

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof Dimo Enev Enev – AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev"-Plovdiv

on dissertation work for awarding educational and scientific degree “**Doctor**”,
Professional field 8.3 Music and dance Art, Doctoral program “Choreography”
Department of Choreography, Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography at
Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts “Prof Asen Diamandiev”, Plovdiv

Author: Marina Semyonova Bankova

Academic supervisor: Prof Daniela Dzheneva, PhD

General presentation of the procedure and the materials received for review

The doctoral candidate Marina Bankova has presented a set of electronic and paper documents related to the procedure for defending the dissertation work, as well as 4 publications related to the main topic of the scientific research. All of them comply with the regulations for the development of the academic staff and the scientific activity of AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv and therefore I have no objections to the presented documents and materials.

Brief biographical data of the candidate

Marina Bankova is born on 29 Aug 1974 in the village of Kairaklia, Republic of Moldova. She has an extremely rich educational and professional career with a focus on the Bulgarian dance folklore: She completes her secondary education at the "Stefan Neaga" Music and Choreography School in Chisinau, after which she works as ballet dancer at the Studio for Bulgarian of Music and Dance, at the Moldovan Philharmonic - Taraclia branch. In the period 1994-1998 she studied and completed a Bachelor's degree at AMDFA - Plovdiv, and in 1999 she receives Master's Degree. During her studies, she has also worked as a solo ballet dancer at the Academy's Ballet Ensemble. In 2000 she specialized in the topic "Research and recording of the dances and games of the Bessarabian Bulgarians" at AMDFA-Plovdiv with scientific supervisor Prof D. Dzheneva.

Since 2002 she has been going through different levels of her professional development, including: artistic director and choreographer of Folklore Ensemble Rodolyubie - Taraclia branch. Work in educational institutions teaching folk dances in the city of Sofia. Member of the Managing Board of Rodolyubets – Association for Relations with the Bessarabian and Tavrian Bulgarians. Two 5-year mandates as a delegated teacher of the Bulgarian communities abroad in the music college "Stefan Neaga" branch Tvarditsa Republic of Moldova, commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria. She works as a Dance Teacher at Dance Ensemble "Badniche in the National Palace of Children, Sofia. Author of numerous dance productions, such as: *Shopska Zadyavka*, *Bessarabian Motifs*, *Severnyashka Suite*, *Children's Games* and others. In 2016 she was accepted into the Doctoral program at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv with the topic of the dissertation work *The Dance Folklore of the Bessarabian Bulgarians*.

Relevance of the topic

The research subject of the proposed dissertation is extremely relevant in the study of the dance folklore of the Bessarabian Bulgarians. It corresponds with the author's family background, as well as with her long-standing professional and research interest in this multicultural topic. This is already evident in the introduction of the work, where, in addition to the motivational aspects of the study, the purpose, tasks and methodology of the study are clearly formulated. The different focus lines of the dissertation are mentioned, which raise questions for the author with the idea of being deciphered in the main part of the work. I quote: *"The above-mentioned facts raise the issue of preserving and keeping the dance folklore of the Bessarabian Bulgarians as a concern for the education of the young generation. Refracted through the events experienced by the Bulgarian settlers in Bessarabia, the chronology and development of the dance patterns will challenge the descendants to discover their identity and strengthen their ethnic self-awareness in the multicultural environment of southern Moldova."*

Feasibility of research methods for achievement of the set goals

Evaluation of the dissertation work

The dissertation consists of 210 pages and is structured according to the standards and requirements for scientific writing, it includes: Introduction defining the objective, tasks and methods of the research, four chapters in the main part, conclusions – including conclusion and contributions, named list of informants, bibliography of 62 paper and internet editions, as well as archival materials from the archive of the Institute for the Study of Arts at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Chapter I - Overview of the studies on the dance folklore in the region. Here, the candidate pays attention to authors with different national origins and the focus of publications, which is evidence of an attempt for depth of the research. The doctoral student skillfully brings out the specifics of the individual texts, chronicles the arrangement and the brief presentation of the authors and the content, and in this way gives the review completeness and concreteness in favor of the studied issues, concluding: *"Despite the numerous scientific studies and monographs of great researchers, we do not find any publications or editions in which the essence and peculiarities of the dance folklore of the Bulgarian settlers in Southern Bessarabia and in particular the Republic of Moldova are revealed and illuminated"* and claims that this will happen in her work.

