

REVIEW

by

Prof Anton Hristov Andonov, PhD

on

Dissertation work for awarding educational and scientific degree “Doctor”

Professional field (code 8.3) Music and dance Art

Doctoral program “Choreography”

Doctoral candidate: **Dragomir Valentinov Yordanov**, doctoral student at the Department of Choreography of Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts “Prof Asen Diamandiev”

Topic: *Interaction between the Bulgarian Stage Folk Dance and Contemporary Dance Styles*

Academic supervisor: Prof Zhelka Tabakova, PhD

This review is prepared on the grounds of Order RD-27-058/ 15.04.2024 of the Rector of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof Asen Diamandiev" – Plovdiv, regarding the approval of a scientific jury and presented by the doctoral candidate a dissertation, an abstract, a report on the contributions of the dissertation, publications on the topic of the dissertation, meeting the requirements of Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA), and the Regulations for its implementation, for obtaining educational and scientific degree “doctor” and scientific degree “doctor of sciences”.

I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND EVALUATION OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation consists of 163 pages and includes introduction, an exposition in four chapters, conclusions, contributions, bibliography, and appendix. The content of each chapter is divided into separate paragraphs, with conclusions drawn at the end of each chapter. The main text contains numerous quotations, as evidentiary material for the text of the dissertation work. The list of used literary sources consists of 80 titles in Cyrillic and Latin and 8 internet sources.

The biography and professional career of the author of the dissertation presented for review clearly suggests the reason why he focused on the researched topic: *Interaction between the Bulgarian Stage Folk Dance and Contemporary Dance Styles*. The development of Dragomir Yordanov is related to his studies at the National School of Folk Arts, "Filip Kutev" Kotel, specialty Bulgarian folk dances, after which he entered the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof. Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv major Bulgarian Folk Choreography, Bachelor program. In 2015, he also graduated with honors the Master's program in Contemporary Dance Techniques in the class of Prof Zhelka Tabakova. Simultaneously with his studies, Dragomir Yordanov successfully developed his performance as a ballet dancer in the Academic Folklore Ensemble at AMDFA-Plovdiv, folklore ensemble Trakia, folklore ensemble Bulgare"- Sofia and Pasha Dance Theater - Turkey. Particularly significant are his performance awards from the International Festival for Solo Dance "Mahmud

Esambaev" - Chechen Republic (2012), where he was awarded first place and a prize for innovation, and the International Dance Festival "Magic World" - Haskovo (2015) for the best solo dance.

An important part of his artistic biography is his work as the artistic director and choreographer of the dance ensemble at University of Agriculture - Plovdiv, dance ensemble Zharava and guest choreographer in various projects. His teaching work started in 2016 at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" as a part-time specialist in the disciplines: Popular Dance Styles, Modern Dance Techniques and Folklore Dances of the People. At the same time, as a teacher, he is also involved in various projects for community centers and secondary schools, working with children and adolescents of different ages.

His experience as a dancer, choreographer and manager over the years gives him the opportunity to state a serious large-scale study, which finds its place in the scientific-theoretical base of modern research trends and carries in itself a theoretical-practical significance.

I believe that the topic of the dissertation formulated in this way is relevant and interesting for choreographers, educators and researchers in the field of contemporary and folk dance art.

The **introduction** points to the basis of the dissertation on the collaboration across dance styles and the doctoral student's research approach. It emphasizes the relevance of the problem and its significance in the analysis of summarized and synthesized information about the process in Bulgaria up to this point. The objective specifies the tasks presented in a theoretical and applied aspect.

The **first chapter** *Stage Forms of the Bulgarian Folk Dance* is an in-depth reading of theoretical studies, presented through an analytical approach with comments aimed at the main objective. The author makes a detailed choreographic analysis of emblematic dance works by the authors Prof Kiril Dzhenev - *Danube Fairy Tale* and Prof Daniela Dzheneva - *Uralia*, tracing the origin and realization of the entire stage product. The analysis focuses extensively on the authentic dance samples in comparison with the author's interpretation in the works of art.

Of particular importance and contribution of the doctoral student are the detailed interviews cited and accompanied with analysis by proven specialists in the field of folk dance art - Ivan Ivanov, Prof Nikolay Tsvetkov, Vasil Gerlimov and Stoyan Gospodinov, related to the subject matter and research in the first chapter.

In the **second chapter**, *Ethnographic and stylistic features of the ring-dance – a basis for structuring modern dance models*, Dragomir Yordanov thoroughly examines the historical specificity of the ring-dance and its forms in the traditional culture, as well as its interrelationship with the modern dance styles. It specifically describes the style and character of all folklore regions in Bulgaria, analyzing their specifics and indicates the possibility of lexical collaboration with popular dance styles.

The **conclusions** drawn by the author after each region and at the end of the second chapter facilitate the choreographers and are a prerequisite for conducting future experiments between

Bulgarian folk dance and modern dance stylistics, which is a contribution to today's generalized and structured theoretical research.

In **chapter three**, *Types of traditional and modern dance patterns in education. Forms of synergism in choreography*, the author has achieved maximum depth in the study of street styles and modern dances – their specificity and their combination with traditional folk elements and movements.

This chapter occupies an extremely important place in the dissertation, as an experimental study related to the diversity of dance styles and the character of different genres, as well as evidence for the realization of a modern harmonious dance interpretation.

