

## **PEER REVIEW**

by Assoc Prof. **Zornitsa Dimitrova Petrova, Ph.D.**  
tutor of piano and keyboard instruments accompaniment  
in the Department of Piano and Accordion  
of the Faculty of Musical Pedagogy  
with AMDFA Prof. Asen Diamandiev – Plovdiv

on the materials submitted for participation in a procedure  
for awarding the academic position of Associated Professor  
in Piano (compulsory instrument) academic specialty,  
code 8.3. Music and Dance Arts  
in the Department of Piano and Accordion  
of

**Sen. Asst. Nadezhda Kozma Kuzmanova, Ph.D.**

address: 47, Volga Str., City of Plovdiv  
tutor in AMDFA Prof. Asen Diamandiev

The task to review the professional work of a long-time colleague like Sen. Asst. Nadezhda Kuzmanova, Ph.D. is both exciting and demanding.

Our acquaintanceship dates back to her student years, so I was a happy witness of almost all her achievements that shaped her dominant and creative presence over time. I have personally experienced the artistic achievements that year after year raised the growth of a talented, erudite and consistent pianist and educator. The main challenge for me was to turn the subjective satisfaction into an objective and logical evaluation. Therefore, following the formal sequence, I will highlight some factors that, in my opinion, naturally bear the weight in shaping the undisputed artistic, creative and educational merits of Sen. Asst. Nadezhda Kuzmanova, Ph.D.

First of all, I would like to emphasize the high level of pianistic and artistic education acquired during the years of her academic training. I think that the class of the renowned pianist and tutor Prof. Georgi Petrov has long ago and lastingly acquired the prestige of a keyboard instruments school, in which the teaching of the instrument is inextricably linked with the education of higher professional virtues, such as a wide repertoire horizon, indisputable aesthetic knowledge, constant strive for experimentation and improvisation, inspired performance of contemporary keyboard instruments music of Bulgarian composers. Nadezhda Kuzmanova not only preserves these professional virtues in time, but also carries them today, enriched by her natural creative passions and interests.

During her university studies (1992) she studied as a guest student with Prof. Gunda Köhler-Scharlach at the University of Music FRANZ LISZT, Weimar. This important period undoubtedly contributed in the enrichment of the professional development of the pianist.

Important role in the creative biography of Sen. Asst. Nadezhda Kuzmanova, Ph.D. must be attributed to the Prof. Peter Feuchtwanger (England) keyboard instruments interpretation master classes and the numerous concerts associated with them (in Weimar, Zion, Lübeck and Bonn).

Of particular importance in N. Kuzmanova, Ph.D., concert practice is her participation in various chamber formations:

1. The RANG Keyboard Quartet (with Prof. Georgi Petrov, Rayna Petrova, and Arno Hovagimyan), with which she performed and recorded (premiere in the country) all the concerts of J. S. Bach for two, three and four pianos.
2. The vocal chamber duo with Nely Koycheva (alto) – the first performer of the Charles Ives songs in Bulgaria.

3. The keyboard duo with Rayna Petrova, with whom she performed the works of Franz Schubert for four hands in five integral concerts.
4. The numerous chamber configurations within the 6 concert programs entitled The Chamber Music of Gabriel Faure. The creative collaboration with renowned musicians such as Prof. Nedyalcho Todorov, Prof. Aleksandar Spirov, Prof. Magdalena Chikcheva, etc., led to the successfully defended Ph.D. degree in 2014.
5. The specializations in Methods of Piano Training at the National Academy of Music Prof. Pancho Vladigerov (2010) and the organ training at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts (*AMDFA*) (2013-2017) significantly extend the pedagogical and artistic experience of Sen. Asst. N. Kuzmanova, Ph.D. The second specialization (under the supervision of Stefan Dalchev, Ph.D.) shapes the presence of active-performing Bulgarian organ performers.

The Fulfillment of the Minimum National Requirements Statement plays a main role in the attached documents set. It is clear and truthfully reflects N. Kuzmanova's many appearances. Even at the first glance, the impression of persistent, constant and consistent artistic work, which includes various solo and chamber recitals, style-rich organ programs, recording activities, participation in prestigious festivals, is evident.

In terms of the Group C Indicators, the performance of the V.A. Mozart's Piano Concerto in D Minor with the Symphony Orchestra of the City of Targu Mures – Romania is clearly prominent. This legendary work was interpreted by Nadezhda Kuzmanova under the direction of the renowned Bulgarian conductor, Radosveta Boyadzhieva, (13 June 1997). The following is a series of integral recitals: The concerts for 2, 3 and 4 pianos by J.S. Bach; Piano Music for 4 Hands by Fr. Schubert; The songs of the American composer Charles Ives. Nadezhda Kuzmanova carries her talent and depth over her affinity for the complete creative picture of any author, style or age. She selects bright interpreters for the concert podium, with which she enters into deep and rich stylistic layers.

