

## **PEER REVIEW**

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

**Lecturer in “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 of  
“Associate Professor”**

**in the specialty “History of Pop and Jazz Music”  
Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”  
to the Music Pedagogy and Conducting Department  
of**

**Dr. ZHAN STEFANOV PEHLIVANOV**

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

My acquaintance with Dr. Zhan Pehlivanov dates back to the distant junior high school years of our education at the Music High School in the City of Plovdiv (now Dobrin Petkov National School of Music and Dance). As his longtime classmate (in the same class until our graduation in 1984), it is not difficult for me to form a peer review on the path and directions in which his professional activity has developed, as well as for the musical charge and the creative impulses of his constantly searching artistic nature.

First of all, I would like to mention the natural piano talents of Zhan Pehlivanov, which found their stable realization under the guidance of one of the most iconic piano teachers in our country – Mrs. Rositsa Ivancheva. In addition, during his school years at the Music School, Zhan gained extensive knowledge, theoretical and practical experience in the genre of pop music under the beneficial influence of his father – the longtime conductor of the Big Band and the Plovdiv Brass Band Stefan Pehlivanov. As a participant in the extremely successful and popular for its time Pioneer Children’s Instrumental Ensemble at the City House of Culture, led by his father, Zhan entered the stylistic features of jazz and the popular “overseas” and British music culture. I think that this “golden” time laid the foundations and nurtured the lasting motives and professional interest of Dr. Pehlivanov not only to the range of disciplines he teaches today, but also to the arrangement and composition as his strong creative role.

I will focus on some of the most important features driving the successful and, above all, vividly artistic realization of my colleague, which over the years have left in my mind the marks of their rich ancestral destiny. Zhan Pehlivanov is a musician with a natural and unadulterated creative gift. His senses for flawless realization of the artistic product are sharpened and fine-tuned. Things happen by virtue of natural talents, artistic talent, ease and ethereality in communicating with a wide audience, but at the same time – by virtue of deep professional education, serious

musical and theoretical knowledge, and compositional sense. To all this, I will add the bright affinity for technique and technology, which manifested itself in childhood.

With regard to the Table reflecting the minimum scientometric requirements, I should note its correct completion and its rich content. Zhan Pehlivanov's creative achievements as a creator and artistic director of the Intro Quartet are numerous. His successful style and repertoire concept, combined with the high professionalism of each instrumentalist, established Intro as a leading project of its kind in the country with popularity beyond its borders. It is enough to follow the selected four concerts-performances ("*10 years of Intro & Erika*", "*There is Such Country*", concerts in Warsaw and Paris), their promotional materials, repertoire, and reviews in order to form a convincing assessment of the high artistic values of the large-scale concert production of Intro. Of course, this is a total guide, which includes full responsibility for the composition and arrangements – from management to transport logistics.

In section 7 of Group of indicators D Zhan Pehlivanov presents his book based on a defended dissertation: "*History, Theory and Styles in Pop, Rock and Jazz Music. Digital Sound Technologies. Digital Audio Workstations*". The work respects with its strong contribution significance, entirely focused on the theory and practice not only of the students at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, but also of any specialist in genre music. Written in a clear and natural style, this useful book provides extensive and in-depth knowledge in the two areas listed in the content: the historical and theoretical foundations of pop and jazz music and the closely related new digital sound technologies.

To all the contributing moments that Dr. Pehlivanov presents in his report, I want to include his publications, which I perceive as personal ideological platforms, logically pointing to the overall artistic presence of Zhan as a composer, arranger, creative director, and pedagogue. And last but not least, to the presence of a professional in the field of entertaining music, who defends the positions and traditions of classical taste in it and with the capabilities of all his talent and knowledge limits the penetrating provocations of the mass chalga culture.

Due to everything that I focused on and evaluated as a contribution and respectable overall activity, I confidently suggest to the Scientific Jury to unite for the awarding of Dr. Zhan Stefanov Pehlivanov with the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "History of Pop and Jazz Music".

25.07.2021  
Plovdiv

Reviewer:  
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zornitsa Petrova