

OPINION

By Prof. Dr. Angelina Petrova on the competition for acquiring the academic position of *Associate Professor* in Musicology and Music Art (Contemporary Bulgarian Music Culture and Festival Practices), professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art, for the needs of the Music Department, research group Music Culture and Information, Institute of Art Studies (IAS), Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), according to the announcement published in the State Gazette (issue 41 / 20.05.2025) with candidate senior assistant professor Dr Diana Danova-Damyanova.

Senior Assistant Professor Diana Danova-Damyanova has enviable experience and authority in the field of musicological research related to unstudied or poorly studied objects of the Bulgarian performing and composing music culture in the 20th century. She is a valuable, active scholar, with a solid contribution to the field of research on the *Musica Novae* festival, and now with her monographic work: *Sofia Music Weeks. Study on the History and Present State of the Festival* - one of the largest performing institutions, existing for more than half a century. She is a researcher who combines fidelity and detailed and careful study of the document and archive with the sober and analytical view of a modern musicologist and historian. Her books are a benchmark for objectivity, multi-faceted and dense research of objects, revealing the functions and manner of functioning of her objects. In all her research and publications, she also applies interviews with participants and contemporary interpretations of research on memory and history. This makes her research not only claim objectivity, cited and established basic knowledge about her objects, but also helps to reveal a living dialogue with time, with language and ideas, to preserve the life and authenticity of the context in her research.

The monographic work of Diana Danova-Damyanova: *Sofia Music Weeks. Study on the History and Present State of the Festival* is undoubtedly a large-scale contribution to contemporary research on musical events that unite performing culture, premieres of Bulgarian composers' work, it traces the dynamics and interrelations of many events of the Bulgarian music scene. In fact, the most important merit of the monograph is the combination of two types of research: of institutions and performing art on the one hand, and of phenomena and trends, as well as representative figures in composers' work in the last five decades, focused on representative and vivid works, analyzed and documented in the text. This results in an overlay of the types of text: archival materials, observations and analyses, the interpretation of the socio-cultural dynamics around *Sofia Music Weeks*, which combines the authenticity of the archive, the current analysis of trends, ideas and phenomena in performing culture - and finally, the analysis and presentation of composers' discoveries. With this, Diana Danova-Damyanova establishes a new stage in the maturity of her research and achievements. The book crowns a series of articles and studies dedicated to the *Sofia Music Weeks*, which speaks of maturity and the

achievement of fundamental knowledge about performing and composing creativity, presented in the mirror of performing culture and one of its largest and most fundamental institutions in our country.

The contributions of Diana Danova-Damyanova's monographic work are in several directions. Initially, the theoretical model of the “*festival model, metamorphoses in the organizational structure, as well as the affirmation of the international authority of the forum*” should be highlighted. Perhaps the most laborious, but nevertheless very weighty, are the eight detailed appendices to the analysis of the festival, summarizing a huge body of facts and archival material, in which the author analyzes opening and closing concerts, author's and anniversary concerts, concerts "Under the Honorary Patronage of the European Festival Association" and others. The analysis and arrangement of the archival materials, invaluable evidence not only of the festival, but also of the structure, phenomena and essence of the artifacts in the musical and cultural space related to the festival, is extremely productive. Each stage of the development of *Sofia Weeks* as a structure and functioning are presented in detail and innovatively. Even as an approach to performing and composing institutions, this is an innovative moment. The accompanying studies in authoritative refereed publications, supplementing the book, contain some of the most insightful and interesting contributions related to contemporary Bulgarian creativity, the relevance of the festival, the participation of young performers, etc.

Among the most useful chapters of Diana Danova-Damyanova's monograph, I would single out Chapter 4, "Some premiere performances of works by Bulgarian composers at the international festival "Sofia Music Weeks", dedicated to the premieres of Bulgarian works. First, we are talking about very bright, representative works - such as the Piano Concerto by G. Minchev, Konstantin Iliev's "Euphoria for Constantine the Philosopher, Called Cyril", about the Requiem by Emil Tabakov, works by Mikhail Goleminov, Simeon Pironkov, Boyan Vodenicharov, etc. Here new and truly fundamental knowledge about the period and the role of the festival appears.

In the monographic work, as I have already indicated, there are eight very valuable appendices, which are essentially analysis and arrangement or classification of some of the most important archival material for the *Sofia Music Weeks*. They turn the publication into an invaluable reference book that will assist future researchers of the Bulgarian performing and contemporary compositional situation.

In accordance with the law, it should be noted that the contributions of Diana Danova-Damyanova, reflected in the numerous and valuable publications in Bulgarian and foreign publications, far exceed the necessary scientometric requirements. They are in the field of scientific, scientific-practical knowledge, they are current and have a wide range of types of research and their significance. Various types of archives, searched by her herself, such as that of Petar Stupel, etc., have been

studied. As can be seen from the reference, she is also a scientist who is often cited in scientific research - both in our country and abroad. The authority of her scientific and propaganda activity is confirmed by her participation in international and Bulgarian scientific and scientific-applied projects, by the numerous citations.

I dare say that her principledness, objectivity and purposefulness have built and are the basis of her informal authority as a scholar and musicologist. She is also a magnificent moderator of various musical events; her scientific and popular science activities are very rich and diverse. First, it should be noted that she is very purposeful and productive - both in working with archives and artifacts from past decades, and with live musical material, performances, ideas. In this sense, the interpretation of the festivals and the multifaceted fabric and interpretations that she has put into her scientific summaries are valuable, fundamental, and again, it is not by chance that I emphasize this.

Based on what has been said here, outlining only some individual aspects of the contribution of the main habilitation work and the accompanying publications, as well as my personal impressions of the professional qualities of the candidate, I strongly recommend that the esteemed Scientific Council of the Institute of Art Studies elect Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Diana Danova-Damyanova to the academic position of *Associate Professor*.

Prof. Dr. Angelina Petrova

9.10.2025

Sofia