

## REVIEW

by Assoc. Prof. Yanna Pavlova Ruskova, PhD

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**Subject:** the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of *Associate Professor* in: field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching... (Methodology of Music Education).

### Information for the competition

The competition for the academic position of *Associate Professor* was published in Official Gazette, issue 98/17.11.2020. The only candidate is Chief Assistant Liuba Atanasova Zlatkova, PhD – Lecturer at the Department of Musical Aesthetics, Music Education and Performance, Faculty of Pedagogy, University of Shumen Bishop Konstantin Preslavsky. All the necessary documents and relevant evidence for review and evaluation are presented in accordance with the Development of the Academic Personnel in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DAPRBA), the Rules for the application of DAPRBA and the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff in the University of Shumen Bishop Konstantin Preslavsky. The requirements for holding the academic position of *Associate Professor* are met: the candidate has a doctorate in Methodology of Teaching Music, has held the position of Chief Assistant since 2004; and my reference shows that there are not repeated materials from production for a previous procedure. The materials submitted for the competition, according to the respective requirements under Art. 2 b, para. 2 and 3 DAPRBA exceed by a total of 30 points the minimum requirements, as there are a sufficient number of points for each individual indicator. All this gives me a reason to believe that Chief Assistant Dr. Liuba Atanasova Zlatkova has the right to participate in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor.

### Details of the candidate

The career development of Chief Assistant Dr. Liuba Zlatkova follows a continuous line of professional and creative interests related to music and music education. She graduated from the Higher Institute of Music and Pedagogy (now the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts), Plovdiv. From the very beginning of her professional career until today she has worked as: accompanist at the United School of Arts Anastas Stoyanov, Shumen; a teacher of music and piano at the High School of Nature N. Popovich, Shumen; a music teacher at the German Language High School, Sofia; Lecturer at the University of Shumen Bishop Konstantin Preslavsky – part-time lecturer in 1987-1988, full-time lecturer – since 1988, successively holding the positions of assistant, senior assistant (1995), chief assistant (2004). In 2015 she defended her doctoral dissertation. Her biography and production indicate not only a professional music education and scientific activity corresponding to the field, but also permanent interests in extracurricular creative activity forms of work – she has created and manages a non-profit association *Art Workshop* for joint extracurricular activities of student pedagogues with primary school children. Her constant interest in one main topic – rhythm and its manifestations in many ways is impressive. This determines much of the appearance of her scientific, teaching and creative activities

and career development – combining the problems of contemporary musicology and music pedagogy.

### **For scientific works**

For participation in the competition, according to the requirements of DAPRBA, Ch. assistant Liuba Zlatkova, PhD presents the following materials, 24 in number: 1 monograph, 23 articles and 7 citations. All of them are related to her professional scientific and creative interests and are in the context of the direction of the competition. The main theoretical and methodological directions of the candidate's research activity include mutually predetermined thematic areas. There are two connected levels: forms of work in an extracurricular environment, rhythm and music – in theoretical and methodological aspects.

**The monograph *Folk Art. Rhythm – spirit – culture (2019, 236 p.)*** is a kind of a natural continuation of the interests and searches of Chief Assistant L. Zlatkova, PhD, starting from her dissertation (rhythm, genre, training), also from the Rhythmics – the discipline she leads for the students in *Pedagogy of education music*. But in this monographic study there are no direct connections with methodology, didactics and music. The prism has also been completely changed – not musical art in general, but folk art; not only musical folklore art (only 31 pages of the whole monograph are dedicated to it), but folk art in its various manifestations; not a search for a methodology for working in an educational environment and age according to the issues, but a search for a concept and the defense of a position regarding rhythm and folk art as a unity in terms of development, spirit, the eternal, the important.

