

# OPINION

by

Prof. Violeta Gorcheva, PhD

in connection with the competition

for the academic position

**‘Associate Professor of Music Stage Production and Classical Singing’**

field 8.3. Music and Dance Art,

at the Department of Classical, Pop and Jazz Performing Arts of

*Prof. Asen Diamandiev* Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts - Plovdiv

***Candidate: Asst. Prof. Ivaylo Mihaylov, PhD***

The professional qualification and educational background of Asst. Prof. Ivaylo Mihaylov, PhD are the basis of his competence and complex, broad-spectrum creative practice as a classical performer, vocal pedagogue, director-stage manager and art manager with undisputed achievements on the national and international stage.<sup>1</sup>

In the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor of Music Stage Production and Classical Singing - announced by the AMDFA, Mihaylov was the only candidate. The reference he provided meets the minimum national requirements and fulfills the criteria of merit as defined in the Rules on the Implementation of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act.

Asst. Prof. Ivaylo Mihaylov, PhD participated in the competition with a major

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<sup>1</sup> Ivaylo Mihaylov graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Classical Singing from the National Academy of Music. He holds professional qualifications in three master's degree programmes - in MSP and Art Management, acquired at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts and in Classical Music from NBU. He perfected his vocal skills as a specialist in the Opera Academies in Italy - *Boris Hristov* in Rome, and in Osimo. Since 1998 he has established himself as one of the leading tenors on the Bulgarian opera stage, with numerous prestigious performances in Europe and Asia. He was a vocal pedagogue of the Choir of Plovdiv Boys in the period -2005-2008, and also carried out projects in the field of music management. Since 2019 he is an Assistant Professor at the AMDFA where he realizes as a director - *Rita* and *Elixir of Love* by Donizetti, for the first time in Bulgaria he realizes the premieres of *The Player* by L. Cherubini and *Ba-ta-clan* by Offenbach. He is also the author of a number of scholarly publications on creative and performance issues, unexplored authors and segments of their method and work.

habilitation thesis consisting of:

**I. *Artistic and Creative Activity***

**II. *Scientific activity***

The two sections correctly outline the contributions, and the relevant evidentiary material is also attached thereto.

**I. To the artistic creative contributions** of Mihaylov, PhD, reflected in **Indicator - B - item 4, item 5, item 12**, 3 performances and 3 directorial performances are listed respectively:

**In Indicator - B - item 4 /realised author's product/**

- concert-performance – ‘The Songs of Puccini’, realized in Bulgaria Chamber Hall within the framework of ‘Music without Borders’.

*The concert-performance* with a host, presents a little known and performed area of Puccini’s music - his chamber artistic songs. Mihaylov not only translates, creates the overall concept, script and directs the performance, but he himself as a performer makes his own interpretation and embodies his conceptual idea, creating an exquisitely presented, poetic and graceful song performance.

**B Indicator - B - item 5 leading /independent/solo/ creative performance in the field of arts**

- The role of Faust in the premiere performance of the opera of the same name at the opening of the Festival of Opera and Ballet Art - Stara Zagora, 2022;
- The role of Vakula from the Cherievichki opera at the Teatro dell’Opera di Cagliari, 2014 /the premiere was recorded by Italian TV/;
- The role of Don José in the premiere performance of Carmen in Porto, Portugal in 2014.

*The three operatic roles* featured in the reference demonstrate the candidate’s classy command of voice, acting and interpretive gifts. In these vivid portrayals, Mihaylov, PhD achieves an organics and synthesis between dramatic and vocal portrayal, expressiveness and impact, establishing himself as one of Europe’s brilliant contemporary tenor performers of these landmark roles for

operatic dramaturgy.

**In B Indicator – *item 12 /realised short author’s product/***

- the stage production of the operetta by Offenbach - Ba-ta-clan, staged for the first time in Bulgaria at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in 2020;
- directing Bastien und Bastienne, staged at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in 2017.

The director Mihaylov approaches the two works, which are diametric as a musical theatre genre, with imagination and skill. He convincingly weaves his interpretation and original reading/character into their stage transcription and audiovisual solution.

Summing up the artistic and scientific activity of the candidate presented in the report, I emphasize that: ***the six performances are representative and are a high artistic achievement in our contemporary art of singing performance and staging.***

I will emphasize especially the **contributions** related to:

- introducing and popularizing less known and not performed in Bulgaria works of world chamber vocal lyrics, specifically the songs of Puccini;
- Offenbach’s ‘Ba-ta-clan’ operetta staged for the first time on the Bulgarian music-theatre stage.

## II. *Scientific Activity*

As a searching and thinking artist, assistant professor Ivaylo Mihaylov, PhD focuses on the scientific side of vocal and directing art, analyzes current theoretical problems, and develops unexplored topics.

***Indicator – I- item 7*** presents the book:

- ‘*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*’, based on his PhD thesis, published 2023 in Plovdiv, ISBN 978-619-236-420-5;

The monograph is *innovative and contributory* in terms of its theoretical-practical performance and pedagogical applicability. It explores the song work of Reynaldo Hahn, who is almost unknown in Bulgaria, bringing out his essential and guiding aesthetic principles, outlines the genre model, makes an analytical reading and classification of the works. I will emphasize the merit of Mihaylov, who, through his excellent command of the French language and his personal experience as a performer, translated the texts, applied the methods of comparison between phonetic and practical transcription and of correspondence or transliteration, creating a reliable and qualitative theoretical basis for future vocalist-interpreters of Reynaldo Hahn.

**Item 9** contains 3 scientific publications in refereed journals:

‘On Some Issues in Opera Performance Practice in the Conditions of Covid 19’;

*/shared authorship/*

- ‘On the Premiere of Offenbach’s ‘Ba-ta-clan’ in the Tenth, Jubilee Year of the AOT at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* AMDFA - Plovdiv;
- ‘The Songs of Giacomo Puccini - Chronology, Performance and History of their Creation’.

I will note that the book and the three publications analyze diametrically relevant issues and significant topics in their own right, which are covered spatially and researched thoroughly. With their findings, generalizations and conclusions, these works lay a *new scientific touch and enrich Bulgarian musicology*.

On the basis of all the contributions I have highlighted in the artistic, scientific and pedagogical activity of Assistant Professor Ivaylo Mihaylov, PhD, I confidently give my *high evaluation* for his candidacy and recommend to the respected members of the scientific jury to award him the academic position of ‘Associate Professor of Music Stage Production and Classical Singing’.

10.11.2023

Prof. Violeta Gorcheva, PhD