

REVIEW

By Prof. Filip Hristov Pavlov, Doctor of Science

8.3. Musical and Dance Art, "Neofit Rilski" South-Western University, Blagoevgrad,
on an artistic and creative production presented as a habilitation thesis,
for participation in a competition for the academic position of "professor"
across a professional field. 8.3. Musical and Dance Art,
(Conducting, composition, musical folklore)
Faculty of FDECE, Department of Music,
announced in State Gazette no. 44 of 14.06.2022
with a single candidate: **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgi Metev Petkov**

I. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University

After thoroughly familiarizing myself with all the activities carried out by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgi Petkov, reflected in the Report on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements presented by him, and comparing them with the recognized scoring table, I consider that his application for the announced competition is in full compliance with them. There is adequacy with the necessary conditions for application, incl., and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University (according to Appendix 2). The declared number of points for the various indicators shapes the value dimensions of the candidate, his scientific and creative development and pedagogical activity.

II. Research (creative) activity and results

The creative manifestations presented by Assoc. Prof. Petkov as a habilitation work include a series of international projects, concerts and music albums. Their content is revealed in many directions of musical-creative activity and are documented according to all requirements for publicity and credibility.

The materials presented by him convincingly reveal his personal growth in the period from the assignment of the title of "associate professor" to this moment, and the intensity of the activities performed and presented by him is impressive. There is no doubt that his diverse manifestations confirm a number of contributing moments in the field of musical performance, composer creativity - in various creative aspects, and show him as a zealous organizer, promoter and

supporter of the modern development of Bulgarian folklore. An active collaborator and performer in international creative projects, Assoc. Prof. Petkov defines them as "Bulgarian-Spanish musical dialogue", which has its multiple presentations on the international stage. His activities are connected initially with musical arrangements, in which he presents a creative approach, valuable protected by the magnificent knowledge of national traditions, refracted through the prism of modern worldview. With the song "Cantar del Alma", written for Enrique Morente, began an active, long, and fruitful collaboration with concert producers from Spain, with major publishing and recording companies.

The other realized project "Estruna", realized with the flamenco star Arkanhel, won the Grammy award in 2018 for Latin music.

The "New Bulgarian Voices" chamber choir founded by Petkov, together with Roberto Fonseca, perform the world premiere of the Bulgarian-Cuban project "Beyond the Notes". In this performance, he is a composer, arranger and conductor - an indisputable achievement that can be seen in different aspects:

- the creative challenge to the composer to gather different national styles of music in a single artistic product;
- bringing out new conducting structures, different from the traditional practicum, to support the successful realization of the composition;
- first world recognition for the newly created NBU student choir.

More than 30 concerts in Spain and a performance in Turkey follow. A concert with the same headline was also performed in France with other artists.

The general conclusions from the diverse activities of Associate Professor Dr. Petkov form an impression of a versatile creative personality. With a lot of responsibility, energy and taking various creative risks, he fulfills his diverse activities. It must be emphasized that his personal presence on the concert stages in recent years is more than impressive. His performances as a professional specialist are relevant to all levels of creative estimation of achievement and are considered of significant value in other countries in whose musical projects he participates. They are an artistic expression of a modern and effective version of interaction between different creative cultures and, as a result of them, the assessment of Bulgarian performing arts and compositional creativity is prestigious, reverberated in the most prestigious international awards and positive reviews in news agencies and press publications.

The scope of Georgi Petkov's creative activity presents him in a different light to the discerning European and other audiences. Through him, connoisseurs and lovers of musical art get acquainted not only with Bulgarian folk and singing art, but also have the opportunity to realize the high musical level of today's generation of artists, to which he belongs and represents.

There is no doubt that this succession of performances by the colleague brings enormous prestige to the New Bulgarian University, proves the valuable dimensions of the mastered practical peaks of Bulgarian pedagogy, and presents national creativity as a product of high musical culture.

I fully accept that the broad creative activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petkov is of high value and has an important contribution character.

In the years after the defense of his doctoral dissertation, Assoc. Prof. Petkov repeatedly engaged the attention of theorists and researchers of authentic music with concepts, analyzes and publications on problems of Bulgarian musical folklore. The contributions of this research redounded to the formation of different perception related to scat singing technique and its transformations in jazz styles. As the only scientific study in this issue, the interest in the conclusions drawn is natural - as a theoretical justification, and in the presented practical examples from folklore practice. I will note his presence in the monograph of Associate Professor Dr. Dimchev: "The arrangement of the Pirin folk song. Compositional Structures and Approaches" (ISBN 978-954-00-0278-1). In the analyses, he also presents him with his author's song "Sadila Yana".

