

## REVIEW

By Prof. Milena Shushulova-Pavlova, PhD, New Bulgarian University, of the contributions of the artistic creative work, submitted as a habilitation paper, by

**Ch. Asst. Prof. Antoaneta Hristova Petrova, PhD,**

for participation in the contest for taking the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 8.4 *Theatre and Film Arts* (as announced in SG, issues 60, of 01.07.2022), with the School of General Studies and the Theatre Department of NBU

### Biographical data

**Antoaneta Hristova Petrova** is a tutor in acting with the NBU's Theatre Department and a freelance actor, and apart from that she has been a producer for an a manager of Theatre Studio *Persona*. Her education is multi-layered: Culture Studies Expert Diploma from the Culture Studies Centre, SU *St. Kliment Ohridski* (1991); Specialist in Pedagogy Diploma in Social Pedagogy, minor in History, Bulgarian Language and Literature (1992); NBU – BA *Acting and Directing*, she also holds an *Actress* qualification attained in (1995); A Master's Degree in *Artistic and Psycho-social practices*, major: Art and Social Work (2007); Full-time doctoral student with NBU, major: *Theatre Studies and Theatre Arts*, Concluded with a defence of a doctoral dissertation, entitled: *Non-literary Theatre: Performance Practices, Specificities and Development* (2012). Since 2014, she has been a Chief Assistant Professor with the NBU Theatre Department. The candidate has received a multitude of awards (seven altogether) among which are: for leading female role for her character in Erich Kästner's *Three Men in the Snow* and the award of the International Theatre Festival in Bratislava (1989), for her role as Lipa in the play *The Mother: Vasa Zheleznova – 1910* by Maxim Gorky in the Varna Drama Theatre "Stoyan Bachvarov", Directed by Stoyan Kambarev; The Theatre Festival Blagoevgrad (1996); the *Varna Award*; the *Glass Bison Award* from the International Solo Performances Theatre Festival in Lvov, for the role of Poprishchin the clerk in *Diary of a Madman*, by N.V. Gogol, in VDT "Stoyan Bachvarov", directed by Valentin Ganev (1997); The Collective award *Varna* for the creative team of VDT "Stoyan Bachvarov"; the award for the overall repertoire policy of *Basement Theatre*, which had staged the following performances: *Diary of a Madman*, by N.V.Gogol, *The Ghost Sonata* by A. Strindberg, *Edith Piaf and the Others* by Martin, Cocteau and Berto, *Maybe Tomorrow* by F. K. Korz, *Maria Stuart* by B. Maranini (1997). The Candidate has been nominated by the *Ikar* and the *Askeer Awards* for Best supporting Female Role and for Rising Star in *The Mother*, in Varna Drama Theatre (1997). In the period 1989-2022 she successfully played over 50 roles on various theatre stages.: that of the NBU University Theatre, of The Red House "Andrey Nikolov", the

stage of *Arena di Serdica*, the SFUMATO Theatre Laboratory, Youth Theatre "Nikolay Binev", open stage Sofia and Ruse, SST "Aleko Konstantinov", the Chamber Hall "Toplocentrala" – Contemporary Arts Center, DT *Tears and Laughter*, the Renaissance Chamber Theatre, Satirical Theatre, ITF Varna Summer, the Dimitrygrad DT, the Targovishte DT, DT "Stoyan Bachvarov" – Stage Basement in Varna, Sofia Opera, National Palace of Culture, MTI, Szeged Festival (Hungary), Festival Pietro Neamt, Bucharest (Romania), National Palace of Culture – Hall 2 and Hall 8, Alma Mater University Theatre, etc. Antoaneta Petrova participates in many film productions – in feature films and TV series (8 productions): *Windless Times* (2022); *Brothers* (Fifth season in 2022, episode 29); *The Lies Within Us*, in episodes 17, 18, 19, in 2022; *The Unaccompanied* Author's film based on texts by Syrian refugees, directed by Hristo Simeonov, as the interviewer (2021); *Daddies*, season 1 and season 2 (2021 -2022); *Scars* (2021); *A Life Stolen* - season 9 (2000); *The Way of Honour* (2019). She also participates in short productions (12 in total): *The Surprise* (2018); *Studying through Playing* (2016); *Mania* (2013); *The Vulnerable* (2013); *Banitsa* (2013); *Pride and Honour* (2013); *I Learn Playing* (2012); *Behind the Wall* (2012); *The Itinerary of Awakening, Arousing and Stripping the Psychophysical Nature of the Actor* (2011), concept author: Antoaneta Petrova, Director: Pavel Vesnakov, an indispensable part of the candidate's PhD Dissertation *Non-literary Theatre – Performer's Practices, Specificities and Development*; *The Paraffin Prince* (2011); *Trains* (2010); *Charred* (2009), etc.

