

OPINION

By **Prof. Dr. Veneta Doicheva**, member of the Academic Jury

On the competition for holding the academic position ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

In *Theater Studies and Theater Art* (history of the Bulgarian theater)

Professional direction 8.4, published in State Gazette issue 3 of January 10th 2020 for the needs of Theater Department of the Institute of Art Studies, BAS

For **Chief Assistant Dr. Roumyana Nikolova**, participant in the competition

Dr. Roumyana Nikolova is a modern researcher and art manager (participant in different creative and educational projects, member of the Via Fest Foundation and direct participant in the team of the International Theater Festival Varna Summer, Chairman of the Guild of Theater Critics and Dramaturges at the Union of Bulgarian Artists). She is the author of the original study "Actor's Training in the 20th century", Publishing House "Prof. P. Venedikov", 2007 (Icarus 2008 Award of the Union of Bulgarian Artists for Critical Text). Guest-lecturer at NAFTA "Kr. Sarafov" (course: Preparation and Development of a Stage Project; History of the Russian Theater; Actor's Training in the 20th century). Author of reports, articles, critical texts about stage productions, interviews in the periodical press/pages on theater and culture: newspaper *Literaturen Vestnik (Literary Journal)*; journal *HOMO LUDENS*; journal *Art Studies Quarterly, Yearbook of NATFA "Kr. Sarafov"*, collection *Art Studies Readings*, etc. She has participated in dozens of academic conferences. Total: 2 publications in academic journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with academic information and 16 specialized publications.

For her participation in the competition, Dr. Roumyana Nikolova presents her research and creative works, according to the framework of academic data and minimum national requirements for holding the academic and scientific position of "Associate Professor". All requirements of the law are met and she meets the standards for this competition.

The main research work presented for participation in the competition is "Model of Functioning of the Bulgarian Theater in the Period 1944 - 1989", Publishing House "Prof. Petko Venedikov", Sofia, 2020, ISBN: 978-619-7469-12-7

The book has a volume of 258 pages of text, appendices and bibliography (cited and used literature, articles in periodicals, archival materials - funds from CSA and a list of more important cited documents) - a total of 287 pages.

The study examines in a historical perspective the period after the Second World War in Bulgaria with a focus on the specifics that characterize the functioning of the theater from 1944 to 1989. The task is very serious, requiring skill and precision

when working with sources of different nature, involves the study of a long period of time, which, in addition to imposing a radically different system of theater from the previous one, is not internally homogeneous, but divided into several sub-periods. I immediately want to emphasize that the author easily masters these challenges and organizes the presentation in a fine construction. The main line is to follow the steps that the state was taking to impose its firm policy of controlled art management. The study traverses an impressive array of documents (archived protocols, decisions, guidelines, programs, etc. of government agencies, political bodies, creative unions, individual institutes). Individual critical reviews, review articles, editorial publications of a normative-imperative nature, transcripts and minutes of discussions of theatrical production (within individual theaters and in the press) were studied. These text materials are testimonies coming directly from the period and presuppose a careful reading and analysis, which the author makes in the course of the presentation of the documents and to which she returns as systematized conclusions in the final pages of the separate chapters. To these she adds other author's observations (for example, of Georgy Markov, who testified to his experience in the theater, or of contemporary researchers of the period and of socialist culture and literature). I emphasize the various sources on which the study is built, to note that the result is impressively objective in view and balanced in the tone of academic speech. A picture of the dynamics in the processes that fluctuate depending on the general political events (in the Soviet Union and in our country) and in the different chronological segments have their own profile. The presentation pays attention to the administration of the theater, the imposition of the artistic method of "socialist realism" as the only approach in drama and stage practice, and the mechanisms of evaluation and sanctions. The author approaches the processes and facts with precision and invariably emphasizes all the details and nuances that are inherent in theatrical life in the different periods of the communist era. As a result, a landscape of the Bulgarian theater is shown, forced to become a repertoire (as the only admissible model), which is limited in the choice of plays, authors, themes and approaches and which multiplies in a growing network of theaters subordinated to ever more centralized management power. The merit of the research is the comprehension of the artistic "breakthroughs" in the dogmatized system, which with different specific dimensions manage to express the individual talent of artists from different theatrical professions (they are also commented in the context of the general political framework).

The book examines objectively and carefully the moves of the government of the socialist state in the field of Bulgarian theater. Although she deals mainly with the dry matter of administrative documents and the stiff language of party programs and decisions, Roumyana Nikolova manages to give an author's view of the period and demonstrate how the government works - as a strict pyramid of absolute hierarchy

which at its different stages contain, in addition to obedience, single breakthroughs and violations.

I know Roumyana Nikolova very well and I have witnessed her professional dedication and academic precision.

I confidently vote with YES for awarding the academic position of ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR to Roumyana Nikolova.

Prof. Dr. Veneta Doicheva