

PEER REVIEW

by Assoc. Prod. Dr. Zornitsa Dimitrova Petrova

lecturer of piano and piano accompaniment

in the Department of Piano and Accordion

to the Faculty of Music Pedagogy

at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – City of Plovdiv

for participation in a competition for the academic position

“Professor” under the scientific specialty “Choir Conducting”,

field 8.3 “Music and Dance Arts”

at the Department of Music Pedagogy and Conducting

for

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Ivanova Geleva

lecturer at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – City of Plovdiv

Expressing an opinion on the overall activity of an artist such as Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Ivanova Geleva is a rewarding task. Our acquaintance, which started from the high school classes at Dobrin Petkov National School of Music has grown into a long-standing collegial empathy as lecturers in Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy. In my mind, Vesela has won recognition as one of the leading choir conductors in the country and natural respect as a longtime professor of spirit and vocation. All that remains is to unite, as far as I can, the numerous motives that drive my definite positive judgments.

Before focusing on the rich table of evidence about my colleague’s creative achievements, I would like to share some informal thoughts. The right word is “to share”, because they have nothing to do with the protocol indicators, reflecting real quantities, but not always real qualities. A well-constructed point system is more than once an impartial appraiser of objective claims, unsubstantiated with real artistic value, which leads to the natural delusions of the appraisers. How nice that such dangers are excluded when it comes to a creative presence, such as that of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva. Moreover, in this case the professorship is a long overdue recognition.

First of all, I want to note the high morals and personal ethics that permanently characterize the professional path of the conductor. These are signs of a remarkable upbringing, encoded in the family traditions of the great Bulgarian scientist of world renown – the microbiologist Prof. Dr. Ivan Gelev. By adding the innate artistic exactingness and the uncompromising attitude to the creative process, the profile of the conductor-lecturer is formed. Conductor who inspires, leads, and models equally successfully the sound characteristics of amateur and professional choirs.

We must also note the high conducting skills acquired at the National Music Academy in the classes of Prof. V. Arnaudov and Prof. Dr. V. Atanasov. In this bright music laboratory, Vesela’s innate sensitivity, talent, and pronounced intellect are shaped and honed. All these qualities, developing over time, mark her achievements with various choir formations. We are

still rejoicing in these achievements today as numerous accumulations in a markedly successful conducting career of national importance.

Here is the moment to highlight the choir sound picture, which Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva sculpts, I would say “patents”, as her individual artistic skill. The voices are soldered and mixed in a free-flowing sound stream, without tension, with lightness and filigree, to which the vocal over-volume is alien. The choirs are soft and varied. The vocal dynamics flexibly follow the detailed but clear and clean conducting gesture. Style and stroke richness are achieved cheerfully and naturally, but at the same time persistently and consistently.

If we return to the table, which reflects the artistic achievements of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva, we find the quantitative abundance of concert performances (at home and abroad) of premiere performances – diverse in style and genre, and enviable recording activity.

The conductor points out an impressive number of 10 concerts as leading creative performances in the field of arts. All of them were performed with the Gaudeamus Academic Choir at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, of which Assoc. Prof. Dr. Geleva is the main artistic director. Numerous concert tours have been performed in the Netherlands, Poland, the Czech Republic, and France. The following participations in festivals stand out:

- 16th International Festival “Music in Balabanov House”;
- 35th International Choir Festival for Church Slavonic Music in Hajnówka, Poland;
- Festival “Days of Chamber Music” – Gabrovo.

Here I should emphasize the realized author’s show on the occasion of 130 years since the birth of Petar Dinev, recorded by the BNR and broadcast in the section “Cantate, jubilate” of the Hristo Botev program.

No less respectful is Indicator 14 – “Supporting creative expression or participation in a collective product in the field of arts”. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Geleva modestly attributes to it some of her most significant creative performances. Such, in my opinion, are the participation of the Gaudeamus Academic Chamber Choir in the productions “Didona and Aeneas” by H. Purcell, “Semele” by G. F. Handel, “The Fairy-Queen” by H. Purcell, realized by the Educational Opera Theater at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva has been repeatedly invited to prestigious international projects (mostly with the French Ministry of Culture) and international choir festivals:

- for sacred music – Virgo Lauretana – 2015, Italy;
- for church music “Hajnówka” – 2016, Poland;
- Vivace Choir Festival – 2015, Hungary;
- International Orthodox Music Festival “Saint Mary – Axion Estin” – Pomorie;
- Spring Festival of Arts at the Ecole normale de musique in Paris and many more.

Part of this huge creative activity is reflected in 11 reviews in the magazines “Musical Horizons” and “Art Spectrum”. Naturally, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Geleva is a winner of numerous Bulgarian and international awards and diplomas.

And so – all the stage achievements of our colleague can be listed at length and in many words. Essential, however, remains for me the real, true coverage of a high artistic growth, of creative “construction”, which stands up with dignity among the most valuable achievements of Bulgarian and international choir art. That is why, with absolute respect and conviction, I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to unite for the awarding of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Ivanova Geleva the academic position “Professor” in the scientific specialty “Choir Conducting” at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts.

23.07.2020
Plovdiv

Prepared by:
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zornitsa Petrova