

OPINION

by Prof Ivaylo Krinchev, PhD – National Academy of Music “Prof Pancho Vladigerov”

on the dissertation of

Vanya Simeonova Moneva – doctoral student individual form of study at the Department of Musical Folklore at Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts “Prof. Asen Diamandiev” - Plovdiv

with academic supervisor: Prof Kostadin Mihaylov Buradzhiev

titled

Contemporary interpretations of songs for female folk choir

for awarding the educational and scientific degree Doctor in

Professional field 8.3 Music and dance art

The dissertation work presented for defense (*consisting of Introduction, 3 chapters, Conclusion, Contributions, Bibliography, Alphabetical list of the used quotations in a total volume of 107 pages*) is an artistic doctoral dissertation, whose author is a standard for modern high professional conducting in the interpretations of songs for female folk choir. This predetermines the high value of this type of research, based on an empirical approach of many years of professional experience. Behind the rich artistic biography of Vanya Moneva there is a solid musical education, which began from an early age and passed through the high school of music in Ruse with a degree in piano until graduation with honours at the NMA “Prof Pancho Vladigerov”, majoring in Choral Conducting in the class of Prof Vasil Arnaudov. Until “*the project of my life – the choir with the new name "Vanya Moneva"*”, as she defines it, she was the main artistic director and conductor of the Cosmic Voices of Bulgaria, the Mystery of the Bulgarian Voices, the Female Folk Choir at the Bulgarian National Radio, representative mixed choir “Aleko Konstantinov”, Women’s Choir of Sofia, representative mixed choir “Petko Staynov” Kazanlak, as well as a number of other choirs in Sofia, Lom and Stara Zagora. Her work has provoked the most renowned Bulgarian composers to create works dedicated to the choir carrying her name, and with her innovative thinking she shows how a women's folk choir can be treated as a brilliant instrument in various genre dimensions. She has won a number of prestigious Bulgarian and international music awards, including *Crystal Necklace* and *Crystal Lyre* of Union of Bulgarian Musicians and Dancers, *Musician of the Year* and *Classics in Other Genres* by Allegro Vivace, *Golden Stave* of Union of Bulgarian Composers, *Golden Pen* for her contribution to

the Bulgarian culture, first prize in the international choir competition "Let the peoples sing" on European Radio, *ECHO* Award of the German music producers for her CD *Bulgarian Soul* with Veselina Katsarova and others.

She teaches Vocal Chamber Ensembles, Folk Choir, Conducting Folk Choir and Vocal Methodology at the National Academy of Music "Prof Pancho Vladigerov".

The **Introduction** specifically, accurately and clearly sets out the reasons for choosing the topic, object, subject and purpose of the study. The research thesis is defined and the methods and tasks that the dissertation sets for solving in its defense are formulated. Here the author makes a claim to upgrage the definitions of the term "interpretation", "*as we know, there are two types of interpretation - of musical scores (physical objects) and musical elements (concepts) - the conversion of written characters into audible tones and sounds, as well as the combination in the concert realization, includes a rich palette of senses and sensory nuances - sight, hearing, suggestion, multidirectional impact on the first-signal and the second-signal systems in the cerebral cortex*" (p. 4).

The **first chapter** "The Folk Choir - Specifics and Problems" examines the chronology of the emergence of the first folk ensembles in Bulgaria and their choirs. The stages of development of their professional qualification in parallel with the sophistication of the compositional arrangements and the inclusion of a large circle of listeners from different settlements to the new forms of life of musical folklore. Vanya Moneva shows in-depth knowledge of the work of many Bulgarian composers who develop and influence the development of choral arrangements for folk ensembles, as well as the regional connection and the dialectal stylistic features of some of them. Attention is paid to the specifics of the folk choirs, the differences and characteristics that define them as "folk" and the versatile competence that conductors must have. "*The [ensemble] managers are supported by the empirical overlays, the singers playing the role of "demonstration models" and the already existing literature on the problems affecting the vocal-pedagogical work*" (p. 14). "*According to the specifics of the score, the conductor can assign one party to perform the function of another for better balance In some cases, the choir can be divided into as many voices as its number (in scores with aleatoric moments)*" (p.17). In this chapter I would like to place special emphasis on the doctoral candidate's attempt to examine and present definitely different conducting portraits of leading performers in the genre in several areas: psycho-emotional image, interpretive decisions about sound emission, visual performance and genre - stylistic compilation. Thus, the author argues that "*while the emphasis in the combination "composer-conductor" in the first decades of the folk choral art falls on the first word of the phrase, the modernity changes the sequence to "conductor-composer"*" (p. 34).).

The **second chapter**, "Interpretation in Choral Folk Art" traces the development of the genre *adaptation* and the influence of the contemporary phenomena on it. The factors that determine the specific requirements of the conductor's work with a folk choir, as well as the requirements for

professional folk choirs and interpretation in the context of the modern treatment of these formations are indicated. *"The development of the musical means of expression and the sophistication of the compositional texture create interpretation problems, which increases the role of the conductor in the transformation of any contemporary musical work."* (p. 4)

In the **third chapter**, "Contemporary concert interpretations of songs for female folk choir" Vanya Moneva discusses in detail the factors that determine the choice and the structuring of the concert programs based on her personal experience. *"The relevance of the concert programs is sought in several main areas: contemporary productions, including premieres, combining folk choir with various instrumental formations - symphony orchestra, string quartet, classical wind instrument, combining different genres, adapting a repertoire from another style, personal interpretation of songs from the "classics" of the Bulgarian folklore"* (p. 55).

The dissertation is supported by bibliographic citations from 150 sources, which are clearly described in alphabetical review. I fully accept the conclusions and contributions formulated by the doctoral candidate and I strongly recommend to the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree *Doctor* to Vanya Simeonova Moneva.

Prof Ivaylo Krinchev, PhD