

Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” Faculty of Pedagogy

REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Velimir Velev, Head of the Department of Drama Theatre, Faculty of Performing Arts, NATFA, 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

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 has submitted one monograph and 7 scientific articles (6 in English and 1 in Bulgarian). The academic evaluation/review of the work requires it to be considered in the context of the author's professional experience, which is also one of the criteria for assessing the degree of the author's personal involvement in the research and the realization of its scholarly contributions.

The professional biographical profile of candidate Petar Odazhiev is more than impressive. Noteworthy is the scale of his professional path, which integrates extensive experience in the fields of musical, performing, and screen arts. In his academic record, the candidate holds no fewer than half a dozen higher education degrees: two Bachelor's, three Master's, and two Doctorates. His acquired qualifications include: Opera Singer, Musical-Stage Director, and Film and Television Director. He has been awarded the degree of "Doctor" in the field of "Musicology and Musical Art" (directing and working with the singer-actor) and "Doctor" in the field of "Film Studies, Cinema, and Television." He studied at the National Academy of Music "Pancho Vladigerov" and the National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts "Krastyo Sarafov." At the State University of New York, he completed a Master's degree in Management, Copyright, Cultural Policies, Project Management, Public Sector Management, Marketing, and Arts Management.

This solid education yields results in several directions:

1. **Scientific:** Author of 5 monographs and 21 studies and articles in the fields of opera, musical theatre, and music drama, addressing fundamental and interrelated issues of musical/opera dramaturgy, opera directing, musical and stage performing arts (opera, musical theatre, musical, dramatic theatre, acting for the camera, film acting), as well as the transformation of stage/musical/opera works into screen/visual forms.
2. **Creative:** Author of dozens of artistic realizations in the field of stage and screen arts—musicals, films, and short musical and screen formats.
3. **Pedagogical:** Instructor at the New York Academy of Visual and Performing Arts, teaching "Acting for the Camera" and "Psychophysical Training." Adjunct lecturer at AMTII Plovdiv in "Acting," "Stage Speech," and "Movement." Senior Assistant/Research Fellow at the Institute of Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Associate Professor at Plovdiv University, teaching "Acting for Dramatic Theatre," "Acting for Musical Theatre," "Acting for the Camera," "Musical Art," and "Psychophysical Training." Leader of numerous workshops both in Bulgaria and abroad.
4. **Production and Entrepreneurship:** Director/CEO of the production company "Sofia Musical Theatre" Ltd., Project Manager at the "State Musical and Ballet Centre," Manager of Odavision LLC, New York, and Director of the production company "Odavision" Ltd. He has exceptionally rich experience in managing activities in the fields of artistic and educational work, as well as in preparing and realizing projects in

theatrical and screen genres, and in organizing and conducting educational projects, seminars, and workshops.

He is the recipient of numerous national and international awards.

The present habilitation work is a logical consequence of the candidate's entire professional path. The relevance of the topic is indisputable: the work submitted by Petar Odazhiev appears against the background of a long-standing absence of targeted and systematic theoretical research in Bulgaria related to directing practice and issues in the field of opera. This topic has long been of particular significance in the development of the global operatic theatre, due to the emergence of the stage director as the dominant creative figure in the operatic production process. What is lacking is a comprehensive "opera-directing" methodology that synthesizes the leading staging principles and interpretative approaches applied in the history of opera in Bulgaria, including the directorial toolbox employed in operatic productions.

At the same time, the valuable theoretical legacy of key figures in opera directing—consisting largely of subjective accounts of personal experience rather than attempts to develop a coherent directorial methodology—remains insufficiently studied. In this work, for the first time, this theoretical heritage, from the early 20th century to the present, is subjected to comparative analysis and generalization, from which the author synthesizes conclusions towards a comprehensive directorial methodology. This is based on the interpretative staging approaches of various directors and encompasses the directorial instruments, together with their aesthetic and artistic principles in applying musical and stage means within the operatic production process.

