

## REVIEW

of scientific works and teaching activities of

**Senior Assistant Dr. Smilena Dimitrova Smilkova**

reviewer **Prof. Dr. Sevdalina Ilieva Dimitrova**

**Shumen University "Bishop K. Preslavski", ДИКРО-Varna**

**With reference to participation in the competition**

**for holding the academic position of Associate Professor in the field of higher education**

**1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy,**

**scientific specialty "Methods of teaching music in kindergarten and primary school"**

### 1. Candidate data, teaching activities and publications

1. The competition for "associate professor" is legally announced in SG, issue 107 / 16.12.2021
2. The position is provided with the required number of hours.
3. Only one candidate participates in the competition - Ch. Assistant Dr. Smilena Dimitrova Smilkova.
4. For the purpose of the review, the candidate Smilena Dimitrova Smilkova has duly submitted the necessary and required documents, references and materials concerning her education, educational and scientific degree, teaching, executive and research employment and administrative activity, as well as her scientific and applied research products, which are well presented and sufficient. They provide credible evidence for her achievements.

Her biography reveals the image of a purposeful, talented, and hard-working, innovation-seeking teacher who is fully committed to her profession. Born in 1961 in Burgas, where she graduated from the music school and completed her higher education, majoring in Piano, in 1984. at the Bulgarian State Conservatory "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov", Sofia. After graduation she worked as a teacher and part-time teacher in all levels of education. From 1984 to 2016 Dr. Smilkova was a senior teacher at NUMSI "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov", Burgas, piano, compulsory piano, chamber music and piano methodology. During these years she was a part-time lecturer in the preparation and conduct of seminars and practical exercises in Musical Piano Instrument with students, majoring in Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy - Bachelor's Degree at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov", Burgas. From 2016 to 2018 she was a part-time piano teacher at the Private Kindergarten and School "Veda", Sofia, where she taught children of preschool and primary school age basic basic skills in keyboard and piano playing, entertainingly combined with singing and dancing. Since 2018, Dr. Smilena Smilkova is an assistant, and since 2020, after a successful competition, now senior assistant at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov", Burgas.

In the process of her development as a teacher of piano and methodology of music education, Dr. Smilkova showed serious interest in economics and psychology. In 1994 - 1996 she

studied management, marketing, accounting, business communications and graduated as a Manager at Burgas Free University, and in 2009 she graduated as a Mediator (Union of Lawyers in Bulgaria, Law on Mediation), which she skillfully combines with her teaching activities.

5. The research activity of the Chief Assistant Dr. Smilena Dimitrova Smilkova can be systematized in the following directions:

#### 5.1. Participation in projects

The participation of Chief Assistant Dr. Smilena Smilkova in projects for scientific activity, shed light on another area of her performances - her work in the field of soft skills and her work with students from junior high school and high school.

#### 5.2 Scientific publications

His educational and scientific degree is Doctor in the scientific specialty "Methodology of music education", which Chief Assistant Dr. Smilena Smilkova received in 2005. after successfully defending a dissertation on the topic: "Piano methodology of Assoc. Prof. Lydia Kuteva and her contribution to the development of Bulgarian music pedagogy." In 2003, she published the book: "Music - the voice of the soul." on the topic of her dissertation.

The analysis of the scientific publications of Chief Assistant Dr. Smilena Smilkova includes the book from her dissertation: "Music - the voice of the soul", a monograph on "On instrumental music and its perception or tell me music: fantasy - creativity - audience" and a guide for students and teachers : "Creative tasks for the development of imagination through the perception of instrumental music". I reviewed the monograph and the guide before their publication and I can safely say that their relevance and significance are indisputable.

The book "Music - the voice of the soul" is dedicated to the "unwritten" methodology of Assoc. Prof. Lydia Kuteva - one of the brightest Bulgarian piano teachers, who left a living and brilliant mark in the history of Bulgarian piano art. In it, the author skillfully examines and analyzes the voluminous material collected in 25 collections by Assoc. Prof. Kuteva, which is classified by content and purpose. Chief Assistant Dr. Smilena Smilkova examines the methodology of L. Kuteva through the prism of the huge versatile and diverse piano material: etudes, polyphonic and artistic works. The means of musical analysis were used, as well as observation, associative and divergent thinking.

The emphasis is on the specifics of L. Kuteva's piano methodology, which can be defined as "inside - out": a conscious emotional and intellectual understanding of the artistic musical image is a leading principle in interpreting and creating creative suggestion embedded in the piano fabric.

For the first time the piano methodology of Assoc. Prof. Lydia Kuteva was reviewed and analyzed through voluminous music material. Contribution is the way in which the collections are examined - the image-aesthetic and pianistic analysis, which are closely related to the pedagogical practice. Here Chief Assistant Dr. Smilena Smilkova also emphasizes the role of the piano teacher.

20 years later, this book is the basis and continuation of Smilena Smilkova, in describing the model "Tell me music" in the presented monograph. The issue of emotional comprehension

and intellectual understanding of the artistic image in instrumental music changes the addressees, methodological steps and techniques for creating forms, but retains the depth and necessity of sensory perception and interpretation of musical imagery.

The monograph "On instrumental music and its perception or tell me fantasy: music - creativity - audience", is an in-depth look and shared experience in the formation and development of basic musical abilities, imagery, imagination and creativity of students - future children and primary school teachers . Its structure is divided into two parts: Theoretical justification and Model for perception of instrumental musical works in preschool and primary school age "Tell me music". With a total volume of 184 pages, the monograph also contains an introduction, conclusions, appendices and a bibliography from 116 sources related to the topic of perception of instrumental music. The size of the volume is not an end in itself. It is dictated by the desire of Chief Assistant Dr. S. Smilkova to consider in many ways the problem of the conscious perception of instrumental music in preschool and primary school, as well as the training of future teachers in kindergarten and primary school - teachers of the new century.

The first part is Theoretical rationale, including: music as an art form and its interaction with other arts. Attention is paid to the basic means of expression and musical language. The structure of musicality - musical hearing and its main form of manifestation - melodic hearing, as well as musical talent are traced. The main musical abilities are clarified - mood and metrorhythmic sense and musical auditory performances, as well as musical memory, and their formation and development in the main musical activities, with an emphasis on the perception of music. The organization and conduct of the main musical activity - perception is studied in detail: preparation for acquaintance with a new musical work; musical material with sound and imitation character- opportunity for initial formation of listening skills and habits; use of works from the music literature, suitable for initial development of listening habits and skills. To clarify them, Smilkova seeks information from esteemed Bulgarian and foreign authors.

The second part presents the Model "Tell me music" in the perception of instrumental musical works in preschool and primary school age. Here the author focuses on fantasy - creativity - the audience, giving a serious emphasis on the formation of competencies in children and students through the training of students - future kindergarten and primary teachers. . The model presented by the author has its indisputable value. It gives its theoretical validity and practical applicability. Its effectiveness, proven in practice, stands out . Musical hearing, musical memory, image-associative thinking, imagination and active creative participation are necessary for the effective course of the activity of perception. In this regard, the author gives a special place to students - future teachers in preschool and primary school, who are preparing in the spirit of our time - to seek, discover and foster creativity in children and students. In support of this, she has proposed creative tasks described in their practical implementation. The conclusions in the monograph are a logical summary. Excellent mastery of scientific terminology is also evident. I think that the work of Chief Assistant Dr. Smilena Smilkova, is an achievement and an extremely useful book both for students and for the entire music-pedagogical college.

The significance of the presented for review Guide for students and teachers from Chief Assistant Dr. Smilena Smilkova on the topic: "Creative tasks for the development of

imagination through the perception of instrumental music" is also indisputable. Perception of music is an activity of fundamental importance for the musical development of children in kindergarten and primary school students, for the formation of musical-auditory ideas and concepts, because without perceptions it is unthinkable to form and develop musical abilities and musicality in general. This activity is of fundamental importance because it lays the foundation for the musical and aesthetic taste of the individual. Therefore, one of the tasks of this activity is to lay the foundations of artistic taste and criteria for evaluating works of musical art by forming cognitive interest, desire and need to listen to music, especially in the first organized musical influences on children in this fragile age - kindergarten, and further in primary school. The development of such a taste depends on the educational impact of teachers, on the one hand, and on the other - on the correctly selected samples of Bulgarian and world music literature. Therefore, when children are stimulated to emotionally experience music, it is extremely important to know the musical patterns this stimulation is based on. It is not easy to turn children's attention to instrumental music and learn to listen to it with understanding. It is this difficult task that Chief Assistant Dr. Smilena Smilkova has decided to undertake and present in her guide, preparing the students for it.

The materials presented by the author in the proposed guide for review are based on several creative tasks, which are precisely divided into groups and graded by complexity. Considering the gradual development and interpretation of the musical image in instrumental works, Chief Assistant Dr. Smilena Smilkova puts them in front of students studying Preschool Pedagogy and Foreign Language (PUPCHE), Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy (PNUP), Primary School Pedagogy and Foreign Language (NUPCHE) and Social Pedagogy (SP) at the University "Pro . Dr. Asen Zlatarov "Burgas. Interestingly interpreted and refracted through the personal life experience, observations and fantasies of young people - future kindergarten and primary teachers, teachers of the 21st century. These materials, including short stories, fairy tales, poems, essays and surveys, are extremely valuable for our time, as they answer a number of important questions that excite us, namely - to capture, explain and describe the musical art image embedded in instrumental works, and the thoughts and emotions generated by it. The preparation of young people, as mediators between the composer and the listener, in the perception of instrumental works is not an easy task that the author has set and realized in her guide. The structure of the guide is divided into three parts, including Introduction, Four Tasks and Five Appendices. In the Introduction the author emphasizes the need for such a guide for students and teachers who will teach all educational areas in kindergarten and school subjects, including Music, through the most difficult moment in the methodology of music education - the perception of instrumental patterns. The second part includes Four tasks with specific questions and tools for perception and analysis, namely: Tasks related to verbal summaries, Tasks related to written narrative, essay, fairy tale, Tasks describing the feelings and emotions that arise when listening to a piece of music , Tasks related to the general culture of students in the field of music, literature and fine arts in the period 17-19 century and the Bulgarian professional music - first and second generation composers. The third part contains Five Appendices, including the written works of the students, composed on the assignments set by the author, interpreted and refracted through their personal life experience, feelings, emotions and imagination. Titles of used authors are included in the Literature. The size of the volume is sufficient for this type of music guide for students and teachers. It is dictated by the desire of Chief Assistant Dr. Smilena Smilkova to share her experience in working with students on setting and

implementing creative tasks for the development of their imagination by adopting carefully selected, consistent with the age and perceptual abilities of children in kindergarten and primary school students, instrumental works. The author skillfully arranges the results of the students tested in practice, observing a certain gradual development and comprehension of the musical image in the instrumental works. The eighteen papers presented for review from conferences and articles are independent and arranged by topic: "Elements of musical expression (№ 15, 16, 19); Development and improvement of "soft" skills in children, pupils and students, through the use of various musical activities. (№ 13, 14, 17, 18, 20); Education and training of future listeners (№ 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12), seven of which are in impact factor magazines. They are related to preschool and primary school pedagogy, as well as the preparation of students - future children's and primary teachers. They have been published in 8 Bulgarian and 10 foreign specialized editions and emphasize her professional commitment.

### 5.3 Contributions

The contributions of Chief Assistant Dr. Smilena Smilkova are in the scientific and scientific-practical field of Theory and Methodology of Music Education, Art Pedagogy and Socio-Pedagogical Mediation and concern the levels of education - preschool and primary, as well as students. Her qualities as a teacher and pedagogue are indisputable. The publications submitted for review show a logical structure of presentation and excellent mastery of scientific terminology. The author chooses key topics for the education of students and children / pupils in both levels of education (pre-school and primary school stage). They correctly present the main research results. The monograph, the Guide, the articles, and the reports contain clearly formulated goals, ideas and conclusions, as well as practical applicability. The issue is topical. She is convincing with a solid theoretical base, rich in her creative ideas and solutions. The language is concise and precise. I accept the precise author's reference to the scientific contributions of the works and citations, presented by Chief Assistant Dr. Smilena Dimitrova Smilkova. It is difficult to judge your own creative achievements. Self-assessment is not always accurate, but it is a matter of procedure and cannot be ignored.

### 5.4. Citation

The works of by Chief Assistant Dr. Smilena Smilkova are recognizable. Their scientific value, quality and application are confirmed by the eight citations, 7 of which are by authors in collective volumes with scientific review.

## **2. Assessment of personal contribution**

What has been said so far is indicative of mature professionalism and accumulated scientific-theoretical and scientific-practical experience for the next step in the career of Chief Assistant Dr. Smilena Smilkova. My assessment of the personal contribution of the candidate in all submitted works is high. The significance of the scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the presented works of the candidate for the competition for "Associate Professor" is indisputable.

**3. Critical remarks and recommendations** - I do not have any.

## **4. Personal impressions**

My personal impressions are based on professional acquaintance with Chief Assistant Dr. Smilena Smilkova, which dates back to her election as Chief Assistant in 2020. Despite the short time in which I have known her, I am impressed that in her research and teaching she follows modern trends in education and adheres to high scientific criteria. I am positively impressed by her ethics, responsibility, humanity, integrity, motivation, and diligence.

I have no doubt that the candidate will continue her independent research in the Methodology of Music Education, Art Pedagogy and Social-Pedagogical Mediation.

### **5. Conclusion**

The criterion in the requirements for such a competition - the presence of a defended doctoral dissertation is met, and the analysis of the submitted for review book of the dissertation, monograph, guide, articles and reports are important features concerning the essential work of the candidate. The indisputable excellent qualities they possess give me full reason to offer with conviction to the members of the esteemed Specialized Scientific Jury Senior Assistant Dr. Smilena Dimitrova Smilkova to be elected to hold the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education **1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy, scientific specialty "Methods of teaching music in kindergarten and primary school" at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov ", Burgas.**

03.04.2022r.

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