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**THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL  
PROCESSES IN THE FORMATION  
OF NEW TRENDS IN AZERBAIJAN'S  
FOLK STAGE DANCE IN THE BEGINNING  
OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

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The purpose of the article is to study new vector forms in training choreography using the example of the Baku Choreography Academy. The research methodology is based on the method of historicism, for the Azerbaijani folk stage dance is studied in the context of a specific historical period in the development of Azerbaijani culture. Moreover, the consideration of the activities of the Baku Choreography Academy throughout the study correlates with the processes that are taking place in modern Azerbaijan. The method of historicism makes it possible to identify trends, significant from the point of view of the historical process, in the development of Azerbaijani folk stage dance. The scientific novelty of the research lies in the fact that for the first time, a study was undertaken of the modern functioning of the Azerbaijani folk dance art in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The novelty is also determined by the new material used in this article. For the first time, the parameters of educational methods of Azerbaijani folk stage dance are systematically classified — specificity, stage implementation, training, cultural relationships. Conclusions. Along with the synthesis of general and specialised experience accumulated within the Baku Choreography Academy framework, other training parameters are put forward. The article emphasises the participation of the Baku Choreography Academy students in the stages of the Republic's leading theatres, forming in them the qualities of cultural and social adequacy to society and context. Special knowledge of choreography, which determines further productive activities in the dance art, is honed on the professional stage.

*Keywords:* education; culture; choreography; ballet; art; stage; dance; society

### Introduction

Baku Choreography Academy plays an important role in developing Azerbaijani folk stage dance during the years of independence of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. At the same time, the implementation of new creative approaches to the improvement of Azerbaijani folk stage dance is determined by important factors of intensification of education. The latter is relevant because training the young generation all the features of the artistic principles of Azerbaijani folk stage dance today acquires new dimensions related to historical and cultural changes in the history of Azerbaijan in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, one of the main of which is the socialisation of creativity, which reflects the active correspondence of modern history of Azerbaijan.

The scientific novelty of the research lies in the fact that for the first time, a study was undertaken of the modern functioning of the Azerbaijani folk dance art in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The novelty is also determined by the new material used in this article. For the first time, the parameters of educational methods of Azerbaijani folk stage dance are systematically classified — specificity, stage implementation, training, cultural relationships.

### Purpose of the article

The purpose of the article is to investigate new course roadmaps in dance education under the case of Baku Choreography Academy.

The research methodology is based on the method of historicism, for the Azerbaijani folk stage dance is studied in the context of a specific historical period in the development of Azerbaijani culture. Moreover, the consideration of the activities of the Baku Choreography Academy throughout the study correlates with the processes that are taking place in modern Azerbaijan. The method of historicism makes it possible to identify trends, significant from the point of view of the historical process, in the development of Azerbaijani folk stage dance.

**Main research material**

Important historical factors determine the implementation of new creative approaches to improving Azerbaijani folk stage dance.

As it was said, the state's sustainable development policy has become a priority for artistic culture.

If in the 1990s, due to a difficult socio-political situation, tragic events in the history of the Azerbaijani people, choreographic art was at the level of de-intensification, then since the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the processes associated with various aspects of choreographic art have become dynamised. The decisive role belongs to the organisational support of the state.

In modern Azerbaijan, we observe active processes of information transfer. This kind of communication lies at the foundation of the sociocultural process and ensures joint life in a democratic society.

Folk dance stage art functions in the context of democratic transformations in Azerbaijan. In this aspect, we note that Azerbaijani art culture is open to world culture, for it can assimilate values of world significance.

One of the most important tasks of modern choreographic art lies in the obvious fact that one should develop the performing art and knowledge about it, the possibility of comprehending dance both practically and theoretically. The practice of modern dance art shows that to achieve effective creative results in dance art, a theoretical base is needed.

One of the modern vectors of development, ensuring both the preservation and improvement of the dance art of Azerbaijan, is the creative synthesis of eastern and western trends. The latter appear in different forms. For example, the study of the dance art of the peoples of the near and far abroad, the relationship between choreographers and dance groups, etc. In other words, in the modern development of Azerbaijani folk stage dance, both theoretical and practical knowledge is needed about the domestic dance culture and Eastern, European, and Russian artistic creativity.

