

REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Ognyan Nikolaev Konstantinov

On a dissertation work for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "doctor"

of Rумыana Nikolaeva Petrova on the subject

"The role of ensemble playing in early learning on orchestral instruments"

Professional direction 8.3. Music and dance art

Doctoral program "Musicology and musical Faculty of Music Pedagogy"

Department "Classic and Pop and Jazz Performing Arts"

Academy of Music, Dance and Visual Arts "Prof. Asen Diamandiev" Plovdiv

Research supervisor: Associate Professor Kiril Ivanov Chaplikov

The subject of the review is the one presented by Rумыana Nikolaeva Petrova, doctoral student of an independent form of study (supervisor Assoc. Prof. Kiril Chaplikov, doctoral program "Musicology and musical art" at the Department of "Classical and Pop and Jazz Performing Arts" of AMDVA "Prof. Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv) for public defence of the dissertation on "The Role of Ensemble Playing in Early stage of training in orchestral instruments". For participation in the dissertation procedure the PhD student presents abstract, professional curriculum vitae, statement of contributions and three publications on the subject. All documents and materials fully meet the requirements of ZRASRB.

Biographical data

Rумыana Petrova has a completed master's degree in music pedagogy at Academy of Music, Dance and Visual Arts "Prof. Asen Diamandiev", and performing arts at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. Plays in the symphonic and opera orchestras of Cape Town, Pretoria and Durban. Since 1999, she had been working in USA, occupying the position of viola principal in a chamber orchestra, at the same time she also participated in a string quartet. She gave many concerts in New York ("Carnegie Hall"), Washington, Boston, etc. During these years she was also working actively as a teacher - at the "Brooklyn" Conservatory in New York and at the Stradivari School of Music in Miami. Since 2008 she has been teaching viola, chamber music and orchestral practice at National school of arts "Dobri Hristov" - Varna, where she is currently the principal of the school. She worked as a manager of the International Music Festival "Varna Summer" and was the head of a number

of successful projects in the field of culture and education, for which she was awarded the Grand Prize for overall achievements award of BAROK for 2019. Her students are winners of numerous awards from Bulgarian and international competitions, a fact that shows the high level and effectiveness of her pedagogical activity.

The topic of the dissertation is interesting and important for modern musical pedagogy, examining the relationship between the young music instrument performer's development and the ensemble practice. The doctoral student compares different methods and approaches, makes an in-depth analysis of the impact of ensemble musicianship on the general musical development of young musicians, based on conducted surveys and interviews with teachers and students and follow-up analyses and comparisons.

Rumyana Petrova's dissertation has a volume of 164 pages and contains an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a reference to the contributions of the work and bibliography. Part of the dissertation are 14 graphs, 11 tables, 6 sheet music examples and 2 photos. Three supplements are included: surveys with participants in the Varna Youth Symphony Orchestra, interviews with teachers and, according to the author, suitable repertoire for youth orchestras. The work is well organized and structured, the research is chronologically maintained - from the time of A. Vivaldi to the present day.

The introduction reveals the object of the study (the young musicians from music schools), the subject (ensemble music making in the early stage of training), the research methods (comparisons, analyses, interviews, surveys).

In the first chapter, popular pedagogical practices implying ensemble playing dating from the past to modern times are examined and analysed. The doctoral student draws a parallel between group-mutual learning method and ensemble musicianship (p. 12). Antonio Vivaldi's professional and pedagogical activity is thoroughly presented. Rumyana Petrova analyses very accurately and correctly the pedagogical and methodical element in Vivaldi's work (pp.15-22), applying the necessary score examples. All conclusions and proposed decisions show the erudition and rich experience of the doctoral student.

Special attention in the first chapter is given to the widely used nowadays method of Shinichi Suzuki. This method requires playing in an ensemble from the earliest stage of training, striving to create a suitable environment for the young musician's development (p.23). The purpose of the "Suzuki" method is not only musical development, but the general construction of the personality (p. 24). Rumyana Petrova describes in detail, and with

understanding the positive sides of the method, bringing out its main merits for the education of children and young people (p.29).

A major place in the first chapter is devoted to "El Sistema", a modern method of classical music training for children created by Jose Abreu in Venezuela. The PhD student observes, compares and comments the origin and development of this method, its international application, especially in the USA (p.30). The ensemble musicianship and its effect is derived at the forefront of the analysis (p.37).

The Bulgarian tradition and practice in children's ensemble music making is also presented. In the chapter, the organization and activities of the "Pioneer" Philharmonic, founded and led by Prof. Vladi Simeonov is analysed and commented in detail. The PhD student compares the pedagogical practices of "El Sistema" and "Pioneer" Philharmonic, showing the similarities (p.38). The activity of the youth chamber orchestra of the city of Lom as well as the children's violin orchestra of the city of Yambol are noted, showing the importance of these ensembles for the development of the instrumental and musical culture in cities.

The second chapter examines scholarly publications that comment the role of ensemble playing from a psychological perspective. Rumyana Petrova seeks in the articles of Laura Bishop and Andrea Schiavio the psycho-social contours of ensemble music-making, the role of the ensemble for the growth and strengthening of the individual (pp. 46-56). In the book of Trendafil Milanov "Towards new foundations of musical education" the doctoral student finds theses that support the dissertation topic (p. 58). The different approach to ensemble playing is also shown in Antoaneta Penkova's book "Problems of violin pedagogy in my practice". The PhD student emphasizes the author's opinion that the ensembles at the beginning of the training process must be of uniform tools (p.60). The chapter examines articles by Nikola Chakalov, Dobri Paliev, Avangard Fedotov. Rumyana Petrova finds and brings to foreground characteristic ensemble problematics (pp. 65-66).

The third chapter presents the doctoral student's own research, realized over a twelve-year period through surveys, interviews, analyses and comparisons. With this research, Rumyana Petrova confirms the main thesis of her work – ensemble music playing - has a huge role in the initial stage of training, helps and develops the sense of rhythm, the intonation stability, the reading of the musical text, the stage behaviour. These conclusions are proved with tables and graphs, exactly reflecting the commented indicators. The PhD

student successfully proves his thesis that ensemble practice is particularly important for the construction of ensemble-instrumental and personal-social qualities.

Three publications realized in 2020 and 2021 are related to the topic of the dissertation. They comment on some of the thesis' topics. The bibliography used includes 64 editions in Bulgarian and Russian and English as well as five Internet sources. The abstract has a volume of 56 pages, has the same structure and arrangement as the dissertation.

I accept the contributions presented by Romyana Petrova dissertation work. I consider the most important contribution of the work is the comparison between different methods of ensemble music making from a contemporary perspective point, the resulting benefits and effects for the development of young musicians. The long-term research conducted by the doctoral student has an undoubted contributory character, proving her theses contained in the Ph.D. The high level of competence and professional erudition of Romyana Petrova are evident throughout the work as well as her serious and profound attitude towards the topic under consideration. I'm sure after some editing and reduction, this work may be published to pose interest to music teachers.

Based on everything written so far, I confidently suggest to the respected scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in professional direction 8.3 "Musical and dance art" to Romyana Nikolaeva Petrova.

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