

## **STATEMENT**

by Professor Dr. Deyan Evgeniev Pavlov

Lecturer in **Opera Singing with Conductor** at the Department of Musical-Stage Art, Vocal Faculty, and in **Opera and Symphony Conducting** at the Department of Composition and Conducting, Theoretical-Composition and Conducting Faculty, at the **National Music Academy “Prof. Pancho Vladigerov” – Sofia**

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. Presentation of the Procedure and the Doctoral Candidate**

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.

## **2. Relevance of the Topic**

There is a lack of problem-focused research that treats the director's thinking as an independent object of scholarly interest. Moreover, the written legacy of Bulgarian opera directors—whether in the form of articles, critical texts, memoir notes, or journalistic writings—remains largely underexplored within contemporary theoretical musicology and often completely unknown to the broader academic community.

The present study aims to fill this significant gap by identifying the fundamental aesthetic and methodological views of prominent Bulgarian opera directors from the early 20th century to the present day, focusing on a specific aspect. More precisely, it does so through analytical tracing and comparison of their representative works in the field: books, monographic studies, problem-oriented and critical articles published across various platforms and time periods. The choice to focus on this category of original printed documents is motivated by the intention to study the directorial thinking of a representative group of opera directors (from all creative generations) from their subjective perspective, thus gaining deeper insight into the world of their artistic ideas and pursuits.

## **3. Understanding of the Problem**

Based on thorough exploratory research and the accompanying historical overview of theoretical works and other publications by Bulgarian opera directors, this study identifies the leading principles and approaches of the interpretative directorial toolkit. Its analytical aim is to compare and synthesize both individual creative-directorial components of the methodological process and to offer forward-looking projections regarding the key position and contemporary role of Bulgarian directors in repertory opera theater.

The dissertation deliberately emphasizes the following: the fundamental characteristics of the methodology and directorial approach of the identified key figures, tracing the processes in their genre- and style-specific decisions, the development of stage-directing tools, and reflections on opera-specific requirements in their staging choices, ultimately summarizing the main problems of directorial interpretation.

## **4. Research Methodology**

The research methods employed in the dissertation include general scientific methods of cognition, as well as historical, comparative, logical, and systemic analysis. Specifically, the methods applied are:

- **Text-centered analysis** – of published and archival texts;
- **Historical-genetic approach** – for tracing stylistic evolution;
- **Interdisciplinary synthesis** – integrating musical, theatrical, and cultural studies concepts.

The empirical basis of the study is the candidate's own practice as an opera director, performer, and educator. The theoretical foundation consists of publications, monographs, archival materials, musicological and theater studies sources, and musical scores.

## **5. Characterization and Evaluation of the Dissertation**

The dissertation thoroughly traces and systematizes the aesthetic and methodological views of leading Bulgarian opera directors from the beginning of the 20th century to the present day, through the analysis of their theoretical publications. The goal is to establish a stable directing paradigm and to define contemporary problems and prospects in national opera directing, thereby outlining a potential new field of art studies research—methodological and practical issues of directorial art in Bulgarian opera theater.

### **Contributions of the Dissertation**

The study presents significant contributions in three main areas: methodological, applied, and academic. These reflect the importance of the work both for directing practice in contemporary opera theater and for the development of Bulgarian music-theatrical theory.

#### **Methodological Contributions**

- A scientific model was developed for analyzing the methodology of stage realization in opera.
- An innovative methodology for analyzing directorial texts was introduced, combining aesthetic, stylistic, historical, and genre-based approaches, applicable to other stage forms as well.
- A model for comparative analysis of directorial interpretations was created, based on textual and staging sources.
- A model for reconstructing stage thinking from published (and partially subjective) texts was developed by identifying dominant aesthetic lines and practices.
- An interdisciplinary approach was implemented, combining elements from theater studies, musicology, and cultural studies, which can also be adapted for other synthetic arts.

#### **Applied Contributions**

- An informational and analytical database was created, classifying key directorial strategies and approaches, applicable in the teaching of opera directing and stage interpretation.

- Criteria for evaluating directorial interpretation were established, useful for repertoire planning and artistic policy in opera theaters.
- The study provides guidance for contemporary directors on interpreting classical opera works through historical and stylistic context.
- The identified directing principles can be applied in creating educational programs, directing workshops, and critical publications related to music-theatrical arts.
- Through the analysis of specific cases and published texts, the research encourages reflexivity among creators, mediating between theory and directing practice.

### **Academic Contributions**

- A perspective for a new field of art studies research was outlined: Methodological and practical issues of directorial art in Bulgarian opera theater.
- For the first time in Bulgarian theater and musicology, a comprehensive systematization and analysis of original theoretical publications of leading Bulgarian opera directors from the early 20th century to the early 21st century has been carried out.
- The evolution of directorial thinking was traced through various cultural, political, and aesthetic phases—from the formation of the directing school to its contemporary transformations.
- A new periodization of Bulgarian opera directing was proposed, based on genre-stylistic and methodological criteria rather than solely historical-chronological or ideologically determined principles.
- The existence of a stable national directing school was demonstrated, characterized by an integrated approach to musical and stage elements.
- The role of the “writing director” was examined and justified as a figure contributing to the theoretical understanding and documentary archiving of Bulgarian stage interpretative tradition.

### **Structure of the Abstract**

The abstract consists of an Introduction, Three Main Chapters, Conclusions, and a Final Summary.

### **Conclusion**

The research provides not only a retrospective analysis but also a prospective framework for future developments aimed at enriching pedagogical programs, repertoire policies, and contemporary directing practices in Bulgarian opera theater. In this comprehensive sense, the contribution of the work lies not only in the field of scholarly knowledge but also in supporting the necessary creative dialogue between different generations of directors and between their methodological views and practical stage experience.

After thoroughly reviewing all the materials submitted by the candidate and his reference for minimal requirements, I give my **positive** evaluation and I confidently recommend that the academic jury award the scientific degree **Doctor of Sciences** to Associate Professor Dr. Petar Zapryanov Odazhiev.

14.08.2025, Sofia

Prepared by: .....

**Prof. Dr. Deyan Evgeniev Pavlov**