In this aspect, we emphasise the creative activity of the Baku Choreography Academy, within the framework of which an information base is formed, teaching, creative and scientific activities are concentrated. On the other hand, the basis of the educational process of Choreography Academy is a strict selection, identification of talented applicants, a correct, objective assessment of their creative potential.

We will consider such issues as the participation of students in professional productions, which, of course, forms the skills of independent choreographic experience. Creative reports of the teaching staff and students are drawn up in the form of concerts and gala concerts and require maximum responsibility from the participants; contests organised within the framework of Choreography Academy, together with other creative organisations, also raise the prestige and status of choreographic art; the organisation of anniversaries of outstanding figures of this art form is not only a tribute of respect, but also a propaganda of choreographic art.

First of all, let us note the diversity of creative aspects in the activities of the Baku Choreography Academy. It includes vectors and directions that are important, both artistically and in teaching. The latter is due to the modern needs of both society and the development of choreographic art, including Azerbaijani folk stage dance.

The improvement of folk stage dance is directly related to education, with the training of young professional personnel, the initial link in the formation of a dancer.

Permanence in the educational system lies in the fact that the formation of cadres of folk stage dance is a spontaneous process because while still students, dancers actively manifest themselves on the professional stage.

Modern training at Choreography Academy is aimed at two mutually complementary processes — the formation of high professionalism and deepening the understanding of contemporary culture.

The intellectual potential is a serious basis for motivating the development of Azerbaijani folk stage dance. The expansion of knowledge in the field of national and world culture raises the status of each member of the dance group. In this sense, the role of a personality, an individual in a dance ensemble in the culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, acquires special significance.

Folk stage dance requires special education and vocational training. This kind of priority of Azerbaijani folk stage dance and classical dance once again emphasises the professional mastery of folk stage dance. This trend is intensifying within the educational system of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Naturally, the Azerbaijani folk stage dance is becoming one of the fundamental disciplines at Baku Choreography Academy. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, vocational training in Azerbaijani folk stage dance acquires a purposeful and systemic character, for the "language" of folk dance, multiplied by classical choreography, becomes the leading one in Azerbaijani folk stage dance.

An important aspect of teaching Azerbaijani folk stage dance at Choreography Academy is preserving the best traditions of this type of art. Concerning folk culture, preserving traditional, I would say, “fateful” samples is a necessary component in the successful functioning of Azerbaijani folk stage dance.

In the modern context, Choreography Academy has actualised the search for more dynamic and creative approaches to education. The practical component is important among these systematic, methodically verified, creative ways. Today’s educational space is expanding due to the active involvement of students in performing on the professional stage. Of course, these facts enhance the effectiveness of the general educational process. The correct guidelines in education (structure, vectors, functioning) create conditions for the formation of highly professional personnel.

In Choreography Academy, there is a practice of implementing creative learning tasks on a professional stage. Among the practical, creative tasks of the Choreography Academy is the participation of students in various programs — on the stage of the theatre, various events of the state level, in concert programs, in cultural projects, etc.

Choreography Academy students are much more actively involved in the professional creative process than before. Thus, young dancers have the opportunity to show their abilities through their participation in professional performances. Of course, the chance to perform on a professional stage is a powerful incentive for everyone to reveal their abilities.

Thus, one of the aspects of the creative process, in our opinion, a powerful incentive for the active development of Azerbaijani folk stage dance was the attraction of young personnel, students of the Baku Choreography Academy to professional stage performances. The practical activity of students, which was expressed in the possibilities of their participation as performers on professional stages, undoubtedly served as the motivation for their training in the art of choreography. Moreover, we emphasise that the participation of the students of the Academy is carried out at the level of significant performing productions. Only a shortlist of them demonstrates this thesis.

In the process of participating in professional productions, the level of professionalism increases and such important functions as the communicative function, which an artistically gifted person must follow.

The norms and rules of the profession are being mastered. At the same time, in a situation of collective interaction, it is important to educate certain parameters of this interaction.

The knowledge gained at the Baku Choreography Academy, on the one hand, is specialised; these are different sides of choreographic skill, its foundations. On the other hand, they are vast and universal, for the range of objects covers many aspects of the morphological system of arts.

As a result of the activation of the student potential of Choreography Academy, professionals are formed that are adequate to the needs of society’s culture.

So, let us note the activity of the senior teacher of the Baletmeyster Sənəti Department (Choreography), the honoured teacher of Azerbaijan.

