

# **R E V I E W**

**by Prof. Dr. habil. Filip Pavlov, PhD  
regarding the participation of Asst. Prof. Georgi Anastasov Slavchev, PhD  
in the competition announced by *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* Academy of Music,  
Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv  
to the Department of Piano and Accordion  
for occupying the academic position of *Associate Professor*,  
professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Arts,  
major *Piano***

**The competition has been announced on the grounds of Art. 25 of the  
Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA)  
and by decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Musical Pedagogy  
(Record No. 17 / 12.09.2025).**

**The present Review has been prepared in accordance with Order No. ПД -27-120 /  
12.09.2025 issued by the Rector of the Academy, and it complies with the requirements  
of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act as well as the  
internal regulations of the Academy. The scientific, applied, artistic and academic work  
of the candidate, Assist. Prof. Georgi Anastasov Slavchev, PhD - the sole participant in  
the announced competition - have been examined.**

The autobiographical data of Georgi Slavchev demonstrate his continuous development as a performing pianist from his early school years. His talent flourished over time, and he attained national and international awards even before continuing his education in the United States. There, Slavchev achieved significant accomplishments that encouraged his pursuit of pianistic mastery - an aspiration that forms the solid foundation of his subsequent development in the fields of musical creativity and scholarly research.

He successfully completed both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree and received numerous distinctions from the University of Houston and the Cleveland Institute of Music. He completed his cycle of academic training by obtaining the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Southern California for his dissertation work. The competition materials include the relevant documents certifying the candidate's academic qualifications.

## **Assessment of Compliance with the Minimum National Requirements and with the Requirements of *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts**

The **Report** submitted by Asst. Prof. Slavchev, PhD regarding the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements, and its comparison with the recognized evaluation table, provides a reliable basis for assessing his overall professional activity to date. I consider that the parameters presented in the documentation fully correspond to the relevant requirements, all of which are met in their entirety. The content of the submitted written materials attests to a broad-ranging, successful, and prestigious body of work in the field of musical performance.

His scholarly research offers opportunities for its application in the pedagogical training of performers in the sphere of musical art, which renders it an effective theoretical-practical component of contemporary educational activity.

The results presented in the Report fully comply with the requirements of the Regulations of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, as well as with the objectives set within the specialized educational practicum initiated and conducted at the educational institution. The declared number of points across the various indicators contributes to forming a positive overall impression of the candidate in the multifaceted aspects of his active professional work. In several assessment categories, the total number of points exceeds the established minimum thresholds, reflecting the substantive scope and wide-ranging dimensions of Asst. Prof. Slavchev's contributions across all spheres of musical art, creativity, and pedagogy.

Particularly noteworthy is the significant surpassing of the indicators in Group B - Item 5, which is entirely expected and justified given the candidate's highly developed individual performing artistry, consistently demonstrated in his concert appearances. This fact is documented and positively evaluated in reviews of his artistic achievements published in materials listed under Group Д Indicator - Item 19. The attention directed toward the personality of the talented pianist and his extensive overall musical activity is by no means incidental; rather, it serves as a testament to the high level of his accomplishments.

To remain fully objective in my assessment of the candidate, I must note the absence of several significant contributions that are not reflected in Group E Indicator - Items 30 and 31, which concern participation in competitions and awards granted by professional forums and organizations in Bulgaria and abroad. These data appear only in the list of awards included in the supplementary materials. The achievements in question unequivocally affirm the candidate's excellence in both solo and chamber performance and command respect, particularly in light of the national and international recognition he has received.

### **Research (Scholarly and Creative) Activity and Results**

The candidate submits a Contribution Report to be recognized **as a habilitation work**, which includes:

- scholarly publications related to his research activity, featured in less frequently published materials and specialized literature of historical and theoretical-practical orientation
- selected concert-performing activity in Bulgaria and abroad as a soloist and chamber performer.