For the first time, the candidate realized a training - exercise in modern street styles, built on the basis of dance techniques from folk and modern dance. In parallel, the author proves the importance of the original approach to the well-chosen musical material, which is in synthesis with the innovative dance exercises. The productivity of the close relationship between music and dance is comprehensively indicated as a prerequisite not only for successful preparation, but also for maintaining a good physical shape of the performers.

In this third chapter Dragomir Yordanov makes a detailed analysis of the path and development of the Bulgarian folklore from the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. Based on extensive and personally conducted interviews with choreographers of various genres, the author synthesizes and summarizes the conclusion: *"It is important to search for and preserve the authentic dance folklore and to preserve, as much as possible as it is, so that the artists who have innovative thinking to have somewhere to take the authentic and by reworking it through their own creativity to develop our national culture, and in this way to expand the boundaries of influence among society"*.

In **chapter four**, *Stage forms and contemporary trends - interaction between folklore, classical and contemporary dance*, Dragomir Yordanov very clearly outlines a specific profile of the place of folklore and its relationship in the stage forms of the classical and the contemporary dance. The in-depth analyzes of the dance works: *Triptych (Nestinarka and By the River)* – choreography and direction Zhelka Tabakova, *Swan Ring Dance* - choreography by Stefan Yordanov, *Orisia* – choreography by Neshka Robeva, *Healing* – choreography by Dragomir Yordanov, show that the author is well acquainted with the new trends in performances and various dance specifics. Through interesting facts and stories of the choreographer-directors and performers, skilfully interprets and summarizes the information in his precise analyzes of the theoretical thesis.

In addition to stylistics in choreographic vocabulary, the author examines the concrete compositional structure and dramaturgical activity in the dance performance. It proves that the Bulgarian folk dance has undergone a great development through the eyes of each artist and successful experiments have been achieved in the combination of different styles in the XXI century.

II. SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS AND EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS

There are real scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation research, which are relevant for the enrichment of folklore science. For the first time, the research on Bulgarian dance folklore analyzes its development in the direction of interaction with modern dance styles and its relationship with *street dance*. The author has conducted independent research through various activities related to the topic and presents his point of view. Until now, there are no extensive and generalizing analyzes in this area, but he proves his thesis about the development of the Bulgarian dance: referring to the interviews with contemporary choreographers, the possibilities of combining heterogeneous styles – Bulgarian folk and contemporary-popular, as a result of the collection of information about the variations in the popular dance styles and their application in practice by himself.

The research successfully achieves its goals not only in terms of theoretical problems, but also in terms of practical results.

I agree with the five general *contributions of the work*, which are analytically presented and credibly highlighted: For the first time, the path of reformatting the Bulgarian folk dance from its authentic environment to large contemporary stage forms is indicated; for the first time, the stage folk dance is explored in the light of interaction with contemporary dance movements, forms and trends; for the first time, a model is given for mixing different dance styles in the training of dancers in order to apply them in practice; for the first time the mechanisms for creating new choreographic productions in the spirit of the XXI century are described; for the first time, the applicability of interaction is analyzed and proven as a method suitable for creating a new system in dance education.

I give positive assessment of the reports on the dissertation problem. The doctoral student has participated in three conferences with reports:

- Spring Scientific Readings 2020 - AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev", Plovdiv. Report: *Contemporary trends in the traditional forms of training in Bulgarian folk choreography*.

- III International Scientific Conference "Science, Education and Innovations in the Field of Art", AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv, 2021. Report: *Practices in contemporary Bulgarian folk choreography and possible collaborations with other dance styles*.

- Cultural seminar *The Unknown*, AMDFA "prof Asen Diamnadiev" - Plovdiv, 2022. Report: *The collaboration of the Bulgarian folk dance with other dance styles - an opportunity for sustainable development of the dance heritage*.

He has **three publications** – two publications in collections and one in the journal *Musical Horizons* (refereed edition):

- Yordanov, Dragomir. *Contemporary trends in the traditional forms of training in Bulgarian folk choreography*. Collection of reports "Spring scientific readings 2020 - AMDFA "prof. Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv, p. 175-180. // ISBN/ISSN 1314-7005

- Yordanov, Dragomir. *Practices in contemporary Bulgarian folk choreography and possible collaborations with other dance styles*. Collection of reports from III International Scientific

Conference "Science, Education and Innovations in the Field of Art", volume 2, p. 94-100. // ISSN 2738-8956 (Print), ISSN 2738-8964 (Online)

- Yordanov, Dragomir. *A possible approach for the development of Bulgarian folk dance through interaction with contemporary dance styles*. Musical Horizons magazine, 2024, issue 1, p. 13 // ISSN 1310-0076.

The **author's abstract** meets the standards and accurately conveys the essence of the dissertation, and the relevant conclusions are made. The contributions are precisely indicated.

The reviewed dissertation work has a scientific-practical value. It meets the requirements of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and the regulations for its implementation.

III. CONCLUSION

In the context of everything said in this Review, I give my positive assessment of the dissertation work *Interaction between the Bulgarian Stage Folk Dance and Contemporary Dance Styles* and I propose to the respected scientific jury **to award Dragomir Valentinov Yordanov** the educational and scientific degree "**doctor**" in professional field **8.3 Music and Dance Art**, doctoral program **Choreography**.

10.05.2024

Plovdiv

Reviewer

Prof Anton Andonov, PhD