

## PEER REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Virzhiniya Atanasova,  
 Professor at the Conducting Department  
 at Prof. Pancho Vladigerov National Academy of Music  
 for Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva for occupation of the academic position  
 “PROFESSOR in CHOIR CONDUCTING” to the Music Pedagogy and Conducting  
 Department according to the announcement in State Gazette from 11.02.2020 (Issue 12)  
 in Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – City of Plovdiv  
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 Republic of Bulgaria

The creative and artistic, scientific and pedagogical activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva is presented to the respected scientific jury as a habilitation work. The extensive artistic and creative reference, as well as the author’s reference for the contributions of her musical and creative activity respect both the complexity of the performing issues and the search for new, original, and unconventional forms and genres, unknown and unperformed before the Bulgarian audience.

The rich concert activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva impresses with titles such as the opera “The Castle” by Karol Beffa after Kafka – an international project in France under the auspices of the French Ministry of Culture and the Euroculture Foundation in 2010, consisting of 7 performances of the opera “The Castle” with choir conductor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva in various French cities (Monet, Arsich, Saint-Fleur, Saint-Nectaire, Mont-Dore, and other French cities). The opera was recorded for MEZZO TV, which was its world premiere. The broadcasting on this world-famous television channel is undoubtedly recognition of the high performance level of the opera. In the same year (2010) the project with the French Ministry of Culture “Euroculture-Paris” was realized jointly with the Academy and with the participation of Gaudeamus Academic Mixed Choir and the Contraste Ensemble – Paris, France in 2 performances under the direction of Assoc. Dr. Vesela Geleva at the Military Club – Plovdiv and the National Archaeological Museum in Sofia, which was also a **premiere** for Bulgaria. To this title I will add the premiere performance of the opera “Semele” by G. F. Handel in the Hall of the Academy, Plovdiv in 2012, “The Fairy-Queen” by Henry Purcell, performed at the Academy, Plovdiv, as well as the opera “Richard the Lionheart” by André Grétry performed by the Gaudeamus Choir with choir conductor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva in Bulgaria Hall together with the Sofia Philharmonic.

In the colorful palette of master classes, workshops, and concert performances stand out the master classes in ballet by Carolyn Lumiere in the Academy and the National School of Music and Dance, as well as concerts by the Consonance Quartet from Paris with event organizer Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva. They were again **premieres** for Bulgaria. The workshop in France in 2012 under the auspices of the French Ministry of Culture is impressive – a colossal international youth project with

the participation of 8 nations and a concert tour in Clermont-Ferrand, Riom, Saint Rémy, Shalignar, and others, with works by Fauré, Duparc, Beffa, Liszt, Beethoven, Gounod, and others. This was followed by an international cultural project in France with the participation of 10 nationalities – “100 Voix pour l'Europe” (France, England, Poland, Bulgaria, Germany, Sweden, Croatia, Romania, Hungary, and Turkey) with a choir conductor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva and participation with performances in the festival “Rencontres a Saint Remy de Provence” in 2012 in Chalinargues, Riom-es-Montagne, Saint-Amandine, and Saint-Remy de Provence.

The energy charge, the artistic aspiration, and the presence of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva in the following years from 2015 to 2019 in international festivals are as follows: the 55th International Choir Festival of Sacred Music “Virgo Lauretana” (08.2015), Loreto – Italy, and 4 concerts and participation in messa; participation of the Gaudeamus Academic Mixed Choir at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy with conductor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva at the 35th International Choir Festival for Church Slavonic Music “Hajnowka” followed by 4 concerts (2016) in Hajnowka, Białystok, Kraków, Supraśl – Poland; premiere performance for Bulgaria of “Hymn for The Holy Virgin” for choir, organ, piano, and harp (2016) in the Concert Hall of Prof. A. Diamandiev Academy, as well as a concert of the Gaudeamus Academic Mixed Choir at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy with conductor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva and the “Voices from Bulgaria” Choir in Prague (2017) in the Saints Cyril and Methodius Cathedral, Prague, Czech Republic. The concert performances of the Gaudeamus Academic Choir with the already established conductor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva in the next 2018 mark a continuous rise: a concert tour of the Gaudeamus Academic Mixed Choir in Paris at the invitation of the PSL University (Paris science et letter); participation in the 3rd Spring Arts Festival with 3 concerts; and performance of “German Requiem” by J. Brahms in Saint Etienne du Mont, Chappelle de lycee Henry IV, Ecole normale de musique, Paris, France.

