

**DANCE PERFORMANCE
AS A PHENOMENON OF EUROPEAN ART**

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary dance performance is a unique phenomenon that expands the boundaries of traditional choreography, combining elements of theater, music, visual arts, and performative practices. Its roots trace back to the experimental dance of the 20th century, where artists sought to transcend canonical forms and discover new ways of expressing corporeality and movement. Rudolf Laban, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida viewed dance as a form of discourse and a means of communication. In the European artistic context, dance performance serves as a space for socio-critical reflections, bodily explorations, and technological experiments.

Modern research in the field of performative arts often focuses on the interaction between art and society, emphasizing the role of performance as a form of social expression. In the European context, dance performance has traditionally been perceived as an elite form of art, but in recent decades, it has acquired new significance in light of social and political transformations.

It is important to note that dance performance is a vital part of the cultural heritage of European countries, and its study provides deeper insights into historical and contemporary processes in society and new art forms. In times of heightened political activity, dance performance becomes a significant means of expressing public opinion, accessible to everyone.

One of the main features of dance performance is its ability to blur the boundaries between art and life, inviting spectators to actively participate and engage. Dance performance emphasizes the transmission of meaning and emotions, making it a powerful tool for communication and audience influence.

Dance performance as an artistic phenomenon emerged as a result of modernist explorations of alternative forms of bodily expression. Changes in the socio-cultural context of the 20th and 21st centuries contributed to the transformation of traditional choreographic approaches, leading to the emergence of new experimental methods of movement practice.

In the 21st century, dance performance takes on new forms through the use of digital technologies, sound design, and virtual reality. Performers explore corporeality through improvisational methods and interaction with unconventional spaces, such as urban locations and online platforms. Ukrainian dance performance is actively developing thanks to the creativity of choreographers and directors like Stanislava Ovchinnikova, Olena Shoptenko, Dmytro Sharykov, Olena Shabalina, Nina Khizhnyia, Rita Lyra, and Sasha Kurmaz, who introduce innovative methods of movement research. Dance performances from Western and Eastern European countries are widely represented through the works of contemporary choreographers and directors such as Gilles Jobin, Sasha Waltz, Sławomir Krawczyński, Anna Godowska, and Xavier Le Roy.

In performance art, dancers can use various means of expression, including unconventional movements, objects, props, costumes, and even direct interaction with the audience or surrounding space. The goal of dance performance is often to create an atmosphere, illustrate a concept or idea, and provoke intellectual and emotional engagement with the audience.

It is essential to emphasize that a characteristic feature of dance performances is their interdisciplinarity. In representing an artistic image, multiple forms of artistic expression emerge—architecture, painting, sculpture, choreography; poetry, literature, conference-style narration, cinema, and web design; music in genres such as new age and enigmatic, as well as abstract sounds and audio effects; acting techniques, stage movement, stage combat, pantomime, and light manipulation. Thus, this issue remains relevant for contemporary scientific research.

1. Contemporary Trends in the Development of Dance Performances in Ukraine

Ukrainian choreographers are actively creating dance performances that reflect the pressing philosophical themes of contemporary culture: pain, fear, horror, and despair of Ukrainians during the Russia-Ukraine war; the urgent issue of orphanhood; the psychological struggles of widows of Ukrainian soldiers who died defending their country; the theme of cultural identity formation; the search for a new, fulfilling life; and ideas of cosmism, existentialism, and psychoanalysis.

Dance performances are frequently presented at contemporary dance festivals. As noted in the works of O. Bilokin: "Every performance is a story-message that each spectator deciphers in their own way. However, dancers have no restrictions on their actions to convey their core idea, which is essential for any performance. Artists most often explore themes of the body, identity, politics, and society. Today, however, the majority focus on

war-related issues, including the loss of loved ones, loss of home, violence, cruelty, human suffering, destruction, economic losses, stress, psychological trauma, and disability"¹.

In Ukraine, dance performances are widely showcased at the "Zelyonka SPACE UP" festival, a performative platform where artists express socially significant ideas through performances. The founder and creator of this artistic space is Anton Ovchinnikov, a performer, choreographer, manager, and organizer of educational and art projects in performative arts.

To clarify, let us define the terms "performance" and "dance performance." As stated by R. Goldenberg, performance is a form of postmodern culture and contemporary postmodernist art of an actionist nature that occurs "here and now." In artistic performance, there is often no meticulously planned scenario, with the artist's personal experience and emotions during execution being the central focus².

