

REVIEW

By Prof.PhD Lyubomir Garbev – Lecturer in the Stage Speech Department at
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Member of the Scientific Jury for the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in Field 8. Art, Professional Field 8.4. Theater and Film Arts (Theater Studies and Theater Art) – Stage Speech, Announced in SG, issue 85/29.10.2019, with the candidate

Chief Assistant Lora Mutisheva, PhD

The candidate, Chief Assistant PhD Lora Mutisheva – Chief Assistant in Stage Speech at the Stage Speech Department, has a considerable pedagogic and other experience and proven stage and creative successes as evidenced by the Autobiography proposed in the documents, but also according to my personal observations on her development – more than 40 theater roles, participations in film and TV productions, concerts, etc. Her achievements in the composition, staging and directing of this year performance “EROFEEV” by “Moskva-Petushki”, “Blagovestie” and “Vasiliy Rozanov through the eyes of an eccentric” by Venedict Erofeev, at the NATFA Theater, were respectable.

In 2001 – 2005, Lora Mutisheva graduated from “Krastyo Sarafov” NATFA with a Bachelor’s Degree in Acting for Drama Theater in the class of Prof. Plamen Markov and assistants Assoc. Prof. PhD Ivaylo Hristov and Prof. PhD Atanas Atanasov. Since 2009, she has been conducting Stage Speech exercises at the “Kr. Sarafov” NATFA as an assistant to Prof. Ivanka Bencheva. In 2012 she became a PhD student at the Stage Speech Department and since 2015 she holds the educational and scientific degree of **PhD** successfully obtained with the “**Voice-Speaking Characteristics in the Contemporary Approach in Stage Image Creation**” thesis – an author’s work which received a very high appreciation for its current scientific and pragmatic relevancy, by the scientific jury.

Lora Mutisheva’s “Verbal Action in Action”, 2019, Faber Publ. House – Veliko Tarnovo – the author’s text proposed for reviewing – is a 173-page book body with contents: Foreword, Introduction, Five Chapters – **Verbal Action and A Rehearsal; Verbal Action and Spectacle’s Components; Verbal Action and Space; Verbal Action in Action and Voice Care**, Conclusion, Annexes and Bibliographic Reference.

The material fulfils the minimal national requirements for admission to the procedures under LDASRB (Competition for academic position of **Associate**

Professor) and has been approved by the relevant academic bodies of the “Kr. Sarafov” NATFA.

As I mentioned already, I have personal, direct impressions from the work of the peer – Chief Assistant PhD Lora Mutisheva, as an actress at the Sofia Theater and my assistant during the 2014-2016 period. I second the high appreciation that the team of the artistic instructor Prof. Rumen Rachev gave her for her independent work with Puppeteer students on Correct Speech and Speech Technique. The text I offered her to work on – excerpts from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, created lasting voice-speaking habits and encouraging results in the students, and her methodology created confidence and hope for her future as a lecturer at the Theater Academy. The semester and yearly exams in Stage Speech and Artistic Speech of the classes of Prof. Plamen Markov, Prof. Atanas Atanasov and Assoc. Prof. Penko Gospodinov with whom she works are no less successful and acknowledged. The series of critic texts and analyses of her creative and scenic achievements in mass media also don’t miss the appreciations. So, the shared, scientifically substantiated and justified by Lora Mutisheva professional and pedagogical experience is timely and up-to-date with its real contributions both for our students and the professionals in the theater circles.

The text in “**Verbal Action in Action**” is written in a fascinating and in many places even essayistic way, but these “genre” qualities don’t compromise its scientific value and practical applicability in any way. The definite author’s position and the scientific assessment of her many years of work at Sofia Theater as an actress and at the Theater Academy as a teacher are evident in many places. ...*„If lighting rehearsals /during the technical rehearsals before premiere – L.G./ are long lasting and you are on stage under the lights for a long time, drink more water so you don’t get dehydrated!“, “Spare your nerves – yours and your colleagues’!“*, *„Be healthy selfish“*... she advises /pp. 42-67/ and her tips are useful, coming literally from the “front line” of the theater offensive, especially for the colleagues who are about to appear on a professional stage for first time. Work with costumes, props, theatrical make-up, etc., are all things that, with foresight, the author notes as problems closely intertwined not only with the character’s verbal action but also with the psychological and physical stamina and vitality. And, she shares her experience in a timely manner, and the tips are appropriate and verified.

