

## OPINION

by Prof Milena Shushulova-Pavlova, PhD, New Bulgarian University  
Professional direction 8.3. Music and dance art  
on the dissertation work of **Nikolay Stefanov Gurbanov**,  
doctoral student at Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts “Prof. Asen Diamandiev”, Plovdiv  
Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography, Department of Art Theory  
Academic supervisor: Prof Kostadin Buradzhiev, PhD

Topic: **The suites of Kosta Kolev for orchestra of Bulgarian folk instruments**  
for awarding educational and scientific degree Doctor  
in Professional field 8.3. Music and dance art;

### Biographical data

Nikolay Stefanov Gurbanov has an notable and rich biography, which impressed me and put in the right place the focus of his doctoral dissertation. A graduate of AMDFA, with many awards and great public activity, he is a great choice of the academy, which in the future will be able to pass on his knowledge and experience to next generations of students and professionals.<sup>1</sup>

### Content of the dissertation

The dissertation was discussed and proposed for public defense at a regular meeting of the Department of Theory of Arts at the Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography of AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev"- Plovdiv, held on 07.07.2021. It contains a total of 233 pages, which include:

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<sup>1</sup> Has a Master's Degree in Conducting Folk Ensembles at the AMDFA "Prof. Asen Diamandiev"- Plovdiv (2017) and was immediately invited as a part-time lecturer in the disciplines: Conducting a folk choir on piano, Conducting a folk orchestra on piano and Folk singing. In 2019 he acquired a new professional qualification in the specialty Pedagogy of music education – teacher of folk singing. Since January 2020 he has been a full-time assistant in conducting a folk choir and conducting a folk orchestra at AMDFA “Prof. Asen Diamandiev” and PhD student at the Department of Theory of Arts at the Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography. Founder and Chairman of the Management Board of the Bulgarian National Youth Folklore Union (from 2012 to present, <https://bnmfs.com/>); Director of the Youth Folklore Festival - Kalofer (2013); Director of the National Music and Folklore Competition "Orpheus Spring" - Kalofer (2015); Director of the National Folklore Festival "Botev Days and Nights in Kalofer" - Kalofer (2016); Director of the National Music and Folklore Competition "Orpheus Talents" - Plovdiv (2017-2020); Director of the National Literary Competition "With Yovkov in the Heart" – Zheravna (2017); Director of the National Literary Competition "With Elin Pelin in the Heart" - Elin Pelin (2018); founder and editor-in-chief of the newspaper Narodna Madrost 2016); Director of the National Competition for Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Orpheus Talents" - Plovdiv (2021). Member of the jury in a number of folklore competitions ("With the songs of Stoyan Radev" - Targovishte; "Orpheus spring" - Stara Zagora; International Folklore Festival "Atlimanska necklace" - Kiten; National competition "The children of Bulgaria sing, dance, paint" - Shumen; National competition "With the songs of Georgi Germanov" - Varna, etc.). **Awards:** "Award for significant contribution in the field of culture" by the Minister of Culture - 2014); Winner of the Golden Baton Award from the National Competition for Choir Conductors - Shumen (2016); "Audience Award" and "Third Prize" of the jury, from the National Competition "New Bulgarian Music 7/8" - Chepelare (2018). **Participates as a performer in the albums:** "Young Dobrudja", MC "Milena Records" (2006); "New Beginning", MC "Patriotism" (2009); "Phoenix" MC Sunrise Marinov (2012); "Heritage", C Sunrise Marinov (2016); "My singing Brodilovo" solo album of the folk singer Kostadin Mihailov, C Sunrise Marinov (2018, author of the arrangements); "Charm" (2019) of the women's folk choir "BORYANA" (conductor and producer) with the band has a number of concerts and tours in Russia (2019). In the period **2016-2020 he was a solo artist at the National Folklore Ensemble "Bulgare"**. Has published 7 papers in the collections of AMDFA "Spring Scientific Readings" (2013-2019) and 4 papers in other international scientific forums such as: "Science, education and innovation in the field of art" (2019) and "Cultural seminar" THE UNKNOWN "(2018) of AMDFA, in Music Logos - electronic scientific journal (2020) and participates with a report in the International Scientific Conference "Folk Art in Contemporary Cultural Space" (2020) of the State Music Pedagogical Institute "M. M. Ippolitova - Ivanova" in Moscow, Russia. Has **published monograph** "Minko Kostadinov - the master of the two-voice bagpipe" (2013). Author and compiler of "Folk songs with piano accompaniment" (2013) and "Songs for folk choir by contemporary authors" (2015) editions of the Bulgarian National Youth Folklore Union and "Plays for folk orchestra" (2016) published by AMDFA- Plovdiv, co-authored with Prof. Dr. Kostadin Buradzhiev. **Participates in 4 teaching and repertoire manuals** issued by AMDFA- Plovdiv (2016-2019).

