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Czasopismo Uniwersytetu Papieskiego Jana Pawła II w Krakowie poświęcone muzyce kościelnej

Pro Musica Sacra

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The role of breath, body, hearing and psyche in voice emission

In singing instruction, three basic components are always the most important: breathing, phonation and articulation, which are not only interdependent but are always conditioned by the singer's physical and mental state and the level of development of their musicality and musical hearing. It is also worth mentioning so-called vocal hearing, which relates not only to pitch but also to the ability to perceive and enjoy both one's own and others' performances on a deeper level. It is part of the singer's mental image of sound, realised through their voice. The more refined the singer's imagination, the more precise and differentiated their ability to analyse subtle differences in pitch, strength and colour. The singer should perceive what bodily sensations these auditory nuances evoke and how they correspond to the musical message. The singer gradually develops their imagination, both by listening and through their own singing, under the teacher's supervision. Gradually, in cooperation with the teacher, they refine their sensitivity to bodily sensations, which are processed by their brain into a holistic auditory-psychosomatic "touch". Teachers speak of "understanding through hearing and body". From experience, we know that we become fully aware of the correct sensation only when we manage to achieve it ourselves. For example, we understand singing "on the breath" or "with head resonance" only when we experience it personally. The quality of the singer's imagination improves with musical and vocal experience and is connected to the development of musical, emotional and kinaesthetic memory. The degree to which these forms of memory have developed is measured by the speed, durability and accuracy of recall, as well as the readiness to evoke sensations and acquired habits and use them creatively in vocal interpretation.

Vocal imagination, which triggers the necessary psychosomatic tuning, is closely linked to the singer's ability to experience music and perceive the flow of a musical phrase. Practice confirms that a clear, rapidly formed mental image of a complete melody automatically triggers the required setting of the vocal apparatus during singing. This imagination (activated even before inhalation) anticipates the

balance between functional tension and relaxation that correspond to the requirements of the musical message. The vocal delivery then becomes vivid, retaining its strength and spontaneity. Musicality, musical and vocal imagination and emotional memory must be systematically developed. Therefore, even the simplest vocal exercise must be presented to the singer as a communicative musical phrase with its own musical and emotional content.

In vocal pedagogy, a holistic approach is applied, taking into account the interdependence of breathing, body, hearing and psyche. Given the scope of the discussion, we will focus on part of this issue: the relationship between body and breath. The idea behind the described practical exercises is to teach the student to observe breathing and bodily activity simultaneously. The exercises aim to help the student consciously avoid external interference with breathing. The student should rediscover natural breathing, strengthen it through bodily activity and apply it to more demanding parts of compositions.

Relationships between body posture or movement and breathing (and therefore phonation).

The breathing function is closely connected to body posture and movement. Once we become aware of and experience this close interrelationship, we stop forcefully manipulating the breath. We become its observers – calm, clear-minded – who use breathing as a fluid, internal source of our voice.

The situations listed and described below, in which a breathing response occurs as a result of movement, a change of position or an intention to act, have been verified by the author through her extensive teaching practice. It is up to the teacher to apply this information creatively in practice, taking into account the individuality of the student.

Probably everyone agrees on one thing: when training the breath, it is better to observe its flow and "perceive" it through bodily sensation rather than control it through force of will and considerable effort.

Let us try to observe some relationships between breathing and posture:

- Lying on the back allows natural, calm breathing – it becomes even deeper when the knees are bent (although slight lumbar lordosis should be maintained).
- Lying on the stomach eliminates a problem that often arises when breathing while lying on the back – the ends of the ribs lift forward, making it difficult to fully expand the sides and back of the chest. Resting the floating ribs on the mat opens access to these areas.
- When lying on the back, we place a hand on the lower ribs and check that they do not move forward. We feel the ribs at the back moving sideways away

from the spine and resting on the ground, allowing breathing into the sides and back of the ribcage.

- The singer can become aware of diaphragmatic activity in many ways – through laughter, giggling, whining, barking…
- Singing while standing on one leg, which is bent and straightened during phonation, activates the pelvic floor – an essential partner of the diaphragm. Through their coordinated action, we build a voice that is strong, confident and capable of expression.
- Lowering the pelvis with bent knees relaxes the lumbar region. However, one should remember that during this movement, the upper back remains rounded (the thoracic spine curves), and the head moves slightly forwards. This is a relaxation exercise, not a target singing posture.
- Lowering the pelvis during exhalation activates the diaphragm's attachment in the lumbar region. The exercise is performed in a sitting position.

In an upright position, we energetically pronounce the consonants M-W-R-S, extending the "ssss", while simultaneously pulling back the lumbar section of the spine (the pelvis lowers). The upper body automatically bends; this exercise relaxes tension in the lumbar region and activates the posterior diaphragm attachment.

- The exhalation ends with a slight tilt of the upper body – as the head drops freely, we pronounce "tha". With this sound, the abdomen relaxes, and the body initiates a spontaneous, calm inhalation through the mouth – with the wide tip of the tongue touching the lower lip. The inhalation continues as the pelvis returns to an upright position and the lumbar, thoracic and cervical spine straighten. The impulse to straighten comes from the feet pushing against the ground.
- The exercise proceeds calmly and evenly. The result is "forgetting about the breath" – the body itself finds its natural rhythm by repeating the movement. As the spine straightens, the singer's mind focuses on the idea of the pitch at which they then produce the consonants M-W-R-S.
- If the practitioner combines inhalation with a sense of childlike wonder and the expectation of the sound "heard" in the mind that descends from above, they will find it easier to achieve vocal placement – which is then "supported" on the breath.

Extended version: the relationship between the diaphragm and the lumbar section of the spine

The strongest attachment of the diaphragm is located in the lumbar section of the spine, making it exceptionally sensitive to any tension or change in this area.

To relax the stiff lumbar section, an exercise metaphorically referred to as "horse riding" proves helpful. Controlled movements of the lower spine can be used not only to deepen breathing but also to somatically "feel" *legato* – the smooth connection of two tones within the body.

Performing the exercise

In a sitting position, relax the hips: the lumbar spine moves back, the shoulders move forward, the back rounds and the head tilts. In this configuration, full exhalation occurs, ending with the relaxation of the abdominal wall. This process is supported by pronouncing the syllable *tha*, accompanied by allowing the jaw to drop freely.

We remain in this position until the body itself signals the need to replenish oxygen. Inhalation is combined with a gradual return to an upright position, initiated by pressing the feet against the ground. A gentle hip movement follows – the pelvis reacts, followed by the lumbar and then the thoracic spine. At the end of the movement, the transition between the thoracic and cervical sections is straightened, gradually lifting the head.

As the body straightens, air flows freely into the lungs through the open mouth, relaxed larynx and expanded trachea. The tongue lies freely, its tip dropping forward, creating a feeling of weight. The jaw also drops under this "weight", without tension.

Then exhale in the same way, repeating the entire cycle of movements. Always wait for the body to call for inhalation or exhalation. After several repetitions, we find our own rhythm.

Inhalation can be accompanied by the sensation of yawning – using only its initial phase, without allowing a full yawn. During inhalation, the resonating space is optimally adjusted and remains open during exhalation as well.

In the next stage, we add a simple melody to the exercise, always connecting two adjacent tones and singing them *legato*. Each tone is accompanied by a backward movement of the hips, which strengthens the bodily sensation of tones flowing through the body.

Example exercise sequence

- **1–2** *ja-a* – hip movement back → straightening with inhalation
- **3–4** *ja-a* – hip movement back → straightening with inhalation
- **5–4** *ja-a* – hip movement back → straightening with inhalation
- **1 –** *ja* hip movement back

Because of its relaxing and airway-opening properties, this exercise can serve as a supportive element in respiratory rehabilitation, especially in the initial stage of asthma. However, it should be remembered that movements in the lumbar section of the spine can strongly activate emotions, so the exercise should be performed mindfully and not prolonged beyond the individual's physical tolerance.

- Relaxing the knees creates a movement opposite to the airflow of exhalation, thus limiting inappropriate, excessive pressure of inhaled air that is directed upwards towards the vocal cords. For safer execution, it is recommended to take a step forward with one leg. The body's weight will be evenly distributed over both legs, and the aligned pelvis will rest in a central position. The point is to lower the centre of gravity, not to lower the pelvis. The purpose of lowering the centre of gravity with an aligned pelvis is to engage the pelvic floor muscles and the diaphragm in movement, which is helpful when singing a rising melody, a melodic leap or a full tone. A movement performed just before reaching the tone can also contribute to a soft onset of the vowel on a high, narrow sound. Swaying and straightening the knees combined with lowering the body's centre of gravity strengthens the leg muscles and the awareness of pushing the feet away from the mat. The centre of the body is activated.
- The spine responds to the feet pushing off the ground by straightening. Straightening the spine and "lifting" the chest is a prerequisite for full breathing (without a straightened spine, the chest is often flattened and lowered). Firm grounding of the feet, active pelvic floor muscles and alignment anchor the sound in the body while the muscles remain elastic.
- Activity transferred to the fingertips (engaging the fingers that "grip something") relaxes the hand muscles, straightens the body and frees the chest muscles, which can then lift and expand. Elastic muscles work without unnecessary effort and tension.
- Straight arms extended to the fingertips facilitate better mobility of the intercostal muscles during breathing.
- It is beneficial to breathe and sing while lying on the back in an infant-like position with arms and legs raised. The effect is enhanced when the fingers and toes are actively holding an object. The spine and head are resting on the mat.
- Points of support on the periphery of the body (i.e. in the feet, hands, fingertips, crown of the head and on the "edge" of the tongue tip, i.e. in diction) activate the centre of the body, straighten the spine and thus make it possible to use the entire respiratory system during breathing. Engaging peripheral supports eliminates undesirable muscle tension that isolates individual body segments. On the contrary, thanks to support on the body's periphery, the body achieves internal coordination, remaining internally connected and

flexible in movement. We can set the chest, hips and waist dancing… and our body will not "fall apart". Activity on the periphery of the body coordinates the muscles so that they work economically and efficiently, without unnecessary (substitutive) movements and increased effort. If the singer adds their voice to the movement of a dancing body with which they spontaneously express their current feelings, they pave the way for the free resonance of tones. For the singer, it is an opportunity to reveal the true sound of their voice. The more freely they surrender to this process, the more vocal possibilities they discover. They connect with their inner feeling of singing. In such moments they experience authenticity, certainty and security, because they realise that "this voice is me", and they feel comfortable with themselves.

- Sitting with the palms turned upwards induces deep, calm breathing, which soothes the psyche. This effect is intensified when the thumb and index finger of each hand are joined and the remaining fingers are extended at the tips.
- When the arm is placed to the side (fist closed, thumb pointing upwards) and the head is simultaneously turned in the opposite direction, the ribs at the front and sides of the ribcage are relaxed. We do this on both sides. The breath then freely "enters" the elastic ribcage.
- When "picking apples from a tree", we stretch the intercostal muscles (we breathe smoothly, without holding the breath). When reaching "for a high branch", the body's weight rests on the leg on the same side as the extended arm. First we follow the hand with our gaze, but the higher we reach, the less we tilt the head back, looking straight ahead instead (the body straightens, the cervical spine becomes a continuation of the thoracic spine, the back of the head "extends" upwards, the crown of the head is the highest point of the body). Only in this way can we reach even higher to grasp the apple with our fingertips and pick it. Then we do the same on the other side. After stretching the body, we will be able to breathe better. While picking apples we raise the chest, which tends to sink with a relaxed posture. This is a consequence of atmospheric pressure, which we must constantly "resist" by straightening the spine. Working on sustained alignment improves not only posture but also the functioning of the entire respiratory system.
- For example, if we lift the left arm sideways above the head (stretching the arm to the fingertips) and at the same time bend the ribcage to the right, we breathe into the stretched left side of the body. However, if we stand even more consciously on the sole of the right foot and push off from the ground, the entire ribcage will lift higher and the first, i.e. oblique, side of the ribcage will also be partially engaged in breathing (it will also be stretched upwards). Then we perform the exercise in the opposite direction. After returning to an

upright position, we will feel how the ribs move during breathing; we do not control the movement of the ribs, we only observe it.

- Place the hands as if offering (or receiving) something, with the palms turned upwards. Such positioning of the hands strengthens the "anchoring" of tension in the body. The movement of the hands that "offer something" comes from the forearms; the shoulders do not take an active part. We feel muscle activity especially in the back – between the shoulder blades and lower down, towards the hips. Thanks to the feet anchored in the ground, the entire body becomes connected. The idea "I am offering something" activates the desired muscular synergy to fulfil the intention. Muscular synergy strengthens the body from within, yet the body does not become stiff; it remains flexible.
- Strengthening and softening the voice is supported by hand movements that offer something in front of the body, with palms facing upwards. Initially, we practise a melody that initially rises in pitch, e.g. 12321 (scale degrees). Later, we move on to a more difficult task – strengthening and softening a single tone (*messa di voce*). If we want to strengthen the tone, we "offer" it with hand movements and continue the movement even as we soften it – we gradually reduce the sound intensity while always moving the hands forward. This ensures continuous breath support. When softening the tone, we must maintain support from the body and breath – on the contrary, we feel it more intensely, only narrowing and brightening the tone in our imagination.
- Greeting a guest warmly (opening the arms to express joy at the meeting) helps maintain the width of the chest, as in the example above, in which we offer something in our hands – here, we offer the guest our sincere openness. If, during the greeting, we take a step towards the guest and briefly leave the toe of the back foot on the ground, pushing off the mat with that foot will cause the upper part of the chest to rise diagonally upwards and slightly forwards. Further opening the bent arms at the elbows in a welcoming gesture will allow the entire respiratory system to engage in the breathing function.
- Breath support in the pelvis is strengthened when we open the hands and lift the thumbs, moving them outwards. The hands open even more; as the thumbs move, "the back opens", and the breath is directed more clearly into its lower part. We observe that the lower rib arch slightly "lifts", and the breath "settles" in this place. If we sing a note in this position, we feel support in the hips (not in the lumbar spine!). The front of the chest is brought forward and "lifted". In the full sound of the note, "the whole body resonates".
- When we imagine embracing someone, the body reacts in a similar way to when we greet a guest. "If we hug mum and tickle her back with our little finger" (we consciously lift the thumbs and move them outwards), a pathway

opens for the breath into the back. Active elbow joints help maintain the inhalation position of the expanded ribs. The diaphragm then does not rise with the first sound, as happens in normal breathing, when the ribs relax during exhalation. On the contrary – thanks to the activity of the elbow joints, the expanded ribs "force" the diaphragm to remain in a lower position, thereby slowing down the exhalation.

Note: If the muscles in the shoulder area tense when "hugging mum", we can perform a relaxation exercise: we raise our arms in the hugging position together with the shoulders. We stay in this position for a moment, deliberately drawing the shoulders up towards the ears. After a moment, we relax the shoulders, but the bent arms remain forward and "hug". The shoulders will relax and spread sideways, together with the entire upper part of the chest (the area of the sternum widens, the shoulder blades move apart). Natural supports are created in the elbow joints of the bent arms, from which the forearms and hands (with active fingers) extend forward into space. The position of the hands keeps the chest in a "lifted" position – we breathe into the chest with full participation of the diaphragm.

- Hanging down from the waist: we place the legs slightly apart, knees bent, arms lowered, shoulder joints relaxed, hips stretched. The head does not jut out; the back of the head is a continuation of the thoracic spine. The exercise is assisted by the thought: "water is dripping from my hair, it is good that the dripping shampoo no longer stings my eyes". In this position, breathing deepens (the lumbar section is engaged, where the diaphragm has its strongest attachments), the lower abdomen is relaxed, so the diaphragm can descend freely and work elastically. For those who cannot place the tone in the mask resonance, this position is a good starting point for discovering this resonance – bending forward, we produce the sound m (mim, mam, mem). We feel its vibration in the hand we place on the forehead. Then we slowly stand up "with the sound of the tone in the hand", which remains in the mask even after the body and head are upright. We rise by pressing the soles of the feet against the ground.
- Is it possible to feel which part of the diaphragm works most intensively: its centre, its lumbar section (an example is given in the next point) or its entire surface up to the rib attachments? With a short, energetic inhalation, the breath is "concentrated" in the centre of the diaphragm, which supports its elasticity, and the voice gains agility and lightness. We feel this activity when we "sniff like a little dog" during breathing training or when we sing in dotted rhythms or *staccato*. During "heavier groaning" one can observe increased diaphragmatic activity across its entire surface, especially in the area of its attachment to the xiphoid process of the sternum and the lower ribs.

