

## OPINION

by

Prof Elenka Karaliyska-Trapkova, PhD

National Music Academy "Prof Pancho Vladigerov"

on the dissertation of

**Huang Boyu**

doctoral student full-time study

in professional field 8. 3. Music and Dance Art

doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art

at Department of Piano and Accordion

at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv

with academic supervisor Prof Lyudmil Petkov

titled:

*Characteristics and Development of the Piano Accompaniment in the Vocal Music of the Chinese*

*Composers from the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the Present Day*

for awarding educational and scientific degree "**Doctor**"

On the grounds of a decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Music Pedagogy dated 06.07.2023, to open a procedure for the defense of Huang Boyu's dissertation, the following materials were provided to me: the candidate's CV, the dissertation, an abstract, a report on the contributions of the dissertation, a list of publications on the topic, a diploma for Master's degree.

### **Brief biographical data of the candidate**

Huang Boyu is a Chinese pianist who graduated from the Tianjin Conservatory in 2014. In the period 2015-2017 he studied at the Conservatory in Fermo, Italy, where he received Master's degree in piano. He continues his studies in the specialty of piano accompaniment in the class of Prof Sofia Cavarocchi. He successfully graduated in 2019. During his studies in Italy, Huang Boyu obtained a certificate for Italian language proficiency level B1. He also has certificate for English language proficiency, level B2. In the period 2020-2023, he is a full-time doctoral student at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" in the city of Plovdiv with scientific supervisor Prof Lyudmil Petkov. Huang Boyu is a prominent pianist and accompanist. He has performed concerts in China, Italy and Bulgaria. He promotes the music of his homeland. A logical continuation of Huang Boyu's concert activity is deepening of the research of works by Chinese composers. The choice of the topic of the dissertation work coincides with the author's creative pursuits and improvement of his knowledge and skills as a pianist and accompanist.

The presented thesis is relevant with its topic, dedicated to the characteristics and development of the piano accompaniment in the vocal music of the Chinese composers from the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, its national characteristics in its three varieties: the Chinese art song, the musical adaptations of ancient poems and the Chinese national opera.

### **Content of the dissertation**

The dissertation work *Characteristics and Development of the Piano Accompaniment in the Vocal Music of the Chinese Composers from the 20th century to the Present Day* is structured in an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, bibliography including 32 titles, 16 internet sources, appendices and three publications on the subject. The total volume is 190 pages, of which 169 are the main text.

In the introduction, the author outlines the main objective, the reason for choosing the topic, the research methods and the applicability of the achieved results. "*Through empirical, theoretical and comparative methodology, a more complete and comprehensive understanding of the logic of development and characteristics of piano accompaniment in different types of vocal works has been achieved*" (quote from Huang Boyu's dissertation, p. 9).

The **first chapter** examines the origin and the meaning of the concept "artistic song". Historically, the birth and development of the Chinese art song has been traced. The author analyzes seven representative vocal works of Chinese composers who worked in different periods from the emergence of the genre (1919) to the present day. The relationship between text and music is emphasized. The development and importance of the accompaniment for the artistic transformation of the poetic image is traced. The role of the likeminded accompanist and partner of the singer is brought out. The summary highlights the complexities and challenges the author faces in performing piano accompaniment in Chinese art songs compared to that of European songs. In chapter one are presented 33 sheet music examples, as well as a brief biographical reference of the authors of the considered works.

In the **second chapter**, the author focuses his attention on art songs based on text from the classical Chinese poetry. The structure follows the logic: origins, development, structural and stylistic analysis of five significant art songs. Attention is paid to the depth and the multilayers of the poetic imagery of the ancient texts. Emphasis is placed on the synthesis between ancient poetry and piano art. Interwoven into the fabric of the research are interesting historical facts related to the creation of the works. The conclusions and summaries confirm the value of the songs composed according to classical Chinese poetry, their social significance.

The **third chapter** is dedicated to the emergence and development of the Chinese National Opera, the historical prerequisites for the emergence of the opera genre in the country, the political, economic and cultural factors that influenced the flowering of the opera art. The national specifics characterizing the genre, the borrowing of European elements in the Chinese opera are emphasized.

Information is provided on the most famous authors of opera works. Chinese opera works from the latest period are examined and analyzed. The trends in the development of the piano accompaniment in the Chinese national opera, as well as the various functions it takes on, are outlined. It is also interesting to trace the changes in the accompaniment of Western instruments in Chinese operas.

The **fourth chapter** is a kind of conclusion, which summarizes the main characteristics of accompaniment in the Chinese art songs in the context of historical development. The renewal of traditional tonal functions and harmonic rules, the diversification and improvement of compositional techniques for piano accompaniment are conditioned by the emergence of modern styles in Chinese music. The conclusions drawn defend the author's thesis about the need for in-depth aesthetic studies of the piano accompaniment. In my opinion, this is the first time that such a topic is being considered in Bulgaria professionally and in depth.

**Chapter five** includes the contributions of the dissertation work, which **I fully support**.

The research has practical applicability. The analyses made of the melody, the texture, as well as the author's guidelines for the performance of the various types of accompaniment, would be a technical and theoretical basis for pianists presenting Chinese national music on the world stages. In support of his study, the author presents concert programs of Chinese art songs, with the participation of Chinese singers, accompanied by the author of the dissertation work.

Huang Boyu is correct in citing the sources used, the basis of which serves to build and prove his thesis.

The abstract correctly conveys the character of the doctoral work.

The scientific publications are three in number and are related to the topic of the dissertation work.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that Huang Boyu's dissertation work titled *Characteristics and Development of the Piano Accompaniment in the Vocal Music of the Chinese Composers from the 20th century to the Present Day* impressed me with its analytical approach, thoroughness and consistency, as well as with its scientific - theoretical substantiation.

I congratulate the author and his supervisor Prof Lyudmil Petkov for their efforts and I believe that the work will contribute to the spiritual and cultural exchange between China and Bulgaria.

I strongly suggest to the honorable Scientific Jury to award Huang Boyu the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the professional field 8. 3. Music and Dance Art.

Reviewer: .....

Sofia

Prof Elenka Karaliyska – Trapkova