

**PEER REVIEW**  
by  
**Prof. Nikolay Stoyanov Tsvetkov**  
**Neofit Rilski Southwest University – Blagoevgrad**  
**Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”**  
**scientific specialty “Choreography”**

**for the scientific works and educational activities of Assistant dr. Elitsa Petrova Lukanova**  
**presented for participation in a competition for the occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor”, under Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”, in the scientific 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**

This peer review was prepared on the basis of documents received for a competition announced by Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv (State Gazette, Issue 52 dated 05.07.2022) for the needs of the Choreography Department with the Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography. The documents submitted for the competition correspond to the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and 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. The competition procedure has been correctly followed.

### **1. General presentation of the received documents**

Only one candidate submitted documents for participation in the announced competition:

Assistant Dr. **Elitsa Petrova Lukanova**, Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv, Choreography Department with the Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography

In order to participate in the competition, the candidate **Assistant Dr. Elitsa Petrova Lukanova** has presented a list of a total of 5 titles and 5 citations. They are classified into categories as follows:

- monographic work for participation in the competition – 1 pc.
- a book based on a defended dissertation work for awarding the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” – 1 pc.
- articles in peer-reviewed national scientific publications – 3 pcs.
- citations – 5 pcs.

### **2. Data of the candidate**

Assistant Dr. Elitsa Lukanova was born on 15.08.1969 in the City of Sofia.

In 1979, the candidate Assistant Dr. Elitsa Lukanova began her ballet education at the State Choreographic School (today National School of Music and Dance) in Sofia.

In 1987, she graduated from the Agrippina Y. Vaganova Leningrad State Choreographic School (today Agrippina Y. Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet – St. Petersburg), Russia, as Artist-Ballerina in the class of Prof. I. A. Trofimova.

In 1995, Dr. Lukanova graduated from Prof. Pancho Vladigerov National Academy of Arts in Sofia with a Master's degree in Ballet Pedagogy.

The candidate's professional activity, scientific works, and educational activities are related to the participation in the competition for the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor".

Her professional realization to date is expressed in holding positions related to work in the field of choreography, pedagogy, performance and choreographic practice. She is also author and director of choreographic works, performances, etc.

From 1988 to 2015, she was an Artist-Ballerina at the Sofia Opera and Ballet. She also was an Assistant Teacher at the National School of Music and Dance in Sofia. Since 2016, Dr. Lukanova has been an Assistant at Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in Plovdiv, where she conducts lectures in "Fundamentals of Classical Dance" and "Methodology of Classical Dance Teaching".

In 2019, Dr. Lukanova is awarded the educational and scientific degree "DOCTOR" in Choreography, which corresponds to the specialty of the announced competition.

Dr. Elitsa Lukanova has long won the authority of an excellent choreographer-pedagogue, the result of which is the present monograph and the participation in the competition for "Associate Professor".

Elitsa Lukanova has extensive pedagogical and practical experience. She also actively participates in a number of national and international conferences, festivals, competitions, etc. in the field of choreography.

In accordance with the requirements of the Regulations for the implementation of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the candidate has submitted a report on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, para.2 and 3, respectively, and of the requirements under Art.2b, para.5 of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as a reference to the original scientific contributions to which the relevant evidence is applied.

Assistant Dr. Elitsa Lukanova meets the conditions of the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation. The documents presented in the competition correspond to the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and 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 for participation in the competition and for assessment of her scientific contributions.

### **3. General characteristics and assessment of the scientific activity of the candidate**

The candidate's works and scientific-applied works accepted for review are in the specific field and issues of the specialty of the competition for "Associate Professor", namely in the field of higher education, under professional field 8.3. "Music and Dance Arts", in the sci-

entific specialty “Choreography”, and examine various aspects of choreography related to the **beginning of professional ballet in Bulgaria, professional ballet education in Bulgaria, tracing its development, and comparative analysis of different world ballet schools.**

In connection with the participation in the competition, Assistant Dr. Elitsa Lukanova has presented a list of scientific publications, which includes a total of 5 publications and 5 citations. The list shows the scientific works after the defense of the doctoral dissertation. They are:

✓ **One monographic work:**

- “Influence of the Russian Ballet School on the Development of Ballet Art in Bulgaria in the 20th century”, published by Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv, 2022, // ISBN 978-619-7682-08-3, pages – 173;

✓ **One book:**

- “Creation, Development and Comparative Analysis of the Italian, French, Danish, and Russian Ballet Schools”, Plovdiv, Color Print BG, 2022, /ISBN 978-954-2963-00-4, pages – 208