Chapter II. The Bulgarians in Bessarabia – geographical location and historical information. In this Chapter, Marina Bankova mentions and regionalizes in detail the diaspora of the settlers, and on the basis of the known information and publications gives specific information about the historical and geographical specifics of the Bessarabian Bulgarians. Thus, she smoothly leads the reader into the main part of the work, namely:

Chapter III. Description and analysis of the dance folklore of the Bessarabian Bulgarians.

The author has structured this chapter in 4 separate subsections with different specifics.

3.1 Examples of folklore dances of the Bulgarians in southern Moldova, systematized according to the investigated settlements: the town of Taraclia, the village of Kairaklia, the town of Tvarditsa and the village of Korteni. In this part of the work, 20 dances and performances from the mentioned settlements are deciphered and described, which give a complete picture of the research and analytical activity of the author in a choreographic and musical aspect.

3.2 Traditional ring dances and performances popular in all settlements of southern Moldova and the whole of Bessarabia, as an integrating and differentiating mark for the local Bulgarian population. In this part of the work, the author classifies the "Dances" and "Performances" according to their place, occasion and function, as well as according to their external form and appearance, the musical-song accompaniment, the way the participants hold and arrange while dancing. She discusses some of the specifics of the individual dances and their transformation over the years in different locations. She also analyzes the interrelationships between the local folklore and the folklore of the Bessarabian Bulgarians and their gradual collaboration and gives various examples.

3.3 Examples of dance folklore of the Bulgarians in Bessarabia from the studies of other researchers. An extremely important part of the work, in which the author complements her studies with already existing studies. This gives the thesis additional scientific value and builds on the main topic of the work. The studies and descriptions of Georgi Yankov and Raina Katsarova make an impression, which in their own way are an extremely rich finding for the dissertation, and the texts of Galin Georgiev supplement what was researched by the doyens.

3.4 Conclusions about the style and character of the dance folklore performed by the Bulgarians in Moldova and the whole of Bessarabia. The concluding subsection has a general character of this part of the work. Comparisons are made of the structural components, as well as of the individual games and people studied and described by the various researchers, drawing the following conclusion: "*...the Bulgarian settlers in Bessarabia have their own repertoire performed on various occasions with entertainment character. The differences of this repertoire are established with respect to the settlements depending on the original regions from which they come, the periods during which they were influenced by other cultures and their contemporary regional location in the two countries of Moldova and Ukraine...*"

Chapter IV. Occasions and place of folk dancing and performances among the Bessarabian Bulgarians. Periodization. Musical accompaniment. The next classification of the dances of the Bessarabian Bulgarians proposed by the author is according to the time, place and occasion of dancing. Created by the national tradition, the scientific thought qualifies them as recreational and ritualistic, and based on her studies, Marina Bankova systematized the recreational ones into: Sunday Dance, Evening Dance and Festive, and the ritualistic dances are classified as

dances within the family and seasonal rites. She shares the memories of the respondents, cites many authors and summarizes: *"...it can be said that the Sunday dance on the town/ village square, and all the little and important festivities /evening dance, gathering/ was carried over from the ancestral homeland and carefully preserved by the Bulgarians in Bessarabia ..."*

The conclusion is extremely thorough and is built in a retrospective plan. The author recalls the main components of the work and confirms the set goals and tasks of the dissertation work. She deciphers the main problems accompanying the multicultural society of the Bessarabian Bulgarians in a historical-geographic and cultural-educational aspect, refracted through the prism of traditional culture.

The six presented contributions are formulated extremely precisely and adequately correspond to the topic of the research. They reflect the author's pursuits in the dissertation work and give it adequate completion.

Abstract

The 38-page author's abstract meets the requirements and adequately and fully reflects the dissertation. The contributions of the study are presented. Four publications in eligible journals are submitted. Each of them reflects a different stage of the candidate's work on the topic of the dissertation in theoretical and applied aspects. The contributions formulated by the author adequately reflect the results of the research.

Conclusion

Based on everything said above and my positive assessment of the merits and contributions of the dissertation work, I strongly recommend the Scientific Jury to award Marina Semenova Bankova the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".