

REVIEW

by

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on

Dissertation work for awarding educational and scientific degree

“DOCTOR”

Professional field (code 8.3) Music and dance Art

Doctoral program “Choreography”

Doctoral candidate: **Marina Semenova Bankova**, doctoral student at the Department of
Choreography of Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts “Prof Asen Diamandiev”

Topic: *The Dance Folklore of the Bessarabian Bulgarians*

Academic supervisor: Prof Daniela Dzheneva

This review is prepared on the basis of Order RD-27-108/14.07.2023 of the Rector of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof Asen Diamandiev" – Plovdiv, regarding the approval of a scientific jury and the presented by the doctoral student dissertation work, abstract, reference for the contributions to the dissertation work, publications on the topic of the dissertation, in accordance with 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 207 pages and includes introduction, exposition in four chapters, conclusion, contributions, bibliography, researched and described dances from different regions populated by Bessarabian Bulgarians. 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 and links, as evidentiary material for the text of the dissertation. The list of used literary sources consists of 62 titles in Bulgarian, Russian and Moldavian language.

The biography and professional career of the author of the dissertation presented for review clearly suggests the reason why she focused on the researched topic: *The Dance Folklore of the Bessarabian Bulgarians*. The development of Marina Bankova is related to her training at the Choreographic Studio for Bulgarian Folk Dances at the Moldavian Philharmonic, after which she

joined the Ensemble for Bulgarian Folk Songs and Dances at the same Philharmonic as ballet dancer. In 1998 she obtains Bachelor's degree in Bulgarian Folk Choreography at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev", Plovdiv, then in 1999 Master's degree in Choreography Directing. Along with her studies, Marina Bankova also works as a ballet dancer in the Academic Ensemble of AMDFA - Plovdiv.

An important part of her artistic career is her position of Artistic Director and choreographer of Ensemble "Rodolyubie" - Branch - Taraclia, Moldova. She has staged many concerts with the Ensemble, performing renewed author's repertoire, and she also has managed to develop cooperation with the Music College "Stefan Nyaga", Branch of Tverditsa. In 2006 was assigned by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria to the "Stefan Nyaga"-Tverditsa College of Music and teaches the following subjects: Bulgarian folk dances, Choreographic composition, Folklore dances of the nations, History of dance, Methodology of teaching Bulgarian folk dances, etc.

Her experience as a dancer, choreographer and manager over the years gives her the opportunity to claim 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 as formulated, the topic of the dissertation is relevant and interesting for choreographers, teachers and researchers of the folklore dance art.

The **Introduction** leads in to the main scientific research of the dance tradition of the Bessarabian Bulgarians. It emphasizes the relevance of the problem and its significance in the analysis of the local studied regions in a historical and geographical aspect, as well as the minimal influence of the coexistence with another traditional culture.

The objective specifies the tasks presented in a theoretical and applied aspect.

Chapter I - Overview of the studies on the dance folklore in the region, is an in-depth reading of theoretical studies, presented through an analytical approach with comments directed at the main objective.

The analysis of the published theoretical sources traces the emergence and development in cultural and historical terms of the ethnic group from the region and their traditional practices of the past.

In the next chapter, *The Bulgarians in Bessarabia – geographical location and historical information*, Marina Bankova very thoroughly examines the historical specificity and ethnoculture of the various groups present in the region, as well as their interrelationship related to the material tradition, holiday system, customs and geographical location, inherited and preserved from ancient times.

The theoretical overview shows the specifics of the different ethnic cultures of the region and the lack of a generalized and structured theoretical research to this day.

After the comprehensive review of factors of a different nature and a thorough analysis, the author correctly quotes the conclusion “...regardless of its almost two-century existence in a multi-ethnic environment and the political vicissitudes in the region, the Bulgarian community retains its national self-awareness...”

In the third chapter *Description and analysis of the dance folklore of the Bessarabian Bulgarians*, the author has achieved maximum depth and authenticity in the study due to the fact that she personally conducted the surveys with the informants and reveals the specifics of the traditional dance culture. This chapter is extremely important for the dissertation, as an ethnological study of the style and character of the various dances and their performance. The high value of the studied and analyzed examples prove the original approach to the field work of Marina Bankova, based on written sources and own local history materials. The detailed classification according to form, place of performance, specific dance vocabulary, holding and accompaniment reveal the deep history of traditional dance culture. In addition, the author managed to trace the transformation of archaic dances influenced by other ethnic groups, which left their traces of the past, became known in the performance of the nonprofessional dance groups, namely: “...Moldavian-Romanian influence can be detected in the ring-dance, which is most prominent in the music. One of the assumptions is that this ring-dance entered the entertainment repertoire of the people of Kayraklia after the active work of the improvised dance group from the local Culture Club in the all-republican performances and events.” In parallel with this, the author brings to the fore and concludes that in order to preserve and form ethnic self-awareness in the population, the most appropriate way is through the "Folk Dance".

Bankova honestly and bravely approaches the researched material, in which a detailed emphasis is placed, through interesting facts and classifications related to the spirit of an ancient dance culture, filled with a lot of color and archaism.

The in-depth analysis in the third chapter shows that the author is familiar with the work of researchers such as Yov Titorov, Colonel Georgi Yankov, Nikolay Derzhavin, Raina Katsarova, Nikolay Kaufman and others, correctly using and skillfully interpreting the scientific information in her precise and comprehensive analyzes and field studies.

In the **fourth chapter**, *Occasions and place of folk dancing and performances among the Bessarabian Bulgarians. Periodization. Musical accompaniment*, Marina Bankova very clearly outlines a specific profile for the place of the ring-dance in the traditional village culture, as a social factor uniting the inhabitants of the respective settlement. The author very thoroughly examines and analyzes the "Sunday", "evening" dance, as well as the "gathering", as a center which, “...reinforces the identity of Bulgarians living far from Bulgaria and their preservation as a community”.

Moreover, in the fourth chapter, a detailed emphasis is placed on the dance tradition in the customary-ritual and calendar system, through interesting facts, informants' accounts and numerous

quotations bearing the spirit of ancient culture, past and destiny of the population. Customary-ritual dances and performances are very thoroughly described and examined, depending on their diversity and the different content they carry, through ritual actions, symbolic rituals, verbal and musical examples.

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. The research successfully achieves its goals not only in terms of theoretical problems, but also in terms of practical results. I agree with the three general contributions of the work, which are analytically presented and credibly highlighted.

The considered 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.

I give positive assessment of the reports on the dissertation problem /four scientific reports published in the period 2017-2022/. As a choice of topic, they are related to the dissertation work.

The abstract meets the standards and correctly conveys the essence and the stated contributions of the dissertation.

III. CONCLUSION

Based on everything stated above, I hereby give my **positive** assessment for the dissertation work *The Dance Folklore of the Bessarabian Bulgarians*, and I propose to the respected scientific jury that Marina Semenova Bankova be awarded the educational and scientific degree **Doctor** in Professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art, doctoral program Choreography.

15.09.2023

Plovdiv

Reviewer

Prof Anton Andonov, PhD