

**PEER REVIEW**

**by Prof. Dr. Todor Aleksandrov Kirov,**  
member of the scientific jury appointed by the Rector of Prof. Asen Diamandiev  
Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts  
under Order ПД-27-067 dated 16.06.2023,  
**regarding the candidacy of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Galya Georgieva Petrova-Kirkova,**  
**for awarding the academic position “Professor”**  
in the scientific specialty “Folk Singing and Methodology of its Teaching”,  
Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”,  
to the Musical Folklore Department, Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography,  
at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv

-----

**1. General information about the candidate:**

The only candidate in the competition for “Professor” in “Folk Singing and Methodology of its Teaching” is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Galya Georgieva Petrova-Kirkova. The set of documents presented by her is in accordance with the requirements of the normative acts of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation, and the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquisition of scientific degrees and academic positions at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts.

Galya Kirkova has been a lecturer of folk singing at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in Plovdiv since 2010, a Doctor of Musicology and Musical Art since 2015, an Associate Professor of Folk Singing and Methodology of its Teaching since 2018, and a Director of the Language and Specialized Training Department since 2020. She graduated from Filip Kutev Secondary Music School in Kotel in 1994. She also has Bachelor’s degree (1998) and Master’s degree (1999) in two specialties (“Rebec and Folk Singing”) from Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in Plovdiv. She also worked as a performer and choir singer at Trakiya Folklore Ensemble and a teacher of folk singing and rebec at Lyuben Karavelov High School and a lecturer at Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University.

For her high achievements as a performer and educator, she has been awarded many awards. She has participated in concerts, radio and television shows, and recordings in the Bulgarian National Radio. Dr. Kirkova has also released a solo CD. Her students have won awards from national competitions. Galya Kirkova has participated in the composition of the juries in various contests and festivals. She is the author of three monographic books, two music-folk song collections, and numerous publications in collections and periodicals. She also participates in scientific conferences and conducts master classes and workshops.

**2. Creative asset:**

According to the “Evidential Information Table”, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Galya Petrova-Kirkova has an asset of 660 points, which is a significant achievement. By sections, the points are distributed as follows:

= Section A – 50 points

Dissertation work for the awarding of the educational and qualification degree “Doctor” on the topic “*Musical and Folkloric Heritage of Dobrudzha – Connection with the Ethno-Demographic State and Migration Processes*”. Diploma No 0018 dated 28.04.2015.

= Section C – 100 points

Habilitation work – published monograph “*Repertoire in Folk Singing Education*” – 2023.

= Section D – 205 points

Published book, five articles, and reports in specialized publications in the field of arts, participation in two TV shows on the Bulgarian National Television, soloist and performer in one concert – show.

= Section E – 115 points

Eleven citations in non-refereed journals; four reviews for realized author’s products.

= Section F – 190 points

Leader of seven master classes; one workshop; acquired three diplomas as awards from competitions for creativity and performance.

### **3. Habilitation work:**

As a habilitation work, Assoc. Prof. Kirkova presents the monographic work “*Repertoire in Folk Singing Education*”. The work contains an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, and four appendices.

The in-depth theoretical knowledge, high singing professionalism, and long-term pedagogical work with young singers are the motivation that forms Assoc. Professor Kirkova’s desire to develop this topic. The topicality of the issue is determined by the dynamics in the development of modern musical art and the need to consider, analyze, and renew the approaches in the methodology of teaching folk singing, as well as their practical application. The question of the repertoire is important for the teaching of folk singing and is quite logically put into consideration. The main impression that the present work leaves is the presence of a deep and sincere interest on the part of the author in the subject, as well as her personal motivation to examine the problem from almost all possible angles and perspectives. The work has researched, analyzed, and systematized a huge volume of information related to tracking and analyzing previous research and developments in this area, and the essence of the subject under consideration is multifaceted and deeply researched and presented by the author with relevant conclusions.

The emphasis in the development is placed on the repertoire issues in the teaching of folk singing, and methodological guidelines are presented for achieving greater efficiency in the teaching process. The thesis about the fundamental importance of “*repertoire phenomenon*” as the main subject in the process of teaching folk singing is

defended. The following tasks have been solved in detail through the individual chapters:

- = The problem with the repertoire is examined in general theoretical terms. Its place and role in the teaching of folk singing is defined.

- = Possible repertoire sources are explored. An attempt is made to systematize them and derive basic structuring principles.

- = The question related to the reflection of modern trends in the development of folklore on the repertoire in the education of folk singing is posed and analyzed.

- = A “feedback” is sought from the students through a survey, and the results reflecting the opinion of the students regarding the singing repertoire are presented and summarized.

