

REVIEW

by Prof Ivan Stoyanov Dimitrov, PhD

Department of Pop and Jazz Art

National Academy of Music "Prof Pancho Vladigerov"

professional field 8. 3. Music and Dance Art

on the dissertation of

Kristian Antoniev Zhelev titled

Interplay between styles and approaches in drumming in popular and jazz music

for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor"

professional field 8. 3. Music and Dance Art

doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art of

Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts

"Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv

Academic supervisor: Prof Veselin Koychev, PhD

Brief biographical data of the candidate

Kristian Zhelev is born on 19.02.1989 in Kardzhali. In 2008 he completed secondary education in a class with intensive music studies - majoring in piano at "Cyril and Methodius" Secondary School, Plovdiv. In 2013 he receives Bachelor's degree in Pop and Jazz Piano at AMDFA, in the class of Miroslav Turiyski, and in 2015 he obtained Master's degree in performance art Pop and Jazz percussion instruments at AMDFA, in the class of Ivan Enev. In 2017 he enrolled as a doctoral student at the Department of Classical and Pop and Jazz Art, with scientific supervisor Prof. Veselin Koychev.

The artistic work of the candidate includes:

The name of Kristian Zhelev is actively present on the Bulgarian music scene with appearances in a number of jazz festivals and music forums in collaboration with prominent performers such as: Vasil Petrov, Magi Alexieva - May, Karageorgiev Quintet, Plovdiv Octet, the rock band The Legends. He also participates in musicals and productions of the State Opera Plovdiv.

The recording work of the doctoral student includes appearances on albums by Milcho Leviev, Magi Alexieva - Mei, Veselin Koichev and Tsvetan Nedyalkov, Plovdiv Octet, Georgi Hristov, Dimitar Blagoev and Hristo Minchev. At the same time, he composes music for films: *Free, Freer, Dimitar, Frozen Kingdom* - a film with live music performed by the BNR Orchestra.

Zhelev's concert work includes numerous performances in music clubs in the country and tours with some of the most popular names on the Bulgarian music scene - Orlin Pavlov, Vasko Vasilev, Dimitar Karnev, Angel Zaberski, Viki Almazidu, Antoni Donchev, Georgi Kornazov, Velislav Stoyanov, Milen Kokusharov, Vladimir Karparov, Petar Salchev, Alexander Lekov,

Ventsislav Blagoev, Miroslav Ivanov, Nikolay Karageorgiev, Miroslav Turiyski, Dimitar L'olev, Martin Tashev and others.

General description of the presented materials

The dissertation is structured in **introduction, three chapters, conclusion, reference** to the contributions of the dissertation, **CV, scientific publications** on the topic and a bibliography.

The dissertation is **105** pages and the text includes **4** figures and **14** sheet music examples.

The abstract is **47** pages, and its structure and content are in accordance with the dissertation. The bibliography contains a list of **61** sources, of which **3** in Cyrillic, **54** in Latin and **4** internet sources.

Goals and objectives of the dissertation work

The dissertation focuses on the study of the different approaches in playing percussion instruments in jazz and pop music, directly related to the process of improving the drum set.

The **subject** of the dissertation – the wide use of the drum set in the modern musical environment and revealing the interaction between the different trends in the popular and jazz music, as well as an analysis of the different techniques of performance.

To achieve the goals of the research, the following **methods** are used: **analysis** and **synthesis** of information and literature on the specific issue and empirical research method.

Chapter one of the dissertation, offers a 27-page chronological research starting from the earliest records of the appearance of the drums "set" and the initial attempts of instrumentalists to play the big drum not in the usual way until then with sticks, but with a pedal, which gives rise to the use of the "set", which is a collection of different percussion instruments, each of which has its own history and exists independently long before the appearance of the "set". This chapter focuses on the social and cultural characteristics of the African and the Latin American influences on the development and refinement of the modern drum set. The author also mentions the convergence of the African-American rhythm and blues and the Anglo-American honky-tonk (country) music, leading to the emergence of a new distinctive style dominating the popular music in the United States.

In the **second chapter** of the dissertation, the author focuses on certain performance techniques that characterize the different approaches to playing drums, related to the transformation of the technical exercises into a playing style, introducing us in detail to tuning the instrument, dynamics, sticking and linear playing.

The rudimentary and linear playing, within the musical phrase, are outlined. Both theoretical and practical techniques for so-called melodic drumming and its realization are illustrated. The performance technique related to the reflection of the melody is examined, with special attention being paid to the importance of improvisation in melodic drumming.

Based on his extensive professional experience as an instrumentalist, the candidate emphasizes the importance of tuning the drum set, depending on the interpretation of the different music styles, and asserts his conclusion that drummers possess a heightened sense of spatial perception that is attuned to the nuances of their surroundings by manipulating the spatial dimensions of sound, exploring the interplay between loudness, timbre and resonance.

Chapter three, which is 42 pages, deals with the performance characteristics and structural aspects of drummers from Dixieland to fusion, related to the development of their technical capabilities, the complexity of rhythms and dimensions, innovations such as drum solos and especially syncopation and the swing feel. The author studies the influence of a number of world-famous drummers such as: **Steve Gadd**, **Billy Cobham** and **Elvin Jones** on the development of percussion art and the evolution of the musical form, which requires not only technical skills, but also a high level of musical understanding, attitude to different styles and responsiveness to the needs of the other musicians during performance.

Contributions and significance of the dissertation

I agree with the contributions listed by the author and I consider a contribution of this dissertation the section related to the melodic drumming, in which the drummers tune the drum set to certain pitches and create melodic phrases, which gives the improvisation the feeling of good musical construction and good interaction between the orchestra players.

The grounds for my positive assessment are also the presented publications of the doctoral student, which I define as corresponding to the subject of the dissertation work.

Conclusion:

The dissertation work of Kristian Zhelev is a complete systematized study in a scientific-theoretical and practical-applied aspect, which examines in detail the specifics related to playing the drum kit in pop and jazz music.

All of the above gives me sufficient reason to give a positive assessment of the dissertation work and I recommend to the esteemed scientific jury to award Kristian Zhelev the scientific educational degree "DOCTOR" in field 8.3. Music and Dance Art.

/Prof Ivan Stoyanov Dimitrov /

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