

Opinion

by Prof. Dr. Ognyan Nikolaev Konstantinov,

Lecturer at the Faculty of Theory at the National Academy of Music
"Prof. Pancho Vladigerov,"

on the dissertation of Evgenia Petrova Vitanova
entitled "Specifics of Working with Children's Musicals in Preschool
Groups of Kindergartens"

for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the
professional field 1.3 "Pedagogy of Music Education."

The dissertation submitted by Evgenia Petrova Vitanova, a part-time PhD candidate under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Ganka Nedelcheva-Boyanova, is the subject of this opinion. The topic of the dissertation is "Specifics of Working with Children's Musicals in Preschool Groups of Kindergartens." The PhD candidate has provided all the necessary materials for participation in the procedure – dissertation, abstract, CV, and a reference for meeting the scientometric indicators.

Biographical Data:

Evgenia Petrova 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 at the Vocal Faculty and Theoretical Faculty of the National Academy of Music "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov." Subsequently, she completed Master's degrees in "Music Pedagogy" and "Innovations in Preschool Education" at Shumen University "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski," as well as a Master's degree in "Primary School Pedagogy" at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski."

Her professional realization as a music pedagogue is substantial, including pedagogical activities both in Bulgaria (National School of Music "Lyubomir Pipkov," 54th School "St. Ivan Rilski," various kindergartens) and in South Korea. This background suggests that the PhD candidate possesses the

necessary knowledge and practical experience to make accurate conclusions, assessments, and recommendations in her dissertation.

The submitted **reference for meeting the scientometric indicators** shows that Evgenia Vitanova meets the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB).

Evgenia Vitanova's **dissertation**, titled "Specifics of Working with Children's Musicals in Preschool Groups of Kindergartens," is well-organized and structured, consisting of 165 pages. It includes an introduction, a description of the abbreviations used, four chapters with numerous subsections, a list of contributions, three appendices, and a bibliography.

In the introduction, the PhD candidate presents the objectives of the work and the resulting tasks (e.g., the development of the musical genre, the evolution of children's musicals, the systematization of Bulgarian stage productions resembling musicals, the classification of genres suitable for adaptation into preschool musicals, the introduction of non-traditional children's musical instruments). The subject of the dissertation is the work with children's musicals in kindergartens, while the research object is the presence of children's musicals in the repertoire of preschool-aged children.

In the first chapter, Evgenia Vitanova traces the development of the musical genre over the years, highlighting some significant and foundational works in the genre (pages 9-11). The PhD candidate organizes and systematizes Bulgarian works in the genre, paying particular attention to children's musicals (pages 12-14). She discusses the similarities and differences between operettas and musicals (page 13) as well as the presence of children's musicals in the repertoire of Bulgarian theaters and vocal formations. I find subsection 1.2.2, which examines children's musicals as part of the educational process in kindergartens (pages 17-21), to be of particular importance. This is an undeniable contribution. Evgenia Vitanova analyzes the ways to transform various genres into children's musicals, emphasizing the necessary involvement of the pedagogue in genre adaptation. Thanks to her pedagogical experience, the PhD candidate provides conclusions and recommendations (pages 31-32) and discusses certain challenges in organizing and conducting the rehearsal process.

In the second chapter, the PhD candidate examines in detail the stages of preparing a musical in kindergarten. All aspects of the teacher's work are discussed – choosing a suitable piece, possible genre transformation,

auditioning and analyzing the piece with the children, casting roles, working on stage blocking, and stage movement and behavior. Based on her extensive pedagogical experience, Evgenia Vitanova offers optimal solutions even for seemingly minor issues, such as obtaining informed parental consent (pages 52-53) or how to bow and exit the stage (pages 75-76). The analyses and comments made, as well as the solutions proposed by the PhD candidate, make this chapter particularly important to the dissertation, with undeniable contributions.

The third chapter of Evgenia Vitanova's dissertation is devoted to the instruments, costumes, and sets used in children's musicals. I find the classification of Bulgarian children's musical instruments-toys (pages 81-82) particularly important. The PhD candidate excellently argues the need for these instruments-toys in children's musicals and in the educational process in kindergartens. The chapter also lists non-traditional and Far Eastern instruments used in children's musicals. I believe that the advice given by Evgenia Vitanova on purchasing and making musical instruments-toys, sets, and costumes will be useful for kindergarten teachers.

In the fourth chapter of the dissertation, Evgenia Vitanova conducts a pedagogical experiment related to the staging of the musical "The Missing Martenitsa" in Kindergarten No. 72 in Sofia. Using two groups of children – an experimental and a control group, as well as classical and unconventional research tools (surveys, image cards, picture tests, etc.), she convincingly proves her hypothesis that well-chosen children's musicals, adapted from other genres, significantly enhance children's musical concepts and abilities, and increase their desire for active involvement in music. Numerous tables, as well as maps and symbols used in the experiment, are included.

The dissertation also includes **three appendices** listing well-known musicals, directors, and actors, terminological clarifications, photo materials of children's instrument-toys, performance programs, and original scripts and songs.

Evgenia Vitanova identifies five main contributions in her dissertation, four of which I fully agree with. I find the formulation "digital audio fairy tale" to be insufficiently precise.

The bibliography includes 24 titles, as well as 22 websites and digital platforms.

The abstract is 41 pages long and has the same structure and organization as the dissertation. The PhD candidate presents the most important aspects of the research in the individual chapters.

Conclusion

In summary, I can confidently state that the dissertation of Evgenia Vitanova, titled "Specifics of Working with Children's Musicals in Preschool Groups of Kindergartens," has undeniable contributions. Of particular importance is the chronology of Bulgarian musicals and children's musicals, as well as the practical and methodological model for working with children's musicals in kindergartens, proposed by the PhD candidate. This model will undoubtedly help in the daily pedagogical practice of music teachers in kindergartens.

I am convinced that the scientific supervisor, Prof. Dr. Ganka Nedelcheva-Boyanova, played a significant role in the PhD candidate's successful work.

In conclusion, I confidently recommend that the esteemed scientific jury award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the professional field 1.3 "Pedagogy of Music Education" to Evgenia Petrova Vitanova.

Prof. Dr. Ognyan Konstantinov