

## EVALUATION OPINION

by

**Prof. Milena Shushulova-Pavlova, PhD,**

New Bulgarian University

In connection with the contributions of the proposed activity and habilitation work  
of **Kalina Ivanova Decheva-Petkova, PhD**

for participation in the competition for the academic position of

**Associate Professor (Foreign Language Interpretation of the Musical Piece)**  
at the **Faculty of Music Pedagogy, Department of Music Pedagogy and Conducting,**  
of the **Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts “Prof. Asen Diamandiev” – Plovdiv,**  
in the professional field 8.3. **Music and Dance Arts,**  
announced in the *State Gazette*, issue no. 57 / July 15, 2025.

Kalina Decheva is a lecturer in English with more than eighteen years of professional experience at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts “Prof. Asen Diamandiev,” where she teaches students from various specialties—opera singers, visual artists, musicians, and dancers. She graduated from the English Language School in Plovdiv and continued her linguistic education in the Master’s programs at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” and Veliko Tarnovo University “St. St. Cyril and Methodius.”

She holds a Ph.D. with a research focus on language as a bonding factor in the musical-stage arts. For Kalina, foreign language teaching embodies meaning, rhythm, and emotion; when language is mastered with understanding and sensitivity, it becomes a powerful instrument of stage expression.

She strives to work in an interdisciplinary manner—integrating language with music, movement, and the performer’s psychology. Decheva demonstrates a marked interest in innovative teaching methods, including microlearning, motivational strategies, and artistic techniques for more effective foreign language acquisition. She conducts her language instruction in the context of the arts, guided by an individual approach, respect for the learner’s personality, and the awareness that she is working with highly creative and emotionally perceptive individuals.

**Assessment of Compliance with the Minimum National Requirements under the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ЗПАКРБ)**

### **Group A of Indicators**

**Indicator 1.** Dissertation for the awarding of the educational and scientific degree *Doctor*  
Title: *Language as a Bonding Factor in Musical-stage Arts*  
Diploma No. 121 / 18.02.2025

Academic advisor: Prof. Toni Shekerdzhieva–Novak, PhD  
Points achieved: 50

### Group B of Indicators

**Indicator 2.** Habilitation work – published monograph in the relevant scientific field.

*Language in Musical Activities and the Field of Psychological Well-being*

Plovdiv: AMDFA “Prof. Asen Diamandiev,” 2025, 193 pages

ISBN: 978-619-7682-48-9 (print); 978-619-7682-49-6 (PDF)

