

OPINION

by Prof. Dr. Ermila Schweizer, NMA “Prof. Pancho Vladigerov”

on a dissertation thesis of

Kalina Ivanova Decheva-Petkova

doctoral student on a free form of individual programme *Musicology and music arts*

at the Department of Classical, Pop and Jazz Performing Arts

Academy of Music, Dance and Fine arts, Plovdiv

Academic supervisor: Prof. Dr. Toni Shekerdzhieva – Nowak

titled: **LANGUAGE AS A BONDING FACTOR IN MUSICAL-STAGE ARTS**

for awarding the educational and scientific degree **Doctor**

Professional field 8.3 Music and dance art

On the basis of the decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Music Pedagogy held on 20.09.2024 to open a procedure for the defense of Kalina Decheva-Petkova's dissertation, the following materials were submitted to me: the applicant's resume, the dissertation thesis, an abstract, a reference to the contributions of the dissertation thesis, list of published articles on the topic of the dissertation.

Brief biography

Kalina Decheva-Petkova graduated from Veliko Turnovo University “St. st. Cyril and Methodius” in 1995, Major: English Philology. At present she is a senior lecturer in English at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" – Plovdiv. Her main research interests are in the domain of applied linguistics, the influence of music on optimization of the English language teaching for arts students; the role of language as a bonding factor in musical stage arts; the microlearning in English language training for the students in vocal classes. She has taken part in a numerous conferences and seminars for foreign language teaching, translation and interpretation as well as English literature. The dissertation student has presented an impressive list of published materials proving her stable interest in the subject of text and music and the relation between them.

The subject matter of the research is quite up-to date as an idea. It seeks concepts for the language improvement of vocal performers who inevitably encounter various language challenges. The author offers models for mastering the phonetics and semantics of a foreign language, bearing in mind the notion that this contributes to a better musical-stage performing and ensures greater satisfaction of the performers. According to the thesis language is not only a bridge between the performer and the audience but also a bonding factor in the cast while working on a musical-stage piece.

Empirical and theoretical methods were used in the present study. The empirical ones include survey and research of the available literature about the constructs discussed, social

questionnaires, interviews, observation. The theoretical methods are used in the comparative studies, analyzes and summaries.

The forwarded dissertation thesis contains a total of 225 pages, organized into introduction, three chapters, conclusion, bibliography and appendices.

The motifs of choice for the topic of the dissertation paper are clearly stated by the author in the Introduction. These motifs are in connection with her teaching practice with students from vocal classes and the difficulties they have when performing in a foreign language, namely in English.

Chapter one: Here Ms Decheva argues that language is a means of communication which possesses both mind-shaping function together with a coding and expressive one. A synthesized historical overview is done regarding the genesis of language by means of analyzing some basic theories with regard to the subject. A special attention is paid to the language-text in a musical piece and its role as a bridge to connect the author, the performer and the audience. In subchapters the characteristic features of English phonetics are highlighted as well as the connection between verbal text and music.

Chapter two: Here the author analyzes some difficulties regarding the language when staging repertoire in English. The analysis is based on her experience from working with multinational group of students when staging the one-act jazz opera *Blue Monday* by *Gershwin*. Various methods for acquiring a better articulation and diction are mentioned – the aural-oral approach, repetition, the philosophy of Suzuki method. Also some specifics when working with students from China are presented, which come as a consequence of the weak points of the English language education in China - like the lack of communicative approach and logically integrated teaching.

Chapter three: Here the author elaborates on motivational techniques that will build grounds for high quality of language production. She dwells on leading motivational theories and clarifies the etymology of the term *motivation*. Special focus is put on Carol Dweck's book "Self theories. Their role in motivation, personality, and development". There Carol Dweck highlights the problems of personal mindset and the notion of success, also the subdivision into two groups of people following that criteria: the group of fixed mindsets and the group of malleable intelligence. The subsequent results in overcoming the difficulties in the educational process are taken into account. In a separate subchart text is defined as an important factor for bonding the musical-stage piece with its audience.

Conclusion: Here Decheva confirms her scientific assumption about language and its role as a bonding factor in staging musical-stage pieces and also as a connecting element between author, performer and audience.

I accept as credible the contributions of the dissertation thesis / 6 in number/ presented at the end of that work.

The dissertation student has three scientific published materials in accordance with the subject of the thesis. The abstract, which consists of 59 pages, fully corresponds to the contents of the dissertation.

The dissertation thesis of Kalina Decheva-Petkova is a profound scientific study, both in terms of problematics discussed, and in terms of the analysis of the aforementioned problematics, and the conclusions drawn. From the presented text it is clear that Kalina Decheva-Petkova is a polymath linguist with serious theoretical background and a marked scientific interest.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the author and her academic supervisor Prof. Dr. Toni Shekerdzhieva-Nowak and I appeal to the reputable Scientific jury to award Kalina Decheva-Petkova with the educational and scientific degree "*Doctor*" in professional field *8.3. – Music and Dance Arts*.

Sofia, 15.01.2025

Prof. Dr. Ermila Schweizer