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## **Genre and Style Interaction in Solutions Staged Ballets of the Nineteenth, Twentieth Centuries**

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**Abstract.** *The relevance of this study is determined by the need to create a new scientific approach to conducting an analysis of specific properties of the genre and style in the ballet theater, arising from the theoretical problems of ballet as a scenic genre based on the visual nature of perception. The question is raised about the meaning of the plot, event-related beginning in genres of the considered arts. Based on a number of studies in the field of choreography, the author uses a system-semiotic analysis of a semantic category in dance. In the article the questions concerning the genre and stylistic solutions ballets and dance numbers staged by examples of decisions of the nineteenth, twentieth century, considered the relation of genre and style in the structure of a number of ballet performances. Of all types of expressive dance art tends to be the most figurative. The ratio in the modern dance space pictorial and expressive on the basis of existing dance techniques creates new approaches to understanding and mastering the art of ballet. Thus, research methodology based on the system-comparative analysis of genre elements makes it possible to highlight deep regular contacts between them and expand the understanding of modern dance vocabulary, orienting researchers to the latest integrative approaches to mastering the synthetic nature of the ballet theater.*

**Keywords:** genre, style, horeodramaturgiya, staging solution, the unity of form and content, choreographer language.

### **Introduction**

The choreographer's stage work provides for various forms and genres of the choreographic repertoire. In the process of creating a stage image, it is necessary to master the whole variety of choreographic forms and genres that have developed in the practice of both professional ballet companies and choreographic collectives.

The study of genre and stylistic principles in contemporary choreography seems complicated because of a rapid change in creativity, the diversity of existing schools, directions and styles of choreography.

### **Methods**

There is no single developed methodology for teaching contemporary choreography. This is the reason for the relevance of this article. It should be noted that the well-known works of E. Esaulov, I. Smirnov, R. Zakharov, critical articles by I. Slonimsky, historical studies in the sphere of classical ballet by Y. Bakhrushin, V. Krasovskaya, memoirs of M. Petipa, M. Fokine, K. Goleizovsky, F. Lopukhov, A. Messerer, R. Nuriev, works on the art of modernism by G. Von-Becker and other authors describe the theory of the art of the ballet master of the classical performance, but do not disclose special questions of the genre and style solution in the figurative structure of the ballet performance. The main goal of the article is to trace the peculiarity of thematic, figurative, stylistic features in the best staging decisions of the 19th-20th centuries, which are indicative of contemporary choreography practice.

"Genre and Style Interaction in Solutions Staged Ballets of the Nineteenth, Twentieth Centuries," *Astra Salvensis*, VI (2018), no. 12, p. 689-694

### **Genre definition of ballet performance**

Genre-forming characters play a different role in different kinds of art. It is known that the genre in the visual arts is determined by the object of the image, and in the choreography by the character of the performance. An essential criterion for the internal division of genres can be found in the different logic of relations to reality. Traditional genres of ballet theater (lyric-dramatic, romantic, tragic, comedic, genre of plotless ballet – ballet of symphony) is supplemented by new genres in the twentieth century: tragicomedy – ballet of satirical orientation, ballet-pamphlet, ballet-poster). Academic dance, in contrast to the fine arts in genre terms, proved to be a flexible, mobile form capable of expressing the uniqueness of new themes, images, unusual for a ballet.

Choreographic genre, as well as any plot genre of fine art, shows the interaction of the heroes of ballet or painting with the environment, the ratio of the subject of the image to a certain structural and style system depicted. Therefore, the choice of the theme of ballet or painting canvas is the beginning of their ideological and imaginative solution. Selection by the choreographer of the material determines the form of the play or act, pictures, and hence their genre<sup>1</sup>.

