

REVIEW

by

by Prof Daniela Petrova Dikova, PhD

National Academy of Music "Prof Pancho Vladigerov"

of the dissertation work of

Nadezhda Simeonova Petrova

for acquisition of educational and scientific degree Doctor

in Professional Field 8.3 Music And Dance Art

on the topic:

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT OF FOLK SONGS

The dissertation work of Nadezhda Simeonova Petrova is prepared in accordance with the normative requirements for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor" and has successfully passed the procedures of discussion, control and referral to public defense at a regular meeting of the Department of Musical Folklore at the faculty Musical Folklore and Choreography, Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv, held on 16.06.2022.

Nadezhda Petrova's professional career is guided by renowned Bulgarian piano teachers (Elena Velcheva and Prof Snezhana Simeonova). She performs as an accompanist, but also has experience in chamber and solo performances, as an organist and harpsichordist. Nadezhda Petrova's experience as accompanist is related to work with choir and accompaniment of classical singing and ballet. In 2013 she becomes a full-time accompanist at the department of Musical Folklore of AMDFA - Plovdiv. In addition to being a pianist, N. Petrova is also qualified music teacher, and has specialized in solfeggio. The foundations of her education and her experience as accompanist ensure the success of her exploration of the folk song accompaniment.

As emphasized in the **introduction**, N. Petrova's motivation to work on the present dissertation is a result of her encounter with a number of specifics and problems in working with folk singers: the variety of unequal measures; the performance of meterless songs, the element of improvisation in such songs by folk singers, and other performance and ensemble issues. In her words, "*My practical experience helped me realize that between the folk songs with piano for opera singers and for folk singers there are both similarities and quite a few differences in terms of texture, metrorhythmic variety, compositional techniques used, performance and ensemble problems, a way of interpreting.*"

These similarities and differences motivate N. Petrova to trace how the piano part in the genre "folk song with piano accompaniment" changes from the emergence of our professional musical culture until now. **Scientific publications investigating folk song piano accompaniment for folk singers are very rare.** The absence of a comprehensive research is the main reason for writing the dissertation.

The **object** of the research in the dissertation work is the piano accompaniment of a folk song.

The **goal** of the study is the development and the transformations of the piano accompaniment of folk songs from its first attempts to the present day, and the main **methods of the study** are historical, comparative, analytical, empirical, and sociological. To achieve the goal, the following **tasks** have been defined: systematization of the published theoretical materials related to the folk song with piano accompaniment for classical singers and separately for folk singers; • analyzing the piano accompaniment as emerging from and inextricably linked to the melodic and metrorhythmic features of the authentic song in terms of structure, form and mode and the compositional concepts and harmonic language used by the composers; • outlining the ratio between metered and meterless songs in the of the composers; • comparing the performance of the meterless songs by classical and folk singers and the resulting specifics of the accompaniment; • explaining of the role of the piano as part of the ensemble in folk songs with piano; • making theoretical and practical parallel between accompanying classical and folk singers; • exploring the relationship between the piano and the classical/ folk orchestra; • synthesizing the stylistic features of the accompaniments of folk songs by different composers and related performance and ensemble problems based on conversations, surveys, observations, pedagogical and concert practice; • determining the place of the folk song with piano in the concert and competition programs of the classical and folk singers.

The dissertation includes a total of 360 pages, of which 234 pages are the main part - introduction, four chapters, conclusion, contributions of the dissertation, bibliography including 176 sources of information and 5 appendices with total of 126 pages.

The structure of the text is based on logic that reveals the research object. The **introduction** includes a theoretical overview of the 21 publications relevant for the topic of the dissertation, which, in view of their systematization, are grouped into four types - scientific works, monographs, articles and scientific reports, didactic aids, arranged chronologically according to the year of their publication.