Odazhiev achieves such a synthesis only on the basis of a profound understanding of the problems of operatic staging, which he has been exploring for decades. This allows him to work creatively with extensive documentary sources from the abovementioned artists across a wide historical period. By tracing the evolution of their individual directing practices, he is able to distill their essential characteristics, ultimately synthesizing them into a comprehensive concept for assessing a directorial methodology in operatic production.

This high and rarely encountered level of professionalism and expertise in the field stems from his consistent practice-theoretical engagement as an accomplished professional (artist, pedagogue, and theorist). This, a priori, guarantees his competence—both in terms of familiarity with the existing scholarly legacy, particularly the selected theoretical material, and in terms of his research potential.

In this line of thought, the research methods indicated by the candidate in the section on Research Methodology constitute a set of carefully selected analytical approaches, aligned with the stated objectives and resulting tasks. However, in the present study, I find evidence of the application of a broader range of research methods, which the author does not explicitly mention, though he employs them with excellence. Within the method of historical analysis

(indispensable, given the need to analyze and systematize original publications from the early 20th century to the present), the author incorporates the method of periodization, the historical-genetic method, the historical-comparative method, and the historical-systematic method. With the exception of the historical-genetic method, these are not listed by the author, but are nevertheless applied successfully.

Likewise, the methods of comparative and systematic analysis are employed, both necessary for juxtaposing the diverse perspectives on the issues addressed by different representatives of opera directing during the studied period, as well as for their systematization. The author notes the use of text-centered analysis, appropriate for archival texts, but in certain aspects he also resorts to a kind of anthropocentric analysis—particularly in the first chapter, where the biographies and textual legacy of the three pioneers cannot be analyzed outside the context of their personal characteristics and inner moral, including emotional, motivations.

Furthermore, the methodology of the study includes elements of functional analysis, related to the “musical, theatrical, and culturological concepts” identified by the author. This enables him to arrive at their interdisciplinary synthesis.

The study comprises a total of 497 pages, divided as follows: 279 pages of text and 218 pages of visual material. It includes: a title page following Plovdiv University standards; a table of contents; an introduction; three chapters (each with their corresponding conclusions); general conclusions; textual appendices with one table and one graphic diagram; visual materials (scanned copies of original documents, publications, archival sources, and photographs); and a bibliography of 83 Bulgarian-language sources.

The work is properly formatted according to established academic standards (with the exception of the absence of an automatically generated table of contents).

In terms of style, the dissertation is characterized by a rigorous academic tone and clarity, without pretentious pseudo-scientific language. To this may be added a combination of scholarly conciseness and semantic richness with fluency and engaging expression.

Introduction

With remarkable perfectionism, the elements of the research are presented and meticulously structured into ten paragraphs: Relevance of the Topic; Degree of Literature Review; Problematic Argumentation; Object of Study; Subject of Study; Research Objectives; Research Hypothesis; Research Tasks; Research Methodology; and Structure of the Study.

With analytical breadth, the argumentation of the thematic relevance and the issues under consideration is elaborated in the first three sections: Relevance of the Topic; Degree of Literature Review; and Problematic Argumentation (see p. 4 of the present text). The objectives, tasks, and hypothesis of the research constitute a strong declaration of the high contributive value

of the forthcoming study. The research methodology, carefully aligned with the stated aims and objectives, provides confidence and assurance in the unquestionable success of the final scholarly outcome (see pp. 4–5 of the present review).

Chapter One. The Professionalization of Opera Directing in Bulgaria. The Pre-Directorial Period

The text introduces the emergence of Bulgarian opera within the context of the country's cultural emancipation following the Liberation, focusing on three key figures in the rise of the national operatic tradition, periodized as representatives of the three initial stages in the development of opera in Bulgaria: Dragomir Kazakov, Konstantin Mihailov-Stoyan, and Petar Raychev.

Although the chapter is predominantly biographical in nature, due to the character of the available written sources, it is exceptionally valuable and unique in its scope. On the one hand, the analysis of these figures constitutes a foundational stage for the final conclusions, outlining a set of issues tied to the very existence of opera in Bulgaria—problems that prove to be classical and still valid in the present historical moment. On the other hand, it provides in-depth professional information about these important personalities, beneficial to students and young professionals in the field, while drawing the reader into the personal journeys of these pioneers—a path of dedication, devotion, and mission—which has a profoundly formative, motivational, and inspiring impact.

