

REVIEW

by **Assoc. Prof Rada Borislavova Slavinska, PhD**

on dissertation work for awarding educational and scientific degree “Doctor”

in Professional field 1.3 Teaching Pedagogy in ...

Doctoral program: Methodology of Music Teaching

Author: **Tong Guiyang**

topic: *A Comparative Study of the Ideas of Music Education of*

Xiao Youmei and Zoltán Kodály

Academic supervisor: Prof Tsvetanka Kolovska-Zmeeva, PhD

1. Information the doctoral procedure

By Order № RD – 27–109 of 20.07.2023, pursuant to Art. 31, para. 1 of the regulations for the implementation of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA) and Resolution of the Faculty Council at the Faculty of Music Pedagogy (Protocol No 12/13.07.2023) I have been appointed a member of the scientific jury to supervise a procedure for the defense of a dissertation work of Tong Guiyang, on topic: *A Comparative Study of the Ideas of Music Education of Xiao Youmei and Zoltán Kodály*. The procedure is for obtaining educational and scientific degree “doctor” in Higher education field 1.3 Teaching Pedagogy in ... The author of the dissertation is Tong Guiyang – a doctoral student in doctoral program Methodology of Music Teaching at the Department of Music Pedagogy and Conducting. AMDFA “Prof Asen Diamandiev”.

The doctoral student Tong Guiyang has submitted a set of documents (on paper and electronic) related to the dissertation defense procedure, as well as 4 publications (*Research on the Formation and Content of Zoltán Kodály's Views on Music Education, Inspiration from the Thoughts on Music Education of Xiao Youmei and Zoltán Kodály, The Ideas of Developing Music Education for Children of Xiao Youmei and Zoltán Kodály, and A comparative study of the ideas of music education of Xiao Yumei and Zoltán Kodály*) related to the topic of the dissertation under consideration.

I have no objections to the submitted documents and materials, except for the different Cyrillic and Latin transcriptions of the doctoral student's name in the documents provided - in the autobiography and the first publication Tun Guei-in, in the other three publications Tong Guying, and in the dissertation itself and abstract Tong Guiyang (Tong Guiying,) which causes confusion.

Brief biographical information about the candidate

From the autobiographical reference submitted by the Master of Musicology and our doctoral student Tong Guiyang, we understand that we are looking at the work of an already distinguished researcher. She herself is an established performer and teacher of the traditional Chinese instrument Guzheng, during her 11 years of teaching she has trained more than 100 students who have successful career as performers or teachers. Her performance skills make her a welcome guest in many officially

organized concerts in various cities and provinces of China, in regional media recordings, and her joint concerts with her prominent students are an integral part of the so-called artistic practice.

An impressive part of Guiyang's biography is her work as researcher in different directions – the three published monographs, the more than 20 scientific publications, three of which were awarded, as well as the four registered utility model patents. The pedagogical and organizational work of the doctoral student is also respectable – participant and/ or leader of 9 research projects, over 20 awards for scientific supervisor, three awards for teacher training. Her memberships in various professional organizations such as the Chinese Musicians Association, the Association of Ethnic Instrumental Music of Heilongjiang Province, the Special Guzheng Committee of the Heilongjiang Provincial Musicians Association, the Chairmanship of the Guzheng Council of the Daqing City Musicians Association, and the position of Associate Professor in Guzheng at the Huizhou University, speak to Tong Guiyang's established position as a serious specialist, educator, researcher and performer in China's multi-million musical community.

Relevance of the topic

The dissertation work *A Comparative Study of the Ideas of Music Education of Xiao Youmei and Zoltán Kodály*. covers a topic, which has not been considered until now in Bulgarian musicology, namely - the application of Zoltán Kodály's ideas in modern music education in China, as well as introducing the Bulgarian scientific audience to the personality and work of Xiao Youmei. In view of the increased international exchange of ideas regarding the development of music pedagogy, it can be assumed that the topic is relevant beyond the borders of Bulgaria.

