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**AMATEUR DANCE GROUPS  
REPERTOIRE: PROBLEMS  
AND TENDENCIES**

Iryna Hutnyk

*PhD in Pedagogy, Associate Professor,**ORCID: 0000-0001-6492-370X,**e-mail: i.gutnyk@ua.fm,**Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts,**36, Ye. Konovaltsia Str., Kyiv, 01133, Ukraine*

In the article, the phenomenon of amateur choreographic art is considered as a significant component of choreographic culture of Ukraine. Amateur dance while preserving centuries-old national heritage, at the same time reflects current tendencies. That is why choreographic art attracts people of all ages, especially children and youth.

The purpose of the article is to analyse dance routine of amateur groups, as well as to identify the main problems and tendencies in the repertoire policy shaping.

The methodology of the research is to apply general scientific methods of theoretical and empirical levels as follows: the analysis and generation of the scientific and theoretical foundations of the study, comparative and logical methods, own analysis of dance routines of amateur groups from different regions of Ukraine via the review of festivals and competitions to characterize, determine the typical problems and main tendencies, as well as factors that determine the repertoire of amateur dance groups. The scientific novelty is to identify positive and negative tendencies in the activities of young ballet masters and find ways to prevent the development of negative tendencies.

Conclusions. It has been proved that in the last decade many dance groups appeared in Ukraine, which achieved significant success in not only the training of high-skilled dancers, but also the creation of an original and interesting repertoire. However, along with these positive phenomena, a negative tendency has also emerged – to speed low-dance dances in order to attract as many children as possible to participate in commercial festivals-competitions. In order to change this tendency, the choreographers should be aware of it, and, at the same time, requirements should be raised to the level and quality of competition routines at dance events, as well as the criteria for its scoring.

*Keywords:* amateur dance group; choreography; ballet master; festival; competition; repertoire; plagiarism.

**Introduction**

Amateur choreographic art is an important component of the modern choreographic culture of Ukraine. The phenomenon of this kind of creativity is that dance, on the one hand, preserves centuries-old folk heritage, and on the other – reflects the main trends and the “trend” of the present days. That is why choreographic art attracts people of different ages, especially children and youth, more than any other type of performance. Recently, in the sphere of amateur dance art, there are contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, every year there are more and more dance groups with original and interesting repertoire and a rather high level of dancers’ training in Ukraine. Their ballet masters usually focus on the smallest nuances in creating and performing each dance routine, and at the same time constantly working to improve their own professional skills. On the other hand, more and more choreographers team up with a large number of participants for making a repertoire quickly, ignoring (or not realizing) the fact that the dance routines created by them in a short time are of low quality, have no logic or content. However, parents, who are attracted by the opportunity to see their children on stage often, wearing a new costume, like such groups. The spread of such a negative tendency is due to a number of reasons, including the impact of contemporary socio-cultural circumstances and socio-economic factors. The need to overcome this tendency, which is traced, first, in children’s groups, and determines the relevance of the topic under study.

The issues of professional training of choreographers are given in the works of K. Vasylenko (1983), O. Goldrich (2002), S. Zabredovsky (1997) and A. Kryvokhyzh (2006). In their research, the authors have analysed the basic principles of creating a repertoire of dance groups for different age groups, determine the production work stages of dance routines, etc. T. Luhovenko in the thesis “Children’s amateur groups of folk dance in the context of the development of the choreographic culture of Ukraine from the beginning

of the XXI century” studies the formation and development of children’s amateur choreographic art (Luhovenko, 2012).

Pichurinkin discusses the image, psychological portrait and repertoire of the dance group in detail in his book “Image of the creative group” (Pichurinkin, 2011). Emphasizing the six components of the dance routine, the author pays special attention to the festival movement, analysing its pros and cons.

V. Giglauri’s “Components of choreography and performing work in the art of movements” devotes to the analysis of the dance routine components with regard to audience appeal (Giglauri, 2010). The author tries to explain as much as possible the system of criteria components, which, from his point of view, must be taken into account creating a dance routine.

In modern Ukraine there is a steady increase in the number of amateur groups that provide various types of choreography (modern, ballroom, folk-stage, and classical), which is facilitated by a number of phenomena: the spread of new styles and tendencies of choreographic art, the differentiation of varieties of choreography, popularization of media projects of dance subjects, etc. (Luhovenko, 2012).

### **The purpose of the article**

The purpose of the article is to analyse dance routines of amateur groups, as well as to identify the main problems and tendencies in the repertoire policy shaping.

