

## REVIEW

for occupation of the academic position ‘Associate Professor’

in Plovdiv University ‘Paisii Hilendarski’

The only candidate

**Ch. Asst. Diana Ivanova Stancheva, PhD,**  
Department of Music, Faculty of Pedagogy

Ch. Asst. Diana Stancheva applied for the position ‘Associate Professor’ in the Department of Music, Faculty of Pedagogy, Plovdiv University ‘Paisii Hilendarski’ with extensive scientific, performing and pedagogical activity.

Increasingly in recent years, habilitation requirements include a combination of these three fully required for the position requirements, because music and its teaching, whether in a higher education institution with a predominantly pedagogical orientation or performing one, is an art that requires from those dedicated to it to possess, to the same extent, the qualities of an active concert artist, a thorough researcher, and an energetic and captivating students' hearts and minds pedagogue.

Subsequently graduating from the most prestigious Plovdiv schools - School of Music ‘Dobrin Petkov’, Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts and Plovdiv University ‘Paisii Hilendarski’, Diana Stancheva receives diplomas with a special subject ‘Accordion’, plus Conducting a choir, all necessary musical and theoretical disciplines and academic degree ‘Master’ in Music Pedagogy. During the period 2004-2007, the candidate studied the degree of education and defended the title ‘Doctor of Philosophy’, self-preparation, before the Specialised Scientific Council at the Higher Attestation Commission in 2010.

Her work experience began as early as 1988, when she taught accordion in art school in Botevgrad, followed by part-time jobs in most music schools in

the country - secondary schools and higher education institutions. National School of Music 'Lyubomir Pipkov' - Sofia, National School of Music and Dance Arts 'Dobrin Petkov', Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts-Plovdiv, New Bulgarian University - Sofia. The main position of the candidate is in Plovdiv University 'Paisii Hilendarski', accordion lecturer, passing through all academic degrees - assistant, senior and chief. She trains her graduates not only in performing skills but also in the complex qualities that the chamber musician must possess, as well as the necessary knowledge in the field of methodology of teaching accordion .

The biography of Diana Stancheva impresses with the organizational activity that the candidate performs - Creating a printed periodical for accordion culture and art 'Accordion Magic' and work in its editorial board. Establishment of the Organization of Bulgarian Accordionists (OBA) and providing its membership in the UNESCO CONFEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES ACCORDEONISTES (CIA). Work as a Chairman of the Music Council and a member of the OBA Organizational Council. This includes her work in organizing concerts, seminars and competitions. Her activity in projects in the country and abroad (especially in the neighboring Balkan countries) is impressive, over 120 awards and distinctions of her graduates (until 2019), Honorary Diploma for Contribution to the Development of Bulgarian Culture, given by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria (2006), etc. Her research work goes far beyond just a successfully defended dissertation, but includes monographs, studies and reports in various forums, a textbook designed for accordion teachers, and a variety of chamber music school aids with author arrangements for accordion duos and quartets.

Considering the reference for meeting the national minimum requirements, it is found that the applicant easily covers the main indicators. Along with the defended doctorate and the presented habilitation work, Diana Stancheva presents her original product - music for the theatrical production of

Plovdiv Theater from 2005/2006, which was performed live during the performance. From section G, with a maximum of 120 points required, the candidate achieves far more - 815. In the publications and studies subsection, she submits a variety of articles on different topics that address issues of accordion technique, repertoire, cognitive learning of the musical work, and the historical overview 'Origin, Technical Development and Application of Accordion in Music Art. Part I. From Ancient Asia to Modern Chromatic Button Accordion' In this section, the artistic and creative performances of the candidate, which are of a different spectrum, are remarkable - from 'realized short author's product' (21 arrangements for accordion composition, highly rated and performed at competitions in the country and abroad, recorded on compact discs and broadcasted), through a supporting creative role (performance of Bach's work in an orchestra) and leading stage performances (conductor of the Balkan Accordion Ensemble and artistic director of chamber ensembles with numerous performances and awards in the country and abroad).

Four quotations (mainly by the Head of the Department of Music at Plovdiv University 'Paisii Hilendarski' Assoc. Prof. Burdeva, in the published methodology of music education at preschool age, editions of Plovdiv University 'Paisii Hilendarski', affecting various aspects of accordion training - quality tone, cognitive learning of the musical work, interpretation problems in performing polyphonic transcriptions, etc.) are remarkable.

In point E, the required number of points is achieved with a university textbook 'Technology for Achieving a Quality Tone in the Initial Accordion Training' and master classes in Bulgaria (Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts , National School of Arts - Pleven) and abroad (Latvia and Turkey), and awards from various organizations in the country and abroad.

The main part of the documentation for Diana Stancheva's application for the academic position 'Associate Professor' falls on the 'Annotation and Self-Assessment of Own Contributions'. Extremely well arranged and well-

organized, the applicant presents her extensive work, firstly ranking her monograph, which is also a major habilitation work. ‘Artistic-Interpretative and Technical Parameters of the Accordionist’s Work over Musical Works’ is a serious topic whose development is made by Diana Stancheva within almost 200 pages, and the bibliography is based on 48 sources of Bulgarian and foreign publications. The author examines the topic in 4 chapters, the first two focusing on the general problems of the performer over the musical works and in particular of the accordionists (the technological aspects of the work are specified). Similar to the scheme for the doctorate, the author clearly introduces into the topic, its relevance, especially with regard to stage performances, the relationship of the performers with the work of art and as she says ‘reproduction’ of the author.

