

PEER REVIEW

by

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rada Borislavova Slavinska

regarding a competition for occupation of the academic position "**Professor**",
announced in State Gazette, Issue 13 dated 07.02.2023,

under 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

I. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate

By Order No ПД – 037 dated 06.04.2023 of the Rector of Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury in the competition for occupation of the academic position of "Professor" under the Specialty "Tambourine and Conducting of a Folk Orchestra". The candidate Vladimir Vladimirov has submitted a set of documents (on paper and on magnetic media) related to the application procedure for the academic position "Professor of Tambourine and Conducting of a Folk Orchestra". I have no comments on the documentation and the presented materials.

For almost two decades now, Vladimir Vladimirov has been conducting the Academic National Orchestra and has been presenting on stages in the country and abroad the high level of instrumental folk music established at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts. His conducting activity brought a number of honors and recognition both to the formation representing the Academy and to the entire Academy. It is no coincidence that over the years he has been invited as a guest conductor of the Folk Music Orchestra of the Bulgarian National Radio and as a member of juries in many prestigious folk music competitions throughout the country.

However, his talent is not limited to the conducting profession. A superb tambourine player (and guitarist), he is the author of several tambourine textbooks and scholarly publications on the instrument, a much-loved lecturer of tambourine, orchestral conducting, and conducting practice at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, a leading lecturer of "Tambourine and Tambourine Methodology" at the Josip Strossmayer Academy of Art and Culture in Croatia, a sought-after and highly valued guest soloist in various instrumental formations – "Bulgara", the orchestras "Detelini", "Lira", "Bulgare" Folklore Ensemble, instrumental duets with the fiddle performer Peyo Peev, and many others. Vladimirov is also known for his compositions for tambourine and piano, for soloist and folk orchestra, as well as for folk orchestras. This versatility of his talent was reflected last year by me in the extensive article "*When the Conductor Takes the Instrument*", published in the specialized series "Musical Horizons".

In addition to his purely musical, performing, and instrumental qualities, the candidate is also a successful long-time Head of the Musical Folklore Department, as well as attentive and kind as a colleague and a person who manages to maintain wonderful relationships between the members of the Department. Also, over the years, he has often been a leader or member of various projects related to the prosperity of folklore specialties at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts.

II. Presentation of the materials for habilitation

The indicators presented in the scientometric table repeatedly exceed those required by law. In Section C instead of the required 100 points, evidence is presented for 175 points; in

Section D instead of 150 points, materials are presented for 465 points (three times more); in Section E instead of 80 points, there are 100 points; and in Section F instead of the minimum 120 points, materials are submitted for twice as much – 240 points. Against the minimum scientometric requirements of 500 points for occupation of the position of “Professor” under field “Arts”, Vladimir Vladimirov applied with materials proving activity of 1,130 points. Knowing the candidate’s activity over the years, this is only a part of his accumulated asset over time.

III. Contributions of the leading creative performances

Vladimirov applies with five leading creative performances, equivalent to a habilitation thesis. I have attended three of them live and can attest to the high interpretive value of the selected concerts and the concert impact on the listening audience, expressed by the unceasing applause and the numerous encores in each of the performances. The concerts have a varied, rich program, with many premiere performances and with works that are rarely performed on stage, so no interpretive “stereotype” has been created for them. In the 5 concerts, various aspects of Vladimirov’s creative essence are stated – as a conductor, as a virtuoso tambourine player, as a much-loved composer with rich invention and deep knowledge of the possibilities of various instruments, as well as a lecturer. I believe that the selected concerts are extremely representative, illustrating the development of modern folk-based music, and their realization is an indisputable contribution to Bulgarian musical culture.

IV. Contributions of the other presented habilitation materials

The rest of the habilitation materials cover the versatility of Vladimirov’s activity as much as possible – 4 published scientific reports, a repeatedly performed author’s work, 7 selected concerts from his rich conducting practice, 13 supporting concert performances with various instrumental formations, 7 citations of his theoretical developments in peer-reviewed publications, 4 reviews for various creative performances, management of a successfully defended doctoral student, 2 participations in national projects, management of 2 artistic and creative projects, management of 5 tambourine master classes in the country and abroad, as well as First prize in the “Arts Week – Borovets 2018” Competition.

Each of these materials is selected from among a much larger number of activities realized by Vladimirov and is of high artistic and/or scientific value (for example, the numerous productions of his students in tambourine and conducting, which reveal his educational skills and successes, are not included here). The selection shows the versatility of the candidate’s active activity and ideation, as well as his executive, scientific, pedagogical, compositional essence, and his leadership skills. All of this fits perfectly with my idea of the value and weight of the title “Professor”.

V. Recommendations

My recommendations do not refer to the current materials, with which Vladimirov applies for the procedure, but to his future academic activity. Still in Bulgarian musicology, the subject of folk orchestral conducting is little researched. I hope that the future professor will summarize and share his vast performance and interpretation experience as a folk orchestra conductor in a future monograph.

VI. Personal impressions

I have known the development and activities of Vladimir Vladimirov for 25 years. I have had the pleasure of following his growth as a performer, conductor, lecturer, author of wonderful music, researcher, and creator of a significant part of the basic methodological literature on the topic of tambourine, from the student bench until today.

I can boldly state that he is one of the favorite lecturers of the students in folklore majors at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts. Smiling, radiant, and respectful, he is also one of the most positive members of the Musical Folklore Department, in addition to being its Head for the second term and valued by the collegium. Over the years, I have become convinced that he meekly, unobtrusively, but steadfastly works for the prosperity of the Department and the Academy. His excellent relationships with students and colleagues prove rare communication skills, and the successful projects he has led reveal very good organizational qualities.

Vladimirov is a successful conductor of a folk orchestra, well received by the folklore-performing community, who has left a legacy of dozens of concerts showing a deeply thought-out program, innovative invention, and painstaking interpretation. In addition to the wonderful “readings” of the scores, his manual technique is distinguished by a beautiful, plastic gesture, perfect correctness of submissions and extreme intelligibility in nuance, combined with a noticeable and affecting suggestion. In his stage performances – whether as a tambourine player or as a conductor – one can always notice a general integrity of concepts and a desire for innovation, to “break” stereotypes, and to “pave a way” for young authors.

VII. Conclusion

After thoroughly familiarizing myself with the documentation provided by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vladimir Vladimirov 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 “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 “Professor” to select Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vladimir Vladimirov for the academic position “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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Plovdiv

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