

## REVIEW

by Prof Milena Shushulova-Pavlova – Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts  
“Prof Asen Diamandiev”, Plovdiv  
of the dissertation work for awarding educational and scientific degree Doctor  
in Professional field (code) 8.3. Music and dance art  
author Nikolay Stefanov Gurbanov, doctoral student at Department of Art Theory, Faculty of Musical  
Folklore and Choreography, AMDFA “Prof Asen Diamandiev”, Plovdiv  
Topic: The suites of Kosta Kolev for orchestra of Bulgarian folk instruments  
Academic supervisor: Prof Kostadin Buradzhiev, PhD

### **Presentation of the doctoral student:**

In the competition announced by AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev", Department of Art Theory, participates one candidate. The biography and the professional path of the author of the dissertation proposed for review, assistant Nikolay Stefanov Gurbanov, clearly suggest the reason why he focuses on the researched topic: *The suites of Kosta Kolev for orchestra of Bulgarian folk instruments*. Gurbanov began to study in depth the Bulgarian musical folklore and in particular the instrumental music in his student years. As a student in the specialty Conducting folk ensembles at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev"- Plovdiv, he has the opportunity to analyze, stage and conduct many of the works of Kosta Kolev for folk orchestra. After obtaining Master's degree in 2017, he was appointed a part-time lecturer in the disciplines Conducting a folk choir on piano, Conducting a folk orchestra on piano and Folk Singing at the Department of Musical Folklore. In 2019 he acquired a new professional qualification in the specialty Pedagogy of music education – teacher of folk singing, and since January 2020 he is a full-time assistant for conducting a folk choir and conducting a folk orchestra at the Department of Musical Folklore.

Gurbanov's work as performer is associated with his solo performances as an artist-singer in the National Folklore Ensemble "Bulgare", with a number of released music albums, and as a conductor of the women's folk choir "Boryana". During his studies he began to arrange folk songs, writing piano accompaniments. Thus, he participated in a number of musical projects of soloists-folk singers and in several published teaching aids. In addition to his performance, a very important part of his career is his scientific work. He participates in the "Spring Scientific Readings" 2015-2019, in the International Scientific Conference "Folk Art in Contemporary Cultural Space", 2020 - State Music Pedagogical Institute "M. M. Ippolitova - Ivanova " – Moscow, Russia and in the seminar “The Unknown”. He is the author of textbooks and a monograph. Nikolay Gurbanov's activity also has public recognition – he has won a number of awards, he is a founder, and currently Chairman of the Board of the Bulgarian National Youth Folklore Union, also a member of the jury in national competitions and others.

### **Content of the dissertation**

The dissertation was discussed and proposed for public defense at a meeting of the Department of Theory of Arts, AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev"- Plovdiv, held on 07.07.2021. The

chosen topic shows a counterpoint, suggesting different research approaches and readings. The doctoral student accepts the challenge to state a serious, large-scale theoretical study, which finds its place in the modern research trends, corresponding to the aesthetics of time. In this sense, Mr. Gurbanov presents a research that is needed for the folklore science.

The dissertation includes an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion, a total of 163 pages of text, including tables, musical examples, diagrams, literature and five appendices on 69 pages. The bibliography includes 96 titles and 10 internet sources. The structure and content of the work are a success for the doctoral student. The development is characterized by well-maintained, logical consistency and completeness. The scientific text proposed to our attention has competence and creativity. The statement is accurate, clear and legible. The significant amount of scientific literature used is aptly and accurately reflected.

The introduction emphasizes the motives for choosing the topic and the relevance of the problem with its significance. The object, the subject, the spatial and temporal frameworks of the research, the objective and the tasks are correctly presented. The aim specifies the tasks presented in theoretical and applied aspect. The stated methodological framework, formulated clearly and precisely, is expressed in the following methods: analysis, synthesis, classification, comparison and interview.

The first chapter, entitled *Kosta Kolev's contributions to the development of the orchestra of Bulgarian folk instruments and the role of the suite in his works*, directs us to "one of the emblematic figures in the history of art related to the stage and media life of folk songs, and instrumental melodies from all regions of the country"(p. 10). The author states that "there is no research on the work of Kosta Kolev as a conductor and composer, and the data in publications dedicated to the institutions where he worked, and the processes in which he participated proved to be scarce."(p. 10). With this statement he declares the presentation of a fundamental work with a significant contribution to the work of Kosta Kolev and in particular to folklore science. The availability of a small number of publications in connection with the presented topic directs the candidate to focus on the analysis of the musical literature from the personal fund of the composer, on archival documents and library funds. Valuable for the research is the historical review of the creation of the orchestra of folk instruments and highlighting the contribution of Kosta Kolev for its development and establishment, for enriching the fund of the National Radio with tens of thousands of notated folk songs and instrumental melodies, many of them arranged for soloists, choir, orchestra, concerts in the country and abroad. Thus, his name was established not only as a founder and conductor, but grew as a composer and promoter of the Bulgarian folklore. Analyzing a number of publications and opinions about the compositional style of Kosta Kolev, the first chapter of the dissertation serves as a basis of the candidate's findings, summaries and conclusions, which he develops in the next two chapters of the work. An attempt was made to briefly review the genre "suite" and the place of orchestral suites in the composer's work, which according to the author deserves "special attention and differentiation as a separate research

object, ... as well as that they contain thematic material accompanied by its specific stylistic features and characteristics from all folklore areas in Bulgaria”(p. 47). The essence of the theoretical research is given by classification of the suites according to the genre specifics of the melodic material.

