

## OPINION

by Velislav Zaimov

**Professor Doctor of Score Reading in the Department of *Conducting*  
and of Composition in the Department of *Composition*  
at the Faculty of *Theory, Composition and Conducting*  
of the National Academy of Music *Prof. Pancho Vladigerov*,  
scientific jury member in the competition, announced in State Gazette No. 40  
of May 17, 2019, for the academic position of *Associate Professor*  
in professional field 8.3. *Music and Dance Arts*, specialty **SOLFEGGIO**  
at the Department of *Music Pedagogy and Conducting*  
at AMDFA *Prof. Assen Diamandiev – Plovdiv***

One candidate applied for the above mentioned competition. This is Milena Ivanova Bogdanova, PhD.

Milena Bogdanova is an alumna of the *Lyubomir Pipkov* High School of Music in Sofia, graduating in 1989. In 1995 she graduated from the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts *Prof. Assen Diamandiev – Plovdiv* with a Master's Degree in Music Pedagogy. In 1997, also at AMDFA, she completed a postgraduate qualification course in *Methodology of Solfeggio Teaching*. In 1998, as well at AMDFA, she began her teaching career in Solfeggio, Theory of musical elements, Methods of solfeggio training, Pedagogical practice in solfeggio, Methods and psycho-techniques for aural musical skills development (ear training). In 2015, she received a **PhD** degree for her dissertation *Solfegging with piano accompaniment*.

The scientific and pedagogical activity of Milena Bogdanova is rich and diverse. It includes lecture cycles, curricula development, numerous participations in international theoretical seminars, a large number of articles in scientific publications. Milena Bogdanova is also a performing pianist.

The habilitation thesis submitted by Milena Bogdanova is the monograph "*Musical and pedagogical concepts of Professor Zdravko Manolov in the field of aural musical skills training*".

The study is structured in three chapters, preceded by an introduction and followed by a conclusion, four appendices, and a list of references.

The introduction defines the purpose of the research and the principles on which it is based.

In **Chapter One**, the authoress presents the life of Zdravko Manolov, with an emphasis on the atmosphere in which he lived, the steps in his musical training and his growth as a person and musician. I am convinced that nowadays, by coincidence, only Milena Bogdanova could gather piece by piece the artistic and pedagogical line in the biography of Zdravko Manolov and weave them into a common thread. This chapter of the monograph fills in a missing page in Bulgarian music culture.

**Chapter two** is entitled *The Bulgarian School of Solfeggio* and is dedicated to the origins and development of aural musical skills training in our country, as well as to the main distinctive features of our solfeggio literature. It tracks down the steps of the emerging musical literacy and the contributions of its foremost developers: Alexander Krustev, Dobri Hristov, Boris Trichkov, Kamen Popdimitrov, Ivan Peev, Asen Diamandiev. Professor Zdravko Manolov took his well-deserved place among them in the early 1960s. In this chapter, every musician and music educator could find the concise basics of aural musical skills teaching (ear training) in our country, and in the case of a broader professional interest, to get the correct orientation.

**Chapter Three *Musical, pedagogical and theoretical views of Prof. Zdravko Manolov in the field of aural musical skills training*** is of the greatest importance with respect to the main purpose of the study. Here, the authoress makes her conclusions based on the practical involvement of Professor Zdravko Manolov in the process of developing aural musical literacy. His practical contribution is by no means accidental, since his being a composer makes him the most prominent figure in this field and, quite naturally, his importance in the practical mastery of this matter is of utmost significance. I find Professor Zdravko Manolov's participation in this process of musical education a real serendipity, since he was a professor of polyphony who had a very high level of contrapuntal technique and knew a great deal of musical and theoretical literature from the time of the Renaissance to the second half of the twentieth century. His skills and

knowledge enabled him to construct the aural musical skills training upon a high musical and aesthetic foundation.

Milena Bogdanova has organised the music examples selected or composed by Zdravko Manolov, which makes it possible to evaluate the comprehensiveness of his pedagogical views and their correlation with the level of the trainees. Some of the music samples are more educational and informative in character. These are examples of world and Bulgarian music heritage. Others prepare the trainees for the various types of polyphony. Still others help to master the metro-rhythmic and melodic features of Bulgarian folklore. There are also sample pieces that develop the feeling of ensemble music. The sample pieces composed by Zdravko Manolov are of particular value due to their focus on the relationship between ear training and the theoretical disciplines - especially harmony and polyphony.

Milena Bogdanova is a solfeggio teacher with considerable experience. Her in-depth knowledge of Zdravko Manolov's pedagogical system enables her to build on a sound musical basis in her pedagogical work. On the other hand, as an educator she has had the opportunity to check in practice the results of the music samples provided by Zdravko Manolov. The publication of the present habilitation thesis provides an opportunity for Manolov's premium-quality ear training methodology to gain its well-deserved popularity among many teachers, pupils and students. The analysis and arrangement of the concepts inherent to this methodology and their presentation in a clear and systematic manner in front of the musical circles makes the study particularly relevant and valuable.

Having assessed these merits of the habilitation thesis, I am fully convinced to propose that the honourable scientific jury grants the academic rank of *Associate Professor* in professional field 8.3., specialty *Solfeggio* to Milena Ivanova Bogdanova, PhD.

Sofia, July 27, 2019

Prof. Dr. Velislav Zaimov