

REVIEW

BY PROF. GEORGI VELKOV KOLEV, DOCTOR OF ECONOMICS

regarding the competition for the occupation of the scientific position of
"Professor"

at "Konstantin Preslavsky" University of Shumen,

scientific field 1. Pedagogy, professional field

1.3 Pedagogy of teaching in ...,

scientific specialty "Music teaching methodology"

Contest details

The competition for the occupation of the academic position of "Professor" is announced in the State Gazette, issue 79 / 08.10.2019. The only candidate is **Assoc. prof. Stefan Panayotov Ruskov, PhD**, lecturer at the department of Musical aesthetics, music education and performance. The necessary documents and relevant evidence for review and evaluation are presented in accordance with the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), the Rules for the implementation of the ADASRB and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff at "Konstantin Preslavsky" University of Shumen. All materials are accurately and precisely described, as well as clearly arranged. The requirements for occupation of the academic position of "Professor" are fulfilled: the candidate is a Doctor in music teaching methodology, and has held the position of associate professor for four years; he declares, and also the reference made by myself supports, that materials from the production of the previous procedures are not repeated; the materials submitted for the competition in accordance with the relevant requirements of art. 2 b, para. 2 and 3 of the ADASRB, in quantitative terms exceed the minimum required points by groups of indicators - a total of 758 points (instead of the minimum 550 points), and there are sufficient points for each individual indicator. All this leads me to believe that Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov has the right to participate in the competition for the academic position of "Professor".

Applicant details

The career development of Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov follows a continuous line of professional and creative interests related to music and music teaching. He graduated from the Music and Pedagogy Higher Education Institute (today the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts), Plovdiv. From the beginning of his working experience to this very day he works as a teacher: music teacher at secondary schools (incl. the Bulgarian Lyceum, Chisinau, Moldova), lecturer at "Konstantin Preslavsky" University of Shumen. He has been working at the university since the Faculty of Pedagogy has been founded - part-time lecturer since 1984, full-time - since 1989, and has held the positions of assistant, senior assistant (1992), chief assistant (1996) and associate professor (2015). In 2013 he defended his doctoral thesis. In addition to his professional education in music, his biography and achievements speak of enduring interests in the creative activities - he participates in various artistic formations, creates various imaginative products. His continuous interest in computer technology in music is also very impressive, which also determines much of the pattern of his scientific, teaching and artistic activity and career development - combining the problems of contemporary musicology, music pedagogy, musical performance and digital technologies.

Regarding the scientific works

For the participation in the competition, in accordance with the requirements of the ADASRB, Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov, PhD presents the following materials, 49 in number: 2 monographs, 15 articles, 20 textbooks, 12 study aids. They are all related to his professional and scientific interests and are in compliance with the course of the competition. The main theoretical and methodological directions of the candidate's research activity include mutually predetermined thematic areas related to his long experience in creating digital arrangements, as well as his teaching work with students in the field of Music Education Pedagogy: 1. creation and testing of original copyright technology for creating digital arrangement, as well as a system for evaluating digital arrangement; 2. formation and development of the contemporary image of the music teacher in the digital society and the related challenges for music teachers and their digital competence; 3. the creation of a complete set of textbooks and teaching aids in music from 1st to 10th grade for the comprehensive schools.

A major problem identified in the **two monographs** is the use of information technologies and digital technologies in music - in the context of audio and MIDI technologies and the technology for implementing digital arrangements in a mobile environment.

