

## **OPINION**

by Prof. Dr. Veselin Ivanov Koichev

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

of Rumyana 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

### **1. General presentation of the procedure and the materials received for review**

By order No. PD-27-024 dated 17.02.2023 of the Rector of Academy of Music, Dance and Visual Arts "Prof. Asen Diamandiev" (AMDVA) I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for opening a procedure for the defense of Rumyana Nikolaeva Petrova's dissertation work on the topic "The role of ensemble playing in the early stage of learning orchestral instruments".

The set of materials presented by Rumyana Nikolaeva Petrova includes: order for deduction, order for a scientific jury, dissertation, author's abstract, three publications and a professional autobiography.

### **2. Brief biographical data for the doctoral student**

The doctoral student's musical education includes two master's degrees - music pedagogy at AMDVA - Plovdiv and performance art at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, and she defines herself as an "actively playing pedagogue". She worked as an orchestra player in symphony and opera orchestras in South Africa. Since 1999 she lived in the USA and worked as a chamber musician and soloist and performs a number of concerts in the country. She taught for 10 years at the Brooklyn Conservatory in New York and in Miami. She is an active promoter of Bulgarian music and for her work she received the annual award of the "Bulgarian Virtuosi" foundation in 2003.

From 2008-2018, she taught viola, chamber music and orchestral playing at the "Dobri Hristov" National school of arts, Varna. Mrs Petrova hosts the weekly radio show "Festivals" on Radio Varna and works in the "Directorate of Culture" of the Municipality of Varna as a manager of the International Music Festival "Varna Summer". She has participated as a performer in the most prestigious Bulgarian music festivals "Varna Summer", "Sofia Music Weeks" and "March Music Days". She developed an active

pedagogical activity at National school of arts "Dobri Hristov" and stimulated the activities of the Youth Symphony Orchestra. She created and led for more than ten seasons the "Varna summer for children" project, as well as European projects with the participation of National school of arts "Dobri Hristov", under the "Comenius" and "Leonardo da Vinci" programs in the period 2012-2014. She has released two CDs with her original compositions. As a performer, she made numerous recordings in BNR.

Since December 2019, she is the director of the "Dobri Hristov" NSA - Varna. Petrova is the winner of numerous awards.

The overall activity of Rumyana Petrova defines her as an extremely active performer, educator and organizer, setting high goals and achieving serious results.

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

The dissertation explores and surveys in detail ensemble playing in the early stages of learning orchestral instruments. The text is written in an engaging way that intrigues with an intelligent style, knowledge of the subject and is well formatted. The topic is extremely pertinent and affects the musical upbringing and realization of young musical performers.

### **4. Expediency of the research methods to achieve the set goals.**

The methodological basis of the dissertation has a complex nature. The research toolkit in the development of the scientific study includes the examination and analysis of various components related to the topic: tracing children's orchestral practices from the Baroque to the present day; analysis of publications by psychologists and educators regarding the role of ensemble playing; presenting and summarizing the results of own research through surveys. A complex approach is applied, which allows consideration of the topic of the role of ensemble playing in the early stage of learning orchestral instruments. The chosen methodology allows achieving the set goal and obtaining an adequate answer to the tasks in the dissertation work.

### **5. Evaluation of the dissertation work**

The total volume of the dissertation is 164 pages arranged in an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion, and the used literature contains 69 sources, of which 25 are in Cyrillic, 39 are in Latin and 5 internet sources. Musical examples, 11 tables and 14 diagrams are included in the text. Their volume is not too large compared to the text part. The dissertation includes 3 appendices: surveys with participants in the Youth Symphony Orchestra - Varna, interviews with teachers of orchestral instruments from National school of arts "Dobri Hristov" - Varna and recommended literature for working with children's orchestras.

The object and subject of the dissertation work are clearly formulated in the introduction. The advantages and positive aspects of ensemble playing are successively examined from various angles. The first chapter, on the basis of historical information, forms

a picture of the development of ensemble playing in the early stage of training with orchestral instruments. The chapter is divided into 6 sub-chapters which deal with:

- 1.1. Ensemble playing as a form of mutual learning
- 1.2. The pedagogical practice of the "Red Father" Antonio Vivaldi
- 1.3. The Suzuki Method
- 1.4. The "El Sistema" phenomenon
- 1.5. "Pioneer" Philharmonic and other youth ensembles in our country
- 1.6. The author's analyses and conclusions are made. I support the author's conclusion that *"Ensemble playing at an early stage of learning should be viewed by all participants in music education practices as an aid and ally in the overall music-educational process."*

Chapter two is very well developed. The PhD student examines several publications reflecting different perspectives on the role of ensemble playing in the early stage of orchestral instrument learning. These points of view are correctly described and supported by quotations, accompanied by assessments given from the position of the author's many years of practical experience as a teacher. Two articles by psychologists are discussed and several methods for teaching string, wind and percussion instruments are compared. Critical conclusions are drawn, supporting the claim that ensemble playing at an early stage of training supports the development of the young instrumentalist.

In the third chapter, the actual scientific research is done on about 50 young musicians studying at the National School of Arts. An anonymous survey is conducted with the participants of the ensemble. Interviews, notes, consultations are made to complement the general picture and support certain theses. The results are summarized and displayed in tables and charts. A comparative analysis is made and the data from the conducted interviews were summarized. Conclusions are drawn from the research. Doctoral student Romyana Petrova conducts her research, on the one hand collecting, classifying and analysing the answers from the surveys and interviews, but on the other hand, experimenting with new ideas emerging during the analysis on the group which is the subject of the research. This unique opportunity to test different approaches when working with a large group provides valuable insights and conclusions applicable in both theory and practice.

The author's thesis that ensemble playing has an important role in the early stage of orchestral instrument learning is proven by comparing historical examples, quotations from publications and results from the two elements of the author's research (surveys and interviews). The research unequivocally proves that participation in an ensemble is a prerequisite for musical, academic and professional growth.

**6. I agree with the specified scientific contributions of the dissertation work,** with particular importance defining the following:

- The reasoned derivation of five important elements for the proper integration of ensemble playing in the overall music-educational process (repertoire policy, structuring of

the rehearsal process, the personality of the conductor to create a positive attitude, planning of large-scale performances, creation of cross-curricular connections).

- Setting a topic about the adequate career orientation of the young musician with a view to successful professional realization.

The publications on the dissertation work (3 in number of articles) are related to the problems of the research, supplementing and further developing it. They are published in "Spring Scientific Readings 2020" AMTII, ISSN 13141-7005, "Doctoral Readings 2020", ISSN 2367-4873 and Third International Scientific Conference "Science, Education, Innovation", 2021, AMTII, Volume 1, ISSN 2738- 8956.

## **7. Critical notes and recommendations**

I have no critical remarks and recommendations.

**8. The abstract** is made according to the requirements of the relevant regulations, and reflects the main results achieved in the dissertation, giving an accurate idea of the quality of the dissertation and the level of scientific thinking.

## **9. Conclusion**

The dissertation shows that the doctoral student Romyana Petrova has in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the field of higher education 8. Arts, professional direction 8.3 Music and dance art. The research contains scientific and scientific-applied results that represent a contribution to science.

Due to the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the conducted research, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation work, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the honorable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Romyana Nikolaeva Petrova in the field of higher education 8. Arts, professional direction 8.3 Music and dance art, doctoral program Musicology and musical art.

12.05.2023

Prof. Dr. Veselin Koichev