

PEER REVIEW

Academic position: PROFESSOR
Only candidate: **Lyudmil Borisov Petkov**

For the academic position “Professor”, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lyudmil Petkov presents a variety of creative and pedagogical activities. In the section referring to the minimum national requirements, the candidate emphasizes his preference for the three recitals with piano sonatas from the first volume of the collected works by W. A. Mozart carried out in the period August 2017 – August 2018 in the House of Culture – Plovdiv. This section includes his piano recital in Verderonne, France with a special guest, the Russian soprano Olga Seliverstova.

The presentation of an integral with Mozart’s piano sonatas to a specialized audience is in itself a very bold undertaking. Achieving a convincing interpretation of these piano Mozart pieces requires high pianistic skills, stylistic culture and related sound instrumental richness, a sense of distribution of the dramatic line, and many more performance qualities, difficult to enumerate in a limited number of pages. With full right, Lyudmil Petkov puts this achievement in the first place, which, although with a selected part, compares it with the successes of the greatest Mozart pianists, who measure the musicality and culture of their colleagues by the ability to play any, even a very short part of Mozart’s sonata.

Here is what the candidate himself says about the contribution of this integral “marathon” – *“The integral performance of the 1st volume is a reminder and respect for the timeless artistic and aesthetic values “encoded” in this eternal music, announced in their public presentation”*. To the realization of this creative product I would like to add its verbal presentation. It is unlikely that the selected audience in a city like Plovdiv needs any details of Mozart’s creative legacy. But the presentation of a clean, brilliant piano style, in which with ingenious simplicity sometimes barely perceptible light shadows of fleeting moods are replaced, or a change of a whole “world” of eternal wisdom is made, is a necessity, which a performer with the qualities of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petkov completely logically puts in symbiosis with the sound of the works.

Another contribution that the candidate emphasizes in the “Reference on Contributions” and which is essential for him as a educator in higher education – *“The concert performance of these works gives the performer-educator an exceptional chance to educate and ennoble through personal artistic-performing example, tested over the centuries and infinitely necessary today – in the time of grossly trampled musical idealism”*. The best lesson a performer-educator can give to his students is his own stage performance. This is especially true when music that has survived for centuries is chosen as a program – music that will guide the spirituality of the human race for centuries to come.

To the already mentioned concerts with works by Mozart, I would like to add the participation in a concert at the Mozarthaus Vienna on 27.01.2015, as well as open dress rehearsal before recording on 22.02 2018 at the Yuri Bukov Hall.

Lyudmil Petkov’s creative activity also extends to jazz, as a style that the candidate successfully masters in the specific details of improvisation, sound, and a special pianistic way of sound extraction. One such concert is “Carpe Diem”, performed on 26.06.2015 at the

Trakart Hall, as well as Petkov's participation in the festive New Year's concert on 18.12.2017 at the Drama Theater – Plovdiv, together with bright and prominent musicians such as Mario Hossen and Teodosiy Spasov.

The candidate's scientific contributions are also reflected in the Reference and cover his interest in covering in a scientific style important moments of the performing life of the concert musician, either as a soloist or as part of an ensemble.

The published book on the basis of the defended dissertation stands out as a significant scientific contribution: *“Unknown and Rarely Performed Works for Piano Duo from the Period XVIII-XX Century – Historical and Performing Perspectives”*. The author writes: *“In the light of the already changed world of classical music, questions have been asked and answers have been sought about the existence of classical heritage and the responsibilities of the performer in the dramatic conditions of our 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 35 works from different musical epochs have been clarified”*.

It is through the connection in a single projection of historical and performing analysis that this unknown chamber music comes to life with its true values. The right approach has been found for both the specialized readers and the amateurs, who, in addition to the joy of the experience in the concert hall, want to clarify for themselves questions of the obscure creative life of the rarely played repertoire. The book also includes *“Intriguing experiments: jazz improvisation in concert conditions of plays with a genre focus and the ability for performance on two grand pianos of works written for four hands”* (quote). Thus, it “enters” the classroom, with students not only from the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, but also other higher art institutions, where lecturers always need to update the set repertoire. In this respect, the contribution nature of the said book, created on the basis of the defended doctoral dissertation, is indisputable. Quite logically, it serves as a basis for some citations – **in an article by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zornitsa Petrova in the Yearbook of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, dealing with the pianistic legacy of Anatoliy Lyadov.**

The modern title, dealing with *“pieces and technical instructions aimed to help the pianist and messages of continuity”* (quote) bears the intriguing title “Repertoire Drone” and was released in 2019. What distinguishes this collection of genre plays from similar ones is the instructional sequel, which contains six technical exercises. The author – Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lyudmil Petkov successfully combines the academic orientation with *“a place for free trajectories and experiments, in the essence of which the young musicians should follow the direction of their individuality”* (quote), and who mentions in the text to his reference that this is *“a direct continuity with which, as a classical musician, I am connected by the names of Dzhuliya Girginova, Prof. Dzhuliya and Konstantin Ganevi, the conductor Dobrin Petkov, Prof. Rudolf Kehrer and my father Prof. Boris Petkov”* (quote). We should remind that Lyudmil Petkov was a student in the class of Dzhuliya and Konstantin Ganevi and this textbook is a kind of his gift to their memory, as prominent figures in the Bulgarian piano pedagogy.

In the same spirit is the textbook – *“Plays and Instructions with Genre Orientation”*, in which the pianist shares his essential experience in mastering the professional subtleties of

genre music – details that the classical pianist has not encountered in his work as a pupil or student. Like the other two editions, I believe that this has a contribution moment in the pedagogical work not only in Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, but also in every music school not only in Bulgaria but also abroad.

I would not like to miss another perspective of the creative activity of the candidate – composer of songs from the genre repertoire – “Carneol” and “Song for the Father”, written in 2014 and 2015. In the CD of Lamico Band released in 2016, Lyudmil Petkov participated as a pianist of the group and author of three songs. The CD is dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts and aims to present the institution in an *“increasingly interesting niche for students”* (quote). The concert of this ensemble held on 15.12.2011, with the participation of Prof. Snezhana Simeonova, was charitable – “raising funds for the reconstruction of the yellow institution”.

In June 2019, the pianist organized a master class, the genre range of which was very wide – from Viennese classics, through Romantic miniature, to Evergreen improvisation. With this, his name was established as a broad-minded and competent in many areas musician and pianist with skills beyond the set of technical skills and pianistic means familiar to most classical colleagues.

I will allow myself to quote only one of the attached peer reviews of the candidate’s performances for his concert in the Balabanov House, by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zornitsa Petrova – *“Lyudmil’s elegant and flattering and intimate style sets the large audience to the upcoming walk in the sound world of the popular chamber music”*.

Everything set out in this peer review leads to its logical conclusion – I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to appoint **Assoc. Prof. Dr. LYUDMIL BORISOV PETKOV** to the academic position **“PROFESSOR”** on the basis of Art.22, para.2 and Art.23, para.1 of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.



Prof. Dr. Rostislav Yovchev

Sofia, 15.03.2021