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**From jazz to minimalism: On stylistic features of music for the ballet
«THE GREAT GATSBY».**

The article is devoted to one of the brightest events in the modern Ukrainian ballet theater – premiere of “The Great Gatsby”. The article highlights the history of the composition and determines genre features of the choreographic performance. Particular attention is given to the stylistics of the musical language and to the specificity of the musical drama ballet.

Keywords: modern ballet, genre features, leitmotif system, style of musical language.

In the history of the genre of ballet, as well as in cultural-historical process as a whole, there can be observed some cyclical repetitions. The beginning of the last century was marked with an unprecedented rise of interest for the art of ballet. Let's recall that in 2013 we celebrated 100 years from the premier of “The Rite of Spring” by Igor Stravinsky in Paris, which marked the beginning of a new stage in the development of the world ballet. A new era opened by Diaghilev's Seasons, became apparent not only in the dance, but also in music, as the main stylistic trends of musical art of the early twentieth century were reflected in the peculiarities of the musical language of the Stravinsky's ballets. Today, we are separated from those events with a century of searches and experiments, with the development of the traditional ballet genres and creation of new genre varieties. This article will consider one of the genre models of ballet having kept its actuality at the beginning of the XXI century.

In the autumn of 2014 in the Ukrainian ballet world it happened an extraordinary event, which caused a wide resonance. In a difficult political and economic situation, in the shortest possible time, it was realized a project of the global level. We mean the ballet “The Great Gatsby”, which premiered in Kiev in

the Palace “Ukraine” on 28 October 2014 and became the highest-grossing event of the previous year.

The idea of the project belonged to the charismatic Ukrainian modern dancer Denis Matvienko. A native of Dnepropetrovsk, graduate of the famous Kiev ballet school, world's only winner of four Grand Prix of the leading ballet competitions, winner of the Vazlav Nijinsky Prize and the Prize “Soul of the Dance” in the category “Star”, at the moment he is a star actor of the Mariinsky Theatre. It was about him that a legend of the world ballet Natalya Makarova said in an interview: “This is Baryshnikov, Nureyev and Godunov in one person. We have not met such a phenomenon in the ballet for a long time” [3].

Having got experience not only as a soloist, but also as an artistic director of the ballet troupe of the National Opera, D. Matvienko conceived a project with the motto to go beyond the genre framework in order to create a completely new direction, not chained with rules and boundaries. It had to be a choreographic performance combining elements of classical ballet, modern dance and cinematography.

As a basis of the plot it was taken a novel by American writer Francis Scott Fitzgerald “The Great Gatsby.” According to the authors of the project, the topics raised in the novel are timeless and perfectly in tune with the modern world: the gap between dream and reality, love and betrayal, ambition and loneliness ...

The staging of the play was entrusted to one of the most successful choreographers of the contemporaneity, American Dwight Roden, well known for his collaboration with Cirque du Soleil and creation of stage shows for stars like Prince, Lenny Kravitz, Kelly Clarkson, Nina Simon, U2, etc. [10].

The troupe for the performance was gathered from three countries, it included dancers of Complexions Contemporary Ballet (New York), soloists of the Mariinsky Theatre and dancers selected during the Ukrainian casting. The main roles were brilliantly performed by Denis Matvienko and Anastasia Matvienko.

Composing of music for the play was offered to Konstantin Meladze, who had not worked in the ballet genre before. According to the authors of the project, reference to the famous pop composer was imposed by a desire to confront stereotypes of the classical ballet. In an interview, answering the question concerning his attitude to the composer, Denis Matvienko said: “Of course, I really like his music. Originally the choreographer Dwight Rhoden created the libretto on which Constantine wrote the music. He very expressively showed what Dwight wanted: enchanting paints of the first act, 1920-s, parties, reckless life of the American bohemians. And absolutely opposite by its sounding the gloomy second act is, where there is the feeling that everything goes to hell "[9].

The scenario plan provided by D. Roden, quite generally conveys the outline of the novel’s plot. Spectators being familiar with the novel, easy recognizes particular parts in the choreographic scenes. Those who have not read the novel perceive the general mood and emotions transmitted by the language of dance. The choreographer told about this as follows: “The effect of the age can be grasped through the way the artists move, through the pace, gait, gestures, costume design. But we are not trying to authentically recreate the 1920s; we only make references, allusions, creating an indefinite period of time. So you will not see any crackers with confetti and cigarettes with mouthpieces, but you will get some aesthetic sense of those times through the sets, costumes, certain movements of Charleston. But only some kind of feeling, because it is a fusion, a junction of times, as Gatsby – he is out of time and we return to the fact that the history of him is out of any temporal frames. It's about greed, love, success, loneliness – about everything we feel and understand nowadays” [8].

