

The Influence of Performing Arts Competitions on the Formation of Artistic and Pedagogical Space

Aleksandr Vladlenovich Kamenets¹, Natalia Ivanovna Anufrieva¹, Elizaveta Evgenievna Grushina², Galina Ivanovna Gribkova³, Olga Victorovna Ershova³, Natalia Sergeevna Yushchenko^{1*}

¹Russian State Social University, 4-1 Wilhelm Pieck str, Moscow, 129226, Russia; ns.yushchenko@mail.ru (N.S.Y.).

²Moscow State Institute of Music named after A.G. Schnittke, 10 Marshala Sokolovskogo str, Moscow, 123060, Russia

³Moscow City University, 4 Vtoroy Selskohoziaystvenny Driveway, Moscow, 129226, Russia

Abstract: The article deals with the main pedagogical problems of performing arts competitions in the context of the humanistic paradigm of the forming artistic and pedagogical space. Different pedagogical situations determining the requirements for organizing and conducting contest programs are analyzed. Various pedagogical strategies of involving the younger generation in performance activities that ensure mass participation and provide children and adolescents with access to creative activities regardless of the level of their performing abilities are proposed. The article also pays special attention to the creation of a pedagogical environment that motivates children and adolescents to participate in contest performance; the organizational conditions of the competition that minimize the negative psychological effects on its participants are highlighted and further prospects for their improvement from the point of humanistic art pedagogy are outlined. The pedagogical problems considered in the article allow the authors to conclude on the need for greater use of the achievements of theater pedagogy in work with contestants, as well as for a thought-out differentiation of competition programs accounting for the composition of the participants and the nature of the pedagogical problems.

Keywords: *Creativity, Performance, Competition, Pedagogy, Education, Development, Younger generation.*

1. Introduction

There are currently two main approaches to conducting competitions among children and adolescents in various kinds of performing arts [1]. The first of them, the most common one, involves the maximum approximation of competitive situations to the competitions of professional adult art performers that have developed a fairly stable system of professional and ethical requirements for the participants and organizers of these events, as well as appropriate criteria for assessing the level and quality of the demonstrated performing skills. The second approach, mostly adopted in the field of amateur performing arts, focuses more on the importance of the very fact of participation of the largest possible number of amateur young performers seeking to demonstrate their abilities to a wide audience. The first approach implies the preferential choice of the higher level of performing skills assuming a limited number of the competition winners and a significant rate of “elimination” of participants before the competition, during the competition, and at the end of it as not corresponding to the specified professional performance criteria. This type of competition includes the L.A. Brooke International Children’s Piano Duo Competition “Brother and Sister” and the Children’s and Youth Choral World Championships.

The second approach allows mass participation in competitive events not requiring the demonstration of a high level of performance but also solves an important pedagogical objective of involving the greatest possible number of representatives of the younger generation as performers in the given type of art. This type of competition includes the International Festival-Contest of Children and Youth Creativity “Commonwealth of Talents” and the International Competition of Children and Youth and Adult Creativity “Bird of Fortune”. The established stereotype in art pedagogy implying that these two approaches or two competitive strategies have the right to exist independently of each other entails many significant pedagogical problems and costs. The first, “professionalized” approach raises the following pedagogical problems [2-4].

Early professionalization of children and adolescents in competitive situations organized as a competition of professional performers disrupts the process of gradual maturation of this age group in accordance with its psycho-physiological capabilities; hence the common nervous and mental overload, artificially forced development of creative abilities not accounting for the capabilities of children’s bodies, and also the imposed system of world perception and worldview borrowed from the “adult” world mainly at the level of behavioural and performance stereotypes that do not account for the peculiarities of the inner world of children and adolescents;

- The development of spiritual and moral qualities of a young performer’s personality predominantly takes the direction of increased egocentrism often leading to “narcissism” which eliminates readiness for proper cooperation, mutual assistance in the peer environment, and, accordingly, the lack of experience of sympathy and compassion necessary for comprehensive psychological and moral development; accentuated individualism and an orientation toward fierce creative competition vividly reflected in such a well-known popular slogan among participants in such “professionalized” competitions as “We will tear everyone (the other participants) apart”; if one loses in such competitions, the personality of an angry “loser” often losing all interest in this type of performing art is constantly reproduced;

