

## **Peer Review**

**by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Veselka Toncheva**

under a procedure for awarding of the academic position “Associate Professor”

Professional field: 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”

Specialty: “Folk Singing and Teaching Methodology”

for the needs of Department of Musical Folklore, Faculty of Musical Folklore and

Choreography at Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – City of Plovdiv

Only candidate: **Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Yordanova Tsvetkova**

The candidate has submitted all the necessary documents for the competition, her results meet the minimum requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and she has attached the relevant supporting material, which shows the specific activities and products according to the individual indicators. The review of her documents established a very active and successful teaching and creative and artistic activity.

As a result of her *research activity*, Danka Tsvetkova cited her doctoral dissertation work on the topic: “The Pazardzhik Folklore and Singing Style and Its Local Manifestations in Some Settlements in the Region”, defended in 2014. The following are also included: the book “Folk Singing in the Pazardzhik Region” (2018) and the studies “Local Manifestation of the Pazardzhik Folklore and Performing Style in the villages of Belovitsa, Lyuben and Dragomir” (2019). The three citations that the candidate cited are from the book based on her dissertation work.

The only scientific publication on the candidacy for Associate Professor (since the abovementioned ones are on the topic of the dissertation) is the habilitation work of Danka Tsvetkova – “Male Folklore Performance in Sliven – Known and Unknown” (2018). In this book the author demonstrates excellent knowledge of the male singing style in Sliven and its regional characteristics. It is examined in four stages, each represented by several striking and iconic performers, whose specificity is analyzed in detail. I think that this “stage order” is not entirely convincingly argued, that the stages are not sufficiently clearly defined and that there is a lack of a more general “picture” of the social and cultural changes in which the singers are developed. The text includes song samples from the repertoire of the respective performers, as well as interviews with five of them, which make the presentation of the figures more complete.

The text undoubtedly has its contributions, though it emphasizes the high practical

competence of Danka Tsvetkova at the expense of the weaker theoretical base in the literature used, the terminology, etc. The thorough insight into the performing style and approach to the ornamentation of each of the singers examined is a contribution in the field of ethnomusicology, but it also has high pedagogical potential, as it would be useful for students studying folk singing and tempted by the Thracian singing style.

The research activity of the candidate is related to her *pedagogical and methodological activity*. She is also the author of scientific and applied publications: teaching aids that are especially valuable in practical terms and are well received by the students – 4 collections with solo folk songs with piano accompaniment: “A Song Has No Limits” and “Folk Songs from the Pazardzhik Region” (Plovdiv, Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, 2006), “Folk Songs from Shopluka” (Plovdiv, Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, 2016) and “Where Tears Fell Songs Blossomed” (Plovdiv, Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, 2017).

Danka Tsvetkova’s work as a Vocal Educator at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts (since 1996 as a part-time teacher and since 2011 as a full-time Folk Singing Assistant) has been particularly active. She teaches not only Bulgarian but also foreign students, who regularly perform productions and concerts, and have various stage and public appearances. The students in her folk singing class have won awards in various competitions, which is indisputable evidence of her teaching capacity. After completing their higher education, her students become successful vocal educators in music schools, institutions, choirs and more.

Outside of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, in the field of specialized secondary music education, she has taught a master class at the Veselin Stoyanov National School of Arts – City of Ruse (2014–2018). As a vocal educator, Danka Tsvetkova is highly regarded and recognized outside the country. She successfully conducts master classes abroad with foreigners (choirs and students) – works and performs with the Sedianka Choir from the City of Aarhus, Denmark (2014, 2015, 2017 – January and May), with the Perunika Choir from Stockholm, Sweden (2016, 2017, 2018), at the Royal Academy of Music in City of Aarhus, Denmark (2017), etc. Her work with foreign choirs is in the field of vocal and staging issues. She is also connected with the introduction and work on the interpretation of individual folk singing styles.

As an expert, the candidate is actively involved in the juries of various folklore competitions and festivals. She also performs consulting work – vocal work with the singer Rositsa Peycheva in the development of the specifics of the songs from different regions, as

well as in the selection of suitable song material for three of the singer's albums.

Particularly impressive is the artistic and creative work of Danka Tsvetkova – she participates as a Soloist, Choir Singer, Assistant Conductor and Vocal Educator at the Academic Folk Choir at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, and also as a Soloist of two choirs outside Bulgaria – the Sedianka Choir from the City of Aarhus, Denmark and the Perunika Choir from Stockholm, Sweden. For the period from 2014 until 2019, Danka Tsvetkova had a very big concert activity – participation in 38 concerts in Bulgaria and 14 concerts abroad. As a Soloist, she has recorded for the Bulgarian National Television and the Bulgarian National Radio, and has appeared on CDs released in Bulgaria, Germany and Denmark.

The candidate is highly appreciated by both the specialists and the public, and this is evident from the many certificates, diplomas and honors she has received. The World Champion title from the 5th World Choir Games in Graz, Austria (2008) and the Grand Prix (2011) stand out in particular.

From all the above it is clear that Danka Tsvetkova is a candidate who fully fits the profile of the competition – she demonstrates high qualification in pedagogical, teaching and methodical activities; has numerous and high achievements in the artistic and creative fields; her research work is directed to research of regional singing styles, and although she is not as active in this activity as she is in the other ones, her research interests are again associated with her practice as a vocal educator and this makes her a valuable candidate with excellent academic background. This gives me a reason to suggest to the distinguished Scientific Jury to select the candidate Danka Tsvetkova for the academic position “Associate Professor” for the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in the professional field “Music and Dance Arts”, specialty: “Folk Singing and Teaching Methodology”

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