

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: Author: **Riolina Petkova Topalova**, Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof Asen Diamandiev" – Plovdiv, Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography, Department of Choreography, doctoral students individual studies

Topic: *Development of modern dance in America and Europe. Comparative analysis of the established techniques*

Academic supervisor: Prof Daniela Dzheneva, PhD

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

This opinion is prepared on the grounds of Order RD-27-082/ 24.06.2024 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 175 pages. It consists of five chapters, including an introduction, conclusion, contributions, publications on the topic of the dissertation (3) and a bibliography of used sources (45 thematic units).

2. Brief biographical data of the candidate

The biographical reference of Riolina Topalova presents us chronologically the development of her personality in the field of dance art in several directions – education, pedagogical activity, achievements (two personal awards and eleven awards as a teacher and artistic director from national and international dance forums).

Her artistic and creative work is impressive. Twenty-six works are presented, in which she is part of the creative team, which includes established names in music and dance art, Topalova participates as a choreographer/ director/ producer in the implementation of the performances. The

entire professional path of the doctoral student is directly related to the developed topic of the dissertation work.

3. Relevance of the topic

Several directions of relevance in the scientific development stand out: (1) as the author claims, "*insufficient availability of necessary literature on the subject, in Bulgarian*"; (2) a key component in the relevance of the topic is "*the transformations of choreographic art today*" – the research actions of this process are laid down in the title of the dissertation work, with the first stage being formulated as "*development of modern dance*" and the second stage as "*comparative analysis*" of already established dance techniques; (3) the dissertability of the topic is also confirmed by the fact that currently there are no registered researches in the National Center for Information and Documentation in the field of modern dance.

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

The introduction clearly defines the **objective** (*to trace the historical creation of the modern dance from its inception, through its affirmation, development and promotion... the modern dance in America and Europe, in the twentieth century*) and the **tasks** of the dissertation work (*to explore more materials from different sources; - to compare, analyze and summarize; - to outline the creative path, in more detail, of significant personalities in the history and development of modern dance; - to give a precise definition of the terminology of the moves used in the modern techniques*). The described qualitative research methods are the right choice to achieve the set objective and tasks (*comparative analysis of established dance techniques based on different forms, directions and styles and their terminology*). The doctoral student has built a structure that clearly reflects and defends the author's thesis that "*...discovering and studying more and more materials about the history and development of modern dance and its diverse directions, as well as all established modern dance techniques, and somatic techniques, will contribute to the richer knowledge in the professional training of pupils and students, as future performers, teachers and choreographers, dedicated to modern dance art*".

5. Evaluation of the dissertation work.

It is no coincidence that in **chapter one**, the author presents an **Overview of the research on the subject**, thus proving the lack and need for awareness of the history of modern dance, its stylistic characteristics, and its philosophy of self-discovery and mastery.

Chapter two: Main stages of the emergence of modern dance. The exposition in this part is full of rich information about the firsts in modern dance in chronological order from America to Europe. Before that, Riolina Topalova presents the main aesthetic characteristics and self-expression, as a basis in the construction of modern dance technique. The approach adopted is to present each name with how it contributes to the development of modern dance, what new move/ sequence of moves it stands out with, how it is affected emotionally then physically, it is this sequence that helps

the analysis in the following parts of the development The first dance schools and trends are identified, and the different approaches in the construction and structuring of the choreographies are also presented.

The second chapter is, in a way, divided into two parts, the second starting from **II.4. Development of modern dance in the twentieth century. Intergenerational connection and continuity**. After that, the author introduces us to *Postmodernism, Musical, Dance Theater and Expressionism* with its representatives (successors of the "first"). The first dance schools are introduced.

Several generations of modernists are examined, creating new performance techniques and teaching methods on the basis of which modern dance techniques are shaped. The conclusions drawn are a logical transition to the next **chapter three: Comparative analysis of the established techniques**. As in the previous part of the work in paragraphs *III.1* and *III.2* attention is paid to the emergence and development of the jazz dance, the names that influenced the construction of the various styles of contemporary jazz dance. The practical and applied contribution of the presentation stands out in *III.3, III.4, III.5* and *III.6*, namely, contemporary trends in the development of modern jazz dance and its various directions, as well as the established precise technical concepts. The detailed presentation of the main modern dance techniques, somatic techniques and methods, contact improvisation or composition is justified. It is necessary to note that throughout the dissertation work, an ease of mastery of the scientific terminology is visible, in which the specific dance terminology is so interwoven that it makes the work readable even for a wider circle of interested people.

Chapter Four: Terminology used in modern dance techniques is distinguished by its practical-applied orientation, which is brought out in **IV. 3. Conclusions**.

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

The presented contributions are of undeniable importance for the development of the art of choreography and the modern dance. They can be divided into: contributions of a scientific-applied nature and contributions of an applied nature.

The three publications presented fully correspond to the topic of the work.

7. Critical remarks and recommendations

After an expected **positive assessment** by the scientific jury, the work should be published in the form of a teaching aid and targeted at teacher, dancers and educational institutions in the field of dance.

8. Abstract.

The abstract provides information on all parts of the dissertation work.

9. Conclusion

Riolina Topalova is a bright representative of dance art, the study *Development of Modern Dance in America and Europe. A Comparative Analysis of the Established Techniques* is another proof of her skill and professionalism. In its essence, the dissertation work is a scientific document inspired by the modern needs for accurate knowledge and development of the teaching methodology in the field of modern dance.

Due to the above, I confidently give my **positive assessment** of the conducted research and propose to the honourable scientific jury to **award** the doctoral student Riolina Petkova Topalova the educational and scientific degree "doctor", professional field 8.3. Music and Dance art, doctoral program Choreography.

19.08.2024

Prof Maria Kardzhieva, PhD