

OPINION

By Petya Alexandrova Alexandrova, Department of Cinema, Advertising and Showbusiness, NBU, Professor and Doctor of Science in direction 8.4 "Theatre and film art"

on the scientific and creative works submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in professional direction 8.4 "Theatre and Film Art", as announced in the State Gazette no. 50/01.07.2022, with candidate Chief Assistant Antoaneta Hristova Petrova, PhD

I. Assessment of compliance with minimum national requirements.

It can be seen from the attached reference that Ch. Assistant Professor, Antoaneta Petrova, PhD meets the minimum national requirements, and in some paragraphs, particularly in terms of creative performances, exceeds them multiple times.

II. Research and (or) creative activity:

Antoaneta Petrova has presented a solid author's paper for the needs of the competition. I will try to summarize a few facts that stand out. Firstly, Toni Petrova has accomplishments in a range of directions within the art field, i.e. dramatic theatre, documentary theatre, improvisational theatre, psychodrama, cinema, television series. Secondly, she tends to work with artists of different styles, some of whom she has consistently worked with - from Vazkresia Viharova and Stoyan Kambarev through Elena Panayotova and Delyana Maneva to Pavel Vesnakov and the series teams. This evidences the candidate's ability to adapt to the specific requirements of the environment in different spaces, to the type of performance, the creative collectives and the specificity of the work, in other words all you need for the acting profession. Thirdly, social projects have a prominent draw for her and Toni Petrova is involved in projects like Art for Social Change or The Reticently Told. Thus, she presents the students involved with the opportunity to go beyond the framework of education and be active citizens as well.

I will not go into detail and dwell on the part of Lipa in "The Mother" way back in 1996 (for which reviews are attached), nor discuss the rest of the performances of diverse genres and forms included in the attestation. Toni Petrova has seen it all on stage: she has played the part of a man and a woman, a wife and a mother, a girl and an old man, a maid and a queen, a conductor and a news presenter, a nurse and a history teacher, a journalist and a warden... I would only note some of her performances that have remained out of the limelight, but are at the center of my personal film interests, i.e. her participation in Pavel Vesnakov's short films and especially the part of the mother in *Trains*. By the plot, the heroine struggles with all her might to raise funds, or rather to get what she has duly earned, so that her disabled son could celebrate with friends. She looks miserable because she's a dishwasher, her kid's bunch have a bad reputation and her employers are difficult too. There is no light in the tunnel, no positive emotions; where does the sympathy for the heroine come from then? Toni Petrova's play conveys poverty and ignorance but in a nonjudgmental way so that one can identify with the heroine. The ability to convey in an a nearly detached way, even with a sense of humor, the unbearable that she wants to break, and at the same time make the viewer feel personally responsible is in my opinion Toni Petrova's great skill as an actress. This skill is particularly vivid in the three leading roles in one-act performances included in the attestation - "Diary of a Madman" (Popryshchin), "Infanticide" (The Mother) and "On the Edge" (Bridget Jones).

In her theoretical text, Petrova shares her experience in a detailed and systematic way and chooses improvisation and play as a topic in the training and practice of the actor. After presenting the three acting models as taught to actors and commenting on a range of names and schools from Stanislavski to Grotowski, the doctoral student enters into the systematization, summary and terminological determination of her extensive teaching and acting experience in Playback theatre. Based on it, she also adds her contribution to well-functioning practices: two presenters - a psychodramatist and an actress; two musicians; different and often larger number of participants.

The valuable thing in the theory and practice shared in the text comes from the premise that Toni Petrova relies on, namely, "accept the challenge of the unexpected". The choice of non-theatre spaces is quite a challenge: prison and psychiatry in *Infanticide*. The "Reticently told" is a challenge too, as well as the subsequent creative results, i.e. shooting films, creating

performances based on the collected materials with the methods of applied theatre (*Your Story (You) in me*). *Learning through play* is another challenging project in several educational institutions in the city of Sofia. All these challenges have a social and interdisciplinary application, and among others, include teachers and students from the Theatre Department.

III. Other activities of the candidate.

Educational and teaching activity:

Ch. Assistant Professor Antoaneta Petrova, PhD has fulfilled and exceeded the volume required for teaching employment. The average student satisfaction rating is high (excellent 4.64). Presentation material on the courses and additional materials have been uploaded to the NBU Moodle platform. Diverse as they are, Antoaneta Petrova's activities always aim at involving students in them. As I have already said, most of the applied performances are also joint projects with teachers and students from NBU, i.e., teamwork is among the strengths of the candidate.

Administrative and public activity

Since her appointment, Tony Petrova has been a member and director of the departmental council, an Erasmus coordinator, an active participant in the improvement of programmes, author of the minor programmes "Theatre - learning in a group" and "Theatre in English". My personal impression is that she is a supportive colleague and a dedicated mentor.

I would recommend to the candidate that in her future she will need to make up for the lack of written scientific texts and, accordingly, citations. Since a number of plays are the fruit of her ideas, I believe she is able to expand these ideas into analytical texts. And as a side note, albeit a minor one, I would note that the attached reviews of her work are quite far back in time.

My general conclusion is that the activities included in the attestation are evidence of a broad-minded person both in terms of creative accomplishments and teaching practice, and as a socially engaged citizen.

What has been said so far gives me reason to conclude that **Chief Assistant Professor Antoaneta Petrova, PhD has the necessary qualities to be awarded the academic position of "Associate Professor" and I therefore IN FAVOUR of the above.**

Sofia, 24.10.2022

Sincerely,

Prof. Petya Alexandrova, DSc