

OPINION

by Prof Tsvetan Milchev Nedyalkov, NMA "Pancho Vladigerov",
on a dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "**Doctor**"

in: field of higher education 8. Arts

professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art

doctoral program Music Studies and Music Art

Author: Kristian Antoniev Zhelev

Title: *Interplay between styles and approaches in drumming in popular and jazz music*

Academic supervisor: **Veselin Koychev**

Considering the fact that I know and have worked personally with Kristian Zhelev, I must say that he is an impeccable professional and a very talented young musician. It is a great pleasure to work with him because he is disciplined and definitely creative. The professional path of the doctoral candidate began in the city of Plovdiv, where he completed his secondary education in a class with intensive music studies - majoring in piano at the Secondary School "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" in 2008.

As evident from Kristian's autobiography, he has gone through all the necessary educational system to build and has developed as a multi-talented musician and drummer. In 2013 he receives Bachelor's degree in Pop and Jazz Piano at AMDFA, in the class of Miroslav Turiyski. Moving forward in 2015 he finished his higher education with a Master's degree – performing arts Pop and Jazz percussion instruments at AMDFA, in the class of Ivan Enev.

It is impressive that the candidate's performances are numerous and diverse, both in jazz and pop and rock styles. For example: participation in the musicals *Maria from Buenos Aires*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Evita*, *Company*, *Law of the Jungle* – productions of the State Opera Plovdiv. Numerous concerts at prestigious jazz festivals: Katara European Jazz Festival (Doha) with Vasil Petrov; Novi Sad Jazz Fest (Serbia) with Karageorgiev Quintet, Jazz'Bone Festival (France) with Maggie Aleksieva – May, Plovdiv Jazz Fest with Octet Plovdiv, Bansko Jazz Fest and Apolonia with Octet Plovdiv and The Teachers, Sofia Summer Fest with The Legends titled *A Song for Annie*, etc.

The presented dissertation entitled *Interplay between styles and approaches in drumming in popular and jazz music* is a total of 128 pages in the following sections: introduction, three chapters, conclusion, contributions and appendix. The literature and online resources used are a total of 61 titles, and there is a summary of the concerts related to the specifics of the art-creative doctoral studies. According to the candidate, the relevance of his research is manifested in a scientific-theoretical and practical-applied aspect, as it examines and substantiates in detail the specifics and characteristic features of playing drums in pop and jazz music.

From the very beginning becomes clear the author's idea regarding the *goal* set in this study, namely: to explore the styles in Jazz and Pop music, as well as the different approaches to drumming. The scientific thesis of the dissertation is precisely and concretely formulated: *there is a relation between the different styles of popular and jazz music and the approaches to playing drums in the musical band.*

The research toolkit used in the dissertation is a comparative, analytical-chronological and theoretical analysis and synthesis of information and literature regarding the specific issue. An important role is played by the empirical research method, which serves to collect and substantiate knowledge through the means of direct or indirect observation, experience or experiment of the doctoral student.

In *chapter one*, historical moments in the formation and improvement of the modern drum set are traced, at the same time the issue of cultural mixing, which led to the formation of individual styles in jazz, is also discussed. At the end of this chapter, the author very clearly and logically summarizes the several aspects of his research, namely:

- social and cultural features during the considered period are a prerequisite for the creation of the set of drums,

- the presence of cultural mixing leads to the formation of individual styles in jazz.

The *second chapter* presents approaches to drumming. It describes the setup of the set, the different materials for making the drums and their characteristic features related to the sound.

The core of this study, as well as its main purpose, is found in the third chapter entitled *Interplay between styles and approaches in playing a drum set*. Here the author covers the interplay between the different styles, which is directly dependent on the role of the drummer and the performing techniques for drums in the different styles. Here, the candidate presents and then proves his thesis that the evolution of drummers from Dixieland to fusion is related to the development of their technical capabilities, the complexity of the rhythms and the scales in which they play, and their ability to be soloists and band leaders.

I fully agree with the main contributions highlighted in this dissertation.

In conclusion, I will say that Kristian Zhelev offers for defense a serious and valuable work, which unequivocally shows his analytical qualities, his ability to systematize in a historical, cultural and functional aspect. The approach to the chosen topic is academic and based on the analysis and evaluation, he was able to accurately formulate the scientific contributions and merits of the work.

Considering all of the above, I give my positive assessment of the presented dissertation work and propose to the respected Scientific Jury to award Kristian Antoniev Zhelev the scientific and educational degree "Doctor".

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