

STATEMENT

by **Associate Professor Rositsa Dimitrova Becheva,**

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on the dissertation of **Zane Abazi**

professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art,

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on:

FLUTE REPERTORY BY EMERGING KOSOVO COMPOSERS. A PARALLEL WITH THE EUROPEAN FLUTE REPERTORY OF THE 21ST CENTURY for the award of the degree of Doctor of Education and Science

Supervisors. **Prof. Dr. Luisa Sello and Prof. Dr. Yavor Konov, DS**

Biographical data

Zane Abazi (née Zanë Abazi), born in 1997, began her flute studies at the age of 7. Education and training She completed her primary and secondary music education in Peja and Prishtina under the guidance of Professor Suejla Bruti-Zhuri. She then went on to complete her Bachelor's degree at "Hasan Prrishtina" University of Pristina, where she studied with Venera Mehmetagai and Erëmira Çitaku, before beginning her Master's studies with mentor Prof. Erëmira Çitaku.

Professional and artistic activities: She has participated in masterclasses led by distinguished instrumentalists, including Laura Levai Akshin, Ljubisa Jovanovic, Andreas Gosling, Susanne Peters, Michelle Becker, Bulent Eugiel, Evelyn Degen, Gregory Charette and Luisa Sello. She has performed as a soloist with the Naonis Donatello Orchestra in Grado, Italy, with the Sofia Sinfonietta in Bulgaria and with the Kosovo Philharmonic Orchestra in Kosovo. In addition to her solo performances, she has also contributed to the Kosovo Opera as the principal flute in the world premieres of La Traviata and Lo Speciale. Notably, she is a member of the Kosovo Youth Orchestra and the European Summer Academy Orchestra (ESMA), as well as the flute ensemble "Le Agane" based in Italy. Since 2021, Zane has held the position of principal flutist of the Kosovo Opera

Orchestra and has served as deputy flutist of the Kosovo Philharmonic Orchestra. She possesses a profound passion for the stage, performing in a variety of musical settings, whether as a soloist, in chamber ensembles or in orchestras. She derives great enjoyment from expressing her musicality through various collaborations, believing that each performance offers a unique opportunity to connect with the audience and share her love of music. Her participation in numerous festivals, including DAM Fest, Flute Sounds, Sofia Music Week, Orpheus International Music Academy, Chamberfest in Pristina, Skopje and Tirana, the International Computer Music Universe Forum-Festival, Sofia, Campus Udine, Darte Festival, Pristina Balkan Composers Competition and the Castello Udine Festival, is indicative of her commitment to her craft. Zane's passion for contemporary music is evident in her dedication to exploring new sounds with the flute.

Presently, she is conducting doctoral research in Sofia, Bulgaria, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Luisa Sello. The focal point of this research is the recognition and interpretation of works by 21st-century Kosovar composers.

Contents of the dissertation

The dissertation is 99 pages in length and is structured as follows: an abstract, an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a list of contributions, a bibliography (total number of sources in Latin - 64, of which: books - 14 pieces, musical scores - 33 pieces, internet sources - 8 pieces, audio recordings - 9 pieces), and an appendix (schedule of concerts, scientific activities, autobiography of Zane Abazi).

The Abstract and Introduction provide a concise overview of the dissertation's central themes, objectives, and research tasks.

The central objective of this thesis is an examination of contemporary flute compositions by young Kosovar composers, with a parallel and comparative analysis of the European flute repertoire in the 21st century.

As the PhD student observes, "as a flautist from Kosovo, I am eager and enthusiastic to discover and study the composers of my country and their artistic development in recent years, more precisely the time frame in question is the last 24 years. The paucity of documentation and publication of these compositions has engendered a strong desire to conduct research on both the composers themselves and their flute works." (op. cit. p. 5).

The research methodology encompasses a comprehensive review of extant scholarly literature on the subject, the application of historical analysis, and comparative analysis.

