

PEER REVIEW

**by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rada Borislavova Slavinska
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Regarding the proposed contributions of Chief Assistant Dr. Ivan Simeonov Georgiev, for his participation in a competition, announced in State Gazette, Issue 52 dated 05.07.2022, for occupation of the academic position of “Associate Professor”, specialty: “Bagpipe and its Teaching Methodology”, faculty: Musical Folklore and Choreography, for the needs of the Musical Folklore Department, under Professional field 8.3 “Music and Dance Arts”, in accordance with the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its application and the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquisition of scientific degrees and occupation of academic positions at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts.

1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate

Pursuant to Art.25 of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and decision of the Faculty Council at the Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography (Protocol No 1/05.09.2022), and by Order No ПД 27-067 dated 05.09.2022 of the Rector of Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, I was appointed as a member of the scientific jury with the purpose to ensure a competitive procedure for occupation of the academic position of “Associate Professor” under Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”, specialty “Bagpipe and its Teaching Methodology”. The candidate Ivan Georgiev has submitted a set of documents (on paper and on magnetic media) related to the application procedure for occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor” for the specialty “Bagpipe and its Teaching Methodology”. The submitted documents are the following:

- a sample application to the Rector for participation in a competition for the academic position “Associate Professor”, specialty: “Bagpipe and its Teaching Methodology” and a curriculum vitae with emphasis on the most important publications and projects;
- a diploma for a completed Master’s educational-qualification degree;
- the necessary documents in relation to the procedure – a medical certificate, a criminal record certificate, a certificate of his work experience in the specialty and a report on his academic workload during the past academic year;
- a completed scientometric table and a document on the contribution moments in the indicated theoretical publications;
- evidentiary material on the scientometric table.

I have no objections to the presented documents and materials.

2. Brief biographical, pedagogical and creative data of the candidate

Ivan Georgiev is among the most prominent Bulgarian folk instrumentalists. Having started his bagpipe studies way back in 1987, he walked the long and difficult path of proving himself – through training at Filip Kutev Secondary Music School in Kotel; followed by Bachelor's and Master's degrees at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in Plovdiv; the wonderful defense of his thesis, laying the foundations for the scientific definition of “bagpipe style”; as well as dozens of awards from various competitions. Although a native of the City of Burgas and nurtured with the intonations of music from the Strandzha region, Georgiev shows an incredible skill for stylistic flexibility and in his concert incarnations skillfully recreates with enviable regional purity the dialectal palette inherent in our folk music. Inquisitive throughout his life, he drew bagpipe ideas, skills, and techniques from the manners of the best Bulgarian bagpipe players. It is no coincidence that in the folklore guild and among the candidate students, his name is synonymous with a person who has learned everything about the bagpipe and can show you and teach you almost everything – from authentic to processed folklore and from Bulgarian intonations to the art of playing any kind of music of this very specific instrument – from folk music to jazz.

The hundreds of concerts in all corners of the planet with Theodosii Spassov Folk Quintet, Mystery of Bulgarian Voices Vocal Ensemble, Nightingale Quartet, State Folk Orchestra at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts; the dozens of interviews for various national media; his participation in the juries of the folklore contests “Orfeevo Izvorche”, “Dinyo Marinov”, “Magical Rhythms”, etc., are all serious evidence of his importance as a performer and specialist. The numerous scientific articles and the successful realization of his graduates (students) also illustrate the deep academic, research and pedagogical essence of his searching nature. All this is combined with a wonderful character and a deep conviction of collegial belonging to the team of Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts and the Musical Folklore Department.

3. Contributions of the habilitation work

The monograph *“The Unachievable Sound of the Bagpipe”* represents the first study of the manner and characteristic features of the performance handwriting of a bagpiper by another performer who is also an educator. It is the pedagogical essence of Georgiev that directs his attention to one of the emblems of bagpipe performance art, as Nikola Atanasov was in the 20th century, because *“...Nikola Atanasov is a benchmark for bagpipe playing, untouched by the changes in our intonation environment after the 80s of the 20th century, but at the same time corresponding to the most modern trends in bagpipe art”* (p. 9) The scientific development represents a thorough study of the style and performance skills of this famous bagpipe performer, which will remain a contribution not only in a musicological sense, but also purely informative regarding the correct and complete coverage of the biography, the evaluations of contemporaries, and

the personal self-evaluations of the life of a great Bulgarian instrumentalist. The amalgam of biographical data, the premiere deciphered works from Nikola Atanasov's repertoire, and the competent analysis of his manner based on a rich theoretical basis and empirical knowledge based on Georgiev's vast performing concert and pedagogical experience lead to a complete "disentanglement" of the style of Nikola Atanasov – so that the monograph remains for the benefit not only of future researchers of the history of bagpipe performance art and of Bulgarian musical folklore, but also as a kind of "textbook" for some authentic bagpipe techniques in the manner of a standard performer who manages to masterfully balance between pure authenticity and processed folklore, by preserving the former while contributing to the latter. Or as the doyen in academic bagpipe training Assoc. Prof. Mariya Stoyanova says: *"In this monograph, Dr. Ivan Georgiev uses his entire scientific and research potential to reveal the secrets of the playing of "Bai Nikola" (p. 14).*