Pulumbus Aguillua, who staged quite complex ballet performances for both performers and choreographers. For example, *The Nutcracker* by P. Tchaikovsky, *Don Quixote* by L. Minkus, *The Eastern Poem* by T. Bakikhanov.

The performances were staged at the Akhundov Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre.

T. Bakikhanov’s *Oriental Poem* ballet was performed in 2015. And two years later, at the beginning of 2017, Pyotr Tchaikovsky’s *The Nutcracker* ballet. Let us emphasise that for the first time, the teaching and student collective took part in the birth of such a high-level ballet on the stage of the country’s leading musical theatre. And, naturally, the production directors included well-known choreographic art figures — People’s Artist Kamilla Huseynova as artistic director, professor Lyudmila Hasanova, honoured cultural worker Mayra Almaszade.

In 2017 and the next two years, masterpieces of Azerbaijani ballet art were staged — Kara Garayev’s *Seven Beauties* ballet and Afrasiyab Badalbeyli’s *Maiden Tower* ballet.

Prominent Azerbaijani choreographers took part in the birth of these performances — People’s Artist of Azerbaijan Kamilla Huseynova, People’s Artist of Azerbaijan Yusif Gasimov, Honoured Artists of Azerbaijan S. Gasimova, R. Iskenderova and other teachers of the Baku Choreography Academy.

Expressive, absolutely necessary in the modern world, choreographic compositions are dedicated to the tragic pages of the history of Azerbaijan. So, in 2016, the People’s Artist of Azerbaijan Rufat Khalilzade staged a choreographic composition, which reflected the whole tragedy of bloody January 1990. In the piece, in the language of folk stage dance, he expressed the entire spectrum of the suffering of the Azerbaijani people, the destructiveness of aggression.

The Azerbaijani folk stage dance also receives new forms of embodiment in the gala concerts that have become part of the performing practice. So, in 2019, a series of gala concerts dedicated to the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Baku Choreography Academy took place in several halls — on the stage of the Azerbaijan State Song Theatre, Opera Studio of the Baku Academy of Music, and Musical Comedy Theatre.

As part of the educational process at the Baku Choreography Academy, I would say a landmark performance entitled “Leader who dedicated his life to the people” was carried out in memory of the national leader of the Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev. Staged in 2015 by the People’s Artist of Azerbaijan Yusif Gasimov, this choreography piece was performed based on symphonic, chamber, vocal works by Azerbaijani composers U. Hajibeyli, F. Amirov, Niyazi, T. Quliyev and others.

In 2016, within the framework of the year of multiculturalism announced by President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, a number of projects were implemented at Choreography Academy. A bright event was the presentation of the dance performance on the stage of the Azerbaijan State Musical Theatre “Azerbaydjan yurdum menim” (I washed Azerbaijan). We emphasise that the performers were students of Choreography Academy, who showed professionalism and talent.

An important event of the choreographic school of Azerbaijan was the 1<sup>st</sup> International Competition of Classical and National Dance named after I. Gamar Almaszadeh. The competition was dedicated to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first ballerina of the East and was held as part of the anniversary events dedicated to the great ballerina.

It is noteworthy that the decree signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev emphasised the birth of Azerbaijani folk stage dance as a synthetic art, the foundation of which was laid by Gamar Almaszade.

The competition as an opportunity to determine the best performers showed that the choreographic school of Azerbaijan at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is at a high level. The skill of its representatives was clearly demonstrated at the competition and received high marks.

The teaching priorities of the art of choreography are directly based on contemporary social demands.

It is precisely with this that the active participation of the students of the Academy in various kinds of public concerts, anniversaries, projects, competitions, etc. is connected.

Moreover, students of the Baku Choreography Academy are entrusted with such a responsible part in the Azerbaijani folk stage dance system as an independent staging of dance scenes.

Of course, for students to see their performance performed by masters-dancers with high state regalia is an active entrance to the professional level and quite powerful motivation. This practice is a new and creative initiative in the modern functioning of Azerbaijani folk stage dance.

So, at a concert dedicated to the Day of Dance, the Syuzen qızlar dance (Floating girls) was performed to the music of J. Dzhangirov, staged by a second-year student R. Hajiyev. The dance was performed by the Honoured Artist of Azerbaijan N. Ramzanova. Further, the dance “Ozyunyu tap” (Find yourself) was performed by N. Vekilova, a third-year student of the Baku Choreography Academy, as a choreographer, performer, soloist.