In Chapter I, entitled *"The artistic musical community in the 2000s in Kosovo and their connection with the artistic musical community in the world"*, the focus of the research attention is on the first, second and third generation composers in Kosovo and the musical heritage of Kosovo, the social circumstances of the music society in Kosovo in the early 2000s. The influence of world composers on the artistic and musical development of Kosovo composers of the early 2000s is also examined, as are the most influential Kosovo composers of the 20th century who have contributed to this development. It is clarified that the term "classical music in Kosovo" first appeared in the mid-20th century, coinciding with the beginning of education and development of young talents in the region. The establishment of the first music school in Prizren, followed by the subsequent founding of other music schools in various locations, marked the inception of this endeavour. The flute began to garner recognition as a musical instrument among composers in the latter half of the 20th century. This was due to the emergence of talented flautists from Kosovo who had completed their bachelor's and master's degrees at local universities, as well as in France. A notable example of this was the young flautist Venera Mehmetagai.

The author of the study observes that there is now a wide selection of outstanding compositions for the flute created by composers from Kosovo. These compositions are characterised by innovative and extended playing techniques, which are presented in a fascinating manner. They also demonstrate a wide range of innovative and creative performances, including percussive effects produced by the flute, harmonics, multiphonics, and so on. During the course of my research, I sought to identify any connections between these individual elements, and then compare them to the compositions of renowned composers from around the world. Since these compositions are from the present century, I was able to immediately consult with the composers and gain valuable insight into their works. These compositions show differences, but sometimes have things in common. Therefore, I made comparisons between them to provide a more comprehensive understanding of flute composition in this century. The objective of my research is twofold: firstly, to identify the composers who influenced the future generation of composers in Kosovo, and secondly, to examine the extent to which the new composers measure up to their predecessors. I

will achieve this through a comparative analysis of their compositions for flute or compositions that include flute (p. 2).

With regard to the second generation of composers, a significant figure in the development of the flute repertoire in Kosovo is the composer, conductor and music critic Rafet Rudi, whose work *Dialogues Perdu* for flute, string trio, piano and tape recorder is "one of the first for flute and one of the first in style among all composers from Kosovo in terms of their avant-garde repertoire." (quoted Abstract, p.4) With respect to the third generation of composers, it is explained that "the third generation of composers debuted in Kosovo in the late 1980s, bringing with them a significant impetus in the development of serious music." (cit. Abstract, p.4)

In Chapter II, entitled *"Extended techniques in 2000's in Kosovar composers' flute repertoire alongside world composers flute repertoire"*, the subject of analysis is the compositional and stylistic characteristics of 21st century Kosovo composers and their performance by local flautists, Kosovo composers from 2000 to 2010, and the use of advanced techniques in their works.

It is elucidated that at the dawn of the 21st century, a cohort of young musicians came to the fore, establishing themselves as exceptional composers. Graduating from the Faculty of Arts in Prishtina as part of the fourth generation under the direction of Mendi Mengjiqi, this group comprises Drinor Zymberi, Dafina Zeqiri Nushi and Kreshnik Aliçkaj. Additionally, Donika Rudi, daughter of Rafet Rudi, is recognised as part of this generation, having completed her education in Geneva and Belgium. It has been observed that composers of this generation demonstrate a propensity to incorporate elements of contemporary music into their oeuvre.

The focus of this study is the composition *Atmospheres* for flute and piano, created in 2002 by Dafina Nushi, which employs experimental techniques and effects inspired by global composers. A comparative analysis is thus made with Toru Takemitsu's composition "Voice" and Luciano Berio's work "Sequenza". The works of other composers who have enriched the flute repertoire in Kosovo, such as Mendi Mengjiqi, whose compositions are influenced by serialism and minimalism (according to the study's author), are also subject to analysis in terms of the stylistic approaches used.

The analysis concludes with the following assertion: "The younger generation of composers in Kosovo is particularly committed to the exploration of sound and timbre, as well as various effects.

