

REVIEW

By Prof. Elisaveta Borisova Valchinova-Chendova, Doctor of Science,

New Bulgarian University,

Professional field 8.3. "Musical and Dance Art",

on a competition for the academic position "professor",

concerning higher education 8. Arts,

Professional field 8.3. Musical and Dance Art,

(Conducting, composition, musical folklore)

to the 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**

Introduction of the candidate

Due to his active and very successful activity as a conductor, pedagogue, author of many interesting works of folk origin and participant in original international projects, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgi Metev Petkov has established his name in Bulgarian musical culture. Following his biography, we can outline his contribution as a musician and musical folklorist, as a conductor and pedagogue, as a creator with a recognizable handwriting.

He was born in 1961 in Gabrovo. He graduated from the Academy of Music, Dance and Visual Arts - Plovdiv with majors: "Leader of folk ensembles and performer" and "Teacher of folk instruments and folk singing". In the period 1986 - 1998, he worked as a conductor of the folk orchestras in the State Ensemble for Folk Songs and Dances "Dobrudja" - the city of Dobrich, the National Folk Ensemble "Filip Kutev", as well as the chief conductor of the Professional Folk Ensemble "Gabrovo". From 1999 to 2018, he was the artistic director and conductor of the women's choir "Bulgarian Voices - The Angels", with which he won the prestigious amazon.com "Guest Artist of the USA for 2000" award. Since 1995, he has been a composer-collaborator of the Bulgarian National Radio. Georgi Petkov's conducting performances include over 900 concerts at home and abroad and over 15 hours of recording production. He realizes sound productions for BBC - London, CNN, JARO Medien, ZDF, Balkanton, BTR, BNT, BNT and other Bulgarian and world media.

His compositional work includes over 300 titles, some of which are distributed by world music companies. Since 1993, he has been a member of "Music-author".

His author's songs and performances are included in music textbooks for general educational preparation of "Procveta" and "Klet" ("Bulvet 2000") publishing house.

Since 1998, Georgi Petkov has been a teacher in the "Music" department of the New Bulgarian University with musical theoretical and practical courses related to musical folklore. He has been an associate professor since 2006, with a doctorate in musicology and musical art. His research activities are in the field of ethnomusicology, composition, and choral conducting.

He is a teacher of folk choir and chamber vocal ensembles at NMS "Lyubomir Pipkov".

Georgi Petkov is: a creator, conductor and author of the main repertoire of the University Mixed Choir "Folk-Jazz Formation" of NBU (2002) and of the polyphonic Folk Choir at the National Music School "L. Pipkov" - Sofia (2006); a creator, leader and producer of the Vocal Trio "Euridika" by NBU students (2010), creator, conductor and author of the entire repertoire of the Chamber Choir "New Bulgarian Voices" by NBU students (2012).

He has active charity and community work: Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Music-Folklore Union "Orfeevo Izvorche" and chief organizer of the National Music-Folklore Competition "Orfeevo Izvorche" (since 2015), expert project estimator for the CP "Culture" of Sofia Municipality in 2016 and 2017, member of the jury for determining the Sofia Municipality Awards for outstanding achievements in the field of culture for 2020, etc.

Research/creative activity and its results (in accordance with the indicators for the various scientific degrees and academic positions for the field of the competition: 8.3. "Musical and dance art").

The presented materials, with which Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgi Petkov participated in the competition, include activities that far exceed the minimum requirements for this section in the individual groups. As required, I will limit myself to commenting on the groups indicators with presented materials for the competition, and I will emphasize that all documents are very well prepared: attached is a rich evidentiary material of sheet music, sound files, posters, programs and in-depth annotations to the individual projects and works discussed in his extended summary (Habilitation thesis).

- **Group A – 50 points / defended doctoral dissertation**

The topic of Georgi Petkov's dissertation is "Scat technique in the work of Bulgarian composers for folk ensembles", successfully defended on December 18, 2015. (Diploma for educational and scientific degree "doctor" No. 261 of 21.1.2016 from NBU in scientific specialty 05.08.02 Musicology and musical art.) A work that is thoroughly analytical and very important and its practical usefulness was highly appreciated by the Scientific Jury of the procedure.

- **Group B: Achieved 355 points in total at minimum 100 points**

In indicator 4, 5 author's contributions in the field of arts are indicated (250 points).

The five CDs are related to the candidate's performances as a conductor and composer. Among them are the international projects together with Arkanhel and his orchestra ("Al este del cante" - Arkanhel, "New Bulgarian voices" and Georgi Petkov, Univerdal Music Spain, 2018) and the Bulgarian-Cuban international music project "Beyond the notes" with the participation of "New Bulgarian Voices" and jazz pianist Roberto Fonseca (premiere on 07/08/2021 in Sofia Live Club, realized solo concert at Jazz Marciac, France, 08/01/2021).

I am familiar with the specified records and I have attended concerts of these formations and repertoire. I would especially emphasize the originality of the idea, the professional attitude in the performances, the work with the young singers in his formations, which is an academy for building artistic taste and musical skills. As regards of his impressive original compositions and arrangements in these projects, Georgi Petkov manages to organically incorporate the colors of folk ornamentation into a new musical context, creating dialogic sound magic. The participants are very good professional performers, and the singers are young people trained by Georgi Petkov, who are in no way inferior to the big names.

In support of this, I will quote a statement from Bilyana Chokoeva's material in "ARTizanin" magazine (2019) on the occasion of the "Estruna" project, awarded with the "Latino Grammy": "East of Singing" however turns out to be a landmark album and its importance not only falls into the "ten" despite the competition, but stands out seriously among the rest. A fusion album that impresses with its very high quality and with the fact that there hasn't been a similar project for years. Because unlike other attempts where the mixing of genres is done mechanically, here we have a deep gathering. No less important is the fact that the choristers of "Estruna" are extremely professionally trained. Although in a chamber ensemble, they demonstrate an excellent command of polyphonic scores for a large choir."

In indicator 5 - Leading (independent) creative performance in the field of arts, three concerts are indicated, among which I will especially highlight the author's concert "10 years University Choir Folk-Jazz Formation of NBU" (First studio of BNR, 12.11.2012 (105 points).

- **Group of indicators C: a total of 275 points collected with a minimum number of 150 points.**

In indicators 12, 13, 14 are specified prestigious national creative performances for the candidate.

- **Group of indicators D: total 80 points with a minimum number of 80 points.**

Indicator 17. Citations in monographs and scholarly review collective volumes - 2 citations of his doctorate and the publication "Folk-jazz-scat" (Sofia: NBU, 2007. 104 p.).

Indicator 19. 5 positive reviews for realized artistic production in peer-reviewed publications.

- **Group of indicators E: total 155 points with a minimum number of 120 points.**

Indicator 27. The published university textbook "Folk-jazz scat" with choral songs by Georgi Petkov is very useful.

Indicator 28. A workshop under the Cross-Border Cooperation Program IPA "Youth Music Workshop" - Bulgaria-Serbia (2013) was accomplished.

Indicator 29. Two national and one international creative performance in a master class, studio, and workshop in the field of arts have been specified.

Indicator 30, 31. Assoc. Prof. Petkov has been honored with 2 awards at competitions for creativity and performance, given by national professional forums and organizations, and 4 prestigious awards at competitions for creativity and performance, given by professional forums and organizations abroad: "Guest US Artist - 2000" (amazon.com); First prize for the Folklore Choir at NMU "L. Pipkov" - Sofia from the Ohrid Choir Festival (North Macedonia, 2009) and Second Prize for University Mixed Choir "Folk-Jazz Formation" of NBU from the Ohrid Choir Festival (2011); and the last one - "Latino Grammy 2018" in the section "Latin music" for the album "Al este del cante" - Arkanhel, "New Bulgarian Voices" and Georgi Petkov (0602567406274 - M -2227- 2018 P&C Univerdal Music Spain 2018), which I commented on already briefly. Here I will emphasize again the great success with this recognition for originality and performance.

Total presented:

Group A	Minimum points - 50	Points achieved - 50
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Group B	Minimum points - 100	Points achieved - 355
Group C	Minimum points - 150	Points achieved - 275
Group D	Minimum points - 80	Points achieved - 80
Group E	Minimum points - 120	Points achieved - 155

- **Indicators F, G, H and I are also very convincing.**

I have already emphasized the included activities during the presentation of the candidate, all of them also testify to his active creative, social, pedagogical and administrative activities.

I fully accept the 12 contributions by the candidate indicated in p. F. And again I will emphasize his participation as a conductor and composer of dozens of international music projects with names such as Bobby McFerrin, Adriano Celentano, Antonio Forceone, Enrique Morente, Arkanhel, the Moscow Atre Trio, "Khun Khurg Tu" from the Republic of Tuva, Antonio Zambujo, Mikhail Alperin, "Fanfare Chokarlia" and many more. They are not only a source for the creator Georgi Petkov - he is also the first composer who successfully combined Bulgarian folklore and flamenco music (1998) in the album Morente and Lorca. They are also a blessing for the pedagogue Georgi Petkov, who with his personal example and inexhaustible energy teaches and educates young people, opening new horizons in art for them.

With his creative activity, Georgi Petkov promotes Bulgarian choral cause and Bulgarian musical folklore on the world music scene, realizes premiere performances of dozens of choral works¹.

