

## The Concept of Vocal Exercises and Vocal Skills

**Rakhimov Sayfudin Shokirjonovich**

[rakhimov@yahoo.com](mailto:rakhimov@yahoo.com)

Andijan State University, Uzbekistan

**Rakhimova Mavluda Nabijonovna**

[mavluda@gmail.com](mailto:mavluda@gmail.com)

Andijan State University, Uzbekistan

**Annotation:** In this article, vocal-choral skills is to convey the image and also the content of the work, the connection of vocal exercises in the choir with musical literacy, it is achieved by learning and singing all vocal exercises.

**Key words:** Voice, timbre, breathing, diaphragm, chest, singing art, rhythm, choir, technique, legato.

### Introduction

Choral singing is the main and most popular form of musical education of students in secondary schools. In the process of choral lessons, a singing voice develops and is brought up, singing skills and abilities are developed. Vocal-choral skills are a means of transmitting the image, the content of the work. The better students have these skills, the more expressive the performance can be.

Choral singing is a complex art that requires a certain automation of singing techniques. The more perfect the singer is in mastering the technique, the more creativity he will bring to his performance, the more he can concentrate on the composer's artistic plan. Therefore, the development of singing skills is one of the urgent problems in vocal pedagogy.

The development of vocal and choral skills is carried out successfully only under the condition of close connection with the development of musical hearing of students. Auditory monitoring makes it possible to establish whether the reproduced sound corresponds to its preliminary presentation, to its internal "hearing" by students.

A necessary condition for the development of singing skills is an exercise, that is, targeted repetition in order to improve these skills. In the process of such repetition, there is an improvement in the ways of performing the task, its consolidation, refinement.

The whole process of developing vocal-choral skills is a delicate selection of the most appropriate for each specific case performance techniques. At the initial stage of classes, students are working on the education of the basic vocal and choral skills in their elementary form: maintaining the correct, natural position of the body, as well as the head and hands when singing, taking a deep breath without raising your shoulders and gradual economical exhalation, free opening of the mouth, simultaneous the beginning of singing, the simultaneous pronunciation of the text, the length of the sound.

In the process of further work, we gradually consolidate, deepen and improve these skills - we develop lower-silver-diaphragmatic breathing that requires maintaining the respiratory position of the chest and expanding the lower ribs, we work on the correctness of sound, expanding the range, beauty of the timbre, flexibility, mobility of the voice, thin and varied nuanced.

Of great importance for the development of vocal-choral skills is the so-called "muscle feeling". This refers to the sensations that arise during singing and which are the

result of irritations emanating from the muscles and ligaments involved in the process of voice formation. These feelings help the selection of the necessary performing means in singing. Muscular feeling in combination with previously audible sound determines the formation of performing skills and techniques that give the singing sound the necessary artistic coloring.

In the process of vocal-choral exercises, an important point is the correct relationship between working on a particular skill or technique and combining these skills into a single set of expressive means of artistic performance. The correct selection of exercises helps to develop and consolidate each element individually, as well as consolidate the complex of these skills and abilities in their entirety. It should be borne in mind that you cannot reduce exercises only to work on individual skills, since in this case there will be no necessary connection and coordination between them. However, an extremely holistic approach to solving the problems of vocal training is also unsuitable: to teach everything at once, without fixing individual elements of voice formation. This leads to a lack of technical clarity in the operation of the voice-forming apparatus.

How should this problem be solved in the vocal education of students?

The art of singing requires mastering a complex set of artistic and technical elements. This is achieved by fixing the attention of students at each individual stage of training in the choir, on a specific vocal and technical task. At the same time, focused, gradually becoming more complicated musical material of exercises will contribute to the consolidation of certain skills.

Special exercises and singings are selected according to the level of students' singing development and gradually become more complicated in the learning process. For example, by offering cantilena exercises, we deliberately simplify other elements of musical expressiveness, select a small singing with a simple rhythm, a smooth melodic pattern, at a moderate pace and average tessitura. Thus, we create the most favorable conditions for developing the length of the sound. Working in a choir on an ensemble in two and three voices, we offer exercises without text (with your mouth closed or in syllables) so that students can focus as much as possible on the balance and purity of the sound of the choral parts.

The first condition of the system of vocal-choral exercises is the education of students' conscious attitude to those educational tasks that are set in the process of exercises. At the beginning of teaching choral singing, schoolchildren more than in the process of further work need an explanation and visual displays of the teacher. Gradually, as a result of conscious training and rational repetition, they already independently apply the acquired skills. A sufficiently definite conductor's gesture of the choir's leader, corresponding facial expressions: even a look, and the entire choral collective harmoniously and clearly respond to his demand.

The second condition of the exercise system is the gradual and consistent complication of training tasks.

In the process of exercises, it is necessary to go from simple to more complex, from understandable, accessible to more difficult. Any new exercise should be connected with the previous one, rely on it and help move on. In the system of vocal exercises, it is assumed that the arrangement of educational material in which the student has to overcome gradually increasing difficulties. The third condition of the exercise system is to take into account the characteristics of the process of skills formation. This process goes from the perception and

assimilation of the rule to the ability to apply it, to the consolidation of this ability, to the gradual acquisition of skill.

