

# OPINION

by

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on dissertation work for awarding educational and scientific degree

**“Doctor”**

Professional field: 8.3 Music and Dance Art

Doctoral program: Choreography

*titled*

## **PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING IN CHOREOGRAPHY – THEORY AND PRACTICE**

**SUN XIAOFANG**

**Academic supervisor:** Prof Zhelka Tabakova, PhD

The dissertation was discussed and proposed for public defense at a meeting of the Department of Choreography on 7.10.2024.

The total volume of the dissertation is 210 pages. It consists of three chapters, introduction, conclusion, contributions, bibliography. The bibliography contains 79 sources and 5 internet addresses. The doctoral student has 2 publications in Bulgaria and 4 publications in China, 1 participation in a conference.

Xiaofang Sun has a Bachelor's degree in dance at the Shenyang Conservatory of Music. In the period 2003-2004 she studied Modern Dance Choreography at the School of Continuing Education at Beijing Dance Academy, Beijing.

In 2009, she received a Master's degree in dance from the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

She regularly participates in seminars such as:

- Hong Kong International Seminar for the Development of Dance Education;
- Pina Bausch Dance Company in Hong Kong. Dance Workshop;
- International Modern Dance Week Seminar in Guangzhou, etc.

Since 2003, she has been a dance teacher, as well as a director and creator of original productions. As personal achievements, she notes:

- In 2009, she was invited as an assistant director for the opening and closing ceremonies of the 9th Wenhua Awards "Taoli Cup Dance Competition".
- In 2020, her course "Improvisation Training" was rated as a first-class double course in Liaoning Province.

- In 2023, her original choreography "I Want to Say" was performed at the Beijing Contemporary Dance Company's Contemporary Dance Week.

She is a member of various dance-related organizations and has won numerous awards.

**Relevance of the topic.** The doctoral candidate Xiaofang Sun has conducted a study in China on the qualities and abilities that dance choreographers should possess. In 2021, she published the monograph *Theory of Dance Choreography and Innovative Practice*. Therefore, the current topic is also based on this foundation. The dissertation *Principles of Teaching in Choreography - Theory and Practice* is based on her many years of teaching experience and artistic practice, as well as a dance choreography teacher at an art college. She seeks to analyze the different aspects of choreography training and the choreographic/ directing process itself as an author's work.

To achieve the set goals, the doctoral student refers to surveys, research data obtained through interviews and pedagogical reflections and synthesis, especially the problems existing in the training of dance choreographers in art colleges and universities. Therefore, the present study focuses on the training of choreographic talents, combining her personal teaching experience and her reflections on it. This can to some extent broaden the research perspective in this field, complement and improve the theory of choreography teaching, as well as attract the attention of other teachers to use the study as a theoretical guide.

The dissertation work is structured according to established norms. Xiaofang Sun is clearly familiar not only with the problems but also with the prospects of training future choreographers and ballet directors. The analytical approach is followed in each chapter and combines practical experience and scientific research in the field.

The contribution of the dissertation is undeniable! As the doctoral student claims, this will be the first work of its kind in China on the topic *Principles of Teaching in Choreography - Theory and Practice*. Its popularization will contribute to the future development of dance art in her homeland, not only in terms of choreography, but as a comprehensive development of the personal qualities of dancers. The main contribution, in fact, is the desire to modernize training in the direction of choreographic trends on a global scale and to integrate it in the educational system in China.

I would like to point out a few quotes that I think are subject to comment:

1. 1.5. ....First of all, a choreography teacher is a dance performer who must not only possess solid dance skills....It has been proven in world choreographic practice that a choreographer does not have to have been a dancer!

And also:

2.2. ....Chinese classical dance has gone through four stages, namely the foundation and the initial stage of development from 1950 to 1960 and ..... from 1960 to 1970.

In conclusion, I would say that Xiaofang Sun's dissertation work is comprehensive and multi-layered. It touches on all aspects of choreographic art. A parallel is drawn between classical Chinese

dance and modern world techniques. One can see the sincere desire to achieve new directions in choreographic discoveries!

I strongly suggest that the members of the esteemed scientific jury award the scientific and educational degree "doctor" to Xiaofang Sun in the scientific specialty Music Studies and Mus Art, professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art, doctoral program Choreography.

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