

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Velislava Angelova Karagenova, PhD

Regarding the application of *Assist. Prof. Milena Ivanova Bogdanova, PhD* for the competition for the academic position of *Associate Professor in Solfeggio* in area of higher education 8. Arts, professional field 8.3. Musical and dance arts, announced in the State Gazette No. 40 / 17.05.2019

Assist. Prof. Milena Ivanova Bogdanova, PhD, has submitted a comprehensive testimonial of her **scientific contributions, pedagogical and artistic accomplishments** towards her participation in the *Associate Professor of Solfeggio* competition. I have known for a long time my colleague M. Bogdanova as an erudite, proficient and ethical specialist in her field, but so far I have not had the pleasure to be fully acquainted with her activity and interests. The submitted documents and materials gave me the opportunity to see the big picture of her personality as a professional with wide-scoped and rich scientific views and various artistic appearances. Milena Bogdanova defends her professional ambitions with impressive accomplishments, among which I will highlight a few:

- Her **active scientific research** – materialized in 24 publications, 10 of which Bogdanova submits in the competition for associate professor –, cover a variety of issues in the field of methodology of aural music skills training, music history, theory and psychology. The range is wide – from the historical perspective and evolution of the phenomena, through the issues of ear training, psychological and applied analysis in the field of elementary education, to the theoretical and methodological approaches in Bulgarian solfeggio pedagogy, targeted at incorporation of the valuable existing experience. All publications submitted by the candidate are based on the desire to bring out and summarize contemporary aspects in the forms and ways of approaching ear training; to discover, test and implement new pedagogical techniques and efficient practices in order to optimize the process of music education in line with the changing reality. The relevance of the commented topics and the contemporary worldview, in whose context

they are studied, reveal an authoress with in-depth scientific knowledge and a teacher with many years of experience in the field of solfeggio and music theory. This is validated by the numerous substantive reports presented at reputable scientific forums in Bulgaria and abroad – in France, (2014 and 2016), Serbia (2018), Montenegro (2018) and Greece (2018). An original perspective on solfeggio training, of both highly theoretical contribution and utilitarian value is the topic of the candidate's doctoral dissertation – *On solfeggio with piano accompaniment*.

- **M. Bogdanova's extensive pedagogical experience** is validated by the achievements of her students, who have admirably presented the name of the Academy in a number of issues of the National Contest on Theory of Musical Elements. Another product of the long professional experience of M. Bogdanova are the developed course curricula, both in the traditionally established disciplines like Solfeggio, Theory of Musical Elements, Methodology, and in the innovative discipline *Modern methods, psycho-techniques and approaches for aural musical skills development*. The latter, as an idea, title, and methodical and thematic content, is an individual contribution.
- M. Bogdanova's broad professional interests go way beyond her scientific and pedagogical commitment. I know the candidate as a **performing pianist** from her participation in the jubilee concerts, dedicated to the 110th anniversary of M. Goleminov's birth and 90th anniversary of Z. Manolov; both projects being initiated, planned and organized by her. They revealed a musician with a distinctive performing nous and multifaceted competencies; a professional whose profile has the solid basis of a theoretician upgraded with the attentive enhancement of a performing pianist. The positive opinions and reviews of these concerts are an indisputable criterion for their relevance and public significance. I accept as candidate's certain contribution to contemporary Bulgarian musical culture the premiere performance of "*Song*", "*Summer Bird*" and "*Spring Song*" by M. Goleminov, transcribed for clarinet and piano by M. Bogdanova, and "*Ten Pieces for piano and clarinet*" by Z. Manolov. In addition, M. Bogdanova has recently co-organized and participated in two more memorable performances – "*100 minutes for tango with musical illustrations*", 2015 and "*Concert – Fairy Tale*", 2013.

Representative to the overall professional appearance of Assist. Prof. M. Bogdanova, PhD, is her being the founder and long-term coordinator of the Academic Club *Young Scientist*. Over the years within the framework of this forum original public lectures have been delivered by Assoc. Prof. M. Tsenova-Nusheva, PhD, BAS; Dr. A. Kevorkian, Assoc. Prof. A. Martonova, PhD, BAS; Prof. Vitanova, PhD, University of Shoumen, etc.

For the current competition M. Bogdanova has also submitted the book "***Musical, pedagogical and theoretical concepts of Prof. Zdravko Manolov***". Conceived as a project to preserve the original heritage and memory of Zdravko Manolov, the initial idea grew into an in-depth study – the result of the authoress' personal affinity for Manolov's legacy and of her extensive professional experience.