A new song, a new exercise, a new task in the repetition of a well-known material, a new methodological technique for reinforcing skills, the emotionality of a leader - all this helps to maintain activity, attention, interest in the process of working on the formation of singing skills. At the initial stage of work, it is especially important to interest students in the very subject of studying the art of singing. It is necessary to show all the charm, richness and diversity of this art form, to arouse the desire among students to master it. This will help to instill in them perseverance, perseverance and diligence in teaching choral singing.

If the teacher cannot interest students, then often this leads to the fact that their attention fades, boredom sets in, distraction appears. The task of the choir leader is to use the involuntary attention of students, to direct him in the right direction.

The fourth condition is the variety of tasks, switching the attention of students in the process of exercises from one task to another, covering a whole range of tasks.

The concentration of exercises around a specific artistic and technical task leads to the assimilation of a certain skill. However, it should not be too long to delay students in any one task: this tires the attention of children and at the same time distracts them from other tasks.

For example, it is known that singing legato is considered the basis of vocal art. The development of singing, lingering skills is one of the main tasks in vocal pedagogy. However, if this task is not combined with the development of lightness, voice mobility, and non legato singing skills, then this can lead to the formation of a heavy, massive sound, lacking the necessary flexibility and expressiveness.

The fifth condition of the vocal-choral exercise system is the need for regular and consistent work. Irregularity of classes, a large time gap between them lead to a loss of skills. Random or rare lessons in the formation of singing skills will never lead to the mastery of the complex art of singing, requiring great, persistent and consistent work.

In the process of developing vocal-choral skills among schoolchildren, all the musical material used as exercises can be divided into two types.

1. Special exercises. The system of such exercises is built in accordance with the level of singing development of children and the degree of their mastery of vocal and choral skills. In the process, the exercises gradually become more complicated. Their system contributes to the development of singing skills, helps to consciously fix attention on a particular task. These exercises are also used to configure the voice apparatus for each lesson of the choir.

2. Exercises on the repertoire being learned, which help to overcome specific difficulties in a particular song. Exercises of this kind, unlike the first, cannot be systematized to the same extent. However, this type of exercise is based on a certain fundamental basis. So, it is known that the song repertoire is selected according to the singing development of children and their degree of vocal and technical skills. However, there are often songs in which there are certain difficulties that are peculiar only to this song and cannot be overcome in the process of preliminary work on mastering the skills.

The system of vocal exercises in the school choir is based on the following provisions of vocal pedagogy:

- in the process of exercises, it is necessary for students to develop the skill of silent and deep inhalation with the expansion of the belt area when inhaling, as well as the skill of

gradual economical exhalation while maintaining the respiratory position of the chest. Do not draw in excessively large amounts of air. The proper organization of singing breathing requires the interconnection of individual parts of the vocal apparatus. Therefore, one should not get carried away by prolonged isolated breathing exercises (without singing);

- begin vocal exercises with naturally-sounding notes in the range of students, gradually moving along the line of expansion of the zone of natural, free (primary) sound, to bring up a bright, sonorous sound in the choir;

- in vocal-choral exercises it is necessary to take into account that the main thing in singing diction is not the pronunciation of vowels in their orthoepic form, but the preservation of the correct singing tone, the sound of which is subject to the pronunciation of vowels. This requires the neutralization (alignment, rounding) of the pronunciation of vowels in singing, which, in turn, often requires maintaining the purity of sound unstressed vowel.

The use of vowels and, e, and the syllables di, zi, le helps to correct the imperfections of singers with a “darkened”, deaf, unnecessarily deep sound, and the vowels of u, o and the syllables do, gu, ku, singing with an open, “white” sound. The most favorable in terms of diction are songs with such text that contains a large number of vowels and consonants, pronounced with the participation of the vocal cords.

The development of vocal-choral skills in the process of exercises is based on the following methodological principles:

- a) the establishment during the exercise of the correspondence between the nature, sound quality and certain movements of the vocal apparatus, the upbringing of auditory control in children, assessing the quality and correctness of the performance of each vocal and technical task in the choir.
- b) consciousness in mastering vocal and choral skills, that is, understanding the content, tasks and results of the educational process, understanding the rules and methods of performing the exercise.
- c) personal display and explanations of the teacher during the exercises, as well as demonstrations of photographs and posters that reflect the correct and incorrect methods of voice formation, with appropriate explanations.
- d) the connection of vocal exercises in the choir with musical literacy, which is achieved by learning and singing all vocal exercises.
- e) maintaining children's interest, activity and emotional tone in the process of exercises with the help of a variety of exercises and teaching methods.
- f) the combination in the process of vocal-choral exercises of collective singing with the entire choir with a survey of students in groups and with an individual survey of individual students.
- g) unaccompanied singing, contributing to the successful upbringing of students' vocal hearing, purity of intonation.

