

**The secret of difference: A technical and cultural investigation and
comparison of Western classical singing methods for beginners and early-
stage singers in China**

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Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
List of Figures and Tables	vi
List of Music Examples	viii
Acknowledgments	ix
Chapter 1 Introduction and Literature Review	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Literature Review	2
1.3 Rationale for recital repertoire and choice of vocal pedagogues under study	15
Chapter 2 Western Vocal Music and Pedagogy in China	24
2.1 Overview of Chinese vocal music	24
2.2 Introduction to the historical context of Western vocal music in China	26
2.3 Music development in Shanghai: A brief overview	30
2.4 Xiaoyan Zhou's biography	33
Chapter 3 Biography and Vocal Treatises of Manuel Garcia	47
3.1 Biography of Manuel Garcia	47
3.2 Manuel Garcia's published vocal treatises	52
Chapter 4 Analysis of Selected Vocal Techniques from Manuel Garcia and Xiaoyan Zhou	57
4.1.1 Manuel Garcia's vocal techniques: breathing	57
4.1.2 Manuel Garcia's vocal techniques: registers	60
4.1.3 Manuel Garcia's vocal techniques: timbre	64
4.2. Vocal pedagogy and philosophy of Xiaoyan Zhou	68
4.3.1 Xiaoyan Zhou's vocal techniques: breathing	70
4.3.2 Xiaoyan Zhou's vocal techniques: register and passaggio	73
4.3.3 Xiaoyan Zhou's vocal techniques: articulation and legato	77
Chapter 5 Research Method	83
5.1 Participants observed in this study and design of participant study	83
5.2 Rationale for choice of topics under participant study	87
5.2.1 Breathing	87

5.2.2 Blending registers	88
5.2.3 Legato	89
5.3 Participant observation	90
5.4 Introduction to auto-ethnography	93
5.4.1 What is it used for?	96
5.4.2 Why and How to do it?	97
Chapter 6 Training Results and Dialogue	101
6.1.1 Manuel Garcia's breathing technique	101
6.1.2 Zhou's breathing technique	105
6.2.1 Manuel Garcia's blending register technique	108
Garcia offered an exercise for singers to help them obtain a smooth transition	108
6.2.2 Zhou's blending register technique	112
6.3 Zhou and Garcia's legato technique	116
Chapter 7 Analysis of Auto-ethnography and Participant Observation from a Cultural Perspective	120
7.1 Introduction	120
7.2.1 Mandarin pronunciation features	128
7.2.2 How does Mandarin speaking affect singing?	132
7.3.1 Chinese traditional etiquette	138
7.3.2 How does Chinese traditional etiquette affect singing?	142
7.4.1 Blind obedience	145
7.5 Why has the Western expression of vocal technique not been fully preserved?	151
7.6 Why are Chinese students today more receptive to Western singing techniques?	154
Chapter 8 Rationale for the Recital Programme	160
8.1 Repertoire in French	161
8.2 Chinese repertoire	166
8.3 Russian repertoire	181
Bibliography	188
Appendix A. Participant observation session plans	207
Appendix B. Excerpt of Participants' observation training experience and	

Abstract

In the twenty-first century, the development of Western classical singing in China has steadily advanced, with an increasing number of individuals embracing this singing style. However, it is noteworthy that a significant number of students still choose to study or further their training abroad rather than in China. Moreover, many of these students feel that their singing technique improves markedly after studying in Western countries, with these advancements primarily reflected in better resolution of long-standing issues in their training and education. Therefore, this thesis will draw upon my five years of study and life in the United Kingdom, to put my experiences in dialogue with Chinese singers who are just beginning their Western classical singing studies in China. It aims to explore the issues faced by Chinese beginners and early-stage singers from both a technical and a cultural perspective.

In Chapter One, I outline the current research on Chinese students' Western classical singing and how my study builds upon existing research and how it fills the gaps and contributes to current knowledge. I will also justify the selection of the two vocal pedagogues, Manuel Garcia and Xiaoyan Zhou, whose vocal techniques are analysed in detail. Chapters Two and Three provide an overview of the cultural background of Western classical singing developments in China and introduce the biographies and treatises of Garcia and Zhou. Chapter Four presents a comparative analysis of selected key vocal techniques from their treatises.

In Chapter Five, I outline the methodologies of autoethnography and

participant observation and how I apply them to my research. In Chapter Six, I compare my own training and reflections with those of my participants to form a dialogue between our experiences. This chapter will be supplemented by a video recording of a lecture-recital where I sing through the vocal exercises under study and explain the issues at stake, alongside my own experiences of them. Chapter Seven provides a critical analysis of the principal phenomena emerging from this project, including language, culture and education, adopting a novel perspective and revealing the relationships between culture, politics and classical singing. Lastly, Chapter Eight illustrates how the techniques of the two vocal pedagogues are reflected in the performance of specific repertoire chosen for the final recital.

List of Figures and Tables

Tables:

Table 3.1 French Editions of Manuel Garcia's treatises

Table 3.2 Editions of Manuel Garcia's treatises in English

Table 7.2 The four categories of finals in Mandarin

Figures:

The sigla given in the list of figures below refer to different editions of Manuel Garcia's treatises, presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 on pp. 55-56

Figure 2.1 The portrait of Xiaoyan Zhou in *Point de Vue*

Figure 4.1 Garcia's registers in women's voices, H2, p. 10

Figure 4.2 Exercises to unite the chest and medium register, E3, p. 10

Figure 4.3: The position of the soft palate and larynx, and the tongue and soft palate in the production of clear and sombre timbres, H2, pp. 11-12

Figure 4.4 Zhou's registers in women's voices

Figure 4.5 Zhou's transition notes from the middle register to the head register for men's and women's voices

Figure 4.6 The diagram of the oral cavity

Figure 6.1 Garcia's exercises to unite the chest and medium register, E3, p. 10 (also Figure 4.3)

Figure 6.2 Zhou's transition exercise between the medium and head registers

Figure 7.1 The positions of the tongue, jaw and lips in the pronunciation of

Mandarin simple vowels

Figure 7.3 Muscles of the head and neck

Figure 7.4 The position of oral and nasal pharynx

Figure 7.5 The position of the soft palate

List of Music Examples

- Example 8.1 Alexander Tcherepnin, *La Fée et le cultivateur*, bb. 102-104
- Example 8.2 *La Fée et le cultivateur*, bb. 121-123
- Example 8.3 *La Fée et le cultivateur*, bb. 127-129
- Example 8.4 Zi Huang, *春思曲 (Spring Yearning)*, bb. 1-6
- Example 8.5 *春思曲 (Spring Yearning)*, bb. 10-12
- Example 8.6 *春思曲 (Spring Yearning)*, b. 16
- Example 8.7 Zi Huang, *思乡 (Homesick)*, bb. 4-6
- Example 8.8 *思乡 (Homesick)*, bb. 7-9
- Example 8.9 Xinghai Xian, *黄水谣 (Ballad of the Yellow River)*, bb. 23-37,
- Example 8.10 *黄水谣 (Ballad of the Yellow River)*, bb. 6-16
- Example 8.11 Qianshu Ouyang and Jingan Zhang, *没有眼泪, 没有悲伤 (No Tears, No Sorrow)*, bb. 23-25
- Example 8.12 *没有眼泪, 没有悲伤 (No Tears, No Sorrow)*, bb. 30-40
- Example 8.13 *没有眼泪, 没有悲伤 (No Tears, No Sorrow)*, bb. 40-49
- Example 8.14 *没有眼泪, 没有悲伤 (No Tears, No Sorrow)*, bb. 40-49
- Example 8.15 *茉莉花 (Jasmine)*, bb. 11-15
- Example 8.16 *茉莉花 (Jasmine)*, bb. 31-35
- Example 8.17 Pauline Viardot, *Тихая, звёздная ночь (Silent, Starry Night)*, bb. 15-19
- Example 8.18 *Тихая, звёздная ночь (Silent, Starry Night)*, bb. 31-35
- Example 8.19 Pauline Viardot, *На заре (At Dawn)*, bb. 11-13
- Example 8.20 Pauline Viardot, *Узникъ (The Prisoner)*, bb. 56-63

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Chapter 1 Introduction and Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

In the twenty-first century, the general standards of classical singing in China have greatly improved and classical singing is being increasingly embraced and studied by a larger number of students. The focus of classical singing education in China primarily revolves around discussing how to improve students' singing proficiency, and the developmental history of classical singing in China and issues faced by students in the process of learning. However, within the theoretical discourse on classical singing in China, two crucial aspects are lacking:

- Students' embodiment of classical singing techniques provided by the Chinese vocal pedagogues
- The challenges faced by Chinese students in learning classical singing in the twenty-first century.

Therefore, this research project focuses on vocal pedagogy in Europe and China, by taking examples from vocal pedagogues such as Manuel Garcia and Xiaoyan Zhou, who were both celebrated vocal teachers and who have had a significant impact on classical singing education in the West and China (respectively). In addition, I will be applying participant observation and auto-ethnography as methodological tools to address these two issues outlined above.

Although the second point above has been widely discussed, so far, few have considered the relationship between the emergence of these challenges and culture and politics. Furthermore, it remains to be explored whether classical

singing techniques adopted by the Chinese in the first half of the twentieth century are still applicable to Chinese students in the twenty-first century, and whether different cultural backgrounds influence Chinese students' reception of Western vocal approaches today. These questions significantly lack detailed discussions and examination in the research on Chinese classical singing pedagogy, musicology and broader humanities disciplines, and these two aspects constitute the focal points of my research project and form the basis for my research questions. Thus, relying on both rich resources and intuitive observations, this project brings new insights to the field.

1.2 Literature Review

From the era of the May Fourth Movement (1919),¹ Western classical singing gradually began to be taught widely to Chinese students, and to this day, this Western singing form has flourished in China, and is being increasingly chosen by students over Chinese folk-style singing. For example, in the 2023 Artistic Examination Ranking Information released by Liaoning Province, there were 1,486 candidates in the classical singing category and 916 candidates for Chinese folk-style singing.² As the number of students pursuing Western classical singing

¹ The May Fourth Movement, which took place on 4 May 1919, in Beijing, was primarily led by young students, with significant participation from various segments of society, including the public, urban citizens and business elites. The movement encompassed a range of activities, such as demonstrations, petitions, strikes and violent confrontations with the government. The essence of this movement lay in the Chinese people's fervent desire to completely liberate themselves from the rule of imperialism and feudalism, thus giving rise to this patriotic movement.

² '2023nian Liaoningsheng Putong Goaxiao Zhaosheng Yinyue Biaoyan Zhuanye (Zhuanmenhua) Tongyi Kaoshi Chengji Tongjibiao' [Statistical Table of the Unified Examination Scores for Music Performance Major (Specialization) in Regular Higher Education Institutions in Liaoning

studies has been increasing, a series of phenomena has emerged in this context that have sparked my inquiry: given China's historical background, what are the reasons for the differences between Chinese and Western approaches to classical singing teaching? Why do Chinese students make greater progress in their studies after studying abroad? What is the relationship between the problems encountered by Chinese beginners and early-stage singers in learning classical singing and their cultural background? Are the classical singing teaching methods passed down in China since the early twentieth century still applicable to these singers nowadays?

Numerous dissertations, articles, media resources and textbooks which will be reviewed in this chapter, from around the world, have discussed the development and teaching of classical singing in China. Most sources extensively discuss how Western classical singing has been disseminated and developed in China, exploring the difficulties encountered by students, and proposing new methodologies to solve them. However, these sources do not explore why Chinese vocal tutors have not retained the original Western descriptions of classical singing techniques, or the pervasive impact of cultural background on students' performance. Investigation of the second issue is crucial for students to cultivate correct singing awareness. For Chinese beginners and early-stage singers, it is not necessarily a challenge for them to correct errors in singing but rather more challenging is the realization of the causes of these errors. This can lead to

Province in 2023], < <https://www.lnzsk.com/lnzkbfiles/2022/2023gkyslyby07.pdf> > [accessed 3 August 2023].

students being unable to independently avoid similar problems, thereby hindering their progress in learning. This literature review will focus on the dissemination and development of classical singing in China, deficiencies in Chinese classical singing education, and the main issues encountered by students in the process of learning classical singing.

Chinese vocal art has a long history, with traditional Chinese opera and folk-style singing holding significant positions in China's vocal art before the introduction of Western classical singing. After the arrival of classical singing in China, it faced challenges in its smooth and steady development due to the prolonged feudal rule and the dominance of traditional Chinese music with its distinct characteristics. Chen has divided the development of classical singing in twentieth-century China into four stages, summarizing the important events in each phase:³ the germination period (1920s-1940s); the development period (1950s-1960s); the Cultural Revolution era (1966-1976) as a stagnation period; and the reform period from 1978 when classical singing could smoothly develop in China. Li has discussed the 'conflict between Chinese and Western styles' in China's vocal community,⁴ elaborating on how major music conservatories in China resolved the clash between the two different vocal styles, proposing his own

³ Chunhua Chen, 'The Development and Teaching Characteristics of Chinese Bel Canto' (published conference paper, International Conference on Education, Sports, Arts and Management Engineering, University of Xi'an, 12-13 March 2016) < <https://www.atlantispress.com/proceedings/icesame-16/25851049> > [accessed 5 August 2023].

⁴ Jiti Li, "Tuyang Zhizheng' Yu 'Xianfen Houhe'—Zhonxi Yinyue Guanxi Fansi' [The Conflict Between 'Local and Foreign' and 'Divide First and Then Unite'—Reflection on the Relationship Between Chinese and Western Music], *Shenyang Yinyue Xueyuan Xuebao [Journal of the Shenyang conservatory of Music]*, 01 (2022), pp. 95-104.

insights into the coexistence of diverse vocal cultures. Lin has explored the influence of the development of classical singing in China on the Chinese folk-style singing from a cultural and historical perspective,⁵ advocating that Chinese folk-style singing could draw upon classical singing techniques while preserving its own cultural characteristics in a process of ‘integration.’

Zhang conducted a comparative analysis of vocal education in China and the United States,⁶ highlighting distinctive features between the two. Zhang underscored the comprehensive integration of scientific knowledge within vocal pedagogy in the United States, that is to say that students’ educational endeavours are undertaken upon a comprehensive grasp of physical structures. Moreover, in vocal education in the United States, an emphasis was placed on equipping students with the skills of independent innovation and critical thinking. In contrast, Chinese vocal education tended to prioritize the mastery of singing techniques as the sole educational objective, with comparatively less emphasis on fostering divergent thinking and independent consciousness among students. Pei has emphasized the shortcomings in Western classical singing education at Normal universities in China.⁷ Pei stated that the tutors at Normal universities

⁵ Ying Lin, ‘The Influence of the Spread of Bel Canto on the Chinese National Vocal Music’ (published conference paper, 2019 International Conference on Humanities, Cultures, Art and Design, Sun Yat-Sen University, 2019) https://webofproceedings.org/proceedings_series/ART2L/ICHCAD%202019/AD057.pdf [accessed 6 August 2023].

⁶ Yuhang Zhang, ‘A Comparative Study of Vocal Music Education Between China and the United States’, *Advances in Educational Technology and Psychology*, 02 (2018), pp. 200-204.

⁷ Xintong Pei, ‘An Analysis of the Importance of Vocal Music Teaching to the Cultivation of Students’ Comprehensive Ability’ (published conference paper, 5th International Conference on Arts, Design and Contemporary Education, Baicheng Normal University, 14-16 May 2019). < <https://www.atlantis-press.com/proceedings/icadce-19/125916175> > [accessed 6 August 2023].

lack the capacity to cultivate students' comprehensive performance abilities, and tend to blindly transmit their personal professional skills through oral instruction without providing students with a systematic and complete teaching approach.

Additionally, Pei discusses how vocal educators within higher education institutions often ignore the scientific underpinnings and foundational theoretical knowledge that underscore effective singing techniques. Concepts such as diaphragm movement during the breathing process, optimal larynx positioning and the segmentation of vocal registers remain overlooked in favour of metaphorical explanations. This approach extends to elucidating singing techniques and the accompanying physical reactions and sensations through demonstrations, guiding students to mimic their instructors' vocal states. This pedagogical trend, while common, leads to a critical drawback: a deficiency in students' understanding which will directly impact their vocal development.⁸

Theoretical knowledge allows students to gain a deeper understanding of how vocal approaches interact with the body and the resulting physiological responses, and relying on imitation cannot provide student with comprehension of how singing techniques affect the body, leading to inaccuracies and inefficiencies in executing vocal methods. As Ye mentioned, only by mastering theoretical knowledge can students better apply the acquired vocal techniques to their singing performances.⁹ Um and Zheng pointed out that tutors excessively pursue

⁸ Ibid., p, 635.

⁹ Qing Ye, 'On the Cultivation of Aesthetic Consciousness in Vocal Music and Bel Canto Teaching in Colleges and Universities, *Frontiers in Art Research*, 03 (2021), pp. 15-21.

the shaping of the voice.¹⁰ They believe that possessing a beautiful voice with seamless register transitions is the sole criteria for judging a singer's proficiency, consequently neglecting other aspects of singing, leading to one of the reasons why students' singing often lacks clarity in language expression. In addition, they point out that many vocal tutors in universities lack abundant theoretical knowledge and may misinterpret the vocabulary involved in Western classical singing requirements. This phenomenon can significantly affect students' ability to establish correct singing awareness, potentially influencing their future development in the field of singing. In order to enhance the teaching quality of Classical singing in China, Um and Zheng provided several recommendations: tutors should change the teaching method, in order to establish an equal relationship with students and listen to their opinions; tutors should also increase the emphasis on scientific knowledge during instruction and they should focus on cultivating comprehensive abilities in students rather than solely pursuing the 'beautiful' voice. Other issues present in higher education institutions in vocal education were also briefly mentioned: Zhang pointed out that vocal tutors still rely on the traditional, teacher-centered modality.¹¹ This approach entails a unidirectional transfer of knowledge from tutor to students, inadvertently

¹⁰ Eunkyung Um and Yunfei Zheng, 'Misunderstanding Analysis and Countermeasure Research in Vocal Music Teaching of Bel Canto' (published conference paper, 2018 International Workshop on Education Reform and Social Sciences, Zhejiang Conservatory of Music and Zhejiang Vocational Academy, 29-30 December 2018)

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331335217_Misunderstanding_Analysis_and_Countermeasure_Research_in_Vocal_Music_Teaching_of_Bel_Canto> [accessed 8 August 2023].

¹¹ Ni Zhang, 'Meisheng Jiaoxue Zhong Jige Jiben Wenti Tanta' [A Discussion of Several Fundamental Issues in Classical Singing Teaching], *Shoudu Shifan Daxue Xuebao [Journal of Capital Normal University]*, 02 (2010), pp. 140-142.

triggering a decline in students' engagement and enthusiasm for the learning journey. Furthermore, the tutors do not place enough emphasis on nurturing students' ability to independently solve problems during the teaching process. Qian pointed out that tutors do not often adapt their teaching methods according to students' individual characteristics and learning abilities and students have limited opportunities for extensive practical experience during the learning process.¹²

Such challenges encountered by students have been a major focus of discussion among vocal pedagogues and scholars. But perhaps the main issue that Chinese students encounter is the pronunciation of Western languages. Li discusses how for Mandarin-speaking singers, the most significant challenge they face in choral singing is enunciating the texts of the Western choral repertoire.¹³ To address this, Li conducted a comparative analysis between Chinese and English from a phonological perspective and proposed a methodology to assist Chinese singers in achieving resonant tone, vowel unification and clarity of diction when performing foreign choral works.

Another area of focus has been the difficulties Chinese singers encounter when singing French works, especially in terms of pronunciation and understanding the content of French poetry. Wu demonstrates that certain French phonemes are

¹² Kun Qian, 'Gaoxiao Meisheng Jiaoxue Xiancun Wenti Ji Yindui Celue' [Current Issues and Response Strategies in Higher Education Institutions], *Dangdai Yinyue* [Modern Music], 12 (2010), pp. 182-184.

¹³ Chien-yi Li, 'Diction for Mandarin/Chinese Singers: A Methodology to Achieve Resonant Tone And Vowel Unification in Western Choral Music' (PhD dissertation, University of South Carolina, 2018) <<https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd/4804/>> [accessed 12 August 2023].

absent in the Chinese Pinyin system;¹⁴ these missed phonemes can create pronunciation challenges for the Chinese singers when they perform French repertoire. Therefore, through a comparative analysis of the French in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet (Chinese Pinyin) with words examples for both languages, Wu has enumerated eight vowels and six consonants that exist in French but are absent in the Pinyin system, and has provided a systematic approach with meticulously devised exercises to assist Chinese students with the unfamiliar phonemes. Moreover, Wu recognized that some of the phonetics bear resemblances to sounds or characters in the Pinyin system; therefore, Wu incorporated relevant Chinese examples to aid students in resolving the challenges associated with French pronunciation. Another aspect that Wu focuses on is the challenges faced by Chinese singers in comprehending French poetry. She posits that due to disparities of cultural and life experiences, the challenge for Chinese singers is to grasp the portrayal of certain things and the expression of imagery in French poetry. Wu exemplifies some of the cultural differences between China and Western countries by examining a few poems used in French songs, and provides basic suggestions concerning the selection, reading and interpretation of French poetry. Furthermore, Wu offers a brief annotated bibliography of sources to help Chinese singers cultivate and enhance their taste and ability to interpret French literature.

¹⁴ Kehui Wu, 'Difficulties for Chinese Vocalists in Singing French Art Song' (PhD dissertation, Arizona State University, 2019)
< <https://keep.lib.asu.edu/items/157364> > [accessed 12 August 2023].

Moreover, pronunciation issues have been identified by Wang for singers singing Chinese repertoires.¹⁵ Wang proposed using IPA notation instead of traditional Pinyin to label Mandarin characters in Chinese works, aiming to improve the performance of both Chinese and non-Chinese singers. Liu, Yap, Zang, Song and Li have recently focused on similar issues.¹⁶ They analyzed the differences between Italian and Chinese from the perspective of pronunciation, identifying certain shared vowels and consonants that have distinct pronunciations in Italian and Chinese. Notably, Italian lacks pronunciations ending in 'n' (front nasal) and 'ng' (post nasal) which are present in Chinese Pinyin. To clarify the pronunciation of these initials and finals in Chinese, they offered a table listing all the Chinese initials and finals by referencing frequently occurring Chinese characters from several highly prevalent Chinese art songs. Additionally, to facilitate comprehension for non-native Chinese-speaking singers, the table includes English words with the same or analogous pronunciations. They also explained the primary pronunciation rules in Mandarin and provided specific examples to assist singers in grasping the pronunciation rules and distinguishing them from Italian. This effort aims to help non-native Chinese-speaking singers in learning Chinese Pinyin and help them resolve issues of unclear pronunciation when performing Chinese repertoires.

¹⁵ Chong Wang, 'A New Training Technique for Using the Bel Canto Method to Sing Chinese Songs' (PhD dissertation, Texas Tech University, 2018) < <https://ttu-ir.tdl.org/items/526a2735-ae6d-4fe9-a4cc-dd9456972950> > [accessed 12 August 2023].

¹⁶ Lijia Liu, Yap Jin, Haiping Zang, Chen Song and Yang Li, 'Rules for Performing Chinese Art Songs with Bel Canto Singing Techniques', *International journal of academic research in progressive education and development*, 11 (2022), pp. 1821-1844.

Of course, it should be noted that other issues are also present in Chinese students' learning of Western classical singing, and although the issues have not been fully addressed and analyzed as pronunciation has, they have nevertheless been acknowledged and referenced in the literature. Wang discusses how most Chinese students sing with unstable breath and lack proper breath management.¹⁷ Zhou pointed out that students lack aesthetic perception and awareness and mistakenly believe that possessing proficient singing skills is the sole criterion for becoming a professional singer.¹⁸ Furthermore, students' deficiencies in stage performance have also been observed: Wei pointed out a prevalent issue that students tend to exhibit rigid body movements.¹⁹ This phenomenon not only produces a non-legato singing voice and obstructed breath flow but also impedes the effective translation of emotional nuances through gestural expressions, thus exerting a negative influence both on vocal quality and performance. This holds true even for those students who exhibit commendable skills during daily practice. Cheng also mentioned stiff body movements and students who appear unnatural during performances. While such difficulties may also be present among students from other countries, Chinese students generally encounter greater obstacles in overcoming them.²⁰ Moreover, many sources elucidate the positive implications

¹⁷ Chong Wang, 'A New Training Technique for Using the Bel Canto Method to Sing Chinese Songs', p. 37.

¹⁸ Na Zhou, 'A Study on the Teaching of Vocal Music in Colleges and Universities from the Perspective of Aesthetic Education', *Advances in Educational Technology and Psychology*, 06 (2022), pp. 25-28.

¹⁹ Ying Wei, 'Lun Shengyue Ketang Yu Wutai Biaoyan Ronghe De Jiaoxue Yanjiu Yu Shijian' [Research and Practice on the Integration of Vocal Session and Stage Performance in Teaching], *Dazhong Wenyi Daxue Xuebao [Popular Literature and Art]*, 24 (2014), pp. 222-224.

²⁰ Ming Cheng, 'Qiantan Meisheng Changfa Jiqiao Zai Chuxuezhe Xunlian Zhong De Yingyong'

that stage performance can have on vocal expression: Yuan believes that singers can establish a connection with the audience and convey profound musical emotions by incorporating rich and natural body language during their performances.²¹ While the Stanislavski system is extensively employed in European theatre performance, Liu underscores the significant implications of this system in the domain of acting, and proposed that opera stage performances in China should draw inspiration directly from it.²² By analyzing its fundamental principles and viewpoints and employing specific case studies, Liu explores how this system is implemented in opera, thereby providing insightful implications for opera performance in China. However, the lack of stage training in China is predominantly attributed to issues within the realm of teaching. An exhaustive study of stage performance and training for Chinese singers is beyond the scope of this dissertation, which rather focuses solely on analyzing the cultural aspect of the bodily issues present in the singing and learning of beginners and early-stage singers. There is a dearth of literature that analyzes why these singers tend to show rigid body movements from the students' cultural environment and this is one of the precise gaps my research aims to address.

[Application of Bel Canto Skills Training of Beginners], *Taiyuan Daxue Xuebao [Journal of Taiyuan University]*, 14 (2013), pp. 76-78.

²¹ Yuan Yuan, 'Qiantan Zhiti Yuyan Zai Shengyue Wutai Biaoyan Zhongde Zuoyong' [A Brief Discussion on the Role of body Languages in Vocal Stage Performance], *Yinyue Shikong [Music Space]*, 10 (2013), pp. 142 and 145.

²² Chen Liu, "Sitannisilafusiji Yanju Tixi' Guanzhaoxia De Geju Biaoyan Yishu Yanjiu' [The Research of Stanislavski's System in Opera Performance] (PhD dissertation, Harbin Normal University, 2017)

<[https://www.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CDFD&dbname=CDFDLAST2018&filename=1018012145.nh&uniplatform=OVERSEA&v=YwXcmTC1IRp9XBRECu9IElzTIkdDai0-aE6g_uoiCsvfuQYgCCewcdzq\]mp_m6zQ](https://www.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CDFD&dbname=CDFDLAST2018&filename=1018012145.nh&uniplatform=OVERSEA&v=YwXcmTC1IRp9XBRECu9IElzTIkdDai0-aE6g_uoiCsvfuQYgCCewcdzq]mp_m6zQ)> [accessed 14 August 2023].

The above-mentioned literature provides theoretical support and serves as a guiding reference for my research. Firstly, a crucial emphasis emerges on pronunciation issues encountered by students, revealing a distinct research gap in the physiological explanation of how the pronunciation system impacts vocal technique and muscle movement, and subsequently influences the execution of Western repertoire. This gap in understanding underpins the fundamental reasons for unclear pronunciation. Drawing upon preceding research involving Pinyin analysis, phonemes and Mandarin pronunciation, this study will bridge this gap by correlating these linguistic aspects with the physiological intricacies of vocal performance, thereby enhancing both pedagogy and the understanding of pronunciation mechanisms.

Secondly, I observed that despite Chinese pedagogues gradually adopting and assimilating advanced Western science and culture during the twentieth century, they neglect the scientific theory of singing which was current in the nineteenth century in the West and continues to be relevant today. Therefore, my research also links historical context with the teaching methods of classical singing in China to explore why in China, commensurate emphasis was not placed on the scientific theories intrinsic to Western classical singing techniques. Then I will contextualize this conclusion within the contemporary landscape of vocal education in China to investigate whether the classical teaching methods inherited from the early twentieth century are still efficacious in nurturing novice talents today. This endeavour offers new insights that can recalibrate instructional strategies for

Chinese vocal tutors. Ultimately, this discernment aspires to enhance the efficacy of pedagogical practices and optimize the learning journey of present-day beginners and early-stage singers.

Moreover, the initial stages of classical singing learning are fundamental to good technique: students gradually develop an awareness of their physical reactions to singing techniques, cultivate pronunciation habits, and enhance their ability for independent thinking in the learning process. However, the fact is that most Chinese beginners and early-stage singers learn this form of singing to prepare for artistic examinations. Faced with the heavy burden of academic coursework, they often struggle to allocate sufficient time and energy to the study of Western classical singing and lack performing experience. In addition, the majority are unfamiliar with and have not used IPA in the early stages of their learning. By identifying the issues for beginners and early-stage singers, I aim to assist this group in learning to be aware and overcome language-related difficulties which they might not even realize they face at the beginning of their studies.

Last, it is crucial to mention that while language and teaching issues significantly impact singers' performance and development, they are, of course, not the sole criteria for judging the quality of singing and the pace of learning progress. As mentioned before, there are other issues that significantly impact performance and development that have not yet been fully addressed in the literature, such as bodily movement and emotional expression, as well as the

ability to think independently during the learning process. Moreover, some cultural habits which influence students' performance have been overlooked, such as singing with a less open mouth. Although some of the issues related to these aspects have been skated over, they fall short in uncovering the underlying causes of these phenomena and the relationship with the cultural environment in which Chinese learners are situated; culture can subconsciously influence students' physical performance during learning activities, making it difficult to detect and identify. Therefore, as an influential but underexplored factor, my study extends its purview to bridge this knowledge gap, to analyze technical and teaching issues from the perspective of cultural influence. Overall, my study is not only looking at language issues but also focuses on general singing techniques, teaching and performance issues in a social context to think more globally about how these elements interact with the body and culture. Therefore, this study will assist in a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationship between culture and the problems students encounter during learning and address the aforementioned issues which have not been fully addressed in the current literature, thus filling a gap in the knowledge of vocal pedagogy for Chinese students and vocal tutors.

1.3 Rationale for recital repertoire and choice of vocal pedagogues under study

Manuel Garcia II occupies a prominent and enduring position in the annals of vocal pedagogy. He not only nurtured numerous renowned singers such as Mathilde

Marchesi, Julius Stockhausen, Johanna Wagner and Jenny Lind but also invented the laryngoscope, a milestone invention that enabled the observation of the vocal mechanism in action.²³ This groundbreaking invention not only laid the foundation for the advancement of vocal pedagogy on a scientific basis but also catalyzed transformative developments in the field of medicine. Garcia's research ran alongside that of figures such as George Duncan Gibb, London's foremost laryngologist during the same period.²⁴ While Garcia's research was solely dedicated to vocal pedagogy and is still regarded as an indispensable primary source of reference by contemporary scholars,²⁵ Gibb's work proposed that the anatomical structure of the larynx might vary among different ethnic groups, resulting in differences in vocal characteristics. He attempted therefore to associate these variations in voice with racist, geographic and gender ideologies, aiming to establish a hierarchy of ethnic groups and voice types.²⁶ My research project takes its lead from Garcia to explore why, after Western vocal techniques were introduced into China, Chinese vocal pedagogues transformed these

²³ Teresa Radomski, 'Manuel García (1805-1906) A Bicentenary Reflection', *Australian Voice*, 11 (2005), pp. 25-41.

²⁴ R. D. Laursen, 'George Duncan Gibb (1821-1876): London's Foremost Laryngologist', *Journal of Medical Biography*, 05 (1997), pp. 205-209.

²⁵ Examples such as Michèle Castellengo's work examine the historical progression of the concept of vocal registers up to the present day. At the same time it explores the key physiological, acoustic and perceptual attributes associated with the prevalent singing voice registers by discussing Garcia's definition to vocal registers and his theories on human voice production. Cheruvathur Uthup's project aims to elucidate the fundamental scientific principles inherent in the traditional teaching of *bel canto*; in Uthup's work, Garcia's theories such as registers and breathing are extensively discussed. Michèle Castellengo, 'Manuel Garcia Jr: A Clear-sighted Observer of Human Voice Production', *Logopedics, Phoniatrics, Vocology*, 30 (2005), pp. 163-170. Cheruvathur Uthup, 'The Acoustical foundations of Bel Canto', PhD dissertation (Indiana University, December 2016) <<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/items/13222f00-49fd-4b59-8c99-5d10c29fbed7>> [accessed 14 August 2023].

²⁶ Katherine Meizel, 'A Powerful Voice: Investigating Vocality and Identity', *Voice & Speech Review*, 07 (2011), pp. 267-274.

scientifically and objectively characterised techniques into more intuitive methods for Chinese learners.

Of course, during the same period as Garcia, there were many famous singing tutors who trained outstanding students and who had their own insights into vocal techniques. Giovanni Sbriglia (1832-1916) a Neapolitan tenor, transitioned from a performing career to teaching in Paris in 1875. Many well-known names were among his students, including Lillian Nordica, the De Reszké brothers and Pol Plançon. Although Sbriglia did not write vocal treatises, his vocal principles can be gleaned from the recollections of his pupils and journalists. However, some of the techniques he advocated do not align with contemporary mainstream ideas on vocal pedagogy. For instance, he advised students to build up a strong chest and his technique primarily focused on the thoracic region.²⁷ He invented a belt to assist pupils in building up and maintaining a high chest and proper posture during singing. Jean De Reszké (1850-1925), a Polish tenor, retired from the stage in 1904 and began teaching in Paris. Similar to Sbriglia, Reszké did not publish teaching materials, so information about his singing methods can only be gleaned from his students' recollections and the published press. His natural approach was aligned with the principles of speech and was adjusted to the unique attributes of each singer.²⁸ However, this natural approach may not be suitable for beginners and early-stage singers. If they are taught to believe that singing should be 'effortless, easy and natural' they will probably experience muscular fatigue and

²⁷ Edmond Skiff, 'Signor Sbriglia and Some of His Pupils', *Étude Magazine*, (1902), p. 181.

²⁸ Arthur J. Stringer, 'Jean De Reszké: Famous Tenor', *The Day*, 9 (1899), p. 2.

become anxious during training.²⁹ Saint-Yves Bax (1829-1897) served as a voice professor at the Paris Conservatoire for nearly three decades.³⁰ His treatises primarily consisted of vocal exercises of varying levels of difficulty and length. Despite his emphasis on the performance of vocal exercises, he also acknowledged the abundance of available vocal methods and directed singers to explore the methods of Garcia for more in-depth study.³¹ Mathilde Marchesi (1821-1913) gained prominence as one of the most renowned vocal teachers in the Western world, continuing the scientific approach to singing and teaching pioneered by her teacher, Manuel Garcia II.³² Another student of Garcia, Julius Stockhausen (1826-1906), authored a renowned singing treatise titled *Gesangsmethod* in 1884, which was firmly rooted in Garcia's principles.³³

In addition to the Garcia school,³⁴ another significant vocal pedagogical

²⁹ Walter Johnstone Douglas, 'Jean De Reszké: His Principles of Singing', *Music & Letters*, 6 (1925), pp. 209-213. Singing involves a series of movements, such as the use of various muscle groups, proper breath support and control. The execution of these actions requires different muscles to exert force directly on each other and to coordinate in harmony. Beginners who are in the phase of learning and exploring vocal techniques often lack sufficient theoretical knowledge and extended experience, they may misunderstand terms like 'effortless' and 'natural'. Consequently, they may neglect practising singing techniques and have an incorrect understanding, which can lead to a lack of coordination among different muscle groups and result in negative occurrences such as muscular fatigue and discomfort.

³⁰ Tamara D. Thompson, 'The Vocality of Sibyl Sanderson in Massenet's *Manon* and *Esclarmonde*', PhD dissertation (Royal College of Music, February 2016), copy provided by Prof. Clair Rowden.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 85.

³³ James Richard Joiner, 'The Vocal Principles of Garcia as Represented by His Pupils: Battalles, Marchesi, and Stockhausen', PhD dissertation (Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, December 1979) <https://repository.lsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4442&context=gradschool_disstheses> [accessed 14 August 2023].

³⁴ The Garcia school refers to a tradition of singing pedagogy and vocal technique, focusing on scientific understanding and vocal health. As Adkins said, 'The Garcia school is neither a pure Italian school nor is it something apart. It is based on the bel canto tradition because at the time of Manuel Garcia's entry into the musical world, European operatic music was primarily Italian, and the singers called to perform the works were Italian. The Garcias, father and son, by means of their physiological discoveries, enlarged the scope of this school and set out to improve and strengthen it.' Adkins Chiti, *Songs and Duets of Garcia, Malibran and Viardot: Rediscovered Songs*

tradition is the Lamperti school. Led by Francesco Lamperti (1811-1892) and subsequently by his son Giovanni Battista Lamperti (1839-1910), the Lamperti school cultivated numerous notable singers, including Irene Abendroth, Marcella Sembrich and Franz Nachbaur. Both the Garcia and Lamperti schools held significant positions in the nineteenth century, but their teaching styles were distinct. While the Garcia school emphasized infusing scientific principles into vocal technique, the Lamperti School was more inclined to preserve and pass down the old Italian vocal tradition, and concentrated on delineating the sensations and timbres associated with excellent singing.³⁵ One of the most famous books regarding the teaching of Giovanni Battista Lamperti is *Vocal Wisdom* which was transcribed by his student William Earl Brown.³⁶ The primary goal of this book was not to offer singing exercises or provide advice on resolving vocal difficulties but rather to convey a philosophical perspective through the use of wise proverbs and beautiful analogies. Although the book was not Lamperti's original work, it still provides insights into his methodology and teaching style.³⁷

In conclusion, despite the presence of many famous vocal pedagogues in the nineteenth century apart from Garcia, their methods were often either built upon Garcia's theoretical foundations, or lacked detailed instructional materials, or

by *Legendary Singers* (Van Nuys: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1977), p. 7.

³⁵ Cheruvathur Uthup, 'The Acoustical Foundations of Bel Canto', PhD dissertation (Indiana University, December 2016) <<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/items/13222f0049fd-4b59-8c99-5d10c29fbed7>> [accessed 14 August 2023].

³⁶ This book was transcribed by William Earl Brown and consists of a compilation of maxims grouped into loosely connected chapters, each providing a diverse range of insights and advice. Uthup, 'The Acoustical foundations of Bel Canto', p. 14.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

required additional devices, such as a belt, for assistance. Considering the participation of early-stage singers in this study and to minimize potential influences on their future learning, the methods of other vocal teachers were not employed in this research. Furthermore, one of the questions addressed in this research revolves around the acceptance of Western and Chinese classical singing methods among Chinese beginners and early-stage singers. Given that Chinese vocal education normally leans toward conveying singing techniques to students using numerous real-life examples, Garcia's scientifically grounded approach to classical singing forms a stark contrast. Also, it is imperative to emphasize the pragmatic considerations as well. Due to the fact that Garcia spent nearly fifty years teaching and living in London, his treatises were published in English translation very quickly which makes them all the more accessible to me than other continental European languages. Lastly, it is worth emphasizing that in the published papers of Chinese vocal scholars discussing principles of Western classical singing, Garcia's name and contributions are cited by some, where no other Western pedagogue names appear. This indicates that, when juxtaposed with other vocal pedagogues, Garcia's name stands out as familiar to Chinese vocal teachers and scholars. Therefore, Garcia's theory is better suited for use in this study.

Compared to the Western world, China has only a few notable vocal educators. Though the development of Western classical singing in China faced challenges upon its introduction, China's vocal education landscape has seen the emergence

of a select group of dedicated educators who made significant contributions to the dissemination and growth of Western classical singing, such as Yixuan Yu (1909-2008), Youkuo Huang (1908-1990), Zhilan Gao (1922-2013), Shangneng Ying (1902-1973) and Shuan Zhou (1894-1974). Xiaoyan Zhou witnessed nearly every crucial historical phase of Western classical singing in China, from its introduction to its development and maturation.³⁸ Throughout this journey, Zhou continuously reflected on her teaching methods, addressing specific issues that arose during vocal training and offering vocal methods to solve singing problem.³⁹ Furthermore, due to Zhou's significant role in advancing vocal education in China, literature about her teaching characteristics and vocal principles is more readily available and collected compared to that on other vocal tutors. In addition, Zhou's treatise *Fundamental Technique Training of Vocal Music* was included in the teaching materials for vocal courses after revision by the National Education Commission in 1990 and 1991. This treatise was also selected as teaching material by various singing educational institutions.⁴⁰ Therefore, considering the specificity and wider dissemination of Zhou's theories, as well as the availability of relevant materials regarding her teaching principles, Zhou was chosen for this study.

³⁸ Yan Zhang, 'Zhouxiaoyan Shengyue Jiaoxue de Tese Fenxi' [Analysis of the Characteristics of Xiaoyan Zhou's Vocal Teaching], *Da Wutai [Great Stage]*, 06 (2014), pp. 233-234.

³⁹ Mao Cui and Danguang Xu, 'Lun Zhouxiaoyan Gechang Yishu Jingshen Jiqi Gongxian' [An Analysis of the Artistic Spirit and Contributions of Xiaoyan Zhou in Singing], *Wenyi Zhengming [Literary and Artistic Contention]*, 06 (2021), pp. 192-194.

⁴⁰ Xiaotong Guo, 'Qiantan Shengyue Xuexi de Jishu yu Pingjia—Ping Shengyue Jichu' [A Brief Discussion on the Techniques and Skills of Vocal Learning—A Review of The Foundation of Singing], *Zhongguo Jiaoyu Xuekan [Journal of the Chinese Society of Education]*, 11 (2018), p.143.

Furthermore, to better elucidate the technical issues I am investigating for Chinese early-stage singers, I will give a recital of music in both European languages and Chinese. Incorporating these languages will provide a more intuitive demonstration of how these vocal techniques are applied in singing and how they manifest in musical performances. Additionally, I will perform some Russian pieces during the recital. This choice is motivated by the fact that many vowels and consonants in Russian are similar to those in Chinese, making Russian pronunciation easier for Chinese beginners and early-stage singers to learn.⁴¹ Moreover, Russian language, music and culture serve as a crucial link connecting figures who will be discussed during the dissertation: singer and pedagogue Vladimir Sushlin and composer Alexander Tcherepin, as well as poet Ivan Turgenev and the music composed by Garcia's sister Pauline Viardot which sets his poetry. At the same time, the significant role women have played in developing classical singing both in China and the West is reflected in my repertoire choices which include music written for Zhou (by Tcherepnin) and music by Viardot. Chapter Eight will examine more closely both the repertoire chosen and why it was chosen.

