

OPINION

by Prof Vladimir Vladimirov,
lecturer at AMDFA Prof Asen Diamandiev - Plovdiv,
on dissertation work for awarding educational and scientific degree “Doctor”
in professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art,
doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art.

Title: *Gadulka – acoustic features and modern trends in its sound amplification*
author Peyo Trendafilov Peev, PhD student at AMDFA Prof Asen Diamandiev - Plovdiv,
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The procedure for the abovementioned dissertation work was started after a successful internal defense before the Department of Musical Folklore, held on 28.02.23. Based on a proposal from the department and a decision of the Faculty Council at the Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography (Protocol 7/21.03.2023) I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for the defense of the dissertation work of Peyo Trendafilov Peev on the topic *Gadulka – acoustic features and modern trends in its sound amplification* by order of the Rector of AMDFA Prof Asen Diamandiev - Plovdiv Prof Toni Shekerdzhieva-Novak (No RD 27-32, dated 28.03.2023, Plovdiv). The doctoral candidate Peyo Peev, having completed his doctoral studies, presents his dissertation, abstract, two publications, a list of major contributions, and a resume.

I have known Peyo Peev personally since the mid-1980s. By coincidence, our life paths have intertwined many times, and that is why I have immediate impressions of his creative growth. His professional biography is quite respectable - he works in Folk Music Orchestra of the Bulgarian National Radio, plays with the most prominent Bulgarian folk artists, performs concerts all over the world /incl. for two years with the world-famous dance show Riverdance/. I see that the presented materials do not include his two author's CDs, which in my opinion are exceptional. In 2017, he obtains Master's degree in Performing Art at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Art, and is immediately becomes a part of the team of the Department of Musical Folklore as Gadulka teacher. Thanks to his impressive career, Peev ranks among the contemporary artists who are charting the new directions of Gadulka art.

Artistic and creative doctoral programs, such as this one, are a certain challenge due to the relative equality of the two components – concert and theoretical, and their equal weight in the final result. The chosen topic is distinguished with its relevance and dissertationability, because today the Gadulka is more and more confidently and actively entering the field of world ethnic music. The full acoustic presentation of this traditional Bulgarian instrument in its contemporary creative appearances is of great importance, as professional quality standards are constantly rising, stimulated

by the technical progress of recent decades. The six concerts, part of the doctoral program were at a very high artistic level, and the theoretical research is in essential connection with them and an expression of Peyo Peev's long-term experience. I believe that reaching more performers, the dissertation will greatly help them in their future professional performances on the one hand, and on the other hand it would provoke similar research on other Bulgarian folk instruments. I myself, having some experience in the analysis of the acoustic features of the Tambourine, find that this acts as a stimulus to search for new directions of development. The dissertation work *Gadulka – acoustic features and modern trends in its sound amplification* is an attempt to understand and systematize the main acoustic properties of the Gadulka, the possibilities of sound recording and amplification in different acoustic environments. We can see that the author's personal motivation is clearly expressed: "*the love for Gadulka provokes us to improve it and to discover new horizons in front of its performance artistry*". The scientific methods chosen for the achievement of these goals are: observation, comparison, demonstration, stage conceptualization, analysis and synthesis, interview and interpretation. Their adequate use results in the successful realization of the set tasks and achievement of the goal of the dissertation. The use of spectrograms further verifies the author's theses.

The volume and structure of the dissertation work fully meet the requirements of the law. The six concerts from the doctoral program were performed in accordance with the requirements of the **Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at AMDFA**. It is not by chance that I emphasize these performances, because the regulation in question explicitly states: after the last concert, a public defense of the candidate's achievements as performer and his scientific research is made before a scientific jury. Having personally attended all of Peyo Peev's concerts in my capacity as the head of the department, I can confidently say that they testify to excellent performing skills, bearing the marks of high professionalism and artistic significance. Their uploading on various video sharing platforms continues to generate some interest among the professional folk guild. Through them, the performer Peev managed to show, not only the traditional forms of performance of the Gadulka, but "new paths in the development of the gadulka music and performance, paths based on non-standard compositional invention and so far "untrodden".

The total volume of the research is 115 pages, divided into an introduction, four main chapters, conclusion, contributions, bibliography /73 sources/, appendices.

The **first chapter** offers a brief historical reference regarding the appearance of the Gadulka in our lands, the stages of its popularization, development and improvement. It fills a certain gap in our ethnomusicology regarding the period from the turn of the century to the present day.

The **second chapter** examines the problems related to the main acoustic properties of the Gadulka, paying special attention to its sound generation and sound propagation. The innovations of the luthier Deyan Denchev, which are analyzed in detail are very interesting.

The **third chapter** presents different types of microphones and their role in sound recording and amplifying the Gadulka in different acoustic environment. Various electronic music effects are analyzed and their application to the sound of the instrument is demonstrated. It also gives valuable guidelines regarding the studio and stage work of the performers - Gadulars.

The **fourth chapter** is the main one and presents in detail the practical stage sound amplification of the Guidulka in the six concerts part of the doctoral program. In addition to analyzing the pieces performed, the author here discusses the tasks set before the performer in each concert and the decisions not only for creative and performing approach to each piece, but also for microphone selection and use of electronic effects for each different repertoire and venue.

The candidate Peyo Peev lists the following contributions: the art of Gudulka has been traced from the end of the 20th century to the present day, the main acoustic properties of the Gudulka have been studied, guidelines for sound recording of the Gudulka have been given, methods verified in practice have been proposed for voicing the Gudulka in different acoustic environment, the influence of various types of electronic musical effects on the sound of the Gudulka is described and demonstrated, the traditional construction of the instrument is compared with innovations made by Bulgarian luthiers. I believe that they are formulated correctly and correspond to the content of the work.

I have made critical comments in the process of preparing the dissertation, and my recommendation is that the work be published in order to reach more interested readers. I believe it can be a good basis for further research into the acoustic features of our traditional instruments, which would lead to an increase in their constructive and sound qualities.

The abstract meets the requirements and correctly reflects the content of the dissertation. Publications are directly related to the topic of the research.

In conclusion, I will say that the dissertation work of Peyo Peev, combining an artistic and theoretical part, is a scientific study of considerable theoretical-practical value. It is based on many years of empirical knowledge, refracted through the prism of theoretical judgments, accurate analyzes and logically formulated conclusions, which would give a new impulse to the modern art of Gadulka. I give a positive assessment and propose to the respected scientific jury to award Peyo Trendafilov Peev the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional direction 8.3. Music and Dance Art.

05.06.2023

Assoc. Prof Vladimir Vladimirov