

**OPINION
OF**

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**FACULTY OF MUSIC PEDAGOGY, DEPARTMENT OF PIANO AND ACCORDION
FOR THE AWARDING OF THE EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC DEGREE
"DOCTOR"**

TO Evgenia Petrova Vitanova

**IN PROFESSIONAL FIELD 1.3 "Pedagogy of Teaching (Methodology of Music
Education)"**

AT THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND ARTS

AT SOFIA UNIVERSITY "ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI"

**ON THE TOPIC: "SPECIFIC FEATURES OF WORKING WITH CHILDREN'S
MUSICALS IN PRESCHOOL GROUPS IN KINDERGARTENS"**

**WITH ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR: PROF. GANKA NEDELTCHEVA-BOYANOVA,
PhD**

1. General presentation of the procedure and materials for review

Evgenia Vitanova is a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Education and Arts at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski," under the supervision of Prof. Ganka Nedeltcheva-Boyanova, PhD. My impressions are based on the submitted documents: biographical information, dissertation, abstract, and the Plagiarism Check Protocol. "SPECIFIC FEATURES OF WORKING WITH CHILDREN'S MUSICALS IN PRESCHOOL GROUPS IN KINDERGARTENS" is the topic of the dissertation, which I reviewed in order to prepare this opinion. The documentation, in essence, meets all the requirements for the procedure for awarding the educational and scientific degree of "doctor."

2. Brief biographical details of the doctoral candidate

Evgenia Vitanova completed her secondary education at the National School of Arts "Dobri Hristov" in Varna, specializing in "Piano" and "Classical Singing." She obtained her bachelor's degree from the Faculty of Musical Pedagogy and the Vocal Faculty of the National Academy of Music "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov." She holds master's degrees in Music Pedagogy (Shumen University "Episkop Konstantin Preslavski"), Innovations in Preschool Education (Shumen University "Episkop Konstantin Preslavski"), and Primary School Pedagogy (Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"). Evgenia Vitanova is an experienced performer – both as a singer and pianist – and a teacher of solfeggio and music in kindergartens. The doctoral candidate's activities also extend into areas such as working with children with special educational needs (SEN) and organizing leisure and physical health activities.

3. Relevance of the topic

The topic of the dissertation has a broad field of useful application and pronounced academic relevance. It is a valuable source of knowledge for the methodological challenges related to teaching music to young children. Its particular value stems from the doctoral candidate's impressive practical experience and creative interests in the fields of preschool and early childhood education and their close musical specialization. I accept and applaud the working hypothesis of developing a methodological model for staging a children's musical and its role in enhancing the musical abilities, understanding, and motivation of children toward music.

4. Appropriateness of the research methods for achieving the set objectives

In the introductory part of the dissertation, Evgenia Vitanova outlines a broad target range of research with clearly defined subject and object of study. The methodological foundation of the work includes the analysis and synthesis of practical summaries, conclusions, and results. The information is presented in a suitable manner through systematization and classification.

5. Evaluation of the dissertation (understanding of the problem, content, structure according to established norms, reliability, analytical approach, derived results)

The dissertation includes an Introduction, four chapters, Conclusion, and key contributions, along with three appendices. Particularly significant is the third appendix, which documents Evgenia Vitanova's creative achievements as the author of children's musicals. Here, her original script, piano score, and song lyrics for the musical "A Christmas Gift" are presented. I have genuine respect and admiration for such creative work, which stands as proof of personal emotional commitment, deep knowledge, and understanding of the subject, as well as the authenticity of the analyses and the presented experimental results.

The first chapter begins with a historical overview and the genre characteristics of the musical on a global scale, as well as its natural transformation at the start of the "television era." The author does not neglect Bulgarian works and creators associated with the genre, including Maestro Georgi Atanasov, Parashkev Hadzhiev, Alexander Yosifov, Andrey Drenikov, and others. Here, Evgenia Vitanova shares the need for the transformation of various music-theatrical genres, leading to the creation of a new genre with the stylistic features of the children's musical but adapted to the organization of the daily schedule in kindergartens and to the understanding and worldview of 5–6-year-old children. This is tied to the specifics of education and upbringing in kindergartens and early primary school (p. 18).

