

REVIEW

by
Prof Svilen Raichev, PhD

on dissertation work for awarding
educational and scientific degree *Doctor*

to

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

Tong Guiyang is born in China. In 2006, she receives Master's degree in Musicology from the Conservatory of Harbin University, majoring in Guzheng. In 2020 she takes up the position of Teacher in Guzheng at Huizhou University.

In December 2020 she becomes a doctoral student individual form of studies, in professional field 1.3 Teaching Pedagogy in..., doctoral program Methodology of Music Teaching at the Department of Music Pedagogy and Conducting at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv.

She was discharged with the right of defense by order No RD-27- 094 of 07.07.2023.

The dissertation was discussed and proposed for public defense at a meeting of the Department of Music Pedagogy and Conducting at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev"- Plovdiv, held in July 2023.

The author has some pedagogical experience in China.

She has published three monographs and over 20 articles. She has participated in numerous concerts together with her students.

The dissertation consists of a total of 177 pages, which include an introduction, six main chapters with subchapters, Conclusion, contributions of the dissertation and bibliography.

I am impressed by the way the dissertation was conceived and constructed - academically, with an excellent style.

The main goal of this work is to present the ideas of music education of Xiao Youmei and Zoltán Kodály. The main emphasis is the comparison between the similarities and differences in their work in the field of education.

The idea of a thorough research and analysis of the characteristics of training is in itself a great challenge. The concepts, methods and results of the teaching experience of Xiao Youmei and Zoltán Kodály are summarized, based on which recommendations are made for increasing the value of music education through the improvement of the educational resources. The author offers a comparative

analysis of the ideas of the two educators, showing the similarities and differences in their ideas about education: according to her, both pedagogues highly value the folk music, as Xiao Youmei believes that experience should be directly borrowed from the Western education system, while Zoltán Kodály supports the view of sticking to the national.

Already in the *Introduction* of the dissertation, the purpose and tasks of the research are clearly stated, showing the trends in music education in China at the moment and the process of adaptation of the music education system in China is fully traced.

The *first part* of the study presents the formation and the content of Xiao Youmei's ideas on music education. The biography of Xiao Youmei, who made an important contribution to the establishment and the development of professional music education in China, is presented. The author also explains the historical context of the formation of the ideas for music education and the popularization of the foreign ideas from the developed European countries and the trends of American music education. Since Xiao Youmei studied in Japan, major reforms in music education in Japan that directly influenced Xiao Youmei and a number of other Chinese educators, are also examined. Important local Chinese ideas from the era and their influence on the Chinese educator, as well as the development of the traditional Chinese music, are also mentioned. The author finds in Xiao Youmei's educational theory and practice strong patriotic views on the use of music and music education on depicting various events in the Chinese history – the writing of patriotic songs, the stimulation of society's self-awareness, etc. Xiao Youmei's contribution to the development of the students' artistic skills through the establishment of qualified teaching staffs and teaching aids is examined.

In the *second chapter* presents the three stages of Xiao Youmei's practical research and his ideas on music education: Return to China and the beginning of the development of the ideas of musical aesthetics and the founding of the music department at the Beijing Women's Higher Pedagogical School, the founding of the Shanghai Music School. The third stage in the development of Xiao Youmei's research and ideas is after the Japanese occupation of China in 1937. His views on the mission of music in the appeal to patriotic spirit during the war are shown.

The *third chapter* examines the biography and diverse activities of the famous Hungarian composer, pedagogue and specialist in musical ethnology Zoltán Kodály. His compositional work, his work in the theory of ethnic music and his teaching work are also shown. According to Tong Guiyang, under the influence of the German-Austrian musical culture, Kodály made the Hungarian folk music the source of his music works. I quote "*the folk music should be a perspective of the culture of the ethnos, it is a quintessence of the wisdom handed down and accumulated by the people over the course of many centuries*" /p. 76 of the dissertation/. Zoltán Kodály's ideas for musical education of the whole nation, the role of singing in the musical education system, the importance of folk music and its studying in school and the creation of rich and high-quality music textbooks are emphasized.

In the *fourth chapter* of the dissertation presents the development and popularization of Zoltán Kodály's system of music education in China, which meets the needs of reform in musical methodology and is important for borrowing experience from the West. Reputable educational institutions consistently organize relevant courses on the Kodály's method.

The traditional Chinese music developed under the influence of incoming Western music. The results achieved by the introduction of the Kodály's method in China are examined.

The *fifth chapter* is a comparative analysis of the ideas of music education of the two music educators Xiao Youmei and Zoltán Kodály. The similarities are highlighted – both Hungary and China are in the post-war period, both educators: make national culture the basis of music education, create high-quality teaching aids and build groups of qualified educators.

The *sixth chapter* shows the applicability of the ideas of the two music educators today. The main task of music for self-improvement and education, development of the students' complex musical skills, cultivation of musical sense and musical memory, international exchange and cooperation is improved, academic exchange is strengthened.

The dissertation also mentions the differences in views on the development of the Chinese music education – both political and artistic-pedagogical.

The principles and difficulties in solving the specific tasks in music education are highlighted and brought out.

The dissertation is not just a historical, chronological study of a particular genre or era. This is an analytical reflection of the author on the traditions of the European and the Chinese folk music culture and music education. The dissertation is very useful and will be useful to young people who are training to be music educators.

The dissertation thus presented enriches our scientific literature and can serve with its ideas for new scientific studies.

The work has apparent practical character. In this sense, it is a natural link with the past and the prospective development of both the European and the Chinese musical culture and education.

The conclusion makes an attempt to summarize the problems and to bring out the contributing points in the text. This study creates a basis for continuity and borrowing experience from the ideas of Xiao Youmei and Zoltán Kodály.

I fully agree with the contributions of the dissertation work pointed out by the author.

The candidate also has the necessary scientific publications on the subject.

As a conclusion, I would like to say that the work has the necessary contributing qualities of a dissertation for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor", however, I think that the author should use not only Chinese sources, especially for Zoltán Kodály, or at least the titles of these Chinese sources in the bibliography should be translated into Bulgarian.

I am convinced that the dissertation of Tong Guiyang has a contribution nature, both in a theoretical and an applied sense. With her overall work and contributions, the candidate meets the requirements for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "doctor".

Prof Svilen Raichev, PhD