⁴¹ Chashenkov Sviatoslav, 'Yuanyu Eyu de Hanyu Wailaici de Yinyi Fenxi he Yanjiu' [Transliteration Research Analysis of Chinese Loanwords Derived from Russian] (Master dissertation, East China Normal University, 2023). Many Russian vowels and consonants have similar counterparts in Chinese phonetics. For instance, using International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols, the Russian consonant *г* /g/ corresponds to Chinese *g* /k/ or *k* [k^h]; the Russian consonant *й* /j/ corresponds to the Chinese *y* /i/; the Russian vowel *ю* /ɥ/ corresponds to the Chinese *iou* /iou/ or *ü* /y/; the Russian vowel *э* /ɛ/ corresponds to the Chinese *a* /A/ or *e* /ɛ/. Due to the diverse nature of Russian pronunciation rules, this discussion will remain basic and will not delve into a deeper study of Russian phonetics.

Last, it is crucial to mention that by selecting these two very contrasting female and male vocal tutors, I have effectively created a dichotomy that could be perceived as reflecting historical Western male-driven scientific principles versus Eastern female-oriented intuition. But this does not imply that I have imposed a neo-colonial narrative on vocal pedagogy. As the participants in this research are novice vocalists, and despite students nowadays having a higher theoretical knowledge base and comprehension abilities in various subjects compared to students from the last century, it does not necessarily imply that they can fully comprehend the scientific aspects within Garcia's singing methods. In this sense, they also require Zhou's more intuitive method, which is primarily based on given life-examples. Hence, both Garcia's and Zhou's methods hold equal instruction for beginners and early-stage singers. Therefore, it is important to note that this distinction does not inform the way I deal with vocal pedagogy, which primarily draws on an auto-ethnographic perspective.

Chapter 2 Western Vocal Music and Pedagogy in China

2.1 Overview of Chinese vocal music

The origins of Chinese national vocal music can be traced back to the matriarchal clan society of 6000 B. C., where songs originated from peoples' labour and daily life.⁴² For example, the genre of *Work Song* has a long history and was previously documented in the *Huainan Zi*⁴³ during the Han Dynasty (202 BC-9 AD), which is the basic form of Chinese national vocal music. Its origins predate other lyrical folk songs, emerging within the context of labour and intimately intertwined with the rhythms of labour, thus the singing is mainly in the form of shouting.⁴⁴ There is therefore a long oral tradition of work and folk songs,⁴⁵ such as the grand song of the Dong minority, the Mongolian Toast Song.⁴⁶ The other main type of Chinese vocal music is Chinese opera: Huangmei Opera and Shaoxing Opera in Jiangnan,

⁴² Yuemei Sun and Xiaofeng Fan, *Zhongguo Jinxiandai Shengyue Yishu Fazanshi [The Development History of Chinese Modern Vocal Music]* (Zhejiang: Zhejiang Daxue Chubanshe) [Zhejiang: Zhejiang University Press], 2011, p. 7.

⁴³ Huainanzi is a philosophical work written by An Liu, from the royal family of Huainan in the Western Han Dynasty. The work contained Daoist, Confucianist, and Legalist concepts and theories, for example, yin and yang, and Wu Xing theories. See Wenlu Shi and Anchao Wang, 'Huainan Zi de Liyueguan Jiqi Fazhan Bianxi' [Analysis of the Outlook on Rites and Music and Its Development in Huainan Zi], *Huainan Shifan Xueyuan Xuebao [Journal of Huainan Normal University]*, 06 (2022), pp. 30-34.

⁴⁴ 'Zhongguo Minzu Shengyue de Qiyuan' [The Origin of Chinese Vocal Music], <<https://baike.baidu.com/reference/174820/234b0eTCwlmmo17zQynYnHSd5CnSJJYX6P1ItP0UEtbo03fMmPP111GL8GKdkwqt3h6hpZ1s28nOPvkmo1ylG9xqd3aEVXQXW3qAShFavDz3n2RZz8By31d15Q>> [accessed 29 May 2021].

⁴⁵ Lanlan Su, 'Minjian Shengyue Chuancheng yu Xiandai Shengyue Jiaoyu Fazhan Tanjiu' [On the Inheritance of Folk Vocal Music and the Development of Modern Vocal Music Education], *Huanghe Zhisheng [Song of the Yellow River]*, 04 (2018), pp. 96.

⁴⁶ This grand song refers to the collective categorization of unaccompanied and conductor-less multipart folksongs among the Dong ethnic group, who inhabited areas such as Liping County, Congjiang County, and Rongjiang County in Southeastern Guizhou Province. The Toast Song expresses good wishes and respect, and is mainly popular among the traditional nomads in East Asia. See Guihua Zhang, 'Dongzu Dage de Yanchang Tedian Jiqi Xingshimei Tezheng' [The Singing Characteristics and Aesthetic Features of Dong Ethnic Grand Songs], *Zhongguo Yinyue [Chinese Music]*, 03 (2004), pp. 106-108; Zhenhua Xiao, 'Exploring the Distinctions in Mongolian Short Tunes Folk Songs in the Khorchin and Ordos Regions' [The Singing Characteristics and Aesthetic Features of Dong Ethnic Grand Songs], *Zhongguo Yinyue [Home Drama]*, 32 (2023), pp. 79-82.

Flower Drum Opera in Hunan, and Cantonese Opera in Guangdong and Guangxi.

Compared with other types of vocal music, Chinese opera is the most popular form of vocal music in China since the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1644).⁴⁷ Its performance is based in local cultures with an inherited performing tradition passing from father to son.⁴⁸ Chinese opera is based on folk stories or adaptations of historical events, as well as myths familiar to the public; it applies strict regulations to such as costumes, staging, the types of music for different voices and makeup; all of these have specific requirements according to the different roles. Operatic troupes not only have fixed performance venues but also tour the country, and in Chinese traditional customs, some families will invite operatic troupes to come to play for an important event, such as a marriage, birthday and a Spring Festival, which thoroughly integrated Chinese opera into major ceremonies or festivals.⁴⁹ People also followed excellent actors, just as people pursue famous stars nowadays, a phenomenon which tended to increase the scope and speed of the dissemination of opera.⁵⁰ Thus the players of Chinese opera formed a

⁴⁷ Guisheng Dong, 'Xiquzhong de 'Ban' he 'Yan'' ['Clothing' and 'Acting' in Chinese Opera], *Dangdai Xiju [Contemporary Theatre]*, 03 (1977), pp. 40-41.

⁴⁸ In the early days of Chinese operas, all troupe actors were men; even when there were female roles in the performances, they were portrayed by male actors. This practice stemmed from the belief that it was inappropriate for women to be in the limelight, as it was considered immodest. Therefore, in the initial stage of Chinese opera, there was a strict adherence to the tradition of male-to-male transmission. It was not until after 1900 that women gradually started to be allowed to receive training in Chinese opera. However, there was still a prohibition on men and women performing together in the same troupe and on the same stage. It was not until the 1920s that mixed-gender performances became permissible. See Songkun Liu, 'The First Woman Comedian in the Chinese Opera' ['Clothing' and 'Acting' in Chinese Opera], *Shuzhai [Digest]*, 05 (2009), pp. 84-86.

⁴⁹ Jiez Zao and Hongrui Yuan, 'Lun Chuantong Xiqu de Shehui Zuoyong' [The Social Function of Chinese Opera], *Dianying Wenxue [Movie Literature]*, 10 (2008), pp. 149.

⁵⁰ Zhonglin Wang, 'Zhongguo Jingjushi Luelun' [Brief Studies on History of Beijing Opera], *Qinghua Daxue Xuebao (Zhaxue Shehui Kexueban) [Journal of Tsinghua University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)]*, 03 (2008), pp. 5-17.

professional body, drawing recruits from a wide social base.⁵¹ Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, China has protected Chinese opera as intangible cultural heritage,⁵² and some specialized schools have been established, while other schools teach on the subject of Chinese opera and regularly hold outreach.⁵³

2.2 Introduction to the historical context of Western vocal music in China

Music education in China can be traced back to 551 BCE, but until the conclusion of the Second Opium War (1856-1860), the majority of music teaching was of traditional Chinese music. Moreover, music education received little attention, music being considered merely as entertainment.⁵⁴

This situation really only changed in the mid-nineteenth century after the failure of the First Opium War in August 1842 when China was forced to abandon the previous Closed Door Policy,⁵⁵ and signed the Nanjing Treaty with Britain. This led to the opening of five trading ports in China through which Western cultural influences could gradually enter China.⁵⁶ Moreover, during the Second

⁵¹ Weimin Yu, 'Nanxi Yiren de Shengtai Jiqi Yanchu Changsuo' [The Nanxi Artists and their Performing Places], *Xiqu Yishu* [Chinese Theatre Arts], 38 (2017), pp. 32-37.

⁵² Yunfeng Yang and Haibo Zhu, 'Zhongguo Xiqu de Lishixing Shanbian—Xianzhongguo 70nian Xiqu Yishu Fazhan Zhilu de Fansi' [The Historical Evolution of Chinese Opera—Reflection on the Development of Chinese Opera in the Past 70 Years], *Dangdai Xiju* [Contemporary Theatre], 06 (2019), pp. 4-7.

⁵³ Qiaoqian Fan, 'Zhongguo Chuantong Xiqu Jinxiaoyuan de Yiyi he Chuangxin Fazhan' [The Significance and Innovative Development of Chinese Opera on Campus], *Xiju Zhijia* [Home Drama], 16 (2017), pp. 158-159.

⁵⁴ Meiyao Wu, 'Education and Social Selection in Ancient China: Semantics, Conceptual Transformation and Social Change', *Paedagogica Historica*, 51 (2015), pp. 247-263.

⁵⁵ The Closed Door Policy cut off China from the outside world, with only one trading port during the period. The policy enforced isolationism and strict restrictions on foreign economic, cultural, and scientific exchanges.

⁵⁶ The five trading ports are Guangzhou, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo, and Shanghai. Rong Wei, 'Qianyi Qingzhengfu Biguan Zhengce de Chengyin ji Jiaoxun' [The Cause and Influence of the Closed Door Policy of the Qing Government], *Xinxibu* [New West], 31 (2017), pp.103-104.

Opium War against Britain and France (1856-1860), foreigners had more rights and possibilities to spread Western culture and music widely, with education becoming an important component of their work.⁵⁷

At the same time, the legitimacy of Christianity was ensured and missionaries began to introduce Western music and instruments into China. For example, Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), an Italian Jesuit priest who arrived at the Portuguese settlement of Macau in 1582, was invited by the Emperor to come to Beijing to become an advisor in 1601. He introduced the first clavichords and pipe organs to China,⁵⁸ and set the Chinese language in eight songs which summarized Christian values.⁵⁹

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there were other Catholic orders working and introducing Western music in China: Tomas Pereira (1645-1708) was a Portuguese Jesuit who was summoned to Beijing by Emperor Kangxi in 1672, and became a court musician, organ builder and mathematician.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Sheng Geng, 'Chuanjiaoshi yu Yuanzhengjun—Faguo Chuanjiaoshi Aijialue Dierci Yanpian Zhanzheng Qinliji' [Missionaries and Expeditionary Armies—French Missionary Delamarre in the Second Opium War], *Hangzhou Shifan Xueyuan Xuebao (Shehui Kexueban) [Journal of Hangzhou Teachers College (Social Sciences Edition)]*, 04 (2005), pp. 19-29.

⁵⁸ Luis Saraiva (ed.), *Europe and China Science and Arts in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (London: World Scientific, 2012), p. 136. Ricci believed that music was an excellent and subtle medium of diplomacy, so his chamber organ was mainly intended to be a sample of music technology to present to Emperor Wanli, and he was the first Westerner to be allowed in the Forbidden City, and given free access. He established a Catholic Cathedral in Beijing (later rebuilt several times, destroyed in 1900, but rebuilt again in the twentieth century).

⁵⁹ 'Matteo Ricci and the Introduction of Italian Music', <<http://www.associazionematteoricci.org/site/matteo-ricci-and-the-introduction-of-italian-music/>> [accessed 1 May 2021].

⁶⁰ Artur K Wardega, *In the Light and Shadow of an Emperor Tomas Pereira, SJ (1645-1708), the Kangxi Emperor and the Jesuit Mission in China* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), p. 12-69. Pereira demonstrated a small pipe organ to Kangxi in 1676, and built a larger organ which was installed in the Nan Tang (south) cathedral in Beijing. His only surviving music is a collection of hymns in Chinese.

Teodorico Pedrini, the Italian Lazarist priest and composer arrived in Beijing in 1711. As the most famous European baroque musician to work in China after Pereira, he taught music to the princes of the Imperial Court.⁶¹ During the reign of Emperor Qianlong (1739-1796), one of the important Jesuits at the court was the French Jesuit missionary Joseph Marie (1718-1793), who ordered that music be sent from Europe for use in Beijing, including a mass by the Jesuit composer Charles d' Ambleville (1588-1673).⁶²

It was only in the nineteenth century, during the two Opium Wars, that the Qing government officially allowed the freedom of Christian preaching with the signing of the Treaty of Tianjing in 1858. The Treaty of Whampoa (signed with France in 1844) had already allowed the French to set up churches, hospitals and schools. Therefore, Western missionaries were given increasing freedoms to establish schools and, most importantly, music was included in the curriculum of missionary schools because they believed that music, especially singing, could carry messages that they wished to inculcate which was, of course, conducive to the spread of Western culture.⁶³

Moreover, the Chinese started to realize that the traditional Confucian education could not change the backward developmental situation of China, and missionary schools gained more popularity.⁶⁴ By 1899, there were 17,000

⁶¹ Hon-Lun Yang and Michael Saffle, *China and the West: Music, Representation and Reception* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017), p. 36.

⁶² Luis Saraiva (ed.), *Europe and China Science and Arts in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (London: World Scientific, 2012), p. 81.

⁶³ Jane E Southcott and Angela Hao-Chun Lee, 'Missionaries and Tonic Sol-fa Music Pedagogy in 19th-Century China', *International Journal of Music Education*, 26 (2008-08), pp. 213-228.

⁶⁴ Haifeng Liu, 'Kejuxue' de Shiji Huigu' [The Study of Keju, the Chinese Imperial Examination

students in Protestant mission schools, and by 1915 the student number had increased to 169,707 throughout China.⁶⁵ Most of the schools offered education in English, and universities run by the missionary secondary schools usually had a choir which assisted in the promotion and spread of Western music in China.

During the period from the end of the nineteenth century to the first quarter of the twentieth century, more and more people became interested in Western vocal music,⁶⁶ and to meet the requirements for establishing Western-style professional training, music departments were opened in higher education establishments where foreign and native vocal teachers worked, such as the music department of Peking Women's Higher Pedagogical Institute (established in 1920) and the music department of the Private Yanjing University (founded in 1929).⁶⁷

Outstanding students were also sent to study abroad, bringing back to China both Western repertoire and a Western vocal training. After WWII, at the founding of new China on 1 October 1949, China was faced with a difficult reconstruction task. Thus, after strict political review and screening by the central government, some students such as Chaozhi Ge, Wei Zhong or Xingli Zheng, were sent abroad to study, later returning to China.⁶⁸

System in the Twentieth Century], *Xiamen Daxue Xuebao (Zhhexue Shehui Kexueban)* [Journal of Xiamen University (Arts and social Sciences)], 03 (1999), pp. 16-23.

⁶⁵ P. A. Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese and Diplomats: The American Protestant Missionary Movement in China, 1890-1952* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), p. 90.

⁶⁶ Kaidi Wang, 'The Formation of the Professional Vocal Education in China—Regarding the Russian Musicians' Contribution', *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 289 (2018), pp. 44-48.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁶⁸ Jie Chen, '20shiji Zaoqi Zhongguo Shengyue Liuxuesheng Qunti Yanjiu Wenxian Zongshu' [A Literature Review of the Overseas Chinese Vocal Students in the Early Twentieth Century], *Mei yu Shidai [Aesthetics]*, 11 (2020), pp. 107-109.

2.3 Music development in Shanghai: A brief overview

Shanghai was one of the five trading ports opened following the Nanjing treaty. It was therefore open to the West and became a hub for the dissemination and development of Western culture by foreigners. The metropolis on the Whampoo River was divided into three distinct political territories: The International Settlement (dominated by the British); the French Concession (ruled by a Governor General appointed by Paris) and Greater Shanghai (administered by the Chinese central government, yet still surrounded by foreign enclaves). Moreover, Shanghai is not only the nearest trade port to Beijing but also located at the mouth of the Yangtze River, from where foreigners could enter different parts of inland China easily. Increasing numbers of foreigners came to Shanghai to enter China, including the French, Germans, Russians, Japanese, Americans, Belgians, Dutch, and Italians.⁶⁹

After the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, two millennia of Chinese feudal monarchy ended. Then, the first Minister of Education in China, Yuanpei Cai (1867-1940) encouraged the importation of Western culture and suggested that by assimilating Western music styles, Chinese music could be improved.⁷⁰ He also believed that singing should be an integral part of education, and in September 1912, the Ministry of Education first included music in the Chinese National Curriculum.⁷¹ Moreover, during this period, before the May Fourth Movement, more than 40

⁶⁹ Non Arkaraprasertkul, 'Power, Politics, and the Making of Shanghai', *Journal of West Anhui Planning History*, 9 (2010-11), pp. 232-59.

⁷⁰ Ho, 'Music Education in Shanghai', p. 195.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

different kinds of primary and secondary school music textbooks were published, including music theory, music for harmonica and over 1300 school songs.⁷² The May Fourth Movement, which took place on 4 May 1919 in Beijing, was primarily led by young students, with significant participation from various segments of society, including the public, urban citizens and business elites. During this era, the importance of Shanghai in the dissemination of Western thought and culture continued to grow. *The Youth Magazine* (later renamed *New Youth*), first published there in 1915,⁷³ was founded by Duxiu Chen (1879-1942), one of the leaders of the May Fourth Movement. This magazine mainly advocated Western ideas, and as music began to enter the national curriculum, so Western music began to infiltrate the educational system. For example, one of the founders of Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Youmei Xiao (1884-1940), who was named the ‘father of contemporary Chinese music education’, introduced Western music after study in Germany in 1921.⁷⁴ Generally speaking, following the establishment of the Republican Government in 1925, teaching materials in music were expected to include Western elements, and the government made music and singing classes compulsory in primary and secondary schools.⁷⁵

Western missionaries nevertheless remained influential in Shanghai’s music-making and music education. For example, William Muirhead (1822-1900), of the

⁷² Ibid., p. 196.

⁷³ The Chinese name of the magazine is *Xinqingnian* [新青年].

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 92-100.

⁷⁵ War-Chung Ho, ‘Music Education in Shanghai from 1895 to 1945: The Cultural Politics of Singing’, *Music Education Research*, 14 (2012), pp. 187-201.

London Missionary Society, was one of the first missionaries to enter Shanghai during the late Qing dynasty on 26th August 1847. He edited *Hymns of Praise* – a collection of 100 hymns translated into the Shanghai dialect.⁷⁶ One of the earliest orchestras, the Shanghai Municipal Symphony Orchestra, was established by the Shanghai International Settlement, later financed by the Shanghai Municipal Council, during the 1880s, and comprised Italian, Philipino and Russian musicians.⁷⁷

It is also worth noting that in the early twentieth century, Russia had a profound impact on the development of Western music in China, particularly in Heilongjinag Province, which borders Russia in the northern region of China. At the end of the nineteenth century, as tsarist Russia drove to expand its interests in the Far East, it used the pretext of building the Middle East Railway branch line to infiltrate the northeast region of China. After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, in order to guard against Japan, the Qing government agreed to the request of Russia to build the Middle East Railway.⁷⁸ When the railway was completed, businessmen from Europe poured into this city through the Siberian railway, mostly Russians, who also brought their culture to this city.

⁷⁶ Long Wei, 'Jidujiao Fangyan Zanmeishiji Chuban (1818-1911) Pingshu' [A Review of the Publication of Hymns in Christian Dialects (1818-1911)], *Guangzhou Shehui Zhuyi Xueyuan Xuebao* [Journal of Guangzhou Institute of Socialism], 31 (2010), pp. 37-39. This collection is prefaced by a statement of thirty principal doctrines of the Christian religion, with elaborate detail of pertinent Scripture texts under each. A subsequent edition was published in fifty-five leaves with *Hymns of Jesus* added in. The Chinese titles of the hymns are *Zanzhu Shige*, *Yiesu Zange* [赞主诗歌, 耶稣赞歌].

⁷⁷ Yurun Mao, 'Music under Mao, Its Background and Aftermath', *New York: Society for Asian Music*, 22 (1991), pp. 97-125.

⁷⁸ Mara Moustafine, 'Russians From China: Migrations and Identity', *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies*, 5 (2013), pp. 143-158.

Moreover, following the outbreak of the October Revolution in 1917, a large number of Russians fled to Harbin to escape the turmoil of war, including famous musicians, such as V. L. Gershgolina, Vladimir Trakhkinbory and Achair Dobrotvorskaia. These musicians introduced advanced instrumental and vocal techniques from Europe,⁷⁹ and in general the Russians also placed emphasis on music education, establishing more than 30 music schools in Harbin, the capital of Heilongjiang Province, significantly contributing to the cultivation of Chinese musicians.⁸⁰ Thus, due to its unique geographical location and historical context, Russia played a proactive and influential role in the dissemination and development of Western music in China during the early twentieth century.

2.4 Xiaoyan Zhou's biography

Zhou was born in Shanghai in June 1917. Like Manuel Garcia, Xiaoyan Zhou (1917-2016) lived a long life; she was a soprano and the most notable achievement in her life was the development of Westernised classical singing in China, creating a school of vocal pedagogy suitable for Chinese pupils. She was not born into a musical family; her father was a rich banker and studied in the Department of Economics of New York University. After the summer of 1918, Zhou moved to Hankou (Wuhan) with her parents where they settled in the French Concession

⁷⁹ Wei Guo, 'Ershi Shiji Eluosi Yinyue Wenhua dui Heilongjiang Yinyue Wenhua de Yingxiang Yanjiu' [A Study on the Influence of the Twentieth Century Russian Musical Culture on the Musical Culture of Heilongjiang], *Yishu Pingjian* [Art Evaluation], 12 (2017), pp. 186-188.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

and she later attended Daosheng primary school in Hankou.⁸¹ The school used foreign textbooks, and Zhou was allowed to think more independently than if she had been in a traditional Chinese private school.⁸² Traditional Chinese education focuses on rote learning, and the curriculum is fixed as textbook knowledge; teachers rarely extend their teaching beyond it. Unlike the questioning principles of Western education, the Chinese teacher will select key points which they think are important and exhort the students to memorize them directly.⁸³ It is, therefore, hard to stimulate the students' independent exploration and creative ability in a Chinese traditional education. The education Zhou received at Daosheng primary school paid more attention to the cultivation of practical ability.⁸⁴ Zhou could formulate her own views and develop an ability of independent thinking through personal participation in putting forward and solving problems. Zhou studied English and began her piano training with an Italian nun at the Saint Mary Foreign Language School, run by the Roman Catholic Church, and began to show her talent for music in 1929.⁸⁵

At the beginning of 1935, accompanied by her mother, Zhou was admitted to

⁸¹ After the Opium War, Western countries set up Concessions in Hankou, governed and occupied by foreign powers. There were five Concessions in Hankou: British, Russia, French, Germany, and Japanese Concessions. In China, France established concessions in Shanghai, Wuhan, Tianjing and Guangzhou. The Hankou French Concession, established in Hankou, Wuhan, through the Hankou French Concession Treaty signed with the Qing government in 1896, covered an area of approximately 187 acres.

⁸² Jianqiang Wang, *Zhou Xiaoyan Zhuan [Biography of Xiaoyan Zhou]* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Renmi Chubanshe [Nanjing: Jiangsu People's Publishing House], 2012, p. 38.

⁸³ Wensen Yu, 'Shixi Chuantong Ketang Jiaoxue De Tezheng ji Biduan' [An Analysis of the Characteristics and Drawbacks of Traditional Classroom Teaching], *Jiaoyu Yanjiu [Educational Research]*, 05 (2001), pp. 50-52.

⁸⁴ Wang, *Biography of Xiaoyan Zhou*, p. 38.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

the piano class of the Shanghai National Conservatory of Music (now the Shanghai Conservatory of Music).⁸⁶ Compared with other students who had already learnt piano with masters such as Mario Paci (1878-1946), an Italian pianist and conductor, Zhou felt stressed and decided to change her instrument to voice.⁸⁷ Zhou was taught by the Russian opera singer Vladimir Grigorievich Shushlin (1896-1987), called the founder of modern Chinese Westernised Classical singing.⁸⁸

Vladimir Shushlin was a Russian opera singer who began his studies at the St. Petersburg State Academic Chapel in 1914. He entered as a violinist before changing to vocal studies and opera performance in 1917. In 1918, he joined the Mariinsky Theatre and sang in the opera *Boris Godunov* with Feodor Chaliapin (1873-1938). During his vocal studies, he came under the direction of Stanislaw Ivanovich Gabel (1849-1924), a Russian operatic bass, vocal pedagogue, composer and opera director. Gabel's vocal tutor was, in turn, Camille Everardi (1824-1899), a Belgian operatic baritone who studied singing under Manuel Garcia in Paris, and Francesco Lamperti in Milan. Thus, in terms of the relationship between teachers and pupils, links between Garcia and Zhou exist cross several generations.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Yong Shi, 'Zhou Xiaoyan Shengyue Biaoyan yu Jiaoxue Chengjiu Pingshu' [Review on Zhou Xiaoyan's Vocal Performance and Teaching Achievements], *Wanxi Xueyuan Xuebao [Journal of West Anhui University]*, 27 (2011), pp. 142-144.

⁸⁷ Wang, *Biography of Xiaoyan Zhou*, p. 144.

⁸⁸ Zhaorun Sun, "'Zhongguo Shengyue de Dianjiren"—Su shilin Shiliao Xinjie' [The Founder of Modern Chinese Westernised Classical Singing—A New Interpretation of Su Shilin's Historical Materials], *Renmin Yinyue [People Music]*, 07 (2016), pp. 40-44.

⁸⁹ Zhaorun Xun, 'Zhijing Su Shilin—Lun Gechangjia de Gechang Yishu Shijian he Zhejiao Nengli' [To Salute Shushlin—the Practice of Singing and teaching ability], *Renmin Yinyue [People's Music]*, 11 (2019), pp. 50-53.

In May 1924, under the leadership of Russian conductor Mriy Moiseyevich Pazovsky (1887-1953), Shushlin went with other singers to Harbin to give a concert for the workers of the Middle East Railway who built the city.⁹⁰ After that, Shushlin stayed in Harbin and joined the Harbin Opera Company as a soloist, performing in several opera such as *Carmen*, *Aida*, and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. He also taught at the Harbin Glazunov College of Music from 1925.⁹¹ Invited by the Chinese composer and scholar Youmei Xiao (1884-1940), Shushlin became a vocal tutor at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in September 1930 and taught here for 26 years.⁹² He returned to Russia in 1956 and became a professor at the Moscow Conservatory where he died in 1978.

Yet in August 1937, the Japanese Army attacked Shanghai and Zhou could not continue her studies with Shushlin. Thus, in September 1938, she went to Paris for further study. At the beginning of October 1938, Alexander Tcherepnin, a Russian-born composer, pianist and sinophile, met Zhou at the reception held by the Embassy of the government of the Republic of China in Paris.⁹³ He was impressed by her singing and recommended her to apply to the *École normale de musique*. In the same month, Zhou entered the *École normale*, studying with the French composer, conductor and teacher Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979). But the process of learning did not go well,⁹⁴ so Tcherepnin introduced her to the Russian

⁹⁰ Harbin is located in Northeast China and the center of Northeast Asia.

⁹¹ The college was the most famous music college in the Far East, founded in July 1925, and was one of the first batch of Western music schools in China.

⁹² Ruyan Ding, 'Sushi Lin yu Zhongguo Shengyue Jiaoyu' [Shushlin and Western Vocal Education in China], *Renmin Yinyue [People's Music]*, 08 (2006), pp. 55-57.

⁹³ Wang, *Biography of Xiaoyan Zhou*, p. 30.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

Conservatory in Paris where his father Nikolai Tcherepnin (1873-1945), composer, pianist and conductor was one of the founders. She studied singing under the Italian mezzo soprano Bernardi, and then Tcherepnin introduced her to Mrs. Perugia and Mrs. Mani to learn French repertoire.⁹⁵

At that time, the Chinese educator and scholar Zisheng Xiao (1894-1976) was living in France. When he saw Zhou's success, he decided to write a cantata libretto called *Pan-Keou* based on Chinese folktales, which was set to music by Alexander Tcherepnin, and later orchestrated to become *La Fée et le cultivateur*. This work was later translated into English by Giovanni Cardelli as *The Nymph and the Farmer*.⁹⁶ The cantata was premiered at a gala to celebrate the anniversary of the Chinese Republic at the Opéra de Paris on 9 October 1945. The performance was a great success, and Zhou's talent and performance were recognised by a larger audience:⁹⁷

who is Shiao Yen? She's a young Chinese singer you may have heard at the opera or in recitals. Recently in London, she achieved such great success that the English asked her to return in the autumn.⁹⁸

The name of Xiaoyan Zhou began to appear frequently in major newspapers in France, where she was hailed as the Chinese Lily Pons, possessing a *haute* and *crystalline* voice.⁹⁹ Her voice, as hinted by her exquisite appearance, was reported

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 249.

⁹⁶ Copyright Office, *Catalog of Copyright Entries Third Series* (Washington: The Library of Congress, 1953), p. 107.

⁹⁷ According to the stage director's daily journal, the performance was interrupted several times as the electricity supply was unstable, and power was cut off twice during the gala. In addition, the performance started late as the organisers forgot to send a car for the singer (presumably Zhou). Archives de l'Opéra. Régie. Journal de régie. Deuxième série, <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530969421/f351.item>> [accessed 1 May 2021].

⁹⁸ Germaine Bartoli, 'Shiao Yen la Petite Hirondelle qui a chanté à l'Opéra veut devenir une grande vedette', *France-soir*, 03 August 1946, p. 2: 'Mais qui est Shiao Yen? C'est une jeune chanteuse chinoise que vous avez déjà entendue à l'Opéra ou dans des récitals. Dernièrement, à Londres elle a remporté un succès si grand que les Anglais lui ont demandé de revenir à l'automne.'

⁹⁹ George le Cerf, 'Mademoiselle Chow Shiao-Yen', *Claudine*, 22 January 1947, p. 8.

to be supple and fresh, limpid like a spring, with a unique allure that greatly enhanced its charm:¹⁰⁰ 'Miss Shiao Yen Chow, [who] vocalizes with no more apparent effort than a spring does to gush, murmur, and spread.'¹⁰¹ American composer and musician Edmund J. Pendleton (1899-1987) commented that Zhou's voice exhibited charm in the high and low registers, but required smoothing out in the middle register.¹⁰² If the transitions of register were something Zhou had to work on, it could be reflected in her particular emphasis on training students in smooth vocal register transitions upon her return to China, when she proposed specialized methods to address precisely these issues.

In addition to the acknowledgment of Zhou's singing abilities, her exemplary conduct as an oriental woman is another reason for her being admired. Zhou consistently maintains appropriate etiquette in any setting, whether it be in behavior or appearance.¹⁰³ Moreover, in press interviews, Zhou emphasized the importance of proper etiquette for Chinese women:

In China, [...] a woman is judged mainly by her education, her refinement; her way of speaking and the grace of her attitudes count more than her features. [...] But we never forget that we must remain secretive and perfectly modest if we want to maintain our influence over the men of our country.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ 'Courrier Musical: Œuvres et interprètes nouveaux', *France-Illustration*, 28 June 1947, p. 3.

¹⁰¹ Clarendon, 'Les Concerts symphoniques', *Le Figaro: journal non politique*, 25 March 1947, p. 4: 'Mlle Shiao Yen Chow [qui] vocalise sans plus d'effort apparent qu'une source n'en déploie pour jaillir, murmurer et s' épanche.'

¹⁰² Edmund J. Pendleton, 'Music in Paris', *The New York Herald Tribune (European ed.)*, 30 March 1947, p. 5.

¹⁰³ Bartoli, 'Shiao Yen la Petite Hirondelle qui a chanté à l'Opéra veut devenir une grande vedette.'

¹⁰⁴ Cerf, 'Mademoiselle Chow Shiao-Yen' : 'En Chine, dit-elle, l'on juge surtout une femme à son éducation, à sa distinction; sa façon de s'exprimer et la grâce de ses attitudes comptent davantage que ses traits. Les jeunes Chinoises se servent maintenant des produits d'Elizabeth Arden et des maquillages de Max Factor; elles font du sport; elles nagent, montent à cheval et jouent au tennis mais nous savons ne jamais oublier qu'il nous faut demeurer secrètes et parfaitement pudiques si nous voulons conserver notre ascendant sur les hommes de notre pays.'



Figure 2.1 The portrait of Xiaoyan Zhou in *Point de Vue*.¹⁰⁵

It is worth noting that Zhou also engages in a certain degree of physical exercise. In the article in the women's magazine *Claudine* on Zhou, the writer suggests that Zhou practises gymnastics,¹⁰⁶ although this exercise appears to more closely resemble the Chinese practice of Tai Chi, which requires strong balance to support slow and steady movements involving different parts of the body. This not only indicates Zhou's strong core strength but also signifies her self-awareness physically. She can perceive which muscles are actively engaged when exerting force, a skill that can also be applied to singing. In her subsequent publications, particularly in the section on breathing techniques, Zhou vividly describes the

¹⁰⁵ 'Une Lily Pons chinoise', *Point de vue*, 18 October 1945, p. 14.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

sensations in her body during training, which may well be attributed to her physical exercise regime.

On 30 March 1946, the China Aid Association raised donations in London, and Zhou was invited to give a concert for this event in Whitehall.¹⁰⁷ In this concert, Zhou and Tcherepnin's wife, pianist Xianmin Li introduced Chinese contemporary music to the foreign audience, which was a huge success and the concert was recorded live by the BBC and transmitted to the world.¹⁰⁸ From this time, French newspapers refer to her as the 'little swallow', the literal meaning of her name in Chinese.¹⁰⁹ Thus during her studies abroad, Zhou not only delved into advanced Western vocal techniques but also dedicated herself to introducing Chinese music and culture to Western countries. This became evident shortly after she arrived in France. On 30 March 1939, two French newspapers published identical articles about an evening in honour of the letters and arts of China organized by The International Literary Circle in collaboration with the Chinese Cultural Embassy. Zhou performed distinctive Chinese pieces during this event. She continued to regularly promote Chinese music in service to her nation,¹¹⁰ performing a recital of Chinese music for 50 delegates from 34 countries participating in an

¹⁰⁷ 'Chinese Music', *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, 01 April 1946, p. 5.

¹⁰⁸ An email was sent to the BBC archives to see if they hold a recording for this performance but unfortunately, no references to performances by Zhou exist in the holdings of the BFI National Archive and BBC archive, presumably because the BBC radio service was suspended during World War II and did not resume until June 1946. Email correspondence sent 19 April 2021, reply received 21 April 2021.

¹⁰⁹ Bartoli, 'Shiao Yen la Petite Hirondelle qui a chanté à l'Opéra veut devenir une grande vedette'.

¹¹⁰ 'Une Lily Pons chinoise', *Point de vue*, 18 October 1945, p. 14 : 'Un tel talent ne demandait qu'à s'épanouir... [...] la jeune artiste consacre désormais ses loisirs à la cause chinoise en « chantant son pays ».'

educational programme sponsored by UNESCO in August 1947,¹¹¹ before embarking on a last European tour, before returning to China. Hence, Zhou exhibited a strong sense of patriotism throughout her activities from 1939 to 1947, engaging in diplomatic endeavours. Additionally, her patriotism is evident in her earnest desire to bring European vocal music and singing techniques back to China:

Away from her homeland, a young Chinese girl dreams of becoming a renowned singer, then returning to her county to sing the songs of victory, the ancient tunes of China and our classical operas.¹¹²

After the victory of the War of Resistance against Japan in 1945, Zhou decided to return to China in October 1947.

Before the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, Zhou was actively engaged in teaching. In 1948, She served as a vocal tutor at the Shanghai Conservatory and then at Yu Cai School in Shanghai. In September 1949, she was appointed as the head of the vocal department at the Shanghai Conservatory. She also participated in cultural delegations sent by the Chinese Ministry of Culture to the Soviet Union and Poland. However, in 1966, with the eruption of the Cultural Revolution, Zhou's work and life were significantly impacted. She underwent isolation and political scrutiny at the Shanghai Conservatory. She was required to destroy all her own books, LP records and even her high-heeled shoes. Accusations of being a 'French spy' and a 'reactionary academic authority' were levelled against

¹¹¹ 'La Lily Pons Chinoise donne un récital à Sèrres', *Paris-presse: dernières Nouvelles du monde*, 1 August 1947, p. 4.

¹¹² Bartoli, 'Shiao Yen la Petite Hirondelle qui a chanté à l'Opéra veut devenir une grande vedette' : 'Loin de sa terre natale, une petite Chinoise rêve de devenir une grande chanteuse, puis de repartir dans son pays chanter la patrie victorieuse, les vieux airs de la Chine antique et nos classiques opéras.'

her, and all her performances and teaching activities were suspended.¹¹³

In October 1969, Zhou was released from isolation and transferred to Meilong Labour Camp, which was located more than 50 kilometres away from Shanghai. Shortly thereafter, a type of school emerged nationwide, primarily utilizing labour as the main method to educate Party and government cadres, as well as personnel from educational, scientific and artistic units. Those individuals considered to have deviated from the Communist Party's ideological line or who were deemed to hold 'bourgeois', 'capitalist', or 'revisionist' thought were subjected to re-education by being sent to rural areas to participate in agricultural labour. During the Cultural Revolution, there were total of 106 such 'schools' throughout the country, collectively referred to as the 'Five Seven Cadre School'. Subsequently, Zhou was sent for several years to a 'Five Seven Cadre School' located approximately 40 kilometers away in Fenxian for ideological transformation. There, she was assigned to poultry farming. This method of altering class consciousness through physical labour is also referred to as 'labour reform'.¹¹⁴

With the official visit of U. S. President Nixon to China in February 1972 and the signing of the 'Sino-American Joint Communiqué' on February 28th in Shanghai, Premier Enlai Zhou proposed criticism of the extreme leftist ideologies of the

¹¹³ Wang, *Biography of Xiaoyan Zhou*, p. 426.

¹¹⁴ The 'Five Seven Cadre School' was established in 1968 during the Cultural Revolution, in accordance with the spirit of Mao Zedong's 'Five Seven Directive'. It was a unique educational and labour institution, primarily structured as a school but characterized by its agricultural aspects. Its main objective was the labour reform and ideological education of cadres from Chinese party and government institutions, as well as intellectuals from scientific, educational and cultural sectors.

Cultural Revolution,¹¹⁵ marking the gradual waning of the revolutionary momentum. In the latter half of 1972, Xiaoyan Zhou received a notification from the Revolutionary Committee of the 'Five Seven Cadre School' instructing her to return home. Before the Cultural Revolution, Zhou had already garnered a reputation nationwide. Upon her return, there were strong calls from both former colleagues and students for Zhou to resume her work at the Shanghai Conservatory.¹¹⁶ Moreover, due to Zhou's consistent alignment with communist ideology throughout the labour reform period, where she demonstrated no indications of 'capitalist thinking' emerging, the Revolutionary Committee leadership at the Shanghai Conservatory agreed to her formal reinstatement to teaching duties in 1973.¹¹⁷

After the end of the Cultural Revolution, China aspired to reengage with the world.¹¹⁸ In late 1977, the Chinese Ministry of Culture organized a Chinese cultural and artistic delegation to visit Germany. Zhou was selected as a member of this delegation, tasked with the mission of gaining insights into the state of vocal music training and performance.¹¹⁹ In June of the following year, Zhou accompanied the delegation on a visit to the United States. Following these two visits, she was acutely aware of the underdeveloped state of Western classical

¹¹⁵ 'Zhou Xiaoyan: 'Wo Buneng Shangtaile ,Wo Yaogei Tamen Chuangzao Tiaojian'' Xiaoyan Zhou: 'I Can Not Perform on Stage Anymore, I Must Create Opportunities For Students], <https://culture.china.com/expo/figure/11170657/20160309/21733859_all.html> [accessed 16 January 2024].

¹¹⁶ Wang, *Biography of Xiaoyan Zhou*, p. 448.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 468.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 499.

¹¹⁹ Shaojie Lin, 'Qiantan Zhou Xiaoyan de Meisheng Jiaoxue Zhilu' [Brief Talk on the process of Xiaoyan Zhou teaching Bel Canto], *Beifang Yinyue* [Northern Music], 02 (2015), pp. 30-32.

singing in China.¹²⁰

In 1979, the Ministry of Culture decided to convene the National Higher Music Institutions Student Vocal Competition in Shanghai, selecting the Shanghai Conservatory as the hosting institution.¹²¹ Seizing this opportunity to promote the development of Western classical singing education, Zhou organized a conference in November 1980,¹²² where she invited such vocal pedagogues as Yixuan Yu, vice-president and head of the vocal department at the Central Conservatory of Music and Yuxiu, director of the Sichuan Conservatory of Music.¹²³

The following year, Zhou published a paper in which she comprehensively summarized the development and lessons of Western classical singing in China over the past three decades, emphasizing that the singing voice should be produced with underpinning scientific methodology.¹²⁴ Concurrently, she, along with other vocal tutors, established a 'Research Group' to address issues related to Western classical singing in China.¹²⁵ Additionally, Zhou extended invitations to foreign classical musicians such as Seiji Ozawa to come to China for performances,

¹²⁰ Jianbin Chen, 'Lun Zhou Xiaoyan de 'Xiansheng' Zhilu' [Investigating Xiaoyan Zhou's Path as a Teacher], *Yinyue Wenhua Yanjiu* [Music Cultures Studies], 04 (2015), pp. 99-108.

¹²¹ Unknown, 'Quanguo Gaodeng Yinyue Yuanxiao Xuesheng Shengyue Bisai zai Shanghai Juxing' [National Higher Music Institutions Student Vocal Competition Took Place in Shanghai], *Renmin Yinyue* [People's Music], 12 (1980), p. 10.

¹²² Wang, *Biography of Xiaoyan Zhou*, p. 492.

¹²³ During this conference, Zhou also presented her solutions to the issues related to the transition into head register for tenors which she described as to 'pass the thread through the eye of a needle'. Details of Zhou's technical approaches will be discussed in the next chapter. *Ibid.*, p. 490.

¹²⁴ Xiaoyan Zhou, 'Dangdai Shijie Shengyue Fazhan Qushi gei Women de Qishi—Dui Woguo Shengyue Yishu Ruogan Wenti de Zairenshi' [Insights from the Contemporary Trends in World Classical Singing Development—Revisiting Several Issues in Western Classical Singing in China], *Renmin Yinyue* [People's Music], 03 (1981), pp. 18-22.