## Assessment of the compliance with the minimum national requirements

### REQUIREMENTS OF DASRBA

#### Group of indicators "A" (needed 50 points / Realized 50 t.)

**Indicator 1.** Dissertation on *Non-literary Theatre – Performing Practices, Specificities and Development*" Protocol No 647 of 2012; Order of the Rector of NBU No156/14.12.2012.

#### Group of indicators "B" (needed 100 pts. / Realized 105 pts. )

**Three creative events have been suggested as habilitation work, all of which are of primary importance for the candidate:**

1). **A solo performance *Diary of a Madman*** by N.V.Gogol; director. Valentin Ganev; Varna Drama Theatre "Stoyan Bachvarov"; in the role of Poprishchin, premiere 12.12.1995 ; award in Minsk (Belarus) – festival of solo performances, Award "Varna"; premiere at the State Satirical Theatre "Aleko Konstantinov" in 2005.

**Varna Award for the role of the clerk Poprishchin in *Diary of a Madman*** by N.V. Gogol in DT "Stoyan Bachvarov" Varna, dir. Valentin Ganev; 1997. **Glass Bison Award for the role of the clerk Poprishchin in *Diary of a Madman*** from the **International Theatre Festival of Solo Performances** in Lvov, 1997. **Collective Award Varna**“ as part of the creative team of VDT

„Stoyan Bachvarov“, which has developed the complete repertoire policy of the *Basement Theatre* and staged the performances: *Diary of a Madman* by N.V. Gogol and *The Ghost Sonata* by A. Strindberg.

2). **The solo performance *Infanticide*** by Peter Turini; director Delyana Maneva; *The Red House CCD “Andrey Nikolov”* Adaptation Center at Fifth Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Interior – Sofia, National Center for Drug Addiction, Sofia Central Prison, Catholic Exarchate, Nursing Home for Cultural Workers, Home for Children Deprived of Parental Care – village of Podem, in the roles of: She, the Friend, the Father, and the Judge; premiere 07.04.2005.

3). **The solo performance *On the Edge*** by Helen Fielding and Maria Kasimova, Director Andrey Belchev; NPC-MTI, The Red House, CCD *Andrey Nikolov*, *Tears and Laughter Theatre*, *The Yellow Cow Stage*, in the role of Bridget Jones, premiere on 04.05.2001.

**Group of indicators "D" (needed 120 pts. / Realized 800 pts. )**

**Indicator 7.** (75 pts.) *Egyptian Tale of the Heart*, NBU Publishing House, 2014, ISBN: 978-954-535-825-8

**Indicator 12.** (30 pts.) *The Underworld King* an author's text by Ruslan Manikatov (a student in the Minor programme), performance of students from the minor program *The Theatre – Learning in a Group*, UT of NBU, premiere on 11.03.2013.

**Indicator 13.** (35 points each) **Realized** 17 activities – a total of **595 pts.** , including a documentary.

**Indicator 14.** (10 points each) **Realized** 10 activities – a total of 100 pts. including participation in the series *A Life Stolen Life*, "The Road of Honour" and a number of productions (listed above in the biography of the candidate).

**The candidate offers over 30 high-quality creative events that present her as an active participant in the cultural life of the University and of our country.**

**Group of indicators "D" (40 points needed/ 40 points realised)**

**In this group, the candidate presents four reviews for her creative performances in specialized editions in the field of arts:**

**Indicator 19.** *Reviews* (10 points each)

1). *Lost in the Hold*, by Nikola Vandov, in *Kultura* (newspaper) 14.6.1996, ISSN: 0861-1408, for the role of Lipa in *The Mother*.

