

REVIEW

by
Prof Svilen Raychev, PhD

on dissertation work for awarding
educational and scientific degree *Doctor*

to

Guan Hao Wen

titled

PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROCESS OF INHERITANCE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN THE FOLK MUSIC OF CHINA AND EUROPE

academic supervisor: Prof Toni Shekerdzhieva-Novak

Guan Hao Wen was born in China. He teaches vocal mastery at Hankou University in Wuhan, China.

He completed his Master's degree at the Conservatory of Music in Fermo, Italy, under the supervision of the famous Italian tenor Nazzareno Antinori.

- he performed leading roles in the opera of Fermo, Italy;
- he also participated in a solo concert with the Rome Symphony Orchestra.
- he is a winner of the first prize in the vocal category of the international music festival Giulianova.
- third prize at the Pietro Argento International Music Competition.

From 2021, he is a full-time doctoral student, paid training in professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art, doctoral program Music Studies and Music art at the Department of Classical, Pop and Jazz Performance Arts at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv.

He was discharged with the right of defense by order No RD-27- 064 of 17.04.2024.

The dissertation was discussed and proposed for public defense at a meeting of the Department of Classical, Pop and Jazz Performance Arts at AMDFA "Prof. Asen Diamandiev" – Plovdiv, held in April 2024.

The dissertation contains a total of 191 pages, which include seven chapters, the first of which is the Introduction, and the remaining six chapters have sub-chapters. The dissertation ends with references, conclusion, bibliography and list of scientific publications on the research topic.

The main goal of this work is to make a systematic comparison of the general features and characteristics of traditional folk songs in China and Europe.

The idea of thoroughly research of the methods of preservation and inheritance of the international exchange between Chinese and European folk songs, is in itself a great challenge.

Using comparative analysis, the author summarizes the similarities and differences in the historical background in order to promote the study and sharing of folk songs between China and the European countries.

The first chapter is an introduction to the problem: the object and purpose of the research are indicated and the research methods used in the dissertation are clarified.

The second chapter is titled A Comparison of the Origin and Development of Traditional Folk Songs in China and Europe. The chapter is divided into three parts: Origin and Development of the Chinese Traditional Folk Songs, Origin and Development of European Traditional Folk Songs and Comparative Studies and Conclusions. The similarities and differences throughout the long history and traditions of the folk songs in China and Europe are compared: time of origin, their sources, the themes in the content, their development through the different eras.

Chapter Three "A Comparative Study on the Basic Classification of Chinese and European Folk Songs" compares and studies the themes, genres and singing forms of Chinese and European folk songs. I quote: "*From the point of view of origin, all Chinese and European folk songs originate from the life of the working people, reflect the working conditions, scenes of everyday life, thoughts, feelings and desires*" page 45.

The fourth chapter is titled "A Comparative Study of the Musical Styles of the Chinese and European Folk Songs" The author affirms that musical styles are closely related to the scenes of people's lives. Differences in regional musical styles are formed due to differences in the ethnic culture, social environment, and religious beliefs. The musical styles are defined in terms of mode, melody and rhythm, the specifics of the eight regions of China and the various countries in Europe.

Chapter Five - "Comparative study of representative composers of Chinese and European folk songs" points out the contribution of the composers in the development of the folk song. Using statistical tables of works by Chinese and European composers, the candidate shows the common features and differences in the way of creating the works and the composing technique and makes a comparative analysis of Chinese and European composers.

The sixth chapter is "Comparative study of the preservation and inheritance of traditional folk songs in China and Europe" The author emphasizes that folk songs are intangible cultural heritage and it should be effectively protected, promoted and developed. Ways of preservation and inheritance are also shown. In China, these are: creating a storage library, holding various forums for the inheritance and development of traditional folk songs, holding folk song festivals and competitions, various media programs, establishing folk song museums, etc. In Europe, laws are being created to protect historical and cultural heritage. The strategy of Bulgaria is also mentioned – accepting the community center as a social basis for protection and inheritance.

I quote "*...to rely on community centers across the country to truly integrate the protection and heritage of the traditional folk music into people's lives.*" page 48 of the abstract.

Various concerts and music festivals are regularly held in Europe. Historical and cultural protected areas are defined, the "Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage" campaign is created, promoted by UNESCO, etc.

According to the author, the inclusion of traditional folk music and songs in the educational system is extremely valuable for the protection and preservation of cultural heritage. Both China and Europe have signed the UN Convention on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, and this should be state policy.

Seventh chapter is titled "Comparative study of the international exchange of folk songs between China and Europe". The European folk music gradually spread in China together with Christian sacred music since the time of the missionaries in the 7th century. And main forms of international cultural exchange between China and the world is with an emphasis on the folk songs. Artists and folk song and dance ensembles participate in exchange programs and tours constantly between China and Europe. Many Chinese music academies and schools regularly invite foreign musicians to teach in China and send their scholars and professors abroad for academic exchange.

Guan Hao Wen summarizes the reasons why the international exchange of folk songs between China and Europe is well developed: first, it is due to the active promotion of music culture and the exchange of folk songs by the Chinese government and the governments of European countries; secondly, it is due to the active participation of professional artistic groups, music academies and other institutions, as well as the media; third, to the commercial activity of audio and video websites and short video applications. Cultural exchange is the best way for culture to open up and develop.

The dissertation is not just a historical, chronological study of a particular genre or era. This is the author's analytical reflection on the European and the Chinese folk music traditions and how the young people should learn to perform works in this style. The dissertation work is very useful and will be useful for young people who are studying this kind of art.

The dissertation thus presented enriches our scientific literature and can serve with its ideas for new scientific works, also as a valuable guideline for the benefit of both singers and instrumentalists who begin their creative journey with the intention of conquering the world stages, as well as their teachers.

The work has a pronounced applied character. In this sense, it is a natural link with the past and prospective development of both European and Chinese folk songs.

Numerous works are used for the research, classified according to the historical period of their creation. There is also a place dedicated to schools or authors who are particularly important and who are unfortunately little known in our country.

In the conclusion, the author makes an attempt to summarize the issues and bring out the contributing points in the text.

I fully agree with the contributions of the dissertation work pointed by the author.

The doctoral candidate also has the necessary scientific publications on the subject.

As a conclusion, I would like to say that the work has the necessary contributing qualities of a dissertation for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor".

I am convinced that the dissertation of Guan Hao Wen has a contribution nature, both in a theoretical and an applied sense. With his overall work and contributions, the candidate meets the requirements for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "doctor".

Prof Svilen Raichev, PhD