

REVIEW

by

**Prof. Mariana Nikolaeva Bouleva-Petrova, Doctor of Pedagogy -
Department of Music at the University of Veliko Turnovo “St. Cyril and
Methodius”,**

about a competition for

occupation of the academic position of "Professor" -

higher education area 1. Pedagogical sciences,

**professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Teaching in... (Music Teaching
Methodology) -**

Department of Musical Aesthetics, Music Education and Performance,

“Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen,

published in the State Gazette, issue. 79 / 08.10.2019

with candidate: Assoc. Prof. STEFAN PANAYOTOV RUSKOV, PhD

1. Contest details

The competition for professor was announced by the Department of Musical Aesthetics, Music Education and Performance at the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen. The only candidate in it is Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov, PhD. All stages of the procedure have been correctly followed in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation from 06.07.2018. The candidate meets the condition for the Minimum National Requirements for Occupation of the academic position of "Professor" in the relevant professional field.

2. Details of the applicant

Stefan Ruskov obtained his education at the Music and Pedagogy Higher Education Institute, Plovdiv (today - Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof. Assen Diamandiev"), majoring in Music Pedagogy (music teacher, accordion teacher), and at the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen, where he received the scientific degree of "Doctor" in Music Teaching Methodology. He also holds a certificate for “Teacher in Electronic Instruments” from “Technics-orgelshule”, Mannheim, Germany, where he

acquires professional skills in teaching children and students to play electronic keyboard instruments. These professional qualifications define the areas of his pedagogical and creative activities, and over the years he has extended them and made them both an object and a subject of lasting research interest.

Stefan Ruskov has an exceptionally rich teaching experience, which links his teaching and artistic activities. He has worked with people of various ages in general education schools and in music classes, both as a music teacher and as a leader of various music groups, as well as a teacher of accordion and electronic instruments. This experience is integrated and upgraded theoretically and methodically in the wide range of disciplines that he takes in the majors of Music Education Teaching: Pre-school and Elementary School Pedagogy, Primary School Pedagogy with a Foreign Language, Pre-school Pedagogy, Elementary School Pedagogy with Information Technologies; in the disciplines Audio and MIDI-technologies in music, Methods of music teaching, Accordion, Electronic instruments, Theory and history of popular music, Musical diagnostics, Organization, technology and repertoire for working with musical ensembles at school, Principles of music layout, Computers - music - education, Modern technologies in music teaching.

3. Description and contribution of scientific works

The publication activity of the candidate Stefan Ruskov in the competition for “Professor” is significant in terms of volume and contribution value. It includes two monographs (one of which is the publication of the dissertation - indicator D 5 of the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, para 2 and 3 of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria of NACID), 15 articles in scientific publications and collections, a large number of textbooks and teaching aids for music education.

The major habilitation work "Creating a Digital Arrangement with a Smartphone and a Tablet" (“Konstantin Preslavsky” University Publishing, 2018, 193 pages. ISBN: 978-619-201-248-9) impresses with its *relevance and innovation*. It includes main text, annexes, literature from 158 sources, 102 of which are in Cyrillic and the rest are in Latin, and online materials. The development presents **a model for working with the Caustic 3 software toolkit and the methodology for optimizing the evaluation of a Caustic project**. As the author points out during the contribution of the competition materials, the criteria were synthesized on the basis of Audio and MIDI technology for creating a digital arrangement using the Cakewalk SONAR toolkit from a previous stage of research and teaching activity. The results of this previous activity are disclosed in the monograph "Creating and Evaluating

Digital Arrangement" ("Konstantin Preslavsky" University Publishing, 2019, 168 pages. ISBN: 978-619-201-330-1) - a published book based on a dissertation thesis for the award of a doctoral degree. In formulating the practical contributions, Assoc. Prof. Ruskov states: "The current new technology is a continuation and an upgrade of itself, it is connected with realization of a mobile environment and is the groundwork for making a digital arrangement based on the Caustic 3 toolbox. The new technology increases the efficiency of the educational process in the discipline "Audio and MIDI technologies in music".

