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**TRADITIONS BACKGROUND IN THE UKRAINIAN PROFESSIONAL THEATRE (THROUGH OUTSTANDING THEATRE ARTISTS' WORK)**

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The purpose of the article is to analyse the continuity of traditions in the Ukrainian drama theatre, its signs in the work of outstanding theatre artists and the study of artistic phenomena that reflect the national heritage of theatre culture in Ukraine. With this objective in view, and to justify the need for a combination of skill, innovation and tradition for updating the culture of society, we have used methods of analysis and synthesis, an interdisciplinary approach and the principle of historicism. The scientific novelty lies in the fact that the development of the national Theatre is analysed taking into account cultural traditions, their influence on the work of leading theatre figures, and the main principles and traditions of the performing arts. Conclusions. We have found out that Ukrainian artists, despite the Imperial pressure, in the 80-90s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century got an opportunity to stage performances in the Ukrainian language, although with certain restrictions, and subsequently organise the Coryphée Theatre. Since that period the national tradition had been developed in professional Theatre. We can state that for the support of Maria Zankovetska and the activities of Hnat Khotkevych, the Hutsul theatre of folk art and a combination of cultural traditions with the theatrical art of that time was founded. It is shown that the success of creative searches and experiments of stage figures of the 1920–1930s, which is evident in the activities of Les Kurbas and Hnat Yura and defined as a new chapter in the development of the Ukrainian drama theatre that took place as a result of the synthesis of the tradition of Coryphée Theatre stage school with innovative methods and acting skills. In the future, Serhii Danchenko was able to take the national theatre art to a new level. Particular attention should be paid to Bohdan Stupka's experimental search. He founded a Theatre in the Foyer, and later a Chamber stage at the Ivan Franko National Academic Drama Theatre, which created new hottest features for communication with the audience, helped to reach the potential of the so-called "small stage". The plot and sense-creative series tend more towards poetic utterance. It is proved that only a combination of skill, innovation and tradition can provide a high-quality result for performances are filled with deep meaning, awaken thought, emotionally unite the

audience, vibrant and exciting to watch. Introduction of new elements gives an impetus to the development of Ukrainian theatre and updates the culture of society.

*Keywords:* theatre traditions; cultural traditions; dramatic art; director; Ukrainian drama theatre.

## **Introduction**

Today, building a strong, prosperous state requires the unification of Ukrainian society, confident determination, and the strengthening of one's own national identity. One of the prominent spiritual concepts is namely the theatre, where the introduction of the all-new world perception of a person occurs in syncretic unity with the embodiment of cultural values, in which many years of the spiritual experience of the nation is engraved. Not without reason, the finding of identity is traced in the theatre for there the natural syncretism of the arts manifests itself clearly and rises among the relevant issues of the artistic space of modern Ukrainian culture.

The analysis of publications of Ukrainian teatrologists and culturologists indicates numerous work studies of outstanding artists of performing arts. Thus, the director of Ivan Franko National Academic Drama Theatre, People's Artist of Ukraine Mykhailo Zakharevych (2015) researched the history of Ivan Franko Theatre from the time of its foundation to the beginning of the third millennium. The theatre critic Hanna Veselovska (2019) focused her attention on a golden period in the history of I. Franko Theatre when it was headed by Bohdan Stupka, phenomenal actor, a genius of Ukrainian theatre and art director in 2001–2012. Rostyslav Kolomiets (2018), theatre historian, critic and director, covers Les Kurbas' life and career, the Ukrainian theatre director and reformer. Thorough information about the development of theatrical art is represented in the collective work of the Rylsky Institute of Art Studies, Folklore and Ethnology scientists (Pylypchuk, 2016). However, the problem of the connection of theatrical systems and the formation of cultural traditions in the Ukrainian drama theatre has not been given enough attention by the scholars.

## **Purpose of the article**

The purpose of the article to analyse the continuity of traditions in Ukrainian theatrical art, to trace its manifestation in the activities of famous theatre figures, to identify artistic phenomena that indicate the preservation of the national heritage of theatre culture of Ukraine and their organic development.

The research methodology consists of the use of a sophisticated general and specialised approaches. The interdisciplinary approach, reflected in the combination of theatre history, art history, philosophy and culturology, provided an opportunity for all-round comprehension of the material on the research topic. The principle of historicism was used to present content on the history of the formation and development of professional Ukrainian theatre consistently, as well as to trace the continuity of theatrical traditions. The methods of analysis and synthesis were used to identify the main artistic phenomena in

theatrical activities and to confirm the need to combine skill, innovation and tradition to renew the culture of society.

