

EXPERT REVIEW

for a Dissertation on a topic
**"Youth Symphony Orchestras -
world and national practices and models "**
for the Doctoral degree in Education and Science
in professional field 8.3. "Music and Dance art"

of Svetlina Ilieva Terzieva-Angelova

doctoral student in self-study
in the Doctoral Program in Music at New Bulgarian University (NBU)
by Prof. Dr. Ivanka Vlaeva

Svetlina Terzieva-Angelova is a musician with many years of professional practice and realization in several directions: concert activities of an orchestra, the organization of creative activities as manager of the Sofia Philharmonic, cultural management as director of the Fortissimo Family program, director of the Sofia Philharmonic, and others. This diverse experience logically leads the doctoral student to explore different practices and models of youth symphony orchestras in Bulgaria and around the world (specifically in England, the USA and Venezuela).

The dissertation of Svetlana Terzieva-Angelova presents a significant and current topic. The subject of study and the objectives of the dissertation are clearly stated. The PhD student aims to identify practices and models that could revive and breathe new life into the youth symphony orchestras and through which young people become involved in musical art. It is argued that orchestral activities help the academic, cognitive, social and emotional development of adolescents, including at-risk youth. The development of these practices, as an element of a coherent and sustainable strategy, is proven to contribute to the realization of their social and cultural development, their integration into social and social values.

The dissertation consists of an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion and cited literature (424 pages in total). The bibliography includes 308 titles - 34 of them in Bulgarian and Russian and 274 in English. A wide range of sources is used that includes the most recent dissertation publications. The study material is systematized in a clear and logical way. The introduction introduces the relevance and importance of the topic. The object, purpose, tasks and methods of research are clearly formulated.

Chapter One entitled "Children and Music Education - Physiological, Cognitive, and Social Aspects", presents music education as one of the stimuli for child development through the results of proven research. Various aspects of the influence of musical activities on the cognitive development and academic performance of children and young people are shown. The chapter examines the psychological, social and emotional effects of engaging in youth music. Scientific evidence is presented about the influence of musical activities on important qualities for the realization of the modern citizen - self-confidence, sense of self-esteem, leadership skills, teamwork, harmonious development of personality and more.

The second chapter focuses on "Youth Orchestras in England and the United States - Policies, Practices, and Models". It also discusses educational reforms in England that precede the National Music Education Plan launched in 2012: its aim is to provide every child in England with access to high quality music training in and out of school. The most successful programs that have prepared the abovementioned National Plan - Music Manifesto, Wider Opportunities, Sing Up, as well as Music Education Hubs, National Music Curriculum, various structures and organizations in the field of music education, are also mentioned in this chapter. Special attention is paid to the characteristics of the activity of English youth orchestras. The student also focuses on the music education policies and practices of US youth orchestras, for which specific institutions at the national, state and local levels play an essential role. The system of music education is presented and the results of studies are commented on. It is important that good practices are collected and analyzed here – e.g. the composition of the ensembles, the methods of financing, the procedures for the selection of orchestrators, the rehearsal process, etc., which may be useful for adaptation in Bulgarian conditions.

Chapter three draws attention to practices and results that are increasingly attracting the attention of professionals in different countries (including Bulgaria). This is the Venezuelan El Sistema's Practices and Models. This music education program is aimed primarily at low-income and/or disadvantaged young people. Its purpose is to change the lives of many children through music lessons. Its extremely high results define it as a valuable application model in other parts of the world. El Sistema's structure, funding, training methods, results and adaptation in England and the US are presented.

The fourth chapter is very important because it presents the Bulgarian experience in the studied topic. This part of the dissertation analyzes the current legislative framework for the development of the model of music education in Bulgaria. The accumulated valuable knowledge and experience in this field is also shown. The music subject in school education is presented in terms of creating opportunities for further training in musical instruments. Opportunities for music lessons within state-funded programs and institutions are commented on in order to support the personal development of children and students, the educational integration of ethnic minorities and others. Documenting the practices of youth orchestras in Bulgaria - the Children and Youth Philharmonic "Pioneer" established at the Central Pioneer Palace in Sofia (now the National Palace of Children) and the Sofia Youth Philharmonic at the Lyubomirkov National Music School - is valuable and rewarding. I would recommend to the doctoral student that this line of analysis be continued and expanded in a further study, because of its importance for the Bulgarian music culture and its perspective.

Chapter Five presents "Opportunities for Application of the Studied Practices and Models for the Construction of Youth Orchestras in Bulgaria". It is logically complete and it is the most essential part of the dissertation. It summarizes the described practices and models of youth orchestras in Venezuela, England and the United States. On this basis is offered a model of up-and-coming music education. Conclusions are made about the positive impact and value of the participation of children and young people in musical ensembles. Youth Symphony Orchestras are seen as tools for social inclusion and a strategy for cultural development. Opportunities for instrument training and orchestral playing within the school day and the

curriculum according to the new curricula in accordance with the Pre-school and School Education Act of 2016 are mentioned. A preliminary draft of a Model for the construction and development of youth symphony orchestras is proposed for the context of Bulgaria, based on the experience of the English National Plan for Music Education and the Venezuelan El Sistema program. The possibilities for creating pilot programs for group training in musical instruments and orchestral activities are also indicated.

The Conclusion systematizes the research highlights and outputs. The completed tasks are presented. The best practices on which the conceptual design of the Model for the construction of youth orchestras in Bulgaria is based are outlined.

The contributions of the dissertation can be made in several directions. A multi-layered overview of scientific research is presented to show the academic, cognitive, creative, social and emotional impacts of playing a musical instrument and participating in a musical ensemble. Policies and activities of institutions in the US, England and Venezuela that support music education and orchestra practices are analyzed and compared. Field material has been collected that empirically compresses the research results. A thorough review of the model of music education set by the Pre-school and School Education Act of 2016 has been made, as well as the prospects it provides for further training in musical instruments and orchestral playing in Bulgarian general schools. Opportunities for orchestral activities in extracurricular activities are indicated. The experience and achievements of the Youth Symphony Orchestras in Bulgaria (Children and Youth Philharmonic Orchestra "Pioneer" and Youth Philharmonic Orchestra "Sofia" are presented.

The problems addressed by Svetlina Terzieva-Angelova are a valid subject of a dissertation. The individual chapters in the dissertation clearly follow the chosen topic. I think that the analyzes in the dissertation will be enriched if the Bulgarian experience in the orchestral music of children and young people is examined in greater detail, as a possible further upgrade on the obtained results. The dissertation corresponds to the great practical need to present good practice models. It will be very useful with its results, both for the performers of music and for the theoretical and historical understanding of the subject under study. The volume, content and results of the dissertation, as well as the six publications on the topic of the dissertation, fully comply with the minimum national indicators for the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in Professional direction 8.3. Music and dance art.

The dissertation is innovative. It is completed in volume and content and fully complies with the requirements of the ZRASRB and RASRRB. The problems introduced follow the logic of researching the questions and tasks posed. The text presents an important and relevant topic. I accept the scientific contributions formulated by the doctoral student. The abstract and publications on the topic present the dissertation correctly and accurately. Taking into account the relevance of the topic and the contributions of the dissertation, I propose to the distinguished Scientific Jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" of Svetlina Ilieva Terzieva-Angelova in professional direction 8.3. Music and dance art.

Sofia, 10 October 2019

Signature:

Prof. Dr. Ivanka Vlaeva