

## OPINION

by

Assoc. Prof Ivaylo Mihaylov - AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev"

on the dissertation of

**Yingying Hou** - doctoral student individual form of studies at the Department of Classical and Pop and Jazz Performing Arts at AMDFA „Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv, with academic supervisor: Prof Veselin Koychev on the topic:

Topic: *The Synthesis between Bel Canto and Pop Singing in the Vocal Art of the Musical*

Professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art

Doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art

Winging Hou's biography includes chronologically graduating from the Liaoning Provincial College of Culture and Arts, majoring in drama, film and television performances in 1999.

In 2014 receives Master's degree from Shenyang Conservatory of Music, studying in the class of Professor Yang Weizhong, majoring in pop vocal singing. Then also in 2014 Peking University International Music Master Class and received certificate.

In 2015, Broadway AMDA Hong Kong Musical Theater jointly organized the graduation of the Chinese and American Musical Masterclass.

In 2015, she is appointed as a lecturer in the Department of Musical Theater of Shenyang Conservatory of Music, and becomes an Associate Professor in the Department of Musical Theater in 2021.

2018 -2019 completed an advanced course in musical theater at Peking University.

From 2009 until now, she has been working in the Department of Musical Theater, College of Drama, Film and Television, Shenyang Conservatory of Music.

The dissertation is developed in an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, contributions, three scientific publications on the subject and a bibliography - 30 sources. The total volume is 182 pages.

**Chapter one**, *Evolution of the musical and its popularization in China* examines the historical sources of the musical in the form of two of the European stage forms, *opera-buffa* and *operetta*, whose development and gradual shaping make them the "parents" of the musical. Developmental subgenres of the musical such as the Broadway musical and London's West End musical in the 19th and 20th centuries are explored. Special attention is paid to the entry of the musical into China.

**Chapter two** explores the similarities and differences between bel canto and pop singing. The two singing styles are mainly analyzed. Information about the origin and development, features and techniques of the bel canto singing style has been collected and systematized. It also explains the technical characteristics of the trained bel canto voice, basic technical principles in bel canto, ease and simplicity of singing, bringing ornamentation into singing by means of coloratura, recitative singing -

*Sprechgesang*. The author provides general information on the origin and development of pop singing and the incarnations of pop singing in foreign musicals. She makes a characterization of pop singing in the Chinese musical and an exposition of the features and the vocal technique of pop music, listing the means of expressions and styles in pop singing, such as lyrical style, folk singing, country, rock, jazz, rap style, musical style and Chinese pop singing style.

An important part of the research contains a thorough examination of the questions of similarities and differences between the bel canto and pop singing in two respects: in the use of the voice and in the style of performance. Aspects important to singing are covered, such as breathing, intonation and timbre, voice strength, resonance, throat position, vocal cords, diction and performance style. Factors such as environment and language, different national history are also taken into account. Similarities and differences in teaching methodology are developed theoretically, such as peculiarities in teaching bel canto and pop singing.

**Chapter three** examines the performance styles and forms of expression in the musical. A comparative analysis is made between the musical and other music-theatre genres and specifically between the musical and the opera. Similarities and differences between the musical and the Chinese theatrical forms are also pointed out. The musical and the Chinese theater as performing arts are compared, the question of the genre-stylistic diversity of the Chinese opera is examined. A classification of vocal styles and forms of expression in the musical is made.

**Chapter four** is extremely valuable because it gives a ready-made algorithm for applying, on the one hand, bel canto techniques and, on the other hand, pop vocal techniques in the vocal performances of the musical. Various arias from musicals are examined and analyzed in terms of using the elements of bel canto in a specific dramatic context and examples of the use of bel canto in the musical. The use of pop vocal techniques in musical theater is also analyzed. Also examined is the use of Chinese folk singing, juxtaposed with music-theatre singing in China.

A special place is devoted to the analysis of the integration between bel canto and pop singing in the musical, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the use of different musical styles to aid the musical perception and the introduction of an innovative approach to vocal training. A discussion on the vocal training integrating bel canto and popular singing methods is provoked in order to deepen the synthesis between bel canto and pop singing in the musical.

Yingying Hou's dissertation work is a thorough scientific study, both in terms of the problem under consideration, and in terms of its analysis and the conclusions drawn. It fills a gap in musicology and can be used as a practical guide by novice and professional singers in integrating bel canto and pop singing in the musical. I strongly recommend the esteemed Scientific Jury to award the Scientific Educational Degree "Doctor" to Yingying Hou.