

# **REVIEW**

**by**

**Prof. Mariana Nikolaeva Bouleva-Petrova, DSc -**

**Department of Music at "St. St. Cyril and St. Methodius" University of Veliko Tarnovo,**

**regarding the competition for**

**holding the academic position of "professor" -**

**field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences,**

**professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching in... (Methodology of teaching music) -**

**Department of Musical Aesthetics, Music Education and Performing,**

**"Konstantin Preslavsky" University of Shumen,**

**published in the State Gazette, issue 94 / 12.11.2021**

**with candidate: Assoc. Prof. YANNA PAVLOVA RUSKOVA, PhD**

## **1. Details of the competition**

The competition for the academic position of "professor" in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching ... (Methodology of teaching music) was announced by the Department of Musical Aesthetics, Music Education and Performing at the "Konstantin Preslavsky" University of Shumen. The only candidate in it is Assoc. Prof. Yanna Pavlova Ruskova, PhD. All stages of the procedure have been passed correctly in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation. The candidate in the competition, Assoc. Prof. Yanna Ruskova, PhD, meets the Minimum National Requirements for holding the academic position of "Professor" in the relevant professional field. The materials presented by her in the competition are properly documented and give the necessary information in full.

## **2. Details of the candidate**

The candidate - Assoc. Prof. Yanna Ruskova, PhD, graduated from the Higher Institute for Music and Pedagogy in Plovdiv (now "Prof. Asen Diamandiev" Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts) with a degree in Music Pedagogy (music teacher, accordion and solfeggio teacher), and at the "Konstantin Preslavsky" University of Shumen she obtained the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" in Methodology of Music Education. She has improved her artistic skills and competencies at the International Summer Seminar and the International Summer School of Accordion. These professional qualifications determine the spheres of her diverse pedagogical, creative and musical performances, as well as the subject areas of her research.

Yanna Ruskova has an extremely rich pedagogical experience, which combines teaching and artistic activities in various educational institutions. She has worked as a music teacher, as a teacher of accordion and electronic instruments, and as a leader or accompanist of various

musical ensembles - both instrumental and vocal. This wide range of artistic performances determines her lasting theoretical interest and keen attention to the musical performance competencies of contemporary music teachers. Since 1989, Yanna Ruskova has been a lecturer at the "Konstantin Preslavsky" University of Shumen, where she lectures practical and theoretical subjects in various specialties: "Pedagogy of music education", "Preschool and primary school pedagogy", "Primary school pedagogy with a foreign language", "Preschool pedagogy with a foreign language", in all three educational degrees: "Bachelor's", "Master's" and "Doctor's". *This wide range of practical, theoretical and methodological competencies is a solid basis for her academic growth in the scientific specialty "Methodology of teaching music".*

### **3. Description and contributions of scientific papers**

The publishing activity of Yanna Ruskova - a candidate in the competition for the position of "professor", is respectable both in terms of volume and contribution value. The materials of the competition include two monographs (one of which is the publication of her dissertation - indicator D 5 of the minimum national requirements under Art. 2 b, para. 2 and 3 from LDASRB of NACID), 18 articles in scientific journals and collections, textbooks and teaching aids designed for music education from 1st to 10th grade, published from "Anubis Publishing House", Klet Ltd. (2016 - 2021), in which she is co-author and leader of the author's team.

**The habilitation thesis "Contemporary music pedagogy. Theoretical and Analytical Aspects"** (Shumen: "Konstantin Preslavsky" University Publishing House 2021, ISBN: 978-619-201-547-3) grabs the attention and impresses with the scale, significance and relevance of the topic. The *object* (modern music pedagogy), *research subject and methodology* stated in the title (theoretical perspective and - respectively - analytical "probing" of music education in the Bulgarian school), constitute an *indisputable scientific contribution*. Such a comprehensive reading of contemporary music pedagogy (proposed by the author of music textbooks for all grades, developed on the concepts of the Law on Preschool and School Education - 2015, effective since 01.08.2016, and the relevant State Education Standards) is not only necessary for contemporary music educators, but also directly fits into the circle of scientific literature, which in the future will testify to the educational principles and achievements of our time. I congratulate Yanna Ruskova for her holistic thinking, for her courage to thematize and problematize the various aspects of music pedagogy and to embrace the music teaching profession in its entirety as a system of complexly coordinated components. Even before I opened the work, guided by these thoughts, I was in reverence by the high bar that is being set, which can only be a task before the spiritual gaze of an author with rich and up-to-date pedagogical experience and significant scientific accumulations.

Implemented on 207 pages, structured in an introduction, three chapters and a bibliography, in terms of content the study covers the following interrelated issues:

- music pedagogy ↔ philosophy of music, philosophy of music education;
- music pedagogy ↔ music psychology;
- musical didactics ↔ artistic didactics;

- traditions ↔ modernity ↔ perspectives: current technologies, forms, methods, approaches to work;
- competency profile of the music teacher;
- the music lesson (Introduction, p. 9).

Not only the topic of the monograph, but also the overall approach impresses with its scale. To bring out the mission of music pedagogy, Yanna Ruskova begins with the functions of music art (Chapter One "ON THE FUNCTIONS OF MUSICAL ART in the context of the philosophy of music and music pedagogy") - undeniably a complex research task, as today it is difficult to systematize a united scientific concordance on this issue. The author finds a firm foothold in the bimodality, embedded in the essence of music education, where music is a *means* of influence and an *object* of value. What's remarkable is the concentrated reference of philosophers and music researchers from different times, as well as the wide-range presentation of the problem.

