

REVIEW

by

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on

Dissertation work for awarding educational and scientific degree "Doctor"

Professional field (code 8.3) Music and Dance Art,

Doctoral program Choreography

Author: **Ventseslav Mihailov Nedelchev**, doctoral student at the Department of Choreography

Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof Asen Diamandiev"

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

Academic supervisor: Prof Daniela Dzheneva, PhD

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

This review is prepared on the grounds 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 presented by the doctoral candidate a dissertation, an abstract, a report on the contributions of the dissertation, publications on the topic of the dissertation, meeting 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". On the basis of the submitted documents, there is every reason to conclude that the procedure for announcing and conducting the competition was carried out in full compliance with the DASRBA, and the Regulations for its implementation, as well as with the internal Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions in AMDFA.

The candidate Ventseslav Mihailov Nedelchev has submitted for review:

- ✓ Dissertation work consisting of 206 pages with the following structure: introduction, exposition in three chapters, conclusion, reference to contributions, bibliography and appendixes. The bibliographic reference includes 98 sources, including 9 from the Internet, 32 digital video archives of BNT - Ruse, a list of 27 conducted field studies, 8 comparative videos and 3 appendixes. The useful conclusions of the study show convincingly the skillful handling of the different types of sources. The classical structure of this type of exposition is a good statement of the doctoral candidate for mastered basic skills and norms in scientific stylistics. The content of each of the three chapters is separated into paragraphs;
- ✓ Four publications, in academic journals, on the subject of the dissertation work, 3 of which are individual and 1 in co-authorship;
- ✓ Четири публикации, в академични издания, по темата на дисертационния труд, като 3 от тях са самостоятелни и 1 в съавторство;
- ✓ Abstract of 52 pages, prepared in accordance with the academic requirements.

II. Brief biographical data of the candidate

The Bulgarian folk dances have been a part of Venceslav Mihailov Nedelchev's life from an early age, starting in 1982 as a participant in Children's Dance Ensemble "Zdravets". In the period 1991-1995, he continued to improve as a stage performer at folklore dance theatre "Nayden Kirov", which was also the starting point of his Master's degree in the specialty "Bulgarian folk choreography" at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" - Plovdiv. In parallel with his studies, he worked in the dance ensemble of the same institution and taught (for two years) Bulgarian folk dances in a choreography class at 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. Since March 2011, he has been founder and manager of Bulgarian Dance Club "Nashentsi". His professional experience includes the creation of 14 stage works, some of which have been awarded at various national dance forums. His desire for development and improvement continues and in 2021 he becomes doctoral student in the doctoral program "Choreography" at AMDFA "Prof. Asen Diamandiev". Already during his studies for the Master's degree, the author of the dissertation stated his research interests by carrying out complete folkloristic studies on the "Babin's Day" custom from the village of Pirogovo. The doctoral program is a natural extension of his professional and personal interests.

III. Relevance of the topic

The dissertation is devoted to an important and significant problem in the considered context. The good knowledge of the issues is evident in the in-depth analysis of the diversity of the distinct ethnographic groups, which is of scientific interest to ethnographic researchers, dialectologists, musicians, artists, choreographers, etc. and proves the scientific intention of the candidate to put an emphasis in research on the dance folklore of the ethnographic group of the Hartsoy around the regional centers of Ruse, Byala and Razgrad. In this sense, the topic developed by him is relevant and has scientific value in a theoretical and scientific-applied plan and fits into the modern research trend of ethnochoreology.

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

The chosen methodology and organization of the research are correctly and clearly selected and formulated. The achievement of the set goal and an adequate response to the tasks seeking solutions in the dissertation justify the choice of a precisely selected instrument, including field research, analysis, comparative characteristics, systematization and classification of the collected information, work with archival materials, as a basis in the methodology suitable for the parameters of this type of research.

V. Evaluation of the dissertation work

The dissertation work benefits from its positive features, which can be summarized in the following main points:

- the structure of the dissertation is logical and is determined by the set goal of the research;
- the individual parts form a compositional unity united by the common goal;
- there is an in-depth and complex analysis of the problem of the characteristic features of the Hartsoy dances and performances in the context of the dissertation.

