

PEER REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Toni Shekerdzhieva-Novak

regarding competition for occupation of the academic position of **“Professor”**
under Professional field **8.3. “Music and Dance Arts” in specialty “Piano (Piano
Accompaniment and Piano)”**

for the needs of the Piano and Accordion Department

at the Faculty of Music Pedagogy

with Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv

General presentation of the candidate

Zornitsa Petrova was born and raised in Plovdiv, in the family of outstanding musicians and educators. She finished her secondary education at (today) Dobrin Petkov National School of Music and Dance Art with a gold medal. Her studies at Prof. Pancho Vladigerov National Music Academy in the classes of the famous professors Lili Atanasova (piano) and Vladimir Avramov (chamber music), as well as “Applied Composition” under Simeon Pironkov, were also very successful. Zornitsa Petrova is a laureate of Bulgarian and international competitions, as well as a winner of the special scholarship named after Prof. Andrey Stoyanov.

Since 1991, the candidate has been a lecturer at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in Piano, and since 2000 – in Piano Accompaniment. In 2011, she defended her doctoral dissertation on the topic: *“The Songwriting of Franz Liszt”*, and became a Doctor of Musicology and Musical Art, and since 2013 she has been a full-time Associate Professor of Piano (Piano Accompaniment and Piano) at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in Plovdiv.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zornitsa Petrova is a remarkable musician whose presence in the cultural life of the country is amazing, not only because of the high quality, but also because of the diversity of her performances. We know her as a pianist, composer, accompanist, singer, pedagogue, critic, publicist, reviewer, and researcher. All her performances and activities carry high value and significance.

The piano and chamber cycles realized by her have a wide range – from Baroque music to modern times, as well as delightful examples of instrumental and chamber vocal work by Bulgarian composers. I will mention the cycles she created: “Old European Music”, “Sonatas for Violin and Piano by Johann Sebastian Bach” – Integral, “Viennese Classics”, “Masterpieces of Chamber Music of the 20th Century”, “Unknown Bel Canto Pages”, as well as the Integral “The Songwriting of Franz Liszt”. Since 2014, the series of concerts under the title “Masterpieces of the Small Vocal Genre” has been launched, in which the most valuable works created in the field of vocal chamber music are presented. The fact that

Associate Professor Dr. Zornitsa Petrova is the author of a large number of scientific publications is also worth mentioning.

Brief presentation of the materials received for review according to the various indicators from the scientometric table

The presented scientometric indicators are presented correctly and exceed the minimum national requirements.

Group of indicators A – 50 points

The rich experience and erudition find realization in the dissertation work of the candidate – *“The Songwriting of Franz Liszt”* (2011) and Diploma for awarding the educational and scientific degree **“Doctor”** No 002, issued on 11.11.2011 /50 points/.

The dissertation is the first of its kind *“reasoned comparison between Liszt’s reformative work carried out in his piano music and the enviable share of the song genre in the composer’s overall work.”* The work examines the problems of structure, melodic-harmonic characteristics, genre evolution, and the basics of pianistic technique. The multilingual poetry is analyzed – poems in French, German, Italian, Russian, English, and Hungarian languages, on which Franz Liszt composed his songs.

Group of indicators C – 190 points

Under **item 4**, *Realized author’s product in the field of arts* (film, performance, exhibition, concert, etc.), author’s concert of Zornitsa Petrova is presented – *Retrospection “Sans Résonance”*, 26.11.2022, Plovdiv (Hall of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – 11 AM), and 12.12.2022, Sofia – New Bulgarian University (UniArt Gallery); Zornitsa Petrova (piano) performed her own solo and ensemble compositions. <https://youtu.be/FejpUoyhpqM> /50 points/.

Under **item 5**, *Leading (independent) creative expression in the field of arts*, /140 points/ four concerts are specified, respectively:

1. Piano recital *“The Big World of Mikrokosmos”* (on the occasion of the 140th anniversary of the birth of Béla Bartók), 15.06.2021, Ethnographic Museum Hall, Plovdiv, 6 PM; <https://fb.watch/IJ3YL1Tnmk/>
2. Piano recital *“Fr. Chopin – Nocturnes”*, 11.08.2021, Art Gallery in the City of Kazanlak, 6 PM
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9K4SOVQMR6U>

3. *Chamber concert with Jamie Damon (tenor, USA) and Zornitsa Petrova at the piano – “Troubadours of Love”, 05.07.2019, Concert Hall of Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, 6 PM;*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBoIcJLC 54>

4. *Opera Con Pianoforte – Christoph Willibald Gluck, “Orpheus” Opera – concert performance of the Paris version from 1774. For the first time in Bulgaria. Soloists: Tsvetelina Maldzhanska, Andrey Naydenov, Hristina Vencheva. Piano accompaniment and interpretation: Zornitsa Petrova, 12.05.2015, Hall of Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, 11 AM.*

I will not dwell in detail on the creative performances presented by Assoc. Prof. Petrova, grouped in the scientometric table. I will only mention that fortunately I have attended most of them and my high rating is the result of personal impression.

Group of indicators D – 245 points

Under **item 7**, *Published book based on a protected dissertation work for awarding the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”,* the following book is presented: *“The Songwriting of Franz Liszt” – a book based on a defended dissertation work, Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, Plovdiv, 2019, ISBN: 979-0-707681-63-3, 130 pages /75 points/.*

Group of indicators E – 105 points

Both the citations and the reviews that meet and exceed the minimum requirements are very correctly indicated here.

Group of indicators F – 210 points

Assoc. Prof. Petrova’s project work is impressive. The management of five artistic-creative projects is indicated, as well as participation in one. The reviews submitted to the projects correctly reflect what was achieved. An interpretation master class and an Atelier for young pianists are also presented. The participation in these projects, the organization of integral concerts, as well as the judging of competitions, are an integral part of the organizational activity and commitment of Associate Professor Zornitsa Petrova to the musical culture of Bulgaria.

Assessment of the scientific and scientific-applied activity

I have many years of immediate personal impressions of the personality of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zornitsa Petrova. I can say with confidence that she is a mature, independent, and very active person with bright positive qualities. I know her as an extremely intelligent, open,

conscientious, and dialogic person. I admire her sense of responsibility, as well as her human and spiritual integrity.

Zornitsa Petrova is actively involved in the academic life of Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in Plovdiv. Her academic teaching experience, her successful teaching activities, her attitude towards the profession, colleagues, and students, as well as her vast experience as a concert pianist fully meet the criteria for occupation of the academic position of “Professor”.

Personal impressions

In this part of my peer review, I can be extensive and comprehensive, because I have known her since her early childhood. I am a graduate of her mother and I have received the love and great attention of her entire family. I probably shouldn't share this in a document like this peer review, but it wouldn't be fair to the past. Zornitsa Petrova has inherited all those wonderful qualities that the musicians Ivanka Mihaylova and Dimitar Petrov carried – above all, love for the profession, dedication to students, and devotion to classical academic continuity. Assoc. Prof. Petrova is an original and creative artist, a person with a rich soul, equally valuable as a composer, as a performer, as an educator, and as a colleague.

Therefore, based on everything written so far, I confidently recommend to the respected scientific jury to award the academic position “Professor” under Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”, specialty “Piano (Piano Accompaniment and Piano)” to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zornitsa Dimitrova Petrova.

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Prof. Dr. Toni Shekerdzhieva-Novak