

PEER REVIEW

on the competition for occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor” in Professional field 8.3 “Music and Dance Arts”, specialty “Folk Choir Singing with Choir Science”

by

Prof. Dr. Svetla Kaludova-Stanilova

One candidate – Chief Assistant Dr. Rada Borislavova Slavinska, participates in the competition announced by Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – City of Plovdiv (State Gazette, Issue 12 of 11.02.2020). The documentation presented by her is in accordance with all the necessary requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for the occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor” – creative resume, diplomas for higher education and for acquired “Doctor” degree (2012), certificates – medical and criminal record, certificate for internship in the specialty and for teaching activity, held position of Chief Assistant (2016), published monographic work with a summary of the content, a table of met minimum national requirements for the position of “Associate Professor”, accompanied by evidence, author’s reference to scientific contributions of papers and citations, and reference and documents certifying creative achievements in the country and abroad specific to the respective field. The materials contain comprehensive and correct information about the research, pedagogical, and artistic activities of the candidate. They are the basis for my review as a reviewer. No plagiarism was found when reviewing the submitted materials.

Rada Slavinska’s biography has been connected with music education from an early age – the Music High School – Plovdiv and the Higher Music Pedagogical Institute (Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts) – Plovdiv, where she studied piano, choir, and orchestral conducting. Her life and professional path is entirely related to her work at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts as an accompanist and teacher of folk choir conducting. Her creative performances are mainly as a conductor and are related to: Angel Bukoreshtliev Singing Society, “Detska Kitka” Representative Choir, and the Philippopolis Ensemble. She is the founder of the Evmolpeya Girls’ Choir Formation, with which she has realized a large number of concerts in Bulgaria and abroad with many awards. Dr. Slavinska’s research activity is manifested in the authorship of scientific and fiction literature: Conducting Textbook, monographs, manuals, collections, publications in specialized issues, author’s arrangements of works for homogeneous or mixed choir, etc. She is also a winner of prestigious personal awards.

I. Scientific research activity

The candidate, Chief Assistant Dr. Rada Slavinska, presented for review papers and citations that characterize her scientific research activities related to the groups of indicators: A, C, D and E of the table for filling in evidence. Thus, the following groups are determined:

1) Dissertation work (group A), 2) Habilitation work (group C), 3) Published: books, reports, studies, author's products and solo concerts (group D), 4) Citations and reviews (group E).

1) Dissertation work (group A). Chief Assistant Dr. Slavinska presents a dissertation work for the award of "Doctor" degree on the topic: "*The Songs of Krasimir Kyurkchiyski for Folk Choir – Specificity and Significance*". It explores in depth the compositional language of the artist and the significance of the means of expression in comparison with the approaches of other representatives in the genre. Valuable conclusions and summaries have been made about the creative, life, and socially significant path of Kyurkchiyski. With this dissertation Slavinska fulfills the requirement for the number of points under the Rules for implementation of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria – 50 points.

2) Habilitation work (group C). A monographic work "*Prerequisites for the Emergence of the Songs for Folk Choir Genre*", Plovdiv 2019, is presented. The book has a volume of 196 pages. The content is structured in an introduction, five sections, conclusion, and references. The scientific interests of Chief Assistant Dr. Slavinska reflect her lasting commitment to the problems related to the genre of folk choir songs. The present study is preceded by the monograph "*Chronology and Characteristics of the Songs for Folk Choir Genre*", published ten years ago. Thus, the author goes into the depth of the issue, presenting a high-value research on current issues. The main direction is to study the attitude of Bulgarian composers to folklore samples until the middle of the XX century and their personal and creative approach in creating choir works.

The work is characterized by well-sustained, logical consistency and completeness. The scientific text proposed to our attention has competence and creativity. The statements are accurate, clear, and legible. The used, significant amount of scientific literature is correctly and precisely reflected.

The introduction emphasizes the relevance of the problem and its significance. It is important for the research to clarify concepts such as: "*folk*", "*folk song*", "*folk choir*", "*songs for folk choir*", and "*processing*". The term "*interactivity*" is clarified as a priority, as an interdependence, both between the different types of art and between composer – performance and society for the inclusion of the "*national and specific in Bulgarians to the common for the world*" (p. 11). The author's research pursuits, aimed at different historical stages in the development of society in Europe and Bulgaria, prove the diversity of approaches to folklore patterns: transmission through oral tradition, means of enlightenment and spiritual elevation, anonymous professional creativity, "*conscious introduction of Bulgarian melodies in the author's work*" (p. 62). The historical review in the first section traces the place and significance of the folk song as a basis for the development of professional music. In a logical sequence of exposition, Slavinska applies an analytical approach to the indicated periods in the various sections and emphasizes the importance of socio-cultural conditions for the spiritual growth of the Bulgarians, their attitude to traditional values, and their view of the world. Folk song is a major product of aesthetic needs, as an important "*type of cultural communication*" (p. 33).