In our view, dance performance is a form of stage art that combines elements of dance, theater, visual arts, and music. It expands the boundaries of traditional performances by emphasizing ideas, concepts, and audience impact. It is often based on improvisational approaches and movement research, while also carrying a socially critical or conceptual nature.

Thus, Ukrainian dance performances can be classified by choreography type as folk dance performances, based on Ukrainian folk dances, and contemporary performances, incorporating improvisation and experimentation with movement, space, and time. By dance style, performances are categorized as neoclassical performances, merging contemporary choreography, ballet, and illusion, and postmodern performances, often addressing themes of deconstruction, identity, and social critique. Performances can also be classified by the number of performers: solo, duet, trio, quartet, or group.

Philosophical-Psychological Themes in Dance Performance. A dance performance that carries a philosophical-psychological message, appealing to the higher consciousness of modern individuals, is the neoclassical ballet-performance "The Fall of the Fallen Angel." This performance, set to the music of Michael Cretu, was directed and choreographed by Denys Sharykov, with costumes and artistic design by Natalia Bannova and Denys Sharykov, and illusion techniques by Artur Tomashevsky. The ballet was presented at the 5th International Contemporary Choreography Competition "Super Dance – 2018". The core idea of the neoclassical ballet-performance is "From macrocosm to microcosm and back to macrocosm." The key

¹ Білокінь О. Розвиток танцювального перформансу в Україні в контексті прогресу сучасного мистецтва. *Актуальні питання гуманітарних наук*. Вип. 77, том 1, 2024. С. 79-83. DOI <https://doi.org/10.24919/2308-4863/77-1-10>

² Goldenberg R. L. *Performance Art: from Futurisme to the Present*. Singapore: Thames & Hudson world of art, 2000. 232 p. : ill.

message is: "We are on Earth only to learn how to love." The ballet consists of eight scenes and eight performers, where the number eight symbolizes infinity. The music is from the album "The Fall of a Rebel Angel," the eighth studio album by the German music project Enigma. The ballet-performance narrates the journey of a contemporary hero searching for a new, fulfilling life, transitioning from the decay of modern society to the cosmic light of the Creator³.

The philosophical essence of "The Fall of the Fallen Angel" is rooted in aesthetics and the ideas of cosmism, existentialism, and psychoanalysis. The plot explores the metaphysical duality of humanity. In its origin, humanity is angelic. However, by the 21st century, moral degradation in society has reached such a level that few dare to leave behind consumerism and embrace divine beauty. A bright star from the depths of the cosmos, symbolizing the Creator's love, descends to Earth and ignites a divine spark in the hero's mind and heart, allowing them to resist the darkness of society's decay. The ballet showcases the inner conflict between good and evil, light and darkness. Will the protagonist remain in darkness, or will they embrace the light of love? The fall of humanity has already occurred—now, they seek a path back to their true origin⁴.

The neoclassical ballet-performance blends choreography and illusion, incorporating contemporary dance techniques such as neoclassical dance, contact improvisation, and contemporary jazz dance with acrobatics. It is visually magical, featuring light effects and conveying a philosophical-psychological message, addressing the viewer's subconscious mind⁵.

Contemporary Ukrainian Dance Performances Addressing Societal Issues. Ukrainian choreographer Olena Shoptenko created the dance performance "Motanka" featuring 120 Ukrainian women and men in Vienna for Ukraine's Independence Day. The performance is centered around a four-meter-high Motanka doll, a traditional Ukrainian protective talisman, dedicated to Ukrainian women. The Motanka represents grief yet fertility, resilience yet love. Each woman in the performance shared her personal journey of escaping war for her children's safety. The performance is based

³ Про перформанс «В полі зору». Jam Factory Art Center. URL: <https://jamfactory.ua/projects/in-one-s-sight-dance-performance/#/>

⁴ Marselle Mitchel, Ginot Isabelle. *La Dance au XXe siecle* / Marselle Mitchel, Ginot Isabelle. Paris : Bordas, 1995. 264 p. : ill.

⁵ Шариков Д. Неокласичний балет-перформанс «Падіння занепаłego ангела». Актуальні питання гуманітарних наук. Мистецтвознавство. Вип 19, том 1, 2018. С.66-70. URL: https://www.aphn-journal.in.ua/archive/19_2018/part_1/14.pdf . DOI <https://doi.org/10.24919/2308-4863.1/19.167593>

on real events, serving as a reminder of the devastating consequences of the Russia-Ukraine war⁶.

