

## **Review**

Of the dissertation

**Of Rosen Metodiev Nikolov**

*Doctoral student at the Institute of Art Studies, BAS*

On the subject:

**"Development of Ballet Art in Bourgas"**

for acquiring the educational and academic degree "Doctor",

Scientific specialty: "Musicology and Music Art"

PF 8.3 "Music and Dance Art"

*Academic supervisor: Prof. DSc Anelia Yaneva*

### **Relevance of the topic**

It is our human, creative and moral duty to be aware of our roots and our national identity, to have a historical memory for them, as well as for the individuals who dared to boldly enter the imaginary artistic territories and trace our path.

Inspired by the always current and archetypal cause - to preserve, transmit and enrich the historical creative memory, to step on the foundation of healthy and constructive traditions, Rosen Nikolov through his dissertation, for the first time in our scientific thought and knowledge, has set before himself a responsible and voluminous task to cover the integral path of dance art in Bourgas from its initial amateur, fashion events in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, to the present, when the ballet troupe at the State Opera-Bourgas has almost half a century of successful independent creative existence and productions, including world premieres, won a place among the emblematic performances in the Bulgarian ballet history.

The excellent theoretical training, the rich fruitful practical experience of the doctoral student, his personal tastes and attitudes, allow him to skillfully, with conviction and in detail enter the issues and the specific nature of the study, to resurrect and discover new historical facts and circumstances, to interpret them from today's point of view and the current situation, to make comparisons, analyzes and definite conclusions related to the past and present of dance in Bourgas.

Especially valuable are his long-term authentic observations of what is happening with ballet art in Bourgas in terms of repertoire, significant performances, acting

interpretations, as well as sought, collected and selected by him (unexplored till now) articles and reviews published in regional Bourgas newspapers and magazines extensively covering the city's dance events.

### **Information for the doctoral student**

Rosen Nikolov was born in Bourgas, where he first came into contact with ballet at the school at the House of Culture of Transport Workers (a curious detail is that he later became its director).

In 1999 he obtained a bachelor's degree in "Choreographic Pedagogy", and in 2015 a master's degree in "Choreographic Directing" at the Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski" - Blagoevgrad.

He specialized at the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet in St. Petersburg and modern ballet in Vienna.

Since 2016 he has been a doctoral student at the Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences at the Research Group "Musical Theater".

Since 2001 he has been a lecturer in the disciplines Classical Dance, Historical Dances, Characteristic Dances, Contemporary Dance Techniques, Composition and Improvisation, Theory and Methodology of the Subject, History of Dance, Acting and Pantomime in NSMSA "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov" Bourgas.

On his initiative in 2002 the first ballet class was opened in NSMSA "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov", and in 2004 – the first class in acting.

In 1974 he created the first modern ballet ensemble in Bourgas "Tanz Studio R" - one of the first to appear in Bulgaria, which he managed until 2000.

Nikolov realized a number of entertainment programs on Bulgarian National Television as a choreographer and director of his ballet, tours around the country with almost all popular Bulgarian pop performers, staged ballet performances and dances for dramatic performances at home and abroad, including: the musical "Hurry, Hurry" /directed by Yordan Gadzhev/, "The Family Dance" /directed by Nadezhda Seykova/, "I Kill No One" - staged by the famous Russian artist of Yuri Eremin – National Theater Stara Zagora, "New Year's Tale", "Bear Pepo" - Gabrovo, Kalman Evenings – Blagoevgrad Opera, "The King is Having Fun", "Decameron" - Veliko Tarnovo, the super production "Hernani", dance director - Assen Gavrailov - Bourgas Opera, "Switzerland, Switzerland" at the "Yanka Kupala" theater -Minsk, Belarus and many others.

Among Nikolov's creative achievements we can point out as outstanding his author's performances - "From Beginning to End", "Hopefully We Can Find a Home for our Dreams", "Wunderkind", "Silver Dreams", "Unburned Passions", "A Reason to Live", "The Essential is Invisible", "The Light Behind the Window" and others.