The next three sections are essential for the research, in which the candidate enters deep spaces in the research thesis. The folk song tradition is accepted as a solid basis for the development of professional musical art and compositional approaches to authentic samples. The path taken by the musicians is outlined to prove the differences in the structure of the folk song and its uniqueness, compared to the well-known features. Through an in-depth analysis of the work of first and second generation composers, the evolutionary changes in the approaches to folk singing applied in works for various choir formations are traced. This leads to a synthesis of musical, historical, socio-cultural, and educational prerequisites for the emergence of the genre “Songs for Folk Choir”. Each section ends with a summary and valuable conclusions about the evolution of the approaches to the folklore patterns and the means of expression of the composers, concerning harmonious and polyphonic language, architecture, musical form, and expression. The presented theoretical work is the first attempt to clarify the emergence of the genre “Songs for Folk Choir”, creating a national polyphonic style, deeply connected with the specifics of folklore and its artistic transformation. In the overall presentation of the monograph the author’s aspiration to demonstrate her own, personal research style is evident. The work is presented as a scientific and scientific-applied development. It proves the fulfillment of the required number of points under the Rules for implementation of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, indicators group C – 100 points.

3) Published books, reports, studies, author’s products, and solo concerts (group D). The emphasis in the proposed scientific publications is the monograph “*Chronology and Characteristics of the Songs for Folk Choir Genre*”. This study is the first of its kind, which traces the historical conditionality of its appearance, development, and creative pursuits of composers to create works based on folk intonations in order to build a new genre for Bulgarian musical culture in the national style. The described biographical data and a brief analysis of the compositional means of expression of 22 of the most prominent artists in the genre prove the wide practical applicability of the monograph. It counts for 100 points.

The author's edition “*Obarkvatsiya*” /*Confusion*/ – eight children’s songs with piano accompaniment and a richly illustrated book of poems by Dr. Slavinska, is a valuable edition for children (50 points).

The presented creative performance “Solo concert of the Evmolpeya Choir” – “*Whiff from Vienna*” shows the vocal and performing skills of the formation under the direction of the candidate for successful performance of works of various genres. (35 points).

The reports that the candidate presents in the habilitation report concern topics related to the habilitation work and others such as: Plovdiv Waldhorn School and manual issues in the dimensionless transformation. Leading creative performances with a total of 115 points are also presented.

4) In citations and reviews (group E), the candidate offers evidence for 2 citations and 3 reviews with a total of 50 points from this indicator.

II. Educational and methodical activity

Dr. Rada Slavinska has provided for review educational and methodical manual “*Short Course in Choir Science*” (2018), presenting information on basic theoretical and practical issues, concerning the collective way of making music (20 points). The manual has a wide practical applicability

III. Creative and artistic activity

The analysis of the materials attached to the habilitation reference proves that along with the scientific activity, the artistic and creative activity of Dr. Rada Slavinska is also her strong point. Her performances are mainly as a Choir Conductor. The information given in the “Reference for Specific Creative Achievements in the Country and Abroad” is significant, as composer, teacher, publicist in specialized publications, conductor, and others. For her high artistic achievements Dr. Slavinska has won prestigious awards. The analysis of the documentation in this section shows that Dr. Slavinska has an active, significant, and highly valued participation in artistic performances in the country and abroad.

Conclusion

The habilitation materials presented by the candidate in the present procedure do not contradict the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules for its implementation. They show a high contribution to the enrichment and development of the Bulgarian folklore science. Slavinska’s achievements as a researcher, artist, and lecturer are indisputable and definite. Her scientific and research activities show depth in her own research field and affirmation of personal style, which is very valuable. Thus, Dr. Slavinska deserves high praise for her overall work. Proof of this are the fulfilled scientometric requirements according to the table of the Rules for implementation of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria under Scientific field 8. “Arts”, Professional field 8.3 “Music and Dance Arts”. The minimum national requirements for the scientific, educational and methodical, and creative and artistic activity for occupation of the position “Associate Professor” are met, even exceeding the required points. Based on the above arguments, I give a high and positive assessment of Chief Assistant Dr. Rada Borislavova Slavinska, as a candidate in the competition.

I recommend to the esteemed Scientific Jury to award Chief Assistant Dr. Rada Borislavova Slavinska with the academic position of “Associate Professor” under Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”, in specialty “Folk Choir Singing with Choir Science” for the needs of the Musical Folklore Department.

Plovdiv

Prof. Dr. Svetla Stanilova

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