

REVIEW

By Prof. DSc Elisaveta Borisova Valchinova-Chendova
(Institute of Art Studies – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)

Prof. field 8.3 Music and Dance Art

for a competition for acquiring the academic rank of *Associate Professor in Music Studies and Music Art* (contemporary Bulgarian musical culture and festival practice), higher educational field 8. Arts, prof. dir. 8.3 Music and Dance Art, one, for the needs of the Music Department, Research Group Music Culture and Information published in the State Gazette (No. 41 of 20.05.2025)

with a single candidate: Sen. Ass. Professor Dr Diana Ivanova Danova-Damyanova

BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATE

Diana Danova-Damyanova's dissertation, also published as a book, attracted the attention of the specialized and wider readership and was highlighted as a very serious first study of the cultural model of the contemporary music festival in our country. As the scientific supervisor of her dissertation and then as her colleague at the Institute of Art Studies, I have observed her work for many years. I highly value her serious professional realization as a music historian, focused on the study of festival models in contemporary musical culture, her purposeful research interests, in which the emphasis is on contemporary music and Bulgarian composers' creativity and performance, her overall active and versatile professional realization.

EVALUATION OF THE SUBMITTED DOCUMENTS FOR THE COMPETITION IN RELATION TO THE MENTIONED NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC INDICATORS

The documents submitted by Senior Asst. Prof. Dr. Diana Danova-Damyanova convincingly present her activities in various indicators and cover the minimum national scientometric requirements corresponding to the candidate's scientific profile, and her publication activity exceeds them many times.

Group "A". The defended dissertation on the topic *The Modern Message of Musica Nova in Bulgarian Musical Culture* (diploma dated 23.06.2008) was highly appreciated.

Group "C". In 2024, as a publication of the Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences her monograph *Sofia Music Weeks. Studies on the History and*

Present of the Festival were published. (Sofia: Institute of Art Studies – BAS, 2024, 320 pp. ISBN 978-619-7619-36-2), which is presented in the competition as the main habilitation work. I will comment on it separately, as well as on her other publications, when I evaluate the contributions.

Group “D”. Diana Danova-Damyanova presents: a published dissertation; 4 articles (published reports) in the collections “Art Studies Readings, New Art Module”, which are indexed in the Web of Science; 6 articles and reports published in specialized publications in the field of arts, of which two in the academic journal *Bulgarian Musicology*; 3 studies in the journal *Bulgarian Musicology*, two of them being referenced and indexed in ERIH+. Her publication activity in this category brings her a total of 405 points (with a specified minimum of 150 points).

Group “E”. Studying the problems that relate to different cultural aspects - musical and cultural processes and models, festival performances and concert practices, etc., the works of Diana Danova-Damyanova have been repeatedly cited in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review and in non-refereed journals with scientific review. I believe that in the future they will also be key texts for authors researching the periods in question in our musical culture.

Her books have been positively reviewed in the journal *Bulgarian Musicology*.

Group "F". Her participation in scientific, educational and artistic projects is convincing. They represent the multifaceted realization of her professional experience in working with archival materials and creative initiatives: research projects of the Institute of Art Studies, the International Festival "Sofia Music Weeks" and the projects of "Orange Factors" related to the presentation of contemporary music.

She participated in the authorship team of a textbook on *Music for the eighth grade* and a *Music Teacher's Book for the eighth grade* (Bulvest 2000).

Her habilitation work, published as a book, was awarded the "Book of the Year 2024" Award of the "Musicologists" Section of the Union of Bulgarian Composers in the "Special Award 2025" Category (Monographic Studies).

COMPLIANCE WITH THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDATES FOR ACADEMIC POSITIONS AT THE INSTITUTE OF ART STUDIES

The submitted materials fully comply with the additional requirements for scientific activity at the Institute, and in terms of publications and citations they exceed them.

ASSESSMENT OF THE APPENDIX "REPORT ON CONTRIBUTIONS"

Diana Danova-Damyanova has grouped her publications into three thematic groups with contributions:

1. The International Festival "Sofia Music Weeks".
2. Contemporary music on the festival podium (following the example of several Bulgarian festivals).
3. Bulgarian performers and festival practices.

I will briefly emphasize the **contributions of the habilitation work and the studies and articles** according to this grouping.

