

“Kr. Sarafov” National Academy for Theater and Film Arts

SHORT REVIEW

By Assoc. Prof. P. Gospodinov, PhD

Member of the Scientific Jury for the competition for the award of academic position of ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR announced by NATFA in the SG No. 85/29.10.2019

The documents for participation in the competition submitted by the candidate **Chief Asst. Lora Mutisheva, PhD**, clearly show that her application could be considered in essence.

Dr. Mutisheva’s biography speaks for a professional (an actress and a pedagogue) with a solid background: Bachelor of Drama Theater Acting, Master of Marketing, PhD of Theater Studies and Theater Art. Her work for attainment of academic rank is on the topic of “Voice-Speech Characteristics in the Contemporary Approach to Development of the Stage Image”. Since 2009, she has been a teacher in Stage Speech, Correct Speech and Public Speech at the NATFA “Kr. Sarafov”. Her creative biography is also quite rich: nearly 40 theatrical roles, author’s compositions based on texts by Ovid, Homer, G. Rupchev, V. Erofeev, etc., numerous participations in Bulgarian and international festivals.

The main work with which Dr. Mutisheva participates in the current competition is the recently published monograph “verbal Action in Action” (Faber, V.Tarnovo, 2019). This compact book (170 pages) treats “the issues of verbal action mainly in its “technical” part, ...tracing the path of revival of the dramatic material to its turning into a spectacle focusing on all the elements that influence the actor’s verbal action”. According to the author, the book is addressed to students in Acting, beginning and non-professional actors, but, in my opinion, this original Manual on Verbal Action should become a book of reference to each professional actor who respects his audience and himself, regardless of his years of experience accumulation or may be even more because of them. It is known that in the Bulgarian theatrical practice, the care to maintain the acting capabilities is left to the actors themselves; after graduation from the

theater schools, there are no teachers to pay special attention to the various aspects of the acting tools. In the companies of actors, there are no vocal educators, no choreographers, no courses nor workshops in which the professional actors could refresh their abilities without pursuing a specific result. The shortened production terms do not allow the directors to be particularly demanding or provocative to the actors. And, as a result of all this, there are fewer and fewer vivid and emphatic actor's personifications (a priority of younger actors) as well as not so bright a landscape related to the so-called acting longevity – exhausted voices, resigning bodies, practicing of painfully familiar means.

Against this sad background, I find Dr. Mutisheva's efforts to be particularly beneficial. In a concise and engaging style, she treats key points with respect to stage speech: rehearsal period, speech during performance, voice and space, voice care, etc. And, all this is refracted through the personal professional experience of an actress and an educator which works up a specific confidence in the writing. At first glance, it seems that the author does not aim to make landmark discoveries or to create, God forbid, her own methodology but is satisfied to modestly deduce and arrange long-discovered truths. And it is precisely the special charm of what is written. It is as if Lora Mutisheva stands behind the curtain or near the stage and directs the young actor with love and self-irony; she advises him to definitely warm up before rehearsal and performance, to study the text correctly, to listen to and hear his partners, to keep professional hygiene, etc. All these are things he has heard more than once at the Academy and has readily forgotten once he joined the professional theatre. It is precisely because of the basic truths that we underestimate, thinking they have become an integral part of our acting activity that I find Dr. Mutisheva's book very valuable not only for the beginners but, above all, for the long-time actors with extensive experience.

In my short review conclusion, I must add also the following. I've known Dr. Mutisheva since my first teaching days at NATFA. We started our pedagogic activity at one and the same time. We were assistants to distinguished professors with many years of practice. Ten years later, I am about to see my first class in Acting for Drama Theater to graduate while Chief Asst. Dr. Mutisheva is the teacher in Stage Speech and Verbal Action for the team I manage. I didn't hesitate even for a second when choosing the teachers whom to entrust with the training and education of my class of actors who will graduate soon. I have always been

impressed by her efficiency, uncompromisingness, good taste and high standard. Qualities that have fully been proved in our work together over the last four years, also. I think theater pedagogy needs educators like Dr. Lora Mutisheva and I hope that the scientific jury will back her candidature for the academic position of ASSOCIATED PROFESSOR.

Confidently and conscientiously, I vote “YES”.

9th March 2020

Assoc.Prof. P. Gospodinov

Sofia