

PEER REVIEW

by Prof. Lozanka Peycheva, Doctor of Arts
on the candidacy of Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova
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” at Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography, Department
of Musical Folklore, announced by Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance
and Fine Arts – Plovdiv (State Gazette, Issue 40/17.05.2019)

The materials submitted for review show that the main activities and production of Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova fit into the following fields: artistic and creative activity, pedagogical, teaching and methodological activity, and scientific research activity. These areas are directly related to the professional field and the specialty of the announced competition. The proposed documentation for participation in the competition contains: a completed table for individual fulfillment of the minimum national requirements, evidence on indicators A, C, D, E and F (from the table), a monograph, two published books, posters and programs for concert performances (in Bulgaria and abroad), description of pedagogical and teaching and methodological activity.

My general opinion on the materials and documents offered is that they satisfy the legal requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for participation in the announced competition and certify the scale and nature of the multilateral academic activity of the only candidate in the competition.

The habilitation materials with which Danka Tsvetkova participates in the competition are grouped into the following major sections: 1) Creative and artistic activity; 2) Pedagogical, teaching and methodological activity; 3) Scientific research activity and 4) Awards.

A significant part of the applied materials is related to the rich **creative and artistic activity** of Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova. Her artistic and creative activities are associated with many stage performances as soloist, choir singer, assistant conductor and vocal educator of the Academica Folk Choir at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv.

In 2010, Danka Tsvetkova received an Honorary Diploma in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Academica Folk Choir, which is a well-deserved recognition for her highly professional and precise work as an assistant conductor.

The versatile stage performances of Danka Tsvetkova testify to the wide range of her abilities as an interpreter. She is a performer with a deep sense of singing as one of the essential elements of the Bulgarian music and folklore culture and interprets in diverse performing groups, different in time, style and genre of songs. The submitted documentation for participation in the competition reveals that in her active concert activity the candidate has played with a large number of Bulgarian and foreign folk music performers – choirs, instrumentalists, conductors. Particular emphasis in Tsvetkova’s work is the creative connection she has with foreigners – lovers of Bulgarian folk music, participants in the choirs Sedianka (Denmark) and Perunika (Sweden). Extensive performing and interpreting practices reveal Danka Tsvetkova as a well-established performer with numerous achievements in many specific directions for presentation and promotion of folk music from the past in contemporary conditions.

Dr. Danka Tsvetkova implements her concert activity in Bulgaria and abroad. Among her leading creative appearances in various cities of Bulgaria are numerous concerts with the Academica Folk Choir at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv, in which she participates as a Soloist and Choir Singer. Another striking achievement

on the Bulgarian stage is her concert performances with the Perunika Chorus (Stockholm). Danka Tsvetkova has had a respectable concert activity abroad on prestigious stages in Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, France, Canada and more.

As a choir performer, she has participated in various competitions in Bulgaria (Varna – 2012; Sofia – 2013) and abroad (Graz, Austria – 2008, 2011; Serbia – 2010), where she has won a number of prestigious awards, among which the gold medals won in 2008 and Grand Prix at the 2011 World Choir Games in Graz, Austria. I have excellent impressions of the participation of Dr. Danka Tsvetkova with the Academica Choir at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv at the National Singing Competition, dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the birth of Prof. Kiril Stefanov, organized by the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research with the Ethnographic Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences on 08.11.2013 and 09.11.2013 in Sofia, where they won the biggest special award. The Academica Folk Choir presented a tasteful selection and a masterful repertoire on the stage of the Grand Salon of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Their performances were remarkable for their timbre beauty, exceptional musical sense and sophisticated interpretation.

From the materials presented for participation in the competition it is clear that the stage performances of Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova are among the priorities in her field of work. Through them she promotes the Bulgarian song art based on the folklore traditions in front of contemporary audiences and this can be considered as the main contribution of the candidate for the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the announced competition.

The **pedagogical, teaching and methodological activity** of Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova is developed in the following main areas: comprehensive work on vocal and performance issues, familiarization with and work on the interpretation of various folk singing styles with foreign choirs from Denmark and Sweden, vocal production work with the Academica Folk Choir at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv, work as a folk singing teacher at the same higher education institution and issuance of textbooks related to the teaching of folk singing.

The main emphasis in the pedagogical activity of Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova is her whole work on vocal and performance issues and overcoming the obstacles that singers face when reading notated folk music. Typically, recorders and composers provide little information and rarely give specific instructions on how to interpret a folk song notated or processed by them, and leave the interpretation to the singer’s own judgment and imagination. In the overall vocal and staging work with the students, with the Academica Folk Choir and with the foreign choirs Sedianka (Aarhus, Denmark – since 2007) and Perunika (Stockholm, Sweden – since 2015), Danka Tsvetkova directs the process of decoding and understanding of the notated work presented for interpretation. In the complex pedagogical and creative process of translation from author to performer, Tsvetkova has enviable achievements, which are based on her good knowledge and considerable experience in this type of repertoire.