Through their research and by using new and expanded flute techniques, they have been able to bring something innovative to the flute repertoire in Kosovo" (Author's abstract, p. 11).

Chapter III, entitled "*Kosovo Composers from 2010 to Today*", explores the flute scene in Kosovo, with a particular focus on the utilisation of extended techniques by Kosovo composers. The chapter delves into the educational musical journey of Kosovo composers and their introduction to the incorporation of electronic music in the musical works of world composers. The PhD programme places particular emphasis on the remarkable skill demonstrated by composers such as Ersan Januzi and Ylli Daklani in their use of new and extended techniques within the flute repertoire. In this chapter, the works of composers such as Bardh Dubovci are analysed. Dubovci is a prominent contributor to the flute repertoire of Kosovo from the emerging generation of composers, and he emphasises the importance of incorporating extended techniques in his compositions. The chapter concludes with the assertion that, as composers continue to explore and refine their techniques, they play a significant role in the dynamic contemporary music scene that highlights Kosovo's distinctive cultural and artistic identity. This ongoing dialogue between tradition and innovation underscores the resilience and ingenuity of Kosovo's composers, situating them within a broader milieu of contemporary music (p. 19).

Of particular significance is the presentation of the doctoral student's perspective as a flutist-interpreter, the music theoretical analysis produced, and the concomitant practical guidelines concerning the performance of contemporary flute repertoire.

The **Conclusion** offers a synopsis, conclusions, and supporting points.

The significance of the research problem in scientific and applied terms

The research is topical and has strong practical applicability.

The extent of the author's familiarity with the subject matter and the quality of the literature consulted

-The author has demonstrated a commendable utilisation of diverse informational sources, with accurate referencing.

Contributions of the dissertation.

The contributions of the thesis as outlined by the doctoral candidate are accepted, including: "Young flutists and aspiring composers can benefit greatly from the study as an informative resource. By integrating these compositions into their research, students will have the opportunity to engage directly with the contemporary flute repertoire. This initial information not only aids in the preservation of the traditional components of Kosovar music, but also exposes students to new and expanded techniques in flute compositions. Consequently, this dissertation fulfils a dual function: it serves to safeguard the nation's musical heritage while concurrently providing a valuable resource for the training and inspiration of the next generation of musicians. By fostering a better understanding of Kosovo's dynamic musical customs, this study prepares future musicians to explore and participate in the continued evolution of their country's musical environment."

The study's exclusive focus on flute compositions from Kosovo addresses a significant knowledge gap concerning the interplay of local and global influences in the country's evolving music scene, thereby representing a substantial contribution to the field of musicology with a particular focus on the flute repertoire. This study thus illuminates the creative potential of Kosovar composers and their place in 21st-century contemporary music, making it an invaluable resource for academics and performers alike. By examining their works, the dissertation also encourages greater interest in this under-researched field and increases awareness of Kosovo's musical heritage.

Assessment of the relevance of the abstract to the main points and contributions of the thesis

The abstract, which is 32 pages in length, successfully conveys the essence of the doctoral work.

Publications on the dissertation topic

The doctoral candidate has a sufficient number of publications and concerts on the doctoral thesis.

Opinions, recommendations and comments

It is recommended that the thesis be published.

In conclusion:

I offer my positive evaluation for the dissertation work of **Zane Abazi: FLUTE REPERTORY BY EMERGING KOSOVO COMPOSERS. A PARALLEL WITH THE EUROPEAN FLUTE REPERTORY OF THE 21ST CENTURY**, in relation to the scientific and applied merits of the contributions he has made. It is concluded that the doctoral thesis of the doctoral

candidate fully meets the requirements for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "**Doctor**" in the professional field 8.3. In accordance with the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, I hereby propose that this thesis be awarded to the esteemed scientific jury.

10.01.2025, Sofia

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rositsa Becheva