Although the author declares not an appeal to specific manifestations of art – in this case to folk art, but a view of art as a whole (p. 15), her exhibition interprets manifestations, connections, relationships, messages dictated by folk art (200 pages). However, their understanding and evaluation should be considered as part of a single overall concept of art as a manifestation of the human spirit in its specific patterns, sealed epochs, customs, beliefs, traditions and more. Here the rhythm is indicated as a driving force of everything in concrete manifestations – Universe, Spirit, Culture. The development of the author's thesis is based on a variety of teachings and authors, sometimes intertwined in an extremely opposite and complex relationship – religion, mysticism; ancient teachings and philosophical systems such as Hermeticism, Pythagoreanism, Rosicrucianism, Kabbalah; others, just like the previous ones – often controversial and disputed: esotericism, exoterism, etc. neo-...; established Bulgarian scientists, in whose works specific individual problems of folk art are embedded; semiotics, numerology, ethnography, folklore, etc. The desire to explain sometimes mysticism, paranormal phenomena with scientific approaches is not a new phenomenon in principle in the surrounding reality and science. The author reveals and develops the thesis of the research using a scientific approach and reasoning based on a variety of philosophical and others. teachings, sometimes not accepted in the strict scientific thought.

1. Rhythm is the driving force of the universe and as its driving model is defined as “a sequence, composed of elements of the same sphere, having their

conditional center, spatial-temporal parameters and speed of manifestation and which is repeated on the principle of ostinato” (p. 13);

2. Rhythmical models in different areas of spiritual culture carry as a hologram the knowledge of human existence and development; these patterns are changing in different fields of art; what are the reasons for the changes; whether there is a connection between the changes in rhythmic patterns and the change in people's thinking (p. 14);
3. Rhythm leads and determines everything in all manifestations of our folklore – “Folk art is not an end in itself, it is not just art, much less just a fairy tale, song or costume. It is a whole in which the parts vibrate with a common rhythm, radiate energy that comes into contact with our own soul and on a subconscious level gives us knowledge of our connection with the universe.” (p. 222).

The monograph is divided into **three chapters**. **The first chapter** is devoted to the author's principled position (based on various theories of evolution) on the symbiotic equal unity of the building blocks of folk art; the comparison with a hologram is interesting, perhaps not unequivocally scientifically supported (based on Michael Talbot's theory of the holographic model of the universe as an explanation for paranormal phenomena). Attention is paid to the universal symbols, to the number as a symbol in the various elements of folk art, as well as to its place in the cultural stages and its connection with the civilizational processes of mankind. **The second chapter** reveals the author's view of the external aspect of the perception of folklore as a symbiosis of equal cultural elements and its inclusion by analogy with exotericity. Word (tale), folk song (music, text, movements – dance), ornamentation, the house as formal elements of folk art are analyzed. **The third chapter** defends the esoteric nature of folk art – the inner, invisible, the content of the form. Rhythmic patterns and trinity are found in the construction of the Bulgarian house during the Revival, the embroidery of the costumes, the patterns, the figures, the folk song. Special attention is paid to the musical folklore and the meaning of the number – in the rhythm of our folk songs, even in the number of our musical-folklore areas (whether there are 7 – today there are other scientific interpretations on the topic...). It is in this chapter that the rhythmic model is presented as a unity between form and content, as a carrier of both external and hidden knowledge of the principles of life.

The elements of folk art are still present in all state documents for work in kindergarten and school. And now they are considered formally divided into certain stages, in certain different areas and subjects. In general, as the author claims that it is possible to do, with an understanding of the connections between phenomena and processes, it is carried out today within the tasks of developing key competencies and interdisciplinary connections, in many attempts at binary lessons and topics, as general topics listed in the curricula, etc. So as a policy and technology to work exist. Another question is how much, how, where, why it is done or not. And another topic is based on the scientific grounds on which attempts to search for new knowledge about the world and its movement in time will unfold. New attempts, a combination of seemingly unrelated sciences and concepts, are never superfluous, as long as it does not infringe on rights, worldview, established educational state policy, development and self-development, etc. Therefore, as a positive interpretation of the

topic, provoking controversy in some aspects, I accept the monograph of Chief Assistant Dr. L. Zlatkova. The ideas embedded in it could in the future acquire specific methodological manifestations, specific examples of work, tasks, innovative technology and be really useful to students and music teachers, as reflected in the conclusion of the monograph (p. 223).