introduction, three main chapters<sup>2</sup>, conclusion, contributions to the dissertation, 5 appendices, a list of scientific publications on the research topic and references (containing 96 titles and 10 Internet sources).

### **Precisely formulated objectives and tasks of the dissertation**

The **object** of the present study are the suites for orchestra of Bulgarian folk instruments by the composer Kosta Kolev as the intersection of three important aspects: the orchestra of folk instruments, the work of the composer Kosta Kolev and the genre "suite". The personality and work of K. Kolev. Kolev's works are unique artistic examples with an innovative approach in the processing of Bulgarian folk music, with indisputable constructive solutions related to the instruments in the folk orchestra. The **subject** of the research are the compositional techniques of Kosta Kolev in the genre "suite". The idea to study this particular subject on the suite genre is substantiated in the section dedicated to this problem in the second and third chapters of this paper. The main objective of the research is to extract and systematize information about the compositional techniques in the suites for orchestra of folk instruments by Kosta Kolev. The dissertation has the following **objectives**: 1). To search, collect and systematize scores of works for orchestra by Bulgarian folk instruments in the genre "suite", created and arranged by Kosta Kolev. 2). To analyze the musical works, specifying a terminological apparatus to be applied specifically in the analytical process (compiled and included in the beginning of chapter two). 3). To study the history, the current state and to systematize data of different nature (including

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<sup>2</sup> **Introduction. Chapter one:** 1.1. The personality and work of Kosta Kolev. (1.1.1. Literature review. 1.1.1.1. Sources of biographical data. 1.1.1.2. Published works. 1.1.1.3. Data sources for the Folk Song Ensemble at the Bulgarian Radio. 1.1.4. Sources giving information and assessment for the creative activity of Kosta Kolev 1.1.2 Biographical data about Kosta Kolev 1.1.3 The personality and contributions of Kosta Kolev) 1.2. The work of Kosta Kolev in the Folk Song Ensemble as part of the history of the Orchestra of Folk Instruments in Bulgaria. (1.2.1. Origin of the Orchestra of Folk Instruments - a brief historical overview. 1.2.2. The Folk Song Ensemble at the Bulgarian Radio and Kosta Kolev.) 1.3. The genre "suite" and the place of the orchestral suites of Kosta Kolev in his work. (1.3.1. The founders and their followers in creating and establishing the genre of processed folk music for orchestra of folk instruments. 1.3.2. The creative heritage of Kosta Kolev - an overview. 1.3.3. The genre "suite" and the place of orchestral suites of Kosta Kolev in his work 1.3.4 Classification of the suites according to the genre specifics of the melodic material.). **Chapter two:** 2.1. Methodological aspects. Clarification of the terminological apparatus. (2.1.1. Research methodology. 2.1.2. Theoretical approach and terminology regarding the orchestral invoice. 2.1.3. Problems of structural analysis and terminology of the musical structure. 2.1.4. Theoretical basis and terminology of harmonic annals.) 2.2. Kosta Kolev's suites of instrumental-dance type. (2.2.1. "Pleven Suite" - a model of synthetic thinking of Kosta Kolev. 2.2.2. "Haskovo Suite" - innovative approaches in orchestration and scale drama. 2.2.3. "Chirpan Suite": compositional solutions in a work for "New Bulgarian music". 2.2.4. Suite "Old Dobrich"- "Dobruzha trio" and the colorful picture of the heterogeneous texture. 2.2.5. "Shopska suite" - the element of Shopa dances and folklore variance. 2.2.6." Pirin suite": Metrorhythmic and textural diversity in the unity of the orchestra of tambourines.) 2.3. Conclusion. **Chapter three:** 3.1. General characteristics. 2. First group of instrumental-song suites. (3.2.1. "Strandzha Suite" on songs from the repertoire of Magda Pushkarova. 3.2.2. "Suite of Bulgarian folk melodies" - dialogue between Pirin and Thrace. 3.2.3. Thracian melodies and rhythms - from folklore variance to the creation of 3.2.4 Comparative analysis of the three suites and the first attempt to summarize the compositional style of Kosta Kolev.) 3.3. Second group of instrumental-song suites. (3.3.1. "Rhodope Suite" - the songs of Boyka Prisadova and the ancient beauty of the Dorian style. 3.3.2. "Kotel Suite" and the emblematic Kotel singers Ivan Kremov and Maria Leshkova. 3.3.3. "Pazardzhik Suite": songs by Nadka Karadjova, united by a common theme 3.3.4. "Pazardzhik Suite" (for soloist, choir and orchestra) - a way to enrich the ensemble and orchestral instruments. Bulgarian musical folklore 3.3.6 Two suites, presented by the method of auditory analysis 3.3.6.1. A theoretical model of Kosta Kolev's compositional style in music for an orchestra of folk instruments. (3.4.1. The orchestral thinking of Kosta Kolev. 3.4.2. The role of invoice in the construction of orchestral works. 3.4.3. The harmonious thinking of Kosta Kolev. 3.4.4. The structural thinking of Kosta Kolev.). **Conclusion. Contributions of the dissertation. Literature and Appendices:** Appendix № 1. Appendix № 2 Editions and other sources of information about published music works, part of the work of Kosta Kolev. Appendix № 3 Tapes, magnetic tapes and audio cassettes containing partial or full participation of Kosta Kolev as arranger, composer, conductor or accordion performer. Annex № 4 Interviews in relation with the research. Appendix № 5 Facsimiles of title pages of manuscripts of scores by Kosta Kolev.