2). *Taming of the Crime*, author Dimitar Staykov, in *Kultura* (newspaper)– Issue 45, 10.11. 1995, ISSN: 0861-1408, for the role of Lipa in *The Mother*.

3). *Bulgarian Theatre from Afar*, by Honne Dohrmann, translation from German Irina Ilieva, in *Kultura* (newspaper), 25.10.1996; ISSN: 0861-1408; for the role of Lipa in *The Mother*.

4). Bergman's "Persona" as a theatrical "Silence", *Theatre Magazine*; Issues 10-12 2008, Yoana Spasova – Dikova; ISSN 0204-6253, for the role of Alma.

**Group of indicators "E" (minimum required: 50 points / realized: 90 points)**

**Indicator 22.** (15 pts); **Indicator 24.** (30 pts.); **Indicator 28.** (20 pts.); **Indicator 29.** *Seven activities* (35 pts.)

Group A	Minimum points required – 50 pts.	Points represented – 50 pts.
Group B	Minimum points required – 100 pts.	Points represented – 105 pts.
Group C	Minimum points required – 120 pts.	Points represented – 800 pts.
Group D	Minimum points required – 40 pts.	Points represented – 40 pts.
Group E	Minimum points required – 50 pts.	Points represented – 90 pts.

**NBU REQUIREMENTS**

**Group of indicators "G" (minimum required: 50 points / 60 points realized)**

**Indicator 40.** *Initiating/actively participating in the creation of a successfully launched new programme*

The candidate has taken part in the devising of the following successfully launched programmes:

- 1). Modules *Acting and Stage Design* in MA *Acting, Directing and Stage Design for Theatrical and Audio-visual Pieces* (2011/2012);
- 2). Minor Program *The Theatre – Learning in a Group*;
- 3). The new BA *Theatre*, launched in the 2018/2019 school year. (10 T.)

**Indicator 41.** *Participation in programme improvement and course development to programmes.*

She participated in the improvement of the MA *Theatre Directing in a European Context*; minor programmes *The Theatre – Learning in a Group* and *Theatre in English*. (10 pts.)

**Indicator 42.** *Organizing and conducting a creative festival in NBU*

Organisation and holding of a forum *The Trace* in 2018, 2017 and 2019. Organization and participation in NBU DAYS AT THE RED HOUSE – PERFORMANCES AND DISCUSSIONS (NBU's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary) (10 pts.)

**Indicator 43.** *Creation and development of an academic/creative collective or an academic/creative school*

*The House of Bernarda Alba, Rosmersholm, Playback, Game of events, Playback Reloaded, Gilgamesh; Atelier: Rhythm and Text, Art School Varvara; Your Story in Me, The Story and its Narrator, as Object and Subject of a Study* (20 pts.)

**Indicator 44.** *Proven professional skills in the relevant academic field and professional field*

Participation in ITF *Varna Summer* with the performances –*Silencing, The Home of Bernada Alba, Blacksmiths, Gilgamesh*; Participation in ITF *Tara Ra – Bumbia* with the performances *Rosmersholm, and The House of Bernarda Alba*; Participation in a festival *Sketches and Friend* with the performance *Gilgamesh*; Participation in the *International Independent Theatre Festival*, with the performance *The Underworld King* by Ruslan Manikatov (10 т.)

**Group of indicators G: The requirements are fulfilled and 130 points have been realized**

**Group of indicators H: The requirements are fulfilled and 80 points have been realized**

**Group of indicators I: The requirements are fulfilled and 40 points have been realized**

Group F	Minimum points required – 50 pts.	Points submitted – 60 pts.
Group G	Minimum points required – 70 pts.	Points submitted – 130 pts.
Group H	Minimum points required – 50 pts.	Points submitted – 80 pts.
Group I	Minimum points required – 40 pts.	Points submitted – 40 pts.

**The submitted Professional Portfolio is a serious academic work, with significant contributions and is sufficient to defend the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 8.4. *Theatre and Film Arts* with the School of General Studies and the Theatre Department of New Bulgarian University. The data shows that Ch. Asst. Prof. Antoaneta Petrova, PhD meets the necessary scientometric requirements and has an active and memorable teaching and professional career.**

#### **Research (creative) activity and results.**

In the proposed habilitation text *IMPROVISATION AND PLAY IN THE TRAINING AND PRACTICE OF THE ACTOR* (theoretical summary of the creative activity of the candidate) Antoaneta Petrova examines chronologically and constructively the development of modern theatre practices. Her personal acting experience forms an empirical and theoretical apparatus through which she analyses the different forms and their creative inclusion in interdisciplinary approaches in NBU and beyond. She systematizes, summarizes, and terminologically defines her

many years of teaching and acting experience at the Playback Theatre. According to Antoaneta Petrova, Playback is a spontaneously created improvisational dialogue between audience and actors, which is a kind of mirror of the experiences of viewers: *the narrator gives us personal stories about real people and events, the actors visualize the unconscious, and our audience pays off with deep attention and love* (quote from the text). The Playback Theatre is cathartic in nature: Storyteller and actors build a bridge with each other. She is convinced that the social function of theatre is part of its current mission and modernity. The candidate reviews the participation of lecturers and students from the Theatre Department in the projects *The Untold Told* and *Your Story (You) in Me*, as well as the subsequent creative results – the shooting of two films, the creation of performances based on the collected materials with the methods of applied theatre – in the context of the contemporary socio-cultural environment. The participation of the theatre in such projects is determined by the possibility through its means to carry out therapeutic and mediatory functions that contribute to improving our social engagement and communication. Her specific qualification as a tutor, artist and educator determines the direction of development in the implementation of innovative practices in school education. Her overall complex work in the applied theatre is reflected in the project **Learning by Playing** (an educational project of the Theatre Department at NBU), which is implemented in several educational institutions in Sofia, by following the process of preparation and course of training classes through play. The idea of the project is to apply the game method of teaching, oriented to the spirit and body of the child. The aim of the method is to create an environment in which students acquire knowledge in a team, learn through role-playing and situational games, and the teacher directs their thinking and activity. The game method turns students into authors of their own education by cultivating sensual, sensory and emotional memory. Antoaneta Petrova makes significant conclusions, contributing to teaching practice about the degree of usefulness and applicability of this method, the opportunities it creates to increase learning outcomes, the practical effect on deepening the knowledge of the trainees. The training process is considered as a process of acquiring and upgrading knowledge and skills from the basic and the traditional to the modern and interdisciplinary. *Children work with their senses, so it was very important throughout the day to provoke them to imagine, feel, compete, seek, think and surprise each other in order to get to know each other.* (Quote by A. Petrova.) Not only does the game method, developed by Ch. Asst. Prof. Antoaneta Petrova, PhD, provide knowledge and skills for teaching in the Bulgarian school, but it also encouragement for the students to think, to unleash their imagination, not to get bored, but to work in a team, to create and remember faster and easier the learning material.

**Contribution moments in Antoaneta Petrova's research, practical and teaching activities:**

1. Her work develops the means and principles for improvising in theatre. As a result, it imposes the following innovations in the structure of the Playback theatre and renders them appropriate and effective: two presenters – a psycho-dramatist and an actress; two musicians; a different and often larger number of participants in the Playback performance.
2. The candidate creates and develops a Playback Theatre Cast within the NBU University Theatre. She organises performances beyond the University Theatre stage; she contributes to NBU prospective students' campaigns each year.
3. She applies the game method of education through a two-component analysis of the results – the reaction of students and the ability of students to test improvisational models, to acquire habits of acting in a dynamic environment and to organize themselves in working teams situationally.
4. Develops specific courses at NBU (to the relevant programs) – Educational, Improvisational and Game Theatre; She organises and conducts spontaneity trainings.
5. She develops a specific methodology for training actors and non-actors in improvisational theatre by assessing the nuancing of groups and their application in a real environment.

Antoaneta Petrova regularly participates in specialized academic fora and has published materials in the following collections: Fifth Scientific Conference for PhD Students with international participation; NBU (2010); Young Art Studies at NATFA "Krastyu Sarafov" with a the academic message: The semiotic discourse between the actor's "I", the character and the new "I" in the game-theatre (2010); Scholarly Forum For Arts – Theatre, Cinema, Stage and Visual Arts, National Palace of Culture; II Scholarly forum for arts, including XIII Young Academic Researchers' Forum for Music and Dance and II Young Academic Researchers' for Theatre, Cinema, Stage and Visual Arts, NBU (2018); III Scholar forum for arts, respectively – XIV Young Academic Researchers' for Music and Dance and III Young Academic Researchers' for Theatre, Cinema, Stage and Visual Arts (2019). A. Petrova, PhD presents the following works: The Egyptian Tale of the Heart. NBU, Sofia, 2014, and published conference reports: Petrova, Antoaneta. Non-literary theatre – performing practices, specifics and development. In: Young Academic Researchers' for Music and Dance, NBU, 2011. Petrova, Antoaneta. The Island of Abundance – an Attempt at Semiotic Analysis. In: Collection for young PhD students edited by Prof. Maria Popova, NBU.

#### **Administrative and public activities. Teaching and teaching activities**

I believe that the exquisite teaching activity of Antoaneta Petrova is proof of her large-scale and influential public activity. Antoaneta Petrova **has made 11 productions with students** from NBU and NATFA as a director and/or a producer: *Welcome to Bulgaria* by Zdrava Kamenova and

Gergana Dimitrova; Study Theatre of NBU (2021); *The Underworld King* based on an original text by Ruslan Manikatov (a student at NBU), AT, NBU (2013); *Return*, based on an original text by Gabriel Stoychev (a student at NBU), Training Theatre, NBU; (2012); *Money* by Ruslan Manikatov (a student at NBU), Training Theatre, NBU (2011); *The Lover* – Harold Pinter, Educational Theatre, NBU, Training Theatre, NBU (2010); *Death Skirmishes* – Woody Allen, Training Theatre, NBU, Training Theatre, NBU (2010); Forum Theatre – University Theatre of NBU, (2009); *Hamlet* – William Shakespeare; NATFA Training Theatre (2008); *Mission London* – Alek Popov, University Theatre of NBU, Theatre Laboratory *SFUMATO* (2008); *Game of Events* – Playback Theatre, Socio-drama, Psychodrama; AT, NBU, TL *SFUMATO* (2007); *An Absurd Day*, real stories from the lives of students; Training Theatre, NBU (2007).

Antoaneta Petrova regularly **participates in international theatre festivals**: International Theatre Festival in Potsdam (Germany) UNIDRAM with the performance *Silence* and discussion on Non-Literary Theatre; International Theatre Festival in Novi Sad (Serbia) – INFANT with the performance *Silence* and discussion on Non-literary Theatre; International Theatre Festival in Zagreb (Croatia) with the performance *Three Sisters* by Chekhov, director Julian Tabakov; International Theatre Festival *Varna Summer* with the performances *The Mother*, *Illyria*, *Silence*, *The House of Bernada Alba*, *Kovachi*, *Gilgamesh*; 5. Participation in the International Theatre Festival *Tara Ra – Bumbiya* (Blagoevgrad) with the performances *Rosmersholm* and *The House of Bernarda Alba*.

Antoaneta Petrova **also has administrative commitments** at NBU. She is Director of the Master's Degree Programme in Theatre Directing in the European Context in the academic year 2009 2010, and in the academic year 2016-2017 she is Director of the Program Council at the Theatre Department of NBU.

### **Personal impressions of the candidate (if any)**

I know Ch. Asst. Prof. Antoaneta Petrova, PhD, only from her teaching and stage events as an audience of her productions. An accurate professional and colleague. Hardworking, responsible and always ready to get involved in a project or activity with a cause. I believe that she will be an asset for NBU and the Theatre Department as an experienced lecturer.

### **Opinions, recommendations and notes on the activity and achievements of the candidate**

No.

The review may end with the following evaluation:

Based on all of the above, as well as on the conclusions made on the proposed creative and teaching



activities of Chief Asst. Prof. Antoaneta Petrova, PhD, considering her extremely high activity, the contribution of the proposed creative expressions and projects, **I give my convinced positive assessment** and offer to the honourable members of the Academic Panel for the Associate Professor contest (in professional field 8.4. Theatre and Film Arts), held by the SGS and the Department of Theatre, and do propose to the honourable Academic Council of NBU to elect Ch. Asst. Prof. Antoaneta Petrova, PhD for the academic position of Associate Professor, according to the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Date 1.11.2022

Signature:

Prof. Milena Shushulova-Pavlova, PhD