The doctoral candidate is motivated by the "lack of sufficient examples of Bulgarian children's musicals and methodological guidelines for working with musicals with 5–6-year-old children" to present and analyze a tested methodological model for staging a musical in preschool, as well as to reflect on the challenges arising in the rehearsal process. She identifies these challenges as: "mastering the specific behavior of preschool children, increasing their self-control, stepping beyond the established rehearsal process format used

for smaller stage performances that the children are familiar with, and stimulating a desire in children for future music engagement as a result of working on a musical" (p. 23).

The application of children's musicals in the early grades of general education schools is also examined in depth. According to the author, the appropriate teacher's approach is to act as a "director" of the developed skills of older children through their involvement in various activities related to children's musicals.

The second chapter is entitled "Stages of Working on a Musical in Kindergarten." In this section, Evgenia Vitanova demonstrates enviable and comprehensive competencies regarding the overall organization required for staging a musical in a kindergarten. The key stages of the process are described in detail—from the choice of script and all accompanying preparatory activities, to the distribution of roles, learning of lines and songs, work on stage directions, costumes, and sets, and finally, the involvement of children playing musical instruments commonly used in kindergarten.

The third chapter addresses the specific functions of musical instruments, costumes, and sets in the kindergarten musical. Here, the doctoral candidate emphasizes one of the main tasks of the music teacher, which is to develop children's musical hearing and concepts. She references valuable methodological guides by Prof. Penka Mincheva and Prof. Yordan Kolev. "Participation in the musical-theatrical game offered by the musical evokes a strong emotional experience of the music and stimulates children's future involvement with musical instruments. The kindergarten musical provides an opportunity for a smooth transition from play to stage performance, from musical toy to musical instrument," the author states, effectively pointing to the path toward early childhood musical education (p. 80). The classification of Bulgarian folk musical toys is based on music education systems for preschool children developed by Carl Orff and Natalia Vetlugina, as well as on the creative explorations of I. Kachulev, M. Todorov, V. Atanasov, and D. Paliev. The methodology of musical education by Emilia Nikolova is also not overlooked. Evgenia Vitanova reflects her foundational methodological knowledge related to early musical education. In addition to Bulgarian musical toys, European wind and percussion non-traditional children's musical instruments like the triola, pan flute, recorder, and two-row metallophone are also included.

The fourth chapter provides a detailed description of Evgenia Vitanova's pedagogical experiment, which focuses on the performance of the musical "The Missing Martenitsa" by preschool groups in kindergarten. The experiment is presented in its various phases. Following discussions about the text of the musical, test tasks using colored pictures were conducted. Through this process, "diagnostic images" were created for various educational fields, reflected in tables. The doctoral candidate prepares a graphic representation that presents in synthesized form the methodological model for working on a musical in kindergarten, with its stages and content. This model holds significant weight and importance as a meaningful contribution.

The concluding part of the dissertation once again proves the author's working hypothesis, namely that performing a musical at preschool age raises musical abilities and

musical hearing to a new level, while also fostering overall development and motivating children.

6. Contributions and significance of the scientific work and the publications on the dissertation's topic

I accept and confirm the contributions and significance of the dissertation. Evgenia Vitanova introduces the concept of the "kindergarten musical" with its specific characteristics. I consider this to be not so much a genre innovation as a terminological one, in line with the logic of early childhood and preschool music education methodology. A thoroughly developed model for working on a musical in preschool age is presented, with the stages of its implementation carefully traced. The work is entirely the result of personal creative approaches and has all the qualities and potential to be published as a valuable methodological guide for the needs of the music pedagogical community in the country.

7. Brief notes and recommendations – none.

8. Abstract – accepted.

9. Conclusion: I believe I have sufficient grounds to commend the dissertation titled "SPECIFIC FEATURES OF WORKING WITH CHILDREN'S MUSICALS IN PRESCHOOL GROUPS IN KINDERGARTENS" as important and significant, rich in specialized information, and useful for anyone following the music-methodological issues related to early childhood. Thus, I express my confident proposal to the esteemed scientific council to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Evgenia Vitanova.

07.09.2024

Plovdiv

Prepared the Opinion:

Prof. Dr. Zornitsa Petrova