

The Representative Dance and Cheerleading Team of the Bucharest University of Economic Studies - Establishment and Evolution

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Abstract

Over time, the Department of Physical Education and Sports of this university has gathered notable names in Romanian sports, encouraging and supporting the passion, importance, benefits, and necessity of practicing sports among the young students of this university. The ASE Representative Dance and Cheerleading Team brings together students, former high-performance athletes, who train and participate in demonstrations and competitions, presenting artistic performances during various university sporting, cultural, and artistic events. The participants' performances consist of a wide variety of movements, multiple possibilities for creating motor sequences by combining different movements and positions, which make up the composition of routines, combinations, and competitive exercises. The support and involvement of ASE students in competitive and demonstrative events bring confidence, self-assurance, improved self-esteem, opportunities for socialisation, relaxation, joy, and the maintenance of their physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

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1. Introduction

The Association of Students of the Commercial and Industrial Academy (ASACI), founded in 1918, was the first promoter of the sports movement. Represented by the Sports Association "Academia," it participated, alongside other associations and clubs organised during the interwar period, in sports events organised at that time (Popa, B. 2013).

The biographical documents of ASE mention the hiring of specialised physical education professors within ISEP Bucharest, with physical education being part of the study programs for future economists. The department of this discipline started in the academic year 1951-1952 with a number of seven highly qualified teaching staff.

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Over time, the Department of Physical Education and Sports of this university has gathered notable names in Romanian sports, encouraging and supporting the passion, benefits, and necessity of practicing sports among the young economist students: Sonia Iovan (gymnastics), Filofteia Andrei (basketball), Doina Furcoi-Solomonov (handball), and Constantin Fugigi (rugby).

2. Debut

One of the great names in Romanian gymnastics, with an impressive international record, is Sonia Iovan, who has been employed in ASE since 1956.

Sonia Iovan, alongside the team, won bronze medals at the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne and the 1960 Olympics in Rome. She also participated in the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games.

In 1958, she participated in the World Gymnastics Championships in Moscow, obtaining a third-place with the Romanian gymnastics team.

Sonia Iovan is a multiple national champion. At the first edition of the European Artistic Gymnastics Championships for Women, she won silver in the beam and bronze in the all-around and vault. Her entire sports career was rewarded with the title of Honored Master of Sports.

As a professor, she worked within the faculty for 40 years, advancing in the professional hierarchy and retiring as a university professor in 1997. She led the Department of Physical Education and Sports at ASE for 7 years, guiding and supporting physical education teachers.

Her love and passion for gymnastics led her to continue participating in sports competitions, and thus, she organised the gymnastic Representative Team, a female ensemble comprising former high-performance athletes from artistic, rhythmic gymnastics or ballet, participating in various events (competitions /demonstrations) organised within the university environment.

3. From 1995 to now

The guidance and leadership of this team were taken over in 1995 by Ilie Ileana Cătălina, an educator with a prestigious national and international professional record.

Ilie Ileana Cătălina started folk dancing, participating in the ensemble „Doina Studentilor” from the 9th grade (1969) and the Doina Bucharest ensemble in the 12th grade. She performed with this ensemble on the International Tour in Italy in 1974 and 1975, mentioned in the newspaper "L'unita". Ilie Ileana Cătălina was the soloist of the Gymnasion student ensemble from her first year of college in 1973 until 1984, under the guidance of Maestra Vera Proca-Ciorteia. With this ensemble, she participated in the International Student Festival in Germany - Kiel 1982. She was also an international referee from 1990 to 1996.



Since 2003, Professor Ciomag Rela-Valentina has joined the team and is currently the coordinating teacher. Rela-Valentina Chiru (Ciomag) was a student of Professor Ilie Ileana Cătălina, at Sportiv Scholar Club 1 Bucharest between 1979 and 1987, before becoming a university professor at ASE Bucharest. Ciomag Rela-Valentina was also part of the student ensemble led by Maestra Vera Proca Ciorte, which later became Columna and participated in the International Student Tournament in Germany in 1990 - Kiel, Essen, Köln.

Throughout the years, the two professors have trained the representative dance and cheerleading team, selecting former ASE students who proudly represented the university and achieved valuable awards and distinctions. The representative team has been prepared and presented artistic performances on various university cultural, sports, and artistic events.

