

**REVIEW**

**by**

**Assoc. Prof. Dr Emil Toshev Traichev,**

**New Bulgarian University,**

**on**

**the dissertation of Wang Jiaxin**

**for the award of the educational and scientific degree of “Doctor” in the professional field**

**8.3. Music and Dance Arts**

**on the topic:**

**DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION OF THE SAXOPHONE IN CHINA**

**OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS – METHODOLOGICAL VIEW**

*Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr Rositsa Becheva*

Wang Jiaxin's dissertation is an exhaustive study dedicated to analysing the development and integration of the saxophone in China over the past two decades. The subject matter is both contemporary and substantial, as it examines the processes of establishing saxophone performance and its gradual integration into the country's contemporary musical culture. In this context, the study emphasises the interaction between Chinese musical tradition and Western performance practices, as well as the saxophone's role as a mediator between different musical styles and cultural models.

The dissertation comprises 136 pages, of which 130 pages constitute the main body. The structure of the dissertation is as follows: an abstract, an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, formulated scientific contributions, a list of publications on the topic, and appendices including musical examples of works, as well as a list of concerts and publications. The bibliography comprises 26 sources: 2 in Bulgarian, 19 in foreign languages, and 5 online sources.

The thesis is structured logically, enabling a systematic examination of the research questions posed.

The abstract is intended to provide a concise yet comprehensive overview of the study's contextual framework. This includes the delineation of its scope and subject matter, its primary objectives and tasks, the **research methodology** employed, and the dissertation's scientific contributions.

In the **introduction**, Wang Jiabin justifies the choice of topic by situating it within the context of contemporary globalisation and increased cultural exchange across regions worldwide. The saxophone is presented as an instrument with broad artistic possibilities and as a means of interaction between different musical traditions. In this sense, the study examines the saxophone not only as a performance instrument but also as an important factor for cultural interaction and integration between Eastern and Western musical cultures. The objectives and tasks of the study are clearly defined, as are the research methods used. These include historical research, analysis of musical examples, performance techniques, and specialised academic literature.

The doctoral candidate emphasises the need for a more in-depth investigation into the relationship among cultural context, performance practice, and methods of teaching the instrument. The following section delineates the study's conceptual framework, establishing the basis for further analysis of the saxophone's development and integration across various musical contexts.

In the **first chapter**, titled "The Development and Integration of the Saxophone in Chinese and Western Music," the text assumes an introductory, conceptual character, with the doctoral candidate providing a comprehensive overview of the historical and cultural framework underpinning the study. The paper examines the prerequisites for the emergence and development of the saxophone in three different cultural contexts—Europe, America, and China.

This study focuses on the role of the saxophone in the evolution of jazz music in America. The instrument gradually became established as a primary means of expressing the improvisational tradition. The historical conditions that led to the emergence of jazz are analysed, as are its stylistic features and the significance of the saxophone as a leading instrument in various jazz ensembles. The influence of jazz culture on the saxophone's global spread and popularisation is also examined.

The development of the saxophone in China is also examined, with the historical and cultural factors that influenced its introduction and establishment in Chinese musical practice analysed. The

processes by which the instrument adapts to the local musical environment are examined, as well as the interaction between Western musical traditions and Chinese folk music. As the doctoral candidate observes, "*Saxophone music in China has undergone a process of introduction and gradual localisation, in which the influence of Western musical culture is combined with elements of traditional Chinese music, leading to the formation of a genre with Chinese characteristics.*" (p. 37)

In this section, the doctoral candidate provides a comprehensive historical perspective on the development of the saxophone in various cultural contexts, thereby laying the foundation for a subsequent examination of its integration into contemporary Chinese musical culture.

**Chapter Two** examines the development and adaptation of the saxophone in contemporary Chinese musical culture. In this dissertation, the doctoral candidate analyses the integration of the musical instrument into classical music, the Chinese folk tradition, jazz, and popular music. The historical preconditions for its introduction and establishment are traced.

This paper sets out to analyse the interaction between Western performance traditions and national musical elements, with a view to explaining the formation of distinctive stylistic patterns in saxophone performance in China. The examination encompasses compositional and performance techniques associated with the utilisation of pentatonic scales, folk melodies, and timbral imitations of traditional Chinese instruments. Additionally, it delves into the contributions of composers and educators who played a pivotal role in the evolution of the Chinese school of saxophone. As the doctoral candidate observes, *the combination of the saxophone and Chinese folk music represents a significant expression of the integration between Chinese and Western musical cultures* (p. 42). The evolution of the jazz saxophone in China is presented, tracing Shanghai's role as a major centre for the development of Chinese jazz. The article analyses the processes of jazz style localisation, the significance of big-band orchestras and educational institutions, and the role of improvisation as a fundamental element of jazz musical practice.