In the final section, devoted to Petar Raychev, his critical reflections on staging and directorial work in opera productions are presented. Lifting the curtain of time, they spark immense interest in questions that remain relevant today, revealing that:

1. Petar Raychev's competences and artistic-aesthetic criteria are entirely contemporary, despite being almost a century old;
2. his perspective on the concepts of “director” in comparison to “stager,” as well as his views on a certain category of European directors devoted to spectacular formalism in opera, likewise resonate with striking modernity.

The conclusions of the chapter, rich and substantive, demonstrate the candidate's research skills—particularly given that they stem from a body of work that is primarily biographical and to a lesser extent strictly critical.

Chapter Two. Musical-Theatrical Aesthetics and Methodology in the Work of Bulgarian Opera Directors. The Early Period

At this stage of the research, in order to analyze the periodized “early” stage in the development of the Bulgarian opera-directing school—characterized by (1) the legitimization of opera in Bulgaria through the revolutionary institutional transformation leading to the establishment of the State National Opera, and (2) specifically, by the emergence of the first trained directors, carriers of innovative staging concepts—Odazhiev selects a group of representatives including Hristo Popov, Iliya Arnaudov, Hrisan Tsankov, Dragan Kardjiev, and Evgeniy Nemirov, who shaped the “unique model of stage thinking and interpretation” in opera directing during this period.

As the critical nature of the available sources gradually intensifies, the candidate delves more deeply into the staging and directorial issues. Moving from a concise and laconic style—through which Odazhiev traces the biographical trajectories of Popov, Arnaudov, and Tsankov, brilliantly highlighting their defining characteristics as directors who shaped the path of Bulgarian directing in this period—to Kardjiev and Nemirov, the analysis acquires a broad critical dimension.

An additional scholarly contribution of the candidate lies in his ability to contextualize each director’s experience within the framework of broader artistic and cultural transformations. In doing so, he inscribes, for the first time, this succession of figures into an ensemble of titans embodying a blend of national artistic identity with modern European and Russian aesthetic influences—an ensemble that exerted significant influence on the evolution of opera in Bulgaria:

- **Hristo Popov**, the first formally trained director in Bulgarian opera, student of Stanislavski and Nemirovich-Danchenko, also attuned to the French dramatic thought of Mase, bridging the classical repertoire with the tastes of the Bulgarian audience.
- **Iliya Arnaudov**, the first specialized opera director, associated with Modernism (Expressionism), and a strategist in developing a national identity for Bulgarian opera.
- **Hrisan Tsankov**, a theatre director and experimenter, one of the pioneers of Modernism in Bulgarian theatre (and opera), student of Max Reinhardt and follower of Brecht, exploring untraditional repertoire for the Bulgarian stage.
- **Dragan Kardjiev**, who Europeanized Bulgarian opera, “bringing” the era of the director into the national operatic art.
- **Evgeniy Nemirov**, dramatic director, painter/sculptor, and conceptualist of the aesthetics of expressive-conditional theatre, with a vision for the Bulgarian opera repertoire.

By considering their individual merits within the broader framework of Bulgarian cultural development—particularly during a time of significant political and social transformation—the candidate synthesizes profound conclusions which serve as essential building blocks for the step-by-step realization of the stated research objectives and for the final substantiation of the hypothesis.

Chapter Three. Contemporary Paradigms and Leading Staging Principles in the Interpretation of the Operatic Repertoire Classics. The Mature Period

This chapter, quite naturally, stands as the culmination of the candidate's research periodization. The period placed under analytical focus spans from the very end of the 1980s (1989), associated with the beginning of the "democratic changes," to the present day. With remarkable conciseness and surgical precision, Odazhiev defines, in clear cause-and-effect relations, the key "hot spots" in the directorial challenges of this period: the *fall* of totalitarian artistic restrictions → the onset of spontaneous "modernist experiments" and "feverish borrowings" from the European postmodern stage → the neglect of operatic-dramaturgical principles → conflict between dramatic and musical logic → emphasis on the dramatic dimension → loss of stylistic musical poetics, "uniformity," "banalization of stage results," and the emergence of staging clichés.

