

OPINION

regarding the competition for the academic position of ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR in "Musicology and Musical Art" (Contemporary Bulgarian Musical Culture and Festival Practices), in professional field 8.3 "Musical and Dance Art", according to the announcement published in the "State Gazette" (issue 41 / 20.05.2025) with a single candidate: **Diana Ivanova Danova-Damyanova PhD**, Chief Assistant Professor at the "Music" Department, Institute of Art Studies – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS)

by **Prof. Evgenia Simeonova PhD**

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1. BRIEF CREATIVE OVERVIEW

The Chief Assistant Professor Diana Danova-Damyanova PhD is a musician with excellent academic training and steadily developing creative trajectory. She has over 18 years and 6 months of experience in her field. Since 1988, she has held a Master's degree in "Musicology" – "History of Music," with substantial teaching and research experience. What is particularly striking in her biography is the purposeful structuring of her overall activity, which has rightfully earned her a respected place as a scholar and as a chronicler and analyst of the musical life in the country.

Professionalism, objectivity and integrity, and depth in her intellectual pursuits form the basis of all her conceptual research projects.

In 2008, she successfully defended her PhD in "Musicology and Musical Art" with a dissertation titled "The Modern Message of Musica Nova in Bulgarian Musical Culture." Since 2011, she has held the position of Chief Assistant Professor in the "Music" Department at the Institute of Art Studies

2. EVALUATION OF THE SUBMITTED COMPLIANCE REPORT ON THE MINIMUM REQUIRED SCORES BY INDICATOR GROUP

The report submitted by Chief Assistant Prof. Dr. Diana Danova fully meets the national minimum requirements for occupying the academic position of Associate Professor and even exceeds the required points.

Here is a summary of some of the highlights:

- **Group B, Item 3 – Habilitation research:**

The submitted monograph is in the relevant scientific field:

Danova-Damyanova, Diana. “*Sofia Music Weeks. Studies on the History and Present of the Festival.*” Sofia: Institute of Art Studies – BAS, 2024, 320 pages. ISBN 978-619-7619-36-2.

I thoroughly reviewed the habilitation work, and as a contemporary and participant in some of the events described, I found it exceptionally interesting to compare my personal recollections and impressions with the author’s objective evaluations.

This work is of great value as it authentically preserves the musical memory of a major Bulgarian forum, namely the "Sofia Music Weeks" – a festival of repertoire and of "stars." The monograph traces 55 years of history, from the festival's founding in 1970 to 2023. As the candidate herself notes, the research is based on critical analytical articles published annually in specialized periodicals, as well as on journalistic texts in weekly and daily newspapers of various profiles. The eight detailed appendices and rich illustrative materials, including data on numerous Bulgarian and international premieres, are particularly impressive.

- **Group G, Item 7 – Special note on the published book based on her PhD dissertation:**
Danova-Damyanova, Diana. *Musica Nova in Bulgarian Musical Culture.* Sofia: Institute of Art Studies, 2009, 296 pages, ISBN 978-954-8594-16-5.

According to the author, “The book *Musica Nova in Bulgarian Musical Culture* (2009) articulates the topical but until then unstudied question of the existence of new music on the stage of the first international festival of contemporary music in Bulgaria, offering an in-depth review of its ten editions (1993–2002).”

- **Group G, Items 8–11 – Dr. Danova has presented a solid body of scholarly articles, studies, and publications (over 120 points total), including:**
 - **Item 8** – 4 articles/papers in peer-reviewed journals indexed in international scientific databases
 - **Item 9** – 6 articles/papers in specialized journals in the field of arts

- **Item 10** – 2 studies in internationally indexed journals
- **Item 11** – 1 study in a specialized arts journal

- **Group D, Item 17 – Citations**

Dr. Danova-Damyanova has meticulously documented (with links) 11 citations in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes by respected researchers such as E. Chendova, A. Palieva, M. Bozhikova, S. Harkov, M. Tsenova, and others.

In **Item 18**, she also lists 2 citations in non-indexed, peer-reviewed journals.

- **Group E, Item 22** – Her research activity is further exemplified by 7 participations in significant national, scientific, educational, and creative projects.

- **Group E, Items 26 and 27** – A published school textbook and accompanying teacher's guide:

- *Valtchinova-Chendova, Elisaveta, Diana Danova-Damyánova, Vanya Angelska. Music for 8th Grade. Bulvest 2000, 2017, ISBN: 978-954-18-1080-4, 64 pages.*

- *Valtchinova-Chendova, Elisaveta, Diana Danova-Damyánova, Vanya Angelska. Teacher's Book for 8th Grade Music. Bulvest 2000, 2017, ISBN: 978-954-18-1039-2, 44 pages.*

We are all familiar with the challenges surrounding the subject of "Music" in primary and secondary education, including its neglect and the ongoing struggle to restore the strong traditions once present in Bulgaria. In this context, the creation of a textbook that cultivates good taste is a significant achievement.

- A logical conclusion to her activity is **Item 30** in the same group – **Awards:** Dr. Diana Danova-Damyanova has been honored with the “*Book of the Year 2024*” award by the Musicology Section of the Union of Bulgarian Composers in the “**Special Award 2025**” category (Monographic Studies).

3. SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTIONS

The overall work of Chief Assistant Prof. Dr. Diana Danova-Damyanova convincingly presents her professional accomplishments as a scholar and researcher. I fully accept and agree with the candidate's categorization of her original scholarly contributions, grouped into three main sections:

- I. Publications on the topic of the “*Sofia Music Weeks*” *International Festival*
- II. Publications on the topic of “*Contemporary Music on the Festival Stage*” (using several Bulgarian festivals as case studies)
- III. Publications on the topic of “*Bulgarian Performers and Festival Practices*”

4. CONCLUSION

All the excellent evaluations of the candidate’s in-depth and contributory research activities, as discussed in this Opinion, provide sufficient grounds for me to express my strong support for Chief Assistant Prof. **Diana Ivanova Danova-Damyanova** PhD.

I confidently recommend to the esteemed members of the scientific council that she be elected to the academic position of **Associate Professor in “Musicology and Musical Art” (Contemporary Bulgarian Musical Culture and Festival Practices)** in professional field 8.3 “Musical and Dance Art,” Department of “Music,” Research Group “Musical Culture and Information,” Institute of Art Studies – BAS.

Sofia

October, 2025

Signed:

Prof. Evgenia Simeonova PhD