- If we sit down on a chair with a feeling of relief that everything is now behind us and breathe out freely while saying "thaaaak", we will feel the lowest ribs in the lower back drop in complete relaxation. The muscles, including the abdominal muscles, are relaxed at this moment, but they do not collapse. The natural resonance of the voice, which is held in the muscles, is activated when the need to take in air arises, starting the inhalation phase in the lumbar section. If we simply follow the breath, we will notice how the lower ribs on the back gently expand sideways during inhalation and how the entire back rises from the arch of the lower ribs, then falls again during exhalation. It is worth "extending" this exhalation from the lower ribs to a full exhalation and pausing for a moment at its end. We will feel the tension around the neck muscles, tongue and jaw joints gradually disappear. This sensation should be very soothing. The next breath flows out of this calm and corresponds to the current needs of the body.
- When we lie on our side, deep diaphragmatic breathing induces drowsiness: the head is relaxed and slightly tilted forward, the jaw joint and tongue are completely relaxed, facial expression is softened and the mind passively follows the alternating cycle of exhalation, calm and inhalation. The body and emotions experience beneficial tranquillity. We practise in a safe space so that we can also consciously activate the breath in moments of tension, such as a stage performance, when emotional tension turns into unwanted physical tension. Breathing that relaxes the back muscles and the solar plexus brings release.
- Gentle activity between the shoulder blades supports natural breathing and the opening of the voice. We will feel the activity when, standing, we lean the body backwards and, with full trust, "lay" our back on the hands of the person standing behind us (supporting us in the lower shoulder blade area). We place our feet firmly on the ground and rest our back on the prepared hands – there should be no leaning or lifting in the hips! If the person behind us engages their core muscles and anchors their weight on their feet (or takes one step forward with one leg), we can trust them. Their hands will support our weight. Calm, with a relaxed mind, we observe how our body copes with the situation, that is, the change of position. The body is supported at the feet and in the shoulder blade area, but is otherwise completely free. We will feel relaxation in the shoulder joint (the arms hang beside the body under their own weight), we will notice expansion around the sternum and lower ribs, and the solar plexus will relax pleasantly forwards and sideways. Let us draw on this sensation of the chest opening in all directions with each breath and the gentle movements of the abdomen responding to the soft, calm movements of the

diaphragm. We breathe freely because the entire respiratory system is working. After a while, we will feel a surge of energy and a desire to sing boldly and with a full sound. Support in the feet and the feeling of support in the interscapular area anchor our voice in the body. The voice sounds surprisingly resonant and free. In this situation, we improvise melodies that arise from bodily sensations or sing a favourite song.

If at first we are unable to relax the body with full trust, the person behind us can "shake" us slightly. Our still restless mind will focus on maintaining balance, the body will automatically activate the necessary balance reflexes and the head will "understand" that there is no point in resisting and it is better to surrender completely to the situation.

- Standing, we rest the interscapular part of the back against a door frame (preferably one with a rounded edge so that the support against the spine does not cause pain). We place the feet apart, moving them forwards to ensure stability and to be able to "slide" the back up and down along the door frame while singing. We test this movement – the arms hang freely, support is provided by the feet, springy knees, leg muscles and deep abdominal muscles. During the upward and downward movement we can sing or speak clearly. After mastering this movement, we can place the arms in a "welcoming" position (support in the elbows, not in the shoulders!) to help open the body to the sound of the voice.

A more difficult option: in a half-sitting position (legs apart) we rest the back and bring the back of the upright head closer to the wall (the cervical lordosis is preserved). At first, in this position we simply breathe to become accustomed to its demands; then we sing. We can also add the movement of the hands that receive something into upturned palms and grasp it with the fingertips. This position, with the shoulders relaxed, helps anchor the voice in the body. It sounds free, broad and resonant.

- The muscles of the upper chest, including the shoulder girdle, should be able to remain flexible in every situation. The prevalence of limited flexibility in this part of the body among today's children, young people and many adults is concerning. The upper chest can be trained and mobilised using the sternum, which we draw back towards the spine (the shoulders are brought forwards, the head drops down). Then, in the opposite direction, we move the sternum forwards and diagonally upwards, as if the movement originated from a prominence on the sternum. This movement is also supported by the thought that we are directing the thoracic spine forwards through the body towards the sternum. In this position, the head, extended upwards, may pass "above level" into a slight tilt (the range of the tilt can be increased by widening

the shoulder blades). When returning to an upright position, the singer must maintain the muscular freedom and flexibility achieved through the movement. Therefore, during the exercise we teach the student to be aware of what happens to their body during the movement and to store these sensations in body memory. They will then understand the teacher's instruction: "open the body".

- Many singers have a tendency to "close". This occurs not only under the influence of ordinary atmospheric pressure but also, very often, as a result of traumatic experiences and associated negative emotions. Exercising the sternum and shoulders helps to get rid of this "closure". Let us emphasise once again that a fully developed breath as a source of the voice can only be achieved in a relaxed body ready to perform.

The ability to "lift the chest towards the armpits" is an extremely valuable skill for singers and their breathing. It is connected with their posture and internal activity in counteracting the effect of gravity, which pulls down not only the body but also its organs. Many postural exercises initiate the internal activity necessary for this. Let us stress once more how important it is that the singer consciously experiences, accepts and stores positive muscular sensations in body memory.

- How can we achieve "lifting and expanding the chest" with the help of another person? Standing in front of the singer (with their permission), we grasp their chest at the sides (about 3–5 cm below the armpit) in the same way as a mother lifts an infant that is still limp. The singer standing on the ground will feel that the ribs of the chest are slightly lifted, and their shoulders and arms (relaxed at the shoulder joint) drop limply. They do not actively assist the movement. The chest remains "suspended" in our hands – we wait a moment. After a while we feel the movement of the ribs (inhalation) under our hands. The singer's brain has registered the pressure of the hands and sent a signal to the intercostal muscles, which will push the pressing hands away when an inhalation is needed. Subsequent breaths are directed in the same way towards the hands in this position. With each inhalation, the chest becomes more relaxed. It breathes, but without the involvement of the shoulders. Gradually the breath deepens, and the singer begins to breathe with the entire respiratory system. The chest reacts similarly in a lying position when we place our hands on its sides (about 3–5 cm below the armpit) and wait a moment. Sometimes it can take up to a minute for the intercostal muscles to start working. The brain constantly analyses the situation (compares it with the habit of breathing only in the upper chest or the learned practice of directing the breath solely to the abdomen). It spontaneously sends an impulse

to the ribs only when it decides it is necessary to respond to the pressure and finally take a proper breath. Both the need to replenish oxygen and the pressure prompt it to choose a specific way of inhaling. After several repetitions, the brain accepts the rib movement and incorporates it into the repertoire of acquired inhalation (motor) skills. A new experience is also gained: the chest does not have to remain habitually "dropped", but can lift, open freely and participate in the work of the entire respiratory system. The singer's muscles have acquired this experience spontaneously as a result of the adopted position. If the singer had not achieved this physical experience through their own muscular "searching" and had learned it only through the teacher's instructions on "how to move the chest muscles by force, how to breathe with them", they would be unlikely to return to the experience of the "crying" child, for whom breathing when singing high notes was essentially the synchronised work of the entire respiratory system. Practice convinces us that, even with the best intentions, the changing requirements of interpretation prevent us from consciously establishing balanced muscular synergy correctly and economically. And yet, theoretically, a "trained" mind should know "how to do it"! The mind then consciously directs the body's movements, but this often happens at the cost of increased effort, which impedes breathing and its interaction with the vocal cords, something many singers struggle with for years, and some for their entire lives. A psychosomatic approach to working with the breath is based on an appropriate image of the musical phrase within the whole piece and on the appropriate positioning of the body prepared for performance. Breathing then occurs within the desired range, without abrupt conscious intervention.

- As the melody ascends, the stronger stream of exhaled air tends to "attack" the vocal cords from below. This forces excessive adduction, leading to tension and loss of elasticity. The false vocal folds, which tend to close, will then also be engaged. This direct attack of the breath on the vocal cords can be regulated by "changing the path" of the breath. If we place a hand on the sternum (or press the index finger against the upper part of the sternum – the protrusion where the second rib joins the sternum), the position of the chest changes and the work of the diaphragm is also altered. The larynx, through the movements of the muscles suspended in the fascia (the retractor muscles), is connected to the sternum and tilted backwards, towards the occiput. All this contributes to distributing and shaping the energy and power of the breath reaching the vocal cords. On its way from the diaphragm, the breath energy is distributed – it "bounces" off the sternum, is directed internally towards the ribs and back to the diaphragm.

For completeness, let us add: a fully developed tone can be supported by the body only if the supraglottic area actively participates in voice formation – we then speak of support in resonance and diction and their interaction with breath support.

- The position of the head influences how the breath spreads through the body. When it is slightly tilted forwards, the breath is directed more towards the back. When tilted backwards, the head favours the flow of breath towards the lower areas, especially the abdomen. Let us observe how the direction of the breath changes when we tilt the head to the side.
- When the head is upright and the neck extended, the yawning reflex can be triggered spontaneously. If we do not interrupt the whole yawning process, but only prolong its initial phase, we feel that the larynx is slightly lowered and the spaces above the palate open. If we raise the bent hands above the head and "open a gate" with the hands and consciously extend the joints of the middle fingers, the ribs will expand to the sides and the diaphragm will naturally drop. Adding the thought that the soft palate rises high (up to the hands above the head), or that the hair on the crown of the head lifts and "levitates" above the head (which activates the soft palate), we create a whole-body setting favourable to raising the voice or using it in a high vocal position without difficulty. The body is ready to work "from above".
- The movement of the hands helps guide the breath and visualise the course of the phrase, and changes in gestures can support musical articulation (*legato*, *staccato*, *tenuto*, etc.). Many movements and gestures associated with specific situations remain imprinted in the singer's muscle memory. Sometimes, as teachers, we can use them to quickly teach the student skills that would otherwise require lengthy verbal explanations or laborious exercises. We draw on experiences from everyday life, or we motivate the student by giving them a task to complete "in their own way". For example, we place them in a situation in which, with a gallant gesture, they are to take off a hat as a sign of respectful greeting. The entire act is accompanied by singing a descending musical phrase. The hand removing the hat makes a wide arc upwards and forwards, and the head gently bows in a courteous nod.

What is beneficial for singing in this situation? The movement of the hand reaching for the hat initiates an upper setting of the voice, and removing the hat while singing the descending melody helps maintain the resonant position of the starting tone (reaching for the hat "lifts" the soft palate, which remains active throughout the phrase). The initial gesture of the gallant greeting (the hat slightly raised and moved above the forehead) is linked to a slight inclination of the head with the neck extended, which remains in line with the spine. The elongated nape opens the path of sound to the resonators, and their activation is further

supported by the smile of the eyes and lifted cheeks (which affect the activity of the soft palate). Support in the nape (a movement opposite to the hand gesture) widens the posterior arch of the nasopharynx, and the entire space of the oral cavity is slightly "stretched" backwards and upwards – the sound is directed towards the dome. The soft, fleshy tongue moves forwards and, with a slight tilt of the head, automatically approaches the hard palate, which helps keep the sound in the head resonators. The descending melody flows in one line, without breaks in the voice. If we perform the greeting gesture using *brumendo*, its easy execution is supported precisely by the slight tilt of the head and the natural contact of the tongue with the hard palate.

A carefully chosen hand movement can help the singer overcome technically difficult tasks during vocal training. For example: a stepwise progression to high notes sung *legato*, 3-4-5-4-3-2 (mi-í--i-jó-bén). It is worth combining the exercise with a hand gesture in which we place the hands on both sides of the head, and the index and middle fingers, following the rising melody, move upwards on both sides of the ears, then along the hair, and from the crown spread apart – at the moment of the transition from the fifth down to the fourth scale degree. The hand movement traces the shape of the letter Y in the air.

What happens during this exercise? The spreading of the hands around the ears prevents the head from being pushed forwards, the body straightens and the soft palate subconsciously lifts, adjusting the acoustic spaces to the tones 1–2–3 sung with a "slender" sound. We feel as if the upper jaw and the spaces above it gradually rise and open. The movement of the spreading hands (3–2: i–jo) simulates the full opening of the head spaces into which the sound moves above the soft palate. We notice how the sound spreads into the dome of the head and radiates into space like a halo. Throughout, attention is focused on the movement of the hands, not on the conscious shaping of the tone – the mind only registers the sensations accompanying the whole process. Only the ears "supervise" the slender sound of the rising tones (1–2–3). The sound of the phrase is carried by free exhalation and resonates, filling the open sound spaces. When we feel complete freedom of voice and resonance (usually at the 3–2 transition, when the hands separate), we can allow ourselves dynamic play with the tone: expand it, soften it, or lead it with full breadth to the final note on the syllable *ben*. The syllable *ben* strengthens the frontal resonance and closes the musical phrase, accompanied by the hand gesture: from the open *Y* shape, during the melodic motion 2–1 (*jo–ben*), the hands meet at chest level. If we continue the exercise or its sequential repetitions, the hands do not stop – they move smoothly into the next repetition of the described movement.

The following variant is an exercise for equalising registers. The pattern, which descends sequentially through the notes of the major scale, is always combined with the *Y*-shaped hand movement. In each subsequent sequence, the gesture starts from the "forks" around the ears and moves upwards. We perform the exercise at a slow tempo so that the singer has time to feel and consciously experience the process with their whole body.

Exercise: 8-9-10-9-8-7, 7-8-9-8-7-6, 6-7-8-7-6-5, 5-6-7-6-5-4, 4-5-6-5-4-3, 3-4-5-4-3-2, 2-3-4-3-4-2-1 (mi-i-i-i-jo-ben, ti-ti-ti-ti-ta-ta).

- With the help of hand movements, we can also solve intonation problems resulting from technical imperfections in the phrase. Maintaining accurate intonation on repeated notes is always a challenge related to breathing and resonance. This challenge can be readily overcome through movement. Usually the singer's mind focuses on the first note, and the subsequent repetitions are left, as it were, "to themselves". As a result, the tension in the breath and in the supraglottic resonance space decreases. The activity of the soft palate weakens, the sound loses its placement in the resonators and a tone deprived of higher harmonics seems darker to the ear – which the brain interprets as lower. The vocal cords automatically adjust to the perceived timbre, lowering the pitch. With each repetition of the notes, the intonation of the entire phrase, and often of the whole piece, gradually "drops".

How does the movement of the hands help correct this problem? By engaging the hands, we activate the breath and the placement of the tone in the resonators. Although the repeated tones have the same pitch, the hands in front of the body illustrate the movement of climbing stairs – with each successive "step", the hands move alternately. The hand moving from above (like a foot stepping onto a higher step) rises higher and further forwards with each movement, activating the back muscles and diaphragm support. The thought directs the movement of the hands, and the gaze follows how the hands – and with them the soft palate – rise higher with each successive tone. The muscular arch between the hard and soft palate (resembling a horseshoe) lifts and, with each successively higher tone, inclines towards the nose. The body straightens, the legs press more firmly into the ground, the neck lengthens and the crown "lifts" upwards. As a result, in this setting, the repeated tones retain their timbre and intonational quality. We must ensure that no final tone is burdened with uncontrolled breath – the sound could then intensify. On the contrary, the ending of the tone should be brightened towards the dome so that the next repeated tone can start from above.

We work in a similar way with repeated tones followed by an upward leap. Proper use of the breath and resonators during repetitions and a clear mental

image of the pitches of the entire musical phrase help to master this technically demanding task. The very first tone must be placed high in the resonators, and the subsequent repetitions "build" a bridge leading to the high note. The aim is to minimise the resonant difference between notes that are far apart in pitch. A good command of the technique of repeated tones is essential – this "shortens" the distance to the high note. If they are not executed correctly, we move away from the high note – the resonance of the preceding tones drops. We use the same hand gestures as described earlier. The last tone in the series of repetitions must already be supported by breath and resonance on a prepared foundation – at the threshold of the high tone. On this common basis, both tones – though distant in notation – meet in resonance, and the high tone takes over and smoothly continues the melody. It is important that both hands indicate the same height during the leap – the hand representing the high tone moves only forwards, remaining on the same plane. The leap occurs in one line because the placement of the high note has been prepared by the preceding tones.

These examples illustrate only part of the relationship between breathing, phonation, resonance and body posture. A fuller picture of this subject can be found in the forthcoming publication by Alena Tichá*: Učíme děti zpívat*, to be published by Portál in an expanded edition. It is an original methodology for working with the voice based on the use of play, motivation and movement.

* * *

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- Boele, C. (2016, September 23–24). Škola odhalení hlasu podle Valborg Werbeck-Svärdström [personal communication]. Course, Obec křesťanů, Praha 7 – Holešovice.
- Boele, C. (2023, November 17–19). Škola odhalení hlasu podle Valborg Werbeck-Svärdström [personal communication]. Course, Obec křesťanů, Praha 7 – Holešovice.
- Burianová, B. (2023, January 15–25). Kurz jógy a průběžně dále [personal communication]. Course, Influencia Dance studio, Praha 1.
- Čumpelík, J. (2019, July 5–14). Letní jógové soustředění Jiřího Čumpelíka [personal communication]. Course, areál Sklenářka, Kostelec nad Orlicí.
- Čumpelík, J. (2021, July 2–11). Letní jógové soustředění Jiřího Čumpelíka [personal communication]. Course, areál Sklenářka, Kostelec nad Orlicí.
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Abstract

The role of breath, body, hearing and psyche in voice emission

When singing, three fundamental components are always involved: breathing, phonation and articulation. These are not only interdependent but are also influenced by the singer's mental state and physical condition. An important element is the level of musicality and auditory perception. Taking a holistic approach to vocal training (with an awareness of the interconnections between these aspects), this text presents examples of situations in which body posture or movement can influence breathing function and, consequently, the quality of vocal performance, including improved intonation. The text is based on personal experience from fifty years of teaching practice.