The ASE representative dance and cheerleading team has achieved awards and qualifications in previous years as follows:

- Student Ensemble Festival - POLIDANSFEST, organised by the Polytechnic Institute of Bucharest, May 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019
- May 10-11, 2019: 1st Place for Technical Complexity and Originality, Polidansfest Competition, National University Festival of Aerobic Gymnastics and Dance "Gineta Stoenescu"
- May 11-12, 2018: 1st Place for Technical Execution, Polidansfest Competition, National University Festival of Aerobic Gymnastics and Dance "Gineta Stoenescu"
- May 12-13, 2017: 1st Place for Artistic Originality and Composition and Interpretation, Polidansfest Competition, Festival of Aerobic Gymnastics and Dance "Gineta Stoenescu"
- May 13-14, 2016: 1st Place for Choreography Originality and Special Popularity Award, Polidansfest Competition, National University Festival of Aerobic Gymnastics and Dance "Gineta Stoenescu"
- May 15-16, 2015: 1st Place for Best Artistic Interpretation, Polidansfest Competition, National University Festival of Aerobic Gymnastics and Dance "Gineta Stoenescu"
- May 16-17, 2014: 1st Place for Best Choreography, Polidansfest Competition, National University Festival of Aerobic Gymnastics and Dance "Gineta Stoenescu"
- May 16-18, 2013: 1st Place for Technical Execution, Polidansfest Competition, National University Festival of Aerobic Gymnastics and Dance "Gineta Stoenescu"
- May 11-12, 2012: 1st Place for Best Choreography, Polidansfest Competition, University Festival of Aerobic Gymnastics and Dance "Gineta Stoenescu"



- May 13-14, 2011: 1st Place for Popularity, Polidansfest Competition, Festival of Aerobic Gymnastics and Dance "Gineta Stoenescu"
- May 14-15, 2010: 1st Place for Best Choreography, Polidansfest Competition, Festival of Aerobic Gymnastics and Dance "Gineta Stoenescu"
- May 8-9, 2009: Special Award for Recognition and Appreciation of Participation in the Student Festival of Aerobic Gymnastics and Dance "Gineta Stoenescu"
- May 16-17, 2008: Special Award for Technical Execution, National University Student Festival of Aerobic Gymnastics and Dance "Gineta Stoenescu"
- "8 Martie" Cup, ASE Bucharest 2008 • ASE Bucharest 95th Anniversary, April 12, 2008 • May 11-12, 2007: Special Award for Recognition and Appreciation of Participation in the National University Student Festival of Aerobic Gymnastics and Dance "Gineta Stoenescu"
- May 2007: "European Integration Day" - Tei Student Complex Bucharest
- The third sports tournament of Central Banks from Southeast Europe, organised by the National Bank of Romania (BNR) on October 2-7, 2007;
- The 6th edition of the University Aerobic Gymnastics Championships on October 13-14, 2007;
- May 12-13, 2006 - Special Award for Recognition and Appreciation for participation in the Student Festival of Aerobic Gymnastics and Dance "Polidansfest Gineta Stoenescu";
- April 10-12, 2006 - "Sport and Friendship" Competition in Bucharest;
- European Year of Education through Sport: "Power for the Body - Wisdom for the Mind" in Bucharest, 2006;
- May 9, 2006 - "European Integration Day" at Tei Student Complex in Bucharest;
- November 2006 - Aerobic Sports Festival, Special Jury Prize, organised by the Police Academy;
- April 2005 - Sports events on the occasion of the International Day of Sport for All, organised at the Polyvalent Hall in Bucharest;
- December 14, 2004 - Special Award - "Sports and Friendship" Competition in Bucharest, Romania, organised by the Romanian Government and the National Sports Agency.

The teaching staff Associate Professor, Dr. Ciomag Rela Valentina, and Assistant Professor Ilie Ileana Cătălina, train and coordinate the representative dance and cheerleading team of the Bucharest ASE, which has won the 1st prize in the national university competition "Polidansfest," the aerobic gymnastics and dance



festival "Gineta Stoenescu", hosted annually by the Polytechnic University of Bucharest.

The team participates with various numbers and dances and earns award points for the university. This competition, the most important in the university environment, annually brings together the representative teams of universities from all over the country, participating in one or more of the more than 30 existing sections. The dance and cheerleading team consists of first-year students who perform street dance numbers, social dances (slow waltz, tango, samba, rumba, jive), cheerleading routines, modern dance, and scarf-poi dance. It should be noted that these programs have also been demonstrated at sports competitions organised by ASE, such as the Academic Cup at volleyball, Economist Cup and Dracula Cup at basketball, and Anniversary Celebration Days marking certain years since the establishment of the university.

