

REVIEW

from

Prof. Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences Mariana Nikolaeva Buleva-Petrova
Department of Music at the University of Veliko Tarnovo St. St. Cyril and Methodius,
concerning a competition for
holding the academic position of *Associate Professor*
field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences,
professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching in) (Methodology of Music Education)
University of Shumen Bishop Konstantin Preslavsky,
published Official Gazette, issue 98 of 17.11.2020
with candidate: Chief Assistant Liuba Atanasova Zlatkova, PhD

1. Data for the competition

The competition for associate professor was announced by the Department of Musical Aesthetics, Music Education and Performance at the University of Shumen Bishop Konstantin Preslavski. The only candidate in it is Chief Assistant Liuba Atanasova Zlatkova, PhD. All stages of the procedure have passed correctly in compliance with the terms and conditions of Development of the Academic Personnel in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DAPRBA), the Rules for its implementation in force from 06.07.2018 and the Rules for the development of the University of Shumen Bishop Konstantin Preslavsky. The candidate in the competition Chief Assistant Liuba Zlatkova, PhD meets the condition for fulfilling the Minimum National Requirements for holding the academic position of *Associate Professor* in the relevant professional field. The materials presented by her in the competition are properly documented and give the necessary information in full.

2. Details of the candidate

Liuba Zlatkova received her education in: AMTI – Plovdiv (today AMTI Prof. Asen Diamandiev) – as a Master of Music Pedagogy; Prof. Pancho Vladigerov State Academy of Music, with a specialization in Rhythmics; University of Shumen Bishop Konstantin Preslavsky, Faculty of Pedagogy – educational and scientific degree doctor.

Chief Assistant Liuba Zlatkova, PhD has many years of pedagogical experience in the specialties Pedagogy of Music Education (bachelor and master), and other pedagogical specialties as a teacher of basic methodological and methodological-practical disciplines, as well as Rhythmics and Rhythmic education for teachers. In this aspect, her candidacy for *Associate Professor* in the scientific specialty *Methodology of Music Education* is well-founded and convincingly defended with stable pedagogical experience.

Dr Liuba Zlatkova participates in the competition for *Associate Professor* with a respectable volume and diversity of scientific and academic activity, including research, project, artistic and methodological and applied activities. This multifarious nature of personal expression is a serious testament to a modern-minded university lecturer in the field of music pedagogy and a strong presence in the academic community. To create and manage an extracurricular form of art work – Non-profit organization *Art Workshop* (to include students with interests in various arts as leaders of art studios who discover and develop the creativity of children of primary school age), to conduct educational music lectures with students and pupils of primary school age – these original forms are rightly included by Liuba Zlatkova in the report on her contributions.

3. Description and contributions of scientific papers

Given that the monograph, presented as a habilitation thesis, is the result of a very purposeful long-term search, I will start the commentary on the scientific production from the other publications presented in the competition. The author encloses a list of 23 articles and reports in scientific journals and in proceedings of national and international conferences. They have a very strong center and that is the *rhythm*. This scientific interest of Liuba Zlatkova is activated at the intersection of her specialized education at the National Academy of Music, her research and her pedagogical ideas. For her, rhythm is not just one of the musical means of expression, but a model and a code. In her publications of the last five years, she gradually matures the idea of the rhythmical model (sequence of metric pulsation, characteristic rhythm and rhythmical groups) as a code of existence and as a source of knowledge about historical epochs. The ideas of rhythm as a “*hologram of the spirit*” swirl around this axis and they radiate to folklore and all manifestations of folk tradition. Thus, in a series of publications from various forums and in various publications, Liuba Zlatkova tested her **understanding the rhythm as a concept that has the power to restore a unified way of thinking about the world.**

The habilitation work of Liuba Zlatkova (*Zlatkova, L. Folk Art – Rhythm – Spirit – Culture*. University Publishing House Bishop K. Preslavsky, 2019, 236 pp. ISBN: 978-619-201-311-0) crowns these milestones, giving a complete and integral expression to the concept.

In the introduction, the author emphasizes that the monography is directed to “teachers and students, as well as a wider readership”. The very clear addressee of the book determines the level of the informative layer of the text. It covers a very wide range of phenomena of folk art: fairy tale, song, dance, proverb, embroidery, costume, ornamentation of decorative ornaments in various crafts, ritual breads, construction (construction of the house) and more. In this regard, the research courage of Liuba Zlatkova should be noted, as such an object, combining an impressive number of subprojects, implies a high dose of risk. The risk stems from the fact that most of the phenomena under consideration are central or ancillary objects in various scientific fields, and the study of some of them has a long history, in the course of which numerous scientific studies have been created. The coverage of the issues, the selection of the scientific literature – all these tests require not only great effort, but also determination, which in this case is caused by the pathos of the

unifying idea of the integrity of existence and the people's worldview. And it is in this sense that the risk is fully justified and worthy of support.