### Main research material

Theatrical art tends to reflect the spiritual world of a person, people, formed on national life traditions, through the reproduction of common forms, rites, rituals. M. Hrushevskiy (1993) wrote about the role of the Ukrainian theatre in preserving the national tradition, that always, even in the most challenging times for Ukrainians, “the theatre remained one of the few bright spots, and in a passionate striving for finding some way out of the national feeling, the need for national self-expression, the stage... was used with all the energy” (p. 3). We take these words as a guide in the search for a definition of how the intellectual heritage of the past is correlated with modern artistic culture, which today encourages us to turn to ancient national traditions, what are the results and significance of such continuity.

The formation of the professional Ukrainian theatre has long traditions: from folk rites, skomorokhs, verтеps to the permanent Ukrainian Theatre in Hlukhiv in 1751 and the emergence of permanent theatres in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Kyiv, 1806; Odesa, 1809; Poltava, 1810, etc.). However, at that time the theatres in Ukraine were collective that included Russian and Polish professional theatre groups. The first attempts at productions in the Ukrainian language belong to the same period: the activity of the playwright Vasyl Maslovykh from Kharkiv (whose plays were never staged), the play by the Russian playwright Oleksandr Shakhovskiy *Kozak-stykhotvorets* (The Cossack Poet) (1812), which, although was bilingual and arranged with Russian and Ukrainian folk songs, distorted the character and way of life of the people, being openly anti-Ukrainian. Although in the first half – the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Ukrainian plays appeared in some places (*Natalka-Poltavka*, *Moskal-charivnyk* (Muscovite Wizard), etc.), but the theatrical repertoire was limited, the translated works were not staged, and national culture continued to exist under imperial pressure.

In the 1880s and the 1890s on the background of the prohibition of the Ukrainian word, schools and art (the Valuev Circular of 1863 and Ems Ukaz (a secret decree) of 1876 continued to act) in the Ukrainian theatrical business, a certain “thaw” began, in particular, in 1881 Ukrainians were allowed to stage plays in Ukrainian, although with certain restrictions – before each Ukrainian production had to be staged Russian one. Thus, the national theatrical tradition was gradually formed. The first professional purely Ukrainian theatre was the Coryphée Theatre founded by M. Kropyvnytskyi in 1882, which separated from the Polish and Russian ones.

The real legend of the Ukrainian Coryphée Theatre was a talented dramatic actress Maria Zankovetska, who mastered the art of transformation skilfully, had an incredible voice – a dramatic soprano. Her perfect skill, plasticity and artistry won not only the Ukrainian spectator but also the Moscow audience, creating competition for Russian actors. Zankovetska’s work was highly ap-

preciated by the prominent cultural figures of that time, for example, Symon Petliura (1993) as a theatre critic wrote: “A powerful talent which would do honour to the best European stage ...” (p. 31). Writers L. Tolstoi and A. Chekhov noted the phenomenality of her talent (Kavunnyk, 2016, p. 146). Actor and director Panas Saksahanskyi claimed that such actors like Zankovetska are born once a century (Korniichuk, 2015).

Maria Zankovetska had not only extraordinary professional success on the stage but also fully supported the Ukrainian theatre and even gave up her career at the imperial theatre stage. The actress gathered young people around her, helped in the creative development of young talented actors (Samoilenko, 2016), and if necessary, supported financially. For example, the story of the tour organisation of the amateur and later semi-professional Hutsul theatre under the direction of Hnat Khotkevych (Shlemko, 2014).

Owing to pressure from the authorities and fears of arrest, Hnat Khotkevych was forced to move from his home city of Kharkiv to Galicia. He was fascinated by the beauty of the Carpathians, the sincerity and originality of the locals. Their culture and traditions inspired the master to write a play based on the stories from Hutsul life, customs and legends of those places. He invited Les Kurbas as an assistant, knowing him as an immensely talented actor, whom he noted for himself during performances at the Ruska Besida travelling theatre.