Thus, the substantive content, going directly from the choreographer or from the artist, is the beginning of the movement in the concept of the genre, as choreography. However, the content essence of any genre is revealed by the choreographer in its individual uniqueness<sup>2,3</sup>. In addition, the genre of the ballet performance is determined primarily by the plot, and hence by the feature of the author's participation in it (choreographer and artist). Describing the ballet genres, V. Pasyutinskaya writes: "The plot gives rise to a certain kind of relationship between the heroes of the play with the environment, with the ongoing events, with each other – the connections of social, moral, psychological. Hence the first definition of ballet follows – social, lyrical, heroic, psychological, etc. But there is a definition of the genre of the performance, which is given by the choreographer. It can be a definition of the type – satirical ballet, choreographic poem, ballet-romance, ballet-parody, etc."<sup>4</sup>

In this regard, it will be possible to find analogies with genres of fine arts. Each master creates his own portrait image (intimate, ceremonial, portrait-type, etc.), each landscape painter interprets nature in his own way (landscape – romantic, lyric, epic, etc.). At the same time, the genre nature of ballet depends on the prevalence in it of such properties of imagery as symbolism, allegory, poster, etc., directly borrowed from the fine arts. V. Pasyutinskaya singles out the

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<sup>1</sup> N. P. Pankov, *Stage Sketches for Works of Art*, Moscow, the State Institute of Theatrical Arts named after A.V. Lunacharsky, 1982, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> *Russian Painters and the Stage. 1884-1965. A Loan Exhibition of Stage and Costume Designs from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Nikita D'Lobanov-Rostovsky*, Copyright, 1977, p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> *Russian Stage and Costume Designs for the Ballet, Opera and Theatre. A Loan Exhibition from the Lobanov-Rostovsky, Oenslager and Rialov Collections, 1967-1969*, New York, International Exhibitions Foundation, 1967, p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> B. Pasyutinskaya, *Enrichment of the Multinational Soviet Ballet Traditions*, Moscow, the State Institute of Theatrical Arts named after A.V. Lunacharsky, 1984, p. 5.

following main choreographic genres: "... heroic, ballet-tragedy, lyrical-dramatic, comedy, ballet-tale. They can correspond to the following types: in the heroic genre – a heroic-romantic ballet, a heroic poem, a heroic ballad, a heroic legend; in the genre of ballet-tragedy – a lyrical tragedy, a heroic tragedy; in the lyric-dramatic genre – a romantic poem, a choreographic novel, a choreographic epic, a novel, a social and romantic tale, a choreographic drama, a lyrical drama, a pantomime drama; in the comedy genre – social comedy, satirical comedy, ballet-parody, ballet-grotesque, ballet-comedy, ballet-satire, ballet-irony, lyrical comedy; in the genre of ballet-fairy-tale – magic-fantastic ballet, fairy ballets about animals and birds, household ballets-tales, lyrical fairy tale, satirical fairy tale, magic-fantastic action.”<sup>5</sup>

Genres in dance art are not only whole works, but also their separate parts, if they are finished in form and possess the qualities of a genre feature. So, individual dances, scenes, variations in ballet can have their own style and be performed in a certain genre. Each genre as a single direction can be subdivided into varieties of this species. For example, a waltz is a general direction in art, the direction of the genre, but it can be ballroom, symphonic, concert, etc. It can be lyrical, dramatic, sentimental, sad, merry or bravura. And all this acquires shades of plot in a single genre direction.

The unique nonverbal system of the classical dance school can assimilate and transform the signs and symbols of various nonverbal systems, developing and expanding the range of its technical and artistic possibilities and enriching the stage dance art with new original genres.

### **Style definition of ballet performance**

Style in choreodramaturgy depends on many qualities of the author: temperament, culture, education, talent, taste, psychology, world outlook, will, way of thinking, spiritual orientation of creativity. Style is determined by a certain historical epoch, time, which form directions, schools, expressing certain trends in the development of society<sup>6</sup>. Style is a reflection of the spiritual, aesthetic essence of any time, class, group. Style is manifested in a combination of ideological and artistic features, distinctive features in the work of artists, orators, writers, composers, architects, choreographers, etc. In the broad sense of the word, style is the flow in the aesthetics of the arts, ideology, the morality of society, its mentality. In a narrower sense, style is the language, techniques, methods of operation of the choreographer. Style in the art of a choreographer is that “building material” and the way of its organization, through which ideas are realized.