Prof. Petkov's name also appears in numerous reviews of his diverse performances and is at the attention of our musical community. From the main materials that are published in his reference in the last years, I randomly choose only 3 of them: of Margarita Borisova from 2018 (ISSN 1311-5170), of Bilyana Chokoeva-Angelova's online review from 2019 (ISSN 2535-1273), and of Prof. D.Sc. Elisaveta Valchinova-Chendova - also from 2019 (ISSN 1310-0076).

When commenting on other manifestations of the colleague's creative performances, which do not constitute a habilitation work, I would not pass over his particularly significant conducting and composing performances:

- the international music project-concert realized together with Bobby McFerrin in Gdansk, Poland in 2013

- the solo author's concert at the international Art/Jazz festival - 2017, in which the NBU mixed choir "Folk-jazz formation" and vocal trio "Euridika" are participants
- another author's presentation with "New Bulgarian voices" and again with vocal trio "Euridika" in 2019.

The record of this activity is extensive, representative, and significant. It is in accordance with all scoring requirements that point it in the application requirements for this academic position.

I would like specially to dwell on some original compositions by Georgi Petkov, which give a clear idea of a high level of creative achievement in the use of different techniques for melodic exposure. They fully fit into the good traditions of Bulgarian folklore arrangement, and at the same time they also express his personal creative claim.

In the song for a cappella choir "Murray, Rado" - with one male part, there is a researched and described tendency, specific for a variety of scat singing - contradistinction of two beginnings/concepts of simultaneous performance/presentation of the vocal and the instrumental beginning. Identity with this approach is presented by the song "Mesechinka", while in the song "Sadila Yana" there is a new compositional approach - an exchange of the leading lines between the male and female voices, preserving partially instrumental sounding musical lines in the accompaniment of the melodic development, or in given fragments, this movement is entirely taken over by the active polyphony.

His "Scat Anecdote" is entirely in the characteristics of an instrumental work with a clear formal-structural and clearly presented dramaturgical development. This composition by Petkov associates with many other creative opuses of Bulgarian authors in a cappella choral music, regardless of the specific sound differences of the diverse creative material used: "Children's Rally" by Alexander Tekeliev, "Pizzikati" and "Solfezhna Sonatina" by Alexander Tanev, " Merry Jazz 1" by Philip Pavlov and other published music literature.

There is no doubt that a number of opuses by Georgi Petkov fit into the broad trends resulting from contemporary Bulgarian creativity. As a personal choice, their musical reading presents a liberated way of thinking and individual approaches. These works are identified with other specific searches of Bulgarian composers from different creative generations.

In the direction in which he works, his personal preferences and concepts for modern song development are clearly outlined as positions, based on specific intonation means of Bulgarian folklore, and their incorporation into the characteristics of jazz music. In this sound environment, he seeks the symbiosis between authenticity and modernity, which has a visible characteristic reflection in many of his compositions.

III. Educational and teaching activity

The educational and teaching work of Associate Professor Dr. Petkov is logically connected with his conducting, organizational and administrative-management positions. Its aspects are outlined in broad limits, it is carried out with marked intensity and versatility of performances. The small performing and large choral formations created at NBU dominated themselves very quickly in our musical life and won high positions in the European cultural space. This is evidenced by the awarded international honors and many national prizes, related to the specific contribution and achievements of the conductor and the music ensembles. They are sought-after partners for joint music productions and recording activities.

A few listings that can give a clear idea of the achievements of the performing teams led by Assoc. Prof. Petkov:

Vocal trio at NBU –

- diploma for "most original performance style" from the First International ethno-pop-jazz competition "Star Voices over Tsarevets" in 2010
- first prize "Golden Lyre of Orpheus" in 2011, confirmed two more times in the same year: at the XI International Youth Festival-Competition "Folklore Without Borders" and at the "Pautalia" competition
- first prize at the seventh International Art Festival "Morning star" in 2012.

