



TRANSILVANIA University of Braşov

HABILITATION THESIS

**CHORUS DIRECTING – EDUCATION, INTERPRETATIVE
PERFORMING, MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RELATIONS**

SUMMARY

Domain: MUZIC

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B. Scientifically and professional achievements and plans for career evolution and development

B.1. Scientifically and professional achievements

The Habilitation thesis *CHORUS DIRECTING – education, interpretative performing, management and human relations*, aims at presenting my own professional, scientific and academic achievements, as well as drawing the main directions of evolution and development of my academic career. The purpose of this theoretical approach is to acquire the attestation certificate and to recognize the author's quality of conducting doctoral works.

1. University and professional course previous to being conferred Doctor in Music title

I graduated from the University of Timisoara at the Faculty of Music and from the *Ciprian Porumbescu* Music Conservatory in Bucharest.

Since graduating from the faculty, I have been a professor of musical education in pre-university education and a professor of vocational education. From 1990 to 2011 I was director of the Arts and Music High School in Braşov and a specialized school inspector. In university education, I was an associate professor of the Faculty of Music in Brasov, between 1990 – 1996, 2010 – 2012 and a title professor from 2012.

In the conducting activity, nationally and internationally, I am the conductor of the ASTRA Choir, founding member and president of the Romanian Coral Choir Association, member of the Board of Directors of Chorus Association *A Coeur Joie-International*, and founding member of the *Balkan Coral Forum*.

3. Scientific and professional achievements ulterior to being conferred Doctor in Music title

If the realization of the doctoral thesis was a moment of creative synthesis of the professional preoccupations, the period that followed this approach of my scientific research was an opening and deepening towards four syncretic directions: didactic activity, interpretative-conducting activity, vocal- symphonic and cultural management.

3.1. Didactic Activity

3.1.1. Multiple valences of the musical education

Musical education is the instructive-educational process of forming the skills and abilities of perception and knowledge of reality by means of sound images by semantic decoding of the musical language inserted into the written text of the score, and / or audible reception.

The content of the bachelor's and master's degree programs is aimed at educating educators with a complex musical and psychological pedagogy capable of actively engaging, gradually and continuously, at all stages of the formation of elements of musical language in the individual's consciousness, from pre-school to in high school

3.1.2. The formative valences of the musical language

Music education is an art of human valences that promotes, with a formative role, fundamental aesthetic values that express the truth, the good and the beauty and mainly address affectivity, emotion and feelings.

3.1.2.1. The virtues of music / arts in achieving school excellence

A model personality has an existential structure of equilibrium, in which, in a complementary form, interconnected the intellectual-rational, brain-related coordinate with technical abilities and skills, with the artistic-irrational, affective, capable of authentic emotional experiences.

The fact that Transylvania University promotes and sustains a dynamic cultural life in two exceptional spaces – the Aula Magna and the Multicultural Center – is the proof of understanding the position and the determining role that artistic education has in shaping human personality and school excellence.

3.1.2.2. The Virtues of Music / Arts in Preventing Disengagement and School Abandonment

In most situations, the human being, faced with making decisions, thinks cerebrally and decides emotionally. Disengagement and school abandonment are affective decisions whereby a student disappointed that he / she does not find a place in the school, abandons and renounces the benefits that school education can offer to his / her professional training.

Artistic education, with its multiple forms of manifestation – musical, literary, plastic, choreographic, can be a solution for preventing school disengagement and abandonment.

The professional duty of educators is to meet young people with projects and programs that offer them attractive alternative activities; and the duty of the education system and the school institutions is to provide the institutional and logistical framework for the development of these activities.

3.1.3. The role of Coral Directing Discipline in the educational system and socio-cultural life

The coral conducting, as a specialty of the music study program, has as a general objective: the theoretical, pedagogical, psychological and practical training of students for developing the conducting technique, as well as the formation of the psycho-pedagogical, inter-relationship and management skills required in the educational, artistic and musical communication process.

The creativity of the conducting professor should find the most appropriate methods for recovering and developing students' knowledge, abilities and skills in order to prepare the future performer, conductor for the profession's mission to recreate the content of a work addressed, and lead a coral collective in a concert manifestation.

3.1.4. Coral Voice Formation - a determining objective of expressive interpretation

The human voice is the instrument by which the interpreter gives musical expression to his inner feelings, and the choral singing is the collective language of vocal expression of the deepest ideas and feelings of social-human harmony, inserted in the text of the score.

Considering that the requirements of a musical interpretation with artistic valences presuppose the achievement of sonority of unique intonation accuracy and a homogeneous stamp, the formation of the choral voice becomes the priority objective of vocal musical education.

3.1.4.1. Disfunctions of the musical hearing, generator of the false singing

A fair musical intonation with expressive valences is conditioned by three determinant factors: good functioning of the nervous system, manifested by a special hearing acuity, a correct intonation, and a memory capable of retaining and reproducing musical fragments of the most diverse and complex.

False singing is due to dysfunctions of hearing and intonation, determined by genetic (physiological), medical (neurological, psychological) or educational factors.

3.1.4.2. Methods and technics of educating the singing voice

Applying the most appropriate study and vocal training techniques requires educators to have a good understanding of the anatomical physiological characteristics of the human voice, as well as its psychic and temperamental structure – interpretative experience, intelligence and culture.

The formation of vocal, individual and choral culture is a continuous and lasting process, starting from the moment of understanding the mechanism to its conscious assimilation through the progressive formation of vocal technique sensations and abilities.

3.2. Performing, conducting – concerts

3.2.1. Introduction

The choral concerts are artistic manifestations with complex aesthetic messages transmitted to the listening audience. They synthesize the ideological and expressive vision of the composers, filtered and recreated through the conductor's intelligence and sensitivity and expressed through the collective voice of the chorus.

