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**THE SPECIFICS OF INTEGRATING
THE ELEMENTS OF THE PHYSICAL
THEATER INTO MODERN
PERFORMANCES OF CLASSICAL
DRAMA WORKS**

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The purpose of the article is to determine the specifics of the use of the forms and methods of physical theater in modern performances of classical drama works. The research methods. The scientific provisions of the article are argued at the level of the following scientific methods: empirical-theoretical – for processing the artistic factual base of the research, comparative – for comparative analysis of the determinants of modern scenography with classical samples of theatrical performances, systematization and generalization – to determine patterns that determine the specifics of the interaction of traditions and innovations in the development of modern theater. The scientific novelty consists in revealing the specificity of integration and functioning in modern theatrical productions of the forms and methods of physical theater in the context of the prevailing trends in the development of the theatrical art of the 21st century. Conclusions. The elements of physical theater in modern performances of classical plays greatly expand the boundaries of dramatic theater, focused on action. Accordingly, if the works of classical drama express symbols, focus on actions and are disconnected from realism, the methods of physical theater are among the important means of innovative dramatization of famous theater plays in the conditions of the stage space of the 21st century.

Keywords: physical theater; theatrical space of the XXI century; dramatization; classical plays; means of acting expressiveness.

Introduction

Theatrical art is one of the most valuable assets of human society. Its phenomenon is the uniqueness of the relationship arising between the audience, the performer and everyday life.

At the present stage, theatrical performances are notable for the mutual integration of various types of art, in particular for the active use of elements of performance, pantomime, visual elements, interactive forms of art, etc. One of the most popular forms which are referred by directors in the process of staging of classical drama works is the forms of physical theater, which were brought into focus at the present stage.

The features of physical theater are primarily discussed in the works of D. Callery “Through the Body: A Practical Guide to Physical Theater” (2001); S. Murray “Jacques Lecoq” (2017) and others. However, the authors focus only on certain aspects of the professional activities of their creators, leaving the issues of the genesis and development of the physical theater. But in the works devoted to the study of the specifics of modern drama performances, for example, I. Yasnets “Dance and plastic solution of performances in the drama theater at the turn of the XX–XXI centuries” (2004); A. Vislova “Cultural industries and theater” (2012), the authors mainly focus on some of the newest forms and methods used in theatrical productions. In the context of this study, the most comprehensive are the works by K. Vervain “The masks of Greek tragedy as point of departure for modern performance” (2001, pp. 254–272) and R. Moschochoriti “Physical theater as an approach to contemporary stagings of classical Greek tragedy” (2009) which systematically consider aspects of the mutual integration of new and classical forms of theatrical productions.

The problem of using the form of physical theater in modern performances of classical plays remains insufficiently covered and requires further study.

The purpose of the article

The research purpose is to identify the processes of mutual integration of the forms and methods of the new theater with classical theatrical performances.

Presentation of the main material

Physical theater is a genre of theatrical presentation, which provides for the dominance of movement over the text, independent of the text of the playwright, the presentation of the action using body language and mime. Of course, the theater for many centuries of its existence used enhanced physical model, and in the twentieth century, there was a new discovery of physical and plastic capabilities of the theater. 1910s marked the beginning of consistent research by the lead theater directors and educators on theatrical forms of the past, focused on the body, including the attempts of V. Meyerhold to reform the old methods of the *Commedia dell'arte*; A. Arto's influence on the role of the actor's body in the performance; the first approaches of J. Lecoq in the method of physical theater.

The term "physical theater" first appeared in theatrical environment in the late XIX – early XX century. It was created as a counter to the outdated theater of the beginning of the century, based on realism and naturalism. But the new type of theater had to use an innovative, latest and vivid approach, aimed at becoming the opposite of the verbose and intellectualized old theater. This approach demonstrated other expressive possibilities for freeing the imagination of an actor whose body was used as the main tool of expression by means of special exercises and techniques.

