

STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Dr Angel Angelov Zaberski, a full-time faculty member at New Bulgarian University,

on the dissertation of doctoral candidate Wang Jiaxin

for the award of the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor," on the topic: *The Development and Integration of the Saxophone in China over*

the Past 20 Years – A Methodological Perspective,

supervised by: Assoc. Prof. Dr Rositsa Becheva

in the professional field 8.3. "Music and Dance Arts," scientific speciality Musicology and Musical Arts

This statement was prepared pursuant to Order No. 3-RK-114 / January 30, 2026, issued by the Rector of NBU, regarding the approval of the composition of the academic jury to oversee the procedure for the defence of the dissertation of **Wang Jiaxin**, a full-time doctoral student (fee-paying), supervised by **Assoc. Prof. Dr Rositsa Becheva**.

I have been provided with the following documents: the candidate's CV, dissertation, abstract in English and Bulgarian, list of publications on the topic, and the Order for the Scientific Jury, all of which comply with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education and the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on Higher Education for the award of the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor."

Wang Jiaxin was born in Hohhot, China, and began studying the saxophone at an early age, winning prestigious awards even in his teens. He obtained a bachelor's degree from Tianjin Normal University, subsequently pursuing advanced studies at New Bulgarian University, where he earned a master's degree in saxophone performance under the tutelage of Dr Trifon Trifonov and a master's degree in sound engineering. He is currently enrolled as a doctoral student in the professional field 8.3. The field of study is Music and Dance Arts. The candidate has an active competition record,

with distinctions in both China and Bulgaria, including first prize at the International Competition in Pernik, as well as other awards from university and national forums.

The conclusion of this analysis is that the candidate's participation in the competition is entirely convincing. I have had the privilege of knowing him personally, as he was my student, and I hold his professionalism in high regard, which he demonstrates in all aspects of his work. The chosen topic is of grave significance and has been meticulously examined in all its aspects.

The thesis under consideration is 136 pages in length, of which 130 pages comprise the main body of the text, while the remaining 3 pages are allocated to the references section and the final 3 pages to the appendices. The study is meticulously structured, comprising an introduction, four primary chapters, and a conclusion. Please refer to the attached documentation, which comprises a list of scientific contributions, a summary of the primary research results, musical examples, and a register of the doctoral candidate's concert performances.

The bibliography comprises 26 titles, of which two are in Bulgarian, 19 are in foreign languages, and five are online sources. It is evident that the dissertation is thoroughly substantiated in its entirety, and it is evident that it fulfils all the requirements for the structure of a doctoral thesis.

Following a thorough examination of the doctoral thesis, it is asserted with a high degree of confidence that the study constitutes an exhaustive and significant investigation. The work constitutes a significant contribution to the author's oeuvre and to the development of the performing arts, while also proving to be an invaluable resource for specialised music education.

It is my considered opinion, based on my experience as a performer, composer, instrumentalist, and lecturer at NBU, that the work presented by my colleague is of the highest quality. The analysis of the examples demonstrates both his extensive knowledge of Eastern and European cultures and his profound understanding of music history. The authors persuasively delineate the trajectory by which contemporary saxophonists have, over several decades, assimilated and reinterpreted foreign influences while concurrently cultivating and adhering to their own artistic principles.

The study places these processes within the broader context of general musical and cultural development, the individual performances of specific musicians, and the rapidly changing interests of the audience.

The **initial chapter** is characterised by a distinct objective: to provide a systematic overview of the saxophone's evolution across three cultural contexts: Europe, America, and China. The foundation of the study is an examination of the instrument not merely as a Western phenomenon, but as a culturally mobile mediator. The European section provides a comprehensive exploration of the saxophone's origins, tracing its lineage to Adolphe Sax and the historical context of its development. The section also delves into the instrument's association with Romanticism, offering insights into its cultural and historical significance. The section on jazz delineates the transition to modern popular and improvisational music through key stages and figures, thereby serving as a conduit to the subsequent context.

Of particular significance is the analysis of developments in China, where the path is traced from the initial perception of the saxophone as a foreign instrument to its establishment as part of the national musical practice. It is imperative to acknowledge the significance of regional disparities, which are pivotal in delineating divergent developmental trajectories.

In summary, the initial chapter establishes a comprehensive historical framework and persuasively introduces the saxophone as a medium for cultural exchange.

