

REVIEW

for the dissertation **Stylistic and interpretive problems
in works for wind orchestra by Nikolay Bratanov, Jules Levy and Hristo
Tonev
by Trifon Velikov Trifonov**

Reviewer:
Prof. Dr. Sava Dimitrov

The author of the work, Trifon Velikov Trifonov, graduated in 1993 with a degree in clarinet from the National Music Academy "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov". Since 1996 he has been playing as a concertmaster and first clarinetist in the brass band of Pernik, and since 2008 he has been its conductor. The orchestra performs about 150 concerts a year and has awards, among which is "Crystal Lyre" of UBC for 2018. T. Trifonov receives "Golden Lyre" of UBC for 2017. Since 2013 he has been enrolled as a doctoral student in independent training in the doctoral program "Music (Performing Mastery)" at the Department of Music of NBU for obtaining the educational and scientific degree of doctor.

The introduction of the dissertation is very structured, in which the author tries to justify the relevance of the problem, to analyze the conditions that necessitated this study, and to present his personal motivation to deal with the topic related to finding, arranging, the orchestration and (later) the interpretation of works for brass band by Bulgarian composers. Defining the purpose and object of his research, the dissertation very carefully presents all the terminology related to musical instruments and brass band that will be used in the study, and thus demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the existing literature on the subject.

The dissertation consists of two parts.

The first part includes a number of more general questions such as where, how and why the brass band emerges as an ensemble. The dissertation examines very precisely and comprehensively the development of the brass band from ancient times to the present day, clarifies its functions in society worldwide, but also pays special attention to the Bulgarian cultural reality. After making a clear distinction between military and civilian brass bands and emphasizing the greater flexibility and mobility of civilians in their performances and repertoire to meet the musical needs of the audience, the dissertation deals with the specifics of the brass band and work with it. Here we consider its number, tools, repertoire, which determine the stylistic and interpretive problems in shaping the works performed. Special emphasis is placed on the fact that the brass band gradually develops its own independent, rich and diverse repertoire, constantly replenished with new works, in which different stylistic characteristics are intertwined and mutually penetrate and new features are formed, typical only for the brass band.

This first part is divided into two, and conclusions are even included for each section separately, in order to differentiate what becomes the center of attention of the dissertation afterwards.

His very work with a specific brass band prompts him to present in detail the origin and development of the oldest civil brass band, the Pernik Brass Band, which he knows very well. Starting with the beginning of 1902, when the foundations of the professional ensemble "Mining Music" were laid, the dissertation lists the first orchestrators, as well as the conductors and their contribution for nearly 120 years since this composition existed.

In connection with this part, the research activity of the dissertation should be especially noted here, which includes in its exposition archival units documenting the development of the Pernik brass band, revealing the contribution of various bandmasters and conductors in its long life. It is worth noting the in-depth study of all kinds of interviews and other archival materials that complement the picture around the development of this ensemble.

The second part of the dissertation is dedicated to the interpretation of contemporary works for wind orchestra by Hristo Tonev, Nikolay Bratanov and Jules Levy. Taking into account the specific contribution of the three composers to the formation of an original repertoire of brass bands, which is evident from the reviews of New Bulgarian Music, and emphasizing that their work has already been the subject of analysis, here the dissertation considers it for the first time point of musical interpretation, paying special attention to the conducting and educational problems in working with selected works. In doing so, special attention is paid to the possible errors in the interpretation of the works when reading the musical content of the score and in the very process of making music.

As the dissertation points out, the original work of Hristo Tonev is not large, but consists of works that are significant in terms of musical content and subject matter. The dissertation describes in great detail everything that the composer creates as a musical production, but special attention is paid to "Holiday in Graovsko. Song and dance for bagpipe and brass band", a work that is defined by the dissertation as a textbook for processing, arranging and orchestrating themes from Bulgarian folklore. The other work to which the analysis in the dissertation is dedicated is "Choral".

For the work of Nikolay Bratanov, the dissertation points out that his marches are characterized by song and theme, including melodic Bulgarian themes woven into his compositions with selected tonalities, well harmonized and applicator-friendly for orchestral performance. From the many marches, choirs and plays written by the composer, the dissertation analyzes the march "Rodina" probably because Hristo Tonev also took part in its processing, which significantly enriches it.

Jules Levy is presented as a multi-genre composer with remarkable musical thought, firmly rooted in Bulgarian folklore, socially engaged, relevant not only for his time, using all styles. An analysis of the "Pirin Rhapsody" was made, so named regardless that, as the dissertation emphasizes, there are no literal quotations from the Pirin folklore. This is the second version of the rhapsody, which is intended for performance by a medium-sized brass band. Careful examination of the three parts of the rhapsody makes the dissertation right to object to the separation of the third part as a separate work for execution, because in this way it as a style differs significantly from the other two. In this work, too, the choice of the dissertation was made because it was influenced by the taste of Hristo Tonev, who conducted it.

The great admiration of the dissertation for Hristo Tonev is evident not only as his teacher, composer, orchestrator and conductor, but also as an advisor on various topics - both for different periods of the history of brass band practice in our country as performance and creativity, and for evaluation of the other two authors presented in the dissertation - Nikolay Bratanov and Jules Levy.

What is special about the in-depth analysis of the works of the three composers in the dissertation is that the exhibition pays much attention to the role of the conductor, who relies on the works to keep these works closest to the author's thought and the chosen and recommended style.

I especially want to emphasize that the applications included in the dissertation are valuable, which by their nature are very different, but justify, on the one hand, the need for general

and specialized music education through and wind instruments, as the dissertation writes, and supplement with interviews and the impressions of the composers presented in the work. However, Annex № 1 and the text on the candidate's contributions have a place only in the employment abstract and their presence here is not appropriate. There is one application (№ 5), which must be dropped because as a style it contradicts the specifics of the dissertation.

On the topic of the dissertation T. Trifonov has two independent publications in collections published by NBU with texts of young professionals in the field of music and dance, as well as a report in a scientific conference with international participation on similar topics, also organized at NBU.

The main contribution of the dissertation is that T. Trifonov has gathered in one place his analyzes of the selected and reviewed works of the three composers, related to their style and interpretation, which he combined with his conducting and musical recommendations, which they can be useful both for the conductors working on the same works and for the musicians involved in the orchestras. An interesting contribution, although isolated and not directly related to the topic, is the proposed example version of "Lesson for wind instruments", which as a finished product the author recommends to be used by educators in the preparation of young musicians.

The author's abstract of T. Trifonov has been prepared very carefully, presenting satisfactorily all the features of his dissertation.

In the real part of the work, subordinated to the chosen topic, the role of the conductor-researcher stands out, who has the opportunity to develop through the considered works and the musicians themselves, as well as to monitor their every step to avoid any side effects and unwanted effects in this development. On the other hand, the specific research done by the dissertation can serve as an example and a good basis for other activities in the same direction.

I propose on the basis of all the above positive features of the presented dissertation "Stylistic and interpretive problems in works for brass band by Nikolay Bratanov, Jules Levy and Hristo Tonev" of Trifon Velikov Trifonov to be awarded the educational and scientific degree of Doctor.

Sofia, 1st of December, 2020.

Prof.Dr Sava Dimitrov