

OPINION

by **Prof. Vesela Ivanova Geleva, PhD**, lecturer in Choral Conducting at the Department of Music Pedagogy and Conducting of the Faculty of Music Pedagogy at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts - Plovdiv*

for **Elvira Todorova Mateva, PhD**, in Professional Field 8.3. Music and Dance Art, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Classical and Pop and Jazz Performance Arts, for participation in the competition for the academic position of 'Associate Professor' in the major: **Chamber Singing (with Pianist)** in Professional Field 8.3. Music and Dance Art at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, Plovdiv, Department of Classical and Pop and Jazz Performance Arts*, announced in the State Gazette, Issue 16/10.02.2026.

Elvira Mateva was born in 1968 in Plovdiv. In 1987, she graduated from *Dobrin Petkov National School of Music and Dance*. She graduated her higher education at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts*, where she graduated in the majors: Music Education Pedagogy and Instrumental Performance - Piano. Since 1994 until present, she has worked at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts* as a lecturer in Chamber Music and Interpretation and as a vocal class accompanist. Among her numerous artistic activities are stage appearances with diverse concert programmes in Poland, Germany, Russia, Greece, Turkey, North Macedonia, Moldova, and Bulgaria. Elvira Mateva has successfully performed as a soloist with the Plovdiv Philharmonic Orchestra and the Burgas Philharmonic Orchestra. She has been repeatedly awarded prestigious distinctions for highly artistic accompaniment at various music forums: the Eighth National Academic Competition '*Johann Sebastian Bach and His Time*' - *Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, Plovdiv*; the Fifth International Competition for Chamber Music and Individual Performers '*Prof. Asen Diamandiev*' - Art Borovets Festival; the 7th International Competition '*Eugen Coca*', Chisinau, Moldova; the Fourth International Competition for Young Trumpet Players – Ohrid, North Macedonia; the Second International Competition for Brass Instrument Performance '*Nizhny Novgorod - Brass*' - Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, and many others. Elvira Mateva has participated in numerous prestigious national and international projects, and for her long-standing teaching activity she has been awarded distinctions for high achievements.

The reference submitted by the candidate regarding the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements presents a versatile, profound, and valuable professional development over the years, significantly exceeding the required minimum number of points. As early as her doctoral dissertation entitled '*The Chamber Vocal Cycle Songs and Dances of Death by Modest Mussorgsky in the Context of Medieval Macabre Aesthetics*', published by Delta Ti, Plovdiv, Elvira Mateva demonstrated a serious scholarly interest in the field of chamber singing and its artistic issues. The analysis of the musical-poetic and musical-dramaturgical expression in the vocal cycle Songs and Dances of Death includes a historical study of the macabre theme and the influence of the medieval allegory in European culture - literature,

visual arts, and music, presenting the ideological and artistic image of death through the prism of the poetic and musical text. The dissertation represents the first analytical and scholarly study of Mussorgsky's chamber vocal cycle *Songs and Dances of Death* in Bulgarian musicology, in which a musicological-stylistic (compositional organization, means of expression) and interpretative analysis of the work has been carried out. The conclusions and generalizations regarding the development of Mussorgsky's piano oeuvre, in accordance with the selected research topic, are supported by well-grounded evidence, literary factual material, and personal performance experience.

The leading creative performances submitted for review by Senior Lecturer Elvira Mateva (11 in number) are diverse in terms of repertoire, themes, genres, styles, and artistic expression. Among them, particular emphasis should be placed on the performance of the one-act monopera *The Human Voice* by Francis Poulenc (the first performance in Plovdiv, soloist - Ralitsa Goranova), as well as the concerts in Germany, Greece, and North Macedonia. The repertoire is exceptionally diverse and includes both solo performances (the performance of Grieg's Piano Concerto and Orchestra) and collaboration with violists, French horn players, and singers. This demonstrates not only the technical maturity and pianistic skills of the candidate, but also her ability for artistic interpretation and a high level of ensemble musicianship.

