

## PEER REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Todor Aleksandrov Kirov,

for the creative activity of Chief Assistant Dr. Vasil Milchev Vasilev,

candidate for participation in a competition for the academic position “Associate Professor”, under scientific specialty “Shepherd’s Pipe and Chamber Instrumental Ensembles”, Professional field 8.3 “Music and Dance Arts”, at the Musical Folklore Department, Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography, Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv

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With the idea of preservation and development of the Bulgarian musical folklore, specialties in folk instruments were opened at the Higher Music and Pedagogical Institute (respectively the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts). They have developed and established themselves over time as extremely successful. In the sense of strengthening the specialties and the academic growth of the lecturers, there is also the announced competition for “Associate Professor” in “Shepherd’s Pipe and Chamber Instrumental Ensembles”, in which Chief Assistant Dr. Vasil Milchev Vasilev participates.

Vasil Vasilev presents the following creative assets:

= Defended dissertation on the topic “Characteristic Features of the Contemporary Shepherd’s Pipe Performance Art”.

= Habilitation thesis “The Shepherd’s Pipe in Bulgarian Musical Practice”.

= Publication in the Yearbook of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts” on the topic “Usage of Shepherd’s Pipe and Bagpipes in Chamber-Instrumental and Vocal Folklore Ensembles”.

= Participation as a soloist in a concert at the National Palace of Culture – Sofia on the occasion of the 110th anniversary of the birth of Nikola Vaptsarov.

= Concert “Ten Years of Academic Folklore Ensemble at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv”, soloist Vasil Vasilev, shepherd’s pipe.

= Participation in a concert of the Folk Line Formation in the city of Osijek, Croatia.

= Published university manual, together with Prof. Dr. Lyuben Dosev: “Non-Measured Melodies from the Repertoire of Popular Master Players”

= Workshop on shepherd’s pipe at the Music School in Katerini, Greece.

= Workshop at the Shiroka Laka National School of Folk Arts, on the topic “Working with Chamber Folklore Ensembles”.

= Master class in shepherd’s pipe at Lyuben Karavelov Secondary School in Plovdiv.

= Manager of the project “Studio Audio Recordings of Prominent Students 2021-2022” – Plovdiv

= Participation in 27 concerts of the Academic Folklore Ensemble in the period 2017 – 2021 as a soloist and concertmaster of the orchestra.

= Awarded with a Certificate of Appreciation from the Chairman of the Management Board and the Artistic Director of the Rodina Chorus of Medics for significant contribution and unreserved support in the organization and holding of the solemn jubilee concert of the chorus in Bulgaria Hall (*Five CDs are presented, embodying the above-described creative assets*)

Vasil Vasilev was born in the City of Plovdiv and grew up in a family of musicians – his grandfather and father were shepherd's pipe players. He graduated from the Shiroka Laka National School of Folk Arts, and in 2005 graduated from the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts with a Master's degree in "Performing Arts – Shepherd's Pipe". Since 2002, he has been working as a soloist in the State Folk Orchestra at the Academy, and then as a part-time and full-time lecturer of shepherd's pipe. In 2015, Dr. Vasilev defended his doctoral dissertation, and since 2017 he has held the academic position of Chief Assistant. He also teaches shepherd's pipe at Lyuben Karavelov Secondary School in Plovdiv.

In the monograph "The Shepherd's Pipe in Bulgarian Musical Practice", Vasil Vasilev diligently and objectively describes the application of the shepherd's pipe in musical practice, at the very beginning posing some questions related to its structure and construction. Vasilev also raises the question about the spread of the shepherd's pipe, and more specifically "Why were the best masters-performers of this instrument born and why they lived and worked as performers in Central-Eastern Bulgaria (Central and Eastern Thrace)?" According to him, these questions are essential and so far no research has been done on them. The accumulated experience as a shepherd's pipe player and a participant in the events related to the shepherd's pipe art since the beginning of the new century substantiate the motives and give Vasilev courage for theoretical work. His creative path and competence are a good prerequisite for the development of such a topic.

The current monographic development is an attempt to gather in a common focus and to analyze and systematize the contribution of the shepherd's pipe players since the middle of the 20th century, who, through their performing skills, contribute to the development of the shepherd's pipe art to the present day. I consider the focus on the music performed on the shepherd's pipe a significant contribution, "starting from the simple folk song and reaching the most modern interpretation of instrumental melodies, as well as the use of this instrument as solo and orchestral in the composition of chamber groups and the folk orchestra".

In general, the habilitation work presents reflections and conclusions on the topic indicated in the title. An up-to-date analysis of what is happening in the Bulgarian shepherd's pipe practice from the middle of the 20th century to the present day is made. Facts are presented that support the idea of the function of the shepherd's pipe and its importance in folklore practice.

Vasil Vasilev is a young man, but with many years (more than 20 years) of experience and knowledge accumulated in his professional performance and teaching practice. The presented habilitation materials are valuable, with a contribution to science, and meet the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for awarding an academic title.

**My assessment is positive. I am convinced that Chief Assistant Dr. Vasil Milchev Vasilev is worthy of the academic title “ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR” under scientific specialty “Shepherd’s Pipe and Chamber Instrumental Ensembles”, Professional field 8.3 “Music and Dance Arts”.**

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*Prof. Dr. Todor Kirov*