

PEER REVIEW

**for the scientific works and educational activity of Assistant Dr. Elitsa Petrova
Lukanova
submitted for participation in a competition for occupation of the academic position
“Associate Professor”
under Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”, specialty “Ballet Art”,
announced in State Gazette, Issue 52 dated 05.07.2022, for the needs of Prof. Asen
Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv**

**Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Daniela Kirilova Geneva, Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts
under Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”, specialty “Choreography”**

The present peer review was prepared on the basis of documents received on the occasion of a competition announced by Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts /State Gazette, Issue 52 dated 05.07.2022/ and on the website of the Academy for the needs of the Choreography Department at the Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography.

Only one candidate has submitted documents to participate in the competition, namely Dr. Elitsa Petrova Lukanova, Assistant at the Choreography Department with the Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts. The materials she presented are comprehensive and comply with Art.45, para.3 and para.4, as well as Art.46 of the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquisition of scientific degrees and occupation of academic positions at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts. They also meet the minimum national requirements under Art.2b, para.2 and para.3 and under Art.2b, para.5 of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. They include a list of a total of five titles, including one monograph, three publications in refereed Bulgarian scientific publications, and a published book based on a protected dissertation work for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”. All the documents required by the competition have been correctly submitted: diplomas for the degrees of education, reference of work experience, as well as author’s reference for the scientific contributions and citations. Documents for implementation of a workshop for female rhythmic gymnastics competitors “Expressiveness, Artistry and Performance Technique” in 2021 at the Rakovski National Sports Base are also presented. Evidence of supporting creative performance – in “Giselle” on the stage of the Sofia Opera and Ballet in 2021, as well as participation in academic creative projects in 2021 and 2022, is attached.

Elitsa Lukanova was born in the City of Sofia in 1969. She grew up in a family of distinguished actors of ballet art and pedagogy. She began her special education at the State

Choreographic School in Sofia, and in 1984 transferred to the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet in St. Petersburg, Russia, where she graduated under Prof. Trofimova in 1987. She was a ballerina at the Sofia Opera and Ballet for 18 years, and has been a soloist in a number of productions presented in Bulgaria and on the stages of Europe, Asia, the USA, and South America. In 1985, Dr. Lukanova graduated with a Master's degree in "Ballet Pedagogy" at Prof. Pancho Vladigerov National Academy of Arts in Sofia. She was also a teacher at the National School of Dance Art in Sofia. Since 2016, Dr. Lukanova has been an Assistant at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, where she teaches "Fundamentals of Classical Dance", "Methodology of Classical Dance Teaching" and "History of Dance". Since 2017, Dr. Elitsa Lukanova has been a ballet teacher of the Bulgarian Women Rhythmic Gymnastics National Ensemble. She has repeatedly participated in international juries of ballet competitions. She was also a member of expert groups on accreditation of higher institutions with the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency.

According to the current competition, Elitsa Lukanova declares serious scientific and scientific-applied contributions, realized in publications and works created by her after the defense of her doctoral dissertation. She has attached three reports: *"Precursors of Professional Ballet in Bulgaria"*, Yearbook of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, 2019, *"Evolution Versus Revolution or Versus Development Models in Classical Dance"*, published in a collection of reports from the International Scientific Conference in 2020 in Ruse, and *"Professional Ballet Education in Bulgaria – 70 years of State Ballet School (State Choreography School, National School of Dance Art)"*, Musical Horizons, 2021.

A leading emphasis in the scientific publications is the monograph *"Influence of the Russian Ballet School on the Development of Ballet Art in Bulgaria in the 20th century"*. The work was printed this year with a volume of 174 pages and is structured in an introduction, five parts, and a conclusion. The used and cited literature numbers 47 titles, 7 of which are in foreign languages. Dr. Elitsa Lukanova's monograph is a substantial and intriguing scientific work, exploring the birth and development of ballet art in Bulgaria from the beginning of the 20th century. The study covers a period of about 70 years, chronologically tracing the influence of the Russian ballet school on these processes. The individual aspects of this impact are analyzed in detail – from the first touring Russian artists in our country, through the highly artistic influence of Russian ballet works, to the key role of theoretical and practical teaching methods.