In theoretical terms, the candidate examines a carefully selected representative sample of significant creative figures, including Petar Shturbanov, Mihail Hadzhimishev, Stefan Trifonov, Emil Boshnakov, Svetozar Donev, Pavel Gerdzhikov, Rumen Neykov, Plamen Kartalov, and Vanya Bachvarova. The breadth of information concerning these figures is impressive—thoroughly processed and analytically explored. Equally impressive is the synthesis: the result of the analysis that identifies the personal contributions of each of them.

These, in turn, together with the three-component generalization emerging from Chapter Three—(1) the emergence of a distinct identity of directorial aesthetics; (2) the "academization" of opera directing; and (3) the general tendency among directors toward multi-component, integrated productions—constitute the primary analytical material for the final synthesis. This synthesis generalizes the principles of opera as an integral artistic and aesthetic phenomenon, as well as the postulates underlying directorial interpretative approaches—crystallized in the author's model for analysis: an algorithm for evaluating the staging methodology of any operatic production, proposed by the candidate.

Conclusions

The concluding part of this work demonstrates a perfect, impressively elaborated quintessence of the entire research. It consists of: Analytical Review of the Study; Systematization of Main Findings; Contributions (with three specific subsections: Methodological Contributions; Applied Contributions; Academic Contributions); Scientific Novelty of the Research; Prospects for Future Studies; and Conclusion.

I. Analytical Review of the Study. The candidate summarizes the picture of his contributive, authorial periodization, situating the analyzed key opera directors within a historical cause-and-effect continuum, as integral elements in the overall development of opera directing and opera art in Bulgaria.

II. Systematization of Main Findings. Here, Odazhiev identifies methodological and aesthetic principles of the staging process in opera directing. From the subjective nature of the analyzed directorial texts, categorized into seventeen specific perspectives, the candidate extracts objective

elements of the operatic directorial toolkit. This, in turn, enables him to “generalize the main problems of directorial interpretation” in the stage realization of operatic dramaturgy. This section also serves as proof that it is possible to derive a “stable staging paradigm and define contemporary problems and perspectives for national opera directing,” as well as to outline “a new area of art studies research—methodological and practical problems of directorial art in Bulgarian opera theatre.” These objective postulates in staging methodology provide a foundation (“valid framework”) for the “applied and pedagogical development” of opera directing in Bulgaria.

III. Contributions. The contributive part is systematically organized into three conceptual levels—Methodological Contributions; Applied Contributions; Academic Contributions—through which the candidate clearly and precisely describes his personal innovative achievements:

- **a. Methodological Contributions:** A scientific model for analyzing the methodology of stage realization in opera; innovative methodology for analyzing directorial texts; a model for comparative analysis of directorial interpretations; a model for reconstructing stage thinking; an interdisciplinary approach integrating theatre studies, musicology, and cultural studies, with applications to other synthetic arts.
- **b. Applied Contributions:** Creation of an informational and analytical database; derived criteria for evaluating directorial interpretation; a guide for contemporary opera directors; potential applications in developing educational programs, directorial workshops, and critical publications; bridging theory and practice in opera directing.
- **c. Academic Contributions:** A new research area in art studies—Methodological and Practical Problems of Directorial Art in Bulgarian Opera Theatre; the first comprehensive systematization and analysis of original theoretical publications by leading Bulgarian opera directors (20th–21st century); tracing the evolution of directorial thinking; introducing a new periodization of Bulgarian opera directing; demonstrating the stability of a national directorial school; examining and arguing the role of the “writing director” in opera.

I can affirm that the innovative achievements identified by the candidate receive my full verification as significant scholarly contributions in the field of the reviewed research.

IV. Scientific Novelty of the Research. This section represents a general categorization—a “synthesis of the synthesis” of the contributions—collected into five aspects of the study’s scientific innovation.

V. Prospects for Future Research. This paragraph, in turn, outlines the horizon of the research, both literally and figuratively, in four directions for future inquiry:

1. Empirical research,

2. Study and analysis of stage artifacts,
3. Comparative studies of the Bulgarian directing school with other national schools,
4. Research related to digital platforms and databases.