The POLIDANSFEST national university competition, now in its 12th edition, attracts 1000-2000 participants annually who come to express themselves artistically, competing in various sections: modern dance, folk dance, sports dance, character dance, ballet, street dance, aerobic dance, jazz, musical, object dance, cheerleading. This competition is the only one of its kind that targets the university segment. The members of this team are first-year ASE students. They participate on a weekly basis, sometimes twice a week, and more frequently before events or competitions to refine and establish the smallest details of their artistic performances. The competition attire varies from team to team, but there is uniform for the entire team and suitable for the chosen dance style: skirts, leggings, dresses, jumpsuits, T-shirts, crop tops, etc. However, they must meet the requirement of the composition. The presented exercise must meet the requirements of originality, technique, and composition as required by the competition regulations. The members of the representative teams must be previously registered, provide evidence that they are students of the respective faculty they represent, and bring a medical certificate proving their fitness for sustained effort.

The performances presented by each participating university must meet the criteria of composition, technical elements, execution, consistency between elements, and the chosen musical accompaniment. Each performance is scored, and the addition of points obtained for each competition section ensures the ranking position.

The participants' performances consist of a wide variety of movements, and multiple possibilities for composing motor sequences by combining different movements and positions, which are part of the formations, combinations, and competition exercises. The wide variety of technical procedures is constantly combined through a multitude of expressive motor structures, varied combinations, diverse compositions, and choreographies.

The movements must have an artistic and expressive character of communication; therefore, the movement, plasticity, fluidity, and bodily expressiveness acquire aesthetic attributes.



The technical elements used in the composition of the artistic performance include elements from classical ballet, dance (classical, modern, jazz, Romanian and international folk dance, contemporary), basic gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics, aerobics, and acrobatics.

In addition to learning different technical bodily procedures, portable object techniques are also added, so that in the end, the object becomes an extension in space of each bodily gesture, suggesting a plastic and expressive image of the musical piece (Mociani, V., 1992, cited by Manos, M.).

The movements taken from dance are particularly varied, suggestive, adapted to the music used, and loaded with emotions and meanings, highlighted by the plastic and expressive quality of the gesture.

The difficulty of the elements must be chosen in accordance with the level of preparation of the students, so that they are correctly executed, with maximum amplitude, and perfectly aligned with the musical phrase. The performances must be rehearsed in order to achieve a high level of synchronisation among the team members, a level of mastery in execution, and an increased degree of expressiveness. Creativity, originality, and the manner of interpretation of the presented dance themes are appreciated. The exercises must be different, with unique content, connections between elements, transitions, and correlation with the chosen music. In addition, the chosen elements must accurately express the theme of the selected melody. For example, on a slow, romantic melody, ample, expressive, melodious elements of suppleness and prolonged balance will be used, while for lively, dynamic, patriotic songs, elements of strength, rigidity, emphasis, and well-defined movements will be used.

Participation in such competitions and sports demonstrations can bring benefits to all participants: in addition to maintaining good physical condition and improving self-image and self-confidence, as well as personal satisfaction.

The exercises also have a positive influence on the psyche, requiring concentration, observation skills, memory, imagination, willpower, and creating special emotional states through the use of musical accompaniment. Performing movements on music not only adds a particular elegance to the performance but also creates a "positive emotional state that eliminates fatigue, boredom, and stress, while the rhythmic execution imposed by the musical rhythm facilitates sustained effort over a longer period" (Viorica Mociani, 1985).

Aerobic activity, accompanied by music and performed systematically in an organised framework, can bring significant benefits to students: not only by creating a state of joy, exhilaration, and satisfaction, but also health-related benefits. Moreover, it creates meanings and emotions, builds motor expressiveness by engaging students in artistic creation, thus offering unique educational perspectives (Grigore, V., Manos, M., 2011).



4. Conclusion

In conclusion, personally, I believe that the existence of this form of creative representation through movement, the ASE Representative Dance and Cheerleading Team, brings the image of future economists to university life, both in the socio-professional and cultural, creative, sports, and artistic realms. The support and involvement of ASE students in such events bring an added sense of confidence, self-assurance, improvement in self-esteem, opportunities for socialising, relaxation, joy, and the maintenance of good physical, mental, and emotional well-being.





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