Although the Hutsul folk theatre has existed since ancient times, Hnat Khotkevych founded an original musical and dramatic Hutsul theatre, activities of which were based on folk art and a combination of cultural traditions with the artistic achievements of the theatre of that time. It was namely the authentic Hutsul folk theatre that was the closest one to the times of ritual action, when deep sacred knowledge, spiritual values and norms of behaviour were passed to the next generation through songs, dances, fairy tales and legends. The theatre actors were talented locals who learned texts by ear. The folk actors had a spiritual connection with nature, and their understanding and sense of their national identity made the performances successful. They became actors only during theatrical performances and rehearsals. They didn't need to explain in detail how to build this or that scene in a play, because they were in a live tradition from childhood and were involved in rituals and folk games. Thus, there was natural actor skills training – improvisation, a sense of a partner, mastery of their movements, facial expressions, gestures, and voice. It was namely the absence of any actor stamps and mastering the musical instruments, knowledge of authentic songs and dances that distinguished the Hutsul theatre among others. He toured Galicia, Dnieper, and with some performances went even to Moscow. The guest actors were wildly successful, especially when they started singing and dancing on the stage.

We can assume that it is because of the great distance, the remoteness from the cities, a continuous live tradition has been preserved – the power of words, tempo and rhythm, timbre and innate artistry – the magic of folk art. This elated spirit became an example and a powerful incentive for the development of theatres in other regions of Ukraine. The Hutsul theatre has fulfilled and continues to fulfil the mission of revival of the nation and unification of generations into

a single nation, which has had and continues to have a positive impact on the development of the nation and modern Ukrainian theatre in general.

Exploring the phenomenon of theatrical tradition, it is impossible to ignore the work of the outstanding master of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Les Kurbas, who strove “not to adopt the old theatre to modernity, but to create it, although based on tradition, but anew” (Ohneva, 2014, p. 399). Thus, creating a renewed, modern theatrical art, he tried to preserve the old cultural traditions and heritage of his predecessors. Kurbas’ theatrical concepts are a synthesis of the traditions of the stage school of the Coryphée Theatre with innovative methods of performing skills and the search for outstanding directors of that time.

Of particular interest is his methodological and theoretical legacy, the unique world of creativity, which is built on the intersection of three languages – verbal, theatrical, and sophia. First of all, this is the interrelation between the process of breathing and stage rhythm, the influence of these factors on stage speech and the actor’s movements. It is essential that, except corporeal aesthetics and harmonious movements, it is necessary to use the auditory perception of a viewer. If we do not see a person, then we imagine, compose his image, emotional state in our consciousness only by the sound of his voice. Les Kurbas invited professional opera singers to practice mastering his voice, timbre and stage speech. And for performing art, plasticity and body control, the director invited dance instructors to teach choreography. For example, Bronislava Nizhynska, having professional classical training and many years of experience, strove to renew the choreography art. Therefore, she created a method of training for dancers and actors, and the leading direction was contemporary choreography, which allowed releasing body tension. Hence, classical choreography was available. Kurbas invited Mykhailo Mordkin, a talented dancer and choreographer of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a thinking actor, as his associates called him, to collaborate in the theatre. He helped to create original deep dramatic images, paid particular attention to the details in costumes, lighting, props. In his work with actors, instead of lessons at the classical barre, he invented non-standard tasks, plastic exercises.

Thus, the artist’s skill was manifested in a harmonious combination of gestures, movements, voice and other factors, which increased the expressiveness of the performance significantly. Therefore, in theatrical practices, the techniques of performing skills are mastered and improved from generation to generation, which can be attributed to the cultural traditions in the theatre, and that was innate in the Hutsul theatre.

The period of intense energy in the creative search and experiments of theatrical figures of the 1920s and 1930s is traced clearly in the activities of the actor and director, founder of Ivan Franko Theatre Hnat Yura. Being a classicalist, he turned to German expressionism in his innovative searches (for example, he staged E. Toller’s drama *Hinkemann* in Kharkiv). Preserving and multiplying cultural traditions, the master was able to implement non-standard solutions in the national theatre in the times of total restrictions, which are still relevant today.

One of such decisions was the development of scenography art to convey the essence of the play. For this purpose, the director attracted artists from different

regions of Ukraine and abroad, who worked in various styles and manners. They were Vasyl Komardonkov, Borys Erdman, Dmytro Vlasiuk and others. This added dynamism to the theatre. That is, together with the development of classical forms as the picturesqueness and naturalism of the play, there was another approach as the transformation of visual forms, structures in combination with creative enthusiasm and innovation. As a result, the performance acquired liveliness, and the image of the stage was renewal. In the historical cultural space, Hnat Yura left us a creative legacy in artefacts and material things. Therefore, today we have the opportunity not only to imagine the scenography but also to recreate, feel the state of society and the development of theatrical art of those times, as well as to find unifying factors with modernity, repeating the creation of scenery.

