

OPINION

by **Prof Kameliya Nikolova D.A.**

National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts
Art Studies Institute, Bulgarian Academy of Science

on the scientific papers presented
for participation in the competition for academic position **Associate Professor**
in professional field 8.2. Fine Arts
specialty History of Costume and Scenography
Announced by AMDFA “Prof Asen Diamandiev ”
in State Gazette of 26.07.2019, with a single candidate

Assistant Professor DIMITAR LUYBENOV VODENICHAROV

Dimitar Vodenicharov has presented two research articles for the competition – *Adolphe Appia, first performances of modern theatre* (Homo Ludens, Sofia, 22/2019), and *Three scenographic solutions for “light” theatrical genre* (Collection of Spring Scientific Readings, AMDFA, 2019), as well as two scenography projects for theatrical productions – for stage and costume designs for the play *Undress!*, based on *What the Butler Saw* by Joe Orton, staged at Plovdiv Drama Theatre (season 2014-2015, directed by Krasimir Rankov), as well as a set design for the musical *The Schmuck* of Petar Radevski and Leo Capon, based on a fairy-tale by Iva Perzhikova, staged at Plovdiv Drama Theatre (season 1995-1996 directed by Leo Capon).

The research articles and artistic work presented by the applicant, meet the minimum national requirements for awarding academic title Associate Professor.

As main reason for this opinion I take the abovementioned materials, and I also refer to some of the other artistic works of Dimitar Vodenicharov – stage solutions for theatrical productions and participation with his works in art exhibitions.

In his article *Adolphe Appia, first performances of modern theatre*, Dimitar Vodenicharov aims to recall, rationalize and analyse the views of Adolf Appia - one of the pioneers of modern set design, on the construction of the space and lighting in the spectacle. Starting from Appia's main theoretical work *Music and the art of the theatre* (1897), the author attempts to trace the realization of his key idea that the theatrical performance must have the same effect as music. According to Appia, light is the stage equivalent of music, and such an effect would be achieved if it, along with the plastic forms, were constructed to create

a synthetic overall atmosphere and rhythm that would touch the viewer's "soul" continuously and totally. Discussing Appia's well-known stage solutions in several productions of Wagner's operas, Dimitar Vodenicharov attempts to reconstruct the Appia principle for the construction of conditional stage space, using striking combinations of horizontal and vertical planes, stairs and different stage levels, and uniting them into a new fictional reality with stage lighting.

As an acting set designer and scenography teacher, what he looks for in these reconstructions and in their rationalization, is both strategies, which he can use and develop in his practice, and above all, appropriate examples for work with the students, which is *one of the important contributions* of this historical and theoretical text.

The other theoretical text proposed by Dimitar Vodenicharov – *Three scenographic solutions for "light" theatrical genre*, presents and comments on his designs for the set design and costumes of three musicals, staged at Plovdiv Drama Theatre in tandem with the director Leo Capon in the period 1995 – 2001. These are *The Schmuck*, staged by Peter Radevski and Leo Capon, and *God is Innocent*, with music by Peter Radevsky and text by Martin Karbowski, and *The Wizard of Oz*, by of Lyman Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

In the curious self-reflection of the author on his own work, I would like to highlight as *contribution* his attempt to trace and comprehend his lasting interest in the dynamic conditional space, an integral part of which is the creative use of the stage lighting, also evident in his studies of stage design history, and especially the modern ideas of Adolf Appia.

The two stage design projects, presented by Dimitar Vodenicharov, for the comedy *Undress!* directed by Krasimir Rankov, and the musical *The Schmuck*, with Leo Capon as director, convincingly add to his preference for bright and unexpected spatial solutions evident in his theoretical texts, such as ladders, moving elements and light-reflecting materials that provide rapid and impressive changes and transformations of the acting environment in the musical. Insofar as this genre as a whole, and in particular, its spatial layout and rationalization from the point of view of scenography, are almost absent in both the theatrical practice in Bulgaria and the theatrical science, then Dimitar Vodenicharov's attempts to work in this direction and analyse his searches and the results achieved, are *another significant contribution* to the discussed productions.

I have no comments and recommendations on the materials presented for the competition. I do not personally know Dimitar Vodenicharov, but my acquaintance with his theoretical texts and analyses of stage design solutions of the mentioned productions, as well as my impressions of other scenography projects and works of art, convince me of his

qualities as an interesting and provocative artist, and a good educator with great teaching potential.

CONCLUSION: The materials presented at the competition prove that Dimitar Vodenicharov fulfils the requirements for occupying the academic position *Associate Professor* at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts “Prof Asen Diamandiev”, specialty History of Costume and Scenography. As a member of the jury, I will vote in favour of his nomination.

I vote YES.

Sofia, 15.11.2019

Reviewer:

Prof Kameliya Nikolova, D.A.