

PEER REVIEW

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Zornitsa Dimitrova Petrova**

lecturer of Piano and Piano Accompaniment at the Piano and Accordion Department
to the Faculty of Music Pedagogy at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance
and Fine Arts

regarding the participation in a competition for occupation of the academic position
“Associate Professor”

under scientific specialty “Special Instrument (Pop and Jazz Guitar)”

Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”

to the Classical and Pop and Jazz Performing Arts Department

of

Chief Assistant Dr. PETAR VESELINOV KOYCHEV

lecturer at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts

I got acquainted in detail with the materials provided for the competition for occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor” in the specialty “Special Instrument (Pop and Jazz Guitar)” at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts. The only candidate who participates in the competition is Chief Assistant Dr. Petar Koychev. I responsibly declare that he has submitted his documents in full form and according to all scientometric requirements of the current competition.

Petar Koychev grew up in a family of musicians. His father is the famous Bulgarian jazz musician-guitarist Veselin Koychev. This fact speaks eloquently about the genetic predisposition of the son to the art of the entertainment genre and jazz. Petar graduated from Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University with a major in “Jazz and Pop Performance Art” and “Special Instrument – Guitar”. He received his Master’s degree at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts. He also specialized in Jazz Guitar at the Giuseppe Tartini Conservatory in Trieste, Italy. In 2019, he defended his doctoral dissertation on the topic “*Guitar Improvisation in Modern Jazz*” at Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University.

Over the years, Petar Koychev developed an active and versatile teaching activity: teacher of electric and classical guitar, as well as teacher of elementary theory and solfeggio. All this, together with the numerous master classes he attended and the

active club activity, shaped the world view of an experienced and active jazz and pop musician from an early age.

The large amount of creative projects in which he is a participant (many of them with symphony or opera orchestras): “Bohemian Rhapsody” – rock-symphonic concerts, “Sympho Ethno Jazz” – symphonic concerts, “Abba In Sinfonie” – symphonic concerts in Germany, Gypsy Jazz Project “Hot Club de Plovdiv”, “Bulgarian Folklore and Jazz”, Paris Night Jazz Formation, “Man of La Mancha” – musical with Plovdiv State Opera, the musical “Jesus Christ Superstar” with Plovdiv State Opera, the musical “Hair” with Plovdiv State Opera, “Two Guitars Jazz Live”, “Sting The Opera” with Stara Zagora State Opera, the CD “Black Coffee Nadya Toncheva”, the CD “Notes for Django” – based on compositions by Petar Koychev – 2022, and many others, is extremely impressive. Obviously, the rich and varied career of a young musician with a huge practice in the world of genre music is taking shape before us.

Petar Koychev is a participant in the program of many jazz festivals, in partnership with leading pop and jazz musicians such as Orlin Goranov, Nasko from BTR, Tsvetan Nedyalkov, Ivan Lechev, Veselin Koychev, Aleksandar Lekov, Petar Salchev, Mariyan Bachev, the group “White, Green and Red”, Lubomir Tolumbadzhiev, Ricardo Kieron, and many others. The importance of his work with famous Bulgarian conductors should be added to this.

As I have already stated, the Table with the minimum scientometric requirements has been filled in very precisely and truthfully, with the number of points significantly exceeding the basic indicators. Here I would like to focus on the essential artistic achievements, not on their quantitative value. In this direction, I will single out the author’s music on the CD with the title “Notes for Django”. The compositions of Petar Koychev, recorded by Riva Sound Records and released in 2022, carry the light melancholy and gentle sentiment of Gypsy jazz style. Inspired by the legendary guitarist Django Reinhardt, Petar successfully recreates the main rhythm-harmonic characteristics, the particular accentuation of the 2nd and 4th beats, and the abundance of arpeggios and chromatic scales as a soloist of his Jazz trio. Visibly in this style, the young musician feels confident and inspired and plays music freely in his own artistic “direction”.

Along with his numerous concert appearances, Petar Koychev has not underestimated the questions of theory related to mastering the pop and jazz guitar. *“Theoretical Foundations of Guitar Improvisation in Modern Jazz”* is the title of the published book based on his doctoral research. It successfully presents the basic improvisational principles and their practical application in playing the jazz guitar. The ways of sound extraction with the fingers of the right hand and the stroke characteristics realized by the left hand are examined in detail and provide clear guidelines between the theory and its application in the training of this instrument. The contribution nature of the book is clear and is in full sync with the highlighted scientific merits in Petar Koychev’s author reference. It should be emphasized that a coherent theoretical concept of jazz guitar improvisation and related instrumental skills has been developed. Moreover, in the words of Petar Koychev: “Detailed methods for training modern jazz guitarists have been developed”.

Six reviews in renowned specialized publications prove the positives of our colleague’s rich and varied activity: authorial, performing, and pedagogical. To what has been said so far, I would also like to add the three creative studios (Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University, Hristina Morfova National School of Music and Performing Arts – Stara Zagora, and Lyuben Karavelov High School – Plovdiv), in which Petar introduced pupils and students to the rich artistic essence of the jazz guitar as a soloing, rhythm-organizing and harmonic instrument.

In conclusion, based on all the distinguished fruitful activities of the colleague Petar Koychev, I declare my support for his logical growth in the professional structures of Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts and I propose to the respected Scientific Jury to award him the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the scientific specialty “Special Instrument (Pop and Jazz Guitar)”.

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