

OPINION

by Prof Alexander Vasilenko, PhD

Department of Piano
Theory, Composition and Conducting Faculty of the
National Academy of Music “Prof Pancho Vladigerov”
on a dissertation on a topic

**The piano in the solo piano and chamber-ensemble works of Ivan Spasov
(theoretical and interpretative aspects of the keyboard articulation)**

for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in
Professional field 8.3 - Music and Dance Art

of **Dimitar Yuliyarov Nakov**

AMDFFA “Prof Asen Diamandiev”- Plovdiv
Faculty of Music Pedagogy
Department of Piano and Accordion

I will start my review with a quote from the conclusion of the first chapter of the dissertation:
“The solo piano and chamber ensemble of Ivan Spasov analyzed so far reveals to the performers a broad creative territory, covering a wide variety of works of different form, scale and content. The richness of instrumental ensembles poses to the pianist high challenges related to sound adaptation to individual instrumental compositions, as well as a good knowledge of their timbre, register and technical features. On the other hand, the piano performer must master the ability to enter into different roles in different works - solo, partner, independent of other performers (in chamber works with an aleatory organization), unifying, coloristic, complementary”.

I refer to this finding because the dissertation work is artistic and creative, with a strong performance focus; therefore, I consider it appropriate to point out at the beginning that the doctoral candidate has convincingly, competently and with the influence of an engaging stage presence, undoubtedly achieved the interpretive tasks indicated by him (I am convinced in this - videos are available on YouTube). The respectful size and variety of the six concert programs, putting the performer in very different situations, is an extremely serious professional challenge, overcoming which logically equips the doctoral candidate with the necessary competence to conduct in-depth and reasoned theoretical research on the topic of the dissertation.

The dissertation consists of 168 pages and contains: introduction, three chapters, conclusion, contributions, bibliography (with an impressive list of 95 titles) and two appendices (containing interviews with seven leading performers of Ivan Spasov's music, as well as a description of the personal concert performances in direct connection with the topic of the dissertation). The content is well structured and balanced, with the second chapter logically being most detailed and specifically focused on the subject of the research – keyboard articulation. The author's abstract is 57 pages and relatively clearly reflects the overall text of the dissertation. My only remark is directed at the excessive (as it seems to me) volume set aside here for the general, predominantly overview part, describing and explaining the specifics of the different types of piano articulation.

I consider the decision to choose exactly keyboard articulation as the subject of the research as successful. This choice, on the one hand, is convincing and clearly argued - articulation is presented as an important aspect of the interpretation, and in particular in the piano work of Ivan Spasov; the problems of articulation in this author, as noted by the candidate, are relatively poorly and peripherally studied in existing previous publications; and, finally, the focus on the abovementioned means of expression, so characteristic of musical language, such as articulation (in itself and in connection with other musical textural elements), gives the research purposefulness, concreteness and clear semantic support. The author convincingly and competently, demonstrating excellent orientation and general vision on the piano texture of the numerous and diverse works such as genre, construction and purpose, groups the various articulatory elements. Using numerous musical examples, he makes both localized from the specific fragment, and summarizing conclusions, and his first-hand experience as performer gives him the opportunity and solid reason to comment on various problems arising in the process of interpretation - not just at the ascertaining level, but in the form of concrete sharing of experience and offering practical solutions.

The contributions of the dissertation are clearly presented and grouped according to the theoretical (1 - 6) and executive (7 - 10) part. However, it seems to me that points 3, 4 and 5 overlap in a sense and could, following logic, be merged into one.

In conclusion, based on my above impressions, I strongly recommend that the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 8.3. Music and dance art, be awarded to Dimitar Yuliyarov Nakov.

