

## OPINION

By Assoc. Prof Rositsa Dimitrova Becheva,

New Bulgarian University,

on dissertation work for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"

in Professional direction 8.3. Music and Dance Art

Doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art

of **Tianzi Tian**,

doctoral student at the Department of Classical and Pop and Jazz Performing Arts,

the Faculty of Music Pedagogy of AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev"

on the topic: *A History of Modern Opera in China from the Birth of the Genre to the Present - a*

*detailed analysis of the most significant operas of the period,*

Academic supervisor: Assoc. Prof Plamen Parvanov, PhD

### **General presentation of the procedure and the materials presented for review**

The provided documents and materials under the procedure for review and defense of educational and scientific degree Doctor by Tianzi Tian, are complete and correct and meet the requirements of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and the Regulations for its implementation and the regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions in AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev", Plovdiv.

The doctoral student has presented the following materials: CV, dissertation, abstract, list of publications on the topic of the dissertation and contributions.

### **Brief biographical data for the candidate:**

Tianzi Tian graduated from higher music education, Bachelor's degree at the Department of Music at Xiamen University. Won the Outstanding Graduate award. From 2016 to 2018, she received a scholarship and studied at the Manhattan School of Music in the USA (ranked third in the world in 2016) majoring in vocal music in the class of the famous soprano Joan Patenaude. During her studies at the Manhattan School of Music, she earned the Honourable Mention Award for academic excellence.

From 2020 to 2024, she is a doctoral student at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev", Plovdiv, in the program Music Studies and Music Art, and in April 2024 was discharged with the right of defense.

Tianzi Tian's rich performance experience includes participation in performances, national and international projects: February-April 2018 participated in the Outreach Opera Project of the Manhattan School of Music in New York and performed the role of the Queen of the Night in the English version of the opera *The Magic Flute* – performed in seven concerts in New York. Her performance was praised on the opera's website; July-August 2018 participated as an opera singer at

the International Lyric Academy in the Italian Summer Spectacle – performance at Teatro Vicenza, Italy; June-July 2019 participated as an opera singer (the only representative of China in this project in 2019) in the summer performance program of the Manhattan Opera Studio in the United States. Performed the role of the Queen of the Night in the original German opera *The Magic Flute* at the National Opera Centre; In July 2019, she performed the aria of the heroine Manon in the opera *Manon* at the MOS Opera Gala aria concert at Carnegie Hall in New York, the largest music hall in the world, and more.

Tianzi Tian is a participant in national and international competitions, winner of awards: June 2021 – third place in the professional category of the Online International Vocal Competition of the Paris Art Association, France; December 2020 – Second Prize in the China Division of the New York International Opera Competition (qualifies for the Asian Semi-Final); 12.12.2020 – Silver medal in the bel canto category at the 5th Golden Bell Vocal Competition of Fujian Province; 2019 – prize for outstanding singing in the final of the Asian International Vocal Competition. In the field of Piano Art: won the first place in the professional performance category, Fujian Division at the 4th edition of the Hong Kong International Piano Open in 2013 and the first place at the finals in Hong Kong.

Tianzi Tian's professional experience is related to teaching: for three years, from September 2019 to June 2022, she worked as a guest teacher of vocal music at Minnan University, teaching vocal music classes and the professional elective course Learning the Language of Singing. During her three years of teaching at Fujian Normal University, she was well received and her students made great progress. Many of her students have won gold and silver awards in provincial and municipal vocal music competitions. From September 2019 to June 2020, she worked as a guest teacher of music theory and singing and ear training in the high school class of the Xiamen Conservatory of Music, teaching students instrumental music. She received high marks for her work.

As a creator of author's music, Tianzi Tian composes works in the field of song genre, chamber music, she is also a creator of multimedia projects.

### **Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation work and contributions**

The dissertation consists of 228 pages, and its structure includes: introduction, five chapters, conclusion, reference of the contributions, bibliography (a total of 91 sources, of which 58 foreign language titles, 32 Internet addresses), appendices and list of scientific publications on the subject of dissertation work.

The topic of the dissertation is directly related to the executive practice of the doctoral candidate, with the accumulated long-term theoretical and practical experience.

The presented research is relevant with its subject, examining the history of modern opera in China from the birth of the genre to the present day. The author of the work defines as the *goal of the work*: the preparation of a "*detailed analysis of the most significant operas of the period*", researching the historical development of the original Chinese opera, presenting the historical transformations of

the Chinese opera, testifying to its cultural significance and artistic insights.

The research methods include a review of the scientific literature on the topic, a survey of academic journal and newspaper articles, master's theses and dissertations, conference collections, personal visits to cultural circles, and meetings with artists. Through the historical and empirical method, comparative analysis, statistical analysis, synthesis, the author have drawn appropriate summaries and conclusions.

The doctoral student points out that one of the goals of the dissertation is to present "*a thorough classification of the Chinese operas in terms of musical material, themes and composition techniques. The comprehensive analysis of Chinese opera types reveals the process of historical evolution and provides new perspectives and theoretical basis for future opera creativity and its research*".

**Chapter One**, Development of opera in China in the period 1920-1935, traces the entry of the traditional Western opera into China from a historical perspective, reviews the creative pursuits of Chinese composers and their attempts to combine Chinese and Western musical elements.

In **Chapter Two**, The Initial Period of Chinese Opera (1936-1960), the research focus is on the style of the first Chinese opera, the peculiarities of the musical material and musical form, the vocal style of the work, and traces the cultural exchange between China and the Western countries in the field of opera in the course of its perception and study during this period, a classification of the Chinese original operas from the war period to the founding of the People's Republic of China is made, in terms of the type of plot and musical material, accompanied by an analysis of the most essential qualities of the representative works.

The **third chapter**, Periods of stagnation and subsequent recovery of opera, presents the state of the Chinese opera in the political context of the Cultural Revolution, the measures for the development of the Chinese opera during the years of recovery after the Cultural Revolution, and the original opera works are grouped according to the plot and the musical material. . Three representative works from this period are used as examples of the refinement and renewal of the opera art during this period.

In the **fourth chapter** Period of rapid growth of Chinese opera (1980-2000), the author of the study draws attention to the artistic concepts and creative trends in the specified period, as the analysis of the considered works is based on the theme, composition technique, innovations. The emphasis is on operas of modernist nature.

The **fifth chapter**, The heyday of the Chinese opera (2000 - 2023), brings out the six main types of operas in this blooming period and makes a detailed classification according to typology, musical themes, artistic concept. An analysis of the opera *Jianzhen Voyage to the East* is presented as an example of a new type of classical opera.

The **Conclusion** summarizes the most important results of the study and the recommendations. The appendices supplement the main text.

### **Contributions and significance of the dissertation and publications on its topic**

I accept the contributions of the work presented by the doctoral student. The presented three publications on the topic of the dissertation in terms of content meet the requirements.

The abstract of 59 pages conveys the nature of the thesis. The reviewed dissertation has a contribution value, provides up-to-date information in a theoretical aspect and the possibility of practical applicability.

In conclusion:

**I give my positive assessment** to Tianzi Tian 's dissertation work *A History of Modern Opera in China from the Birth of the Genre to the Present - a detailed analysis of the most significant operas of the period*, in relation to its contributions of scientific and applied qualities. I believe that the dissertation work of the doctoral student fully meets the requirements for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art under the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria Act and I propose to the respected scientific jury that it be awarded to her.

16.06.2024, Sofia

Assoc. Prof Rositsa Becheva