It is recommended to write exercises on the board in a key that is convenient in vocal terms, with the least number of signs of alteration, and then give it sequentially, up in semitones, in several keys.

The system of special vocal exercises presupposes the following volume and arrangement of educational tasks: first, on simple musical material, skills of singing breathing, sound production and diction in one-voice singing are developed. This work is carried out in unity with the development of ensemble skills and building in a unified choir. Further, the vocal and choral skills achieved in unison singing are fixed in singing with two

voices, and later with three voices. The system of vocal-choral exercises in the classroom of the school choir involves the following volume and order of educational tasks.

The first task is to develop the skills of singing breathing, singing and light sounding of children's voices, as well as distinct, clear articulation (range of 3-5 sounds). Work on unison.

The second task is the development of a smooth and abrupt character of sound science. The development of diction in exercises of a moving pace.

The third task is to expand the range (to an octave), equalize, round off the sound of vowels when singing legato, develop a unified choral sound, work on unison.

The fourth task is the work on two-voice singing (exercises with independent voice study in choral parts, canons, initial exercises for tertz two-voice).

The fifth task is a clear, easy execution of small durations. Developing skills of singing diction in moving exercises with a dashed rhythm and a difficult combination of words in the text.

The sixth task is to develop an energetic, but not sharp forte and soft, but sonorous piano based on a good mastery of singing breath.

The seventh task is the intonation of halftones and chromatic moves.

The eighth task is to strengthen the skills of singing breathing and sound formation in the sound of youthful voices. Developing the skills of three-voice singing<sup>1</sup>.

All factors of the singing process: breathing, sound formation, vowel formation, resonance, etc. should be implemented in a number of practical singing skills. But what is skill? This is a skill brought to a considerable degree of automation through long and regular training. Such training should basically be based on a conscious attitude to education and strengthening skills, when unnecessary and unnecessary movements are discarded in this process and only the necessary and appropriate are selected and cultivated; continuous and systematic improvement leads the skill in its most complete form to automation. The achievement of such a level, even if relative, is very important: it gradually frees the singer from stiffness and randomness, allowing him to carry out tasks of a more creative order<sup>2</sup>.

One of the most important conditions for the education of singing skills is the observance of the rules of the song. The term singing installation is understood as a set of mandatory requirements that contribute to proper sound production. The song set consists of many external techniques and skills. To preserve the necessary qualities of the singing sound and to develop the external behavior of the singers:

- keep your head straight, free, without lowering it and not throwing it back;
- stand firmly on both legs, evenly distributing the weight of the body;
- keep the body straight, without tension, and slightly pull the shoulders back.
- sit on the edge of a chair, without tension, also resting on his legs.
- When sitting, do not put your foot on your foot, as this makes breathing difficult<sup>3</sup>.

The correct position of the case is important not only from an aesthetic point of view. It affects voice formation. The muscular composure of the singer, associated with a good singing setup, contributes to better sound organization.

Keep your head straight. A raised chin causes tension of the anterior muscles of the neck, deprives the larynx of freedom and can cause a clamped sound. A chin close to the

<sup>1</sup> Dobrovolskaya N. Vocal-choral exercises in a children's choir. - M.: 1969. - P.2.

<sup>2</sup> Work in the choir / Ed. D.L. Lokshina. - M.: VTSPS Profizdat, 1964. - P.156.

<sup>3</sup> Stulova G.P. Theory and practice of working with a children's choir. - M.: Vlado, 2002. - P.41.



chest limits the movement of the jaw. The lower jaw should move naturally and freely. Any tension in the masticatory muscles located in front of the auricles is poorly reflected in the sound quality. The articulation of vowels and consonants should not affect the stable position of the larynx during singing. Words are spoken freely, but not listlessly. Active plastic articulation is an important element of vocal technique. The determining factor here is the sound quality, phonetic purity and distinctness of pronunciation. All choir singers need to use uniform articulation techniques. Individuality is revealed in the implementation of techniques. However, choral singers should not have a significant difference in articulation forms. This makes it impossible to establish an ensemble. So, if one singer, when pronouncing the vowel "a", opens his mouth wide and the other almost does not open it, their voices do not merge.

Some singers, taking a vowel, change the form of articulation in the process of singing. This is a significant drawback. The articulatory form must be stable from the beginning of the sound of one or another vowel and it should not be transformed unless it is caused by a specific artistic task.

Pronunciation of vowels and consonants in singing does not require exaggerated articulation. Any exaggeration only interferes with pronunciation.

A significant role is played in singing facial expressions. A lively expressive face is necessary for variety performance. The expressionless, "dead" faces of the choir singers make the most depressing impression on the audience. Mimicry also affects the nature of the sound. Many vocal teachers believe that, for example, a smile helps to form a brighter, brighter sound, and a gloomy, harsh facial expression - to a darkened, sombre sound. Without affirming the indisputability of this judgment, one cannot but agree with the fact that facial expressions contribute to the expressiveness of performance. This is well known by radio singers, who usually sing in front of a microphone in a studio with the same expressive facial expressions as in a concert hall<sup>4</sup>.

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