychological set for performing activity; the need for such activities; musician's creative experience, his professional knowledge; features of mental processes, including performance focus, a will, auditory perception, level of emotional excitement optimal for creativity, flexibility of psychological adaptation (Shuter-Dyson & Gabriel, 2012).

The task of the performer is a comprehension of the composer's symbolic text, ability to analyze the form and content of work, ability to create a program for psychological impact on the listener, convert it into virtual reality of empathy. Thus, the special types of performers' abilities are: analytical (depth, flexibility, independence, initiative thinking); expressive (plasticity, gestures, speech/sound); significant abilities (stage temperament, the ability to transform, scenic charm, contagion, persuasiveness) (Stevens & Latimer, 2012).

According to the D. Dewey (1997), while creating a stage image, the musician enters into a proper psycho-emotional state, transforms into the image and acts as the characters feelings are his own; he models, reproduces, immerses into the atmosphere of the author's intention, captivating with his musical expression. Meanwhile musical transformation is carried out «only internally, distinguished by implicitness; an artistically valuable sound is the result of inner work; it is not an artistic game. One can enter this sphere only by means of transformation».

Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to characterize the psychological structure of the performer's personality and to reveal the interdependence of the performer's psychological character and musical interpretation in the context of artistic activity.

Research questions

The research questions were as follows:

What is the correlation between performer's personal characteristics and the features of his/her artistic activity? How does the structure of the character influence the performer's psychological preparation to concert performance?

Method

In order to fulfill the goal of the study, we used the method of psychological observation and diagnostics. The theoretical bases of the study are the ideas of L.M. Friedman (1969) and L.S. Vygotsky (1980) on psychological mechanisms of development and training of the individual. Allocating the structure of personality aspects, influencing the scenic status of an artist, we relied on K.

Platonov's concept (2008), which refers the personality traits into four sub-structures: orientation, experience, mental processes and biopsychosocial properties.

Data, Analysis, and Results

As we see, all the aspects of personality are closely interrelated and require individual consideration. It's almost impossible to determine a single «recipe» for all for psychological preparation of the musician for public performance. Every professional musician has his own techniques; their number increases with time. The universal techniques of preparation for the concert are based on marginal conscientiousness of preparatory work.

Comfortable psychological state on the stage can be achieved by readiness, the criteria of which include: the ability to consciously control the process of performance, ability to interpret the work in an imaginary sound and action, ability to work with technical difficulties, ability to demonstrate improvisational freedom, ability to emotionally "live" your performance, ability to assume the "audience's" perception of performance, ability to regulate psychological state (Deliege, 2004). The composition prepared at this level can be considered ready for stage adaptation.

We have also found that some musicians draw more attention to external attributes of music performance to the prejudice of musicality, the privilege of craft over art.

It is widely documented that the effectiveness of the musician's activity depends on psychological preparation for performance. The types of performance require maximum disclosure of its possibilities, careful preparation, mastering the methods of organization of performance. Getting prepared to the performance, the musician should think on the images, find examples of these images in life, literature, painting, theatre, musical means of expressiveness to show these images, pay attention to technical difficulties, as well as train emotional artistic state, that can convey the image, achieve the desired effect.

Furthermore, the development of musician's artistic and scenic thinking is based on: imagination, image memory, figurative thinking, the ability to transform an abstract idea into a figurative form, active response to the phenomena of reality, subtle sensitivity, general emotional susceptibility. «The performer gets into the character through the mechanism of vision, contemplation, viewing. The main thing for the thinking musician is a comprehension of the idea of the composition – to learn, to experience, to bless with the light of the mind – this is his primary goal. The image should be born organically out of human nature of the artist» (Stanislavski, 1957).

In addition to perfect mastery of the instrument, phrasing, ultimate concentration on the sound the performers need to have acting skills. Publicity of the musician's art requires a special physical organization of his emotional apparatus, creative thinking. The performer must combine an artist and actor in one person and have high creative abilities; intellectual potential; flexibility of thinking; the ability to live real moments, manifested in focus of the mind and will on the movements of musical thought; the ability to convey the energy of sounding image; to have an instant presentiment, ability to foresee the whole, which is to be unfolded; personal charm; the artistic ability to engage the listener into the musical experience.