Evaluation of the dissertation work

Tong Guiyang's dissertation is a total of 179 pages. The text is divided into six chapters, introduction, conclusion, contributions and a bibliography consisting of 79 titles. In terms of structure, there is a gradation in the specifics – from the broadly informative for the two music educators to the specifics in the research and application of their ideas. In its essence, the research traces the development of the music-pedagogical work in the recent history of China and systematizes scientific works in this direction. The language of the dissertation is readable and, regardless of the errors encountered – in my opinion, technical and mainly of the kind of omitted letters and merged words – is a demonstration of excellent use of the rich possibilities of the Bulgarian language. The work is a scientific systematization, chronological arrangement and synthesized announcement of a large number of theoretical sources, as well as a follow-up of research on the incorporation of Zoltán Kodály's ideas into the Chinese music education.

The **first chapter**, *Formation and Content of Xiao Youmei's Music Education Ideas* is essentially a historical overview of the most popular pedagogical practices in Europe and America at the beginning of the XX century, the biography and ideas of the founder of the modern music education in China – Xiao Youmei. The information is presented in a synthesized way. The text is full of quotations showing the use of a wide range of sources. The chapter is divided into 15 subtopics of

the four main topics, properly differentiated in their titles and sub-titles and with a size of about 1-2 pages, very brief, without going into details. Each subtopic ends with 1-2 synthesizing sentences, tracing the specifics of the topic.

The **second chapter**, *The Three Stages of Xiao Youmei's Practical Research and His Ideas of Music Education*, examines in detail Xiao Youmei's theoretical heritage and his life career, his ideas, divided into three sections and 11 subtopics. An extremely high percentage of the chapter consists of citations, which shows a deep knowledge of the theoretical heritage of the great Chinese educator. The doctoral student also presents a brief retelling of Xiao Youmei's professional life.

A **third chapter**, *Formation and Content of Kodály's Ideas of Music Education*, examines Zoltán Kodály's biography, views, and legacy, divided into 22 subtopics. It is presented in an interesting and brief manner, with an emphasis on Kodály's ideas and their premises. Some of the sections are too short – e.g. Section 3.4. Kodály's Method is covered over 3 pages with 5 subtopics (two of the subtopics are one short paragraph each), but the general concept and idea follows logically.

The **fourth chapter**, *Popularization of Zoltán Kodály's System of Music Education in China*, examines the influence of Kodály's ideas on the Chinese music education system. This is the largest chapter – 50 pages. It reviews dozens of scientific studies by various Chinese scholars and educators on the implementation of the Kodály's system. The forums and organizations for implementing the system are systematized chronologically. The works of Yan Limay are especially emphasized. It also discusses translations of Western scientific works on Kodály's work such as *The Kodaly Method I: Comprehensive Music Education* by Lois Choksy, *Kodaly's principles in practice* Szonyi Erzsebet, etc., as well as the direct lecture courses of Cecilia Zelman Russinkoni, Michalih Parseas, Casey Benedict and others. In essence, this chapter is a synthesized panorama of the application and research on Kodaly's pedagogical principles, and is in fact an extremely voluminous literature review of sorts.

Chapter Five, *A Comparative Study of Xiao Youmei's and Kodály's Music Education Ideas*, although it directly formulates the topic of the dissertation, is a short section of about 10 pages that compares some facts and thoughts from those already presented in the first three chapters as parallels in the historical situation of Hungary and China, the support in folk music, similar ideologically forming circumstances, differences in some understandings of the two great music educators, etc.

Chapter Six - *Inspiration from the Ideas of Xiao Youmei and Kodály's Music Education* examines the recent history of music pedagogy in China. The latest scientific work of various Chinese scholars and an outline of the national policy towards the music education in China are presented. In this chapter, the author steps slightly off topic, as she presents definitions of a number of well-known pedagogic practices, and presents too brief and combined the introduction of various European systems into the teaching of music in China. At the same time, it is here that the candidate first mentions her own pedagogical and experience gives examples of the application of the ideas of Youmei and Kodály in her direct work as a teacher.

