

REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Borislav Alexandrov Yasenov

AMTII "Prof. Assen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv

About: Dissertation for the award of the educational and academic degree

“Doctor”, in the field of higher education 8. Arts, professional field 8.3.

A doctoral degree in Musicology and Musical Art.

I have been appointed by Order No 3-RK-86 of 06.01.2022 of the Rector of New Bulgarian University, Sofia, as a member of the scientific panel for the procedure of defence of the dissertation: “THE ROLE OF A FLUTE SOLOIST IN THE XVIII, XIX, XX CENTURY: A COMPARISON ABOUT QUALITIES AND EXPECTATIONS” for an award of the degree of *Doctor* in the field of higher education, professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Arts, PhD programme “Musicology and Musical Art. The author of the dissertation is Mirna Mlikota-Dizdarevic - a doctoral student in the free form of study at the Music Department of NBU, with research supervisors Prof. Dr Luisa Sello and Prof. Dr Milena Shushulova-Pavlova.

The set of materials provided to me includes the following documents: autobiography, dissertation, abstract, scientific publications and a list of concerts.

It is with great pleasure and joy that I acquaint myself with the creative achievements and ventures in the scientific sphere of fellow flautists, who are fortunately becoming more and more numerous. Each research contributes to the enrichment, development and improvement of the skills and competencies in flute art in various aspects - performing, methodological or philosophical-aesthetic.

Mirna Mlikota-Dizdarevic graduated from primary and secondary music education with a Summa cum laude. She continued her studies at the Music Academy in Sarajevo (with flute teacher prof. Sakib Lacevic), where she obtained her Bachelor’s degree in 2016 and her Master’s degree in 2018. In 2019 she completed a second Master’s degree at the Academy of Music in Ljubljana, in the class of prof. Matej Župan. She participates in many masterclasses and works with renowned flautists such as Chantl Zupan (with whom she completed her third academic year as part of the Erasmus Mundus programme in Ljubljana), Marina Horak, Pierre-Yves Artaud, Trevor Wai, Orlando Vallee, Philippe Alain-Dupré, Damian Krajačić, Karl-Heinz

Schutz, Rafael Leone, Ana Domančić, Boris Previšić, Luisa Cello (with whom she completed her 2017-2018 academic year, part of the Erasmus+ programme in Trieste). She was awarded the Golden Badge of the University of Sarajevo for outstanding artistic success. She has participated in many national and international competitions. Since 2018 she has been a PhD student at the NBU, Sofia.

The doctoral student is an active performer. Mirna Mlikota-Dizdarevic has performed in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovenia and Italy. She has played at festivals such as Sarajevo Chamber Music Festival, Majske svečanosti, Zeničko proljeće, Grad, Flautistra, Baščaršijske noći, Flautissimo, Flute & Me, etc. In 2019 she founded the trio Flavia - flute, violin and viola, and since 2021 has been a member of the flute ensemble Le agane, founded and directed by Prof. Dr Luisa Cello. Mirna plays the flute, piccolo flute and traverso flute. Her concert activity involves both solo performances and various chamber ensembles and orchestras. The flautist's extensive repertoire includes works from baroque to contemporary music.

The paedagogical work of M. Mlikota-Dizdarevic is linked with the Academy of Music in Sarajevo, where she holds the academic position of assistant professor of flute at the Department of Wind Instruments and Accordion.

The PhD student participates in the Young Scientific Forum for Music and Dance, Sofia, 10-11 October 2020 year – an annual conference of New Bulgarian University with international participation, with a paper on “Music in Virtual Reality”.

The dissertation is dedicated to the flute performance, to which the author adopts a philosophical approach, sharing personal her experience as a flautist. The information presented covers an extended period in the historical development of musical art from the Baroque era to the present. It describes deductively the general characteristics of music and forms in particular age, through famous composers, their works for flute, and contains a comparative analysis of characteristic features of interpretation in a given era and our own time. Due to the consideration of the extended period and the bulkiness of the material, the study cannot provide in-depth, detailed attention to elements of specific issues. Virtually every problem covered has been studied and elaborated on in detail by colleagues in our country and abroad.

What impressed me was the clear, precise and well-presented content. The reflections on the thesis of the dissertation show personal insight, profound knowledge and attitude to the subject matter. The information presented will help enhance the knowledge and skills of young, emerging flautists and

give them a guiding light and clear direction for their development. It will encourage them to achieve high professional results. It will enrich the competencies of music educators. The preceding determines the contributory nature of the dissertation.

The work meets the requirements of a thesis. Mirna Mlikota-Dizdarevic has systematised a vast amount and high quality of content using the deductive method and descriptive, theoretical - related to the psychology of perception and performance, stylistic interpretation and analysis, comparative analysis, as well as empirical.

