

PEER REVIEW

By Prof. Dr. Svetla Kaludova-Stanilova

according to the procedure for occupation of the academic position “Professor” under field 8. “Arts”, Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”, Specialty “Tambourine and Conducting of a Folk Orchestra” for the needs of the Musical Folklore Department, Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – City of Plovdiv.

Candidate for the competition: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vladimir Kanchev Vladimirov

Only one candidate – Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vladimir Kanchev Vladimirov, participates in the competition announced by Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – City of Plovdiv for occupation of the academic position “Professor” under field 8. “Arts”, Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts (“Tambourine and Conducting of a Folk Orchestra”). The documentation presented by him is in accordance with all the necessary requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for occupation of the academic position “Professor”. The habilitation materials in a complete set contain comprehensive and correct information about the candidate’s scientific-research, artistic-creative, and educational-methodical activities. The submitted materials correspond to the scientific specialty, for which the competition was announced. They are the basis for my assessment as a reviewer. No plagiarism was established when examining the submitted materials.

Presentation of the candidate:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vladimir Kanchev Vladimirov completed his secondary education at the Secondary Music School in Kotel (Filip Kutev National School of Folk Arts) majoring in “Tambourine”. He received his Bachelor and Master degrees from the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in Plovdiv, majoring in “Folk Ensembles Conducting”. His professional realization began in 2002 as a part-time lecturer, and from 2004 – as a full-time employee at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts. Since 2005 until today, he has been the conductor of the Academic National Orchestra and a lecturer in the following disciplines: “Conducting of a National Orchestra”, “Conducting of a National Orchestra from a Piano”, and “Conducting Practice”. In his academic growth, Vladimirov did not miss a single step. He defended a dissertation on the topic: *“The Modern Bulgarian Tambourine – Appearance, Influences, and Qualities”*.

As a prominent performer for many years, he has performed on world stages with the Mystery of Bulgarian Voices choir, and many more. Since 2011 he has been a guest lecturer at the Josip Strossmayer Academy of Art and Culture in Croatia. He has released CDs, as a conductor, as well as a performer. Assoc. Prof. Vladimirov has numerous publications in the field of instrumental folklore, and participates in juries of national competitions. He is the winner of prestigious personal awards for his active concert and performance activities, as well as a member of the Union of Bulgarian Music and Dance Performers.

The reference submitted by the candidate for the scientometric indicators and the attached evidentiary material show that the uniform state requirements for occupation of the academic position of “Professor” are sufficiently fulfilled, by comprehensively covering several types of activities – scientific-research, artistic-creative, and educational-methodical.

Scientific-research activity:

The candidate’s participation in scientific forums, projects, and publications are numerous. A significant place is devoted to the defended dissertation work (50 points) on the topic: *“The Modern Bulgarian Tambourine – Appearance, Influences, and Qualities”*. Vladimirov’s creative maturity, his rich experience as a musician-instrumentalist, orchestra conductor, as well as lecturer, led him to the need to explore a new, insufficiently known sphere. It is his experience as a performer that is the basis on which he looks for innovations in performing techniques for the modern tambourine. Thus, he presented a work that is thoroughly analytical and meaningful with practical applicability. The problem under consideration has not been studied in our musicology and performance practice, and this determines its scientific contribution.

In the reference, the candidate also presents four publications (60 points), in which the line of the dissertation work continues – from tradition and authentic melodies, instruments, and performance style to modernity in the present day. Of great interest to him is the study of ancient instrumental practices and available tools, as well as their application. The emphasis falls on the modern existence of the ancient instrument *“bulgariya, bungariya, or bulgarina”* in Bulgaria, in a form quite close to the samples of the tambourine. A still preserved tradition that remains in countries of the attention of modern ethnomusicologists is indicated. *“The Nightingale from Chernogorovo”* is an article that outlines the professional path of a native talent – a tambourine player who preserves and demonstrates the old, original tradition, bearing the breath of bygone times and devoid of self-serving virtuosity and ostentatiousness. A tradition that today is increasingly disappearing with the loss of its authentic bearers. Ignat Kukov’s melodies are deeply connected to his native Pazardzhik region. He is the only one who plays the older tambourine system and did not cheat on it until his death. *“Balkan Tambourine Parallels at the Beginning of the 21st Century”* is the other publication. The candidate’s long-term practice as an instrumentalist and pedagogue has always posed challenges to which he sought an answer. His research field goes beyond national borders and reaches most of the countries of the Balkan Peninsula. In this article, he searches for the reasons for the *“variable activity”* of the tambourine in the last 150 years regarding structure, ornamentation, and traditional forms of living in modern times. The conclusions made are a contribution to folkloristics and instrumental music and practice.

A central research output of the presented publications is the paper *“Tambourine vs Guitar in our Contemporary Folk Instrumental Practice”*. Here the author dwells on the problems related to transferring techniques, ornaments, and touches from one instrument to another. This is a process – *“transposition”*, affecting the interaction

between instruments belonging to different genres of music, a process of particular value for modern ethnomusicology. The author tries to point out the reasons for replacing the tambourine with a guitar, looking for the connection with the wedding practice with *“the possibility of upgrading professional competences and expanding the opportunities for realization”* (p. 24). The ongoing globalization and modernization of folk music poses various challenges to the tambourine performers, for the place and role of the tambourine in the orchestra of folk instruments or classical ones. The aesthetics of the time indicate the direction of development and application of both the repertoire and the accompanying performance technique with all its elements.

