

PEER REVIEW

by

Prof. Dr. Kostadin Mihaylov Buradzhiev

**on the presented habilitation works by Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Yordanova Tsvetkova
for participation in the competition for “ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF FOLK
SINGING”**

in Professional field: 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”

**in the Department of Musical Folklore at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music,
Dance and Fine Arts – City of Plovdiv**

The candidate Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Yordanova Tsvetkova, who, in accordance with the documents and supporting materials presented by her, fully complies with the requirements stipulated in the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations of Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – City of Plovdiv, participates in the competition for “Associate Professor of Folk Singing”.

Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Yordanova Tsvetkova graduated from the Specialized Music School in the village of Shiroka Laka and the Higher Music and Pedagogical Institute (today “Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv”) with a specialty in “Head of Folk Groups” and “Performer and Teacher of Folk Singing”. From 1996 until 2011 she was a part-time teacher of folk singing at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, and since 2011 she has been a full-time Folk Singing Assistant.

In 2014 her in-depth knowledge of the singing style in the region of Pazardzhik enabled her to successfully defend her dissertation work on the topic: “*The Pazardzhik Folklore and Singing Style and Its Local Manifestations in Some Settlements in the Region*”, on the basis of which she received the title “Doctor” in Musicology and Musical Art. This dissertation has a broad theoretical and applied character and, in addition to highlighting the Pazardzhik singing style, for the first time the following was also made: a comparative analysis of the types of “trembling” and its peculiarities in different regions, methodological guidelines for its mastering, presentation of the male two-part singing in the region of Pazardzhik, a

comparison of the male singing style in different musical and dialect areas, etc.

Based on her dissertation work, Dr. Tsvetkova published the monograph “Folk Singing in the Pazardzhik Region” (2018) and the studies “Local Manifestation of the Pazardzhik Folklore and Performing Style in the villages of Belovitsa, Lyuben and Dragomir” (2019).

Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Yordanova Tsvetkova is a distinguished vocal educator, teacher and performer of folk songs with a wide repertoire range and extensive professional experience, accumulated over the years as an Artist, Choir Singer and Soloist at the Pazardzhik Ensemble – City of Pazardzhik, an Artist and Choir Singer at a full-time Folk Choir at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, a longtime Soloist at the Academic Folk Choir at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, a Conductor of the Sliven Ensemble – City of Sliven, a Vocal Educator and Assistant Conductor of the Academic Folk Choir, a Vocal Consultant of the Sedianka Choir from the City of Aarhus, Denmark and the Perunika Choir from Stockholm, Sweden and a teacher of “Folk Singing and Teaching Practice” at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv.

Her candidacy for “Associate Professor of Folk Singing” fully complies with the requirements of the Act on Academic Degrees and Titles for Professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Arts. In my opinion, the materials presented in connection with her artistic and teaching activities are the most important ones.

The successes that Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova has on the concert podium are incredibly impressive. Even during her years as a student at the Specialized Music School in the village of Shiroka Laka, she was constantly elected as a Soloist in the choir of the school. She continued her career in the Pazardzhik Ensemble and later in the Academic Folk Choir as its Soloist under the direction of Prof. Vasilka Spasova. After graduating from Higher Music and Pedagogical Institute (today Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts), her creative path was connected with the Sliven Ensemble as Conductor of the choir of the Ensemble and its Soloist. At that time I noticed her professional qualities as a Vocal Educator and Conductor, which made me invite her to work with me at the Dobrudzha Ensemble – City of Dobrich, the Chief Artistic Director of which I was then.

Since 1995, Danka Tsvetkova has been a member of the full-time Folk Choir at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts as a Choir Singer and permanent Performer of solo parties, as well as a Soloist of the Academic Folk Choir with Conductor Prof. Vasilka

Spasova. Her exceptional qualities as a Performer and her in-depth knowledge of the Pazardzhik, Sofia, Gabrovo and Kyustendil singing styles make her a sought-after Performer for solo parties in a number of choirs from these folklore regions of Bulgaria.

After 2001, now as a Conductor of the Academic Folk Choir, I once again had the opportunity to be astounded by the professional qualities of Danka Tsvetkova. In 2003, together we created a folk choir at the Plovdiv Military Club, which in 2004 became a champion in the system of the Ministry of Defense, of course, with the help of Tsvetkova's exceptional vocal work. In the fall of 2004, I was entrusted with the leadership of the Academic Folk Choir and I did not hesitate even for a moment about the selection of a vocal teacher (of course, I should also mention the work of Radka Stefanova, who is also a Vocal Educator and Assistant Conductor).

The successes of the choir from 2005 up to today are largely due to the vocal work of Danka Tsvetkova in terms of the sound and stylistic work of the choral works from different folklore regions. It is no accident that the rehearsals of the choir have been designated as a creative laboratory for the mastering of various choir techniques and singing styles.

The vocal work with the Academic Folk Choir gives Danka Tsvetkova the opportunity to be noticed and invited as a vocal consultant to choirs from abroad – the Sedianka Choir from Denmark and the Perunika Choir from Sweden, in which she also participates as a Soloist.

Since 2011 Danka Tsvetkova has been teaching master classes in folk singing at Prof. Veselin Stoyanov National School of Arts – City of Ruse.

Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova has a great credit for the professional growth of the folk singer Rositsa Peycheva as her vocal educator during the preparation of the singer's solo album "Dream" containing a repertoire of different folklore areas.

The concert and recording activity of Danka Tsvetkova is very impressive. With various choir formations and as a solo performer, she has performed in Bulgaria and in many countries from Europe, Africa and North America, has released a solo album in Frankfurt am Main, has recorded for the Bulgarian National Radio and the Bulgarian National Television and was a Performer and Soloist in the albums of the Academic Folk Choir – "Academic Folk Choir" (Vasilka Spasova – Conductor, GEGA NEW, 2004), "Folk Choir Masterpieces" – works by Krasimir Kyurkchiyski (Kostadin Buradzhiev – Conductor, Stefkos Music, 2007),

“Live in Concert” (Kostadin Buradzhiev – Conductor, Sunrice Marinov, 2011), “The Magic” (Kostadin Buradzhiev – Conductor, Music World, 2015). She has also participated in the following concerts: concerts with the Sedianka Choir (2011-2018), concerts with the Perunika Choir (2011-2012), concerts in Toronto, Canada (2011-2013), concerts with jazz formation in composition – Mario Stanchev (piano), Veselin Koychev (guitar), Vasil Vasilev (shepherd’s pipe), Stoyan Yankulov – Stundzhi and Academic Folk Choir (2014, 2018), concerts and competitions in various national and international competitions, and many more.

Danka Tsvetkova’s professional experience has been evaluated with the workshops organized in Denmark (annually since 2008), Sweden (2011, 2012, 2017, 2018), at York University, Toronto, Canada (2012), as well as with participations as a jury at national and international folklore competitions.

Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova is an active participant in a number of internal academic projects – preparation of teaching aids, publication of a textbook for students in the specialty “Choreography”, implementation of a field study in the villages of Ravnogor, Yavorovo and Iskra with the participation of students, as well as publication of the study materials, all projects related to the activities of the Academic Folk Choir, participation as a mentor in the project “Student Practices”, etc.

The great professional experience gained from concert activity and vocal practice successfully translates into **excellent teaching activity**.

The pedagogical successes of Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova are indisputable. In the years of her teaching activity since 1996 (part-time teacher and since 2011 full-time Folk Singing Assistant) she has made a significant contribution to the education of students in the fields of “Performing Arts – Folklore”, “Pedagogy of Music Training” and “Folk Groups Conducting”. All of them are successful vocal educators at the Shiroka Luka National School of Folklore Arts, the Dobri Hristov National School of Arts – City of Varna, at various music schools, choirs and more.

In addition to the traditional productions of the students in her vocal class, Danka Tsvetkova constantly provokes her graduates with unconventional performances. One of them is the performed folklore-musical theater “Sedenkarski Lakardiy” with songs and folklore texts from different regions of Bulgaria, as well as many other initiatives – performances of authentic repertoire from Shopluka, Pirin and Nedelin two-voice texture (demonstration of the

excellent pedagogical activity of Chief Assistant Dr. Tsvetkova).

The students in the class of folk singing thought by Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova have won numerous honors and awards from national and international competitions.

The results achieved in working with students and provoking their attention in order to master and preserve our folklore heritage are an indisputable pedagogical contribution. The problems that have arisen in the teaching of folk singing and the ways of overcoming them are indisputable pedagogical contributions of Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova, placing her among the most prominent vocal educators in the country.

From the presented habilitation materials it can be seen that Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova has also been actively working on the creation of teaching aids, which are a valuable contribution to the mastering of the musical and folklore dialects, as well as in the field study of the Bulgarian folklore – Collection of solo folk songs with piano accompaniment “A Song Has No Limits” (2006), Collection of authentic folk songs from the region of Pazardzhik (2006), Collection of solo folk songs with piano accompaniment “Folk Songs from Shopluka” (2016), Collection of solo folk songs with piano accompaniment “Where Tears Fell Songs Blossomed” (2018).

Along with the materials for her pedagogical and artistic activity, Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova also presents the monographic work “Male Folklore Performance in Sliven – Known and Unknown”.

Male folklore singing in Bulgaria has been poorly researched, specifically about sound production, ornamentation, and so on. The idea for such research is very good, especially since some of the performers have been interviewed during the preparation of the text.

In my review of Dr. Danka Tsvetkova’s monograph, I state that “this is a valuable tool for all those who are professionally engaged in the Bulgarian musical folklore”, considering that no research has been done on singers (men) from this region, except for the ones mentioned in the dissertation work of Dr. Danislav Kehayov and Yovcho Karaivanov. I also note that the monograph “presents a gallery of 10 iconic performers for the region, who are presented with brief biographical data, an analysis of the manner of singing and notated song samples”.

As a first-of-its-kind study of male folk singing in Sliven, it has its undisputed contributions:

- for the first time the specifics of the male folklore performances in Sliven are examined and a characteristic of the folklore singing manner is made; for the first time 3 generations of male singers are presented.

Taking into account the scientific and methodological literature and the undisputed and pedagogical, artistic and scientific achievements of Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Tsvetkova, I believe that she fully fulfills the conditions for occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor”. I give a positive vote on the candidacy of Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Yordanova Tsvetkova and propose that the members of the distinguished Scientific Jury support her election as “Associate Professor of Folk Singing”.

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