University mixed choir "Folk-jazz formation" –

- first prize at the X International Art Festival "Morning star" in 2013
- first prize at the eighth international competition "Pautalia" – 2014
- first prize at the 15th National folklore competition "Orpheus Spring" – 2015
- diploma from "Arts Week - 2017" and "Arts Week - 2018" - competition organized by NSM (National School of Music) "Prof. P. Vladigerov", Sofia University "St. Kliment

Ohridski", AMDVA (Academy of Music, Dance and Visual Arts) "Prof. As. Diamandiev"
- Plovdiv, SWU (South-West university) "N. Rilski" - Blagoevgrad

- diploma from BCU (Bulgarian Choral Union) for contribution to the popularization of Bulgarian choral art for his participation in the 3rd national choral initiative "Bulgaria sings" in 2018, Sofia.

Folklore Choir at NBU –

- first prize at the international art festival "Morning star" in 2014.

There is no need for further enumeration because this part of the evidentiary material presented by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgi Petkov fully satisfies all the requirements regarding his candidacy in the competition. It is an essential and indisputable expression of a quality pedagogy, of scientific and creative responsibility in relation to the student practicum and represents his high creative position in musical activities.

However, other of his important activities should be noted - his participation as a master class and workshop leader in the realized cross-border project "Youth Music Workshop", a joint activity of Serbia and NBU. In his practical work with the students, he uses the "Folk-jazz scat" - songbook that he created, containing author's choral works, which represent his original approach in music-educational activity.

NBU students have the privilege of being managed in various directions of their development as future educators and musical performers by Assoc. Prof. Petkov - a proven personality in musical life, with high competence in the circles of professional educators-folklorists. It is no coincidence that he is a multiple representative in various juries and receives awards, diplomas, written thanks, and various awards for a number of its diverse performances from: governmental institutions, public organizations, scientific units, universities, creative unions and centers in the field of culture.

His other activity, related to the training of young folklorists at the "Lyubomir Pipkov" National Music School, Sofia, is also of a contributing nature. He has been awarded national and international honors for it.

IV. Administrative and public activity

The presence of Associate Professor Dr. Petkov in the pedagogical team of qualified teachers at NBU is a real contribution to the education of students and a solid guarantee for their future

development. The personal evaluations he receives during his certification are always positive. His personality is popular and attracts the attention of prospective students who are looking for challenges in their development in the field of Bulgarian folklore.

Associate Professor Petkov's organizational and public activity in the field of musical culture is impressive: creator of vocal-musical ensembles, organizer of national events in the field of folklore, chairman and participant in various juries, etc. It should be added that he is the current Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Musical Folklore Union "Orfeevo Izvorche" and a permanent collaborator of the Bulgarian National Radio as a composer.

V. Personal impressions of the candidate

I am quite aware of the representative activities carried out over the years by Associate Professor Dr. Petkov, and I follow his professional development with interest. His growth as a high-ranking artist in the field of musical art is in continuous progression, and this gives me reason to have a high appreciation for his overall work. What he achieved is not a given from his official positions in education and in the cultural bodies, but is a consequence of personal talent, responsibility, and high artistic and pedagogical goals. That is my assessment of his personality. I am sure that his presence in university education will contribute even more to the prestige of the young staff who received their education at NBU.

VI. Opinions, recommendations and notes on the activity and achievements of the candidate

I would like to express my personal position about the too late in years' attention to the career development of this person by the colleagues from the FDEUE (Faculty of Distance, Electronic and Upgrading Education), Department "Music". Of course, it would be good if the University's priorities included the habilitation processes in a timelier manner, because in this way both the scientific environment and its educational activities with students can win. I can only add as a note on the activity of Associate Professor Dr. Petkov a desire to activate his scientific positions with future research work in the field of folklore science, in which I expect him to have his say to a great and highly erudite specialist.

Conclusion

I offer my opinion to the colleagues of the Scientific Jury:

I believe that the artistic and creative production, presented as a habilitation thesis by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Geogi Metev Petkov, has all the required valuable qualities and proves achievements of national and international significance. The creative contribution from his activity reflects diverse competencies and has a concrete meaning as applicability in pedagogy and for the development of folk-performance culture of young musical staff in the field of higher education. My assessment is entirely positive.

I propose the confirmation of his candidacy in the competition for the academic position of "professor", professional field 8.3 Musical and dance art (conducting, composition, musical folklore), FDEUE faculty, "Music" department and his admission to election by the Academic Council of NBU.

04.10.2022

Blagoevgrad

/Prof. F. Pavlov, D.Sc./