The narrow specificity of the development and the lack of publications on the subject do not prevent the author from basing his reasoning on 40 profiled works, drawing parallels with the instrumental art of other folk instruments and reaching helpful conclusions about the significance of Atanasov's figure. Already in his dissertation work, Georgiev laid the foundations of the specific bagpipe terminology, which continued in several subsequent scientific reports. Therefore, here, in the monograph, it is not necessary to explain a number of terms. He demonstrates a free, conscious and pedagogically "trained" handling of bagpipe terminology, with which he persistently and gradually imposes on Bulgarian musicology the understandings already formulated by him about the all-Bulgarian bagpipe style and its dialectal manifestations. Thanks to the theoretical base created in his previous scientific developments, Georgiev is able to determine with a high degree of validity the manner, specific ideas, and style of Atanasov.

The structure of the monograph follows a strict scientific sequence, presented with a large dose of poetic artistry. This is evident in the choice of titles for the three major sections (chapters) – "Prologue", "Core" and "Epilogue", the naming of the reviews of the work as "Reflections", and of the sheet music appendix as "Deciphered Memories". The proximity of the theoretical construction with its 14 subsections to the knee structure in instrumental music, the "tonal" unity of the thematism, the logical sequence in the accumulation and condensation to the increasingly specific scientific "dissection" of Nikola Atanasov's handwriting, presented with extreme concreteness, make the analogy quite obvious. And if the entire work is built with a scientific approach – to the search and systematization of biographical data, the creation of a catalog of the works performed and recorded by Atanasov, interviews, and analysis of the melodies – it is precisely the "peculiarities" of the structuring, the titles of the sections that evoke associations, the understandable journalistic style of speech, and the presence of a poetic "section" ("Bagpipe Introduction") that "break" in a very pleasant and readable way the strict standards of style in scientific research.

In addition to the purely scientific contributions, the work also has a high didactic value, as the characteristic interpretive skills of this outstanding Bulgarian bagpipe

performer are traced and clarified – technique (purity of performance), articulation, metrorhythmic sense, dialect preferences and personal manner of their performance, intonation purity and ensemble, phrasing, ornamentation, vibrato, etc. Definitive conclusions are also systematized, which contribute to a correct interpretation of Nikola Atanasov's playing and technique, as this would support the technical improvement of every performer.

4. Contributions to other habilitation materials

As part of the habilitation materials in section D, item 9, Ivan Georgiev applies the published scientific report *"The Concept of "Bagpipe Style" in Bulgarian Musicological Journalism"*. Relying on various theoretical sources and reasoning on the basis of accumulated empirical experience, the author offers a clarified formulation of the concept as *"a set of features of the song traditional musical culture characteristic of a given folklore-dialect area ... transferred to the bagpipe performance practice"*, which is done in the scientific literature for the first time and which lays the foundations of research in this direction. In the same scientometric section, Georgiev also applies another published scientific report, namely *"Diagonal Dissection of the Handwriting of a Bagpipe Performer"*. This report precedes and actually represents the quintessence of the habilitation thesis – proof of the long-term and thorough work on the monograph. Among the most valuable pieces of evidence in this section is the report *"Problem Aspects of Bagpipe Playing"*. In the scientific development – a kind of deepening of some aspects of the dissertation work – the terminological problem is raised again, or as Georgiev himself says: *"The clarification of the terminology concerning folklore-performance specifics is an important element not only in musicological studies. The systematization of the specific performance problems considered when playing the bagpipe is the result of my many years of performance and teaching activity"*.

In the section, in item 14, evidentiary material is provided on 9 concert appearances of Georgiev on world stages with Theodosii Spasov Folk Quintet – in Ottawa and Toronto (Canada), New York and Los Angeles (USA), Plovdiv, Burgas, Balchik, Kavarna, and Sofia. To this colorful concert kaleidoscope, realized only in the last 5 years, the concert *"The Art of the Bagpipe"* together with the Folk Music Orchestra of the Bulgarian National Radio from 10.03.2022 has also been added. All concerts have a high contribution weight and show the candidate's skill as a soloist performer, for skillful incorporation into a chamber group, as well as for virtuosity, genre diversity of the performed music, dynamic and agogic nuances, which are difficult to perform on this instrument.