1. The International Festival "Sofia Music Weeks". Publications on the topic

I have reviewed Diana Danova-Damyanova's habilitation work, published as a book, **"Sofia Music Weeks. Studies on the History and Present of the Festival"** (see *"Bulgarian Musicology*, 2024, No. 4, pp. 126 – 130). I will briefly present the work and its scientific contributions.

- The book is the result of the author's long-term research on the history, operating model and program strategies of the festival, as well as on the Bulgarian and foreign performers participating in it, and critical reflections on this most prestigious musical forum in the capital.
- Based on extensive research, the book is the first in-depth study of the festival from its creation in 1970 to its most recent editions.
- The work is divided into four main sections. The first examines the historical development and institutional evolution of the festival. The second outlines its distinctive features, and the third explores the establishment of its international prestige. Finally, the fourth section focuses on the role and representation of Bulgarian music in the festival's repertoire.
- This extremely informative historiographical study is based on a wide range of documents and sources. Its text is open to future analytical readings. At the same time, being highly dialogic, it provokes the interest of both professional readers and festival participants (performers and organizers), as well as the numerous admirers of the "Sofia Music Weeks".
- The book was realized under a project of the "Sofia Music Weeks International Festival" Foundation, with the financial support of the National Culture Fund. The publication is related to the 55th anniversary of the "Sofia Music Weeks" International Music Festival.

Related to the topic of her habilitation work are **the articles** (published reports) in the collections of the international conferences “Art History Readings. New Art” (“Sofia Music Weeks” – European Bulgarian Festival, 2018; “Sofia Music Weeks”: Returns, 2020; “Petar Stupel – the Festival Director”, 2021; “Traditions and Transformations in the Longest-Running Sofia International Music Festival”, 2023), as well as her **study** “Sofia Music Weeks”. Archive Documents” (*Bulgarian Musicology*, 2018, No. 4). They trace different aspects of festival practice. The topic of “Sofia Music Weeks”, introduced by Diana Danova-Damyanova as a scientific object through her publications over the years, reveals the author’s purposeful, in-depth research interest.

2. Contemporary music on the festival podium (following the example of several Bulgarian festivals). Publications on the topic

A special emphasis in her research, including in her habilitation work, is modern music in contemporary Bulgarian festival practice, as well as the presentation of Bulgarian composers' work, including prominent names in festival programs.

I will mention the two studies in *Bulgarian Musicology*: "Contemporary music in the program of the International Festival "Sofia Music Weeks" from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. Repertoire accents" (2020, No. 4) and "Some premiere performances of works by Bulgarian composers at the International Festival "Sofia Music Weeks" (2023, No. 3).

Two of the publications in this group continue the study of the activities of the Society for New Music in Bulgaria – and specifically the role of its founder Georgi Tutev, and of the International Festival of Contemporary Piano Music “ppIANISSIMO”.

3. Bulgarian performers and festival practices. Publications on the topic

The study of performing arts is perceived as an independent field. In the mentioned studies in the journal "Bulgarian Musicology", the important figure of musicians in festival programming is highlighted. On the other hand, the special intersection between festival practices and critical evaluation is analyzed.

Summary of contributions: I highly appreciate the habilitation work and all other presented publications of Diana Danova-Damyanova. They are an undoubted input to the study of contemporary Bulgarian culture, of festival practice as a musical and cultural model and its repertoire policies, of Bulgarian performance, of the connection between Bulgarian composers' work - concert practice - critical and listener reflection, etc.

CONCLUSION

Considering all of the activities of the candidate, Senior Asst. Prof. Dr. Diana Danova-Damyanova, which is convincing in terms of national scientometric indicators in the field of arts, research area: 8.3 Music and Dance Art and the additional requirements for holding the academic position of "associate professor" at the Institute of Art Studies, as well as the stated contribution of her publications, **I join the decision of the Scientific Jury to propose the candidacy of Senior Asst. Prof. Dr. Diana Danova-Damyanova for voting in the Scientific Council of the Institute of Art Studies to hold the academic position of "associate professor" in prof. direction 8.3. Music and Dance Art (contemporary Bulgarian musical culture and festival practices).**

I believe that my opinion will be supported!

Sofia, 15.10.2025

Prof. DSc Elisaveta Valchinova-Chendova