### **Presentation of the main material**

At the present stage, amateur art (artistic amateurism) is understood as the individual or collective creative activity of nonprofessional creative people or groups that are not their main job, the result of which is the creation or interpretation of works of cultural and artistic value and is not intended getting revenues. It is very important in the amateur sphere to draw participants on the culture, their inclusive development and contribution to the society’s artistic treasury.

At all times a characteristic feature of amateur choreographic art was many children in dance group members. According to statistics, today most of the children who want to try their hands in performing arts are visiting dance hobby groups (Luhovenko, 2012). Moreover, even if the young dancers tend not to go to a professional stage – acquiring choreography basis, they educate their ear to music and get a correct posture, they form aesthetic sense and communication skills.

During the last decade, many groups appeared in Ukraine, which achieved significant success not only in high-class dancer training, but also in the creation of a repertoire, which has the genius idea, plot, compositional structure and interesting language of dance. Choreographers – the leaders of such groups have their own “secrets” of working on the creation of dance routines, but each of them tries to do everything possible to make their dance make the most positive impact on the viewer. Such well-designed routines are interesting and spectacular; they stand out from dozens of other concert program dances and are emotionally perceived by viewers, which is one of the criteria for scoring. In this regard, the opinion of T. Luhovenko is appropriate, which emphasizes that “the subjective criterion for the routine scoring can be the general impression, the strong emotional reaction of a particular viewer to the performance. It is this impression caused by the skilfully performed dance routine, even in the absence of a high technique, can play an important role in determining the artistic level of a work” (Zabradovsky, 1997; Luhovenko, 2012).

The groups demonstrating an interesting repertoire and high performing skills, in the overwhelming majority have modern choreography. Among them, there are a folk amateur group “Yarmarka” (Chernihiv), folk choreographic workshop “Malva” (Brovary), showpiece choreographic ensemble “Kraina Tantsiv” (Kyiv), folk dance ensemble “Ukraina” (Kyiv), showpiece sports ball dance band “Kapriz” (Kremenchuk), folk theatre of modern choreography “Fenix” (Zaporizhia), children’s showpiece choreographic studio “FORSE” (Kyiv), showpiece ensemble of folk dance “Shchaslyve Dytynstvo” (Dnipro) and many others.

However, along with the positive phenomena in the field of amateur choreographic art, a negative tendency has emerged today, which can be traced on the example of children’s groups. Artistic directors of newly created dance groups take a large number of children and try to create not just dance routines in a very short time, but to form a repertoire to take part in various festivals–competitions. In this case, choreographers do not take into account the fact that before taking to the stage, there should be long-term preparation in the dance practice hall, and the routine composition and onstage dress should be careful and well thought out. It seems that ballet masters do not think that the creation of the group’s repertoire in general and each dance routine in particular

requires to meet certain criteria regarding expediency, accessibility, and artistic character (Кривови́зха, 2006); since only under such conditions choreographic art can develop dancing and music ability of children, form aesthetic sense, raise spiritual and moral values, etc.

We can track the massive tendency to “speed” low-grade dances while viewing dance routines at commercial-based festival-competitions. The choragus, interested in attracting as many participants as possible, easily distribute prize-winning places and diplomas for compositions that contain a series of rather rude mistakes. Therefore, it will be appropriate to analyse the typical errors inherent in the creativity of many modern ballet masters.

First, we should say about plagiarism as a mass tendency within amateur groups, that is, “the appropriation of authorship on someone else’s work ... the use of someone else’s work without reference to the author” (Pichurichkin, 2011; Stefan, 2011).

Very often you can see, even within one competition, dance routines that have similar not only ideas and music background, but also the language of dance, costumes, and composition. It is astonishing that choreographers do not even try to show originality and distinguish themselves from among other groups, but copy each other. Of course, every artistic director has a situation when another choreographer’s dance routine inspires and causes the desire to create something similar. In this case, if you do not want your own dance become a plagiarism, you should thoroughly analyse it by answering the following questions:

- If you use a combination of the number seen, is it too long for copying?
- How many combinations, similar to the original, are in your work?
- Can links between movements be considered to be original?
- Do patterns of a dance in your routine differ from the original?
- Try to assess your dance routine objectively: can it be called plagiarism; is it still a new vision, a fresh look at the same topic? (Hunt, 2014).

This is a very common situation when artistic directors of folk dance ensembles use well-known dance routines or those that can already be considered a classical heritage, created many years ago and represented in the repertoire of many professional and amateur groups in Ukraine. Modern choreographers begin to modify partially the chosen dance routines found on the Internet. They change pair dance to female, the number of performers and performance manner, composition, pattern of a dance, etc. Some ballet masters plagiarize deliberately. They declare themselves the authors of the routines without thinking about the fact that the dance is quite famous, and some members of the jury are even personally familiar with the choreographer or they performed this dance, and the language of dance can be recognized even with other background music. Others name the author who really stage the routine, but not in the author’s version, changing (often not for the better) the original.