The monograph "**Creating a Digital Arrangement with a Smartphone and a Tablet**" (2018, 198 p.) introduces a concept focused on *the capabilities of mobile applications to create music and to realize digital arrangement* (up-to-date and with current means) in a mobile virtual environment found on every smartphone and tablet. The report shows that in Bulgaria there is no monographic work related to this contemporary topic - the use of the latest and most common tools (smartphone and tablet) in digital technologies to create a music arrangement. The most widely used mobile devices today among the younger generation are a wonderful prerequisite for motivating them, engaging them in activities for developing their knowledge, skills and competences for creating, storing and distributing music. The **first chapter** introduces the concept of mobile learning based on three models: web, cellular and apps. They highlight the peculiarities of smartphones and tablets as devices with different features and capabilities that provide access to information; as a tool for the synthesis, processing and reproduction of music-teaching information; as a means of using digital resources for mobile learning. The **second chapter** covers the deployment of technology to implement a digital arrangement with the tools of the Caustic mobile application. The implementation of the technology is performed in a defined, hierarchical sequence of independent modules, based on specific requirements (criteria). The necessary knowledge, skills and competences to implement a digital arrangement are derived based on defined requirements for audio and MIDI technology for creating a digital arrangement (in the other monograph). **Chapter three** describes the technology for evaluating such an arrangement - performed in a digital environment on a smartphone and a tablet: a criterion-oriented test system with 11 tasks, based on criteria and indicators following the algorithm of the technology for creating a digital arrangement; original rules for determining the structure of test tasks; four levels (indicators) defined for knowledge, skills and competences; expert evaluation technology, including identification, measurement and evaluation of the completed project. In Chapter 4, the methodology for optimizing the evaluation of a Caustic project is tested.

The monograph "**Creating and Evaluating a Digital Arrangement**" (2019, 168 p.) presents a dissertation thesis for the award of the academic and scientific degree "doctor" (indicator D 5 of the national minimum requirements under Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of NACID). It consists of an Introduction,

four chapters, a summary and conclusions, a bibliography, 4 appendices. **The introduction** reveals the relevance of the issue under consideration. **The first chapter** presents a detailed analysis of the problems related to the developed topics in contemporary musicological, pedagogical and methodological literature. On this basis, the theoretical statement of the study regarding the definition of the characteristics of the digital arrangement as a creative process is derived, with characteristic requirements and rules of operation, as well as the need for having specific knowledge, skills and competencies (KSC), for the use of MIDI platform and a certain software to make such an arrangement. **In the second chapter**, a pedagogical technology for the implementation of digital arrangement is synthesized - an original methodological model for working on a MIDI project, with six basic requirements and 13 consecutive steps defined; The KSC required for the implementation of this type of arrangement; criteria and indicators for creating it in five levels, giving an algorithm for evaluating and self-evaluating a creative product obtained through a MIDI arrangement. **Chapter three** describes the rationale and implementation of an original system for evaluating a digital arrangement. An evaluation procedure using an expert criterion-based fuzzy test based on fuzzy logic theory is disclosed. Expert "multimedia" evaluation (auditory and visual) is performed on the basis of the test system. **The fourth chapter** approves the technology for evaluating the realized digital arrangement, and through it - the pedagogical technology for its realization.

The articles submitted for participation in the competition (15 issues) are in specialized scientific journals, yearbooks, collections of scientific conferences (all are in the NACID reference list). They relate to theoretical and methodological problems of music-pedagogical professional education of future music teachers in terms of their professional competences, their digital and audiovisual competence, as well as competences for the use of electronic musical instruments. All of them are directly related to the main topics of the two monographs, as well as to the teaching work.

The citations, noted by the applicant and presented in the reference, are 25. Predominant are those citations in articles (23 pcs.), and 2 pcs. are in monographs. Many of them relate to the problems developed by Assoc. Prof. Ruskov regarding the competence of the music teacher (digital competence), and they also reflect the latest textbooks and teaching aids for the comprehensive school, to which the candidate is a co-author.

The third very large share of the presented materials by Assoc. prof. Ruskov for participation in the competition is **the textbooks and teaching aids in music**

for the comprehensive school - a complete set for students, grades 1 through 10 (20 textbooks, 12 study aids). They are related to the new state documents and standards that have come into force since the academic year 2016. It is not easy to create a new, up-to-date, original textbook. It is the result of many years of experience in the field of music education and upbringing and the theoretical and practical competences of Assoc. Prof. Ruskov, that are derived from an extremely diverse spectrum of contemporary musicology, musical pedagogy, musical performance, digital technologies in music and more. The main merit goes to Assoc. Prof. Ruskov (except for the construction of the books) for presenting the current music repertoire on CD for the teacher and students in the electronic textbooks: over 200 specially arranged and recorded songs, 13 copyright songs and other music, music editing and digital processing of numerous music material (about 300 pieces of music). This again is directly related to the scientific research and production of Assoc. Prof. Ruskov.