Chapter two “Methodology of theoretical research. Kosta Kolev’s instrumental-dance suites” is built on the basis of a comprehensive analytical approach, “*on the one hand, preserving the national and regional specifics of the folklore prototype, and on the other hand, working with the means of professional music culture of European type*” (p. 54). To achieve the objective, the candidate is helped by his empirical experience and auditory impressions from his work with the works, as a conductor and lecturer. He shows flexibility in the approaches with which he selects his conceptual apparatus, relying on the statements of prominent scientists. The doctoral student tries to differentiate the analysis of the invoice, starting from “the specific material” (p. 59). In the proposed analysis of the structure of the musical form in the instrumental-dance suites, Gurbanov has his own vision of a kind of “intertwining” of terms such as: “musical phrase”, “multi-phrase”, “athematic forms”, “playing”, “medley”, etc. (p. 60-61), built on a varied repetition, which in its own way builds the structure of the form. In the course of the research he draws the following conclusion: “... *with regard to the musical structure there are grounds for the use of synthetic terminology, which at the respective levels includes both terms adopted in analytical practice and in the communication of folk musicians (phrase, playing) and all the terminology of the doctrine of musical forms applicable to the particular piece of music.* (p.62-63) I believe that these statements need accuracy and greater clarity.

Significant attention is paid to the harmonic analyses presented in the various works. Here again the author addresses the question about the approach to the musical matter and the terminological apparatus, which the dissertation defines “*with a high level of complexity*”. It is clearly stated that the harmonious language of Kosta Kolev emphasizes the nature of the means of expression in each work, integrates the dramatic possibilities of the pitch plans, the functional-dynamic potential of the quartal-quintal connections in combination with the modal richness and melodic specifics of the folklore works. Kosta Kolev's instrumental-dance suites are built on instrumental melodies with a specific regional affiliation, often corresponding to certain dance movements or people typical of the folklore area. The analytical approach focuses on applied compositional techniques regarding structure and form, type of texture, harmonic and polyphonic plan, orchestration, performing techniques, etc.

Third chapter, entitled “*Kosta Kolev’s instrumental-song suites. The compositional style in the “suite” genre*” presents works based on folk melodies. The candidate divides them into two groups depending on the way of presentation of the musical texture, type of accompaniment, regional specifics of the song model and the performance technique of a specific emblematic singer. Here he made the first attempt to systematize individual compositional features in the work of Kosta Kolev, expressed in: treatment of each suite as a concert piece; presence of bimodality, “modal harmony”, the quartal-quintal tonal plan, use of extended instruments, folk choir, thematic proximity of the melodies. Valuable for the research is the focus on the compositional approach of Kosta Kolev in the second

group of suites. They present local song-instrumental specifics in the construction of the samples, in accordance with the vocal abilities and characteristics of a given voice, to which the composer seeks and adds the appropriate timbre palette of the accompaniment. With the conclusions, the author tries to present a theoretical model of the compositional style of Kosta Kolev in the music for an orchestra of folk instruments.

The conclusion of the dissertation presents in a generalized form its contributions, which are important for the enrichment of folklore science. The research successfully achieves its objectives, not only in theoretical terms, but also in the achieving scientific and applied results.

The used literature proves the candidate's excellent knowledge of a large volume of studies in connection with his chosen topic. The included illustrative material is necessary for the dissertation and is well designed. Nikolay Gurbanov has three publications and one study related to the dissertation. The appendices have evidential value. The abstract of 53 pages contains a summary of the content with an emphasis on the main points and contributions of the work. Thus presented, the abstract meets the standards.

**In conclusion:**

The reviewed dissertation has the necessary scientific and practical value. It meets the requirements of Law on the development of the academic staff of Republic of Bulgaria and the regulations for its implementation. The author presents a high-value text, which is an achievement for a young performer and educator.

In view of all of the above, I strongly support the doctoral candidate and his thesis. I express my positive assessment of the work on the basis of the indicated contributions. I strongly recommend to the esteemed Scientific Jury to award Nikolay Stefanov Gurbanov the educational scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education: 8. Arts; Professional field 8.3 Music and dance art.

8 Sept 2021

Prof Svetla Stanilova, PhD