

STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Petya Aleksandrova Aleksandrova, DSc, department of “Mass communications”, NBU, professional division 3.5. “Social communications and information sciences”, on the provided materials for participation in the competition for the academic position of “professor” in professional division 3.5. Social communications and information sciences (Journalism – Media music), announced in State gazette, no.65, August 16 2019, with Assoc. Prof. Ventsislav Dimov Dimov, DSc as a participant.

I. Evaluation on accordance with the minimal national requirements

From the administered reference, it is clear that the participant meets the minimal national requirements, and significantly exceeds them in paragraphs “G”, “D” and “E”. Considering, that these requirements appeared only a year ago and the participant could not have been prepared for the new formats beforehand.

II. Research (creative) activity and results

The Monograph “Music for the people on the media front (The soft power of the people’s and popular music in Socialist Bulgaria)” consists of 368 pages and starts from the prerequisite, that “media music in Bulgaria in the time of state Socialism (1944-1989), along with the history of radio, is still in the shadows, compared to the previous period”. The quality of the work is in the simultaneous presentation of the relations of power, music and media (primarily radio, but also television) vertically, as well as horizontally. Vertically – in a historical aspect, as the 1944-1989 period has a number of rises, falls and spirals of ideological pressure and playing with the musical, and with the media. Horizontally, Assoc. Prof. Ventsislav Dimov pays attention to the variety of styles, separately: hymn, mass song with variations for partisans, foremen, etc., music of minorities, musically artistic amateur performances, Estrada, people’s music. He also presents figures, who pass through formations, radio and media (Gyurga Pindzhurova, Atanaska Todorova, Ibrahim Destanov, Stoyan Milenkov, Stoyan Gigov). And recounts about shows (“Kostadin and Miladin”, “Curly antenna”, “The Golden blackbird”, “Colorful horovod”) and editorial boards (“Humor, satire and fun”), that shaped the musical-media preferences of different generations.

The most complicated part of this kind of text is mastering the construction, preserving the logic and consistency of the narrative, and the natural weaving of the empirical material in the theoretical reasoning. I believe, that Ventsislav Dimov has handled this challenge successfully – he shows “popsocialism (per Ivaylo Dichev) from the inside”, as well as from above and below, and he does it compellingly and concretely. The stories with the changing of the hymn, the argument over “Thracian trio” and “Thracian company”, the preserving of the “Turkish editorial board” archives during the Revival Process in Kaufmann’s bureau, etc., are

examples of great, impactful stories. The music for and of the people is materialized in media. Sometimes, perhaps, I grasp the essence of the power-music-media relations rather slowly (in the first part), or the references of Stoyan Gigov seem too lengthy to me, but that is rather a personal preference – for example, I would have liked reading more about television musicals, as well.

Finally yet importantly, I would note the linguistic liveliness and opulence, with which Ventsislav Dimov writes and unfolds the history of music for the people. As an author, he has a well-balanced combination of the metaphorical quill of a journalist, who knows how to listen, and the precision of the scientist, who lovingly examines archives and testimonials.

Other publications:

In addition to his primary monograph, Assoc. Prof. Ventsislav Dimov has attached a representative sample of 15 articles and studies in scientific collections, annuals and electronic publications in Bulgarian, Russian and English.

It should be noted, that the field of his research interests is interdisciplinary – between media science and musicology, ethnology and sociology, anthropology and sociology. Therein, they are quite similar to their object – music between folklore and Estrada, its realization between regulations and media. The result is visible – the scope of the texts varies from the Balkan pubs and cafes as an incubator of music, through the role of minorities and Slavic musicians in recordings from the first half of the XX century, to representations of Wagner in new media.

The solid list of research activity shows not only the lasting interests of Ventsislav Dimov in the field of music-media relations, but also his constant search for new sub-subjects and specific examples.

Other activities:

Assoc. Prof. Dimov is also a part of several fundamental and scientific-applied projects. First on the list is a collective project, managed by him: “The “soft power” of popular music in media (by examples from Bulgaria and the Balkans)”, supported by the “Scientific Research” fund. I realize clearly how difficult it is to win and furthermore manage such a project, and I can only admire Assoc. Prof. Dimov for succeeding to publish his monograph, beyond the organizational engagements, surrounding the project.

Other projects are related to the “Radio and television” department – seminars, conferences, the electronic publication “Medialog”. They present Assoc. Prof. Dimov as an active member of SU’s academic community, filled with ideas and energy.

In addition, for dessert – his participation in the scientific-applied project „Sound Portraits from Bulgaria“, which resulted in the publication of a multimedia product by the Smithsonian,

USA. I regret not receiving “evidence” in the form of discs, so I can acquaint myself further sonically with this project, purely out of curiosity.

III. Educational and teaching activity:

From the attached references, it is clear, that Assoc. Prof. Ventsislav Dimov meets the requirement for hours of workload as a lecturer at the Faculty of journalism at SU, and not only in this faculty.

Actually, I am more impressed by the six textbooks and teaching manuals, published by “Prosveta”, presented for the competition. The participant is a co-author of the music textbooks for grades 8, 9 and 10 and the parallel teaching manuals for music teachers for grades 8, 9 and 10. These textbooks present him, once as a sought expert in a broader environment, than that of the university, who can communicate at a more accessible universal language, as well. Secondly, they give him an opportunity for a more comprehensive look at youth perception and knowledge of music, which makes him more functional, from a pedagogical standpoint.

IV. Personal impressions of the candidate.

My acquaintance with Ventsislav Dimov began through the text from Art readings 2006 “Reverse gaze: art reads the academia”, dedicated to cinematic readings of ethnology, which is also the first additionally presented text in this competition. The unconventional and, alas, exposing attitude of the author toward the films “Whose song is this” and “Dushevno” made an instant impression on me. Which gave me the chance to see them from a different angle. And develop a lasting interest in Ventsislav Dimov’s texts, because they never fail to give me the same opportunity – to see known phenomena from a different perspective (this is also characteristic of the monograph “Music for the people on the media front”, where the painfully familiar characteristic of the period fools our banal expectations).

In the following years, I have had the opportunity to listen to his reports at the Art readings of the Art Studies Institute, which convinced me of another quality of his – the power of his oral presentation and his skill to think on the spot.

The previously stated gives me grounds to state the opinion, that **Assoc. Prof. Ventsislav Dimov, DSc has the necessary qualities to be awarded the academic rank of “professor” and I vote “FOR”.**

Sofia, 15.12.2019

Respectfully:

Assoc. Prof. Petya Aleksandrova, DSc