Alongside her active concert activity, Elvira Mateva is the author of a number of publications in specialized scientific editions, some of which address projections of the macabre theme in Mussorgsky's oeuvre and in visual arts. Other scholarly studies are dedicated to contemporary trends in vocal work, namely 'MICROLEARNING IN VOCAL PERFORMANCE – AN EXPERIMENT FOR IMPROVING LANGUAGE SKILLS', Vol. 67, No. 5 (2024): Knowledge in Practice, ISSN 1857-923X (Printed), ISSN 2545-4439 (Online), pp. 807–813. In this publication, Mateva, PhD substantiates the effectiveness of microlearning as an alternative method for overcoming information pressure and cognitive overload characteristic of contemporary education and proposes a structural model for e-learning that integrates microlearning into a specific artistic and educational context - the education of students and doctoral candidates in classical singing. Models and specific micro-tasks are proposed, aimed at improving articulation, diction, and intonation accuracy in the performance of vocal repertoire in English, as well as an interdisciplinary approach through the synergy between language and music education.

A significant contribution is also the study 'MUSICAL TRANSFORMATIONS OF A LYRIC INSPIRATION – 'NUR WER DIE SEHNSUCHT KENNT' BY JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE', E-Journal VFU, No. 23 (2025), ISSN 1313-7514 – online, pp. 674-683, in which a comparative analysis of the musical interpretations of the poem 'Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt' from the novel *Wilhelm Meister* by J. W. von Goethe is carried out, and the various compositional approaches to the vocal interpretation of the poetic text in the works of Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, and Medtner are systematized, with their inherent stylistic and emotional-expressive characteristics.

The citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific peer review amount to 6, which meets the legal requirements. There are also three reviews of the candidate's concert activity in specialized scientific editions.

Among the leading creative performances that are not considered a habilitation work, special attention should be paid to the premiere performance in Bulgaria of *First Songs*, Op. 5/Op. 47

by Fazıl Say, with soloist Alper Ünlütürk – baritone, and the concert of the soloists Chen Yikan and Ouyang Rinze in *Saedinie* Hall. Perhaps this is the appropriate place to emphasize a serious problem of contemporary pedagogical activity related to the education of foreign students, predominantly from the People's Republic of China. Verbal communication may represent a significant obstacle on the path to mastering the educational material and its artistic realization on stage. Based on my direct impressions of the work of Senior Lecturer Elvira Mateva, PhD, I must share that she masters the balance between patience, high standards, pedagogical principles, psychological approach, and empathy, finding the appropriate individual path to each student. These professional and personal qualities ensure optimal results and excellent 'feedback' with the students she trains.

The list of the candidate's supporting creative performances is extensive and contains an impressive number of repertoire works from various styles and historical periods. Many of the concerts were realized at prestigious music forums abroad, in Austria, Greece, Turkey, and North Macedonia. Her professionalism, erudition, and skills as an accompanist have been highly appreciated in the masterclasses in which she has participated.

Alongside her active academic teaching, concert, and research work, Ms Mateva participates in projects (/Musical Theatre - A Creative Laboratory for Specific Linguistic and Vocal Sound Models: Historical, Cultural and Semantic Aspects'), conducts masterclasses in vocal chamber music, and appears as a piano accompanist in the masterclass of Prof. Ryszard Minkiewicz, PhD (*Stanisław Moniuszko* Academy of Music, Gdańsk, Poland). The creative field of her activities is continuously enriched with new ideas and artistic stimuli, which harmoniously complement her overall artistic and academic presence.

I have known Senior Lecturer Elvira Mateva, PhD since I joined the teaching staff of *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, and I believe that she belongs among those colleagues whose principles, integrity, diligence, commitment, and professionalism uphold the authority of the Academy. Based on all the above, I firmly support her candidacy for the academic position of **Associate Professor in Chamber Singing (with Pianist)** in Professional Field 8.3. Music and Dance Art, and I wish her success in her future work as a pedagogue, scholar, and artist.

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Prof. Vesela Geleva, PhD

Plovdiv