

OPINION

by **Prof. Borislav Aleksandrov Yasenov, PhD**
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on the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of **Associate Professor** at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* - Plovdiv in the field of higher education 8. Arts, professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art, major: Music Stage Production and Classical Singing

By Order No. RD-27-117 of 21.09.2023 of the Rector of *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, Plovdiv, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury of the competition for the academic position 'Associate Professor' in the field of higher education 8. Arts, professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art, scientific major 'Music Stage Production and Classical Singing', announced for the needs of the Department of Classical, Pop and Jazz Performing Arts at the Faculty of Music Pedagogy. One candidate has submitted documents to participate in the competition, announced in the State Gazette, issue 63 / 25.07.2023, namely Asst. Prof. Ivaylo Trifonov Mihaylov, PhD from *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* AMDFA - Plovdiv. The submitted documents and materials, on electronic media, meet all the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and the Regulations for its Implementation at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts - Plovdiv.

Ivaylo Mihaylov is an outstanding tenor opera singer with an enviable professional career and an impressive educational background. In 1992 he graduated from *Antoine de Saint-Exupéry* French Language School, Plovdiv. In 1997 he was awarded a Bachelor's degree at *Prof. Pancho Vladigerov* National Academy of Music, Sofia, major 'Classical Singing'. Since 2002, after winning a scholarship from the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria, he has continued his studies in Italy, first at *Boris Hristov* Academy in Rome (2003), and later at the Academy of Opera Baroque Art in Osimo (2004). In 2007 he defended his Master's degree in Vocal Pedagogy at the NBU - Sofia. He was awarded a Master's degree in two majors at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* AMDFA, Plovdiv - Art Management (2011) and Music Stage Production (2013), and also defended a doctoral degree (2022).

The candidate's professional experience began back in 1998 as a soloist at the State Opera of Stara Zagora, where he worked until 1999. In the period 2005 - 2017 he held the position of soloist at the State Opera of Plovdiv, from 2013 to 2014. - Cattiensa - Saigon, Vietnam, VN - jury and mentor in TV-show Pop star to opera star (VTV), 2012 - 2013 - artist-soloist at State Opera of Varna, and from 2005 to 2008 - vocal pedagogue of Plovdiv Boys Choir. From 2017 until now he has been working at the State Opera of Stara Zagora as a soloist, and since 2019 he has been an Assistant Professor at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* AMDFA, Plovdiv.

Mihaylov's artistic activity is extremely active and rich. His debut at the Sofia National Opera and Ballet was in 2012 in the role of Ernani from Verdi's opera of the same name. The following year he made his debut at the Bucharest National Opera and Ballet as Faust from the opera of the same name by S. Gounod. Next followed performances at the opera in the city of Cagliari: Don José in Coliseo do Porto (2014) and the title role of Vakula in Tchaikovsky's fairy-tale opera Cherevichki. Since 2015, he has been a regular guest soloist in Spoleto, Italy, where he has appeared in the title roles of the operas La bohème (2015), Masked Ball (2016), and Carmen (2017). He tours in Perugia, Orvieto, Assisi. Since 2018 he is a soloist of the State Opera of Stara Zagora. She sings on the stages in Palma de Mallorca, Antwerp, Ghent, etc. He has participated in a number of prestigious festivals in Bulgaria. He has made numerous recordings for BNR, BNT, VTV and RAI.

The minimum national requirements are met, even more than necessary.

For the indicator A is presented Dissertation Thesis for the award of the educational and scientific degree 'PhD' on the topic 'Vocal Songs of Reynaldo Hahn and the Application of French Phonetic Transcription to the Interpretation of French, Compared to the Practical Transcription and Transliteration into Bulgarian'.

Indicator B, item 4 - Staged author's product in the field of arts, is proposed Concert-performance 'The Songs of Puccini' (2022), Sofia, Bulgaria Chamber Hall, in the framework of 'Music without Borders' (script and direction, soloist, concept, translations).

Under item 5, as a leading (independent) creative performance are highlighted 3 premiere performances: Faust, Gounod, in the role of Faust, with the State Opera of Stara Zagora (opening of the 52nd Festival of Opera and Ballet Art, 2022); Tchaikovsky's Cherevichki, in the role of Vakula, with the Opera Theatre in Cagliari, Italy (2014); Carmen, Bizet in the role of Don José, with Orchestra do Norte, Coliseo do Porto, Porto, Portugal (2014).

Contributions of a methodological and applied nature are:

'Vocal Songs of Reynaldo Hahn and the Application of French Phonetic Transcription to the Interpretation of French, Compared to the Practical Transcription and Transliteration into Bulgarian' - published book based on a defended dissertation for the award of the academic degree of Doctor (PhD) (indicator Γ item 7).