In this aspect, let us emphasise the cooperation of musical institutions, concert halls with the Baku Choreography Academy, which significantly expanded at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is fashionable to give a lot of such examples. We also meant those cultural events that resonated in society and served as a springboard for young dancers.

In the cycle of cultural events dedicated to the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Baku Choreography Academy, we will note a concert for the Day of Dance, which took place on the stage of the Opera Studio of the Baku Academy of Music.

I must say that this kind of concert performances were organised with the participation of highly professional choreographers. Thus, this concert included an *Azerbaijan suitası* dance suite (Azerbaijani suite), staged by People’s Artist Yusif Gasimov.

The promotion of choreographic art, including the promotion of Azerbaijani folk stage dance, is an integral part of the activities of the Baku Choreographic Academy. The acquaintance of a wide audience with the history of choreography, with outstanding art workers, is organised on a professional level. Here, the desire to present all aspects of choreographic art manifests itself and evoke an emotional attitude in the audience because we are talking about the selfless work of dancers, difficulties on their creative path, dedication to their profession.

The images of legendary dancers, choreographers who have written glorious pages in the history of Azerbaijani culture have been repeatedly recreated within the walls of the Baku Choreographic Academy within the framework of various creative events.

Anniversaries of outstanding cultural workers of Azerbaijan are a remarkable tradition of the Baku Choreography Academy. Due to the specifics of the type of arts, these anniversaries turn into a tribute to the memory of famous masters and a certain link in the development of Azerbaijani folk performing arts. Such anniversaries were also held as scientific conferences, where interesting reports on the history of Azerbaijani choreography were presented. So, in November 2017, an unforgettable evening “Ustad senetkar” (Master craftsman) was organised, dedicated to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the People’s Artist of Azerbaijan, master, founder of Azerbaijani folk stage dance Alibaba Abdullayev.

An event-related to this series was also the anniversary — the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the People’s Artist of Azerbaijan Boyugaga Mammadov. The “pathos” of such anniversaries, among other things, consists in the participation of such events of living legends of Azerbaijani dance art. Thus, the People’s Artist of Azerbaijan Roza Jalilova performed at the jubilee and shared her memories of B. Mammadov. Let us emphasise the participation of students in such projects of the Baku Choreography Academy. Thus, the students performed *Çobanlar* dance (Shepherds) staged by B. Mammadov in due time.

In November 2015, on the days of the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creative activity of the People’s Artist of Azerbaijan T. Muradova, famous dance groups and soloists from many countries of the world took part in the concert program as a sign of understanding of the high professional level of Azerbaijani folk stage dance.

The professionalism of Azerbaijani folk stage dance is based on classical education and the high status of choreographers. T. Muradova, People’s Artist of Azerbaijan, soloist and choreographer of the State Dance Ensemble of Azerbaijan, brought her individuality, her understanding of national choreography to the development of Azerbaijani folk stage dance.

Since 1995 T. Muradova has been a ballet master of the State Dance Ensemble of Azerbaijan. T. Muradova gave her own interpretation of folk dances, which received their filigree embodiment on the concert stage. Among them are *Naz eleme*, *Qavalla reqs*, *Vaghzalı*, *Mirzeyi*.

With the support and organisation of the Baku Choreography Academy, the First International Competition of Classical and National Dances was held. Of course, this competition served as a huge impetus to the development of national choreography, opened the way to new searches.

The holding of International festivals and competitions, in which a large number of students become participants, is a striking indicator not only of interest in the art of choreography, but also, which is especially important, a manifestation of attention to the incentives and motivations of young choreographers and dancers.

The competition was dedicated to the memory of the first ballerina of Azerbaijan, Gamer Almaszade, and was the first in terms of the breadth of the competition in the C.I.S.

### Conclusions

The study of various aspects of the activities of the Baku Choreography Academy indicates that a new and significant trend in modern stage dance is the intensification of the search for, I would say, creative, more perfect ways to improve performers’ professionalism. Systematic training in this context must be combined with purposeful practical creative activity. As a result of this kind of expedient approach, it is effective to develop creative abilities and concentrate the experience of a concert performance of Azerbaijani folk stage dance.