¹²⁵ Nan Zhang, 'Zhou Xiaoyan Shengyue Jiaoxue Sixiang Tanjiu' [Exploring the Vocal Teaching Philosophy of Xiaoyan Zhou], *Yinyue Yanjiu* [Music Research], 03 (2005), pp. 98-102.

facilitating experiential learning and drawing inspiration from these interactions.¹²⁶

In 1984, Zhou took a group of Chinese singers to the Belvedere Singing Competition which took place in Vienna. Since this was China's first participation in this international competition after the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese Ministry of Culture attached great importance to it.¹²⁷ Zhou's student Jianyi Zhang achieved first place in the tenor group. In May 1988, she established the Zhou Xiaoyan Young Opera Singers Trainee Centre, and the first opera she directed was Giuseppe Verdi's *Rigoletto* in mandarin at the Shanghai Music Festival with a cast of her students from the Trainee Centre.¹²⁸

In order to improve vocal teaching and help students get a better understanding of vocal technique, she published the book *Fundamental Technique Training of Vocal Music* in October 1990 which became the official national textbook of vocal music education in colleges and universities.¹²⁹ Two years later,

¹²⁶ Wang, *Biography of Xiaoyan Zhou*, p. 484.

¹²⁷ 'Yi Yuyan wei Tupokou, Shixian Zhongxi Shengyue de Ronghe Guantong' [Using Language as a Breakthrough to Achieve the Integration of Chinese and Western Vocal Music], <<https://www.wenmi.com/article/pxf73604h84i.html>> [accessed 31 January 2024].

¹²⁸ 'Shanghai Zhouxiaoyan Geju Zhongxin Jianjie' [Brief introduction of Shanghai Zhou Xiaoyan Young Opera Singers Trainee Center], <https://www.shcmusic.edu.cn/view_22.aspx?cid=324&ppid=27&id=2&navindex=0> [accessed 3 March 2021].

¹²⁹ Xiaoyan Zhou, *Shengyue Jichu [Fundamental Technique Training of Vocal Music]* (Beijing: Gaodeng Jiaoyu Chubanshe [Beijing: Higher Education Press], 1990). Hereafter referred to as *Fundamental Technique Training of Vocal Music*. A second edition, compiled with the collaboration of Ruilin Ni, was finished in September 2003 and published in April 2004. There are few differences between the two editions except for the addition of twelve pieces of repertoire which are mostly Chinese folk songs. Although the book does not explicitly state the specific reasons for including these repertoires, it is presumably to enrich the content of the treatise and to provide reference and assistance for students of varying proficiency levels in selecting appropriate songs. Xiaoyan Zhou and Ruilin Ni, *Shengyue Jichu [Fundamental Technique Training of Vocal Music]* (Beijing: Zhongyang Guangbo Dianshi Daxue Chubanshe) [Beijing: China Central Radio and Television University Press, 2004]). Ruilin Ni died in March 2019. He was a professor at the Shanghai Conservatory of music, member of the Jiusan Society (one of the eight legally

Zhou presented the paper *The Tract of Chinese vocal development* at a seminar held by the Centre for Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong Society of Ethnomusicology in 1992.¹³⁰ Furthermore, in order to facilitate a better understanding of the singing techniques offered in her published treatise, Zhou did not employ scientific language in the treatise to describe these singing techniques but rather used real-life examples to describe and illustrate the feelings of vocal students as they practised. As a 'valued publishing project' to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, a set of DVDs entitled *Zhou Xiaoyan: The Foundation of Singing* was published in 1999, where she describes singing techniques such as respiration, resonance and illustrates the functions, morphology and roles of the vocal organs when people sing. The basic vocal technique expounded is the same as in her first treatise, but as it is narrated, it appears more intuitive and vivid than the written words.¹³¹

In 2001, she was awarded as an outstanding Communist Party member; in the same year, she was awarded the lifelong Honour Award from both the China Federation and Association of Literary and Art Circles. In February 2002, the Minister of Culture and Communication of France presented her with the Légion d'honneur to award Zhou's special contribution to opera and vocal pedagogy.

recognised minor political parties in China), and former executive vice editor of the magazine *Music Art*.

¹³⁰ Yilan Tu, 'Zeqi Yibiao Shiqi Mofan—Zhou Xiaoyan Jiaoshou Shengyue Biaoyan, Jiaoxue, Yanjiu 70nian Yishu Huodong Shulue' [Her Demeanor as an Exemplar—A Brief Account of Professor Zhou Xiaoyan's 70 Years of Artistic Activities in Vocal Performance, Teaching and Research], *Renmin Yinyue [People's Music]*, 01 (2008), pp. 15-20.

¹³¹ Xiaoyan Zhou, *Zhou Xiaoyan: Gechang de Jichu [Xiaoyan Zhou: The Foundation of Singing]* (Zhongyang Yinyue Xueyuan: Beijing Huanqiu Yinxiang Chubanshe [Central Conservatory of Music: Beijing universal audiovisual publishing house]), 1999.

Chapter 3 Biography and Vocal Treatises of Manuel Garcia

3.1 Biography of Manuel Garcia

Manuel Patricio Rodriguez Garcia (1805-1906) lived a long life: his most significant achievements were as a vocal pedagogue and as the inventor of the laryngoscope.¹³² The Garcia family was an extraordinary one: Manuel del Pópulo Vicente Rodriguez Garcia (1775-1832), as the father and founder of the family dynasty, was renowned not only as one of the finest tenors of his day but also as a prolific composer, singing teacher and conductor. He and his second wife Joaquina Sitches (1780- 1864) had three children: Manuel Patricio Rodriguez Garcia; Maria Malibran (1808-1836), the renowned soprano; and Pauline Viardot (1821-1910), who was a leading mezzo-soprano, composer and salon hostess and who, after retirement from the stage, devoted herself to teaching.¹³³

Manuel Garcia *films* began his musical training in the summer of 1814 in Naples where he spent two years having a few informal lessons with the Italian composer Giovanni Ansani. The elder Garcia took care of most of his son's musical training, beginning with the practise of simple solfeggio, followed by exercises in rhythm and studies for intonation, and from this time until his was 20, his vocal training continued practically without intermission under his father's guidance.¹³⁴ In addition, Manuel Garcia studied harmony under the Italian composer Niccolo

¹³² Teresa Radomski, 'Manuel García (1805-1906) A Bicentenary Reflection', *Australian Voice*, 11 (2005), pp. 1-45.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹³⁴ M. Sterling Mackinlay, *Garcia the Centenarian and His Times Being a Memoir of Manuel Garcia's Life and Labours for the Advancement of Music and Science* (Project Gutenberg: Sagwan Press, 2015), p. 55.

Antonio Zingarelli (1752- 1837).

Between 1816 and 1825, the Garcia family spent time in Paris, London and Spain, and Manuel commenced the study of harmony with François Joseph Fétis (1784-1871) in Paris,¹³⁵ a Belgian musicologist, composer, and one of the most influential music critics of the nineteenth century.

At the beginning of 1825, the elder Garcia realized he had already passed the peak of his operatic career and that operatic Europe had nothing more to offer him: he needed to search for new stages outside Europe.¹³⁶ In spring 1825, Dominick Lynch, an American tycoon and opera lover with businesses based in London offered him an opportunity to introduce Italian opera to North America, and in the autumn of 1825, the elder Garcia took a well-equipped opera troupe to New York with Manuel Garcia on the roster as a baritone for the season; Maria Malibran undertook all the contralto roles, Mme. Garcia and Mme. Barbieri were the soprani. Garcia sang the primo tenor roles himself, assisted by the younger Crivelli as the secondo tenor.¹³⁷ The opening night took place on 19 November 1825 in the Park Theater with Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.¹³⁸ The company performed *Don Giovanni* there later in the season on 23 May 1828,¹³⁹ when Garcia *filis* sang the

¹³⁵ 'Manuel Patricio Garcia', <<http://www.harmonicorde.com/Manuel%20Patricio%20Garcia.html>> [accessed 4 December 2020].

¹³⁶ Francesco Milella, 'Italian Opera and Creole Identities: Manuel Garcia in Independent Mexico (1826-1829)', in Axel Körner and Paulo Köhl (eds.), *Italian Opera in Global and Transnational Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

¹³⁷ Domenico Francesco Maria Crivelli (1793/1796-1856) was an Italian-born English opera singer and singing teacher and the son of one of the best Italian tenors Gaetano Crivelli (1768-1836). He had first met the Garcia family in Naples, where he had spent some years in vocal study under Millico and Zingarelli.

¹³⁸ Radomski, 'Manuel García', p. 6.

¹³⁹ Michelle Trauring, 'Operatic History, Live, in "Don Giovanni in New York"', 18 September 2018

role of Leporello in which and he was seen to be a proficient, if not excellent baritone.¹⁴⁰

After the America opera tour, Manuel Garcia set out for Italy and lived there for several months. In 1828, he met Luigi Lablache (1794-1858) who was a renowned Italian opera singer noted for his comic performances, possessing a powerful and agile bass voice, a wide range, and adroit acting skills.¹⁴¹ His voice was full of power which obsessed Manuel Garcia who tried to mimic his hero. As Garcia's sister Viardot recounted, by trying to make his voice 'as big as a bull' he undoubtedly injured his voice.¹⁴² At the beginning of 1829, Manuel's parents persuaded him to give a performance in Naples which unfortunately was unsuccessful. Viardot stated: 'He gave his first performance in Naples, few audiences came to see him and the concert was held without much success.'¹⁴³ The newspaper critics wrote the next day that he should quit the stage and abandon his lyric career. In a letter to his father, he wrote: 'You see from these notices that I can never hope to become an operatic artiste [...] From now onward I am going to devote myself to the occupation which I love, and for which I believe I was born.'¹⁴⁴ With this letter, he gave up his singing career.

Garcia returned to France from Naples, but rather surprisingly turned to a

<<https://sagharborexpress.com/operatic-history-live-don-giovanni-new-york/>> [accessed 3 December 2020].

¹⁴⁰ Francis Rogers, 'America's First Grand Opera Season', *The Musical Quarterly*, 1 (1915), p. 98.

¹⁴¹ Radomski, 'Manuel García', p. 6.

¹⁴² Cited in Mackinlay, *Garcia the Centenarian*, p. 143.

¹⁴³ Cited in Mackinlay, *Garcia the Centenarian*, p. 144. The English quotation was translated by myself and the original sentence in the Mackinlay is 'Il débuta à Naples, je crois, et il eût ce qu'il désirait, un four noir.'

¹⁴⁴ Mackinlay, *Garcia the Centenarian*, p. 144. English translation in the source.

naval career, becoming an officer in the French navy.¹⁴⁵ During the last months of 1830, Manuel Garcia attached himself to the military hospital which inspired his preliminary studies into the physiological and physiognomical aspects of singing. Pauline Viardot recounted some of the objects that were brought home during this period:

What do you think he brought? You would never guess. You would imagine that these would have disgusted me. But it was not so. He would give me a pair of bellows, which I would insert in these windpipes, one after another, and blow hard. Heavens! What extraordinary sounds they used to emit. The chickens' throats [wind pipes] would cluck, the sheep's would bleat, and the bulls' would roar, almost like life.¹⁴⁶

Following his studies of the larynx and with the knowledge he had gained in anatomy, Garcia took up the profession of teacher like his father and began teaching towards the end of 1830. He would require his pupils to submit to a full medical and vocal examination and if he thought it necessary, he would suggest they accepted medical treatment of the larynx.¹⁴⁷ In 1835 he was appointed to a Professorial Chair at the Paris Conservatoire and in 1840 published his *Traité complet de l'art du chant*, dedicated to King Oscar I of Sweden,¹⁴⁸ followed the following year by his *Mémoire sur la voix humaine* which was presented at a meeting of the Academy of Sciences on 12 April in Paris.

The first revolution of 1848 broke out in Paris in February, with demonstrations and the abdication of King Louis-Philippe making Paris highly unsettled and a less suitable terrain for giving singing lessons. After resigning from

¹⁴⁵ Radomski, 'Manuel García', p. 7.

¹⁴⁶ Mackinlay, *Garcia the Centenarian*, p. 156.

¹⁴⁷ Henry Shaw, 'Manuel Garcia—A Centenary Tribute', *The Journal of Laryngology & Otology*, 69 (May 1995), pp. 342-346.

¹⁴⁸ For all French editions and editions in English see Table 3.1.

his post in Paris, Garcia went to England and in November 1848 was appointed Professor at the Royal Academy of Music. Around this time, he indicated that ‘one wish was ever uppermost in my mind—if only I could see the glottis!’¹⁴⁹ The first attempts to examine the throat through reflected light date from the mid-eighteenth century and by 1829, Benjamin Guy Babington’s invention could view the interior of the larynx clearly but he failed to conceive the future of his invention.¹⁵⁰ In September 1854, while Garcia was in Paris on holiday, the idea of the laryngoscope came to him.¹⁵¹ He bought a long-handled dentist’s mirror which he heated and placed against his uvula while he used another, hand-held mirror to reflect sunlight onto the dentist’s mirror. On 22nd March 1855, he submitted his paper entitled *Physiological Observations on the Human Voice* to the Royal Society in London. In this paper, he gave an account of mirror laryngoscopy using direct sunlight, and of the actions of the laryngeal components in producing the various musical tones of the human voice. In 1862, the University of Königsberg (Prussia, modern day Kaliningrad) awarded him the degree of Doctor of Medicine in comparative anatomy. In 1878 he was made a Director of the Royal Academy of Music and in 1881 he was invited to read a paper before the International Medical Congress describing his work in connection with laryngoscopy.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Mackinlay, *Garcia the Centenarian*, p. 204.

¹⁵⁰ Stephen R. Collins, ‘Direct and Indirect Laryngoscopy: Equipment and Techniques’, *Respiratory Care*, 59 (June 2014), pp. 850-864 (p. 851).

¹⁵¹ J. D. Kernan, ‘Manuel Garcia; the Artist and Scientist’, *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 32 (1925), pp. 612-619 (p. 616).

¹⁵² Shaw, ‘Manuel Garcia—A Centenary Tribute’, p. 346.

In 1894, over fifty years after his first vocal treatise, Garcia published *Hints on Singing* in London (see Table 3.1).¹⁵³ The following year he retired from the Royal Academy of Music, where he had taught for forty-seven years. Even though he no longer worked in the vocal department, he still taught private students at his home. Garcia entered his 100th year in 1905 which was the occasion for a number of commemorative events. On 1 July 1906, he passed away.

3.2 Manuel Garcia's published vocal treatises

Manuel Garcia published two vocal treatises during his lifetime. The first *Traité complet sur l'art du chant* is based on ten years working as a teacher and the time he spent in the military hospital, allied to the singing knowledge that Garcia learned from his father: 'It is his method which I have wanted to reproduce by trying to reduce it to a more theoretical form and by attaching the results to the causes.'¹⁵⁴ Originally, this treatise appeared in two parts: the first part was published in 1840 when Garcia was teaching at the Paris Conservatory. Volume one includes the explanation of the vocal mechanism and progressive methods for training the voice. The treatise thus drew from vocal pedagogic thought of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but contained several new ideas, such as the importance of the larynx remaining low, Garcia's definition of vocal timbres and vocal register, and the controversial 'coup de la glotte' (glottal stop). Garcia also designed many exercises to train the musician (interval studies, scale work), to be

¹⁵³ Teresa Radomski, 'Manuel García (1805-1906) A Bicentenary Reflection', p. 36.

¹⁵⁴ Stephen F. Austin, 'Hints on Singing... Hints Indeed!', *Journal of Singing*, 69 (2012), pp. 215-220.

able to interpret the musical score correctly, and to construct the voice (register building and unification, the use of *messa di voce* and velocity). In 1847 the second part was added, which primarily elucidates the stylistic traditions and practices of the day.

This treatise underwent several editions and revisions, and was translated into different languages, such as German, Italian and English. In English translation, the most renowned versions include the two-part English translation of the 1872 edition, edited by his grandson Albert Garcia. In this edition, Albert replaced a few of the exercises from the original edition and corrected some faults that had crept in, as well as making ideas more simple. The other two-volume English translation of the 1841 and 1872 editions, edited by Donald V. Paschke, intends to provide the vocal profession with an English translation of a significant work.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, his edition includes annotations, footnotes and commentary that provide context and explanations for the text, which makes it more accessible to modern readers. All these editions mentioned are listed below in Table 3.1 and 3.2.

Written in question-and-answer format, Garcia's further late treatise *Hints on Singing* offered comprehensive insights into his approach. The majority of vocal treatises around this time were not presented in this way but Garcia's clear format was adopted by other vocal tutors, such as Francesco Lamperti (1811-1892), a renowned Italian vocal pedagogue who wrote his vocal treatise *Guida teorico*

¹⁵⁵ Manuel Garcia, *A Complete Treatise on the Art of Singing Part One*. The Editions of 1841 and 1872 collated, edited and translated by Donald V. Paschke (New York: Da Capo Press, 1984). Manuel Garcia, *A Complete Treatise on the Art of Singing Part Two*. The Editions of 1847 and 1872 collated, edited and translated by Donald V. Paschke (New York: Da Capo Press, 1975).

pratica elementaire per lo studio del canto in the question-and-answer format,¹⁵⁶ and Léon Melchissédec (1843-1925) a French baritone who, in his singing treatise *Pour chanter: ce qu'il faut savoir*, presented information in the format of giving a student a lesson.¹⁵⁷

Drawing from his extensive 49 years of teaching and research experience following the completion of his earlier texts, Garcia aimed to present in *Hints on Singing* a concise and unambiguous summary of his life's work, providing a manual to create a polished and refined singing voice, covering breathing, vocal registers and sound quality. *Hints on Singing* was originally written in French, but only published in English in two different editions.¹⁵⁸ Both were translated by Garcia's second wife Beata Garcia and the second was edited by Garcia's student Hermann Klein. In Klein's edition, he identified and rectified numerous errors, certain chapters were restructured and, in places, Klein adjusted the organization of exercises to enhance their clarity. He also inserted explanatory notes and references, to make the text more accessible.¹⁵⁹

Several editions of Garcia's work will be used in this research. These editions not only rectify errors from previous iterations but also incorporate more lucid annotations and analyses. Consequently, they offer a more faithful rendition of Garcia's vocal theory and the advocated singing techniques. Furthermore, these

¹⁵⁶ Francesco Lamperti, *Guida Teorico Pratica Elementaire per lo Studio del Canto* (Milano: G. Ricordi, 1900).

¹⁵⁷ Léon Melchissédec, *Pour chanter: ce qu'il faut savoir* (Paris: Nilsson, 1913).

¹⁵⁸ Manuel Garcia, *Hints on Singing*, translated by Beata Garcia (London: Ascherberg, Hogwood and Crew, 1894). Manuel Garcia, *Hints on Singing*, translated by Beata Garcia and edited by Hermann Klein (London: Ascherberg, Hogwood and Crew, 1911).

¹⁵⁹ *Hints on Singing*, ed. Hermann Klein, iv.

editions are frequently cited in the scholarly studies of other academics engaged in vocal theory analysis, such as in Lee Alan Gregory’s discussion of vocal acoustics,¹⁶⁰ and Paul Han’s research on *appoggio*.¹⁶¹ This signifies that these publications are more readily accessible to modern scholars.¹⁶²

Table 3.1 Editions of Manuel Garcia’s treatises:

French Editions:

Sigla	Date	Title	publisher	observations
F1	1840	<i>École de Garcia : Traité complet sur l’art du chant.</i> (1 ^e édition)	Paris: E. Troupenas et Cie	
F2	1847	<i>École de Garcia : Traité complet sur l’art du chant en deux parties.</i> (2 ^e édition)	Paris : E. Troupenas et Cie	
F3	1851	<i>École de Garcia : Traité complet sur l’art du chant en deux parties.</i> (3 ^e édition)	Paris: Brandus et Cie	
F4	1856	<i>Nouveau Traité sommaire de l’art du chant.</i>	Paris : Richard	
F5	1863	<i>Nouveau traité de l’art du chant par Manuel Garcia.</i> (5 ^e édition)	Paris : Heugel et Cie	New preface with laryngoscope images
F6	1872	<i>École de Garcia : Traité complet de l’art du chant en deux parties.</i> (6 ^e édition)	Paris : Heugel et Cie	

¹⁶⁰ Lee Alan Gregory, ‘Vocal Acoustics and the *Messa Di Voce*’ (PhD dissertation, University of Houston, 2019).

¹⁶¹ Paul Han, ‘Principles of *Appoggio*: The Interrelationship Between Theory and Practice for Today’s Young Opera Singers’ (PhD dissertation, Indiana University, 2018).

¹⁶² The treatises highlighted in bold within the tables serve as the principal references for this research. I have given sigla to the different editions and hereafter refer to the them by their identifying sigla.

Table 3.2 Editions in English

Sigla	Date	Title	publisher	
E1	1857	<i>Garcia's New Treatise on the Art of Singing. A compendious method of instruction, with examples and exercises for the cultivation of the voice.</i>	London publisher unknown	
E2	1870	<i>Garcia's New Treatise on the Art of Singing.</i>	London: Cramer & Co.	
E3	1924	<i>Garcia's Treatise on the Art of Singing. A compendious method of instruction, with examples and exercises for the cultivation of the voice, edited by Albert Garcia.</i>	London: Leonard and Company	Drawn and translated from the French edition of 1856
E4	1975	<i>A Complete Treatise on the Art of Singing: Part Two, the editions of 1847 and 1872 collated, edited and translated by Donald V. Paschke.</i>	New York: Da Capo Press	
E5	1984	<i>A Complete Treatise on the Art of Singing: Part One, the editions of 1841 and 1872 collated, edited and translated by Donald V. Paschke.</i>	New York: Da Capo Press	
H1	1894	<i>Hints on Singing, translated by Beata Garcia.</i>	London: Ascherberg Hogwood and Crew	
H2	1911	<i>Hints on Singing, translated by Beata Garcia, edited by Hermann Klein.</i>	London: Ascherberg, Hogwood and Crew	New and revised edition

Chapter 4 Analysis of Selected Vocal Techniques from Manuel Garcia and Xiaoyan Zhou

4.1.1 Manuel Garcia's vocal techniques: breathing

While breathing is a crucial technique of singing, there was very little information about breath and breath control in the eighteenth century.¹⁶³ The majority of pedagogues during this time held the view that to ensure good breathing, chest position was the most important element. The castrato Giovanni Battista Mancini (1714 – 1800), in his treatise *Pensieri e riflessioni pratiche sopra il canto figurato* (1774), recommended an 'elevated robust chest assisted by the graduation of breath' and was one of the first teachers to give specific exercises to achieve breath control.¹⁶⁴

By the nineteenth century, vocal pedagogues had begun to think about the relationship between anatomy and physiology of the body. At this time, breathing methods were divided into two categories: thoracic (also called ribcage or lateral breathing) and diaphragmatic (also called abdominal breathing). By looking at Paschke's translation of the 1841 and 1872 editions of *Traité complet sur l'art du chant* [E5] we can see Garcia's ideas on breath control were under development.

In the 1841 edition, Garcia describes inhaling:

In order to inhale freely, hold the chest erect, the shoulders back without stiffness, and the chest free, raise the chest by a slow and regular movement, and set the hollow of the stomach. From the moment when you begin these two movements the lungs will dilate until they are filled

¹⁶³ Sarah Potter, 'Changing Vocal Style and Technique in Britain during the Long Nineteenth Century' (PhD dissertation, University of Leeds, 2014), p. 52.

¹⁶⁴ Heather Lyle, 'A Historical Look at Breathing Methods for Singing', *Voice and Speech Review*, 7 (2011), pp. 310-317.

with air.¹⁶⁵

But by the 1872 edition [E5], we can see the addition of ‘Lower the diaphragm without jerking’, and the omission of ‘and set the hollow of the stomach.’¹⁶⁶ It is clear to see that these instructions were added/ removed at the later date because these two actions were considered to be physiologically incompatible, as Johan Sundberg explained in 1992: ‘by contracting, the diaphragm presses the abdominal content downward which, in turn, presses the abdominal wall outward.’¹⁶⁷ To clarify his stance that thoracic and abdominal breathing should be combined, Garcia added the following to the 1872 edition:

This double procedure, on which I insist, enlarges the envelope of the lungs, first at the base, then by the circumference, and allows the lungs to complete all their expansion and to receive all the air which they can contain. To advise the abdominal breathing exclusively would be to voluntarily reduce by one half the element of strength most indispensable to the singer, the breath.¹⁶⁸

For singers to develop the ability to control their respiration and foster proper breath management, a 4-step exercise is also given:

First—The pupil should gently and slowly inhale for a few seconds, as much air as the chest can well contain.

Secondly—After taking a deep breath the air should be exhaled again very gently and slowly

Thirdly—Fill the lungs, and keep them inflated for the longest possible time.

Fourthly—Exhale completely, and leave the chest empty as long as the physical powers will conveniently allow.¹⁶⁹

This exercise allows singers to fully experience the process of breathing by taking actions slowly, sensing how the ribcage expands, the direction of the stomach, and

¹⁶⁵ Manuel Garcia, *A Complete Treatise on the Art of Singing Part One*. The editions of 1841 and 1872 collated, edited and translated by Donald V. Paschke (New York: Da Capo Press, 1984), p. 33. [E5]

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹⁶⁷ Johan Sundberg, ‘Breathing Behavior During Singing’, *STL- QPSR*, 33 (1992), pp. 49-64.

¹⁶⁸ E5, p. 33.

¹⁶⁹ Manuel Garcia, *Garcia’s Treatise on the Art of Singing. A compendious method of instruction, with examples and exercises for the cultivation of the voice*, edited by Albert Garcia (London: Leonard and Company, 1924), p. 6. [E3]

helping to enhance the ability of breathing control during inhalation, exhalation and suspension, creating and enhancing musical awareness. The first two steps aim to move the ribs out and expand the chest during inhalation and in the meantime, singers can sense the connection between the lower ribs and the abdomen. The last two steps aim to help singers sense the tension exerted on the rib muscles and strengthen the diaphragm and the intercostal muscles. Therefore, this exercise can aid singers in gaining the power to retain air without fatigue and preventing the enlarged thoracic space from collapsing, so the voice can be fully supported when singing.

In *Hints on Singing*, Garcia's second treatise, the discussion of breathing techniques exhibits only slight differences compared to the first treatise. Building upon the scientific pedagogy established in his previous work, the second book published many years after he invented the laryngoscope, incorporates more anatomical illustrations. Here, Garcia added further instruction on drawing the stomach in, with the chest out, during inspiration and nevertheless, he also advocated the thoracic breathing technique:

Q: How does the diaphragm control respiration?

A: In the first attempt to emit a sound, the diaphragm flattens itself, the stomach slightly protrudes, and the breath is introduced at will by the nose, by the mouth, or by both simultaneously. During this partial inspiration, which is called abdominal, the ribs do not move, nor are the lungs filled to their full capacity, to obtain which the diaphragm must and does contract completely. Then, and only then, are the ribs raised, while the stomach is drawn in. This inspiration—in which the lungs have their free action from side to side, from front to back, from top to bottom—is complete, and is called thoracic or intercostal. [...].

Q: Which do you approve?

A: The thoracic; and to obtain it the breath must be taken slowly and deeply.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ Manuel Garcia, *Hints on Singing*, translated by Beata Garcia and edited by Hermann Klein (London: Ascherberg, Hogwood and Crew, 1911), p. 4. [H2]

Garcia also recommended the teachings of Dr. Roth, a Hungarian advocate and practitioner of Chinese Kung-fu, based on Chinese exercises for breath control for 'strengthening the chest and regulating its movement', and Garcia added his exercises for breath management which are the same exercises as in the previous treatise, but in a simplified form (three steps).¹⁷¹ Moreover, the faults of breathing and how to remedy them were also discussed; for example, faults such as scanty, hurried and noisy breathing could be solved by breathing slowly and deeply.

4.1.2 Manuel Garcia's vocal techniques: registers

The registers of the singing voice are a known fact and related to perception of different vocal qualities. Garcia provided an explanation of the formation of sound: 'the voice is solely formed by the periodic compressions and expansions of air during its exit from the glottis [...] and the pitch of the sound depends on the rapidity with which the glottis opens and closes.'¹⁷² Men possess thicker vocal cords compared to women, resulting in greater mass and lower elasticity. This requires higher air pressure to initiate vibration and the increased airflow further slows the opening and closing speed of the glottis. Consequently, the vocal registers of men and women differ significantly due to these physiological and mechanical factors.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 4. Dr. Roth studied Chinese in Paris then settled in London in 1848. He believed Kung-fu breathing exercises could cure illness and remove pain. He published several works on the subject including *The Cure of Chronic Diseases by Movements*, *Handbook of the Movement Cure* (London: John Churchill, 1851). His work was popular in the nineteenth century both with scientists and health enthusiasts.

¹⁷² E3, p. 4.

Manuel Garcia's theories on register were evolved over the years: he started his theory by considering the singing voice to have two registers which were the chest and the falsetto-head. He described the falsetto-head register as belonging to one register which was made up of two continuous registers,¹⁷³ while insisting that the falsetto register fell between the chest and the head register. Later, when the vibration of the vocal cords during transitions between different registers could be observed with the laryngoscope, he changed his analysis to a three-register theory, which he named as the chest, medium and head in both men's and women's voices.

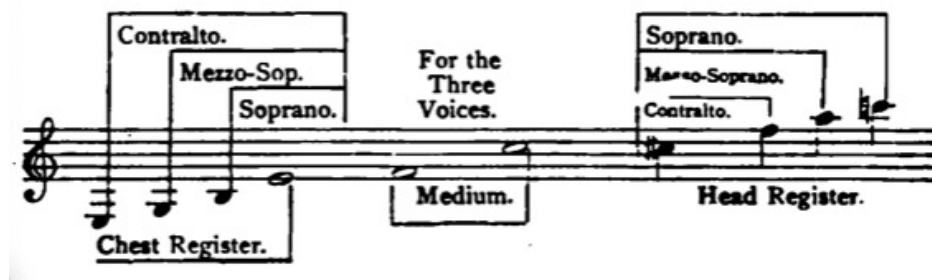


Figure 4.1 Garcia's registers in women's voices.¹⁷⁴

He also suggested that, in the same register, all sounds are similar in both quality and nature, and gave the definition of registers based on a physical view:

A register is a series of consecutive homogeneous sounds produced by one mechanism, differing essentially from another series of sounds equally homogeneous produced by another mechanism, whatever modifications of timbre and of strength they may offer. Each of the three registers has its own extent and sonority, which varies according to the sex of individual, and the nature of the organ.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ J. A. Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 68.

¹⁷⁴ H2, p. 10.

¹⁷⁵ H2., p. 8.

Furthermore, instead of employing the term *passaggio* which refers to the transition area between different vocal registers, Garcia proposed two pivotal strategies to help singers achieve smooth transfer between registers and called it 'union of the register' or 'emitting the voice'. The first method he suggested involves transitioning between registers within the border notes by alternately producing them using the different strategies for each register. Based on this idea, he designed exercises to achieve a smooth transition between different registers, which need to be practised repeatedly (see Figure 4.2 exercise 1).

CHAPTER IX.
EXERCISES ON VOCALIZATION.

Exercises to unite the chest and medium registers.

1. *Medium*
Chest *&c. the same on* on

2. *Medium*
Chest *&c. the same on these notes* on

3. *Medium*
Chest *&c. the same on these notes* on

Figure 4.2 Exercises to unite the chest and medium register.¹⁷⁶

As shown in Figure 4.2, exercise 1 starts on d2 and involves switching back and forth from the chest to the medium register on the same note before doing the

¹⁷⁶ E3, p. 10.

same on eb2, and then e2. The aim of this exercise is to balance the different registers through the passaggio note. If the singer has a strong chest voice compared with the medium voice, then the singer could hold the chest tone back as much as possible before strengthening the medium tone little by little to achieve the balance of the different registers. Similarly, if the singer has a strong medium voice then the process can work in reverse. These exercises, therefore, avoid the break and hiccups which can easily happen when passing from one register to the other. The other two exercises are the same as the first exercise, but rather than changing the registers on the same note, the singer should sing a semitone or tone when changing to the medium register.

Garcia's second recommendation when he addressed women's weak lower notes (d1-f1) and men's medium tones (a-c1sharp), was to either darken or round out the timbre of the sounds belonging to both registers.¹⁷⁷ He went on to explain these techniques in more detail, suggesting that singers should increase the vowel's roundness when they ascend a scale and, when descending it, this mechanism should be reversed:

The apparent equality of the notes in the scale will be the result of actual but well-graduated inequality of the vowel sound. Without this manoeuvre, the round vowels which are suitable to the higher notes would extinguish the ringing of the middle and lower notes, and the open vowels which give éclat to the lower would make the higher notes harsh and shrill.¹⁷⁸

Modifying vowels as a principle to create a homogenous tone across registers and throughout a tessitura is still advocated by contemporary vocal pedagogy. For example, Richard Miller said that in ascending the scale, singers should open their

¹⁷⁷ E5, pp. 45, 47, 48.

¹⁷⁸ H2, pp. 16, 17.

mouths gradually and allow the vowels to move forward. Although this process 'must never occur abruptly (its avoidance) will produce shrill, edgy timbre.'¹⁷⁹

The process of rounding the vowel is connected with the 'covering' of the upper sounds. Singers can round vowels with a dropped larynx and a raised soft palate, the tongue should flatten as the jaw descends, and the pharyngeal space is enlarged and takes the shape of a lengthened arch.¹⁸⁰

When the larynx and soft palate are in such positions, as illustrated by Garcia in his treatise (see figure 4.2), it results in what he refers to as a sombre timbre. Therefore, in an ascending scale, as the position of the larynx should descend from high to low, thus the timbre should go from open to dark. Thus, the modification of vowels not only determines whether the voice can smoothly transition from one register to another but also affects the shape of the pharynx during phonation, which in turn influences the timbre of the voice.

Garcia also emphasized the impact of the position of the mouth and lips on register transitions. Excessive opening of the jaw can create tension in the pharynx, inhibiting vocal cord vibration and depriving the pharynx of vault-like resonant form. Overly tense lips not only result in a dull sound quality but also make the vowel articulation unclear and difficult to distinguish.¹⁸¹

4.1.3 Manuel Garcia's vocal techniques: timbre

¹⁷⁹ Richard Miller, *Training Soprano Voice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 129.

¹⁸⁰ H2, p.8.

¹⁸¹ E3, p. 10-11.

Garcia defines that 'the varieties of timbre will correspond to the multitudinous mechanical changes of which the vocal tube is susceptible'. This means that the pharynx is a crucial element which modifies the sound, and produces the various qualities of the voice.¹⁸² The sound emerges by vocal folds vibrating and is then changed by the pharynx before the complex qualities and timbres of the voice can emerge. Thus:

Being able to elongate or to shorten itself, to broaden or to narrow itself, to take the form of a slight curve or to break into a right angle, and finally to maintain any of the numerous intermediary forms, [the pharynx] fulfills wonderfully the functions of a reflector or a megaphone.¹⁸³

The shape of the pharynx can be influenced by the larynx's movement. Garcia said that the modifications are characterised by the height of the larynx, width of the pharynx, shape of the mouth and other physiological factors. He demonstrated three conditions on which vocal timbre depends:

Firstly: those of a fixed nature, by which each individual voice is characterized, as form, capacity, volume, firmness, and the healthy or unhealthy state of the vocal organ;
Secondly: its variable conditions, such as the directions which sounds take in the vocal tube during emission, whether through the nose or mouth, the shape and capacity of that tube, the tension of its side, action of the soft palate, width between the upper and lower jaws, position of the lips, with the extent to which they can be opened;
Lastly: the elevation and depression of the tongue.¹⁸⁴

Thus Garcia implied that the movement of the larynx not only produced pitch but also influenced different timbres, and that it should be allowed to rise and fall for the production of the different timbres. Garcia divided timbre into two main categories of clear (bright) or open and sombre (dark) or closed. The sombre timbre is produced when the pharyngeal tube becomes lengthened, in Garcia's

¹⁸² E3, p. 4.

¹⁸³ E5, pp. 44, 45.

¹⁸⁴ E5., p. 4.

words 'right-angle shaped', with a dropped larynx and a raised soft palate. To obtain the clear timbre, the process is reversed: the larynx rises toward the soft palate, and the soft palate lowers toward the larynx. Garcia affirms that 'the short and gently-curved shape [of the pharynx] produces the clear timbre, while the sombre is caused by the lengthened and strongly-curved form'.¹⁸⁵

When addressing the register transitions, Garcia suggests that students should not rely on just one timbre but should select different timbres for different register transitions. He recommended that when singers transfer their voice from the medium to the head register, the pharynx must assume the form required for the closed timbre.¹⁸⁶ When the voice travels from the chest register to falsetto, he emphasized that singers should prioritise an open timbre to avoid potential irreversible damage to the voice:

On ne doit pas travailler le timbre sombre dans ces derniers sons tant que l'on ne s'est rendu maître du timbre clair, le plus difficile à obtenir dans cette partie de l'étendu, et le seul qui donne de l'éclat aux sons. Si l'on négligeait cette recommandation on s'exposerait à voiler et à étouffer sa voix.¹⁸⁷

Garcia specifies that the clear timbre is the most difficult to attain. He also said that when the clear timbre is exaggerated, the voice could be shrill, yet he also warned that when the sombre is exaggerated it 'muffles the sounds, and makes them dull and hoarse'.¹⁸⁸ He also mentioned several defective timbres that could injure the

¹⁸⁵ E5., p. 4.

¹⁸⁶ E3, p. 8.

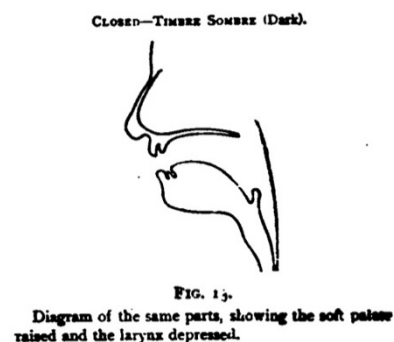
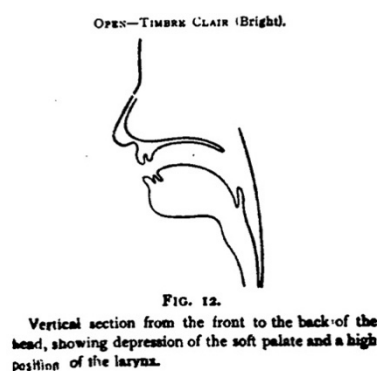
¹⁸⁷ F2, p. 27. ['One should not work the sombre timbre in these last tones until one has mastered them in the clear timbre, which is the most difficult to obtain in this part of the range, and the only one which gives clarity to the tones. If one neglects this recommendation, one would risk veiling or choking his voice.' English translation is from Kenneth E. Querns Langley, 'Reconstructing the Tenor 'Pharyngeal Voice': A Historical and Practical Investigation' (PhD dissertation, Royal College of Music, 2019), p. 62.

¹⁸⁸ E3, p. 6.

beauty of the voice, such as guttural timbre, cavernous or hollow-sounding timbre, veiled sounds and provided methods for correcting them.

In the subsequent publication *Hints on Singing*, Garcia simplified the definition of timbre: 'Every sound of the voice may assume an infinite variety of shades apart from intensity. Each of these is a timbre'.¹⁸⁹ He gives one further reason for the permanent causes which could affect the voice such as the constitution, age, health or disease of the vocal apparatus.

The space between the tongue and the palate make the difference between the open or dark timbres. To provide a clear and intuitive representation of the positions of different vocal mechanisms involved in timbre production, Garcia provided further information on the classification of the qualities as well as diagrams to demonstrate the states of the soft palate, larynx and tongue when producing two different timbres (see Figure 4.3).



¹⁸⁹ H2, p. 11.

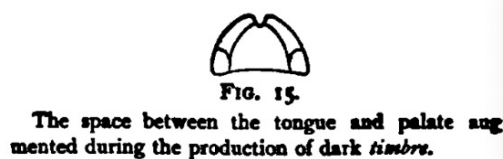
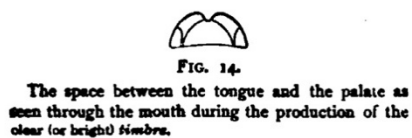


Figure 4.3 The position of the soft palate and the tongue in the production of clear and sombre timbres.¹⁹⁰

4.2. Vocal pedagogy and philosophy of Xiaoyan Zhou

As mentioned in Chapter 2, during Xiaoyan Zhou's lifetime, she published two vocal treatises and several papers to discuss the developmental trends and problems of Chinese vocal techniques. Although Zhou explained some of the physiological mechanisms of certain organs during singing in the treatise – such as the diaphragm and the movement of the ribcage during breathing; an introduction to the resonating organs, accompanied by visual representations of their location and morphology – she did not employ much scientific language in the description of singing techniques. Zhou's treatise contained illustrative and metaphorical examples related to daily life to help students get a better understanding of vocal skills. She explains vocal techniques based on physical sensations and feelings, thus Zhou can be viewed as extremely effective at using heuristic and example-led teaching to explain vocal technique to students, especially for the beginners and early-stage singers.¹⁹¹ For example, to help

¹⁹⁰ H2, pp. 11-12.

¹⁹¹ Liping Yu, 'Qiantan Zhou Xiaoyan Jiaoshou de Shengyue Jiaoxue Tedian' [Analysis of Xiaoyan Zou's teaching style], *Tianjin Yinyue Xueyuan Xuebao (Tianlai)* [Journal of Tianjin Conservatory of Music (Sounds of Nature)], 01 (2012), pp. 116-119.

students experience the expansion of the ribcage during inhalation and the sense of support from the abdomen, she metaphorically likened this bodily sensation and reflective state to the feeling of surprise upon seeing a close friend unexpectedly, where a rapid inhalation leads to the quick expansion of the ribcage and the intake of air into the deeper region of the lungs.

It is crucial to note that metaphor-based teaching methods are not unique to Chinese vocal pedagogy; indeed, similar approaches can also be found in Western teaching, such as the metaphors of a 'feeling of surprise' and 'smelling a rose'.¹⁹² The key difference lies in their role within the teaching process. In Western vocal teaching, such metaphors typically serve as supplementary tools, primarily aiding students in better understanding vocal techniques that are fundamentally grounded in scientific principles. They function as a means of reinforcement rather than a primary teaching approach. In contrast, Chinese vocal instruction tends to place metaphor-based teaching at the forefront. Teachers avoid excessive use of scientific terminology, instead opting for more related, everyday language to directly convey vocal techniques to students.

Zhou was also sensitive to the lack of communication between teachers and students in the traditional teaching method where teachers lectured on the stage to a supposedly homogenous group of placid, accepting students.¹⁹³ Thus, in

¹⁹² Kenneth Bozeman, *Kinesthetic Voice Pedagogy: Motivating Acoustic Efficiency* (Gahanna: Inside View Press, 2017), p. 7.