The results of psychological observation and diagnostics show that overestimation of own abilities may have a negative impact; this may result in a nervous breakdown, feeling of failure, etc. However, underestimation of oneself limits the performer's horizons, his professional, creative potency. Being a volitional act, performing activity lets musician remove excessive impulsivity during performance and achieve an organic unity of emotional and rational principles in art. Voluntary attention, arising as a result of the efforts of the will and involuntary attention as a result of the interest reduce the possibility of the emergence of negative forms.

«An endurance test» in conditions of public performance can determine: degree of management of the material; degree of performer's talent; psychological stability; ability to affect the audience, «capture» it with his performance, to subdue the audience to creative will, his artistic magnetism. Embodying the world of imagination and fantasy (alternative reality) in a plausible way, the performer should transform ordinary reality, deepen into his soul, and penetrate into spiritual and psychological levels of own self. The art of music often goes hand in hand with unusual mental abilities, with the ability to feel own body, with spiritual power and imagination, with the restraint of human passions.

A musician should strive to the feeling of “concertness” from the first minute of his work with composition. “Concertness” is a scrupulous work, an inspiration, inner excitement, a feeling of conviviality, the joy from the fact that the performer is being listened, moments of emotional soaring with a thorough professional analysis of his own actions, emotional, professional and technical readiness to meet with the listener. Concert performance requires a large consumption of neuro-psychological energy and a significant effort of will and attention, the accumulation of which requires not only a physical but also an emotional strength. Emotional excitement, causing the acuteness of the senses, enables the musician to outdo himself. For a successful performance he needs an emotional excitement, associated with the artistic interpretation of the work. Forming the psychological setting to creativity, it indirectly influences the peculiarity of scenic state.

Examining different personality types, we can state that introverted type is not less common in art, he is the creator and is more inclined to imagination, deeply delves into performed work, constantly finding new meanings. His performance is not so spectacular, since it is directed to the listener, is intended to affect his feelings, but it is specific, richly outlined with timbral colors and contains colorful vivid core. Introverts solve interpretative tasks subjectively, not following blind tradition or authoritative interpretations.

Moreover, introverted temper is not deprived of emotions – his emotions come from depth of the soul and strike with their sincerity and uniqueness. The thinking type of introvert carefully builds the artistic conception of the works, analyzes every detail of the text. He is a true guide between the author's intention and the listener. He says that one can interpret the work only in accordance with the composer's instructions. Typically, the thinker's performance is stable, precise, clear, but he is sometimes accused of excessive academism.

Feeling introverts are not cold-hearted, nor even stable, they are sensitive and emotional by nature. Their performance is characterized by fragility,

transience, passion, innocence. They evoke a sense of empathy, and it is the attractive force of their work. Their performance lives on stage, breathes the freshness of improvisation and represents a newly born image, a flight of fancy.

The intuitive type prevails in musical world with their peculiar dreaminess, the ability to bring the images to logical end and to see the hidden in the obvious. Irrational beginning of their personality was manifested in art. Unique style, surprisingly graceful way of performance and rare combination of extroverted intuition are explained by musician's outstanding personality, uniqueness, genius talent.

It is pertinent to point out that despite the apparent logic of performance, most of the performers' interpretation is ruled by heart. This orientation fits the description of intuitive-logical introvert. With a developed intuition, the performers of this type prefer analytical clarity working with artistic composition. Constantly experimenting, they search for the best sound. Therefore, they can be attributed to logical-intuitive introverts.

We consider the emotional sphere as: a part of the composer's sound picture of the world; the place of emotions in sound picture of the world; the ways of their sound expression; the possibility to project emotions to the sound system; the content and structure of emotions. The essential distinctions between emotions and feelings are manifested on a psychological level as well and have the following meanings: mental feelings; physical sensation and perception; unclear, hard-to-explain sensations; the ability to understand something through sensual perception.

