



FACULTY OF ARTS
Charles University

Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

EXAMINER'S REPORT

Tereza Kiszová: *Music in Anthony Burgess' Fiction* (BA thesis)

In her BA thesis, Ms. Kiszová courageously and inventively opted for a topic outside the compulsory curriculum of her degree, and decided to focus on the works of Anthony Burgess, specifically on the role of music in his fiction. Ms. Kiszová discusses not only musical references and music as a topic in Burgess' novels and short stories, but also the employment of musical forms as an organising principle, in which the author drew on his own prolific work as a composer. These two methods are illustrated on the following examples: the little-known short story "1889 and the Devil's Mode" (1989), the novel *Napoleon Symphony: A Novel in Four Movements* (1974), and *A Clockwork Orange* (1962). In this way, the thesis manages to provide new insights into Burgess' most famous and most analysed work, and it also makes a contribution to the volume of criticism on other parts of his oeuvre.

The theoretical part is useful for the following analysis and Ms. Kiszová demonstrates her ability to summarize complex ideas from theoretical works and apply them for her purposes. The employment of music theory and terminology and the candidate's ability to draw on works of music criticism are productive and impressive. In this way, it is also a very successful interdisciplinary thesis. In the theoretical part as well as in sections focusing on Burgess, references to other works of Anglophone literatures testify to the commendable scope of Ms. Kiszová's reading and to her ability to think across genres and periods.

The thesis is clearly structured, well-organised, and fluently written, but there are some stylistic and formatting oversights (leftover tracking changes marks; section divisions beginning in the middle of an empty page; a tautology in the first sentence of the English abstract) and occasional inconsistencies (Burgess's / Burgess'), but these seem to result from time constraints, rather than from lack of familiarity with the conventions and requirements on the candidate's part. I would recommend uploading a corrected version into the system, so that these minor problems do not divert attention from the contents of this otherwise impressive work of research.

In my opinion, the thesis amply fulfils the requirements for a BA degree, and it is a pleasure to recommend it for defence, proposing the grade excellent / výborně.

Out of interest and in order to learn more about Ms. Kiszová's experience from completing the thesis and about her opinions on related matters, I suggest the following topics for discussion during the defence (it is not necessary to cover all of them):



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1. If you had a chance to write the thesis again, knowing what you know now, after completing it, is there anything that you would change or do differently?
2. Were you to broaden the scope of the inquiry, for instance for your MA thesis or for some later research project, how would you proceed? Are there any other works of Anglophone literature that would be worth exploring? Or would you prefer to follow with another study of Burgess?
3. In terms of literature and other art forms, the most studied relationship is probably that of literature and visual arts, and the tradition of ekphrasis. Apart from Burgess, what is your experience with representing music in literature – and what would you see as the main theoretical and methodological challenges?
4. What is the state of musicological research regarding Burgess' own compositions, apart from Paul Phillips' monograph which you refer to? How have they fared in terms of recordings and performances?

Mgr. Petra Johana Poncarová, PhD.

Glasgow, 25 January 2024