¹⁹³ Shi Yong, 'Zhou Xiaoyan Shengyue Biaoyan yu Jiaoxue Chengjiu Pingshu' [Review on Zhou Xiaoyan's Vocal Performance and Teaching Achievements], *Wanxi Xueyuan Xuebao [Journal of West Anhui University]*, 27 (2011), pp. 142-44

Zhou's own teaching, she would make adjustments based on each student's performance during singing lessons and engage in timely communication with them.¹⁹⁴ Moreover, Zhou also recognised the differences in students' understanding and ability: some tutors only allowed their students to perform in public once they were 'good enough' and many teachers were over strict which created nervous, tense students who could not sing well. Thus, in Zhou's treatise she also offered four suggestions to vocal tutors: create an active atmosphere; individualise teaching and build it up, step by step; provide more chances for students to perform; and prepare a systematic plan to guide students' learning holistically, rather than teaching students piecemeal.¹⁹⁵

4.3.1 Xiaoyan Zhou's vocal techniques: breathing

In her treatise, Zhou recorded breathing methods: thoracic, abdominal and combined thoracoabdominal. She thought there were limitations in the first two breathing methods, and she does not advocate them. She suggested that with thoracic breathing, the diaphragm and abdomen cannot effectively participate in respiration.¹⁹⁶ Because thoracic breathing depends on the support of the upper chest, with a high fulcrum, it can easily cause muscle tension, especially in the

¹⁹⁴ Although Zhou had already recognized the phenomenon of ineffective communication between teachers and students during teaching and had provided suggestions for addressing this issue in her treatise, the prevailing education model still heavily favoured the teacher. In addition not all teachers possessed experiences of studying abroad like Zhou, and which enabled her to realize the existence of such issues in teaching. As a result, the concept of equal teacher-student interaction during teaching was not consistently passed down to the next generation of teachers. This aspect will also be discussed in Chapter Seven.

¹⁹⁵ Zhou, *Fundamental Technique Training of Vocal Music*, p. 17-18.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

muscles around the throat and neck, which limits the amount of air being expelled. This breathing method could easily cause incorrect standing posture also, as students tend only to lift the upper chest without squaring their shoulders, leading to the collapse of the chest and leakage when exhaling.

The second breathing method she mentions is abdominal breathing and its participation in exhalation. However, Zhou pointed out its limitations which could cause dark vocal timbre and lower pitch. Therefore, Zhou preferred singers to use combined thoracoabdominal breathing. Garcia gives specific explanation about how the diaphragm, ribcage and thorax work when breathing. In contrast, Zhou only briefly outlines the key organs involved in the process of respiration, including their movements. Thereafter, the way she described her techniques is focused on describing the physical sensations when applying breathing techniques and in illustrating practice methods by enumerating examples relevant to daily life.

Two exercises were proposed in Zhou's treatise to train thoracoabdominal breathing. Zhou also believed that before a student can master how to inhale gently and continually, they need to practise quick inhalation to avoid the process of breathing becoming unnatural:

Imagine that a good friend, who has been away for a long time, suddenly appears in front of you. You gasp in surprise, almost shout out then stop in this state. After a few seconds, it seems that there is an external force pushing the lower abdomen back, the lower abdomen is fighting against this external force, and the breath is slowly sent to the behind upper teeth. Then the diaphragm could be supportive when breathing.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 5. The translation from Chinese to English is done by the 'Baidu' translator, https://fanyi.baidu.com/?aldtype=16047&ext_channel=Aldtype#auto/zh

The aim of this exercise is to make use of people's unconscious reactions when surprised which enhances abdominal muscle activation, expands the ribcage and lowers the diaphragm. This way of inhaling is fast and deep, and the lungs fill with air automatically and immediately without extra help and any overthinking on the part of the singer. What is more, with this quick inhalation, the singer can feel the soft palate go up, the muscles in the cheeks lift slightly, and the eyes opening more widely. Therefore, this method also helps singers prepare correctly before singing. The next step of this exercise is to exhale the air slowly which makes the muscles complete the alternating cycle of tension and relaxation instantly and can exercise the flexibility of the respiratory organs. In this process, the diaphragm is also trained to support the voice strongly.

The other exercise emphasises breathing slowly, similar to Garcia's method, but in Zhou's words: 'The movement of ribcage should expand regularly and slowly raised as if you receive a bunch of flowers and smell the fragrance of the flowers. You will feel, the intercostal muscles, including the waist, are expanded to all sides at the same time naturally, [...] exhalation is achieved through the relaxation of the muscles below the diaphragm.'¹⁹⁸ This exercise is based on the first exercise, but is designed more for consolidation and building muscle memory; moreover, the control of the muscles will gradually strengthen through the slow inhalation and exhalation movements.

Both Garcia and Zhou agree that singers should combine thoracic and

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 5, 6.

abdominal breathing, but Zhou insisted on the practice of fast inhalation before slow.

4.3.2 Xiaoyan Zhou's vocal techniques: register and passaggio

Zhou considered the singing voice as including three registers which were the chest, medium and head registers. Minimal differences exist in the ranges of different registers as described by Garcia and Zhou (see Figure 4.4).



Figure 4.4 Zhou's registers in women's voices.¹⁹⁹

Nevertheless, Zhou provides further insights not based on the vocal mechanism but on the technical training of passaggio. She considered there to be a further register between the medium and head register, which she named as the transition register.²⁰⁰ In order to provide students with a clear understanding of the range of transition registers, Zhou supplements a transition note between the medium and head register, which means that when the singer's voice is around the transition note, they need to prepare for the transition of their voice from the

¹⁹⁹ Zhou, *Fundamental Technique Training of Vocal Music*, p. 8.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p. 9.

middle register to the high register. Zhou specified transition notes for different types of voice in her treatise (see Figure 4.6).

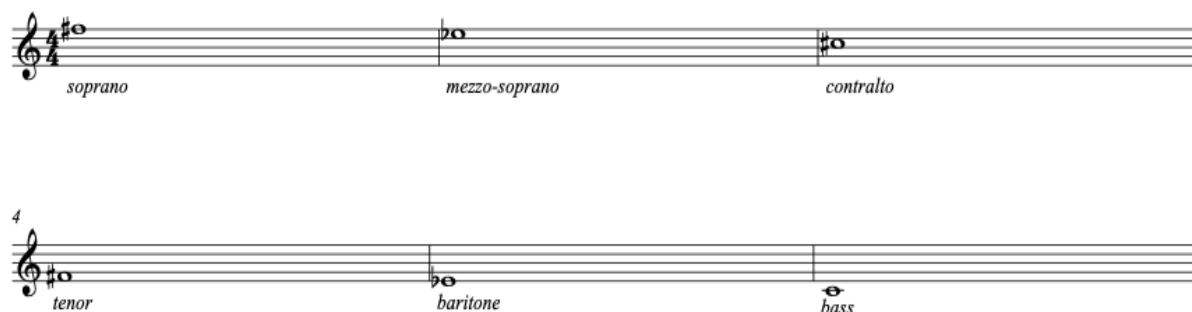


Figure 4.5 Zhou’s transition notes from the middle register to the head register for men’s and women’s voices.²⁰¹

She also noticed that unfortunately, the singer’s larynx always went to a higher position when changing register from medium to head; therefore, she dealt with this issue in the paper ‘The Training of Tenor’s Middle Voice Area and Transition Voice Area’²⁰² and published in April 1979, in *Art of Music (Journal of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music)*.²⁰³ She wrote: ‘Because of the characteristics of the Chinese language and speaking habits, some beginners tend to have a high larynx when they are singing, especially for the student from the southeast coastal

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 9.

²⁰² Xiaoyan Zhou, ‘Nangaoyin Zhongshengqu he Huanshengqu de Xunlian’ [The Training of Tenor’s Middle Voice Area and Transition Voice Area], *Yinyue Yishu—Shanghai Yinyue Xueyuan Xuebao* [*Art of Music—Journal of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music*], 01 (1979), pp. 60-63.

²⁰³ In 1976, after the end of the Cultural Revolution, the Shanghai Conservatory resumed admissions. Due to a relatively high proportion of tenor students, this paper aimed to address and solve the issues related to passaggio specifically for tenors. Nevertheless, this method reappears in Zhou’s 1990 treatise *The Foundation of Singing* without specifying that it is only applicable to the tenor voice, and instead presents it as suitable for all voices and passaggio.

areas.’²⁰⁴ To fix this problem, therefore, she described the technique of transferring from the medium register to the head register as to ‘pass the thread through the eye of a needle.’

The core idea of this metaphor is that the vowel is modified or narrowed. Taking the vowel ‘a’ as an example, with the pitch rising, the vowel ‘a’ should become ‘a-au-o’, and the larynx should go down gradually. The vowel ‘a’ is the thread and the vowel-changing process is like thinning thread ends. Zhou also added other considerations when the voice undergoes register transition. She advocated that on the transition note between medium and head registers, the singer could do a tiny backward breath action, just like a startled physiological state. This is to make sure the singer lifts the soft palate while keeping the bottom of the tongue in a low position, helps the larynx remain in a low position and also prevents the pharyngeal cavity from shrinking. What is more, given the fact that the amplitude of the sound wave vibration determines the intensity of the sound, Zhou says that as pitch rises, the flow of breath and volume should not be increased; if the singer does increase volume and the flow of the breath, the vibration amplitude of the vocal cords will be increased, placing pressure on the vocal cords and the consumption of breath so the singer will feel tired and out of breath easily.²⁰⁵ Zhou also emphasized that with the pitch ascending, the vowel should be ‘narrowed’, just as Garcia described and prescribed rounded vowels, and

²⁰⁴ Zhou, ‘The Training of Tenor’s Middle Voice Area and Transition Voice Area’, p. 63.

²⁰⁵ Shiyu Kan, ‘Shengyue Jiaoxue Zhong Ruhe Jiaoxuesheng Zuohao Shengqu de Guodu’ [How to Train the Student on the Uniting Registers in Vocal Teaching], *Dazhong Yishu* [Art and Literature for the Masses], 14 (2017), pp. 229-230.

the timbre should become darker gradually which could be accomplished with the help of lips.²⁰⁶

Zhou mentioned that many vocal tutors chose the vowel 'a' for singing practice, but she noticed that Chinese students could easily sing this vowel too open thus allowing the larynx to rise, and with shallow breath, and a collapsed rib cage. She believed the vowel 'o' more suitable for Chinese students and in my opinion, the reason that Chinese students cannot sing 'a' properly is because, for a long time, the bright vocal emission of Chinese Opera means young singers imitate this open timbre.²⁰⁷ What is more, in Chinese Opera, a lot of 'a' sounds exist in the text, and the timbre requires brightness, so students raise the larynx to brighten the voice.²⁰⁸

For both Zhou and Garcia, the basic idea for negotiating the passaggio between registers is the same, by rounding vowels and creating enough resonating space in the vocal tract. Yet there is a tiny difference between Zhou and Garcia in the word when they choose to describe the method to students. Zhou used the word 'narrow' and Garcia used the word 'round.' Zhou puts more emphasis on the changes of some vocal organs by modifying vowels such as relying upon the lips to change the vowel and the longitudinal opening of the oral cavity. Garcia mainly focuses on the

²⁰⁶ Zhou, *Fundamental Technique Training of Vocal Music*, pp. 6-10.

²⁰⁷ Yuehua Li, 'Qianxi Chuantong Xiqu dui Minzu Shengyue Changfa de Yingxiang' [An Analysis on the Influence of Traditional Chinese Opera on the Singing of National Vocal Music], *Beijing Yinshua Xueyuan Xuebao [Journal of Beijing Institute of Graphic Communication]*, 26 (2018), pp. 33-35; Yaru Qiao, 'Shilun Chuantong Xiqu de Jicheng yu Chuangxin Fazhan' [The Inheritance and Innovation of the Chinese Opera], *Mingjia Mingzou [Master and Masterpiece]*, 01 (2021), pp. 158-159.

²⁰⁸ Zhenlin Wang, 'Jingju Ziyin yu Hanyu Pinyin' [The Pronunciation of Beijing Opera and Chinese Phonetic Alphabet], *Zhongguo Jingju [Jingju of China]*, 02 (2019), pp. 54-55.

process of how to round the vowel, but the final result they pursue is the same, and the state of some vocal organ changes is achieved by modifying the vowel.

4.3.3 Xiaoyan Zhou's vocal techniques: articulation and legato

In Zhou's revised treatise, the second part consists of a repertoire of Chinese songs because, in Zhou's teaching, she adhered to the principle that 'Chinese singers must sing Chinese songs well'.²⁰⁹ She believed that Western classical singing technique was not merely for the singing of European repertoire and opera, but that the vocal science could be combined with Chinese traditional music, thus promoting Chinese repertoire internationally.

There are twenty-three consonants and twenty-four vowels in the Chinese language system, and vowels are divided into four categories.²¹⁰ Since the Ming Dynasty (1368), words have been divided into prefix (consonant), ventral (vowel), and suffix.²¹¹ Therefore, Zhou said to sing Chinese words clearly, the

²⁰⁹ Nan Zhang, 'Zhou Xiaoyan Shengyue Jiaoxue Sixiang Tanjiu' [Explore Xiaoyan Zhou's teaching methods], *Yinyue Yanjiu* [Music Research], 03 (2005), pp. 98-102.

²¹⁰ Consonants: b, p, m, f, d, t, n, l, g, k, h, j, q, x, zh, ch, sh, r, z, c, s, y, w.

Monophthong: a, o, e, i, u, ü.

Diphthong: ai, ei, ui, ao, ou, iu, ie, üe

special vowel: er

anterior nasal vowels: an, en, in, un, ün.

posterior nasal vowels: ang, eng, ing, ong.

Vowels are divided into three parts: the head vowel, the essential vowel and tail vowel. For example, the character 娘 reads niáng, the consonants is 'n', and the vowel is 'iang'. 'i' is the head vowel, 'a' is the essential vowel, and 'ng' is the tail vowel. Every vowel must contain the essential vowel, for the head and tail vowels are dispensable. For example, the character 大 (dà) only has the essential vowel 'a' without head and tail vowels. With the character 刀 (dāo), the vowel is 'ao', 'a' is the essential vowel, 'o' is the tail vowel, without head vowel.

²¹¹ The phonetic system of Mandarin has two distinctive features: first, a diverse and complex combination of phonemes, and second, a unique system of four tones. To ensure clear and accurate pronunciation, mastering proper 'guiyun' is important. 'Guiyun' means that the pronunciation of a character returns to the ventral after enunciation. This feature has been better reflected in traditional Chinese Opera tradition, Kunqu Opera, which is known as the ancestor of

laryngopharynx of the singer must be kept as still as possible, and the articulatory organs such as lips, teeth and tongue must be flexible. Yet, with too much emphasis on the former (laryngopharynx), the phonemes will be ambiguous, and overemphasizing the latter may affect the larynx position, affecting the quality of the singing voice. Therefore, Zhou believed singers should be clear about which part of the articulatory organ should be involved when pronouncing a word:

For prefixes (consonants), she specified:

Bilabial sound: Sounds which are produced with both the upper lips and the lower lip, and there is a small amount of breath, b, p, m.

Single lip sound: sound produce by the airflow between lips, f.

lingua-apical sound: tap the back of the upper tooth root with the tongue, and withdraw it immediately after hitting, d, t, l.

apical dental sound: consonants produced by an obstruction such as the tip of the tongue against the back of the upper incisor, j, q, x.

velar sound: it is produced by the soft palate and the base of the tongue, g, k, h.

alveolar sound: the upper and lower teeth are closed, the tip of the tongue is on the back of the lower teeth, z, c, s.

cacuminal sound: the tongue is cocked up, and the airflow is emitted from both sides of the tongue, zh, ch, sh, r.²¹²

Zhou declared that the pronunciation of a ventral (vowel) syllable must be kept in the posterior pharyngeal wall of the oral cavity

all kinds of Chinese Operas. One of the great contributions of Kunqu Opera is its deepening of the special aesthetic of Chinese in pronunciation. Yinglv Liu and Heizhuai Guan, 'Hanyu Pinyinhua Yundong de Lishi Jincheng yu Xianshi Kunjing' [The Historical Course and Realistic Predicament of Chinese Alphabetization Movement], *Jilin Daxue Shehui Kexue Xuebao [Jilin University Journal Social Sciences Edition]*, 02 (2014), pp. 160, 167.

²¹² Zhou, *Fundamental Technique Training of Vocal Music*, pp. 9-10.

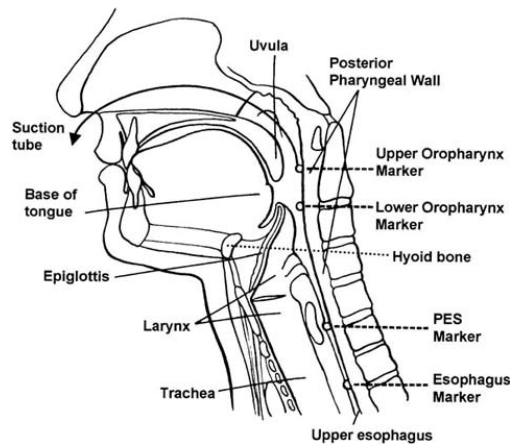


Figure 4.6 The diagram of the oral cavity.²¹³

when singing, and the oral cavity should be stable to allow the vowels to be correctly pronounced (see Figure 4.6). Then the suffix (guiyun) should be completed through action at the front of the mouth. Zhou advocated minimal (but not non-existent) movement both on the outside and inside of the mouth, and stressed that when voicing the prefix, the ventral should enter the back of the mouth immediately, to avoid delay of rhythm.

Thus, to assist students in achieving proper Chinese pronunciation and legato singing, Zhou emphasized that singers must pronounce each phoneme of the Chinese characters completely, especially the suffix. For example, in the word ‘猫’ spelled in Chinese Pinyin as ‘mao’ (which means ‘cat’), the suffix is ‘o’. After producing the vowel ‘a’, the singer’s lips must slightly round to produce the ‘o’ sound. If the ‘o’ is neglected, the word becomes ‘ma’ which means ‘horse’. Additionally, Zhou also mentioned that when singing music at moderato or adagio

²¹³ Jeffery B Palmer, Eiichi Tanake and Erik Ensrud, ‘Motions of the Posterior Pharyngeal Wall in Human Swallowing: A Quantitative Videofluorographic Study’, *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, 81 (2000-11), pp. 1520-1526.

tempi, the suffix of the first word should be placed before the beginning of the next word to ensure legato singing. For example, consider the word ‘忙碌’, which means ‘busy’ and is composed of two characters, spelled in Chinese Pinyin as ‘mang’ and ‘lu’. The suffix in ‘mang’ is a posterior nasal vowel ‘-ang’, and ‘-ang’ also contains the vowel ‘a’, which can also serve as the syllable nucleus.²¹⁴ During singing, after pronouncing the initial ‘m’ and the syllable nucleus ‘a’, singers should seamlessly link the final ‘-ng’ with the initial ‘l’ in the subsequent character ‘lu.’ Therefore, when singing, it should be rendered as ‘ma-nglu’ to ensure legato and accurate pronunciation. Failing to do so may result in disjointed sound and a change in the word’s meaning, potentially turning it into ‘ma-lu’ which means ‘road’.

Therefore, although the combination of different syllables in Chinese characters is more complex, in essence, ensuring the achievement of legato in singing involves shortening consonants and lengthening vowels which also aligns with Garcia’s perspective:

To sing legato means to pass from one sound to another in a neat, sudden, and smooth manner, without interrupting the flow of voice; yet not allowing it to drag or slur over any intermediate sound. In this case, as with the slurred sounds, the air must be subjected to a regular and continuous pressure, so as intimately to unite all the notes with each other.²¹⁵

Garcia proposed that to sustain the voice on words, a vowel should receive the greater portion of the value of a note, and the consonant should come in only at its close to let the vowels carry the legato line. Shortening the consonant could

²¹⁴ The syllable nucleus refers to the main vowel in a compound vowel, which has the widest opening and the loudest pronunciation, also known as the primary vowel.

²¹⁵ E3, p.8.

prevent the airflow being blocked, and when singing vowels, the tongue goes flat which helps to open the vocal tract.²¹⁶ He also emphasized that the passage from one note to the next must be precise, immediate and smooth which requires the singer to start the new note as leave the preceding one; he also pointed out that if the singer slur or glide from one pitch to another, this is not singing legato. To achieve this, the singer should know how to breathe effectively, they should breathe constantly and regularly. A proper breath could make sure when singing legato in vocalization that each pitch could be projected with the same degree of power, that there are no unwanted accents on any specific note of the vocalise sequence, and that notes are sung evenly with the value of each note the same.

Through a comparative analysis of the singing techniques from Xiaoyan Zhou's and Manuel Garcia's treatises, it is evident that the two vocal pedagogues share a high degree of consensus regarding the fundamental concepts of vocal technique. They both emphasize the importance of vowel modification for achieving smooth register transitions and the shortening of consonants to facilitate legato singing. However, their methodological approaches exhibit significant differences: Garcia's transmission of vocal techniques is grounded in scientific descriptions, such as objective accounts of the physiological state of the body and vocal mechanisms during singing, as well as explanations of how to achieve optimal vocal techniques through controlled movements of specific vocal organs. In contrast, Zhou's pedagogical approach primarily relies on metaphorical descriptions drawn from

²¹⁶ E3, p. 45.

everyday life, such as, 'smelling flowers' or 'feeling surprise', which utilize emotional engagement to stimulate physical responses, thereby facilitating the acquisition of vocal techniques. The two vocal pedagogues converge in their fundamental vocal philosophies, but they have developed distinctively characteristic approaches in their pedagogical expressions.

Chapter 5 Research Method

5.1 Participants observed in this study and design of participant study

The purpose of this project is not only to explore how the vocal techniques of Manuel Garcia and Xiaoyan Zhou work for singers, their similarities and differences, but in particular how Asian students and Asian voices respond to Garcia's physiological approach compared to Zhou's more emotional and representational approach. Moreover, I endeavour to discover the problems young Asian singers are prone to encounter in the early stages of singing and how these problems are related to wider cultural systems.

The results are easier to analyze by observing singers' physical reactions when applying these different methods and thus participant observation was chosen to be one of the main research methods in this study. Moreover, obtaining as much training feedback as possible is another important condition for answering the research question. Therefore, participants are required to write their thoughts and feelings using auto-ethnography as they take the training. In addition, to minimize negative impact on research results, it is stressed that participants need to provide honest or objective answers and responses.²¹⁷

It is undeniable that there is always the possibility that participants may change their answers or behaviours based on the experiences they have accumulated, or present what they believe to be the best version of themselves

²¹⁷ Greenberg, B; Abul-Ela, A; Simmons, W and Horvitz, D, 'The Unrelated Question Randomized Response Model: Theoretical Framework', *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 64 (1969), pp. 520-39.

and their voice, or even react purely to what they think the researcher expects. To avoid the biases described above and obtain more subjective feedback from participants, I chose two early-stage Asian students who used to received regular training from a vocal tutor as the project participants. Inexperienced singers are generally better at keeping an open mind, because they have not learned the rules and techniques of classical singing systematically; therefore, they are not limited in their approach to vocal techniques or issues.

The first participant was Michael, a first-year university vocal performance student, who started to learn pop music singing at the age of 14. After four years of pop singing study, he switched to lyrical singing, and he studied classical techniques for a year before he participated in this project. Before his university studies, he had sung only eight songs, most of which were European art songs. The second participant was Mary; she began to learn classical singing when she took her undergraduate course. She learned lyrical singing for about a year, and most of the repertoire she sang was Chinese art songs; she sang few Western arias or art songs. Before she took part in this project, she had not continued practising classical vocal technique for some considerable time.

Before participants joined this project, I confirmed with them that they were willing to devote the time and involvement required, and willing to share their feelings as required. Then, they were sent the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form which included details about this project, such as the aim of the project, when and how the project would take place, their rights and what would

happen to the data after the project. Only after they confirmed and signed the document would the project start, and I reiterated that as their participation was voluntary, they could withdraw at any time and for any reason.²¹⁸

The whole project was divided into three parts, each with a specific topic: breathing, blending registers and legato. Rather than giving all these techniques to the participant in one go, I took the techniques apart in three 40-minute sessions with specific topics and exercises, and the participants needed to attend once a week individually, plus a concluding review session. This 'dissection' of the technique aimed to give the participants enough time to think about the individual parts and the links between them, how different techniques affected each other, etc., and focused on their physical reactions and feelings. Also, as participants in this project are at an early stage of classical singing, breaking down this project into manageable lessons arranged in order of increasing complexity not only gave the participants a clear idea about each technique, but also avoided making the participant feel overwhelmed, and reduced any sense of intimidation.

The participants received a session plan the week before each session; the plan included detailed session content, exercises, after-session requirements, etc. (detailed information for each session can be found in Appendix A), and participants were required to look through the plan before they took the session, and the process of the session was recorded in the form of video.²¹⁹ Each session

²¹⁸ There was another student as a substitute participant, who was informed of the details of this project. Had any of the participants withdrawn, the substitute participant would have been sent the consent form to join this research, but these measures were not necessary.

²¹⁹ As the research project involves visual recordings where the participant may be identified, the

included three parts as shown in the table below.

Key Points	Session Activity	Notes
Review and Session Introduction	The participants need to do a verbal summary of what they did in and felt about the last session and during self-training (In the first session, they only need to talk about their personal feelings and expectation for the whole training programme.) Then the introduction to the session will be given to the participant and questions are invited.	When the participants give a verbal summary, they need to mention all the techniques they have already been trained in.
Warm-up and Technique Training	The participant will do directed warm-up exercises, then they will receive singing technique training. They will do the training step by step and express their feelings and bodily changes for each step.	
Session Conclusion	A quick review of the session will be provided by the project leader, and the participant should talk about how they feel about the session. Then they are required to practice by themselves after the session and write session feedback and daily 'diaries' in an auto-	

video will be made with the informed consent of the participant and will not be disseminated on any public medium, for example, live streaming, web broadcast, website, etc. If the recording (or any of the feedback) needs to be disseminated, I will elicit prior consent of the participant concerned, and they may withdraw their permission at any time. The ethics application will be submitted to keep records of all correspondence relating to informed consent. Additionally, as the recordings and participants' training diaries are produced in Chinese, the original Mandarin content will not be provided in this study. All key information from the recording and diaries will be translated into English and included in Appendix B.

	ethnographic form.	
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Moreover, during the session, participants were asked how they felt after being taught vocal techniques provided by Zhou and Garcia, and I observed their physical and emotional reactions at the same time. At the end of each session, the participants were required to do self-training and write auto-ethnographic self-training diaries. It must be emphasized that I only provided participants with information that was needed for the session, without telling them the purpose of these vocal techniques and not making suggestions about their practice in order to avoid creating bias in their feedback, as extraneous detail and suggestions from the research leader would likely affect their reactions and feelings, affecting the final results.²²⁰

5.2 Rationale for choice of topics under participant study

5.2.1 Breathing

Garcia emphasizes in his treatise ‘No person can ever become an accomplished singer until they possess entire control over the breath—the very element of sound’.²²¹ Each note and phrase should rely on steady and fluent air. Taking a good breath not only means drawing in the proper amount of air to support the voice

²²⁰ Before each session, I asked them to review the previous techniques and asked them again how they felt. I could sometimes offer training advice and pointers in the right direction to practice, but only when they completely failed to understand the techniques or when their practice significantly deviated from the right direction. After a week of training, they developed their own experiences and abilities to make suggestions, and were thus less easily affected by any suggestions from the research leader and thought more deeply and personally about these vocal techniques.

²²¹ E3, p. 6.

until the end of phrases, but also helps singers obtain good sound quality and provides singers sufficient support to access a broader range of notes. Unsatisfactory breathing technique can also affect singers' physical and organ changes such as larynx and diaphragm position, which in turn affects the performance of other singing techniques and timbre. Thus, the realization of other vocal skills is also inseparable from proper breathing as a steady foundation, such as blending register, legato, etc. What is more, Sun pointed out that many students in the process of vocal training can quickly master other vocal techniques, while breath training requires a significant amount of time and effort.²²² Therefore, as an essential part of singing, singers should train in this technique carefully until they master it.

5.2.2 Blending registers

Bel canto means beautiful singing; one way to achieve this is to master the technique of blending registers. Singers need to know how to connect different registers properly and make sure the transition is as smooth as possible. They also need to maintain an equal timbre throughout the *passaggio* to make the transfer sound more natural, and avoid unbalanced/unblended tones throughout the vocal range or the hiccup when singers pass from one register to another. Indeed, most beginners and early-stage singers fear the hiccup which occurs when they

²²² Shuli Sun, 'Gaoxiao Shengyue Yanchang Jiaoxuezhong Qixi de Xunlian Yanjiu' [Research on Breath Training in Vocal Performance Teaching in Higher Education], *Beifang Yinyue* [Northern Music], 24 (2015), p174.

transfer between different registers; thus to some extent, they also need to overcome their psychological fears. Besides, quickly mastering this technique is inseparable from the incorporation of correct breathing, especially when transferring from the medium register to the head register where sufficient support is required. If inappropriate breathing is used, the position of the larynx will rise and the resonator tract (pharynx) will be shortened: this not only will make the higher notes difficult to complete but also will make the transition between different registers become unsmooth.

What is more, singers need to take care of other aspects such as volume, pitch and timbre, ensuring auditory balance of the voice across different registers. Therefore, learning to blend the registers can be one of the most challenging things and needs singers to devote much patience and time to achieve blended singing. This technique can be combined with the breathing technique which the participant will be learning in the first session.

5.2.3 Legato

Reputed twentieth-century American pedagogue Richard Miller mentioned legato could be used as a standard to measure a singer's artistry and the uninterrupted flow of a true legato could display a singer's technical prowess.²²³ Therefore, singers should treat singing legato as a critical performance technique and carefully train to master it. Singers should be aware of how to create a flowing and

²²³ Richard Miller, 'Legato in Singing', *The American Music Teacher*, 14 (1965), p. 15.

continuous motion between notes and make sure every single note performed lasts its maximum duration. Also, students need to lengthen vowels as much as possible and minimize any interruption from consonants. In the meantime, singers should also avoid breaking the legato line due to changes in pitch, consonants or vowels, etc. Besides, if singers want to achieve smooth legato singing, the correct coordination of breathing is a foundation to achieve it, as a legato line cannot be unstained by an uncoordinated breathing process. Moreover, improper breathing could cause unnecessary stress on the glottis, and this will affect sound quality and the ability to sing legato. These singing techniques not only are important factors in *bel canto* singing, but also, they are intimately related to each other. This is why these vocal techniques were chosen as the subject of this research.

5.3 Participant observation

Participant observation can be used to serve many disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, communication studies, human geography and social psychology. In 1989, Marshall and Rossman explained observation as ‘the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study.’²²⁴ In this study, the observed content mainly focused on the physical reactions and personal sensations of two participants after practising vocal techniques of Garcia and Zhou, respectively. During the sessions with the

²²⁴ Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research* (London: Sage, 1998), p. 79.

participants, I recorded in detail the changes occurring in their bodies. If some physical reactions were not sufficiently obvious, with the participants' consent, I would physically sense their body changes through touch. For example, during breathing exercises, I would place my hand on the ribcage to feel the extent of chest expansion and then record it; thus as Erlandson advised, the researcher can explain and describe the existing situation through the five senses and offer a 'written photograph' of the subject under study.²²⁵

Demunck and Sobo claimed that the anthropologist could use participant observation as the primary method when doing fieldwork, for example, actively looking, improving memory, informal interviewing and writing detailed field notes.²²⁶ On the other hand, Schensul, Schensul and Lecompte claimed that 'participant observation is the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the researcher setting.'²²⁷ During the observation period of this project, I not only recorded the participants' physical reactions in the session, but also – in order to gain as much insight as possible into the participants' true feelings and thoughts about these singing techniques – required them to engage in independent practice each day and to write daily training diaries to record their experiences. This

²²⁵ David A. Erlandson, *Doing Naturalistic Inquiry: A Guide to Methods* (Newbury Park, CA.: Sage, 1993), p. 99.

²²⁶ Victor Demunck and Elisa Sobo, *Using methods in the Field: A Practical Introduction and Casebook* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1998), p. 40.

²²⁷ Stephen L. Schensul, Jean J. Schensul and Margaret D. LeCompte, *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews, and Questionnaires* (Walnut Creek, CA.: AltaMira Press, 1999), p. 91.

includes their psychological activities during training, reflections after training and how they overcame difficulties encountered during training. Thus I gathered feedback from participants' practice as comprehensively as possible to facilitate experimental analysis.

Bernard pointed out that participant observation should include more methods rather than just observation, for example, conversations between researchers and participants, interviews, checklists, questionnaires, etc.²²⁸ During the session with participants, I can observe their objective physical reactions, but I am unable to accurately discern their actual feelings, such as whether these singing techniques cause discomfort or what their psychological thoughts are when embodying it. Therefore, during breaks in session, I inquire about the participants' personal feelings, encouraging and guiding them to express their genuine thoughts. Furthermore, emotions involve the ability to maintain or alter an individual's connection to an object or event,²²⁹ which implies that the varying emotional states experienced by participants during training may influence the training outcomes to some extent. Moreover, Dewalt and Dewalt promoted research observation in the 'natural setting' so the researcher can learn about the activities of the people under study through both observing and participating in activities.²³⁰ Thus, prior to participants recording their training

²²⁸ Russell H. Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, second edition, (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 1994), p. 72.

²²⁹ Antony S. R. Manstead, Nico Frijda and Agneta Fischer, *Feelings and Emotions: The Amsterdam Symposium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 158.

²³⁰ Kathleen Dewalt and Billie R. Dewalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2002), p. vii.

experiences, I prompt them to provide additional descriptions of their emotional states, such as whether they felt happy during the training, if they were willing to engage in the day's practice and whether encountering difficulties led to feelings of apprehension or frustration. These psychological factors experienced by participants during training are appropriately taken into account during the analysis.

Therefore, the methodology of participant observation is suitable for studying almost every aspect of human existence: it allows the researcher to describe when and where things happen, the what and the how of the activity, who and what is involved, and how and why they occur from the participant's perspective. For descriptive and exploratory studies, participant observation is highly appropriate, albeit less useful for testing and critically examining theories and other claims to knowledge.²³¹

5.4 Introduction to auto-ethnography

Due to the limits of participant observation, project participants must write session feedback and training diaries in auto-ethnographic form, and I have done the same exercise with my own practice. Auto-ethnography is a research method which has become more popular over the past two decades and which can provide the scholar with opportunities to explore a variety of aspects of their lives and

²³¹ Danny L. Jorgensen, *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies* (London: Sage, 1989), p. 12.

culture in a sustained manner. The term 'auto-ethnography' first appeared in the 1970s with Karl Heider's use of the word in 1975 in the context of the Dani auto-ethnography, a study carried out in the Grand Valley Dani of Irian Jaya Indonesia (West New Guinea) in which sixty school children from the Grand Valley Dani gave 50 responses to the question, 'What do people do?' This became known as the Dani auto-ethnography: 'auto' for autochthonous, since it is the Dani's own account of 'what people do'; and 'auto' for automatic, since it is the simplest routine eliciting technique imaginable.²³² In 1977, Walter Goldschmidt called all ethnography 'self-ethnography' in that ethnographic representations privilege personal beliefs, perspectives and observations.²³³ Other authors noted the differences between cultural insiders and outsiders, as well as the fact that a researcher's perspective can inform the research process and the product. The participants in this project and I are all 'insiders' in some ways for we all grew up and were educated in a Chinese environment. Yet unlike me, the participants have had no experience of life and education in the West. This makes me both the insider and the outsider at the same time.

During the 1980s, although few scholars explicitly used the word 'auto-ethnography', many researchers started to realize the importance of this research method, especially interpretive social scientists who began writing articles to show that storytelling and the personal narrative is crucial for research; thus they

²³² Karl G. Heider, 'What Do People Do? Dani Auto-ethnography', *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 31 (1975), pp. 3-17.

²³³ Walter Goldschmidt, 'Anthropology and the Coming Crisis: An Autoethnographic Appraisal', *American Anthropologist*, 79 (1977), pp. 293-308.

illustrated how a researcher's perspective informs and facilitates research processes, products and the creation of culture.²³⁴

In the 1990s, auto-ethnography became a research approach for connecting personal experience and reflexivity with the lives of others to examine cultural experiences; auto-ethnographers believe that political/cultural expectations are infused with personal feelings and experiences. Auto-ethnography also offered a chance for readers not only to read a text but also to 'live' with the author and experience the author's emotion, helping both the author and reader to know the potentially obscure subjects or different cultures deeply. As Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln explained it in 1997: 'Auto-ethnography is setting a scene, telling a story, weaving intricate connections among life and art, experience and theory, evocation and explanation... and then letting it go.'²³⁵ According to H. L. Goodall, not all the answers to questions can be resolved by traditional methods such as one-to-one interviews with strangers; some responses can only be answered through exploring researchers' lived experience and using self-reflection.²³⁶ In short, to obtain rich and contextualized information about any number of subjects, the living and lived experiences are the crucial elements of auto-ethnography which thus narrates a personal history within a specific culture or society. Overall,

²³⁴ Arthur P. Bochner, *Coming to Narrative: A Personal History of Paradigm Change in the Human Sciences* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2014), pp. 13-23.

²³⁵ S. Holman-Jones, 'Auto Ethnography: Making the Personal Political', in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (London: Sage, 2000), p. 208.

²³⁶ H. L. Goodall, 'Notes for the Autoethnography and Autobiography Panel', Paper presented at the National communication Association Convention, New York (1998). Drawn from Renata Ferdinand, 'What's in a Story? Using Auto-ethnography to Advance Communication Research', *American Communication Journal*, 11 (2009) available online: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/0947/054e2727cdb2266a44c10ea3afa846f600f4.pdf>

as a research method, auto-ethnography remains a relatively unconventional way to interpret cultural texts, experiences, beliefs and practices by using personal experience and can be expressed in several ways such as stories, performances and poems.

5.4.1 What is it used for?

Auto-ethnography can be used to focus on personal experience and document aspects of the human, social and lived condition that might escape more traditional analysis methods. Researchers offer their personal experience to complement or fill gaps in research and these experiences may reveal generalizations which may hide important nuances of cultural issues and reactions. Auto-ethnographical writing therefore benefits from the personal experiences of the author who, as a first-person narrator and analytical protagonist, facilitates nuanced and evocative accounts of thoughts and action.²³⁷

In addition, 'insider' knowledge of cultural experience can be revealed by auto-ethnography. In this way, through auto-ethnographers' texts, any readers can gain knowledge of more aspects of the cultural life observed which other researchers might not be able to know and communicate. For example, compared with the researcher who has limited experience of cultural problems or institutional oppressions, a person who has directly experienced these situations can talk about these topics in a more articulate and accurate way.

²³⁷ Leon Anderson and Mathew Austin, 'Auto-ethnography in Leisure Studies', *Leisure Studies*, 31 (2012), pp. 131-46.

This theoretical context frames the ways in which my research participants and I write, put into dialogue and analyze the training diaries. My own cultural identity as a Chinese classical singer means I am able to feel how these techniques work on my own Asian body and accurately describe the physical, mental and emotional changes when I apply these methods. In addition, I bring my own cultural experience to bear: born and raised in China, I am also familiar with the methods of Chinese teachers, especially the more emotional and representational approach that Zhou uses in her treatise. As I share many experiences – musical and cultural – with the participants in this project, I am at the same time, both participant and researcher in a project to discover how young Asian singers embody these vocal techniques. This also gives me a chance not only to analyze these techniques from the perspective of an advanced singer but also to think deeply about these vocal approaches from the perspective of and beginners and early-stage singers.

5.4.2 Why and How to do it?

Answers to research questions will thus be obtained by observation of the participants' physical changes and collection of their feedback. Yet, Bullough and Pinnegar emphasized that auto-ethnography is more than the literal study of self but rather the space between the self and practice, and researchers should also gather the data from the self and others before bringing it together to create

meaning.²³⁸ Thus, it is essential for participants to write down in auto-ethnographic form their feelings, and use their native language to express their feelings and describe their physical changes when they practise which is why I have asked participants to write post-session feedback and do a week of self-training; they also need to write daily diaries for every self-training session.

In this way, as a qualitative research method, auto-ethnography can promote the process of understanding how young Asian singers respond to different vocal techniques. I plan to collect participants' session feedback and create analyses of participants' auto-ethnographic training diaries, including my own training diaries. Within these unconventional techniques, auto-ethnography provides an efficient way for me to investigate my research topic and allow me to gain a deep knowledge about different cultural responses while simultaneously acknowledging my experiences. Putting into dialogue the participants' training diaries and my own also allows for a juxtaposition of various versions of the telling of a narrative: it provides a 'layered account',²³⁹ and can show connections among personal experiences, theory and research practices across the range, from elementary to advanced vocal techniques as the writer-researcher, i.e. as I move back and forth between narratives and reflections on those narratives or their content.²⁴⁰ H. L. Goodall argued that a well organized auto-ethnography,

completely dissolves any idea of distance, does not produce 'findings', is not generalizable, and

²³⁸ Robert Bullough and Pinnegar Stefinee, *Guidelines for Quality in Autobiographical Forms of Self-Study Research* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), p. 14.

²³⁹ Carol Rambo Ronai, 'Multiple Reflections of Child Sex Abuse: An Argument for a Layered Account', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 23 (1995), pp. 395-426.

²⁴⁰ H. Lloyd Goodall, *Writing Qualitative Inquiry: Self, Stories, and Academic life*, (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2008), pp. 59-95.

only has credibility when self-reflexive, and authority when richly vulnerable... When it is done well, we can learn previously unspoken, unknown things about culture and communication from it.²⁴¹

Auto-ethnography is usually written in the first person,²⁴² although some scholars might choose the third person, as 'she' or 'he' implies an intention not to become the centre of the work. In this project, the feedback and training diaries are written in the first person.

One point needs to be clarified: even though personal experience lies at the heart of auto-ethnography, a good auto-ethnography is not a simple confession story of the writer or literary self-exposure; the text should be an argument which can persuade readers and reflect on, be entangled in, and critique the current moment and scholarship. As Ruth Behar explained,

the exposure of the self who is also a spectator has to take us somewhere we could not otherwise get to. It has to be essential to the argument, not a decorative flourish, not exposure for its own sake.²⁴³

In this project, I am both an auto-ethnographic researcher and the reader of my participants' text. My own experiences and background are similar to that of the participants but necessarily different as I have spent 5 years studying in Britain. These cultural differences will inform my reading of the participants' text as well as our dialogues in the practice room. Indeed, here I not only observe their physical singing bodies, but also get to know them and their emotional

²⁴¹ H. L. Goodall, 'Notes for the autoethnography'. Drawn from Tami Spry, 'Performing Autoethnography: An Embodied, Methodological Praxis', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7 (2001), pp. 706-32 (p. 714).

²⁴² Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner, 'Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject', in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (London: Sage, 2000), pp. 733-768.

²⁴³ Ruth Behar, *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart* (Boston MA.: Beacon Press, 1996), p. 14.

responses.²⁴⁴ As Goodall points out:

good auto-ethnography strives to use relational language and styles to create a purposeful dialogue between the reader and the author. This dialogue proceeds through close, personal identification—and recognition of difference—of the reader’s experiences, thoughts, and emotions with those of the author’.²⁴⁵

This is how my project was built using participant observation and auto-ethnography. In all the ways outlined above, I aim to create a piece of engaging research which can inform Western and Asian singers and pedagogues.

