

# OPINION

By Prof. Dr. Julian Kujumdzhiev

On the dissertation of Rosen Metodiev Nikolov

Doctoral student at the Institute of Art Studies

Music Department, BAS

on the subject:

## **DEVELOPMENT OF BALLET ART IN BOURGAS**

for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"

### Data on the doctoral student

Rosen Metodiev Nikolov has graduated as a baccalaureate in "Pedagogy of Choreography" (1999) and had his master's degree in "Choreography Production" (2015) at the Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski" in Blagoevgrad. He specialized at the "A. Vaganova" Academy of Russian Ballet in St. Petersburg. Worked as the head of the ballet school at the House of Culture of Transport Workers and as artistic director of "Tanz Studio R" in Bourgas. Since 2001 he has been a lecturer at NSMSA "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov" - Bourgas, in the disciplines "Classical Dance", "Historical Dances", "Character Dances", "Contemporary Dance Techniques", "Composition and Improvisation", "Theory and Methodology of the Subject", "History of Dance", "Acting" and "Pantomime". Nikolov has been creatively active as a director of ballet stage productions and dances in dramatic plays, as well as an author of dance performances.

### Assessment of the dissertation

The Rosen Metodiev's dissertation has an introduction, 6 sections, conclusion, 4 appendices, bibliography, publications on the subject of the dissertation and a reference on the contributions of the work with a total volume of 192 pages. This is the first comprehensive study that presents the development of ballet art in Bourgas. It fits into a current research field dedicated to the history of Bulgarian musical theater. The text traces chronologically a period of 130 years - from the prerequisites for the emergence and development of dance in Bourgas from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,

through the phase of the first ballet productions in amateur opera (established in 1955) to the formation of the professional ballet troupe at the State Opera in the city (since 1972).

In the introduction the author presents the main publications where there is information on ballet art in Bourgas (along with those publications, the book "Founders of the Bourgas Opera" by Prof. Srebra Mihaleva, which is quoted later on in the text, should be added), articulates the aims of the research by systematizing the "initial steps, the establishment and development of ballet in Bourgas" (p.7), presents in a synthesized manner the content of the six chapters.

The first chapter "Prerequisites for interest in dance in Bourgas (end of the 19<sup>th</sup> – middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century)" reveals the author's intention to look for the roots and beginnings of ballet art in the city, which he finds in various cultural, educational and musical events, in everyday life, in school activities, in the activities of choirs and music societies, in theater and music performances, in initial events of dance training. On the occasion of this section during the initial defense, the doctoral student was given recommendations regarding the selection of information, which in general he has complied with. In view of a better content coverage of this section, I think that it is good to add text on the operetta "Girl's Boarding House" by Dimitar Tsonev to the ballet performances, in which the dances were staged by ballet masters Vesa Peneva and Siya Kotova. In addition, information about the staging of the opera "Gergana" by Maestro Atanasov should be added with a review of it in the newspaper "Bourgas Evening Post" from May 26, 1928, which specifically mentions the work of ballet master Polyana Opalchenska.

Also in this section more detailed information should be added about dance music in the works of two famous composers who worked actively in Bourgas in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the inventories of whose archives were published - Georgi Shagunov (author of hundreds of waltzes, mazurkas, polkas, tango and other dance pieces, but also of musical stage productions) and Varban Varbanov (author of piano waltzes and musical stage productions, for example, the ballet from the opera "In the Forest" is preserved, a review of the premiere of the opera from June 6<sup>th</sup> 1929 can be found in the newspaper *Bourgas Post*). This would enrich the general picture that the doctoral student outlines in the first section.

The second section of the work presents the formation of a ballet troupe at the stage of the amateur opera in Bourgas, the realization of the ballet episodes in opera titles

and the first independent ballet performance, the role of Dora Varieva in the initial steps of the ballet troupe.

The main focus of the study is the repertoire - classical and modern - of the State Opera in Bourgas. The third and fourth sections of the work are dedicated this. All productions (ballets from the classical repertoire, ballets related to modern choreography, Bulgarian titles, performances for children) are presented in detail, this information is accompanied by the analyzes of the author with added comments and excerpts from reviews and publications. Impressive is the vast amount of researched and commented sources on which the text is based - monographic studies, encyclopedic editions, documentary books, articles in specialized periodicals, publications (reviews, opinions, announcements, information) in local periodicals, archival materials, are cited correctly in the work.

The fifth section is dedicated to contemporary dance formations in Bourgas, which are not state-funded and their contribution to the art of dance in the city.

The contribution of all choreographers who staged ballet titles in the opera is outlined - among them are Dora Varieva, Dimo Vrubel, Pavlina Ivanova, Lyuba Kolchakova, Prof. Petar Lukanov, Prof. Hikmet Mehmedov, Vesa Tonova, as well as ballet dancers with an important role in the development of the professional ballet troupe, including Grigor Roglev, Galina Kalcheva, Dobrina Bakhova, Lili Biserova, Nedko Georgiev, Martin Chikalov.

The brief overview of ballet education in Bourgas, especially of the ballet classes at NSMSA "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov", whose graduates are regular participants in the productions of the Bourgas Opera, and some of them already have professional realization as ballet dancers in various opera houses in Bulgaria should also be subject of our attention.

Valuable are the applications at the end of the work, which present all ballet titles staged in Bourgas, choreographers who have performed at the Bourgas Opera, as well as productions of musical works with the participation of the ballet troupe at the Opera House.

Rosen Nikolov's work is a contribution to the history of Bulgarian ballet and in general to the history of music performance in Bulgaria. The study of archival funds and the systematization of many sources and facts, documents and videos, as well as the study of many publications by the doctoral student and their introduction in the text is an important prerequisite for his broad view of the research object. I think that it would be of value if Rosen Nikolov's work is published after the necessary editing and the relevant additions.

## Conclusion

I would like to congratulate the doctoral student Rosen Nikolov and his supervisor Prof. DSc. Anelia Yaneva and I recommend to the esteemed scientific jury to award Rosen Metodiev Nikolov the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the professional field "Music and Dance".

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