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Translation from Bulgarian

## **OPINION**

by Prof. Dr. Tsvetan Nedyalkov

about

the PhD thesis on

### **New areas of exploration in 21<sup>st</sup> century instrument invention and its effects on musical composition**

by Liburn Jupolli

for awarding the educational and scientific degree of DOCTOR

in scientific speciality “Musicology and music art”, professional field 8.3 Music and Dance,

The PhD thesis presented is, on the one hand, an in-depth, detailed study of microtonal and spatial instruments, and, on the other hand, it analyses the 10-year presence of the hybrid microtonal and spatial instrument called Octo. Created by the author on the basis of a wide range of medieval, baroque and new instruments invented in the XX - XXI century, it explores how the invention influenced compositional development.

The work consists of 7 chapters, introduction, conclusion, bibliography containing 150 figures, 87 titles in the bibliography. The two main areas of analysis that the doctoral student examines are the microtonal instruments and their influence on the compositional fields and composition techniques developed from the twentieth century to the present day.

As the author himself defines *the object* of his work, it is the principles of invention of the hybrid spatial instrument Octo with predetermined characteristics and developed performing technique. Evident from the very beginning is the innovative spirit, as well as Jupolli’s desire to look for new horizons in areas that turn out to be a challenge for technical adaptation and at the same time have expanded the horizons not only of composition but also of perception. The *objectives* and *tasks* are precisely and concretely formulated. As regards the *methodology*, it is based on psychomusical, philosophical, *musicological* and art-related literature on the

researched problems, as well as on the doctoral student's own practical experience and experimental work.

*Chapter one* describes the collection of general information and topics related to the creation of Octo. In my opinion, one of the important ideas present in this chapter, as the author himself defines it, is - "the need to understand and invent instruments is an integral part of creating music, and the ability to compose music is strongly influenced by the possibilities the instrument offers". Many concepts have been commented and clarified here, such as: electrical and electroacoustic, digital strings, microtonality and new microtonal instruments, spatial music, etc. The relevant conclusions are drawn at the end.

The genesis and the idea of creating the hybrid microtonal instrument Octo are at the centre of the work in *Chapter Two*. The reasons and motives for the creation of the new invention are definitely clarified, as well as the setting system, the design of the fingerboard, the concept of the reverse "fretboard" and the body of the instrument. It should be noted that like in the conclusions in the previous chapter, here the doctoral student also defines the specific contributions.

*Chapter Three* presents the work related to the creation of the practical hybrid Octo notation system. The possibilities for creating new scales and mode systems have been increased with the use of 31 tones within one octave. The various maqams and other Asian scales that may be performed in Octo have been studied.

Curious and interesting are the performance techniques in *Chapter Four*, which are possible when playing this new instrument. In general, they are a compilation of the ones existing hitherto, used on a number of western and eastern stringed instruments.

*Chapter Five* examines the spatial and timbre control with Octo, which is accomplished by manipulating the sound characteristics with external amplification or other external timbre manipulation equipment. In other words, an eight-channel instrument with eight output channels was invented, which made it possible to partition each string into a separate amplifier. I fully agree with the contribution here, i.e., that the idea of a more extensive study of timbre has been extended by using separate effects for each string.

The author's pursuits in the field of composition leads us to the three original works written for "Octo" and discussed in *Chapter Six*. The new instrument is used as part of a chamber ensemble and as a solo instrument with electronics and external effects.

This PhD thesis is definitely of a contributive nature, but I would like to highlight some major achievements that I think are the most important:

- An eight-channel Octo instrument with eight output channels was invented, which made it possible to partition each string into a separate amplifier.
- The idea of a more extensive study of the timbre has been expanded by using separate effects for each string and creating a notation registration system.
- A spatial notation method has been developed for Octo.
- Joint performance on the hybrid instrument Octo in different ensemble formations has been experimented.

The PhD thesis is characterized by a high degree of authenticity and originality. The author's opinion in the process of the mentioned analysis is well substantiated and defended.

In conclusion, I give my positive assessment of the presented PhD thesis propose to the esteemed Scientific Jury to award Liburn Jupolli the scientific and educational degree of Doctor.

24.10.2020

Sofia

Prof. Dr. Tsvetan Nedyalkov

*I, the undersigned Venceslava Mishlyakova hereby certify the truth of the translation made by me from Bulgarian language to English language of the enclosed document Opinion. The translation consists of 3 pages.*

Translator:

