

PEER REVIEW
for competition for occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor”
under Professional field 8.3 “Music and Dance Arts”,
specialty: “Folk Singing and Teaching Methodology”,
by
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The only candidate in the competition announced by the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts is Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Yordanova Tsvetkova. The candidate's biography reference shows a close connection between her education, creative and pedagogical activities and the subject matter of the competition. She graduated “Folk Singing” at the Shiroka Laka Specialized Music School, and received her Master's degree in the Higher Music and Pedagogical Institute – Plovdiv in the specialties: “Head of Folk Groups” and “Performer and Teacher of Folk Singing”. She has many years of practice as a contractor, conductor and teacher. She has worked at the Pazardzhik Folk Song and Dance Ensemble and at the staff choir at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts as a Soloist and Choir Singer, and at the Sliven Folk Song and Dance Ensemble as the conductor of the choir. Dr. Tsvetkova has been teaching pedagogically since 1997 as a part-time lecturer in folk singing, and since 2011 she has been employed at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv. She received her “Doctor” degree in 2014 with a thesis on the topic: “The Pazardzhik Folklore and Singing Style and Its Local Manifestations in Some Settlements in the Region”.

In accordance with the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria the candidate has submitted the necessary documentation, incl. a table on the fulfillment of the minimum requirements for the academic position of “Associate Professor”, as well as evidence material.

In the documentation on the **scientific part** of the competition, the candidate presented a brief summary only of the publication “Male Folklore Performance in Sliven – Known and Unknown”, referred to as habilitation work. Year of publication is not specified in the book, but the documents show it to be 2018. In terms of volume, the text has the character of a study rather than a monograph (about 80 pages, excluding about 20 pages with note examples, 20 pages of interview applications, 7 pages of photos and 3 pages of reviews). The content is informative rather than analytical, and the referenced literature consists of only 18 titles. The work contains already known features of the musical dialect in the Thracian folklore, some stylistic specifics of female and male singing, in particular in Sliven and chronological periodization in the development of the local male singing style through the biographies of famous professional singers from this region. The first section is limited to a brief geographical and historical description of Sliven and a listing of editions with song folklore from the region. In the second section, the author herself states that she refers to her dissertation, giving general information about the Thracian singing style (respectively Sliven) with an emphasis on ornamentation as a hallmark. The third part presents individual “emblem” singers born in Sliven, whose biographies mark the stages formulated by the author in the development of the regional male singing style. The ten names selected are “portrayed” with brief biographical information from various sources and a characteristic of their performing style. The grouping and differentiation of the performers into four stages in the development of the singing style seems to be done according to age. There are no clear style criteria and indicators among the singers belonging to the second and third stage. In all, the traditional manner is strongly influenced by vocal professionalism. The accompanying five

interviews of the author with the performers supplement the cognitive nature of the text. Although more in-depth analytical conclusions and summaries are needed, the publication is a contribution to regional studies in the field of Folk Art.

The other two attached publications are not accompanied by summaries. The edition “Folk Singing in the Pazardzhik Region” (2018, 73 pages) was published on the basis of the candidate’s dissertation work and should not be reviewed in this procedure. The same applies to the publication (as part of a dissertation study) presented in the studio, “Local Manifestation of the Pazardzhik Folklore and Performing Style in the villages of Belovitsa, Lyuben and Dragomir” (without year of publication, 94 pages).

Much more convincing and worthy of high evaluation is the large-scale **artistic and creative production** of the candidate. Her solo appearances in concerts and television shows are evidence of vocal mastery and a stylish performance of folk repertoire. Her long-standing practice as a soloist, vocal educator and Assistant Conductor of the Academica Folk Choir at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts contributes to the excellence of the musical formation on the concert stage and in the educational process. The report indicates a significant amount of concert events with people in the country and abroad over the last five years. In her work as a vocal consultant, the Swedish choir Perunika from Stockholm and the Danish choir Sedianka rely on their achievements in performing the Bulgarian repertoire on a folklore basis. She has also conducted workshops with other formations and students from Canada, Denmark and Sweden, as well as annual master classes for students.

Chief Assistant Dr. D. Tsvetkova has a significant contribution to the pedagogical work with students at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts. For them she has prepared several textbooks – collections with appropriate song repertoire. Performances of students of her class in folk singing in concerts, festivals, competitions, record production are specified. The musical production of Chief Assistant Dr. D. Tsvetkova, “Sedenkarski Lakardiy” (2016) performed by her students in folk singing with artistic and musical performing skills is successfully constructed.

The assessment of the candidate’s habilitation materials in the competition shows greater weight and advantage in terms of quantity and quality of artistic, educational and pedagogical activity over research results. In view of the competition topics – the specialty “Folk Singing and Teaching Methodology”, and the specifics in the requirements for Professional field 8.3 “Music and Dance Arts”, I think that the candidate Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Yordanova Tsvetkova has accomplished the necessary achievements to occupy the academic position “Associate Professor”.

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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nataliya Rashkova