**Points achieved:** 100

### Group Γ of Indicators

**Indicator 7.** Published book based on the defended dissertation for the degree of *Doctor*

Monograph: *Language as a Bonding Factor in Musical-stage Arts*

Plovdiv: DeltaT Publishing, 2025, 218 pages

ISBN: 978-619-7579-03-1

**Points achieved:** 75

**Indicator 9.** Articles and papers published in specialized journals and proceedings in the field of arts:

- *Music in English Language Classes with Art Students – Some Ideas for Enriching Current Practice.* In: Jubilee Collection *Music Theory Training in Higher Music Education*. 2017. ISBN 978-954-2963-24-0, pp. 76–83.
- *The Role of Musical Background in English Language Lessons.* In: *Proceedings of Spring Scientific Readings 2017*, AMDFA, 2017. ISSN 1314-7005, pp. 59–62.
- *Photos and Replicas of Famous Paintings in English Language Classes with Art Students – New Aspects of Current Practice.* In: *Proceedings of the International Conference Science, Education and Innovation in Arts*, 2017. ISBN 978-954-2963-23-3, pp. 384–388.
- *How Listening to Songs Affects Language Competence.* In: *Annual book 2018*, AMDFA – Plovdiv. ISSN 1313-6526, pp. 253–260.
- *Some Authors’ Views on the Connection between the Development of Musical Skills and Language Competence.* In: *Spring Scientific Readings 2018*, AMDFA – Plovdiv. ISSN 1314-7005, pp. 36–41.
- *How Memorizing Songs Contributes to More Effective and Enjoyable English Language Learning.* In: *Spring Scientific Readings 2019*, AMDFA. ISSN 1314-7005, pp. 112–118.
- *Why Is Studying a Nation’s Culture Essential for Successful Language Acquisition.* In: *Proceedings of the 3rd International Scientific Conference “Science, Education, and Innovation in the Arts”*, 2021. ISSN 2738-8956 (print), ISSN 2738-8964 (online), pp. 211–219.
- *How Can Learning the Language of Foreign Students Improve the Teaching of Bulgarian.* In: *Spring Scientific Readings 2021*, AMDFA – Plovdiv. ISSN 1314-7005, pp. 42–49.
- *How Can Assessment Serve as a Motivational Tool in Teaching English to Art Students.* In: *Spring Scientific Readings 2022*, AMDFA – Plovdiv. ISSN 1314-7005, pp. 38–47.
- *Carol Dweck’s Theory of Motivation and Mindset in English Language Learning for Art Students.* In: *Spring Scientific Readings 2023*, AMDFA – Plovdiv. ISSN 1314-7005 (Print), ISSN 2738-7720 (Online), pp. 37–45.
- *Optimizing Pronunciation Work When Preparing English Language Repertoire with Vocal Students from China.* In: *Multidisciplinary Journal of Science, Education and Art*, *Proceedings of the 7th Balkan Scientific Conference Science – Education – Art in the 21st Century*, 2024. ISSN 1313-5236, pp. 349–356.
- *Microlearning in the Arts (for Vocal Classes): A Review of Literature on the Topic.* In: *Proceedings of the 3rd National Scientific and Practical Conference “Digital Transformation of Education – Problems and Solutions,”* University of Ruse, 2025. ISSN 3033-0610 (print), ISSN 3033-0629 (online), pp. 216–221.

**Points achieved:** 180 (12 articles × 15 points)

**Total points for the group:** 255

### Group Δ of Indicators

**Indicator 17.** Citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific peer review:

1. Decheva, Kalina. *Music in English Language Classes with Art Students – Some Ideas for Enriching Current Practice*. In: *Music Theory Training in Higher Music Education*, AMDFA – Plovdiv, 2017, pp. 76–85.  
Cited in: Ruseva, Sofia. *On Teaching the Course “Bulgarian Folk Music” to Students in “Bulgarian Folk Choreography”*. In: *Proceedings of the Jubilee International Scientific Conference Science, Education, and Arts. 50 Years of Tradition and New Trends in Dance Genres*, AMDFA – Plovdiv, 2024, ISBN 978-619-7682-45-8, pp. 305–309 // p. 307.
2. Decheva, Kalina. *Approaches to Overcoming Certain Difficulties in Pronunciation When Preparing English Language Repertoire (“Blue Monday” by Gershwin – a Production of the AMDFA Academic Opera Theatre)*. In: *Proceedings of the Conference Science, Education, and Innovation in the Arts*, AMDFA – Plovdiv, 2023, ISSN 2738-8956 (Print), ISSN 2738-8964 (Online), pp. 127–132.  
Cited in: Hanse, Alia. *The Academic Opera Theatre of AMDFA “Prof. Asen Diamandiev” as a Workshop for Student Ideas and Collaborations*. In: *Intellectual Property – Creativity, Innovation, and Sustainable Development*. Sofia: Academic Publishing House “Za bukvite – O pismeneh,” 2024, ISBN 978-619-185-687-9, pp. 343–353 // p. 350.