In this group of indicators I would like to highlight the concert program The Romantic world of Gabriel Faure, performed together with the great Bulgarian violinist and tutor, Prof. Nedyalcho Todorov. Deeply personal and ecstatic is my memory of an inspired ensemble performance that immersed the audience in the exquisite, immaculate world of the French composer. Prof. Todorov recalls the following for the performance of both violin sonatas and both miniatures (Lullaby op. 16 and Andante op. 75): “I must emphasize that our collaboration with Nadezhda Kuzmanova has always given me great satisfaction. Her deep penetration

into the Faure's style and her comprehensive knowledge of the spirit and the specific features of his music inspired and enriched me. As the first researcher of his chamber art in Bulgaria, she was able to discover his true beauty and allure. The whole preparation process, which turned into a truly creative empathy and creative interaction, resulted in high results, well appreciated by the high demanding chamber-instrumental art professionals and connoisseurs and critics.”<sup>1</sup>

In the rich series of creative performances (Japanese Music Concert; Slavic Composers' Songs Concert, Forgotten Masterpieces Concert), the most prominent are those in which Nadezhda Kuzmanova played with Nely Koycheva – a singer with deep and richly nuanced and striking alto timbre, and Albena Dimova – a pianist and tutor of leading importance in contemporary Bulgarian keyboard instruments culture. Conclusion can be made of the strict precision and sense in the selection of the creative collaborations.

I would also like to express my sincere respect for N. Kuzmanova's newest creative role – the vast “space” of organ music, sacred and secular, baroque and romantic. The recital performed in the concert hall of AMDFA Prof. Asen Diamandiev (17 April 2016) and the joint concert with Prof. Albena Dimova (Keyboard Dialogues for Organ and Piano, 26.02.2017) are another evidence of high instrumental skill, acquired in the year of specialization for Nadezhda's rich repertoire portfolio, featuring organ masterpieces by J.S. Bach, A. Vivaldi, D. Buxtehude, J. Rheinberger, G. Merkel, F. Mendelssohn and C. Frank. Some other organ and piano ensembles must be added, such as the first performances of Rhapsody for organ and piano and Fantasy for organ and piano by Clifford Demarest, Sonata for piano and organ by Velislav Zaimov and Morning Serenade for piano and organ by Francis Poulenc.

In terms of Group D Indicators, Sen. Asst. Kuzmanova attached her book *The Chamber Music of Gabriel Faure*, published in 2019 based on her dissertation thesis. The subtitle *Through the Pianist's Eyes* immediately emphasizes the practical applicability of the book, summarizing the musicological knowledge gained through doctoral studies on the one hand, and on the other, organizing numerous analyzes, guidelines and interpretative views derived from “live” musical activity. All of the indisputable merits and contributions of the book should include the rich and extremely rare photographic material, which further enriches the scientific and cognitive value of what was written about the “master of charm”, as Gabriel Faure was called according to the author.

---

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Nedyalcho Todorov, “Impressions of my creative collaboration with Nadezhda Kuzmanova, Ph.D.”, 9 July 2019.

Five more concert performance were added to the Statement, defined as participations in a collective product in the field of art and one quotation in the Lyudmil Petkov's book, Unknown and Rarely Performed Works for Piano Duo from the XVIII-XX Centuries. The impressive number of reviews (seven) is a true reflection of the rich and well valued concert activity.

Sen. Asst. Kuzmanova, Ph.D., is the head of three clubs at the Contemporary Piano Culture Club of the Department of Piano and Accordion. She held a master class at the Rameau Theater, Kobe-Japan (2015), as well as a workshop named Music of the Old Times, Plovdiv in 2019.

Nadezhda Kuzmanova's pedagogical work is meaningful and richly protected with numerous stylish programs, academic and national awards.

As a conclusion, we can see a documentation that fully meets the national requirements. It should make the candidate's overall activity contributions indisputable:

Nadezhda Kuzmanova's rich concert activity is considered a contribution to the artistic and creative life of the AMDFA and a national heritage.

The high instrumental level, the stylistic precision of the interpretation in the concert programs is an indispensable personal example, which reinforces and validates her pedagogical work.

An indisputable contribution is the combination of the concert activity with the organizational commitment of N. Kuzmanova, Ph.D., as long-time secretary of the Department of Piano and Accordion.

After everything presented in the Peer Review, I am fully convinced that I must propose to the Honorable Scientific Jury to submit a well-deserved proposal to the Faculty Council to award Sen. Asst. Nadezhda Kuzmanova, Ph.D. with the Academic Position Associate Professor in Piano (compulsory instrument) at AMDFA Prof. Asen Diamandiev.

Peer Review drawn up by:  
Assoc Prof. Zornitsa Petrova, Ph.D.

21.08.2019  
Plovdiv