## **Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation is of historiographical nature and is of the theoretical-applied type. It has a total volume of 192 pages and consists of an introduction, 6 sections, (in the 3rd section there are 3 chapters, in the 4<sup>th</sup> -10, in the 6<sup>th</sup> -2) and a conclusion. There are four applications in the form of tables, containing a detailed list of: Ballets, realized in the Bourgas Opera; Choreographers staged at the Bourgas Opera; Ballets performed at the Bourgas Opera; Titles with dance fragments - dances in operas, operettas, musicals or whole ballets performed in Bourgas. The bibliography includes a total of 458 chronologically arranged sources: 90 books; 171 articles and announcements in the regional press; 18 articles in the specialized press; 17 documentaries and videos; 43 programs of performances; 119 materials belonging to the State Archives - Bourgas.

The abstract of the dissertation concisely, but correctly and accurately summarizes the essence of the researched and developed thesis.

The doctoral student has 7 publications and 5 reports on the specifics of the dissertation the contributions drawn out of the thesis are presented correctly.

## **Description and evaluation of the dissertation**

**The Introduction** first of all presents the personal motives of Rosen Nikolov that have provoked the material, specifies and clarifies the important details regarding the selection and choice of the material, refers to the approach and methods used - universal - analysis, comparison, summary, induction, deduction and individual - research, study of materials from the State Archives-Bourgas, archives of Bourgas Opera, personal observations and meetings. In the introductory part the aim of the research is pointed out: *"... a systematized and substantiated work for the initial steps, the establishment and development of ballet in Bourgas in its overall profile ...."*. Formulated also are the specific tasks: *to define the unique for each stage (amateur, not professional, professional) of the development of the Ballet Art in Bourgas; to position the specific problems (related to the lack of educated specialists, male ballet dancers, funding); to look for and bring out the distinctions and peculiarities in the repertoire and in the creative experiments of the choreographers; to model the image of the iconic artists that have contributed to the formation and development of ballet in Bourgas; to show their creative achievements and discoveries, both in terms of classical solutions and in the field of experiments through modern techniques; to draw a parallel with the ballet troupes outside the capital and to derive the place and role of the Bourgas Ballet in relation to the Bulgarian ballet art.*

The comparative analysis is supported by the internal grouping of the chapters - productions with similar themes; with the same title, but interpreted, interpreted and

resolved in a different manner; plays for children. In this way clarity and legibility of the form is achieved, the specificity of the content becomes clear.

The author makes an important clarification about the dances in operas, operettas and musicals, that have not been covered by his research, arguing his choice with the artistic fact that in music and stage genres dances bear the ideological and aesthetic imprint of the director and not the choreographer and in this sense one cannot speak of authorial reading and stage transcription.

Through his work Nikolov carries out a huge research and discovery activity, pointing out correctly, on the one hand the existing sources - reviews, reviews and review articles in the media, in private and public archives, audio and video recordings, and on the other his personal conversations, collected memories and interviews with participants in the productions, as well as through their authorial analyzes of the works considered for the first time in our national ballet studies.

In the *first introductory section*, the research focuses on the cultural events in Bourgas, dating from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (literary and musical parties, school activities and dance performances in theatrical stage productions). Some of the significant factors that provoked the interest in stage and dance events in Bourgas during this initial stage are indicated, namely "... *the economic and social indicators, along with the geographical location of the city ...*".

An accent is placed on the establishment of the Bulgarian municipal community in 1869, the opening of a Bulgarian school and church (after the permission of the Grand Vizier), which marked the beginning of cultural and educational life in Bourgas.

Nikolov outlines the cultural events in Bourgas until the liberation, which was focused mainly on the activities of the only Bulgarian school, promoting our national traditions and customs, and also the holding of secular celebrations. Information is given about the first teachers - teacher Petko, priest Georgi Stoyanov Djelepov, Boyan Keremidchiev, Teofana Hadji Decheva, who with their Renaissance spirit and inexhaustible energy expanded the quantitative and qualitative parameters of cultural events in the city.

