

OPINION

by Prof Stela Miteva-Dinkova, PhD

of a dissertation work for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor"

in professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art

doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art

with author: Miroslav Ivanov Turiyski

title: **THE RELATION OF IMPROVISATION TO COMPOSITION, ARRANGEMENT, AND
LINEUP OF THE CONTEMPORARY JAZZ BAND**

Academic supervisor: Prof Veselin Koychev

1. General presentation of the procedure and the materials presented for review

By decision of a meeting of the Department of Classical and Pop and Jazz Performing Arts of the Faculty of Musical Pedagogy of AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" – Plovdiv, held on 8 July 2024, and based on order No RD 27-104 of the Rector of AMDFA dated 11 July 2024, I have been appointed as a member of a scientific jury in a procedure for defense of dissertation work on the topic *The Relation of Improvisation to Composition, Arrangement, and Lineup of the Contemporary Jazz Band*, for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in a professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art, doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art. The author of the dissertation is Miroslav Turiyski, a doctoral student at the Department of Classical and Pop and Jazz Performing Arts of AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" – Plovdiv.

The candidate has presented the following required materials: curriculum vitae, dissertation, abstract, list of publications on the topic, and list of dissertation contributions.

2. Brief biographical data of the candidate.

Dubbed by the media as one of the most virtuoso and unconventional jazz pianists, Miroslav Turiyski undoubtedly ranks among the names of prominent contemporary jazz performers, arrangers and composers. Born in the oldest living city in Europe, his creative path is marked by a certain unconventionality. He finished secondary education at the Model High School of Mathematics "Acad. Kiril Popov" in 1999 and chose the jazz piano as an instrument to continue his life and professional journey. In 2006 he receives Bachelor's degree at National Music Academy "Pancho Vladigerov", Sofia, and in 2012 – Master's degree at AMDFA, Plovdiv. From 1997 until today, he actively participates as a pianist, music director, sideman, band leader in dozens of projects covering all significant jazz festivals in Bulgaria: Plovdiv Jazz Fest, Bansko Jazz Fest, Apollonia, Sofia Music Jam, Burgas Jazz, Varna Jazz Festival summer, Bankya Jazz Fest, Haskovo Jazz Fest and many others. No less impressive is his concert activity abroad, which started in 2004 – music director, arranger-orchestrator and pianist of *Cesar Sampson in Linz*, part of the legendary classical festival in Linz, Austria, Music director and pianist for 3 years in the English show Christmas Crooners with a tour of over 60 concerts in the UK and Ireland. He has numerous appearances at international jazz festivals and stages in Canada, Italy, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Romania, Turkey, Serbia,

Cyprus, Macedonia, Dubai, Morocco, Norway, and Austria. He cooperates with some of the most significant and popular names of the Bulgarian jazz, ethno, pop music.

The beginning of his teaching work at AMDFA was in 2009. In his teaching practice in jazz piano and improvisation, Turiyski strives not only to pass on his knowledge and love for jazz to talented students, but also to arrange for them performances on club stages and festivals.

Miroslav Turiyski composes, arranges and performs music in a wide range of genres and compositions: from jazz combo to symphony orchestra or big band; from jazz, pop-rock to film or theater music. The emblematic ensemble Octet Plovdiv, which he founded, brings together the brightest Plovdiv jazz musicians and enjoys popularity and success.

The "Golden Feather" award for contribution to Bulgarian culture, which he received in 2017, is a recognition of his overall creative activity, its value and comprehensiveness.

3. Relevance of the topic and evaluation of the dissertation work

The dissertation work presented by my colleague Miroslav Turiyski titled *The Relation of Improvisation to Composition, Arrangement, and Lineup of the Contemporary Jazz Band* was provoked by the author's long-term work in the field of jazz art. It is the result of accumulated rich experience from his activity as a composer, arranger and performer, factually reflected in released albums with author's works and hundreds of concerts at home and abroad. The scientific problem of musical improvisation has been addressed by a number of authors in both applied and scientific aspects, but few have linked it and explored its interaction with the composition, arrangement and performers of the modern jazz band. By experimenting with different bands, styles and arrangements, Turiyski places improvisation in a different context and reaches scientific results related to the level of standardization and predeterminedness. The achieved results condition and guarantee the relevance of the presented dissertation work.

4. Contributions and significance of the research and publications on the topic of the dissertation

The structure of the work is formed in accordance with the requirements in: introduction, four chapters, conclusion, scientific contributions, bibliography and 6 appendices with musical scores. The total volume is 145 pages, of which 104 are main text. The bibliography consists of 21 titles in Cyrillic, 24 in Latin, as well as 11 Internet sources.

The object, subject, goals, tasks and hypothesis of the work are clearly presented in the introduction. The research work is closely related to the specific concert activity, which is an essential part of the doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art. Only through practical activity is it possible to establish certain dependencies between the improvisation, the features of the arrangement and the specific instrumental ensemble.

The first chapter presents in detail the theoretical basis or means of expression of jazz improvisation. Principles and terms related to the construction of chords, the connections between harmony, melody and rhythm are commented on, proving that long-term preparation is needed to achieve spontaneity in improvisation. Certain terminological concepts are introduced: substantive chords, layered chords, etc. The exploration of harmonic diversity and the means by which it is

achieved demonstrates an extremely high level of familiarity with the researched issues. The author discusses functional, altered dominant chords, polychords, etc. The presented approaches in harmonizing the melodic line of the well-known children's melody *Sandman* illustrate practically the possibilities of achieving diversity and colourful phonism. The different levels of melodic improvisation and their connection, relevance to the metrorhythm, alternation of tension-release, the placement of irregular accents, change of durations, etc. are explained.

The second chapter examines the realized concerts, clarifying the conceptual creative design of each performance, the participating musicians and the performed plays. It is directly related to the third chapter, which goes into the details of the arranging activity or the essence of the scientific research work through the detailed analyses of a particular piece from each concert.

In the fourth chapter, using three set criteria and their analysis, the author calculates specific percentage ratios of the possibilities for improvisation in the considered musical performances. Thus, the place and dependence of improvisation "*on the complexity of the composition, arrangement and members of the ensemble*" is illustrated. (p.98)

In the conclusion, Turiyski comes to the conclusion that the freedom of improvisation is inversely proportional to the complexity of the composition and arrangement, and also to the number of the performing team, thus proving the scientific hypothesis, also included in the title of the work, that the freedom of improvisation is in direct connection with the composition, arrangement and the members of the contemporary jazz band.

The doctoral student also presents three publications that are related to chapter one of the research. They were published in the periodicals of AMDFA - Yearbook (1 article) and Spring Scientific Readings (2 articles).

5. Conclusion

The dissertation work *The Relation of Improvisation to Composition, Arrangement, and Lineup of the Contemporary Jazz Band* authored by Miroslav Ivanov Turiyski is in full compliance with the legal provisions for the acquisition of the scientific degree "Doctor", the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria and the regulations for its application.

The study with its accompanying six concerts is analytical, valuable, neatly structured with significant scientific and applied scientific contributions in the field of musical theory and performance art.

Appreciating the merits of what has been achieved, I congratulate the author and his academic supervisor, Prof Veselin Koichev, and I propose to the scientific jury to award the scientific degree "Doctor" to Miroslav Ivanov Turiyski in the field of higher education 8. Art, professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art, doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art.

07.09.2024 г.

Reviewer:
/Prof Stela Miteva-Dinkova, PhD /