

## STATEMENT

by

**Prof. Yavor Svetozarov Konov, PhD, DrSc,**

**on the dissertation of**

**Magister Ilia Zdravkov Mihaylov,**

full-time doctoral student in the professional field

1.3. Pedagogy of Education in (Methodology of Music Education),

Theme: "Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of Church Monody"

**with scientific supervisor prof. Adrian Georgiev, PhD,**

Department of Music and Multimedia Technologies,

Faculty of the Education Studies and the Arts,

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Sofia 2023

**for obtaining the educational and scientific degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**

**in the professional field 1.3 Pedagogy of Education in**

**(Methodology of Music Education)**

### **Biographical and professional data about the PhD student:**

According to the electronic documentation provided to me, in his CV, **Magister Ilia Zdravkov Mihaylov defines himself as "cultural manager, conductor and researcher". Sofia address is given. No year of birth is given.**

### **Educational steps listed are directly at the level of higher education:**

1997 **HEMU - Conservatoire de Lausanne** (Switzerland) Diplômes de l'enseignement (**Bachelor degree**) **Double bass, Piano, Music Theory**; Première Prix (**Master's degree**) with Honours (from which I assume that I. Mihaylov is a double bassist, perhaps with musical school?); **another Masters's degree** (Advanced certificate) 1997-1999 from **The Juilliard School** (USA) **Double bass, Orchestral conducting, LiberalArts**; **third Master's degree** (FRSM, Hons) 2005-2009 from **Associate Board of the Royal Schools of Music - ABRSM** (UK), **Music Director, Symphonic Conducting**.

2000-2001 Specialisation in **Geneva Conservatory** (Switzerland) **choral conducting** in the class of Michel Corboz; 1998-1999 Specialization in Art Management **New York University** (USA);

**Teaching experience:** lectures and master classes given for **Harvard University** (USA), Paris University VIII: Vincent-Saint-Denis, **Strasbourg Conservatoire** (France), **Chengdu School of Culture and Arts** (China).

Described **professional experience:** From 1999 – present **Music Director, "The Great Voices of Bulgaria"** (folk choir, YK); 2017-2019 **Artistic Director, Byzantine Music Ensemble „Sofia Psaltes"**; 2005-2018 **Artistic Director, Bulgarian Musical Society**; 2011-2015 **Conductor, Bulgarian National Philharmonic Choir "Svetoslav Obretenov" (Bulgarian Choir Cappella)**; 2012-2015 **Conductor, Sofia Philharmonic**; 2009-2015 **Conductor, Teacher, American College of Sofia**; 2012-2014 **Choirmaster, Conductor, Summer Choir Academy of the Festival in Puise (France)**; 2000-2001 **Principal Conductor, Leadercrantz Choral Society(Switzerland)**;

**1992-2015 Professional collaboration as conductor, choirmaster, double bassist with:** conductors Claudio Abbado, Bernard Haitink, Pierre Boulez, Seiji Ozawa, Kurt Masur, Ivan Fischer, Daniele Gatti, Jean-Claude Casadesus, Jesús López-Cobos, Jean-Bernard Pomier, Uros Lajovich, Michel Corboz; composers Daniel Schnider, Michel Colombier; choreographers Pina Bausch, Maurice Béjart; tenor José Carreras. More - **guest conductor of choirs, instrumental ensembles and orchestras in USA, France, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Bulgaria.**

Use of Languages, **Bulgarian** (mother tongue), **English C2-1, French C2-1, Italian C1-B2, Russian C1-B1** (and here no attached certificate proving what is claimed).

**Cited project management and participation in projects at: UNESCO, UK, France, Spain, Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland, Bulgaria.**

***NB: in relation to everything stated in the biography, I have not been provided with any document certifying it (diploma whatsoever, certificate of proficiency for a foreign language, a certificate of employment here or there with this or that conductor and/or ensemble, and etc.).***

From the foregoing one is left **with the impression of a colleague of high and versatile education and experience in the field of music:** first as a double bassist and later especially as a conductor, as well as manager and teacher. **His interests in the field of church chanting apparently led to the development of the present dissertation.**