The author is deeply convinced that the richness and diversity of the repertoire determines the quality of the learning process. It is of particular importance that educators and students know how to navigate this diversity and make the right selection. The educator and the student participate together in a single process in which knowledge, skills, and competences are realized. (p. 10)

The contributions of the habilitation work are the following:

- = For the first time, the topic related to the teaching material on folk singing is put through a comprehensive study.

- = The path of the song repertoire is traced from the authentic song practice, through theoretical studies and collections of song samples, to the contemporary author’s creativity (including the issue of piano accompaniment) and their application in vocal pedagogy today.

- = Song samples from different sources and of different character, which are current and applicable today in different educational levels and institutions, are analyzed.

- = In the methodological aspect, didactic principles for the selection of a suitable repertoire in the sense of the overall construction and education of the adolescent performers and pedagogues are derived.

- = The principles of selection of the song material included in the various collections are analyzed in the sense of methodological consistency, specificity, regional characteristics, performance characteristics, etc.

- = The issue related to the male voice repertoire, suggested by the features of sound extraction, tessitura, tonal volume, and regional characteristics of male singers, is purposefully addressed.

- = And last but not least: Both the historical chronology of folk singing training, as well as contemporary trends and issues related to the influence of the social and cultural environment, the media and concert performances on the formation of the aesthetic taste and personal preferences for the repertoire by young singers are outlined.

In detail, this means the following:

In the distant past, the folk song was inextricably linked with people’s life and work process. It was sung on different occasions and in different situations:

celebrations, sittings, parties, work activities... The singers were naturally gifted talents, the songs were passed on from mouth to mouth and from generation to generation.

With the advent of the radio, singers entered the studios and the songs sounded on the air – alternating performances from different folklore areas and songs with different themes sounded. And the process of spreading the folk song among the people on a larger national scale began. It is logical to bet on the statement that many talents started on the folk-singing path by learning songs from singers in the respective village or from performances on the radio. It is logical to determine that this is the primary, amateur way of training folk singers.

With the opening of secondary music schools in the City of Kotel, the village of Shiroka Laka, and the Folklore Department at the Higher Music and Pedagogical Institute in the City of Plovdiv, the beginning of professional training in folk singing in Bulgaria was set.

When we talk about folk art, however, a very voluminous and complex problem comes to the fore: the folklore-contemporary ratio. For folklore art (as an art that preserves and maintains living traditions in folk life), the connection with the contemporary interests of people is historically predetermined – it is embedded in the nature of folklore. In other words, the maxim that “Folk art must correspond to its time, otherwise it will cease to be folk art” applies here.

In this sense, in our case, the question arises about the relevance of the song repertoire and the teaching methodology in the educational process. Inevitably, a dilemma arises whether to rely only on traditional folk song samples, or to include in the training the new, non-traditional, modern, attractive. There are different opinions on this issue, but Assoc. Prof. Kirkova in her theoretical development draws the logical conclusion: “To use both and to seek balance and equilibrium between the “old” and the “new”:

*“The challenges of the time inevitably reflect on the educational process and the educational content that is its basis. But the tasks in this process are directed in two main directions: On the one hand – the knowledge and assimilation of the ancient traditions, and on the other hand – the understanding and valuable orientation in modernity... The selection of repertoire in training is mainly determined by program requirements (curriculums) depending on the set goals, tasks, and expected results of training. It is important to take into account the modern didactic situation, which is characterized by radical changes, dynamics, and complexity, which requires a search for ways of effective teaching... The repertoire in the educational process must reflect the “equilibrium” in the opposition “old vs new...” (Quotation from the work, p. 7, 8)*

The work of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Galya Petrova-Kirkova is a serious and in-depth study of the issues related to repertoire selection in folk singing education. It shows the author’s effort to achieve comprehensiveness in the collection and synthesis of available information about her research object. The research is of a theoretical and practical nature and examines a rarely treated topic. The development is done competently, gives information and knowledge, and the author shows a wide-ranging and thorough

preparation. I am convinced that it (the research) will be useful for teachers of folk singing, for pupils and students – folk singers, for independent artists in the field of folk art, as well as for specialists dealing with the development of folklore themes. The work is valuable and a significant contribution to the field of vocal pedagogy and folk art.

Proceeding from what has been said so far and based on the habilitation materials presented, I express the following opinion: **My assessment is high and positive. I am convinced that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Galya Georgieva Petrova-Kirkova is worthy of the academic title “PROFESSOR” in the scientific specialty “Folk Singing and Methodology of its Teaching”, Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”.**

*04.07.2023*

*Prof. Dr. TODOR KIROV*