- The problem of introducing French phonetic transcription leading to effective text handling in French singing is addressed for the first time;
- the study of the songwriting of Reynaldo Hahn (1875-1947) enriches the scientific discourse by bringing out essential aspects of the multifaceted work of this little-known author;
- a large amount of information from various sources is translated;
- for the first time in Bulgarian musicology, a comprehensive analysis and genre classification of the song works and vocal cycles of Reynaldo Hahn;
- for the first time, a phonetic transcription is made, compared with the practiced transcription and transliteration and free translation of the songs;
- in addition to its research value, the work has practical-applied value: it proposes and proves an innovative system that can replace an existing practice, both in opera houses and for chamber performers.

The issues discussed in the book have practical applicability and are oriented to both academic work and artistic activity. The study will enrich the theoretical and practical skills of performing singers, facilitate their work in preparing works with text in French, and also expand the competencies of music educators.

Under indicator Γ, item 9 - Articles and reports published in specialised journals in the field of arts, 3 publications have been submitted whose contribution is undisputed.

In the paper 'On Some Issues in Opera Performance Practice in the Conditions of Covid-19', presented at the III International Scientific Conference 'Science, Education and Innovations in the Field of Arts', *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts - Plovdiv, some of the more significant problems in the opera performance practice in Bulgaria, caused by the pandemic situation, are structured and analyzed, attention is paid to the change of the practical, psychological and economic profiles of professionals in the field of opera art due to the Covid-19 restrictions in the country, and it is also noted that as a result of the analyses, a scientific model can be applied as a basis for building a package of modern policies in the realization of talents in the real economy and cybereconomy.

In the article 'On the Premiere of 'Ba-ta-clan' by Jacques Offenbach in the tenth anniversary year of the Academic Opera Theatre (AOT) at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* AMDFA – Plovdiv' (Yearbook, 2020, *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* AMDFA – Plovdiv), for the first time a current event is analyzed in a scientific work, namely the Ba-ta-clan Operetta by J. Offenbach. The background,

preparation, realization of the production and the media response of the event are described and analyzed, as well as factual information related to the history of AOT.

In the paper 'The Songs of Giacomo Puccini - Chronology, Performance and History of their Creation', presented at the Spring Scientific Readings, *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* AMDFA – Plovdiv', 2022, a little-known part of the song output of the composer Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) is explored. It traces the chronology and history of the creation of the works and reflects on their performance (the author was the first tenor performer of Puccini's songs in Bulgaria).

Indicator Γ item 12 - Realized short author's product in the field of arts, two premiere performances are listed, of which the candidate is the director-stage producer, and the organization and performance is made by AOT at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* AMDFA – Plovdiv: 'Ba-ta-clan', operetta by J. Offenbach and 'Bastien und Bastienne', opera by V. A. Mozart.

Under item 13 - Leading (or independent) artistic performance in the field of arts, the premiere of the opera *Thais* by Masne, realized with the Baltic Opera in the city of Gdansk (2019), where Mihaylov plays the character of Nisias (title role).

The candidate has offered two citations (indicator Δ item 17).

Eight reviews have been submitted for completed performances in which the candidate performs activities closely related to the announced major (Indicator Δ , item 19).

Under indicator E, item 22 - Participation in a national scientific, educational or artistic project, two performances of the AOT at AMDFA are presented, in which Mihaylov is the staging director: the 'The Player' /Il giocatore/ opera by L. Cherubini (project – 'From Concerts to Opera on the Path of Professionalism in the Development of Students', Contract No. 1/19 of 21.03.2019) and 'Rita' opera by G. Donizetti (project – 'Beginning of the Second Creative Decade for the Academic Opera Theatre – Plovdiv' 2021-2022. Order 134/17.03.2021).

The candidate is the project leader of the project 'Stage Realization of Fragments from the 'The Elixir of Love' Opera by Gaetano Donizetti for a Successful Professional Debut in a Role', Contract No. 3 / 2023 (indicator E, item 24).

A workshop and presentation of the 'Cherevichki' opera by P. I. Tchaikovsky (2023) is proposed in *Prof. Ivan Spasov* Choir Hall at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, Plovdiv (E 28).

Taking into account the above, I note the high achievements and the contributory character of the overall active and rich pedagogical, artistic and scientific research activity of Asst. Prof. Ivaylo Mihaylov, PhD. The theoretical developments of the candidate have practical applicability and are oriented to the educational work. The achieved results fully correspond to the specific requirements of the major 'Music Stage Production and Classical Singing'.

After reading the materials presented in the competition and analyzing their significance, research, scientific and applied contributions, I find it justified to give my positive assessment to the esteemed Scientific Jury in support of the candidature of Asst. Prof. Ivaylo Mihaylov, PhD for the academic position of Associate Professor at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, Plovdiv in the professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art, scientific major 'Music Stage Production and Classical Singing'.

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Opinion drafted by:

(Prof. Borislav Yassenov, PhD)