The PhD student comprehensively and in detail explores and outlines all that is in the cultural activity /events, personalities/ distinguishing it in different areas: cultural and educational activities, musical events, music in restaurants, school operas and operettas, choral and musical societies, theatrical experiments, musical -stage events, training in modern dance, tours of ballet dancers, ballet schools.

I would like to underline the selected tours and theater productions containing choreographies /Sofia Theater "Osнова" 1890/, as well as the musical and stage performances presented by traveling troupes - 1901, 1902 which included program dances, opera and operetta fragments, of the fully presented opera titles, all of which

beneficially influenced the interest and stimulated the development of the musical-theatrical art, and in particular of the dance art in Bourgas. Also important are the documented impressive tours of Bulgarian and foreign ballet dancers in the 1930s, among which stands out the most noted artists of the Sofia Opera - Atanas Petrov and Nadia Vinarova.

According to the author, training in fashionable salon dances was traced *long before the Bourgas public got acquainted with the professional dance art through the tours of ballet performers*. Curious is the fact, emphasized by Nikolov that Rahni Stoev and Parush Kostov /The Chicken/, persons not professionally related to the art of dance, were the creators of a course for modern dance in Aitos in 1920 and in 1932 in Bourgas.

Nikolov makes an important clarification that, unlike the schools in fashionable ballroom dancing, the training in ballet schools started later /initially it was centered only among the Russian minority and partly in the schools/.<sup>1</sup> Based on archival materials, the candidate conveys the enthusiasm of the citizens in Bourgas and the hope *that the young ballet dancers will become the future resource of trained artists for the Bourgas Amateur Opera*. An important strategic finding was made related to the urgent need for a more professional attitude towards amateur ballet schools, dominated by higher requirements for the artistic and creative process and the activities of cultural centers.

The study in the **second section** focuses on the establishment in 1955 of the Amateur Opera in Bourgas and presents its artistic activity - platform, repertoire, performances. Through the selection made by Nikolov of the documentary notes, made by the accountant Vasil Vassilev, detailed and authentic information is presented about its origin, creative and technological process, problems and vicissitudes, the members of the artistic council, responsible for the policy and quality of the realized productions, for the creative units and artistic composition. Quite logically, in view of the object of study, the accent is placed on solving the problem directly related to the formation of the ballet troupe, starting from scratch. The names of the ballet dancers /soloists and ensemble/ who formed the first amateur ballet troupe, created in 1956, are correctly targeted. The atmosphere of creative activities, unique for each of the performers, is captured. Analyzing the authentic materials inherited from Vassilev, the author concludes: *"... It will be decades before the ensemble starts acting as one, which will lead to the next challenge - unification of the individual personalities. So one is at the expense of the other - increased dance mastery is at the expense of the individuality of the performers ... "*. From this point of view, Nikolov emphasizes the importance of the training course for ballerinas and ballet dancers, held in 1957 at the Amateur Opera, through which the troupe completes its ensemble with 18 new artists and thus makes possible the realization of the first ballet performance in Bourgas in 1958 - Hertel's performance of "Rivals"<sup>2</sup>.

Again, basing his work on the documentation left by Vassilev, the doctoral student *concludes that the lack of staff is a significant obstacle to building a professional troupe. The only ballet staged at the Bourgas Amateur Opera until its nationalization was born only thanks to the dedication of the performers and the great enthusiasm of Dora Variева*, whose creative work as a director, ballet dancer and choreographer in many opera and operetta productions is examined in detail.

