

PEER REVIEW

under a competition for occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor” at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – City of Plovdiv, Musical Folklore and Choreography Faculty, Musical Folklore Department, announced in State Gazette, Issue 54/26.07.2019

under Professional field „Music and Dance Arts” – cipher 8.3, Scientific specialty “Ethnomusicology”

with candidate: Chief Assistant Dr. Zoya Iliycheva Mikova

by Prof. Dr. Svetla Georgieva Kaludova-Stanilova – Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – City of Plovdiv

The candidate under this procedure, Chief Assistant Prof. Zoya Mikova, is a graduate of the Shiroka Laka Specialized Music School and of the Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in the specialties “Head of Folk Groups” and “Performing Arts” under the Bachelor’s degree program and “Ethnomusicology” under the Master’s degree. As early as her student years, she showed interest in research and scientific activities. Later she defended her dissertation on the topic: “*Traditional Practices and Music of the Ethnic Communities in the City of Plovdiv*” and received a “Doctor” degree. In her professional career so far, Dr. Mikova has consistently gone through all the steps of her academic growth. This also defines her professional realization as Chief Assistant in Musical Folklore.

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My assessment in this peer review is based on the habilitation reference of the activity of the candidate after the defense of the “Doctor” degree in 2015 presented in this procedure. The submitted documents and materials, arranged in several sections, are substantiated and eloquent testimony for a wide-ranging activity. They comply with the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules for its implementation. The following is attached:

- curriculum vitae, diplomas for higher education and for the obtaining of “Doctor” degree, medical certificate and Conviction Status Certificate, certificates of internship in the specialty and of teaching activity;

- a table for the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for the academic position “Associate Professor”, supporting documents according to the table under items A, C and D – Diploma for the scientific degree “Doctor”, monograph work with summary of contents, list of publications and printed articles;

- evidence for indicator “E” from the table – reference for citations and reviews;

- evidence on indicator “F” from the table – references for educational and artistic activity, teaching aids, honors;

- reference for the contributions of the rehabilitation materials.

The peer review covers, in two directions, the activities presented in the habilitation work: Scientific activity and Pedagogical and methodological and teaching activity.

I. The scientific activity of Dr. Mikova is multifaceted – publications in the Yearbook of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, Spring Scientific Readings, scientific conferences and seminars. She also guides and advises graduate students. In 2017, she was the

Editor-In-Chief of the “Narodna Madrost” Newspaper in the section “National Holidays and Customs”. According to the scientometric tables and requirements under the indicators A, C, and D the following groups can be distinguished: Dissertation work; Monograph; Published articles and reviews; Citations and reviews in indicator “E”; Management of a scientific, educational or artistic project under item “F”.

1. Through her dissertation work on the topic “*Traditional Practices and Music of the Ethnic Communities in the City of Plovdiv*”, Zoya Mikova received her “Doctor” degree and fulfills the requirements of the Rules for application of the Act, for which she receives 50 points.

2. The presented monograph “*Milkovitsa – History, Ethnography and Culture*” is the habilitation work of the candidate. The content is presented in 280 pages, structured in: an introduction, three chapters, traditional clothing, conclusions and six appendices. The choice of the topic has two meanings for the author: the first one – emotional, related to childhood, and the second one – the lack of a comprehensive, in-depth study of the traditional, material and spiritual culture of the village. Through the topic thus developed, Dr. Mikova presents various research approaches through which a serious, theoretical study is sought with the purpose to find its place in contemporary preservation of the folklore tradition. In this sense, the author presents a folk scientific development with practical applicability.

The introduction addresses the main research thesis related to the evolutionary political and socio-cultural changes affecting communities of people with different anthropological, physiological and cultural markers (language, religion, morals, customs, etc.). Emphasis is placed on the ethno-linguistic group “Vlasi”, a glimpse into their traditional material and spiritual culture, in order to uncover unknown facts about the history and origin of the population in the village of Milkovitsa. The first chapter provides a wealth of information on the historical, demographic and ethnographic information about the village. An attempt is made to clarify its ethnographic picture by examining and discovering connections at different historical and ethnographic levels in the festive and customary ritual system, as well as linguistic features. All this is related to the musical traditions and the usual festive system in the ratio “past and present to future”. With it the author paves the way for new opinions and conclusions based on rich fieldwork and numerous meetings with respondents. Throughout the study, there is a desire for demonstration of the author’s own personal research approach. The second chapter, entitled “*Festive Calendar and Traditional Practices*”, is the result of a comprehensive field study, carried out over a long period of time. In front of us is the incredible wealth of variants and models of rituals. Each of the described and studied rituals is in accordance with the common Bulgarian calendar related to the characteristics of Middle Northern, Northwest and Northeast Bulgaria. Dividing them into calendar (winter, spring, summer and autumn) and family (birth, wedding and death) bears a local characteristic and message to the community. The interviews conducted with the informants explain some details in the implementation of the specific rituals. The emphasis is on the “*Kalush*” ritual and commemorative practices. In the course of the study, the philosophy of the Vlasi about the afterlife, expressed in the specific funeral ritual, is emphasized. The emblematic rituals for the community: “*Pomana*” and “*Razlivane na voda*” /*Water spilling*/ stand out. Through them, Dr. Mikova analyzes in depth the connection between life and death. A complete picture of the philosophy of the Vlasi on death and the sacred state of mind in thinking of the “*other world*” is presented. Step by step, with the help of their rituals, customs and beliefs, they strive to “humanize” the beyond, filling it with the hope of a better life. The paragraph “*Other Practices*”, which presents local, unique traditional games, such as “*Tsar Zapovyada*” /*The King’s Commands*/, “*Prastencheteto*” /*The Little Ring*/, “*Ilenush*” and the dance “*Pelenitsa*”, is also very interesting. Chapter Three presents and analyzes information on the musical and dance culture of the population of the village of Milkovitsa. Dr. Mikova

