

REVIEW

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Prof. direction 8.3 Music and Dance Art

On the competition for acquiring the academic position of Associate Professor in Music Studies and Music Art (History of Popular Music)

Higher education field 8. Arts, prof. dir. 8.3 *Music and Dance Art*, one, for the needs of *Music Department, RG Musical Culture, and Information*,

(State Gazette issue 65/12.08.2022)

With one candidate Senior Ass. Dr. MIHAIL TODOROV LUKANOV

BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE CANDIDATE

I have known Mihail Lukanov (born 1967) since he joined the Institute as a full-time PhD student under the supervision of Prof. DSc Clair Levy. I was a member of the AJ in his successful competition for the position of Senior Assistant Professor in 2013 for the needs of the RG Music Culture and Information in the Music Department. As a colleague in this research group, I have had the opportunity to follow his interests in the field of popular music in Bulgaria, looking towards new topics. M. Lukanov is also actively involved with the academic journal *Bulgarian Musicology*, he is the editor and translator of the English texts in it (he graduated with a second master's degree at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski). I will add his artistic creativity - he completed his secondary musical education as an instrumentalist with double bass, and his higher education at the NMA "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov" in *composition*. He is a member of the Union of Bulgarian Composers.

EVALUATION OF THE DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE COMPETITION REGARDING THE NATIONAL SCIENTOMETRIC INDICATORS

The documents submitted by M. Lukanov meet the minimum national scientometric indicators corresponding to the candidate's scientific profile.

Group A. The defended dissertation on "Convention and innovation in Bulgarian rock music: on the experience of *Studio Balkanton Formation*" (diploma dated 13.06.2012) was highly evaluated and was a convincing statement for the future academic activity of M. Lukanov.

Group "B". In 2020 as a publication of the Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (De Artibus Monographiae № II) was published his monograph *Music at the Bulgarian Circuses: Historical and Theoretical Aspects* which was presented in the competition as a major habilitation work. I will comment on it separately when I evaluate the contributions.

Group "Г". M. Lukanov has included two books - a monograph, which is not presented as a major habilitation work - "Miljo Bassan - Life and Art" (Institute of Art Studies, BAS, 2017), and a published dissertation, as well as 5 articles and reports in specialized journals in the field of arts. I have one note here that is in the candidate's favor. Of the two articles in the journal. *Bulgarian Musicology*, the text in the special issue of 2021 should also be included as a publication in a refereed journal (Group Д.8.).

Regarding the content of the texts: two of his articles ("Notes on the Songs of Miljo Bassan", 2014; *Virtuosity and the Circus Arena*, 2020) are related to research on his monographic works. *The article Gramophone records in the archive of the IAS circulated before 1960: an attempt at systematization* (2021) is a new direction in his research. And the two texts in *Medialog (On Authorship in Popular Music through the Eyes of Will Stroh and Musical Creativity through the Eyes of Jason Toynee)* represent his interest in music-theoretical and aesthetic aspects of popular culture and state personal views on current topics and concepts.

I will point out that the journals in which these texts were published are represented in CEEOL.

Group "Д". Exploring issues related to various cultural aspects, the works of M. Lukanov have been cited and I believe that in the future they will be reference texts for more authors exploring the periods under consideration in our musical culture. His books have been favorably reviewed in the journal *Bulgarian Musicology*. The author of the review for the book *Miljo Bassan - Life and Work* is Prof. DSc Ventsislav Dimov, and I presented *Music in the Arena of the Bulgarian Circus*.

I have a note about the citations, they are also not accurately correlated to refereed and non-refereed journals and periodicals, this would increase the points in this group of indicators. My review of his book *Music at the Bulgarian Circuses. Historical and Theoretical Aspects*" (Bulgarian Music Studies, 2020, No. 4) and the 3 other publications cited in it refer to paragraph Д.16.

Group E. Participations in two projects are included, as well as three awards of his choral works.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDATES FOR ACADEMIC POSITIONS AT THE IAS

The submitted materials fully comply with the additional requirements for scientific activity at the Institute and exceed them in terms of monographic research. As I have indicated, the candidate has, in addition to the main habilitation work, 1 book and a

published dissertation. The required 5 publications in scientific periodicals and proceedings are presented, 5 participations in scientific forums are indicated, some of them international. There are also the required 10 citations.

EVALUATION OF THE ATTACHED STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS

M. Lukanov has organized his publications into four thematic groups with contributions: 1) Music in the arena of the Bulgarian circus (from the beginning of the 20th century to the 1980s), 2) History of popular music in Bulgaria in the first half of the 20th century, 3) FSB and progressive rock in Bulgaria, 4) Individual music-theoretical and aesthetic aspects of popular culture. I will comment on three of them that are related to this academic procedure.

