

# STATEMENT

By Assoc. Prof. Dr. Veselin Karaatanasov

on the dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) in the professional field 1.3 - "Pedagogy of..."

Author: Ilia Zdravkov Mihaylov

Form of study: regular doctoral studies

Scientific organization: Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Faculty of Education Studies and the Arts

Department of "Music and Multimedia Technologies"

Subject:

## **THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF CHURCH MONODY**

Scientific supervisor. Prof. Adrian Georgiev

Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts

Department of "Music and Multimedia Technologies"

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### **1. Materials for the defense**

The documents provided by the candidate meet the set of requirements specified in the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on Higher Education, adapted to the specificity of the above-mentioned higher education institution.

I have received the following documents in digital format:

- Dissertation;
- Dissertation Abstract;
- Creative curriculum vitae;
- List of publications.

All of the above files cover the required set of documents in accordance with the provisions in the Law of Development of the of Academic Staff of Republic of Bulgaria.

## 2. Biographical data and general information

In 1992-97, Ilia Mihaylov studied double bass, piano and music theory at HEMU- Lausanne Conservatory (Switzerland), where he received the *Diplômes de l'enseignement*, graduating with a Bachelor's degree, and soon afterwards, a Master's degree - *Première Prix*. For the next two years, from 1997 to 1999, he continued his studies at The Juilliard School, USA. From there he obtained Advanced Certificate (Master's degree) in Double Bass, Orchestral Conducting and Liberal Arts. Six years after that, between 2005-2009, he obtained a third Master's degree from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, UK, where he studied for the Music Director's Diploma (FRSM) as a Symphonic Conductor. From 1998 to 2001, he specialised successively in Choral Conducting in Michel Corboz's class at the Geneva Conservatory and in Art Management at New York University in the USA.

The professional experience of the colleague Mihaylov is very rich. Since 1999 he has been the Music Director of the "The Great Voices of Bulgaria" choir, at the same time he has served as the Artistic Director of the Ensemble for Byzantine Music "Sofia Psalters" and of the Bulgarian Music Association. Between 2011 and 2015 he was conductor of the Bulgarian National Philharmonic Choir "Svetoslav Obretenov" and almost at the same time conductor with Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra, simultaneously teaching at the American College of Sofia. He also serves as Principal Conductor of the Leadercrantz Choral Society (Switzerland) and Choirmaster/Conductor of the Summer Choir Academy at the Festival de Puise (France). During his 23-year career as a choirmaster, conductor and double bassist, Ilia Mihaylov has collaborated professionally with conductors such as Claudio Abbado, Bernard Haitink, Pierre Boulez, Seiji Ozawa, Kurt Masur, Ivan Fischer, Daniele Gatti, Jean-Claude Casadesus, Jesús López-Cobos, Jean-Bernard Pomier, Uroš Lajovic, and Michel Corboz; composers Daniel Schnyder, Michel Colombier; choreographers Pina Bausch, Maurice Béjart; tenor José Carreras.

He has carried out joint projects with UNESCO, BBC (UK), Mezzo TV (France), the music publishers Ediciones Singulares (Spain), Brilliant Classics (Netherlands), Naïve (France); Palazzetto Bru Zane Foundation (Italy), production company Freestudios (Switzerland), BNR, TV1, National Film Centre, National Fund "Culture", Organization of Jews in Bulgaria "Shalom", Blubalu Records, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Iliia Mihaylov's teaching experience includes lectures and master classes for Harvard University (USA), University of Paris-VIII: Vincennes-Saint-Denis, Strasbourg Conservatory (France), Chengdu School of Culture and Arts (China).

As a conductor and choirmaster, he has participated in numerous festivals: Bath International Music Festival, The Lichfield Festival (UK); Moscow Easter Festival (Russia); Mondial Choral, L'art Vocal, Mondial des Cultures (Canada); Strade del Cinema (Italy); Jazzdor Strasbourg, d'Jazz Nevers, MC2 Grenoble, Détours de Babel (France); Donaufest - Ulm (Germany); Music in Old Cracow, Festival of Sacred Music in Bielsko-Biała (Poland); MUPA (Hungary); Almere Kamermuziek Festival (The Netherlands); Meeting of the Choirs on the Island of Terceira (Portugal); New Year Music Festival, Varna Summer, Apollonia, Twelfth Salon of the Arts, European Music Festival, Kinomania (Bulgaria).

He has conducted Harvard University Women's Choir (USA), La Metrice de Saint-Louis de Gonzague (France), Le Petit Choeur de Saint-Denis, Soli- Titti, Le Choeur des Polysons, La Chorale de Paris 8, Ensemble Vocale Loyola (France). In the sphere of orchestral conducting he has collaborated with Camerata Bohemiana (Czech Republic), I Musicantini (Switzerland), the Symphony Orchestra of the Bulgarian National Radio, the orchestras of Varna, Plovdiv, Stara Zagora, Rousse Opera Houses, Studio Primo Chamber Orchestra, Consort for Early Music, Concerto Antico, Quarto and Friends Ensemble.