The **third section** presents the classical ballet repertoire at the Bourgas Opera after its nationalization in 1972, and its role as a catalyst and a key factor in raising the qualification of the ballet. The formation of the ballet troupe and the staffing of the artistic ensemble are studied, the problems related to the personnel changes and policy are outlined, the difficulties accompanying the creative process, directly arising from the reduction of the ensembles, the level of performances, the creative invention of the directors are outlined. The growth of ballerinas and ballet dancers in technical and artistic terms is traced, starting from the training in the local ballet schools to the specialized ballet education in the State Choreographic School in Sofia. The importance of contact and professional work with choreographers and pedagogues who graduated in Russia is emphasized.

Accent is placed on the ballet directors' experience and aspiration to raise the level of the troupe through the wide introduction of the classical ballet repertoire /integral titles or fragments/ and the difficult to polish classical dance, in parallel with the aesthetic goal - artists and audiences to immerse themselves in "higher" insight of the art of dance, to feel the impact of its beauty, poetics and attractiveness.

Section three contains 3 legible and logically formed chapters. The *first chapter* is dedicated to the multi-act classical ballets - "Swan Lake", "The Hazelnut Crusher", "Don Quixote", "Giselle", "Sleeping Beauty", "La Bayadère", "Coppelia", "Rivals", "Chopiniana", "Paquita". The *second chapter* is dedicated to ballets, that introduce the classical repertoire - "Bastard", "Doll Fairy", "Cinderella", "Rivals", and in the *third* to one-act ballets from the classical repertoire - "Chopiniana", GRAND PAS from the ballet "PAQUITA". For each one of these works, the doctoral student provides comprehensive information related to the world premiere, subsequent productions, their stage transcriptions and transformations in the capital, the country and respectively on the stage in Bourgas. The creative profile of the choreographers Lyuba Kolchakova, Pavlina Ivanova, Petar Lukanov, Hikmet Mehmedov, Lyubov Fominikh, Vesa Tonova is outlined, and a spatial analysis of their, including new author's interpretations is made. The different interpretations of ballet dancers, their creative successes and conquests are widely covered. From this point of view, the author derives the essential in terms of artistic interpretations, the time component, the differentiation - capital - provincial theaters.

I would certainly define this section as a *contribution* as well as the important conclusions made about the periodization and the unique artistic specificity of ballet

art in Bourgas: "... A distinctive feature of the classical ballet repertoire in Bourgas is that the chronology of its appearance on the Bourgas stage differs from its emergence in Europe, as well as its performance in Sofia. However, it is noteworthy that the performances of classical ballets cover two periods in the development of the Bourgas ballet:

1. During the creation of the ballet troupe at the State Opera - Bourgas, when the engaged ballet masters - Lyuba Kolchakova and Pavlina Ivanova - sought to raise the level of technical training of ballet dancers;

2. And at the end of the past and the beginning of the new century, when the troupe was already well enough staffed and could afford to be compared with other ballet troupes in Bulgaria .... "

In the **fourth section**, I accept as *contributive*, the spatially and in detail traced artistic activity of the ballet troupe at the State Opera-Bourgas, situated and analyzed through the prism of the stylistics and language of expression of contemporary choreography, the current dance trends. The objective circumstances are positioned /the late creation of the Bourgas Ballet and the distance of the city from the capital/ was the main prerequisite for the dance experiments, with manifestations mostly in the direction of modern dance and free plasticity. The author defines these experiments as "*smoother*" and less noticeable and finds its roots in the Russian education of choreographers and the classical schooling of ballet dancers. Reviewing ballet art in Bourgas, Nikolov summarizes - "... in the last 40 years the repertoire of the Bourgas Opera was dominated by ballets with contemporary choreography, further arguing: each choreographer treats his work as "*contemporary*" using movements, other than classical dance, it is easier to hide defects and ignorance when they are not shown in classical dance, the choreographer relies specifically on the individual qualities of the performer and thus can better express his talents. Nikolov dwells on the problems of the stylistics and forms of expression of this "modern choreography", which, according to his words is *a mix of different choreographic styles*, underlying the orientation and growing tendency of staging one-act ballets, individual miniatures, in a mosaic and thematic way woven into plotless one-act ballet.

