

STATEMENT

By **Professor Dr. Momchil Lyubenov Georgiev** of the **National Academy of Music "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov**, Professional field **8.3 "Music and Dance Art"**

for obtaining the scientific degree

Doctor in the professional field 8. 3 "Music and Dance Art"

Candidate Nayden Vladislavov Todorov

Thesis: *DEVELOPMENT OF SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS IN BULGARIA. HISTORY, CURRENT ISSUES AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS*

**Pursuant to the Order No. Z-PK-281/2.7.2024 of the Rector of New Bulgarian University
Prof. DSc Plamen Doynov**

The doctoral candidate's social and artistic presence and prominence, as well as his extensive musical, performing and administrative experience and achievements, are beyond doubt. He is publicly known and recognised in the field of musical art, both at home and abroad, and for this reason I shall dispense with his biography and go directly to the work presented. He is well known and recognised in the field of musical art at home and abroad, so I will dispense with his biography and go straight to the work presented. Overall, it combines the personal experience of his various artistic and managerial incarnations with the ability to analyse, compare and argue at a theoretical level his practical activities and observations. Moreover, with the ambition to cover multiple points of reference - terminological, historical, administrative, financial, legal, repertoire, regional, international and other aspects of orchestral work, including through the prism and examples of the history, present and future of the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra.

The proposed dissertation is clearly relevant and predictive in its topic, combining different methodologies and approaches to the issues, specifying definitions and proposing possible solutions. The compilation efforts, valuable analyses and suggestions are presented in an impressive total of 246 pages, divided into an introduction, four chapters and a conclusion, with numerous supporting examples in the text - 25 in tabular form and 12 illustrative facsimiles - articulating the contributions of the development, there are also 351 footnotes. An extensive 11-

page list of references, websites and sources (in Bulgarian, Russian, Polish, German, Spanish and English) is appended. A further 50 pages contain interviews with conductors Veselin Baichev, Plamen Djurov and Vladimir Kiradjiev and musicologist Andrei Avramov, as well as normative and other documents, which also form an important part of the work. The abstract is 47 pages of fairly concise text, succinctly presenting the numerous supporting and essential points of the dissertation, corresponding to the main tasks, statements, conclusions, recommendations and contributions.

The introduction thoroughly introduces the topic, shows its relevance and states the reasons for the author's interest in it. The main aim, objectives and methodology are stated and well explained. Already here I can say that the tasks set have been successfully fulfilled. And they are not small:

1. To lay a theoretical foundation for the structure and management of symphony orchestras.
2. To gain historical insight into the origin and development of orchestral art in Bulgaria.
3. To analytically study the state of orchestras and the development of symphonic institutions in Bulgaria.
4. To critically examine the cultural reforms of the performing arts in Bulgaria.
5. To present and analyse the structure and management of the Sofia Philharmonic (as of 1 January 2020).
6. To appraise strategy as an influencing factor on the significance of the performance of symphony orchestras.
7. To analyse the legislative framework for performing arts management in Bulgaria.
8. To present integrated criteria for the evaluation of the symphony orchestra in the country, from which to derive the ways of its financing and management.

The contributions of the paper follow logically in two groups after four structured chapters with numerous examples, comparisons and conclusions:

Cultural and managerial contributions

1. It is argued that the work of the symphonic musician has a dual character: it is a personal resource, but at the same time it is the capital of the organisation that is interested in developing it. The symphonic musician achieves three types of results (musical, economic and socio-cultural) by carrying out his activity in an organisation where the results in these three areas are measured.
2. To systematise a set of integrated criteria for evaluating the human resources of symphony orchestras in this country, from which it is possible to derive ways of financing and managing them as part of the cultural industry.
3. It has been demonstrated and proven that, despite the multifaceted and complex nature of the work of symphonic musicians, it is subject to management and that its results can be significantly improved through the application of appropriate methodological tools for training and developing their capacity for individual and organisational change.

Applied contributions

4. The development of the symphony orchestra as part of the performing arts in our country from the time of liberation to the present day is presented historiographically. The line drawn in the dissertation is supported by evidence, and possible further paths for its growth as a musical and social instrument are shown, drawing on the experience of various world models.
5. A critical analysis of the reforms in the performing arts in Bulgaria is made. The legislative framework for the management of the performing arts in Bulgaria is defined and outlined.
6. To propose and test a model of the strategy of the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra and its importance as a factor influencing the performance of symphony orchestras as a whole and as part of the country's cultural industry. This large and important activity has a social and educational character and could be a model for similar orchestras based on the Sofia Philharmonic.

7. The conclusions drawn, the range of information presented, the examples and practices given, the data and interviews suggested in the appendices could form the basis of further scientific and applied research in the field of orchestra management.

The extensive research work and the collected material with examples from abroad lead to my recommendations for development in two directions:

1. They deserve to be socialised and published in different ways and channels: publications on websites (including those of the Sofia Philharmonic, the Bulgarian Association of Employers in Culture - BAROC, etc.), which opens the field for further research and practical conclusions and implications for orchestra managers in the country.

2. It is extremely useful for the publicly funded ensembles (state and municipal) to bring the observations, conclusions and recommendations to the attention of the Ministry of Culture, in order to improve the management of these formations in terms of funding, remuneration formation through the dynasty system, collective labour agreements, interdependence between the hall and the orchestra, categorisation and many other important and still too "neglected" managerial aspects of orchestral work.

In conclusion - the development skillfully combines research and practical aspects in its set goal and objectives, demonstrates professional competence in the descriptive and research part. It meets the requirements for a dissertation, has significant contributions and shows that the candidate has in-depth knowledge and experience, being able to process and analyze a large volume of materials.

In view of the foregoing, I consider that the submitted dissertation gives me grounds to propose to the Honourable Scientific Jury to award the educational and scientific degree of Doctor to **Nayden Vladislavov Todorov**.

September 2024