

REVIEW

by Prof. Simo Lazarov, PhD

on the contributions of the pedagogical, scientific and artistic activity of

Assoc. Prof. Stefan Panayotov Ruskov, PhD

I. Applicant Details

Position held: Associate Professor, PhD at “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen, occupying teaching, research and artistic activities.

In 2013 he was awarded the academic and scientific degree of "Doctor" in "Methodology of Music Training." The researching and creative character of the activities by Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov, PhD, as well as everything he has accomplished, is directly connected to the modern pedagogical creative work, due to the fact that the author emphasizes the developments in the educational process, in light of digital technologies. The topics are disclosed with the necessary professionalism and confidence.

II. Research activities and results

The reference to the scientific contributions of the research activity of Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov is substantial, which proves the professional music-pedagogical activity and scientific potential to achieve results. The methodology of teaching is within the theoretical framework and is combined with its practical application. His work includes an impressive amount of articles, textbooks and teaching aids. Other leading creative manifestations and professional activities involving expert and artistic activities are registered in sections VI, IV and III, respectively.

III. Publications

2 monographs, 15 articles, 20 textbooks and 12 study aids (the last two published in specialized editions) have been mentioned in Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov's publication record. His interests are focused on the constant study of music-pedagogical activity, moving on the right path to its theoretical and practical introduction into the process of music teaching. This approach clearly has a major scientific contribution, owing to the fact that the attention is centered on modern music teaching with electronic means.

The monograph “**CREATING A DIGITAL ARRANGEMENT WITH A SMARTPHONE AND A TABLET**” extends its reach and the perimeter of action is not

limited to the boundaries of a digital studio. The monograph of Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov, PhD is a serious research activity related to the investigation of the problem of entering the educational process in music on the one hand, and the factual status of mobile devices at present - on the other.

The four chapters consistently and methodically describe the components of modern learning in light of the universal digitization of our analog life. Digital Arrangement Technology - this creative activity is a function of the ever-evolving software and is, as such, subject to the will of its creators. The connection of this new software is mediated by the creators - in this case lecturers-students.

To what extent will this connection prove effective, given the creative germ of this act? In the monograph, the thread for the creative moment necessary for the realization of the final product is drawn through. The necessary technology is only the fundamental without which the contemporary musician, composer and performer would not be up-to-date. The author systematically describes the "*defined, hierarchical sequence of independent modules, based on specific requirements related to the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to implement a digital arrangement.*"

An analysis has been made of the achievements in 28 European countries and a four-level classification is proposed in terms of mobile learning - a necessary overview of Bulgaria's place in European life. An extensive review of the nature and elements of mobile learning has also been made. Benchmarking analysis is an often employed technique for research start-up work and is useful for clarifying the benefits of mobile learning. The models of mobile learning are described and mobile units are presented "*as a means of synthesizing, processing and reproducing music-educational information*".

The implementation of a test system and the subsequent revealing of its testing to evaluate the result of the technology's application is interesting, useful and last but not least – mandatory. Here lie the pedagogical approach and methodology that lay the scientific foundations for the realization of sound products of this kind.

This monograph carries the value and weight of a theoretical scientific work that is necessary for the practical mastery of set goals and objectives. This is a fundamental work, indispensable to the modern pedagogue and creator.

The monograph “**CREATING AND EVALUATING A DIGITAL ARRANGEMENT**” engages the attention with the creative problems associated with the process of producing a piece of music. This is the basic information needed for any artist who wants to create music in a software environment.

Although familiar, the information about audio and MIDI technologies in music is placed here in a different environment, defined by the study of the object, the purpose and the tasks. Reviewing the conceptual system for defining the arrangement as a process and placing it in a digital environment, clarifies the concept of the author, who writes that it is “*a creative process of rethinking a musical theme and presenting it in a new digital version, which includes its harmonizing and orchestrating for a certain ensemble*” - a very precise summarization.

In addition to our familiar categories, however, Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov delves into the topics related to the issue of evaluation in higher education. The study also finds the pedagogical technology for the implementation of digital arrangement through a MIDI project carried out in Cakewalk Sonar software environment. The important thing here is to come up with a thirteen-step algorithm in three modules. Some interesting results are presented in tabular form that would undoubtedly be of use to the pedagogical approach of creating music in general. Creating an expert evaluation matrix is the next step towards the ultimate goal of evaluation. The mathematical apparatus is necessary to achieve the intended purpose and fulfill the task. Naturally, a technology for the evaluation of knowledge, skills and competence should be developed at this point, and finally, approving the technology for the evaluation of the completed digital arrangement.

The summary and conclusions are contextualized in the idea of developing specialized *pedagogical technology*, that is thoroughly analyzed in 4 positions. The problem of evaluation is analyzed. *A functional detailed model for expert measurement and evaluation* is created. *An original approach to determining content validity* is justified and used. The *criteria and indicators defined* at each step of the methodology are used both for students' self-assessment and for the selection and training of the experts involved in the evaluation.

