

## **Foreign Scientific Supervisor's Review**

**For the PhD dissertation entitled “The Staging of Mukhtar Auezov’s Works: Tradition and Innovation” submitted by doctoral student Askar Akimbek at the Faculty of Theatre Arts, Kazakh National Academy of Arts named after T. Zhurgenov, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the specialty of Directing.**

The research topic chosen by PhD candidate A. Akimbek is a highly relevant and valuable contribution to the exploration of the creative and aesthetic dialogue between classical literary heritage and contemporary theatre. By analyzing the stage adaptations of playwright Mukhtar Auezov’s dramatic works, the author scientifically contextualizes the intersection of tradition and innovation in the national theatre.

The core feature of the dissertation lies in its comparative analysis of the theoretical and practical developments in Kazakh theatre directing during the post-independence era and the Soviet period. The researcher offers a broad and in-depth evaluation of methods used by renowned directors such as Peter Brook, Jerzy Grotowski, Eugenio Barba, Robert Lepage, Romeo Castellucci, Bertolt Brecht, and Konstantin Stanislavski. Their staging systems are critically assessed and compared with traditional Kazakh theatrical practices. This comparative approach demonstrates the author’s capacity for broad academic thinking and his deep understanding of both global directing systems and national performance aesthetics.

The dissertation addresses major issues present in contemporary global directing practices – such as the balance between authorial interpretation and fidelity to the text, transformation of stage space, interactive communication with the audience, the blurring of boundaries between stage and screen, postdramatic structures, the rise of physical theatre and visual language. These issues are theoretically grounded and contextually linked to current trends in Kazakh theatre, which highlights the author’s successful integration of global movements and local practices.

Furthermore, the researcher has demonstrated active participation in the international academic community through a number of prestigious publications. These include:

- “Stage Interpretation of M. Auezov’s Story “Korgansyzdyn Kuni” published in the journal “Kereuen”, recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance in the Field of Science and Higher Education of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- “Directing Methods of Staging Heroic Epics in Kazakh Theatre” published in “Central Asian Journal of Art Studies” (also CQAFSHE-recommended)
- “Classics and National Idea”, published in the international journal “Kurdish Studies”
- “The Transformation of Kazakhstan’s National Classics in World Performing Arts”, published in “Open Cultural Studies”, a journal indexed in Web of Science (Clarivate Analytics) and Scopus (Elsevier).

These articles confirm the author’s commitment to high-level academic research.

In conclusion, the dissertation “The Staging of Mukhtar Auezov’s Works: Tradition and Innovation” fully meets the requirements of scientific research. The study is thorough, professional, comparative, and highly relevant. The author has convincingly shown himself to be a promising young scholar with strong academic potential, profound critical thinking, and a solid understanding of contemporary theatre studies. Therefore, I find this dissertation fully deserving of the PhD degree.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Kerem Karaboğa

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