All of these establish a strong level of scientific sustainability. It should also be noted that the applied experimental “Scientific Model for the Analysis and Description of the Methodology of Stage Realization in Opera”—featuring an econometric evaluation matrix and a graphic scheme—adds further substantial contributive value and significant applied potential.

Conclusion. The conclusion, as a “Finale Grande,” represents a retrospective analysis, a forward-looking framework for future developments, and an enrichment of pedagogical programs, repertoire policies, methodological perspectives, and practical stage experience.

Synthesizing the above regarding the scientific and applied-scientific achievements of the dissertation and its contributions to both theory and practice, it can be concluded that the objectives set by the researcher and the corresponding tasks have been fully accomplished. It can be convincingly verified that the dissertation hypothesis—“the systematic analysis of theoretical publications by Bulgarian opera directors from the beginning of the 20th century to the present allows for the derivation of a stable directorial methodology, reflecting the specific synthesis between musical and stage elements in the genre, and offers a model for contemporary interpretation of the opera repertoire in national and European contexts”—is fully substantiated by the evidence presented.

PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE TOPIC OF THE DISSERTATION

The publications accompanying the dissertation are equally impressive:

1. Monograph: *The Operatic Canon and Contemporary Opera Directing*, Sofia: IK “Cinema,” 2014. ISBN 978-954-2985-05-1.

This work is innovative, similar to the present dissertation, exploring the role of the director in opera and the specificities of working with performers, which differ from those in dramatic theatre. It examines the established classical genre aesthetics of opera as well as its particular conventions in the context of the director’s interpretative role in operatic theatre. The monograph addresses the opposition between *musical dramaturgy (composer’s ideas)* and *its visual materialization on stage in directorial decisions*. It also logically covers *staging and pedagogical principles in directing methodology* when working with the “singer–actor.”

2. Article: *The Influence of Psychological Realism and Epic Theatre on the Aesthetics of Opera Directing*

This text examines the interaction between psychological realism and epic theatre in contemporary opera directing. Psychological realism, inspired by Stanislavski, emphasizes emotional authenticity and depth of character, while Brecht’s epic theatre employs alienation and

symbolism to provoke critical thinking in the audience. The article analyzes how combining these two approaches leads to new artistic tools, innovations in scenography, and a deeper interaction between performers and spectators in contemporary opera productions.

3. Article: *The Aesthetic Phenomenon of Opera and the Stage Director's Approach to Interpretation*

This publication investigates the aesthetic nature of opera as a unique art form and explores the director's approach to interpretation. It focuses on the principles guiding the transformation of musical and dramatic material into a coherent stage realization, highlighting the director's role in synthesizing music, performance, and stage design into an integrated artistic experience.

The research analyzes transformations in opera at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries under the influence of mass culture and contemporary theatrical directing. Particular attention is given to the transition from traditional operatic conventions to a dramaturgical model focused on theatrical realism, often at the expense of the musical component. The entry of directors from dramatic theatre into the operatic stage has produced interpretations that sometimes conflict with the composer's intentions and marginalize vocal artistry. Postmodern aesthetic practices such as eclecticism and deconstruction contribute to the fragmentation of musical-dramatic integrity. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the need to achieve a balanced interaction between music and drama, grounded in a deep understanding of the artistic principles of the operatic genre.

4. Article: *The Psychotechnique of the Opera Singer*

This article highlights the importance of specialized psychophysical training for opera performers. Such preparation is key for developing stable stage habits necessary for coordinating the multiple elements of operatic performance. It facilitates a natural and integrated realization of the role.

5. Article: *From Stage to Screen: Exploring Directorial Approaches in Adapting Musicals to Film*

This study examines contemporary directorial practices in adapting stage musicals for the cinema, emphasizing that the process often leads to a direct and mechanical transfer from one art form to another. The article proposes enhancing directing methods through the integration of techniques from experimental and auteur cinema. It also advocates the creation of a directing laboratory that applies ideas from avant-garde theories and practices characteristic of 20th-century cinema, theatre, and music.