The responsibility of the conductor, as well as the teacher of conducting and music education, is reflected and manifested through the attention he attaches to his position as a re-creative

interface between the universe of the language of creation, inserted into the text of the score and the audience to which it is addressed.

3.2.2. Conducting – concerts

Interpretive and interactive participation in cultural activities – concerts, educational projects, partnerships, master class – represent unique socio-cultural experiences, by connecting the musical and human interpreters to the same musical experiences and musical expressions of spiritual essence.

The interpretative activity as a conductor of the *ASTRA Choir* was manifested by the development of deep, diversified cultural programs, conducted in festivals and partnerships, by *a cappella* or vocal-symphonic concert - presented thematically in the habitation thesis.

3.3. The vocal-symphonic creation, in concerts and master class work

3.3.1. Syncretical dramaturgy of vocal-symphonic creation and interpretation

Syncretic thinking of creation and vocal-symphonic interpretation synthesizes in a unitary whole three elements with complementary semantic implications in the plane of expressivity and musical architecture: *choir, soloist and orchestra*.

The responsibility of achieving a vocal-symphonic interpretation at the level of the professional exigency is primarily the conductor, through a thorough knowledge of the creative approach and the ability to coordinate and maximally valorise the whole vocal-instrumental ensemble.

3.3.2. Expressive resonances of vocal-symphonic creation in the chorus consciousness

Despite the difficulty of studying, which imposes on the chorists an additional effort and a demanding involvement in the rehearsal preparation period, the approach of the vocal-symphonic musical creations represents, for the *Astra chorus*, a primordial repertory preference, offering them special moments of living, because the profound richness of the dramaturgy of creation captivates and motivates their emotional and volitional involvement.

Up to now, ASTRA has performed 80 vocal-symphonic concerts in which it has performed 45 large vocal-symphonic works.

3.3.3. Methodology of approaching vocal-symphonic creation in choral workshops

The approach of a vocal-symphonic creation in a master class workshop is a difficult task. The success of the concert is determined by the musical pedagogical and musical skill, the conductor's managerial personality and managerial virtues, as well as by the feedback of the chorus to the conductor's requests.

Supporting such a masterclass workshop is a cultural richness for performers who have experienced a unique experience, but also for the public.

3.3.4. Interpretative landmarks in Mass C-Dur by Franz Schubert

Franz Schubert's vocal-symphonic creation includes an agreed and preferred repertoire for musical and study availability, accessible to various types of choral formations.

Based on the analysis, presented in the content of the article *Mass in C Major* by Franz Schubert, published in the Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov, the main ideas, guidelines, aiming at the formal structure and the dominant stylistic features that define Schubert's musical personality, refer to the specific interpretation style of *Mass in C Major*.

3.3.5. Vocal-symphonic projects in the study

King David – Arthur Honegger (Symphonic Psalm)

3.4. Cultural Management, Coral Projects and Partnerships

International Coral Festival in Brasov, *Transilvania CorFest*

3.4.1. Cultural, institutional and coral management

The management of intelligence, as well as of cultural heritage values, requires a profound understanding of the intellectual and artistic sensibilities of the gifted persons, and atypical managerial coordination in consensus with the creative aspects arising from their individual evolution.

The diverse and complex activity we have carried out in the field of professional, national and international socio-cultural management has manifested itself through the responsibilities that we have had, as a member of the boards of the international professional associations, in the forums and international cultural symposia.

Another source of managerial experience in terms of institutional management was the position of director of the Art High School in Braşov, specialized school inspector and member of the National Music Commission, art director of specialized competitions and festivals, or member of national and international jury.

Other responsibilities I have paid attention to have been: conductor and organizer of the *ASTRA choir*, president of the *Romanian Coral Song Association*, director of the *Transylvania Coral International CorFest Festival*.

3.4.2. Cultural chorus projects and partnerships

As a conductor of the *Astra Choir*, in the context of my responsibilities in international federations and associations, we have organized and supported international cultural projects, partnerships and international choral exchanges with foreign music formations: England, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Switzerland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, Hungary, USA, and cultural projects and partnerships with choral bands in Romania.

3.4.2.1. Cultural and socio-human valences of choral partnerships

As a synthesis of the benefits and openings that the world's chorus community can make, I want to emphasize that through the partnerships between choruses' formations in cultural spaces and distinct but different socio-political communities one can change the human and political perception of countries and Peoples.

3.4.3. The International Choral Festival - Transilvania CorFest

The International Coral Festival – *Transilvania CorFest*, is designed as a week of choral singing with masterclass studios, concerts, choirs, conferences and tourist activities. Promoted in Braşov, took place in the editions: 1996, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2013, 2015, 2016.

With a program of dense and varied activities, *Transilvania CorFest* has achieved its objectives, managing to provide all participants with an intercultural choral social space and to promote the Transylvania University of Brasov as an international cultural space.

4. Conclusions on the relevance and originality of personal contributions

The relevance and originality of personal contributions, from didactic, managerial, and choir activity, is reflected in the national and international projects, programs, festivals and competitions, to which I contributed.

B.2. Academic career development plans

The personal evolution of the academic career can only be a dynamic process of continuation of the directions and orientations reflected in the previous activity, with creative value accumulations focused on areas of personal and professional interest.

Promoting the heritage values of national culture through specific manifestations at national and international level is part of the priority directions of university career development through teaching, conducting and scientific research. The confidence in the successful implementation of future projects is based on the cultural, didactic, and socio-cultural opening promoted by Transylvania University in Brasov.