

REVIEW

On a dissertation for awarding the PhD educational and scientific degree,
professional field

8.4. Theater and Film Art

On topic:

„RHYTHMICS, MUSIC AND SOUND PICTURE AS POSSIBLE SUBSTITUTES FOR A
MISSING DRAMATURGICAL STRUCTURE IN NON-VERBAL THEATER AND
PERFORMANCES BASED ON NON-THEATRICAL TEXT”

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Reviewer: Prof. Dr Adrian Georgiev, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

Petya Dimanova graduated from Lyubomir Pipkov High School of Music, Sofia, majoring in Percussion Instruments, followed by a Master's degree in Percussion Instruments at the Pancho Vladigerov National Music Academy in Sofia. The autobiographical reference shows a rich creative and teaching experience in Bulgaria, as well as abroad, as a composer, studio musician and performer at the "Stars Company" Music House, Milan – Italy. She is a composer of theater and film music, and she was awarded with a number of nominations and awards - Asker, Icarus, Dimitar Valchev Music Award of UBC, etc., for her work.

The publications on the topic of the dissertation are:

- „Theatrical Music as an Acting Character in a Performance“ – Annual Digest of NATFA “Kr. Sarafov”, 2019
- „Functions of Rhythm and Music in a Non-theater Conditionality” – Center for Simeotics and Cultural Studies – Page for doctoral students – Electronic edition.

The dissertation focusses on the rhythm-theater relation seen through music as a sound picture which could replace missing dramaturgical structures

that reflect the world non-verbally through the theater art. According to the doctoral student, the relevance of the theme is indisputable and could be found in two aspects – on the one hand, the dissertation will help to integrate the actors in the process of staging non-verbal performances on various theater stages and, on the other hand, it will assist the improvement of the training of future actors in vocal-rhythmic aspect. Concepts like “rhythmics”, “music”, “sound” and “sound picture” are considered in detail in their function in the performance, interrelation and autonomy correlated to the figure of the actor and the theater as a part of its dramaturgical structure or presented as its substitute in various types of performances, mostly those in which verbatim is not present and the message is communicated through means other than speech. One of the goals of this work (and, in my opinion, the most important one) is to systemize and deduce a methodology for training of students in Drama Theater Acting specialty using the techniques of rhythmics, various vocal techniques and non-verbal communication. An expected specific result is also the creation of short non-verbal performances fully based on rhythmic exercises. Petya Dimanova defines the following goals of the dissertation:

- To prove the thesis that one of the languages spoken in the performance is related to sound and rhythm which have their own dramaturgical function.
- To systemize a methodology for training of students through rhythmics, vocal techniques and non-verbal communication.

The following hypotheses were proven in the course of the study:

- rhythmics can be a substitute for a dramatic text;
- theatrical music can drive the theatrical action;
- students can successfully develop their psychophysical qualities through exercises in rhythmics and sound extraction;
- low and high frequencies of sound can cause certain physical reactions in humans.

The subject of the study is rhythmics, music and sound picture as possible substitutes for a missing dramaturgical structure in non-verbal theater and performances based on non-theatrical text. The subject of the dissertation is usage of rhythmic and vocal techniques in theater performances with missing dramatic and verbal structures:

- Rhythmics as a substitute for a dramatic text;
- Theatrical music as a driver of theatrical action;

- Relation between rhythmic, vocal techniques, theatrical music and their application in the training of students;
- Development of psychophysical qualities through exercises in rhythmic and sound extraction.

The dissertation consists of 122 pages and an appendix – a table which presents the written duration of the training and allotment of the academic hours by academic years and semesters. The cited literature was derived from twenty-five sources. Fifty-one sources in Bulgarian and nineteen sources in English were used. The dissertation has the following structure:

- Introduction to the topic
- Chapter One deals with the issue in historical terms
- Chapter Two deals with the issue through the prism of the basic theoretical knowledge applied practically in the theatrical performance
- Chapter Three presents the specific methodology, its theoretical reasoning and practical manifestation
- Chapter Four presents the specific training design
- Conclusion summarizing the results
- Contributions
- Bibliography

I will briefly point out some highlights which I think important to note, from my position of being both a professional musician and someone working in the field of sound recording and post-production for film projects.

Chapter One deals with the issues about the origin of music, primitiveness and authenticity as concepts, representation of space and character through music. According to the author of the dissertation, music in its inception was accompanying, enriching, highlighting, exalting, a path to the inexplicable although in its primitiveness it originated and resembled routine and monotonous, rather everyday actions. Over time, music became a basis of some shamanic rituals and occupied a major part in religious ritual in general. It was much later when it established itself as an independent art.

While music in its inception was accompanying the labour activity and afterwards becoming an independent art, then now, correlated with theater, it returns to its original function, to its genesis and performs a supporting function to the theatrical action. Even more, it becomes a possible substitute for verbal action. Here I find it particularly important to mention the theoretical

validity of the thesis that music is an integral part of every action whether on stage or in life in general.

In the second chapter, verbal action is analyzed, music is considered as a substitute for dramatic text but subordinated to the laws of rhythmic, polyphony and sound extraction. The analysis is based on the fundamental theoretical statements related to the theory of musical art. The function of theatrical music in a performance as well as the issue of genre as a convection of theater art are considered; the issues of music modality, the concepts of “sound” and “words”, the relation music-text, the concept of “musical theater” are clarified.

In the third chapter, a theoretical development of the specific methodology that can develop and strengthen the contemporary actor’s rhythmic, intonation and vocal skills, is made. The direct relation between musicality and pedagogy is considered as well as the musical action as an alter-ego. The most important issues regarding rhythmic formulae in non-verbal theater are clarified, the issue of rhythmic etudes is presented, music is considered as a partner of the actor on stage. Specifics regarding applicable rhythmic exercises are presented, specific concepts regarding sound formation and practical process of sound extraction are clarified. The purely psychologic aspect of vocal training of the actor is also presented as well as the extremely important relation between pedagogue and trainee.

The fourth chapter sets out the specific model of training, suggests a specific duration of the training and distribution of classes by academic years and semesters, and sets forth the main objectives and tasks as well as the expected results of implementation of the training in practice. The learning content is specifically describes by modules, the rules that students must comply with during their training are specified. Thus presented, the training design is ready to be practically implemented in the vocal training of future actors.

I endorse the defined and proven contribution points in the dissertation, namely:

- A scientific issue has been formulated in the relation field between rhythmic, music and sound picture in non-verbal theater

- An entirely new methodology has been introduced in training of students in Theater Acting which definitely changes the quality of studying process.

Given the above-stated, I strongly suggest to the esteemed scientific jury to award PETYA VASILEVA DIMANOVA with the educational and scientific degree of PhD in professional field 8.4 Theater and Film Art, with which I wish her future creative and professional success.

Prof. Dr. Adrian Georgiev