

PEER REVIEW

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under a procedure for “Associate Professor” of Chief Assistant Dr. Stefan Yordanov, Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv

Professional field 8.3 – “Music and Dance Arts”

There is only one candidate for the competition announced by the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts for “Associate Professor” in “Bulgarian Folk Dances Processing” at the Choreography Department – Chief Assistant Dr. Stefan Yordanov Yordanov – Choreographer – Teacher (Bachelor) and Choreographer –Director (Master) in the specialty “Bulgarian Folk Choreography”, respectively in 2007 and 2008, who successfully defended the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” under field 8.3 “Music and Dance Arts”, with a dissertation on the topic: *“Processing of Bulgarian Folk Dances as a Basis for Their Stage Transformation”* (in 2016).

In 2016, Dr. Stefan Yordanov was appointed as an Assistant, and in 2017 – as a Chief Assistant at the Choreography Department. He teaches the disciplines “Bulgarian Folk Dances Processing”, “Physical Education” and “Samples of Bulgarian Folk Choreography”, with an annual standard of 345 exercises. Dr. Yordanov is also the head of the Staff Dance Ensemble and choreographer of the Academic Folklore Ensemble (AFA) at the Academy.

1. In the competition for Associate Professor Dr. Stefan Yordanov presents as a dissertation author’s choreography and direction of three dance performances:
 - Anniversary concert-performance entitled *“Ten Years of Academic Folklore Ensemble at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts”*, realized on 01.08.2018 on the stage of Ancient Theater – Plovdiv;
 - Concert-performance *“Budna Perushtitsa”*, with premiere on 09.05.2019 at the Historical Museum – Perushtitsa;
 - Performance *“Rhodope Wedding”*, presented on 07.09.2019 on the Central Square in the City of Nedelino.

In the anniversary concert-performance *“Ten Years of Academic Folklore Ensemble at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts”* (01.08.2018) Dr. Stefan Yordanov shows dance suites from different ethnographic areas performed by former and current dancers from the AFA, and for this purpose some of his works are further complicated given the larger number of participants (about 40). *“Dance with Drums”* (entirely male) is presented – music by Asen Musov; *“Kate, Kate”* (from the Pirin ethnographic region; *“Shopska Suite”* (*“Games in Shopluka”*) with music by Prof. Milcho Vasilev, and *“Dobrudzha Suite”* with music by Prof. Dr. Kostadin Buradzhiev, and at the end – *“Thracian Suite”* (music by Krasen Gospodinov) and *“Festive Suite”* (music by Prof. Milcho Vassilev) The concert-performance was realized as a festive variety of rhythms, colors, and choreographic performances. The ability of Dr. Stefan Yordanov to handle large groups of people by successfully playing the space in various stage figures, along with the moderate modernization of Bulgarian dance

folklore, is also evident. From my point of view, the most spectacular both as an image and as a choreography is the “Games in Shopluka”.

The concert-performance “**Budna Perushtitsa**” (2019) is dedicated to 143 years since the April Uprising. Unlike the anniversary concert-performance, where dances and songs coexist, here the combination is between spoken word, dance, and plastic refrains. Actors from the Plovdiv Drama Theater and dancers from the AFA at the Academy participated. The director of the performance is Aleksey Kozhuharov, with choreographer Dr. Stefan Yordanov and screenwriter Petar Toskov. The genre form is closer to the historical myth-celebration of the work and the feat of the people of Perushtitsa. In this production I would emphasize the attempt to present through dance the conflict between Turks and Bulgarians, which uses both dance techniques and drama – stills, plastic out-of-rhythm, slowing down of the pace, in order to emphasize important dramaturgical moments (e.g. mourning the dead). Thus, the choreography leaves the traditional framework of the dance suite in order to achieve greater allegory. The plastic decisions in the acting *mise-en-scène* and the use of the props also have an impact.