emphasizes the importance of the “geographical location” of the village, which allows foreign influence from neighboring populations and cultures. Close specimens are found north of the Danube River, where the population is predominantly referred to as “Wallachian”. The accordion and the acoustic guitar enter the music life of the village permanently in the XX century along with the brass music. The study shows that the classical orchestras with classical instruments gradually push away the traditional for the village: *kaval* /shepherd’s pipe/, shepherd’s whistle and *duduk* /wooden pipe/. The folk song is not missed either. Most of the performers described are also informants, on the basis of whom conclusions are drawn about the current state of the singing and choir tradition in the village.

The conclusion of the monograph summarizes the opinions and the contributions that are important for the enrichment of the folklore science. The research successfully fulfills its goals as a theoretical problem. The 28 notated examples of songs and 9 choirs are also of contributive nature. A comparative characteristic is made between the instruments from the village of Milkovitsa and our northern neighbor and the place of the brass orchestras in the funeral practice. Traditional clothing is seen as a sign of ethnicity and religion. The applications are of an evidential nature.

The monograph thus presented has its contribution to regional studies. Important for the research thesis is the emphasis on the essential connection of the usual and festive system with the song and dance folklore, as a sustainable element of the traditional culture in the village Milkovitsa, preserved to this day. The applied monographic work 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 B – 100 points.

3. Published articles (group D). There are 9 articles and reports published in referenced editions. All of them are thematically related to the main research goals of the candidate, concerning the problems of traditional practices in different ethnic groups and their importance and application in the educational process. Thus, Dr. Mikova has 127 points under this indicator.

4. Citations. In the columns of the table in Group E, items 17 and 19, Zoya Mikova applies evidence of 4 citations with a total of points under this indicator – 40 points.

II. Pedagogical and methodological and teaching activity: The pedagogical path presented in the biography by the candidate Dr. Zoya Mikova shows that she is connected with the educational process at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in different specialties: “Performing Arts – Folk Instruments and Folk Singing”, “Management of Folk Groups”, “Bulgarian Folk Choreography”, “Ethnomusicology” in the following disciplines: “Musical Folklore”, “History of Folk Performing Arts”, “Bulgarian Folk Music”, “Bulgarian Ethnography”, “Collection and Decoding of Musical Folklore”, “Music Theory”. Dr. Mikova also works with foreign countries and students under the programs “Erasmus” and “Fulbright”. Her activity is manifested in the publishing of a solo collection “Breath from Pleven” – solo songs with piano accompaniment. In 2015, after defending her “Doctor” degree, she continued as a Project manager of “The Unknown” Cultural Seminar at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in Plovdiv. The seminar was implemented in three separate modules and presented the communities of Armenians, Jews, Turks and Roma in Bulgaria. The main objective was to broaden the knowledge about the traditional culture of the different ethnic, ethnographic, confessional and cultural communities in Bulgaria. Thus, the candidate adds 60 more points to the requirements.

As a result of field studies with students, her first book, “*Road to the Spring*” (2018), was published, which contains materials from the villages of Iskra, Parvomaysko and Yavrovo,

Asenovgrad District. The aforementioned activities add up to a total of 377 points under the indicators that fully meet the requirements.

The analysis of the applied habilitation materials and my personal observations show that the candidate Chief Assistant Dr. Zoya Mikova is an active initiator and organizer of a number of events related to student expression. She also organizes the “*Martenitsa*” Exhibition. Under her conceptual design and as part of the training in the discipline “Musical Folklore”, every year a performance with authentic costumes and performances by students from different courses and specialties, full-time dance troupe and external formations, is held at the Concert Hall of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts. Some of them are: “*Proletni Tsvetya*” /*Spring Flowers*/, “*Ruchenitsa*”, “*Ludi-Mladi*” /*Crazy Youth*/, “*Gergyovdensko Tsvete*”, “*Shareno Yayce*” /*Colorful Egg*/, “*Proletno Dzhas-Vyu*” /*Spring Jazz View*/, “*Transformatsii*” /*Transformations*/, etc. For these activities she was awarded the Rector’s Award.

Conclusion: I know the colleague Chief Assistant Dr. Professor Zoya Mikova since her student years. I highly value her professionalism as a lecturer and musicologist. Added to this is my in-depth knowledge of the rehabilitation materials presented. After analyzing their importance and the scientific and applied contributions for the enrichment and development of Bulgarian folklore, I give my definitive assessment in support of the procedure. Proof of this is the fulfillment of the scientometric requirements according to the table under the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules for its implementation. These activities and my personal conviction give me a reason to give a high and positive assessment of the activities of Chief Assistant Dr. Zoya Mikova and her participation in the competition for the occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor” under Professional field „Music and Dance Arts” – cipher 8.3, Scientific specialty “Ethnomusicology”, for the needs of the Musical Folklore Department at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – City of Plovdiv.

01.11.2019

Prof. Dr. Svetla Stanilova