

## OPINION

by Prof. Dr. Milena Shushulova-Pavlova, lecturer at the New Bulgarian University,  
Department of Music - professional field 8.3 Music and dance art,  
on the dissertation work of **Aliya Sahl Hanse**  
doctoral student at AMDFA „Prof. Asen Diamandiev” – Plovdiv  
Faculty of Music Pedagogy, Department of Classical, Pop and Jazz Performing Arts  
with academic supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Plamen Parvanov, PhD, on the topic:

### **THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL ASPECTS OF THE UNITY BETWEEN POETRY AND MUSIC IN THE SOLO ART SONGS OF IVAN SPASOV**

*for awarding educational and scientific degree DOCTOR*

in Professional field 8.3 Music and dance art,

#### **Biographical data**

Aliya Sahl Hanse graduates the National School of Art „Panayot Pipkov” in Pleven. In 2012 starts her training in conducting in the Master's program of Academy of Music Dance and Fine Arts „Prof. Asen Diamandiev” Plovdiv. In 2017 she graduates as a conductor. In 2012, she becomes post-graduate student and actress in children and youth theatre performances at A'part Theater Studio. In 2016 she starts conducting practice at the Academic Opera Theater of AMDFA „Prof. Asen Diamandiev” under the supervision of Prof. Toni Shekerdzhieva-Novak and Assoc. Prof. Plamen Parvanov. She was awarded Second Prize in the 16th Academic Competition „Johann Sebastian Bach and His Contemporary“ (2016) in the category „Piano (compulsory instrument)” and First Prize in the category „Chamber Ensembles“ as conductor of the Vocal Ensemble „Pro belcanto“ at Academic Opera Theater. Actively performs as a conductor of „Pro belcanto“, the Symphony Orchestra of National School of Music and Dance „Dobrin Petkov“ and as a director of productions: *Bastien and Bastienne* by W A Mozart (2017); *The Gambler* (Il Giocatore) by Luigi Cherubini, which was included in the first Chamber Opera Festival in Sofia (2019); *Ba-ta-clan* by Jacques Offenbach with the premiere for Bulgaria and participation in the second Chamber Opera Festival, Sofia (2020). On 15.09.2020 she is appointed as an assistant lecturer at AMDFA „Prof. Asen Diamandiev” in the Department of Classical, Pop and Jazz Performing Arts. She actively participates in the „Spring Scientific Readings“, International Scientific Conference at AMDFA „Prof Asen Diamandiev”, and has published articles in the academic cultural-information periodical Art Spectrum. She is also conductor of the Evmolpeya Girls Choir; Boys' Choir „Stefka Blagoeva“ (both formations are in Plovdiv) and Male Chamber Choir „Panagyurtsi“, from Panagyurishte.

## **Content of the dissertation work**

The dissertation was discussed and proposed for public defense at a meeting of the Department of Classical, Pop and Jazz Performing Arts at AMDFA „Prof. Asen Diamandiev”, held on 16.03. 2021. It contains a total of 242 pages, which include: introduction, four chapters<sup>1</sup>, conclusion, bibliography, contributions, three appendices: (interviews with Vasilka Spasova, Roxana Bogdanova and Zornitsa Petrova; Musical scores<sup>2</sup>); list of scientific publications on the topic of the research and used literature (containing 113 titles).

The **first chapter** offers an overview of literature containing studies of the musical culture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (world and compared with the Bulgarian), as well as the work of Ivan Spasov as part of it. It presents publications, opinions, reviews and critiques on the vocal and vocal-instrumental work of Ivan Spasov. The **second chapter** focuses on the composer Ivan Spasov. It draws a portrait of the artist (from the point of view of the candidate), and makes periodization of his vocal and vocal-instrumental works, using mainly the personal publications of Ivan Spasov, which are like his confession. In the **third chapter**, the doctoral candidate analyzes the poetic texts used by the composer; the influence that the composer achieves through them, refracted through the personal perceptions and ideological and aesthetic values, principles and approaches of Spasov. It reveals the composer's attitude to poetics. The **fourth chapter** contains verbal and musical analyzes based on the trinity text-voice-accompaniment of all songs of the genre, in chronological order, systematized and theoretically interpreted. As a result of the analyses, the author comes to conclusions, which reveal a wealth of ideas and the path of development in their artistic realization by Ivan Spasov.

