

REVIEW

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On the dissertation titled:

**“THE DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION OF THE SAXOPHONE IN CHINA
OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS -**

A METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE”

for the award of the educational and scientific degree of “Doctor”

to WANG JIA XIN

Full-time doctoral student in the Doctoral Program in Music, NBU

Professional Field 8.3. Music and Dance Arts

Research Field “Musicology and Musical Arts”

PERSONAL DETAILS: Wang Jiaxin was born in Hohhot, China. He commenced his musical education at an early age, specialising in the saxophone. Demonstrating remarkable talent, he secured first prize in a saxophone competition in his teens, along with numerous other accolades. In China, Jiaxin pursued her musical education at the Conservatory under the tutelage of Professor Li Manlong. From 2009 to 2013, he successfully completed a bachelor's degree programme at Tianjin Normal University. He completed a master's degree in saxophone at New Bulgarian University between 2020 and 2022 under Dr Trifon Trifonov, and in 2024, he also completed a master's degree in sound engineering in the Department of Music, again at New Bulgarian University. He is currently a doctoral student in the field of "Music and Dance Arts," specialising in "Musicology and Musical Arts." During his studies at NBU, Wan Jiaxin received multiple accolades, including first prize in a university arts competition and second prize in the ensemble category of the same competition. He participated in the National Woodwind Instrument

Competition in China, which was organised by the Central Conservatory of Music. At the 16th International Competition for Young Performers of Classical Musical Instruments in Pernik, he was awarded first prize in addition to other accolades, including the title of "Young Performer" and a solo performance with the Pernik Wind Orchestra.

The doctoral candidate's artistic biography demonstrates that he is an instrumentalist with a creative career that is already extensive by his youth. This provides him with the necessary experience, opportunities, and foundation to undertake this research.

The submitted dissertation comprises 136 pages, of which 130 pages constitute the main body of the text, 3 pages comprise the references, and 3 pages form the appendices. The study is meticulously structured into an introduction, four primary chapters, and a conclusion. Please refer to the attached list of contributions and summary of the primary research outcomes, which are appended to the thesis. Musical illustrations and a compendium of concerts in which the doctoral candidate has performed have been incorporated. The bibliography comprises 26 titles, of which two are in Bulgarian, nineteen are in foreign languages, and five are online sources.

The present work comprises four primary chapters. The **first chapter**, entitled "The Development and Integration of the Saxophone in Chinese and Western Music", provides a systematic overview of the saxophone's development within three distinct cultural contexts: European, American, and Chinese. In his analysis, the author emphasises the instrument's integration into different cultures and presents innovations within the framework of local musical traditions. A comparative analysis is employed to examine the development of the saxophone up to the point at which it was established as a globally recognised musical instrument.

The **second chapter** of the work provides a systematic overview of the saxophone's development following its introduction to China. The chapter is entitled "Innovations and the Integration of the Saxophone in China". The author reiterates the instrument's profound impact, emphasising its integration into both Chinese folk and popular music genres. It is observed that this penetration results in the emergence of distinctive, "Sinicised" styles, schools, and genres within both classical and popular music, as well as jazz. A number of examples from musical works, as well as interesting photographs, are used to clarify and support the thesis that the saxophone serves as a key bridge between Western and Chinese musical traditions and styles.

The title of **Chapter Three** is "Methodology of Saxophone Instruction: Innovative Emotional Expression and Perception." The present chapter proposes developing a concept to enhance China's teaching system. This will be achieved by utilising pedagogical methods from countries with long-standing traditions in saxophone pedagogy and the performing arts. The present study presents six innovative teaching strategies that underscore the originality of the work and fulfil the goals and objectives set by the doctoral candidate.

Chapter Four presents conclusions and recommendations, and examines the rapid development of saxophone art in China at the beginning of the 21st century from a historical perspective, emphasising achievements in various fields. The text under consideration here affirms the crucial integration of the saxophone into various genres, including traditional Chinese, popular, jazz, and electronic music. This, in turn, contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted evolution of saxophone performance in China.

Wang Jiabin's dissertation explores the utilisation of teaching methodologies and performance techniques for the saxophone that facilitate its integration into a diverse array of musical genres within the Chinese cultural context. A comparative analysis is conducted of the similarities and differences between American, European, and Chinese musical styles. In this regard, it is asserted that the thesis can serve as a unique textbook within the Chinese music education system, and specifically in the domain of saxophone pedagogy in China. The doctoral candidate's aspiration to dedicate himself to saxophone pedagogy is evident, and this study can serve as a solid foundation for both his teaching ambitions and future research in the field.

The study's contributions are presented in a non-standard manner. It is acknowledged that the comparative analysis of the saxophone's application and use across various musical styles in China over the past 20 years is of both theoretical and practical significance. The author highlights the contributory nature in several areas:

The following aspects are addressed: first, the theoretical framework; second, the practical application; third, the historical value; fourth, the pedagogical approach; fifth, the emotional expression in performance; and finally, the promotion of international cooperation.

Wang Jiabin hereby presents two articles that have been published in the collection entitled Young Academic Forum on Music and Dance, which was published by the Department of Music at New

Bulgarian University. The articles in question fully meet the publication requirements set forth in the regulations.

The doctoral candidate has appended a list of seven concerts he participated in during his doctoral studies to the dissertation. The list encompasses his concert performances across various genres, his participation in festivals as a soloist, and his appearances as an orchestral musician in the Pernik Brass Band's programs. It is hypothesised that the doctoral candidate's performance activities in Bulgaria have influenced his instrumental development and contributed to his research work.

The thesis appendix contains musical illustrations from the works under study. The collection also comprises posters, video recordings, and materials related to the concerts performed and to competition awards. The following discourse aims to articulate my personal impressions of the doctoral student, to whom I was privy during the Sixteenth Classical Music Competition in Pernik, as a member of the adjudication panel. At this competition, Wan Jiabin impressed the jury with his performance, earning him First Prize and a Diploma.

In conclusion, it is evident that the doctoral candidate has made a significant contribution to the field of scientific and creative work, and the high level of scientific research in the presented dissertation is commendable. I hereby express my positive assessment and propose to the esteemed academic jury that the academic and educational degree of "Doctor" be awarded to Wan Jiabin, a full-time doctoral student in the doctoral programme "Music," professional field 8.3. The scientific speciality of Music and Dance Arts, with a particular focus on Musicology and Musical Arts, is offered at New Bulgarian University.

The fifth of April in the year 2026.

Professor Dr Atanas Karafezliev