In terms of content, the study covers the following issues:

- 1) Clarifying and justifying the current and promising role of mobile learning, delivered through dedicated mobile devices (PDAs, smartphones, tablets, laptops) - easily portable, usually owned and controlled by an individual rather than an institution, that stimulate and secure "learning anywhere and at any time"(Chapter One).
 - 2) Synthesis of technology for digital arrangement with the toolkit of the Caustic mobile application (Chapter two). Stefan Ruskov develops an algorithm of actions (divided into modules), in concrete steps followed by consecutive instructions for obtaining a complete product of creativity - digital arrangement. A major advantage of the technology is that it combines the qualities of a creative method of arranging, a methodology for teaching arrangement and a pedagogical technology for acquiring knowledge, skills and competences (KSC) for working in a digital environment. This original complexity of the model also has a broader educational effect - it accustoms to the use of systematic thinking, to the activation of insights from different spheres of knowledge, all subordinated to a single goal - a qualitative, comprehensive and directly applicable result.
 - 3) Synthesis of a criterion-oriented test system for *expert measurement and evaluation* of the realized MIDI project. This *functional detail model* contains eleven test tasks following the algorithm for creating digital arrangement (Chapter Three). The evaluation system itself is a confirmation of the tidiness and methodological precision of the pedagogical technology and corresponds to the number of steps in the model and the level of satisfaction regarding the criteria set in each step.
3. The evaluation system is approved and the results of the evaluation give highly satisfactory results. Several general features of the development testify to the importance and value of the monograph:

- the broad context in which modern education is placed with regards to the current age of information;
- the brilliant systematization of views on mobile learning according to precisely defined criteria of the proposed definitions;
- convincing presentation of the mobile learning strategy, with its undeniable advantages and flexible applicability;
- utilization of digital technologies for creative activity with direct relevance to the work of a music teacher;
- integrative connection with the theoretical and practical disciplines of harmony, arrangement, music analysis, as well as with the methods of music teaching;
- the habituation to style and genre based on a complete musical product with creative and methodological potential;
- the possibility for creative applicability of the whole model by educators;
- flexibility of the acquired skills that not only stimulate learning but also encourage and underpin creative initiative "anytime and anywhere".

The articles presented for the contest have a broad thematic scope (I present it in key terms):

- collective multimedia training in the form of interactive procedures, activities and operations;
- a professional portrait of a music teacher in terms of their digital competence and information culture;
- scientific and theoretical prerequisites for deriving a competence model of the future music teacher;
- professionalism of the future music teacher at university stage;
- use of mobile training in preparation of the contemporary music educator;
- theoretical study of the specificity of musical performance with electronic musical instruments like a *keyboard*;
- the creation of a criterion-oriented test system with a Likert-type measuring scale;
- models for mobile music training; innovations in modern education.

The material presented for the competition has a very significant share: **a complete set of textbooks and teaching aids in music from 1st to 10th grade** (co-authored) by the publishing house "KLET BULGARIA" Ltd., introduced in stages in accordance with the new state educational standards and curricula: textbook, teacher's book, e-textbook, speakers kit, front panel. The very inclusion in this intensively developed activity over the course of several years,

related to the educational process in Bulgarian schools, is a sign not only of high professionalism, but also of the willingness to respond to a social errand that has a very high coefficient of usefulness for our society.

4. Conclusion

It is very impressive that Stefan Ruskov has successfully discovered and activated the intersection point of his various skills and competences. Generally, at the center of his scientific and pedagogical pursuits is **the construction of the contemporary image of the music teacher in the context of modern digital society**. In this way, his computer skills, creative experience and teaching experience are concentrated in **an up-to-date, meaningful, creative, pedagogical and scientific manifestation**. For me, this particular ability is a sign of academism and a guarantee of the value of the scientific production, which is based on rich empirical accumulations and real practical achievements.

With everything said in this review, I have the resolute conviction to give my professional support to Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov, PhD and confidently suggest the distinguished scientific jury to select him for the academic position of "Professor" in the professional field 1.3 Pedagogy of Teaching in ..., (Music teaching methodology).

December, 2019

Reviewer: .....
/Prof. Mariyana Bouleva, Doctor of Pedagogy/