In the previous book published by Lukanova, *"Creation, Development and Comparative Analysis of the Italian, French, Danish, and Russian Ballet Schools"*, she concluded that the emergence of classical ballet was due to a wide continuity and interpenetration of individual trends throughout Europe, *and that the Russian ballet school preserves and develops the best of these schools*. With the present monograph, she builds on these scientific searches by setting herself the goal of studying specifically and in detail all the processes of influence on the ballet art in Bulgaria. To achieve this goal, she analyzes a

huge volume of information, as individual elements of it are processed and presented for the first time in our country. For example, for the first time, the information gap regarding the launch of professional ballet education in Bulgaria is filled. For the first time, facts about Vladimir Beliy's influence on these processes in our country are revealed, directly from his students, who witnessed his great instinct and feeling for classical dance.

In the first part, legitimately titled "To Anastas Petrov", Dr. Lukanova traces the historical and social changes from the beginning of the last century, which led to an increase in interest in dance culture in the capital and large cities. This part introduces us to the professional growth of the first creators who developed the dance from gymnastics classes through the interpretation of some folklore customs to the staging of ballet scenes in dramatic and opera performances. Lukanova analyzes in detail the influence of the touring Russian ballet artists at that time in Bulgaria, noting that the critical attitude towards this type of stage performances created a desire in a number of our performers to specialize with the leading Russian pedagogues.

In the second part, she explores the creative and pedagogical achievements of the first established Bulgarian ballet masters and introduces us to the rich personality of Anastas Petrov as one of the founders of Bulgarian ballet and the first founder of professional training at the State Ballet School in our country. This part presents interesting facts about the creative progress of a number of his collaborators, who established themselves in the 1930s and contributed to building the image of ballet in our country.

In the third part, Dr. Elitsa Lukanova reveals to us the rise of Bulgarian ballet after the Second World War. In fact, the overview begins a little earlier with the creative realizations of the German modernists Max and Margarita Froman. Their works on the Sofia stage, the opinion of the critics about them, and last but not least, Anastas Petrov's attitude towards the repertory policy of the Opera, are analyzed. In this part, Elitsa Lukanova very skillfully and correctly combines facts, publications, and quotes from other authors, bringing her opinion to the fore. Also included here is a study of the repertoire performance of two magnificent choreographers, Nina Anisimova and Nikolay Holfin, with conclusions about the influence of their creative achievements on Bulgarian ballet.

The fourth part of the monograph is dedicated to professional ballet education in Bulgaria. Elitsa Lukanova's research has a certain contribution to filling in the facts and memory of the creation of the State Ballet School in 1951. For the first time through the museum of the Academy of Russian Ballet in St. Petersburg, she reveals the biography of Vladimir Beliy, a wonderful teacher and the first head of the Sofia Ballet School. The data was enriched and compared with the memories of some of his first graduates, as we must emphasize his great influence and merits for the formation of the professional outlook of a number of choreographers in Bulgaria /from the field of classical and folk stage dance/. The topic of the influence of the Russian ballet school on the establishment of professional

education in our country is fully developed, as the factors that led to the implementation of these processes are presented in a fascinating and correct way.

In the last, fifth part, a considerable volume of information about the choreographers who contributed to the development of modern classical ballet in Bulgaria is examined in detail. Bright stage achievements from the 60s and 70s of the last century are analyzed. Attached is a reference for all ballet graduates in Moscow and Leningrad (St. Petersburg) in this period, a circumstance that proves once again the enormous contribution of the Russian ballet school.

The monograph *“Influence of the Russian Ballet School on the Development of Ballet Art in Bulgaria in the 20th century”* is a timely and necessary publication with a significant contribution to Bulgarian ballet art and its history. The facts described by periods, the interesting references to certain events and personalities, as well as the analytical conclusions, form the content of the scientific work, which can be a valuable teaching aid for students of the “Ballet Art” specialty. Elitsa Lukanova is a direct witness of the dynamic development of Bulgarian ballet at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. She has the capacity to build on what has been written so far with a new scientific work that will develop the topic of the fascinating successes of Bulgarian ballet artists in our country and around the world. She definitely possesses the complex qualities of a theorist and a practitioner in the field of ballet. In this regard, and days after the end of the 2022 World Rhythmic Gymnastics Championship, I want to highlight her significant contribution as a ballet teacher to the Gold medal of the Bulgarian Women Rhythmic Gymnastics National Ensemble.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the achieved scientific contributions, together with the attached scientific reports on the subject, as well as the irrefutable, wonderful pedagogical and creative achievements of Dr. Elitsa Petrova Lukanova, give me a reason to propose to the respected Scientific Jury to award her the academic position “Associate Professor” under Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”, specialty “Ballet Art”.

10.10.2022

Reviewer:.....

/Prof. Dr. D. Dzheneva/