

OPINION

by Prof Simo Leonov Lazarov

on a dissertation work for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in a professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art, scientific specialty Music Studies and Music Art, doctoral program

Music Studies and Music Art with author

Kristian Antoniev Zhelev

dissertation title:

Interplay between styles and approaches in drumming in popular and jazz music

Academic supervisor: **Veselin Koychev**

The doctoral candidate Kristian Zhelev graduated in 2013 with a Bachelor's degree in Pop and Jazz Performing Arts, in 2015 he received Master's degree in Percussion Instruments at AMDFA. In 2017 he was enrolled as a doctoral student at the Department of Classical and Pop and Jazz Art, with the academic supervisor Prof Veselin Koichev. Kristian Zhelev knows well the different styles and techniques of drumming. His dissertation is related to performance techniques and different musical styles and the role of the drum in the jazz music and improvisations. The dissertation consists of 128 pages and contains introduction and three chapters, conclusion, reference to the main contributions and to related publications, bibliography of 57 titles and four internet sources. The motivation for Zhelev to choose this topic is to explore the performance techniques and to expand the field of knowledge about percussion instruments. He clarifies his concepts by studying different techniques and styles of performance.

The object of the research in the present dissertation is the modern set of drums and their participation in the jazz performance. The achievement of the main task is to explore in detail and establish the important elements in the traditions of jazz performances. The aims and outcomes of the study focus on approaches and styles in pop and jazz music. The scientific-theoretical and practical-applied aspects outline the relevance of the research. It manifests itself as a detailed examination and justification of the specifics of playing drums.

The historical review in the first chapter reveals the dynamically changing sound environment over the years and the specifics of the use of percussion instruments in jazz music around the world and in our country, as well as familiarization with the stylistic varieties.

The historical review in the first chapter reveals the dynamically changing sound environment over the years and the specifics of the use of the percussion instruments in jazz music around the world and in Bulgaria, as well as learning the stylistic varieties.

The second chapter compares the performance techniques, rudimentary and linear playing using comparative analysis. The author pays attention to the playing techniques and harmonic rhythm, with creative invention and the individual approach leading. The importance of improvisation in

melodic drumming is emphasized here. The melodic approach to drumming is applicable in any style of performance. The rich palette of musical examples contributes to the practical value of the dissertation work, supported by scientific arguments, which make the work valuable, and proves the relevance of its topic.

In this chapter, Zhelev offers an analysis of the performance techniques and the leading factors related to the style and content of the composition and perception, which makes the listener more active in determining the idea and content of the composition. A wide palette of styles is presented, in which the percussion instruments take their proper role. The practical aspect and importance of tuning is analyzed as an important component for the overall sound of the drums. The sequential analysis in this chapter proves that the research methods achieve the set objectives.

The interplay between the different styles, as influenced by the role of the drummers in the band, is explored in chapter three. To a large extent, this is due to the development of their technical capabilities. The interaction between the styles and the used music-making approaches has also been analyzed. As one of the main lines of research, the development of styles in jazz has been traced, along with prominent representatives of the different generations. The biographical description of these artists according to the periods of their music-making also determines the specific nature of the intonation environment. The development of the function of the musical drama as a main and interesting theme helps jazz to reach its peak, and this is described and analyzed in the exposition of the dissertation work.

The author also pays attention to the Bulgarian peculiarities of the development of the jazz art and to the creative achievements of the brightest Bulgarian musicians. The candidate directs the research to such examples where the compositional and improvisational beginning has a certain starting direction. The analytical approach of the researched matter substantiates the goals and tasks of the dissertation work. What gives the research a certain weight is the in-depth study of the author in the analysis of the formation of the specific stylistic and genre features of the musical form in the performed compositions.

The important contributions address the social and cultural features in the emergence, development and refinement of the modern drum set, as well as the specific tuning of the drum set, depending on the interpretation of the different styles. Emphasis is placed on the role of the drummer in a music band and the approaches to playing in various styles of popular and jazz music. New to the music literature in Bulgaria is the section on melodic playing. The analysis of the musical structure, supported by musical examples, proves the scientific approach of the study. The dissertation proves that there is a relationship between the different styles of popular and jazz music and the approaches to playing drums in the band.

Kristian Zhelev writes that “*Approaches in drumming refer to the techniques, methodologies and creative processes used to interpret and perform musical ideas. Contemporary approaches incorporate elements of technology such as electronic drum pads and sampling. Experimental*

approaches push the boundaries of conventional drumming by exploring unconventional techniques, unequal dimensions and avant-garde sounds”.

The contributions of this dissertation can serve to improve the teaching methodology and can support the learning process. The author has conducted a scientifically based research methodology. Analyzing a large number of techniques and ways of solving performance-related problems are the main contributing points. They are related to the standardization of the training methods based on the analysis of performance techniques in pop and jazz music. These qualities of the dissertation work can serve as a basis for preparing a teaching aid in the relevant specialization in drums.

The abstract is prepared in accordance with the requirements and reflects the content of the dissertation in detail. Bringing out the main details of the dissertation work in the abstract, the main goals, tasks and results achieved in the research are emphasized.

Taking into account the above arguments, I consider that Kristian Zhelev fully meets the requirements for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art scientific specialty Music Studies and Music Art pursuant to the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria Act and I propose to the honorable scientific jury that it be awarded to him.

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Prof Simo Lazarov