The appendices to the work contain interviews with Prof. Vasilka Spasova, Prof. Roxana Bogdanova and Assoc. Prof. Zornitsa Petrova, as well as musical scores of unpublished songs - „Four songs for soprano and piano“ on lyrics by Dimcho Debelyanov; „Four Songs for Soprano and Piano“ on lyrics Nikolai Liliev; „Five Poems by Apollinaire“; „For whom do the bells toll“ after Ivan Zdravkov; „Four Songs for Soprano and Piano“ on Paul Eluard and „Triptych by Emily Dickinson“.

## **Precisely formulated goals and objectives of the dissertation**

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<sup>1</sup> **Chapter One.** Literature review (1.1. Some important processes and phenomena in the context of the world music culture of the XX century; 1.2. Bulgarian music culture and composers of the XX century; 1.3. The composer Ivan Spasov in the aspect of the music culture of the XX century; 1.4. Literary review in the context of vocal and vocal-instrumental music in the works of Ivan Spasov - Vocal-instrumental work. Acapella spirituals. Choral works. Art songs. Summary and conclusions). **Chapter Two. Portrait of the artist** (2.1. Basic life positions and creative view. 2.2. Periodization of the works. Summary and conclusions). **Chapter three. Analyzes of the poetic material in the solo art songs of Ivan Spasov** (Summary and conclusions). **Chapter four. Musical analysis of the songs for voice and accompaniment in the works of Ivan Spasov** (4.1. Solo art songs - overview.4.2. Analysis of the musical structure - Early solo art songs of Ivan Spasov. The development of the genre in the 1960's. Solo songs from 1970s. Characteristics of the construction and themes of the works from the 1980s and 1990s Summary and conclusions).

<sup>2</sup> Four Songs for Soprano and Piano (1957); Four Songs for Soprano and Piano (1962); Five poems on Apollinaire for soprano and chamber orchestra (1968); "For Whom the Bells Toll" - Triptych for Soprano and Piano (1982); Four Songs for Soprano and Piano (1982); Triptych for soprano and piano (1992).

The **relevance** of the present work is determined by the research interest in the composers of the XX century and in particular in Ivan Spasov. The **motive** for choosing the topic is the personal interest of the candidate in the development of the chamber vocal genres in Bulgarian music. The **object** of analysis are the solo art songs for voice and accompaniment in the works of Ivan Spasov. The **subject** of the research is the specifics in the verbal, dramatic and technological peculiarities in the construction of the song scores of the composer. The inseparable unity between poetry and music in the genre of vocal lyric, manifested through his personal worldview. The **objective** of the work is to systematize the genre of solo art song in the works of Ivan Spasov. To make theoretical developments on the works. To publish some of the yet unpublished solo songs, in order to have practical applicability and to increase the performers' interest in them. The set tasks are determined by the set objectives: research of the place and significance of the solo vocal works in the work of Ivan Spasov; chronological presentation of the solo vocal genre in Spasov's work; an attempt of periodization of his works; analyzes of the poetic material and of the solo art songs of Ivan Spasov.

### **Significance of the researched problem in scientific and scientific-applied aspect**

Vocal works take up a central place in the work of Ivan Spasov, which are contributory to our cultural heritage. The difficulties in working with the composer's work are also due to “... *the refusal of tonal thinking, made in the first creative decade, is a shake-up of unnecessary shackles, an act on the basis of which the equality of 12 tones is perceived as a kind of liberalization in the transformation of the compositional elements*” (quote of the candidate), which places more demands on the theorists. The research **methods** of the doctoral student are theoretical-cognitive and analytical. The dissertation work has no ambition to look for new concepts, based on already established ones. The study presents the solo songs, inspired by the word for their musical construction. In this context are borrowed terms inherent to the literature. The approach in their interpretation is justified from the point of view of the semantic content of the texts. The author discusses some aspects of the interaction between voice and accompanying instrument (most often piano or chamber ensemble), as well as their subordination to the poetic text. The work does not exhaust all possible research aspects of the chosen object, because “*The composer's style is characterized by subjectivism and a bright personality, revealing the most intimate and personal ideals in his worldview, stemming from the connection between his life and career. His music is a kaleidoscope of light and dark shades, of movement and statics, of excitement and calm. With his original ideas, non-standard means, measured sensuality and philosophical depth, the great composer breathes life into his works*”. (quote of the candidate)

