

The diagnostics and formation of psychological readiness of students for public appearance

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Abstract: The article studies external and internal negative factors affecting the character, content and quality of man's public activities. Besides, the article considers such notions as "stage fright" and "reliability in public appearance". The authors present and analyze the results of a psychoeducational experiment conducted on the basis of the Piano Department in the College of Arts. Moreover, they analyze the efficiency of forming students' psychological readiness to public appearance.

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Introduction

In any field of activity directed to an audience, the speakers face psychological difficulties. Public appearance is a kind of activity performed in unusual conditions [1]. Public appearance is often a strength test indeed even for experienced lecturers, artists and musicians. There are many different extreme factors which influence the character, content and quality of man's public activities. For instance, musicians-performers mostly deal with external negative factors: overwork; acoustic imperfection of concert hall and musical instrument; unforeseen disturbances. Typical psychological states include: stress; strained attention; high responsibility; fear of mistakes, failure, etc. Nevertheless, while studying, musical students have a unique opportunity to reveal their artistic and creative potential in academic concerts, tests, exams, competitions, report concerts in educational institutions of different levels (music school, music college or university). Public appearance, as an important element of education, prepares musicians for their future performing career.

Stage experience accumulated during the years of studies, theoretical knowledge and the practical skills of preparing to public appearance matter much in music performing. The leading role in training a musician belongs to his teacher: he helps students not only to acquire professional knowledge and skills but also to manifest themselves as creative personalities and to prepare themselves for public appearance. This process is very individual because every student has individual psychological characteristics.

The problem of "stage fright" is the one which is mostly studied in musical pedagogy, psychology and performance. Psychologists, music

teachers and methodologists consider the problem of stage fright from different viewpoints: as a negative condition preventing an artist from recreating an image on the stage; and as a positive condition which helps an artist to mobilize himself to the uttermost and brilliantly fulfill the creative concept [2; 3; 4]. Besides, performer quite often displays a kind of inhibition caused by an excessive agitation and his worry is followed by a "stage apathy" or indifference to the stage [5].

Musician's activities are notable for multi-aspect character and complexity. That is why it seems reasonable to consider the problem of successful public appearance wider than the stage fright. In our opinion, musician's preparation for public (concert) appearance includes the notion of "musician's reliability".

Man's reliability in general is "an ability to preserve required qualities in complex conditions and the stability of person's optimal operating parameters" [6]. Musician's performance is also conducted in the conditions of possible complication of situation and must be faultless. Consequently, performer should display reliability.

Musician's reliability is thoroughly studied in the works of Y.A. Tsagarelli, R.F. Suleymanov and S.G. Korlyakova. Y.A. Tsagarelli [7] was the first who studied musician's reliability as an ability to play music faultlessly, persistently and accurately in the conditions of concert performance. R.F. Suleymanov [8] experimentally found out the evolution of emotional features of instrumentalists during the formation of their professional skills. S.G. Korlyakova [9] experimentally proved that musician's psychomotor reliability is provided by the automatism and stability of performing skills

moulded at all levels of motion synthesis (according to N.A. Bernstein) and depends on the level of musician's proficiency, stage experience, general psychomotor maturity, general psychomotor reliability and the characteristics of neurodynamics. The problem of reliability of piano students in concert performance is studied in the works of S.G. Korlyakova and Y.L. Vanskova [10].

Based on the above, the goal of our research is to study the psychological peculiarities of public appearance reliability forming among piano students while training in the College of Arts.

Methods

In order to reach the goal, the authors conducted a psychopedagogical experiment which included the problem searching method, the cross-sectional method and the experimental method consisting of summative, formative and control stages. The experiment was conducted on the basis of the Piano Department in the College of Arts.

Music student reliability in public appearance was examined with the help of:

1) Human system diagnostic device "Aktivatsiometr" (the diagnostics of psychophysiological characteristics, emotional steadiness, attention, thinking, psychomotor processes, psychomotor activity in extreme situation) [11];

2) The EPQ method of G. Eysenck "The Diagnostics of Reflexive Skills and Thought Reflection"; the method of O. Garrens "The Diagnostics of Activity Reflection";

3) The method of V.I. Petrushin "Detecting the Treatment of a Certain Music Activity";

4) The method of the expert assessment of reliability in concert performance (self-regulation, disturbance resistance, stability and readiness).

During the experiment the authors conducted a correlation analysis with Student's t-criterion and linear correlation coefficient; a factor analysis with elimination criterion, significance test and reproduced variance proportion test; multivariate analysis with principle component method (PCM); spectral analysis with data array distribution analysis; data ranking by significance. Program Statistica 10.0 was used for statistical treatment.

Main part

The diagnostics of specified parameters at the summative stage of the research revealed the following:

- Three sets of factors having a significant influence on musician's reliability in concert performance: 1) psychomotor factor (psychomotor processes) – 34% of the variance; 2) cognitive-

reflexive factor (reflection, thinking, attention) – 22% of the variance; 3) psychoemotional factor (emotional stability) – 29% of the variance;

- The most significant characteristics which influence musician's reliability in concert performance: psychoemotional stability; psychomotor abilities; thinking; attention and reflection;

- Key components of reliability: performance stability and readiness for the next concert.

On the termination of the summative stage, a special psychopedagogical program was introduced into the experimental group's education. This program includes the tasks for purposeful forming the stability components of students in public appearance. The obtained diagnostic data allowed supposing that the biggest effect for successful reliability formation can be provided by focusing on the development of psychoemotional and cognitive-reflexive factors because they appeared to be the least developed in both experimental groups.