²⁴⁴ Carol Rambo-Ronai, ‘The Reflective Self Through Narrative: A Night in the Life of an Erotic Dancer/Researcher’, in *Investigating Subjectivity: Research on lived experience* (Sage: Carolyn Ellis, 1992), pp.102-24.

²⁴⁵ H. L. Goodall, ‘Notes for the autoethnography’. Drawn from Spry, ‘Performing Autoethnography’, p. 713.

Chapter 6 Training Results and Dialogue

In this chapter, I will compare my training and reflections with those of my participants from the live training sessions and the feedback diaries they kept, aiming to create a dialogue between our experiences. The purpose of this comparison is to provide a more intuitive understanding of the differences between an advanced and early-stage singers, focusing on their physical and psychological reactions during training. By analysing these reactions, we can better understand the challenges faced. The following sections will discuss our experiences with Zhou's and Garcia's singing techniques in the order of breathing, blending registers and legato.

6.1.1 Manuel Garcia's breathing technique

In the early stages of training, both participants seemed to struggle with fully embracing the new method. They experienced a certain level of psychological tension due to the introduction of these unfamiliar techniques. This tension created obstacles to achieving the relaxed physical state advocated. For example, during Mary's training, her eyes stare at one point when she practises and when I asked why she did that, she said she wonders if her physical reactions will be the same as described in the treatise, and as this is the first time she practises breathing this way, she could not help but worry if she could meet every requirement of each step. Her brain seems to send a nervous signal which distracts her and adds extra psychological pressure; this pressure causes tension in her

ribcage, back and neck. Although Michael's physical reaction was different, he would nevertheless constantly think about how to achieve the state described by Garcia, trying his best to follow every instruction meticulously. This overthinking led to psychological stress, which ultimately caused him to experience the same physical muscle tension as Mary.

Despite these muscle tensions, some physical reactions expected from correct breathing still begin appearing, albeit not very prominently in the early stages of training. For example, Mary could sense the lateral expansion of her chest with the process of inhalation which ensures that her lungs contain more air than before. As the ribcage expands and the back muscles begin to engage, her body posture is also affected in a positive way, her shoulders are back and down, her chest is open and her head stays erect. Moreover, when singing, she can sense support from her back and abdomen which means her practice is going in the right direction.

While Michael used to take a breath by lifting his chest and expanding less his ribcage, now his ribcage starts to expand more with a less lifted chest. When he inhales, the noise from his nose is barely heard which means he does not force the air through the nose; he also feels the air can go deeper in his body. His standing posture has also changed: he used to stand with his head forward and shoulders hunched, while, after training, his chest is open and his head remains erect.

Contrary to the two participants, I did not experience the physical tension brought about by Garcia's technique. When I practised, I felt that my ribcage expanded well and the slow, even breathing actually helped relax other parts of

my body. Consequently, I did not experience tension in my neck or shoulder, and while my ribcage muscles did become somewhat tense as the expansion was maintained, this sensation did not cause any discomfort. As the air was slowly exhaled, the sense of support from the abdomen became more pronounced and I quickly realised that this sensation was identical to the continuous support my abdomen provides during singing. However, it was evident that the participants did not share my experience during the initial stages of training. I think that my ability to keep my body relaxed while ensuring effective ribcage expansion is rooted in my background as I am an experienced singer. I have a clear understanding of what constitutes correct breathing and the appropriate physical reaction during singing or practising. I also consciously relax my body, which is why my experience of the training remained consistent from beginning to end.

In the mid to later stages of training, both participants showed good progress and their facial expressions also became more positive. Mary is gradually developing awareness to adjust her body; for example, she can recognize some of the inappropriate physical reactions that are prone to occur, such as an unsatisfactory standing posture, a lifting chest, etc., and she avoids these reactions by reminding herself before inhaling. A gentle smile began to appear on Mary's face, although it did not persist throughout the whole session. When singing, she senses she can sing high notes easier than before which means she begins to use the support and energy provided by this method.

Michael becomes more proficient in applying this method and he realizes the

difficulties that he meets and finds ways to resolve them. He notices his anxiousness to meet all the requirements which put him under extra psychological pressure. In order to relieve this, Michael usually walks and closes his eyes and, as his diaries show, once the psychological tension is reduced, he is less tense and obtains better training results. He has easier control of the speed of breathing which demonstrates that the muscles involved are fully exercised and strengthened; his eyes are slightly wide but he displays no expression of nervousness; moreover, as he takes the air in gently, his ribcage gradually expands which demonstrates that the cooperation between the intercostal muscles and inhalation is better.

Thus, in the later stage, both participants released significant amounts of psychological tension. This was evidenced not only by their increased physical relaxation but also by relaxed facial expressions. At times, their expression included slightly widened eyes and a gentle smile, which also contributed to the elevation of the soft palate. Therefore, interestingly, the methods of Zhou and Garcia interacted with each other. Both breathing techniques offered by these two vocal pedagogues aim to make the lungs freely receive air through positive physical reactions such as a well expanded ribcage, rise and fall of the soft palate and larynx, etc. One of the main differences is that Zhou provides a shortcut to enable the changes in the oral cavity: in Zhou's method, she guides young singers to assume a pleasant facial expression during singing to stimulate the zygomatic muscles to lift subtly and gently, as well as helping to achieve a raised soft palate

and a lowered larynx. The participants practise Garcia's and Zhou's methods separately in each daily training, yet there is a high probability that these methods affect each other. For me, my soft palate does not exhibit a raised reaction during training because Garcia's method does not involve facial expressions. Therefore, I rarely consider my facial expressions during training and do not feel significant changes in my soft palate and larynx.

In summary, the training for both participants has been progressing in a positive direction. Most of the time, they have been able to achieve a greater expansion of the ribcage than previously. As the training time increases, their psychological tension gradually decreases, allowing them to feel more relaxed. Positive reactions also occur in their oral cavity: the soft palate rises and the larynx is in a lower position. As I am an experienced singer, I received more positive and constant bio-feedback from the start.

6.1.2 Zhou's breathing technique

When I initially started practising Zhou's techniques, the feedback and sensations from my body were positive. Whether it was the quick inhalation and slow exhalation or the slow inhalation and exhalation exercises, both allowed me to achieve a rapidly expanding ribcage, although the degree of chest expansion in the quick exercises was slightly less than with Garcia's method. Moreover, the life-related examples provided by Zhou for this method made my facial expressions more positive, resulting in a quickly elevated soft palate and a larger oral cavity

space during training, which I did not experience with Garcia's method. As I had positive feelings and physical reactions to Zhou's method, therefore, I thought that the participants' reactions would be satisfactory but on the contrary, their bodies show they are not at ease and the techniques seem to put them on the wrong track.

Mary feels the air enter her lungs in a more shallow position compared with Garcia's method and she visibly feels the chest lift: she forces air through her nose, the rib cage does not swing out and is not maintained in this position by the intercostal muscles which causes the air to stay in a shallow position. Slight twitching at the corners of Mary's mouth and the unnatural expression on her face indicates tension in Mary's muscles which can also affect her performance. For Michael, the quick inhalation method poses many challenges and creates some unexpected physical reactions, such as an upward chest and shoulder movement. He feels the dry and stiff larynx exists due to the fast obtention of air through the mouth without concentrating effort on the expansion of his ribcage. He also mentioned in his diary that he makes no change in facial expression which suggests he does not understand all the requirements of this exercise.

These phenomena highlight a crucial fact: during my practice, I did not approach the exercises from the perspective of an early-stage singer. So I repeated the exercise based solely on its literal interpretation with markedly different results, and ones closer to those of the participants. The rapid breathing did not allow for adequate expansion of my thoracic cavity; rather, it caused my upper chest to rise quickly, which in turn elevated my shoulders. Similarly, attempting to

breathe slowly as if inhaling the scent of flowers also resulted in the elevation of my upper chest. I perceived that the air entering through my nose could not progress deeper; it felt as though it was trapped in my upper chest and, at times, even lingering in my nasal cavity. After several repetitions of these exercises, my body became tense and I felt tired.

Therefore, I decided to provide participants with appropriate guidance during the latter stages of training which allowed them to recognise the negative effects and implement effective solutions, leading to more positive training responses. Mary starts to understand that some of her reactions are inappropriate and have prevented her from progressing: for example, Mary begins to adjust her standing posture by throwing her shoulders back and holding her head more erect to create an open chest to let more air into her lungs. She also avoids overdoing the facial expression but uses the zygomatic muscles to make changes in the oral cavity. Overthinking and misunderstanding the true purpose of the facial expression is also one of the reasons why Mary's practice goes in the wrong direction, as shown in her diary on day eleven. Zhou's quick inhalation and facial expression causes Mary's upper body to tense and her chest to lift; she forgets that she should use the expansion of her ribcage to store air. Yet as soon as she realizes this, she worries less about the facial expression to focus on supporting an open ribcage. Mental relaxation helps Mary get the correct physical reaction more easily and also reduces most of the muscle tension.

For Michael, most of his attention is diverted to how to complete the

requirement of smiling which prevents him from achieving the effective movement of the ribcage. Nevertheless, some satisfactory reactions show that Michael is making improvements by the end: his larynx can drop after very quick inhalation; he feels energy when singing which means the ribcage has expanded more to allow the lungs to contain more air; in addition, the back and abdominal muscles participate to support his breath.

Zhou's method can effectively stimulate the activity of the soft palate and enhance its flexibility to some extent. However, it appears that Zhou's approach is more suitable for students who already possess some awareness of proper breathing techniques, and can lead to tension for those who do not. Additionally, appropriate guidance from an instructor is necessary to facilitate efficient practise, ultimately leading to improved outcomes.

6.2.1 Manuel Garcia's blending register technique

Garcia offered an exercise for singers to help them obtain a smooth transition between the chest and medium register (see Figure 6.1, also given as Figure 4.2).

Exercises to unite the chest and medium registers.

The image displays three musical exercises, numbered 1, 2, and 3, designed to help a singer unite their chest and medium registers. Each exercise consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (bass clef).
Exercise 1: The vocal line starts in the chest register with a half note G4, then moves to a half note A4 in the medium register. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords. The instruction '&c. the same on' is written below the vocal line.
Exercise 2: The vocal line starts in the chest register with a half note G4, then moves to a half note A4 in the medium register. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support. The instruction '&c. the same on these notes' is written below the vocal line.
Exercise 3: The vocal line starts in the chest register with a half note G4, then moves to a half note A4 in the medium register. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support. The instruction '&c. the same on these notes' is written below the vocal line.

Figure 6.1 Exercises to unite the chest and medium register.²⁴⁶

For both participants, Garcia's exercises were the most difficult of all, as they had very little knowledge about registers and could not tell when they were singing in different registers. For example, Mary needs time to understand how to produce the voice in different registers and creates noticeable pauses during transitions between the chest and medium registers. Similarly, Michael needs several attempts to sing the notes in the correct register, and like Mary, he does not make the transfer happen in quick succession each time. Additionally, they both were unable to sustain the same volume between register changes and always felt less support in the medium register. The cause of these issues is clear: aside from the inevitable psychological tension, they do not combine the previous breathing technique with this register change exercise. A weak medium register is the result

²⁴⁶ E3, p. 10.

of less breath support; therefore, the connection with the abdomen muscle is broken. This indicates that despite making good progress in breathing training, they are not able to consciously layer it up with other singing skills. Therefore, in the beginning stage of training, their practice primarily exposed problems rather than helping them improve their transition ability.

I did not experience uneven volume between the medium and chest registers during my practice because I understand the importance of abdominal support for maintaining volume. Therefore, I consciously prepare my breath to ensure that sufficient support from the abdomen can be used when I sing in the medium register. Although I did not encounter the same issues as the two participants, it still took me some time to adapt to the exercises. As a soprano, my daily practice of the repertoire rarely includes notes in the chest register or the lower notes of the medium register. Thus, on the first attempt to sing the exercises, although I did not have the noticeable pauses that the participants experienced, my transitions were not very smooth. After several attempts, I realised that the key to improving the smoothness of transitions lies in the flexibility of the soft palate. This reminded me that Zhou's quick inhalation method helps students perceive the movement of the soft palate and improve its flexibility. Thus, this breathing method from Zhou also serves as an excellent supplementary technique for mastering Garcia's register transition exercises.

Despite encountering many difficulties, the participants did not bury their heads in the sand due to obstacles but, on the contrary, they found solutions that

helped them adapt. In the mid stages of training, Mary realizes that part of the reason she is unable to transfer between the chest to the medium register smoothly is that she cannot prepare the voice quickly and precisely. Therefore before singing the exercises, Mary would sing in the chest and medium registers separately to prepare and preempt the feelings she is looking for when singing the exercise. Michael gradually discovers that the support from the abdomen is important for balancing the sound between the chest and the medium register. He reminds himself to use the energy and support from the abdomen muscle to sing in the medium register; he also can keep a good standing posture most of the time which shows he understands the importance of a well-open chest, well-inflated lungs and the energy this provides to sing the lower notes. At this stage of training, therefore, they are both working self-reflectively to solve practice problems.

Once their practice starts to go in the right direction, progress is quick. Mary solves her unbalanced voice in the two registers and makes the medium voice sound stable on lower notes by adjusting her breath before practicing, which means the abdomen muscles are active and provide sufficient power for singing. This also shows that she realizes the importance of satisfactory breathing and consciously adjusts breathing during training. Similarly, Michael manages to combine the breathing technique which he learnt in the first session with this register blending technique. In order not to forget to manage the breath and use the energy from the abdomen muscles, Michael puts his hands on the side of his ribcage. Additionally, they both realise that positive reactions in the oral cavity can

help them to find the lower notes in the medium register quickly and accurately, and make the transfer from the chest to the medium register smoother, which proves that a flexible larynx plays an important role in this approach. Again, singing with well-managed breath and with an energized facial expression can stimulate the larynx to drop and raise the soft palate.

Although they made progress in the final stage, this does not mean they have completely mastered the method. They always forget to remain in a good standing posture and prepare the inhalation, and most of the time they cannot ensure an expanded ribcage and pleasant mien at the same time. Thus, overall, they improve, but they still need time to recall all the good physical reactions and to improve the cooperation and coordination between different singing approaches before they master this method.

6.2.2 Zhou's blending register technique

Unlike Garcia, Zhou's method targets transitions between the medium and head registers by modifying vowels within an exercise provided in her teaching video (see Figure 6.2,).

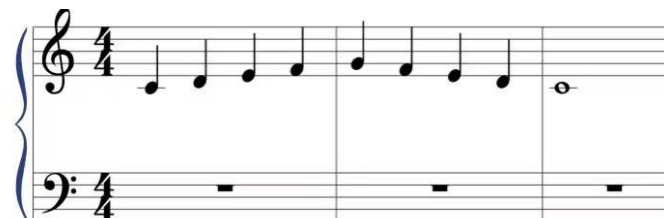


Figure 6.2 Transition exercise between the medium and head registers.²⁴⁷

Before the voice transfers from the medium to the head register, when rising in pitch, the vowel 'a' should gradually change to 'au', and then to 'o'. Aiming to raise the soft palate and add space in the oral cavity, the singer can then transfer from the medium to the head register without a tense larynx and shrill tone quality. Zhou's method also indicates that the participants do not need to address the issue of volume imbalance across different registers as in Garcia's exercises. In addition, while they may have received regular training from a vocal tutor, this does not mean they can quickly master the method. On the contrary, obstacles still emerged during practice.

Mary's voice shows a lack of legato, and there are several reasons for this: one is that she does not prepare a proper breath before she sings; her ribcage does not fully expand to provide sufficient air. The other is that her lips are too tense and overworked when she changes the vowels; in this way, she overemphasizes the pronunciation of vowels and affects the flow of breath. Excessively tense lips hinder the lifting of the soft palate, which is why her voice in the head register lacks resonance and her larynx feels uncomfortable. Resonance does not exist in Michael's voice and sometimes breaks in the head register which demonstrates that he does not breathe correctly; his ribcage shows no obvious expansion, and

²⁴⁷ 'Xiaoyan Zhou Shengyue Jiaoxue' [Vocal Pedagogy of Xiaoyan Zhou], <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8k0PtUjCB8g&t=774s>> [accessed 3 August 2023]. This exercise begins in the chest register and ascends by semitones, concluding at g2.

therefore, his abdomen muscles are not engaged and cannot provide sufficient support and energy. Moreover, his hunched shoulders and his chest lifting as he breathes means air is stored in a shallow position; the larynx does not drop which means his neck's muscles are tense and therefore, his voice easily breaks in the head register.

Thus, similar to Garcia's exercises, the lack of breath support remains the primary cause of their problems. In the medium and head register, this is mainly evident in the sharpness of vocal quality and lack of resonance of their voices when entering the head register. Additionally, psychological factors cannot be ignored. Most beginners and early-stage singers feel nervous when they sing high notes, and this anxiety often leads to tension in the throat and neck muscles, causing the larynx to rise unconsciously, resulting in a shrill-sounding voice. As Mary mentioned in her diary, she is afraid to sing top notes when she enters the head register and at the same time, she needs to think about the vowel change which exacerbates the tension.

My experience was different from that of the participants because changing vowels is a common method I use in my daily practice to handle transitions between the medium and head registers. From my perspective, a relaxed body and oral cavity, along with good breath support are key to mastering this method. At the same time, I can understand the participants' feelings. When I was an early-stage singer, every time I sang high notes, I felt afraid. The closer my voice got to the high note, the more nervous I became. At that time, my attention was entirely

focused on my face and mouth, causing tension in my larynx. I did experience the same challenges they did in my early learning stage.

In the later stages of training, the participants tried to find solutions to their problems and made some progress. Mary's lips look more flexible which means that she releases part of the tension and does not overwork the lips when modifying vowels; she sings in the head register with resonance reflecting that the relaxed root of the tongue and the rounded vowels create more space in the oral cavity and help the soft palate to rise and the larynx to drop to a comfortable position; her abdomen also provides support during singing. She also realizes that both physical and psychological tension could prevent her from making progress. Therefore, when she senses tension, she immediately stops singing in order not to exacerbate the feeling. Michael finds some strategies to release the mental pressure, stopping between two groups of notes to avoid the tension building up. He also manages to combine breathing techniques with register blending. All his positive physical reactions at this stage contribute to him managing his breath before singing.

Yet, neither Michael or Mary can maintain all the positive physical reactions throughout their training: they easily lose them at some point and replace them with physical tension. When their voices enter the head register, they still become involuntarily tense and appear lacking in confidence to sing these high notes. Overall, improvements are made and solutions found, but they need time to practise and balance the cooperation between different singing skills before this

method can be integrated.

6.3 Zhou and Garcia's legato technique

Garcia offers several tips for students to sing legato, permitting singers to choose flexibly according to different musical lines and text. Zhou provides suggestions to singers on how to pronounce Chinese more clearly. Yet in both the treatises, Garcia and Zhou emphasize that the most important and basic rule for achieving legato lines is to shorten the consonants and lengthen the vowels.

In this session, one Chinese and one Italian piece from the repertoire is sung by participants, and to save time, I suggested they sing repertoire they had already learned. Moreover, according to their performance in the live training sessions, not only is there a lack of legato singing but also other related problems were exposed. Therefore, I will focus more on these latter issues in the following discussion.

It is undeniable that, despite this project nearing its end, the participants still cannot maintain consistent control over their breath during singing. Although I suggest they think about previous breathing training, they continue to exhibit improper posture and take random breaths during practice. When they sing Chinese repertoire, only a few words show incomplete pronunciation, especially those concerning the suffix as noted by Zhou in her treatise. For instance, Mary chose a Chinese art song which describes the view of the Peacock River in Xinjiang, China called *美丽的孔雀河* (*Beautiful Peacock River*). She overlooks some of the suffixes, for example, in the word '像' which means 'like', spelled in Chinese Pinyin

is 'xiang', the suffix in this word is a posterior nasal vowel '-ang'. Mary's pronunciation only articulated the 'a' in '-ang', resulting in a shift from '像' (like) to '下' (down). Yet this issue can be easily corrected by Chinese singers with a bit of attention during performing.

Most of the problems become apparent when they sing Italian repertoire. Although these problems rarely occur in my own singing, I have experienced similar difficulties in the past and thus I can empathise with their situation. Firstly, they tend to overemphasise the pronunciation of consonants, causing the consonants to take up more time than the vowels; of course. This issue is also evident in their performance of Chinese pieces and will cause a lack of legato. Consonants are more percussive than vowels; if consonants are longer, then the airflow will be disrupted and it will be difficult to create legato. Overemphasis on consonants in singing is also affected by long-term language habits. In Chinese, the consonants carry the intent and the meaning, and to avoid unclear intentions when speaking, the Chinese will emphasize the consonants. Therefore, Chinese singing students, especially beginners and early-stage singers, over-emphasize the consonants when they sing in any language.

Secondly, when singing in Italian, they always 'chew the words' which means that when their voice moves from a consonant to a vowel or from one syllable to another, their oral cavity is not stable and therefore some 'unexpected' sounds will exist, resulting in 'chewed' pronunciation. A long-standing habit of pronunciation leads to the fact that when the participants sing Italian, the oral cavity is too

flexible to maintain the single pure vowels which is why they 'chew' the words in singing. This excessive use of the jaw and mouth for pronunciation not only results in inaccurate word meanings but also introduces non-existent syllables; these extraneous syllables occupy the value of a note, thereby hindering the creation of legato.

Moreover, the two participants always miss certain vowels in pronunciation. For example, in Michael's case, when he sings the aria 'Per la gloria d'adorarvi', he always misses the vowel 'i' in 'mio'. For Mary, in the sentence 'che cosa è amor' in Cherubino's aria 'Voi che sapete' from *Il nozze di Figaro*, the vowel 'è' is missed and there is no 'u' in the word 'nuovo' in Mary's pronunciation. As mentioned, vowels in Chinese are usually combined to create one sound: in Mandarin, consecutive vowels are not treated independently but pronounced as a single phoneme. Therefore, Chinese students subconsciously ignore or reduce the pronunciation of one of the consecutive vowels in the Italian language. This may have less impact on creating legato than the 'chewing' of the words which creates extra notes, but it does not help in delivering the meaning.

The last issue is more pronounced in Mary's case because she sings with her mouth less open. An open mouth is encouraged in Chinese singers: singers need to open their mouths more than for speech as this creates more space for the oral cavity which helps with resonance. In Mary's case, she tends to sing with a small open mouth due to cultural perceptions and speaking habits in Mandarin. In Chinese culture, understatement and an introverted nature are valued, especially

during conversation. For example, Chinese people are taught from childhood that exaggerated facial expressions will be considered a sign of loss of etiquette and to be acceptable to traditional culture, girls are expected not to show their teeth when they talk with others. Strict family etiquette, especially for girls, and introverted culture mean that Chinese people use less bodily language than Europeans, and this phenomenon is more obvious in women. Moreover, due to the particular pronunciation of Mandarin discussed above, a flexible jaw and tongue means Chinese people can pronounce each word clearly with little change to the shape and openness of their mouth. Chinese vocal students unconsciously bring these cultural habits and practices to singing which can lead to vocal students who are reluctant to open their mouths.

Thus, linguistic, cultural and speaking habits do affect their pronunciation when they sing in Italian and, presumably, other Western languages. After addressing these issues with the participants and introducing Zhou's and Garcia's methods, they were able to accept and correct them relatively quickly. However, since these problems are influenced by entrenched linguistic and cultural habits which are the result of long-term development, the participants, despite making some progress in the later stages of training, still require additional time to establish good habits and develop the autonomy and problem-solving skills needed to address these issues effectively.

Chapter 7 Analysis of Auto-ethnography and Participant Observation from a Cultural Perspective

7.1 Introduction

In the twenty-first century, the general standards of classical singing in China have greatly improved. Nevertheless, according to my own experiences and that of my peers both in China and the West, I have noticed that most students achieve better progress after studying in the West compared with their Chinese period of study. Some scholars note that in the teaching of singing in China, foreign languages have been ignored; in addition, other factors include that except for in prestigious conservatoires, not all the vocal tutors have had a high level of training, and are not necessarily highly competent singers themselves.²⁴⁸ But few scholars have analyzed this phenomenon from a cultural perspective, while David Stephens affirms ‘the importance [...] culture can play in improving the quality of educational research in the developing world.’²⁴⁹ This becomes increasingly relevant when considering the development of Chinese classical singing education, and both vocal students and teachers can and must reflect on the problems that arise in learning or teaching from a cultural perspective.

Meanwhile, the concept of ‘epiphany’ remains a core concept in the autoethnographic investigation,²⁵⁰ as auto-ethnographers openly admit that

²⁴⁸ Yongqing Shi, ‘Woguo Dangqian Meisheng Jiaoyu Cunzai De Wenti Ji Celue Yingdui Weitan’ [Probe into the Problems and Countermeasures of Classical Singing Education in China], *Beifang Yinyue* [Northern Music], 23 (2015), pp. 212-213.

²⁴⁹ David Stephens, *Culture in Education and Development: Principles, Practice and Policy* (Oxford: Symposium Books, 2007), p. 53.

²⁵⁰ Barbara Gentili, ‘The Invention of the ‘Modern’ Voice: Changing Aesthetics of Vocal Registration in Italian Opera Singing 1870-1925’ (PhD dissertation, Royal College of Music, 2018).

personal experience plays a determinant role in the research process; therefore, research is value-centered rather than objective.²⁵¹ 'When researchers do auto-ethnography, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/ or by possessing a particular cultural identity.'²⁵² This precise theoretical context supports this section of my research. As both 'insider' and 'outsider' to different cultures, with 5 years of vocal study in the UK, I can synthesise my own experiences with that of my two participants, and other anecdotal evidence from Asian singers in both China and the UK, to write about such epiphanies when practising the vocal techniques of Zhou and Garcia. Moreover, because of my experiences, I can quickly observe, examine and accurately realize how and why these phenomena and epiphanies happen in the participants' training, and the relationship between these phenomena and different cultures. In this way, I rely on this 'doubleness' of being both 'insider' and 'outsider' for my study to function.²⁵³

After reviewing the participants' responses to this project, three aspects related to classical singing learning have been brought to the surface: pronunciation, physical properties and cultural education. Thus, in this chapter, I no longer directly analyze the participants' physical or mental reactions to the singing techniques but investigate these three aspects that their lessons and

²⁵¹ Arthur P. Bochner, *Perspectives on Inquiry II: Theories and Stories* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994), p. 21.

²⁵² Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams, and Arthur P. Bochner, 'Autoethnography: An Overview', *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung*, 36 (2011), pp. 273-290 (p. 277).

²⁵³ T. Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 3.

diaries reveal; focusing on the nexus between culture and the acquisition of Western classical singing. Specifically, I delve into the interplay between phenomena emerging during vocal learning in Chinese novices and their cultural context.

The exploration traverses the intricate terrain of cultural context and learning encounters, which necessarily navigates certain biases, stemming from the unique and diverse life trajectories and educational backgrounds of each vocal learner. As these trajectories and study experience are multifaceted and individualized, so challenges encountered during vocal training vary among individuals. Consequently, the observations gleaned from the two selected participants cannot be extrapolated to encapsulate the entire spectrum of Chinese beginners and early-stage singers. Nevertheless, it can be asserted that the cultural context, study experiences and challenges exposed by these participants resonate with the broader cohort of Chinese Western classical singing novices. This proposition finds support through compelling evidence that materialized across two distinct areas: Chinese etiquette education and classroom instruction. Both participants exhibit commendable etiquette according to Chinese principles (discussed below) and have undergone a comprehensive and traditional high school education. It should be acknowledged that the teaching content and realm of etiquette may vary across different provinces in China, yet it is evident that despite the variations among provinces and cities, there is a significant degree of commonality in terms of both etiquette education and classroom instruction. The Chinese government

has provided comprehensive recommendations for etiquette and has introduced relevant policies for regulation. For example, in 2004, the *Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Further Strengthening and Improving the Ideological and Moral Construction of Minors* emphasized that minors should start with regulating behavioural habits, cultivating good moral and etiquette qualities and exhibiting civilized conduct.²⁵⁴ In 2009, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China issued the *Outline for Implementing the Construction of civic Ethical Standards in the New Era* which explicitly states that engaging in necessary etiquette, rituals and courtesy activities plays an important role in regulating people's words and actions.²⁵⁵ Province and city governments should guide citizens in enhancing their awareness of etiquette and courtesy and emphasize the importance of establishing good family etiquette. From the perspective of schools, various types of schools across China have consistently placed a high emphasis on cultivating students' etiquette education and have incorporated etiquette education into their curriculum as a mandatory course within compulsory education. Thus the core content of etiquette education aligns with the relevant policies issued by the government where national policies not only ensure smooth implementation across provinces

²⁵⁴ 'Zhonggong Zhongyang Guowuyuan Guanyu Jinyibu Jiaqinag he Gaijin Weichengnianren Xixiang Daode Jianshe De Ruogan Yijian' [Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Further Strengthening and Improving the Ideological and Moral Construction of Minors], < <http://www.jxggw.gov.cn/view8-1.html> > [accessed 03 August 2023].

²⁵⁵ 'Zhonggong Zhongyang Guowuyuan Yinfa Xinshidai Gongmin Daode Jianshe Shishi Gangyao' [Outline for Implementing the Construction of civic Ethical Standards in the New Era], < https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2019-10/27/content_5445556.htm > [accessed 03 August 2023].

and cities but also contribute to a significant degree of uniformity in the content. Etiquette education in schools aims to foster attitudes of tolerance, humility and honesty, while promoting refined communication, dignified behaviour and friendly interactions; moreover, the emphasis on etiquette education extends beyond the classroom, encompassing diverse spheres of students' lives. For instance, the Education Bureau of Nankai District in Tianjin includes an Etiquette and Manners course in the curriculum during the compulsory education phase.²⁵⁶ The Hebei Provincial Department of Education issued *Opinions on Strengthening Civilized Etiquette Education in Primary and Secondary Schools* which explicitly mandates that schools within the province incorporate etiquette education into their teaching plans. These schools are required to regularly organize etiquette-related activities and class meetings and guide students in practicing civilized etiquette in various contexts such as school, home community and other social spheres.²⁵⁷ Moreover, an increasing number of higher education institutions consider etiquette education as a mandatory or elective course for quality education. Vocational schools also commonly offer educational courses related to professional etiquette.²⁵⁸ Thus, it can be seen that at the national level of education, there is a strong emphasis on cultivating student etiquette. While the evolving landscape of etiquette education may diverge from traditional practices,

²⁵⁶ Helan Wang, 'Dangdai Zhongguo Qingshaonian Liyi Jiaoyu De Fansi yu Goujian' [The Reflection and Construction of Contemporary Chinese Youth Etiquette Education] (PhD dissertation, University of Hebei Normal University, 2010).

²⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 40.

²⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 41.

the foundational principles of humility, respect for elders and teachers, and appropriate conduct remain deeply rooted. This alignment between traditional values and contemporary education reinforces the enduring relevance of etiquette education in shaping individuals' character and interactions.

Another aspect covered in the study pertains to educational experiences. In China, the pursuit of a classical vocal performance major at university level necessitates success in both the national college entrance examination (known as 'gaokao') and an arts-specific examination. This dual requirement mandates a rigorous three-year secondary education during high school, acting as the foundational stepping stone for aspiring vocalists' higher education. Notwithstanding recent efforts advocating educational reforms, such as the introduction of flipped classrooms to foster self-directed learning and independent thinking,²⁵⁹ the educational landscape predominantly adheres to examination-oriented paradigms, and in order to optimize the use of limited classroom instruction time, the traditional classroom teaching model remains the predominant pedagogical approach in China at present. As a result, teachers remain central and authoritative figures, initiating all activities related to teaching. Students are expected to adhere to teachers' instructional steps and primarily play a passive role as recipients of knowledge during classroom instruction. Furthermore, the primary purpose of employing the traditional classroom

²⁵⁹ Jinlei Zhang, Ying Wang and Baohui Zhang, 'Fanzhuan Ketang Jiaoxue Moshi Yanjiu' [Research on Flipped Classroom Teaching Model], *Yuancheng Jiaoyu Zazhi [Journal of Distance Education]*, 04 (2012), pp. 46-51.

teaching model is to cope with the demands of entrance examinations.²⁶⁰ Consequently, the emphasis in this mode of instruction prioritizes efficient knowledge transmission over the cultivation of critical thinking. This pedagogical approach positions teachers as the primary source of knowledge, reinforcing a teacher-centered instructional environment.

It is worth noting that in many regions of China, there are international high schools that align their educational approaches and philosophies with those of foreign high schools, focusing more on fostering students' personal abilities and independent thinking. While, there is no official numbers given for international high schools, based on statistics from some authoritative educational institutions in China, there are only 1,432 international high schools,²⁶¹ in stark contrast to the 15,000 regular high schools in the country as of 2022, according to data from the Ministry of Education.²⁶² This demographic distribution underscores the prevailing dominance of the traditional examination-driven education system. In conclusion, this study acknowledges that while the experiences of all Chinese beginners and early-stage singers in Western classical singing may not mirror those of the two participants, shared attributes are evident. The majority of novice

²⁶⁰ Wensen Yu, 'Shixi Chuantong Ketang Jiaoxue De Tezheng ji Biduan' [An Analysis of the Characteristics and Drawbacks of Traditional Classroom Teaching], *Jiaoyu Yanjiu* [Educational Research], 05 (2001), pp. 50-52.

²⁶¹ 'Jigou: 2022 Nian Zhongguo Neidi Guojihua Xuexiao/Guojibu Gong 1423 ge' [Institution: In 2022, There were a Total of 1243 International Schools in Mainland China], < <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1758966192608337155&wfr=spider&for=pc> > [accessed 03 August 2023].

²⁶² '2022 Nian Quanguo Jiaoyu Shiye Fazhan Tongji Gongbao' [Statistical Bulletin on the Development of National Education in 2022], < http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_sjzl/sjzl_fztjgb/202307/t20230705_1067278.html > [accessed 03 August 2023].

vocal learners, including the participants, undergo comparable etiquette education and navigate China's traditional examination-oriented educational framework. This alignment underscores the substantial reference value of the study's findings across a broader spectrum.

Another aspect that requires clarification is that the phenomena observed in the two participants of this study, while not universally representative of all Chinese beginners and early-stage singers of Western classical singing, are extensively documented in the existing literature as previously reviewed. Wang mentioned that when students sing Italian repertoire, if a word contains two vowels, one of the vowels tends to be 'swallowed' and there is a challenge for students to maintain a stable jaw during the singing process.²⁶³ Qi's insights further underscored this challenge, noting that while singing, if a vowel needs to be sustained, students have difficulty maintaining the pronunciation mouth shape until the duration ends and the jaw tends to move during the singing in order to transition to the pronunciation of the next phoneme.²⁶⁴ Xie emphasized the prevalence of imitative learning devoid of underlying understanding and inhibiting independent thought and critical analysis.²⁶⁵ Wang wrote that during performances, the performers exhibit limited body language and their expressions lack vividness, thereby failing to convey the emotions, impeding their ability to

²⁶³ Naiqian Wang, 'Qianxi Gechang Zhong de Yidaliyu Yuyin' [A Brief Analysis of Italian Phonetics in Singing], *Gechang Yishu [Art of Singing]*, 11 (2021), pp. 46-51.

²⁶⁴ Lan Qi, 'Yidaliyu Shengyue Zuopin Zhong Fayin Wenti Qianxi' [An Analysis of Pronunciation Issues in Italian Vocal Music], *Xiju Zhijia [Home Drama]*, 15 (2014), pp. 46-51.

²⁶⁵ Yuanyi Xie, 'Cong Meisheng Changfa Zhongguohua de Jincheng kan Zhongguo' [Examining Issues in Chinese Bel Canto Education through the Process of Localizing Western Classical Vocal Technique], *Cai Zhi [Ability and Wisdom]*, 20 (2016), p186.

convey emotional nuances to the audience beyond their vocalization.²⁶⁶ All these phenomena can also be identified in the experiences of my two participants and are thus corroborated by the existing literature. Yet, while these occurrences have been acknowledged within the reviewed sources, their underlying causes remain largely unexplored, particularly from a cultural perspective. Consequently, this study seeks to bridge this gap by providing an in-depth cultural analysis of the observed phenomena. Hence, its findings may extend beyond the immediate scope of this study's participants, offering a broader reference for the vocal education community in China and supplementing literature on beginners and early-stage singers.

7.2.1 Mandarin pronunciation features

'Chewed' pronunciation as a common phenomenon among Chinese students will be discussed in this section from a cultural perspective. As previously mentioned, most Chinese students cannot fully pronounce consecutive vowels in Italian. This problem is rarely solved in Chinese singing lessons as few vocal tutors notice and correct it, and when Chinese students continue their study abroad, they cannot hear the differences, even when the Western vocal tutor provides them with the correct Italian pronunciation. In this section, I will provide a detailed analysis of Mandarin pronunciation to explore the links between Mandarin speaking and

²⁶⁶ Wei Wang, 'Duoyuan Yishu Xingtai Fazhan Qushi Xiade Meisheng Wutai Biaoyan Yanjiu' [Research on Operatic Stage Performance of Bel Canto within the Trends of Diversified Art Forms Development], *Beifang Yinyue* [Northern Music], 20 (2018), pp. 241 and 251.

singing.

It is necessary to understand how vowels and consonants are formed in standard Mandarin. In short, there are twenty-three consonants and six simple vowels in Chinese Pinyin which is the foremost romanization system for Standard Mandarin Chinese. Consonants are termed initials (*sheng mu*) and vowels, finals (*yun mu*).²⁶⁷ Finals are not only simple finals (vowels), as there are also thirteen compound finals, sixteen nasal finals and three special finals, making thirty-six finals in total.

Compound finals are made up of two or three simple vowels where the tongue should glide from one simple final to another to complete the pronunciation. Therefore, to understand how compound finals in standard Mandarin are enunciated, I must stress the positional relationship between the tongue, lips and jaw when articulating these vowels. Figure 7.1 below illustrates the articulatory positions of three high vowels [i], [y] and [u], one mid vowel [ə] and one low vowel [a] in Standard Mandarin.

²⁶⁷ 'sheng mu' (声母) and 'yun mu' (韵母) means 'initials' and 'finals'.

Mandarin Vowel Chart

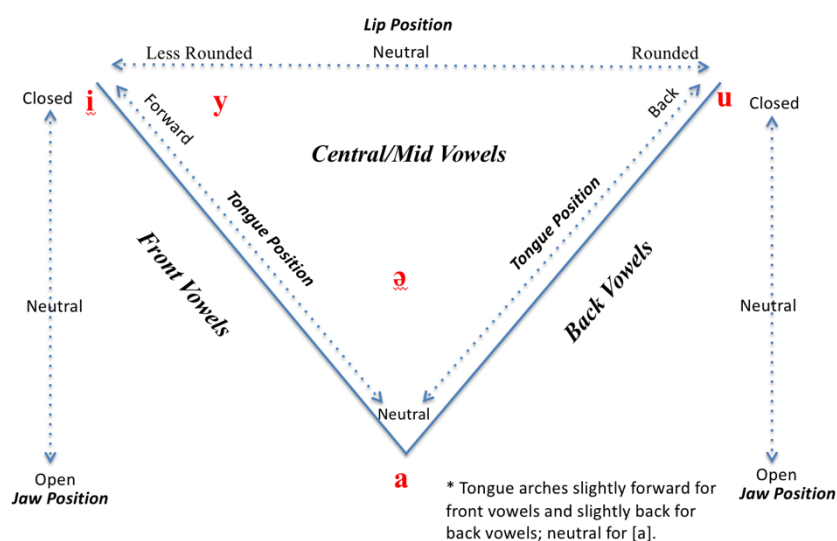


Figure 7.1 The positions of the tongue, jaw and lips in the pronunciation of Mandarin simple vowels.²⁶⁸

The pronunciation of nasal finals requires the tip of the tongue to be close to the back of the upper teeth or for the root of the tongue to quickly touch the soft palate (which is inimical to classical voice production). Based on the lip shape of the first vowel of each final, finals can be divided into four categories (the Four hu classification, or si hu in Chinese),²⁶⁹ as shown in Figure 7.2.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ Yen-Hwei Lin, *The Sound of Chinese* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 21.

In Standard Mandarin, the pronunciation of 'o' differs from that of other simple vowels, as the lips do not maintain a fixed position during articulation. When pronouncing 'o', the lips round slightly, approaching each other to form a circular shape then at the moment of articulation, the lips position promptly returns to its initial state. This phonetic process cannot be precisely represented within the confines of the provided illustration, as a result, the figure 1 only displays the articulatory positions of five simple vowel phonemes.

²⁶⁹ 'Si hu' (四呼). Si Hu is a traditional method used in Mandarin Chinese, including standard Chinese and its dialects, to classify syllable vowels based on different glides before the central vowel of the final.

²⁷⁰ Dugang Yu, *Shengyue Yuyan Yishu [The Art of Vocal Languages]* (Hunan: Hunan Wenyi Chubanshe [Hunan: Hunan Literature and Art Publishing House], 2000), p. 153.

category \ Four hu	Open mouth	Even teeth	Closed mouth	Round mouth
Simple finals		i	u	ü
	a	ia	ua	
	o		uo	
	e	ie		üe
Compound finals	ai		uai	
	ei		uei	
	ao	iao		
	ou	iou		
Nasal finals	an	ian	uan	üan
	en	in	uen	ün
	ang	iang	uang	
	eng	ing	ueng	
	ong	iong		
Special finals	i			
	-i			
	er			

Table 7.2 The four categories of finals in Mandarin.²⁷¹

On reading in tandem the two figures above, it is evident that when simple finals combine with others, the tongue and the openness of the mouth need to constantly

²⁷¹ Li Lei, *Gechang Yuyan de Xunlian yu Biaoda* [Training and Expression in vocal Articulation] (Shanghai: Shanghai Yinyue Chubanshe) [Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House], 2008, p. 8

adjust position to meet pronunciation requirements. Therefore, the jaw needs to be adjusted to different positions quickly in order to work in conjunction with the tongue for pronunciation. Moreover, there are twenty-three initials that combine with these finals to form complete words, and the pronunciation of different consonants corresponds to different levels of openness of the mouth and tongue position. Therefore, the pronunciation of Chinese is highly complex and requires flexibility of the jaw and tongue to meet the pronunciation requirements.

7.2.2 How does Mandarin speaking affect singing?

In order to sustain fluent speech, not all phonemes in the finals need to be pronounced individually and fully. When the first phoneme is pronounced, the tongue, lips and jaw have already changed their position to prepare for the pronunciation of the next phoneme; only in this way can the different phonemes be integrated into a whole.²⁷²

If all the phonemes in the final are fully pronounced, then the meaning of a word will be changed completely. For example, in the Chinese character ‘海’, spelled in Chinese Pinyin is ‘hai’ (which means the sea), the compound final is composed of two single finals (vowel): ‘a’ and ‘i’. As the open mouth ‘a’ is followed by the even teeth ‘i’ (as shown in Figure 2), to achieve a natural and smooth transition from ‘a’ to ‘i’, the jaw needs to gradually close during the pronunciation of the first phoneme. Yet this is different from the mouth shape when the ‘i’ is

²⁷² Ibid. p. 132.

pronounced alone. If each sound is pronounced fully, then the word 'hai' will sound like two different words 'ha' and 'yi' (means laugh and clothes)²⁷³, and the meaning will be changed totally.

