

# 07

## SPECIFICS OF CHORAL CONDUCTING TRAINING OF FUTURE MUSIC TEACHERS

### ESPECIFICIDADES DE LA FORMACIÓN EN DIRECCIÓN CORAL DE LOS FUTUROS PROFESORES DE MÚSICA

Juliya Mavrodina<sup>1\*</sup>

E-mail: [juliya.mavrodina@yandex.ru](mailto:juliya.mavrodina@yandex.ru)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4816-1252>

Olga Kurganskaya<sup>1</sup>

E-mail: [olga.kurganskayaa@yandex.ru](mailto:olga.kurganskayaa@yandex.ru)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8978-9671>

<sup>1</sup> Belgorod State University of Arts and Culture, Russia.

\*Corresponding autor

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#### ABSTRACT

The article considers the professional training of future music teachers, which is of great scientific and practical interest to music pedagogy. The emphasis is placed on the professional readiness of educator musicians to implement choral conducting activities in the setting of educational institutions. The methods employed in the study include a qualitative analysis of existing pedagogical practices, theoretical frameworks, and practical experiences in choral conducting training programs. The authors conducted a comprehensive review of educational strategies aimed at developing vocal training, conducting skills, and the ability to analyze and interpret choral pieces. The study results indicate that a well-rounded choral conducting training program is vital for competent music teachers. The findings highlight the importance of hands-on experience, such as participation in choral ensembles and conducting practices, in fostering the necessary skills for choral leadership. The study emphasizes the need for a curriculum that balances theoretical knowledge with practical application, ensuring that students acquire both the technical skills and the pedagogical insights required for successful choral conducting.

#### Keywords:

Professional activity of a music teacher, choral conducting training program, educator musician, vocal/choral work, conducting, analysis of choral pieces, choir, vocal ensemble.

#### RESUMEN

El artículo considera la formación profesional de los futuros profesores de música, de gran interés científico y práctico para la pedagogía musical. Se hace hincapié en la preparación profesional de los músicos educadores para llevar a cabo actividades de dirección coral en el entorno de las instituciones educativas. Los métodos empleados en el estudio incluyen un análisis cualitativo de las prácticas pedagógicas, los marcos teóricos y las experiencias prácticas existentes en los programas de formación de dirección coral. Los autores llevaron a cabo una revisión exhaustiva de las estrategias educativas dirigidas a desarrollar la formación vocal, las habilidades de dirección y la capacidad de analizar e interpretar piezas corales. Los resultados del estudio indican que un programa de formación en dirección coral completo es vital para que los profesores de música sean competentes. Los resultados destacan la importancia de la experiencia práctica, como la participación en conjuntos corales y prácticas de dirección, para fomentar las habilidades necesarias para el liderazgo coral. El estudio hace hincapié en la necesidad de un plan de estudios que equilibre los conocimientos teóricos con la aplicación práctica, garantizando que los estudiantes adquieran tanto las habilidades técnicas como los conocimientos pedagógicos necesarios para el éxito en la dirección coral.

#### Palabras clave:

Actividad profesional de profesor de música, programa de formación de dirección coral, músico educador, trabajo vocal/coral, dirección, análisis de piezas corales, coro, conjunto vocal.

## INTRODUCTION

The modern music teacher is a complex and multifaceted profession (Ukolova, 2022; Gribkova, 2022; Zhuzeyev et al., 2024). It includes several competencies and skills necessary for successfully implementing professional activities: organizational, communicative, reflexive, research, constructive and design, etc.

Besides the general competencies that combine the activities of music teachers with the activities of other subject teachers, it is necessary to highlight the aspects of professional activity specific and characteristic only for the professionogram of the educator musician: the musical and performing aspects (instrumental and vocal), choral conducting, musicological, etc. (Alessandroni & Etcheverry, (2012; Anufrieva et al., 2022).

One of the main activities of the music teacher is choral conducting or choirmaster activity. What is included in the content of the educator musician choirmaster activity? The content of this activity depends on the specifics of the music lesson, where musical and practical forms of work with students require a creative approach both from the teacher and the students. Such forms include perception or listening to music, vocal-choral or singing activity, musical and rhythmic movement or plastic intonation, elementary music playing, etc.

The choral conducting training of future music teachers is a unique combination of general didactic foundations and key principles of art pedagogy; hence, this must be considered in professional training.

Pedagogical training combines theoretical knowledge with the practice of child and adolescent music education, methods of teaching music, child and adolescent psychology, and general and age-specific fundamentals of pedagogy and psychology (Zhuzeyev et al., 2024; Svirin et al., 2024).