The **introduction** substantiates the importance of the problem and outlines the direction of the research, logically presenting various theories about the origin of the name *Hartsoy*. Its goals, tasks and methodology, the object and the subject of the research are correctly stated, as well as the author's thesis that *"The migration processes after the Liberation and around the First National Catastrophe create interrelationships in the dance folklore of the Hartsoy with refugees from Dobrudzha, immigrants from the Balkans and immigrants from Thrace."* The author clearly characterizes the specific problem, which have provoked the desire to study the dance folklore of the ethnographic group Hartsoy around the regional centers of Ruse, Byala and Razgrad and, through systematization and analysis, to establish the characteristic features in the dances and performances of the ethnographic group, caused by mutual influence in the dance traditions between the immigrants and the local population.

In the **first chapter**, the presented in-depth reading of a significant number of theoretical studies and achieved scientific results, form the views of the doctoral candidate and support and confirm the upcoming analyzes on the proposed topic. Nedelchev dwells in detail on examining the various hypotheses for the origin of the name *Hartsoy* consistently outlining the appearance of this ethnographic group with a specific way of life, soul and folklore culture. In the context of the study he offers the conclusion *"...that the research done so far on the Hartsoy ethnographic group is most often from the point of view of the ritual-customary system, music-song folklore, traditional clothing and needlework, characteristic dialect, way of life and mentality of the locals."* The research emphasis placed on dance folklore leads to the conclusion that there are local dances and games that have not been the subject of research until now, and the illumination of their specificity determines points of contact with the dances of other ethnographic groups. Particularly valuable in this regard, is the presentation of the migration processes with distinct directions forming the degree of interaction between the imported and local dance folklore.

In the **second chapter**, the attention is focused on the influence of the refugees from Dobrudzha on the folk-dance culture of the Hartsoy. The author focuses his research goals on proving the interrelationships of the local population with the ethnographic groups of Dobrudzha - Grebentsi, Shikovtsi, Glavantsi and Sartovtsi. Nedelchev takes the political-historical situation and the accompanying migration processes as a serious foundation, which influences the mutual penetration of the folklore and the traditions of the local population and the immigrants. The comprehensive analysis of the customs Brazaya, Kukov, Buenets and the emphasis placed on the Rachenitsa as a ring-dance outlines the conceptual field of the different interpenetration of customs, people and games, in which a folk culture specific to the researched region is formed, bearing features of both the local population and the newcomers.

In terms of content, the **third chapter** follows the logic of the exposition of the second chapter, with the focus on the influence of the migrants from the Balkans on the formation of the dances and games in the Hartsoy ethnographic group and the introduction of Kapan and Thracian dances and games into the dance folklore of the Hartsoy. The maximum thoroughness and comprehensiveness in the presented comparative analysis, carried out according to the principle of logical sequence, is impressive. In it, the author argues for the mutual influence in the dance folklore between the Hartsoy, Balkanjiy, Kapantsi, and Thracians, concluding that "*...the majority of the local population's repertoire was influenced by the mountain settlers.*"

In the **conclusion**, as a natural finalization of the research, the doctoral candidate summarizes the most essential that is contained in it about the interpenetration in the music-dance folklore between several ethnographic groups determining the characteristic marks in the dances and the games of the ethnographic group of Hartsoy around the cities of Ruse, Byala and Razgrad.

VI. Contributions and significance of the thesis and the relevant publications

The reviewed dissertation work has serious scientific value and meets the requirements of the DASRBA and the regulations for its implementation. The candidate has demonstrated the skill and genuine interest in the fieldwork necessary for any folklorist studying the local forms of dance culture. The research successfully achieves its goals not only in theoretical issues, but also in achieving scientific results. I fully accept the analytically presented and credibly highlighted five contributions of the work.

The number and content of the listed four publications fully meet the requirements for admission to public protection.

VII. Critical notes and recommendations

I recommend that the dissertation be edited and published as a practical handbook not only for choreographers and specialists, but also for all those who are interested in the art of dance.

VIII. Abstract

The abstract of 52 pages is prepared in accordance with the academic requirements and analytically presents the main points and own theses in the dissertation work. It reflects the volume of the dissertation correctly and accurately - both the content side and the conclusions and scientific contributions made.

IX. Conclusion

In view of everything mentioned above, I hereby give my **positive** assessment of the dissertation *Characteristic Features of the Hartsoy Dances and Games*, and propose to the respected scientific jury that Ventseslav Mihaylov Nedelchev be awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in Professional Direction 8.3 Music and Dance Art, doctoral program Choreography.

Varna,

Prof. Dr. Katya Kairyakova