

REVIEW  
FOR  
AWARDING THE ACADEMIC POSITION OF “ASSOCIATE  
PROFESSOR” IN STAGE SPEECH

Candidate: Ch. Assist. Prof. TODOR IVANOV DIMITROV, PhD

Reviewer: Prof. EMILIA ANGELOVA-PETKOVA, PhD

Chief Assistant TODOR IVANOV DIMITROV is one of most productive and socially active pedagogues in the Stage Speech Department at the NATFA. He belongs to this category of researchers and authors who commit all their energy and knowledge and interests to search and discover unexplored yet aspects in the field of Stage Speech in our country.

His presence in the Department is marked by his constant pursuit of new knowledge and expanding the horizon of his imagination to the direction of a modern future development and perspectives in training in Stage Speech and Correct.

Ch. Assist. Prof. Dr. T. Dimitrov is uncompromising in his efforts to draw our attention to the interdisciplinary character of methodological and scientific and practical work, convinced that this will open the doors to related sciences and modern discoveries which focus on VOICE and SPEECH (Speech Therapy, Hermeneutics, Semiology, Physiology, Logotherapy, etc.).

This is the direction of the earnest scientific interests of the candidate who seeks all the possible ways to enrich his scientific potential and pedagogic experience. Just getting acquainted with the CV enclosed with the documents is enough to make sure of that!

He graduated from the “Kr. Sarafov” National Academy for Theater and Film Arts in 2011. The same year he graduated from a summer school at the Shanghai Academy. In 2011-2012, he defended his master’s degree in MANAGEMENT IN STAGE ARTS. Since 2011, he has been a teacher in Stage Speech, Speech Technique and Correct Speech. In 2017, he defended his PhD with a dissertation on the subject of: “THOUGHT PROCESSES – PRIMARY ENERGY OF STAGE SPEECH”.

The original approach and searches of T. Dimitrov in the speech field stood out even with this defense. He has entered a very interesting niche of the speech science. He is interested in the processes of speech formation, seeks to find “the reasons that drive impulses and, respectively, thought processes”, i.e., he seeks to find out, what drives the impulse? How the thought formation that P. Brooke talked about is created and, how all this could be used by the actor to provoke creative beginning and inspiration!...

This is an extremely ambitious task which provokes the Author to sink deep into his searches and reflections using latest researches and achievements in various fields of science that are related to the issues of sound speech and speech process.

In the scientific and creative activity of T. Dimitrov, it is characteristic that he directs his efforts to discover new unexplored areas or those in process of research and proof covering a wide interdisciplinary spectrum, and to find common ground and similarity with theatrical speech. This is the way where he makes a bold modern step in theater

science which, in my opinion, is his indisputable and unequivocal contribution in modern theater pedagogy!

There are many activities that avail the candidate to enrich his professional experience and find the right way to his development as a pedagogue and a scientist. His numerous participations in scientific forums and juries are impressive; he is the author of training programs, a tutor of students in Master courses, he writes reviews and attends many scientific conferences at home and abroad...

A significant contribution are his books published in 2019:

1. „THOUGHT PROCESSES – PRIMARY ENERGY OF STAGE SPEECH“, FARAGO Publ. House, Sofia
2. „TERMINOLOGICAL FUNDAMENTALS OF STAGE SPEECH“, FARAGO Publ. House, Sofia

It is with the second book that Ch. Assist. Prof. T. Dimitrov applies in the competition for ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR in Stage Speech, announced by NATFA “Kr. Sarafov”, published in the State Gazette No. 52 from 09.06.2020.

The very title of the book already arouses the reader’s curiosity and is undoubtedly a novelty in the theoretical works in the field of Stage Speech.

THE BOOK is organized as a dictionary the main purpose of which is to find the most perspicuous way to arrange the terminological elements (p. 24). It offers an up-to-date and comprehensive “information fund of theoretical knowledge on the terminological fundamentals of Stage Speech (p. 24). The aim is to outline the framework of the discipline of Stage Speech as a scientific area for which it is necessary to find the utmost accurate definitions of concepts of various fields of science (linguistics, phonetics, psychology, etc.) that are used by the NATFA’s Speech specialists in their practice.

This is a very ambitious idea of the author – To prove the necessity to revise, update and modernize as a whole both the concept for theoretical and practical voice-speech training of the actor, and some methods and aspects of theoretical enrichment of the student, according to the findings of modern science” (p. 17). The author emphasizes the need “to specify the conceptual basis of teaching..., to specify the pedagogical method and its set of concepts” (p. 18) which is a warrant for the development of the discipline of Stage Speech in theoretical-scientific, and practical-applied, and professional direction.

T. Ivanov is unequivocal in his statement that the terminological fundamentals of Stage Speech must be defined and selected! I fully support the author’s idea about outlining

the terminological frameworks and vocabulary of the teaching staff in Stage Speech and Correct Speech because this sets the specialty on a serious scientific base and brings it closer to modern achievements of similar sciences!

I am aware that this is an act very difficult to implement, given the deep and lasting traditions in training of actors in our country without which, however, it is unthinkable to upgrade and direct the position to modern science that requires interdisciplinary approach to the methodological, scientific and practical activity of the pedagogue.

With publication of TERMINOLOGICAL FUNDAMENTALS OF STAGE SPEECH, the author enhances this process to direct our attention to related sciences and techniques the subject of which is the study of VOICE, SPEECH... and this ensures improved quality of teaching. He himself applies this integration principle in his pedagogical activity which provides him with broader scientific knowledge.