Keywords: Singing, breath, vocal education

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The conductor's gesture and the sound of the choir

The subject I have proposed for today's presentation has been a focus of my professional interests for many years. Among those who inspired my interest in the impact of conducting technique on choral sound was Professor Jadwiga Gałęska-Tritt, an outstanding conductor and a distinguished authority in the field of vocal technique, whom I first met during the Postgraduate Choirmaster Studies in Bydgoszcz in 1992. It was this direct contact with Professor Gałęska-Tritt and her research[1] that became my starting point for the reflections I present to you today, which I also base on nearly 35 years of work as a conductor and choirmaster, as well as on observing countless choral performances and on experience gained from leading a choral conducting class and choirs at the Karol Lipiński Academy of Music in Wrocław.

What we say without words, or how we are seen, is how we are perceived

When discussing today's topic, I would like to draw attention, among other things, to the issue of the conductor's non-verbal communication with choristers, as well as to which factors influence the sound of the choir and which elements of conducting technique best support it.

Professor Jadwiga Gałęska-Tritt repeatedly emphasised that, in singing, "the whole body is an instrument"[2]. I believe this statement can successfully be applied to conducting as well, although when we talk about the basic tools of a conductor's

[1] J. Gałęska-Tritt, *Kształcenie gestem dyrygenckim techniki wokalnej chóru* – paper presented at a meeting of the Department of Choral Studies at the Academy of Music in Warszawa on 23 February 1991 (typescript from the collection of J. Szybalska-Matczak).

[2] Cf. J. Gałęska-Tritt, *Dzieci lubią śpiewać, a my razem z nimi!*, Poznań 2007, s. 10, p. 49.

work, we most often think of the hands and face; yet we know that in the process of conducting, consciously or not, the entire body is involved. Moving from the general to the specific, it is therefore worth first considering what our instrument is, what its strengths and weaknesses are, what we can influence and what we cannot. In summary, we should consider what we need to understand in order to make full use of our instrument and work as effectively as possible as choral conductors.

As we know, a human being is a biological organism; we are born with traits that determine our body structure. Some of these, such as height, limb length or eye colour, we cannot significantly influence, as they are genetically determined. However, in the vast majority of cases, in healthy individuals, our skeletal, muscular and nervous systems operate through the same mechanisms. We tend to react similarly, both physiologically and through body language, for example, to external factors such as:

- high or low air temperature (we sweat, we swell, we fan ourselves or seek shade; we hunch, try to cover every bit of our body, shiver with cold, develop redness in areas exposed to the cold, etc.)
- stress (we have stomach ache, digestive problems, blood pressure fluctuations and an increased heart rate; our hands or knees tremble, we sweat, etc.)[3]
- satisfaction and joy (we are relaxed, our bodies move freely, we bounce, we smile, we utter joyful exclamations, etc.)

Similarly, although often unconsciously, we read the non-verbal signals sent by other people. Our mind forms an absolute unity with our body, and the complex mental processes and their impact on our physical and emotional reactions are the subject of research by many scholars[4]. This is an extremely interesting, important and extensive topic that could form the basis of an entire conference involving relevant specialists, so I shall not elaborate on it here. I strongly encourage you, however, to explore these issues independently, especially if in your work as a conductor you experience, for example, a lack of conscious control over tensing and relaxing specific areas of the body, or a level of stress or stage fright that, instead of motivating you, paralyses you and thus undermines your work[5].

In the context of non-verbal body language, I would like to highlight elements that significantly affect both the conductor's communication with the choir and

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[3] B. van der Kolk, *Strach ucieleśniony. Mózg, umysł i ciało w terapii traumy*, Warszawa 2023.

[4] Cf. A. Lowen, *Język ciała. Fizyczna dynamika struktury charakteru*, Warszawa 2023.

[5] R. LaDyne, *Odetnij napięcie. Jak pokonać stres dzięki praktykom psychosomatycznym*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2021.

the way the conductor is perceived by the audience[6]. These elements take on particular importance during a concert, when we cannot communicate verbally with the ensemble or, for example, interrupt the piece to correct musical elements that, in our opinion, the choir could perform better. It is precisely then that the subtle language of the body, eye contact, facial expression and gestures become particularly important in creating an artistic interpretation together with the ensemble.

Moving on to practical considerations, it is worth asking when, as conductors, we begin our non-verbal dialogue with the ensemble and the audience, and examining the sequence of events.

1. Entrance onto the stage: most often the choir is already waiting for us on stage, and in front of it is the audience awaiting a musical experience. Whether we intend to or not, we draw their attention with our entrance. As we appear on stage, walk across it and bow, we must be aware that our body has already begun sending signals. They may indicate that for various reasons we do not feel comfortable in this situation – our posture is slouched, our head lowered, our gaze uncertain, etc. We may also appear before the choir and the audience in a way that emphasises that we are calm, in control of the situation and prepared for what is about to happen, with a positive or even enthusiastic attitude. We express this, for example, through an upright posture and by establishing eye contact with the choir and the audience. Our facial expression – cheerful or more focused – as well as the tempo and character of our steps may already suggest the mood of the first piece or the whole concert. To give extreme examples: it is hard to imagine a conductor running energetically onto the stage with a broad smile at a concert of Passion music, or entering a carnival concert with a look of existential contemplation.

2. Adopting the correct stance in front of the choir: the positioning of our body, the arrangement of the hands, the re-establishment of eye contact with the choir and facial expressions will have an enormous impact on the ensemble's concentration and its readiness to begin the piece with the appropriate character. I am convinced this point needs no extensive explanation. It is enough to use our imagination and envisage performing, for example, the Polish national anthem with a large choir, then *Już się zmierzka* by Wacław of Szamotuły with a vocal ensemble and finally *Oj, nasi jadą* arranged by S. Rażdżyński with a youth choir.

3. Conducting the piece: while conducting individual compositions, our facial expressions, gestures and body movement remain extremely important at all times. Ideally, we use all these elements with full awareness. The problem arises when we cease to control them, or are unaware of certain behaviours. If, while

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[6] Cf. A. Pease, *Mowa ciała. Jak odczytywać myśli innych ludzi z gestów*, Wydawnictwo Jedność, Kielce 2001.

building tension in a piece or at a high dynamic level, we tense the muscles of the hands, arms or even back, we will certainly achieve the intended effect. Problems arise, however, if we are unable to move from this tension to a relaxed state, causing blockage and stiffness of the body. At times an inappropriate facial expression or excessive physical activity (walking, jumping, crouching, swaying), or conversely, excessive stillness and a lack of the energy that should emanate from our body, can completely disrupt the atmosphere of the composition. For example: while attending a concert by an excellent choir under a distinguished conductor, I sensed a certain dissonance in those moments when the conductor smiled broadly at the choir during the performance of Krzysztof Penderecki's *Stabat Mater* for three mixed choirs *a cappella*. It was difficult to find fault with the technical execution or interpretation, yet this behaviour, for me personally, detracted from the depth and meaning conveyed by the piece.

4. Ending the piece and leaving the stage: here I would simply like to emphasise that the conductor remains the "director" of the concert until the last singer has left the stage. It is the conductor who, with an appropriate gesture adapted to the ending of the piece, can influence the moment when the applause begins. Sensing the mood of the audience, they decide on the number of bows (their own and the choir's), and also help the performers decide when to leave the stage, as less experienced singers often have difficulty judging this.

All the stages of public performance mentioned above, and the associated issues, significantly influence the creation of the atmosphere necessary for performing a specific musical work, as well as the dramaturgical structure of the entire concert. Watching the conductor, the singers perceive the conductor's emotions and often subconsciously mirror their behaviour (especially in children's choirs) – returning a smile, but also raising their shoulders or tensing their necks, neither of which favours proper vocal production. We must, however, remember that every conductor, like every person, has their own individual physical and personality traits, including so-called stage temperament: one will be naturally more dynamic while conducting, another more static, yet another – thanks to great charisma – will achieve the desired effect by directing a single glance at the singers, without even moving their hands. It all comes down to assessing our "instrument" as accurately as possible, understanding our own traits and personality, working on elements that may negatively affect choral performance and making full use of our strengths.

The technique of playing the choral instrument

With regard to classical conducting technique, I assume that the aim of training in this technique is to achieve the highest possible level of skill, precision and

freedom of hand movement, so as to convey the conductor's intentions in a compelling and expressive way that performers can readily understand, especially those with whom we do not work on a daily basis[7]. I often compare the conductor to a virtuoso instrumentalist. Watching, for instance, the International Chopin Piano Competition or the International Henryk Wieniawski Violin Competition, we can notice that participants use different playing techniques yet demonstrate an equally high level of musical virtuosity. The conductor's specific instrument (apart from the body mentioned by Professor Jadwiga Gałęska-Tritt) is the choir and, even though one "plays" it without physical contact, the effect of each gesture on the manner and quality of sound production is extremely important. I must admit that for many years I asked myself whether there exists a single, universal and correct conducting technique. As a student, I believed there was, appreciating the methodical and insightful approach to the subject adopted by my mentor, Professor Zofia Urbanyi-Krasnodębska. However, the experience and knowledge I gained during Postgraduate Choirmaster Studies at the Feliks Nowowiejski Academy of Music in Bydgoszcz, where I studied conducting with professors from various music academies in Poland, allowed me to significantly broaden my horizons in this area. The initial stages were not easy, as each of these distinguished pedagogues positioned my hands differently and each demonstrated different technical solutions to the same problems. After a short period of rebellion, during which I evaluated and compared the knowledge passed on to me, I came to understand that in fact they were all right, and that the newly acquired skills would be the best path to developing my own individual language of communication through conducting.

Turning now to the interdependence between the choir's sound and conducting technique, it is worth reflecting on what determines this sound. First and foremost, the sound of the ensemble is shaped by the performers themselves as individual singers. Therefore, elements such as their age, physiological vocal characteristics and level of vocal training will be of great importance[8]. The sound of the ensemble will also be influenced by systematic work on so-called collective vocal production, which includes not only vocal exercises but also harmonic and aural training, sensitising singers to the palette of human vocal timbres.

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[7] Cf. L. Jaworski, *Podstawy techniki dyrygowania*, Lublin 2023.

[8] Regarding the individual contribution of each performer, professional ensembles employ singers whose timbre and technical skills match the needs and distinctive characteristics of a given choir. The requirements at auditions for an early music ensemble differ from those for an opera or philharmonic choir. Conductors of amateur choirs do not have this advantage; when admitting new candidates, they most often test their general musical and vocal aptitude.

For a gesture to have an effective influence on the choir's sound, the conductor must fully understand and identify with the vocal technique requirements of their singers[9]. This applies to the following elements:

- the tempo and energy of inhalation before the beginning of the piece and before individual phrases, taking into account their length
- the work of the abdominal press muscles responsible for the respiratory mechanism, rhythmic impulses and the execution of particular types of articulation
- shaping dynamics by creating space in the pharyngeal cavity, using proper breath support
- shaping timbre by directing the sound towards the resonators and through the action of the articulatory apparatus, as well as through timbral imagination
- awareness of the needs of the articulatory apparatus responsible for diction (tongue, lips, jaw)
- awareness of more demanding passages in the melodic line (leaps, high or low tessitura, etc.)

Let us now consider the tools that conducting technique offers us to support and inspire our singers to perform at their best[10]. The most basic tools include:

- the preparatory gesture – its length, tempo and character
- shaping dynamics by varying the amplitude of movement; in *forte*, one should use a gesture that releases a large volume of sound (a wide range of motion and anchoring of the gesture at the point of support are recommended, in keeping with the character of the piece), while in *piano* the range must be significantly smaller, yet with a clearly defined preparatory motion and attention to the point of support. Equally important is awareness of the work of the hand that "holds" and shapes the sound[11]
- eliciting a bright timbre through a light gesture, guided gently upwards by the hand; for darker, more dramatic timbres, the gesture should be more firmly grounded

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[9] Cf. A. Zeman, *Komunikacja między dyrygentem a zespołem wokalnym: wybrane zagadnienia*, [w:] *Kreatywność i tradycja we współczesnej chóralistyce: studia i materiały*, red. K. Szatrawski, Olsztyn 2018, p. 95–105.

[10] This part of the paper, as delivered during the conference, was supplemented with practical conducting demonstrations.

[11] In shaping dynamics, non-verbal communication between the conductor and the choir can play a crucial role. The conductor's posture, appropriate muscular tension and relaxation, eye contact and other signals are especially important when sustaining notes of long duration and shaping the volume of sound through gesture (*crescendo*, *diminuendo*).

- realising articulation: *non legato* with a slightly pulsating, steady gesture, active in each preparatory movement; *legato* with a very smooth, "viscous" gesture, as if the hand were moving through a dense substance, struggling to detach from the support point; preparatory movements within the pattern become more passive; *staccato* with a short and light gesture, determined by the ability to initiate the preparatory movement appropriately, comparable to the reflex of a quick rebound or the hand "escaping" after touching a very hot surface. It should be remembered that the communication of a specific articulation is determined not only by the moment the preparatory motion begins, but also by how the gesture is finalised at the sound's support point (marcato, portato, etc.)
- controlling intonation by subtly indicating with the hand the need to raise or lower the pitch.

Only when the conductor is fully aware of the vocal technique and musical challenges involved in performing a particular work can they guide its performance and thus shape its sound through gesture and non-verbal body language. It is therefore extremely important that the conductor's preparatory gesture and subsequent conducting of the entire piece be consistent with the singer's breathing needs, the requirements of the abdominal press muscles, the opening of the pharyngeal space, the activity of the articulatory apparatus, etc. The conductor's gesture should release the energy necessary to convey, for example, fast and slow tempi and rhythmic patterns (e.g. syncopation), and should appropriately manage this energy. An inappropriate gesture can negatively affect performance quality and cause vocal blockage in singers; non-verbal communication contrary to the character of the work can disturb the mood and emotional interpretation of the piece.

Conclusion

The conductor's distinctive body language and a clear understanding of their verbal and non-verbal signals form the basis of communication with the choir. A conductor who uses good technique and a choir that sings well together form a single organism in complete symbiosis. Only the integration of conducting technique with an awareness of the singers' vocal needs can guarantee effective and fruitful collaboration, enabling free music-making and thus appropriate "management" of the emotions of both performers and audience. As conductors, we should constantly develop and refine our technique, and, in moments of doubt, remember the principle popular among doctors: *primum non nocere*. We should also take care of our physical condition so that our bodies allow us, for as long as possible, to practise a profession which is often our passion and a source of vitality.

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Abstract

The conductor's gesture and the sound of the choir

This paper explores the impact of the conductor's gesture on the sound of a choir, taking into account both conducting technique and non-verbal communication with the ensemble. Drawing on the author's extensive professional experience and taking inspiration from the research of Professor Jadwiga Gałęska-Tritt, the paper highlights the importance of the conductor's body awareness and its influence on the quality of choral performance. It discusses the significance of posture, facial expressions and preparatory movement, as well as techniques affecting articulation, dynamics, intonation and tone colour. Emphasis is placed on the necessity of an individualised approach to conducting technique, tailored to the conductor's physical and emotional characteristics, as well as the needs of the ensemble. The conclusions are supported by specific repertoire examples and practical exercises.

Keywords: conducting, communication, effectiveness, sound

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The choral ensemble warm-up

The subject of choral warm-up is particularly close to me, as it has accompanied my daily work with choirs since the beginning of my artistic and teaching career. My involvement in choral music began in 1984 in Wola Rzędzińska, a small locality near Tarnów, where I was a co-founder of the mixed choir "Cantus". During my education, I met outstanding teachers who shaped my approach to working with the voice and the choir. In 1986, during my studies at the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Kraków (Liturgical Music Section), I met the charismatic Professor Jan Wojciech Śmietana, who taught me how to use my voice professionally as an instrument. My fascination with choral music inspired me to explore the beauty of the choir's sound as a musical instrument, which led me to complete Postgraduate Voice Emission Studies at the Academy of Music in Bydgoszcz. My studies at this institution, particularly individual and group vocal technique classes with Professor Jadwiga Gałęska-Tritt, confirmed my conviction that the vocal training of a choir depends to a large extent on the vocal education of the conductor. Leading various ensembles – the Jagiellonian University Male Choir, Psalmodia at the Pontifical University of John Paul II, the Polish Radio Choir in Kraków – I have always paid special attention to the role of the warm-up. Time devoted to the warm-up has never been time wasted; quite the contrary. Thanks to the use of appropriate vocal exercises, all the ensembles I have worked with have won valuable prizes at prestigious competitions and festivals.

Between routine and foundation – perspectives on the warm-up

While preparing this paper, I came across many sharply contrasting views on warming up the solo voice or the voice of a choral singer. Here are some of them:

> When I myself attended singing lessons, I was quite often irritated that roughly the first 10 minutes were devoted to "silly" exercises which, so I thought, did not bring any change to my singing. I used to get frustrated because, after all, SO much money [yes, my dear friends, voice training is quite expensive], and there it was – the same old "brrr", up, down, over and over again every single time?!?!?!
>
> Fortunately, now I am wiser and I do not waste those 10 minutes on silly repetition of "brrr"… instead, I use those 10 minutes as effectively as I possibly can![1]

In her book *Chór amatorski jako forma edukacji kulturalnej dorosłych* [*The Amateur Choir as a Form of Cultural Education for Adults*], drawing on examples from Kraków choral ensembles, Aleksandra Litawa presents conductors' contrasting attitudes towards methods of working with ensembles and the warm-up as an element of the organisational structure of rehearsals. The conductor of the *Echo* choir emphasised that it is a key element of every rehearsal and that proper vocal set-up should always precede work on the repertoire. However, the publication also described choirs in which the warm-up was not an integral part of the ensemble's work and had been abandoned entirely. This was the case in the choirs *Cecyliański* and *Hejnał*:

> We do not do a warm-up, we warm up on the pieces. (…) I am not convinced about exercises in an amateur choir, and it is difficult to introduce something one does not believe in. I think it would bore and irritate them (conductor of the Hejnał choir)[2].