Early 1980s marked changes in the art of acting – a deviation from the psychological approach to the role of K. Stanislavsky and the creation of new methods of staging the play, and therefore the evolution of means of actor's expression. Words and behavioral gestures, which for a long time were the main means of expression in theatrical space, gave way to physical expression. According to D. Lecoq's observations, "the body knows things that the mind does not know" (Lecoq, 2000, p. 16), respectively, in physical theater, movements and body language are chosen to convey to the viewer metaphorical images of the world.

During the twentieth century many well-known practitioners (V. Meyerhold, A. Arto, M. Chekhov, B. Brecht, E. Grotowski, and others) used elements of physical theater in the process of evolving their own methods, in order to emphasize the need to use visualization techniques and physical expressiveness.

In the middle of 1980s, the phenomenon of physical theater acquires a new status due to the activities of groups such as "DV8", "Théâtre de complicité", and the D. Glass group "David Glass Ensemble", which positioned themselves in the dimensions of this phenomenon. It is worth noting that the director D. Glass acted, studied and taught in more than 70 countries, and his teachers were A. Boala, E. Grotowski, P. Brooke, E. Aili and M. Alfreds. In 1990 he founded his own theater group, which is now one of the most famous in the global theater space. The D. Glass Theater has won many prestigious international awards, and in 1993 – "The UK Theater Awards", in 2011 – "TMA Awards", awarded in recognition of creative excellence, for the best director's performance of M. Peake's "Gormenghast". In 2000 he founded the Center for the Support of Creative Development in Cambodia, specializing in educational creative theatrical practices, and also he developed five stages of a practical creative process that are now used around the world. D. Glass is one of the founders of the "Physical Theater", the Center for Creative Practice and the lead creativity coach at the UN International Labor Organization.

It should be noted that elements of the physical theater began to be used much earlier than the term itself appeared. They were introduced by American drama theater groups and experimental theater companies, for example, the "Living Theater", USA, the "Mabou mines", troupes under the guidance of directors R. Lepage and B. Wilson. They consciously combined physical and motion techniques, without giving up the linguistic means of expressiveness, compositional techniques, etc.

At the end of the twentieth century, activities of the American theatrical company "Wooster group", the French theater group "Théâtre du Soleil", the British theater companies "Théâtre de complicité" and "Shared experience" were aimed at staging live, interactive theatrical performances in order to "...fix a sense of modern life" (Keefe and Murray, 2007, p. 22).

In the development process, the physical theater used circus techniques, modern dances, French pantomime traditions, traditions of street theater and even aspects of visual art, as well as elements of Oriental and Asian philosophies, avant-garde style of modern Japanese dance "Butoh" (the founders are T. Hijikata and K. Ono. – *the Author*), which focuses on the movement of the actor (Sanders, 1988, p. 152).

A significant contribution to the development of modern European and North American physical theaters, and, accordingly, world theater art, was made by J. Lecoq, whose acting system affected the features of dramatic productions of the twenty-first century.

The terminology of physical theater is reflected in the idea that theater is a craft, celebration and play, which are based on collaboration and collective representation (Callery, 2001, pp. 4–5). The physical theater is

based on a collective procedure in which actors can freely discover and feel their own creative abilities. This is due to the director's ability to take responsibility. On the other hand, a clear representation of reality, mainly by means of the word, which is the main characteristic of traditional theater, limits imagination and leads to a rigid representation of everyday life as a semiotic reference. But physical theater includes everyday life, using special techniques of expression, symbolizing human life in a cultural and historical context. In addition to focusing on the body, emphasis is also placed on voice, creating sound, articulating words and using voice pitch. Scenography is influenced by the fact that stage objects and costumes have metaphorical and symbolic meaning – that particular codification creates a new instrument of communication with the audience.

The relations between the actor and the audience in the conditions of the modern theatrical space, due to the use of physical theater methods, are changing – the participation of the audience (which is extremely emotional, impulsive and imaginary) is greatly enhanced. The viewer must comprehend and interpret the composition of movements and gestures that an actor uses to transmit an image, character, meaning, or even something more tangible; he/she must have the ability to perceive the world, built in front of him, which requires emotional immersion, much more than the semiotics of words used to define everyday life.