I should note, however, the fact that with his modern attitude towards processes and issues concerning and related to stage speech, T. Dimitrov does not fail to pay due attention to the founders of this discipline, the initiative teachers without whom the speech science could not develop. We find this in both the extremely rich bibliography he used, and the numerous citations of Bulgaria and world authorities in the field of speech in the theater. Here, we see the names of the founders of the Bulgarian speech school – R. Rosnyaer, Cherkezov, Assoc. Prof. Mara Georgieva, Boris Mihaylov, etc.

It is natural for a representative of a new generation of educators, scientists, researchers, to seek a new path, new horizons in their improvement. “Victim” of his youth and the time of new technologies, including in the field of theater, Ch. Assist. Prof. Todor Dimitrov is impatient in his desire to introduce serious changes in speech teaching at the theater academy but does not take into account the fact that this is a delicate and lengthy process that requires very careful, calm and... wise approach!

I respect that enthusiasm! In his face, I see the new generation of educators with an innovative spirit who come with the new technological age. This gives me reason to back the considered candidacy for “ASSOCIATED PROFESSOR” with the confidence that the training in Stage Speech will pass to a new stage, in unison with the new times!

Such are the serious efforts of Ch. Assist. Prof. T. Dimitrov to introduce more academicism in teaching and to place it on a scientific basis adequate to similar sciences. However, there is a feature that should not be overlooked – the SPECIFICITY of acting profession and the non-standard approach in training!

That is why I think we have to be very careful about the academic style and scientific terminology! Many of the terms are rarely used in daily pedagogical practice at the Theater Academy but the availability of a vocabulary such as the one T. Dimitrov suggests provides opportunity for anyone who is interested and wants to enrich their knowledge in the field of speech culture and the processes of sound formation, for instance, in articulation, in issues that arise for physiological, psychological or other reasons, to use it.

The most important thing in this case is that the book is a FACT, and its appearance is another significant contribution to the theater theory!

Recognizing the importance and qualities of the book, as a reviewer, I let myself share my impression of the reading, making some recommendations:

1. I have the opportunity to closely monitor the professional development of Ch. Assist. Prof. T. Dimitrov during all the years of his presence at the Department of Stage Speech at NATFA which gives me a reason to advise him... to slow down in his pedagogical and research activities. His ambition to cover as many areas related to stage speech as possible is commendable but could trespass the limit of his capabilities and destroy all his efforts and useful achievements in search of the so coveted academicism!
2. I advise him to pay attention to the style of his theoretical works because the phrases are often loaded with foreign and professional terms which sometimes “weigh down” and drive the reader away from the essence and meaning of the presentation.
3. Undoubtedly, T. Dimitrov is a very erudite and intelligent pedagogue but in his zeal to be at the required professional level, he sometimes makes his scientific works incomprehensible for a wider range of readers as the book in question claims.

I will be happy if the candidate deciphers my goodwill in these recommendations! They do not anyhow belittle the significance of the work which is a major factor in the candidature considered. Just the opposite! I highly appreciate the efforts and the original idea of the candidate, for, above all things, the book is the first GLOSSARY of its kind in this field in our country and probably also abroad! This is an invaluable contribution to the theater theory and a wonderful guide for educators and their students.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS:

I fully acknowledge the contributions suggested by the author, and I would like to distinguish a few that I deem particularly important:

1. Above all – the very appearance of the “TERMINOLOGICAL FUNDAMENTALS OF STAGE SPEECH“ habilitation work is a serious contribution to the theatrical theory in our country as it is the first of its kind theoretical text in the form of a GLOSSARY in service to the Stage Speech specialty!
2. The ambition of the author to lay the frameworks of the stage speech as a SCIENTIFIC FIELD in the area of theatrical theory, through this work and his numerous elaborations, books, publications, is, in my opinion, a very significant contribution!
3. The efforts to create BRIDGES TO RELATED SCIENCES to prove the interdisciplinary character of terminological fundamentals in the methodological and practical work in the field of SPEECH, are a big merit of Ch. Assist. Prof. T. Dimitrov.
4. I believe the work has gone beyond the scope of a “popular” reading. It is “a high bar” which the author overcomes with ease by which he proves his erudition – a high competence, a rich palette of his knowledge and breadth of interests!

If we duly peruse the rich documentation submitted by Ch. Assist. Prof. Todor Ivanov Dimitrov, the candidate for ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, we shall see for ourselves that the subject of our discussion is an active, intelligent, “modern” young scientist.

He appeared at a very appropriate, in my opinion, moment when the Stage Speech Department needs exactly a similar “instigator”, with his creative perseverance and active participation in the numerous scientific and public activities of the life at the Department and NATFA, to maintain a creative atmosphere and to engage young colleagues in pursuit of professional skills in tune with the challenges of the new age.

T. Dimitrov’s rich creative, pedagogical, and scientific activity of convinces me of his indisputable qualities which justify my high appreciation! As an official reviewer of Ch. Assist. Prof. Dr. TODOR IVANOV DIMITROV, candidate in the competition for ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN STAGE SPEECH, announced by NATFA “Kr. Sarafov”, I back up his candidature and vote with “YES”!

Reviewer:

Prof. Dr. EMILIA ANGELOVA-PETKOVA