The included chapters - 4,5,6,7 in the third section are dedicated to iconic choreographers and their significant one-act productions, that constructively and qualitatively influenced, stylistically and as genre enriched not only the ballet art in Bourgas. Among them are:

*Dimo Vrabel* with his productions of "Scheherazade", "Rhapsody in Blue", "Viennese Love" or "Straussiana", "Bakhchisaray Fountain";

*Pavlina Ivanova* and her performances of "Carmen", "Creation", "Peace in the World", "Space of Love";

*Petar Lukanov* and his choreography of "The Three-Topped Hat" /staged twice in different versions/, "Evening of Contemporary Ballet", consisting of 3 parts, /it is curious that for the first time in the title is officially intertwined with a contemporary, from 1983 "Folk - jazz and something else" ballet again staged in three parts /;

*Hikmet Mehmedov*, who for 20 years permanently tied his life and creative activities with the ballet of the Bourgas Opera as a director and choreographer with modern ideas, looking for new genre forms and manifestations, including in classical models. Attention is dedicated to his brightly impressive productions: the world premiere of the multi-act rock ballet "Angels through Hell", the one-act "Nuncha" /with the participation of the prima ballerina Krassimira Koldamova, author also of the libretto /, "The Waltz" and "Bolero", "Love Magic", "Spring Sacrament", as well as ballet miniatures, included in joint concerts or combined in several and shown in one performance, including "Salome", "Romantic", "Spiders", "Pomegranates of Love".

I would like to emphasize the used and quoted materials by our ballet critics regarding the interpretation, vision, personifications, stage solutions, stage design and creative findings, expertly selected, analytically developed and organically woven into the overall picture of the dissertation /undoubtedly his achievement/, through which we acquire a multi-layered, vivid idea of the vision and the atmosphere, of the rhythm, the dynamics, the thematic and ideological circle, of the messages of the performances created by the above-mentioned choreographers.

*Chapter eight* is very special and intimate, it is inspired and recreates the archetypal idea of the image of the creator. I consider the analytical materials on the discovered new version of the dance drama "Nestinarka" /libretto and choreography by Pavlina Ivanova /, the world premiere of the ballet "Mozart and Salieri" /choreographer Pavlina Ivanova/ for the first time an object of study in our specialized literature the most outstanding contributions to the dissertation. Examining the new version of "Nestinarka" by Pavlina Ivanova, Nikolov makes a comparative analysis between its interpretation and the prototype of the libretto by Hrisan Tsankov, applies the content and brings out the significant differences and findings in terms of plot, story, dramatic lines, conflicts, motivation and relationships among the characters. In the author's interpretation of the ballet "Mozart and Salieri" by Pavlina Ivanova, the author of the dissertation focuses on the leitmotif of the artist and creativity, reaching through music to the Cosmic heights and dimensions, to the Divine harmony. The analyzes are enriched and supplemented with information about the two productions of Pavlina Ivanova, about her choreographic interpretation and staging in the direction of the sublime, about the scenography and costume design solutions, about the personifications and achievements of the ballet artists.

Another ballet whose world premiere was also on the Bourgas stage, but with a different value paradigm and creative position, a kind of counterpoint to the lofty quests of Pavlina Ivanova, is analyzed in this chapter and contributive to for

dissertation - "One Night in Paris" with choreographer Hikmet Mehmedov. The ballet performance with the main character Creation considers the idea of the artist, but in the direction of "reverse reading" and is defined by Nikolov on the one hand as an indication of generation changes, and on the other as an aesthetic dividing line, bringing a drastic change in the perceptions of creativity; of normal-abnormal.

