

OPINION

By

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On the dissertation for acquiring the educational and academic degree

Doctor

Academic specialty Music Studies and Music Art

Author:

Angel Dimitrov Simitchiev

Subject:

**Ambient Music from the Periphery to the Center –
Function, Typology and Genre Interactions**

Scientific Supervisor:

Prof. DSc Kristina Yapova

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1. Data on the procedure

The materials and documents presented by Angel Dimitrov Simitchiev fulfill the necessary requirements. The four publications on the topic are referential to the dissertation. All deadlines have been met. The doctoral student demonstrates serious competencies, motivation and a bright author's position in the process of creating the dissertation.

2. Characteristics of the dissertation

The volume of the dissertation includes a total of 142 pages. The structure of the dissertation contains an introduction, an exposition in four chapters, a conclusion and a bibliography. The bibliography covers over 70 cited sources. The discography reviewed and cited includes over 100 musical examples.

The introduction presents ambient as a contemporary musical phenomenon, the goals and methodologies of the research, as well as a description of the work with its

relevance and exposition of the problem. The scope of the study is impressive, referring to works and authors from the entire history of ambient.

In the main sections of the dissertation: Chapter I "An Attempt at Theoretical Research of Ambient Music", Chapter II "Sources of Sound Material and Means for its Treatment", Chapter III "Genre Interactions and Varieties", Chapter IV "Directions, Critique, Potential", The author elaborates on the topics mentioned in detail in the titles.

The academic community has acquired a comprehensive study that traces the emergence and establishment of ambient as a musical phenomenon. Important for the study is the (sub)cultural context, the predecessors and inspirations of the genre, as well as the fundamental role of Brian Eno in building its philosophical and aesthetic characteristics.

A key starting point of the dissertation is the tracing of the connections between instruments and studio practices. The transformation of the studio into a musical instrument, the experiments in the field of electronic music, the selection and treatment of software and hardware instruments in real time or in post-production, orient us not only in building the specific ambient sound, but also in the mechanisms of its creation. The individual approaches that the author of the dissertation points out help us to orient ourselves in the variety of author's decisions. The subcultural affiliation of the composers engages us in building their own line of interpretation in the many sub-genre branches of ambient. Attention is paid to the interactions and influences that occur in both directions between the ambient and other musical and non-musical tendencies. These examples prove the important strategic choice of ambient practitioners: its multicultural, inter-genre, cross-media, interdisciplinary approach. These qualities lead to various practices that go beyond musical conventions and develop experimental forms of existence.

In the context of these features, Angel Simitchiev outlines areas of comprehensibility that help us navigate in a rich environment of examples, technical terms, authorial concepts and manifestos, constantly updated definitions. The author meticulously guides us in the different sonorities, moods, instrumental-technological approaches or in the specifics of live performance.

3. Main contributions of the dissertation

The dissertation has indisputable contributions to the systematization of information about the musical phenomenon ambient. The doctoral student offers a competent evaluation through which to read its characteristics. The work historically positions the practices and tendencies of the ambient. The contribution of the dissertation is significant for the development of an in-depth and analytical view of this musical genre. Of great interest are its commonalities beyond the music art, finding its role in

the film industry, video games, various software and multimedia products and in various forms of contemporary art.

The dissertation represents an impressive volume of information for future research projects to those that would dedicate their efforts to such kind of musical practices. The author acquaints us with compositions and authors of the history of ambient music and one is impressed of the combination between history and actuality of the denoted examples. The dissertation is a valuable scientific and theoretical research, with high public, social and creative significance. The doctoral student emphasizes the role of ambient in the formation of an alternative community that needs funds to show its social and political gesture, to express its social reflection, to embody the conceptual quests of marginalized communities. Rebellion, alternative, sound escape, musical buffer, subcultural structure, experiment, musical philosophy are key words for the interpretation of ambient and their degree of importance is properly deduced.

Beyond the theoretical qualities, it is necessary to note the specifics in the presentation of the instrumental and technological methods for creating ambient music. As a practicing performer, the author of the dissertation demonstrates his knowledge and personal experience in the field. Angel Simitchiev's professional experience is the solder that gives the dissertation the basis for full understanding.

4. Conclusion:

I find Angel Simitchiev a diligent and creative professional. He successfully integrates his rich knowledge and experience in an ambitious, thematically and structurally complex project, such as his dissertation. I am impressed by the large amount of work that has been done. The dissertation gives the impression that nothing has been missed. The work is richly supported by examples, an abundance of cleverly used terminology and references. I support the work, the structure of the dissertation is logical and with a specific density due to the committed position of the author, as a practitioner in the field.

I recommend the future publication of the dissertation in paper or electronically accessible format.

In conclusion, I recommend to the esteemed members of the scientific jury to vote positively for awarding of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to the doctoral student **Angel Dimitrov Simitchiev** in professional field 8.3. "Music and dance art".

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Venelin Shurelov

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