In a realistic action, for a long time the emphasis was made on actor's reproduction of the character, which is determined by the author, interpreted by the director and realistically depicts the psychology of the role. In the physical theater, it is replaced by an increased sense of theatricality and exaggeration, used by the actor to play the role. So, the action is concentrated on the actor himself/herself, who becomes the performer, but not the character who seeks the experience of reality through a task, an action and the rejection of illusions. Actor as a performer of the selfhood (the main goal of human life. – *the Author*) is pursuing the "I", which is a problem-free and autonomous basis for acting. In this case, the "I" is identified in the theories of the end of the twentieth century as a concept of presence, which leads directly to the body of the actor and its construction. The concept of "construction" is based on the philosophical idea that the body and movement, that have been preserved, represent greater authenticity, while the sophistication of the language deceives and misleads.

Let us note that the theories of the physical theater provide for a simple style of acting, but not naturalism – movement and gesture in the physical theater are carefully selected and have a certain meaning. This style of acting presents the basic qualities of a character and his/her actions; the actor does not play the character as a role, but exposes the actions and manner of the hero.

The physical element exists in all theatrical types, if we take into account the fact of the participation of the body in all types of theater. So, the whole theater is physical, at least in a combination of its elements. In this sense, there were two main categories, where the strong physical form informed the theater – the theater of the full mask of ancient Greek drama and half mask, the improvisational theater of *Commedia dell'arte*, in which the actor performed extravagant physical improvisations based on a short script, a project.

However, there are differences between the traditional Western European language theater and the physical theater: in the first variant, an element of the language is strengthened over physical actions – the actors-characters focus on the arguments to tell a story, which is often already familiar to the viewer; but in the second variant, the body itself becomes the narrator, replacing parts of speech and rejecting realism in favor of explicit physical theatricality – the actual spectacle that can inflame the viewer's perception.

S. McBurney, a founder of "Théâtre de Complicité", says that elements of the physical theater "bring spirit and development strategies to all of the company's projects, work on the texts of plays, short stories, novels or a blank sheet of paper" (Keefe and Murray, 2007, p. 22).

It cannot be argued that in classical plays language was the dominant influence factor, but it defined the character and characterized the described action.

In our opinion, the meaning of the creative approach to the staging of a certain scene of the performance, using elements of the physical theater, is explained by the tendency towards entertainment (which includes the direct participation of the body) in the modern theater.

Let us note that the characteristic features of the forms of physical theater are: focusing on the actor as the creator of the performance, but not as a text interpreter; focusing on collective working methods; the use of acting techniques based mainly on the means of physical expression; dialectic relations between the actor and the viewer; spontaneity, vigor and acting sense, which is achieved by means of organized, but improvisational relations between the actors, as well as between the actor and his/her character.

The actor's approach begins with his/her body – the human body, as a part of nature, that brings memories of experience, prior movements, natural rhythms, and contains those elements that may appear as a result of experiments with modern dance techniques and acting techniques of physical theater (for example, the J. Lecoq's method).

According to R. Moshochoriti (Moschochoriti, 2009, p. 14), the visualization element of feelings, attributes and characteristics and the physical projection of elements of nature deserve special attention in the process of implementing modern performances of classical works of world drama. The researcher notes that the adaptation of some classical plays, in particular the ancient Greek tragedy, needs transformation of words into images, emphasizing that these methods have not exhausted their functionality and offer unlimited scope for experimentation.

Innovative processes occurring in the global theatrical space at the present stage are complex and contradictory, as well as their genesis. According to researchers, on the one hand, they are aimed at modernizing the theater, and on the other hand, they carry not so much a creative as a destructive principle (Vislova, 2012).