There is no doubt that most scholarly and musicological publications related to the personality and music of Dvořák - whose work is also a subject of focused research in the materials submitted for the competition - are devoted to his operatic and symphonic oeuvre. In this context, Dr. Slavchev's scholarly study on the composer's piano interpretation, published in the anthologies of the *Spring Scientific Readings* organized by the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts (2024), expands the thematic scope of existing research, provides new theoretical-practical insights, and outlines a specific range of performance-related issues. Piano performers receive guidance concerning sound choices in future interpretations of Antonín Dvořák's music. The study offers concrete recommendations on how to interpret

structural features in piano compositions, taking into account the national characteristics of Czech folk music embedded in the composer's musical material.

In his other theoretical study, Slavchev's attention to the personality of Leopold Godowsky is clearly not the result of a sudden decision, but rather stems from his particular interest in an exceptionally gifted musician often described by experts as 'an unpolished nugget of pure gold'. The presence of this composer in the world of music represents a phenomenon rarely observed in the creative sphere, where it is commonly assumed that the development of talent is achieved through the logical pedagogical continuity from a genius teacher to a genius student. In Godowsky's case, however, one encounters personal discoveries in the realm of superior pianism, embodied in the absolute technical perfection of his performance. The study presents, in an engaging manner, the composer's concept concerning the principles of arm weight as a fundamental approach to the keyboard - an approach that relieves the performer from expending excessive muscular energy. This attitude toward piano playing is characteristic of all the great pianists of the past century: Rubinstein, Arrau, Cziffra, Gilels, among other giants of the piano art.

I regard the presented scholarly studies and their conclusions as an essential component of Dr. Slavchev's research work in the field of music education and pedagogy.

The piano performance activity documented in the candidate's materials illustrates the realization of recital programs presented across the American continent as well as in various European countries. The repertoire he has selected clearly highlights the significant artistic value of these performances, which may justifiably be considered as **contributions** to the Bulgarian tradition of piano performance art.

It is noteworthy that Slavchev has been invited to appear as soloist with some of the finest Bulgarian symphony orchestras in a concert repertoire of exceptionally high prestige for any performer. Ravel's Piano Concerto is a rarely performed work, as it demands not only flawless pianism from the soloist but also a refined rendering of the specific orchestral colours characteristic of French impressionism. The name of the conductor of this performance - Ruslan Raychev, an artist of world renown - already suggests the choice of an equally gifted soloist. I believe that this collaborative achievement represents a fortunate and meaningful milestone in Georgi Slavchev's career.

Several years later, having entered a mature creative phase, Slavchev continued to reach new heights in his performance career. Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto is consistently acknowledged as one of the benchmarks of pianistic mastery. It is evident that this level of performance ability has been attained by the artist while appearing as soloist with the Rouse Philharmonic Orchestra.

I must, however, note that the candidate presents his authorial report rather economically and succinctly - perhaps with a degree of hesitation or modest discomfort. Of course, the material itself carries a prestigious character; yet every performer should defend his artistic accomplishments with the dignity that commands the appropriate respect for such achievements.

With the performance of Brahms's First Piano Concerto with the Plovdiv Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Georgi Dimitrov - and shortly thereafter, one of Mozart's piano concertos with the *Sofia Soloists* Chamber Ensemble, conducted by Plamen Dzhurov, again before the Plovdiv audience - the cycle of contrasting pianistic appearances

by Slavchev in the solo sphere has thus far been framed within the widest possible boundaries.

I shall add yet another fact: as early as 1996, the Second Piano Concerto by Chopin was also the object of interpretation, performed with a symphony orchestra in Texas, USA - an achievement that likewise stands among the masterful pinnacles of piano performance.

The stylistic diversity in the repertoire is a personal choice of Georgi Slavchev and serves as evidence of his broad interests as an interpreter, with firmly established qualities characteristic of a fully developed concert-type pianist. This approach also accompanies his work in the realm of chamber music, and I would further add that it is likewise discernible as a defining feature in the opus output of his original compositional creativity.

Undeniably, the artistic performances of the colleague are noted as high achievements within the performance environment in which Slavchev expands his ongoing activity during the respective period. He participates both in conventional and in non-traditional chamber ensembles, thus expressing his preferences for multigenre approaches in stage artistry. His 'interpretation' of the works he performs introduces us to a contemporary pianism in which the foremost aim is to achieve an accurate, balanced, and inspiring stage interpretation.