I will summarize: with special contribution to our performing practice are the thirteen premiere performances, including the **world premiere** of the opera “The Castle” by Karol Beffa, as well as its repetition with the troupe from France in the Academy, Plovdiv, the opera “Semele” by G. F. Handel, “The Fairy-Queen” by Henry Purcell at the Academy, Plovdiv, and the opera “Richard the Lionheart” by André Grétry with the participation of the Sofia Philharmonic, soloists from Germany and Austria in the Bulgaria City Hall.

Within the period 2010 – 2019, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva has implemented over 10 national scientific, educational, or artistic projects, of which I would point out the artistic and creative project on “Church Choir Music of All Genres of Eastern Orthodox Liturgical Practice”, Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in 2010; Author’s program on the occasion of the 130th anniversary of the birth of Petar Dinev, recorded in the Bulgarian National Radio – Sofia and broadcast on 03.07.2019 in “Cantate, jubilate”, “Hristo Botev” program of the Bulgarian National Radio; and lecture on the life and work of the composer and musical performances of the Gaudeamus Academic Mixed Choir at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts with conductor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva.

This indisputable artistic and creative rise of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva is supported by a number of national and international awards:

Musician of the Year Award of Allegro Vivace – BNR for 2013 in the category “Ensemble of the Year”, Sofia, for Gaudeamus Academic Mixed Choir at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts with conductor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva, National Palace of Culture, Sofia.

In the same year, the Gaudeamus Academic Mixed Choir received a Diploma, a statuette, and an Award for high artistic and creative achievements for the interpretation of orthodox music from the International Orthodox Music Festival “Saint Mary – Axion Estin”, Pomorie, and in 2015 – the academic award “Meden Chan” for the Gaudeamus Academic Mixed Choir with conductor Vesela Geleva for high artistic and creative achievements.

To all this I will add the membership of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva in the selection committee and jury of the International Orthodox Music Festival “Saint Mary – Axion Estin”, Pomorie – undoubtedly a well-deserved recognition for her competent and dedicated work in the field of Eastern Orthodox Church music.

The pedagogical work of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva in the Academy in Plovdiv during the years from 2010 to 2020 is rich and multifaceted, namely:

- 2010: Work on the project and status of the competition “Young Teacher”, held at the Academy;
- 2011: Training of masters in church choral music Gergina Nedelcheva and Rayna Angelova;
- 2012: Development of programs in the disciplines “Church Choir Music Conducting Skills” (Master’s degree), “Piano Choir Conducting”, and “Course Choir Conducting with Choir Science”, as well as “Church Choir Conducting”, “Scores Reading”, and others.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that I have no doubts about the qualities and merits of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva for the development of our national choir performing school and her contribution to its international prestige. Last but not least, I would like to mention the collegial ethics, responsiveness, modesty, and tolerance of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva, which can serve as a model in professional interpersonal and academic relations.

Based on these remarkable achievements and contributions in the artistic and performing activities, as well as in the multifaceted scientific and pedagogical activities of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Geleva, I recommend with deep conviction the esteemed scientific jury to award the candidate the academic position “PROFESSOR in CHOIR CONDUCTING” at the Music Pedagogy and Conducting Department of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, Plovdiv.

Thank you for your attention!

Respectfully,  
Prof. Dr. Virzhiniya Atanasova

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