

REVIEW

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

Author: **Dragomir Valentinov Yordanov** – Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof Asen Diamandiev" – Plovdiv, Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography, Department of Choreography

Topic: *Interaction between the Bulgarian stage folk dance and contemporary dance styles*

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

1. General presentation of the procedure and the materials presented for review

This review is prepared on the grounds of Order RD-27-058/ 15.04.2024 of the Rector of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof Asen Diamandiev" – Plovdiv, regarding the approval of a scientific jury and presented by the doctoral candidate: enrolment order, discharge order, dissertation, abstract, curriculum vitae, contributions and three author publications on the topic.

The dissertation is 163 pages and consists of an introduction, four chapters, conclusion, contributions, bibliography 88 sources (67 in Cyrillic, 13 in Latin), 8 internet sources, three publications on the topic.

2. Brief biographical data of the candidate

The autobiographical data presents the work of Dragomir Yordanov in several sections: education, work as performer, specializations, participation in projects, choreographies, teaching work and awards. From the content of the listed activities, it is evident that the doctoral student harbours a deep love for the art of dance and a thirst for innovation in its development based on folklore. Choosing a professional path is his personal challenge and the awards he has received prove that his choice was right.

3. Relevance of the topic

The relevance of the dissertation work is already contained in the title. For the first time, an attempt is made to scientifically substantiate: (1) the observed eclecticism in the development of the stage folk dance and (2) the need to upgrade the dancer-Bulgarian folk dance model in terms of dance technique and development of dance culture.

4. Expediency of the research methods used to achieve the set goals

The author has built a good structure in order to develop and defend the problem implied in the title (interaction - Bulgarian folk dance and contemporary dance styles), related to the specific object (stage folk dance) and the subject of the work (creating a new symbiosis between tradition and modernity in the dance-stage forms). The stated goals and tasks fully correspond with the ambition to defend the author's thesis that a synthesis between the Bulgarian folk dance and modern dance styles will enrich and develop the stage dance art on a folklore basis.

The choice of comparative analysis as a primary tool in the dissertation methodology is appropriate for this type of qualitative research. The conducted interviews support the development of the researched issues.

The scientific stylistics in the dissertation work is respected, and the reached narrative is impressive for a young researcher. The sequence of reflections is broken in some places, but this does not change the structural development. Each part logically ends with summaries and a conclusion.

5. Evaluation of the dissertation work.

Chapter One. *Stage Forms of the Bulgarian Folk Dance* (19 pages). The selection for analysis of the thematic dance piece *Danube Fairy Tale*, choreography by Prof Kiril Dzhenev and the development of the custom *Uralia* authored by Prof Daniela Dzheneva is a kind of prelude to the development of the research. The author demonstrates ease in handling dance terminology, knowledge of all dance details/ components in the presented author's compositions, which contributes to the conclusion that we can safely say that for the first time choreography based on Bulgarian folk dance has become known to science (pp. 15, 19, etc.). Here, the author uses the classical method of analysis – presentation of an episode (authentic dance, time signature, composition, male and female dance, movement, pattern), summarizes and compares, and brings out the innovation. The two works are vivid in the development of the folk dance to stage dance, through the techniques of stylization. Both examples of analysis emphasize symbolism in great detail. Dragomir Yordanov very accurately notes the "*generational continuity*" in the technical development of dance.

In support of his reasoning in this first part of the work, the author presents the opinions of active choreographers from interviews.

The change of clothing as a reason for the development of dance vocabulary is examined, as well as the development of music in sync with new technologies, which also change the type of dance.