- The technical side of the performance providing the result necessary for a successful performance is increasingly prioritized; the orientation on the need to “beat everyone” inevitably generates a negative attitude towards performing arts in a large number of participants in competition programs; the desire to take first place in the list of participants with one’s performance overshadows the attitude towards one’s performance as an opportunity to express oneself and one’s inner world above all else. Pedagogical costs and problems are also found in amateur performing arts competitions. Among them are:
- The lack of opportunities to reach the necessary quality of performance for the majority of contestants so as not to limit the number of participants; thus, many contestants have illusions about their own performance capabilities (often in the form of an unjustified overestimation); the lack of self-criticism and desire to improve the level of performance skills in the future;
- The lack of opportunities to develop strong-willed qualities and healthy ambitions in a competitive environment the deficit of which can then manifest in psychological unpreparedness for self-realization in the face of the need to improve one’s professional skills not only in art but also in any other type of activity; dilettantism in performance as a well-established norm in mastering artistic works;
- Avoidance of excessive strain in mastering a particular type of artistic performance; the lack of diligence in work on the performing repertoire due to the prevalence of the desire to only perform pieces that are easy to learn and perform; hence the primitivism of aesthetic tastes, limited artistic requests, and the gradual fading of interest in the systematic performance of artistic works.

Thus, both of the aforementioned approaches to the organization of creative competitions for the younger generation have significant drawbacks that cannot be minimized through a simple combination of the two types of organization of creative programs. There is a need for a completely different organizational and pedagogical strategy that would allow avoiding the identified pedagogical costs and negative trends. Hypothesis: participation in performing arts competitions as part of the system of moral and aesthetic development of personality aimed at the development of creative imagination, initiative, artistic taste, aesthetic demands, humanism, diligence, creativity, and emotionality has a significant impact on the development of the performing competency in young competitors in particular and the formation of the artistic and pedagogical space in general.

2. Methods

2.1. Study Design

The study of the established practice of organizing creative competitions for the younger generation in the sphere of performing arts allowed developing methodical recommendations providing for the improvement of both the content of competition programs and preparation for them based on the implementation of certain important achievements of pedagogical and psychological science in the sphere of children’s artistic performance. The first important methodical requirement implies a correct adequate attitude to the phenomenon of children’s performance that has to be viewed not as a goal in it but as a unique opportunity for the development of personalities of children and adolescents. This development is not reduced to the formation of personal qualities of a performer but primarily presents the spiritual and moral upbringing of the younger generation by means of artistic pedagogy. In this case, the main focus of methodical search should be the organization of competition programs as a part of the larger system of moral and aesthetic development of personality demanded by modern society [1, 5]. To reveal the status of the development of the performing competency in young contestants, we developed a program of experimental work including the preparatory, ascertaining, and control stages of the experiment. The experimental research work was carried out in several stages:

- The preparatory stage involving the development of methods assessing the individual psychological and performing qualities of young contestants;
- Conducting the ascertaining stage of the experiment involving the identification and assessment of the development of the performing competency in young contestants;
- The control stage involved comparing the results of the ascertaining stage and the results obtained after the young contestants’ participation in the performing arts competition.

The experiment sample consists of young contestants (40 people) at the age of 12-16 years old who were first-time participants in a performing arts competition.

3. Procedure and Methods

The formation and development of the performing competency gain great importance for young contestants as a crucial component of preparation for a performing arts competition.

In this connection, we used the following diagnostic methods:

To determine the level of development of the motivational and evaluative component of the performing competency:

- The “Diagnostic of Performing Motivation” questionnaire assessing the level of positive attitudes toward public performance activities;

To determine the level of development of the content and operational component of the performing competency:

- The “preparation for public speaking” questionnaire determining the level of development of the ability to control the accuracy, completeness, expressiveness of one’s performance actions in the process of public speaking and correct them in time.

To determine the level of development of the predictive and reflexive component of the performing competency:

- The author’s questionnaire “Own performance” assessing the level of competitors’ ability to anticipate the results of their own performance.

To determine the level of development of the predictive and reflexive component of the performing competency:

- The author’s questionnaire “Reflection” assessing the contestants’ ability to self-regulate during public performances and the adequacy of self-assessment of the results of the performance activity (reflection).

4. Statistical Data Analysis

The study used methods of mathematical statistics for quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results and testing their validity. Statistical analysis of the obtained results of the experiment comparing two empirical distributions by Student's t-test was carried out using the SPSS statistical software package.

5. Results

The results of the study of the development of the performing competency components before and after the performing arts competition are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1.

The development of the performing competency components before and after the performing arts competition (in quantitative and percentage ratio).