Professional training in choral conducting is based on the principles of art pedagogy. After graduation, educator musicians must have the skills to play multiple musical instruments (piano, guitar, accordion, button accordion, etc.), know the fundamental concepts of music theory, history, and literature, and be able to create, organize, and carry out musical, cultural, and educational events. The emphasis should be placed on choirmaster training, including the following components: knowledge of choral literature, mastery of the conducting technique and the methodology of working with a choral group, the ability to analyze a choral piece, etc.

The choral conducting training of a music teacher implies the formation of the readiness not only to teach children to play music, perform musical pieces in a choral group, and rehearse but also to inspire students to dive into the

wonderful world of art, develop their creative thinking, and facilitate their musical culture (Romanovich, 2013; Kharkovskaya et al., 2023).

Music teacher training is a complicated process aimed at educating students and developing their professional skills. For a future musician to master the music teacher profession consciously, it is necessary to put them in such an environment from the first year of education, in which they will feel the need for general pedagogical and special knowledge. Specialized subjects almost do not differ from those held in music schools or conservatories (depending on the student's professional training).

According to Aliyeva (2018), the skills that a student receives should correspond to the professional end result. In the education of a conductor, the main idea is not only the mastery of conducting technique but also the ability to direct the creative process. Therefore, the teacher's point of view regarding the teaching of specialized subjects should ensure the education of professional skills necessary for a school music teacher in the setting of educational institutions.

During long-term teaching practice, some students show that they do not have bright vocal abilities, have poor command of voice and musical instruments, and cannot work with a choral group. Systematic work can help overcome these drawbacks: various voice production methods, practical choral classes, and conducting and reading choral scores. Only the close interrelation of specialized subjects and students' conscious attitude toward their professional future contribute to forming the qualities necessary for music teachers, including sociability, organizational skills, oratorical skills, knowledge of musical art, and pedagogical improvisation.

## METHODOLOGY

The methods employed in this study focus on the comprehensive examination of the choral conducting training process for music teachers. We used a qualitative approach, primarily relying on a detailed review of pedagogical practices and theoretical analysis in music education. We explored various components essential for the professional preparation of music teachers, including vocal training, the development of conducting skills, and the analysis and interpretation of choral pieces.

We analyzed existing educational frameworks and methodologies for training music teachers, with an emphasis on the specific skills required for choral conducting. We examined the pedagogical implications of integrating these skills into the broader music education curriculum, ensuring students have the necessary competencies to lead choral ensembles in an educational setting.

Our methods included reviewing practical experiences in choral classes, where students were engaged in hands-on activities, such as conducting, singing in choirs, and participating in vocal ensembles.

Using this methodological approach, we aimed to identify the most effective strategies for fostering the essential skills and knowledge required for music teachers to succeed in choral conducting and music education.

Choral class and practical work with the choir are the core subjects of the choral conducting cycle, within which targeted professional training of a teacher choirmaster is carried out.

The choral class contributes to the education of a choral conductor in the setting of practical work, as through choral classes and studying choral pieces, students acquire methodological and practical skills for working with the choir and get acquainted with the organizational side of the work of the choral group.

The solution of pedagogical tasks in choral classes develops specific singing skills in the choir, guiding it based on mastering methods of working with the team, didactic principles, and knowledge of the psychological and physiological process of singing. Thus, the creative personality of a music teacher is formed through the development of creativity, which manifests itself in various aspects. On the one hand, the student is a member of a choral team, and they study and sing in it as a singer under the guidance of an educator. On the other hand, this team acts as a basis for the student to acquire practical skills in choir management. Choir singing develops emotional intelligence, artistic taste, a sense of collectivism, musical and vocal abilities, and intonation skills in the specific context of the choral system and ensemble.

During choral conducting training, a teacher choirmaster learns to work in the settings of various choral formations: with a choral group, with a large vocal ensemble, with a small vocal ensemble, with soloists, with an accompanist. They can be called a researcher in the organization of the rehearsal process, conducting techniques, methods of working with sound, and approaches to the interpretation of musical pieces because they constantly look for ways to optimize and improve their activities.

Special attention in the choral conducting training is paid to the ability to analyze musical pieces. Only a deep understanding and analysis of musical material allow a teacher choirmaster to convey their concept of sound and create a unified interpretation with their team.

An equally important aspect of the choral conducting training is the educator musician's ability to apply professional skills in public speaking. Participation in concerts, festivals, and contests develops performance confidence,

communication and organizational skills, and the ability to interact with the audience.

As a choirmaster, the student acquires the skills of a performing conductor while working with a choir. Creative communication develops organizational skills, will, and the ability to find psychological and creative contact with the choir members and the team. During choir classes, students acquire the skills of orientation in general choral sonority, learn to listen to and hear all choral parts, and analyze the sound quality of the choir. Thus, the music teacher develops practical skills that form the basis for working with the school team.