And now, on to **the dissertation:**

**The dissertation** provided to me electronically is 205 pages (with a length of perhaps about 1.4x that of the BDS). **It is structured as: Introduction, four chapters, Conclusion, Dissertation's**

**contributions, Bibliography, 2 Appendices, the titles of the Doctoral candidate 4 publications related to his dissertation.**

**Chapters One and Two** (very thorough both historically and substantively, though also in comparativeness with Western things) are devoted to **theoretical and methodological aspects of ecclesiastical monody.**

**The most important chapters of the dissertation authored by the doctoral student are Chapters Three and Four. The Third presents "A didactic model (method) for teaching the Orthodox Church monody in the primary school"** (legal and normative constraints, extracurricular and optional activities in secondary school, the need to create a new didactic model for such teaching, in the 3rd - 4 grade. **The main hypothesis** of the dissertation is that **with its appropriate creation and application this method would give good results in pedagogical practice**), methodological comments in connection with the proposed by the doctoral student innovative method, **and details on its theory and practice (what and how to be individual lesson, etc.).** **The fourth chapter** is devoted to an **experimental study with main importance for the dissertation and analysis of the results** (preliminary, formative and control experiment, expert advice, analysis of the results of the questionnaire-interview). **The bibliography** of the dissertation consists of **133** descriptions of monographs, studies, articles, textbooks, art books (with the character of documents of an epoch), among them a small number from the internet. Of these, **94** in **Cyrillic** (almost all Bulgarian, with a small number of translations, as well as 4 in Russian) and **39** in **Latin (32 in English**, including one from Bulgarian author /Banev/ and **7** in **French**). I haven't checked which of them actually re quoted in the text.

**The two appendices are:** 1) General statements on singing and voice Functions in the Education of Children, and 2) Troparions, notated in five staff notation with microchromatic signs - with notational examples to go with it.

**The Dissertation abstract** consists of **50** pages and **presents the dissertation** satisfactorily.

**I read both the dissertation and the abstract - 3 days of my life. But I enjoyed it, remembered many things, and interestingly - learned many new things.**

Is the Dissertation's topic of a **current concern? Yes. The issues it addresses are related to centuries of church-singing religious-musical professional activity** (for which can be commented that it is a question of identity - namely Eastern, not Western European), **which in our country has long been practically reduced to a state of 'obscurity'. How to resume the teaching of Eastern Orthodox monody in contemporary Bulgarian school**, as our system of teaching is, explicitly emphasizes the doctoral student, "pedagogically unsuitable for mastering the Church monody, practiced in Bulgarian

lands" (dissertation, p. 70). Both musically and linguistically. As for **the textbooks** used to teach music in our country at present, the doctoral student points out the exception: **only in the "textbooks for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades of publishing house Riva with the author's collective Georgiev, Andasorova, Kovacheva [...]**, for the first time after a break of more than 70 years in the education system, **is introduced presentation of Orthodox monody chants**. Sound recordings of Easter (Pasha) tropars - "Christos Voskrese", a tropar for the Nativity, for Sts. Cyril and Methodius, as well as the chant "Chistaya Deva" (dissertation, p. 72). Moreover, **the teaching of music in Bulgarian schools has long been almost abandoned singing in the classroom**: music is talked about and music is listened to, 'in the period from 1878 to the present day from singing to music literacy and then to listening to music. Of our two distinctive musical traditions, attention is paid only to folk music, as opposed to church monody (after 9 September 1944 and for ideological reasons)" (dissertation, p. 93). **In Bulgarian educational system**, after 1878 influenced entirely by Western culture and music, **implemented by the persons** "for whom Western European music was the alpha and omega of musical education" (St. Djudjev, 1979, thesis p. 121).

I have not dealt with Byzantine church monody and its derivative Bulgarian. But I have written on the subject of our church - and Russian church - music, though not directly targeted: <https://yavorkonov.alle.bg/публикации/верски-стефандрагостинов/>, resp. <https://yavorkonov.alle.bg/публикации/верски-стефандрагостинов/галупи-и-руската-музика/>. And with Neofit Rilski - for whom, naturally, is mentioned in Ilia Mihaylov's dissertation - with his life and work, I have dealt more than for my dissertation; I have also presented publicly a huge lectures, in various cities.

