

REVIEW

by
Prof Polina Kuyumdzhieva, PhD

of dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”

Professional field 1.3 Teaching Pedagogy in...

Doctoral program: Methodology of Music Teaching

Author: **Anastasiya Ivanova Batkova**

Title: *Pedagogical technologies for building singing skills in children aged from 7 to 10 years in an extracurricular vocal group*

Academic supervisor: **Prof Tsvetanka Kolovska, PhD**

General presentation of the procedure and the materials received for review

The candidate has submitted all necessary documents pursuant to the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and its implementation: dissertation work and abstract, publications related to the topic of the work, the orders for enrollment and discharge, as well as a curriculum vitae.

Brief biographical data of the candidate

Anastasiya Batkova is a graduate of National School of Music and Dance "Dobrin Petkov" Plovdiv, major Classical Singing. She receives her Bachelor's and Master's degrees at Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof Asen Diamandiev" in the specialty Pedagogy of Music Education. Since 2018, she has been working as a vocal pedagogue at the Art Voice Center Association in Plovdiv, where she trains individual performers and conducts group music lessons, and since 2021 she has been a teacher at NSMD "Dobrin Petkov".

She is the first-prize winner at the National Academic Competition Young Music Teacher (April 2016).

Anastasiya Batkova has participated in a number of workshops and seminars, and has rich concert career (solo and with various bands). Her students are winners of awards from various competitions.

Relevance of the topic

The relevance of the chosen topic - *Pedagogical technologies for building singing skills in children aged from 7 to 10 years in an extracurricular vocal group*, is dictated by the growing role of the vocal groups as an extracurricular work with students in different age groups. Already in the introduction, the author expresses the opinion that the attractiveness and accessibility of training in a vocal group is "*an increasingly desirable and sought-after way to satisfy the interests and needs of*

modern children" (p. 6). At the same time, there is a lack of methodological literature on this issue, and the development of a methodology for working in such groups, which is the author's objective, could form "*a new scientific field in the field of music pedagogy*" (p. 7).

Expediency of the research methods used to achieve the set goals

The methods used by the doctoral candidate are in two aspects: theoretical, related to research and study of literary sources, and empirical, related to a pedagogical experiment conducted in three stages (determining, developing and concluding). The conclusions drawn on the basis of the experiment prove the initial hypothesis of the doctoral student - "*The proposed system of pedagogical technologies would contribute positively to the building of singing skills of children aged 7 to 10 years in their training in an extracurricular vocal group*", as well as the appropriateness of the methods chosen by her of research on the selected issue.

General description and evaluation of the dissertation work

Anastasiya Batkova's dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, contributions and an appendix and is 168 pages. The graphics (tables and diagrams) are displayed as a separate content, which gives additional clarity and overview of the dissertation work, as well as the possibility of quick reference for anyone who would use it.

The Introduction clearly formulates the motivation for choosing the topic – the personal practical experience of the author, as well as the insufficient methodological literature on the vocal groups as an extracurricular form of work with students in different age groups, and in particular in the age group from 7 to 10 years, the subject of her dissertation research. In addition to the object, the introduction clearly states the subject and purpose of the research and the corresponding tasks – 7 in total, as well as the research methods.

The individual chapters are well structured and balanced in number of pages relative to each other. The principle of the general to the particular is followed, with the first chapter (*The Vocal group in extracurricular music activity*) devoted to the general characteristics of the concept of "extracurricular activity" and its distinction from the "out-of-class activity" (also called "out-of-school"). On this basis, the place of the vocal group in the extracurricular activity and the peculiarities with which it is connected are examined. The author makes an interesting parallel between the vocal groups today as a form of expression for the modern children and the choral tradition in Bulgaria. The indicated and cited sources show a detailed knowledge of with the available literature on the issues under consideration.

The second chapter (*Singing activity in an extracurricular environment*) is dedicated to the specifics of the work in vocal groups, and the individual aspects of this work are graded from the musical abilities, which are a necessary prerequisite for participation in such a group, through the

vocal-physiological aspects of the work to separate methodological aspects necessary for the development of children's vocal technique.

The third chapter is related to the pedagogical experiment conducted by Anastasiya Batkova with children from the Vocal Group Magic at Art Voice Center and the various stages it goes through. This chapter is also a sort of the center of the dissertation work, insofar as the effectiveness of the different work methods is shown through the experiment. The precision with which the individual details of the various stages of the experiment have been analyzed is impressive.

The Conclusion presents the results achieved in each of the chapters and confirms the hypothesis stated in the Introduction that "*the pedagogical technologies presented in the dissertation significantly contribute to the building of singing skills in the children participating in the experiment*" (p. 148).

The bibliography includes 132 titles in Cyrillic (in Bulgarian and in Russian) and in Latin and 19 Internet sources, correctly indicated with a link, title, author and date of use.

Contributions and significance of the thesis and the relevant publications

Anastasiya Batkova points out 7 contributions of her dissertation work, among which I would single out the one related to the historical continuity – the consideration of the vocal groups as a kind of successor to the choirs of the recent past. Second, but not in terms of importance, I would point out the author's methods for working with children from 7 to 10 years of age in a vocal group and their practical applicability. In this interrelationship between theory and practice, the doctoral student proves their effectiveness and efficiency.

Anastasiya Batkova has 3 articles on the subject of her dissertation published in the Spring Scientific Readings collections (*Physiological highlights in voice formation in children*", 2020; *Formation and development of vocal habits in children aged 7 to 10 years*, 2021) and Science, Education and Innovation in the Arts, collection of articles from the Third International Scientific Conference (*Vocal group - a popular form of extracurricular musical activity*, 2021).

Recommendations

I recommend Anastasiya Batkova to publish her dissertation work, with which she would facilitate the work of many vocal pedagogues – both those who are already involved in vocal groups as an extracurricular activity, and pedagogues who are new to this activity and have doubts as to how well they are doing, or are simply looking for the appropriate methods of work.

Abstract

The abstract is prepared accurately and includes all the necessary components and faithfully reproduces the content of the work. On 39 pages it indicates the main points of the individual chapters,

as well as a reference to the scientific contributions of the dissertation work. The publications on the topic are also included.

Conclusion

Anastasiya Batkova combines two very important competencies - that of a performer with a rich creative activity and that of a teacher, and this gives her the opportunity to delve deeply into the issues she considers and formulate her conclusions logically and with arguments.

Based on everything presented so far, I give my positive assessment of the dissertation work of Anastasiya Batkova and propose to the members of the esteemed scientific jury to award her the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 1.3 Teaching Pedagogy in..., doctoral program: Methodology of music education.

30.09.2023

Prof Polina Kuyumdzhieva, PhD