

## **REVIEW**

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Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts

“Prof Asen Diamandiev”

Regarding dissertation work for awarding educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in Higher education field 8. *Arts*, Professional field 8.3. *Music and Dance Art*, doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art.

**Author:** Nadezhda Simeonova Petrova

**Title:** Development of the piano accompaniment of folk songs

**Academic supervisor:** Prof Kostadin Buradzhiev. PhD

### **1. General presentation of the procedure and the doctoral candidate**

By order № RD27 – 049 of 05.07.2022 of the Rector of AMDFA “Prof Asen Diamandiev” I have been appointed a member of the scientific jury to supervise a procedure for the defense of a dissertation work titled *Development of the piano accompaniment of folk songs*, authored by Nadezhda Simeonova Petrova. The procedure is for obtaining educational and scientific degree “doctor” in Higher education field Arts, Professional field 8.3 Music and dance art. The author of the dissertation is Nadezhda Petrova – free-studies doctoral student at the Department of Music Folklore, AMDFA “Prof Asen Diamandiev”. She has presented a set of documents (on paper and on magnetic media) related to the procedure, including the dissertation work, abstract, and 3 publications related to the topic of the discussed scientific research. She was discharged with the right of defense by order of the Rector No RD-27-008/02.06.2022 on the grounds of resolution of the council of the Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography dated 27.05.2020 – Protocol 2. . I have no remarks on the submitted documents and materials.

### **2. Brief biographical information about the candidate**

Nadezhda Petrova is a graduate of the Music School in Plovdiv and AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev". With Master's degree in Performing Art in the class of Prof Snezhana Simeonova, Petrova is undoubtedly one of the most gifted and accomplished pianists of the Plovdiv piano school. Her participation in the piano master classes of Prof Viktor Chuchkov, Prof Milena Mollova, Prof Atanas Kurtev, Prof Boris Romanov, Prof Tamara Poddubnaya, Prof Eric Heidzik, etc., the hundreds of concerts as an accompanying pianist of choral groups,

of various instrumentalists and opera singers in Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Spain, as well as the numerous awards from various competitions, prove not only her talent, but also her serious, consistent attitude to the profession "pianist". I know her professional growth from the student bench, through her work as accompanist in the "Detska Kitka" choir and in the "Evmolpeia" choir, to the years of our work as colleagues. Nadezhda Petrova is not only an excellent accompanist, but also a wonderful organist. Her solo piano concerts also present her as a musician with a magnificent sense of phrasing, technicality and agility, detailed command of the piano and its methods, and different of nuances inherent only in gifted pianists. In her professional work at the department Musical Folklore, Nadezhda Petrova also claims a wonderful prima vista, a stable metrorhythmic sense for all possible compound meters, good knowledge of the Bulgarian folklore, pedagogical flexibility, a high threshold of patience and discipline, communicativeness and wonderful relations with co-workers.

### **3. Relevance of the topic**

The dissertation is the first Bulgarian scientific study and review of the overall development of the genre "*folk song with piano accompaniment - from the first attempts at the dawn of our professional musical art to the present day*" (p. 228) - a period covering a century and a half. And while there is research on folk songs with piano accompaniment written for opera singers, the subtype of this genre for folk singers is almost unexplored topic. The problem of the authentic parameters and the way of finding original song sources in the work of the First, Second and Third generation of Bulgarian composers has not been studied until now, which makes it possible to trace both the development of compositional means in relation to the processing of folklore, and the change of the aesthetic attitude towards authentic originals. The need for such a study of the genre is clearly stated in the theoretical review, where the author using a substantial evidence describes the lack of a complete, specifically focused study of the folk songs with piano accompaniment, their performance issues, compositional characteristics in relation to concert and/ or pedagogical orientation. The relevance of the work is complemented by the fact that some applied-pedagogical aspects of the ensemble vocal-instrumental interpretation related to the performance of folk songs are also considered. The research on folk songs with piano accompaniment for folklore performers in Bulgaria contributes to the discovery of new aspects of the current folklore vocal-instrumental practice. The results from the dissertation on the development of the piano

accompaniment presented by the candidate supplement and bring to a new level the knowledge of the art of piano accompaniment in Bulgaria.

