

OPINION

by Prof Veselin Ivanov Koychev, AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev"
on dissertation work for awarding educational and scientific degree "DOCTOR"
field of higher education: 8. Arts, in professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art,
doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art

Author: **Yihan Gao**

Title: ***Historical Aspects in the Development of the Chinese Violin Art in the Period 1919 - 2008***

with academic supervisor: Prof Stela Miteva-Dinkova, PhD

By Order No RD-27-030 dated 16.02.2024 of the Rector of AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev", I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to ensure a procedure for the defense of a dissertation work on the *Historical Aspects in the Development of the Chinese Violin Art in the Period 1919 - 2008*, with author Yihan Gao, to acquire an educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the field of higher education 8. Arts, professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art, doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art. The author of the dissertation work, Yihan Gao, is a doctoral student in an independent form of study at the Department of Classical and Pop and Jazz Performing Arts, AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev".

Yihan Gao began his musical studies in 2011 and in 2015 he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Harbin Normal University - HNU. A year later, he continued his education in a Master's program majoring in violin, with teachers Li Feng and Andrey Fedchenko. In 2018, he became a scholarship holder of the University, and in 2019 he graduated with a solo recital. In his student years, Yihan Gao developed an active concert activity.

In 2018, Yihan Gao joined the Chinese -Russian Chamber Orchestra of the Harbin Conservatory of Music, and 2019 marked the beginning of his teaching career as a full-time violin teacher at Yibin University in Sichuan Province, China.

From 2021 to the current year 2024, Yihan Gao is a full-time doctoral student at the Department of Classical and Pop and Jazz Performing Arts - AMDFA, Plovdiv, with supervisor Prof Stela Miteva-Dinkova, PhD. As a doctoral student, he developed an active artistic activity and won awards: Second prize at the International Chamber Music Competition in Prague (2021), Golden Lyre at the International Competition for Music, Dance and Visual Arts "Orpheus Talents". (2022). All this presents Yihan Gao as a violinist with solo performances, chamber concert and teaching experience.

The dissertation uses several methods of scientific research, such as a review of scientific literature sources, a historical research method, and a comparative research method. The hypothesis of the research gives reason to prove that in the period from 1919 to 2008 under the influence of historical aspects, the violin instrument evolved and gained legitimacy not only in the educational

system, but occupied an honourable place in the cultural life of China and its achievements were recognized outside the country's borders.

The thesis is structured in an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a reference to the main contributions and a bibliography, a list of publications, an appendix and a discography of some of the authors studied. The content and structure are according to established norms. The total volume is 177 pages, of which the main content takes up 164 pages, 33 sources in Chinese and 3 in Bulgarian were used. 40 internet sources were used, some of them repeatedly. Source formatting is clear and precise. A discography of Hong Kun, Lu Sising and Ning Feng is included as an appendix. The volume of the dissertation work meets the requirements for scientific works in AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev".

In the introduction, the object, subject, goals, tasks and hypothesis of the research are clearly formulated. The subject of the work is the violin art with its various manifestations in China. The main goal of the dissertation is to examine the development of this art in the period from 1919 to 2008. The tasks are related to establishing the historical aspects during this period.

The first chapter traces the introduction of the violin instrument before 1919 and the first steps in its socialization and interaction with the local traditional musical practice. The doctoral student defines the researched period as preparatory for violin art in China.

The second chapter covers the historical events after the liberation of the country from the feudal system in 1919 until the arrival of the new ideology with the founding of New China in 1949. The doctoral student demonstrates knowledge of the problem and defines the period as formative of the early Chinese higher music education during which the first violin study materials were created. The creative path of the first violin teachers and the creation of the first Chinese violin works is discussed. Here the candidate gives the due importance to Chinese composers and pedagogues, such as Ma Sicong, Tan Shuzhen and Xiao Yumei, who represent the new Chinese style by placing the themes of the Chinese folk songs within classical European forms. Yihan Gao makes his own comparisons, inferences, and causal relationships regarding the development of the Chinese violin art.

In the third chapter, he examines the controversial course of development of the Chinese violin art and the first "golden period" of the music art. The author discusses the finding of the balance between the foreign musical achievements and the strengths of the Chinese traditional music. The period of the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976 has been characterized as seriously hindering the development of the Chinese violin art. The doctoral candidate describes the persecution of teachers, the destruction of valuable teaching aids and works of art, the closing of schools, the restriction of admissions, the suspension of artistic concert activity. He demonstrates an analytical approach, concluding that despite the regressive influence of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) in all spheres of art, the violin art retains its direction of development.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the historical period from 1978 to 2008, which marked the final rise of the Chinese violin art as part of the world music culture and the success of a number of violinists from China in Europe and the USA. Yihan Gao concludes that the reason for this rise is the

policy of reform and opening of China's foreign relations. The doctoral student concludes that all these phenomena accurately illustrate and practically prove the success of the Chinese violin art in the period 1919-2008.

Researching the history of violin education in China gives Yihan Gao reason to believe that the Chinese higher music education has balanced between traditional and modern, between native and foreign, maintaining a steady upward trajectory. This proves the main thesis of the research that during the indicated period from 1919 to 2008, the historical aspects shaped the development of the violin art in various spheres and brought its evolution to the world musical standards. In the context of today's global world, the Chinese violinists are finding their own voice, going hand in hand with synthesis and innovation.

I agree with the points of contribution and positive aspects of the dissertation mentioned by the doctoral student. Of particular importance to me is the study of the almost century-long evolution of the Chinese violin art, and the influence of historical, political, geographical and socio-cultural factors. I believe that an important point of contribution is the research on the creation of different teaching aids with their advantages and disadvantages. The research of creative pursuits and stylistic characteristics of violin works by Chinese composers and their comparison with the European violin works has a contribution value.

The scientific publications are four in number and are thematically related to the topic of the dissertation work. The submitted abstract is 56 pages long. The individual chapters of the dissertation are presented in a synthesized and at the same time comprehensive form. The abstract accurately and clearly presents the entire scientific work.

The dissertation is technically well-structured; contains collected and systematized information proving the arguments. It is evident that the doctoral student Yihan Gao possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and demonstrates qualities and skills for independent conduct of scientific research. The presented work contains scientific and scientific-applied results that are contribution to science and meet the requirements of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA), the Regulations for the Implementation of DASRBA and the Regulations on the terms and procedures for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions in AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev". In view of all of the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the scientific development presented in the dissertation work, abstract, achieved results and contributions, proposing to the honourable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Yihan Gao in the field of higher education: 8. Arts; professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art.

Plovdiv, 25.03.2024

Prof Veselin Koychev