The development of national and world theatre culture was greatly influenced by Serhii Danchenko's work. He is an iconic figure for the Ukrainian theatre. He was gifted director, interpreter, and teacher of known stage artists pleiad. Perhaps, it was namely this voluminous versatile vision of the theatre that caused Danchenko's phenomenal ability to create his artistic world. In his research, M. Zakharevych (2015) characterises the great director with the critic H. Kovalenko's expressive quote: "It is worth saying that, looking mentally at what Danchenko did, you understand: he had almost no works of chance, made for the needs of the day or the sake of moments. This understanding is even more valuable if we remember again when, how and where the director began the world. Today, it is clear that Danchenko's work in the Ukrainian theatre had to play a serious missionary role" (p. 285). It was namely he who managed to bring the national theatrical art to a new level, to free it from going round in circles. S. Danchenko worked on the development of a model of the concept of "national theatre", the essence of which he saw in the synthesis of refined taste, natural theatricality with the real nationality.

After S. Danchenko's death, his work was continued by Bohdan Stupka, an outstanding modern actor, a genius experimenter. He could work with dramatic practices of different cultures but was brought up in the national theatrical traditions, in particular, Lviv academic dramatic school. The contribution of B. Stupka to the development of the possibilities of the so-called "small stage" after the opening of the Theatre in the Foyer in 2002, and later S. Danchenko Chamber Stage, deserves special attention. Many performances based on classical and contemporary works by Ukrainian and foreign authors were born in the new theatre space. All of them have interesting search trends. Actors, directors, scenographers and playwrights use new opportunities, implement creative ideas and experiments actively. Respectively, viewers get acquainted with various, partly radically new original searches, manners, styles, artistic worldviews, etc. The "small stage" theatre masters the unique possibilities of communication with the audience. At the same time, many theatre artists and admirers know B. Stupka's opinion that if an actor does not play the classics, his talent declines. So, for all the importance of extraordinary modern theatrical developments, the national cultural tradition gives them vitality.

A striking example of the continuity of Ukrainian theatrical traditions is the premiere of the play *Hutsul year* directed by Vadim Sikorsky to celebrate the

101<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Maria Zankovetska Theatre in Lviv. The play was written by Hnat Khotkevych for the Hutsul theatre mentioned above, which the author defined as an ethnographic play: the calendar and ceremonial folk festivals as Christmas, Easter, wedding and funeral are interwoven in the plot. The play is filled with traditional songs and dances, which is an approximation of folk art to the contemporary one. The 2018-play preparation had lasted for a year. The actors studied not only Hutsul rites and dialects but immersed themselves into the life of the Hutsul region (having lived there for several months literally), imbued with the spirit of its culture. This combination experience with the practice work of the Lviv theatre school allowed introducing the cultural Hutsul tradition to the audience, to convey to them a sense of kinship with it in an emotionally convincing way. Thus, the play, created by Khotkevych in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, gets the support of the national idea in Ukraine in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The vitality of the artistic tradition nourishes the activity of artists and creative groups even today and is a core phenomenon of Ukrainian theatre culture.

## Conclusions

We have traced the changes of tasks and forms of existence of the Ukrainian theatre during its development: from the first permanent theatres at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the contemporary theatrical experiments. It is shown that both folk and the first professional Ukrainian theatres appeared and developed on national culture. The works of leading Ukrainian theatrical workers, who were iconic figures in specific periods of development of the Theatre of Ukraine, are studied. Case study of M. Zankovetska, Les Kurbas, H. Yura, S. Danchenko's works shows that their innovative ideas gave an incentive to the development of theatrical art due to unity with the deep spiritual values of the Ukrainian people. We have recognised that during its history, the Ukrainian theatre was changing and at the same time protected and preserved the national cultural tradition in the course of its development.

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## ФОРМУВАННЯ ТРАДИЦІЙ В УКРАЇНСЬКОМУ ПРОФЕСІЙНОМУ ТЕАТРІ (КРИЗЬ ПРИЗМУ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ ВИЗНАЧНИХ ТЕАТРАЛЬНИХ МИТЦІВ)

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Метою статті є аналіз спадкоємності традицій в українському драматичному театрі, її прояву у творчості видатних діячів театру та вивчення мистецьких явищ, що віддзеркалюють національну спадщину театральної культури України. З цією метою та для обґрунтування необхідності поєднання майстерності, новаторства і традицій для оновлення культури суспільства було використано методи аналізу та синтезу, міждисциплінарний підхід та принцип історизму. Наукова новизна полягає в тому, що розвиток національного театру проаналізовано з огляду культурних традицій, досліджено їх вплив на творчість провідних театральних діячів та виявлено основні принципи та традиції виконавського мистецтва. Висновки. З'ясовано, що українським



