

REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Toni Shekerdzhieva-Novak,
Lecturer at AMTI "Prof. Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv,
in the professional field 8.3 Musical and Dance Arts,
scientific specialty Musicology and Musical Arts
for the dissertation on the topic:

**"CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES IN INDIVIDUAL WORK WITH CHANGING
VOICES"**

by DOROTEYA GENCHEVA LYUTSKANOVA

for obtaining the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor,"
in the professional field 8.3 "Musical and Dance Arts"

With a scientific supervisor: Prof. Elisaveta V'ltchinova-Chendova, D.Sc.

The work has been discussed at a meeting of the "Music" department, NBU, Sofia, and is
scheduled for defense before the scientific jury in July 2023.

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

The documentation for the defense before the scientific jury of the dissertation by Master Doroteya Gancheva Lyutskanova is complete. The following legally required evidences have been presented:

1. Order No. Z-RK 303 / 07.08.2023 for appointing a scientific jury by the Rector of NBU, Sofia, based on Art. 14, para. 3 of the Regulation on the development of the academic staff of NBU and the decision of the faculty council of the Master's faculty from meeting No. 11 / 27.07.23.

2. Portfolio of the doctoral student.

3. The dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters, conclusion, and comprises 264 pages, including 169 pages of the main text and four appendices. Appendix No. 4 includes 53 interviews with vocal pedagogues. The bibliography contains 86 titles in Cyrillic, including 60 in Bulgarian and 26 in Russian, and 50 from English and American authors. Eight internet resources are also cited in the reference sources.

4. Abstract

5. List of the student's publications:

1. Specifics in the Development of the Child's Voice During Mutation. – In: Scientific Conference "Young Scientific Forum for Music and Dance 2017." Abstracts and CD with Reports. Sofia: NBU, 2018, p. 29. ISSN 1313-342X

2. Vocal Problems in Sound Production and Contemporary Approaches for Their Resolution During the Mutational Period. – In: Collection "Doctoral Readings." Collection of materials from a scientific meeting of doctoral students from the National Music Academy "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov." Sofia: NMA, 2018, pp. 189 – 198. ISSN 2367-4873

3. Vocal-Pedagogical Science in Support of Methodical Work with Mutating Voices. – In: Scientific Conference "Young Scientific Forum for Music and Dance 2018." Collection of Reports. Sofia: NBU, 2019, pp. 83 – 91. ISSN 1313-342X

I consider these publications, presented in support of the theoretical development of the dissertation, to be entirely sufficient.

2. Brief Biographical Information about the Doctoral Student

The reference prepared by me is based on the portfolio provided to me by the doctoral student Lyutskanova. I have also used data from the website of the National School of Music "Panayot Pipkov." The doctoral student was born in Lom, where she studied piano. She continued her musical education in the field of "Music Pedagogy" at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski." She holds a master's degree in Vocal Performance from the New Bulgarian University in Sofia, where she actively participated in master classes and workshops with Milcho Leviev and Vicky Almazidu. (Since 2015, she has been a scholarship recipient of the "Milcho Leviev and Vicky Almazidu" fund) Doctoral student Lyutskanova has participated in seminars, plein airs, competitions, and training abroad.

Her active musical career started in 1993. From 2008 to 2017, she worked in Switzerland as a piano-bar performer. Lyutskanova highlights her participation in the prestigious jazz festival in Montreux, where she had the opportunity to meet musicians such as Sting, Joe Sample, Randy Crawford, and others. New Bulgarian University provided her with the opportunity to work with teachers from Berklee, the Conservatory in Thessaloniki, distinguished Bulgarian jazz performers, and educators. It was interesting for me to learn that she participates annually in the international meetings of vocal pedagogues in Poland, which I follow and respect, attending international seminars for vocal pedagogues in Poland and England.

Doroteya Lyutskanova teaches pop and jazz singing at the National School of Music "Panayot Pipkov" in Pleven, where she works on establishing fundamental vocal habits for young singers from 8th to 12th grade, nurtures and builds their musical culture, and prepares them for competitions and festivals. For two consecutive years, she has been a member of the jury at the International Jazz Competition in Bucharest, as well as other international competitions.

Interesting for me was to learn that Dr. Lyutskanova is the first licensed vocal coach in Bulgaria in the American Speech Level Singing methodology. She is the manager of the music center "Dori Dios" in Pleven. Her research activities are related to the voice mutation period, working methods, and voice therapy during this developmental period. In addition to publications, she organizes seminars and training on the topic.

3. Relevance of the Topic

The main goal of this work is to analyze the research conducted so far on the mutating voice. The author offers her opinion in the debate about the complex relationship between vocal science and the art of singing, as well as the application of scientific research and discoveries to achieve necessary results in the education of adolescents. In her study, doctoral student Lyutskanova refers to both well-known and less familiar authors working in this scientific field. Since Bulgarian vocal coaches do not often delve into this topic, the research is interesting and timely.