Along with the scientific and **artistic-creative aspirations** of Assoc. Prof. Vladimirov reflect his lasting interest and dedication to the problems related to the folk orchestra and the place of the tambourine in it. In group C of the scientometric table **(total of 175 points)**, five video recordings of the concerts: *“When the Conductor Takes the Instrument”*, *“Christmas concert of the Academic National Orchestra”*, as well as a cycle of three concerts – *“Accordion and Folklore”*, are presented. Here the candidate has a solo performance as a performer-drummer and conductor of an orchestra of folk instruments. I am familiar with the indicated recordings. I have also attended other concert performances of Assoc. Prof. Vladimirov. I have always been impressed and admired his original, creative, innovative ideas, the correct selection of repertoire, his professional attitude in performances, and his work with young instrumentalists. This innovative tendency of his is also found in his author’s play *“Memory of Vesko”* (30 points), composed and performed by Vladimirov in a Jubilee disc of the Musical Folklore Department. All this leads to full deployment of the creative initiative of a conductor and performer.

His successes as a conductor of an orchestra of folk instruments are notable. Vladimirov spent his entire creative career as a conductor of the Academic National Orchestra at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – City of Plovdiv (D-13 – 245 points). With it, he has registered numerous creative performances, not only on the stage of the Academy, but also in the country and abroad, with participation in projects and a number of appearances at our music forums. Vladimirov’s performance experience as a conductor and his creative maturity have led him to search for new, non-standard ideas and concepts in the performances of a folk orchestra. Based on achievements in folklore performing practice on a national scale, he has realized a number of projects in which he combines classical instruments with a folk orchestra. His realized idea with professional accordionists has been a great success. In all his projects, Vladimirov shows himself to be a great connoisseur of instrumental-performance practice. He remains faithful to folk samples, but seeks improvisation and connection with other genres. This determines the direction for the formation of the stylistic characteristics in his subsequent projects, according to the performing capabilities and improvisational abilities of the performers. Thus, the formation *“FolkFive+”*, (D-14 – 130 points) was born, with which Vladimirov demonstrated new compositional and performance ideas not only in our country, but also in many European countries. The presented music albums, concerts, and posters confirm Vladimirov’s goals to present

Bulgarian instrumental folklore with a contemporary sound and vision. Here, the candidate's contribution to this procedure is not only expressed in the music he performs, but also in his manifestation as an expert connoisseur of the possibilities of the folk orchestra, as an inspirer of young talents for their inclusion in folk art.

Educational-methodical activities:

The educational and methodological activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vladimirov is diverse and fruitful. He is a long-time lecturer at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in a number of disciplines – in the specialties “Conducting of Folk Ensembles” and “Performing Art”, as well as at the Josip Strossmayer Academy of Art and Culture in Croatia. Prof. Vladimirov has successfully prepared a doctoral student under his supervision (F-21 – 40 points). He has participated in a number of educational projects (F-22, 24 – 90 points). Along with this, he annually conducts master classes (F-28 – 100 points). Vladimirov also participates in creative meetings and is a member of juries at many national competitions for folk arts. For his active activity, he has been awarded prestigious awards (F-30 – 10 points).

In citations and reviews, the candidate offers evidence for five citations in monographs and collective volumes (E-16 – 50 points), cited in non-refereed editions (E-18 – 10 points), and four reviews (E-19 – 40 points). The analysis of the attached materials to the habilitation report prove that, along with the scientific, artistic-creative, and educational-methodical activities of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vladimir Vladimirov, they are his strengths. In the overall presentation of the reference, the author shows a desire to demonstrate his own, personal handwriting. I believe that the presented habilitation materials in all sections have high practical-applied qualities. They also have their own scientific contribution to the development of Bulgarian folklore and performance practice. A large amount of evidentiary material is attached. I accept the candidate's proposed contributions.

Conclusion

The presented habilitation materials of the candidate under 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 regulations for its implementation. They show a high contribution to the enrichment and development of Bulgarian folklore science and practice. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vladimirov's achievements as a composer-conductor and lecturer are indisputable and definite. His scientific and research activities show depth in his own research field and assertion of personal handwriting, which is very valuable. This is a reason for the candidate to receive a high rating for his overall activity. Proof of this is the fulfilled scientometric requirements for occupation of the academic position “Professor”, according to the table of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the regulations for its implementation under Scientific field 8. “Arts”, Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”. Based on the stated arguments, I give a high and positive assessment. I recommend to the esteemed scientific jury to award Associate Professor Dr. Vladimir

Kanchev Vladimirov with the academic position of “Professor” under Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts” (“Tambourine and Conducting of a Folk Orchestra”).

Plovdiv

Prof. Dr. Svetla Stanilova

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/Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts/