

Assessment Report worked out by the Supervisor

Zhang Wanshu: Diploma Concert

Supervisor: Mgr. et MgA. Markéta Štefaniková

Opponent: MgA. Petr Špaček, Ph.D.

After completing her Bachelor's studies of pop music singing in China and after graduating from a Chinese University, Zhang Wanshu was enrolled in the follow-up Master's Study Program offered by the Music Department and focused on Teaching at Secondary Schools. The above mentioned educational background was connected with different singing technique fundamentals and with a different cultural environment, and furthermore with the absence of experience with acoustic presentations of singing performances and with a different way of studying new compositions. These factors had a strong impact on the Master's studies and made the process of meeting the requirements of this study program much more demanding. At the beginning of Ms Zhang Wanshu's studies, her voice sounded naturally. However, it was evident that the voice had not been classically trained, and common problems with the voice technique appeared – the absence of the head tone, incorrect breathing, non-singing articulation. During her studies she worked extremely hard, which resulted in her gradually growing awareness of the classical singing technique and with her gradually improving skills.

Zhang Wanshu completed her Master's studies of solo singing with her diploma concert performed to the public. The concert was held on 2nd April 2019 at 6 p.m. in C5 Room of the Faculty of Education of the University of Hradec Králové. The dramaturgy of the concert was adapted to Ms Wanshu's level of singing abilities and skills, her previous singing experience and her technique were also taken into account.

The concert was opened by two Czech folk songs adapted by Jan Malát (*Až já pojedu přes ten les* and *Či to husičky na tej vodě*). The initial nervousness reflected mainly in a decreased breathing support. The concert continued with three songs from the cycle called *Five Shakespeare Songs*, op. 23 by R. Quilter. These songs were performed in a much more self-confident way, which was also connected with the language in which the songs were performed. The concert program continued with three arias performed in the chronological order. The first of them was the arie antiche *Caro laccio dolce nodo* by F. Gasparini, an Italian composer, followed by the aria of Teodata - *Che colpa è la mia* - from the "Flavio" opera by G. F. Händel and then by the aria of Veruna - *Aj, zlý to čas* - from the "V studni" opera by V. Blodek. In spite of the problems with articulation, the arias sounded convincingly, with only minor intonation inaccuracies. From the dramaturgic point of view, the decision to include two Chinese songs in this part of the program could seem rather unusual. Ms Wanshu could give two reasons for such a decision: the relation to the original singing technique and a non-violent transition to the lightened part of the program, in which three pop music songs by the 20th century composers were performed. The final composition – the encore – of the concert was the song *Když mne stará matka* from the Gipsy Melodies cycle by A. Dvořák, which was performed in English.

Ms Wanshu's singing performance was very musical and emotionally rich. When interpreting the compositions, she always knows, despite the language barrier, what she is singing about, and she is able to pass the contents on to the audience. During her really demanding studies, she was constantly hardworking, respectful, and persevering, and she approached all tasks in a very responsible way. I believe that, thanks to these personal qualities, in the future she will be able to remove the shortcomings in her technique (which still appear as the time period available for fixing the newly gained skills has been too short).

The student demonstrated that she is able to work on her voice and that she is capable of getting qualitatively improved. I can therefore conclude that Zhang Wanshu met the requirements for completing this type of studies.

The proposed grading:

Hradec Králové, 8th May 2019

Mgr. et MgA. Markéta Štefaniková