**Points achieved: 20** (2 × 10 points)

**Indicator 18.** Citations or reviews in non-refereed but peer-reviewed journals:

1. Decheva, Kalina. *Carol Dweck’s Theory of Motivation and Mindset in English Language Learning for Art Students*. In: *Spring Scientific Readings 2023*, AMDFA – Plovdiv, pp. 37–45.  
Cited in: Mateva, Elvira. *Microlearning in Vocal Training – An Experiment for Improving Language Skills. Knowledge – International Journal*, Vol. 67.5, 2024, pp. 807–813 // p. 812.
2. Decheva, Kalina. *Why Is Studying a Nation’s Culture Essential for Successful Language Acquisition*. In: *Proceedings of the 3rd International Scientific Conference “Science, Education, and Innovation in the Arts,”* 2021, pp. 211–219.  
Cited in: Petkov, Lyudmil. *Crossover in Music from a Different Perspective*. *e-Journal VFU*, Issue 23, 2025, pp. 557–563 // p. 558.
3. Decheva, Kalina. *Approaches to Overcoming Certain Difficulties in Pronunciation When Preparing English Language Repertoire (“Blue Monday” by Gershwin – a Production of the AMDFA Academic Opera Theatre)*. In: *Proceedings of the 4th International Scientific Conference “Science, Education, and Innovation in the Arts,”* AMDFA – Plovdiv, 2023, Vol. 1, pp. 127–133.  
Cited in: Petkov, Lyudmil. *Crossover in Music from a Different Perspective*. *e-Journal VFU*, Issue 23, 2025, pp. 557–563 // p. 560.
4. Decheva, Kalina. *Some Authors’ Views on the Unity between Text and Music in the Musical Stage Work*. In: *Spring Scientific Readings*, AMDFA – Plovdiv, 2024.  
Cited in: Mateva, Elvira. *Musical Transformations of a Lyrical Inspiration – “Nur Wer Die Sehnsucht Kennt” by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*. *e-Journal VFU*, Issue 23, 2025, pp. 663–672 // p. 675.
5. Review of the monograph *Language as a Bonding Factor in Musical-stage Arts* by Jean Pehlivanov: *A Brief Overview of the Book “Language as a Bonding Factor in Musical-stage Arts” by Kalina Decheva*. In: *Art Spectrum*, Academic Journal, Issue 66, May 2025, ISSN 1314-0000, p. 61.

**Points achieved: 30** (6 × 5 points)

**Total points for the group: 50**

## Group E of Indicators

**Indicator 22.** Participation in a national scientific, educational, or creative project:

- Expert in educational disciplines under Project “*Modernization of the Educational Process at the National Academy of Music ‘Pancho Vladigerov’ and AMDFA ‘Prof. Asen Diamandiev’*” (BG05M2OP001-2.016-0034), supplementary agreement to employment contract No. 12 / 14.02.2011.
- Team member – speech technique consultant for Project 20/2023 at AMDFA, directed by Alia Hanse, PhD, for the production of the opera “*Blue Monday*” by George Gershwin (Bulgarian premiere) and participation in the national stage forum.
- Coordinator for Project 24/2024 at AMDFA “Prof. Asen Diamandiev,” led by Prof. Toni Shekerdzhieva–Novak, PhD, focused on “*Application and Study of the Concept of Microlearning in English Language Work with Vocal Students.*”

**Points achieved: 45** (3 × 15 points)

**Indicator 27.** Published university textbook or teaching aid used within the educational system:  
*ESP Handbook for Arts Students*. Compiler and annotations: Kalina Decheva. AMDFA “Prof. Asen Diamandiev,” Plovdiv, 2024, 100 pages.  
 ISBN 978-619-7682-43-4 (PDF) / ISBN 978-619-7682-44-1 (print).

**Points achieved: 20**

**Indicator 28.** Leadership of master classes, ateliers, or workshops in the field of the arts:

- Public lecture–workshop for art doctoral students (19.02.2024): *How to Select Appropriate Material for Translation for the Doctoral Minimum*
- Public lecture–workshop for art doctoral students (26.02.2024): *How to Prepare Successfully the Four Components of the Doctoral Minimum*
- Public lecture–workshop for art doctoral students (21.02.2025): *How to Succeed in the English Language Examination*
- Public lecture–workshop for art doctoral students (28.02.2025): *Common Mistakes in the English Language Examination*

