

# STATEMENT

from Professor Dr. Jelka Koleva Tabakova

NMA "prof. II. Vladigerov"

for

## **Dissertation**

### **Methods of dance therapy through contemporary dance for self-improvement of the personality**

at

**Kristina Dimitrova Merdzhanova**

for the award of an educational and scientific degree of **Doctor**

in professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art

Doctoral Programme Music , NBU / Department of Music

Scientific specialty Musicology and Music Art

Scientific supervisor – **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anna Pampulova**

The PhD Kristina Merdzhanova submits the following for review: **Dissertation Methods of Dance Therapy through contemporary dance for personality self-improvement Abstract**; Report on the contributions of the dissertation; Publications on the topic of the thesis, in accordance with the requirements of the Law on Dissertation and Dissertation for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". The opinion is prepared on the basis of Order No. 3 RS 172 of 29.03.2024 of the Rector of on the approval of the composition of the scientific jury.

The dissertation is in volume 180 pages. It consists of an Introduction, Four Chapters, Conclusion and Contributions. Thirty and seventeen sources of Cyrillic, in Latin and 13 Internet Eastern Cy There is one Appendix Photographic material.

Kristina Merdzhanova has a Bachelor's degree from the NBU at Theatre Department "Dance and Music and Dance" with acquired qualification of "choreographer of contemporary dance" to Department of Music . She has increased her qualifications in 18 seminars at

Specialists from Bulgaria and abroad.

Executive her performing career was from 2001 to 2005, appearing in 5 theatrical performances and a duet choreographed on the show "20 Steps" by the occasion of 20 years of contemporary dance in Bulgaria april, 2015. Her pedagogical and choreographic work began in 2005 at the sports club "DM", where she teaches children between 5 and 18 years old in the following styles: ballet, jazz, show dance, contemporary dance, contact improvisation, sports dance. She has won diplomas from national sports dance competitions (1995-2002). Over the years, the children from the school have won numerous medals, cups and scholarships at home and abroad. Twice received the award for choreographer of the year with "International contribution to the development of dance" in festivals International World Cups in Italy and Serbia.

The topic of the dissertation is topical because it is caused by a certain necessity in contemporary society. In the modern world the individual is exposed to complex pressures on a physical and psychological level, which in turn cause inhibition of various biological processes and provoke specific mental diseases. In this connection hybrid activity related to these new conditions and in support of personality therapy through dance, music, aromatherapy, etc.

**In the Introduction**, Kristina Merdzhanova clearly articulates the reasons for choosing the topic, sets out the aims and objectives set in it.

**Chapter One "Concepts of Authentic Movement"** is a voyeuristic historical guide to the topic of the dissertation. The emergence of the idea and the first research on the therapeutic qualities of dance which it brings to It is also the most important aspect of dance. At the centre of this chapter falls the research of **Mary Whitehouse (Mary Whitehouse)**, which focuses on the thesis of the origins of movement, the links between emotion and matter and the underlying basis of interaction between partners. Quote "She (Mary Whitehouse) began to explore the symbolic, expressive and communicative aspects of movement." Points out possible ways of fixing creative activity. And how authentic movement can be linked to the processes of dance therapy. It also exposes **Janet Adler's** thesis on Authentic Movement , a quote in turn expands the understanding of the role of the observer and develops a practice of observation and means of preparation Witnessing. It highlights the major works of other choreographers and psychoanalysts and makes a connection with the conclusions of Charles Darwin.

In Chapter Two "**Dance Movement Therapy /Dance Movement Therapy (DMT)/ and types of Therapies**" , the doctoral student expands her study with information on the different types and directions of art therapy and their relationship to dance . It points out the groups of diseases for which it is intended the types of therapy methodologies **Expressive Movement Method (EMT)**, explains the importance of **Authentic Movement** , among them falls **Improvisation** as an essential method with healing effects.

It gives numerous examples of music and dance therapy in various cases with positive effects. Dedicating a special sub-point to the **American Dance Association (American Dance Therapy)** and possible naming variations and other similar activities and Authentic Movement, Psychotherapy and Dance Therapy as well as their working methods. Emphasizes the great educational practice that accompanies the methods of therapy and that there are no specialists in this field. Quote: "our experience is relatively small in conducting such trainings. Mostly specialists from other countries visit and implement Dance Therapy classes.." (page 64)

The third chapter - "**Practical applicability of dance therapy in working with children**" contains a description of practical tasks - the set goals and the results of their implementation. Motivates the choice of methods used when working with children in different age groups. The second sub-point is structured on the participants' shared sensations, feelings and therapeutic impact on the body and emotions in the form of essays.

**In the fourth section Dance movement therapy (DMT)/ Dance movement therapy and its development Now**" the Ph.D. kata once again returns to the American "**International Dance Therapy Association**" which develops programs and trains professionals from various countries. In fact This is the second publication by Kristina Medrzhanova. It highlights the global role of dance therapy and its undeniable impact on contemporary society. The PhD student comments on the influence of dance on national identity in the countries where it is practiced and the large intercontinental network of organisations and specialists in this field. It cites the works of leading American specialists.

**In the Conclusion** of the Dissertation conclusions are drawn, stated the achieved objectives and 6 contributions.

The dissertation has a practical-applied orientation and is utilitarian in information and theoretical direction. It traces the historical development of dance therapy, provides a large amount of information on books, articles, journals, etc., describes and analyzes different scientific perspectives, the activities of leading centers of dance and art therapy and shared valuable experience of its practical work. This conditions the contributions and defends the significance of her dissertation. Kristina Merdzhanova has two publications related to the dissertation topic. I have no critical remarks, but I recommend writing organizations, concepts, etc. to be given first in Bulgarian and to put in brackets names in the original.

**The abstract** is prepared according to academic standards and is 24 pages. It includes, in abridged format, all the information from the Dissertation.

**In conclusion**, based on the analysis of the Opinion and the contributions of the dissertation, **The methods of dance therapy through contemporary dance for the self-improvement of the personality** of Kristina Merdzhanova, I confidently propose to the members of the esteemed Jury that she be awarded the degree of Doctor of Education and Science in the scientific specialty "Musicology and Musical Art", professional 8.3 "Music and dance art", field of higher education 8. Arts .

24.05.2024

prof. dr. J. Tabakova