

OPINION

on the dissertation of Mete Gökçe

"YOUTH CHOIRS IN TURKEY AT THE LATE 20TH CENTURY AND THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY – PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES"

for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in a professional field 8.3. "Music and dance"

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Mete Gökçe was born in Ankara, Turkey in 1975. He is holding a Master's degree in choral conducting from Gazi University and Çukurova University. He has enrolled as a PhD student at the Music Department of New Bulgarian University in 2014.

Mete Gökçe is a lecturer at the Departments of Pedagogy of Fine Arts and Music Pedagogy at the Faculty of Pedagogy of the University of March 18 in Çanakkale. The dissertator has gained extensive experience as a choral conductor and organizer of choral festivals, master classes in choral conducting, seminars, participation in panels, winner of numerous awards and distinctions from choral forums. He has released two CDs and publications on the history and problems of Turkish vocal and ensemble art. His conducting activities are related to the National Youth Choir School "100 Voices", as well as several other children's and youth choirs.

The topic of the dissertation is *Youth Choirs in Turkey in the late 20th and early 21st century*. The presented work is written in English and consists of an introduction, five chapters and a conclusion, contributions and a bibliography. The total volume is 173 pages, 167 pages of which are body text, including images, tables and documentary photos. The cited literature indicates on 35 titles in Turkish and English. I am fully acquainted with the presented abstract, which is 44 pages long, where it presents accurately and clearly the main points of the text of the dissertation and its contributions. The abstract is in 2 versions: in English and in Bulgarian.

The research is characterized by a very well-established logical sequence and completeness. The scientific text proposed to our attention is competent and creative. The statement is accurate, clear and legible, which makes the text usable in practice.

The content of the work shows the author's deep knowledge and interest in the subject of the study: "Youth choirs in Turkey in the late 20th and early 21st century." The performing activities of the author are directly related to the research topic. It is clearly the result of the author's long-term efforts to contribute to the development and improvement of the art of choral performing in Turkey. The text of the dissertation is supported by quotations of a large and prestigious number of authors of studies – theoretical and practical research on the problem, which shows the excellent knowledge of the doctoral candidate of the specialized literature on the topic.

The objectives of the research presented in the introduction are: to study youth choirs and their general situation, education, effects and problems in Turkish musical culture, as well as the process of their development in relation to the traditional structure from the late 20th to the early 21st century in Turkey and especially to lay out their perspectives, to analyse and point out the problems and trends in Turkish choral practice, to make suggestions for the development of youth choirs in Turkey; based on the results of data obtained through work in The National Youth Choir "100 Voices" to present the problems in the field of Turkish choral music and suggestions for their possible solution.

The historical preconditions for the emergence of choral art in Turkey, preceded by Turkish folk, religious and court music, are presented in **Chapter One** "Assessment of the History of Choral Studies in Turkey from 1970 to the Beginning of the 21st Century". The author introduces us historically to the single-voiced singing tradition in Turkish culture. In the rare occasions of collective singing, both folk and spiritual music traditionally are sung in one vocal line.

Choral singing in Turkey in the 20th century is the subject of **Chapter Two**. The research there is focused on the stages of general music education in the country and the relevant issues related to the process of teaching choral singing, which is not covered in general music education. The types of choirs in different levels of general education and different educational institutions are presented, emphasizing the role of the music teacher in creating a choral culture in adolescents with the help of extracurricular forms of education. The possibilities for academic music education in choral conducting are indicated, as

well as the variety of additional good practices, compensating in part the insufficient standard of the academic training of conductors. A list of the names of leading contemporary Turkish choral conductors with a contribution to Turkish choral music is presented.

Chapter Three is "An Evaluation of Turkish Choral Music through 20th Century Styles." Scores of various vocal nature, created by contemporary Turkish composers, mentioned in the book "Catalogue of Turkish composers" (2006) by Turkish musicologist Ersin Antep are presented.

The main shortcomings in the choral management and conducting culture of the leaders of youth choirs in Turkey are subject of **Chapter Four**. These leaders continue to work providing individual trainings of goodwill between professionals and students to make up for the lack of academic education for choral conductors.

The last **Chapter Five** of the dissertation presents an auto reflective study of the innovative project "National Choir School "100 voices" with its main objectives, principles, rules, requirements and structure of the school. Also presented are the academic staff working in "100 voices", by years. An analysis of the goals that were not achieved was made and the objective reasons for this were stated.

The dissertation is the result of an in-depth research and analytical-systematization by the PhD candidate Mete Gökçe in the interrelated fields of history, pedagogy and organization and conducting of choirs, and of his rich personal experience in creating, leading and conducting choirs, as well as his extensive personal experience in organizing and conducting choral festivals – both national and international. The objectives of the research have been achieved and, in addition to pointing out the numerous problems in the progress of Turkish choral art, an appropriate model for their partial solution is given, namely the National Choral School "100 Voices" (100 Vocal) National Choir School), created by the author, which is considered as a model of effective problem solving and perspective for the development of youth choral music in the country.

In conclusion: The presented dissertation is of a considerable scientific and practical value and the chosen topic is important and necessary with its conclusions for the future development of choral culture in Turkey. All the mentioned contributions of scientific and practical significance are real and successfully presented at textual level.

Based on all of the above, I strongly support the author and his candidature, giving my positive assessment.

I strongly recommend to the esteemed Panel to award Mete Gökçe the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the professional field 8.3. "Music and dance art"

Congratulations to the author and his supervisor Prof. Yavor Konov, Dr. Sc, for the achievement!

Sofia, April 11, 2021.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgi Petkov