As indicated by the above diagrams, it can be observed that apart from the six simple finals and three special finals in Standard Mandarin, the remaining twenty-seven finals consist of diphthongs, triphthongs and nasal finals. These compound finals require the agile modulation of the orbicularis oris, masseter and buccinator muscles, shown in Figure 7.3. The agile interplay of these muscles facilitates the swift adjustment of tongue and jaw positions,²⁷⁴ a pivotal requirement for seamless transitions between the diverse phonemic combinations. These muscle groups govern lip motion and oral opening and closure, especially the masseter muscle which is the primary muscle responsible for jaw movement,²⁷⁵ and the phonetic attributes of finals dictate that these muscles maintain a high degree of flexibility to effectively convey accurate meaning in pronunciation. Moreover, given the substantial prevalence of compound finals, the jaw in Chinese phonation cannot sustain prolonged stability but rather demands the agile motion of muscles which is crucial for precise and meaningful articulation.

²⁷³ 'ha' (哈) and yi (衣), as 'i' cannot be used alone in standard Mandarin, therefore 'i' should be combined with the initial 'y' to produce the same sound as 'i'.

²⁷⁴ 'Anatomy, Head and Neck: Buccinator Muscle',
<<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK546678/#article-18679.r3>> [accessed 26 August 2023].

²⁷⁵ 'Anatomy, Head and Neck, Masseter Muscle',
<<https://europepmc.org/article/nbk/nbk539869>> [accessed 26 August 2023].

Muscles of the Head and Neck

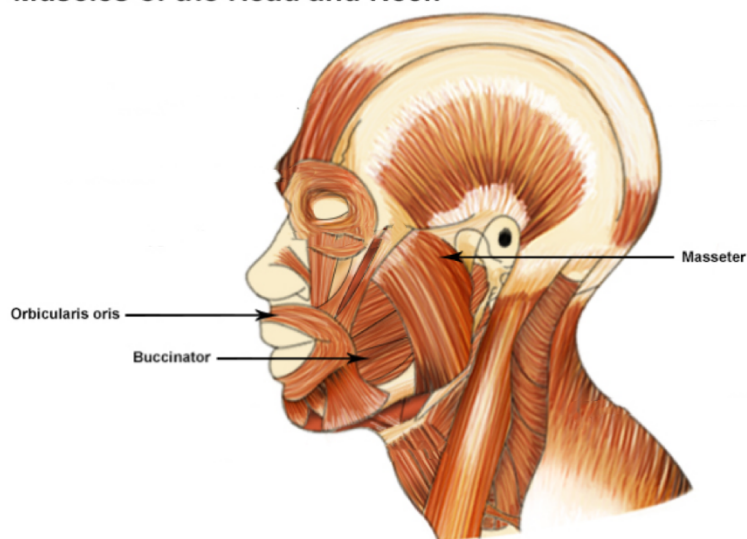


Figure 7.3 Muscles of the head and neck.²⁷⁶

Due to the limited occurrence of diphthong combinations in Italian, comprising only seven sets ('ai', 'ei', 'oi', 'eu', 'iu' and 'ui'), in sung Italian the full and distinct enunciation of each vowel assumes paramount importance. This objective necessitates the establishment of a stable jaw position, complemented by the agile manoeuvring of the tongue for swift and accurate transitions between distinct vowels, which is wholly unlike the multifaceted dynamics present in Mandarin.

Jin's investigation, involving a cohort of 500 Chinese students, aimed to explore the implications of the Pinyin system on English language acquisition.²⁷⁷ Through extensive analysis, she found that when Chinese students learn English phonetics, the pre-existing phonetic patterns of the Pinyin system inevitably shape and

²⁷⁶ 'Muscles of the Head and Neck', <
https://training.seer.cancer.gov/anatomy/muscular/groups/head_neck.html > [accessed 2 August 2023].

²⁷⁷ Yan Jin, 'Hanyu Pinyin Dui Yingyu Yinbiao Xuexi De Fuqianyi' [The Negative Transfer of Chinese Pinyin on the Learning of English Phonetic Alphabet], *Kejiao Wenhui* [The Science Education Article Collects], 377 (2017), pp. 179-180.

modulate their English enunciation. The process of learning a new language yields both positive and negative impacts: any parallels between the two languages bestow a favorable impetus on the acquisition of the second language, while divergences engender a counteractive influence and this phenomenon is referred to as 'language transfer'. This implies that for Chinese students, especially those who have not undergone systematic vocal training, incorporating their Chinese pronunciation habits into the pronunciation of Italian repertoire when singing in Italian is highly probable. As a result, it is hard for Chinese students to maintain a stable jaw and often results in the unintentional phonation of consecutive vowels as diphthongs, often resulting in a 'chewed' pronunciation.

As the phonetic system is ingrained during primary education, each phoneme assumes a profound presence in their cognitive framework;²⁷⁸ at the same time, the persistence of linguistic habits over time further solidifies these phonetic associations. Thus prolonged linguistic habits lead to muscular movements becoming nearly subconscious actions which can be seen clearly during the process of Chinese novice learners studying Western classical singing. Moreover, the ramifications of this linguistic-muscular interaction extend beyond the physiological domain, permeating the auditory realm as well. Drawing upon personal observations and experiences, the process of rectifying this phonetic tendency often encounters resistance. Long-standing Mandarin-speaking habits pose challenges in discerning the subtle differences elucidated by Western vocal

²⁷⁸ Wu, 'Difficulties for Chinese Vocalists in Singing French Art Song', p.6.

tutors. The persistence required for correction is emblematic of the deeply ingrained nature of this phonetic habituation. The intricate interplay between auditory perception, linguistic familiarity and muscular response emerges as a formidable factor in the phonological journey of Mandarin-Chinese speakers navigating the intricacies of Italian singing. Thus, the subconscious ignorance or reduction of one of two consecutive vowels in the Italian language is strongly related to long-standing Mandarin speaking habits.

In addition, another common culture-related phenomenon among Chinese students is that they only have a vague sense of how the soft palate is lifted. In Mandarin, many words contain nasal initials and finals; also, most of the time the tongue is placed near both sets of teeth or close to the hard palate. Figure 7.4 and Figure 7.5 respectively illustrate the positions of the oral pharynx, nasal pharynx and soft palate. The fundamental aspect of creating nasalized sounds is the proper positioning of the soft palate. From the figures, it can be seen that as the soft palate descends, an unobstructed passage is formed between the oral and nasal pharynx, causing some of the airflow to be directed into the nasal cavity and subsequently exit through the nose, thus generating distinct nasalized sounds.

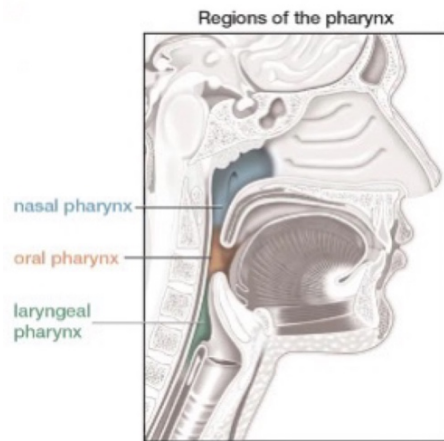


Figure 7.4 The position of oral and nasal pharynx.²⁷⁹

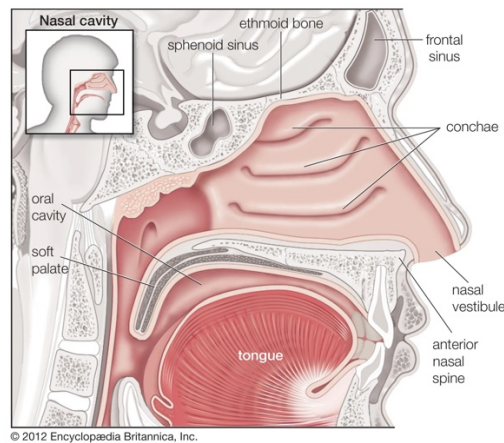


Figure 7.5 The position of the soft palate.²⁸⁰

Furthermore, there are three consonants in the Chinese language. These consonants can be freely combined with simple or compound vowels and the positioning of these three consonants within a syllable differs: [m] can only appear at the beginning of a syllable; both [n] and [ŋ] can be used at the end of the syllable and [ŋ] can also be positioned at the initial of a syllable as the final.²⁸¹ This implies

²⁷⁹ 'Pharynx', <<https://www.britannica.com/science/pharynx>> [accessed 3 August 2023].

²⁸⁰ 'Soft Palate', <<https://www.britannica.com/science/soft-palate>> [accessed 26 August 2023].

²⁸¹ Li, 'Diction for Mandarin/Chinese Singers: A Methodology To Achieve Resonant Tone And Vowel Unification In Western Choral Music, p.26.

not only that students need to continuously adjust the position of the jaw to ensure accurate pronunciation but also a lowered soft palate is needed to achieve accurate nasals and unimpeded transitions between various phonemic elements. These elements mean that Mandarin speakers do not need to raise the soft palate to produce sound. This is something only really discovered through singing and is therefore not always easy for Chinese students.

7.3.1 Chinese traditional etiquette

In classical singing, although there is no specific standard for how wide the mouth should open, singers need to open their mouths properly in order to create more resonance. Garcia suggests in his treatise that this movement, which separates the jaws by the thickness of a finger and leaves the lips alone, gives the mouth an easy and natural form.²⁸² However, from my study experience and observation of participants, it is hard for most of the Chinese students to meet this requirement; their teeth are almost closed and they produce a sound Garcia describes as ‘somewhat like the effect produced by singing through a comb.’²⁸³ Moreover, the female participant Mary sings with a less open mouth compared to the male participant Michael. Also, when Chinese students engage in stage performances, their bodily movements appear excessively restrained and they seldom exhibit a wide range of facial expressions that convey various emotions.

²⁸² E3, p. 6.

²⁸³ Ibid. p. 6.

Some Chinese pedagogues mention these phenomena in their writings and provide solutions.²⁸⁴ But few give specific reasons why these phenomena are common in Chinese beginners and early-stage singers, and why there is a gender difference from cultural perspectives. Taking the phenomenon of a half-open mouth and fewer body movements on stage as examples, this next section will discuss the relationship between physical properties and culture within the context of traditional Chinese etiquette.

As previously mentioned, etiquette holds great value in Chinese culture; Chinese scholars believe that etiquette not only offers guidance on individual behavior, family dynamics and governance, but also can serve as a tool for maintaining relationships between individuals and different social hierarchies.²⁸⁵ Traditional Chinese etiquette includes various types and covers most different aspects of social interaction, such as public behaviour, rituals and ceremonies, tea etiquette and table manners. Early childhood is a critical period for learning and behavioural development, and under the influence and education of parents and schools, children begin to have a basic understanding of norms of communication and behaviour. Despite the national policies and guidelines on etiquette previously discussed, family etiquette is nevertheless considered to be the most important

²⁸⁴ Lei Liu, 'Meisheng Jiaoxue Zhong Cunzai De Wenti Ji Gaijin Cuoshi' [Problems in Classical Singing Teaching and Improvements], *Huanghe Zhisheng* [Sounds of the Yellow River], 18 (2016), p. 43.

²⁸⁵ Dan Yang, 'Zhonghuo Chuantong Liyi Yu Goujian Hexie Shehui Zhi Guanxi Bianxi' [Discrimination and Analysis of the Relationship Between Chinese Traditional Etiquette and the Construction of a Harmonious Society], *Wuhan Daxue Xuebao* [Wuhan University Journal], 66 (2013), pp. 10

part of Chinese traditional etiquette.²⁸⁶

China officially enforced the 'One-Child Policy' in 1980, advocating for couples to have only one child,²⁸⁷ which means that children tended to receive more attention from their parents. This may have led to the stricter enforcement of requirements and behavioural norms regarding etiquette. Nevertheless, while the policy was abolished in 2016, allowing families to raise two or more children, there is now little difference in the nature of etiquette education for children: most Chinese parents consider their children's education to be of paramount importance, and strive to pay as much attention as possible to various aspects of their children's growth. For parents who are busy with work and lack time to supervise their children, the care of their children is often entrusted to elder family members or specialized and traditional institutions for child development which compensate for the lack of etiquette upbringing during the parents' working hours.

Family etiquette is strict although the content is not fixed but mostly determined by the elders of the family or by those with the most esteemed status, based on their life experiences. The purpose of family etiquette is to regulate and constrain the thoughts and behaviours of the descendants within the family.²⁸⁸ For example, humility and forbearance are important parts of family etiquette,

²⁸⁶ Shenjun Jiao, 'Chuantong Jiating Liyi Jiaoyu De Xiandai Chonggou' [The Modern Reconstruction of Traditional Family Etiquette], *Chizhou Xueyuan Xuebao [Journal of Chizhou University]*, 33 (2019), pp. 10-12.

²⁸⁷ 'Dusheng Zinv Zhengce' [One-Child Policy], <<https://baike.baidu.com/item/独生子女政策/12604254?fr=aladdin>> [accessed 2 June 2023].

²⁸⁸ Yueyou Pan, 'Jiating Liyi Wenhua Yu Qingshaonian Daode Renge Jiaoyu' [The Family Etiquette and Moral Character Education of Adolescents], *Shanxi Shifan Daxue Jixu Jiaoyu Xuebao [Journal of Further Education of Shanxi Normal University]*, 24 (2007), pp. 79-82.

which means avoiding the excessive expression of one's thoughts and refraining from excessively negating others' viewpoints. Additionally, some families may have specific regulations for children's behaviour when talking with others, such as avoiding overly exaggerated facial expressions during conversations and using a hand to cover the mouth when laughing with others. It can be seen that regardless of the content and the form of family etiquette, the aim is to demand moderation and standards for the innate emotions and desires of human beings with an appropriate and suitable demeanour.

Moreover, traditional Chinese society places a stronger emphasis on gender roles and expectations, imposing stricter behavioural guidelines and etiquette requirements on women and girls.²⁸⁹ Traditionally, the patriarchy deems that women constitute an important component of the family structure, and only those women who adhere to etiquette can bring prosperity to their families. In addition, women have traditionally played and continue to play a crucial role in assisting their husbands, educating their children and maintaining the household; consequently, the regulation and standards imposed on women become a significant aspect of traditional Chinese etiquette.²⁹⁰ For example, women are expected to strictly adhere to etiquette in their daily lives, with appropriate words, actions and behaviour, and neat appearance and attire. In addition to fulfilling

²⁸⁹ Changrong Xie, 'Zhongguo Chuantong Nvxing Lunli Zhi Jiazhi Quxiang' [The Value Orientation of Traditional Chinese Female Ethics], *Changji Xueyuan Xuebao [Journal of Jichang University]*, 1 (2008), pp. 5-6.

²⁹⁰ Jun Yang, 'Rujia Shiyexia De 'Nvxing Zhili—Yi Liji Weili' [The Confucian's View of Female Etiquette—Taking *Book of Rites* as an Example], *Taiyuan Daxue Jiaoyu Xueyuan Xuebao [Journal of Education Institute of Taiyuan University]*, 32 (2014), pp. 40-43.

ethical obligations such as filial piety, respecting and obeying their husbands and maintaining family harmony, women are also directed to fulfill their domestic duties, diligently attend to household affairs and create a supportive environment for their husbands' career pursuits.

Traditional Chinese culture normally dictates that men primarily assume social roles and their success in financial, professional and personal achievements is considered the main manifestation of their value.²⁹¹ They are expected to pursue higher social status rather than managing household chores and investing excessive time in adhering to traditional etiquette in the same way as women. Moreover, the patriarchal society believes that men hold greater social and familial status compared to women, and women are expected to comply with the arrangements made by men: men are given greater authority and more opportunities to express themselves.²⁹² Therefore, men have more freedom and are not subjected to excessive constraints on their communications and behaviours, and Chinese society gives men greater latitude in expressing their emotions and thoughts.

7.3.2 How does Chinese traditional etiquette affect singing?

Thus traditional Chinese culture puts emphasis on modest, humble and elegant behaviour. Expressing dramatic emotions or displaying exaggerated body

²⁹¹ Xie, 'Zhongguo Chuantong Nvxing Lunli Zhi Jiazhi Quxiang' [The Value Orientation of Traditional Chinese Female Ethics].

²⁹² Ibid.

language can be considered inappropriate or impolite in certain situations. There is therefore a tendency to minimize excessive facial expressions and to avoid hearty laughter. Deviating from these established and customary norms is deemed as a loss of decorum and perceived as impolite.

Most Chinese singing students, therefore tend to have their mouths only partially open and are hardly aware of this issue; even after multiple reminders from vocal tutors, students still struggle to correct this habit. In addition, as previously mentioned, they are unclear how the soft palate is raised due not only to issues related to the pronunciation of Mandarin, but also due to Chinese etiquette. As people tend to retain a calm facial expression, the zygomatic muscles are not activated, affecting the elevation of the soft palate. Therefore, most students also find it hard to achieve the energetic or even excited state of singing or performing that tutors expect during lessons. Nevertheless, as men have fewer and less stringent requirements in terms of social etiquette, when singing, male students tend to exhibit slightly more diverse facial expressions and body language.

Traditional Chinese theatrical performances, particularly in the genre of Peking Opera, are primarily based on the Mei Lanfang system. This system differs from the Stanislavski system, pervasive in Europe, which emphasizes actors' need to experience a role and think, want, strive and behave in terms of the logic of the characters, ultimately achieving a seamless integration with the roles.²⁹³ Most

²⁹³ Jean Benedetti, *Konstantin Stanislavski: An Actor's Work—A Student's Diary* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 19.

Peking Opera stories do not possess a realistic representation of reality; instead, they utilize a stylized approach to shape characters and reflect reality. Therefore, the Mei Lanfang system emphasizes that actors do not need to transform themselves into the characters directly during the performances; rather actors are encouraged to provide their unique insights into the characters and retain their individual styles and personality.²⁹⁴ Moreover, by interpreting the characters and employing codified (rather than naturalistic and personal) gestures, eye movements, facial expressions and body movements, actors create and embody the distinctive characteristics of their roles, thus achieving a vivid, stylized and yet disembodied effect in comparison to more Western techniques.

Although the performance system of Mei Lanfang provides guidance and recommendations for stage performance, this system is mostly used in traditional Peking Opera and the majority of classical singing programmes in Chinese colleges and universities do not offer courses specifically related to stage performance. Furthermore, vocal tutors rarely impart knowledge related to performance during singing lessons. Coupled with the influence of traditional etiquette, therefore, from my experience and observations, Chinese students often use smaller movements that give a sense of constraint during stage performance as they are not proficient in utilizing a large area to express their emotions. In addition, some students exhibit even more restraint and avoid physical contact when performing with

²⁹⁴ Huasheng Qin, 'Meilanfang Yishu Tese Yu Biaoyan Tixi' [The Artistic Characteristics and Performance System of Mei Lanfang], *Zhongguo Yishu Shikong* [China Arts Space], 1 (2017), pp. 9-12.

members of the opposite sex and also display shy expressions during singing and performing.

7.4.1 Blind obedience

The uncritical obedience to tutors and a quickness in practising Western singing techniques is not only evident among the two participants but also prevalent among Chinese students. This section will examine these two issues from the perspectives of the Chinese educational environment and instructional models.

Blind obedience to tutors is the first phenomenon which emerged during the work with the participants. Before starting the projects, despite engaging in casual conversations about daily life to establish familiarity and asking participants to pose questions or raise any doubts during the session, it was evident that they maintained a respectful attitude towards my identity as a researcher who studies abroad. The collaborative atmosphere was lacking, and sessions felt more like me assuming the role of a vocal tutor, imparting singing techniques to them. For instance, they would inquire about my expected physical responses to these methods and whether their physical reactions or feelings were 'correct'; when certain physical reactions or sensations were uncomfortable, instead of directly questioning this method, they politely asked how the correct response should appear and feel and attempted to achieve the proper singing state I anticipated.

This phenomenon reminded me of an incident from many years ago. During my undergraduate studies in China, a classmate of mine complained to me after

class that her vocal tutor would introduce a new technique to resolve the same singing problem in every lesson which would contradict the methods taught in the previous lesson, and this greatly distressed my classmate. Although some of these methods made her feel uncomfortable physically, she chose not to question them but instead accepted the new content taught by the tutor and tried her best to meet the tutor's expectations. I also had similar experiences during my studies in China, believing that everything taught by the teacher was authoritative. If certain methods made me feel uncomfortable, I assumed it must be because I had not grasped the content taught by my teacher, and I would try to find a way to resolve it on my own rather than discuss it with my tutor. When I started studying abroad, my vocal tutor always asked for my personal thoughts and feelings, no matter the techniques or the repertoire he gave me, but I had no doubts about whatever he said to me until after more than a year, when I gradually developed the ability to think independently and express my true feelings and thoughts.

The phenomena I mention above are not just limited to the participants and me; based on my experience, this blind obedience phenomenon is widespread among Chinese students. The atmosphere within Chinese vocal sessions is characterized by a heightened sense of seriousness, wherein students predominantly manifest restraint and reserve rather than an enthusiasm for vocal studies. Students are expected to attentively heed their tutors' directives, refraining from harbouring inquiries or doubts towards the pedagogical authority. In instances where flaws arise during practice, students are subjected to critique

and subsequent rectification on the grounds of purportedly inadequate comprehension and grasp of the tutors' teachings, with emphasis placed on addressing the immediate concern rather than delving into the underlying causative factors and individual affective responses.²⁹⁵ I believe these reactions are not only related to respecting elders and teachers in traditional etiquette but also closely to the educational culture and general teaching environment in China.

In traditional Chinese culture, the hierarchy of 'Heaven, Earth, Monarch, Parents and Teacher' is regarded as the most revered;²⁹⁶ in addition, teachers are seen as representatives of etiquette and morality. Consequently, the teaching profession holds a relatively high social status.²⁹⁷ Several thousand years ago, explicit norms for the teacher-student relationship emerged, and some of its ideological norms have been passed down through China's long-standing cultural heritage.²⁹⁸ The traditional teacher-student relationship emphasizes the dignity of the teacher, and the ancient saying 'One day as a teacher, lifelong as a father' implies that one should treat teachers with the same obedience and respect as one's own parents. This shows the strict hierarchy that exists between teachers and students, where the teacher possesses absolute authority and control over

²⁹⁵ Yuhang Zhang, 'A Comparative Study of Vocal Music Education Between China and the United States', p. 203.

²⁹⁶ Xingchen Dou, 'Lun "Tian Di Jun Qin Shi" Sixiang De Jingweixin Weidu' [On the Solemn Reverence of the Ideology of 'Heaven Earth, Monarch, Parents and Teacher' is the essence], *Fazhi Yu Shehui* [Rule by Law and the Society], 6 (2017), pp. 1-3.

²⁹⁷ Xuemei Li, 'Jianlun Wenhua He Shehui Shiye Zhongde Shisheng Guanxi—Yi Lishi Fenxi De Shijiao' [A Brief Discussion on the Teacher-Student Relationship in Cultural and Social: An Analysis from a Historical Perspective], *Zhiye Jiaoyu* [Vocational Education], 11 (2015), pp. 27-29.

²⁹⁸ Yahong Ding, 'Shilun Chuantong Wenhua Beijingxia De Shisheng Guanxi' [A Tentative Study of the Teacher-Student Relationship in the Traditional Context], *Hebei Shifan Daxue Xuebao* [Journal of Hebei Normal University], 10 (2008), pp. 120-121.

students' learning, activities, and even their thoughts.²⁹⁹ As a result, and as suggested earlier, students lack autonomy and decision-making capacities, gradually diminishing their initiative and creativity. Furthermore, influenced by this hierarchical consciousness, students often exhibit a subconscious willingness to obey teachers,³⁰⁰ believing that everything taught by teachers is correct. This leads to a lack of attention to their own learning experiences and even disregarding their genuine thoughts. Additionally, there are traditional ideologies centered around 'filial piety' and 'loyalty' which subtly affect the teacher-student relationship.³⁰¹ For example, in the minds of Chinese teachers, a student's compliance and obedience are important criteria for judging their character. When evaluating students' conduct, teachers often view obedience and honesty as essential qualities of a good student, while those who express their own opinions and dare to voice dissenting views are often considered as students who do not understand the rules, or may be labelled as underachievers due to their lack of docility. Consequently, most students often respect the teacher's ideas, obey all of their arrangements during the learning process, and even conform to certain misconceptions that the teacher may hold.

In addition, school class sizes are an important factor contributing to the

²⁹⁹ Xiaochuan Xu, 'Rujia Wenhua Chuantong Dui Shisheng Guanxi De Fumian Yingxiang' [The Negative Impact of Confucian Cultural Traditions on the Teacher-Student Relationship], *Jinyang Xuekan* [Academic Journal of Jinyang], 4 (2003), pp. 36-38.

³⁰⁰ Xuemei Li, 'Jianlun Wenhua He Shehui Shiye Zhongde Shisheng Guanxi—Yi Lishi Fenxi De Shijiao' [A Brief Discussion on the Teacher-Student Relationship in Cultural and Social: An Analysis from a Historical Perspective].

³⁰¹ Xiaochuan Xu, "Rujia Wenhua Chuantong Dui Shisheng Guanxi De Fumian Yingxiang" [The Negative Impact of Confucian Cultural Traditions on the Teacher-Student Relationship].

cultivation of blind obedience among students. As of 2022, encompassing institutions from kindergarten, primary and secondary schools, to universities and vocational colleges, there are approximately 518,500 schools in China, accommodating a total of 293 million students.³⁰² With such a massive student population, class sizes in China have expanded accordingly. The Ministry of Education of China has specified the standard class sizes for primary schools as 45 students and for junior high schools as 50 students,³⁰³ but there still exist cases of large classes (with over 56 students) and extra-large classes (with over 66 students) in certain regions. This signifies that students remain in a prolonged state of passive knowledge reception. As mentioned before, under the enduring influence of a teacher-centered educational paradigm, students become accustomed to a role as passive recipients of knowledge, a pattern carried forward from their experiences within expansive classroom settings. Thus, in turn, students carry these predispositions into one-on-one vocal sessions, resulting in a deficiency in effectively articulating their subjective experiences and prioritizing unquestioning adherence to instructor directives over the genuine expression of their individual sentiments.

³⁰² 'Jiaoyubu: Quanguo Gongyou Geji Gelei Xuexiao 51.85 Wansuo, Zaixiaosheng 2.93 Yiren' [Ministry of Education: There are a Total 518,500 Schools at All Levels and Types Nationwide, With A Student Population of 293 Million], <http://www.moe.gov.cn/fbh/live/2023/55167/mtbd/202303/t20230323_1052354.html?ivk_a=1023197a> [accessed 27 May 2023].

³⁰³ 'Jiaoyubu Guanyu Jinyibu Jiaqiang Zhongxiaoxue Xiaoshe Jianshe Yu Guanli Gongzuo De Tongzhi' [Notification From the Ministry of Education on Further Strengthening the Construction and Management of Primary and Secondary School Buildings], <http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A03/s7050/200611/t20061114_172008.html> [accessed 27 May 2023].

The lack of independent thinking and critical inquiry skills undoubtedly exerts a profound influence on their pursuit of vocal studies. Unlike disciplines such as mathematics and physics, where knowledge possesses an objective and unique nature, vocal learning unfolds in a distinct manner. In the initial stages of mastering mathematical or physical concepts, students can rely on established formulas and algorithms to address questions, even if their capacity for independent thought is underdeveloped. However, this dynamic does not translate seamlessly to the realm of vocal studies. Once students are introduced to techniques shared by educators, they are tasked with evaluating the impact of these techniques on their own physical experience and determining their suitability. This evaluation necessitates the articulation of their own perspectives and a continuous process of refinement to shape personalized practice methodologies. Furthermore, due to the inadequacy of professional competence among some teachers in China, this inadvertently results in the dissemination of incorrect information to students during instruction.³⁰⁴ The culmination of these factors creates a scenario wherein students, lacking a heightened sense of self-assessment, experience setbacks in their learning journey. Therefore, it is crucial for early-stage students to develop independent thinking and evaluative skills to navigate the challenges of acquiring technical expertise in vocal studies. However, Chinese students tend to overlook their true thoughts and lack a clear and distinct judgment regarding the suitability of vocal approaches for themselves. All of these

³⁰⁴ Um and Zheng, 'Misunderstanding Analysis and Countermeasure Research in Vocal Music Teaching of Bel Canto', p. 775.

phenomena are connected to the long-term experience of learning in this educational model and mindset.

7.5 Why has the Western expression of vocal technique not been fully preserved?

During the period of training and observation with my participants, a remarkable phenomenon emerged: they were able to grasp Garcia's vocal techniques more quickly than Zhou's and make more progress. This phenomenon is particularly evident in breathing techniques. The main difference between Zhou's and Garcia's training methods lies in Zhou's inclination to indirectly impart techniques to students through illustrative and metaphorical examples from everyday life, while Garcia directly describes physical and physiological reactions. Furthermore, according to my experiences both in China and in the West, as well as conversations with my peers and vocal educators, almost everyone agrees that students can achieve greater improvement after studying in the West compared with their Chinese period of study. Garcia's treatises were more widely disseminated and influential in Chinese vocal pedagogy than other Western pedagogical sources,³⁰⁵ and although metaphorical methods were and remain part of Western pedagogy, Chinese vocal tutors seem to have focused on these and not insisted on the original scientific expressions of methods. Therefore, they have adapted them to what might be seen as a culturally filtered version which rely on

³⁰⁵ Gaojie, 'Yizhu *Gechang Jinliang (Hints on Singing)* Jiqi Shuping' [Translation of *Hints on Singing* and Its Book Review] (Master dissertation, Wuahn Conservatoire, 2010).

illustrative examples. Why then do students today have a faster and better acceptance of Western singing techniques?

Manuel Garcia invented the laryngoscope in 1854 and began to combine physiology with singing.³⁰⁶ His treatises contained physiological terms such as diaphragm, abdominal muscles and palate, and included anatomical diagrams of relevant organs to explain their involvement in singing to vocal learners. His work influenced many vocal tutors and pedagogues to incorporate physiological knowledge into singing. As discussed previously, since 1919, there was group of Chinese classical singers who studied in the West, such as Xiaoyan Zhou, Youkui Huang and Shuan Zhou, and after completing their studies, they returned to the motherland and began to teach Chinese students.³⁰⁷ During this period, although China began implementing educational reforms and drawing inspiration from Western education systems, traditional subjects such as Confucianism, literature and history still dominated the education system which also focused on the cultivation of students' moral and intellectual development.³⁰⁸ Therefore, Western teaching considered valuable for the social and economic needs of the country such as the sciences, mathematics and geography were given prominence, while physiology as a specialized and scientific discipline was not widespread in the curriculum.

³⁰⁶ Mackinlay, *Garcia the Centenarian and His Times Being a Memoir of Manuel Garcia's Life and Labours for the Advancement of Music and Science*, p. 204.

³⁰⁷ Qian Wang, 'Meisheng Changfa Zai Zhongguo De Chuanbo Yu Fazhan' [The Spread and Development of Classical Sing in China], *Beifang Yinyue [Northern Music]*, 22 (2016), p. 175.

³⁰⁸ Damao Zhang, 'Luelun 20 Shiji Zhongguo Jiaoyu De Lishi Kunjing' [A Brief Discussion on the Historical Predicament of Education in 20th Century China], *Shehui Kexue Yanjiu [Social Science Research]*, 3 (2003), pp. 136-138.

Furthermore, despite Western physiology having gradually been introduced to China after 1851, a majority of the Chinese people, particularly those involved in the field of traditional Chinese medicine, resisted foreign cultures.³⁰⁹ They did not acknowledge that other countries could offer valuable new knowledge in such areas, firmly believing that these new notions could not be compared to those of the highly developed culture of China. As a result, the precise description of human bodily structures in Western physiology did not receive significant attention and faced resistance in the educative environment, leading to a lengthy process for the development and popularization of Western physiology in China and its reformed education system.³¹⁰

China started offering biology courses in 1932, but it was not until 1956 that human biology was included as a compulsory subject in the middle school curriculum. However, with the onset of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, the biology curriculum was abolished and remained so until 1978 when the Ministry of Education of China reintroduced the curriculum guidelines for biology education. It was only after this reinstatement that the study of human biology was able to resume for students in China. Therefore, before 1978, few Chinese students had been taught human biology. Although there was a brief period of teaching human biology from 1956 to 1966, it was insufficient to compensate for the long-

³⁰⁹ Zhenhuan Zou, 'Xiyi Yizhu Yu Jindai Zhongyijie De Fanxing' [Reflections on the Translation of Western Medicine and the Modern Chinese Medical Community], *Huadong Shifan Daxue Xuebao [Journal of East China Normal University (Educational Sciences)]*, 1 (1986), pp. 24-28.

³¹⁰ Liande Wu, 'Lun Zhongguo Dangchou Fangbing Zhifang Shixing Weisheng Zhifa' [A Discussion on the Implementation of Health Measures for Disease Prevention in China], *Zhonghua Yixue Zazhi [National Medical Journal of China]*, 1 (1915), pp. 13-23.

standing lack of education in physiology. Due to the lack of physiological education, Chinese students did not always have a clear and precise understanding of the various internal organs of the body. This appears to have led to the adaptation of teaching materials by those Chinese singers who studied abroad and returned to teach in China, and who used examples closely related to daily life to stimulate the active involvement of different parts of the body instead of directly teaching the techniques according to the original methods. As previously mentioned, Zhou suggests that correct inhalation should be done as if 'with surprise and immediately as if meeting a long-lost friend.'³¹¹ The purpose of this instruction is to lift the soft palate by stimulating the zygomatic muscles through a surprised facial expression. Thus, difficulty in understanding unfamiliar physiological terminology is dissipated through simple and comprehensible descriptions. Moreover, we must not forget that as in Western music education, traditional Chinese music education also emphasizes the inheritance between tutor and apprentice, and thus Zhou's teaching methods have been passed down through the generations and still form the basis of Chinese classical singing education.³¹²

7.6 Why are Chinese students today more receptive to Western singing techniques?

³¹¹ Xiaoyan Zhou, *Shengyue Jichu [Fundamental Technique Training of Vocal Music]* (Beijing: Gaodeng Jiaoyu Chubanshe) [Beijing: Higher Education Press], 1990, p. 5.

³¹² Fulin Liu, 'Zhongguo Chuantong Yinyue 'Kouchuan Xinshou' De Chuancheng Tezheng' [Inheritance Characteristics of Traditional Chinese Music 'Oral Teaching'], *Yinyue Yanjiu [Music Study]*, 2 (1999), pp. 71-77.

The nature of China's basic education nowadays encompasses a broader range of content. Fundamental physiological knowledge is also considered an important part of the curriculum, and even if students lack the understanding of certain specialized terms, they can grasp the concepts more quickly and accurately. When working with the two participants, they initially had an unclear concept of the location of the diaphragm and its involvement in respiratory movements, but this was quickly overcome.

Furthermore, Garcia's descriptions of vocal techniques are more direct and objective. This objective description of bodily responses resembles the provision of a 'standard' with specific requirements. Therefore, this objective description provides clear and precise information to students and eliminates confusion or misinterpretation. In Zhou's approach, the illustrative and metaphorical life examples tend towards an expression of inner emotions that cannot be 'labelled' in physiological terms. It may be more useful to say the real-life examples are the natural expressions of inner states, but this means that these inner emotions could carry personal subjective interpretations. Therefore, the bodily responses elicited by these inner emotions can mix personal biases and subjective thoughts and exhibit varying manifestations among different individuals. Moreover, these physical responses may not necessarily fulfill the requirements for achieving the proper singing state, as I noticed with my participants who both felt physical tension and shallow inhalation after embodying Zhou's breathing technique.

It also needs to be emphasized that emotional expression triggers a

subconscious response. All of one's prior knowledge and experiences reside in the subconscious,³¹³ which indicates that subconscious responses are often linked to profound emotions and past experiences or habits. Therefore, the physical reactions generated at this subconscious level are usually difficult to change. Consequently, when the participants experience discomfoting physical reactions after applying Zhou's techniques, it typically takes some time to correct them and find the appropriate physical responses and sensations. It should be noted that this does not mean that Zhou's method is no longer applicable to today's young Chinese singers, but that it is perhaps better suited for experienced students who possess an understanding of proper singing technique and have a clear knowledge of the body's appropriate physiological responses during singing.

It is also worth noting that issues of nationhood and patriotism may have had an influence on vocal pedagogies. The concept of patriotism in China has evolved significantly since 1919, adapting to the various developmental stages the country has undergone. While valuing Chinese culture remains central,³¹⁴ this does not necessarily entail resistance to foreign cultures. In the contemporary era defined by globalization, this notion encompasses the harmonious coexistence and fusion of both Chinese and Western cultural elements. In this context, the inheritance and promotion of traditional Chinese culture not only stand as the bedrock of patriotism but also pave the way for the incorporation of progressive Western

³¹³ Peter M Gollwitzer, John A. Bargh, *The Psychology of Action: Linking Cognition and Motivation to Behavior* (New York: Guilford Press, 1996), p. 370.

³¹⁴ Shu Doingxin, 'Evolution of Chinese Patriotism from Past to Present, *Scientific Research*, 11 (2022), pp. 79-89.

cultural attributes. For example, the Chinese Ministry of Education's 2022 curriculum standards for compulsory education in Chinese language and literature underlines the significance of cultivating independent reading habits among students. This involves engaging with exceptional literary works from both Chinese and Western origins, spanning ancient to modern times. Furthermore, the emphasis extends to utilizing diverse media platforms to connect with contemporary global issues, spanning politics, economics, society, technology and culture, or at least those which the Chinese government design as suitable.³¹⁵ Educators play a crucial role in fostering this attitude by encouraging students to explore outstanding foreign literary works beyond the classroom setting.³¹⁶ In addition, Chinese universities play an active role in fostering cross-cultural interactions. They periodically organize academic exchange events, where foreign experts are invited to deliver lectures and facilitate interdisciplinary dialogues. Moreover, the majority of Chinese students are willing to embrace Western culture. A survey on cultural self-confidence among university students revealed that out of 1000 surveyed: ³¹⁷ 88% of respondents emphasized the importance of integrating Western and Chinese cultural aspects in future cultural developments. In contrast, only 2% advocated for preserving an exclusivity of 'China's cultural

³¹⁵ 'Jiaoyubu Guanyu Yinfu Yiwu Jiaoyu Kecheng Fangan he Kecheng Biaozhun (2022nianban) de Tongzhi' [Notice from the Ministry of Education on the Issuance of Compulsory Education Curriculum Framework and Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition)], < http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A26/s8001/202204/t20220420_619921.html > [accessed 03 August 2023].

³¹⁶ Ibid., p. 64

³¹⁷ Yucheng Xue, 'Dangdai Daxuesheng Wenhua Zixin Xianzhuang Jiqi Peiyang Yanjiu' [A Study on the Current State and Cultivation of Cultural Confidence among Contemporary University Students] (Master dissertation, University of South China, 2014).

domain'. This significant majority highlights a prevailing openness to cross-cultural fusion: a majority of 61% expressed a preference for Western films or Western films infused with Chinese elements, indicating a genuine enthusiasm for embracing Western artistic expressions. Taking holidays in Western countries emerged as another facet of the students' cultural openness. A mere 5% of students claimed to have never engaged with Western holiday-related activities, underlining a widespread familiarity with and interest in Western traditions. Therefore, it is evident that a substantial shift has occurred away from a patriotic sentiment driven opposition to learning Western knowledge, to cross-cultural collaborations, curricular revisions and evolving generational attitudes. While the majority exhibits a receptive stance, it is acknowledged that certain students might still harbour resistance to adopting Western culture or knowledge. However, from the above demonstration, the prevailing trend indicates that such resistance is gradually diminishing, especially within the context of the learning process. Consequently, similar to the two participants, most students adopt an inclusive and receptive attitude towards Western teaching approaches while studying Western classical singing.

In conclusion, it can be seen that students achieve better progress after studying in the West compared with their Chinese period of study, not only because they receive more specialized guidance in terms of language and singing techniques, but also because of the environment in which they live and study. When students are outside the familial, governmental and behavioural etiquette

of China, not only do they live independently, but also they have more time and space to develop a more critical and open way of learning. Students can truly focus on their own learning experiences and feelings, and contemplate what the most suitable practice methods are for themselves rather than just accepting instruction from tutors.

Chapter 8 Rationale for the Recital Programme

Provisional recital programme

Title	Composer	Composi tion date	Publication	Opus numbers
<i>La Fée et le cultivateur</i> (Re-orchestration of cantata <i>Pan Kéou</i> , 1945)	Alexander Tcherepnin	1945	London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1952	Op. 72
思乡 <i>Homesick</i>	Zi Huang	1932	Shanghai :Shangwu Yinshuguan [The Commercial Press], 1935	
春思曲 <i>Spring Yearnin</i>	Zi Huang	1932	Shanghai :Shangwu Yinshuguan [The Commercial Press], 1933	
黄水谣 <i>Ballad of the Yellow River</i>	Xinghai Xian	1939	Unknown, 1939	
茉莉花 <i>Jasmine</i>	Fang He	1957	Unknown, 1957	
没有眼泪, 没有悲伤 <i>No Tears, No Sorrow</i>	Qianshu Ouyang, Jingan Zhang	1961	Unknown	
Тихая, звёздная ночь <i>Silent, Starry Night</i>	Pauline Viardot	1862	Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel,1865	VWV 1038
На заре <i>At Dawn</i>	Pauline Viardot	1865	Unknown, 1870	VWV 1090
Узникъ <i>The Prisoner</i>	Pauline Viardot	1863	Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1865	VWV 1057
Для береговъ отчизны дальней <i>To the Shores of a Distant Fatherland</i>	Pauline Viardot	1865	Saint Petersburg; A. Johansen, 1865	No. 5
Весенний вечер <i>I am April</i>	Pauline Viardot	1836	Saint Petersburg; A. Johansen,1874	VWV 1102

The repertoire selected for this doctoral recital is all related to Xiaoyan Zhou and Manuel Garcia and features repertoire in languages including French, Chinese and Russian. Additionally, Garcia's sister Pauline Viardot, was a renowned singer, vocal pedagogue and composer who was also a student of Garcia. In her later years, after becoming a vocal tutor, she frequently corresponded with Garcia seeking advice on vocal issues for her students.³¹⁸ Therefore, it can be inferred that her opinions on vocal techniques were largely similar to those of Manuel Garcia. As a celebrated composer, Viardot composed a vast array of vocal music for singers. Hence, when considering the repertoire for the concert, I prioritised Viardot's vocal compositions. As all selected pieces are related to the vocal techniques discussed in this study, the subsequent discussion will mainly focus on how these techniques are demonstrated during the performances. Therefore, to avoid repetition and excessive length, only a selection of the pieces have been chosen for analysis in this chapter.

