

## REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Tsvetan Milchev Nedyalkov, NMA "Pancho Vladigerov",  
of a dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"

in: field of higher education 8. Arts

professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art

doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art

**Author:** Marina Ivanova Gospodinova

**Title:** *The Relationship between the Bebop Idiom and the Scat Improvisation in the Musical Language of Jazz Vocalists*

**Academic supervisor:** Prof Borislav Yasenov, AMDFA Prof. Asen Diamandiev

Since I do not know the candidate personally, I will allow myself to mention some facts from her biography that have impressed me. Marina Gospodinova received her musical education at the National Academy of Music "Prof Pancho Vladigerov" in Sofia. Along with her active concert activity, she also works as a teacher in pop and jazz singing at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof Asen Diamandiev" in the city of Plovdiv. She collaborates with many formations and works with the most prominent jazz musicians of Bulgaria, with big orchestras, as well as with foreign musicians. In 2014, she was a special guest on the European tour of the Grammy-nominated virtuoso bassist Juan Garcia - Herreros (Colombia).

Marina is the leader of numerous projects, such as The Golden Years of Jazz, Jazz 'n' Groove Tales, Celebrating Billie Holliday, Bossa Nova-Nova Bossa and many others. Interesting project is her participation in Jazz in Bulgarian (Jazz & Poetry), in which together with the conductor of the Big Band of the Bulgarian National Radio Antoni Donchev, the trumpeter Ventsislav Blagoev and the poetess Maria Doneva, present some of the most beautiful jazz standards with original texts in Bulgarian language. She also has a number of records for BNT and BNR. She takes an active part in the educational project of the trumpeter Ventsislav Blagoev - Jazz for Children.

In 1996, she won the 2<sup>nd</sup> prize for a young performer at the Golden Orpheus International Festival. She started working as a vocal pedagogue in Pop and Jazz singing at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof. Asen Diamandiev" Plovdiv in 2010 and since 2019 she is already a doctoral student at the same academy.

The presented dissertation entitled *The Relationship between the Bebop Idiom and the Scat Improvisation in the Musical Language of Jazz Vocalists* is 180 pages and includes: introduction, four chapters, conclusion, contributions, list of publications, bibliography and appendix. The bibliography includes 20 titles in Cyrillic, 36 in Latin, as well as 12 Internet sources, 141 sheet music examples, 6 photographs and 2 tables.

In the introduction, the author presents her reasons for choosing the topic as:

- striving to enrich the pedagogical experience and accumulate knowledge, allowing to respond to the needs of the trained singer-improvisers.
- starting from both her individual experience of a performer and a teacher, as well as researching literature and music works, to find the connection between the bebop idiom and the scat improvisation in the musical language of jazz vocalists, and to systematize the steps in the training process of modern singers.

From the very beginning, the author presents her very clear and specific idea of regarding the goal set in this research, namely: to trace the relationship between the bebop idiom and the scat improvisation in the musical language of jazz vocalists. To trace the mechanisms for mastering the voice instrument. To draw the relevant conclusions. To prepare a model methodology for vocal scat improvisation.

To achieve the set goal, the doctoral candidate has clearly defined the following tasks:

- Theoretical consideration of the elements of the bebop improvisation and respectively the scat improvisation.
- Introduction to the phrases, sentences and forms characteristic of this music.
- Analyzing the solos of prominent bebop artists and building a process for incorporating this material into one's own expressive possibilities.
- To find the possible application of scat singing in the educational process in higher educational institutions of music, by building a model methodology for scat improvisation.

The research toolkit used in the dissertation is a comparative, analytical-chronological and theoretical analysis based on the empirical experience of the doctoral candidate.

*Chapter one* offers a historical-chronological analysis of the process from the origin of jazz to the emergence of modern jazz (Bebop). Main representatives of the vocal jazz, as well as the types of vocal improvisation, are examined. The concepts of scat and vocalization are defined, in the context of vocal jazz improvisation, as basic means of expression.

The historical-chronological analysis in chapter two focuses on the basic steps for knowing and mastering the voice instrument. The differences in the mechanism of sound extraction in the classical and non-classical styles are examined. In conclusion, the author correctly draws the following conclusion: in order for the singer to freely implement his improvisation ideas, good vocal technique and knowledge of how the vocal instrument works are essential.

I consider this part of the dissertation to be important and essential, which can help specialists to systematize and summarize the accumulated experience and the results of empirical and practical material in the teaching activity.

The core of this research, as well as its main purpose, are found in the *third chapter* entitled *Bebop Idiom - characterization, representatives, analyses*. Using analysis, the author examines the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic characteristics of bebop. She analyses Charlie Parker's solo on his composition *Confirmation*, as well as Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan's scat solos. Vocal

improvisation is examined in the context of bebop and its practitioners, as well as syllable choice. As a result of the musical analyses, the relevant conclusions and conclusions were correctly and accurately drawn: through the theoretical classification and analysis of selected examples from the history of jazz discussed in this chapter, it is shown that this music is knowable and therefore subject to study. Vocal improvisation is examined in the context of bebop and its performers, as well as syllable choice. As a result of the musical analyses, the relevant insights and conclusions were correctly and accurately drawn: *through the theoretical classification and analysis of selected examples from the history of jazz discussed in this chapter, it is shown that this music is knowable and therefore subject to study.*

The last, *chapter four*, considers the possible application of scat singing in the educational process in higher music schools. A model of methodology for scat improvisation has been prepared, including:

- Technical improvement of the voice, through a set of arpeggios, scales, patterns, etc.
- Mastering intervals, scales, old modes, internal scales of harmonic and melodic minor and major, and their relationship to chords.
- Learning and understanding rhythm, pulse, meter, beat and tempo.
- The difference between diatonic and tonal harmony, functionality and tonal centre, through a piano exercise.
- Musical repertoire.
- Mastering assigned musical interpretations, signature solos and etudes addressing specific issues in the bebop language.
- Variability in presenting the thematic material through manipulation of text, rhythm and melody.

I fully agree with the main contributions highlighted in this dissertation, which are as follows:

- Historical tracing of the processes that have led to the emergence of modern jazz (Bebop).
- The main representatives of vocal jazz, as well as the types of vocal improvisation, are examined. The concepts of scat and vocalization are defined, in the context of vocal jazz improvisation, as basic means of expression.
- The steps for knowing and mastering the voice instrument, as well as the differences in the mechanism of sound extraction of classical and non-classical styles are examined.
- Analyses of solos by Charlie Parker, Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan.
- An attempt has been made for a complete and systematized methodological guide in Bulgarian, as well as for studying vocal improvisation using the scat technique.
- The study has theoretical and practical applicability, as a methodical guide, both for singers and for instrumentalists and teachers.

The idea of the presented dissertation work is original and relevant. In general, the work shows that the doctoral candidate has in-depth theoretical knowledge of the specialty and abilities for independent scientific research. In conclusion, I will say that Marina Gospodinova offers for defense a

serious and valuable work, which unequivocally shows her analytical qualities, her ability to systematize in a historical, cultural and functional aspect. She has approached the chosen topic academically and, based on the analysis and evaluation, she was able to accurately formulate the scientific contributions and merits of the work.

Considering all of the above, I give my positive assessment of the presented dissertation work and propose to the respected Scientific Jury to award Marina Gospodinova the scientific and educational degree "Doctor".

25.10.2022

Sofia

Prof Tsvetan Nedyalkov, PhD