

OPINION

By Professor DSc Ventsislav Dimov Dimov

Concerning the candidature of Associate Professor Dr Mihail Todorov Lukanov

On the competition for the academic position *Associate Professor 8.3*,

Music and Dance Art (history of popular music),

for the needs of the Music Department of the Institute of Art Studies, BAS

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About the candidate and the documentation

The only candidate for the competition is Associate Professor Dr. Mihail Lukanov, who, according to the submitted documents, meets the general conditions for participation in the competition procedure under the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB) and the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and for Holding Academic Positions at the Institute of Art Studies, BAS. All the documents and materials required by the Law on Research Degrees and the Regulations are submitted. According to the submitted statement of scientometric, the candidate meets the national minimum requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor.

In this competition, Dr. Mihail Lukanov applied with the following output: 1 monograph (habilitation thesis - indicator B 3); 1 monograph (not habilitation thesis - indicator Г 6); 1 book (published on the basis of a defended dissertation, PhD - indicator Г 7); 1 article published in a scientific journal, refereed and indexed in world-known databases of scientific information (indicator Г 8); 5 articles published in a specialized arts journal (indicator Г 9). Among the evidence, in addition to the author's texts mentioned above, citations and reviews are attached (10 in total - indicator Д); 3 participations in scientific projects (1 international - indicator E 23; 2 national - indicator E 22); 3 awards in creative competitions given by national professional forums and organizations (indicator E 30). According to the submitted statement of scientometrics, the candidate meets the national minimum requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor (Minimum number of points according to Table 1 of the RAADAS in the Republic of Bulgaria - 360; the candidate reports and proves 685).

Research activity

The submitted scientific production in the competition for "Associate Professor" meets the requirements of the competition in terms of the profile of the developed problems and quantity. 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.

Mikhail Lukanov applied for the competition with the monograph (habilitation thesis - indicator B 3), which is the main work in the mentioned first thematic group: "Music in the Bulgarian circus". De Artibus Monographiae № II, Institute of Art Studies, BAS, 2020. "Virtuosity and the Circus Arena" - In: ART STUDIES READINGS (Motifs, Models, Sketches). Thematic Reviewed Yearbook of Art Studies in Two Volumes, 2020, I-II, Institute of Art Studies, BAS; and "Orchestras and Conductors under the Dome of the Bulgarian Circus". Art-Dialogue, Issue 3, 2018. The monograph (total volume 200 pages, of which 128 - main text and 72 - appendices and literature) contains rich empirical chronological information on the development of the Bulgarian circus, tracing the development of music in it. New interpretations of the socio-cultural aspects of the circus in Bulgaria are proposed - its role as a "stage" and "refuge" for Bulgarian jazz in the first decade of the socialist regime; virtuosity as a specific form of "musical acrobatics", specific to the circus arena. The 8 interviews with circus music figures conducted by the author in 2018 are a valuable contribution to the research - they complement the information retrieved from literary and internet sources, introduce data, facts, and names, but also add the touches of biographical narratives and the personal reflection of participants in the events. The habilitation thesis and the two articles on circus music illuminate a little-known part of the development of popular music culture in Bulgaria; they argue that circus art stimulates the development of certain musical practices and stylistic orientations.

The applicant proposes two more monographs for the competition. The first one, published based on his dissertation, is "Convention and Innovation in Bulgarian Rock Music: on the Experience of the FSB" (IAS, 2018). It, together with the attached article "Rock Music as an Innovative Phenomenon" (Bulgarian Musicology, 2012, №1), explore the development and cultural role of rock in Bulgaria in the 1970s and 1980s, focusing on the music of one of the emblematic Bulgarian progressive rock bands FSB (Formation Studio Balkanton).

The history of popular music in Bulgaria in the first half of the 20th century is the problematic field, which is mainly addressed by the third monograph of Mihail Lukanov: "Miljo Bassan - Life and Art" (Institute of Art Studies, BAS, 2017). The thematic core, oriented towards the earlier stages of popular music in Bulgaria in the first half of the 20th century, also includes three articles in the journal Bulgarian Musicology: "Notes to the Songs of Miljo Bassan" (Bulgarian Musicology, 2014, №1); "The Musical Heritage of Assen Ovcharov in Bulgarian Popular Culture" (Bulgarian Musicology, 2020, №2) and "The Short Form in Music and Bulgarian Schlager in the 1930s" (Bulgarian Musicology, 2016, №1). The monograph is the first dedicated to Miljo Bassan - composer, violinist, and band leader. Using archival materials from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences Archive on his repertoire and musical practice, and by analyzing Bassan's most popular works, it highlights his role as a creator of songs and arrangements that chart trends in Bulgarian popular song and suggest the internal dynamics and continuity of musical processes in Bulgaria. The publications in this thematic core illuminate the contributions to the development of schlager in Bulgaria of Bassan, but also of Joseph Tsankov, Stoyan Milenkov,

Jakob Goldstein (Jib), Albert Pinkus and others; as well as the jazz-schlager-dance music relations in the 1930s and 1940s, the attitude of the new socialist government towards jazz by the end of the 40s and the beginning of the 50s.

The fourth core of Lukanov's texts illuminates some music-theoretical and aesthetic aspects of popular culture. These are two articles, "On Authorship in Popular Music through the Eyes of Will Stroh" (Medialogue, no. 10, 2021) and "Musical Creativity through the Eyes of Jason Toynbee" (Medialogue, no. 2, 2018). Both texts are typologically referential insofar as they present the views of English-language authors Will Stroh and Jason Toynbee in their key texts, supplemented with a personal interpretation of the concepts in question through concrete examples and analyses.

Research and creative activity in the arts

Dr. Mihail Lukanov's research is intertwined with scholarly and applied activities and artistic work as a composer. In addition to the above-mentioned original scientific contributions, the candidate documents in his tables active participation in scientific projects: 1 international and 2 national. Three prizes of creative competitions given by national professional forums (festivals and competitions) are indicated.

Conclusion

The overall activity of the candidate, his research and scientific-applied achievements and contributions, presented in the competition documentation, show that Dr. Mihail Lukanov is a researcher with an established place in music studies and, in particular, in the study of popular music in Bulgaria. His candidature fulfils the requirements of the ADASRB and its Implementation, as well as the specific requirements for candidates for academic positions adopted by the Scholarly Council of the Institute of Art Studies, BAS. This gives me grounds to give a positive assessment to Dr. Lukanov as a candidate in the competition and to propose to the Scholarly Council of the Institute of Art Studies at BAS to elect him to the academic position of Associate Professor in 8.3. Music and Dance Art (History of Popular Music). This will have a positive effect on the development of the Music Department, respectively the RG Music Culture and Information, and the Institute of Art Studies, BAS.

Sofia, 7 January 2023.

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