

EXPERT OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rositsa Slavcheva Draganova, Institute of Arts Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, professional field: 8.3. "Musicology and Music"

on the thesis of Svetlina Ilieva Terzieva-Angelova, PhD student at New Bulgarian University, with scientific adviser prof. F. Valchinova-Chandova on the topic of

"YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS - WORLD AND NATIONAL PRACTICES AND MODELS"

for the awarding of the Doctorate degree in education and science in professional field: 8.3. "Musical and Dance Art"

Svetlina Terzieva's dissertation "YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS - WORLD AND NATIONAL PRACTICES AND MODELS" describes the various manifestations of youth orchestral music in the international and national contexts and presents some links to the existing systems related to musical education in these specific contexts. The title of the dissertation points toward a certain important subject of research and creates certain expectations regarding its results, namely - to classify the different practices of youth symphony orchestral music, and to compare the outlined models.

However, this is how the doctoral student herself defines the main topic of her work: "The subject of the dissertation is the youth symphony orchestras in Bulgaria and around the world, and in particular in England, the USA and Venezuela. The subject of the study is the diverse practices of these ensembles, which, if adapted to local opportunities and conditions, could serve as a model, as well as create a basis for the development of amateur music in Bulgaria, which has always been the foundation of high professional art"(p. 8 of the abstract).

The formulation of the subject of the study sets out some of the problems of this text, which has its qualities and informative nature, but leads its reader in a direction different from the expectations created by its title. First, it is not the various world and national practices and models that are the subject of study

(nor does the text indicate why it is necessary to duplicate these two terms almost continuously and how their terminological content is more specialized), which are to be examined, compare and classified through functional, terminological, genre or repertoire analysis, but only several specific practices selected using unspecified criteria. Of course, science allows a similar course of research, based firmly on the analysis of well-known specific doctoral subjects, but it implies the subsequent extrapolation of the model presented. However, such extrapolation cannot be found in the dissertation, despite the claims that it would be presented and despite the frequent use of the word 'model'. Unfortunately, the actual interpretation of the examples is somewhat sidetracked by their rather long-winded description. The explanation of the adaptiveness of the said model, that is, the gradual screening and reconciliation of those sustainable elements in good foreign practices that could actually be applied to our national circumstances, is replaced by the seemingly attractive idea for the mass introduction of youth ensemble and orchestral music education in schools and other locations, but this initiative sounds somewhat aggressive (and somewhat akin to the idea of cultural construction) namely due to its insufficient detail. And in order to finish with the critical discussion of the subject and the objectives of the research, I will ask the doctoral student in her answer to specify on the basis of what data she sets out on page 9 in the abstract (and accordingly on page 10 in the text of the dissertation) that youth symphonic orchestras were "extremely popular in the recent past in Bulgaria, aiming to involve young people in the musical art."

Of course, the abovementioned considerations regarding the title, subject matter, and goals of the doctoral thesis, critical as they may be, will not prevent me from seeing the positives of the peer-reviewed work as well. In the process of scientific pursuit - and the acquisition of a doctoral degree and education inevitably passes through it, and not only through the stage of educational accumulations, their formulation and presentation of contributions are complex moments that require maturity as well as some distance (even cooling) to the problem. If the text is to be published, it should be carefully reviewed and the necessary edits done. Otherwise, the reader will surely find interesting points in this text, structured with an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion and a bibliography spread over a total of 424 pages and the cited literature/references including 308 titles, 34 of which are in Cyrillic and 274 in Latin. The highly informative second and third chapters of work were most valuable to me personally. Chapter Two presents data on music education policies in England for the period 1988 - 2018, in particular with a focus on Music Education Hubs and youth orchestras, which provide alternative options for adapting orchestral practice to local conditions, as well as some policies and activities of US institutions that support music education. And the constructive side of the PhD student's keen interest in the relative famous, but in practice, and

in detail, little-known system for the development of El Sistema Youth Orchestras, as well as the orchestra programs created on its basis in the United States and England, in that the presentation of data on these practices goes into successful interpretation in Chapter Three. Also important to me is the section on the Pioneer Children and Youth Philharmonic and the Sofia Youth Philharmonic.

On the topic of her thesis, Svetlina Terzieva states six publications, all of which were presented at the conference “Young Scientific Forum for Music and Dance” at the New Bulgaria University in 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. The abstract of the thesis was also prepared according to the requirements.

On the basis of the positive aspects of the dissertation "Youth Symphony Orchestras - WORLD AND NATIONAL PRACTICES AND MODELS" outlined in this way, **I propose to the honorable jury to award Svetlina Ilieva Terzieva-Angelova the Doctoral degree in education and science, in professional field “Music and dance”.**

Sofia, October 9, 2019 Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rositsa Draganova,
Institute for the Study of the Arts, BAS