#### **4. Knowledge of the problem**

Nadezhda Petrova's direct professional connection with the piano accompaniments of folk songs for folk performers increases the value of her research because it is based on practice-tested expertise and ensemble-instrumental expertise. The listed bibliography is impressive, including 173 strictly profiled titles, 3 internet sources and 78 sheets of music source (collections), a large part of which are cited in the thesis. This shows a deeply competent and serious, theoretically supported attitude to the subject - not just a systematization of the literature published on the subject, but a thorough research and refraction of other people's experience through personal, tested in concert and pedagogical practice. During the period of preparation of her dissertation, Nadezhda Petrova has done an impressive amount of work. She has synthesized and conceptualized the development of the piano accompaniment of folk songs in its different genre subtypes on the basis of deep theoretical knowledge and serious empirical experience. Petrova knows very well the aspects of the subject presented in the dissertation work. She points out different points of view about the pianist work as accompanist and performer of folk song. Considering the extremely small number of scientific publications related to the researched topic, the dissertation uses as many narrowly specialized, but corresponding directly and indirectly theoretical sources, carrying a wealth of information, as possible. The author skilfully uses the knowledge she has accumulated over the years on the problem, applying it successfully in the development of the various sections and in interpreting the scientific presentations. She demonstrates a fluent knowledge of the specific piano and folklore terminology. In the course of the work, her extremely good practical training and professional approach to the researched subject becomes evident.

#### **5. Research methodology**

The research on topic *Development of the piano accompaniment of folk songs* is carried out according to a modern and adequate, well-developed methodology, correctly applied and allowing the achievement of the set goals and the tasks. I was impressed by the final summarizing paragraphs in each section and the conclusions at the ends of each chapter, which allows a synthesized tracking of the logical connections in the development of the subject and outlines a good scientific construction of the entire work. Adequate theoretical-analytical approaches are included in the synthesis and presentation of the results. To

illustrate her arguments the author uses appropriate fragments from folk songs with piano accompaniment included in the appendix, interviews, tabular systematization; graphic schemes – methods contributing to the clarification of specific cases.

## **6. Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation work**

Nadezhda Petrova's dissertation submitted to me for review is 234 pages, and together with the Appendices it is a total of 360 pages. The research includes 193 graphic examples in the form of music scores, 5 appendices including interviews with composers and accompanists, one table and one diagram in the main text, 115 additional footnotes given to emphasize and supplement the information and arguments. The work consists of an introduction; theoretical overview of the publications concerning the topic of the dissertation; four chapters, conclusion, bibliography and five appendices. The content and structure of the dissertation fully comply with the established norms and contain all the required sections. The purpose and tasks of the research are formulated precisely and clearly. In the **first chapter** *Specifics of the accompanist work in the genre folk song with piano accompaniment*, Nadezhda Petrova discusses those characteristics of the folk song that determine the compositional approach to it. This can be seen as sequence in the following chapters, the clarity of the piano and folklore terminology used here and the clarification of the role of the accompanist of folk songs, which accompanies the theoretical development in all its sections. Or as the author herself says: "*knowing the melodic and verbal essence of the folk song allows the accompanist to support the singer's performance, to enhance and highlight the artistically important details of the solo part, and to flexibly follow the improvisational moments inherent in the authentic musicianship*" [c. 28]. For the classification of the works, Petrova uses the classifications of Bozhidar Abrashev and Plamen Arabov/Svetoslav Karagenov.

The **second chapter**, *Folk songs with piano accompaniment in the work of the Bulgarian composers of the First Generation* examines the folk song as a repertoire component in the concert programs of some of the most prominent Bulgarian opera singers, such as Dimitar Popivanov, Hristina Morfova and Lyudmila Prokopova. The first compositional attempts in the genre of "folk song with piano accompaniment" in the works of composers Andrey Stoyanov, Asen Dimitrov, Yosif Cheshmedzhiev, Dobri Hristov, Alexander Krastev and Petar Dinev are also examined. On the basis of numerous formal-structural, harmonic and piano analyses, as well as analyses of the authentic songs, the author draws conclusions using her own system. The chapter includes conclusions about the range, size, form and mode of the original songs, which make it possible to assess the composers' preferences for a certain type

of primary source, which is realized for the first time in Bulgarian musicology. In terms of form, structure, harmonization and piano texture, it offers generalizations that allow synthesized understanding of the compositional ideas regarding the processing of the Bulgarian song folklore in this early stage of the development of the Bulgarian musical culture.

The **third chapter** covers the works of the composers of the Second and Third Generation - Lyubomir Pipkov, Pancho Vladigerov, Svetoslav Obretenov, Parashkev Hadjiev, Marin Goleminov, Dimitar Petkov and Todor Popov. It is not by chance that Vladigerov's work is examined in more detail, as his piano works are among the most expansive and abundant in techniques and compositional ideas in the genre. The author's systematization is also applied here, which makes it possible to compare the approach to the authentic material between different periods in our musical history.