Many of the statements in the first chapter are common and known from more than a century (Stancheva gives quotations from authoritative names such as Hans von Bulow and Ginsburg). They treat the extreme tendencies in terms of the objectivist conception in contact with the music work, and in Chapter 1.2 the author presents the subjectivist conception as well, subsequently making her personal conclusions as a performer and researcher in general. This is the necessary basis upon which her thesis is going to develop, which focuses attention on the accordion specificity set out in the next chapters. The second one focuses on common, as well as generally valid, theories that can be applied to any instrument. The author provides examples of methodological literature on keyboard instruments, as well as historical examples from famous composers’ work (Skriabin). Emphasis on becoming acquainted with a musical work is an important condition for the PROFESSIONAL mastery of a work, an important moment especially in the pedagogical gradual process of overcoming difficulties and in particular in the accordion specialty. Stancheva goes into details in Chapter 2.2.- a detailed work, which clarifies the basic technical points that should be overcome in the work on a musical work. The author is fully aware of

all the technical requirements for accordionists (the result of many years of experience as a pedagogue). I highly appreciate her emphasis on ANALYSIS at different stages of her work, which turns the work over interpretation into a fully conscious and complete process, incorporating all the theoretical knowledge of the contemporary musician. In the part concerning the overall shaping of the work, Diana Stancheva makes again her generalizations, which affect both participants in the pedagogical process-the pedagogue (with his/her experience) and the student. I think that these summaries of the individual parts and problems in mastering a musical work make the understanding of all the presented theories clearer and at the same time easier and more practical.

The third chapter is the one that further makes this habilitation work a useful read for accordionists. In it, the author makes a serious performance and interpretation analysis of selected works from the accordion repertoire, which not only promotes the qualities of these works and makes them stage-convertible, but with the model of deep insight into the details gives an example to other colleagues how to make musical works, which they have to learn. Four plays of different style and nationality, to which Stancheva adds note examples and schemes that further 'visualize' the musical 'surface'. For me as a pianist, interesting was the introduction of Sonata in E Major by Domenico Scarlatti, a truly 'keyboard' composer from the Baroque era, whose transcription for accordion evokes serious and ambiguous opinions. Especially with regard to outline, which, even for today's piano, is not fully understood and causes different controversy. As well as the agogic deviations, which are part of the style of the era and should be recognized not as a written sign (as in romance), but as part of the semantics of the era. That is why, even being interesting to me, the example with the muted sound of the electronic metronome is not the most appropriate example because:

1. It is hard to imagine how an artist will play at a new tempo, and in front of him will 'shine' metrically the original tempo. This will distract and further block the freedom of the Baroque interpreter.
2. Returning to Tempo primo is an important precondition for correctness to the author's text, but not to such degree need for a 'reminder' to be maintained throughout.

At the same time, I highly appreciate Stancheva's knowledge of imitative polyphony and their interpretation from the perspective of the accordion.

The analysis of the third part of the suite 'Impass' by the French composer Frank Angeli is preceded by an extensive theoretical clarification of the concepts of bellows score, bellows technique, bellows operation and bellows articulation. Beside being necessary for the specific analysis, their theoretical explanation has a far broader scientific and practical purpose and is another constant companion for accordionists in their work and over other, especially contemporary works.

The final, fourth chapter of the habilitation work is devoted to the interpretation issues in polyphonic transcriptions for accordion. A long and serious subject, where the author definitely feels very confident. Her experience of an accordionist making transcriptions, the synthesis of scientific and practical thinking, knowledge of the polyphonic repertoire, and attempts for its transcription for accordion from different colleagues of her are evident. This fills in one definitely missing part of scientific and practical literature on this instrument. In their constant pursuit of expanding their repertoire, accordionists are moving more and more boldly into the 'keyboard literature' from the Baroque era, where they face a number of challenges. On the other hand, experts like Diana Stancheva can skillfully distinguish successful transcription patterns from apparently existing in practice unprofessional attempts, contributing to the development of the accordion repertoire in future.

Summarizing the entire rich and diverse activity of Ch. Asst.

Diana Stancheva, PhD I believe that her candidature is fully in compliance with the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, in accordance with the new requirements for the authenticity and scientificity of the submitted documents. She presents a long artistic career with an enviable activity in the stage, pedagogical and scientific direction and her growth in the academic hierarchy will be an honour for the university and the faculty, which needs a highly qualified specialist. I believe that this is another step that she builds in her own realization as a musician and I suggest, completely convinced, the honorable scientific jury to award to DIANA IVANOVA STANCHEVA the academic position 'Associate Professor' at the Department of Music, Faculty of Pedagogy, Plovdiv University 'Paisii Hilendarski' .

Sofia, 28 July 2019

Prof. Rostislav Yovchev, PhD