The third production presented for review – “*Rhodope Wedding*” – is on the occasion of the opening of the 18th National Folklore Festival for two-part singing and folk song in Nedelino (2019). Dr. Stefan Yordanov is the director, screenwriter, and choreographer. Amateur performers from the City of Nedelino and the region participated. The performance takes place on the square. The genre form is rather a plot folklore performance. The relationship between mother and daughter, the love between two lovers, competitions between girls and bachelors, *voivode* and boys are presented, and at the end, the mother and the *voivode* give their blessing to the young people and after the ritual veiling of the bride, the lovers swear allegiance to the accompaniment of the song “*Ela Se Vie Izviva*” (vocals and orchestra in live performances). In this work I would recommend more interesting choreographic solutions, although I would like to note that the performances in the square are not always good for plot works.

2. In addition to the main productions of Dr. Yordanov, **three other choreographic solutions in film productions and dramatic plays** are presented as accompanying works:

- Choreography in the film “*Voevoda*” – premiere 13.01.2017. Screenplay by Nikolay Haytov. Director and producer Zornitsa Sofia, composer Darko Markovic, choreographer Stefan Yordanov.
- Choreography in the theatrical production “*Boryana*” of the Plovdiv Drama Theater by Yordan Yovkov. Director Krasimir Rankov, choreography Chief Assistant Dr. Stefan Yordanov, music Prof. Dr. Kostadin Buradzhiev. Premiere 18.01.2017.
- Choreography in the performance “*Memory of Perushtitsa*” – premiere 09.05.2016, in front of the Historical Museum in Perushtitsa. Director Aleksey Kozhuharov, choreographer Dr. Stefan Yordanov, screenwriter Petar Toskov. With the participation of actors from the Plovdiv Drama Theater, dancers from the AFA at the Academy, and children from the Dilyanka Children’s Folklore Ensemble – Plovdiv with director Mariya Kyoseva.

3. The publications of Dr. Stefan Yordanov include **one monograph**:

- *S. Yordanov. “Processing of Bulgarian Folk Dances as a Basis for Their Stage Transformation”*. Plovdiv: Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, 2019, 208 pages, ISBN 978-954-2963-54-7, which is actually the doctoral dissertation of Dr. Stefan Yordanov, published as a book.

and **2 articles, after the defense of the “Doctor” degree**:

- *S. Yordanov. “Nikola Kolev and his Contribution to the Development of Bulgarian Folk Dances”* – in: Collection of scientific reports of the Second International Scientific Conference on SCIENCE, EDUCATION AND INNOVATION IN THE ARTS, **2019**, 290-297 pages, ISBN 978-9542963-56-1.
- *S. Yordanov. “The Place of the Choreographer Ivan Ivanov in the Stage Transformation of Bulgarian Folk Dance”* – In: *e-Journal VFU* – electronic magazine published by Chernorizets Hrabar Varna Free University, **2020**, ISSN 1313-7514 <https://ejournal.vfu.bg/bg/izkustva.html>

As well as **1 article**, which was issued before his defense of the “Doctor” degree and which is included in the list due to the fact that it is cited by other authors:

- *S. Yordanov. “Props and Their Place in Bulgarian Folk Dance”* – In: Musical Horizons, Union of Bulgarian Musicians and Dancers, **2014**, No 6, 23-24 pages, ISSN 1310-0076.

4. During the period under review – from 2016 (after the defense of the doctoral dissertation) to 2020, Dr. Stefan Yordanov has been teaching a *master class* related to the Thracian ethnographic area – in 2019 in Veliko Tarnovo; and *two workshops* – “Folk Dances from the Dobrudzha Ethnographic Region” and “Bulgarian Traditional Folk Dances” – in 2019 in Plovdiv

5. Winner of the “Bronze Lyre” by the Union of Bulgarian Musicians and Dancers (2018).

I believe that the above artifacts – author’s choreography for a total of 6 dance performances (2 concert performances, 1 play by Yordan Yovkov, 2 drama-dance works related to the history of Perushtitsa, and 1 full-length film), one monograph, 3 articles, one master class and two workshops – convincingly present and defend with dignity the candidacy of Dr. Stefan Yordanov for “Associate Professor” in Choreography.

I propose to the highly respected scientific jury to award Chief Assistant Dr. Stefan Yordanov the academic position “Associate Professor” in the field 8.3 – “Music and Dance Arts”.

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