The **first chapter** explores the specifics of the accompanist work in the genre "folk song with piano accompaniment". The components of the genre are discussed separately: the folk song (traditional rural song, urban song culture) and the piano part (the role of the accompanist as part of the ensemble, specifics of the accompanist's profession, features of the piano accompaniment). Based on the publications of leading names in this field, N. Petrova outlines her opinion on the genre "solo folk song with piano accompaniment": *"solo folk song with piano accompaniment" should mean "solo authentic song" with piano accompaniment. In folklore, music and text are an inseparable whole. Disrupting their unity by intervention in one of the elements of the song leads to a breakdown of the authenticity.*"

The **second chapter** presents the folk songs with piano accompaniment in the work of the Bulgarian composers of the First Generation. At the end of the 19th century, unlike in the Western European countries, folklore was preserved in our country. This fact attracts the interest of both the Bulgarian researchers and artists, and foreign folklorists and composers. N. Petrova comments on the development of the "folk song with piano accompaniment" genre in the work of: Dimitar Popivanov, tandem Hristina Morfova and Lyudmila Prokopova, Andrey Stoyanov, Asen Dimitrov, Yosif Cheshmedjiev, Dobri Hristov, Alexander Krastev and Petar Dinev. Their work is a kind of preservation and conservation of the Bulgarian folklore. Most of the covered songs for vocals and piano are harmonized with classic tonic-dominant functions.

The **third chapter** examines the genre in the works of the Second and Third generation of Bulgarian composers. Folk music turns out to be the main source for the formation of the Bulgarian national style. The folklore primary source serves as a theme for building the vocal-instrumental work. The author analyzes songs by: Lyubomir Pipkov, Pancho Vladigerov, Svetoslav Obretenov, Marin Goleminov, Petko Stainov, Veselin Stoyanov, Philip Kutev, Dimitar Nenov, Georgi Dimitrov, Parashkev. Composers of the Third Generation who worked in the genre are Dimitar Petkov and Todor Popov. The role of the newly established Radio Sofia (1930) in the development of our musical culture, and hence also of the folk song with piano accompaniment, is outlined. N. Petrova builds her text on good theoretical knowledge and shows commendable commitment. The study will benefit if the explanatory texts are followed by the musical examples.

The **fourth chapter** discusses the folk song with piano accompaniment in the repertoire of folk singers. It is the actual part of the doctoral research (69 pages). It studies the creation of collections, which are necessity for the academic education in the specialty "Folk Instruments and Folk Singing". Most of them are the work of vocal pedagogues. A central

place is given to Asen Diamandiev and his "Vocalizations. I am really impressed with Diagram 1, describing the continuity between teacher and student in a creative and methodical aspect.

The **conclusion** summarizes the facts confirmed in the research. After thorough work and well-made conclusions, N. Petrova reports that at this stage in the Bulgarian musical literature there are over 1200 arrangements of folk songs for classical and folk singers and that nowadays the authentic folk song continues its life and development only in the folklore performers.

I approve the mentioned **8 contributions**: 1. first study of the genre "folk song with piano accompaniment" - from the first attempts at the dawn of our professional musical art to the present day; 2. first differentiation and definition of the varieties of the genre - for classical and for folk performers; 3. first scientific study of vocal parts in the genre in the works of First, Second and Third generation Bulgarian composers; 4. an attempt to fully follow the development of the piano accompaniment of folk songs with all its components, specifics and piano problems; 5. first attempt to compare "folk songs with piano accompaniment" for classical singers and for folk singers by an active accompanist; 6. systematization of the published music literature for folk songs for folk performers with piano accompaniment; 7. original classification with various parameters of the published music literature of folk songs for folk performers with piano accompaniment, systematized in several applications; 8. first attempt to define and systematize the main performing and ensemble piano problems when accompanying folk songs performed by folk performers.

The **abstract** consists of 54 pages, it is structured according to the approved pattern and accurately and clearly summarizes the dissertation text.

Three **publications** on the subject are indicated: Articles: *On the piano accompaniment of the Bulgarian solo folk song*; collection of reports from the international scientific conference "Science, education and innovations in the field of art", Plovdiv, 12-13.10.2017, pp. 263-270. *Performance problems when accompanying folk singers*; Yearbook of AMDFA, Plovdiv, 2017, pp. 123-126 *"Ensemble problems in meterless folk songs with piano accompaniment, performed by folk singers"*; Spring Scientific Readings, Plovdiv, 2018, pp. 139-14. The texts present important issues discussed by the dissertation work.

I confirm that the dissertation is relevant, original and contributing and meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award to Nadezhda Simeonova Petrova, for her dissertation titled *Development of the piano accompaniment of folk songs*, educational and scientific degree **Doctor** in professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art.

3 September 2022

Prof Daniela DIKOVA, PhD