8.1 Repertoire in French

La Fée et le cultivateur is a cantata in French created for Xiaoyan Zhou, based on the traditional ancient Chinese folk tale *The Fairy and the Farmer* [仙女与农夫].³¹⁹

The libretto was written by Zisheng Xiao with music composed by Alexander

³¹⁸ Teresa Radomski, 'Manuel García (1805-1906) A Bicentenary Reflection', *Australian Voice*, 11 (2005), pp. 25-41.

³¹⁹ Jianqiang Wang, *Zhou Xiaoyan Zhuan [Biography of Xiaoyan Zhou]* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Renmi Chubanshe [Nanjing: Jiangsu People's Publishing House], 2012, p. 278. This is the only source I found which suggested the work was written specifically for Zhou.

Tcherepnin, and it was premiered at the Opéra de Paris on 9 October 1945. Prior to the premiere of this work, Zhou's name had appeared in newspapers, but following the premiere, Zhou's name began to frequently appear in major newspapers throughout Europe. As this cantata was sung in French, it was probably more accessible to European audiences than Zhou's public performances of Chinese vocal music, also allowing for a better understanding of the story. Furthermore, this cantata was mentioned multiple times in newspapers, with one critic reporting: 'It is a Chinese legend, but the music, Western in style, wisely restricts itself to Oriental allusions.'³²⁰ Indeed, this cantata effectively blends Chinese elements with Western musical style, and combined with Zhou's crystalline voice, it led more European audiences to appreciate elements of Chinese culture, to recognise Zhou's talent, and for Zhou to establish a reputation in Europe.³²¹

This work primarily narrates the story of a diligent farmer who discovers a large river clam in the fields and brings it home, unaware that the clam has absorbed the essence of heaven and earth and then transformed into a beautiful and virtuous river clam maiden. The beautiful maiden secretly cooks meals and tends to household chores for the farmer every day. Over time, their mutual affection grows and they eventually marry, reflecting the labouring people's

³²⁰ Clarendon, 'Les Concerts symphoniques', *Figaro: journal non politique*, 25 March 1947, p. 4: 'Pan-Keou, Il s'agit d'une légende chinoise—mais la musique, occidentale, se borne sagement à des allusions orientales.'

³²¹ After the premiere, Zhou gave concerts in French several times and I also found a trace of a performance in London but I cannot corroborate this fact.

pursuit and longing for life and love. The music was published in manuscript form with an accompanying English translation.³²² However, there are no printed versions publically available or versions with piano accompaniment and it has never been recorded. I will perform an excerpt from this cantata which focuses on the psychological activities of the clam maiden after encountering the farmer, and the narrative of her daily chores of cooking, cleaning and household duties. A piano reduction with viola solo of these sections was made by Yiran Ma for use in this recital which may be of use for scholars interested in studying this work in the future.

Vocal challenges of this excerpt lie particularly in the latter half which features extensive coloratura passages sung on the vowel 'a'. The singer's voice must continuously transition between the chest, medium and head registers (see Example 8.1), with some phrases containing significant intervallic leaps between adjacent notes therefore crossing different registers (see Examples 8.2 and 8.3). Thus, the coloratura passages in the excerpt extensively employ the Zhou's technique of transitioning from the middle register to the head register.

³²² Alexander Tcherpnin, *The Nymph and the Farmer* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1952).

Figure 8.1 *La Fée et le cultivateur*, bb. 102-104.³²³

Figure 8.2 *La Fée et le cultivateur*, bb. 121-123.

³²³ The bar number refers to the excerpted score. The first staff is for voice and the second staff is for piano. As the viola does not play in these bars, therefore, it would not appear here.

The image shows a musical score for three measures (127-129) from the opera *La Fée et le cultivateur*. The score is written in G major and 3/2 time. The top staff is the vocal line, starting at measure 127 with a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some slurs and accents. The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment, featuring chords and single notes, with 'sf' (sforzando) markings. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/2.

Figure 8.3 *La Fée et le cultivateur*, bb. 127-129.

When singing these passages, singers need to concentrate on preserving a continuous linkage between successive notes during both ascending and descending sequences to circumvent any instances of discontinuity or disruptions for listeners. Singers need to ensure that the breath provides sufficient and continuous support, ensuring the ribcage is fully expanded with the abdominal muscles continuously engaged. As the pitch rises, the singer does not necessarily need to sing 'a' on every note. Instead, in Zhou's words, as the melody ascends, the vowel 'a' gradually 'narrows down', transitioning from 'a' to 'au' then to 'o' on the high notes. The purpose of this is to continuously elevate the soft palate to increase resonance by creating more space in the oral cavity. At the same time, the larynx position is lowered as the voice ascends to avoid producing harsh and tense sounds in the head register, which also alleviates tension in the larynx and neck muscles. In conclusion, 79 years after its first performance, the revival of this work

through the performance of this excerpt not only holds academic significance but also provides a clear embodiment of Zhou's vocal techniques.

8.2 Chinese repertoire

The Chinese repertoire selected is all drawn from the appendices provided in Zhou's revised treatise. Zhou relentlessly advocated for the development of Western classical singing in China while also emphasising the importance of cultivating Chinese music. Consequently, selected Chinese repertoire includes pieces composed for Western classical singing, composed in the early twentieth century, such as *黄水谣* (*Ballad of the Yellow River*), *思乡* (*Homesick*) and *春思曲* (*Spring Yearning*), as well as songs originally written for Chinese national singing styles, such as *没有眼泪, 没有悲伤* (*No Tears, No Sorrow*) and *茉莉花* (*Jasmine*). The latter two pieces are characterized by their strong ethnic features and are rarely performed in a Western, classical singing style.

春思曲 (*Spring Yearning*) and *思乡* (*Homesick*) are both works with lyrics by Hanzhang Wei (1905-1993) and composed by Zi Huang (1904-1938). Wei, a master lyricist of China's first generation of modern songwriters, penned over 500 song texts throughout his lifetime. Huang, an important composer and music educator in 1930s China, studied composition at Oberlin College and Yale School of Music in the United States.

In *春思曲* (*Spring Yearning*), the protagonist is a cold and lonely woman suffering from the pain of longing and hoping for her lover's return, ultimately

resigning herself to despair. This piece extensively employs the technique of vocal register transitions. Unlike in *La Fée et le cultivateur*, the singer can rely on the gradual increase in pitch to adjust the soft palate position and the oral cavity shape little by little and then complete the transition. *春思曲* (*Spring Yearning*) requires direct transitions between adjacent notes in different registers without any intervening notes to facilitate the change. These adjacent notes span wide intervals such as fifths, sixths, or octaves, making the transitions particularly challenging (see Figure 8.4 and 8.5).

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Spring Yearning" (春思曲). The score is in 12/8 time and B-flat major. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system includes a vocal line with lyrics "潇潇夜雨，清阶前，" and a piano accompaniment. The second system includes a vocal line with lyrics "寒衾孤枕未成眠，今朝揽镜，应是" and a piano accompaniment. The third system includes a vocal line with lyrics "寒衾孤枕未成眠，今朝揽镜，应是" and a piano accompaniment. The score is marked "Adagietto 优美地" and "con tenerezza". The piano part is marked "p sempre deli cato". The vocal part is marked "p". The lyrics are in Chinese characters.

Figure 8.4 *春思曲* (*Spring Yearning*), bb. 1-6.

2

10

rit. *più mosso*

懒 贴花 钿。 小楼 独倚； 怕 睹 陌 头 杨

pizz. p

rit. *più mosso*

Figure 8.5 春思曲 (*Spring Yearning*), bb. 10-12.

After singing a note in one register, the singer's soft palate and larynx must quickly adjust position to prepare for the next note in a different register. Failing to do so would disrupt the balance of sound quality between registers, impairing the smoothness of phrase delivery and the overall expression of the song's mood. Therefore, proficient register transition techniques are particularly crucial in this piece.

Moreover, notes in different registers do not correspond to the same Chinese characters or symbols, requiring the singers to maintain clear pronunciation while adjusting their vocal pronunciation mechanisms. But perhaps the biggest challenge is that for some of the consonants in these characters, for example, the plosives 'g' and 'h', a complete stop of airflow followed by a sudden release is needed, and these plosives occur in different vocal registers than the preceding notes (see Figure 8.6).

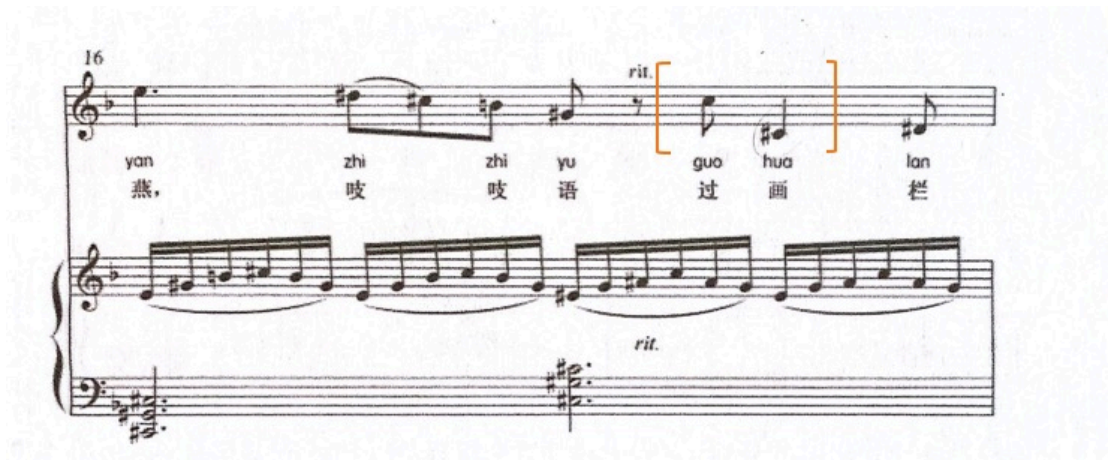


Figure 8.6 春思曲 (*Spring Yearning*), b. 16.

思乡 (*Homesick*) conveys the longing of a person for their hometown upon the arrival of spring. The register transitions in this piece are similar to those in 春思曲 (*Spring Yearning*), characterised by large intervals between notes in different registers, without intermediary notes to facilitate the transition. However, unlike 春思曲 (*Spring Yearning*), 思乡 (*Homesick*) features rests between notes in different registers (see Figure 8.7); this rest gives the singer time to adjust the position of the soft palate and larynx, reset their breath and ensure continuous support from the diaphragm.



Figure 8.7 思乡 (*Homesick*), bb. 4-6.

This piece is also marked with multiple crescendos and decrescendos, which need to be executed within a phrase (see Figure 8.8). Singers should consciously fill their ribcage with air before each phrase and control the support from the abdomen to accomplish these dynamics effectively. Additionally, the tempi of the two pieces are *andante* and *adagietto*, respectively, as both intended to convey a sense of longing. Therefore, it is essential to emphasise *legato* during the performance to convey the emotional characteristics at slow tempo. Thus, the singer should maintain calm and steady breathing and ensure full-ribcage expansion to provide continuous abdominal support throughout the phrases. These breathing techniques align with the exercises recommended by Zhou and Garcia in their breathing training, making their slow inhalation and exhalation exercises particularly applicable to performing these pieces.

Figure 8.8 思乡 (*Homesick*), bb. 7-9.

黄水谣 (Ballad of the Yellow River) is a song composed during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945), depicting the unfortunate experiences of the people along the Yellow River and expressing their unwavering determination to resist the invaders. The song thus portrays the suffering and resilience of the Chinese people during the war. Performed at an *adagio* tempo, the song is melismatic and includes slurs in the vocal line (see Figure 8.9). Thus, the singers must rely on active ribcage and abdominal engagement to execute long, continuous phrases smoothly.

23 *mp*
开 河 渠， 筑 堤 防， 河 东

28
千 里 成 平 壤， 麦 苗 儿 肥 呀

33 *dim.*
豆 花 香， 男 女 老 少

Figure 8.9 黄水谣 (Ballad of the Yellow River), bb. 23-37.

In terms of register transitions, although this piece does not feature large intervals between notes in different registers like the previous two songs, there are transitions between the chest and medium registers which can challenge sopranos (see Figure 8.10).



Figure 8.10 黄水谣 (*Ballad of the Yellow River*), bb. 6-16.

If the ribcage cannot take enough air then the abdomen will fail to provide stable support during these register transitions; resultingly, the notes can easily sound weak and differ significantly in quality from those in the medium register. Moreover, when transitioning between the medium and chest registers, the singer must flexibly adjust the position of the soft palate and coordinate with abdominal support to ensure that the volume and timbre are consistent. Garcia’s exercises for transitioning between the middle and lower registers can effectively address this issue.

没有眼泪，没有悲伤 (*No Tears, No Sorrow*) is an aria from 洪湖护卫队 (*The Red Guards on Honghu Lake*), one of the most important works in the canon of Chinese opera. This opera tells the story of Ying Han, the female village branch secretary, who, under the leadership of the Communist Party, leads the people of

the Hounghu area to overthrow the rule of the Kuomintang and establish a revolutionary regime. 没有眼泪, 没有悲伤 (*No Tears, No Sorrow*) is sung by Ying Han after she is captured and imprisoned. Despite enduring torture, she remains unyielding and is deeply concerned about the Red Guards and the people of Honghu. This aria incorporates elements of the Flower Drum Opera from Hunan province and Hubei folk music,³²⁴ using a traditional Chinese musical structure known as Banqiangti.³²⁵ This piece draws on the characteristics of the aria in Western opera, featuring highly expressive and elaborate melodies that convey the emotional content of the music while showcasing the singer's technical skills. Additionally, the piano accompaniment provides harmonic support that enhances the emotional impact of the music, highlighting the resilience displayed by women in the face of adversity. Thus, it also represents a significant attempt to integrate national music with Western opera.

This piece demands a high level of breath control from the performer for two reasons. First, this aria features mordents, which require a light touch and neat execution (see Figure 8.11).

³²⁴ The Huan Flower Drum Opera is a form of Chinese opera originating in Huan province and recognised as a national intangible cultural heritage. Huan Flower Drum originated during the Qing Dynasty; the content and performance style originate from the mountain songs, folk songs and traditional dances of the Hunan region.

³²⁵ Banqiangti is a structural form in Chinese opera and folk music. It uses symmetrical upper and lower phrases as the basic unit of the melody. Based on this structure, various patterns are developed according to specific variation principles.



Figure 8.11 没有眼泪, 没有悲伤 (No Tears, No Sorrow), bb. 23-25.

Singers should avoid adding undue weight, or exhaling too much when producing the mordents. Additionally, the rapid alternation between notes in a mordent needs to be precise and these embellishments must be seamlessly integrated into the phrase without disrupting the air flow, the melodic flow or the emotional intention of the music. Thus, the quick movements demanded by mordents depend on a stable and controlled breath supply, which necessitates coordinated and sustained support from the abdomen during singing. Only when taking care of breath control can a singer perform the mordent with appropriate emphasis and volume, avoiding an uneven and tense sound which may overpower the surrounding notes.

Secondly, this piece also features melismatic writing with multiple notes per syllable and long phrases (see Figure 8.12). This necessitates careful breath management and control to ensure that each note within a phrase is balanced in volume and timbre and general smoothness and fluidity during performance.

自 从 韩 英 生 下 地, 从 小 我 就 在 你 的 旁 旁。
喝 的 是 湖 中 水 吃 的 是 岸 边 粮;

Figure 8.12 没有眼泪, 没有悲伤 (No Tears, No Sorrow), bb. 30-40.

Additionally, the piece has a varied rhythmic structure (see Figure 8.13). This requires the voice to move flexibly and accurately from one note to the next by relying on stable abdomen support to ensure that each note is articulated clearly and precisely. Overall, as one of the representative works of Chinese national opera, this piece tests the singer's ability to effectively use and control their breath.

Figure 8.13 没有眼泪，没有悲伤 (No Tears, No Sorrow), bb. 40-49.

Moreover, in this music, many characters contain multiple phonemes. If the suffix of each character is not carefully articulated, referred to as 'guiyun' in Zhou's treatise, the meaning of the musical phrase will be completely altered (see Figure 8.14).

Figure 8.14 没有眼泪，没有悲伤 (No Tears, No Sorrow), bb. 40-49

The Chinese characters in this phrase are represented in Chinese Pinyin as: kan-jian-hong-hu-shui and han-ying-wo-wu-bi-jian-qiang. It is evident that most of these characters comprise compound vowels (including nasal compound vowels) and therefore, it is easy to neglect the suffix of each word. For example, in ‘shui’ (水 which means water), after the ‘u’ sound is produced, the lip must gently round to articulate the ‘i’ sound; otherwise, the pronunciation will be changed to ‘shu’ (书) which means ‘book’ in Chinese. Furthermore, many of these characters end with the nasal final ‘n’, which requires a gradual transition in tongue position and lip shape, along with a slight closing of the mouth, while the soft palate tends to lower slightly. Therefore, as well as focusing on ‘guiyun’, attention must be paid to these changes in the oral cavity and lip positions to avoid them becoming obstacles during register transitions. Losing the technical balance between ‘guiyun’ and register transition can result in a loss of legato and a lack of consistency in sound quality across different vocal registers.

茉莉花 (*Jasmine*) is a highly representative piece of traditional Chinese folk music. It has been a popular tune since the Ming and Qing dynasties, evolving into various versions over time. The version from Jiangsu province presented in Zhou’s treatise is the most widely sung and thus the most representative. This piece features relatively long musical phrases and sometimes a single phrase includes transitions between three different registers (see Figure 8.15).



Figure 8.15 茉莉花 (*Jasmine*), bb. 11-15.

In Figure 8.15, the voice starts in the medium register; after pronouncing the second character, the singer must adjust the position of the soft palate and throat in preparation for singing in the head register. The voice then returns to the medium register, before entering the chest register at the end. In this process, singers must continuously adjust the soft palate and larynx positions, while also ensuring a steady and smooth airflow and maintaining abdominal support. This guarantees that when the voice finally enters the low register, the timbre and volume align with the notes in other registers.

Furthermore, special attention must be given to the pronunciation. This repertoire requires the singer to connect the suffix of each character to the initial phoneme of the following character, as mentioned by Zhou, to ensure legato singing (see Figure 8.16):

Figure 8.16 茉莉花 (*Jasmine*), bb. 31-35.

In this phrase, taking ‘采’ and ‘一’ as examples, the Chinese pinyin for these two characters is written as ‘cai-yi’. When singing, the singer should break down and reassemble the phonemes into ‘ca-yi’ to make the vowel as long as possible. Thus, considering the melismatic feature of this piece, if the singer neglects this technique and attempts to pronounce all the phonemes of a single character within one note, the resulting closure of the oral cavity will impede the flow of breath, thereby interrupting the legato.

Although 没有眼泪, 没有悲伤 (*No Tears, No Sorrow*) and 茉莉花(*Jasmine*) are representative works of the Chinese folksong repertoire, they were presented in the recommended repertoire appendices in Zhou’s treatise. This shows she meant for folksong to be sung with a Westernised vocal technique. Both songs demand flexible use of vocal register transitions and exceptional breath control; also singers need to deal with the Chinese pronunciation properly, aligning with the vocal techniques discussed in this study. Therefore, they are suitable for performance in this concert.

8.3 Russian repertoire

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Zhou formed deep friendships with several Russian musicians, such as Shushlin and Tcherepnin, who were both her mentors and peers, and Shushlin also played a significant role in the spread of Western classical singing in China. Additionally, the connection between Zhou and Garcia, which spanned several generations, was influenced to some extent by Russian musicians. Furthermore, Pauline Viardot was one of the earliest Europeans to set texts in Russian in her compositions. She was passionate about exploring Russian literature, actively participating with her husband in translating Russian literary works into French, and advocating for their dissemination throughout Western Europe.³²⁶ Viardot also developed a lifelong, special relationship with Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883), who encouraged her to delve into Russian literature, particularly the poetry of Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837) and Mikhail Lermontov (1814-1841). Turgenev also lived with the Viardots for many of his most creatively fruitful years.³²⁷ Therefore, the songs in Russian composed by Viardot form a point of overlap between Garcia and Zhou, and the formative figures in both their lives.

Тихая, звёздная ночь (*Silent, Starry Night*) is a poem written by Afanasy Fet in 1842. The poem portrays the serene splendour of a starry night, exploring the emotional interplay between melancholy and love beneath the moonlit sky. It

³²⁶ Amy Jo Hunsaker, 'Pauline Viardot's Russian Compositions' (DMA dissertation, University of Nevada, 2010).

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. iii and 3.

contrasts the speaker's inner sadness with the night's outer beauty, underscoring how the presence of a beloved brings comfort and solace.

In the performance of this work, the voice predominantly resides in the chest and medium register. Consequently, smooth transitions between these two registers are crucial for a successful rendition, and the exercises provided by Garcia can effectively assist singers in developing a flexible soft palate and larynx in their negotiation of these transitions. Additionally, some notes are relatively low for a soprano to sing and these notes are positioned at the end of the phrases (see Figure 8.17).



Figure 8.17 *Тихая, звездная ночь (Silent, Starry Night)*, bb. 15-19.

Additionally, similar to the Chinese songs, this piece needs the singer to perform notes with significant intervallic leaps between different registers; moreover, singers also need to avoid 'chewed' pronunciation (see Figure 8.18).



Figure 8.18 *Тихая, звёздная ночь (Silent, Starry Night)*, bb. 31-35.

Although there are similarities between the pronunciation of vowels and consonants in Russian and Chinese, this does not imply that their phonetic methods are identical. For example, Russian lacks diphthongs and each phoneme exists independently, meaning that every vowel must be pronounced distinctly and clearly. The sentence in Figure 8.15, transcribed in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as /drug moj, ja 'zv'ozdi l'ub'l'u — i ot p'i'tʃal'i n'e proč'e/, illustrates this point. Take the word 'печали', marked as /p'i'tʃal'i/ in IPA: when singing, there is a tendency for the Chinese singer to merge the phoneme /i/ following /p'i/, resulting in the insertion of an unintended sound. Therefore, singers must be mindful of pronunciation issues that arise from their native Chinese phonetic habits.

На заре (At Dawn) is a poem by Ivan Turgenev from his collection *Senilia*. In *На заре*, Turgenev captures the serene and contemplative atmosphere of dawn and reflects his deep appreciation for nature. In this song, composed in 1865, many phrases are marked with crescendo and decrescendo symbols, as well as

slurs; moreover, the pronunciation of polysyllabic words poses a challenge when performing this piece (see Figure 8.19).



Figure 8.19 *На заре (At Dawn)*, bb. 11-13.

Transcribing the phrase in Example 16 into IPA yields: /v bɐr'ʲbʲe nɐ'ʧnʲix tʲɪ'zɔlʲix dum trʲɪ'voʒnə 'mʲɛʧʲɪʦə moj/. Each word is composed of multiple phonemes, with a single note often corresponding to two or three phonemes. Thus, the singer must ensure that no phonemes are omitted and that the transitions from one phoneme to next phoneme are clean and precise, avoiding a 'chewed' pronunciation caused by excessive jaw movement. Additionally, as the singer transfers their voice between different vocal registers, they must manage the articulation of different phonemes and ensure that the movements of the oral cavity during phoneme transitions do not disrupt the smoothness of the register shift.

Additionally, this piece is performed at a moderato tempo, which increases the difficulty of pronunciation. This tempo also forces the singer to inhale quickly after each phrase to prepare for the next one. It is crucial to avoid shallow and

insufficient breaths due to this rapid inhalation. Zhou provided recommendations for rapid breathing exercises in her instructional materials, which can address the breathing demands of this piece.

Узникъ (*The Prisoner*) is a renowned poem by Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, penned in 1822, reflecting Pushkin's own sense of confinement and yearning for freedom during his period of political surveillance and exile. The poem vividly depicts the feeling of entrapment and the desire to escape. The prisoner, accompanied by a single bird symbolising freedom and the natural world beyond the prison walls, underscores themes of confinement, the resilience of the human spirit and the intrinsic longing for liberty. This music presents a similar theme to the *黄水谣* (*Ballad of the Yellow River*), both pieces expressing the human desire to overcome oppression and yearning for freedom in the face of adversity. Nevertheless, their musical expressions are completely different.

Distinct from the previous two Russian songs, this piece focuses the voice in the medium and head register, with many phrases demanding the voice to remain at a relatively high pitch; while maintaining these high notes, the singer must also articulate the Russian (see Figure 8.20).

Figure 8.20 *Узникъ (The Prisoner)*, bb. 56-63.

As shown in Figure 8.20, when singing high notes, the singer must also articulate different phonemes. As mentioned earlier, different phonemes often involve changes in the oral cavity and soft palate. In the head register, the soft palate should remain elevated to prevent the sound from becoming tense and harsh. Therefore, the challenge is to balance the need to maintain a high soft palate for a pleasant tone in the high register with the need for clear articulation.

Additionally, to align with the imagery in the lyrics, phrases must be performed smoothly to evoke the image of a bird yearning for freedom, as depicted in the poems. Thus, a long legato line is crucial in this piece, and the singer must have precise breath control to avoid any interruptions or breaks in the sound during the performance.

All chosen repertoire for this recital is not only related to the vocal pedagogues discussed in this study but also requires a high level of mastery over the vocal techniques examined in this research. This effectively demonstrates the positive impact of the exercises provided by Zhou and Garcia in their treatises. Additionally, many of these pieces are rarely performed and their inclusion in this concert can offer valuable performance references for interested scholars or singers.

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Appendix A. Participant observation session plans

Session plan for Week one: Breathing

Research leader: Rebecca Wang

Topic: Breathing Training

1. The participants talk about their feelings, for example, their mood, how things are going, whether they want to do the session with me, what they expect from this session, etc.

Aim: Using personal experience is an essential way to describe and interpret cultural texts, experiences, beliefs, and practices in auto-ethnography, and some auto-ethnographers record their emotions at any time, not just during the project, for example, Arthur P. Bochner, Carolyn Ellis, etc.³²⁸ Therefore, in addition to recording the participants' emotions during the session, their feelings after taking the session are also worthy of recording. What is more, a small chat could help the participants relax and quickly settle into this session.

2. The participants need to sing warm-up exercises before they take the technique training. Before they sing the exercises, I will check with them whether they prefer to do the suggested exercises; if not, I will change the exercises to what they are used to singing with their personal tutor. These warm-up exercises come from my own experience with my singing tutor Pierre-Maurice Barlier. Garcia's exercises in his treatise are related to specific singing techniques – the practise of major scales, exercises on repeated sounds, etc., and he gives no specific warm up

³²⁸ Arthur P Bochner; Carolyn Ellis, *Evocative Autoethnography: Writing Lives and Telling Stories* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

exercises. Equally, Zhou mentions no warm-up exercises in her treatise.

The exercises to warm up are:

- Humming, each bar rising a semitone until the top note around g2.



Figure 1 Warm-up exercise.

- Same exercise on 'a' vowel.



Figure 2 Warm-up exercise.

- A group including two bars, and 'i e a o u o a e, i e a o u o a e i' should be singing for each note. Successive groups rise a semitone each time until the singer's limit.



Figure 3 Warm-up exercise.

Aim: a warm-up should help the participant relax their body and voice and reduce the risk of injuring their voice.

3. I will explain the reasons why I chose breath training as this session's topic and introduce Manuel Garcia and Xiaoyan Zhou to the participants. Then I will introduce the breathing methods of Garcia and Zhou to them respectively. As they

learn the method step by step, I will require them to feel the changes in their bodies: do they feel comfortable when they are using these methods? Which method do they prefer? The step will be repeated several times until the participants can clearly sense and describe the changes in their body.

4. An exercise will be offered to the participant to let them apply these different breathing methods in singing. In Garcia's treatise, there is no suggestion on which vowel the exercise below should be sung. The participants could sing this exercise on 'a' or any other vowel they prefer.

The exercise designed by Garcia is as follows:

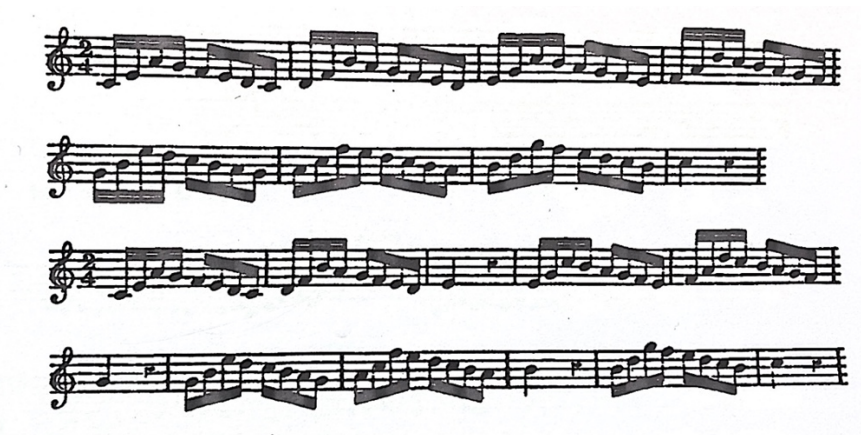


Figure 4 Breathing exercises.³²⁹

As Garcia suggested, if the singer cannot sing an exercise in one breath, they should stop on the first note of a bar, rather than take a hurried inspiration in the middle of the exercise. Considering participants are at the beginning stage of classical singing, the participant will be asked to sing this exercise in these two

³²⁹ H2, p.22.

methods with breath, and as the last step, they will be required to sense their body's changes and feelings when singing the exercise.

5. A quick review for this session will be provided, and the participants will be asked to write a diary when they are home, with prompts such as: how are they feeling today? Do they sense bodily changes and feelings when learning the method of breathing and singing the exercise? Which method do they prefer and why? Are there any uncomfortable feelings when they apply the method? Besides this, the participant will be asked to practise these methods and sing the exercise every day and do the written task in the same way, as well. They should submit the written diary in an electronic document before the next session begins.

Session plan for Week two: Blending Register

Research leader: Rebecca Wang

Topic: Register and blending registers training

Registers must be united smoothly and, to avoid the break between them is important for singers when they are performing. This week, the participant and I will talk about registers and go through Garcia's and Zhou's methods on registers' transition. I will introduce the notion of register and related knowledge to them; if this process lasts more than 30 mins, then the second part of this lesson plan will be done in the next week. Steps for this session are shown below:

Part I

1. The participants talk about the previous week's training, including prompts

such as: Can you summarise last week's training? Can you say whether you easily adapted to this mode of training? Are there any problems that exist during the training? If yes, would they like to share and discuss them with me? Then, they can talk about their feelings today and their expectations for this class.

Aim: As the participants might be not familiar with auto-ethnography, their summary may be limited to describing the changes that occurred in their bodies rather than expressing emotions such as whether they feel comfortable when they apply the methods, or what they are thinking during the training. Therefore, before we start a new session, the participants should give a verbal summary of last week's training. In this process, the participants could deepen their impression of the training methods and modes, and I could check if there is anything new they might want to mention. This also strengthens their understanding of auto-ethnography by speaking in an auto-ethnographic way and helps to broaden their thinking.

2. Warm-up exercises as in Week 1

3. I will give the reasons why I chose blending registers as this session's topic, and an introduction to vocal register (including the conception of vocal register, how many registers are there, etc.); I also will let them sing the warm up exercises again to sense their voice in different registers to let them have a better understanding the different registers. When I was studying in China, few tutors explained registers to their pupils or provided specific training on register blending. They solve the problem of register blending via the repertoire which

means students might not really even know what register blending is, even if they have dealt with this kind of problem in singing lessons.

The introduction to registers will be presented in PowerPoint, and the content selected from Zhou's and Garcia's treatises, including the definition of register, limits of different registers, etc. The participants will be given a handout for preview a week in advance which will include content selected from Garcia's treatise about registers in different voices (see reproduced pages at the end of this session plan). Any questions are invited during the introduction.

Part II

(If this part needs to be postponed for a week, then a verbal summing up about last week's training (register) by participants and warming up should be completed by participants before step 4).

4. I will describe Garcia's and Zhou's methods of blending registers to the participants and ask them to sing the exercises offered by Zhou and Garcia, respectively. Then invite them to describe their feelings about these methods. The participants could sing the vowel 'a' in exercises, or any other vowel they prefer.

Exercises to unite the chest and medium registers.

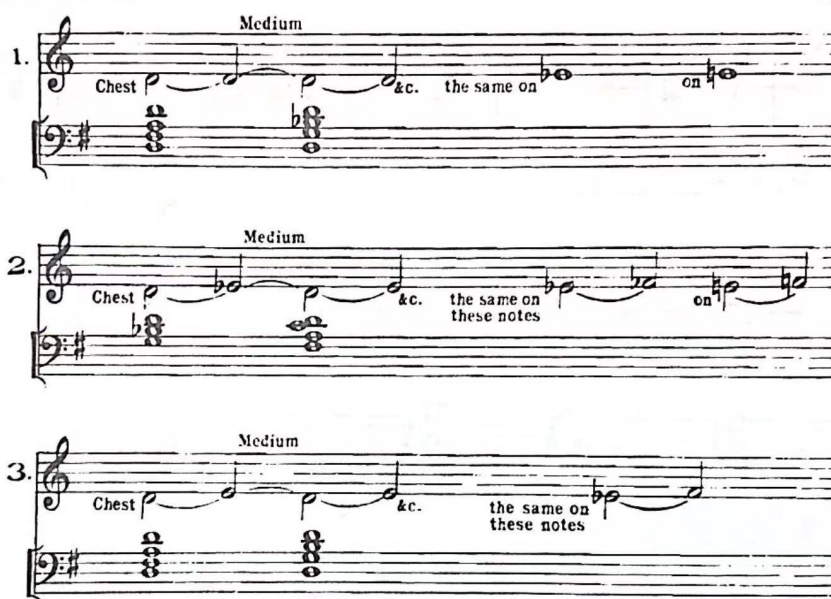


Figure 5 Exercises to unite the chest and medium register.³³⁰

Aim: This exercise helps the participants to get used to switching swiftly from the chest to the medium register by being able to produce those sounds in both ways. When I do this exercise with the participants, I will change the pitch according to their own vocal tessitura. There is no specific exercise for register blending in Zhou's treatise, although this exercise appears in her teaching video:

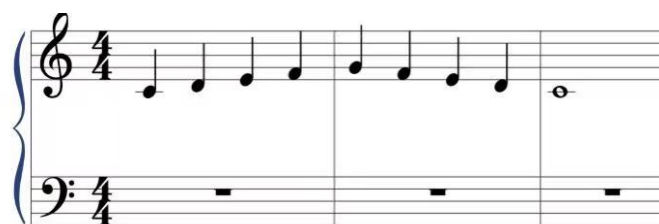


Figure 6 Singing exercise.³³¹

³³⁰ E3, p.10.

³³¹ Participants could sing this exercise with the vowel 'a', and the aim of this exercise is to make the transfer between different registers smooth. 'Xiaoyan Zhou Shengyue Jiaoxue' [Vocal Pedagogy of Xiaoyan Zhou], <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8k0PtUjCB8g&t=774s>> [accessed 3 August 2023].

Aim: This exercise is aimed at helping singers go through different registers smoothly. In Zhou's method, singers should start to change the register before the top note. Taking this exercise as an example, the participant should sing c1 and d1 in the speaking voice, and from d1 the participants should prepare for singing g1, they should open their mouth gradually, rounding the vowel to switch to the next register. By singing this exercise, successively ascending, the participants should become familiar with the process of preparing till they know how to master changing between different registers. When I do this exercise with the participants, I will change the pitch according to their own vocal tessitura. The participants will be asked to sing these exercises and sense their body's changes and feelings when singing the exercise.

5. A quick review for this session will be provided, and the participants will be asked to write feedback for this session. Self-training after the session is still needed, and the participants will be asked to practise by themselves for a week, writing a feedback diary every day. They should submit the written work before the next session begins in an electronic document.

Session plan for Week three: Legato

Research leader: Rebecca Wang

Topic: Legato Training

Legato vocalization is highly important in singing to achieve a smooth transition

from note to note. Singing with legato also helps add expressiveness in long phrases. Steps for this session are shown below:

1. The participants briefly review the previous week and are invited to ask questions. The participants are expected to keep practicing all the singing skills they have learned and when they are asked to do a verbal summary, they should mention all the techniques in which they have already been trained. Therefore, in the review, they need to mention the first and second sessions (breathing and blending registers); for example, are there any bodily changes that happened compared to the first time they applied these methods? Did they have new ideas about the first session? Then, they should talk about how they are feeling today and their expectations for this session. What is more, they are encouraged to talk about how they define legato, what legato means to them and how they create legato in their practice.

Aim: Constant reflection and feedback by participants on what they know will help deepen their impression of these methods and might stimulate new ideas about what they have already learned. The participant needs to discuss their opinions and feelings after they receive the legato training. Talking about the method which they previously applied in advance could make the participant express their views on these methods easily and how they adapt to the new method.

2. Warm-up exercises in Week 1

3. I will explain the reasons why I chose training legato as this session's topic to

the participant. As Zhou and Garcia advocate a familiar method of singing legato, I would not introduce their method separately. Also, I will ask them to prepare music that they sang before and after I introduce the technique to them I will ask them to sing the music to sense how this method works in singing.

4. A quick review for this session will be provided, and the participants will be asked to write feedback for this session. Self-training after the session is still needed; the participant will be asked to practise by themselves for a week and write a feedback diary every day. They should submit the written work before the next session begins in an electronic document.

Session plan for Week four: Reviewing

Research leader: Rebecca Wang

Topic: Reviewing

The session aims to go through all the topics and make a summary of the research.

The steps for this session are shown below:

1. The participants briefly reviews what they did the previous week and gives a summary of last week's training. They should also mention breathing and registers' blending training. What do they think about all the training? Do they feel it is necessary to take the training like this? Have their singing skills improved? etc.

2. Warm-up exercises in Week 1

3. The participants will be asked to go through all the singing techniques. The first

technique is breathing: the participant needs to do the exercise by themselves (as after session practice), then they need to talk about their feelings including body changes, how they think or understood different parts of this training, and any differences or improvements compared with the first time they do this training. Then the participants need to go through the rest of the techniques (blending registers and legato respectively), then do the verbal summary for each one (the whole review could be completed in two sessions if the first two reviews (breathing and registers' blending) take more than 45 minutes). Questions are invited.

4. The participants will be thanked for taking part in this research, and the result of this research will be sent to them in an electronic document (including videos) they are welcome to ask any questions in the future.

Appendix B. Excerpt of Participants' observation training experience and diaries

Participant I experience (Mary)

Garcia's Breathing Technique – Live session

At the beginning, Mary shows great interest in this technique which is new to her. I observe that Mary's physical reactions during warm-up are not very obvious: her ribcage barely expands and her shoulders lift slightly as she takes air in; as she produces the first sound, her shoulders drop and the slight expansion of ribcage disappears. Her body seems to be a bit stiff and she remains in the same body posture till the end of the exercise; her body does not straighten and the shoulders are slightly in front of her hips. When she sings around g₂, her voice sounds harsh and less supported.

Garcia's technique requires the singers to take the air in slowly and gently: every time she applies this method, she shows no specific facial expression, her eyes keep looking at one point or looking around sometimes and her standing posture remains the same as when she sings the warm-up exercise. As she continues to use this approach, a larger in-take of breath can be noted from the movement of her ribcage, and her shoulders begin to pull back gradually, making her upper body look more open and relaxed. Yet, as she repeats this technique several times, her body begins to look tense and her ribcage shows less expansion. When she applies this approach with vocal production, her voice sounds less harsh around g₂, but her previous more relaxed physical reactions disappear

during singing.

Thus, mid-point through the exercises, Mary makes progress and most of the time, she could consciously correct her improper standing posture during training; her breath cycles are lengthened and the lateral expansion of the ribcage appears more pronounced; from the focus on her face, I sense that she tries her best to expand the ribcage with every inhalation. Moreover, before practice, she reminds herself to keep good body posture, especially a straight back; this self-reminding seems to work at the beginning of the session, but as training time increases, she forgets to maintain a proper body posture. While some of her physical reactions are still the same as the start there is still no specific facial expression shown when she uses this technique; her eyes still keep looking at one point and she lost the expansion of the ribcage with every inhalation after several repetitions of this approach.

When she combines this breathing method with vocal production, she succeeds in keeping the ribcage open for a few bars but then she loses it gradually and her body seems tense. I need to remind her not to let the ribcage collapse as soon as she produces the first sound after taking an inhalation. When she manages to do this, her voice sounds more supported and she looks less nervous when she sings higher notes in the exercise.

In the final stages, Mary is not only more proficient but also improves in other aspects. Although sometimes she still maintains an improper standing posture, most of the time her standing posture is satisfactory, and when I remind her to

notice her body's posture, she can respond quickly and correct. When she inhales, her eyes are no longer fixed on one point, but a specific facial expression is shown instead: her eyes widen slightly and the corners of her mouth raise which makes her look more relaxed. However, this pleasant mien does not always appear and she loses it in the middle of the training. Moreover, by the end, her ribcage expands more and she can hold her breath for a longer time without her body growing tense; her upper body especially looks more relaxed than before. When vocal production is added, she can keep her ribcage open when producing the first sound without collapsing immediately and tries to maintain the expansion till the end of each phrase. However, her pleasant expression does not always show when singing. As taking in breath through the nose and wearing an open and pleasant facial expression also affects changes in the oral cavity, helping the soft palate lift and the larynx drop, she could achieve better results if she continued to do this and I need to remind her to notice her face when singing the exercises. Her voice around g2 sounds more relaxed without pushing the sounds out and confidence shows on her face instead of the nervous expression she previously had when approaching higher notes.

Training Feedback diary

From Mary's feedback and daily training dairies, it is clear she can sense her ribcage starting to expand, taking more air into the lungs, and she describes this kind of feeling as similar to sensations when she practises yoga. But sometimes

she senses simply that her chest lifts, especially when she repeats the method several times, thus losing the feeling of the ribcage's expansion, and the muscles around her ribcage and back start to tense and can feel a bit tense, as are the muscles around her neck. At this stage, this technique did not seem to bring about any changes in her oral cavity, she feels neither the raising nor the lowering of the soft palate.

By day five of training, Mary feels that not only the ribcage expands, but also her back muscles participate in this breathing process, and this brings her a feeling of support from her back and abdomen. One requirement of this method is to inhale slowly and gently, yet when she makes this action happen, she overthinks and forces the slow inhalation. She found that the more she thinks, the faster her body gets tired and stiff. When vocal production is added, she finds she obtains more power to sing those notes around g_2 and her throat becomes more comfortable.

By day ten of training, she can make sure most of the inhalation happens with an expansion of the ribcage rather than a lifting of the chest, yet muscle fatigue and tension still exist. Moreover, in addition to the back muscles, the feeling that the abdominal muscles participate in the process of breathing becomes more and more obvious to her, especially when exhaling slowly, the sense of the strength of the abdomen muscles is clearly felt and she can better control the speed of exhalation. This helps her to reduce muscle tension caused by overthinking how to control the exhalation speed. Indeed, she mentions the mental and muscular

tension caused by overthinking which still exists in her daily practice, and before practising she reminds herself not to care too much because she finds that the less she thinks, the better effect she can achieve.