I will now give another example of an approach to warming up a choral ensemble, this time a professional choir.

In 1995, following a competitive selection process, I became director and artistic head of the Polish Radio Choir in Kraków. As part of my duties, I led the choir's rehearsals and artistic projects, including archival recordings for Channel 2 of Polish Radio, broadcast concerts and CD recordings. Before every artistic event and rehearsal, I led the ensemble in a warm-up. These warm-ups were usually longer in the morning. On many occasions, after 20 minutes of warming up, the ensemble was still not ready to cope with difficult pieces of contemporary music.

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[1] *Po co ta rozśpiewka?*, https://gosiasacala.com/po-co-ta-rozspiewka (29.03.2025).

[2] Aleksandra Litawa, *Chór amatorski jako forma edukacji kulturalnej dorosłych*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego, Kraków 2016, p. 88–89.

I must admit that during one of these longer warm-ups I was greatly astonished by a question from the chair of the trade union, Ms Lucyna Szramik: *Director, when will we finally start working?* I leave this question unanswered.

I am a participant in most choral festivals and competitions in Poland. Having observed choral performances at these competitions and during the preliminary rounds, I can state that not all choral ensembles deserve recognition. The lack of proper vocal preparation in some ensembles is particularly striking. There are a number of reasons for this, the most important of which is that, despite generally good musical training, conductors of ensembles lack the vocal training necessary for working with a choir[3].

As can be seen from the examples presented, attitudes towards choral warm-ups vary among conductors, singers and singing teachers, often giving rise to divergent, even controversial opinions. Some treat the warm-up as an optional element; others regard it as the foundation of vocal work. From my point of view, the warm-up constitutes a key element of choral practice – it not only supports vocal hygiene and improves sound quality, but also builds the performing community. It is the key to the success of every artistic performance. It may be compared to an athlete's warm-up before a competition – without it, full capacity and readiness to perform more difficult and complex tasks are hard to achieve.

In my work as a choirmaster, I have always compared all the ensembles I have worked with (including the Polish Radio Choir) to the most perfect instrument – the organ – in which the lungs serve as the bellows, the larynges as the pipes and the individual voice sections – soprano, alto, tenor, bass – as the registers. A choir, being an instrument made up of many voices, is subject to the same laws of music that apply to all other instruments. If we wish to perform a choral work correctly, we must first build a beautifully tuned instrument. After years of working with choral ensembles, I can state that, thanks to the proper synchronisation of vocal functions and appropriate vocal preparation, I was able to develop the desired sound in both equal-voice and mixed choirs. This work made it possible to keep the choral ensembles in good vocal condition and always gave me great joy and satisfaction.

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[3] *Współczesna Chóralistyka 1 – Wartości, konteksty, perspektywy*, [in:] Włodzimierz Siedlik, *Co słychać w repertuarze Zespołów chóralnych? Tradycje, inspiracje, perspektywy*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Muzycznej im. Karola Lipińskiego we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2018, p. 109.

The role of the warm-up in integrating vocal production and building a unified sound in the choral ensemble

In all choral ensembles, I have always used warm-ups that incorporated the synchronisation of vocal production functions. Every vocal function – breathing, phonation, articulation combined with the phenomenon of resonance in the resonating chambers of the chest, larynx and vocal tract – involves different muscles and structures of the vocal apparatus: for example, the diaphragm and the abdominal and chest muscles in breathing, and the muscles and cartilages of the larynx in phonation. Their actions, however, are closely synchronised. Improper functioning of any one of them immediately causes other muscles to work incorrectly. This occurs as a result of psychophysical processes taking place in the human body. As an adjudicator at choral festivals and competitions, I have often noticed certain shortcomings in preparing the choir, as an instrument, for performances. I have observed that conductors and their choirs enjoy using articulation exercises during the warm-up. Unfortunately, these exercises do not give due attention to proper breathing or to the use of the resonance of individual consonants, which affect the sound of the carrier of tone, namely the vowel.

We must remember that singing is a psychophysical process and that "the basis of the integrity of vocal techniques is maintaining the psychophysical interaction of the whole body"[4]. Therefore, it is worth beginning the warm-up with a few simple general movement exercises engaging the whole body. There are many possibilities, such as marching on the spot, squats or alternating standing up and sitting down to develop a posture of readiness. It is worth emphasising that these activities do not have to be treated as mechanical aerobic exercises preceding "musical exercises", and even at this stage one can develop the ensemble's responsiveness to the conductor's interpretative intentions by performing each exercise in response to a hand gesture (at various tempi and with different expressive qualities). We must not forget – I will emphasise this once again – that although the respiratory system plays a key role in this process, we sing with our entire body[5]. The choir conductor should lead the warm-up with their own voice and be a model of correct vocal technique, intonation and articulation so that singers can correctly reproduce the exercises performed. An orchestral conductor knows the construction of the instruments and the way they are played; therefore a choir

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[4] Jadwiga Gałęska-Tritt, *Jak się odnaleźć w matni śpiewu*, Wydawnictwo PPSSW, POMOST, Poznań 2020, p. 112.

[5] Agnieszka Płusajska-Otto, *Podręcznik pracy głosem. Ćwiczenia i wskazówki dla osób występujących publicznie*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2017, p. 68.

conductor should also know at least the basic principles of the anatomy and physiology of the voice, if only to avoid damaging or tiring the singer's voice through ignorance. The conductor's voice carries their own emotions. As the outstanding Polish singer Aleksandra Kurzak observes, "singing is based on imagination. First we must imagine what we want to hear. This instrument cannot be seen […]. It is work with our inner self"[6]. Tension anywhere in the body, even far from the vocal folds, has a very significant impact on the freedom of artistic expression through the vocal apparatus.

Another important aspect of vocal work is focusing on the dynamic type of breathing used in vocal practice. Prolonging the exhalation phase cannot be achieved through excessive exertion of the throat muscles. It should be emphasised that, unfortunately, omitting the warm-up is often the main reason for singers forcing their voices within an ensemble. In working on free sound production and limiting effortful singing, simple exercises such as *yawning* or *lip trills* prove extremely effective. *Yawning* naturally reduces muscular tension and relaxes the throat, while the unforced opening of the jaw contributes to increasing the resonating space in the pharyngeal and oral cavities[7]. *Lip trills*, which involve setting the lips into vibration, are also a simple but extremely effective tool for improving the sound quality of individual voices and thus of the entire ensemble. Based on the continuous airflow necessary to set the lips in motion, *lip trills* can also be carried out at various pitches in the form of *glissandi* within a comfortable range[8]. In my practice as a choirmaster, I often alternate *lip trills* with *blowing kisses*, which strongly activates the lips in extreme positions. This activity has a measurable effect on vowel articulation, which depends on the activity of the orbicularis oris muscle and its coordination with jaw movement in the process of labialisation and delabialisation[9].

Moving on to articulation-focused exercises, so popular in choral warm-ups, we must not forget about phonation exercises. Although they perform different functions in the process of voice training, both types of exercises are closely interconnected. Articulation exercises concentrate primarily on the work of the speech organs and aim at developing clear and precise pronunciation, correct diction and flexibility of the articulatory apparatus. Phonation exercises, on the other

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[6] *Tajemnica przepony*, https://www.dwutygodnik.com/artykul/3958-tajemnica-przepony.html (30.03.2025).

[7] D. R. Boone, S. C. McFarlane, *A critical view of the yawn-sigh as a voice therapy technique*, "Journal of Voice" 7 (1993) no. 1, s. 75–80.

[8] Anna Kasprzak, *Głos jak dzwon*, Vox Ana, 2020, p. 86.

[9] Agnieszka Płusajska-Otto, *Podręcznik pracy głosem*, op. cit., p. 84.

hand, concern the process of producing sound, i.e. initiating and sustaining vocal fold vibrations, shaping the carrying power and timbre of the voice and helping to achieve stable intonation. In practice, both types of exercises should complement each other, since a flexible articulatory apparatus gives the voice clarity, but it is the correctly produced sound that allows this clarity to be fully utilised. The gradual introduction of more difficult exercises requires constant attention to maintaining correct vocal-respiratory reflexes established at earlier stages of the warm-up. When we start working on our diction, we must remember that the text in a piece is as important as the music, and *vowels are the music of the word*[10]. We should sing in such a way that it is the vowels, as carriers of the sound, that convey as many musical features as possible (duration, dynamics, timbre), while the consonants accompanying them in various combinations form a colouristic element characterised by precision and high expressiveness.

Another extremely important issue is the proper use of resonance. I have already discussed this aspect in the context of exercises using lip vibrations, but I believe that the key point is to realise that many structures in the body act simultaneously as resonators. These include the chest, lungs, bronchi, trachea, larynx, and the pharyngeal, nasal and oral cavities. In order to fully exploit the phenomenon of resonance, one must use the muscles which, together with the cartilaginous and bony structures surrounding the resonating chambers and cavities, do not obstruct the airflow during exhalation. Among the most common causes of distortion of the air column are an unnaturally positioned jaw, a lowered soft palate and an unfavourable tongue position. Every voice resonates. However, when we hear a voice that carries exceptionally beautifully, we have the impression that it is full and powerful without effort – as if it were flowing from the whole body, and not just from the limited space of the mouth. And that is precisely the key: that is music.

Conclusion

We must remember that our whole body is an instrument, and a choral ensemble, constituting a single instrument made up of many bodies, needs space in order to unify its sound and become one. This space is provided by the warm-up, during which singers not only safely warm up their vocal folds, but above all gain flexibility and collective readiness for intensive work on the repertoire as an ensemble. As Sylwia Prusakiewicz rightly notes in her publication Zadbaj o swój głos i zobacz co się stanie (Take Care of Your Voice and See What Happens): "Your voice is an

[10] Bogumiła Toczyńska, *Jak wyglądasz słowem?*, Gdańsk 2006, p. 12 (the author's teaching notes used during workshops).

extension of you, a parabola of your soul, a mirror of your experiences, mental states, thoughts and feelings. Your vocal folds, like your entire body, are a unique and highly subtle instrument. For them to serve you well, you simply have to take constant care of them"[11]. A conductor leading the warm-up with a choral ensemble cannot suppress their emotions or effectively mask them. In this artistic work, one must reveal one's true self with complete authenticity.

Throughout my artistic career, I have been guided by a saying frequently repeated by my charismatic choral conducting teacher at the Academy of Music in Kraków, Professor Arkadiusz Basztoń: There are no bad choirs, there are bad conductors.

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[11] Sylwia Prusakiewicz, *Zadbaj o swój głos i zobacz co się stanie*, Internetowe Wydawnictwo Złote Myśli, Gliwice 2006, p. 8.

Abstract

The choral ensemble warm-up

Vocal warm-up constitutes a key element of work with a choral ensemble. The aim of the warm-up is not only to prepare the vocal apparatus for intensive effort, but also to build the choir's collective sound as an instrument. Drawing on many years of experience as a choirmaster and on the relevant literature, the author presents the interdisciplinary nature of the choral warm-up. He discusses the significance and functions of the warm-up in choral practice, outlines the methodology of conducting vocal exercises in terms of their sequence and increasing difficulty and provides examples of practical solutions applicable both in professional ensembles and in choirs with varied levels of ability.

Keywords: choirmaster, choral ensemble, choral ensemble warm-up, vocal technique

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Shaping the sound of a mixed choir through the holistic method "Voice, Body and Spirit in Balance" – through conscious appoggio and cooperation between the body and the breath

Each voice, anatomically and physiologically speaking, is an individual entity, just like each fingerprint, unique in the world. For this reason, a fully individualised approach is required to address the needs of vocal technique development, indispensable for improving the production of sound by each voice. Developing the ability to consciously refine the timbre of the voice – important for those singing in ensembles or vocal groups – is helpful to the conductor in the process of building impeccable choral sonorities and achieving consistent interpretation in accordance with the intended artistic concept. Regular exercises in vocal sound production facilitate the continuation of work. Musicians gain motivation for continuous self-development through the resulting increase in the sense of performative freedom when the stylistic and musical requirements of interpreting the repertoire are met. The following article only outlines selected aspects of the issues in question. The use of original foreign-language terminology alongside English equivalents is intended to enable readers to access relevant entries more easily in readily available foreign-language sources.

1. Outline of the main aspects of the topic

The sound of a mixed choir and its development concern amateur, academic and professional ensembles alike, and fundamentally depend on the quality of the individual vocal and personal foundations of its members. The development of voices in sections depends on achieving an even emission and, in particular, on bringing

individual vocal attributes closer together in vowel production (*Vokalausgleich*). This applies both to innate features and to those gradually acquired and revealed as a result of vocal and technical development through individual and group work with the voice. Developing vocal tone within sections increases the possibilities for balancing dynamics within the choir, determined by the typical composition of four-part harmony. The artistic need to double the saturation of chords in an 8-part choir (with high and low soprano, 1st and 2nd alto, 1st and 2nd tenor and 1st and 2nd bass) requires enhanced selectivity of self-monitoring by ear. Motivating members positively determines the choice of realistically achievable goals. The final result serves proportionally to multiply the level of the individual artistic reservoir of the whole, so gaining one's own vocal confidence should be the primary driving force for choir members. The continuous shaping of a mixed choir's sound requires the professional repeatability of results, eliminating randomness in the results obtained. Creating documentation of model solutions and patterns for high-level vocal and technical interpretation accelerates the development process of refining vocal timbres (*timbrare*) as a conscious path towards achieving the ideal, that is, permanent and flawless, sound of the entire choir.

The development of sound shaping and its measurability are based on the objectivity of self-assessment of sensations. In order to shape the conscious transformation of vocal technique, it is advisable to remain open to criticism. During the period of cooperation with a vocal pedagogue, recordings of vocal technique exercises should be used. Improving vocal technique within the choir facilitates acceptance of further changes in vocal technique. Computer visualisation of spectral analysis of the frequency of formant sounds supports the neutrality of mutual evaluation of the results. Presenting the sound spectrum on screen, with a clear assessment of the sound analysis, becomes more important when it is necessary to demonstrate the need for radical changes in the execution of a musical phrase. It facilitates a conscious choice of interpretation. Visualisation of differentiated vocal dynamics helps to unify the vowel timbres.

Visualisation of vocal sound embodied in the conductor's expressive gestures supports the clarity of suggestions for the precise release of impulses through the whole body. The clarity of their structure facilitates the development of motivation necessary for technically demanding group work. Presenting successive stages of sound development accompanying the shaping of vocal resonance in the choir accelerates acceptance of corrections. Understanding them requires the development of sustained auditory sensitivity. Intuitive freedom in the individual selection of overtones in intoning a note, together with formants supportive of resonance, ultimately rewards the effort invested.

Gaining confidence in controlling the perception of phonation through auditory stimuli of the outer ear – for an objectively indispensable assessment – requires developing the ability to correlate auditory perception selectively with the inner ear. Practical elements of the conventional principles of the Alfred Tomatis method or the effects of auditory stimulation therapy (Neuroflow) are highly inspiring for developing selectivity. In this way, one gains control over clear articulation of consonants and the choice of appropriate vowel timbres. Empirical enhancement of the audibility of the types of intoned overtones together with the resulting formants can be achieved through the use of elements of overtone singing techniques. The existing anatomical characteristics of the resonating system form the basis for correlating tongue shape with adjustments to jaw position, the size of the mouth opening and changes in width. Controlling changes in the length and shape of the vocal tract opens up further possibilities for achieving the intended final result more quickly. Developing both melodic and harmonic auditory sensitivity supports control over differences in overtone composition in both solo voices and choral groups.

Disorders of auditory perception often indicate a lack of sensorimotor sensitivity of the body. If difficulties with auditory pitch control are identified, it is possible to transform hearing by enhancing kinesiological sensations stimulated by the sound wave in the mouth. Enhancing the higher partial tones of the vocal tract resonance by increasing the intensity of the selected overtone – in order to obtain vowels with a higher F2 formant – will compensate for the above deficiency. The phenomenon of resonance in the jaw and skull bones is known from the historical account of Ludwig van Beethoven's discovery. The gradual loss of sensitivity of external hearing inspired the composer's empirical research, which enabled him to regain partial control over surrounding sounds through the vibration of a silver spoon held in his teeth and resting on the piano's soundboard. One may hypothesise that he gradually increased the sensitivity of the body's proprioception, which was undoubtedly an effective aid to improvement.