### **Knowledge of the state of the problem and correspondence of the used literature**

The doctoral candidate has reached some conclusions about the lyrical vocal work of Ivan Spasov: “*The artistic level to which Spasov raises the musical interpretation of the poetic text in his solo songs is remarkable. The line of the voice comes from the natural speech, enriching the expressiveness of the*

*words with a fine sense to details. The organization of the musical means of expression fixes intonations and breaths according to the image-emotional state in the chosen artistic text. The rhythm arrangement is also dictated by the logical speed of expression and the corresponding energy. Thanks to the constructive qualities of the voice part, the meaning and the message of the text inevitably come to the fore and crystallize the image. A symbiosis has been achieved". (quote of the candidate)*

### **Correctness in quoting a representative number of authors**

Aliya Hanse is correct in her quotations. She uses as basis a bibliography on which she has built and proved her thesis.

### **Contributions of the dissertation work**

1. This is the first complete and systematized presentation of Ivan Spasov's art songs for soprano and accompaniment.
2. The research is the reason for the publishing of previously unpublished works of the genre, kindly provided from the archive of the composer, kept by Prof. Vasilka Spasova.
3. For the first time the repertoire for solo soprano in the composer's works is systematized.
4. The study has practical applicability. Many of the songs have been analyzed and presented for the first time, emphasizing their importance in order to continue the research and performance interest in them.
5. The study specifically of the verbal sources used by the composer suggests their highly artistic role and their significance for the works and the personal attitude of the composer to the poetic art.
6. The work includes interviews that contain useful advice in interpreting the artistic work of Ivan Spasov: with the conductor Prof. Vasilka Spasova, the pianist Prof. Roxana Bogdanova and the performer Assoc. Prof. Zornitsa Petrova.

### **Assessment of the compliance of the author's abstract with the main provisions and contributions of the dissertation.**

The abstract corresponds to the dissertation and correctly conveys the nature of the doctoral thesis.

### **Personal qualities of the author (if the reviewer knows her)**

I have no personal impressions of Aliya Hanse.

### **Publications on the topic of the dissertation**

The doctoral student has enough publications on the topic:

1. Hanse, A. *Characteristic compositional and stylistic features in some of the works of Ivan Spasov from the period 1965 - 1970*. In: Spring Scientific Readings 2018 – AMDFA “Prof. Asen Diamandiev”, Plovdiv: 2018, pp. 107 - 112.
2. Hanse, A. *The solo vocal work of Ivan Spasov in the period 1953 - 1963*. In: Spring Scientific Readings 2018 - AMDFA “Prof. Asen Diamandiev”, Plovdiv: 2019, pp. 19 - 27.
3. Hanse, A. *The individual approach of the composer Ivan Spasov to the verbal text in his solo songs*. In: Collection of reports from 2<sup>nd</sup> International Scientific Conference “Science, Education and Innovation in the Field of Art”, Plovdiv: 2019, pp. 140 - 147.

### **Opinions, recommendations and comments**

I have no specific recommendations. In conclusion of this REVIEW, I will finish with the following assessment: The work of the doctoral student corresponds to the scientometric requirements for acquiring the educational and scientific degree Doctor, according to the Law for the development of the academic staff of the Republic of Bulgaria.

The dissertation work of Aliya Sahl Hanse, doctoral student at AMDFA „Prof. Asen Diamandiev” – Plovdiv, Faculty of Music Pedagogy, Department of Classical, Pop and Jazz Performing Arts, with academic supervisor Assoc. Prof. Plamen Parvanov, PhD, on the topic: **THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL ASPECTS OF THE UNITY BETWEEN POETRY AND MUSIC IN THE SOLO ART SONGS OF IVAN SPASOV**.

The dissertation work, together with its scientific and practical contributions, as well as its publications, I consider sufficient to give my positive assessment and to propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree Doctor in professional field 8.3 Music and dance art, to **Aliya Sahl Hanse**, according to the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

10.05.2021, Sofia

Prof. Milena Shushulova-Pavlova, PhD