4. Structure and Content of the Work. Advisability of Research Methods for Achieving the Set Goals

The research is primarily focused on: "...the change in the voice during adolescence, or the so-called mutation of the voice." The doctoral student's interest is sparked by her desire to be helpful to her students. "To be able to guide them through this important period, so that the voice, regardless of the change, can develop its full range and maintain its health over time," says Dorotea Lyutskanova (page 4 of the dissertation). To achieve the goals of her research, the doctoral student sets out to analyze and address the following tasks (quoted from the dissertation):

- Analyze and systematize the scientific research conducted so far on voice training.

- Provide a comprehensive explanation of the specifics of the mutating period, especially the change in the voice.
- Highlight the significance of scientific research for the functioning of the vocal mechanism and its practical application in the work of vocal educators.
- Present innovative approaches and practical exercises from Lyutskanova's personal practice.
- Conduct interviews with vocal coaches to confirm the main question in working with the changing voice – not to stop singing training during mutation.
- The importance of scientific research on the impact of music on individual brain structures and the theory of multiple intelligences by American psychologist Howard Gardner.

Chapter One provides a comprehensive historical overview of the concept of working with the children's voice. It presents key theories on the changes in the children's voice during mutation from the seventies of the last century to the present, mainly covering theories of American vocal pedagogues, including the concepts of McKenzie and Cooper, the theories of Cooksey and Swanson, Professors Gackle and Genevora Williams, stating that singing during mutation should not be stopped. The Bulgarian vocal school recommends discontinuing vocal work during the mutation period. "This opinion is held for a long time in the vocal space until the discovery of the first pop and jazz classes after 2000. This necessitates a change in the approach to singing education and, in particular, to changing voices. However, a written methodology specialized for this specific moment of change in the voices of adolescents in Bulgarian vocal pedagogy is missing." (p. 15, same place) The dissertation of Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva from 2004, "Specifics and Education of the Singing Voice in Childhood and Adolescence and Some Problems of Its Application in the Choral Collective," is cited, analyzing the specificity of the voice during the mutation period. The doctoral student emphasizes that individual work with each student, especially during mutation, is necessary in solo singing.

Chapter Two comments on the voice during mutation. The physiology and anatomy of the larynx, the reasons for the appearance of mutation, the stages of voice mutation in boys and girls, and the reasons for the change in their voice are discussed. Doroteya Lyutskanova defines the **third chapter** as central to the study, focusing on the practical work of the vocal teacher. She considers her proposed approaches to be innovative in defining the issues of changing voices. An attempt is made to analyze the two modes of operation of the vocal mechanism—speaking and singing, their functionality, and differences. Technical exercises from the

researcher's personal practice are proposed, tailored to the needs of solving various vocal problems. **Chapter Four** is related to innovative approaches applied in pedagogical vocal practice to build basic vocal habits based on research on brain function and Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. The main vocal habits that need to be formed during mutation are discussed here, along with the organization and structure of the lesson and the researcher's personal approach to building vocal habits and musicality in the singer. The **conclusion** focuses on the basic rules for preserving and preventing damage to the children's voice and summarizes and systematizes the researcher's experience on the topic of changing voices during mutation.

5. Evaluation of the Dissertation – Understanding the Problem, Content, and Structure According to Established Norms, Material Reliability, Analytical Approach, and Derived Results

The dissertation's topic has not been previously developed in this manner, although issues directly related to the changing voice concern many researchers. The doctoral student's long-term research on the topic, her personal correspondence with vocal pedagogues from the USA and England, her vocal practice, and the numerous interviews conducted by her colleagues, vocal pedagogues, "...establish a new beginning in Bulgarian vocal pedagogy, namely that the changing voice is a developing voice, and undoubtedly, working with it should not stop." (p. 5 of the abstract)

The dissertation analyzes specific vocal techniques that assist the vocal teacher in this complex period of work. The proposed analyses and conclusions lead to innovative methods that also facilitate contemporary singer training. The appendices include a diagnostic chart, a lesson plan, breathing exercises, and the aforementioned interviews.

Doroteya Lyutskanova highlights the following personal contributions of the dissertation:

1. The mutation and the explored innovative approaches are scientifically justified and proved in both the global and her personal methodological practice. General parameters and criteria characteristic of the changing voice have been derived, serving as a starting point in the educational process.

2. Innovative approaches for resolving vocal issues during mutation have been proposed. The classification of vocal problems into distinct groups based on physiological changes in the larynx and related structures involved in phonation has been suggested.

3. The gentle approach and methodology in the teaching process of singing, using specific exercises related to the current state of the larynx, are beneficial.

4. The cases from Lyutskanova's personal practice are interesting, as each one of them has a vocal record

5. The classification of exercises based on their purpose constitutes a valuable contribution.

The **Abstract** accurately reflects the character of the scientific content of the doctoral thesis.

Considering the contributing scientific and applied qualities of Doroteya Gencheva Lyutskanova's dissertation, titled "Contemporary Approaches in Individual Work with Changing Voices," and acknowledging her substantial activity, including three publications, pedagogical achievements, and creative contributions, I offer my positive evaluation. I recommend that the esteemed scientific jury award the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" in the professional field 8.3 Musical and Dance Arts. Congratulations to the doctoral candidate and her academic supervisor, Prof. Elisaveta Valchinova-Chendova, Ph.D.

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Plovdiv

Prof. Dr. Toni Shekerjieva-Novak

