

REVIEW

by

Prof Anton Hristov Andonov, PhD

on

Dissertation work for awarding educational and scientific degree “Doctor”

Professional field (code 8.3) Music and dance Art

Doctoral program “Choreography”

Doctoral candidate: **Ventseslav Mihaylov Nedelchev**, doctoral student at the Department of Choreography of Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts “Prof Asen Diamandiev”

Topic: *Characteristic Features of the Hartsoy Dances and Games*

Academic supervisor: Prof Daniela Dzheneva, PhD

This review is prepared on the basis of Order RD-27-178/15.12.2023 of the Rector of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof Asen Diamandiev" – Plovdiv, regarding the approval of a scientific jury and the presented by the doctoral student dissertation work, abstract, reference for the contributions to the dissertation work, publications on the topic of the dissertation, in accordance with the requirements of Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA), and the Regulations for its implementation, for obtaining educational and scientific degree “doctor” and scientific degree “doctor of sciences”.

I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND EVALUATION OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation consists of 206 pages and includes introduction, an exposition in three chapters, conclusions, contributions, bibliography, three appendices with researched and described dances, customs, musical and photographic material, a list of 26 field studies and 8 video - observations of traditional dance examples from the region. The content of each chapter is divided into separate paragraphs, with conclusions drawn at the end of each chapter. The main text contains numerous quotations, as evidentiary material for the text of the dissertation work. The list of used literary sources consists of 98 titles in Bulgarian.

The biography and professional career of the author of the dissertation presented for review clearly suggests the reason why he focused on the researched topic: *Characteristic Features of the Hartsoy Dances and Games*. The development of Ventseslav Nedelchev in the field of dance began in 1982 at children's dance ensemble "Zdravets", after which he improved as a stage performer in the period 1991-1995 at the folklore dance theatre "Nayden Kirov" in Ruse and subsequently completed Master's program in “Bulgarian folk choreography” at AMDFA “Prof. Asen Diamandiev” - Plovdiv. In parallel with his studies, he also worked in the dance ensemble AMDFA-Plovdiv and at the same time taught (for two years) as a teacher of Bulgarian folk dances in the choreographic class of the "Patriarch Evtimiy" school in Plovdiv. After completing his higher education, Nedelchev worked at

the Municipal Children's Center for Culture and Art - Ruse, as a choreographer of the folklore ensemble "Ruschuklyche" and as instructor-folklorist at the club of Bulgarian folk dances "Chanove" - Sofia, helping to create a branch in his hometown, and in 2011 found Bulgarian Dance Club "Nashentsi". Over the years, he also proved himself as a successful author of 14 stage works, some of which received awards from national forums: "Zlaten Trandafil" - Kazanlak 1996, "Atanas Atanasov" - Stara Zagora 1997, National Chamber Dance Competition Gorna Oryahovitsa.

His experience as a dancer, choreographer and manager over the years gives him the opportunity to claim a serious, large-scale study, which finds its place in the scientific-theoretical base of modern research trends and carries in itself a theoretical-practical significance.

I believe that as formulated, the topic of the dissertation is relevant and interesting for choreographers, teachers and researchers of the folklore dance art.

The **Introduction** leads in to the main scientific research of the dance tradition of the Hartsoy ethnographic group. It emphasizes the relevance of the problem and its significance in the analysis of the local studied regions in a historical and geographical aspect, as well as the influence of the coexistence with another traditional culture.

The objective specifies the tasks presented in a theoretical and applied aspect.

Chapter I - **Characteristics of the Hartsoy ethnographic group/ way of life, mentality and customs/**, is an in-depth reading of theoretical studies, presented through an analytical approach with comments directed at the main objective.

The analysis of the published theoretical sources is done thoroughly and chronologically, tracing the emergence and development in cultural and historical terms of the ethnic group from the region and their traditional practices of the past.

In the next chapter, *Influence of refugees from Dobrudzha on the dance folklore of the Hartsoy*, Ventseslav Nedelchev very thoroughly examines the historical specificity and ethnoculture of the various groups present in the region (Grebentsi, Shikovtsi, Glanvantsi Sartovtsi) , as well as their interrelationship related to the material tradition, holiday system, customs and geographical location, inherited and preserved from ancient times.

The theoretical overview of the migration processes after the Liberation and the two Balkan Wars shows the specifics of the different ethnic cultures of the region and the lack of a generalized and structured theoretical research to this day.

After the comprehensive review of factors of a different nature and a thorough analysis, the author concludes that *"The coexistence of the groups gives rise to interpenetration of the customs, in which the distinctions gradually begin to fall away and a folk culture specific to this region is formed, bearing features of both the local population and the newcomers"*.

In the third chapter *The influence of immigrants from the Balkan on the formation of the dances and games in the Hartsoy ethnographic group. Penetration of Kapan and Thracian dances and games in the dance folklore of the Hartsoy*, the author has achieved maximum depth and

authenticity in the study due to the fact that she personally conducted the surveys with the informants and reveals the specifics of the traditional dance culture. This chapter is extremely important for the dissertation, as an ethnological study of the style and character of the various dances and their performance. The high value of the studied and analyzed examples prove the original approach to the field work of Ventseslav Nedelchev, based on written sources, video records and own local history materials. The detailed classification according to form, place of performance, specific dance vocabulary, holding and accompaniment reveal the deep history of traditional dance culture. In addition, the author managed to trace the transformation of archaic dances influenced by other ethnic groups /Balkanjiy, Kapan, Thracian/, which left their traces of the past in the traditional Hartsoy culture: „*The emergence of the region-specific dance folklore is a long-term process and takes shape around the middle of the 20th century. The national genius with precise observation of the newcomers has settled and adopted what is necessary, which corresponds with the customs. This helps to enrich the aesthetic need for dances, and their interpretation turns them into local ones, turns them into the dances and games of the Hartsoy ethnographic group.*” In parallel with this, the author brings to the fore the conclusion that the interpenetration of the customs leads to the interpenetration of the musical and dance folklore - musical instruments are borrowed, accompanying songs and melodies are perceived, the way of performance of the dances becomes a "game of song".

Nedelchev has boldly approached the researched material, in which a detailed emphasis is placed, through interesting facts and classifications related to the spirit of an ancient dance culture, filled with a lot of color and archaism.

II. SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS AND EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS

There are real scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation research, which are relevant for the enrichment of folklore science. The research successfully achieves its goals not only in terms of theoretical problems, but also in terms of practical results. I agree with the five general contributions of the work, which are analytically presented and credibly highlighted.

I give positive assessment of the reports on the dissertation problem /four scientific reports – 2022, 2023/. As a choice of topic, they are related to the dissertation work.

The abstract meets the standards and correctly conveys the essence and the stated contributions of the dissertation.

The reviewed dissertation work has a scientific-practical value. It meets the requirements of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and the Regulations for its implementation.

III. CONCLUSION

Based on everything stated above, I hereby give my **positive** assessment for the dissertation work *Characteristic Features of the Hartsoy Dances and Games*, and I propose to the respected

scientific jury that Ventseslav Mihaylov Nedelchev be awarded the educational and scientific degree **Doctor** in Professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Art, doctoral program Choreography.

26.12.2023

Plovdiv

Reviewer

Prof Anton Andonov, PhD