- 1) His habilitation work - the book *Music at the Bulgarian Circus* (200 pp.) is the first of its kind in Bulgaria. I will summarize my review of the study. So far in Bulgarian musicology this topic has been considered as a manifestation of popular culture involving performers and artists representing different musical genres. For the first time M. Lukanov formulated it as an independent object of scientific interpretation. The historical framework of the research is from the late 19th century, when the interest in circus art in Bulgaria arose and the first Bulgarian circuses appeared (the first was "Bulgarian Flag", founded in 1897) until the late 1980s (when live music was replaced by musical audio performances). Key figures and ensembles are highlighted, and the specifics of the art of each are brought out. The study is based on historical and historiographical research. The text is structured in seven main chapters. The first chapter argues for the concept of *music in the circus* and its meaningful difference with *circus music*. The next three chapters trace the history of music in the circus in Bulgaria and the most important tours abroad of Bulgarian circus troupes in the 1950s and 1960s. Central to the study are the two "portrait" chapters (five and six). They analyze the musical art of the outstanding names of the circus arena in *musical clowning (slapstick and musical eccentricity)* - Kosta Kertikov (Kertika), Cesar Imbrosh (Lolo), Penka Ivanova-Silagi, Todor Kozarov and Hristo Yanakiev, Kiril Dimitrov (Koko), the Buffosynchronists, the "Harizanovs", as well as the performances of the most famous couplet players - Stoyan Milenkov, Jakob Goldstein and Assen Bogdanov (Chicho Asso). The last chapter is devoted to the notion of musical virtuosity in circus performances, examined in its value-meaning ambivalence. As appendices are included interviews with 8 famous musicians (Gencho Vartovsky, Deyan Timnev, Dimitar Stoikov, Dimitar Simeonov, Liana Antonova, Lyubomir Odzhakov, Nedko Troshanov, Stefan Slavov) who relate to music in the circus. Combining different research approaches, M. Lukanov's book is a contribution to Bulgarian musicology.
- 2) The book on Miljo Bassan (132 p.) and the publications on Assen Ovcharov are studies that are contributing to the history of popular music in Bulgaria in

the first half of the 20th century. Through these two representative figures of the field, the entry, and the differentiation of the "young" Bulgarian jazz into the dominant schlager milieu are traced. M. Lukanov also discusses the activities of Joseph Tsankov, Stoyan Milenkov, Jakob Goldstein (Jib), Albert Pincus and other personalities in this creative and performing sphere. The book on Miljo Bassan is the first monographic study of the multifaceted personality of Miljo Bassan - composer, musician, orchestra leader, and author of a voluminous manuscript on the history of popular music, essential reading for all those working in this or a similar field. The comprehensive presentation of the compositional work of Miljo Bassan as a theatrical composer and author of schlager songs reproduced on gramophone records is also made for the first time. His contribution as a music historian is also considered, as I have already indicated.

- 3) The research on the formation "FSB" and progressive rock in Bulgaria, which represent the interests of M. Lukanov's studies in the more recent past and his broader view of global phenomena in popular music culture are related to his dissertation and have already been assessed, so I do not comment on them as a contribution to this procedure.
- 4) As I have already mentioned, the two texts that deal with music-theoretical and aesthetic aspects of popular culture are in a separate group. In them the author introduces a personal interpretation of concepts such as "author", "authorship", "creativity", "creativity" and "intertextuality" in terms of the postmodern deconstruction of cultural artefacts, which is supported by concrete examples and analyses. It seems to me that this is a promising direction for his future research.

Summary: I accept the contributions listed in groups 1, 2 and 4. My general observation on M. Lukanov's publications is that he searches for various topics related to popular music culture, which have not been specifically addressed so far. In this sense they are a scientific novelty. As studies on the field of popular music in a particular period, his two books are largely thematically related. In them, he also examines various models that represent genre diversity in this field. I would have liked to see in some cases a broader historical and cultural context in which to introduce the personalities, but this is a matter of preferred approach, and of research maturity that a scholar acquires over the years. Texts need in places greater precision in introducing facts and citing different types of literature. I will look forward to his future publications with interest.

CONCLUSION

Considering the overall work of the candidate, Asst. Prof. Dr. Mihail Lukanov which is quite convincing regarding the national scientometric indicators in the sphere of arts, research sphere 8.3 *Music and Dance Art* and the additional requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor at the Institute of Art Studies as well as the indicated contributory nature of his publications, I join the decision of the Scientific

Jury to nominate the candidature of Asst Prof. Dr Mihail Lukanov to be voted at the Scholarly Council of the IAS for acquiring the academic position of Associate Professor in prof. dir. 8.3. *Music and Dance Art (History of Popular Music)*.

I believe that it will be supported.

Prof. DSc. Elisaveta Valchinova-Chendova

Sofia, 7 January 2023