Body proprioception, understood as the organism's ability to identify movement and changes in position through deep sensory receptors, is key to heightening auditory perception and gaining control over the sounding of overtones. We are not all aware that when singing we hear ourselves only from within – primarily with the middle and inner ear. The body's fascial, muscular, cartilaginous and bony connections receive the initial frequency of the fundamental sound wave through the vibration of the laryngeal tone (*Grundton*). The ability to selectively hear the simultaneously sounding chord of harmonically resonating upper partial tones – known as aliquots or overtones – requires cognitive exercises.

Sensitivity of auditory perception, after transformation of the forms – as a structure of formants necessary for correct filtering of the reinforced timbral

effect of the resulting resonance – constitutes the second channel of intonational perception, indispensable for controlling speech and singing. The pure initiation of the fundamental frequency of tones in the larynx (inside the body) simultaneously requires correct intonation of the selected partial elements of sounds (vowels). Filtering them requires mental guidance of the sound on breath support up to its final emission outside the body – in order to achieve a subjectively perceived positive impression of homogeneous sound. Congruence between the fundamentals of the sound wave and the appropriate tuning and tonality is an indispensable requirement for achieving the intended flawlessness of noble choral sound – including in the performance of contemporary music.

Holistic pedagogical supervision (Supervisor) is a guarantee of benevolent and constructive criticism that helps singers remain on the path of continued development. Furthermore, it ensures positive results and is central to healthy, long-term change. Regular cooperation quantifies – through ongoing interaction of the whole body – the directly achieved activation of elements of vocal-technical awareness. Cyclical workshops and systematic daily training produce progress regardless of the voice's needs. A pedagogue working initially with groups of two or three achieves swift results and can immediately present the effects of successive stages along with alternatives for individual development. The impulses acquired in this way confirm the progress of the voices on the path towards the individual evolution of the sound of the groups and, consequently, of the entire choir. This process requires systematic support through analysis of the results achieved through corrections. Periodic reviews at critical stages, using audio-visual recordings for evaluation and the professional exchange of views, complete the cycle of refinement in an atmosphere of balanced diligence.

2. Elaboration of the didactic outline

Technical advances in recording and voice analysis currently enable visualisation of the development of individual resonance forms, while monitoring the levelling of sound within a voice group (vocal tuning). Over the past three decades, there has been tremendous progress in the development of specialised medical devices and phoniatric technical capabilities. Thus, new research procedures have emerged. Computer programs have provided various forms of visual control of live sound production (such as VoceVista Video, Overton Analyzer, etc.) with descriptions of spectral analyses. For the purposes of in-depth analysis of the genesis of vocal sound – in almost all styles of classical and popular music – a number of medical films have been produced, allowing observation of changes inside the bodies of singers in real time during MRI examinations. On the basis of the data

obtained – together with pedagogical and phoniatric consultations – researchers are experimenting and systematising opinions on analyses of the full spectrum of vocal sound. The daily use of various types of equipment from the field of body physiotherapy is entering vocal pedagogy. Sensorimotor cushions of the Sissel type and Pezziball-type gymnastic balls allow choir groups to carry out exercises that increase body proprioception more rapidly. This is indispensable for controlling intonation and sound and stabilising the reproducibility of vocal timbres.

We obtain **overtones with the transformed sound** of favourable formants for vocal resonance, which enables us to reinforce them specifically (the remaining dissonant ones will be relatively suppressed). By applying a suitable selection of emitted overtones to strengthen the partial resonance tones (from R1 to R5), we gain tools for practical control of intonational purity within equal temperament. At the outset, one should empirically train a selected, intonationally well-adjusted pitch of the focused sound of the fundamental tone (*Grundton*). Then, to enable clear articulation of homogeneous vowel sound, we seek a consistent correlation between the selected pitch of formant F1 and the appropriately adjusted frequency output of the component sound of formant F2 (measured in hertz). These processes can be realised intuitively through recordings analysed by trial and error (preferably under a pedagogue's guidance). Vocalisation exercises involving melodic-harmonic clusters of two, three or more vowels "o-u-ü-i-y-j-a-ä-e-é-i-ü-y-j-o-u" – essential in many languages as diphthongs – are practised for the development of sensorimotor perception of individual resonance partial tones, to support the transformation of overtone harmonisation, to achieve shifts in formant pitch necessary for obtaining a controlled balance of vocal emission.

Auditory control requires highly selective hearing. Such skills were already possessed more than 40 years ago by outstanding singers and exceptional pedagogues such as Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. Guidance from an experienced pedagogue who can identify overtones selectively and visually monitor the sound produced calms the subconscious, which over time allows the dispositions to be transferred into neuromuscular motor coordination – as epigenetic muscle memory (Muscle Memory Effect). Another element of vocal-technical development is achieving comfortable anticipatory timing of phonation as an individually controlled strategy of conscious neurological dispositions of the body.

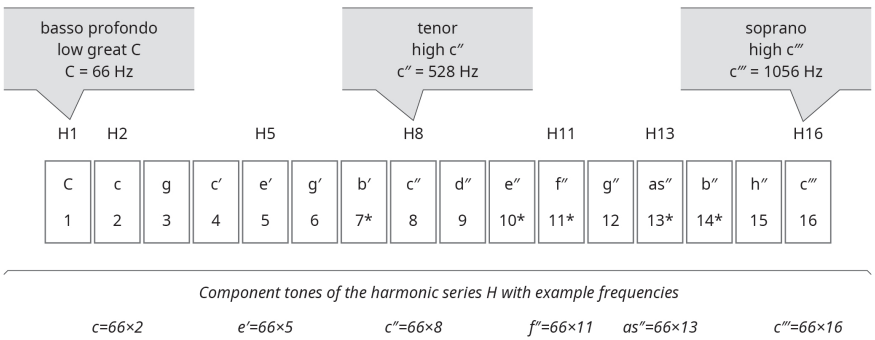
Intoning the structure of formant sound requires an intonationally unified, focused tone. When we intone a given pitch in a given key at a specific frequency in hertz (Hz), selected from the equal-tempered piano tuning with its fundamental tone corresponding to the frequency of the lowest formant F0, we automatically sing it together with the chord sounding above it, formed by the natural series of harmonic partials (*Harmonische*), known to us as overtones or harmonics. These

are understood here physically as the acoustic wave of a series of natural partials – so-called harmonics – at mathematical multiples of the fixed fundamental frequency (n × F0). Their resonance above the fundamental tone as successive overtones/harmonics is based on whole-number multiples of n × Hz of the fundamental (with n > 1 as 2×, 3×, 4×, etc.), generated in the larynx while producing the sound.

In physics, the sound spectrum is characterised by the harmonic series (*Harmonische Reihe*) of partial components (their increasing constant multiple of the fundamental frequency is pure mathematics). However, the harmonic partials are not always identical to their equivalents in equal temperament, which requires strategies of intonational correction.

To understand the topic, it is useful to note that frequency doubles between harmonics an octave apart. The intervals between the natural harmonic partials are measured as whole-number multiples of the pitch of the fundamental sound, with n > 1. The highest note for a coloratura soprano is f‴ at 1396.91 Hz in Mozart's Queen of the Night aria.

The spectrum of differences between voices, from the fundamental note of great C sung by a basso profondo at 66 Hz (×2/×3, etc.) up to the high soprano c‴ at 1056 Hz, together with the acoustic structure (*Grundton* C) of the harmonic series of partials/overtones for musical comparison with equal-tempered tuning (a' = 440 Hz), is presented in the table below, which illustrates their structure. Five differences should be noted here between natural tuning and equal-tempered tuning.



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An interesting feature of their structure is that each interval between natural tones appears in the harmonic series only once. For this reason, five partials are marked with asterisks (e.g. H7*); they sound lower or higher than their equivalents

in equal temperament. The difference in frequency is measured in cents (in equal temperament, a "pure" semitone is 100 cents and an octave is 12 semitones, i.e. 1200 cents). These differences – if reinforced – cause harmonic tones to sound dissonant as formants!

Tensegrity combines two terms, tension and integrity, and derives from 20th-century architectural design. It denotes the self-stabilising interplay of tensile cable elements acting as elastic ties with the compression of rigid beams. The "Spodek" arena in Katowice has fascinated observers since 1971 with its suspended roof structure. The introduction of pre-stressed tendons in the structure to coordinate compressive and tensile forces – through the interplay of elastic and rigid elements – provided balanced stability in space. The practical lightness thus obtained in the interplay of elastic and rigid elements correspondingly prepares the vocal "structure" space of the body for vocal resonance.

Biotensegrity expresses the interplay of tensile forces in the body's elastic elements (muscles, tendons) as pre-tensioned ties in the fascial system (connective tissue and internal organs) with the compression of the rigid bony skeleton – to provide stability for living organisms, not only in moments of stillness or static work. The key element is a stable body structure that allows technically light movement – with reliable stabilisation of the torso and continuous control of balance. The basis of action is freedom from fear of losing balance (*Neuroathletik*). An additional dynamic load on the musculoskeletal system and joints is consciously secured by muscle elasticity and fascial extensibility. Training the connections of tendon attachments with the three-dimensional fascial system, which accounts for around 20% of body weight, enables the overall interplay of the system. Achieving flexibility of stage movement and melodic mobility of the voice supports mental preparation for implementing breath *appoggio*.

The vocal tract naturally possesses a structure capable of producing five fundamental partial resonance tones – together with the physiological possibility of changing its form – in order to exploit differences in formant frequencies. An empirically trained correlation between changes in the tract's dimensions enables the development of an individual vocal timbre. The need for an acoustic encounter of the emitted wave of the laryngeal overtone series is supported by a vocal strategy of selecting specific overtones for paired formant sounds. Freely increasing sonority enhances the power of register sound and the spread of vocal carrying power (resonance).

Formant tuning requires mastery of the basic causal principles governing formant alignment. Experience is gained empirically as well as in ongoing studies (MRT realtime). Observation of the functioning of internal body structures through magnetic resonance imaging, or acoustic monitoring using PC programs for the

spectral analysis of vocal sound, reveals new perspectives. Observation of possible adjustments in bodily activity simultaneously shows their influence on differences in sound spectra and on achieving a fuller or only partial impact on the spectrum of vocal timbre (*timbrare*).

Periodic presentation of recording results to singers is an essential basis for voice analysis in pursuit of a homogeneous sound across the entire ensemble, supporting motivation for further changes. The pedagogy of computer visualisation of spectral analyses and stylistic-musical variants of interpretation supports the intended flawlessness of optimal sound transformation. Correct phonetics determines the correlation of pure phoneme sounds, necessary for steering correct intonation with vowels (F1 with F2).

3. Pedagogical outline of the methodology

The methodology of developing the sound of a mixed choir requires the ability to reproduce results individually. Technological progress in vocal work offers new possibilities for recording the vocal output of a choir as well as for individual voice production exercises. Achieving neutral control of empirical differences in sound changes enables logical, causal reasoning. Stimulating the perception of bodily stimuli makes daily progress tangible, eliminating randomness in the results obtained. Analysis of audio-visual recordings of examples of noble vocal sound accelerates the creation of model patterns and solutions for high-level vocal and technical interpretation, resulting in the ideal, flawless sound of the choral ensemble.

The "Voice, Body and Spirit in Balance" method is effective thanks to individually adapted breathing exercises combining expression with visualisation of sound. Movement of the hands and torso restores freedom and, in practice, allows singers to discover mental control quickly over speech and the sound of the whole body. It accelerates mastery of the voice's sonority as an instrument. Its foundation lies in the author's audio-visual recordings together with the empirical discovery made in the 1980s that through bodily movement we gain access to the proprioception of breathing and its control. Further research into the first systematic spectral analyses of the voice (VoceVista), from the mid-1990s (Donald Gray Miller), confirmed the effectiveness of strategies for achieving resonant carrying power (*Sängerformant*).

The holistic didactic assumptions of the "Voice, Body and Spirit in Balance" method integrate the author's many years of experience gained from his own studies in three traditions: the Slavic, Italian and German vocal schools. After graduating from the Vocal-Acting Department of the State Higher School of Music in Łódź in the class of Antoni Majak, the author continued his creative development

through international scholarships. He initially studied with Rina and Mario del Monaco to learn the secrets of *appoggio* in the operatic tradition of Italian *bel canto*, with its characteristic freedom of execution. These wide-ranging studies were complemented by the key experience of exploring body language and stage work in the operatic repertoire through active participation in Joachim Herz's Master Course in Opera Direction. Another phase in the development of methodology and vocal pedagogy consisted of documented (audio-video) individual discoveries and invaluable impulses together with practical experience. Their attainment, arising from the search for a deeper understanding of resonance and vocal carrying power, was essential for the professional reproducibility of artistic mastery. This was developed through three masterclasses with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and with Birgit Nilsson (IMAS Hanover), and was later confirmed during two scholarships at the Bayerische Staatsoper with the Münchner Singschul in Josef Metternich's class.

These were later complemented by elements of the strongly contrasting precision of the German vocal school with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. Particularly fascinating was the selectivity of her hearing, impeccable phrasing and perfect vocal line in the practical stage performance of Mozart operas. Learning how to build a vocal interpretation under her guidance in stage practice was decisive. Performing the role of Bartolo in the production of "The Marriage of Figaro", conducted by Gary Bertini and directed by Sir Peter Ustinov at Herbert von Karajan's Gesangsstudio in Salzburg, led to a long-term engagement by Rolf Liebermann at the Staatsoper in Hamburg. The insights gained from Anna Reynolds and Jean Cox through two years of work on interpreting the Wagner repertoire in Bayreuth brought this vocal development to fruition.

Years of vocal-technical and pedagogical-artistic development resulted in competition awards, including victory as the sole laureate of the Premier Grand Prix and two special prizes at the 28th Concours International de Chant in Toulouse in 1982 and the Polish Phonographic Academy's FRYDERYK 2011 Award for the recording of Roman Maciejewski's "Requiem – Missa pro Defunctis" as Album of the Year in the "Contemporary Music" category.

Alongside his vocal career, since September 1978 the author has worked intensively as a pedagogue, leading his own singing classes in Łódź, Salzburg and Kassel, continuously putting new didactic and methodological developments into practice, guided by the overriding idea of combining stage movement with acting and vocal performance.

Achieving rhythmic–vocal assurance in the use of the body's musculo-fascial system, in order to develop routine control over the release of sub-impulses during the preparatory phase of phonation, is the principal aim of vocal-technical work. The next stage in vocal development is mastering cognitive recognition processes

for coordinating the essential impulses required to produce sound, involving the work of the entire body as a musical instrument (timing). Initially, this should be done in a stress-free yet always conscious manner and, to understand the structure of movement, even analytically (BODY ↔ SPIRIT).

Achieving resonant formants for maintaining a healthy voice is possible by exciting, via the passing sound wave, free forced vibrations of the five natural resonance frequencies of the vocal tract (R1 to R5), beneficial for generating formants F1 to F5. As the frequency of selected overtones of the sound wave approaches and matches the above resonance frequencies of the vocal tract forms, the phenomenon of vocal sonorisation arises. Enhancing resonance from F1 to F5, through pairing them with the ranges R1 to R5, increases the concentration of acoustic energy that arises independently of the pitch of the fundamental tone. Transferring this energy to the whole body as vocal sonorisation is empirically possible and results from matching changes in the form and size of the vocal tract to the requirements of muscular-fascial tension (VOICE ↔ BODY).

Changing the dimensions, length and shape of the vocal tract (*Vokaltrakt*) either damps or sonorises the voice. Achieving a convergence between the pitch of a spontaneously selected harmonic/overtone and the physiologically given fluctuations in the partial frequencies of the resonances produced by a given vocal-tract configuration strengthens the stability of the vocal sound and its projection in the auditorium, shaping the appropriate vowel formants (*Vokalformant*, *Sängerformant*).

The presence of accumulations of selected overtone resonances within the vocal wave, together with the deliberate adjustment of their pitch for filtering by the vocal tract – as vocal formants, serving the subjective need to complete the sense of fullness in intonation – in addition to the pure fundamental of the laryngeal tone, is still little known. The mutual correlations of the pitches of the formants determine the completion of the sense of fullness in the perception of the twofold nature of the above intonation, thanks to the quality of the sound of pure vowels (Vocal). This applies to both the speech and singing of the singer-actor and to the voices of the entire choir.

Acquiring the ability to make adjustments in the selective hearing of overtones, in order to make planned changes to the pitches of the vocal-tract formants (F3, F4 and F5) before phonation, is the aim of an individually chosen strategy for strengthening the vocal sound (resonance), and becomes gradually possible through the brain's neuroplasticity (*Neuroplastizität*).

Reorganisation of auditory structures initiates new receptive connections (synapses). Their formation enables the further training needed to transform unified vowel sounds, which are absolutely indispensable for singers' articulation. The

full achievement of whole-body resonance is the primary objective of professional education for a healthy voice. The resulting increase in sonority – alongside carrying power – relieves the laryngeal muscles and vocal folds, allowing the voice to remain young and healthy over time.

Through continuous repetition of objective corrections, movements, impulses and their interaction with mental processes become automatic. Sharpening singers' concentration supports precision in focusing the sound. The body's perception in planning action and reaction signals and encoding them into the epigenetic memory of the muscular system are elements that support the ability to control amplification of the sound wave – in order to consistently produce a noble vocal sound (BODY ↔ SPIRIT ↔ VOICE).