### **3. Dissertation**

The dissertation text admitted for defense is entitled "THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF CHURCH MONODY". It is developed within 195 pages and contains an introduction, four main chapters, a conclusion and contributions. Included in this volume is one illustration of alteration comparisons in *commas*, and the notated examples are placed in the appendix at the end. The reference list includes over 130 authors, both national and international.

This dissertation examines the *monody practice* known in Bulgaria as "Eastern Church singing" in view of its place in Bulgarian schooling as an Orthodox-Christian cultural tradition. In the introduction, the author points out its usefulness for the aural education of music students in primary education with a real possibility of its pedagogical implementation by proposing a modern methodological model.

As an aim it is stated that the possibilities of implementation in Bulgarian school of the traditional church monody, practiced in Bulgarian lands, are investigated.

Regarding the subject, the research is focused on the teaching of the *Orthodox Church monody* to students in the primary stage of education with the help of multimedia technologies, mobile applications and apps, the fundamental in this case is the formation of cultural competences and skills of students and most importantly - the preservation of our cultural and historical heritage.

The object of the study is the students in the primary stage of education in the subject Orthodox Church Monody, implemented, as already stated, through multimedia technologies, mobile applications and apps, as an Extracurricular Activity (ECA) - Classes of Interest and/or Elective Classes (EC).

The methodological approaches in the work are based on a review and comparative analysis of musicological literature, a review of events and trends in the education system in historical perspective, analysis and summary of legal documents, approbation of the experiment, survey evaluation, as well as statistical processing and summation of the results of the experiment.

The research hypothesis states that if the innovative teaching method proposed in this dissertation (including modern multimedia technologies and mobile applications) is used for the purpose of learning Orthodox Church chants (festal troparions), their natural assimilation will be achieved and the result of this assimilation will be reported as appropriate for their *Eastern* origin.

**The first chapter** deals with the theoretical aspects of church monody. The terminological apparatus used throughout the work is outlined. The setting of the problem covers the emergence of monody, its relationship to song, notation and its appearance in Bulgaria, i.e. as a manifestation of intonational presence. Its eastern character and interrelations with other cultures are taken into account. Here, the analytical approach is used - both in terms of form and the metro-rhythmic system, as well as the quality of intervallic relationships in Turkish, Arabic and Persian music as an emanation of its emotional diversity.

**The second chapter** is subordinated to the methodological aspects in the study of church monody and here a connection is made with the periodization of Bulgarian music education, not omitting the topic of the so-called notational-perceptual problems.

**The third chapter** follows logically from the previous one, and here the author foregrounds the didactic model for teaching Orthodox Church Monody in primary school as an extracurricular activity, and among the first sub-points for consideration are the National Development Programme "Bulgaria 2030", the Strategic Framework for the Development of Education, Training and Learning in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Law on Pre-school and School Education, the Ordinance on Inclusive Education, Extracurricular Activities (ECA) designed for the Classes of Interest. In this section of the thesis, the repertoire to be worked on, the systematization of appropriate didactic resources, exercises to develop modal listening, and finally the structure and content of the lesson along with the methods to achieve the described activities follow.

**Chapter four**, as the last chapter, presents the experimental study and the analysis of the results of the application of the methodological model.

The conclusion and contributions focus on pedagogical practice that applies a new model for teaching Orthodox Church monody in school.

## **5. Final summaries and evaluation**

I have examined in detail the documents provided by Ilia Mihaylov. After a careful reading of the dissertation, I believe that the defense can be considered successful. The candidate is willing to work and has an extremely high and thorough theoretical knowledge. At the same time, he possesses a proven, and world-class, conducting and creative talent, high motivation and serious ambitions for further development.

The dissertation text has an academic style, being in line with my expectations. It is characterized by thoroughness and is explicitly supported by a wealth of historical and factual evidence. The judgments are justified and precise. The content of the work is easily grasped, stimulating the reader's interest. The individual chapters are analytical and logically interrelated. The style and punctuation are up to the mark, and it should be pointed out that the clarity of the expression precludes any scatter of thought or repetition. Quotations are in their proper places and complement critical summaries without serving as filler to achieve a bloated

volume. As for the score examples, they complement the issues at hand. The diagram on page 34 is also spot on.

On the basis of the foregoing, without having any reservations as to the conceptual apparatus used and the author's competence, and on the basis of the ingenious approach to the presentation and interpretation of the facts, together with the contributions made, **I give my positive assessment.**

## **6. Conclusion**

Considering the importance of the research, I recommend the scientific jury to unite around the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) to Ilija Mihaylov in the professional field 1.3, "Pedagogy of...".

Sofia

October, 13th, 2023.

Submitted the opinion:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Veselin Karaatanasov  
Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"