*I think (Y.K.) - reflections in view of a possible discussion of the defence of dissertation, may not be translated for the English version - that there is no way in our time and in our "society" in our general education school to revive that and spread the study of the Eastern ecclesiastical monody, traditional to our lands. Especially with the widespread "Westernization" in our country (that and to be with things possibly the newest, though expensive, model). (I express my opinion calmly, because from it (from me) practically nothing depends ) But for a statistically insignificant part of students - but if you you count them one by one, they may not turn out to be very few - such teaching of church singing would be interesting, spiritual, valuable. Especially for children from families or other communities with a similar culture and value system. But also for newcomers to the subject, "newcomers" ("neophytes") and captivated by such singing. The aim of dissertation is precisely to explore the possibilities of including such teaching in the modern Bulgarian school, if only with with the help (?) of multimedia technologies and applications for mobile devices ("and the Bulgarian pupil was sitting with his eyes fixed on his phone, studying the church Orthodox Church Monody" - from a science fiction story by anonymous author ; ) ).*

*The lessons offered by the PhD student in his authorial innovative method of teaching church monody in Bulgarian school - in the third and fourth grades - include preparatory exercises for general physical relaxation and attitude, and introductions to the text and its pronunciation, and translation of the text into modern English with explanations of meanings, and an introduction to a biography of an author (complex activities. I would recall that in Western music notation can also be a "reference point" - does not quite fix pitches for voices and for instruments that do not play with fixed tonal pitches (like the piano, the organ...) but can be flexible intonationally. So in transitions such as, say, "f sharp - g flat", the f sharp would be higher than the sol flat, at least that is what naturally musically musicians would do, so to speak. These are similar issues to those of good pronunciation in one language or another, relative to the written text - it varies according to tense, place, vernacular or not, socio-cultural group... Of course, also from personal characteristics.*

*It would be good, speaking repeatedly of Russian church singing, to the role of Emperor Paul with his decree of 1797 on harmonization of Russian church singing on the German model. Church singing in a statewide secular school - a delicate subject! Leaving aside the "game" of "defining it terminologically" (Eastern/Eastern/Greek church singing/chanting, etc.), it could "controversially" and "contradictory" to comment on both the spiritual and religious side, and the cultural and from the musical-practical, etc. How would it be ecclesiastical, when, if it is ecclesiastical, it must be prayerful, religious, and not scholastic (in the secular public school)... - like the disputes about folklore (when it is authentic and when it is "steam").*

*Returning again to the question of what to call this singing, I can add the topic that the "Byzantines" themselves did not know they would be called "Byzantines" and that they would be said to have been from "Byzantium" (a much later, post mid-16th century, an introduced name for the Greek-speaking Eastern Roman Empire, called "Byzantium" centuries after it ceased to exist /why not Constantineopolis, if Byzantine - then, for authenticity? should talk about "Eastern Roman" singing?... because the then inhabitants of the then non-existent "Byzantium" called themselves "Romans", as the Latin the word was "romani" (Romans), and in Greek - ρωμαίοι (Romans), and the Roman their empire was called in Greek Ρωμαϊκή Αυτοκρατορία (Romaic autocracy), as well as the "Kingdom of the Romans" (in Greek - Βασιλεία τῶν Ρωμαίων, Basil's tone romeon). Then for them (for our "Byzantines") their empire was called Romania (Ρωμανία, Romania)... So where are we? With what? With the name of the ecclesiastical their singing! And Constantinople was the New Rome. And after covering the territories of Romania ("Byzantium") by the Ottoman Empire, New Rome became (moved to c) Moscow, we know... And Romania is our neighbor to the north across the Danube... ☺ could go on and on with facts and thoughts about the role of the Greek language in Ottoman Empire, ergo also in the lands of today's Bulgaria, and regarding the Christianity and churchmanship, and of education, and as a major secular and commercial language of communication, but: I pause, for I shall go quite out of the scope of the opinion.*

Ah, there! Some of these issues are commented on in the dissertation (from p. 19)...The doctoral student has quite aptly (re)periodized the history of musical education in Bulgaria as follows: first period - from the first centuries of the Christian era to 1878, second period - from 1878 to 1945, third period - from 1945 to 1990, fourth period - from 1990 to the present (thesis p. 76). I congratulate my colleague Ilia Mihaylov for writing in Cyrillic Western Roman chant Gregorian, not Eastern Gregorian - as much as, in nowadays, such an occasion for greeting sounds almost infantile (to the point it we have come to).