The author approaches her object through the visible (exoteric) and through the invisible (esoteric). In my opinion, in a similar way, the study itself has two layers. The first (visible) is available to every reader and is clearly set out in the summary of the competition materials. Therefore, I will focus on the key messages that are meaningful and innovative for current and future educators.

The first large-scale idea, which I appreciate as the main contribution of the monography (and the author's overall research strategy), is the idea of developing a type of thinking capable of realizing and achieving the integrity of the world through the connection between the elements of multiple reality. I fully share the fact noted in the introduction that school education is falling apart (one of the general effects of education since the dawn of the New Age). To seek this wholeness, to contemplate, comprehend and experience its uniform principles is a task that is difficult to achieve today. Liuba Zlatkova manages to take the first step and it is in the direction of teachers – current and future. They are the ones who can discover the next steps if this type of thinking is activated in them. Thus, following the principle of the hologram in the teaching process, they will be able to reflect the unity in each specific object of attention.

The approaches to the formation of a worldview based on integrity and unity are completed in the publication *To discover the world*. This is a concept of completeness in primary school, which presents the idea of an educational model based on a curriculum of integrated topics. With their help the knowledge and skills may be combined in the various subjects studied in primary school. It is an innovative practice which can give children an opportunity to understand the own world and the world above in its completeness by combining the knowledge gained from individual subjects in school. This is one of the original contributions she mentioned: “Creating an educational model for work in primary school, based on the understanding of the world as a whole – on the principle of integrity of folk art and its functioning as a single organism.”

The second significant idea is the key found to solve the problem of the unity of the universe – **rhythm**. The author devotes her research energy to a strongly working thesis, restoring the ancient ideas of cosmic unity through rhythm. It means that rhythm can encompass through a single principle both the moving and the sculpture of the immovable. This is the reason to contemplate and experience through the prism of rhythm not only dance and music, but also the applied arts and architectural creations. The author works actively with the term *Rhythmic Model*, reaching the widest possible understanding. I will support it with two key quotes from the monograph: “In the present study the concept of Rhythmical Model is derived, which (in our opinion) is universal not only for folk art and its branches, but also for all processes and phenomena in the world we inhabit. The universe as a whole. This notion is gradually enriched by entering the deep layers of folk knowledge.” (P. 9); “...the concept of Rhythmical Model is defined as a sequence composed of elements of the same sphere, having its own conditional center, spatial-temporal parameters and

speed of manifestation and this construction repeats on the principle of ostinato.” (P. 13).

The third moment of contribution is the absolutely convincing connection of rhythm with number. This thematic line is very important both because of its deep historical roots and because of its inexhaustible possibilities in making integrative connections in modern education. In future developments and in-depth studies on the topic, as well as in practical implementations of extracurricular activities, knowledge of the Pythagorean tetractide, proportions, relations expressing musical intervals, as well as information about the number-rhythm relationship in Cicero, Quintilian and St. Augustine. At this point I will note that again in future research (including the development and operation of the proposed educational model) will probably be attracted ideas from research by Iskra Racheva, Svetlana Zaharieva, Goritsa Naidenova, Lozanka Peycheva and others, which would give the view of traditional culture the sound of modern ethnomusicology, as well as the works of Christina Yapova, which can give the musical-philosophical grounds of the problem. This is a perspective that is feasible, as the ideas set by Liuba Zlatkova are widely open to future searches, deepening and concretizations, which is the most valuable achievement of the author, because it lays the foundations of a process that is future-oriented.

The overall research, pedagogical and project activity of Liuba Zlatkova is organically connected and has the character of a cause. The scale and energy invested in its promotion and practical implementation are impressive. That is why it is very important for me to note this general contribution. Against the background of the various current issues that concern the majority of the college, Liuba Zlatkova manages to update what comes from the roots and to discover new ideas for the propaedeutics of a unified worldview. A modern paideia, which has a real opportunity for implementation as a concept of extracurricular activities in school!

Everything said in this review is a reason to give my professional support to Chief Assistant Professor Liuba Atanasova Zlatkova, PhD and convinced to propose to the esteemed scientific jury that she be elected to the academic position of *Associate Professor* in the professional field 1.3 Pedagogy of teaching in ..., scientific specialty Methodology of Music Education.

February, 2021

Reviewer:



Prof. Mariana Buleva