

STATEMENT

by Prof. Dr. Penka Ilieva Marcheva

(University of Veliko Tarnovo "St. Cyril and Methodius"),
professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of...(Methodology of Music Education)
in the procedure for obtaining the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD),
field of higher education 1. Educational Sciences,
Professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Education...

Methodology of Music Education

In Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Doctoral candidate: Ilia Zdravkov Mihaylov

1. Doctoral candidate's data:

Ilia Zdravkov Mihaylov obtained a Master's degree in Musical Art - Contrabass from the Lausanne Conservatoire in 1992-1997, for which a certificate issued by the Ministry of Education and Science has been submitted. Two further Masters programmes are on the CV: from Juilliard School (USA) (1997-1999) and from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (UK) (2005-2009). From the CV presented, it is evident that through these, the dissertant has consistently and purposefully built on his training as a performer and conductor. On this basis, on the one hand, he made a number of professional contacts with world-renowned names such as Claudio Abbado, Bernard Haitink, Pierre Boulez and others. On the other hand, he has appeared as a conductor of a number of prestigious ensembles and formats such as the "Svetoslav Obretenov" National Philharmonic Choir (2012-2015), Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra (2012-2015), the Summer Choir Academy of the Festival of Puise (France) (2012-2014), where he was also choirmaster, and the Leadercrantz Choral Society (Switzerland) (2000-2001).

Special attention should also be paid to the managerial competences of Iliia Mihaylov. Contemporary social and professional practice in various spheres shows that this kind of skills is highly valued. Iliia Mihailov has participated in and managed projects with a number of prestigious institutions such as UNESCO, BBC (UK), Mezzo TV (France), BNR, TV1, National Film Centre, National Culture Fund, etc.

2. PhD data

By order of the Rector of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" № ПД 38-221/28.04.2023., modified with № ПД-38-261/17.05.2023., due to a change in the composition of the scientific jury, a dissertation defense procedure opened on the topic: THE THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF CHURCH MONODY", developed by doctoral student Iliia Zdravkov Mihaylov. The materials presented by the dissertant are in accordance with the conditions and procedures established in the Law on Higher Education, the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for Admission and Training of Doctoral Students at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". A Declaration of Originality and Credibility within the Meaning of Article 27, Paragraph 2 of the PP of the Law on Research and Development. The prepared scientific-metric reference certifies the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". A study not included in the abstract, but meeting the requirements for a certain number of publications on the subject of the thesis, is also attached, the bibliography of which is visible at the end of the abstract. No violations were found in the organisation and conduct of the whole process of the dissertation defence.

Dissertation and Dissertation Abstract data:

Volume and structure

Structurally, the dissertation contains an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, thesis contributions, references used and an appendix. The total length is 197 pages, of which 182 are main text. The bibliography contains 134 sources, 40 of which are in Latin.

The appendix presents some "General propositions on singing and voice function in children's learning"

Theoretical foundations of the study

The dissertation "THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF CHURCH MONODY" presents a hitherto unexamined problem of church monody and its possible projections in contemporary music education in Bulgarian schools. Already in the introduction the aim and objectives of the dissertation are formulated, the subject of the research is specified, its design is presented - supports to which the necessary attention will be paid later in the opinion.

The first chapter of the dissertation attempts to clarify terminologically the basic conceptual apparatus used in the dissertation. Referring to the scholarly views of Elena Toncheva, Svetlana Kuyumdzhieva, Peter Dinev and others, the dissertant Ilija Mihaylov systematizes information on the essence of Eastern Orthodox Church monody, focusing on the nuances of different terminological perspectives (pp. 11-14 of the dissertation). Based on a number of conceptions by different authors, some theoretical aspects of church monody are discussed, the question of its character is raised, and the diversity and specificity of other Eastern musical cultures such as Persian (paragraph I.2.1), Arabic (paragraph I.2.2), and Turkish (paragraph I.2.3) are presented in the context of the idea of the specificity and richness of Eastern music. Based on the views of Stoyan Djudjeff, the doctoral

student seeks intersections for comparison between church and folk monophonic music in our lands based on their essence and origin (paragraph I.3.). Paragraph I.4. is devoted to some specific qualities and manifestations of church monody, the logic of its construction, unrelated to the tempered system.

The second chapter, entitled "Methodological Aspects of Church Monody", deals primarily with the historical development of the music education process in Bulgaria, based on the periodization made by P. Mincheva. This chapter fixes some of the main issues related to church monody in historical, cultural, musicological and educational contexts.

In paragraph II.3, church monody is defined as "natural singing" and in this aspect it is considered through the prism of "unequal-tempered modal musical systems" (p.112).

The main focus of **the third chapter** is "A didactic model (method) for teaching Orthodox Church monody in the primary school". Its presentation is preceded by an overview of the basic normative framework on which the contemporary educational process of music in Bulgarian schools is based. With justification, the dissertation also examines the nature and organization of Extracurricular activities (ECA), desined for Classes of Interest as well as for Elective Classes and optional study hours. These are the organizational forms for "teaching Orthodox Church monody as an Extracurricular activity" (paragraph III.4) in which the proposed didactic model is experimented. It is aimed at students of the 3rd and 4th grades of the primary educational stage in Bulgarian schools. The main pedagogical strategy is the use of multimedia technologies. According to the dissertator's recommendation, the most suitable for the implementation of introducing pupils to the church monody are "festive dismissal *troparyons* - short songs that are sung according to a melodic pattern or are themselves such a pattern" (p. 136). The presented cycle of activities, which are inherent

organizational forms of the Extracurricular activities, defined from the didactic point of view by the doctoral student as "lessons", contain methodological guidelines for familiarizing with certain patterns of church monody and forming initial, elementary performance skills for its performance.

Chapter four of the dissertation presents an experimental study and the analysis of the results obtained from it. It was conducted using two interrelated measurement procedures. The content of the first, involves a pedagogical study conducted in three stages: preliminary, formative and control (p.163). It is essentially applied in nature, as it implies the creation and approbation of technological solutions for the teaching and mastery of some samples of church monody by students in grades 3 and 4 in the general education sphere. The second measurement procedure is based on survey and interview methods. It involved specialist musicians and teachers, through whom feedback was obtained regarding the musical repertoire included in the study, as well as sound material from the experimental and control groups in the study.

The **abstract** presented is 46 pages long and is consistent with the structure and content of the thesis.

Recommendations

The issues addressed in the dissertation are innovative and interesting. With a view to the future scientific growth of Ilia Zdravkov Mihaylov I would like to make the following recommendations:

1. I admire the doctoral student's efforts to include some samples of church monody in the students' Extracurricular activities, but I think that for the sake of musical-pedagogical precision, their place is rather in certain out-of-school ones, namely the Sunday schools at different churches in Bulgaria. This consideration of mine is based on the idea of the contextual nature and functionality of this kind

of music, which is an integral part of worship. Detached from it, it loses its semantics.

2. One of the key factors in the realization of basic musical activities, such as singing and perception in the primary educational stage, is musical experience. For this reason, in the mastery of even just some festive dismissal *troparyon* by pupils in grades 3 and 4, it is better that these are children who have even a minimal one, which can be built mostly in the above-mentioned educational units.

Conclusion

In spite of the recommendations made, I have reason to express my positive evaluation of the submitted dissertation and to propose to the esteemed jury to award the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) to Ilia Zdravkov Mihaylov in the field of higher education 1. Educational Sciences, Professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Education...Methodology of Music Education.

13.10.2023. Prepared by:

Prof. Dr. Penka Marcheva