According to external signs, the style can be linear, pictorial, constructive, decorative, ornamental in form. The style of a work depends on many components and their properties: from the choice of genre, idea, music, images, artistic design, performers, expressive means, language, direction, etc., etc. The style of the ballet performance determines the following qualities: imagery, the social significance, the

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> R. S. Zaripov, & A. R. Valyaeva, *From Conception to the Plot: theory and practice of choreographic art*. Novosibirsk, 2009, p. 340.

"Genre and Style Interaction in Solutions Staged Ballets of the Nineteenth, Twentieth Centuries," *Astra Salvensis*, VI (2018), no. 12, p. 689-694  
motivation of the idea, the novelty, the unity of form and content, the individual language and thinking of the author, the energy of beauty and optimism.

The author-choreographer can take any life phenomenon, a historical fact, a literary work (a poem, a story, a pictorial or sculptural work, etc.) as the basis of the plot. When a choreographer uses the plot of an existing work, he must preserve his character and style, the images of the original source, and find ways to solve his plot in a choreographic genre. This often causes the choreographer (the author of the compositional plan) to change the place of action, to shorten or supplement it in comparison with the literary source material, taken as a basis. In this respect, the choreographic staging culture of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries is characteristic, in which there was a heightened interest in the art of the Ancient East and Antiquity (Cleopatra, Narcissus, Daphnis and Chloe, etc.).

"The greatest strength of M. Fokine is stylization and that his best ballets are stylized, such as" Scheherazade "(East)," Cleopatra "(Egypt)," Daphnis and Chloe "(Greek antiquity), etc. In these ballets M. Fokine has shown such an amazing knowledge of the style of different times and different peoples, such an extraordinary erudition as any choreographer in Russia (and, perhaps, all over the world) did not have before him"<sup>7</sup> – S. Lifar wrote about M Fokine. The choreographer turned to the expositions of the famous Petersburg museums, primarily the Hermitage and the Russian Museum. The authentic historical materials provided the reliability of the visual series. In these ballets, the author's ability to find figurative, scenic visual equivalents to the monuments of art, to make the realization of the idea and design an occupation, a soul-stirring process, attracts. Perfected profile movements and gestures, as if descended from Egyptian temple reliefs with their progressive rhythmic composition are internally connected with the choreographic text throughout the entire ballet "Cleopatra".

The flatness of the composite construction corresponded to the canons of ancient Egyptian art. Ballet costume, wigs, makeup (lengthened eyes, black eyebrows, brightly outlined lips) appeared on a polychrome Egyptian sculpture in a new style. Instead of ballet shoes, the feet were dressed in sandals. Fine stylistics, coming from the monuments of Ancient Egypt with its "canonical" development of artistic thought, created an ideal model of the image, became a dynamic spring and the semantic core of the play.

The materialized in the marble image of the mythological hero, erected in the standard of beauty by ancient sculptors, was used by M. Fokin in his ballets on the ancient theme: Narcissus and Daphnis and Chloe. In this regard, V. Krasovskaya noted: "The ancient myth of the nymph Echo, who drew the curse of the gods on the youth of Narcissus, was embodied in the techniques of picturesque statics. The plastic postures stylized as monuments of Hellenic art were replaced: Echo – Karsavina and Narcissus – Nizhinsky moved on the stage"<sup>8</sup>. In addition to M. Fokine, other choreography figures of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries touched the ancient fine patterns. The first idea of compositional

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<sup>7</sup> S. M. Lifar, *Diaghilev and with Diaghilev*, Moscow, AST, 1994, p. 171.