Thus, we can say that the intensification of practical concert activity manifests itself in the fact that new traditions in the performing culture of Azerbaijani folk stage dance are created in its functioning in the educational process.

The educational process at the beginning of the 21st century is more socially oriented. Building capacity, shaping perspectives and, most importantly, building the adaptive capacity of teams.

This postulate is fully compatible with the main vectors of the Baku Choreography Academy.

Thus, based on this factual material, we can argue for one of the main directions of the pedagogical process at Choreography Academy, namely, the socialisation of learning.

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**РОЛЬ ОСВІТНІХ ПРОЦЕСІВ  
У ФОРМУВАННІ НОВИХ ТЕНДЕНЦІЙ  
АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСЬКОГО НАРОДНОГО  
СЦЕНІЧНОГО ТАНЦЮ  
НА ПОЧАТКУ ХХІ СТОЛІТТЯ**

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Мета статті полягає в дослідженні нових напрямків в хореографічній освіті на прикладі Бакинської хореографічної академії. Методологія дослідження спирається на метод історизму, для дослідження азербайджанського народного сценічного танцю в контексті визначеного історичного періоду розвитку азербайджанської культури. Більш того, розгляд діяльності Бакинської хореографічної академії під час дослідження корелюється з процесами, які відбуваються в сучасному Азербайджані. Метод історизму дозволяє виявити знакові з точки зору історичного процесу тенденції в розвитку азербайджанського народного сценічного танцю. Наукова новизна дослідження полягає в тому, що вперше зроблено дослідження сучасного функціонування азербайджанського народного танцювального мистецтва в ХХІ столітті. Новизна також визначається новим матеріалом, використаним в даній статті. Вперше систематично класифікуються параметри освітніх методів азербайджанського народного сценічного танцю — специфіка, сценічна реалізація, навчання, культурні взаємозв'язки. Висновки. Поряд з синтезом загального та спеціалізованого досвіду, накопиченого в рамках роботи Бакинської хореографічної академії, висуваються і інші параметри навчання. У статті підкреслюється участь студентів Бакинської хореографічної академії на сценах провідних театрів республіки, формує в них якості культурної і соціальної адекватності вимогам суспільства, контекста. Спеціальні знання хореографічного мистецтва, які обумовлюють подальшу продуктивну діяльність в рамках танцювального мистецтва, вигострюються на професійній сцені.

*Ключові слова:* освіта; культура; хореографія; балет; мистецтво; сцена; танець; соціум

**РОЛЬ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫХ  
ПРОЦЕССОВ В ФОРМИРОВАНИИ  
НОВЫХ ТЕНДЕНЦИЙ  
АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОГО НАРОДНОГО  
СЦЕНИЧЕСКОГО ТАНЦА  
В НАЧАЛЕ ХХІ ВЕКА**

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Цель статьи заключается в исследовании новых направлений в хореографическом образовании на примере Бакинской хореографической академии. Методология исследования опирается на метод историзма, для исследования азербайджанского народного сценического танца в контексте определенного исторического периода развития

азербайджанской культуры. Более того, рассмотрение деятельности Бакинской хореографической академии на протяжении исследования коррелируется с процессами, которые происходят в современном Азербайджане. Метод историзма позволяет выявлять знаковые с точки зрения исторического процесса тенденции в развитии азербайджанского народного сценического танца. Научная новизна исследования заключается в том, что впервые предпринято исследование современного функционирования азербайджанского народного танцевального искусства в XXI веке. Новизна также определяется новым материалом, использованным в данной статье. Впервые систематически классифицируются параметры образовательных методов азербайджанского народного сценического танца — специфика, сценическая реализация, обучение, культурные взаимосвязи. Выводы. Наряду с синтезом общего и специализированного опыта, накопленного в рамках работы Бакинской хореографической академии, выдвигаются и другие параметры обучения. В статье подчеркивается участие студентов Бакинской Академии хореографии на сценах ведущих театров республики, формирует в них качества культурной и социальной адекватности требованиям обществу, контекста. Специальные знания хореографического искусства, которые обуславливают дальнейшую продуктивную деятельность в рамках танцевального искусства, оттачиваются на профессиональной сцене.

*Ключевые слова:* образование; культура; хореография; балет; искусство; сцена; танец; социум

