

OPINION

by Velislav Zaimov,
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National Academy of Music "Prof Pancho Vladigerov"
member of the scientific jury, appointed by order of the rector of
AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" No RD - 27 - 015 OD, 26.01.2024,
for awarding the scientific and educational degree "DOCTOR
in professional field 8.3 - Music and Dance Art to

Guo Rui

for her dissertation

Universal and National in the Piano Music of China in 20th Century

Guo Rui studied in China, initially at Harbin University. In 2016, she received a Master's degree from the Harbin Conservatory and since 2017 she has been a piano teacher at the instrumental faculty of the same conservatory. In 2019, she also taught piano at the college in YIbin - the province of Harbin. Since 2018, she has been accepted as a member of the Professional Piano Committee of the Chinese Heilongjiang Musicians Association. From 2021 to 2024, she is a full-time doctoral student at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof Asen Diamandiev" with scientific supervisor Assoc. Prof Velislav Karagenova. During these years she participated in numerous concerts and festivals. Guo Rui has also received several awards: in November 2021 in Prague, Czech Republic – at the ART-DUO International Music Competition for violin and piano duo – second prize; in June 2022 in Zagreb, Croatia - at the International Competition for Young Musicians - second prize; in July 2022, she received a gold medal as a participant in the violin and piano ensemble at the International Competition for Music, Dance and Visual Arts "Orpheus Talents". Guo Rui is the author of articles and scientific publications, mainly on the Chinese music, which have been published in specialized editions.

Guo Rui's dissertation work *Universal and National in the Piano Music of China in 20th Century* contains an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a list of contributions, a list of references, and a list of publications related to the work. The literature used contains sixty-six titles from Chinese sources translated into Bulgarian, six from Bulgarian, one from English and three electronic.

The relevance and significance, as well as the object of the study, are defined in the Introduction. A brief historical background is given here on the development of the Chinese music in the twentieth century and the influence of the Western European professional music, which attracted the attention of the Chinese musicians "*with its different appearance, sensibility and great expressive possibilities of the piano instrument*".

Chapter One: "The Piano as a Factor in China's Sociocultural Life" is a historical survey of the entry of the European musical culture into China, beginning at the early seventeenth century. Along with the appearance in China of the first European instruments such as the clavichord, organ and piano, music education based on European traditions also began.

Chapter Two: *Emergence of the Piano Musical Culture in China - (1915-1949)* is devoted to the first piano works created during this period by Chinese composers. The initial compositions for the piano were strongly influenced by European examples, but gradually the tendency to create a Chinese national style and to combine it with the compositional ideas of European composers, mainly from the nineteenth century, intensified. He Lutin's *Cowherd's Flute* has been hailed as “*the first piano piece in Chinese music with a distinct, mature Chinese style*”. The decisive role played by the Russian musicians Valentin Shilov - pianist, N. Dmitrievskaya - theorist, F. G. G. Arzamon - theorist and composer, G. Diliziev - conductor, Al. Tcherepnin – pianist and composer. The marking of these historical data has its significance, as it is related to the first steps of a new professional musical culture.

In **Chapter Three: *Piano music in the period (1949-1976)***, the doctoral student dwells on the time of great rise of the Chinese musical culture, including the piano music. European-educated Chinese composers created works with a national sound, mainly based on the Han Chinese tradition. Here, the figures of **Ding Shande** (1911-1995) pianist, composer and theorist, student of Wolfgang Frenkel, Nadia Boulanger and Arthur Honegger and **Wang Lisan** (1933-2013) – composer and theorist stand out. Examples of the most striking piano works of this time are given. This chapter also deals with the decline caused by the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and the consequences of this period on music in China and also on the whole cultural life.

The final, **Fourth Chapter: *Chinese Piano Music after the Reform and Opening-up Policy (1976-present)*** describes the kind of revival of the Chinese music. It is connected with the opening of new higher schools and the appearance of new names in the Chinese music, who freely combine the European principles with the Chinese traditions. A special place is devoted to the suite *Long and Short* by Quan Jihao, which, according to the author, takes a pivotal place in the development of the Chinese composer school.

The whole dissertation indicates that Guo Rui has a very good musical and general culture. She knows in detail the matter on which she writes and manages to follow the development of the Chinese music from a professional point of view. Moreover, by analyzing the Chinese piano music, she sheds light on the entire Chinese musical culture. I find her work a valuable contribution to their theoretical legacy. I strongly suggest to the honorable jury that Guo Rui be awarded the educational and scientific degree of Doctor.