Of course, some associations of the audience may arise in connection with the film by Baz Luhrmann (2013) with Leonardo DiCaprio in the key role. However, Denis Matvienko insisted that he was trying to create an image of Gatsby, first of all, identical to that created by S. Fitzgerald. The stage manager praised the work of the soloist to create the image and emphasized that in his interview: “Denis turned to be an excellent Gatsby, the Great Gatsby indeed!” He

is a fantastic actor, able to transform into any character. The main thing, that immediately lead me to the idea that Denis is perfect for this role: Denis is incredibly charismatic on stage, and Gatsby is a very charismatic character, in this point they totally coincide. Also, I understood that it was Denis who would be able to convey all the depth of the character of Gatsby” [8].

The coloristic palette of the suits (stylized a la fashion of the 1920s) was designed with preference to black and white tones, against which there effectively played the bright garments of the solo characters. The overall picture was remarkable for its richness, which was enforced by use of cinematographic footage on the screen situated at the rear of the stage. The visuals either completed the action on the stage, or contrasted with it, creating an additional semantic context. The choreography, combining elements of classical ballet and Contemporary dance, was breathing expression.

In some scenes bench choreography was used: for example, in the midst of a party over the stage there appeared several chandeliers on which dancers began to perform elements of aerial acrobatics.

Similarly it was solved the final scene of the death of Gatsby in which the character in the novel is swimming in the pool but in the ballet he performs a solo in the air.

As a result, the play turned out to be very spectacular, that certainly made an impression on the audience and was noted by critics. For example, a correspondent of Gazeta.ru Anna Gordeeva said: “Suffering adagio of the protagonists attracts with punctual graphics of poses that every second break, melt, then in the vain hope they line up again, and gestures of Gatsby recall some signs desperately fed by a signalman from the ship – signs that no one is able to decipher; Gatsby is understood by nobody. Even by Nick Carraway, whose exalted phrase is included to the libretto: “They're a rotten crowd... You're worth the whole damn bunch put together.”

Music by Konstantin Meladze, who specializes in pop compositions, is stylized to the music of the 1920s, but is more aggressive, and it sometimes annoys: the dances, invented by D. Roden, are thinner than the score” [5].

Apart from the ability to question what “thinner”, music or dance, we would like to move on to the analysis of the actual musical base of the performance. In the novel of S. Fitzgerald the time of action is characterized as “Jazz Age” that all at once identified one of the stylistic dominants of the music for the ballet. Working over creation of the musical foundation of Act I, Konstantin Meladze turned to his partner in numerous pop projects Yuri Shepeta, who is a graduate of the Theoretical Department of Vinnytsia Music College, jazz composer and performer, also known as a professional arranger.

Many years of working in the field of arrangements, subtle feeling of instrumental timbres allowed him to brilliantly perform an orchestration to the music for Act I. But in the process of creation of Act II, his functions moved from performing orchestrations to the work of the composer. The result is that a deep imaginative contrast between two acts of the ballet is underlined stylistically, as the music belongs to the different authors. Yet it is completely consistent with the concept proposed by the choreographer, and doesn't violate the integrity of the overall perception of the music, thanks to the presence of the leitmotif system.

The musical composition of the performance is oriented to the availability of perception. A kaleidoscope of melodies that seem both new and familiar at the same time, line up a series of items, which are easily visualized during listening. The question of the artistic intrinsic value of the ballet music may be discussed. On the one hand, its role is subordinate, it was inspired by choreographic ideas, and has a clear rhythmic, image-bearing and temporary assignments. On the other hand, as P. Tchaikovsky wrote to P. Jurgenson: “ballet is the same symphony” [7, p. 143]. History knows many examples of ballet music that went beyond the theater (the matter concerns symphonic suites created on the bases of music for ballets). The further fate of the present work is not yet known, but it is clear that

the figurative content of the novel is realized in the musical dramaturgy with no less expression than in the choreographic composition.

The ballet score was written for a large symphony orchestra of ternary body with a wide variety of percussion instruments. There were introduced the parts of harp, piano, synthesizer and vocals. During the premiere the music was performed by the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine under the baton of Vladimir Sirenko.

This orchestra also carried out a studio recording, which was used as a soundtrack to the touring stagings in Odessa, St. Petersburg, Moscow.

The Fusion style, specified by D. Rhoden, identified stylistic interactions of the music series. With sufficient originality of the musical material, an allusive series arising in the process of listening is quite wide.

Gershwin's symphojazz, impulsive rhythms of Stravinsky's ballets, signs of Mahler's symphonic handwriting, orchestration techniques of composers of the French school, vim of thinking of Russian symphonic composers, methods of work with thematic structures of postminimalists, aleatory and sonority modes, the pointillism technique – all of them in a merger give a new artistic quality. This merging of jazz and minimalism was set by the choreographer. This direction in the sphere of film music is quite popular at the present moment and it had to contribute to accessibility of the musical language for the ballet audience.

Music of act I, obliged to recreate the jazz flavor of America of the early XX century, is based on typed harmonic and rhythmic turns of jazz standards.

Expressive melodicism and colorful orchestration compensate some discreteness of the structure that forms a kaleidoscope of contrasting episodes.

The musical composition of Act II, the content of which is concentrated on the inner experiences of the characters, is performed with completely different musical means. The author freely appeals to compositional techniques, worked out by the musical art of the XX century. Constantly growing internal tension is being created by means of complication of the vertical by layering the second harmonies

and use of clusters, pointillism techniques and aleatoric episodes reproducing the inner perturbation of the characters.