Thus, the expressivity, being a musicological category, is equalled to expressiveness and represents the result of actualization of macro-components of evaluativity, emotional breadth, intensifying expressivity and functional-stylistic coloring in the semantics of sound system. It is based on several groups of the psychological laws relating, on the one hand, to the expression of emotions and feelings, and from the other - to perception. The range of phenomena and states, described as emotions and emotional states, is very wide – it is a «feeling», «affect», «emotional state», which reflect different aspects and ways of manifesting emotions in a broad sense. We are interested in the signs (both external and internal) making it possible for the performer to identify own emotional state and the state of other person and appropriately describe them in sound forms. Expressivity, emotionality in music express subjective attitude to what was said: from composer's part it is amplification, allocation, emphasizing statements, expressions of feelings, emotions and moods, giving statements an emotional strength, assessment, reaching figurativeness and creation of aesthetic effect; and from performer's part it is a retention and intensification of attention, enhancement of reflection, the emergence of emotions and feelings.

People with any type of neural activity, including the melancholic type, can succeed in musical performance. If a performer with melancholic type of temperament is constantly aimed at overcoming the negative properties of his psyche, then eventually his nervous system adapts to conditions of creative work. Phlegmatic musicians have relatively poor scale of dynamic shades, they often lack the artistry in performance, sometimes they imperceptibly slow down the pace. They feel awkward when they resort to unusual compositional language. They do not take initiative in organizing own performances; they work

methodically, quietly, willingly rely on previously acquired performance skills; they are less susceptible to negative forms of stage worries.

In studying the works, the choleric artists have to make efforts to achieve the organic unity of emotional and rational principles. In performing interpretation they brightly manifest a volitional character. The choleric's play is usually distinguished by a great artistry; they strive to play brightly and expressively. They often have difficulties with the rhythmic organization of musical material: they tend to accelerate the pace, shorten pauses, reducing large durations. They take failures heavily.

The sanguine musicians sometimes have to curb uncontrollable emotions. They work unevenly – train a lot and enthusiastically before an important performance, hardly overcome disabled state after the performance. The sanguine are eager to invest own creative force, take the initiative in organizing their performances, but they quickly become bored with musical compositions, even those that they chose themselves; they flexibly adapt to unusual conditions of work and take failures relatively easily.

Melancholic musicians usually carefully work out the details of performance and pay much attention to details of interpretation. They often lack the scale of performance, artistic freedom and creative courage. They slowly adapt to unusual conditions of work.

The creative nature of performance activity is brightly manifested in interpretation of musical works, in the course of creating an artistic image, idea, style. In this process a whole set of the performer's personal qualities and abilities play an important role: imagination, intelligence, musical-auditory representations, intuition, mastery of technical means of musical expression, performing experience, professionalism, etc. The formedness of performance mastery, manifestation of the creative activity finds expression: in original solution of composition, in search of right means of expression, appropriate technique, artistic intuition, creative mind, artistic will, emotional performance, virtuosity, timbre and dynamic variety of sound based on the profound feelings, thoughtfulness, artistry and other qualities and properties of the performer. The performer's task is a search of convincing and stylistically competent interpretations, deciphering the etymology of musical values, penetration into its semantic and emotional structure. In addition to the formal grammatical analysis (tonal plan, form, harmony, texture, etc.), the performer should resort to the analysis of figurative content.

The performer's auditory representations play an important role in musician's psychological preparation to concert performance. Mentally «playing» fragments of the composition, imagining himself on a concert stage and suggesting himself an appropriate psychological state, the musician trains his ability to emotionally experience and interpret the music. Musical-auditory notions do not only provide a creative approach to the composition to be performed and help choose the performance option, but also control the quality of performance.

Musicians ought to rule over his emotions, he must never lose control of himself, his play and actions. The performer's mental state often has a crucial impact on his play. Therefore, a musician should have a stable psyche or master the techniques of psychological regulation of own state. Consolidation and

training the mental state, the development of skills for overcoming nervous tension before an important performance are of high priority for the performer.