Prof. Zdravko Manolov's presence and achievements in many spheres are indisputable. Being a composer, researcher, professor, he personally considered his pedagogical activity a subject of primary importance. His high professionalism and wisdom propelled him to leaving a rich theoretical and research legacy. Each of us, who were professionally engaged in music in the second half of the twentieth century, went through the coursebooks for aural skills development authored by Z. Manolov, I. Peev, A. Diamandiev – their emblematic publications *Initial solfeggio, Courses for the study of one-voice, two-voice, three-voice-line dictations*, etc. In this sense, the detailed, analytical and comprehensive review of the theoretical and pedagogical views and accomplishments of Prof. Z. Manolov proposed in the candidate's study deserves real admirations. As Bogdanova notes, the work aims to "*provide a unique guidebook for young colleagues who have decided to devote themselves to an ear-development pedagogical career.*" The perspective selected by the authoress projects onto this work a **scientific vision of its own**, vital and significant for the Bulgarian musicology. The clarity of the text is a sign of competence in presenting the topics, of profound professionalism, both scientific and pedagogical.

The biography of Zdravko Manolov, emotionally marked by the unique imprint of the researcher's personal memories, is enriched with unpublished archival documents, photographs and materials. This chapter, as well as the historical presentation of the origin and development of ear training in Bulgaria, aim to cast light on the complex evolutionary path of the music-

educational system, the change in attitudes, the challenges in choosing forms and methods of work to enhance aural musical skills. "Before" and "now" are categories vital and relevant to any in-depth study. Particularly noteworthy are the review and classification of the Bulgarian solfeggio book releases grouped into three sections: solfeggio literature based on music pieces by world-renowned composers; solfeggio literature especially designed for the needs of ear training; solfeggio literature based on Bulgarian folklore. It is in this structured diversity that the authoress searches for, finds and describes Manolov's musical excerpts published in solfeggio literature. Manolov's "wide-ranging" contribution to music theory and practice, as Bogdanova writes, has not been the object of extensive research. The role of the examples he created as a means of developing and enhancing musical hearing has not been studied; and the possibilities, respectively the extent of didactic interpretation, that his entire creative work in the field of ear training could offer have not been clarified. Therefore, in the third chapter, every didactic collection which includes music fragments by Zdravko Manolov is turned into an object of analysis. The main analytical emphasis naturally highlights those of his musical fragments, which are specifically composed as didactic ones. They are commented on in a clearly systematic way from different perspectives - structure and texture, reliance on musical and expressive capabilities; methodological guidelines and requirements – a variety of musical aural tasks, expected results and achievements. In all teaching examples by Manolov presented by the authoress, the presence of the composer is evident, the original creative approach and his proverbial musical-theoretical and methodical proficiency are recognizable. The examples studied and analysed by Bogdanova lead her to important generalizations: alongside material for creating rich and detailed auditory images, each individual sample piece possesses high artistic qualities. Examined outside the coursebooks, the sample pieces outline the contours of an original, distinctive, yet methodologically motivated and rigorously brilliant high-class ear training system. They actually become a prerequisite for an integrated approach in the process of teaching music literacy.

M. Bogdanova discusses also Zdravko Manolov's attitude to Bulgarian folklore and folk songs. As a composer, he preserves the line of enriching and updating the song genre, and achieves that through using polyphonic baroque techniques and extending the formal boundaries of the original. However, in his folk song orchestrations and his own songwriting, Manolov conveys not

only artistic but also deep educational meaning. Bogdanova finds evidence of this in the solfeggio coursebooks on folk intonations, which include music sample pieces composed by Zdravko Manolov. They offer a variety of tone systems, rich ornamentation and metrorhythmics, active variability of mode tonality. Therefore, by creating clear ideas about the Bulgarian folk song style, they provide a universal base for the development of musical hearing (ear training) on a national folklore basis. Drawing on the traditions of folk and professional music making, Manolov builds a bridge between past and present.

The present study systematically conveys every detail of the professional activities, accomplishments and views of Prof. Zdravko Manolov. It covers all theoretical and methodological domains. Milena Bogdanova shares her personal experience and own observations, a fact that further contributes to the high assessment of the candidate.

In conclusion, I **highly evaluate** the overall presentation of **Assist. Prof. Milena Bogdanova, PhD**. I am deeply convinced that her application meets the requirements of the ADASRB and the Regulations for its implementation and that the candidate **deserves to be awarded the academic position of Associate Professor in Solfeggio**.

Assoc. Prof. V. Karagenova, PhD