✓ **Three publications:**

- “Professional Ballet Education in Bulgaria – 70 years State Ballet School” (State Choreography School, National School of Music and Dance), Musical Horizons 8, 2021/ Musical Horizons 8, 2021, ISSN 1310-0076 p. 16-19;
- “Evolution against Revolution or against the Development Models in Classical Dance”, Collection of reports from the international scientific conference “Evolution against Revolution or against the Development Models”, Ruse, 2020, Volume I, Issue by Lyuben Karavelov Regional Library; Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, pp. 463-471, ISBN 978-619-7404-15-9; (item 1) – Lyuben Karavelov Regional Library – Ruse; ISBN 978-954-2963-69-1; (item 1) - Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv;
- “Pioneers of Professional Ballet in Bulgaria”, Yearbook, Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts 2019, issued by Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv, pp. 72 - 79, ISSN 1313-6526

The reference also includes **5 citations** related to the profile of the competition, which are not essential in the habilitation work:

Based on the submitted materials for the competition, I believe that the research activity of Dr. Elitsa Lukanova is determined by her scientific and research interest in several main directions:

- ***The formation and development of ballet art in Bulgaria in the 20th century.*** (Monographic work: “Influence of the Russian Ballet School on the Development of Ballet Art in Bulgaria in the 20th century”, published by Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv, 2022, // ISBN 978-619-7682-08-3; “Professional Ballet Education in Bulgaria – 70 years State Ballet School” (State Choreography School, National School of Music and Dance), Musical Horizons 8, 2021/ Musical Horizons 8, 2021, ISSN 1310-0076 p. 16-19
- ***The influence of the Russian ballet school on the development of ballet art in Bulgaria in the 20th century.***

- *The professional ballet education in Bulgaria*
- *Historical information, overview, and analysis of professional ballet schools in Italy, France, Denmark and Russia.*

The scientific research and artistic creative activity of Dr. Elitsa Lukanova is completely connected with various aspects and components of choreography, choreographic science, pedagogy, and practice. The candidate's research is the most in-depth, based on rich personal experience (pedagogical and practical), extensive empirical material, comparisons, and comprehensive comparative analyses. They are entirely related to the competition area and correspond to the scientific specialty for which the competition is announced. The presented set of published scientific works provides sufficient grounds for the candidate's participation in the competition and for the assessment of her scientific contributions.

#### **4. Characterization and assessment of the candidate's educational and pedagogical activity**

Dr. Elitsa Lukanova is an excellent example of an academic pedagogue. In the period from 1986 until 2000, she was an Assistant Teacher at the National School of Music and Dance in Sofia. Since 2016, she has been an Assistant at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in Plovdiv, where she conducts lectures in "Fundamentals of Classical Dance" and "Methodology of Classical Dance Teaching". Since 2017, at the invitation of the Bulgarian Rhythmic Gymnastics Federation, Dr. Lukanova has been a Ballet Pedagogue-Choreographer of the Bulgarian Women Rhythmic Gymnastics National Ensemble – an ensemble of women who won gold Olympic medals for the first time in the history of the Bulgarian rhythmic gymnastics.

As an academic pedagogue, her pedagogical activity predominates. She prepares and conducts lectures, exercises, and exams for students in the disciplines "History of Dance", "Classical Repertoire Ballet Heritage", "Methodology of Classical Dance Teaching", "Patterns of Dances in Opera and Ballet Performances" and "Fundamentals of Classical Dance".

Her workload in the last 4 years has been above the norm (as can be seen from the provided reference for pedagogical practice). The general and teaching experience only at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts is more than 4 years and 11 months (as can be seen from the transcript-extract of the candidate's employment record). Her professional field is Choreography, which includes the subjects taught.

The presented materials on the educational and pedagogical activity and workload of Dr. Elitsa Lukanova meet the requirements for the competition and they are related to the professional field and the scientific specialty.

Guided by the presented facts, I definitely believe that the candidate's pedagogical training, activities and educational approach fully meet the challenges and requirements of the new era. The research and pedagogical experience, as well as the choreographic specialization of Dr. Elitsa Lukanova reveals a serious potential for academic and career development in the field of choreographic science and art.

#### **5. Scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the candidate**

The reference submitted by the candidate for the scientific contributions of the works is correct and reflects the significant results of the scientific research and publications. As noted, the scientific contributions are mainly in the field of choreography, where there is a lack of comprehensive theoretical development of the issues related to the factors and historical traditions that led to the beginning of professional ballet and professional ballet education in Bulgaria. In this regard, the works presented refer to unexplored or poorly researched problems in choreographic science and choreographic art and have a significant contribution to the enrichment of scientific knowledge in this area. The scientific-applied (practical) contributions are expressed in the fact that the analyzes made outline a range of problems in choreography and the proposed solutions have a practical aspect dictated by the professional experience of the author as a pedagogue, choreographer, and creator in the field of choreography.

Undoubtedly, the most significant scientific achievement among the presented works is the monograph: *"Influence of the Russian Ballet School on the Development of Ballet Art in Bulgaria in the 20th century"*, published by Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv, 2022m ISBN 978-619-7682-08-3. In the monograph presented for consideration, for the first time in our country, all the processes of influence on the ballet art in Bulgaria are studied, researched, and analyzed specifically and in detail.