The topics concerned in the articles by Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov, PhD are largely centered on various aspects of the issue that is the focus of his scientific interests. The focus of the research has a relatively wide range but it is always related to the main problems - MOBILE TRAINING, MIDI MODELS and AUDIO TECHNOLOGY WHEN CREATING A DIGITAL ARRANGEMENT. The COMPETENCE MODEL OF THE FUTURE MUSIC TEACHER and the MODELS FOR MOBILE MUSICAL TRAINING are analyzed, THE OBJECTIVATION OF EVALUATION AS A RESULT OF THE USE OF DIFFERENT SOFTWARE ENVIRONMENTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT is considered.

IV. Reference for meeting the national minimum requirements

According to the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the republic of Bulgaria, the minimum national requirements related to scientific, teaching and artistic activity, which are defined in the appendix under the scientific fields and professional directions for the academic position of “**professor**”, are **550** points. Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov's total score is **758**.

V. Reference to citations

Citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review, reviews in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous scientific information databases or in monographs and collective volumes and in journals with scientific review are 25 in total. The number of citations speaks of the interest people have in the work of Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov, which is related to his undisputed authority and his activities. There may be some other citations that have remained unnoticed.

VI. Evaluation of the results of participation in research and creative projects and application of the obtained results in practice

The work of Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov, PhD is distinguished by a wide range of activities and creative attitude towards the assigned tasks. They present him as a successful teacher, who provides high-level knowledge to the students and the audience. His participation in university projects gives an additional characteristic for the additional indicators under Art. 57a, para. 2 of the Rules for the Implementation of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. There are five projects in which Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov is involved.

VII. Teaching activities

The educational and teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov, PhD is sizeable. He is the author of 6 curricula and the mentor of three graduates. This also includes the guidance of two PhD students.

The courses he teaches are 11. I cannot but mention the wide range of subjects taught: Audio and MIDI technologies in music, History and theory of popular music, Musical diagnostics, Special subject - electronic instruments, Principles of musical design, Modern audio and MIDI-technologies in music, Organization, technologies and repertoire for working with musical ensembles in school, Methods of music education in primary school, Musical instruments, Methods of teaching music in the early stages of education, Modern technologies in teaching music.

This knowledge of Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov reinforces his affinity and scientific potential for the specialized music field, outlined within the contemporary requirements and necessary for the pedagogical orientation in the training of contemporary future artists.

VIII. Administrative and community activities

Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov works actively in the development and updating of the material in the subjects taught by him. This includes all materials related to the learning process. The results provide both intensive teaching and artistic activities, which are guaranteed to stimulate the students' creative expression.

IX. Personal impressions of the applicant

The attached materials show that Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov is a lecturer with a purposeful attitude towards mastering all aspects of music, including innovative technologies. The organizational skills he possesses contribute towards the accomplishment of the set educational and artistic goals. The necessary requirements have been met during the years of the review period, as evidenced by the reference materials provided by the applicant for this competition. This is evident from the facts presented in the report, which speaks of Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov's active participation and initiation of activities.

X. Opinions, recommendations and notes on the applicant's activities and achievements

I have no doubt that the activities of Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov, PhD will continue to develop in this right direction. His desire to solve the set educational and creative tasks speak of him as a person with highly professional skills.

XI. Contributions

The contribution of the presented research papers is directed to the creation of an original copyright technology for creating digital arrangement with mobile devices necessary for his work with students who major in "Pedagogy of Music Education".

The other group of contributions are related to the modern digital society and focused on building a contemporary characteristic of the music teacher. These contributions are supported by the implementation of a set of textbooks and study aids in music, from the first to the tenth grade.

The theoretical contributions are reflected in his monographs and articles, which outline the thesis about the characteristics and competencies of the contemporary musician, who uses the audiovisual environment and electronic musical instruments in the process of education.

The practical contributions are modeled by the educator's competencies in the realization of a digital music product in studio and mobile environment. Teaching while using such technology based on mobile applications and having the reasoned competencies of the music pedagogue are the basis for the development and formation of the modern music teacher.

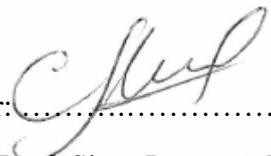
The creative efforts to combine pedagogical orientation with high artistic, imaginative and musical skills should be emphasized as a contributing element.

XII. Conclusion

The whole scientific contribution of Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov clearly speaks about the presence of an energetic and creative teacher and musician, whose activity has indisputable merits in the field of artistic and creative musical education.

In light of all that is mentioned above, as well as the undisputed qualities of the applicant, I suggest that the members of the venerable Scientific Jury choose Assoc. Prof. Stefan Ruskov, PhD for a **professor** in the professional field 1.3. Teaching Pedagogy - Music Teaching Methodology.

Sofia, 06.01.2020

Reviewer: 

*/Prof. Simo Lazarov, PhD/