

Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” Faculty of Pedagogy

REVIEW

Review

by Prof. Dr. Veselin Ivanov Koichev, Paisii Hilendarski University, Plovdiv

Scientific Specialty: Musicology and Musical Arts of the Dissertation Thesis entitled:

LEADING STAGING PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES IN PUBLICATIONS OF BULGARIAN OPERA DIRECTORS

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petar Zapryanov Odazhiev

for the award of the academic degree “Doctor of Sciences” Field of Higher Education: 8. Arts
Professional Field: 8.3. Music and Dance Arts Scientific Specialty: Musicology and Musical Art

1. Subject of the Review

By Order No. ПД-22–1186 of 20.05.2025 of the Rector of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” (PU), I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to carry out the procedure for the defense of the dissertation thesis entitled “Leading Staging Principles and Approaches in Publications of Bulgarian Opera Directors” for the acquisition of the scientific degree “Doctor of Sciences” at PU, in the field of higher education: 8. Arts, professional field: 8.3. Music and Dance Arts, scientific specialty: Musicology and Musical Art. The author of the dissertation thesis is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petar Zapryanov Odazhiev from the Department of Aesthetic Education at the Faculty of Pedagogy of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski.”

The set of materials submitted by the candidate in printed form complies with Art. 45 (4) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU and includes the following documents:

- Application to the Rector of PU for initiating the procedure for defense of the dissertation thesis;
- Dissertation thesis;
- Curriculum vitae in European format;
- Protocol of the Departmental Council related to the initiation of the procedure and the preliminary discussion of the dissertation thesis;
- Author’s abstract (summary);
- Author’s abstract in English;
- List of scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation;

- Copies of the publications related to the dissertation topic;
- Report on compliance with the minimum national requirements.

The candidate also provides copies of one monograph, four articles, and three papers from scientific conferences.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petar Zapryanov Odazhiev studied and completed the following educational and qualification degrees:

- 1987–1992: Master’s degree in Opera Singing at the State Music Academy;
- 1993–1998: Master’s degree in Film and Television Directing at NATFA “Krastyo Sarafov”;
- 2012: Bachelor’s degree in Directing at the State Music Academy;
- 2009–2013: Doctoral degree (PhD) in Directing and Work with the Singer-Actor in the scientific specialty “Musicology and Musical Art” at New Bulgarian University;
- 2013–2016: Doctoral degree in the scientific specialty “Film Studies, Cinematic Arts and Television” at the Institute for Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences;
- 2017–2020: Master’s degree in Art Management at the State University of New York.

During his studies, from 1998 to 2014, he worked on preparing and implementing projects in the fields of theatrical and screen arts, educational projects, seminars, and workshops. He was the director of his own production company, Odavision.

From 2016 to 2019, he taught “Acting for Camera” and “Psychophysical Training” at the New York Academy of Visual and Performing Arts, while simultaneously managing his company Odavision LLC, focusing on the same areas.

From 2019 to 2022, he worked at the Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts “Prof. Asen Diamandiev” as a part-time lecturer in “Acting,” “Stage Speech,” and “Movement.” During the same period, he was also a senior assistant at the Institute for Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, where he developed pedagogical and research activities in the field of stage and screen arts. He has published scientific articles and monographs, participated in international and national academic forums, led educational and research projects, and supervised doctoral students.

In 2020–2021, he also worked at the State Music and Ballet Center as a project manager, planning, organizing, and coordinating all artistic and educational projects of the theater.

Since 2021, he has been the director of the production company “Sofia Musical Theatre” Ltd., overseeing all artistic and educational activities of the company. Since 2021, he has been teaching the disciplines “Musical Theatre Acting,” “Stage Movement,” “Singing,” “Psychophysical Training,” and “Stage Speech” at the Sofia Academy of Musical Theatre.

Since 2023, he has been an associate professor and lecturer in the specialty “Acting for Dramatic Theatre” at Paisii Hilendarski University, teaching “Acting for Dramatic Theatre,” “Acting for Musical Theatre,” “Acting for Camera,” “Musical Art,” and “Psychophysical Training.”

It should be noted that all of the candidate’s activities are related to art, culture, and education, mostly in leadership positions, with a strong focus on project management, pedagogical work, and research activities.

The work is structured into an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, a summary of the main contributions, and a bibliography. The content and structure follow the established norms. The total length is 497 pages, of which 270 pages comprise the main content and 222 pages are appendices. A total of 84 sources in Bulgarian were used. The length of the dissertation meets the requirements for scientific works at Paisii Hilendarski University, and it is correctly structured and formatted.

The introduction clearly formulates the relevance of the topic, the object, the subject, the aims, tasks, and hypothesis of the research. The object of the study is Bulgarian opera directing as an interpretative practice and aesthetic system. The main aim of the dissertation is to identify a stable directorial paradigm and to define contemporary issues and perspectives in the national opera directing. The tasks set by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Odazhiev correspond adequately to the stated aim and provide a correct direction for the development of the dissertation.

The relevance of the topic is determined by the fact that in contemporary opera directing, the director is unconditionally regarded as an equal creator, responsible for developing the specific artistic vision for each opera production and for conceptual staging ideas for its performance.

The work consists of an introduction, three chapters, and a conclusion.

- Chapter One examines the professionalization of opera directing in Bulgaria during the so-called pre-directorial period.
- Chapter Two reflects the musical-theatrical aesthetics and methodology in the work of Bulgarian opera directors during the early period.

- Chapter Three presents contemporary paradigms and leading staging principles in the interpretation of classical opera repertoire (mature period).

The practical significance of the dissertation lies in its applicability both in performance practice and in methodological guidance. The research provides a handbook for contemporary directors for interpreting classical opera titles within their historical and stylistic context.

The study presents significant contributions in three main areas: methodological, applied, and academic. These reflect the importance of the work for staging practice in contemporary opera theater as well as for the development of Bulgarian music-theatrical theory. I consider a particularly important contribution to be the identification of a new field in art studies: “Methodological and practical issues of directorial art in Bulgarian opera theater.”

The dissertation is technically well-prepared and contains compiled and systematized information supporting its assertions. It is evident that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petar Odazhiev demonstrates the skills necessary for conducting high-quality and professional scientific research. I consider that the presented dissertation includes original and significant scientific and applied results, which represent a valuable contribution to the field.

For the reasons outlined above, I confidently give my positive evaluation of the research presented in the reviewed dissertation, the abstract, and the achieved results and contributions, and I recommend that the esteemed scientific jury award the academic degree of **Doctor of Sciences** to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petar Zapryanov Odazhiev in the field of Higher Education 8. Arts, Professional Field 8.3. Musical and Dance Art (Scientific Specialty: Musicology and Musical Art).

11 August 2025
Plovdiv

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Prof. Dr. Veselin Koichev