Unfortunately, nowadays such practice is rather common and is the result of limited, lack of professional theoretical knowledge of the ballet masters in particular, the lack of knowledge of the work requirements on the dance composition with recording, or because elementary reluctance to know, develop, perfect oneself and create something new.

Extremely common among children’s groups are also routines based on cartoons or fairy tales. The ballet masters take the music used in these animated films, create colourful bright costumes that cause delight by originality, and, to the smallest details, reproduce the image of a fairy tale hero. However, developing a plot, the language composition of dance, for some reason, absolutely do not take into account the nature of these characters, typical features of their behaviour, relationships and conflicts that unfold among the chosen heroes in cartoons or fairy tales. In this case, the routine has only an external effect, and if you put the stage costumes off the performers or replace them with others, change the background music, we get characters that also perform the standard set of movements (it is good if children can do these movements), can be called not the kikoriki, but the smurfs.

A tiny percentage of boys is a typical problem for dance groups. To solve it, choreographers disguise occasionally girls in boy’s suits and make them perform male movements, and sometimes-virtuoso technique. This approach is false and unwanted. Eventually, a spectator guesses that there are disguised girls, and the routine keeps away from expectation effect. However, the most important thing is injury risk for the disguised girls, since the choreographers often insert lifts into routines, which must be well thought out, motivated and, it is critical to conform with age and physical capabilities of the performers. So the problem of the absence of boys in the groups can be solved by other means, without disguising. For example, in some groups there are girls only who dance in certain age groups, choreographers form a repertoire, focusing on this circumstance, and thus create dance routines different in form, content, images, and style. A vivid example of this approach can be the folk art studio “Malva” from Brovary and the choreographic ensemble “Kraina Tantsiv” from Kyiv.

Stage costumes of the amateur dance group members require a separate study, as there is colourfulness, indiscretion, inconformity with age, style, and in folk dances with the region at every competition or festival. Without going into a detailed analysis of these errors, we would like to emphasize that the approach to designing dresses should be balanced and well thought out, as the dress is an important precondition for the success of a choreographic routine. The same applies to the dance requisite, which today is an integral part of many children's routines.

Many choreographers of dance groups, trying to interest their pupils, resort to the creation of routines of different directions and choreography styles, forgetting (without regarding to) that each of them provides a certain level of basic training, uses different principles of the musculoskeletal system, sometimes cardinally the opposite, has a peculiar performance style, and so on. Lack of time for the proper working out of such routines, the lack of proper physical training of performers leads to low-level of performers training. As a result, its repertoire consists of a large number of routines (usually of poor quality), in a variety of styles and choreography, which are performed at a very low level.

Getting back to the issue of choreographic competitions, it is worth noting that today there is a massive festival movement in Ukraine. Unfortunately, the main goal of many festivals is to get as much profit as possible, and therefore the quality of the participants' routines, the professional level of jury members and the organization of the festivals are usually low. The common situation is when the organizers encourage group leaders to participate in their event with a certain percentage of the monetary contribution from each participant dance group. Unfortunately, for many choreographers, material remuneration is an important stimulus, and knowing that shortcomings in their work will not be paid attention and the credentials of the winners are guaranteed to them, heads of dance groups repeatedly return to such festivals with their students.

It gives its disastrous results: "a paradoxical situation is created: the number of groups and specialists with higher choreographic education grows year by year, and the quality of ballet master's works, in particular, of Ukrainian folk-stage dance, falls accordingly. Young choreographers have no incentive to improve their choreographer's activities". On the other hand, "the competition festivals are due in no small part to the development and improvement of the level of amateur choreographic art, as in the case of raising the requirements for skilfulness and competence of choreographer works and its performance, the presence of certain criteria for determining the level of dance groups training, choreographers will have a great incentive to improve their choreographer's activities. A discussion of the results of the competition with a serious detailed analysis and observations on the results of the work of choreographers and group leaders by highly-qualified jury members will direct them to further development and extension of their own knowledge, skills and abilities (Hutnyk, 2018, pp. 206–207).

### **Conclusions**

Thus, in order to change and improve the repertoire of amateur dance groups, it is necessary that during the training of professional disciplines as ballet master art at schools, a teacher should require of students to take a more responsible attitude towards the creation of their routines, inspire the search for their own ideas and their original decisions and stop borrowing, the appropriation of choreographic works, as they say, "from the Internet". Students also have to analyse the construction and performance of the chosen routines in every detail, which would considerably improve the quality of their dance performance at their training and future professional activities.