As for the method of minimalism, it's realized in application of an even rhythmic pulsation used throughout all the particular scene or episode. Plus as a rule only one component of orchestral manner is constructed on ostinato repetition of a thematical cell. In this music it is impossible to detect any evenness of dynamics, inherent to minimalism, as well as absence of both strong culminations and emphasized emotionality, because "accumulation" (term of T. Riley) created by the minimalist techniques, discharges in the music of the ballet with culminating bursts.

Two leitmotifs serve as binding thematic component in the music for the ballet: the themes of Gatsby and Daisy, stated in the overture. The first of these leitmotifs, in fact, is the main characteristic of the lyrical line in the musical dramaturgy. Even though there is a number of expressive lyrical scenes, their musical material does not receive such a consistent development, as the leitmotif of Gatsby's love. It is based on two differently oriented melodic elements: rapidly ascending, starting with quart leap, and descending, which is based on the gradual movement with predominance of second intonations. At the moment of exposure of this theme in the overture, it sounds in the parts of piano, strings and woodwinds. Harmonic layers and descending supporting voices are intensified with brass.

The scope of the register coverage is highlighted with colorful glissando of harp across the entire range. Immediately after the leitmotif of Gatsby it starts the Daisy's theme. Against the background of sustained chords of strings and brass, the solo soprano performs a short vocal phrase, based on repetitive second intonations. Both the content of the text ("That's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool") and its musical realization create an image of the character, devoid of psychological depth.

It is the leitmotif of Daisy that sounds in the finale of Act I (scene 9, f. 8). Once again we hear the jazz vocal but a small rhythmic reemphasis clearly

accentuates the proximity of the theme to the second element of the Gatsby's leitmotif. Intonation unity of the two leitmotifs is perfectly proved dramaturgically, because it is the feeling of Gatsby to Daisy that becomes the driving force in all the major plot peripetias of the ballet.

The theme of Gatsby plays an important role in the musical dramaturgy of the ballet as a whole. It is the basis of the musical composition of Scene 4. According to the scenario plan of D. Rodin, it is a duo of the main characters arising in imagination of Gatsby, "a surreal scene, like a dream" [6].

Then this material appears in the center of the scene at the Gatsby's party, which Nick Carraway visits for the first time (Scene 6, f. 8). It is performed by piano solo with the following supporting voices of strings, when in the midst of revelry in Gatsby's imagination it appears the image of Daisy...

The first phrase of the leitmotif performed by harp and piano sounds in the tragic culmination of the Act I, in the scene of death of Myrtle (Scene 18, f. 8).

At the beginning of Scene 19, in which Gatsby, being in the shelter, watches returning Nick and Tom, disjointed intonations of leitmotif sound in the part of clarinet (f. 1) and then the in the part of strings (f. 3, 5, 7).

At last, the final scene of Gatsby's death is also based on his leitmotif. After dark, rich with dissonant sound choral entry, it follows a short stretto sounding of descending element of Gatsby's theme in the part of woodwind. After that, strings for the last time sound the main lyrical theme of the play.

In addition, in the music of the ballet there are themes, though not pretending to be a leitmotif, but playing an important role in the musical realization of the plot. For example, thematic interchanges in the music of two acts of the ballet are formed due to reproduction of the lyrical theme from Scene 2, Act I in

Scene 15 of Act II. For the first time this theme, performed by strings accompanied by harp, occurs in the orchestra when Nick sees his neighbor Gatsby dreaming. In Act II, this theme is performed in the scene with the paparazzi when Daisy and Gatsby remain alone in his mansion.

Any leitmotif of love is actually absent in the ballet, but still in the musical dramaturgy of the ballet there are items that implement mutual feelings of the main characters. For example, in Scene 13, according to the conception of D. Rodin, the heroes “with a short, slow, sensual duet experience incredible moments of intimacy” [6]. After the introductory section, intended to remind about an old letter sometime written by Daisy, it appears an incredibly delicate, elegant, lyrical theme, which, with its transparency resembles plays of E. Satie. The partners perform a touching grand pas de deux. However, this theme of the highest unity of love is not heard in the ballet anymore.

Turning to generalizations, the following conclusions can be made:

- at the present stage the ballet tends to hold positions of the mass genre and is seeking for means that appeal to a wide audience;
- having passed through a phase of being enthusiastic about plotless compositions, the art of ballet does not lose interest to the plot varieties of the genre;
- tending to chamber stagings, peculiar to the last century, has changed to return to full-scale performances;
- ballet performance as a synthetic genre uses expressive means of various arts (including cinematograph);
- choreographic composition tends to polystylistics, to merging of different dance styles with elements of acrobatics;
- music language of the modern ballet longs for universalism, using all the compositional techniques, elaborated both by academic and popular art.

Hopefully, the ballet “The Great Gatsby” will be the first one in a series of similar projects, opening prospects for realization of creative potential of Ukrainian choreographers and musicians.

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