In this context, Wang Jiaxin outlines the main trends in the development of contemporary saxophone performance in China and discusses the instrument's role as a bridge between different musical cultures.

The **third chapter**, entitled "Saxophone Teaching Methodology—Innovative Emotional Expression and Perception", is dedicated to the pedagogical aspects of saxophone instruction and the role of emotional expressiveness as a fundamental component of performance interpretation. Wang Jiabin examines the relationship between the performer's technical training and their capacity for artistic impact, emphasising the importance of timbre, dynamics, articulation, and rhythmic organisation as means of expressing a range of emotional states.

The present paper examines the characteristics of interpretation across various musical styles, including classical, jazz, and folk music. In addition, it explores the role of psychological factors and the interaction between the performer and the audience in creating emotional impact in musical performance.

The doctoral candidate conducts a comparative analysis of saxophone training systems in Europe, the United States, and China, outlining their pedagogical characteristics and offering guidelines to improve instruction by expanding practical training, stimulating creative thinking, and integrating diverse musical styles into the educational process.

A number of innovative pedagogical approaches are presented, including the use of multimedia technologies, diverse forms of instruction, and the role of music competitions in developing students' performance skills and artistic expressiveness.

**Chapter Four** presents a summary of the study's findings and outlines the main trends in the development of saxophone performance and education in China over the past decades. The study examines achievements in music education, the promotion of the instrument, the training of performers, and the creation of new works that blend Chinese musical tradition with contemporary compositional techniques. The text goes on to highlight the growing international presence of Chinese saxophonists and the development of various performance styles, including classical, jazz, and pop genres.

The text highlights the cultural integration of Chinese and Western musical traditions, with the saxophone serving as a vehicle for creative synthesis across different musical genres and artistic practices. Furthermore, the text analyses trends in the development of concert life, the organisation of festivals, master classes, and academic forums that contribute to the expansion of the professional saxophone performance environment in China.

The following section outlines the potential for future development, including enhancing the educational system, deepening intercultural exchange, and integrating modern technologies into teaching and performance practice.

It is important to note that in certain sections, the exposition adopts a more general, descriptive approach, with some of the perspectives presented lacking a direct connection to the results of the research. Notwithstanding, the conclusions and recommendations clearly delineate the primary directions for the future development of saxophone education and performance in China.

Wang Jiabin's dissertation constitutes a comprehensive, well-reasoned and methodologically sound study. It traces the major stages in the development and integration of the saxophone into Chinese musical culture, thereby substantiating its role in contemporary processes of cultural and musical interaction. The study examines the historical prerequisites for the instrument's spread, the processes of cultural interaction between Chinese and Western musical traditions, and pedagogical and performance aspects. The doctoral candidate employs a systematic approach, underpinned by a diverse array of research methods, to integrate theoretical analysis with the practical challenges encountered in music education. This approach is indicative of a comprehensive understanding of music theory and performance practice, complemented by a dexterous integration of historical analysis, stylistic observations, and pedagogical conclusions.

The study makes a significant contribution to the methodology of saxophone instruction by proposing ideas for integrating diverse musical styles, developing emotional expressiveness, and stimulating creative thinking. In this regard, the innovative pedagogical approaches developed – based on interdisciplinarity, an individualised approach, and the use of modern technologies in teaching – should also be highlighted.

Another significant contribution is the study of the processes of intercultural integration, in which the saxophone has established itself as a means of interaction between different musical traditions. The study also has clear historical value, as it traces the instrument's evolution from European and American musical traditions to its contemporary development in the Chinese musical context.

The dissertation is of both theoretical and practical significance, contributing to a deeper understanding of the saxophone's role as a mediator between different musical cultures and outlining guidelines for the development of contemporary saxophone pedagogy. In this sense, the

present work represents a valuable contribution to research in music education and the performing arts.

**It is submitted to the distinguished members of the Academic Jury that the educational and scientific qualification of "Doctor" be awarded to Wang Jiaxin, on the basis of the evidence presented.**

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