In addition to the international projects, highlights of the candidate's creative activity include: the debut album of the Vocal Trio "Euridika" and their entire rich concert activity, awarded with many awards; the concert in the large hall "Bulgaria" with the three choirs of Georgi Petkov from three different generations: schoolchildren, students, professionals and his recording on a CD, released in co-production of NBU with the support of the CFSD (Central Fund For Strategic Development)

¹ As another confirmation of Georgi Petkov's active and forward-looking activity with the NBU students, apart from the attached documents that I am considering, I will add one appearance that took place on October 2, 2022 - their participation in a concert with the visiting Youth Choir from Dresden in the Cathedral of "St. Joseph" in Sofia, an event that will be long remembered by the choristers and the audience. Since 2014, the Dresden Youth Choir has been performing concerts in Eastern Europe to get know the countries, the people and their singing. He meets choirs from the countries where he performs and gives joint concerts. And so it manifests a musical dialogue and repertoire exchange. In only 2-3 rehearsals, the students from the Folkjazz formation (among them there were also many new ones, for the first time not only singing on the stage, but also in a choir at all), were able to present themselves properly together with this well-established group of about 35 singers, mostly students and young professionals, and the three joint performances of "Tebe poem" - mus. Dobri Hristov, "Sadila Yana" - mus. Georgi Petkov, and "Lorelai" - arr. Stoyan Babekov, were impressive with the homogenous sonority achieved in the interpretation.

under the Board of Trustees of NBU and BNR; the CD with author's composition and choir "Bulgarian Voices - The Angels" ("Angelina" JARO 4310-2(2013) JARO medien GmbH - Bremen).

Educational and teaching activity

Participation in over 50 creative projects with students only in the period 2016 - 2021.

For the past 5 years, he has been an academic mentor under Project BG05M2OP001-2.013-0001 of the Ministry of Education and Culture "Student practices - Phase 1 and 2", financed by the OP SESG+ (Operational Program Science and Education for Smart Growth).

A list of his students who received national and international awards is presented.

I have excellent impressions of the educational process and the regular fulfillment of the candidate's academic duties, as well as of the additional activities such as seminars, etc.

Total presented:

Group F	Minimum points - 70	Points achieved - 360
Group G	Minimum points - 70	Points achieved - 100
Group H	Minimum points - 70	Points achieved - 195
Group I	Minimum points - 40	Points achieved - 40

I want to emphasize again that **the candidate Georgi Petkov not only fully meets, but also convincingly exceeds the necessary national minimum scientific-metric indicators in the field of arts, research area: 8.3 Musical and dance art. He also fully meets the additional necessary minimum scientific and metric indicators in the field of arts prescribed by the Ordinance on the Development of the Academic Staff of the NBU.**

Personal impressions, a commentary on his activity and an extended summary describing his author projects and products.

When considering the individual indicators, I tried to emphasize my impressions of the activities of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgi Petkov in a synthesized way. From the beginning of his concert performances and his formations, he attracted my attention with his fresh approach to folklore and with his original creative interpretation of the "World music" style, which he imposed as an

expression of the accumulated processes in the global exchange of local traditions, including folklore. I would say that the international projects with his author's music and arrangements are an example of this style. As Georgi Petkov emphasizes in his extended summary, "The first pieces I wrote in a genre-hybrid style were the choral scores of 'Scat Anecdote' for a mixed choir and 'Murray Rado', 'Mesechinka' and 'Dumbata' for a female folk choir. In these scores, I openly stated my desire for a new reading of our musical folklore, with the aim of including a younger audience. The positive result was not long in coming. Thanks to these songs, I ignited the enthusiasm of the students of NBU, where I created the vocal ensemble "Folk-jazz formation". The scores were very difficult for a beginning ensemble, and most of the students I started with were out of the Music program and trying to sing in a choir for the first time. Their persistence and regular participation in rehearsals came from the fact that they liked the songs. Many of them admitted to me that before joining the ensemble, they had never listened to folk songs. I am glad that I was able to touch young people with the means of musical folklore, presented in combination with elements of modern pop and jazz genres" (c. 4).

Georgi Petkov presents in-depth observations in relation to his projects, for example, the compositional decisions when connecting flamenco with Bulgarian folklore in regard to rhythm and meter, harmonic language and interpretation. He defines this meeting of two different cultures and traditions as a "clash of the different rhythmic-metrical logics of the two cultures". It is necessary for him to radically change his "standard thinking regarding certain rhythmic structures" which are connected with "a classically schooled idea of equality and inequality." This applies to a large extent to the dominant tri-times and the sums of tri-times: 3/8, 6/8 and 12/8. Accents in flamenco are an important and fundamental part of the "meters", etc. I would recommend that this text be published by the NBU in some appropriate form, for example as an introduction to an electronic author's collection with sheet music examples and links to the sound material. The analysis of the considered works is a concretization of processes of musical exchange fundamental to modern culture, of the functioning of musical traditions today, of the role of globalization, etc. By the way, the author's music of Georgi Petkov and the international projects with which he is connected are also included in musicological studies.

Conclusion

Based on everything mentioned above and in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, I would like to emphasize once

again all my positive evaluations on the individual paragraphs and to express my confidence in the decision of the respected members of the Scientific Jury of this competition **to be proposed to the NBU Academic Council for a vote as a convincing entry in the competition, the candidacy of Assoc. Dr. Georgi Metev Petkov for the academic position of "professor" in professional field 8.3. "Musical and dance art (conducting, composition, musical folklore)".**

Sofia, 22.10.2022

Prof. Elisaveta Valchinova-Chendova, D. Sc.