The object of study is the role of a flautist as a soloist in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, examined in historical and contemporary aspects.

The subject of the study is the art of flute performance from the Baroque era to the present today - issues concerning stylistic and interpretative aspects, repertoire, personalities, advantages and disadvantages in socio-cultural aspects, performance and technology.

The research aims to examine and apply performance approaches to achieve stylistic, adequate interpretation, preserve musical art's essence and artistic value, and further the knowledge and methodology of teaching. The doctoral thesis concerns combining classical styles in stage performances with new technology-based possibilities to innovate in the arts.

The tasks that the doctoral candidate sets are:

- tracing and comparative analysis of the role of the flute soloist from the 17th century to the present day;
- to provide a historical overview of the technical development of the flute and characterisation of the types, as well as innovations related to the instrument, in evidence of the inextricable link between instrument, performer and composer;
- an examination of the problems in the contemporary performance process, the positives and negatives arising from digitalisation and technological advances;
- to present the most critical flute schools and flautists chronologically and the flute works during the periods under consideration;

- analyse the advantages and disadvantages of socio-cultural, performance and technological aspects imposed by the epidemiological situation in recent two years. Finding opportunities and approaches to preserve and improve the artistic value of the musical product in these difficult conditions;

- in sociological terms, to conclude the nature and role of flautist-performer-soloist in the historical perspective from the Baroque era to the present day

- to pay attention to the treatment of the old styles - original "authentic" or contemporary, in the context of the traditions, aesthetic taste and culture.

The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a list of contributions, publications and concerts related to the doctoral thesis (8 concerts, with links and one publication), bibliography (16 sources and 69 web pages).

The introduction is a philosophical and aesthetic overview of the development of musical art over the centuries, the influence that changes have had on the use of the instrument in musical practice, the place of the flute, and the approaches of the flautist performer following the demands of the times. The problem of modern technology, the virtual world, and reality has a positive or adverse impact on the artistic process, respectively, on musical art. The influence of various factors that musicians are directed to recording activity, building their career in the online space is cited as a negative. Still, it also brings benefits in terms of more significant opportunities for widespread access to the art of music. In the context of his reflections, the dissertation asks topical existential questions related to the survival and development of musical skills and the possibility of preserving its artistic value in the virtual world, losing the live emotional contact with the audience. This is the most valuable contribution of the dissertation. I would venture to add that, realistically speaking, the innovative product is complete with its presentation and reception by the listener. The live connection between performer/creator and audience is a dual emotionally charged aspect with many positives in the creation process! These are the questions that motivated the doctoral candidate to write this thesis, making a comparative analysis between past and present, examining the musical art, and in particular the flute as emergence and refinement of the construction of the instrument, works, stylistics in different eras, composers, flautists, etc.

The first chapter, "Historical Development of the Flute," chronologically examines the emergence and refinement of the flute at the most critical moments in its development. The following are covered: French, English and German flute schools. Some of the iconic personalities who contributed to the perfection of the instrument, from the Baroque era to the present day, J. P. P. Otter, P. Büffarden, J. J.

Tromlitz, Ch. Nicholson, T. Böhm, the modern achievements of A. Cooper, E. Kingma and her system, R. Dick and his invention of the glissando-labia on the instrument's head. The types of flutes are classified and described in their characteristics, the attitude of composers and flautists to new developments in construction and the qualities of the transverse flute.

In chapter two, 'Styles and Changes', the doctoral student analyses and systematises the styles and characteristics influencing interpretation from the Baroque eras to the present.

The subchapters chronologically trace the characteristics of the eras from the Baroque through the Classicism, Romanticism and the music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, taking a deductive approach to each period, from the general characteristics of the style of the era to the specifics of the art of music - musical forms, significant composers. Attention is paid to the flute in the period under consideration - performers, composers and works written for the instrument by French, Italian and German schools and vital epoch centres define its style and characteristic features. Characterisation of the performing style in each period in comparison with the present.

In the fifth subchapter - "What is the responsibility of flautists who perform music from the past and today's music," the dissertation offers reflections on the interpretation of early music and the approach a performer should take, bearing in mind the expressive possibilities of the modern flute.

Sources concerning the emergence and refinement of the instrument, periodisation, authors and flautists, repertoire, stylistics and modes of interpretation in a particular era regarding the issues at hand are many and quite detailed. All this is related to one of the most debated and analysed problems, namely the artistic and interpretative nature of the art of performing, which is of utmost importance for forming criteria in defining style. I would say that we can add genre synthesis to the approaches considered authentic and contemporary. They are determined not only by the norms generated by the traditions of a particular era accepted as a binding rule, a standard for valuable interpretation, but also by the requirements of the situation, setting and ideology/philosophy of the moment.