During the years of her teaching activity Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova actively participates in the educational process of preparation of students for participation in competitions, concerts, festivals and more. With her pedagogical work she attracts and prepares generations of interpreters of Bulgarian folk songs. Her successes as a teacher are visible from the diverse performances of her students with their active participation in the concert life of Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv.

Among the significant results of the pedagogical activity of Dr. Danka Tsvetkova is the issuance of teaching aids, directly related to folk singing training in secondary and higher music institutions and specialized music classes.

The many years of pedagogical experience of Dr. Danka Tsvetkova (from 1997 to the present), the successes of her students, the developed teaching aids for practical training with students and her numerous master classes, seminars and workshops in Bulgaria and abroad testify to the level of accumulated vocal expertise, extensive pedagogical experience, skills and achievements, as well as of her significant contribution to teaching and pedagogical practice.

The **scientific research production**, with which Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova participates in the competition, reveals another important part of her academic activity. The candidate brings to the attention of the scientific jury three published books, listed by genres in the competition documentation as follows: monograph, book and studies.

The presented habilitation work “Male Folklore Performance in Sliven – Known and Unknown” (2019) addresses issues related to regional studies of musical folklore and the specific characteristics of traditional performance in a sub-region of Thrace. The study presents ten iconic male folk singers from the region with their distinctive style and repertoire. The work presents biographies of the singers and interviews with five of them. The contributions of this work are necessary and useful to all who are interested in the specifics of male singing in the region of Sliven.

The successfully defended doctorate in 2014, focused on the folklore singing style of Pazardzhik and its local manifestations in some localities in the region, was later partially published in the book “Folk Singing in the Pazardzhik Region” (2018). In this book, Danka Tsvetkova presents an original study of the singing art in Pazardzhik and the male folk singing as a special form of it. One of the major challenges facing the author of this work is to make sense of live singing at a theoretical level by using various internal (emic) concepts used by the bearers of the song tradition. Along with the numerous emic concepts derived from the bearers of the singing tradition, the book touches upon the specific constructions of “trembling in Graovski region” and “trembling in the region of Kyustendil”, which are widely used by a number of professional folk singers and show how the internal participants in the art of folk singing interpret this phenomenon. These constructions are important for understanding the local features of the ornamental “trembling” technique, but they are not yet sufficiently clarified and justified in an external (ethical) perspective, which complicates their refinement in the present publication.

The published studies “Local Manifestation of the Pazardzhik Folklore and Performing Style in the villages of Belovitsa, Lyuben and Dragomir” present a field study of three villages located in the outskirts of the Pazardzhik and Ihtiman folklore region. The results of this work are interesting and useful from a research point of view in several fields: settlement studies, local communities and cultures, ethnographic groups and dialects. The empirical study of the three settlements carried out is also essential for the research of the local specifics of the folk music of the researched regions.

In general, the three publications submitted for peer review continue a well-established line of research and achievements of a number of generations of researchers in Bulgarian ethnomusicology who study the local and regional characteristics of music and folklore traditions in Bulgaria. At the same time, the developments of Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova provide new specific empirical data and analytical readings of the phenomena studied. The general impression is that in some places the nature of the data collected allows more extensive analyzes to be made with reference to previous studies. This finding does not detract from the results obtained, which provide valuable knowledge and can serve as a basis for further research.

To the prepared summary of the entire activity, structured in the sections under consideration, Dr. Danka Tsvetkova adds and offers to the attention of the scientific jury a list and copies of documents (diplomas, certificates, awards) certifying the recognitions for her

creative appearances and achievements. A table under the Rules for application of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria is attached, which indicates the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for the scientific, teaching and/or creative and artistic activities or sport activities of the candidates for the occupation of the academic positions “Associate Professor” and “Professor” under Professional field 8.3 “Music and Dance Arts”, Area 8 “Arts”, which in numerical terms proves that the candidate’s scientific, pedagogical and creative and artistic activities have high quantitative and qualitative dimensions, exceeding the minimum individual scientometric requirements according to the Rules.

Conclusion:

The materials, with which Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova participates in the competition for occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor” in specialty “Folk Singing and Teaching Methodology”, the findings and assessments set out in the Peer review, as well as my impressions of her overall activity, give me reason to approve her selection for the academic position “Associate Professor” for the needs of Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts.

12.09.2019
Sofia

Signature:.....
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