

OPINION

by

Prof Tanya Viktorova Burdeva

of a dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor"

in professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art

doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art

with author: Evgeniya Petrova Tagareva

Title: **SPECIFICITY OF THE PIANO TRAINING METHODOLOGY FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN)**

Academic supervisor: Prof Snezhana Simeonova

1. General presentation of the procedure and the materials presented for review

The set of materials presented by Evgenia Petrova Tagareva is in accordance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, and includes the following documents: resume; dissertation work; enrollment order; discharge order; order for appointment of scientific jury; abstract; list of scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation.

2. Brief biographical data of the candidate. Evgenia Tagareva graduated from AMDFA in 1989, where she completed a one-year postgraduate specialization in 1993. Her professional experience is multifaceted: piano teacher, director and organizer of cultural events, expert in literary creativity and music in various projects, secretary of community center "Hr. G. Danov", etc.

3. Relevance of the topic. The topic of the dissertation presents the subject of the research as a closely specialized problem in the field of piano teaching methodology for persons with special educational needs. The relevance of the research is determined by the need to bring out pedagogical technologies, through which to expand the view of piano learning through the prism of inclusive education. This would enrich ideas for innovative approaches in piano teaching, enabling teachers to go beyond their narrow specialization by expanding their theoretical knowledge and practical experience. In the piano methodical literature, there are almost no studies directly related to the topic of piano training for people with SEN. There are very few publications offering new, creative methods for teaching piano to individuals with SEN. There is a lack of teaching materials in this direction, as well as a suitable musical repertoire.

4. Expediency of the research methods used to achieve the set goals. The main method used in the dissertation is a pedagogical experiment. It is very well described in terms of organization and practical implementation. The three stages in the work are clearly presented, carried out as initial ascertaining, training and final, in which an analysis of the results is made.

5. Evaluation of the dissertation work – knowledge of the problem, content and structure according to the established norms, credibility, analytical approach, derived results

The qualities that distinguish Evgenia Tagareva's work are persuasiveness, competence, accessibility, ultimate clarity, logical consistency in the design and implementation of the research. The work shows maximum awareness regarding everything related to theoretical views and practical achievements in teaching piano to people with SEN. The goal, tasks, working hypothesis and research methods are clearly stated at the beginning. They are very well worded so they give a clear idea of the research work to come. The chosen research methodology allows achieving the stated goal and obtaining an adequate answer to the tasks set. The work stands on a solid pedestal that unfolds sequentially.

The first chapter is very detailed because it is the theoretical foundation on which further work must be built. It examines publications related to piano training of blind, vision-impaired, hearing-impaired, and people with intellectual and motor disabilities. Publications and examples of solutions combining knowledge and technologies from various fields are presented, including new ones such as art pedagogy and art therapy. In the first chapter, Evgeniya Tagareva has shown the necessary skill for summarizing, and not just describing the literature read. Its content testifies to a deep knowledge and understanding of the problem. One of the most important conclusions drawn is that a multidisciplinary approach to the topic of piano education for people with SEN is needed and the integration of knowledge and skills from different scientific fields is needed.

The second chapter describes the pedagogical experiment and presents the pedagogical technologies for the formation of piano skills, such as more verbal explanations for blind students, use of visual concepts for the hearing-impaired, predominant non-verbal concepts for students with mental and motor difficulties, inclusion of improvisation in the piano lesson, finger positioning, chord facilitation, etc.

The third chapter is dedicated to the process of interactive communication in the piano training of persons with SEN. Specific characteristics of students with SEN that must be taken into account in the learning process are considered: the structure of the body, the impact of disabilities on the limbs and muscles, the need for non-verbal communication skills, as well as specific ways of presenting information due to sensory violations. Overcoming the specific difficulties dictated by different types of disorders and disabilities is carried out by means of compensatory mechanisms. Methods to compensate for missing senses or disabilities are considered for each group: visually impaired, hearing-impaired, with mental and motor disabilities. A four-step scheme for mastering a musical text with a transition from speaking to singing and playing is proposed. Ensemble playing is seen as a major compensatory mechanism in the piano lesson. The importance of technical means and colour visualization as compensatory factors is emphasized.

The fourth chapter presents the education of students with sensory disabilities, and the fifth chapter - the aid for the blind and partially sighted. The detailed description testifies to the concrete steps in the implementation of the research design that have been considered in detail. The learning experiment is constructed so that all tasks follow a well-thought-out and logical algorithm. The

methodological sequence that was applied in the selection of training tasks reveals a gradual transition from the easy to the difficult. The same applies to teaching students with mental and motor disabilities, discussed in chapter six.

All the results are commented in detail, the necessary comparison is made, the achievements are professionally and competently summarized at the end of the experimental activity. The results are very well presented, including the appendices offering rich illustrative material to complement the text.

6. Contributions and significance of the scientific work and the publications on the subject of the dissertation. The merits of the dissertation can be summarized as follows:

1/ The overall presentation presents the experiment in such a way that it can be repeated, which is evidence of scientificity. 2/ The conclusions drawn follow logically from the conducted research work and are its adequate reflection. 3/ The achieved positive results confirm the raised scientific hypothesis. It has been proven beyond doubt that the experimentally tested system of technologies can be successfully applied to people with SEN and lead to positive results in various aspects of their development. 4/ The dissertation in its entirety reveals the author's skills for in-depth teaching work, for scientific research and finding the most accurate solutions in the process of research. 5/ The necessary ability for analytical, critical and creative thinking is present. 6/ The results are convincingly presented, and the appendices are closely related to the entire text, illustrating, supplementing and clarifying it. 7/ The research work carried out convinces that the proposed technology for teaching piano to people with SEN has an innovative character and that the contributions are of value. I find the use of multidisciplinary approach in finding concrete methodological and practical solutions to be a valuable innovation – knowledge from piano methodology, music pedagogy, special pedagogy, psychology, medicine, art pedagogy, music therapy.

The presented six publications on the topic of the dissertation are the result of the author's personal professional experience, revealing the creative searches and ideas of the long-term activity of a thorough educator.

7. Critical remarks and recommendations. I have no critical remarks.

8. Abstract. The abstract gives a clear idea of the work done, essentially presenting the content of the individual chapters and reflecting the main results achieved in the dissertation.

9. Conclusion. There are original scientific contributions in Evgeniya Tagareva's work. The overall reading of the text leaves an excellent impression. In terms of structure and content, it fully meets the requirements for a dissertation. It is clear that Evgeniya Tagareva has invested a lot of work, professional competences as a teacher and musician in her educational and teaching activities – a fact that I highly appreciate. The overall professional experience, **educational and pedagogical, expert and artistic activities** of doctoral candidate Evgeniya Tagareva fully meet the criteria for awarding the educational and scientific degree of doctor. The dissertation contains scientific, scientific-applied and applied results, which represent an original contribution to science and meet all the requirements

of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the its implementation. The dissertation work shows that Evgeniya Tagareva possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the Doctoral program of Music Studies and Music Art, demonstrating qualities and skills for independent conduct of scientific research.

Considering all of the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the conducted research, presented in the dissertation work, abstract, achieved results and contributions. I propose to the honourable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Evgeniya Tagareva in the field of higher education: 8. Arts, professional field: 8.3. Music and Dance Art, doctoral program: Music Studies and Music Art.

29. 08. 2024

Reviewer: Prof Tanya Burdeva, PhD