The **second chapter** constitutes the core analytical section of the study. The study examines the development of the saxophone in China, focusing on its integration into folk and popular music and the emergence of specific Sinicised styles and schools. In this instance, the emphasis transitions from the adoption of the Western instrument to its adaptation within a local context.

The section on the classical saxophone raises the key question of its deep integration into Chinese tradition and the development of a nationally distinctive style. Of particular significance is the figure of Prof. Li Manlong, through whom the processes of institutionalisation, composition, and pedagogical development are traced. The analysis is supported by specific techniques and works, including imitations of traditional instruments and the use of pentatonic scales. Illustrative examples such as "Tongjin Theme and Variations" demonstrate the synthesis of East and West.

The role of jazz and popular music is also examined, including their localisation in Shanghai and the so-called "Shanghai Jazz School," which underscores the significance of the urban cultural environment. In this context, the saxophone establishes itself not only in academic practice but also in popular music.

In conclusion, the section on improvisation presents it as a creative process grounded in solid theoretical and technical training, rather than simply as free expression, thereby adding further depth to the analysis.

The **third chapter** is dedicated to pedagogical aspects and is distinguished by its practical originality. The central argument of this study is that instruction in the saxophone must extend beyond mere technical training, emphasising the cultivation of emotional expression and perception.

The author examines key performance parameters, including but not limited to timbre, dynamics, intonation, and rhythm. In addition, the author explores specific techniques by which abstract emotions are transformed into practical performance solutions. This represents a significant methodological contribution.

A comparative analysis of teaching models in Europe, the U.S., and China is also presented, outlining their strengths and existing shortcomings, particularly in the Chinese context. The author proposes specific strategies to this end, including systematic work on the fundamentals, collective forms of instruction, stylistic diversity, stage practice, and the promotion of creative thinking.

The proposed teaching models, namely ensemble work and project-based learning, represent a significant departure from the conventional individual approach. In accordance with contemporary pedagogical trends, a multidimensional assessment system has been developed. This system encompasses a range of criteria, including technical skills, expressiveness, progress, creativity, and feedback.

Chapter Four provides a synopsis of the development of the saxophone in China, encompassing its application in educational settings, its popularisation, the training of performers, the composition of original works, performance practice, and the integration of genres. The chapter then projects these developments into the future. A significant strength of the chapter under scrutiny is its examination of this process from a dual perspective, encompassing both the domain of repertoire and the realms of institutional and cultural contexts.

The author outlines several key directions for future development. Firstly, there is a need for greater stylistic specialisation, with classical, jazz and pop being the main areas of focus. Secondly, there is a need to integrate new technologies, such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence. Thirdly,

there is a need to deepen cultural synthesis and to facilitate interdisciplinary interactions with other arts and digital forms.

In conclusion, the study affirms the saxophone's understanding not merely as an instrument but as an active mediator between Chinese and Western musical traditions. This is an idea that logically summarises and concludes the research's overall concept.

The study's **contributions** are presented in an unconventional manner, with an emphasis on a comparative analysis of the saxophone's use across various musical styles in China over the past two decades. This analysis has clear theoretical and practical significance.

These can be summarised as follows: theoretical, practical, historical, methodological, performance expression and international cooperation.

Doctoral student Wang Jiabin has presented two **scholarly papers** in the "Young Scholarly Forum on Music and Dance" collection of the Department of Music at New Bulgarian University. These publications meet the regulatory requirements.

Included with the dissertation is a **compendium of seven concert performances** undertaken during the course of the doctoral programme. These performances encompass solo performances, festival appearances, and activities as an orchestral musician in the Pernik Brass Band. These performance activities have contributed significantly to the instrumental development of the doctoral candidate and have supported his research work.

The abstract, which is 27 pages in length, accurately reflects the content of the thesis.

In conclusion, it is evident that the candidate's work and doctoral thesis, authored by Wang Jiabin, are of a consistently high standard within the domain of arts and performance practices, categorised as professional field 8.3. The field of study is Music and Dance Arts. The presented texts are of a contributory nature and represent in-depth music-historical and music-theoretical studies in the field of performing arts.

In addition, I would like to express my profound gratitude to the academic advisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr Rositsa Becheva, for her invaluable methodological support.

It is this author's considered opinion, based on the available evidence, that **the educational and academic degree of "Doctor" in professional field 8.3, "Music and Dance Arts", should be awarded to the candidate.**

On the 4th of April 2026, in the city of Sofia,

Assoc. Professor Dr Angel Zaberski