

OPINION

by

Prof Elena Karaliyska-Trapkova, PhD

National Music Academy "Prof Pancho Vladigerov"

on the dissertation of

Elvira Mateva

doctoral student full-time study

in professional field 8. 3. Music and Dance Art

Department of Classical, Pop and Jazz Performance Arts

at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv

academic supervisor: Prof Toni Shekerdzhieva-Novak

titled

Chamber-vocal cycle *Songs and Dances of Death* by Modest Mussorgsky - genesis and development of the medieval macabre plots in the context of the sonority-intonation relation

for awarding educational and scientific degree "**Doctor**"

On the grounds of a decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Music Pedagogy (Protocol No. 3/ 25.06.2024), to open a procedure for the defense of the dissertation work of Elvira Mateva, the following materials were provided to me: the candidate's CV, the dissertation, an abstract, a report on the contributions of the dissertation, a list of publications on the topic.

Brief biographical data of the candidate

Elvira Mateva graduated from AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" Plovdiv in 1993 in the piano class of Prof Roksana Bogdanova. In parallel, she also studies music pedagogy. In 1994, she started working as a teacher of chamber music and interpretation and a tutor of vocal classes at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev". Elvira Mateva has won awards for high artistic accompaniment from a number of national and international competitions and festivals. In 2021, she was awarded the Diploma for High Pedagogical Achievements at the 8th National Academic Competition "J. S. Bach and his contemporaries" – AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" Plovdiv. Elvira Mateva is an active participant in the concert life of Plovdiv and other cities of Bulgaria and abroad. Her first performance of works by Fazil Sai in collaboration with Turkish baritone Alper Yunlütürk, is really remarkable. Her scientific research interests are focused on the problems of chamber-vocal works. She is a participant in a number of national and international projects.

Elvira Mateva is a doctoral student individual form studies at AMDFA, Prof Asen Diamandiev"- Plovdiv with scientific supervisor Prof Toni Shekerdzhieva-Novak.

The choice of the topic of the dissertation work is a natural continuation of the candidate's creative pursuits and appearances as an accompanist and teacher in the field of chamber-vocal music.

The presented study aims to reveal the genesis and development of the medieval macabre plots in the context of the sonority – intonation relationship in the song cycle *Songs and Dances of Death* by Mussorgsky. The relevance of the theme is determined by the presence of the cycle in the concert life of Bulgaria. The aim of the doctoral student is to achieve a theoretical-practical result through her research, the purpose of which is to fill in the gaps in the Bulgarian music literature on one of the significant works.

Content of the dissertation

The dissertation *Chamber-vocal cycle Songs and Dances of Death by Modest Mussorgsky - genesis and development of the medieval macabre plots in the context of the sonority-intonation relation* is structured in an introduction, three chapters, conclusion, bibliography including 61 titles and 24 Internet sources. The total volume is 196 pages, of which 177 are the main text. There are also 29 sheet music, 8 diagrams and illustrations. In both appendices, a free translation was made by the doctoral student of the poetic text of the song cycle, noting the editorial changes made by the composer. There is also a translation of a poem by Arseny Golenishchev-Kutuzov dedicated to Modest Mussorgsky.

In the **introduction**, Elvira Mateva sets out the reasons for choosing the topic, content, methods and purpose of the research, its relevance and contributions.

The **first chapter** traces the cultural and historical prerequisites for the formation of Modest Mussorgsky as an artist. The features of his innovative musical style are examined.

In the **second chapter**, focusing on the study of the genesis and the development of the medieval foundation of the artistic-ideological subjectivity of the cycle *Songs and Dances of Death*, as well as on the discovery of proximity and consonance with the Western European imagery of the *Dance of Death*, the author makes a cultural- historical study of the main medieval macabre plots and their reflection in the visual arts, literature, music, as well as their influence in modern culture.

The **third chapter** is central to the study. In it, the author makes a thorough musical-structural analysis of the songs. She indicates the diversity of the artistic and dramaturgical tasks set before the performers and presents a subjective-individual translation of the poems in order to achieve a "*precise and in-depth insight into the compositional and sonorous content of the work.*" (p.94).

In the **conclusion**, the results of the conducted research are summarized „...*Stepping on the broad limits of a musical-cultural parallel in the analysis of the songs, the specific content of the work outlines a horizon for a deeper concretization and study of individual elements of the compositional and musical-poetic dramaturgy in theoretical and performing aspects.*” (p. 175).

I fully support the contributions of the dissertation work listed by the author.

This work is a serious and thorough study, synthesizing the research information on the chamber-vocal cycle *Songs and Dances of Death*. It summarizes analytically the musical-poetic imagery and the specific composer approach to the primary source – the medieval macabre plots. It

undoubtedly enriches the musical-theoretical literature in Bulgaria, supporting the practical realization of Mussorgsky's genius masterpiece.

The abstract is written correctly and corresponds to the content of the doctoral dissertation.

There are two scientific publications and they are related to the problems discussed by the dissertation work.

I congratulate the doctoral student and her academic supervisor and I confidently propose to the honorable Scientific Jury to award **Elvira Mateva** the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the professional field 8. 3. Music and Dance Art.

15.09.2024

Prof Elena Karaliyska-Trapkova, PhD