biographical) related to the three sub-subjects of the research. 4). To conduct interviews with performers, composers and conductors, directly or indirectly related to the work of Kosta Kolev.

#### **Significance of the researched problem in scientific and scientific-applied aspect**

The motive for choosing the topic is the artistic career of the candidate, which is as close to the folk music, as possible in the form of accordion performance. The essence of the topic is an in-depth study of the unique combination between the authentic state of Bulgarian folklore and the original creative thought, generated by the talent, skills, knowledge and experience of Kosta Kolev. These basic qualities describe a man who, with his talent and perseverance, feeling and respect for the Bulgarian folk music, became a revolutionary in building the orchestra of folk instruments in a constructive and artistic aspect. Kosta Kolev's work is a foundation on which generations of Bulgarian composers and arrangers "step" in the creation of their works for orchestra of Bulgarian folk instruments (arrangements of songs and instrumental melodies, music for dance performances, pieces for orchestra of folk instruments and ensemble music). This text is sanctioned by Mrs. Maria Leshkova – the wife of Kosta Kolev. Due to restrictions related to the copyright of unpublished works, only fragments of them are given in the dissertation in the form of musical examples. Reconstructing the overall picture of his work, as well as the access to the scores of the suites, mostly preserved on manuscripts, require a great deal of research, which the candidate has done well.

#### **Degree of knowledge of the problem and correspondence of the used literature**

Nikolay Gurbanov's dissertation is serious, well-arranged, detailed and logical. Both his personal attitude and the scientific approach in his work are evident. He has used different scientific methodology: **Analysis** – structural, harmonic, textural, orchestral, comparative. **Synthesis** at all levels of the research – in the synthesis of information from different sources, reconstruction of historical facts, in the interim summaries, in the theoretical chapters of the dissertation. **Classification** in the organization of the individual elements in groups according to certain criteria. **Interview** - to gather primary information. The following **conclusions of Gurbanov** are worth mentioning: The study confirms the thesis about the essential place of the suite as a genre in Kosta Kolev's work for orchestra of folk instruments. The more detailed structure of the works reveals the complex action of qualities and specifics that the composer has "worked out" and established in his smaller compositional forms. The suite allows for a larger expression of the creative pursuits and dramaturgical views of the composer, for a diverse orchestral realization with highly artistic functions and representative nature. The suite has a unifying structure for different songs or instrumental melodies, which in their joint action reveal the regional specifics in various ways. The genre of the suite in the works of Kosta Kolev represents almost all folklore areas and regions of the country.