The aim of the *ninth chapter* is to point out the subjective choreographic views and aesthetic views of Pavlina Ivanova and Hikmet Mehmedov in the ballet performances of "Romeo and Juliet". The beliefs and semantic landmarks leading for the two choreographers are pointed out, as well as the significant differences in terms of plot development, the change in the plot, the explanation and interpretation, the stylistic and lexical techniques. "..... *Unlike Pavlina Ivanova's production, which focuses on the dramatic fate of the two young people, according to Nikolov's research, Mehmedov's emphasis is on the otherwise often considered episodic character - Father Lorenzo. The choreographer also includes an additional scene - the torture of Father Lorenzo (respectively over faith in general), after he had already handed over the sleeping pill to Juliet. Being dead, Romeo and Juliet join the already dead Father Lorenzo, building a pantheon of the dead in the name of faith and love. Violence over faith, over free choice is one of the often transparent themes in Hikmet Mehmedov's productions. This is exactly the discovery in the interpretation of "Romeo and Juliet" by Mehmedov ....* ".

The fourth section concludes with ballet performances for children, discussed in *Chapter 10*. Nikolov concludes that ballets for children are rare, despite the need to involve children's audiences in the magic of theater and the constructive direction of its aesthetic education. In the context of what has already been said, he emphasizes and highlights the need for a lasting presence in the ballet repertoire of titles addressed to children's audiences with valuable spiritual and moral-ethical messages.

*I will emphasize that these conclusions of the doctoral student and his responsible position are especially relevant in our current spiritual environment and theatrical situation.*

I would define Nikolov's research and analysis on the ballets with typical children's themes "Cinderella", "Doctor Aibolit", "Cipollino", "Jan Bibian", "The Fairy Doll", "The Three-Cornered Hat" /some of them played in different versions/, "The Nutcracker" as *contributive*.

*All these analytical materials together with the other contributions of Nikolov referred to in the previous sections can serve as a good basis or a possible starting point for choreographers and artists in their future work.*

**The fifth section** focuses on the artistic concept and activity of contemporary dance groups with non-state funding, entirely, in the words of the author, *oriented to contemporary choreography*. As the director and choreographer of one of the two

schools in Bourgas, who knows the problems in-depth, Nikolov identifies the positive trends in the repertoire policy and creative pursuits, making a parallel comparison with state-funded ballet and the restrictions imposed by the official cultural policy of state institutes over the choice of titles. The difficulties accompanying the self-financing and survival of these formations are presented. The emphasis is on: the freedom /trademark/ of the self-financing formations; the bold and attractive experiments by redirecting from one technique to another, including the lesser-known such as Butoh-dance; balancing between the known and the novel; the predominant entertainment character of the ballet performances, which is well understood having in mind that these troupes have to survive.

Special attention is dedicated to two dance formations - "Dance Studio R" and "Dune"<sup>3</sup> /their activity is almost entirely connected with new, experimental searches, quality training and education of young ballet dancers, from where as a rule new and talented dancers enter the troupe of the Bourgas Ballet.

In this section there is the indisputable *practical contribution* of the candidate for the creation and development of contemporary dance in Bourgas.

**The sixth section** is divided into two chapters. Chapter II examines the objective prerequisites that led to the need for professional training of ballet dancers in Bourgas. The complex process, the steps, the concrete actions that Pavlina Ivanova and Rosen Metodiev went through are traced in order to successfully crown their long-term efforts and in 2002 to create a ballet class at NSMSA "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov". Important information is given about the structure and specifics of the educational process, an assessment is made regarding the level of education for which the clearest evidence is the success and realization of the first graduates: Stoyan Fartunov Prime Soloist of the Ruse Ballet, Georgi Banchev part of the ballet troupe of the Sofia Opera, Stefan Tipikov, Elena Dimitrova, Iva Ovcharova, Ivanina Ivanova and others that entered organically and very successfully the Bourgas Ballet.

I emphasize Nikolov's *contribution* of for the creation of the first ballet class in 2002 at NSMSA "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov".

*Chapter 12* is dedicated to the artists who have worked for the longest time during the various stages of the development of the Bourgas Ballet and have contributed to the formation and shaping of its artistic and aesthetic status and specific artistic image. Attention is given to performers who have played the main and secondary roles, participants in the ensemble, including: Galina Kalcheva, Grigor Roglev, Daniel Tichkov, Dobrina Bakhova, Lilia Biserova, etc., all of them presented by their life and creative biographies.