Flawless transformation of sound according to register needs is the ability to choose the placement zone of focused sonority (*Stimmsitz*) for intoning a resonant base of the fundamental tone (*1 Ton-Technik*). The quality of the selection of paired emitted tones determines the congruence of the obtained formants, appropriate to the hall's acoustics in relation to the harmony and phrases of the composition (MIND).

We achieve uniformity of noble vocal sound through deliberate coordination of bodily impulses in accordance with the harmony of the melodic phrase. This requires further training of auditory sensitivity to guide the quality of the body's resonance and develop the ability to select specific vocal timbres. Supplementary exercises standardising choir members' knowledge of vocal physiology and hygiene are helpful (MIND ↔ BALANCE).

Acoustic tuning of the sound of free vocal intonation requires the ability to master kinaesthetic sensing empirically, in order to enable physiological changes in the shape of the vocal tract and the damping of dissonant tones within the chord of the natural overtone series. The correct execution of such sound production determines choral homogeneity. Furthermore, it regulates "pure" vowel intonation. Melodically pairing the resonance partials with the appropriate overtones creates the formants of the coherent harmonic structure of the four choral voices (soprano/alto/tenor/bass). Any lack of a homogeneous vocal sound requires an individual change of strategy within the groups.

The specific character of choral sonorities within chord groups, in accordance with the harmony of the melodic phrase of the composition, depends on the ability **to focus** the intoned voices (S/A/T/B). The uniformity of the conductor's gestures controlling the entire piece determines the achievement of an intonational compromise in chord consonance of melodic phrases with the composition's harmony – alongside the development of singers' selective auditory sensitivity during sectional singing.

Physiologically correct nasal inhalations – combined with enhanced perception of the musculo-fascial system – help the body intuitively achieve free sound production by using the initiation phase of support on the gradually perceived inner "air cushion" in the pelvis (*appoggio*).

The use of aerodynamic cushions in choir rehearsals demonstrates the necessity of understanding the impact of bodily exercises on the noble sound of the entire choir. The sensation of gradually regulating balanced vocal support before phonation facilitates comprehensive mastery of a conscious strategy for cooperation within the fascial system. The need to improve proprioception for modulating vocal resonance through body balance is tested using Sissel-type sensorimotor cushions. Arranging them in sets (in a 1-2-3-2-1 system) offers possibilities for individual variations in solo and group exercises to stabilise perception of whole-body balance.

Using **biotensegrity** techniques ("the body's sound from head to toe"), we achieve flexible integration of evenly distributed fascial-muscular tensions of the skeletal system without static stiffness or blockages! Supple stabilisation of the spine as the body's axis during phonation exercises using the alphabet from A ↔ Z supports periodic walking with active tone in the legs and feet. Fluency in counting from 1↔30 refines resonant articulation of all phonemes.

Exercises in flexible muscular interaction to change the resonance spectrum of component tone chords empirically support the shaping of new formant selection patterns. Free nasal inhalation based on conscious Italian *appoggio* (in many countries incorrectly translated as "support"!) enriches the choir by giving each voice a noble sound with carrying power. An indispensable element for sustained vocal sonority is the sensation of musculo-fascial support forms in the torso. Phases of physiologically healthy nasal inhalation and exhalation shape awareness of the breathing air cushion. Initiating its movement in the lower part of the torso and towards the pelvic floor helps minimise air consumption during the phonation of sung phrases.

Slow body movements, with coordinated **conscious inhalation and exhalation**, train gradual differentiation of dynamic effects, consolidating healthy resonance. Through the technical control of fascial tension to develop dynamic shifts in sound, from *p<mp>p*; *mp<mf>mp*; *mf<f>mf*, known as "messa di voce" and regarded as the hallmark of "italianità", we achieve evenness of vocal emission.

The strategy of combining conscious **cooperation of the body with nasal breathing** for **full vocal sound** is as indispensable as controlling one's conscious impact on the final result, requiring the ability to **correlate the work of the entire body** (Mindset). Using mental elements of the Alexander Technique enables the development of subtle sensitivity in the selective perception of one's own voice, with control over auditory spectral differences in vocal sound analyses within the group.

Neurology has demonstrated the physiological phenomenon of evolutionary change through **brain neuroplasticity** and the formation of new connections (synapses). An increase in neural connections facilitates improved concentration and individual skills in conscious cognitive work. As early as the 2000s, scientific research at the University Clinic in Heidelberg confirmed the stimulation of new centres within the cerebral hemispheres and a transformation of auditory function. As a result of cognitive exercises, we develop greater selectivity of perception, which is essential for analysing the overtones we hear when our own voice resonates. In this way, cognitive processes provide new neuroplastic scope for adequately selecting auditory centres in both cerebral hemispheres.

Gaining control over feedback from both forms of hearing (internal and external) facilitates the choice of individual resonance strategies for consciously filling the hall with sound.

Courses are recommended that aim to transform listening habits from the left hemisphere of the brain – located in the area identified by Paul Broca for generating consonants, speech and information for mathematics, rhythm and the perception of musical intervals – to the right hemisphere. Here lies the centre responsible for analysing the timbre of sounds in speech, which perceives the specific differences in the dialectal sounds of vowels. This stimulation of selective perception of the overtone and the resonance of the sung voice, together with the overall timbre, provides information that enhances the sensitivity of full auditory perception for the production of a refined sound of pure vowels.

The multifaceted nature of these activities, together with the comprehensive effect of gradually improving the overall sound, provides choirs with the benefits of ambitious emotional control for further conscious development.

A summary of vocal technique shows that intonation of a specific note depends on the choice of overtone and the position of the second resonance tone R2 for strengthening formant F2, which acoustically activates optimal tuning to environmental needs. Uniform choral sound depends on selecting appropriate vowel timbres through mutual correlation of the constituent formants F1 and F2. Correct vowel pronunciation and overtone placement in the voices steer choral homogeneity. A lack of sensorimotor awareness when unifying the specific place of articulation for consonants during phonation (R3/F3) leads to unclear diction, compromising the final result by reducing the precision of textual communication, overall sound quality and intonation.

The causal relationship between the cognitive choice of actions immediately before phonation and their consequences during phonation has been repeatedly proven (**Mind**). The initial alignment of the body with the group geometry of mouth opening, tongue position and vocal-tract shape enables selectively enhanced perception

of overtones. Correctly chosen overtones, used to generate vocal formants, stimulate an etymologically appropriate vowel timbre, which – as a consequence of the individual vocal sound strategy – determines pure intonation of sung notes.

4. Final conclusions and suggestions for the future

The satisfaction derived from the fully natural sound of a physiologically healthy and vocally well-produced, resonant tone is the result of conscious actions and of selecting the appropriate overtones that reinforce its formants.

The disappearance of reinforced dissonant overtones results in homogeneous formants in the accompanying voice groups along the melodic line, in keeping with the work's tuning and harmonic solutions.

The synergistic effect of applying existing neurological research findings using EEG will support the symbiosis of the multifaceted forms of hearing, helping to accelerate the development of conscious vocal education.

Controlling vocal production with selectively sensitive hearing for constructing the sound spectrum guarantees balanced carrying power with flawless development of noble vocal timbre.

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Abstract

Shaping the sound of a mixed choir through the holistic method "Voice, Body and Spirit in Balance" – through conscious appoggio and cooperation between the body and the breath

Shaping the sound of a mixed choir requires reproducibility of results. A pedagogue presenting computer visualisations of spectral analysis of sound supports flawless stylistic and musical transformations in interpretation. The ability to intonate the sound of chords with the voice through coordination of bodily impulses in accordance with the harmony of a musical phrase requires exercises in auditory sensitivity. The holistic method "Voice, Body and Spirit in Balance" combines shared elements of the performance traditions of the Slavic, Italian and German vocal schools with the author's 40 years of concert, opera and teaching experience in Poland, Austria and Germany. Inhaling through the nose facilitates free support of sound on the breath (*appoggio*), enabling mastery of a conscious strategy of bodily cooperation. Exercises using sensorimotor cushions in conjunction with the resonance of the voice's harmonic components shape the carrying power of noble choral sound.

Keywords: choral sound, sensorimotor cushions

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Intonation and tuning as fundamental elements in choral practice according to the Eastern European choral school

Intonation and tuning are the foundations of the sonic world of choral music. In the context of choral performance, accurate intonation and tuning play a key role in shaping a harmonious sound and in influencing listeners' emotions. The Eastern European choral school is renowned for its balanced, rich sound, which is based on meticulous care for these crucial elements.

The development of choral music in Eastern European countries, especially in Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, is inextricably linked with church music and a rich folk singing tradition. Both these sources – sacred music and folklore – had a profound impact on the formation of a unique performance aesthetic in which intonation and tuning play a central role.

The tradition of singing in the East Slavic lands began to take shape as early as the time of Kievan Rus, where musical practice was closely connected with Orthodox liturgy. After the adoption of Christianity from Byzantium in 988, monophonic church chant developed in the form of Znamenny chant, inspired by Greek-Bulgarian models. By the 11th century, the first liturgical books with notated melodies had appeared, and monasteries such as the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra became major centres for cultivating this tradition. Over time, church chant began to take on a local Slavic character, and its further evolution – including the development of polyphony – contributed to the formation of a unique performance aesthetic whose features are present today in the Eastern European choral school.

Church music in the Orthodox tradition followed a different course from musical traditions in the West and was characterised by *a cappella* singing, as instrumental accompaniment is not permitted in the Orthodox Church. An important

aspect of Orthodox services is their length – they last much longer than, for example, Catholic Masses, and choral singing continuously accompanies the liturgy. A typical Sunday liturgy in the Orthodox tradition may last from two to three hours, and on feast days or special occasions services may extend to four or even five hours.

A particular form is the so-called all-night vigil – a service celebrated on the eve of major feasts, which in some traditions could literally last all night, comprising vespers, matins and the first canonical hour. This distinctive character required not only exceptional vocal stamina but also excellent intonation so that the harmony remained pure throughout the entire service. Without instrumental support, choristers relied on harmonic hearing.

As early as the Middle Ages, church music was based on neumatic chant traditions – known in Russia as Znamenny chant and in Ukraine and Belarus as the chant of the Kyiv circle. These melodies developed in various directions, drawing on both the Byzantine tradition and local melodic variants. It was only in the 17th century that Western musical influences began to permeate the region's choral practice, leading to the emergence of a new style – partesny singing.

Partesny singing appeared mainly in Ukraine and Belarus in the second half of the 16th century and flourished in the 17th century. It was polyphonic choral music, structurally similar to European motets and madrigals, based on counterpoint and polyphonic techniques. Partesny singing broke away from the earlier mono- and two-part Znamenny chant tradition and introduced a new approach to harmony and sonorities.

One of the most important composers of this period was Nikolay Diletsky (c. 1630 – c. 1690), author of *A Musical Grammar* (1675), the first known theoretical treatise on harmony in Eastern European music. Diletsky introduced the Western principle of *basso continuo*, while preserving the distinctive features of natural tuning and the characteristic melodic features of church chant. His partesny choral concertos were among the first works to successfully combine the Orthodox tradition with a modern approach to harmony and sound.

Another key composer in Eastern European choral music was Dmitry Bortniansky (1751–1825), considered one of the most important composers of church choral music in the 18th century. Having studied in Western Europe, especially in Italy, Bortniansky not only absorbed the principles of the Western concert style but also created a unique musical genre – the *a cappella* choral concerto.

This was an innovative combination of two traditions:

- Western European instrumental concerto – Bortniansky adopted its contrasting three-part (or, less often, four-part) form, as well as methods of developing musical material such as sonata form, fugue, etc.

- Eastern European church music – he used psalm texts in Church Slavonic, *a cappella* singing and rich choral polyphony.

The composer employed virtuosic solo writing, drawing on the Western concert tradition in which the soloist contrasts with the orchestra; in his works, however, the solo part was contrasted with the full sound of the choir.

The emergence of this genre had far-reaching consequences for the development of choral music. Works of increasing technical difficulty gradually began to emerge, which compelled choristers to develop harmonic thinking and refine their intonation. Performing these works required a high standard of vocal technique and deliberate work on tuning. Consequently, a choral school began to take shape, founded on the systematic development of intonation and harmonic thinking.

Folk singing, alongside church chant, constitutes one of the oldest and most important foundations of the Eastern European vocal tradition. It was practised within rural communities, transmitted orally from generation to generation and almost always performed *a cappella* – without instrumental accompaniment. This form of music-making shaped a specific approach to intonation, sensitivity to sonorities and the ability to tune collectively in an ensemble without an external point of reference.

In many regions – particularly in present-day Ukraine, Russia and Belarus – folk singing was characterised by rich polyphony and the use of natural intervals, making it an exceptionally advanced vocal phenomenon. Phenomena such as "stretched" singing (intentional widening of intervals), micro-intervals or particular types of vibrato were natural elements of performance, requiring a high degree of aural and intonational awareness from singers.

Moreover, local singing styles – for example, Ukrainian "white voice" singing or Russian heterophonic singing – were marked by intensive use of resonance and strong vocal production, which directly influenced the development of vocal techniques in professional choral practice. Many elements originating from folk practices were later reflected in techniques and exercises used in choral education.

One of the most important distinguishing features of Eastern European choral music is the predominance of *a cappella* works. In contrast to Western European music, where oratorios and cantatas with orchestral accompaniment developed, the choral repertoire in Eastern European countries focused almost entirely on unaccompanied singing. Works with instruments are rare in this repertoire. The practice of combining a choir with instrumental accompaniment began to develop only in the 19th century, initially mainly in the context of secular and concert music.

As a result, a distinctive choral school emerged in Eastern Europe, which in later years led to the creation of teaching methods based on conscious harmonic tuning. The rich choral tradition of this region contributed to the development

of a scholarly discipline devoted to choral music – choral studies. From the late 19th century onwards, various methods for working on intonation and tuning in choirs were developed, based to a greater or lesser extent on principles of "zonal" tuning[1]. These methods became the foundation of choirmaster training in the countries of Eastern Europe.

Konstantin Pigrov and Pavel Chesnokov were among the key figures who contributed to the development of the Eastern European choral school. Both were outstanding conductors, pedagogues and choral practitioners, associated with both church and secular ensembles. Their work coincided with a period of dynamic cultural and political transformation in the Russian Empire, and later in the Soviet Union, where choral music – especially *a cappella* – flourished as a form of artistic and spiritual expression and also as a tool of ideological education.

Konstantin Pigrov (1876–1962) was a Ukrainian Soviet choral conductor, lecturer and professor at the Odessa Conservatory, today known as the Odessa National Music Academy. He is regarded as the founder of the choral school in southern Ukraine, known as the Odessa choral school, which played an important role in shaping generations of conductors and singers. His most important theoretical work is the handbook *Conducting a Choir* (1956), in which he described his methods and principles for working with a choir, focusing, among other things, on intonational problems and ways of resolving them.

Pavel Chesnokov (1877–1944) was a Russian Soviet conductor, composer, pedagogue and professor at the Moscow Conservatory. Known as the author of more than 500 choral works – mainly sacred – he was not only a practitioner but also a theoretician of choral art. In his handbook *The Choir and How to Direct It* (1940), he presented methods developed through many years of work with various types of ensembles, from church choirs to professional secular choirs.

Pigrov and Chesnokov not only pursued parallel careers during the same period but also knew and respected each other. Importantly, they referred to each other in their publications, as if their concepts complemented one another.

Before discussing their methods, however, it is necessary to explain the basic paradigm on which these methods are founded, namely so-called "zonal" tuning (Russian: зонный строй).

Zonal tuning is a way of understanding sound not only as a specific pitch but as a range of frequencies (a zone) within which a given sound can function. In other words, intonation does not consist in producing a single, exact frequency

[1] Zonal (or sectional) theory of musical hearing was introduced by the music theorist Nikolai Garbuzov.

but in placing the sound within the appropriate frequency band according to the context.

This way of thinking arises from consideration of the physics of sound and overtone structures, which determine our perception of "purity" or "tension" between sounds. In practice, this means that, for instance, a major third in the tonic chord may be slightly lower than the same third in the dominant – not because of harmonic theory as such, but because of its acoustic "placement" in different zones.

Depending on its function within the musical structure, a sound occupies different "zones": low, middle or high. This concept relates to natural tuning, in which intervals are not equal and the differences amount to "fractions of microtones" – small yet crucial for pure choral sound.

Nikolai Garbuzov's zonal theory assumes that a sound does not possess a single absolute pitch but functions within a certain frequency range – a so-called sound zone. Depending on the interval, this zone may span from 24 to as many as 70 cents[2]. For example, the note "a¹" may be perceived as correct within the range of 435–448 Hz. Deviations within this range remain imperceptible to the ear, whereas crossing its boundaries results in the impression of singing out of tune. Between the main zones there are also intermediate – unstable – zones, where sounds lose their intonational clarity. A well-developed musical ear, however, can distinguish, for example, "low", "normal" and "high" intonation within the same zone. This intonational differentiation becomes crucial for unified, in-tune ensemble singing – even if individual singers produce slightly different frequencies.

Importantly, zonal tuning is not an absolute unit; it is difficult to measure or notate precisely – it is based primarily on musical imagination, inner hearing and acoustic awareness. This is precisely why Pigrov's and Chesnokov's choral methods place such strong emphasis on developing a mental image of sound and the ability to "hear" it before singing – in relation to other sounds.

