The opponent’s report of diploma work by Constanine Soteriou

_Iannis Xenakis: The Analysis of Four Works for Piano Solo_

Diploma work gives a clear and fairly comprehensive look at selected issues. Already in the preface it is a clear personal commitment of the author. Now, the author combines in his work the knowledge and skills gained in studies of music and playing instrument. That is why, he can accomplish the synthesis of theory and practice in his text.

The dissertation has a clear structure: it follows the process from a solid theoretical foundation to the main problem. I very much appreciate the detailed definitions of Xenakis’s composition theory and styles. It is clear, the author has carefully studied the literature to characterize exhaustively these themes. The concept the Soteriou’s work is developed systematically – the author characterizes the composer’s biography and style of composition in general, then he chooses the works for the comprehensive analysis. The chapters about composer´s biography and composition style due proof of conditions of Xenakis’s creativity. The third chapter follows the important elements and principles of composer’s creation. Here, it is necessary to explain the special system of composer’s musical language. Every composer impeaches two basic factors in the composition – intellect and emotions. They are in agreement or in the conflict. C. Soteriou shows sonic events as the elements of Xenakis´s emotions and mathematical principles as elements of his intellect. In analysis of piano compositions, C. Soteriou shows different relations between these two positions of musical thinking. For example, the work _Herma_ is a good example of mathematical concepts and Soteriou deals with it very thoroughly. However, he proves, this concept is not able to provide a musical work with really musical qualities without composer´s musical ideas, inventions and creative influence. That is why, Soteriou also deals with the theory of Golden Ratio.

The intellectual principles also characterize the next of analyzed works – _Evryali_. Soteriou proves linear lines in the form _arborescens_, sieve theory, rhythmical structure. All these elements and principles are analyzed very thoroughly and systematically. It evokes the question:

1. How has the author of diploma work found out all these details: has he discovered it himself or through the literature and sources?
2. Can the author explain the analytical way to the finding of the key composer´s principles directly at the defense of his diploma work?
3. How has he proceeded in the course of the analysis? What are the analytical steps?

The same is valid for analysis of other works. I am sure, it was necessary to study a lot of sources, to listen to difficult music to the disclosing of complicated structure of analyzed works. C. Soteriou has fully accomplished his main aim – analysis of chosen Xenakis´s works and he also accomplished his secondary aim – to find main principles of author’s works for pianists and music teachers in general.

Considering the topic, form and process of job I propose the evaluation of diploma dissertation as excellent.

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