#### **Correctness in citation**

Nikolay Gurbanov is accurate and correct in his quotations. He uses as a basis an extensive bibliography (106 sources), on which he built and proved his thesis.

#### **The contributions of the dissertation are as follows**

1. It studies and systematizes sufficient information on the contributions of Kosta Kolev in all the main spheres of his compositional work, as well as in the collection, recording and popularization of the Bulgarian musical folklore; about his activity in the Folk Song Ensemble at the Bulgarian Radio as part of the general history of the instrumental folk (folklore) orchestra in Bulgaria.
2. It offers a theoretical model of Kosta Kolev's compositional style in music for orchestra of folk instruments
3. A terminological model for analysis of the works of Kosta Kolev has been developed, which is applicable to the music for orchestra of folk instruments and other Bulgarian composers.
4. The original songs and performers of the melodies contained in the suites of the "instrumental-song" type in the works of Kosta Kolev have are found.
5. The used methodology is substantiated, integrating the analytical and hermeneutic approaches as a way of studying author's music (as composer's thinking) on folklore material.
6. Interviews were conducted with persons who had in-depth professional relationships with Kosta Kolev. The interviews, given in full in Appendix 4, are valuable for the overall process of creating and validating the modern forms of existence of the processed Bulgarian musical folklore.

#### **Assessment of the correspondence of the author's abstract with the main positions and contributions of the dissertation work**

The abstract corresponds to the dissertation and correctly conveys the nature of the doctoral thesis.

#### **Personal qualities of the author (if the reviewer knows him)**

I have no personal impressions of Nikolay Gurbanov. I can only congratulate him for the wonderful work (clean, accurate and orderly), for the great activity – artistic and scientific (publications), as well as teaching aids and recordings of materials related to the present thesis in a broader aspect. I believe that AMDFA will benefit from the future work and development of Mr. Gurbanov. I especially congratulate his supervisor.

#### **Publications on the topic of the dissertation**

The doctoral student has enough publications on the topic:

*Papers from scientific conferences published in collections:* 1) **Gurbanov**, Nikolay. Development of the Bulgarian orchestra of folk instruments from the fifties of the twentieth century to the present day. - In: Spring Scientific Readings, April 27–28, 2018, Plovdiv. Plovdiv: AMDFA „Prof. Asen Diamandiev” – Plovdiv, 2018, pp. 132–138. ISSN 1314-7005. 2) **Gurbanov**, Nikolai. The

contribution of the orchestra of folk instruments in the evolution of Bulgarian folk music. - In: Spring Scientific Readings, 3-4 May 2019, Plovdiv. Plovdiv: AMDFA „Prof. Asen Diamandiev” - Plovdiv, 2019, pp. 234–239. ISSN 1314-7005. 3) **Gurbanov**, Nikolai. On the structure of the orchestra of Bulgarian folk instruments. - In: Second International Scientific Conference "Science, Education and Innovation in the Field of Art", October 24-26, 2019. Plovdiv: AMDFA „Prof. Asen Diamandiev”, 2019, pp. 361–370. ISBN 978-954-2963-56-1 *Study*: **Gurbanov**, Nikolai. The suites for orchestra of Bulgarian folk instruments in the works of Kosta Kolev (with examples from "Pleven Suite" and "Pazardzhik Suite"). In: Music Logos - electronic scientific journal, May, 2020. ISSN 2534-8973.

### **Opinions, recommendations and comments**

I have no specific recommendations.

**In conclusion** of this Opinion I will end with the following assessment: The work of the doctoral student corresponds to the scientometric indicators for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", according to the Law on the development of the academic staff of Republic of Bulgaria. The dissertation of **Nikolay Stefanov Gurbanov**, PhD student at AMDFA “Prof Asen Diamandiev” - Plovdiv, with supervisor: Prof Kostadin Buradziev on the topic: **The suites of Kosta Kolev for orchestra of Bulgarian folk instruments**, together with his contributions with scientific and applied qualities, I consider it sufficient to give my convincing positive assessment and to propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 8.3 Music and Dance, to **Nikolay Gurbanov**, according to the requirements of the Law for development of the academic staff in Republic Bulgaria.

05.09.2021, Sofia

Prof Milena Shushulova-Pavlova, PhD