By day twelve of training, reactions start to show in Mary's oral cavity: she starts to feel the larynx go down and the soft palate rise slightly but still not with every inhalation and she does not understand how these reactions in the oral cavity happen. Sometimes she feels Garcia's technique in general is similar to Zhou's second breathing technique. When vocal production is added, she finds her lungs can contain more air, and more support from the abdomen can be sensed during singing, and she feels top notes can be reached easier if she stops worrying about singing these notes.

Mary writes in her diary on day fourteen that after a period of uninterrupted development, she hits a plateau and this situation continues until day sixteen. During this time, she does not sense any changes happening in her body and the feelings she has remain the same. She worries about this plateau situation and therefore, she decides to relax her mind and take two days' rest. On day nineteen, she feels better. She feels, after restarting practice, that her ribcage can expand more with less tension and the air she takes in goes deeper. She reminds herself to take care of her facial expression because she finds in this stage a pleasant expression helps her reduce tension. Moreover, she finds the coordination between breathing and the ribcage actions is better: when she inhales, the ribcage expands more naturally and automatically. Indeed, she no longer considers these

two physical actions as independent movements but as inseparable and complementary. In addition, she finds by actively using the abdominal muscles to control the flow of breath, she can avoid tension. She also finds muscles in the back which engage more in the process of breathing, and which enhance also the cooperation between the other muscles which improves.

Participant I experience (Mary)

Zhou's Breathing Technique – Live session

Zhou provides two methods for students to enhance their ability in breathing. The first technique is to inhale quickly like a surprise, and the second method emphasizes a slow inhalation while imagining smelling flowers, which naturally lifts the zygomatic muscles, helping to achieve a raised soft palate. Therefore a pleasant countenance is needed in practice. Zhou does not say specifically whether the air should be taken in through the nose or mouth but the first technique she describes like a gasp, so it is through the mouth; in the second approach, she suggests the inhalation should be like smelling roses, so the air should be taken in through the nose. The purpose of the first method is to allow students to feel the expansion of the ribcage, the rise of the soft palate and the descent of the larynx immediately and directly. The second method is to further strengthen the feelings of the body's reactions to the first, to train the lungs store more air, strengthen the abdominal muscles and the muscles around the ribcage, etc.

At the beginning, Mary is not used to applying this technique. When she applies the first method, her eyes widen rather than keep looking at one point; her

shoulders slightly lift and her chest lifts rather than expands. Besides, her body looks full of tension and seems locked after a quick inhalation. Her body looks even tenser after repeated practice. When she sings, quick in-takes of breath turn to rushed inhalation, high notes sound harsh and she looks tired after singing.

As she applies the second approach, her facial expression looks deliberate and with her shoulders are still somewhat lifted; her ribcage only slightly expands and her upper body does not look relaxed. When she applies this method to vocal exercises, her voice lacks steady support especially around the top notes which sound harsh, as if she is squeezing the sound out.

To avoid Mary practising in the wrong direction, I remind Mary that these real-life examples are meant to help her to develop proper physical reactions, such as a well-expanded ribcage, a lower larynx, etc., and that she should not overly focus on her facial expression. Thus, in the middle of the training, her progress is mainly reflected in the relaxation of her body and facial muscles. At this point, Mary's ribcage shows some expansion; in Zhou's first method, after each quick breath, her upper body looks more stretched rather than immediately locked and the frequency of shoulder lift is also reduced. Sometimes, I still can hear her breathing quickly through her nose; the wide-open eyes and a gentle smile starts showing on her face which is good. When singing repertoire, Mary's body is less tense, and her voice sounds steadier, but sometimes the top notes still sound harsh and she fails to keep the ribcage open throughout.

In the second technique, her pleasant face looks more natural but after several

repetitions, Mary's facial expression starts to look stiff and she shows less expansion of the ribcage; yet her upper body looks less tense and more straight compared with the method. In singing, her voice sounds more supported; yet as the pitch rises, her body gradually goes tense; the top notes sound better but still a bit harsh and less supported.

In the last stages of training, Mary gets a better understanding of Zhou's techniques and makes more progress in many aspects. Most of the time, she can make sure the ribcage expands without a locked body after a quick inhalation; her expression looks fine without much tension; she also tries her best to keep the ribcage expanded as much as possible; the cooperation and coordination between ribcage and breathing are better, and I can barely hear her sniffing which is good because this means Mary does not force air through the nose and implies that her her body is more relaxed. When singing, rushed inhalation is replaced by well-managed quick inhalation and Mary tries her best to maintain the ribcage open until the end of each phrase; her voice sounds steadier and supported with less tension; she sings high notes with confidence and from her face, I can tell she enjoys singing and shows no fear to sing those notes anymore.

In the second method, a natural smile shows on her face; her ribcage expands regularly with each slow and gentle inhalation and with the training time increased, her body does not show too much tension. When singing, the frequency of chest collapse is significantly reduced; sufficient support can be noticed in her voice and the top notes sound resonant. For both methods, she sometimes forgets

to smile but most of the time she can manage it and the smile looks natural during practice and when singing which never happened before.

Training Feedback diary

From Mary's feedback and daily training, it is obvious that she does not obtain positive physical reactions by practising Zhou's method. The first method requires her to inhale quickly: she finds that rapid inhaling makes her body tense more easily, especially the muscles around her neck and that the air she inhales is mainly through the mouth. Her chest also lifts and she stores less air in her lungs than she believes she can take in. Also there are no actions in her oral cavity. When singing, this method cannot provide adequate air for her and the faster she inhales the less air she takes in. She sings the high notes with an uncomfortable larynx because she is afraid to sing the high notes and she builds up tension in the body as she rushes to inhale; thus, she is unsure if this approach can enhance her breathing skills.

By day seven of training, although she finds that the second technique should help her to inhale a bit more air; she feels her inhalation is not much deeper than in the first technique. Moreover, she needs to act as if she is relaxed and enjoying the fragrance of the flowers: she keeps thinking about it and she feels the corners of her mouth quivering involuntarily when she puts a smile on her face. In singing, tension in the facial muscles attracts most of her attention and this makes her feel uncomfortable during singing. Mary cannot feel any support to help her to sing the

high notes and she feels tired after training.

By day nine of training, Mary finds that by throwing her shoulders back she can make her body open and inhale more air during the quick inhalation; at the same time, her ribcage expands, yet physical tension still exists after repeated practice. In addition, she senses changes starting to happen in her oral cavity: the soft palate rises and the larynx drops automatically. However, these actions do not happen with each inhalation and when singing is added in, she could not sense these changes anymore. She still feels the air cannot go deeper and remains in the upper chest; sometimes she feels short of air in singing.

In the day eleven diary, she emphasizes that overthinking and facial expressions greatly increase the chance of muscle tension and blockage of the body. To avoid this, Mary reminds herself not to focus too much on facial expression, and to just let things happen naturally. This helps her to relax her body, so more air can enter the lungs and she feels more comfortable in practice; the more she relaxed she was, the more obvious the changes in the oral cavity became. Yet when singing, she cannot always juggle the repertoire, physical reactions and mental pressures: she still thinks about the actions on her face but less attention is paid to the ribcage. In this situation, the tension in the body and the chest collapse still exist but the frequency is reduced.

By day fifteen of training, she writes that, even though she cannot get rid of all the overthinking in practice, she could also relax her mind to some extent. She has minimal chest displacement during breathing and singing and most of the time,

she can keep her ribcage open until the end of every phrase. These positive changes make her gain sufficient support and energy in singing, especially for top notes. Moreover, Mary does not feel the air stay in the upper chest anymore and tension around the neck and upper body cannot be sensed too much. She also talks about the ways in which she manages to reduce overthinking, for example, she shakes her hands and moves around the room before practice or closes her eyes and reminds herself to relax, and these methods truly help her to practice with less psychological tension.

In her diary, she writes Zhou's method is very similar to Garcia's, and with the help of Zhou's technique, the movements of the soft palate and larynx are also more flexible than before. When she sings, she finds she has sufficient support to sing the high notes with a comfortable larynx position and Mary feels her body remain relaxed after singing top notes. She also mentions that she seems to have a deeper understanding of Zhou's techniques in the day eighteen diary. She no longer regards facial expressions and other physical actions as separate movements but as complementary to one other. Mary finds that when she is excited, her chest expands rapidly and, at the same time, a smile just shows on her face naturally. A general state of relaxation is reflected by a natural pleasant expression and allows her lungs to store more air; this more relaxed state also helps with sufficient support and air and she feels that she can hit the top notes easier and that her larynx feels comfortable. Moreover, muscles around the ribcage, abdomen and back also participate in the breathing process; this

physically engaged state makes the movements in the oral cavity easier to perceive, and the fall of the larynx and the rise of the soft palate can be achieved most of the time.

Participant II experience (Michael)

Garcia's Breathing Technique – Live session

Garcia treatise indicates slow and gentle inhalation with nearly closed lips. Michael does not show too many physical reactions during warm-up: he looks relaxed, little body tension is evident and as he sings, his body sways slightly; his chest goes up slightly and, as he inhales the air through his nose and not through his mouth, I can hear him sniff sometimes; he hunches his shoulders which are obviously in front of his hips. His voice sounds less supported especially as the pitch rises: he squeezes the voice out around g2.

Michael always carries out this exercise breathing through his nose and I have not required him to inhale with a nearly closed mouth as, with a slow inhalation speed, breathing through very slightly opened lips holds little difference to breathing through the nose and will unlikely affect results. As Michael begins practises this technique, he seems to pause to think about how to respond to the requirements of this technique without any specific facial expression; the sounds from his nose are less, his shoulders pull back gradually and his head does not hang forward so much. When singing, he could not keep the ribcage expanded which collapses as he produces the first note right after inhalation; his voice

sounds less harsh around the top notes but still there is a lack of resonance. As he practises several times, his body becomes tense, he seems distracted from the task, and any good bodily actions disappear. He tries to find the right physical reactions at least twice then he starts to sing.

With the regularity of training, Michael makes progress: with a gentle inhalation, his ribcage expands gradually and his shoulders remain steady; his face looks focused but still has no facial expression and I can sense he feels the changes in his body and tries to make these physical reactions as satisfactory as possible. His standing posture is also improved significantly, and he keeps his head erect and back straight for most of the time. However, as the individual training time increases, he loses these reactions easily and becomes tense; I need to keep telling him to take care of his standing posture, to try not to inhale through the nose too much to avoid the sniffing sound, and to let the ribcage expand rather than lift the chest.

When singing, he can consciously prepare a satisfactory inhalation, keep the expansion of his ribcage and a good standing posture; there is more breath support and, from his face, I can tell he reaches the top notes more easily than before. Once more, he finds it difficult to maintain these attitudes until the end of the exercises and when the melody starts to descend, these aspects gradually worsen and his body looks tense.

Michael makes great improvements in the last stage of training: he keeps the chest in an open position, his shoulders are not curved forward and his body

seems flexible and relaxed. He keeps the ribcage expanded as much as he can and the breathing cycles are lengthened without bodily tension. Moreover, he shows a specific facial expression: his face looks nice with a gentle smile and wide eyes which makes him look like he enjoys practising. While he sometimes needs reminding about good posture, I remind him much less than previously.

When vocal production is added, with gentle inhalation, his ribcage expands regularly and his upper body looks relaxed; a natural smile occasionally shows on his face; he sings the notes with sufficient support and he keeps the ribcage expanded for as long as possible rather than collapsing the ribcage too early; the top notes sound steadier with resonance. However, he could not remain this pleasant smile till the end of the session, therefore, I need to remind him when he loses it.

Training Feedback diary

In Michael's feedback and training diaries, he says that his bodily reactions are quite different to what he is used to. In the day-four diary he writes that this method makes him feel action in his ribcage which he never felt before. He describes his ribcage as expanded with more air stored in his lungs, and the air he takes in as going deeper rather than remaining in his upper chest. Nevertheless, his chest still goes up most of the time and after sustained practice, he senses tiredness and muscle tension, especially in the ribcage muscles, and he loses the feeling of expansion of the ribcage. At this stage, he hardly feels any changes in the

soft palate or larynx.

By day six of training, Michael feels more actions: his back and abdomen take part in the breathing which brings him a sense of support, although he cannot feel this change all the time. He also describes his challenges: it is hard for him to slow down the inhalation speed as required; the more air he tries to take in the worse results he gets, and what should be a natural inhalation turns to a forced one, and his body gets tense and locked quickly. He finds this situation also occurs with ribcage expansion: if he keeps thinking that he needs to maintain an expanded ribcage, he becomes tense with the result of less expansion. When singing, he can prepare his breath before singing but at the moment of phonation, he cannot keep his ribcage open; yet, support could be sensed and he can sing the top notes with more energy.

By day eight of training, Michael writes he senses comfortable reactions happening in his body: he could feel the air he takes in gently and slowly, his ribcage gradually expanding without tension in the intercostal muscles; he also finds he could control the speed of inhalation, feel the strength of the abdominal muscles as he exhales slowly, and the less he thinks about all this, the more relaxed body he becomes. Thus, he mentions that too much unnecessary thinking causes the body lock: in order to avoid this, Michael walks around, closes his eyes and relaxes his mind as much as possible.

In the day-ten diary he mentions that slight movements can be sensed in his oral cavity: the larynx drops automatically with the soft palate rise, but these

actions only happen occasionally and he did not understand how these movements are achieved. He also feels Zhou's second breathing technique is very similar to Garcia's, as both methods require students to obtain a good expansion of the ribcage by gentle inhalation, while Garcia's technique also asks the student to hold the air as long as possible, and this makes Michael feel that his abdominal muscles have been fully exercised. When singing, he feels his abdomen provide support for the top notes, his larynx feels less uncomfortable and his voice is just produced naturally.

From day twelve to day fifteen, Michael does not take any training, because he hardly feels new physical sensations or progress from the practice which makes him feel anxious; this could even create more unnecessary psychological tension, so he thinks it is essential to stop training for a few days. Even if he does not practice, Michael still takes some time every day to think about the problems encountered.

By day sixteen, progress is shown, as he writes that he can ensure that the physical reactions are positive and can avoid some unsatisfactory responses; the movements in the oral cavity are more obvious and easier to obtain: as long as he guarantees physical and mental relaxation with a gentle smile on his face, he can obtain a dropped larynx and a raised palate easily. The improvements are also reflected in his singing: his voice flows out naturally almost with every gentle inhalation; his ribcage keeps expanding with his singing and does not show collapse easily; he feels the abdomen muscles working, especially when singing

high notes; the power and support provided by abdomen muscles are more obvious, and he sings the high notes with a comfortable larynx.

Participant II experience (Michael)

Zhou's Breathing Technique – Live session

It seems a challenge for Michael to practise the Zhou's first gasping method at the start. He told me in the session that he feels a bit uncomfortable because the air he takes in just stays at the very top of the chest and after repeating the exercise a few times, he feels his body is stiff. From my observation: he takes the air in with a jerking movement; his shoulders and chest have obvious upward movements; his mouth is slightly open and the sound of inhalation is noticeable even from the video; his ribcage has little expansion. In singing, his voice sounds less supported and sometimes he forgets to use this method to breathe; the top of his voice sounds harsh and tends to crack; much tension around his larynx can be heard and singing with this method seems to take him a lot of energy.

The second slower method seems easier to use than the first one. He looks calm and the expansion of his ribcage looks good and bigger than in the first approach; also the air goes in deeper. Yet, he says fewer actions in the oral cavity can be sensed compare with the first method. In singing, his voice sounds more stable and supported; less ribcage expansion can be seen in singing; top notes still sound harsh without resonance.

According to my observation that Michael does not show many facial

expressions in both methods and barely writes in his diaries, I tell him to pay more attention to his facial expression and focus on whether lifting the zygomatic muscles could help him sense the oral cavity changes. Moreover, to avoid him creating more tension by forcing a smile like Mary, I suggested he treat the expressions as natural responses to the real-life examples.

When he applies the first method, he shows an excited face with widened eyes and an open mouth; inhalation can still be heard and feels rushed; his chest and shoulders are lifted sometimes and I can tell there is tension around his shoulders and neck; I can see his larynx go down with almost every inhalation. In singing, his breath still tends to be rushed and as he repeats the exercise, his body becomes tense; he cannot remain energised all the time and he usually loses energy in the middle of the training. When singing, his voice becomes more tense as the pitch rises; top notes sound harsh without resonance and his ribcage shows little expansion.

In the second approach, his ribcage expands more without his shoulders and chest lifting; moreover, I barely hear the sound of sniffing. However, when he adds the facial expression, tension reappears: the smile becomes a rictus and his ribcage shows less expansion. When singing, he forgets to sing with a pleasant face which makes his face look less tense; he manages to keep the support and his voice sounds stable and supported; the top notes sound better but still a bit harsh.

Michael makes good progress in the last stages of training. As he applies the first approach, he can maintain a good standing posture most of the time; his body

looks more relaxed after a quick inhalation without a lifted chest and shoulders; natural facial expressions are shown and a quick expansion of the ribcage can be seen. When singing, a steady and supported voice can be heard; he tries to keep the ribcage open during singing, but sometimes he loses it as he continues; his body shows less tension when he sings top notes and his voice sounds less harsh.

In the second approach, his face looks nice with a natural smile; the ribcage expands more compared with the last method; the sniffing sound is hardly heard during a gentle and slow inhalation; yet, he gradually loses good posture and the smile, and I need to remind him of them. When singing, his voice sounds stable and supported; his chest does not collapse easily and he does not look tired after singing.

Training Feedback diary

From Michael's feedback and training diaries, it is clear he feels uncomfortable at first with the gasp method. He feels his body is very stiff and locked, especially when he has repeated the exercise a few times. He is unable to expand his ribcage and, sometimes, he feels his larynx is dry and stiff, his jaw tense. He does mention however that he can clearly sense the changes happening in the oral cavity, both his soft palate and larynx have distinct upward and downward movements (respectively). When singing, he dislikes this method: the air inhaled quickly and frequently stays in a very high position in the lungs which is tiring when singing; his larynx does not have a chance to drop and feels uncomfortable when singing

the high notes, and he feels his upper body is full of tension.

In the day-eight training diary he writes that he gains more air from the second slower inhalation method: he feels the expansion of the ribcage and his shoulders and chest are more stable; less tension can be sensed from the body. When singing, he could feel support.

By day ten of practising, he writes that with a quick inhalation and sudden expansion of the ribcage, his lungs can only get a short and shallow supply of air; he feels tension in the intercostal muscles and his chest lifts, yet he can relieve this tension by relaxing before the next quick inhalation because he is not singing. The greatest benefit is that he can feel a significant drop in the larynx.

In the day-thirteen diary, he emphasizes that he can obtain more air and maintain this air in a deeper position from the second method; he can greatly expand the ribcage in the second slow technique but these actions would be hard to get if he adds the smile. When he tries to put a smile into practice, he feels the muscles in his face go stiff and he keeps thinking about how to make this smile happen which makes the situation worse: a well-expanded ribcage is replaced by a tense body; the chest tends to lift rather than expand. When singing, he could not help but keep worrying about the facial expression and his body feels tense; top notes are not easy to reach and he feels tired after singing.

He writes on day sixteen that no matter which method he applies, the most important thing for him is to release any nervousness if he wants to progress. He tries to think less before the training and avoids worrying about good results. He

says that once he reduces the overthinking, he is more comfortable. When he applies the first method, he senses more air can be maintained in the lungs longer and the ribcage seems to expand more; the tension in the upper body (especially the neck) is reduced and his body is not locked easily; the air he takes in can stay in a deeper position. His voice also benefitted from these positive changes: he has more energy to sing, the top notes can be reached more easily and he feels the larynx is more comfortable.

By day nineteen of training, he mentions that the coordination between smiling and an open ribcage is better when he pays less attention to his face. If he reduces over-thinking and relaxes, he smiles simply and manages to maintain an aptly open and supported body, but he struggles to maintain this after repetition of the exercise. When singing, he feels more energy and support, especially for top notes.

Participant I experience (Mary)

Zhou's Blending registers Technique – Live session

The main aim of Zhou's blending register technique is to help singers obtain a smooth transition from the medium register to the head register and to make sure the voice in the head register has the same resonance as in the medium register by modifying the vowels to create a high raised soft palate and larger oral cavity. Before training, I demonstrate to Mary what vowel modification is and let her just speak the vowels in the order 'a, au, o' which is also called rounding the vowels. The speaking of the vowels is fine, and she looks really relaxed as in normal

speaking before I asked her to sing the exercise.

When singing, she looks very focused as her eyes keep looking at one point; her back is not hunched and her shoulders are dropped; yet the well-opened ribcage is hard to see and the breath she takes in is random. The vowels should not be shaped by the lips but mostly by the tongue with little change in lip position, apart from opening as the pitch rises. However, Mary forms the vowels, especially the 'o' mainly through her lips, which makes her lips look tense and stiff. Lip tension tends to draw the tongue back and also causes tension in the root of the tongue. Zhou clearly points out in her treatise that students should avoid these kinds of tension which bring the soft palate down and allows the larynx to rise, impacting the quality and accuracy of the high notes.

Her mouth does not open much when singing, her voice sounds less legato and she emphasises every vowel when it is modified. Nevertheless, no obvious break can be heard when she transfers from the medium register to the head register which is good but her voice in the head register sounds less resonance and harsh, more like she is squeezing the voice out.

Some progress can be noticed in the middle stages of practising, but there is no obvious difference, generally. Before singing the exercises, Mary speaks the vowels several times and she looks totally relaxed. When singing, she keeps a proper singing posture almost throughout the training and her face still looks focused but not over-concentrated compared with the last training stage; the breath she takes in still seems random. Sometimes when she produces the vowel

'o', her lips still look as if it takes much effort to shape the vowel but they are more flexible than before; she also told me that sometimes with the process of modifying the vowels, she can sense her soft palate rise up gradually and this is the moment when she feels the top notes are easier to reach, but this kind of feeling just shows in the training occasionally.

Her voice sounds better and I can sense that her abdomen is engaged in singing when she sings top notes, and the transfer between the medium and head register sounds smoother than at the start. However, her voice does not resonate all the time; she loses resonance and feels tired after a few repetitions of the exercise.

Before Mary starts the final stage of training, in order for her make more progress, I remind her to gradually open her mouth as the pitch ascends and she modifies the vowel, as well as applying one of the breathing techniques she has already practised. In this stage, Mary makes more progress: generally, she can take care of her breath and expand her ribcage; the 'o' sound demands less effort from the lips which look relaxed; she also tells me that the tension around the root of the tongue is less.

When singing, her voice in the head register resounds less harsh; with the pitch ascending and vowels changing, her mouth opens gradually and less tension can be seen around the lips. She tells me that the transfer into the head register feels smoother and easier. However, Mary cannot keep this up throughout the session: she forgets about correct inhalation and tension reappears on her lips, at which point I remind her to notice all the positive reactions she had and not to lose them.

Training Feedback diary

In the first week of training, most of what she mentions in her diaries are the difficulties she encountered rather than the benefits she obtains. When singing the vowel modification, she feels that her lips are locked and becomes tense as the pitch rises; she also writes that there is obvious tension at the root of the tongue and this tension becomes more pronounced as the pitch rises and the high note is difficult to reach as sometimes her larynx feels uncomfortable. Moreover, she identifies an involuntarily form of psychological tension which results from having to sing high notes in head register at the same time as gradually changing the vowel.

Mary writes on day ten that to avoid extra mental pressure before she practises, she walks around and takes a few deep breaths before singing; she also tries to think less when she sings top notes. She mentions that if she feels her lips become stiff and tense, she stops singing immediately and rests for a few seconds before starting again. She thinks that in this way she not only can get rid of most of the unnecessary psychological tension but also release the tension which exists at the root of her tongue and the lips, and this relaxation method also appears in the following training diaries.

By day twelve of training, Mary says that sometimes she can sense that the soft palate is raised when she changes the vowel; at the same time, she senses the top note becomes easier to reach, but she cannot make sure this action happens every time she sings. She also mentions that she feels the abdomen muscles are engaged

in singing and help the flow of the air. When she uses the energy from the abdomen muscles, she feels that the top notes can be completed without tiredness and ensure the larynx is in a comfortable position.

By day fifteen of practicing, Mary writes that when singing, with the help of gradually opening her mouth, the vowels can be better shaped and she can avoid the tension of the lips; she also feels that the transfer between the medium and head registers can be achieved more smoothly. She mentions that she incorporates the breathing approaches she practised in the first training session, although at the beginning she could not take both techniques into account at the same time; only as training continued did she feel that the cooperation between these two methods improved and could provide her with more energy and support to sing in the head register.

She writes on day nineteen that rather than overthink the vowels or the pitches, she tries to imagine the process of vowel modification before she does it and thinks of the head voice as 'coming to her' rather than trying to achieve it. She says that if she thinks like this, in addition to the transition process becoming smooth, she maintains deeper inhalation and she feels the lips are more flexible when changing vowels; she also, she can obtain a more comfortable larynx in this way.

Participant I experience (Mary)

Garcia's Blending registers Technique – Live session

Mary holds unclear opinions about the different registers of the voice, especially the chest register. She had never sung any notes with her chest voice in the repertoire she has previously sung. Therefore, before we began practising Garcia's technique I demonstrated what the voice sounds in different registers to make sure she understands before we carry on. Garcia designs three exercises to help students blend the chest and medium registers: students need to pass repeatedly from the chest to the medium and vice versa where the interval between two adjacent notes is a semitone or a whole tone; the last exercise requires students to sing the same note in the chest and medium registers respectively, each exercise starting from c1.

I observe that Mary sings each note very carefully and this makes her body look locked with tension; she can barely use her chest voice, only finding it by repeating notes several times. When she transfers to a different register, there is a break and she cannot ensure that every transfer happens successfully; her medium voice sounds unstable and weak sometimes her voice shakes a bit and the volume of the two registers sound different. From her face, I can tell she tries hard to find those notes in the different registers which makes her look very focused; moreover, I find her ribcage has no obvious movement and the breath she takes in is random and unprepared.

In the middle of the training, some improvement can be seen, but generally,

there is no obvious difference. Before beginning the exercises, Mary tends to sing a random note several times in different registers, especially in chest voice. When singing an exercise, Mary can find her chest voice directly and accurately most of the time; the transition between different registers becomes smoother but the break is still audible. Mary's body seems more relaxed but the body tension builds up during the training time.

There is no specific expression on her face and it is easy to read that she continues to wonder how to set up the voice for different registers; the voice balance between the chest and medium registers sounds better but her chest voice sounds less supported than at the start of the training and the voice in the medium register remains weak. She tends to sing e1 and f1 in the same medium register when she should be changing register, but she cannot hear that she is not doing so. As she sings the last exercise, every time she transfers to the medium voice her eyes roll up and she sings with a tense body; most of the time, she fails to make the transfer around c1 and d1.

In the final stage, Mary makes great progress and shows greater proficiency. Before singing, Mary adjusts her breathing consciously, the ribcage expands with gentle inhalation; a pleasant smile shows on her face and all these physical reactions happen with a less tense body. However, Mary cannot keep this till the end of the session, and in the middle, she loses good posture and breathing easily and her body goes tense, at which point, I remind her to bear these positive reactions in mind.

When singing, even though the break still exists, she tries her best to eliminate the it; she finds her chest voice quickly most of the time and when she changes from chest to the medium register her face looks natural without her eyes rolling up. The balance of voice between the different registers sounds better, both are produced with much support, and she does not deliberately reduce the volume of the chest register to balance the voice in different registers. However, she cannot always sing the last exercise accurately after repeating it many times: she gets tense and makes mistakes.

Training Feedback diary

From Mary's feedback and diaries, it is clearly hard for her to find the different registers and she cannot blend them well in the beginning stage. In the first week of training, Mary writes that she spends a lot of time finding the voice in different registers, especially the chest voice, sometimes she mixing the chest and medium registers, and tends to sing all the notes in the medium register. She feels there is an obvious break when she makes the transfer, and most of the time she needs to repeat it several times for the transfer to happen successfully, otherwise she just keeps singing in one register.

She also cannot reliably produce the same volume of sound volume in two different registers: the chest voice sounds louder than the medium which is weak and unsteady. Moreover, she thinks the hardest exercise is to sing the same note in different registers: she cannot change to another register, singing the same note

in quick succession as it takes some time to make the change happen, especially for c1 and d1. Once she has sung these two notes in chest register, it feels hard to sing those notes again in the medium register.

By day nine of training, Mary writes that before she starts to practise she would walk around, take a deep breath and then pick some random notes and sing them in different registers separately. This seems to help her find her voice in the different registers more easily. She feels that the transition becomes a bit smoother but not every time, especially for the notes around e1, and she cannot find the chest voice to sing the note quickly; most of the time, she needs to sing those notes in chest register first then starts singing the exercise from the beginning.

Mary writes on day eleven that to make the voice sound equal in different registers, she deliberately reduces the volume of the chest voice by providing less support and she also writes this can minimize the gap between the volume in different registers but cannot solve the problem that the medium voice sounds weak. She still has difficulty with the last exercise, even though the chest voice can be found easier, and cannot make the transition happen successfully every time with the most difficult notes in the medium register being c1 and d1. Mary sometimes involuntarily worries too much about if she can make a successful transfer which makes her upper body tense and make the exercise more difficult.

To help her make more here, I remind her that facility in blending the registers comes in part from adequate breathing techniques and a flexible larynx. By day

fourteen of training, Mary finds a flexible larynx does plays an important role in changing smoothly from the chest to medium register quickly, and that the breathing techniques she practised in the first training session could help develop the flexibility of the larynx. Therefore, in this stage, she not only trains her voice to blend registers but relies upon the breathing techniques to help achieve the blending. Moreover, a good standing posture and breathing before singing could help Mary obtain the support and energy needed to sing the lower notes in the medium register: she finds the support provided by an expanded ribcage is sufficient to make the medium voice sounds stable, and in this way she achieves a balance between the chest and medium registers. Besides, when she sings the last exercise, she finds that, as the larynx drops, her soft palate rises automatically and a raised soft palate helps her finish the register change from the chest to the medium quickly and smoothly.

Although she finds a way to overcome the above difficulties, she cannot immediately accomplish these two techniques satisfactory at the same time, as she writes in her diary on day sixteen: she does not always take a proper breath and, as the training time increases, she loses the expanded ribcage and pleasant mien and becomes tense; sometimes she manages a good breath but forgets to put a smile on the face, etc.

Participant II experience (Michael)

Zhou's Blending registers Technique – Live session

Before training, I explained vowel modification to Michael and asked him to speak those vowels before singing. Michael says he has trained with a similar technique with his vocal tutor before, therefore, it is not hard for him to understand. When speaking, Michael looks totally relaxed, he produces different vowels easily with tiny movements showing on his lips and no tension can be seen on his lips.

When singing, his shoulders are dropped, yet his back is hunched; his ribcage does not show expansion and he inhales randomly; most of the time, he keeps his mouth open which is good because a well-open mouth is good for shaping the vowels such as 'a' 'o' 'ao'. However, the pronunciation for different vowels sounds the same as the 'a' sound and I can see he hardly moves his lips especially when the pitch goes higher. I ask him why and he says that he is afraid to sing the high notes and worries about failure; in this case, he overly concentrates on those high notes but at the same time he wants to pronounce the vowels, therefore, he feels that the lips are hard to move and the tongue is full of tension.

With the pitch ascending, his body tends upward and sometimes his heels leave the ground slightly and he has a tendency to lean forward. Nevertheless, there is no obvious break when he transfers from the medium register to the head register but his voice sounds less legato and harsh in the head register without resonance, sometimes, and his voice breaks around the high notes.

Before Michael begins the middle stage of training, to help Michael make more

improvements and find ways to overcome the obstacles he meets, I suggest to him not be afraid to use his lips to change the vowels while being as relaxed as possible, as well as trying to combine one of the breathing approaches when singing the exercise. There are some improvements shown in this stage: Michael's pronunciation sounds clearer and his lips look less tense and more flexible than before, and he reports only a little tension in the tongue.

At this stage, Michael takes care of his breath and he puts his hand on either side of the ribcage to remind himself to expand it; his voice sounds more legato with resonance, and the frequency of breaking the voice is reduced. However, I can sense sometimes he is still afraid to sing the top notes and he forgets to breathe correctly at which point, his voice sounds harsh again and has less resonance.

In the final stages, Michael is proficient, and his performance shows many improvements: generally, his pronunciation is clearer and less tension can be seen around his lips; he can keep a proper standing posture for most of the training time and keeps the ribcage open during singing. The transfer from medium register to the head register sounds smoother and his voice sounds less harsh with more resonance; he sings in the head register with more confidence and he tells me that his larynx and tongue feel comfortable most of the time.

When he feels he sings in an uncomfortable state, he can consciously adjust his performance; for example, sometimes, with the pitch ascending, the air he takes in remains in a high position and it is easy to tell that he is singing with an

uncomfortable larynx because his voice sounds harsh again. Rather than continuing, he stops immediately and reminds himself to relax by taking a few deep breaths before resuming, and after the adjustment, his voice sounds resonant again and his looks more relaxed. However, the longer he practises, he loses these reactions at some point, his back becomes hunched again, his ribcage starts to collapse and his body looks tense.

Training Feedback diary

Michael mainly mentions the difficulties that he meets in his first-week training diaries. When changing the vowels, he feels that the lips gradually lose flexibility as the pitch rises; he worries if he can reach the high notes, and the more he thinks about it, the worse he gets, and the tension on the lips is more obvious. He also says the tension can be sensed on the tongue especially when the pitch rises; sometimes he feels he sings with an uncomfortable larynx, and he can feel the air he takes in remains in a high position.

By day nine of training, Michael identifies that unnecessary mental pressure is the main reason why his lips lack flexibility as he keeps worrying about the high notes. To reduce the extra psychological tension, before practising he thinks about the technique rather than rushing to sing the exercise. Moreover, rather than singing the exercises repeatedly, after singing a group of notes, he stops to rest for a few seconds and then continues to sing to the next group. He writes that proceeding this way helps him release the tension in his body and lips, and also

ensures the quality of his practice.

By day eleven of training, Michael mentions that preparing good breathing can help him obtain more energy and support when he sings in the head register. For Michael, Garcia's breathing technique helps him expand his ribcage and makes sure he sings with sufficient support. He writes that he can reach the top notes easier if he takes care of his breath before singing and he can sense the connection with the abdomen muscles. Also, this builds up his confidence to sing the high notes and with that confidence, he feels the mental pressure has reduced much. However, he cannot ensure that he sings in a comfortable physical state every time and he gets tired easily after repeating it a few times.

On the fourteenth day of practicing, Michael writes that his feelings and physical reactions have remained constant in the past few days of practice and he does not feel he is making progress. Therefore, he decides to rest for a few days and then continue his training on day eighteen. During these days, he reflects on his problems and realizes the importance of satisfactory breathing in singing; moreover, he practises the method in silence and tries his best to make sure his ribcage is open with every breath.

Progress has been achieved after resuming training, as he writes on day twenty that the mental pressure is significantly reduced and he tries to focus on his breath rather than worrying about the high notes; the transfer between the medium and head registers can be completed more smoothly and he modifies the vowels with relaxed lips. When singing, he feels that he has more energy than

before and the support from the abdomen muscles can be sensed; he feels the soft palate rises as the larynx drops into a comfortable position.

Participant I experience (Mary)

Garcia's and Zhou's technique for singing legato – Live session

Garcia offers several tips for students to sing legato, permitting singers to flexibly choose according to different musical lines and text. Zhou provides suggestions to singers on how to pronounce Chinese more clearly. Yet in both the treatises, Garcia and Zhou emphasize that the most important and basic rule for achieving legato lines is to shorten the consonants and lengthen the vowels.

In this session, one Chinese and Italian piece from the repertoire should be sung by participants, and to save time, I suggested they sing repertoire they had already learned. Moreover, according to their performance in the session and their self-training diaries, legato is achieved in Chinese and their pronunciation in Chinese is of course better than in Italian. Therefore, in the following analysis, the main discussion will focus on their Italian pronunciation with legato technique.

The two pieces chosen by Mary were Cherubino's aria from *Il nozze di Figaro* 'Voi che sapete' and an art song describing the view of the Peacock River in Xinjiang, China 美丽的孔雀河 (*Beautiful Peacock River*) which she learned before she attended this project. When she sings in the Chinese repertoire, each word she pronounces is clear and I can understand the meaning of each sentence. However, the musical line is not legato as enunciation of the consonants takes up more time

than that of the vowels. I demonstrate this technique to Mary and allow her to sense the difference when I sang the first sentence again with less emphasis and time given to the consonants. Then Mary sings again and this time the musical line sound more legato.

More problems are exposed when Mary sings in Italian: sometimes Mary 'chews' the words which means that when her voice moves from a consonant to a vowel or from one syllable to another, her oral cavity is not stable and therefore some 'unexpected' sounds will exist, resulting in 'chewed' pronunciation. Differences in language and culture are important reasons: there are twenty-three consonants and six simple vowels in Chinese Pinyin which is the foremost romanization system for Standard Mandarin and most of the vowels are not used alone, but usually in combination. In addition, Mandarin has four tones, so the same letter combination has four different pronunciations and meanings. Also, in Mandarin Speaking, it is not necessary to fully pronounce all the phonemes which is to avoid creating different meanings of a word, the jaw and tongue should be extremely flexible to merge different phonemes into a whole.³³² Moreover, the consonants in Chinese characters usually only appear at the beginning of the word and normally, the plosive sound does not require much emphasis of pronunciation. A long-standing habit of pronunciation leads to the fact that when Mary sings Italian, the oral cavity is too flexible to maintain the single pure vowels which is

³³² Li Lei, *Gechang Yuyan de Xunlian Yu Biaoda* [Training and Expression of Singing Language] (Shanghai: Shanghai Yinyue Chubanshe [Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House], 2000), p. 8.

why Mary 'chews' the words in singing.

Moreover, some vowels are ignored in singing; for example, in the sentence 'che cosa è amor' the vowel 'è' is missed, and in the word 'nuovo', there is no 'u' sound in Mary's pronunciation. The musical line is not legato as the consonants still sound a bit long, and I remind her to shorten the consonants and advise her to treat the consonants like playing the ping-pong. In this image, when the ball hits the racket, the ball will rebound quickly: the pronunciation of the consonants should be like the rebounding ball, effected quickly and decisively; thereafter she sings again and more legato is achieved.

She cannot remain in a proper standing posture throughout the lesson and her back is a bit hunched; she does not take much care of her breath as I barely see obvious expansion on her ribcage; Mary does not open her mouth much, especially when she sings in Italian.

I advised her to use the previously practised breathing techniques and manage her standing posture before we started the session the following week which resulted in a more supported voice and fluent air flow, especially when she remains in a proper standing posture and expands her ribcage; nevertheless, Mary loses the good posture and rib-cage expansion gradually as the session continues. I need to remind her to not only focus on pronunciation but also on breathing and posture.

Her pronunciation in Italian sounds clearer and the words are less 'chewed' as she is careful to shorten the consonants which also makes the musical phrase

sound more legato. However, as with the other technical elements, Mary forgets to concentrate and I need to keep reminding her during the session. Also, Mary still does not open wide her mouth when she sings and can only adjust it when I tell her to.

Training Feedback diary

In Mary's diary, she does not mention the difficulties when she practises this technique as she said it does not take her much time to master this method. In the first week's training, she writes that she does not feel much mental pressure when she practises, because she already knows this method; also, unlike the other techniques, she considers that this method does not require many physical reactions and , therefore, it is not hard for her to master it.

She writes that after shortening the consonants, she feels the pronunciation is clearer and the music sounds more legato. However, in the middle of singing, she still forgets to shorten the consonants and therefore, Mary would remind herself of this issue a few times before she starts to sing.

In the second week, as Mary feels that she gradually masters the technique, she focuses more on her breathing. She writes that her voice is steadier when she sings with an expanded ribcage; more support can be sensed and she has more energy to sing the high notes. However, Mary mentions that she gets both tired quickly and tense when she concentrates on the ribcage expansion Moreover, Mary forgets to lengthen the vowels if she pays more attention to breathing. Therefore, she

decides to practise sentence by sentence to make sure she can meet the requirements as much as possible. Mary writes that singing in this way makes her practice more efficient and her body does not get so tense.

Participant II experience (Michael)

Garcia's and Zhou's technique for singing legato – Live session

The repertoire Michael chose for this session is the *aria antica Per la gloria d'adorarvi* by Bononcini and an art song that expresses patriotic sentiments called *多情的土地* (*Amorous land*), both of which he learnt for his application to Shenyang Conservatory. When singing, his body looks relaxed and moves with the melodies; his shoulders are dropped, yet his back is hunched and his head is not erect; it is easy to tell that he does not prepare his breath before he produces the sound as his ribcage does not show obvious expansion, even when he sings the top notes.

His pronunciation of each word is clear and I do not misunderstand any meanings when he sings Chinese repertoire, the only problem being that sometimes the consonants he sings are too long. I demonstrate to him how to shorten the consonants and he corrects his pronunciation quickly. When he sings in Italian, most of the issues are similar to the ones Mary encounters: sometimes, he 'chews' the word or completely ignores some vowels such as the 'i' in the word 'mio'. Moreover, the consonants still sound too long, so I suggest that the consonant should be enunciated quickly and decisively rather than held for too long and that

he could treat the consonants as playing ping-pong, as I said to Mary. When he sings again, the voice sounds more legato and there are less 'sticky' sounds which hold back the free flow of air.

Before he starts the session the following week, I suggest he thinks about previously breathing training. Then his body looks relaxed as he moves around; he can maintain a proper standing posture and take care of his breathing, sometimes putting his hands on the sides of his ribcage to remind himself to open the chest when singing, and at this time, his voice sounds supported and smooth. However, he cannot remain in this proper standing posture till the end of the session, neither can he maintain concentration on preparing adequate breathing, and I frequently have to remind him of both.

When Michael does shorten the consonants, the singing not only sounds more legato, but also the pronunciation is clearer and the 'chewed' words are less obvious in Italian. Yet he still needs reminding as the session progresses, and for words which contain two consecutive vowels, he still habitually ignores the enunciation of the first of these two vowels.

Training Feedback diary

As Michael had similar experience in legato training with his own vocal tutor, he does not mention any difficulties in his diaries, just his feelings. In the first week, he mentions that he feels less pressure, both mental and physical, due to his previous experiences with legato training and a confidence with his chosen

repertoire. To enhance the feeling of lengthening the vowels, he sings the music first only with vowels and as slow as he can. After that, he sings with the whole words and he feels that the pronunciation is clearer.

Compared with the first week's diaries, most of the content in his diaries is the same. He mentions that more energy and support can be sensed from the abdomen if he prepares his breath and takes care of his standing posture; yet he tires easily and quickly through this mental and physical effort. During the second week, he continues singing vowels only, and he imagines speaking consonants like playing ping-pong to make sure all consonants are enunciated quickly, saving more time and breath for the vowel sounds.