

STATEMENT

**by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Smilena Dimitrova Smilkova – Associate Professor at
“Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov” University of Burgas**

of a dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree “**Doctor**”

in the field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical Sciences,

professional field: 1.3. Pedagogy of...

doctoral program: Methodology of Music Education

Author: Milena Angelova Kostova-Garbacheva

Topic of the Dissertation: Innovative Pedagogical Technologies for Developing Vocal Skills in High School Students

Scientific Advisor: Prof. Dr. Tanya Burdeva

1. General Overview of the Procedure and the PhD Candidate

By Order № P33-22-608 dated 28.02.2025, issued by the Rector of Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University (PU), I have been appointed as a member of the academic jury for the procedure of public defense of a doctoral dissertation entitled “Innovative Pedagogical Technologies for the Development of Vocal Skills in High School Students”, submitted for the award of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in the field of Higher Education Area 1: Pedagogical Sciences, Professional Field 1.3: Pedagogy of Teaching..., Doctoral Program: Methodology of Music Education.

The author of the dissertation is Milena Angelova Kostova-Garbacheva, a full-time PhD student at the Department of Music, under the academic supervision of Prof. Dr. Tanya Burdeva from Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University.

The set of documents submitted by Milena Angelova Kostova-Garbacheva complies with Article 36(1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at PU.

The doctoral candidate has submitted three scientific publications related to the topic of the dissertation.

The biographical information provided by Milena Kostova-Garbacheva portrays her as a music teacher in pre-school and secondary school, a performing musician, and a laureate of numerous awards from music competitions. She has also served as a jury member and vocal coach in national vocal competitions, authored lyrics for both original and external compositions, and is the director of a private educational institution and manager of a company.

She obtained her Bachelor's degree from New Bulgarian University with a major in Pop and Jazz Performance, and her Master's degree from PU “Paisii Hilendarski” with a specialization in Music Teaching in Pre-Schools and Secondary Schools.

Milena Kostova-Garbacheva's work in the fields of education, music, and culture demonstrates both professional expertise and life experience in the spheres of musical art and pedagogy.

2. Relevance of the Topic

Classical methods in vocal pedagogy form the foundation of vocal mastery and artistry. Building upon her knowledge in this field, Milena Kostova-Garbacheva has directed her research toward innovative pedagogical technologies. These technologies are an inevitable part of the development of society and its various domains, enhancing skills and competencies that are relevant and useful in today's world. In this context, the doctoral candidate's focus and the results she presents are both timely and aligned with the expectations and demands of contemporary society.

3. Understanding of the Research Problem

The research conducted by the Phd candidate, which involves the analysis of the physiological characteristics of students aged 13 to 19, a comprehensive review of literature on vocal pedagogy, and the selection of appropriate mobile applications and music software for recording and sound processing, demonstrates her in-depth understanding of the subject matter. These elements also underscore the practical benefits of the research for both students and vocal educators. The studies are further supported by the candidate's own pedagogical and performance experience, which contribute to the development of a theoretical and practical model of innovative vocal-pedagogical technologies.

4. Research Methodology

The chosen research methods include pedagogical observation, analysis, comparison, generalization, and a pedagogical experiment.

A significant aspect of the research methodology is the assessment of vocal activity and its artistic and aesthetic value, grounded in the anatomical, physiological, and psychological changes observed in high school students. The study also examines the relationship between these changes and the elements of vocal performance art.

5. Characteristics and Evaluation of the Dissertation and Its Contributions

The dissertation consists of 193 pages, including 160 pages of main text and 33 pages of appendices. The bibliography includes a total of 96 sources.

The main body of the dissertation is structured into an Introduction, three chapters, and a Conclusion.

In her dissertation, the PhD candidate has developed a systematic approach to the formation of vocal habits and skills, based on innovative and modern technologies, drawing upon her own experience as a vocal pedagogue and performer. The proposed technologies are of a universal nature and can be applied to all students in the high school stage of education.

The contributions of Milena Kostova-Garbacheva, which stand out in her dissertation, include:

- A classification of innovative methods, technologies, and approaches in vocal training;
- The introduction of new and contemporary pedagogical technologies for synchronous work, tailored to the specifics of vocal performance art;
- An analysis of the distinctive features involved in the development of vocal habits and skills among high school students;
- A detailed definition of the use of modern computer hardware, software, and mobile devices, and their wide applicability as educational tools;
- The development of a system of innovative technologies for shaping vocal habits and skills in students, applied for the first time in secondary education;
- A wide range of practical applications of the dissertation's findings.

6. Evaluation of the Publications and the PhD Candidate's Individual Contribution

The doctoral candidate has submitted three publications related to the dissertation: two papers presented at the 2024 Scientific Conference (in press in the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria – Plovdiv, as of March 2025), and one article published in Scientific Works of the Union of Scientists in Plovdiv – 2024. These publications explore innovative pedagogical technologies and approaches in contemporary vocal pedagogy; objective and subjective evaluation of the artistic and aesthetic expressiveness of vocal performance; and an analysis of the issue of inaccurate intonation among high school students along with methods for its correction.

7. Abstract

The abstract submitted by Milena Kostova-Garbacheva is a summary of the completed dissertation. Its structure reflects that of the full dissertation, excluding the literature review section, and presents a coherent and logically organized overview of the research in 32 pages. The abstract effectively outlines the key results and findings achieved in the dissertation.

8. Recommendations for the Future Application of the Dissertation's Contributions and Results

The scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation should be disseminated among a broader audience of stakeholders in order to support and enhance competencies and opportunities in the field of vocal pedagogy.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation contains scientific, applied, and practice-oriented results that represent an original contribution to the field and meet the requirements set forth in the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the regulations for its implementation, and the relevant rules of "Paisii Hilendarski" Plovdiv University.

The dissertation demonstrates that the doctoral candidate, Milena Angelova Kostova-Garbacheva, possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional competence in the scientific specialty Methodology of Music Education, and exhibits the ability to conduct independent scientific research.

Based on the above, I give a positive assessment of the conducted research, the achieved results, and the contributions presented. I recommend that the esteemed academic jury award the educational and scientific degree "**Doctor**" to Milena Angelova Kostova-Garbacheva in the field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of ..., doctoral program: Methodology of Music Education.

17.05.2025 г.

Prepared by:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Smilena Dimitrova Smilkova