

OPINION

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professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art", for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the professional field 8.3. "Music and Dance Art" by candidate Vita Guhelli

Vita Guhelli's current dissertation, **Symbolism in solo songs of Albanian Composers written in the second half of the twentieth century**, is developed in an impressive volume of 219 pages. The dissertation contains a short abstract, an Introduction, six consecutively numbered parts from one to six, which one should probably take as chapters entitled 1. **Origin**, 2. **Stylistic Deviations**, 3. **The text-music relationship in Symbolism**, 4. **Comparative methodology**, 5. **Analytical methodology**, 6. **Research Methodology**, followed by the similarly numbered 7. **Conclusions**, 8. **Contributions** and **Bibliography**, as well as an appendix of interviews.

As stated in the introduction, the main aim of this research is to realise a meaningful analysis of the "symbolism and aesthetic elements" of the genre of art songs in Albanian music created and censored in the time of the totalitarian state. Such a study of Symbolism as a strand in Albanian musical culture is valuable and contributory. According to the dissertation's testimony, this topic is not well developed in Albanian musicology. As far as the Albanian context is concerned.

"there are no publications or books that explain the symbolism in musical art in general, and even less so in the genre of solo songs."

The text of the study includes analyses of ten works by significant Albanian authors born between the years 1919 and 1946. According to the researcher's choice, these authors "deal with the main theme and adequate conclusions can be drawn by studying their works". The composers are Prenk Jakova, Simon Johnny, Tish Djaija, Tonin Zadeja, Tonin Harapi, Feim Ibrahim, Limoz Dizdari and Shpetim Kusht. Authors whose works Vita Guhelli has studied and analysed in relation to the symbolic spirit embodied in them, stylistic differences, and compositional aspects in their works. On this basis, and because of the professional path of the dissertator, which is focused on the solo songs of Albanian composers, Vita Guhelli has set out to clarify essential foundations and reasons for the use of the aesthetics of Symbolism in the works of her selected authors. The text provides a historical overview of the development of Symbolism and its embodiment in art music, particularly in the genre of solo songs, and an analysis of different stylistic approaches and author' strategies, including the juxtaposition of Symbolism with Realism and Expressionism. Grounded on comparative methodology, Vita Guhelli examines specific examples of solo songs by Albanian and Kosovar composers in the context of 'ethnonationalism, focusing on the late twentieth century. Her contributions to the study of the relationship between compositional choices and different approaches to engaging with the poetic text should be noted here.

Relying on the analytical methodology, the PhD candidate focuses on the ten compositions mentioned earlier by significant Albanian authors who worked during the second half of the 20th century. Here comes the most valuable and contributory point of Vita Guhelli: she does not limit herself to the field of analysis. Still, she dares to problematise, moreover, in a precious direction. The questions she raises are

universal and can be applied in principle to the state of musical culture in the late twentieth century. Among them, we should single out the specific consideration of such stylistic trends that influenced the emergence of the Symbolist spirit in 1944-1991, the geopolitical and historical context, as well as contacts with the primary cultures of the twentieth century, which, consciously or not, exercised a genuine hegemony throughout this period under study.

The text of Vita Guhelli's dissertation is based on citations and references to an impressive number of emblematic authors, with a total of 90 titles in Latin script indexed in the Bibliography section. All references and citations to texts are in the main text of the dissertation; they are accurately and correctly noted both in the main text and in the Bibliography. They cover a significant publication period, starting with citations to the celebrated text "Hints of singing" (1894) by the Spanish singer, vocal teacher and inventor of the laryngoscope Manuel Garcia. They move on through references to publications from the post-World War II period exploring Symbolism in music or the symbology of reason, ritual and art, etc., to publications from the 2020s. This, by the way, is particularly valuable with the issues thus explored and the complex dynamics of the historical development of contemporary compositional thinking.

I am thoroughly acquainted with the abstract of 48 pages, which was submitted to me by the dissertator, and which presents the main points of the dissertation text in a synthesised, correct, accurate and transparent way.

I do not know the doctoral candidate personally, but I am well acquainted with the complete documentation accompanying the dissertation. Based on the above, I acknowledge the listed contributions and take the liberty to highly and meritoriously evaluate the entire practical and artistic activity of Vita Guhelli and the dissertator's overall research work the writing of the dissertation text. I would also like to

congratulate her Supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr Ermila Schweizer, for her methodological and scientific cooperation. I would hereby like to propose to the esteemed Scientific Panel of Judges to award Vita Guhelli the educational and scientific degree of Doctor in the field of 8.3 Music and Dance Art.

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