The text provides an in-depth analysis of contemporary directorial approaches in adapting stage musicals to film, noting the tendency toward mechanical transfer from stage to screen. In response, it suggests improving adaptation strategies by introducing methods borrowed from experimental and auteur cinema. In this context, the study argues for the necessity of developing a specific directing approach functioning as an interdisciplinary platform, uniting ideas and practices from the avant-garde of both cinema and theatre.

6. Article: *The Cinematic Convention of the Film Musical: On Chicago by Rob Marshall*

This article analyzes the specifics of the film musical, emphasizing the necessity of stylistic and narrative unity, achieved through grotesque acting and a visually metaphorical directorial language incorporating symbolism and poetic elements. It highlights that the cinematic narrative in a film musical inherently carries a theatrical foundation, characteristic of the musical, which is an indispensable part of the genre's aesthetics.

7. Article: *The TV Series as a Fairy Tale: Archetypes, Narrative Structure, and Cultural Resonance*

The text examines the television series as a modern transformation of the fairy-tale narrative, focusing on the use of archetypal characters and traditional plot structures reinterpreted through the lens of contemporary cultural contexts. Series often reinterpret mythological and fairy-tale motifs—heroic journeys, overcoming obstacles, and moral lessons—embedding them within current social realities. Through these universal narrative formulas, the television series establishes a strong identification with the viewer, functioning as a cultural mirror reflecting societal values, fears, and ideals.

Summary of Publications:

Overall, the publications related to the dissertation topic correspond in quality and content to the analytical depth of the dissertation itself, each addressing a specific thematic problem. Collectively, they testify to the development of the candidate's theoretical inquiries, which logically culminate in the present habilitation text. They demonstrate a sustained interest and progressive growth of the candidate as both a scientific researcher and a successful practitioner.

From the analysis of the research and the submitted materials, it is evident that the candidate's professional qualifications, biographical profile (including professional, creative, scientific, and pedagogical achievements), the presented habilitation thesis, and the accompanying publications correspond in terms of competence, value, and content. This serves as indisputable evidence of the candidate's personal involvement in the conducted research and confirms that the formulated contributions and results are indeed the candidate's own merit.

Author's Abstract

The author's abstract spans 71 pages and is correctly formatted, following the structure and content of the habilitation thesis. While slightly exceeding the typical range of 35–50 pages, this is justifiable given the substantial content of the main thesis, condensed sixfold into a coherent and complete summary. The abstract fully reflects the overall analytical flow, the main findings, results, and contributions, meeting academic standards in quality, structure, and content.

After a thorough reading of the habilitation thesis, any feeling of satisfaction with the scientific merits of the work leaves no room for significant critical remarks regarding content. The scholarly value of this research warrants its publication, and I have no doubt that it will be printed in the near future.

As a formal recommendation, for any potential future electronic edition of the thesis, it is advisable to ensure proper formatting of headings and the generation of an automatic table of contents, which is currently absent in both the main text and the author's abstract.

Conclusion

The dissertation contains scientific and applied-scientific results representing an original contribution to knowledge and fully complies with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZDARS), the implementing regulations of ZDARS, and the relevant regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

The results demonstrate that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petar Odazhiev possesses profound theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the field of *Musicology and Musical Arts*, and he has shown the ability to conduct research leading to original and significant scientific contributions.

The candidate's scientometric indicators meet and exceed the national minimum requirements under ZDARS. Together with all other habilitation materials and the dissertation results, they fully comply with the national standards adopted in accordance with the regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University for the implementation of ZDARS.

Based on the above, I confidently give my positive evaluation of the research presented in the reviewed habilitation thesis, the author's abstract, and the publications accompanying the dissertation. The achieved results and contributions allow me to **unequivocally recommend that the esteemed scientific jury award the academic degree of Doctor of Sciences to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petar Odazhiev in the field of higher education: 8. Arts, professional direction 8.3. Music and Dance Arts, scientific specialty Musicology and Musical Arts.**

July 22, 2025
Sofia

Reviewer:
Prof. Dr. Velimir VeleV