

PEER REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. TANYA VIKTOROVA BURDEVA

Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University, Faculty of Pedagogy

regarding the materials submitted for participation in the competition for occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" under Higher education field 8. "Arts", Professional field 8.3. "Music and Dance Arts" "Special Instrument (Pop and Jazz Guitar)"

1. General characteristics of the activity of the candidate

(A) Assessment of the creative and artistic activity

The artistic path of Chief Assistant Dr. Petar Koychev is associated with many solo and chamber performances: concerts, jazz festivals, musicals, club activities, etc. His artistic skills are also manifested in cooperation with the symphony orchestras of the cities of Plovdiv, Varna, Stara Zagora, Sliven, and Pazardzhik. As a **realized author's product in the field of musical art**, the CD "Notes for Django" is presented, including nine pieces composed by Chief Assistant Dr. Petar Koychev, in the characteristic guitar style of Django Reinhardt. The pieces are performed by a trio formation (guitar, double bass, and accordion), in which the author also acts as a performer. The compositions are distinguished by an expressive melodic line and colorful harmony. A strong sense of ensemble, bright solo performances, and impeccable technique mark the performances of all nine pieces. Petar Koychev's improvisations are virtuosic, marked by his individual style.

Leading appearance as a soloist: Chief Assistant Dr. Petar Koychev has performed in three concerts with the formations "Petar Koychev Gypsy Jazz Trio" (11.06.2022, Bebop Cafe in Plovdiv), "Petar Koychev PROJECT CONTINUITY" (06.09.2022, Sofia Live Club) and "Petar Koychev Quartet" (24.11.2012, Youth Jazz Festival, Dimitrovgrad). The joint activity with famous contemporary musicians has enriched his creative development. The fact that Petar Koychev is a sought-after partner of long-established artists is a kind of high praise for his performing qualities.

The *Reference* lists 16 supporting appearances. These participations of Chief Assistant Dr. Petar Koychev in a collective product are extremely serious and valuable: jazz forums, festivals, concerts, opera performances, musicals, etc., in partnership with famous musicians. All these appearances speak of Petar Koychev's creative growth and convincing artistic presence.

(B) Assessment of the scientific and scientific-applied activity

The scientific production of Chief Assistant Dr. Petar Koychev after acquiring the scientific title of Chief Assistant up to his current candidacy meets the relevant administrative requirements for participation in the competition for "Associate Professor".

MONOGRAPHS

The book “*Theoretical Foundations of Guitar Improvisation in Modern Jazz*” (2021) was published on the basis of a defended dissertation work for the award of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”. The rich executive activity of Chief Assistant Dr. Petar Koychev is a prerequisite and basis for his scientific research. The topicality of the subject of improvisation is due to the fact that jazz has changed significantly over the last hundred years and is currently continuing its development process. As far as jazz is an improvisational art, it is unthinkable to play jazz music without knowing the rules of improvisation, including the study of jazz scales, arpeggios, chords, patterns, and clichés. While the narrowly specialized publications related to improvisation and jazz theory are still too scarce, the practical achievements in this field are significant and constantly evolving. This provides strong enough grounds for research related to improvisation in jazz music, and the book examines the improvisational principles of modern jazz that influence the shape of modern jazz guitar music. The stylistic features and improvisation techniques in modern jazz music are analyzed. These are theoretical studies on modes, phrases, arpeggios, techniques, and chord progressions characteristic of the improvisation in modern jazz. The practical-applied nature of the study deserves high praise, as modern performers need a careful study and analysis of chords, harmonic progressions, improvisational scales and their in-depth practice. It is their prior knowledge that can free the performer’s improvisation and creative invention. A deeper look at chords, their relationships and their movement, and the selection of an appropriate scale, would theoretically prepare the performer for the practical process of improvisation.

The monograph has a significant practical-applied nature. On the basis of the studied audio recordings, note examples of practically applicable musical phrases (characters) used in specific harmonic and melodic jazz structures are collected and classified. They could contribute to the improvement and enrichment of the guitar teaching methodology in the field of jazz music by expanding the specific methods and techniques in the training of guitarists.

ARTICLES

Chief Assistant Dr. Petar Koychev has published two articles in specialized publications in the field of arts: “Guitar as Part of Blues Music in the 20th century” (2021) and “The Harmonic Minor in Jazz Music” (2022). In the first article, I find it valuable to share the author’s personal performance and interpretation experience related to playing the blues, as well as the analysis of audio and video recordings of popular blues guitarists. The second article differentiates the differences in the interpretation of harmonic minor in jazz and classical music theory, and examines common chord structures such as the II-V-I minor progression. The article has methodological and practical-applied meanings, because it could be useful for both students and educators.

(C) Assessment of the educational and pedagogical activity

The teaching interests of Chief Assistant Dr. Petar Koychev are in the field of guitar performance and guitar teaching methodology. His achievements as an educator are evidenced by the master classes held at Lyuben Karavelov High School (“Guitar Chords in Pop and Jazz Music”), at Hristina Morfova National School of Music and Performing Arts (“Jazz Guitar”) and a workshop at Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University (“Gypsy Jazz Guitar”). A very good impression is left by Petar Koychev’s effort to combine artistic and creative and pedagogical activities in the best possible way.

2. Citations and peer reviews: The excellent peer reviews for Chief Assistant Dr. Petar Koychev – six in number – refer to his composing and performing activities, as well as his participation in workshops and master classes. They convincingly testify to his artistic and creative contributions in the professional field and confirm his identity as a modern young artist.

3. Assessment of personal contribution: The high artistic achievements of Chief Assistant Dr. Petar Koychev, as well as his scientific and pedagogical activities correspond to the field and professional direction of the announced competition and to the stated need of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts for an associate professor in the relevant field. The compositional and performing performances are at a high artistic level, and the theoretical developments have practical applicability, as they are directly oriented to the academic work.

4. Personal impressions: My personal impressions from Chief Assistant Dr. Petar Koychev from his years of study as a bachelor, doctoral student and part-time lecturer at Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University – a studious, excellent student and a good colleague.

5. Conclusion: Chief Assistant Dr. Petar Koychev is a contemporary composer, performer and pedagogue with broad interests and high criteria for development, improvement, and professional realization. His personal interpretative style is characterized by great improvisational mastery. His performing skills cover the entire stylistic spectrum of the jazz guitar. Considering the numerous artistic appearances of Chief Assistant Dr. Petar Koychev and their high artistic level, it can be said with confidence that he is already an established name in modern Bulgarian culture and, in particular, in modern pop and jazz music. His creative performances are part of the modern Bulgarian cultural scene. The materials submitted for review comply with the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation. The artistic-creative and scientific-research activity of Chief Assistant Dr. Petar Koychev give me a reason to **give my positive assessment and to recommend to the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Musical Pedagogy for the election of Petar Koychev to the academic position of “Associate Professor” at Prof. Asen**

**Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts under Higher education field
8. "Arts", Professional field 8.3. "Music and Dance Arts" (Special Instrument – Pop
and Jazz Guitar).**

Prepared by:



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/Prof. Dr. Tanya Burdeva/