**Chapter four** *The Folk Song with Piano Accompaniment in the Repertoire of Folk Singers* is especially contributory. It offers the first study and systematization of compositional ideas, published music sheets, interrelationships, common features and differences in the individual attitudes of the authors compared to the authentic songs, concert and pedagogical applicability, specifics, and last but not least, the significance of the new genre subtypes intended for folk performers. The fourth chapter is a serious contribution to musicology with its multidirectional analysis of the genre "folk song with piano accompaniment for a folk singers". Impressive is also the author's systematization of piano-related issues in the genre, based entirely on her personal experience as educator and performer. In her research, Nadezhda Petrova successfully analyzes and systematizes a large number of compositional specifics, appropriately illustrated with musical examples. They are correctly interpreted and show her good analytical skills. The conclusions of the work are clear and correctly formulated. The language and style of the dissertation are readable, uncomplicated by excessive use of strictly specialized terminology. In conclusion, we can say that the analyses and the conclusions presented in the dissertation are valuable and original study. I completely agree with the contributing points in the dissertation. The proposed concepts are an important contribution to the study of folklore arrangement and performance in the genre "folk song with piano accompaniment" at national and international level.

## **7. Critical notes to the dissertation work**

My recommendations are few, because the work meets and exceeds the requirements for the necessary size for a dissertation and the requirements of the Higher Education Act, in

technical aspect it is very well structured; there is sufficient illustrative material proving the arguments; the bibliographic reference includes a significant number of titles directly related to the topic; the contributing moments are formulated very accurately; the tasks stated in the introductory pages have been completed. In other words, the important things are there. My recommendation is if the dissertation is to be published, the illustrative material should follow the theoretical arguments, and not to be presented as an Appendix. Some editing of the text could also be considered to "polish" some paragraphs.

## **8. Scientific and practical contributions and significance of the work**

Since it makes the first scientific comprehensive generalization and systematization of the genre "folk song with piano accompaniment" for the last one-hundred years, the dissertation work is especially valuable. The self-assessment given by the author in formulating the contribution points is reasonable and shows the deep knowledge of the studied issues. Indeed, in this work there are quite a few ideas that are discussed for the first time in the Bulgarian musicology, such as defining and differentiating the varieties of the genre; the determination of the authentic parameters of the vocal parts in the genre in the works of the First, Second and Third generation Bulgarian composers; the finding of the authentic original songs in folklore collections and the proof of the use of these materials; the juxtaposition between folk songs with piano accompaniment for classical and for folk singers, formulated and interpreted by an acting accompanist; the systematization of the published music literature for folk songs for folk performers with piano accompaniment; the attempt to fully trace the development of the piano accompaniment of folk songs with all its components, specifics and piano problematics; the author's classification with various parameters of the published music literature of folk songs for folk performers with piano accompaniment. Petrova substantiates her arguments on the basis of a large number of scientific studies, hundreds of hours of search work and many years of experience as performer, and it is this experience that gives a special "weight" to her arguments.

## **9. Evaluation of the publications and personal contribution of the doctoral student**

The candidate presents three publications on the subject of the dissertation - *On the piano accompaniment of the Bulgarian solo folk song*, *Performance problems when accompanying folk singers* and *Ensemble problems in meter-less folk songs with piano accompaniment performed by folk singers*. The scientific publications are original and presented and printed in referenced journals. They present some of the theoretical suggestions fully clarified in the

dissertation, concerning the development of the piano accompaniment of a folk song in its various genre subtypes.

#### **10. Personal participation of the doctoral candidate**

On the basis of the documentation, scientific publications, dissertation work and abstract provided to me, I consider that the research done for the dissertation is entirely the work of the candidate and we can accept with absolute certainty that the dissertation of Nadezhda Petrova is her personal work.

#### **11. Abstract**

The presented abstract is 54 pages. The individual chapters of the dissertation are presented in a brief but comprehensive form. The music sheets, which are present as an Appendix to the text, are not included here, but the abstract accurately and clearly presents the scientific research.

### **CONCLUSION**

I know Nadezhda Petrova for two decades. I have observed both her development as a student and her growth as one of the prominent pianists in Plovdiv. My opinion of her is that she is a talented instrumentalist-performer, a thorough researcher and analyst, a good colleague.

As part of her studies, Nadezhda Petrova has carried out serious research and scientific work. She has summarized large amount of information, based on even larger number of theoretical and musical sources, as well as on her rich personal experience. Her results are original and contributory. The dissertation shows that Nadezhda Simeonova Petrova possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty "Musical Art" by demonstrating qualities and skills for independent scientific research. The presented work contains scientific results that are contribution to science and meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the regulations for its implementation and the relevant Regulations of the AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev". The materials and the achieved results fully correspond to the specific requirements of the Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography. In view of the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the scientific development presented in the dissertation work, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the

educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Nadezhda Petrova in the field of higher education: 8. Arts; professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art.

I congratulate Nadezhda Petrova for the serious and in-depth artistic and scientific research. I also congratulate her academic supervisor Prof Kostadin Buradzhiev for the successful guidance and the achievement of the impressive end result.

Plovdiv, 22.08.2022

Prepared by: .....

(Assoc. Prof Rada

Slavinska)