In this context, distinguishing between two types of tuning on which both methods are based is particularly important – melodic (horizontal) tuning and harmonic (vertical) tuning[3]. Melodic tuning refers to the linear succession of sounds – that is, the shaping of melody within a single choral part – and is closely related to musical direction and the tension and release within the vocal line. Harmonic tuning, on the other hand, refers to the relationships within vertical

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[2] Cent – a logarithmic unit used in music theory to measure the interval between pitches. An octave contains 1200 cents, and one semitone in equal temperament is 100 cents.

[3] The concept of dividing intonation into melodic and harmonic tuning was extensively discussed by K. Pigrov and P. Chesnokov as one of the fundamental elements of choral practice.

sonorities – between simultaneously sounding notes in different voices – and aims to achieve purity of sound and functional tensions among the components.

In practice, these two aspects of tuning are inseparable and interact with one another – and Pigrov's and Chesnokov's methods teach singers to balance them by considering the harmonic role of each sound. Choral practice, especially in *a cappella* performance, requires extremely precise awareness of both aspects. The melodic line must be shaped by the pattern of tension and release, while at the same time each note must blend with the other parts in an intonationally natural way. This approach presupposes that singers rely not on an external tuning source (e.g. an instrument) but on their own auditory perception and a shared conception of tonality and harmonic functions. Particular attention is also paid to the quality of vocal production, uniformity of vocal placement, evenness of dynamics and precision of articulation – all of which directly affect the tuning of the ensemble.

The principles of these methods have been thoroughly developed and are widely used by choral ensembles in Eastern European countries; they are also taught at music academies. They include principles for intoning individual degrees of major and minor scales, as well as for intoning intervals outside the key – which is of particular importance for pure intonation in more complex harmonic structures.

Since functional harmony lies at the core of the Eastern European musical school, these methods develop in singers the ability to hear harmonic functions while singing – that is, to reproduce a sound while understanding its place and significance within a given chord or tonal structure. Each component of a chord performs a specific function – and depending on that function, it should be intoned slightly differently: higher, lower, sharper, with tension, or with grounding.

In short, Pigrov's and Chesnokov's methods consist in consciously intoning sounds on the basis of imaginative thinking. The point is not solely the physical sense of hearing but the inner conception of a sound and its role – before it is sung. For this purpose, both authors introduced terms describing the character of a sound, including singing "high", "low", "sharp", "weighted", and others. These terms are not physical but relational and functional – they help to create a conception of a specific sound and its place in harmonic space.

Such an approach develops not only the ear but also harmonic awareness and zonal perception of sound – which is crucial to zonal tuning. A singer trained in these methods learns to think in terms of tensions and gravitational pulls between sounds, to determine the position of a sound within the harmonic space and to understand its relationship to other components. Thus vocal technique gains an additional dimension – it becomes a tool for expressing not only melody but also the internal structure of the music.

It is also worth emphasising that although these methods were created in the context of tonal music, their principles can successfully be applied to contemporary music, including atonal music. Although the authors did not develop separate systems specifically for atonal music, their approach – based on conscious relational thinking, auditory imagination and precise intonational differentiation – makes it possible to intone structures that lack a traditional tonal centre as well. Imaginative work with sound and intonation thus becomes the key to accurate performance and understanding of contemporary musical languages.

However, Pigrov's and Chesnokov's methods must not be treated as a "magic pill" that solves all intonational problems. Although their approach is based on an extremely well-developed imaginative and functional system, it does not eliminate the influence of purely physiological and technical aspects of singing, which also determine the quality of a choir's intonation. These factors include, among others, breathing, high vocal placement, precise articulation and diction, as well as the singer's physiological condition.

Both Pigrov's and Chesnokov's methods and the general approach of the Eastern European choral school show that intonation depends not solely on hearing or vocal technique but above all on a conscious approach to sound. It is also worth emphasising that these methods are not limited to the mechanical application of rules but serve primarily to develop inner hearing and harmonic awareness. Their effectiveness becomes evident only in practice – in regular work on intonation, which requires time, concentration and experience.

Contemporary choral practice, regardless of style, still faces the challenge of pure tuning. In this context, returning to methods developed within this tradition may be a valuable tool for conductors and pedagogues seeking a deliberately shaped and coherent ensemble sound. This approach teaches attentiveness to sound, sensitivity to harmonic relations and musical thinking that remain relevant across different eras and aesthetic traditions.

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Abstract

Intonation and tuning as fundamental elements in choral practice according to the Eastern European choral school

The article examines work on intonation and tuning as key factors in choral performance, using the example of the Eastern European choral school. The analysis covers the historical background of liturgical and folk singing traditions, which have shaped a specific approach to intonation in ensemble practice. The concept of zonal (or spatial) tuning is discussed, along with the methods of Konstantin Pigrov and Pavel Chesnokov, which are based on a functional and imaginative perception of pitch. "Purity of intonation is the cornerstone upon which the choral art is based – without it, there can be no question of creating a choir of genuine artistic value" – Konstantin Pigrov, *Kierowanie chórem* [*Conducting a Choir*].

Keywords: intonation, zonal tuning, choral conducting, Eastern European choral tradition

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Akompaniament organowy a jakość śpiewu zgromadzenia liturgicznego – w poszukiwaniu właściwej akcentacji aklamacji po przeistoczeniu

Organowy akompaniament liturgiczny ma charakter służebny. Do jego zadań należą: ułatwienie ludowi Bożemu udziału w świętych obrzędach, przyczynienie się do głębszego zjednoczenia wiernych oraz podtrzymywanie ich śpiewu[1]. Obok tych stwierdzeń można przejść bezrefleksyjnie, sądząc, że wiedza wyniesiona z zajęć akompaniamentu liturgicznego w studium organistowskim, zdobyta podczas studiów muzyki kościelnej lub zaczerpnięta z literaturty przedmiotu jest wystarczająca, by sprostać tak ważnym zadaniom. Obserwacje prowadzone w parafiach[2] ukazują odwrotną zależność – wadliwy akompaniament utrudnia ludowi Bożemu udział w świętych obrzędach: zamiast jednoczyć – rozbija, zamiast podtrzymywać śpiew wiernych – przeszkadza. Zjawisko to domaga się zatem głębszej refleksji zarówno ze strony organistów, muzyków, jak i duchowieństwa.

Organista towarzyszy wiernym w odpowiedziach mszalnych, korzystając z wyuczonego podczas edukacji schematu, rzadziej pod wpływem głębszych refleksji i własnych poszukiwań[3]. Do wyjaśnienia kwestii związanych z wykonaniem omawianych części mszalnych autor wykorzysta analizę porównawczą aktualnie

[1] Zob. *Instrukcja Konferencji Episkopatu Polski o muzyce kościelnej*, 14.10.2017, VIII, 36.

[2] Obserwacje są wynikiem poszukiwań autora, eksperymentów i doświadczeń ponad 24-letniego stażu pracy na stanowisku organisty oraz funkcji wizytatora w ramach działalności Archidiecezjalnej Komisji Muzyki Kościelnej w Krakowie.

[3] Por. W. Zalewski, *Akompaniament organowy z perspektywy tradycyjnych pieśni kościelnych*, https://akompaniament.upjp2.edu.pl/fcp/0PRsbBAcHKDYlLFApR0Nzd2BDYx5gGgwtJzwMXGB9RmVtZX5DKlgFEUpXbyU9URVvEAo0NA8ZJRB4SF9zYB4/_users/code_2KkwAFxsXYycrFkkmBDkkNjoAcxwnDhhkMg8/2024/akompaniament/teksty_organowe/akompa-

dostępnych[4] opracowań akompaniamentów organowych. Analizie poddane zostaną akcenty w tekście oraz akcenty w harmonizacji. Ze względu na ograniczoną objętość artykułu badany materiał zostanie zawężony do jednej, reprezentatywnej aklamacji[5] po przeistoczeniu – „Oto wielka tajemnica wiary"[6]. Analogiczne problemy pojawiają się w pozostałych trzech aklamacjach. Powiązanie nadrzędnej roli tekstu z jej potencjałem interpretacyjnym oraz wpływ akcentów na poprawność wykonania będzie motywem przewodnim dalszych rozważań. Inne istotne kwestie dotyczące tempa, artykulacji, registracji itp. – zostaną pominięte, wymagają bowiem osobnego opracowania.

Struktura językowa podstawą interpretacji

Śpiew gregoriański jako wzorzec i „własny śpiew liturgii rzymskiej"[7] stanowi podstawę dla przedstawionych refleksji. Fundamentem śpiewu gregoriańskiego jest słowo i jego interpretacja na nim się koncentruje[8]. Słowo wypowiadane, wraz z treścią, którą z sobą niesie, zawiera odpowiednią intonację bazującą na rozróżnieniu sylab akcentowanych i nieakcentowanych. Akcent można rozpatrywać na dwóch płaszczyznach: dynamicznej i czasowej[9]. Sylaby akcentowane są wymawiane głośniej. Czas ich trwania jest dłuższy od sylab nieakcentowanych[10]. Mimo różnych podejść do kwestii akcentów[11] warto przychylić się do hipotezy Davida Hileya, według której w chorałowych opracowaniach sylabicznych „sylaby akcentowane

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[4] Przez „aktualnie dostępne" autor rozumie schematy akompaniamentów opublikowane na stronach internetowych związanych z działalnością diecezjalnych ośrodków kształcących organistów oraz publikacje wydawnicze udostępniane przez te ośrodki.

[5] Aklamacja – formuła wymawiana lub śpiewana w całości przez określoną grupę ludzi. Wyraża wspólną myśl i odnosi się do osoby lub rzeczy. Zob. G. Chew, *Acclamation*, MGG I, szp. 348; za: I. Pawlak, *Muzyka liturgiczna po Soborze Watykańskim II w świetle dokumentów Kościoła*, Lublin 2001, s. 296.

[6] Por. *Instrukcja Konferencji Episkopatu Polski o muzyce kościelnej*, III, 20e.

[7] Sobór Watykański II, Konstytucja *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 4.12.1963, nr 116.

[8] Zob. M. Białkowski, *Analiza semiologiczno-modalna w świetle praktyki wykonawczej śpiewu i akompaniamentu gregoriańskiego*, w: *Wybrane zagadnienia akompaniamentu liturgicznego*, red. M. Kierska-Witczak, Wrocław 2012, s. 19 (Psalate Synetos, 1).

[9] Zob. M. Wysocka, *Prozodia mowy – problemy opisu*, s. 215, w: *Logopedia artystyczna*, red. B. Kamińska, S. Milewski, Gdańsk 2016; szczegółowy opis i rodzaje akcentów – tamże, s. 215–220.

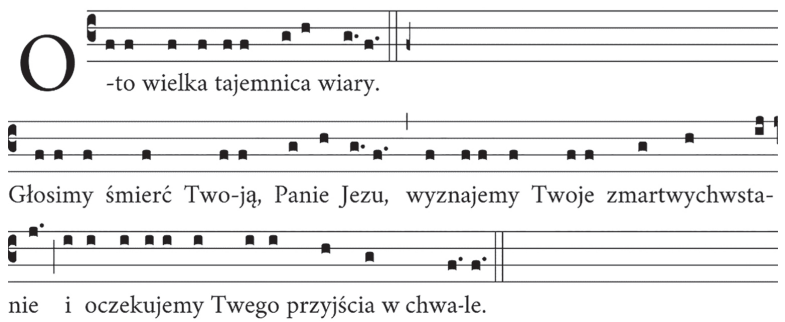
[10] Por. E. Cardine, *Semiologia gregoriańska*, Tyniec 2008, s. 22.

[11] Zob. D. Hiley, *Chorał Kościoła zachodniego*, Kraków 2019, s. 327-332.

mogły teoretycznie być uwidocznione poprzez podkreślenie nacisku w wykonaniu"[12]. Do tego rodzaju opracowań sylabicznych należą aklamacje po przeistoczeniu.

Aklamacja poprzedzona jest wezwaniem celebransa: „Oto wielka tajemnica wiary" (*misterium fidei*). Odpowiedź zgromadzonych wiernych jest rozwinięciem i poszerzeniem tematyki zamykającej się w tych słowach[13]. Pierwsza, najstarsza aklamacja „Głosimy śmierć Twoją…", jest proklamacją związaną z anamnezą[14] stanowiącą fundament Modlitwy eucharystycznej[15]. Nawiązuje do słów św. Pawła z Listu do Koryntian: „Ilekroć bowiem spożywacie ten chleb i pijecie kielich, śmierć Pana głosicie, aż przyjdzie" (1 Kor 11, 26). Świadomość wagi tych słów, wielowiekowej tradycji[16], a także celu, dla którego została wprowadzona do liturgii – pełniejszego uczestnictwa wiernych w Eucharystii w samym jej centrum[17] – zwraca uwagę na sposób jej wykonania. Wykonuje je całe zgromadzenie liturgiczne jako odpowiedź na słowa kapłana. Wykonywanie aklamacji przez kantora lub organistę śpiewającego do mikrofonu i wyręczającego z tego przywileju wiernych budzi wątpliwości.

Odpowiedzi mszalne zawarte w *Mszale rzymskim dla diecezji polskich* czerpią swoją inspirację z modalności gregoriańskiej. Melodyka aklamacji „Oto wielka tajemnica wiary" ma charakter quasi-gregoriański o przebiegu diatonicznym. Spośród trzech eksponowanych w aklamacji wydarzeń, melodia podkreśla chwalebne zmartwychwstanie Chrystusa, wznosząc się ku górze i osiągając swój punkt kulminacyjny na dźwięku „mi".



[12] D. Hiley, *Chorał Kościoła zachodniego*, s. 332.

[13] Zob. B. Nadolski, B. Nadolski, *Liturgika*, t. 4: *Eucharystia*, Poznań 1992, s. 193.

[14] Anamneza – modlitwa urzeczywistniająca wspomniane wydarzenie. Tu: wspomnienie zwłaszcza błogosławionej męki Chrystusa, chwalebnego zmartwychwstania i wniebowstąpienia. Zob. Kongregacja Kultu Bożego, *Ogólne wprowadzenie do Mszału rzymskiego*, 79e.

[15] Zob. B. Nadolski, *Liturgika*, t. 4, dz. cyt., s. 195.

[16] B. Nadolski, *Liturgika*, t. 4, s. 193; por. D. Hildebrand, *Koń trojański w mieście Boga*, s. 328.

[17] Zob. B. Nadolski, B. Nadolski, *Liturgika*, t. 4, dz. cyt., s. 194.

W polskojęzycznych opracowaniach aklamacji decydujące znaczenie ma również słowo. Na potrzeby dalszego wywodu autor skorzysta z tradycyjnego podziału akcentów na akcent leksykalny (gramatyczny) i frazowy. Akcentem leksykalnym z zasady występującym w języku polskim jest akcent paroksytoniczny[18] przypadający na przedostatnią sylabę. Słowa aklamacji z uwzględnieniem akcentów wyglądają następująco: „Głos**i**my śmierć **Two**ją, **Pa**nie **Je**zu, wyzna**je**my **Two**je zmartwych**wsta**nie i oczeku**je**my **Twe**go **przyj**ścia **w chw**ale". W obrębie akcentu frazowego akcent logiczny[19] jest zależny od intencji nadawcy – sprawia, że „waga" każdego słowa może ulegać zmianie. Pierwszy człon aklamacji może przybierać zróżnicowany charakter, np.: „Głos**i**my śmierć Twoją, Panie Jezu" – gdy nadawca chce podkreślić osobę proklamującą tekst – to my głosimy; „Głosimy **śmierć** Twoją, Panie Jezu" – gdy nadawca pragnie uwydatnić zbawczą mękę Pana Jezusa – Jego śmierć; „Głosimy śmierć **Two**ją, Panie Jezu", akcentując nie siebie (nadawcę), lecz adresata wypowiedzi, analogicznie jak w „Głosimy śmierć Twoją, Panie **Je**zu". Możliwości interpretacyjne zależą od wykonawcy i jest ich wiele. Wykonawcą jest całe zgromadzenie liturgiczne, a wpływ na umiejscowienie akcentów ma akompaniujący organista.

Pojawia się pytanie: jakie cechy winien posiadać akompaniament, aby służył uwypukleniu tekstu liturgicznego?

Ideałem wykonawczym odpowiedzi mszalnych jest śpiew bez akompaniamentu[20]. Akompaniament organowy do aklamacji powinien posiadać cechy adekwatne do stylu akompaniowania chorałowi, uwypuklając to, co w nim najważniejsze – słowo. Koncentrowanie na towarzyszeniu słowu jest jego przymiotem[21]. Wyznacznikiem jakości akompaniamentu gregoriańskiego jest wykorzystanie minimalnej liczby akordów, przy maksymalnej liczbie dźwięków wspólnych (legowanych). Słusznie zauważa Mariusz Białkowski, twierdząc, że „wszelkie zmiany akordów powinny być dokonywane na sylabach mocnych (akcentowanych, finalnych) oraz ważkich dla utworu dźwiękach"[22].

Sobór Watykański II przyniósł zmianę, wprowadzając języki narodowe do liturgii. Powstające opracowania akompaniamentu do aklamacji po przeistoczeniu służyły i wciąż służą organistom jako wzorce. W analizie porównawczej odrzucono akompaniamenty cechujące się amatorskim podejściem z wykorzystaniem

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[18] Zob. M. Wysocka, *Prozodia mowy – problemy opisu*, s. 216.

