

## OPINION

By **Prof Vessela Ivanova Geleva, PhD** – professor in Choral Conducting at the Department of Music Pedagogy and Conducting, the Faculty of Music Pedagogy of Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts “Prof Asen Diamandiev” Plovdiv.

for **Anastasiya Ivanova Batkova** – candidate for awarding the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”, in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences; professional field 1.3 Teaching Pedagogy in...; doctoral program: Methodology of Music Teaching, at the Department of Music Pedagogy and Conducting, AMDFA “Prof Asen Diamandiev”

Anastasiya Batkova is born in Plovdiv. She is a graduate of National School of Music and Dance "Dobrin Petkov" Plovdiv, major Classical Singing, then she receives her Bachelor's degree at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" in the specialty Pedagogy of Music Education and professional qualification "music teacher" and "folk singing teacher". In 2017, she receives her Master's degree. Since 2018, she has been working as a vocal teacher at the Art Voice Center Association, Plovdiv. In 2021, she was appointed as a music teacher and conductor of the choral formations at NSMD "Dobrin Petkov". Winner of the First Prize of the National Academic Competition "Young Music Teacher" - April 2016. Author of publications in the field of vocal work with children in specialized scientific forums and publications.

The dissertation titled *Pedagogical technologies for building singing skills in children aged from 7 to 10 years in an extracurricular vocal group* is total 172 pages and includes: introduction, three chapters, conclusion, contributions, bibliography and appendix. The bibliography includes 126 titles in Cyrillic, 6 in Latin, as well as 19 Internet sources. 11 tables and 23 diagrams are used for illustration. The thesis and the abstract meet the legal requirements for structure, volume and content.

The research is relevant and has a direct relation to the extracurricular activities in music, discussing particularly one of the most preferred, attractive and accessible activity – the vocal group. In the introductory part, the author presents the reasons for choosing the topic, namely: personal experience as performer in various musical genres /classical music, folklore, pop and jazz/, pedagogical experience with talented children, lack of sufficient methodological literature on extracurricular vocal groups and their specifics. The object of the study (the vocal training of children aged 7 to 10 years in an extracurricular vocal group), the subject of the study (the pedagogical technologies used to build singing skills in children aged 7 to 10 years) and the objective of the dissertation work (to describe and apply appropriate pedagogical technologies for building the singing skills of children aged 7 to 10 years during their training in an extracurricular vocal group/, are clearly indicated. The author sets a number of tasks, including: to define the concept of "extracurricular activity and examine the vocal group with its characteristics, historical origin, organization and main goals, to clarify the content of the concept of "pedagogical technology" and its parameters, to present

authors, innovative methods applicable in working with an extracurricular vocal group, to consider the musical abilities, the physiological features of the children's voice, to analyze the artistic skills, to generate and analyze data on the development of the singing skills of the participants in the pedagogical experiment, etc. The following methods have been selected for the implementation of the tasks: research and analysis of literary sources, pedagogical experiment in three stages - ascertaining, developing and concluding, structured observation during the pedagogical experiment, as well as musical-diagnostic tests at ascertaining and concluding stages.

The first chapter *The Vocal group in extracurricular music activity* presents the essence, goals, organization and traditions of vocal groups, their specificity and the differences between choral art and singing in a vocal group. Batkova examines the pedagogical technologies required for the work and indicates the necessary methods and qualities that the teacher must possess: pedagogical training, professional musical skills and knowledge of the specific methodology, personal qualities - intellectual, moral, creative and emotional.

In the second chapter, the singing activity in the vocal group is examined in its diversity and peculiarities. The importance of singing for the development of children's musical abilities and the way in which it affects their sense of scale and metrorhythm, musical-auditory representations and the sense of polyphony is highlighted. In addition to appropriate methods and techniques from the established vocal-pedagogical theory and practice, the dissertation also presents author's methods for working with an out-of-school children's vocal group. All these methods and techniques are systematically presented as pedagogical technologies for building singing skills when working with an extracurricular vocal group consisting of children aged 7-10 years. The doctoral student pays special attention to the physiology and anatomical features of the children's vocal apparatus, to the classification and qualitative parameters of the voice, analyzes the formation of singing habits in children, the specifics of singing and vocal work with adolescents, etc. The author rightly distinguishes between the concepts of "choir habits" and "collective singing habits", which details the differences in these types of music making.

In the same chapter, the concept of "artistry" is also discussed. Approaches to building the various elements of artistry in the context of working with an extracurricular vocal group are presented. The importance of the stage gesture, facial expression, dance skills, plasticity, etc. is substantiated.

The real contribution of the dissertation works is found in the third chapter, which presents the pedagogical experiment, which includes the vocal group Magic, composed of 8 girls aged 7-10 years. The methods used are a pedagogical experiment in three stages - ascertaining, developing and concluding; structured observation during the ascertainment and conclusion stage of the experiment; musical-diagnostic tests at the ascertaining and concluding stage. The criteria for evaluation the Artistic Skills are very well selected, based on indicators such as: emotional facial expression when singing; dancing skills when singing; gesturing when singing; the Singing Skills are evaluated based

on: singing breathing; articulation and diction; accurate intonation; build, ensemble; and the Musical Skills are assessed based on: sense of mode; metrorhythmic sense; musical-auditory representations and sense of polyphony. The results of the experiment show that the pedagogical technologies and methods proposed by the doctoral candidate are effective and through them the development of children's vocal skills is achieved. It should be noted that "Musical Row" and "Musical Flash" are author's technologies. The successes of vocal group Magic during the period of the experiment (awards from contests and numerous television appearances) are impressive, which practically proves that the applied pedagogical technologies to improve singing skills have had a positive effect on the development of the participants in the vocal group. All participants have improved their vocal technique and artistry, developed their musical abilities and gained even greater motivation for singing lessons.

The contributions of the dissertation that should be mentioned include:

-The historical origin of the extracurricular children's vocal group has been explored in many ways and has been interpreted as the successor of the choirs. The two forms of musical activity are compared and some new trends in organizational and vocal-pedagogical aspects were formulated when working with a vocal group.

- This is the first attempt for comprehensive description of the specifics in the application of some traditional, widely used teaching methods in the context of vocal work with an out-of-school vocal group consisting of children aged 7 to 10 years. For the first time, a new definition of the singing skills "temperament" and "ensemble" - "collective singing habits" - has been proposed.

- The following author's methods for building singing skills when working with an extracurricular vocal group are described in detail and comprehensively in a theoretical plan: "Dance and rhythm" "Musical row", "Musical flash", "Guess the song", "Sing with a pencil" " The X Factor' 'Singing a Triad'.

- The practical-applied significance of the author's methods for building singing skills is presented in the empirical research for the dissertation. After the application of these methods during the pedagogical experiment, their effectiveness is largely proven.

I know the candidate Anastasiya Batkova from her studies at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev". With the present scientific work, she proves a serious interest in the field of pedagogy, supported by teaching activity, accumulated methodological knowledge and skills, and a desire for future improvement in the teaching profession. Her research can serve music educators working in the field of out-of-school music education, giving practical ideas, methods and insights. Considering the above, I propose to the respected scientific jury to award Anastasiya Ivanova Batkova the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in: field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences; professional direction 1.3 Teaching Pedagogy in...; doctoral program Methodology of Music Education in the Department of Music Pedagogy and Conducting at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev".

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