

PEER REVIEW

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zornitsa Dimitrova Petrova

**Lecturer in Piano and Piano Accompaniment at the Department of Piano and
Accordion**

**at the Faculty of Music Pedagogy at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance
and Fine Arts – Plovdiv**

for the materials submitted for participation in the competition for the academic position of
“Professor of Piano”, Code 8.3 “Music and Dance Arts”

in the Department of Piano and Accordion

of

ASSOC. PROF. DR. Lyudmil Borisov Petkov

32, Knyaginya Mariya Luiza Blvd.

Lecturer at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lyudmil Borisov Petkov is the only candidate in the current competition for “Professor of Piano” at the Department of Piano and Accordion at the Faculty of Music Pedagogy at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv. For more than 35 years his teaching activity, research interests, and art projects have been an integral part of the prestige and creative identity of the piano methodological community in our University. Even a cursory glance at the main biographical touches of our colleague outlines his definite presence as a bright artistic individuality in the musical life of our city and country. The root cause, of course, we find in the ancestral traditions. His father, Boris Petkov, is a longtime soloist-clarinetist of the Plovdiv Philharmonic and a Professor of Clarinet at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts. His mother, Zdravka Bancheva, is a well-known neurologist. Musicality, as a natural talent, is present in the genes of both genera. Suffice it to mention the close relationship with the great Bulgarian conductor – Dobrin Petkov. I dwell on these facts, not to embellish my assessment with the obligatory but depersonalized on-duty “benefits” of the earliest environment. I emphasize the family tradition in Lyudmil’s musical biography, to point it out as a natural “alloy” of gifts, home education, parental example, early communication with high musical values, and criteria for beauty established in childhood. And most of all, a lot of music – perceived, understood, loved, and transformed into hours of child labor in front of the piano. Here is the place of the educators – the training in the class of one of the prominent Bulgarian piano teachers – Dzhuliya Girginova, and later, the Professors Dzhuliya and Konstantin Ganevi. Even in high school, the young musician was an active participant in the Master Class of the great pianist – Prof. Rudolf Kerer (Weimar, 1977).

Anyone who knows Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lyudmil Petkov will agree that even the most detailed analysis of his creative nature will be filled with “white areas” of elusive, incomprehensible musical perspectives. The reason, in my opinion, is in his emphasized individuality, and his rare intellect, supported by broad philosophical and aesthetic competencies. And one more thing – in front of us is a bright freedom-loving, even voluntaristic artist and at the same time – a musician, captivated by the detail, and forming his concepts with meticulous precision. I share these observations with a conviction born of our repeated communication on stage. I have known Lyudmil’s piano performances since I was a child. I attended his high school concerts at the Music School and through them I “arranged” my young notions of the “Chopin type” pianists. This sound finesse and exquisitely flatteringly intimate style, the pianist still preserves as his “artistic brand”. Today Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petkov is a multidisciplinary instrumentalist: soloist, accompanist, chamber musician, and genre improviser. He has a piano repertoire in a wide range of styles. All this is in favor of his pedagogical activities, both with students majoring in “Performing Arts – Classical Instruments” and with students majoring in “Pop and Jazz”.

As for the Table with the minimum national requirements, it has been compiled correctly and completely – only with the most significant artistic manifestations of Assoc. Prof. Petkov. In a way typical of his laconic style, only activities that meet his own criteria for concert level or scientific contributions are included. Thus, many memorable performances remain out of the Table. Three recitals with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s Piano Sonatas (1st volume) and a joint recital with the Russian soprano Olga Seliverstova in the City of Verderonne (France) are mentioned as leading creative performances in the field of arts. I fully share what was written by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lyudmil Petkov in the Author’s report on the contribution of the sonata concerts. At a time like today, when the deficit of high spiritual messages is painfully felt, W. Mozart’s Piano Sonatas are an invaluable source of sublimity and beauty, which rarely sound integral. These three recitals contain a clear educational code, overflowing with constructive emotions. In addition, the high artistic and instrumental characteristics of the sonatas are often closed in the regular educational cycle, and the concert podium undeservedly ignores them. Such a cause is inherently close to Lyudmil’s artistic nature, so that with his inherent lightness and exquisite style, the colleague interprets “Mozart’s piano style”.

In group of Indicators B, item 7, Assoc. Prof. Petkov applies the printed book on the basis of his dissertation “Unknown and Rarely Performed Works for Piano Duo from the Period XVIII-XX Century – Historical and Performing Perspectives”. I find this title useful and timely in relation to the learning process of pianist students majoring in “Performing Arts”. Personally, I use the provided works and theoretical analyzes to update the repertoire of the students majoring in “Piano Duo”. I believe that the publication has an indisputable contribution nature for several reasons. I will quote them according to the truthful wording of Assoc. Prof. Petkov:

- *It is a reliable reflection of the discovery, research, and presentation (for the first time in the country) of works for this specific ensemble, created by important composers of their time;*

- *Through a multi-layered aesthetic analysis the line of continuity, the characteristics, and the individual features of the complex life and creative path of 26 composers and 32 works from different musical epochs are clarified;*
- *An objective factual basis for continuation and research in perspective of the theoretical, aesthetic, and performing issues of a large and diverse in nature repertoire for piano duo is created;*
- *Intriguing experiments are carried out: jazz improvisation in concert conditions of plays with genre orientation and the possibility to perform works on two grand pianos, written for four hands.*

In group of Indicators F, item 27 two aids intended for the training of pianists in the specialty “Pop and Jazz Performing Arts” are presented: “Repertoire Drone” and “Plays and Instructions with Genre Orientation”. Based on his many years of experience in piano teaching with students from “Pop and Jazz”, as well as his rich compositional invention, Lyudmil Petkov creates lasting professional landmarks, outlines opportunities for individual experiments, and enriches students’ access to the genre piano repertoire. I perceive all this as a personal professional contribution, which serves as a clear “guide” in the vast territory of genre music.

To all that has been said so far, I would like to point out a few more touches, which I consider essential and without which the artistic portrait of Assoc. Prof. Petkov will not be complete:

- *His authorial productivity;*
- *The long-term ensemble partnership with the great Bulgarian violinist – Mario Hosen;*
- *The proven affinity for working in a chamber ensemble with classical singers;*

*I will end with an informal confession: It is difficult to write about Lyudmil’s creative identity, especially in the field of scientific review. Probably the essayistic approach is the better solution when it comes to such an unusual and rich musical presence. **In conclusion** – I would like to express my sincere respect to the pianist and educator with a constant search for creative charge – respect that has remained the same from my early perceptions to the perceived professional trust today and now. That is why I confidently suggest to the esteemed scientific jury to choose Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lyudmil Borisov Petkov for the academic position of “Professor of Piano”.*

Prepared by: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zornitsa Petrova

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