Chapter two. *Ethnographic and stylistic features of the ring-dance - basis for structuring modern dance models* (44 pages). Despite the title of paragraph 2.1, so named, the reader expects to read already known information, but in fact it is a continuity of concepts from folk dance to their transformation into a contemporary one. We are witnessing an innovative approach in the interpretation of the etymology of the ring-dance, its character. The presentation of the types of dances has not been omitted, in order to justify the use of basic forms of the ring dance in modern dance (p. 30-35). The types of round dance are also in the focus of the theme - interrelationship with contemporary dance. We see glimpses of music-dance fusion. In paragraph 2.2 the interpretation is

abstractly presented - ethnographic area, characteristic movements relating to contemporary style. Here the author goes deep into the contemporary eclecticism that is modern in today's interpretation of folk dance and boldly puts in a scientific framework with conclusions after each part (pp 45, 52, 56). What stands out is the rich analysis of the Thracian ethnographic area, which can enter into collaboration with the whole arsenal of diverse techniques of hip-hop and house. Here, the candidate demonstrates a good knowledge of the hip-hop dance culture.

Chapter Three. *Types of traditional and contemporary dance patterns in education. Forms of synergism in choreography* (59 pages). In this part, the work begins with the presentation of the exercise and its characteristics related to the Bulgarian folk dance. Paragraph 3.2 traces the peculiarities of the performance of modern styles – a brief history, way of dancing and the possibilities of combining it with folk dance. Of essential importance are the conclusions at the end of the part, which synthesize and clarify – why the characteristics made are here. Paragraph 3.3 is also logical continuation. Styles and characteristics of contemporary dance. The work of the artists who started the development of modern dance are highlighted - Isadora Duncan, Rudolf von Laban, Mary Wigman, Kurt Jooss, Pina Bausch and Martha Graham. The author gives examples of combining techniques in dancing and identifies the general principles in choreographic technique. According to him, the work, the way of thinking/ choreographic philosophy can have a positive influence on the development of stage folk dance: *"In my opinion it is important that Bulgarian folk dancers should study Martha Graham's dance technique from an early age, in order to increase their sensitivity to expression of different emotions and feelings."* Paragraph 3.4 presents the practical application of the author's thesis. The above indicates that the direction is correct, but there are components in the proposed exercise that need to be improved. The next part of chapter three (paragraph 3.5.) presents choreographic projects of the author, such as *Healing*, built in three parts. Also in support of the theoretical development in the first and the second parts of the work. The data from the conducted interviews support the thesis that it is necessary to develop the dance, but to preserve its identity: *"This makes me think that the Bulgarian folk dance, custom, ritual, music, needlework, can be a fertile ground for the development of future choreographers, who, through a modern expression, present their works, without, however, depersonalizing the folk style characteristics"*.

Chapter Four. *Stage forms and contemporary trends - interaction between folklore, classical and contemporary dance* (39 pages). The exposition in this last part presents in practice the need of technical skills, of various genres, so that the modern choreographer can freely handle the dancers as the main carriers of expressiveness in the choreographic dramaturgy. The performances are proof of the author's desire for freedom and eclecticism in dance expressiveness.

6. Contributions and significance of the thesis and the publications on the subject of the dissertation

I have no doubt that the dissertation is the personal work of the candidate and I accept the scientific contributions made.

Three publications have been presented that reflect the topic in the dissertation work and publicity has been achieved among the interested circles.

7. Critical remarks and recommendations

- It is recommended to display parts of the study in a table (second chapter), which will enrich the scientific phrasing and give clear new knowledge in the choreographic theory. - Not to deny the exercise accepted in the practice, but to find the exact place of the new one in the collective's weekly rehearsal schedule.

- The bibliography lacks titles on the subject (related to stylization, means of expression in choreography and techniques in dance) from recent years by Bulgarian authors.

8. Abstract.

I believe that the abstract provides information on all parts of the dissertation work.

9. Conclusion.

The work of Dragomir Yordanov work *Interaction between the Bulgarian stage folk dance and contemporary dance styles* is a reflection of the dynamics of the new time and the needs of the public's perception of the folk stage art, indisputable proof that it is necessary to build a new model of folk dancer, inspired by modern choreographic quests.

The above is the reason to give my **positive assessment** of the researched topic and to propose to the Scientific Jury to **award** the doctoral student Dragomir Valentinov Yordanov the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art, doctoral program Choreography.

17.05.2024

Prof Maria Kardzhieva, PhD