

REVIEW

by

Prof Daniela Petrova Dikova, PhD

of a dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "DOCTOR"
in Professional filed 8.3 Music and Dance Art
doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art at the Department of Piano and Accordion" at
AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv
with author: **Evgeniya Petrova Tagareva**

Title: **SPECIFICITY OF THE PIANO TRAINING METHODOLOGY FOR
PERSONS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN)**

Academic supervisor: Prof Snezhana Simeonova

1. General presentation of the procedure and the materials presented for review

The procedure has been carried out in compliance with all the requirements of the law. The materials provided for evaluation review are exhaustive: dissertation work, abstract, biography of E. Tagareva, contributions and publications that are part of the dissertation work, orders for enrollment and discharge, order for appointment of a scientific jury, model for preparing the review.

2. Brief biographical data of the candidate. All completed degrees of education (secondary, Bachelor's degree, post-graduate qualification and doctoral degree) of the candidate are related to music, piano and pedagogy, as well as to the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts. Her professional realization follows her education – piano teacher, culturologist. It enables the candidate in her long professional experience to develop sufficient pedagogical skills and to prepare for circumstantial comments in piano teaching methodology. Her artistic individuality is developed both in literature and in attempts to skillfully combine the arts. Her social activism brings her many years of experience in the organization of cultural events. These three components of E. Tagareva's creative and pedagogical biography give her the opportunity to combine them in the noble cause of seeking means through piano pedagogy to improve the condition of persons with SEN.

3. Relevance of the topic. As the author notes, only in the last 10 years there has been increasing interest in the methods of working with persons with SEN. The change in the attitude towards them also leads to the questions that await the finding of solutions for their socialization and integration. The idea of achieving these goals with the help of art and in particular through the creation of music is gaining momentum. Due to these facts, the relevance of the dissertation work is more than clear.

4. Expediency of the research methods used to achieve the set goals. E. Tagareva used a combination of analytical and empirical methods to research, clarify and summarize the tasks set, namely:

- research and systematization of scientific research in the fields of piano methodology, music pedagogy, art therapy, art pedagogy, medicine, psychology, the echnologies, presenting the current state of piano training and its results for persons with SEN.

- conducting a pedagogical experiment for teaching piano to students with various difficulties (SEN).

- summarizing the achieved results with a target group including learners with special educational needs - taking into account strengths and difficulties.

- shaping methodological guidelines and practical approaches for teaching students with SEN.

The object of the research is correctly and clearly defined: the process of piano training for persons with SEN and its subject: the specifics of their piano training.

5. Evaluation of the dissertation work, knowledge of the problem, content and structure according to the established norms, credibility of the material, analytical approach and derived results.

Having read the dissertation work of E. Tagareva, I confidently give a positive assessment of her work. In **chapter 1**, we reveal her colossal work in seeking, analyzing and subjecting to comparative analyzes researches and publications on the subject by Russian, Soviet, Canadian, American, Japanese, French, Australian, English, German, Italian and Bulgarian scientists.

It is indisputable that the author knows the problem based on her many years of experience teaching piano to people with SEN. I highly appreciate the idea and its achievement by the author to comment on her experience and conclusions separately for the blind, hearing-impaired and persons with mental and motor problems. The dissertation contains a total of 244 pages, which include an introduction, six chapters, a conclusion, contributions, a list of scientific publications, a bibliography, and three appendices.

The literature used includes a total of 141 titles, of which 65 in Cyrillic (of which 30 in Bulgarian), 73 in Latin and 3 Internet sources. A strong impression is made by the statements in **chapter 2**, based on the author's experiment. I was impressed by her conclusion about the need to combine various pedagogical and psychological skills in working with students, but also most importantly: the piano teacher's humanity, which helps him to measure the requirements and feel the need for praise!

Chapter 3 outlines the need to consider the piano training for persons with SEN as a process of interactive communication between teacher, student and musical instrument (piano) and the main role of the pedagogue as a compensating factor.

Chapter 4 presents in detail the process of piano training for students with sensory disabilities: blind, vision-impaired and hearing-impaired students. They are described with

characteristics of the students of the respective group, initial stage of learning, work on metrorhythmic problems, repertoire and overcoming technical difficulties.

Chapter 5 provides a comprehensive introduction to Piano Art – a piano aid for the blind and partially sighted. There is a description of the content and structure of the aid, and then detailed plans of ten audio piano lessons for blind and vision-impaired beginner students are presented. An integral part of Chapter 5 is Appendix 2 with sheets music, many of which were composed by the author of the study.

Chapter 6 is a detailed description of the process of piano training for students with mental and motor problems. An algorithm similar to that in Chapter 4 is used: characteristics of students with mental and motor disabilities, importance of piano and keyboard training for their development, initial training, work on metrorhythm and on repertoire in the piano lesson.

Appendix 1 is a tabular presentation of the target group

Appendix 2 presents all sheet music for "Piano Art - piano aid for blind and vision-impaired"

Appendix 3 is an example of dynamic character visualization.

6. Contributions and significance of the scientific work and the publications on the subject of the dissertation

I approve the following contributions of the thesis:

- the dissertation, for the first time in Bulgaria, explores long-term experience in teaching piano to students with SEN, giving methodological and practical guidelines for piano pedagogues.

- the dissertation is the most extensive scientific study on the subject worldwide regarding the amount of discussed aspects and the coverage of students with various disabilities.

- the work presents the current state – in the world and in Bulgaria – of scientific publications in the field of piano methodology, music pedagogy, art pedagogy, music therapy, medicine, technologies related to piano training of persons with SEN.

- contribution - innovation is the use of a multidisciplinary approach in finding concrete methodological and practical solutions.

- the groups of students examined in the dissertation and the specific approaches to their piano training expand the scope of piano methodology and are the basis for further scientific research on the subject.

The significance of E. Tagareva's research sums up two particularly important decisions that she made at the beginning of her work. On the one hand, in the first chapter of her work, she has researched publications and studies on the topic: "*the modern experience in the education of persons with SEN - theoretical views and practical achievements*", giving us indispensable information against the background of the scarce modern activity on the topic. The development of E. Tagareva in various fields and her undoubted ability to work are the basis of the knowledge achieved through analytics. The comprehensive look at what has been achieved in Bulgaria has not been omitted. On the other

hand, the author's piano teaching experience allows her "*an experiment related to teaching piano to students with SEN, combining brief explanations of special educational needs, as well as an overview of methodological approaches.*"

7. Critical remarks and recommendations.

It seems to me a bit of an exaggeration to claim that the study is "the most extensive worldwide". Even though we live in the era of technology and easy communications because of this, it still remains unclear what they think about the subject in Asia for example! I am surprised that E. Tagareva commented on the French method "DOLCE" (on pages 27 and 48 of the dissertation), and did not mention that in 2015 the Ardenza Foundation presented the method, inviting Françoise Doroq herself to Sofia to present the conclusions and the achievements from the work of the method the Bulgarian piano pedagogues interested in working with persons on the autistic spectrum.

8. The Abstract is constructed according to the accepted rules and directly follows the dissertation work. It is 58 pages long and contains the contributions and bibliography of the dissertation work. The chapters present the background information and contain well-constructed concluding sentences at the end.

9. Conclusion. Based on all of the above, I propose to the respected scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art to Evgeniya Petrova Tagareva, a full-time doctoral student at the Piano and Accordion Department at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv.

14.09.2024

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