Chapter Two "COMPETENCE MODEL OF THE MUSIC TEACHER" is of particular interest to me. I fully share the author's summary that, unfortunately, we lack such a standard for the teaching profession, "which would prescribe the framework of the professional competence of the future music teacher." (P. 122). I appreciate the graphically presented structure of the competence of the music teacher as a contribution and perspective (p. 123), as well as the convincing constitution of the professional competencies as a compound of two structural elements - *basic* and *special competencies*. I am convinced that the efforts of Yanna Ruskova to propose a sound concept of the competencies of the music teacher will support future developments and will be an area of active interest by researchers in the field of pedagogical science.

Chapter Three "THE MUSIC LESSON - CONTEMPORARY THEORETICAL ASPECTS" is extremely useful for the community of music teachers and it is especially original with the idea of keeping in mind the following categories when teaching the lesson: *composition - drama - improvisation*.

At the heart of the understanding that Yanna Ruskova affirms in her work is the following belief: "The more music that sounds in music lessons, the more it will be a music lesson. Through music students can reach a certain knowledge, through music they can comment on, analyze, make, interpret music..., the more music their achievements can be tested on, the more successful our work will be." (P. 173). Hence the lasting interest in the construction and formation of the music teacher, the non-verbal communication in the music class, the music performance as an essential factor in the special professional competencies of music teachers.

Yanna Ruskova's work is a contribution both as an idea and as a realization. I have already mentioned its intransient value, and again I state that this monograph will enrich both the theory and practice of music pedagogy.

The **second monograph** - "Professional and personal development of students - future music teachers. Professional self-determination." ("Konstantin Preslavsky" University Publishing House, 2020, 210 pp. ISBN: 978-619-201-463-6), is realized on the basis of the author's dissertation.

In this study, Yanna Ruskova achieves a scientifically sound understanding of professional self-determination and derives its parameters, structure and components. "Thus, PS is a generalizing category that allows to combine different in purpose, content and results processes that determine the subjective characteristics of readiness for a particular professional activity / profession, abilities and motives for independence in the advance in the professional educational field ..." ( pp. 47). This original concept inspires the specially developed methodology for empirical research of pedagogical self-determination of students on the basis of data obtained from diagnostic tests and surveys. The value of the development is expressed in the ability to apply it as a diagnostic model in new research through appropriate adaptation to the specific object, subject and purpose, and, on the other hand, through this type of adaptation to monitor the dynamics of learning processes over the years.

The **publications** for the competition have a wide thematic scope, covering with scientific attention the rich spectrum of contemporary music pedagogical issues. I will present them in three relatively separate groups by keywords and concepts from the titles of the publications<sup>1</sup>.

- *Music textbooks:*

- the song repertoire;
- textbooks for the initial stage of education;
- electronic textbooks;

- *Activities and competencies:*

- electronic musical instruments;
- musical-performing activity - interpretation, stages, communicative function, psychological bases;

- *The music lesson - the music teacher:*

- theoretical aspects;
- music education strategy;
- professionalism; attitude to the profession;
- competencies;
- functions of the music-pedagogical activity and the music pedagogue as its subject.

This scientific activity, which for years has formed the overall vision of the author for music pedagogical work as a mission, dedication and will for self-improvement, is a prerequisite for the **practical and applied** contributions of Yanna Ruskova in her large-scale work on textbooks, books for teachers, teaching aids and electronic textbooks as a co-author and leader of the author teams.

We shouldn't neglect the organizational competencies of Assoc. Prof. Yanna Ruskova, PhD, including Head of the Department of Musical Aesthetics, Music Education and Performance at the Faculty of Pedagogy of Shumen University from February 2017 until now and as Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs at the Faculty of Pedagogy from December 2017 to September 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> See the applications to the materials for the competition, "List of Assoc. Prof. Yanna Pavlova Ruskova's publications".

In her work as a university lecturer, Yanna Ruskova develops a rich pedagogical activity with *methodological contributions*. She has developed a respectable number of lecture courses and relevant curricula: Theory and Methodology of School Music Education, Music Psychology, Music Editors, Electronic Musical Instruments, Competence Approach and Innovation in Education (Bachelor's Degree, "Pedagogy of Music Education" major), as well as History of music pedagogy, Contemporary trends and schools in music psychology (for "master's" degree). Her teaching activity in the majors "Pedagogy of Music Education", "Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy", "Primary School Pedagogy with a foreign language", "Preschool pedagogy with a foreign language" and "Primary School Pedagogy with Information Technologies" is similar. The scientific guidance of four PhD students, her participation in projects and qualification courses and webinars should also be included.

Yanna Ruskova gives organizational and professional support for the academic growth of her colleagues as a member of the scientific jury in their procedures and works diligently to raise the prestige of the music majors and the teaching staff at "Konstantin Preslavsky" University of Shumen.

Attached to the materials of the competition is a list of 58 citations, which significantly exceed the required points for indicators D 11 - 12 in the Minimum National Requirements under Art. 2 b, para. 2 and 3 of the LDASRB of NACID.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Yanna Ruskova is one of the most prominent researchers of contemporary music pedagogy. Her *theoretical, pedagogical, practical and methodological contributions* are vivid and indisputable. They are realized both in her teaching activity, and in her large, both in volume and importance, production of publications and monographs, and in the field of her public activities. The combination of different types of contributions, including artistic and creative, determines the originality and relevance of her scientific research and achievements.

**Everything stated in this review is a reason to give my professional support and firmly propose to the esteemed scientific jury Assoc. Prof. Yanna Pavlova Ruskova, PhD to be elected for the academic position of "professor" in the professional field 1.3 Pedagogy of teaching ..., scientific specialty "Methodology of music education".**

February, 2022

Reviewer:



(Prof. Mariyana Bouleva, DSc)