**Points achieved: 80** (4 × 20 points)

**Total points for the group: 145**

### Summary Table of Indicators and Achieved Points

| Group of Indicators | Content                    | Points Required for the Academic Position of “Associate Professor” | Points in the Self-Assessment |
|---------------------|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| A                   | Indicator 1                | 50   | 50                            |
| B                   | Sum of Indicators 3 to 5   | 100  | 100                           |
| Г                   | Sum of Indicators 6 to 15  | 120  | 255                           |
| Д                   | Sum of Indicators 16 to 19 | 40   | 50                            |
| E                   | Sum of Indicators 20 to 31 | 50   | 145                           |

**The presented academic activity is substantial, contributive, and sufficient to justify the awarding of the academic position of Associate Professor (Foreign Language Interpretation of the Musical Piece) at the Faculty of Music Pedagogy, Department of Music Pedagogy and Conducting, at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts “Prof. Asen Diamandiev” – Plovdiv, in the professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Arts. The data submitted by the candidate clearly demonstrate that Kalina Decheva, PhD meets the required scientometric criteria and maintains an active record of scholarly and teaching activity.**

### Contributive Character of the Scholarly Activity

The habilitation work “*Language in Musical Activities and the Field of Psychological Well-Being*” explores the influence of language in music on the inner world of the individual. The verbal text is examined as a powerful instrument for evoking emotions, constructing personal memories, and supporting mental health. The innovative aspect of the study lies in the search for an intersection among the three key constructs under investigation – psychological well-being, musical activity, and verbal text.

Particular emphasis is placed on the interrelationship between language, the musical arts, and well-being. The study considers language as a performative element, addressing phonetic challenges in singing and the necessity of confident mastery of foreign language texts from an artistic perspective. This interconnection is further enriched by the innovations of the digital era and the unique traditions of Bulgarian folklore. Framed in this way, such a synergy offers new opportunities for cultural, social, and emotional development.

The monograph is structured into seven parts. Its focus rests on the song text, the narratives it conveys, and their impact on listeners in fostering emotional stability and self-awareness. The work includes examples from studies conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating that individuals consciously select songs according to their emotional state, with the lyrics playing a key role in this process.

Attention is also given to the social aspect of music—through shared musical preferences and themes, people establish connections with one another, thereby reducing the sense of isolation. The research includes a test and a questionnaire designed as didactic tools to accompany a lecture course on related topics.

Kalina Decheva participates in numerous seminars and scholarly forums, where she shares experience and ideas with colleagues from both educational and performing arts fields. Her publications stem from and reflect the outcomes of these professional and academic activities.

### **Administrative and Public Activity**

The activities of Kalina Decheva demonstrate that she actively participates in projects and academic forums, which attests to her influence within the environment of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts and in the wider regional context.

### **Teaching and Educational Activity**

Kalina Decheva has been teaching at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv for fourteen years.

### **Personal Impressions of the Candidate (if applicable)**

I have no personal impressions of the candidate. I have professional impressions formed during the defense of her doctoral dissertation.

### **Final Evaluation**

Based on all of the above said, as well as on the conclusions drawn from the presented scholarly and teaching activity of **Kalina Ivanova Decheva-Petkova, PhD** and taking into account her academic engagement, the contributive nature of her habilitation work, scientific publications and projects, I hereby express my **positive evaluation** and recommend to the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury of the competition for the academic position of **Associate Professor (Foreign Language Interpretation of the Musical Piece)**, at the Faculty of Music Pedagogy, Department of Music Pedagogy and Conducting, at the Academy

of Music, Dance and Fine Arts “Prof. Asen Diamandiev” – Plovdiv, in the professional field **8.3. Music and Dance Arts**, to propose to the higher academic authority of the Academy that Dr. Kalina Decheva be appointed to the academic position of *Associate Professor*, in accordance with the provisions of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

**Date:** October 15, 2025

**Reviewer / Signature/:**

*Prof. Milena Shushulova-Pavlova, PhD*