Compliance with the aforementioned requirements for the training of choreographers at higher and secondary specialized educational institutions and make popular competitions-festivals with a high level of performance of participants and with strict criteria for the competition routines will introduce new original routines in amateur dance groups.

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### РЕПЕРТУАР АМАТОРСЬКИХ ХОРЕОГРАФІЧНИХ КОЛЕКТИВІВ: ПРОБЛЕМИ ТА ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ

Гутник Ірина Миколаївна  
Кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент,  
Київський національний університет  
культури і мистецтв, Київ, Україна

У статті розглянуто феномен аматорського хореографічного мистецтва як вагової складової хореографічної культури України. Аматорський танець зберігаючи багатовікові народні надбання, водночас відображає сучасні

тенденції. Саме тому хореографічне мистецтво так приваблює людей різного віку, особливо дітей та молодь.

Мета статті. Проаналізувати хореографічні номери аматорських колективів, а також визначити основні проблеми та тенденції у формуванні репертуарної політики.

Методологія дослідження полягає в застосуванні загальнонаукових методів теоретичного й емпіричного рівнів: аналізу та узагальнення науково-теоретичних основ дослідження, компаративного й логічного методів, власного аналізу хореографічних номерів аматорських колективів із різних регіонів України під час перегляду фестивалів та конкурсів для характеристики, визначення типових проблем та основних тенденцій, а також чинників, що зумовлюють репертуар аматорських хореографічних колективів. Наукова новизна полягає у виявленні позитивних і негативних тенденцій в діяльності молодих балетмейстерів-постановників та визначені шляхів запобігання розвитку негативних тенденцій.

Висновки. Доведено, що за останнє десятиліття в Україні з'явилося чимало колективів, які досягли значних успіхів не лише у підготовці танцюристів високого виконавського рівня, а й створенні оригінального та цікавого репертуару. Та поряд із цими позитивними явищами сформувалась і негативна тенденція: створення «нашвидкоруч» низкопробних танців із метою залучення якомога більшої кількості дітей до участі в комерційних фестивалях-конкурсах. Щоб змінити цю тенденцію, необхідне її усвідомлення фахівцями-хореографами і водночас підвищення вимог до рівня та якості конкурсних номерів на танцювальних заходах, а також критеріїв їх оцінювання.

*Ключові слова:* аматорський хореографічний колектив; хореографічна постановка; балетмейстер; фестиваль; конкурс; репертуар; плагіат.

### **РЕПЕРТУАР АМАТОРСКИХ ХОРЕОГРАФИЧЕСКИХ КОЛЛЕКТИВОВ: ПРОБЛЕМЫ И ТЕНДЕНЦИИ**

Гутник Ирина Николаевна

*Кандидат педагогических наук, доцент,*

*Киевский национальный университет*

*культуры и искусств, Киев, Украина*

В статье рассмотрен феномен любительского хореографического искусства как весомой составляющей хореографической культуры Украины. Любительский танец сохраняя многовековые народные достояния, одновременно отражает современные тенденции. Именно поэтому хореографическое искусство так привлекает людей всех возрастов, особенно детей и молодежь.

Цель статьи. Проанализировать хореографические номера любительских коллективов, а также определение основных проблем и тенденций в формировании репертуарной политики.

Методология исследования заключается в применении общенаучных методов теоретического и эмпирического уровней: анализа и обобщения научно-теоретических основ исследования, сравнительного и логического методов, собственного анализа хореографических номеров любительских коллективов из разных регионов Украины во время просмотра фестивалей и конкурсов для характеристики, определение типичных проблем и основных тенденций, а также факторов, обуславливающих репертуар любительских хореографических коллективов. Научная новизна заключается в выявлении положительных и отрицательных тенденций в деятельности молодых балетмейстеров-постановщиков и определении путей предотвращения развития негативных тенденций.

Выводы. Доказано, что за последнее десятилетие в Украине появилось немало коллективов, которые достигли значительных успехов не только в подготовке танцоров высокого исполнительского уровня, но и создании оригинального и интересного репертуара. Но наряду с этими положительными явлениями сформировалась и негативная тенденция: создание «на скорую руку» низкопробных танцев с целью привлечения как можно большего количества детей к участию в коммерческих фестивалях-конкурсах. Чтобы переломить эту тенденцию, необходимо ее осознание специалистами-хореографами и одновременно повышение требований к уровню и качеству конкурсных номеров на танцевальных мероприятиях, а также критериев их оценки.

*Ключевые слова:* любительский хореографический коллектив; хореографическая постановка; балетмейстер; фестиваль; конкурс; репертуар; плагиат.