Chapter Three, "Comparing Yesterday and Today. A survey of achievements against Expectations' presents biographies of famous flautists through the ages. It examines the role of the flautist-soloist concerning the situation and the opportunities posed by traditions and lifestyles in different eras.

In a third subchapter, the doctoral candidate presents her reflections on music in the virtual world - benefits and negatives, the role of the performer, the frustrations and obstacles that lead him to certain decisions related to his realisation, etc.

The conclusion summarises the issues discussed in the area of music.

The relevance of the topic of the dissertation “The role of the flautist as a soloist in the XVIII, XIX, XX centuries: a comparative study of achievements versus expectations” is determined by the dynamics in the development of contemporary musical art and the need to examine, analyse the wealth of styles and approaches to their performance to achieve a valuable and impressive interpretation, updating the methodology of their teaching for each musical instrument, the flute in particular, and their practical application by socio-cultural and life prerequisites.

The contributions of the work are as follows:

- it traces the role of the flute soloist from the 17th century to the present day through a comparative analysis in search of similarities and differences. A parallel is drawn between the development of the instrument and the social changes reflecting on the flautist’s activity with all its challenges and responsibilities. The author stresses that the aspiration and purpose through the centuries is the preservation of high-quality music for the flute, defending his thesis also through the empirical method;

- it addresses the problems in a contemporary performance process caused by digitalisation and technological advances. Technology is an obstacle to the concert activity, live contact, and emotional suggestion. Proposed approaches for collaboration between classical concert activity and the possibilities provided by technology to create innovative content to preserve musical art’s essence and artistic value. On the positive side is the chance of finding a flute work, the wealth of information concerning different issues;

- it contains a chronological presentation and analysis of the achievements of the essential flute schools and flautists and flute music from the eras under consideration. The author proves the relationship between the instrument, performer and composer through the historical review of the technical improvement of the instrument, the modern innovations, and the characterisation of flute types;

- the author displays the advantages and disadvantages - in socio-cultural, performance and technological aspects imposed by the circumstances of the last two years (Covid - 19). Various solutions are proposed for the realisation in the created environment as online concerts, hybrid performances, etc. to preserve art in the difficult conditions, maintaining and developing its artistic value;

- the text includes sociological and philosophical reflections and conclusions on the nature and the role of the flautist in historical perspective from the Baroque era to our modern times. The findings will help elucidate essential points of practice and issues beyond the musician's performance in his professional work and will assist with guidance in the development of young flautists. The candidate describes the specific aims of a contemporary flautist-soloist - expectations and achievements;

- attention is paid to the problem of interpretation of early music, conditioned by the traditions of the various performance schools and personal aesthetic taste and the interpreter's personal aesthetic taste and culture. The author adheres to the idea of the possibility of using the two approaches, authentic and contemporary.

In this work, a large amount of information has been collected, systematised and analysed, expressed in 122 pages, of which 108 are main text. The explanations for the refinement of the flute are substantiated with appropriate examples, four figures comprising 22 models in number, contributing to creating an even clearer picture of the development of the instrument.

The abstract is prepared as required and accurately reflects the main results achieved in the thesis.

I am confident that the methodological work, based on a thorough and detailed study and personal practice of the doctoral student, will provoke further research and development related to the topic. For this reason, it will be beneficial to publish it to make it available to a broader readership. In this regard, I would like to make the following recommendation: it would be helpful to add to each era discussed a brief musical and aesthetic interpretative analysis of a characteristic flute work, substantiated with notational examples.

I express my admiration for the overview, systematisation, links to the concerts and personal insight into the travails and peripeteia of contemporary performers, the judgements about the art of music and existential questions of concern about the existence and the preservation of its artistic value.

In conclusion, I will point out that Mirna Mlikota-Dizdarevic's dissertation on THE ROLE OF A FLUTE SOLOIST IN THE XVIII, XIX, XX CENTURY: A COMPARISON ABOUT QUALITIES AND EXPECTATIONS impressed me with its existential reflections on fundamental issues for performers, the philosophical outlook, the systematisation of the subject matter, the analyses, and the scientific-theoretical grounding. From the content of the work, it is evident that Myrna Mlikota-Dizdarevic is a musician with solid music-theoretical training and dynamic performance and pedagogical practice. I consider that the theoretical work meets the requirements of the Law on the Application of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor

of Education and Science. This gives me the confidence to propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award Myrna Mlikota-Dizdarevic the degree of Doctor of Sciences.

09.03.2022 r. Reviewed by:

(Prof. Dr. Borislav Yassenov)