The modern approach to the classical dramatic legacy is based on the systematic transformation of each theatrical element, the corresponding concept of “conversion” on a conceptual and representative level is principal to many directors. Each new dramatization should contain modern codes of communication with the audience, exploring the world of amazing integrity, different from ours, in attempts to create a bridge between the playwright and the modern audience. Accordingly, we can consider this process from the perspective of thinking and judgment, i.e. choice.

According to many directors, we should not be afraid to use modern structures in the approach to classical plays, since this processing is the basis of the transformation process. For example, quite typical at the present stage is the lack of focus on the tragedy of the characters and the tragic situations in their lives, since the era of tragedies with the traditional meaning of haphazard choosing – the rigid order of fate has ended. In modern interpretations, the hero reproduces and dramatizes the tragic situation, while maintaining a sense of distance. In this sense, the viewer’s attention is transferred to understanding the tragic situation that the character is experiencing, and how he/she reacts.

One of the interesting performances of William Shakespeare’s tragedy “Romeo and Juliet” is the performance “Love and Death in Verona” (2015), which was staged as part of the international project of the ArtUniverse art agency and the International University “Global Theater Experience” (IUGTE, United Kingdom).

Art director of the project, director, choreographer and teacher S. Ostrenko, head of one of the departments of the International University “Global Theater Experience”, in creative activity focuses on the attempts of an organic combination of traditional drama school and innovative experiments in the field of performing arts, primarily practice forms of physical theater. It should be noted that the preparation of the performance lasted more than a year: master classes in modern dance and classical techniques of stage movement, including V. Meyerhold’s biomechanics, were held for the actors. The peculiarity of the modern reading of the famous Shakespeare’s tragedy was an unusual and bright flexible solution, the use of characteristic types of residents of the modern urban space, laconic lines and simple geometry of stage design in the performance by theatrical designer D. Belle (Italy) and choreographer G. Ostrenko (Ukraine).

The main goal of such projects is to strengthen international cultural relations and expand cultural cooperation by resorting to the classics of world drama, sharing experience between artists and theater figures from different countries, searching for a synthesis of traditions and modern trends in theatrical art.

According to the well-known director A. Reed (1993, p. 8), the theater consists of material elements – bodies in action and speech, formulated in certain places and in such a way as to become receptive to the audience. But everyday life A. Reed positions at the same time the customary and demanding dimension of life, to which the theater bears the greatest responsibility “not misleading people, but reminding them who they are and what it is worth living and changing every day”. The director notes that direct human experience is limited only by us, individuals who were captured by a body that can feel only that material world, which they perceived through their own limited feelings.

Modern theater offers an alternative experience – the experience of “someone else” who is feeling “something”. Evidence of another person’s actions and his/her emotional experience can create the same neurological imprint as the process of sensation or feeling itself. According to E. Hurley (2010, p. 57), the theater is a portal to a different, alien life and to a different lifestyle.

Works of classical drama are and remain the most appropriate texts for creativity and experiments, and actors as well as directors, as they usually combine the classical language of the ancient Greek tragedy, Shakespeare’s plays, Moliere’s comedies, etc. as a carrier of lofty ideas and thematic focus of lifelong relevance. The biggest problem for the director, is usually associated with the conflict of classical and modern elements. However, now the world trend is the development of classical structures with the use of modern theoretical tools, theatrical instruments and techniques, the creation of new theatrical images that can clearly highlight the functioning of the individual within the modern lifestyle.

The timeless relevance of thematic content, greatness of ideas, mastery in differentiating roles and other specific features of classical drama works remain the main source of inspiration for theatrical figures of the twentieth century, however, they require radical changes in the structural form, especially the language and movements of the actor, in order to increase the relevance for the modern audience. The innovative vision of a classic play by the director should bring dynamism and it should inspire actors to body reactions.

The specificity of integration and functioning in modern theatrical productions of forms and methods of physical theater in the context of the prevailing trends in the development of theatrical art of the twentieth century has been revealed; the term, genesis and components of the physical theater have been analyzed.

