

EVALUATION OPINION

by

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Professor of Choral Conducting, **Department** of *Music Pedagogy and Conducting*,
Faculty of *Music Pedagogy*,
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regarding **Senior Lecturer Kalina Decheva-Petkova, PhD**

Lecturer in English Language and candidate for the academic position of **Associate Professor**
in the professional field **8.3. Music and Dance Arts**,
specialty **“Foreign Language Interpretation of the Musical Piece”**,
Department of *Music Pedagogy and Conducting*,
Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts “Prof. Asen Diamandiev” – Plovdiv

Biography information and Professional Background

Kalina Decheva was born in Plovdiv, where she graduated from the English Language High School. She subsequently obtained Master’s degrees from Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” and Veliko Tarnovo University “St. St. Cyril and Methodius.” She earned her PhD degree at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts “Prof. Asen Diamandiev” – Plovdiv, with a dissertation entitled *“Language as a Bonding Factor in Musical-stage Arts.”*

At the Academy, Dr. Decheva works with students from various performing art disciplines, including opera singing, visual arts, music, and dance. Over the course of her eighteen-year teaching career, Senior Lecturer Dr. Kalina Decheva has demonstrated a pronounced and consistent interest in innovative teaching methods, including microlearning, motivational strategies, and artistic techniques designed to enhance the acquisition of a foreign language. Her pedagogical approach also integrates interdisciplinary learning and insights from the psychology of art.

Dr. Decheva is the author of numerous academic publications devoted to language as a performative element, the phonetic challenges of singing, and the confident mastery of foreign-language texts from an artistic perspective. She actively participates in a wide range of seminars and scientific forums, both in Bulgaria and abroad, where she shares her experience and ideas with colleagues from the fields of education and performing arts.

The materials submitted for participation in this competition comply with the procedural requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ЗПАЦРБ) and provide a comprehensive overview of the candidate’s professional activities. The reference of the minimum requirements indicates that Senior Lecturer K. Decheva fully meets the required number of points regarding the different groups of evaluation criteria.

The habilitation thesis proposed for review, titled “*Language in Musical Activities and the Field of Psychological Well-being*,” is a study of the role of language in music and its influence on the human psyche and health. Structured into seven parts, the monograph provides an in-depth analysis of the role of verbal expression in music—manifested through song lyrics, opera librettos, and similar forms—and its emotional, social, and psychological impact.

The introduction outlines the role of language as a means of communication, socialization, information exchange, emotional expression, self-expression, and personal affirmation. Particular attention is devoted to words in vocal arts as a primary source, motivation, and creative stimulus for composers. A noteworthy contribution of the work is its exploration of psychological well-being within musical activity and its various manifestations in the perception of arts.

In the second and third chapters, the author substantiates the function of words within the context of the musical process and explores the scope of its suggestive power. Drawing upon the latest international scholarly research on the subject, the study presents a multifaceted view of the emotional impact that text exerts on listeners. The examples provided from operatic performances featuring renowned soloists of the past—such as Maria Callas, Tito Gobbi, Giuseppe Di Stefano, and others—are particularly compelling and illustrate the author’s thesis at a high artistic level. Equally intriguing are the parallels drawn between linguistic influence and elements such as rhythm, timbre, stage behavior, musical style, diction, and pronunciation.

The fourth subsection of the monograph presents the musical philosophy of one of the emblematic figures of the 20th century—Leonard Bernstein. The author also analyzes a range of theories concerning the boundaries between the abstract and the subjective in musical perception, as well as the concept of the “integration effect” in vocal performance.

The subsequent chapters of the work are devoted to psychological well-being and the role of musical art as a therapeutic medium. The author explores and substantiates the diverse effects of music as a stimulus for creativity, self-expression, stress reduction, as well as healing of emotional trauma, social communication, achievement of intrapersonal balance, and more. Among the wide range of cited studies and theoretical perspectives, particular interest lies in the research examining the impact of music on individuals in disadvantaged circumstances and the potential of music to promote psychological support for socially marginalized groups, as well as for individuals in non-creative professions, victims of domestic violence, and other specific social categories.

In keeping with the technological dynamics of the contemporary era, the author devotes special attention to the role of the digital sphere and the combination of innovation, accessibility and global communication it enables. Although the virtually unlimited opportunities for cultural, social, and emotional development in the modern world also entail certain risks and negative aspects, their rational and well-grounded application contributes to the creation of a rich cultural environment and fosters creative stimulation. Of particular interest are both the developed test and questionnaire, which can serve as didactic tools for a

lecture course on a related subject. The questions included ensure the comprehensiveness of the research and provide opportunities for analyzing a broad spectrum of attitudes.

The monographic work of K. Decheva is distinguished by its numerous references to contemporary international scientific studies addressing the triadic relationship among language, music, and psychological well-being. Equally valuable, however, are the author's own conclusions and scholarly observations, which are grounded in her extensive professional experience as a language specialist working within the field of musical arts and possessing an in-depth understanding of the essence of distinctive creative dispositions.

Senior Lecturer Kalina Decheva, PhD, is the author of numerous publications in specialized academic journals. The twelve articles included in the submitted reference list demonstrate her sustained scholarly interest in the methodology of teaching foreign languages to arts students, her effort to optimize the process of linguistic skill acquisition among singers, and her exploration of the relationship between music and effective language learning, including the role of the musical background therein. A common feature of all her publications is the presence of original authorial ideas, a consistent pursuit of innovation, and reliance on contemporary international sources of recognized professional authority. In addition, Kalina Decheva delivers public workshop lectures for doctoral students at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof. Asen Diamandiev", Plovdiv. She is also an author of English language teaching materials and participates in a range of educational and artistic-creative projects.

I have had the opportunity to work with my colleague, Dr. Decheva, for many years in my capacity as a member and Head of the Department of Music Pedagogy and Conducting. I hold her in the highest regard for her professionalism, creative energy, sense of responsibility, empathy and tolerance. Her authority within the academic community is indisputable.

In conclusion, based on all the aforementioned considerations, I wholeheartedly support the candidacy of **Senior Lecturer Dr. Kalina Decheva-Petkova** for the academic position of **Associate Professor** in the field of 8.3 "Musical and Dance Arts," specialty "Foreign Language Interpretation of the Musical Piece" at the **Department of Music Pedagogy and Conducting**. I wish her continued success in her future academic and teaching endeavours.

Date: 31 October 2025

Place: Plovdiv

Reviewer:

Prof. Vesela Geleva, PhD