Teaching and other activities

Assoc. Prof. Stefan Panayotov Ruskov is a lecturer providing education to students in the specialties *Music Education Pedagogy, Pedagogy of Primary School and Pre-school Education, Pedagogy of Primary Education and Early Foreign Language Teaching, Pre-school Pedagogy* – in the Bachelor's Degree, Professional Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree programs, in disciplines related to the student's methodological preparation, current problems of popular music, the use of computer technologies in music, musical instruments, incl. electronic instruments. He is the author of the respective curricula. On his personal page in the university's website, Assoc. Prof. Ruskov provided study materials. After obtaining the position of "Associate Professor", he became the head of two full-time PhD students and three graduates, one of whom is a Bachelor and the other two are of a Master's Degree. During the period 2015 - 2019 he participated in 5 university projects.

The applicant's teaching experience is directly related to the subject areas of his research field, ie. there is complete correspondence between the areas in which the applicant has teaching experience and the course of the competition.

Assoc. Prof. Ruskov, PhD also carries out professional activities: qualification activities with active teachers, the creation of digital teaching resources, production of copyrighted music, many arrangements and their preservation and distribution, the production of sound recordings and CDs from national competitions.

Contributions

From all the presented titles (monographs and articles) the main research and creative interest of Assoc. Prof. Ruskov is outlined: various aspects of creation and testing of original copyright technologies for the creation and evaluation of digital arrangement, by means of MIDI technologies and using a mobile environment (provided by mobile devices - a smartphone or a tablet), which is covered in both his monographs and articles. **The main theoretical contributions** are derived from this: a concept for mobile learning has been developed; digital arrangement technology; modeling the essential contemporary characteristics of the music teacher through the prism of the competence approach - competencies related to digital technology and music. **The practical aspects** of the contribution relate to: projection of theoretical models for working in technology for digital arrangement in a mobile environment based on the *Caustic 3* mobile application; defining and using a hierarchical sequence of independent modules, based on specific requirements (criteria) related to the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to implement a digital arrangement in a mobile application environment; audio and MIDI technology for creating a digital arrangement using the Cakewalk SONAR toolkit (the basis for the contemporary mobile technology); detailed and precise formulation and deployment of criteria and indicators for evaluating digital arrangements, i.e. not only how such music products are created, but also what conditions they must meet in order to be as adequate as possible to all the requirements of music art and sound design; increasing the efficiency of the educational process in the discipline "Audio and MIDI technologies in music"; criteria and indicators formulated and tested - the ability to multiply the technology in another digital mobile environment to create a digital arrangement.

The articles reveal methods and forms of work, requirements based on the competence of the music teacher related to modern digital technologies. Their relevance is absolute and is the basis for the development and formation of the contemporary music teacher.

The creation of modern textbooks and teaching aids in music for high schools is practical and applicable in the extremely diverse spectrum of contemporary musicology, music pedagogy, musical performance, sound design and more.

Conclusion

The analysis of the materials and teaching activity of the candidate in the competition allow me to summarize the following important points:

- The documents and materials presented are in compliance with the requirements.
- A sufficient number of papers have been submitted, published after the materials used to defend the “Doctor” and “Associate Professor” academic degrees.
- The applicant's work provides original scientific and applicable contributions. Its theoretical developments have practical applicability, and most of them are directly oriented towards academic work.
- The formulated contributions and results are his own merit.
- Prof. Ruskov's scientific and teaching qualification is undeniable.

After reading the materials and works presented in the competition and reviewing them, and after analyzing their importance and their scientific and applicable contributions, I find it justifiable to give my positive assessment and to recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a proposal report to the Faculty Board of the Faculty of Pedagogy for the selection of Assoc. Prof. Stefan Panayotov Ruskov, PhD for the academic position of "Professor" at “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen in the scientific field 1. Pedagogy, professional field 1.3 Pedagogy of teaching in ... "Music teaching methodology".

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Reviewer:
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