Chapter three – Verbal Action and Space - stirred up a particular interest, i.e. the author turns her attention towards the component of the performance and the verbal action which is no less significant – their meeting with the public in the theater. Lately, we have quite frequently found negative attitude from spectators and theater critics resulting from bad audibility, diction and negligent actor’s articulation, which immediately reflects on the sick problem – the presence of gaps in the training at the Theater Academy. But the colleagues at the Department stand their ground – training at NATFA requires and realizes results in which no

such comments from the audience are present! Our students have qualities worthy of the professional competence of future actors and creators! Relying on professional and pedagogic experience - both her own and shared with her peers from the theater and the Theater Academy, Lora Mutisheva looks for answers and offers number of well-grounded solutions to the problem. „*Actor's work in every performance is inevitably and necessarily related to the space and the audience!*“ . /p.72/ Acting mastership is first and foremost bound by some conditions and professional attitude with the force of laws, with which it has a decent place in the stage space and the performance of the stage action:

„The larger the space, the greater breathing support is needed to provide the necessary energy of the voiced words...

The level of articulation should increase with enlargement of the space...

The larger the space, the shorter the breaks should be...

The actor's face, his non-verbal gestures and facial expressions become more and more important in larger space. The same goes for the expressiveness of the actor's body...

Fast speaking is unacceptable unless it is a deliberately sought means of expression. The sound of the words should reach even the last row in the theater hall.

Use of resonators and active breathing process during the time of stage presence...” /pp.73-74/

Posed by the author, the problem with the unjustified shouting and chanting on stage, with the search for and justification of “acoustic emotional” form of image expression, even with our students at the NATFA Theater, is equally severe. Or, the careless sound and articulatory expression in smaller spaces... Certainly, a more definitive director's strictness and precision towards the speech and the verbal action is needed as early as the table rehearsals, but only the actor bears personal responsibility for the result and his professional attitude towards work and team does not include “careless” performance of action and stage tasks.

The next chapter is entitled “Verbal Action in Action” and the author semi-jokingly pays attention to the meeting of our students with the professional stage and the actors' circle – Premiere, Stage Fever, Repertoire Spectacle, Independent Project, Reconstructive Rehearsals, Dubbing, Work with a Microphone, Verbal Action and Technical Issues, Verbal Action and Special Effects, Children's Audience, etc. All of these are things rarely talked about in the auditoriums or covered in “creative secrecy and ritual”. And the day when they become an integral part of the acting profession and everyday life, suddenly comes. /In this train of thought, I would like to add also confusion and panic that overtake today's students at a meeting with colleagues well-known for their creative activity on the stage or on the screen in Bulgaria, or working abroad. The shared conditions they are put in and have to comply with – a memorized text at the first rehearsal, at least two or three decisions of the verbal action of the character in a sketch, characteristic features of voice, gestures and behavior, rehearsal period and

premiere within up to 3-4 weeks, working creative condition for 10-11 hours a day, etc. – they find unattainable and unrealistic tasks since they are accustomed to the flexibility, understanding and indulgence with which their teachers care for them... - L.G./

The last chapter is devoted to voice care. Lora Mutisheva precisely defines the problem, the reasons that cause it and the ways to overcome lost voice-speech reflectivity and condition – “...**frank analysis and assessment of what you can and what may be a problem to you.**” /p. 120/ Voice is the main factor in performing verbal action on stage and it has to be well mastered and tempered so that the actor could trust and rely on it in communicating with partners and audience just as the musician takes care for the instrument and the sound clarity or the artist – for the brushes and the paints, etc. Furthermore, the stage conditions are constantly developing and getting more and more “aggressive with their visual and musical decisions”! /p. 143/ The actor has increasingly become a function of directing and scenographic conception, a component of the spectacle but not necessarily the main one – the author sadly states... So he should, or rather, he is obliged to rethink his functions and put his tomorrow’s, future tasks on the agenda though preserving his credo and ambition of a creator and an author in an increasingly fast paced and dynamic environment increasingly called “theater industry” instead of theater art. In this aspect, the book of Chief Assistant PhD Lora Mutisheva turns out to be a timely warning, in a peculiar manner. Her conclusions show the right direction of development for the level of professionalism for our students, and for the colleagues that actively work on stage and screen, as well.

I declare my assessment **YES** and, following the positive assessments of the other members, I propose to the honorable Scientific Jury to award the academic position of **ASSOC. PROF.** in the Professional Range 8.4. Theater and Film Arts (Theater Studies and Theater Art) – Stage Speech, to Chief Assistant PhD Lora Mutisheva. I allow myself to define my positive vote as a peculiar kind of a vote or as a “cheque of confidence” as Dr. M.L. King used to say. I hope, I am even sure that in her future work as a teacher and an actress she will “cash it”. Good luck!

Professor Lyubomir Garbev, PhD