Discussion and Conclusion

We relied on a number of contemporary areas of psychology in our work: K.V. Wundt's (1978) theory of cognitive psychology and psychology of emotions, linguistics of emotion O.S. Akhmanova & V.V. Veselitsky (2001), E.M. Galkina-Fedoruk (1990), V.A. Zvegintsev (1962), I.R. Galperin (1970), V.V. Vinogradov (1988), and L.S. Perezman (1978). These scholars confirmed that the methods of psychological observation and diagnostics are optimal for the examining of personality characteristics and their impact on creative activities.

We have determined that the basics, which the art of experience provides, governed by the laws of artistic nature, will let performer understand own mistakes and correct them. In this context we agree with K.S. Stanislavski (1957): «If the work is really experienced by the artist in the process of preparation and his feelings have individual expression, the technique is spectacular - such performance should be considered an art».

Can add that the school of transformation based on «experience» is «the system of understanding and implementing the core content of the artist's profession in artistic activity that is the process of creating an image». It's necessary to consider important the comprehension of the artistic image as the expression of abstract ideas in a concrete, sensual form: «A sensual expression of the artistic abstraction prevents its identification with the concept – the sphere of pure abstraction. And vice versa: an artistic image is distinguished from the images of sensuality – sensations, perceptions, views – by the fact that it has a great share of abstractions in addition to sensuality» (Hegel, 1999). «A conglomerate of the artist and the image that he creates on the stage is an example of the dialectical unity and interpenetration» (Popov, 2014). All prior important and crucial work is only a preparation for the artistic act. It occurs only in a momentary reverse influence of the audience. The category of self-assessment is directly relevant to the issue under consideration.

In creating the image a special role belongs to transformation through «experiencing», empathy, as a phenomenon of transition of a musician into a new reality. T. Gauthier called the tendency of transformation «a retrospective imagination», O. Balzac called it «retrospective penetration», R. Wagner – the ability to «transform into the performed character with a full sympathy», G. Flaubert – a gift of «transforming into depicted beings», V. Gogol – «flair of hearing the soul», S. Bernard – the ability to «exchange your life» – each of these definitions indicates the gift of artistic personifications, mysterious feature of the artist's creative nature, who can transform into the inner world of the conveyed image, assimilate with them mentally, endowing them with a will, consciousness and character (Shuter-Dyson & Gabriel, 2012).

In summary, the musician needs to prepare himself for the stage not only professionally, but also psychologically.

We have determined that the performer's scenic state is generated under the influence of four substructures. The first substructure – psychological set to performing activity, the need for such activities; it mobilizes all creative abilities, but is not always realized by the performer. The search of a particular performance decision can be implemented even in the moments, when the

musician is seemingly distracted from the upcoming performance. His everyday worries before the performance, manifest themselves on the background of the main task – mobilization of physical and mental strength for the upcoming performance of the concert program. Stable psychological set for repetitive creative work is converted into a need over time.

The second substructure is a creative experience, professional knowledge. The more the performing experience, the more often the musician appears on stage, the more confident he feels. A successful performing activity is possible only in the case if intellectual, emotional and motor parts «work» consistently; none of the named parts should suppress others.

The third substructure – features of mental processes. All mental processes occurring at the moment of performance influence the scenic state of the musician. The most important of them are focus, will, auditory representation, the level of emotional excitement that is optimal for creativity, flexibility of psychological adaptation, artistic interpretation of the works.

The fourth substructure – typological properties of higher nervous activity, temperament. In musical and performance activity we can observe the dependence – musicians with strong unbalanced type of nervous system, such as choleric, often experience a scenic state resembling «a stage fever». Performers with a strong inert system of higher nervous activity, the phlegmatic, often fall into a state of creative apathy. The musicians with a weak type of nervous system, the melancholic type, hardly overcome morbid forms of scenic fright.

Implications and Recommendations

The study of personality characteristics of the performers will help choose the means which help change unwanted behaviors, the ability to transfer to effective ways of functioning. An important component is the performer's sense of responsibility for the performance, his ability to focus on the composition being performed, maximum concentration on the sound and phrasing. The fact of reliable «readiness» of the material soothes the psyche and is a guarantor of success in a sense. Thus, the submissions can be used by musicians, psychologists, music teachers, students of music schools etc. for improving the quality of psychological training before the concert performances.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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