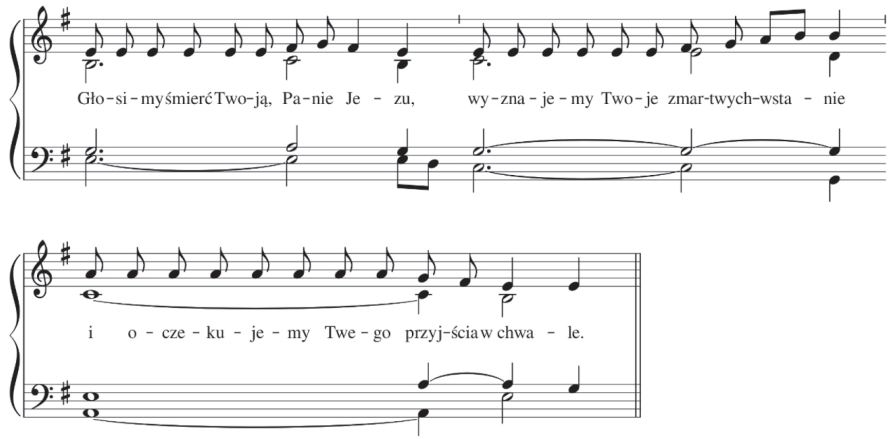
[19] M. Wysocka, *Prozodia mowy – problemy opisu*, s. 220.

[20] Por. T. Kulikowski, *Uwagi praktyczne z zakresu harmoniki modalnej*, w: *Wybrane zagadnienia akompaniamentu liturgicznego*, s. 35.

[21] Zob. M. Białkowski, *Analiza semiologiczno-modalna w świetle praktyki wykonawczej śpiewu i akompaniamentu gregoriańskiego*, s. 19.

[22] M. Białkowski, *Analiza semiologiczno-modalna w świetle praktyki wykonawczej śpiewu i akompaniamentu gregoriańskiego*, s. 27.

harmoniki funkcyjnej dur-moll, akordami septymowymi, nonowymi, itp., wzorowanymi na twórczości późnoromantycznej. Wybrane przykłady zostaną poniżej poddane analizie porównawczej ze względu na umiejscowienie akordów i przypadających na nie akcentów.



Przykład 1 [oprac. F. Rączkowski[23]]

W powyższym przykładzie pochodzącym z ośrodka legnickiego rozkład akcentów wygląda następująco: „**Głos**imy śmierć Twoją, **Pa**nie Je**zu**, **wy**znajemy Twoje zmartwychwsta**nie i** oczekujemy Twego przyjścia **w chwa**le". Charakterystyczne jest użycie akcentu inicjalnego bezpośrednio po oddechu: „**głos**imy", „**wy**znajemy", „**i** oczekujemy", oraz akcentu oksytonicznego na słowach: „Je**zu**", „zmartwychwsta**nie**"[24].

[23] *Akompaniament liturgiczny. Pomoce dla uczniów Diecezjalnego Studium Organistowskiego w Legnicy*, Legnica 2011, s. 13, https://www.scribd.com/document/835841117/Akompaniament-liturgiczny (15.04.2026).

[24] Akcent inicjalny – akcent przypadający na pierwszą sylabę. Akcent oksytoniczny – akcent przypadający na ostatnią sylabę. Zob. M. Wysocka, *Prozodia mowy – problemy opisu*, s. 216–217.



Przykład 2 [oprac. R. Pietrzak[25]]

W opracowaniu organowym aklamacji z ośrodka poznańskiego układ akcentów przedstawiony jest w ten oto sposób: „**Gło**simy śmierć Twoją, **Pa**nie **Je**zu, **wy**znajemy Twoje zmartwych**wstanie i** oczekujemy Twego **przyj**ścia **w chwa**le". Zauważalne jest większe wykorzystanie akcentów paroksytonicznych w miejscach kadencyjnych poprzedzających oddech: „**Pa**nie **Je**zu", „zmartwych**wsta**nie", „**przyj**ścia **w chwa**le". Analogicznie jak w przykładzie 1 pojawiają się akcenty inicjalne. W jednym przypadku występuje akcent oksytoniczny, na słowie „zmartwychwsta**nie"**.

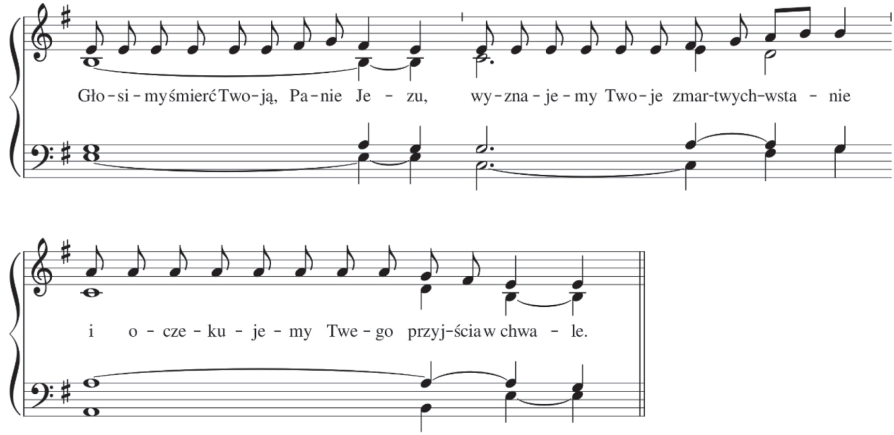
[25] R. Pietrzak, *Aklamacje po Przeistoczeniu. Harmonizacje i transkrypcje na organy. Uwagi*, https://organista.archpoznan.pl/pdf/aklamacje.pdf (15.04.2026).



Przykład 3 [oprac. J. Nowicki[26]]

Powyższy przykład z ośrodka toruńskiego reprezentuje odmienne podejście w stosunku do poprzednich prezentacji. W akompaniamencie występuje jednostajny ruch ćwierćnutowy. Wykorzystanie w przebiegu harmonicznym dużej liczby akordów sprzyja zdyscyplinowaniu śpiewu wiernych, ze szkodą dla przypadających akcentów: „**Głos**i**my** śmierć **Two**ją, **Pa**nie **Je**zu, **wy**zna**je**my **Two**je **zmar**twych-**wstanie i** o**cze**ku**je**my **Twe**go **przyj**ścia **w chwa**le".

[26] J. Nowicki, *Harmonizacje pieśni kościelnych*, Toruń 2005, s. 8, http://www.jerzynowicki.pl/harmonizacje/01.pdf (15.04.2026).



Przykład 4 [oprac. Ł. Popiałkiewicz[27]]

Opracowanie aklamacji z ośrodka szczecińskiego oszczędnie wykorzystuje środki harmoniczne. Legowane wartości rytmiczne wpływają na przejrzystość akompaniamentu. Akcenty wyglądają następująco: „**Głos**imy śmierć Twoją, Panie **Je**zu, **wy**znajemy Twoje zmartwych**wstanie i** oczekujemy Twego **przyj**ścia **w chwa**le". Podobnie jak w poprzednich przykładach – po oddechu występują akcenty inicjalne.

[27] Ł. Popiałkiewicz, *Akompaniament liturgiczny*, z. 1, Szczecin 2017, s. 12, https://www.scribd.com/document/797744272/Aklamacja-I-Po-Przeistoczeniu (15.04.2026).



Przykład 5 [oprac. W. Delimat[28]]

Zbliżone podejście reprezentuje harmonizacja aklamacji z ośrodka krakowskiego: „**Głos**imy śmierć Twoją, Panie **Je**zu, **wy**znajemy Twoje zmartwych**wsta**nie **i** oczekujemy Twego **przyj**ścia **w chwa**le". Wprowadzone zostaje *novum* w postaci prawidłowego postawienia akcentu na słowie „zmartwych**wsta**nie". Ten zabieg eliminuje akcent oksytoniczny na ostatniej sylabie, obecny w pozostałych akompaniamentach. Z kolei akcenty inicjalne pozostają analogiczne do tych z poprzednich opracowań.

Wnioski i dalsze perspektywy

Analiza powyższych przykładów aklamacji pozwala zauważyć pozytywną zmianę w harmonizacjach, coraz częściej uwzględniających akcenty gramatyczne tekstu. Najbardziej wartościowe pozostają opracowania pozbawione nadmiernej liczby akordów. Usytuowanie ich w miejscach akcentu frazowego (głownie logicznego) jest atutem tych harmonizacji. Za wadę uznaje się stosowanie akcentów inicjalnych niekorespondujących z regułami systemu językowego obowiązującego w Polsce.

Czy istnieje metoda akompaniowania, pozwalająca uniknąć konfliktu między akordem rozpoczynającym akompaniament (wywołującym akcent na pierwszej sylabie tekstu) a prawidłowym akcentem gramatycznym słowa?

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[28] *Ciebie, Boga, wysławiamy*, red. W. Delimat, M. Tuleja, R. Tyrała, W. Zalewski, Kraków 2015, dodatek (s. 52).

Rozwiązaniem problemu jest przesunięcie akordu rozpoczynającego frazę z akcentu inicjującego – na akcent gramatyczny pierwszego słowa. Tekst aklamacji przybiera poprawną strukturę: zamiast „**Głos**imy śmierć Twoją, Panie **Je**zu" – „Głos**i**my śmierć Twoją, Panie **Je**zu"; zamiast „**wy**znajemy Twoje zmartwych**wsta**nie" – „wyzna**je**my Twoje zmartwych**wsta**nie"; zamiast „**i** oczekujemy Twego **przyj**ścia **w chwa**le" – „i oczeku**je**my Twego **przyj**ścia **w chwa**le".

W praktyce muzyczno-liturgicznej spotyka się dwa sposoby podejścia do analogicznych problemów. Pierwszym jest rozpoczęcie sylaby nieakcentowanej dźwiękiem w głosie sopranowym, po czym dodanie pozostałych trzech głosów akompaniamentu na sylabę akcentowaną. Przykład poniższy prezentuje aklamację z wykorzystaniem takiego rozwiązania:



Przykład 6

Wadą tego sposobu akompaniowania jest mało czytelny – dla śpiewającego zgromadzenia liturgicznego – pierwszy, pojedynczy dźwięk w akompaniamencie. W efekcie, w kościołach o większej kubaturze, część wiernych dołącza się do śpiewu z opóźnieniem – wraz z pojawieniem się czterogłosu. Jeden głos w organowym akompaniamencie to za mało, by dobrze akompaniować[29]. Wątpliwe jest stosowanie pauz w wyrazach więcej niż trzysylabowych, dzielących całą myśl muzyczną na drobne odcinki.

[29] Podobnych problemów dostarczają akompaniamenty do pieśni liturgicznych zawierających przedtakt, np. *O Boże, dzięki Ci składamy*, *Przez chrztu świętego*, *O, Panie, Tyś moim Pasterzem* itp.

Drugi rodzaj stanowią akompaniamenty zawierające akord wyprzedzający z pauzą ósemkową w głosie sopranowym. Są one stosowane w innych odpowiedziach mszalnych[30]. Aklamacja „Oto wielka tajemnica wiary" wyglądałaby następująco:



Przykład 7

Takiemu rozwiązaniu brakuje jednoznaczności. Akompaniujący muzyk jest zobligowany do zagrania akordu wyprzedzającego bezpośrednio po śpiewie wezwania przez kapłana. Drobne opóźnienie zniechęca wiernych do zaangażowania się w śpiew. Analogiczne zjawisko występuje w pieśniach, w których przerwa (oddech) między przygrywką a zwrotką jest zbyt długa. W kościołach z większą akustyką część wiernych rozpoczyna śpiew odpowiedzi bezpośrednio z usłyszanym dźwiękiem instrumentu, a część zgodnie z zamierzeniem akompaniatora. Efektem tych działań jest chaos oraz błędy w postaci trudnych do wykorzenienia wydłużeń wartości pierwszych nut w odpowiedziach[31].

Niedoskonałości powyższych metod skłaniają do pójścia w kierunku dwóch innych rozwiązań, stanowiących *novum* w podejściu do akompaniamentu w odpowiedziach i dialogach mszalnych. Pierwsze polega na zastosowaniu dwóch akordów (lub powtórzeniu jednego z nich) o charakterze jambicznym – akordu krótkiego, niezawierającego akcentu, oraz drugiego, akcentowanego. Poniższy przykład prezentuje to rozwiązanie:

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[30] Np. „I z duchem twoim" w I i II tonie mszalnym w dialogu przed prefacją.

[31] Przykładem jest odpowiedź mszalna „I z duchem twoim", gdzie spójnik „i" przybiera często wartość ćwierćnuty zamiast ósemki.



Podejście to charakteryzuje jednoznaczność momentu rozpoczęcia śpiewu przez wiernych przy jednoczesnym uniknięciu niepoprawnego stosowania akcentów inicjalnych – wbrew zasadom gramatycznym. Ujemnym skutkiem tego rozwiązania jest wzmożony ruch rytmiczny w akompaniamencie. Można go zniwelować, stosując ruch diatoniczny w linii melodycznej basu oraz niewielkie skoki interwałowe. Nadal problematyczny jest fragment z większą liczbą sylab poprzedzony spójnikiem „**i** oczeku**je**my".

Drugim rozwiązaniem jest przeniesienie akordu z poprzedniej frazy na następną i zmiana funkcji w miejscu akcentu gramatycznego. Poniższy przykład obrazuje tę metodę:



Przykład 8

Taki sposób akompaniowania pozwala wykonawcom przestrzegać zasad poprawnej polszczyzny, przyczyniając się do głębszego zrozumienia śpiewanych tekstów. Różnicowanie akcentów tak w mowie, jak i w śpiewie, sprawia, że modlitwa ma powiew świeżości i jest pozbawiona rutyny. Jednoznaczny i czytelny dla zgromadzonych wiernych akompaniament spełnia swoją rolę, ułatwiając im udział w świętych obrzędach, przyczyniając się do ich głębszego zjednoczenia oraz podtrzymywania ich śpiewu.

Podsumowanie

Dbałość o poprawną relację między słowem a muzyką liturgiczną nie tylko owocuje artyzmem i pięknem wypowiedzi muzycznej, ale sprzyja głębszemu, świadomemu zaangażowaniu wiernych w śpiew. Zaproponowane w artykule rozwiązania stanowią wstęp do szczegółowych badań, prowadzących do usprawnienia praktyki związanej z organowym akompaniamentem liturgicznym. Analiz – uwzględniających akcenty słowa – domagają się wszystkie dialogi mszalne, aklamacje, psalmy, sekwencje, części stałe Mszy św. oraz pieśni nawiązujące w swej stylistyce do melodii gregoriańskich. Opracowanie nowej teorii akompaniamentu do pieśni modalnych jest dla współczesnych organistów koniecznością, która pozwoli uporządkować dotychczasowy chaos wykonawczy.

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Abstrakt

Akompaniament organowy a jakość śpiewu zgromadzenia liturgicznego – w poszukiwaniu właściwej akcentacji aklamacji po przeistoczeniu

Celem akompaniamentu organowego jest pomoc zgromadzonym na liturgii wiernym w modlitwie. Dobry akompaniament powinien służyć uwypukleniu słowa. Jednak praktyka ukazana w opracowaniach aklamacji po przeistoczeniu pokazuje, że istnieją rozbieżności między słowem a muzyką, zniekształcające przekaz zawarty w tekstach liturgicznych. Badania nowych rozwiązań dotyczących sposobów akompaniowania mogą przyczynić się do wierniejszego przekazu idei zawartych w tekstach aklamacji oraz lepszego zaangażowania wiernych we wspólnotowy śpiew. W toku badań analizie porównawczej został poddany tekst aklamacji pod względem występowania akcentów. Biorąc pod uwagę pokrewieństwo między akcentem słowa a zmianą funkcji harmonicznej w akompaniamencie gregoriańskim, przeanalizowane zostały opracowania organowe akompaniamentów aklamacji „Oto wielka tajemnica wiary". Wyniki analizy ukazują rozbieżności między stosowaniem akcentów

inicjalnych a akcentami gramatycznymi tekstu. Poruszając te zagadnienia, autor wskazuje nowe rozwiązania możliwe do wykorzystania w praktyce muzyczno-liturgicznej.

Słowa kluczowe: akompaniament organowy, aklamacje po przeistoczeniu, akcenty, akompaniament liturgiczny

Abstract

Organ accompaniment and the quality of liturgical congregational singing – in search of the proper accentuation of the Acclamation after the Consecration

The fundamental role of organ accompaniment in the liturgy is to support the faithful gathered for the liturgy in prayer. Effective accompaniment should enhance the prominence of the word. Yet the practice reflected in existing organ settings of the Acclamation after the Consecration reveals notable discrepancies between verbal prosody and musical realization. The article conducts a comparative prosodic analysis of the Acclamation, examining the occurrence and structural role of accentual peaks within the text and in the harmonization. The research leads to indicating inconsistencies in the application of initial accentuation within the accompaniment which fails to align with the grammatical accent structure of the text. As a result of careful study of the above issues, the author presents new practical solutions in liturgical and musical praxes.

Keywords: organ accompaniment, postConsecration acclamations, prosodic accentuation, liturgical accompaniment

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