**The stage performance of the works listed thus far provides a clear impression of Dr. Slavchev's pianistic qualities, which distinguish him as a talented interpreter whose artistry bears the marks of individuality and perfectionism. The realized activity possesses all the qualities necessary to be presented and affirmed as a habilitation work. It reflects a solid performance practice of the highest artistic calibre.**

**The additional performances presented** - though not indicated as the primary habilitation work, and listed under Indicator No. 13 in the evaluation table - together with the accompanying documents, reveal the broad panorama of Slavchev's active concert-performing activity. Their list exhibits the same high quality and, in essence, could readily constitute an alternative habilitation proposal. A brief enumeration provides an even clearer idea of his significant activity: soloist appearances with orchestras in the USA - Ohio, California, Colorado - as well as in the Philippines and Turkey. Against this background, the international awards he has received from competitions appear entirely logical.

Further noted is his realized recording activity for radio and television broadcasts, the release of compact discs and albums with classical and original music, as well as work in popular genres and in film music. As a composer, he has also been awarded prizes and public distinctions.

### **Teaching and Educational Activity**

In recent years, the teaching and educational work of Asst. Prof. Georgi Slavchev, PhD at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts has yielded successful results and represents a logical expression of the multifaceted nature of his diverse professional activities. The evidentiary material fully satisfies all requirements concerning his candidacy in the present competition. The colleague's activity constitutes a substantial and indisputable manifestation of high-quality pedagogy, of scholarly and creative responsibility toward student training, and of a representative and effective form that reveals his strong pedagogical standing within the diverse musical specialties to which his work is directed: *mandatory piano, specialized subject: piano, piano accompaniment, and chamber music.*

As a pedagogue, Georgi Slavchev successfully combines his extensive performance experience and accumulated theoretical knowledge with the educational practice carried out with his students. His knowledge of music less familiar within the Bulgarian pedagogical system can only broaden the educational repertoire and present young performers with alternative aspects of creative thinking and diverse instrumental approaches within the art of piano performance. In their development as future pedagogues and musical performers, his students have the privilege of being guided by an established figure in musical life, possessing solid performance experience and high professional competence.

### **Personal Impressions of the Candidate**

I have direct impressions from numerous activities carried out over the years by Asst. Prof. Georgi Slavchev, PhD, and I follow with interest his professional appearances in all areas of his artistic engagement. His performance career has long been known and highly esteemed on both the national and international stage. His interest in compositional work successfully presents him in the public sphere as a thriving creator across various genres. His achievements are the result of personal talent, perseverance in creative work, adherence to high artistic standards, and a sense of responsibility toward every appearance on stage. Such is my assessment of his professional and personal profile.

### **Opinions, Recommendations, and Remarks on the Candidate's Activity and Achievements**

The orientation of Slavchev toward pedagogical work at the Academy is a logical choice and an opportunity for further personal development in this area of knowledge. I expect his teaching activity to motivate him to seek new innovations in the conceptualization of the overall pedagogical process, which should lead to positive results in the training of the Academy's young musical professionals, as well as stimulate further personal engagement in his development as a researcher and analyst in the field of musical performance.

### **Conclusion**

**The Contribution Report submitted by Asst. Prof. Slavchev, PhD possesses all the necessary qualities to be affirmed as a habilitation work. All other accompanying musical-performance activities reflected in the complete documentation are of high value and present significant personal achievements of both national and international importance. The candidate's diverse competencies correspond in the best possible way to the requirements for the development of contemporary pedagogical professionals.**

**I recommend that the esteemed colleagues of the Academic Jury approve the candidacy of Asst. Prof. Georgi Anastasov Slavchev, PhD in the competition for occupying the academic position of *Associate Professor* in Professional Field 8.3 Music and Dance Arts, major *Piano*.**

October 27, 2025

Sofia

/ Prof. Dr. habil. F. Pavlov/