

OPINION

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Regarding dissertation work for awarding educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in Higher education field 8. *Arts*, Professional field 8.3. *Music and Dance Art*, doctoral program Musicology and Music Art.

Author: Alia Sahl Hanse

Topic: Theoretical and analytical aspects of the unity between poetry and music in the solo art songs of Ivan Spasov.

Academic supervisor Assoc. Prof. Plamen Nikolaev Parvanov

General presentation of the procedure and the doctoral candidate

I have been appointed a member of the scientific jury to supervise a procedure for the defense of a dissertation work on topic ‘Theoretical and analytical aspects of the unity between poetry and music in the solo art songs of Ivan Spasov’ authored by Aliya Sahl Hanse, for obtaining educational and scientific degree “doctor” in Higher education field Arts, Professional field 8.3 Music and dance. The author of the dissertation is Aliya Sahl Hanse – full-time doctoral student at the Department of Classical, Pop and Jazz Performing Arts, AMDFA “Prof. Asen Diamandiev”. She has presented a set of documents (on paper and on magnetic media) related to the procedure for the defense of the dissertation, as well as 3 publications related to the topic of the dissertation. I have no remarks on the submitted documents and materials.

Alia Hanse is a talented young professional. I had the opportunity to follow her development from her first days on the student bench until now. Her serious training in conducting, combined with several years of successful and highly regarded work with different orchestral and choral groups, her teaching work, her diverse interests and her inherent dedication, outline the contours of her professional and personal portrait. At the same time, with the present dissertation she proves herself as an in-depth researcher, able to understand in detail the issues under consideration and to summarize on the basis of logical arguments, serious theoretical basis and empirical accumulations caused by her various professional activities.

Relevance of the topic

Indeed, the relevance of the present work is determined by “the unceasing research interest in the composers of the XX century and in particular in Ivan Spasov”, in the words of the candidate. On the other hand, so far the Bulgarian musicology has not exhausted the topic of the composer's vocal works in theoretical and analytical terms. Aliya Hanse manages to prove the need to present and study the chamber vocal genre, determined by the personal affinity of the composer to it, through which one can understand the views, beliefs and worldview of the artist.

The relevance of the work is complemented by the fact that the present dissertation examines applied and pedagogical aspects of the solo and ensemble interpretation, especially through the offered deeply meaningful interpretations of the artistic and ideological imagery, embedded in the verbal impulse of the musical transformation in the works of Ivan Spasov. Tracing and analyzing the trinity “poetic text – vocal part – accompaniment” reveals new aspects of the contemporary chamber ensemble practice and supports the conscious apprehension in the reproduction of works of the XX century. The results from building the dissertation on this genre of Spasov's musical heritage complement and put on a new level the knowledge of his work, the compositional means he uses, his overall perception of the world, the intimate specifics of chamber solutions, the conscious selection of “elements rich in expressive qualities” [p. 155], the ability to define the abstract essence of the poetic content through the means of music.

Knowledge of the problem, characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation and contributions

I am impressed by one of the main motives of Aliya Hanse regarding the choice of topic, namely - that the study of the personality of Ivan Spasov “gives a broad perspective for the development of abstract thinking and the manifestation of analytical skills in scientific writing” [p. 4]. The ability to capture the essence of the conceptual constructiveness, the psychological substantiality of the creative thought, the briefness of the artistic expression, the specific selectivity to the poetic concept, the aphoristic nature of the song opuses of this so recognizable composer, is inherent only to a person with an innate sense of extracting the essential, such as the candidate. And since the analyzed subject is multi-layered and is associated with manifestations of various artistic means in different arts, the complexity of the problem increases, and hence the importance of the scientific research.

Each part of the dissertation demonstrates the in-depth knowledge of the candidate Hanse on the research object. Already in the first chapter Ivan Spasov is discussed as a composer in the context of the musical culture of the XX century. The precise definitive concretizations regarding the different compositional trends and the conclusions regarding the tangents to the composer's work represent a serious, wide-ranging musical-theoretical basis on which the whole scientific work is constructed. The detailed “unraveling” of the attitudes, preferences, worldview of Ivan Spasov and his life philosophy in the second chapter, create the prerequisites for maximum “deciphering” of his ideological and creative approach in the chamber vocal genres. Particularly valuable from a musician's point of view are the literary “dissections” of the poetic sources in chapter three, as well as the formulation of the synthesis between the two arts – poetry and original music – as a serious premise for reasoning and analyzes. The focus of the study in chapter four is on the dramaturgy of the works and the ways in which it is realized in order to conclude that there is a “conscious pursuit of perfection in art” [p. 94]. The intellectual reflectivity of the musical expression and the means used, inspired by the set textual imagery, are captured.

The dissertation work *Theoretical and analytical aspects of the unity between poetry and music in the solo art songs of Ivan Spasov* provides an opportunity for further performance, artistic and creative and theoretical research in various directions. The bibliography of the used literature contains a significant number of diverse sources (113), on which the theoretical and methodological arguments are based. The scientific merits of the work are in combination with a clear readable style and a perfect balance between strict terminology, a high degree of competence and a well-constructed, light narration. The objective set at the beginning of the dissertation is brilliantly fulfilled. The contributions are formulated with extreme specificity and I would say - very modestly.

Assessment of the publications, author's abstract and the personal contribution of the candidate

The candidate presents 3 publications on the topic of the dissertation. The articles are copyrighted and published in refereed journals. There are theoretical formulations, clarified in detail in the dissertation work, concerning Ivan Spasov works for chamber formations, and in particular - the solo art songs. The abstract is 47 pages and accurately and clearly presents the entire scientific research in a synthesized but comprehensive form. Based on the reviewed documentation, scientific publications, dissertation and abstract, I believe that the research in

this paper is entirely the work of the doctoral candidate and we can assume with certainty that the dissertation of Alia Hanse is her own work.

Recommendations for future use of the dissertation contributions and results

I would recommend this work to be officially published. In addition to giving diverse perspectives for further performing, artistic and theoretical studies on the chamber works of Ivan Spasov, the publication would help a wider range of performers in their preparation for concert realization of his works – towards deeper understanding of the poetic imagery of the considered works, full comprehension of the musical language and means of the composer, insight into the innermost intimacy of his creative thought.

Conclusion

As part of her studies, the doctoral candidate has carried out a significant amount of research and scientific work. A large amount of material is synthesized, on which valuable original results and reliable contributions are obtained. The dissertation shows that the doctoral student Aliya Sahl Hanse has in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty "Musical Art" by demonstrating qualities and skills for independent research. In the presented work there are scientific and scientific-applied results that represent a contribution to science and meet all the requirements of the Law for the development of the academic staff in Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulation for its implementation, and the Rules of AMDFA "Asen Diamandive". The presented materials and dissertation results fully comply with the specific requirements of the Faculty of Music Pedagogy, adopted in connection with the Regulations of AMDFA for application of LDASRB. Considering the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the scientific work presented in the dissertation, abstract, results and contributions, and I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree Doctor to Aliya Hanse in Higher education field 8. *Arts*, Professional field 8.3. *Music and Dance Art*.

I congratulate Aliya Hanse for the serious and in-depth scientific development. I also congratulate her academic supervisor Assoc. Prof Plamen Parvanov for the successful guidance and the achievement of the impressive end result.

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Prepared by:
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