

OPINION

By Prof. Dr Daniela Andonova

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On the dissertation

Of Gergana Dimitrova Kostadinova

PhD student at the Institute of Art Studies, BAS

On the subject:

Between Classical Music and Jazz: Stylistic Interactions and Genre Transformations in Bulgarian Music in the Late 20th and Early 21st Centuries.

For the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty musicology and music art, professional field 8.3

Gergana Kostadinova graduated from the National School of Music “L. Pipkov” in Sofia with a degree in piano and NAM “Prof. P. Vladigerov” where she graduated from two faculties: piano and sound engineering. In 2018 she also graduated in Pop and Jazz Piano at Academy of Music, Dance and Visual Arts “Prof. A. Diamandiev” in Plovdiv.

Concert activity of the doctoral student was very active. During her studies Gergana Kostadinova took part in many concerts and master classes. She won scholarships to several summer music academies where she actively participated: San Daniele Piano Meeting (Italy, 2011), Wiener Music Seminar (Austria, 2010), International Summer Academy Prague Wien Budapest (Austria, 2009). Between 2012 and 2022 Gergana Kostadinova gave concert performances in various cities in Bulgaria and abroad. She has released three albums of original music - "Glows" (2022), "Fulfilled Moons" (2021) and "A Day of a Lifetime" (2020). This part of Gergana Kostadinova's biography is a prerequisite for her to know very well the stylistic specifics of contemporary classical music and jazz, which becomes the focus of her dissertation study.

As a full-time PhD student at the Institute of Art Studies - BAS she participated in the Youth Scientific Conference "Art and Context" (2021) and the International Conference "Art Studies Readings" (2019 and 2018). She has published in Bulgarian Musicology (2021), Art and Context (2021), and Art History Readings (2019 and 2018).

Since September 2022, she has been a lecturer of compulsory piano at the National School of Music “L. Pipkov”.

The chosen topic for the research in the Dissertation of Gergana Kostadinova is extremely interesting, rarely touched upon so far and is very topical for the development of contemporary music. The theme of symbiosis between different genres is absolutely in the context of globalism, in the context of the existing global phenomena of interaction between styles and trends not only in music, but in all fields of different arts. The emphasis is on the artistic ideas generated by the desire to go beyond the typical stylistic boundaries and their new transformations in different interactions. The work historically explores the search of many not only musicians, but also artists in the various arts in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries to create new aesthetic spaces.

The dissertation is very analytical, thorough, has a large scope of works and is incredibly comprehensive in detail. It has scientific value for our musical life because it explores the work of entirely Bulgarian composers. Virtually all the works of almost all the composers of jazz in Bulgaria in the 20th century are studied. This is a huge study with a significant contribution to Bulgarian musicology. For the first time in Bulgaria it analyses the stylistic features of composers and performers in Bulgarian jazz music of all generations. Their works, albums, recordings, and concerts are examined. The dissertation is 202 pages long. It includes 61 music examples and four appendices. The bibliography comprises 145 titles. From specially conducted conversations and interviews by the doctoral student, the work shares the personal aesthetic searches of composers such as Lyubomir Denev, Antoni Donchev, Angel Zabersky Jr.

In Chapter One, "*Stylistic Interactions in Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Century Music. Problematics and Terminological Aspects*" the historical foundations of the interaction of classical and jazz in the works of Ravel, Satie, Debussy, Stravinsky, Copland, Hindemith, Darius Milhaud, in the theatre music of Pancho Vladigerov, in the music of Gershwin, Bernstein, etc. are examined. This proves the interest of several generations of great names in the history of music in jazz and the tendencies to move out of the familiar stylistic spaces of contemporary classical music.

The two-way study of the symbiosis between classical music and jazz is of interest in this work. On the one hand, the influence of jazz in 20th century classical works, and on the other hand, the reflection of all trends in 20th century music in purely jazz works and music-making. For example, atonality, serialism, dodecaphony, aleatoric, sonoristic, minimalist influences, etc. The periods of development and stylistic trends in jazz music since its inception are studied in detail: big bands and swing music, combo ensembles and jam sessions, be-bop, various currents in modern jazz - cool jazz, modal jazz, free jazz, the third movement, ethno-jazz, etc.