This dissertation makes for super and educational reading! And especially chapters one and two.

**Is the PhD student familiar with the problem, familiar with the literature on it? Yes.**

He has been involved with these issues and practices for **decades**.

**Is the doctoral dissertation the doctoral student's personal work?** I am convinced that **yes**.

**Do I accept the doctoral student's stated contributions to his dissertation? Yes**

Overall.

**The publications mentioned by the PhD student in connection with his dissertation are:**

1. Mihaylov, Iliia. *The orthodox modal monody as a pedagogical challenge*. – In: Periodical collection, "Young Scientific Forum for Music and Dance". New Bulgarian University, Sofia, Reviewed, 2023 (under print).
2. Mihaylov, Iliia. *The natural singing in the general education and monophonic orthodox chants*. – In: Collected Articles "Musico-pedagogical interaction". ISBN 978- 619-7566-08-6. NMA „Pancho Vladigerov", Sofia, Reviewed, 2021.
3. Mihaylov, Iliia. *The Bulgarian church chanting in the context of the monodic traditions – the issue of its origin and cultural belonging*. – In: Yearbook of SU FNOI, Book "Arts", Vol. 114. ISSN2738-7062 "St. Kliment Ohridski" University Press, Sofia, Reviewed, 2021
4. Mihaylov, Iliia. *"The Eastern in the Monody Singing on the Bulgarian Lands"*– In: Musical Horizons (3). ISSN 1310-0076. Edition of Bulgarian Musician and Dancers, Sofia, Reviewed, 2021.

(Coincidentally, last night I read for the last time - before submission for printing - the first publication in the above list - a paper given at the Music Department Conference at the NBU on October 16, 2021 - for printing in the its Proceedings 16).

**I am not aware of any citations of the PhD student by other authors and reviews of his research and conclusions in scientific press.**

**Do I make criticisms and recommendations? No. Well written dissertation** - and by substance, "language" and form. (Well, its text could use some proofreading.)

**I also congratulate the supervisor Prof. Dr. Adrian Georgiev.** Reading it reminded me of many important processes and details of Bulgarian history.

Well, come on, here are a few technical remarks:

In footnote No. 90, which presents the life and work of Prof. Dr. Penka Mincheva, the years of her birth and death should also be inserted (alas!), as well as where the information was taken from. Similarly for other notes (e.g. No. 107 for Karl Mahan, no. 147 for Peter Dinev, no. 203 for Teplov, nos. 214-218 for I. Yonchev, J. Banev, Archim. Meletios, R.-O. Ivanova and Drs. Andasorova, etc.). Similarly, one

should the mentioned dissertation of Maya Andasorova should be described. 181. Those referred to in footnotes 224 and 225 "Bovaryan, A. Vocal-staging work in genre music. Sofia, 2007, p. 8." and "Orukin, El. From the Unsharp Tone to the High Music. Sofia, 1963, pp. 27, 28." should be included in Bibliography.

**Here is one question in connection with the experiment:** the experimental group was from the 4th grade of the 51st secondary school "Elisaveta Bagryana" (I live one block from it), and the control group - from the 3rd grade of the 7th school "St. Wouldn't it have been better if both groups were from the same school, because of the common "atmosphere"?

(By the way, I searched the net to see how much the Zoom H6 recorder costs: in Amazon -189 USD, at Photosynthesis shop in BG: 999 BGN. Cool!)

**Do I have personal impressions of the Doctoral candidate?** Insofar as he participated in NBU Department of Music conference "Young Scientific Forum..." with a paper - in the course of my work on the text I have been in contact via emails and/or telephone conversations with my colleague I. Mihailov - **competent, well-mannered.**

#### **CONCLUSIONS:**

**On the basis of the above, I vote FOR the Doctoral candidate Magister Ilia Zdravkov Mihaylov to be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) for his dissertation "Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of Church Monody".**

Sofia, 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2023.

(Prof. Yavor Konov, PhD, DrSc.,)