A huge amount of time, work and diligence have been invested in compiling this unique panorama of pedagogical scientific studies on the music pedagogy in China. Numerous sources are used, which are often not directly mentioned in the text, which somewhat reduces the scientific weight of the otherwise beautifully presented text.

In her personal reasons for choosing the topic, Tong Guiyang says that *“This dissertation interprets the music education ideas of Xiao Youmei and Zoltán Kodály. The similarities and differences between them are compared. On this basis, possible and feasible ways for the development and revival of music education in China are proposed. This study is extremely important for the current situation in education”*. Having read the entire text, I noticed that the author presents mostly other’s interpretations (especially of *Kodály’s* ideas) and their application in Chinese music education. Ms. Guiyang herself defines her "research" as a "comparison," and this comparison is mostly factual.

Contributions and significance of the thesis and the publications on the topic of the dissertation

The contributions of the dissertation is mainly in the systematization of the Chinese scientific works on music pedagogy. From an informative point of view, the work appears to be a contribution to both the Bulgarian and the Chinese musicology, as it provides detailed overview of the theoretical studies in the Chinese music-educational system at all stages of education.

Recommendations

The dissertation is very readable and informative, but I have some recommendations. In many citations, the sources are not specified in detail, and this should be considered. Also, the first chapters lack summary sections to make a direct connection to the topic. Personally, I was confused by the bibliography of the used literature offered in Chinese hieroglyphic script. The four publications on the topic also used Chinese sources, but their titles were translated, while in the dissertation itself they were offered only in Chinese. This fact makes it difficult for the jury to understand the content of the used literature. It is advisable Tong Guiyang to leave a copy of the dissertation for use in future research, and translation of these title will benefit the researchers. I also did not see the Bulgarian sources. In the four proposed publications on the topic, scientific works of Tsvetanka Kolovska, Lilia Babakova, and Svetoslav Karagenov are used, and in the final version of the dissertation these works are omitted from the bibliographic reference. Even if published in China, the dissertation is written and defended in Bulgaria, and it should include Bulgarian scientists.

Abstract

The abstract of the dissertation *A Comparative Study of the Ideas of Music Education of Xiao Youmei and Zoltán Kodály* fully meets the requirements for layout and synthesis of the thesis within 30 pages, A4 format. All the contributing and important parts of the work are preserved in almost full volume or offered in a "compressed" form, which allows a full presentation of the various aspects of

the research. Her ability to synthesize the materials is another indicator of Tong Guiyang research qualities and her knowledge of the specifics of the subject.

Conclusion

Regardless of my recommendations, the overall execution of the doctoral thesis and the activities associated with her studies, show that during her studies, the candidate has done a serious amount of educational and research and work. The dissertation synthesizes a large amount of theoretical material, on the basis of which contributing results have been obtained. It also shows that the candidate Tong Guiyang has in-depth theoretical knowledge in the scientific field Teaching Pedagogy in... and in particular - in the direction Methodology of Music Teaching, demonstrating qualities and skills for independent conduct of scientific research. The reviewed work contains results that are contributions to music-education science. The presented materials correspond to the specific requirements of the Faculty of Music Pedagogy, adopted in connection with the Regulations of the AMDFA for the application of the the Law on the development of the academic staff of Republic of Bulgaria. Due to the above, I give my positive assessment of the scientific development presented in the dissertation work, the abstract, the achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the honourable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Tong Guiyang in Higher education field 1.3 Teaching Pedagogy in..., doctoral program Methodology of Music Teaching.

I congratulate Tong Guiyang for the serious and thorough scientific work. I also congratulate her scientific supervisor Prof Tsvetanka Kolovska for the successful mentoring and the achievement of the convincing final result.

17.09.2023

Reviewer:

Assoc. Prof Rada Slavinska, PhD