The importance of the monographic work is conditioned by its specific object of study – **the birth and development of ballet art in Bulgaria from the beginning of the 20th century.**

**The current nature of the topic chosen by the author is indisputable.** It is determined both by the need to thoroughly study the processes of the **development of ballet art in Bulgaria from the beginning of the 20th century, by the chronological tracking of the Russian Ballet School's influence on these processes** (in historical and contemporary terms), and **by the detailed analysis of the individual aspects of this impact – 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.** This nature of the topic predetermines the specific structure of the exposition, in which, according to the defined purpose, it is structured in an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, and an appendix.

In the introduction, the emphases that are the subject of the scientific research are presented in an argumentative manner. It is stated that the purpose of the monograph includes *tracing the developing ballet art in Bulgaria and the influence of the Russian ballet school and the Russian ballet specialists in the development and consolidation of this art.* A research interest related to the study and analysis of a large period of time from the 1910s to the 1970s of the XX century is also stated.

In the first chapter, an overview is made and the reasons that led to the professional growth of the pioneers of the dance art in Bulgaria from the beginning of the last century, as well as the influence of the touring Russian ballet artists in Bulgaria, are historically analyzed.

A serious contribution is contained in the second and third chapters, where the creativity of the galaxy of leading choreographers and performers involved in the validation of classical dance is subjected to a thorough analysis. The work of the two Soviet choreographers – Nina Anisimova and Nikolay Holfin, who staged ballets in our country – is researched and analyzed. As a result of the reasoned analysis, valuable conclusions and generalizations are reached about the influence of their creative peaks on Bulgarian ballet.

A significant contribution is contained in the fourth and fifth chapters of the monograph.

They are dedicated to ***professional ballet education in Bulgaria and to the Russian and Bulgarian choreographers who contributed to the development of modern classical ballet in Bulgaria***. The good knowledge of the theory and practice of the researched questions related to dance has given the candidate the opportunity, when examining different case studies, to correctly present different scientific theses in the field of choreography with respect for different opinions.

Analyzing the presented work, in view of its subject content, logical sequence, and structural scope, it can be concluded that ***it represents a comprehensive and systematic study of the developing ballet art in Bulgaria and the influence of the Russian ballet school and Russian ballet specialists in the development and the affirmation of this art***.

In addition to the monograph, valuable contributions are contained in the other peer-reviewed works. Evidence of the importance of the scientific contributions of Dr. Elitsa Lukanova is the number of citations by other authors of her scientific works. From the attached reference for citations, it is clear that the candidate has been cited 5 times in various scientific works. The fact that the scientific production is recognizable and enjoys authority and recognition in the scientific community is indisputable.

### **Main contributions of the candidate**

Based on the presented reference, the following contributions can be highlighted:

- For the first time in the scope of scientific research, the processes of the development of ballet art in Bulgaria from the beginning of the 20th century are analyzed;
- The reasons that led to the professional growth of the pioneers of dance art in Bulgaria, from the beginning of the last century, are analyzed;
- The influence of the Russian Ballet School on the development of ballet art in Bulgaria since the beginning of the 20th century is identified;
- Individual aspects of this impact are identified – 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;
- A reasoned analysis of the influence of the creative achievements of the constellation of leading choreographers and performers who participated in the establishment of classical dance on Bulgarian ballet is made;
- For the first time, information is given about the first pedagogues, the first graduates, the selection and organization of the initial years of training in the professionally organized structure State Choreographic School – 1951;
- The professional influence of the Soviet dancers on the construction of ballet education in our country is proven.

### **6. Assessment of the personal contribution of the candidate**

I consider that the said contributions are the personal work of the candidate. The reason for this is also the fact that the works presented in the competition are independent and not co-authored. The presented scientific publications and the entire work of the candidate define her as a researcher who, in her scientific production, investigates significant cur-

rent issues in the field of dance, and the theoretical conclusions that are drawn find practical application.

## 7. Notes and recommendations

After thoroughly familiarizing myself with the scientific and artistic and creative production presented by Dr. Elitsa Lukanova for the academic position of “Associate Professor”, I will allow myself to make the following recommendations:

- on the basis of the lecture materials, to prepare and issue an aid or a textbook for the needs of students;
- to continue her scientific search for unexplored or poorly researched problems related to dance in choreographic science and art.

## 8. Personal impressions

Dr. Elitsa Lukanova has a high status in the field of scientific research and is a professional in the field in which she works. All of this is evidenced by the participations, achievements, and awards presented by her. She is a well-established professional dance pedagogue with a taste for research and innovation in her work, showing that she has mastered the research methods in choreographic science, which she skillfully applies in the development of dance art.

## CONCLUSION

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific works presented for the competition, and after analyzing their significance and the scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions contained therein, I give my **positive** assessment and **recommend** to the Scientific Jury to propose to the Scientific Council of **Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv**, to select **Assistant Dr. Elitsa Lukanova** for the academic position “Associate Professor” under **Professional field 8.3. “Music and Dance Arts”, scientific 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.**

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Prepared by:  
Prof. Nikolay Tsvetkov