

OPINION

by Prof Nikolay Motsov, PhD
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on dissertation work
for awarding educational and scientific degree "DOCTOR"
authored by

Zhou Xiangfei

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Professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art,
Doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art

Academic supervisor: Prof Toni Shekerdzhieva-Novak

Title

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CHINESE AND THE WESTERN OPERA ART

The dissertation of Zhou Xiangfei deals with an interesting topic – Comparative Study of the Chinese and the Western Opera Art. This is an interesting field for research, and although there is already writing on the subject by Chinese students in Bulgaria, I believe that each individual study would contribute to the formation of an increasingly clear idea about this interesting topic. The subject of the work is useful and, as the author himself points out: *“I hope that my dissertation will contribute to a deeper understanding of the artistic characteristics and expressiveness of the Chinese and the Western opera, help to reveal the rich traditions of the two opera schools, and stimulate the exchange and interaction between the Chinese and the Western stage music culture. I expect that thanks to this analysis, opera will reveal new nuances of the multi-layered aesthetic concepts and the powerful humanistic spirit that breathes life into the magnificent and glorious civilizations of the East and the West”*. This is indeed the case, and this fact in itself brings a contributing character to the work. The desire to encourage the academic interaction between the European and the Chinese opera, to strengthen the cultural exchange, to open up the cultural markets of the countries, has inspired the idea to research and write this interesting doctoral dissertation. I believe that the topic will be useful in the training of future Chinese students, as well as their desire to further develop the existing research in this direction.

The dissertation contains a total of 160 pages, which include an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, bibliography, appendices and a list of scientific publications on the topic of the study.

They are arranged in a regular manner, chronologically tracking the research on the topic. It is absolutely logical to consider the cultural diversity and integration trend of the era in historical terms. The author has delved into the artistic characteristics and expressiveness of the Chinese and the Western opera art, which helps to reveal the rich traditions of the two opera schools and stimulates the exchange and interaction between Chinese and Western stage music culture. After analyzing and studying a large number of sources, the essential differences between the operatic musical culture of the East and the West in terms of musical language, performance forms, ideological content and other aspects have been brought to the fore. An important theoretical basis for a better understanding and evaluation of the operatic music of the East and the West has been provided. A significant point is the comparative analysis, which is an essential part of the work and provides clarity on the similarities and differences between the analyzed objects.

I totally agree with the author's conclusion that *"The work broadens the horizon of the research of the opera music culture. This dissertation overcomes the limitations of previous studies that only focus on opera music culture in a single cultural environment. It places the opera music culture of China and the Western world within the framework of cross-cultural comparison, revealing the differences and similarities in the historical roots, artistic characteristics, aesthetic concepts and other aspects of opera music culture in the East and the West. The study provides new perspectives and methods for studying opera music culture."*

I accept the contributions presented by the author in the study as credible and practically applicable. For me as a performer and teacher, the most valuable thing is the fact that the thesis is the work of an artist who knows in detail both the Chinese and the European vocal schools, has studied the traditions and peculiarities, which gives him the confidence to analyze and write about this interesting and useful topic.

I am convinced that the professional work with the academic supervisor Prof Toni Shekerdzhieva-Novak has made a significant contribution to the success of the dissertation. There is a serious theoretical and practical doctoral work, which Zhou Xiangfei has successfully managed.

I express my positive opinion about the contribution nature of the presented dissertation work. I recommend to the esteemed scientific jury Zhou Xiangfei be awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", professional field "Music and Dance Art".

Sofia, 09.01.2025

Prof. Nikolay Motsov, PhD