The program included trainings and exercises for the development of self-regulation; professional reflection; stress immunity; disturbance tolerance; readiness for counteraction against stressors; emotional sensitivity; reflection of emotional states; thinking, thought reflection, stability of thinking act; motivation for self-fulfillment in life and career.

In general, the lessons contained the following tasks:

- Psychological exercises focused on the self-assessment of physical and emotional state;

- Psychological exercises making reflection and thinking more active (visualization, controlled imagination, reflection of certain activity, tasks with changing conditions, relax exercises);

- Special training for the development of self-regulation; learning the methods of effective self-regulation; including in activity demanding the use of acquired skills;

- Exercises for the development of emotional sensitivity, tolerance for emotional states and exercises for emotional state reflection;

- Professional role playing games and the development of an optimal behaviour in a role playing game with the help of professional reflection;

- Rehearsals with constantly changing stressors; diverse music exercises;

- Group discussion;

- Final psychogymnastic exercises aimed at the emotional-cognitive transition.

On the termination of the formative stage, the following results were got:

- The significance of factors in the variance changed in both experimental groups: 1) psychomotor factor – 26% of the absolute variance; 2) cognitive-reflexive factor – 32%; 3) psychoemotional factor – 34%. The total volume of variance increased by 7%. So, a significant reinforcement was detected in mutual influence between all parameters under study;

- In experimental group, the space of interconnections between reliability in performance and other parameters under study became wider. In control group, there is a trend to narrowing the interconnection space;

- Component “Self-regulation” was implemented as a single factor of reliability in performance in the experimental group;

- The experimental group displayed very tight connections between disturbance tolerance and activity reflection ($t > 0.70$, $p \leq 0.01$) and between stability and thought reflection ($t > 0.82$, $p \leq 0.01$). This allows making a conclusion that students under test include the reflection maximally into rehearsals and minimally into performance. Reflection is typical of a musician before the concert and after the concert as the analysis of the performance. However, directly during the performance, the main goal for a musician is to create an optimal artistic image;

- The spectral analysis revealed significant linear and non-linear interconnections between the lability of nervous system and psychoemotional stability ($t = 0.74$, $p \leq 0.01$, $r_{xy} = 0.69$, $p \leq 0.01$); the balance of nervous processes and psychoemotional stability ($t = 0.79$, $p \leq 0.01$, $r_{xy} = 0.65$, $p \leq 0.01$); thinking and reflection ($t = 0.71$, $p \leq 0.01$, $r_{xy} = 0.63$, $p \leq 0.01$).

The experiment revealed significant groups of components influencing musician’s reliability during a performance:

- 1) The strength/weakness of nervous system – the lability of nervous system – psychoemotional stability – psychomotor activity in extreme situation;

- 2) The balance of nervous processes – emotional sensitivity – reflection;

- 3) Thinking – attention – psychomotor processes – reflection.

The first category is notable for a dichotomy between students under test with low and high level of nervous system lability. Respondents with the low level of lability have the strongest nervous system, better psychoemotional stability, ill-defined response to stressors and better dynamics of psychomotor activity development in extreme situation. Respondents with the high level of lability have the opposite characteristics. The experimental group data demand different approaches for reliability formation. Thus the students under test with high lability need

more practice and efforts in psychomotor activity under extreme conditions.

The second category is built on the dichotomy of nervous inhibition or excitation predominance among students. Excitation predominance is typical of students with high lability and vice versa. Students with nervous inhibition predominance show a high reflection and ease in acquiring reflexive skills, though the emotional-perceptive aspect of reflection is less pronounced. In terms of this, one should pay more attention to reflexive skills development when forming concert reliability among students with nervous excitation prevalence, and in the group with nervous inhibition prevalence one should give special attention to the emotional aspect of reflection and emotional sensitivity. These parameters are formed by the cognitive-emotional transition principle which should be used in as many exercises as possible.

The third category is built on the dichotomy of high and low development of students’ reflection. Students with low reflection display a lower development dynamics of psychomotor processes, psychoemotional aspect of reliability. They have many mistakes and attention faults in thinking and activity. The high reflection allows respondents to learn effectively from their mistakes and prevent them in activity by reflection. The level of reflection development depends on the uniformity of formed stability and thought self-regulation. This interconnection has the best influence on the dynamics of reflection development.

Conclusion

The analysis of reliability changing in public appearance makes it possible to conclude that psychoemotional and cognitive-reflexive factors play more and more significant role in during the experimental formation of reliability. The experimental group displays a uniformed interconnection between the parameters of reliability and the prevalence of self-regulation role. The control group shows a disharmony and isolation of self-regulation in the structure of reliability.

Reliability component “Self-regulation” became a united factor due to the implementation of training program. The formation level of this factor has a big influence on person’s success in public activity. The success of musician’s performance depends not only on his psychoemotional state and psychoemotional stability but also on the characteristics of his neurodynamics and the reliability of his psychomotor functions. The research shows that the reliability in concert can be described as a dynamic and flexible to external influence quality formation of which is successfully conducted

by the methods presented in this article.

Findings

In spite of the existing scientific experience, the problem of person's psychological readiness for public appearance is still not well-studied. The urgent goal for the theory and practice of psychology and pedagogy is to increase the efficiency of psychological training of students for public appearance. Further prospect in researching this problem are connected with the scientific comprehension and implementation of adequate methods for their formation in educational institution.

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