

OPINION

by

Prof. Ivaylo Krinchev, PhD, NMA Prof. Pancho Vladigerov

on the dissertation of

Ivaylo Trifonov Mihailov - PhD student in an independent programme of study at the Department of Classical, Pop and Jazz Performing Arts at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts Prof. Asen Diamandiev - Plovdiv,

with scientific supervisor: Prof. Dr. Toni Shekerdzhieva - Novak

on the topic

„The songs of Reynaldo Hahn and the application of French phonetic transcription in the interpretation in French, compared to the practical transcription and transliteration into Bulgarian”

for awarding the educational and scientific degree "**Doctor**", field 8.3.
Music and dance art

Ivaylo Mihailov's education includes chronologically the acquisition of a Bachelor's degree in classical singing at the National Music Academy Prof. Pancho Vladigerov in 1997, Master's degree in Classical Music at NBU in 2007, and Master's degrees in Art management and Music and stage directing at Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in 2011 and 2013, as well as specializations in the Opera academies Boris Hristov in Rome and Osimo, Italy. Ivaylo Mihailov has an enviable creative biography - he has been a soloist artist at the State Operas of Varna, Plovdiv and Stara Zagora, where he currently one of the leading tenors in the Opera's repertoire. He is not one of the leading tenors in the opera repertoire. The brief biographical report presented does not indicate that he has an extensive repertoire and that much of it consists of French-language parts. We have worked together on the play "Walpurgis Night" with fragments from the opera "Faust" by Charles Gounod and Goethe's lyrics, as well as on the opera "The African woman" (L'Africaine) by Meyerbeer and I can confidently say that his vocal interpretation in French of the parts of Vasco Da Gama and Faust were at an extremely high level. I am making this detour, because I think it is directly related to the research and speaks for a deep knowledge of the issue.

The dissertation is structured in an introduction, three chapters, conclusion, appendices, contributions to the research, three publications on the topic and bibliography - 56 Bulgarian and foreign titles and 35 Internet sources. The total volume is 187 pages.

The introduction specifically, precisely and clearly states the reasons for choosing the topic, object, subject and purpose of the study. The research thesis is defined, and the methods and tasks that the dissertation student has set to solve in order to defend it are formulated. *“At the heart of the interaction between music and text in vocal works is not only the semantic but also the sound organization of language.”* (p. 9).

The first chapter presents the personality, work and aesthetic views of Reynaldo Hahn, in the context of the Belle Époque, both historically and in interaction with iconic representatives of other arts. Based on numerous scientific sources, the dissertation depicts a clear picture of the spirit of that era, defined as *a complex and multifaceted cultural-historical phenomenon* *“In the entire work of Reynaldo Hahn one can find the restless, the melancholic, the ironic and the ecstatic and the cool and the distanced aesthetically nostalgic, as well as the intellectual play with tradition”* (p.23). Ivaylo Mihaylov with commendable dedication has made a detailed archival research activity, collecting an impressive amount of information, illustrating in a clear chronological tabular form the songs, song collections and vocal cycles published at different times both individually and in groups by different publishing houses. The trends of development of the various arts have been studied, which influence and form the personality, the musical and professional growth and the views of Reynaldo Hahn on vocal art.

I think that the second chapter of the study *“Transcription of the text in vocal interpretation”* is extremely valuable because it provides a ready-made algorithm from a vocal point of view for the interpretation of the text in French. It studies in detail the unconditional need for the unity of text and music, as well as the specifics of transcription and transliteration in Bulgarian and phonetic transcription in French. Special attention is paid to the technology of phonetic transcription in the interpretation in French, the types of French vowels and consonants, the compulsory, desirable and forbidden liaisons are studied and presented in examples and tables. As the author notes *„the lexical word in French has no phonetic autonomy... Often a word that ends with a spoken consonant happens to be in the rhythmic group before another word beginning with a vowel or mute h – a concordant liaison, and the difference respectively compared to the vocal*

liaison” ... the easy transition, without stopping the voice, between the final vowel of the previous word and the initial vowel of the word that follows” (p. 95).

The third chapter is dedicated to the vocal cycles "Gray Songs" ("Chansons grises") and "Venezia", and along with the presentation of the original, transcription, practical transcription and transliteration and free translation by the dissertation student in Bulgarian, a detailed musical and aesthetic analysis of the works is added, including structure, tone plans and texture.

The Conclusion underlines what the introduction of French phonetic transcription will contribute, and clearly and precisely formulates the contributions of the research.

Ivaylo Mihailov's dissertation is an in-depth scientific research, both in terms of the issues under consideration and in terms of its analysis and conclusions made. It fills a gap in Bulgarian musicology and can be used as a practical guidance by beginner and professional singers in the interpretation of French music. I strongly recommend to the esteemed Scientific Jury to award the Scientific and Educational Degree "Doctor" to Ivaylo Trifonov Mihailov.

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