**The 23 articles** presented for the procedure refer to theoretical and methodological problems of the pedagogical professional music education of the future music teachers in terms of their professional competencies. They can be divided into two groups: forms of work for extracurricular activities of students with children in kindergarten and primary school (studio, workshop, lecture, concert, competition... –12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 21); the rhythm in various dimensions – genre, historical development, education, upbringing, integrity, etc. (other articles). The second category of articles popularizes individual positions of Dr. Zlatkova, developed in her monograph. They have been published in specialized scientific journals, yearbooks, collections of scientific conferences (all are in the NACID reference list).

**The citations** noticed by the candidate and presented in the reference are 7. Four of them are in monographs. It is noteworthy that most of the citations (5) are in works that are not in the field of music and music pedagogy (psychology, natural sciences, logistics systems management). This only supports Dr. Zlatkova's main thesis about the comprehensiveness of understanding and interpreting rhythm as a phenomenon.

### **Teaching and other activities**

Chief Assistant Liuba Zlatkova, PhD is a long-term lecturer in the field of Methodology of teaching music, in Pedagogy of music education and other pedagogical specialties. She leads lectures (since 2016) and exercises in the Theory and methodology of music education in kindergarten, exercises on the Methods of teaching music in school, all kinds of practical classes for different types of practices, exercises in Rhythmics, Children's Music and Stage Directing, Rhythmic education for teachers (the latter – for Master's degree). She is either the author or co-author of the respective curricula.

She participates actively in the internal university projects of the department. Numerous are her personal projects, implemented with the non-profit organization *Art Workshop* – national, municipal. The purposeful work of Dr. Zlatkova in connection with various extracurricular activities conducted by students with children is also permanent. All of them are subordinated to the main direction in the musical-creative and musical-pedagogical orientation of her work, which is also reflected in her publications.

The direction of work related to the preparation of students for scientific events – participation in conferences is very important. With the help of Dr. Zlatkova, 11 students from the specialty Pedagogy of music education were presented in scientific forums, but also those from the specialty Preschool and primary school pedagogy.

The mobilities in Belgium, Poland, Spain under the Erasmus+ project are impressive.

## **Contributing moments**

From all the presented titles (monograph and articles) and other activity the main research and creative interest of Chief Assistant Liuba Zlatkova, PhD: rhythm in various aspects of manifestation and meaning. This is reflected in the following theoretical contributions:

- derivation and definition of the concept *Rhythmic model* of dance genres;
- argumentation of the rhythmic model in art on the basis of studied elements of folk art and analysis and summarization of the symbolism in it in connection with its functioning;
- the affirmation of the concepts *form* and *content* as a basis of the folk art and its elements in terms of understanding the symbols in it, as bearers of knowledge about historicity, belonging, nationality.

Practical contributions relate to:

- setting the characteristics of the dance genre in music – the rhythmic model, the basis of methodical work with students, future music teachers;
- awareness of the primary genres and genre in music based on the rhythms and movements in working with students;
- creation of an educational model (not yet tested) for work in primary school, based on the understanding of world as a whole – on the principle of integrity of folk art and its functioning as a single organism;
- system of work for educational music lectures, for other original extracurricular forms.

## **Conclusion**

The analysis of the materials and the teaching activity of the candidate for the competition allows to summarize the following more important points:

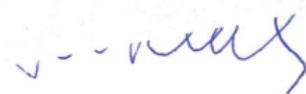
- Documents and materials meet the requirements.
- There are a sufficient number of papers published after the materials used in the defense of educational and scientific degree *Doctor* are presented.
- There are original scientific and applied contributions in the works. Theoretical developments have practical applicability, and most of them are directly oriented to the educational work.
- The formulated contributions and obtained results are a personal merit of Dr. Zlatkova.
- Her scientific and teaching qualifications are unquestionable.

After getting acquainted with the materials and papers presented in the competition and their review, after analyzing their importance and the scientific and

applied contributions contained in them, I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment and recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a report to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Pedagogy at the University of Shumen Bishop Konstantin Preslavsky for electing Chief Assistant Liuba Atanasova Zlatkova, PhD for the academic position of *Associate Professor* at the University of Shumen Bishop Konstantin Preslavsky in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching... (Methodology of Music Education).

March 15, 2021.

Reviewer:



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