In section D, item 17, Ivan Georgiev applies three citations in peer-reviewed monographs from various publications of his. These are quotes from the reports *"The Bagpipe in Bulgarian Publications until the Middle of the 20th Century"* and *"The Concept of "Bagpipe Style" in Bulgarian Musicological Journalism"*, which were also used in the monograph *"Processing of the Pirin Folk Song. Compositional Structures and Approaches"* by Valeri Dimchev, as well as from the report *"Problem Aspects of Bagpipe*

Playing”, included in Vasil Vasilev’s monograph “The Bagpipe in Bulgarian Musical Practice”. The citations in complete scientific works by narrow specialists in various instrumental practices – tambourine (Dimchev) and shepherd’s pipe (Vasilev), speaks of the candidate’s ability to touch and clarify basic questions for the authentic folk instrumental art, as well as of the benefit of his research achievements.

In item 18 of section D 4 citations in international scientific conferences are presented – “Processing and Song for a Folk Choir” by Rada Slavinska (from the report “*The Concept of “Bagpipe Style” in Bulgarian Musicological Journalism*”), “Accordion Processing of the Pirin Folk Song – the Influence of Roma Musicians” by Valeri Dimchev (from the “*The Concept of “Bagpipe Style” in Bulgarian Musicological Journalism*”), “Bulgarian Dance Folklore in the Pedagogical Practice of Music Students” by Tsvetanka Kolovska (from “*Working with a metronome in modern bagpipe training*”), “Ludvik Kuba and the Bulgarian Folk Song with Piano Accompaniment” by Nadezhda Petrova (from “*Working with a Metronome in Modern Bagpipe Training*”). In these citations, the applicability of Georgiev’s research in various aspects of scientific activity is noticeable – conducting (Slavinska), tambourine playing (Dimchev), pedagogical (Kolovska), piano playing (Petrova).

In section F, item 22, the participation of Georgiev in 2015 and 2018 in one of the significant projects of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts is evident – the cultural seminar “The Strangers”. In item 27, a published university edition with two authors – Mariya Stoyanova and Ivan Georgiev – is attached, proving the natural continuity between the two leading bagpipe educators in the academic community. In item 28, evidentiary materials are provided for 3 workshops on the territory of Bulgaria – at the XV Summer Art Academy “The Fire of Orpheus” in 2021 in the City of Zlatograd and two this year – at Dobri Hristov National School of Arts – Varna and at Dobri Chintulov Secondary School – Burgas, representing the value of his teaching work and the assessment of the bagpipe guild.

CONCLUSION

I have known Ivan Georgiev for more than two decades. I was his teacher, scientific supervisor of his dissertation work, as well as scientific consultant of his habilitation work. I have had the opportunity to closely observe his growth as a performer, educator, and researcher. Georgiev walked a long path of improvement in order to establish himself as a virtuoso and flawless piper, a fascinating teacher, a detailed and thorough researcher, as well as creator of basic theoretical positions regarding the bagpipe art. The bagpiper Georgiev is constantly invited to various concert ventures in the country and abroad in all possible stylistic directions. The teacher Georgiev is loved and respected by his students not only during their studies, but also decades after. The researcher Georgiev annually publishes reports in specialized publications, through which he sheds light on various executive case studies, which have not been examined until now in the scientific and methodical literature. The colleague Georgiev is disciplined, calm, correct, and devoted to the students and his work at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts. The wonderful productions of his bagpipe class

at the end of each semester, the love of the students, his involvement in the initiatives of the Musical Folklore Department, and the good relations with all his colleagues only add to his image.

For this competition, it is also important to note that the candidate fulfills the requirements determined by the minimum scientometric indicators set by the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor", as follows: According to group of indicators A – 50 points; According to group of indicators C – 100 points; According to group of indicators D – 145 points, from the necessary 120; According to group of indicators E – 50 points, from the necessary 40; According to group of indicators F – 70 points, from the necessary 50. The candidate meets the minimum requirements in sections A and C, and exceeds the minimum in the other sections. With a national requirement for occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" of a total of 360 points, Ivan Georgiev applied with an activity corresponding to 415 points from the table with the minimum scientometric indicators.

After thoroughly familiarizing myself with the documentation provided by Chief Assistant Dr. Ivan Georgiev for his participation in this competition, I believe that the candidate meets and exceeds the point requirements for the scientometrics indicator groups of the National Center for Information and Documentation. The presented evidentiary material, illustrating the scientific and artistic production for occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor", presents the candidate in many ways as a serious performer, educator, and researcher.

Based on what has been said so far, I give my positive assessment and suggest to the respected members of the Scientific Jury in the competition for "Associate Professor" to select Chief Assistant Dr. Ivan Georgiev for the academic position "Associate Professor" under Higher education field 8. "Arts", Professional field 8.3. "Music and Dance Arts", for the needs of Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv and the Musical Folklore Department.

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