

REVIEW

by

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"Prof Asen Diamandiev"-Plovdiv

on

Dissertation work for awarding educational and scientific degree

“DOCTOR”

Professional field (code 8.3) Music and dance Art

Doctoral program “Choreography”

Doctoral candidate: **Svilen Krastev Hristov**, doctoral student at the Department of Choreography of

Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts

“Prof Asen Diamandiev”

Topic: ***Influence of the Vayats on shaping the style and character of the dance folklore from Varna***

Region

Academic supervisor: Prof Daniela Dzheneva

This review is prepared on the basis of Order RD-27-113/25.11.2022 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 ”.

I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND EVALUATION OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation consists of 257 pages and includes introduction, exposition in five chapters, conclusion, contributions, bibliography, researched and described dances of the region, a glossary of unfamiliar words, a list of inhabitants of the villages and an 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 and links, as evidentiary material for the text of the dissertation. The list of used literary sources consists of 102 titles in Bulgarian and Russian language.

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: *Influence of the Vayats on shaping the style and character of the dance folklore from Varna Region*. The development of Svilen Hristov is connected with the dance folklore, through his studies at the Free University of Varna, where he receives Bachelors' degree in Bulgarian Folk Choreography, and Master's degree in Choreography Direction at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" Plovdiv.

An important part of his creative biography is as his work as chief artistic director and choreographer of the Folklore Ensemble "Gergana" in the city of Varna. With the Ensemble, he realized numerous concerts in the country and abroad, as well as four *Forget Me Not, By the Sea My Love, Mother's Curse, With Love*.

His experience as a dancer, choreographer and manager over the years gives him 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 and has inherent theoretical-practical significance, the verification of which is substantiated by the immediate research activity of the author.

The **Introduction** leads in to the main scientific research on the manners, customs and the dancing tradition of the Vayats in the region. It emphasizes the relevance of the problem and its significance in the analysis of the specific group from the Varna region.

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

The **literature review** offers an in-depth reading of theoretical studies, presented through an analytical approach with comments directed at the main objective.

The author makes analysis of the published theoretical sources, tracing 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, *Historical information about the Vayats*, Svilen Hristov very thoroughly examines the historical specificity and ethnic culture of the various groups living in the region, as well as their interrelationship related to the material tradition, holiday system, customs and geographical location, inherited and preserved from the past.

The theoretical overview shows the specifics of the different ethno-cultures of the region and the lack of a generalized and structured theoretical study to this day.

After the comprehensive review of factors of different nature and in-depth analysis, the doctoral candidate summarizes that, "...*the influence of these groups on the folk dance tradition is imperceptible*".

Examining the clothing of the Erkech-Golish group, the doctoral student categorically confirms, "*... it is specific and is not found anywhere else in Bulgaria*". The author has achieved maximum depth and authenticity in the research due to the fact that he personally conducted the surveys with the informants and reveals the specifics of the depicted ornaments, color, patterns and technique of making.

In *Customary Ritual System of the Vayats*, the candidate focuses in detail on the history of the region related to the customary-ritual calendar through interesting facts, classification and analysis related to the spirit of an ancient culture filled with a lot of color and archaic character.

Svilen Hristov very clearly outlines a specific profile of the holiday calendar through ritualistic practices, symbolic rituals, verbal and musical examples with messages about the origin and development of the folklore tradition, with the conclusion "*...established over the centuries, although with different modifications, this ritualism reaches us in a coarse and at the same time perfect form, which reveals the ethnographic affiliation of its bearers. The central place in the building of this unique culture, preserved to this day, is the society, the conservative nature of the group that has kept these examples for the future generations*".

The focus of the work is found in the chapter *Influence of the Vayats in the shaping of the Varna dance style*. It is extremely important for dissertation, as an ethnological study of the style and character of the dances and the people of the region. The high value of the studied and analyzed examples prove the original approach to the field work of Svilen Hristov, based on written sources and own local history materials. The detailed classification according to form, place of performance, specific dance expressions, holding and accompaniment, reveal the deep history of traditional dance culture. In addition, the author convincingly analyzes and proves, "*...that everywhere in the region of interest the studied ring-dances always have the same dance elements, close and similar in style and character and it is the Vayats who have prevailed over the rest of the ethnic groups in the dance practices.*"

In the **last chapter**, the doctoral candidate presents the transformation of some archaic works that have become known through the performance of amateur and professional ensembles. In addition, it very clearly outlines the importance of Vayats folklore in the creation of performance projects that skillfully preserved the style and character of the region. The author has openly and boldly approached the researched material with summaries and conclusions on the Varna dance style "*...which exists and, regardless of any external influence, and over the years has developed and established as a local regional folklore unit, distinguishing and standing out from Dobrudzha and Thrace*".

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.

III. CONCLUSION

Based on everything stated above, I hereby give my **positive** assessment for the dissertation work *Influence of the Vayats on shaping the style and character of the dance folklore from Varna Region*, and I propose to the respected scientific jury that Svilen Krastev Hristov be awarded the educational and scientific degree **Doctor** in Professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art, doctoral program Choreography.

15.02.2022

Plovdiv

Reviewer

Prof Anton Andonov, PhD