Conclusions

The method of physical expression – symbolic, unrealistic, which enhances theatricality, greatly expands the variety of actor's tools. The study of the specifics of the dialogue between the linguistic and physical means of acting expressiveness in the context of the leading trends in the development of theatrical art of the twentieth century, gives grounds to assert that with the use of experiments and improvisation they can organically interact in the modern stage space. Using the example of modern theatrical productions, it has been proved that the elements of the physical theater in modern performances of classical plays greatly expand the boundaries of dramatic theater. The actors have demonstrated the actions and messages, transmitted by the means of the physical theater, which acquire special significance, representing the collective unconscious. The methods of physical theater are one of the important means of innovative dramatization of works of classical drama in the conditions of the stage space of the twenty-first century.

The problem of using the form of physical theater in modern performances of classical plays remains insufficiently covered and requires further study.

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**СПЕЦИФІКА ІНТЕГРУВАННЯ
ЕЛЕМЕНТІВ ФІЗИЧНОГО ТЕАТРУ
В СУЧАСНІ ІНСЦЕНІЗАЦІЇ ТВОРІВ
КЛАСИЧНОЇ ДРАМАТУРГІЇ**

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Мета статті – визначити специфіку застосування форм і методів фізичного театру в сучасних інсценізаціях творів класичної драматургії. Методологія дослідження. Наукові положення статті аргументовані на рівні сукупності таких наукових методів: емпірико-теоретичного – для опрацювання мистецької фактологічної бази дослідження, компаративного – для порівняльного аналізу детермінант сучасної сценографії із класичними зразками театральних постановок, систематизації та узагальнення – для визначення закономірностей, що визначають специфіку взаємодії традицій і новаторства в розвитку сучасного театру. Наукова новизна полягає у виявленні специфіки інтеграції та функціонування в сучасних театральних постановках форм і методів фізичного театру в контексті превалюючих тенденцій розвитку театрального мистецтва ХХІ ст. Висновки. Елементи фізичного театру в сучасних інсценізаціях класичних п'єс значно розширюють межі драматичного театру, сфокусованого на діях. Відповідно, якщо твори класичної драматургії виражають символи, акцентують увагу на діях та відриваються від реалізму, методи фізичного театру є одними з важливих засобів інноваційної інсценізації відомих театральних п'єс в умовах сценічного простору ХХІ ст.

Ключові слова: фізичний театр; театральний простір ХХІ ст.; інсценізація; класичні п'єси; засоби акторської виразності.

**СПЕЦИФИКА ИНТЕГРИРОВАНИЯ
ЭЛЕМЕНТОВ ФИЗИЧЕСКОГО ТЕАТРА
В СОВРЕМЕННЫЕ ИНСЦЕНИРОВКИ
ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЙ КЛАССИЧЕСКОЙ
ДРАМАТУРГИИ**

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Цель статьи – определить специфику применения форм и методов физического театра в современных инсценировках произведений классической драматургии. Методология исследования. Научные положения статьи аргументированны на уровне совокупности таких научных методов: эмпирико-теоретического – для обработки художественной фактологической базы исследования, сравнительного – для сравнительного анализа детерминант современной сценографии с классическими образцами театральных постановок, систематизации и обобщения – для определения закономерностей, определяющих специфику взаимодействия традиций и новаторства в развитии современного театра. Научная новизна состоит в выявлении специфики интеграции и функционирования в современных театральные постановках форм и методов физического театра в контексте превалирующих тенденций развития театрального искусства ХХІ века. Выводы. Элементы физического театра в современных инсценировках классических пьес значительно расширяют границы драматического театра, сфокусированного на действиях. Соответственно, если произведения классической драматургии выражают символы, акцентируют внимание на действиях и отрываются от реализма, методы физического театра являются одними из важных средств инновационной инсценировки известных театральные пьес в условиях сценического пространства ХХІ века.

Ключевые слова: физический театр; театральное пространство ХХІ в.; инсценировка; классические пьесы; средства актерской выразительности.