**The conclusion** is a kind of recapitulation of the analyzes, conclusions and findings in the dissertation. "..... *Building and educating interesting artists with the help of a new, non-standard dance repertoire is the great contribution of the Bourgas ballet -*

Nikolov summarizes. *In fact, this relationship has always existed - good artists allow the realization of a multi-genre repertoire, and the artists themselves grow through the new repertoire, sometimes specially designed for their nature. Through the ballet repertoire and the level of engaged artists, the Bourgas ballet ranks among the other troupes outside the capital in Bulgaria, and in recent years even ahead of some of them .... "*

## **Contributions**

Summarizing what has been said so far, I believe that the dissertation meets the requirements for a serious scientific contribution: the subject is novel for our science, enriches the existing knowledge and its application in theory and practice. Among the key contributive moments of development, I would like to highlight:

- *the first complete and detailed study of the ballet of the Bourgas Opera;*
- *searched, scanned and published in the bibliography sources from the local press, containing reviews, messages and reviews of the ballet of the Bourgas Opera and conceived for the first time by the dissertation in their entirety;*
- *presented through the searched documents and analyzed by the dissertation in detail /by scenes and episodes/ completely unexplored by our ballet studies: a new reading of the dance drama "Nestinarka" and the unknown work "Mozart and Salieri" /choreographer Pavlina Ivanova/; as well as "One Night in Paris" /choreographer Hikmet Mehmedov /;*
- *reviewing and comparing the classical ballet repertoire in relation to its world premiere, the productions in Sofia, the appearance and changes on the Bourgas stage;*
- *the analysis of the contemporary repertoire from the point of view of its originality, as well as the titles staged for the first time in Bourgas - unique for the country;*
- *the attempt made for a complete presentation of the soloists of the Bourgas Ballet, with included biographical data and tables with a detailed list of their stage roles;*
- *the researched and described for the first time history of the ballet classes in NSMSA-Bourgas;*
- *the comparisons made for the first time between the historical development of the ballet troupes in Sofia and in the theaters outside the capital, in relation to the development of ballet art in Bourgas*

## **Conclusion**

The dissertation "*Development of Ballet Art in Bourgas*" is a serious scientific research study with its leading goal, tasks, research scope and achieved results, created with expert knowledge and competence, with love, respect and responsibility

for the past, present and future of ballet art in Bourgas. The work is a beautiful human and artistic homage to all ballet artists who connected their life and creative work with Bourgas, unconditionally gave their energy, inspiration, spiritual strength, and created an exquisite and timeless ballet chronicle of Bourgas and in particular of Bulgarian ballet art. Based on all of the above, I give my positive assessment of the dissertation of Rosen Nikolov and propose to the members of the esteemed scientific jury to award him the scientific and educational degree "Doctor" in "Musicology and Music Art", professional field 8.3 "Music and Dance Art ”.

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<sup>1</sup> The two amateur ballet schools in Bourgas - at the House of Transport Workers, headed by Hristina Kirova /later by Maria Avramova / and the Children's Ballet School at the City People's Council, headed by Dora Varieva - were formed only in the 50s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>2</sup> The choreography, influenced by the stage production in Stara Zagora, Nikolov notes, is the work of Dora Varieva, who also appears in the main role, and the conductor is Stefan Lalchev. There is also information about the participating ballet dancers: Hristina Savova, Violeta Pencheva, Kalcho Nanev, Stoyan Grancharov, Valentina Mihailova.

<sup>3</sup> The dance group "Dance Studio R" was established in the year of the nationalization of the Bourgas Ballet in 1972, and in 1982 Nikolov became director and choreographer, and he won a gold medal at the Republican Festival in the same year with that formation.

The dance formation "Dune" was founded in 1986 by Petya Stoykova.

April 20, 2021

Prof. Dr. Violeta Gorcheva