Chapter two focuses on jazz music in Bulgaria and the manifestations of the synthesis between classical music and jazz. The development of world trends and their influence in Bulgarian music are comprehensively studied. The works of several prominent Bulgarian musicians in the field of jazz are analyzed. The interest of major Bulgarian artists in opening this new horizon for classical music is reflected. Special attention is paid to the theatrical works of Pancho Vladigerov. Interesting is the study

of his stage works, in whose music elements of the intonational and metrical basis of the African American dances keikook and shimi are used, as well as the interwoven musical expressive means and elements of jazz music, for example the piece Foxtrot (1925) for piano. Works by Bencien Eliezer: Fantasia for Piano and Symphony Orchestra (1962), in which the symbiosis between classical music, jazz and folk, are also explored. An interesting example is also explored in the work of Ivan Spasov: Confrontation - Music for Friends (1967) for string quartet and jazz quartet, which uses aleatoric as a compositional technique. A bright touch is the study of the work of Milcho Leviev. A highlight of this chapter is the tracing of the development of the musical in Bulgaria as a genre.

The study highlights the importance of the post-1989 period, in which several generations of outstanding composers worked and continuity in the new trends of symbiosis between classical, jazz, folk and modern compositional techniques of the 20th century continued.

The summary of several characteristics of the Bulgarian jazz of the late 20th - early 21st century is a contributing point in the dissertation: the increasing number of compositions in the direction of fusion and ethno-jazz, the establishment of jazz in theatre and film music, the use of more and more electronic instruments and electronics.

The third chapter "Bulgarian musicians of the late 20th - early 21st century. Creative Appearance and Works" focuses on the characteristics of the authorial style of the artists, who practically built a new sound environment based on the interaction between classical music and jazz. Impressive is the number of artists included, both from the generation that had leading positions in the 1980s and the younger.

Their oeuvre has been explored, representing a considerable body of new work not previously analyzed. This contribution is of great significance for understanding the development of musical trends in Bulgaria in the post-1989 period and for learning about new artists and works. It summarizes the characteristics of Bulgarian jazz from the late 20th - early 21st century, as well as the development of the festival and club scene into much freer forms, and the development of recording possibilities. The phenomenon of jazz concerts included in traditional long-standing classical music festivals is taking on an increasingly large scale and is indicative of the tendencies of symbiosis and mixing of many genre characteristics in modern times. For example, in the festivals "Apollonia Arts Festival", "Pianissimo", individual concerts mixing so-called classical and jazz - for example "Baroque and Jazz", "Symphony Jazz", the concert for 4 pianos "Jazz meets Classical", etc.

In summary:

Gergana Kostadinova's dissertation is a very thorough and comprehensive study of a world trend that has also found development in Bulgarian music, namely the interaction of the means of expression between classical contemporary and jazz music, the symbiosis between different genres and types of art. This issue adds a bright touch to the contribution of the research, to its relevance and significance. For

our musical life the work is utilitarian, with a special benefit because it explores Bulgarian music and authors. The range of the large number of artists from different generations and their works is impressive. The study explores and summarizes the specific features of their style. Also of interest in this scholarly work is the conceptualization of the terminological apparatus, with its reliance on the term of the so-called 'third current'. The essence of the term is examined, as well as what went into its creation and, subsequently, its juxtaposition with other contemporary terms used to describe the interactions between different musical styles such as crossover, fusion, world music, etc. In the present dissertation, for the first time, the interviews with the Bulgarian musicians Lyubomir Denev, Antoni Donchev, Angel Zaberski-son, and Dimitar Bodurov with their opinions on the manifestations of the stylistic interactions in music are published. The discography of the last few decades is studied: complete albums, various concert, and studio recordings of Bulgarian musicians.

The dissertation can have a very wide practical application among musicologists, students, and educators of secondary and higher educational music institutions. It provides much insight into the peculiarities and stylistic interactions in Bulgarian music of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, as well as detailed characterization of each of the musicians analyzed individually.

From all that has been said so far, considering the articles that the PhD student has published, I believe that the presented dissertation *Between Classical Music and Jazz: Stylistic Interactions and Genre Transformations in Bulgarian Music in the Late 20th and Early 21st Centuries* is of scientific value, topical and giving a wide range and versatility of the studied issues. All requirements of the law have been met. Therefore, with absolute conviction, I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award Gergana Dimitrova Kostadinova the educational and scientific degree of **doctor** in the scientific specialty Musicology and Musical Art, professional field 8.3.

Prof. Dr Daniela Andonova