

STATEMENT

by

Prof. Dr. Svilen Raychev

on the dissertation for awarding a

Doctoral degree

on the topic:

"Vocal, Dramatic, and Stylistic Features of the Interpretation of Leading Female Roles in "Madama Butterfly" and "Turandot" by Puccini. A Comparative Analysis with Leading Female Characters in Chinese Opera"

Doctoral candidate:

Yi Lisha

Research supervisor: **Prof. Dr. Milena Shushulova-Pavlova**

Vocal supervisor: **Dr. Natalia Afeyan**

Yi Lisha was born in China.

She is a lecturer at the Shenyang Conservatory of Music. She has won prizes in International Vocal Music Competitions and has served as a panel member at vocal competitions in China.

Yi Lisha is a full-time doctoral candidate with the right to defend in the doctoral program of Music, NBU in the professional field 8.3 "Art of Music and Dance", scientific specialty "Musicology and Musical Art".

The presented dissertation is entitled "Vocal, Dramatic, and Stylistic Features of the Interpretation of Leading Female Roles in "Madama Butterfly" and "Turandot" by Puccini. A Comparative Analysis with Leading Female Characters in Chinese Opera" has 107 pages and includes: an Introduction, three main chapters with subchapters, a Conclusion, and Contributions.

It examines the development of female characters in three operas on Eastern themes: Puccini's *Turandot* and *Madama Butterfly* and Xu Zhanghai's opera *Cang Yuan*.

The principles and difficulties in solving the specific problems of interpreting the figures are highlighted in the various parts of the thesis. According to the author, unlike Puccini, in whose work the eternal theme of love is the guiding theme, Xu Zhanghai bases his works directly on real and violent historical events. Both composers reveal the richness and mystery of eastern women and create in the audience an insight into the inner world of the heroines.

Also noteworthy is the authors' good knowledge of the difficulties and performance problems in interpreting the characters of Eastern women. A thorough and solidly argued analysis is made to reasonably interpret the form and content of the specific roles. The chosen formulation and the precision of the subject matter in the practical analysis of these works determine the significance and scholarly contribution of the present work.

The purposeful Introduction of the thesis already clearly sets out the aim and objectives of the research, showing the trends of ongoing exchange between Eastern and Western cultures as many Eastern countries are increasingly involved with the rest of the world.

The first part of the study provides a brief portrait of Giacomo Puccini and a profile of his musical and dramatic style. The author gives a description of his two operas, *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot*, focusing on the artistic interpretation of the female characters.

In chapter two, Yi Lisha introduces us to the opera *Cang Yuan* by Xu Zhanghai. The composer combines Western classical techniques with traditional Chinese musical elements. The artistic interpretation of the protagonist Narengawa, who plays a key role in the whole plot, is again presented.

The third chapter is a comparison of the three operas. According to the author I quote, "...these operas skillfully combine Western operatic techniques with unique Eastern ethnic styles." p.17 of the abstract.

While Puccini incorporates various aspects of a country's characteristics into his operas to awaken Western audiences' interest in the exoticism of Eastern cultures, Xu Zhanghai is notable for using the history and ethnic narratives of a particular era as a basis. He expands the scenario and creates musical content centred on the cultural characteristics of his own nationality.

This dissertation follows the author's analytical reflection on traditions and on how young people should prepare themselves to perform female roles in Eastern-themed works. The dissertation is very useful and will be helpful to singers who are training in this art form. Thus, the presented dissertation enriches our scientific literature and can serve with its ideas for new scientific developments.

The Conclusion attempts to summarize the issues and highlight the contributions of the text. This study serves as a guide in finding a stylistically correct interpretation not only of the images of the female heroines, but of vocal music in general.

I fully agree with the contributions of the dissertation outlined by the author. As an advantage of the dissertation, I would also note the presence of a variety of photographic and musical material, by which the presented work only gains. I am convinced that the dissertation work of Yi Lisha has a contributory character, both in a theoretical and applied sense. With her overall work and contributions, the candidate meets the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education and Science and I urge the esteemed scientific jury to award it to her.

IN CONCLUSION: After my thorough reading of all the materials for the defense of Yi Lisha's dissertation on "Vocal, Dramatic, and Stylistic Features of the Interpretation of Leading Female Roles in "Madama Butterfly" and "Turandot" by Puccini. A Comparative Analysis with Leading Female Characters in Chinese Opera", and her abstract, **I am in FAVOR of awarding the author the degree of Doctor of Education and Research.**

24. 05. 2024

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/Prof. Dr. Svilen Raychev/