Conducting skill development is one of the most important indicators of the professionogram of a music teacher. The ability to direct the choir effectively is vital in the educational process and affects the quality of students' music education.

One of the main tasks of choral conducting skill development is to form an understanding of the art of conducting. This includes mastering the basic principles of choral leadership, teaching the competent use of conducting gestures, phrasing, and achieving the necessary interpretation of musical pieces, material, and style.

Conducting skill development requires constant practice in performing musical pieces. For this purpose, the student must have the opportunity to work with a choir and an accompanist, but they can also organize their ensemble. Constant active participation in musical projects and concerts improves the practical skills of the conductor, builds their confidence, and strengthens their professional self-esteem.

For the successful development of conducting skills, self-study and self-development are crucial. Reading specialized literature, studying the professional experience of outstanding conductors, and analyzing recordings of concerts and performances expand understanding and practical skills. Attending master classes, seminars, concerts, and performances of experienced conductors and musicians broaden the horizons and give valuable knowledge and skills.

Vocal training is essential to the curriculum of music teachers. The human voice is extremely rich in its expressive capabilities; it is a delicate and complex musical instrument. The choirmaster's hard work and team members' dedication are necessary to improve it. Instilling love and respect for proper singing and convincing team members to work on their voices are important tasks for a choirmaster.

When working with a choir, the choirmaster must always remember that singing is a psychophysical process. Students overcome difficulties faster if they know their causes and methods of overcoming them. For this purpose,

the choirmaster must explain the construction and interaction of the parts of the vocal apparatus. Instilling a love of conducting, developing the necessary skills, and correcting errors in sound formation, the choirmaster resorts to comparisons and uses associative methods. Singing skills classes should be carried out comprehensively. In the learning process, it is necessary to focus students' attention on the main content of vocal work, which includes work on breathing, the understanding of all parts of the singing apparatus, and sound formation.

At all stages of working with choirs, choirmasters must combine display methods (illustrations) and words. Their simultaneous application gives more effective results. The practice of choral performance has collected many methods, techniques, and systems of vocal development for members of choral groups.

The most important skill is proper singing breathing. This is a difficult stage to learn and organize. For a choirmaster, the difficulty lies in the fact that working with many students, they must manage to control everyone. First, the choirmaster must teach students how to breathe correctly, focusing on inhaling air and holding it, then saving their breath, requiring students to inhale actively and quickly. Here, the methodological generalization of the conductor's experience, the practical mastery of the basics of vocal and choral work, the experience of singing in the choir, vocal skills (the need for individual voice training), and knowledge of the general methodology of vocal and choral work in the choir are of great importance.

In addition to developing choirmaster skills, the ability to interpret the choral repertoire musically and figuratively is important. The ability to use acquired knowledge and skills, creatively interpret them in the classroom, and think figuratively are the main qualities necessary to perform the music teacher's pedagogical activities in secondary school.

The formation of musical and figurative interpretation ability is a complex psychological process. In the pedagogical aspect, it also requires effective methods to create ideas and feelings among students when studying a choral piece. Classes in the conducting training system should be structured so that students' full-fledged artistic image is formed based on the material of each studied piece. One of the methods is a qualitatively new principle of analysis, which allows one to address the sphere of students' emotions and experience and influence the emotional expressiveness of the performing interpretation.

A detailed examination of the choral work based on analysis, which includes a thorough analysis of the author's recording, allows the student to develop value-aesthetic relations by using problem-based learning techniques. This analysis includes three stages of work on a choral piece:

- 1) preparation of the conductor for work with the choir (performance of the work on the piano, vocal and intonation work, conducting and technical development);
- 2) rehearsal work with the choir (familiarization of the collective with the choral work, technical mastering of the piece, artistic work on the piece);
- 3) concert performance as the final stage of the work.

Forming the skills of musical and executive interpretation is based on the interaction of musical and auditory representations of the student's experience and musical and auditory representations arising from the study of a choral work. It is guided, developed, and enriched by the student's emotional reaction, the quality of which determines the usefulness, artistry, and integrity of the performing image (Aliyeva, 2019).

The intensification of artistic activity and the activation of the emotional sphere contribute to the emergence of a musical and figurative interpretation at a higher level when studying a choral work, which qualitatively enriches and expands the creative activity of future music teachers.

## CONCLUSIONS

Thus, forming the music teacher's professional readiness to carry out choral conducting activities is associated with problems relevant to modern pedagogical science. The level of education, upbringing, and spiritual culture of a student and the future generation depend on what today's educator musician will be like.

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