митцям, незважаючи на імперський тиск, вдалося у 80–90-х роках XIX ст. добитися можливості ставити вистави українською мовою, хоча й із певними обмеженнями, а згодом організувати «театр корифеїв». І саме від цього періоду починає формуватися національна традиція у професійному театрі. Визначено, що завдяки підтримці Марії Заньковецької та діяльності Гната Хоткевича був заснований Гуцульський театр, в основу якого покладено народну творчість та поєднання культурних традицій із театральним мистецтвом того часу. Показано, що успіх творчих пошуків та експериментів театральних діячів 1920–1930-х років, який яскраво простежується у діяльності Леся Курбаса і Гната Юри та визначається як новий етап розвитку українського драматичного театру, відбувся внаслідок синтезу традиції сценічної школи «театру корифеїв» із новаторськими методиками і техніками виконавської майстерності. У подальшому Сергію Данченку вдалося вивести національне театральне мистецтво на новий рівень. На особливу увагу заслуговує експериментальний пошук Богдана Ступки – відкриття Театру у фойє, а згодом Камерної сцени в Національному академічному драматичному театрі імені Івана Франка, що створило нові сучасні можливості комунікації з глядачем, сприяло розкриттю потенціалу так званої «малої сцени». Сюжетний та сенсово-творчий ряд якнайбільше тяжіє до поетичного вислову. Доведено, що тільки поєднання майстерності, новаторства і традицій може дати якісний результат – вистави наповнені глибоким змістом, пробуджують думку, емоційно об'єднують глядачів, насичені і цікаві для перегляду. Поява ж нових елементів дає поштовх розвитку українського театру та оновлює культуру суспільства.

*Ключові слова:* традиції театру; культурні традиції; сценічне мистецтво; режисер; український драматичний театр.

## **ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ ТРАДИЦИЙ В УКРАИНСКОМ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОМ ТЕАТРЕ (СКВОЗЬ ПРИЗМУ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ ВЫДАЮЩИХСЯ ТЕАТРАЛЬНЫХ МАСТЕРОВ)**

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Целью статьи является анализ преемственности традиций в украинском драматическом театре, ее проявления в творчестве выдающихся деятелей театра и изучения художественных явлений, отражающих национальное наследие театральной культуры Украины. С этой целью и для обоснования необходимости сочетания мастерства, новаторства и традиций для обновления культуры общества были использованы методы анализа и синтеза, междисциплинарный подход и принцип историзма. Научная новизна заключается в том, что развитие национального театра прослежено с точки зрения культурных традиций, исследовано их влияние на творчество ведущих театральных деятелей и выявлены основные принципы и традиции исполнительского искусства. Выводы. Выяснено, что украинским

мастерам, несмотря на имперское давление, удалось в 80–90-х годах XIX в. добиться возможности ставить спектакли на украинском языке, хотя и с определенными ограничениями, а затем организовать «театр корифеев». И именно с этого периода начинает формироваться национальная традиция в профессиональном театре. Определено, что благодаря поддержке Марии Заньковецкой и деятельности Игната Хоткевича был основан Гуцульский театр, в основу которого положено народное творчество и сочетание культурных традиций с театральным искусством того времени. Показано, что успех творческих поисков и экспериментов театральных деятелей 1920–1930-х годов, который ярко прослеживается в деятельности Леся Курбаса и Гната Юры и определяется как новый этап развития украинского драматического театра, произошел вследствие синтеза традиции сценической школы «театра корифеев» с новаторскими методиками и техниками исполнительского мастерства. В дальнейшем Сергею Данченко удалось вывести национальное театральное искусство на новый уровень. Особого внимания заслуживает экспериментальный поиск Богдана Ступки – открытие Театра в фойе, а позже Камерной сцены в Национальном академическом драматическом театре имени Ивана Франко, что создало новые современные возможности коммуникации со зрителем, способствовало раскрытию потенциала так называемой «малой сцены». Сюжетный и смыслово-творческий ряд более всего тяготеет к поэтическому высказыванию. Доказано, что только сочетание мастерства, новаторства и традиций способно дать качественный результат – спектакли наполнены глубоким содержанием, пробуждают мысль, эмоционально объединяют зрителей, насыщены и интересны для просмотра. Появление же новых элементов дает толчок развитию украинского театра и обновляет культуру общества.

*Ключевые слова:* традиции театра; культурные традиции; сценическое искусство; режиссер; украинский драматический театр.