No	Performing component stability	Level	Before the performing arts competition		After the performing arts competition	
			N	%	N	%
1	The motivational and evaluative component	Low	25	62.5	15	37.5
		Average	15	37.5	15	37.5
		High	0	0	10	25
2	The content and operational component	Low	30	75	15	37.5
		Average	10	25	20	50
		High	0	0	5	12.5
3	The predictive and reflexive component	Low	25	62.5	12	30
		Average	13	32.5	21	52.5
		High	2	5	7	17.5
4	The regulatory activity component	Low	26	66.5	10	25
		Average	12	30	18	45
		High	2	5	12	30

Comparison of the results of the ascertaining stage and the results obtained after the young contestants' participation in the performing arts competition shows an increase in the number of young contestants at the high level of development of the performing competency, as well as a decrease in the number of young contestants at the low level of development of the performing competency. The significance of differences in the level of development of the components of performance stability before and after the performing arts competition was tested using the methods of mathematical statistics (Student's t-criterion), as a result of which their statistical significance was established.

6. Discussion

Let us consider the dynamics of the performing competence in young contestants in competitive activity in more detail. According to the diagnostics of the motivational-evaluative component of the performing competence in young competitors, the low level of the component decreased from 62.5 to 37.5% of the total number of respondents. The low level implies a lack of motivation for public speaking [6], lack of interest in performing activities [7], weak interest in increasing the level of performance skills [8], and weak personal need for performance improvement [9]. The high level of the component increased from 0 up to 25%. The high level implies persistence, stability of interest, responsible attitude to the performing process [10], and constant striving to improve the performing competence [11]. According to the diagnostics of the content-operational component, the low level of the component decreased from 75.0 to 37.5%. The low level implies the inability or lack of control of one's emotional state both in preparation and performance of a public speech, complete or partial emotional resistance to public speaking [12], panic, fear, and anxiety [13], and a low level or even lack of artistic and technical training. This is manifested in the accuracy and expressiveness of performing actions when preparing for a public performance [14]. The average level of the component increased from 25.0 to 50.0%. The average level implies the ability to direct one's feelings, that is, to concentrate on the content of the work being performed. However, it is not always possible to completely preserve this state [15]. The average level also implies a sufficient level of emotional stability when performing musical works but imperfect performance and insufficient formation of mastery of performing skills [16].

The high level of the component increased from 0 to 12.5%. The high level implies the ability to freely control one's emotional state, emotional resistance to the process of comprehending and performing musical works [17], the presence of creative experience, a low level of panic, fear, and anxiety both before and during public speaking [18], technically high-quality performance, and the ability to control the accuracy and expressiveness of the performing actions when preparing for a public performance [19].

According to the diagnostics of the prognostic-reflexive component, the low level of the component decreased from 62.5 to 30.0%. The low level implies the absence or a very low level of the ability to predict the results of public speaking [20] and the dominance of panic and fear over creative excitement [21]. The average level of the component increased from 32.5 up to 52.5%. The average level implies competent performance with minor technical or artistic flaws and a sufficient level of artistic embodiment of the interpretive intention during a public performance [22]. The high level of the component increased from 5.0 to 17.5%. The high level implies an artistically vivid embodiment of the interpretive intention, as well as the ability to control one's state during a public speech [23].

According to the diagnostics of the regulatory-activity component, the low level of the component decreased from 66.5 to 25.0%. The low level implies the lack of the ability to critically assess one's own performing activities [24]. The average level of the component increased from 30.0 to 45.0%. The average level implies a partial ability to assess the result of one's performing activities and partial ability to find solutions in problematic situations of performing actions [25]. The high level of the component increased from 5.0 to 30.0%. The high level implies the independence of judgment, the adequacy and objectivity of assessment and self-

assessment, and active work on one's emotional-volitional state [26]. Thus, the results of experimental work allow concluding on the positive dynamic in the development of the performing competency in the young contestants in the process of competitive activity which demonstrates the influence of performing competitions on the development of the performing competency of young contestants.

7. Conclusion

Analysis of the practice of performing arts competitions with the participation of children and adolescents, as well as the results of the study of the methods and technology of competition programs, allow us to identify several priority tasks in accordance with the humanistic paradigm of art pedagogy including:

- The organization of psychological support for the contestants throughout all stages of preparation for the event [27];
- The creation of a pedagogical environment for future contestants that would stimulate informal interaction and the self-realization of the personality of children and adolescents in the accessible types of performance activity;
- The study of individual and psychological features of contestants essential for their performance and the implementation of an appropriate repertoire policy, the preparation of children and adolescents for competition performances;
- The differentiation of performing arts competitions in accordance with their professional or amateur status by the presence of criteria for the evaluation of contestants, the composition of participants, and their psychological characteristics while maintaining the above mentioned general pedagogical requirements;
- The inclusion of competition programs in the general pedagogical strategy of spiritual and moral development and aesthetic upbringing of the younger generation.

The results of the study confirm the hypothesis that participation in performing arts competitions has a significant impact on the development of the performing competency in young competitors in particular and the formation of artistic and pedagogical space in general. A prospect for further research could be the development of methods for the development of the performing competency at the stage preceding the participation in the performing arts competition.

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