<sup>8</sup> V. M. Krasovskaya, *V. Nijinsky*, Leningrad, Art, 1974, p. 193.

construction of the ballet came to S. Diaghilev in the ballet “Afternoon rest of the Faun” in the choreography of V. Nijinsky. In Venice in 1911 “... he began to show Nijinsky the angry movements of the Faun; Diaghilev’s participation in the creation of the ballet was not limited to this: the whole composition of the ballet, from the appearance of nymphs, the reproduction of the poses of dancers in antique vases to the last gesture, with a stop on the musical crescendo belongs to Sergei Pavlovich. Diaghilev tried to guess the dynamics of antique poses, dynamic plasticity in antique images, in museums devoted to ancient sculpture and painting, and he represented Nijinsky to realize this plastic he had found.”<sup>9</sup> O. Rodin, delighted with the plasticity of Nijinsky in this ballet, said: “Every artist and artist who truly loves his art must see this performance – a magnificent embodiment of the ideals of the beauty of Ancient Greece.”<sup>10</sup> The fragile naked beauty frozen in marble came to life in the images of Narcissus, Daphnis with the formula of the effeminate Ionian of the ancient style and acquired zoomorphic features in the Faun.

Sometimes the sculpture is taken as the basis of the plot of the choreographic number. From this point of view, L. Jacobson’s choreographic miniatures “Eternal Spring”, “Kiss”, “Eternal Idol”, “Minotaur and Nymph” are indicative, which are the semantic core of borrowing the Hermitage originals. The path of L. Jacobson through Rodin’s plastic has become a movement towards the hidden, emotional beauty through beauty external, visible, material. The pose, movement, foreshortening, which were dear to L. Jakobson in O. Rodin’s sculptures became capable of development in instantaneous changes in the plasticity of bodies, head turns, facial expressions.

The choreographer brings to the pedestal scenes generalized, as if coming from antiquity images. The fragile naked beauty of their figures, frozen in white marble, came to life in a duet dance, became an expression of the standard of Rodin’s images (a white tight-fitting leotard imitates the sculptor’s material). If the graphic series offer the choreographers a detailed chain of events, O. Rodin’s fixed images created the choreography of L. Jacobson, which was economical and concise according to the conditions of the selected original source, but more dictated by the choreographer’s plan.

“The movement for Rodin was the main form of expression of life in sculpture, the sculptor was a passionate observer of dance ... He was fond of bold choreography, admired the new quest of L. Fuller and A. Duncan, Russian ballet and Nijinsky.”<sup>11</sup> Although O. Rodin’s compositions “Kiss”, “Eternal Spring”, “Eternal Idol”, “Minotaur and Nymph” are not a direct expression of dance, they represent allegorical abstract concepts. Nevertheless, they are theatrical, ballet. The “extended” space of the Rodin’s sculptures, thanks to the imagination of the choreographer L. Jacobson, formed a plastic synthesis of the stage image itself. The translation of O. Rodin’s sculptures into the language of L. Jakobson’s choreography includes the development of plot lines that ultimately concentrate

<sup>9</sup> S. M. Lifar, *Diaghilev and with Diaghilev*, Moscow, AST, 1994, p. 233-234.

<sup>10</sup> B. Weiss, *Auguste Rodin*, Moscow, Art, 1969, p. 579.

<sup>11</sup> *Rodin and His Time. Exhibition of the Museums of France*, Moscow, Soviet artist, 1966, p. 16.

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around the main core – the beginning and the end, which draws the same visual image (the exact copy) of Rodin's images.

### **Conclusion**

So, the important stage of the choreographer's work concerns his activity as a ballet master-writer<sup>12</sup>. Choreodramaturgy as an idea, reflecting the content in expressive and visual form, should receive a spatial scenic expression. Genre, thematic and imaginative, style preferences of different ballet masters and ballet dancers create a process of individual perception. Then, these positions, overlapping each other, form the lines of power of artistic creativity, in which some general patterns appear. Understanding the process of artistic creativity of choreographers as a multi-system process allows us to embrace the movement of artistic cognition from objective reality to its artistic model (choreographic work), as well as its internal self-movement from individual perceptions to large-scale artistic generalizations, from individual and universal to unity in the artistic image.

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<sup>12</sup> G. F. Bogdanov, *Basics of a Choreographic Drama*, Moscow, MGUKI, 2010, p. 192.