Another unique dance performance is "YIY MOVA" by choreographer and director Kateryna Kuznetsova, exploring identity transformation through language change. Presented at the Kyiv Opera, this plastic-poetic confession delves into the psychological process of forming a new identity through language.

As K. Kuznetsova states: *"My personal experience of forming a new identity directly shaped the need to create this performance. I am originally from the Donetsk region. For 28 years of my life, I was a Russian-speaking Ukrainian. It was only with the full-scale invasion in 2014 that I made the decision to change the language I spoke. Like many others at the time, I barely understood what was happening. It sounds strange—I was a direct witness to the events, yet I had no real understanding of what was unfolding, apart from the fact that shells from Grad or Smerch rocket systems were flying over my head."*

"For me, changing my language is not just about changing my vocabulary. Speaking another language feels like becoming a different person, with a new sound, a different way of thinking, and, as a result, new habits, decisions, and conclusions. Becoming a new person is not always easy or painless. Language is undeniably about identity. And now is the time to find my own," explains director Kateryna Kuznetsova. The performance reflects the painful reality of thousands of people who have lived through war and loss, including the loss of language and the formation of a new cultural identity amid psychological and moral fractures⁷.

The work seeks answers to these questions based on the personal experience of its creator, Kateryna Kuznetsova, and can serve as a form of therapy and healing for those who have faced similar traumas. The performance aims to depict the internal struggle between warm nostalgic memories and the conscious determination to reject everything associated with Russian subculture and propaganda narratives.

Apart from the choreographer, director, and performer Kateryna Kuznetsova, the performance involved choreographer assistants Oleksandra Maksymchuk and Sofiia Andriichenko, with scenography and costumes designed by Olena Polishchuk. The lighting was created by Svitlana Zmieieva, and the music was composed by Ivan Harkusha and Ivan Lykhovid.

⁶ Шоптенко Олена. Танцювальний перформанс. URL: <https://dance.knukim.edu.ua/tancyuvalnij-performans/>

⁷ Луценко Євгенія. Нову опору можливо створити в гармонії: як перформанс "Її Мова" рефлексує про формування нової культурної ідентичності. URL: <https://suspilne.media/culture/896703-novu-oporu-mozливо-stvoriti-v-garmonii-ak-performans-ii-mova-refleksue-pro-formuvannna-novoi-kulturnoi-identichnosti/>

Another original postmodern dance performance, *"In Sight,"* which explores inner resilience and the formation of cultural identity, was created by director Nina Khizhnyia and the performative laboratory *"Lab for Ukraine."* This is a joint Ukrainian-Finnish artistic project by Jam Factory Art Center (Lviv, Ukraine) and the ANTI – Contemporary Art Festival (Kuopio, Finland). The performance features dancers Sofiia Sliusarenko, Oksana Leuta, Anastasiia Lisovska, Yaryna Shumska, and Nataliia Mazur.

In *"In Sight,"* five choreographers experiment with the properties of the collective body through dance and play, symbolizing a society undergoing radical mass events. The performers also explore how vision shapes the image of the observed subject, making it real. *"We need the gaze of another person to affirm our existence, to validate our experiences, both in moments of daily joy and major challenges. Likewise, we need to see and acknowledge the experiences of others."* *"For me, perhaps the most important aspect is the shared experience of our realities—how we, as a society, can remain united even in difficult times. Also, how we can build a new culture of mourning, commemoration, mutual support, and simply enduring together through dance, movement, and gathering,"* says Nina Khizhnyia⁸.

The music for *"In Sight"* was composed by Aliona Kovalenko, who recorded and incorporated the sounds of dancers' bodies into the musical score specifically for this performance. Artist Dasha Chechushkova created an installation-like scenography and visual concepts for the performers, while Dmytro Pashko developed the artistic video projection, closely observing the movement properties of the dancers' bodies. *"On stage, we do not see trained dancers executing polished choreography, but rather a diverse group of women whose movements emerge from everyday actions and experiences familiar to many,"* shares project co-curator Liuba Ilnytska⁹.

The philosophical ideas of contemporary Ukrainian performer Rita Lyra stand out as original. She received her dance education in Kyiv and, in her work, combines contemporary dance, street dance styles, visual art, and documentary practices. Her work is deeply connected with theories and reflections on mental traps, war, and the displacement of Ukrainians to other countries. Rita's performances have been presented in France, Lithuania, Romania, Spain, Czechia, Poland, and Ukraine. She is also a member of UA Contemporary Dance Platform. In 2022, Rita was forced to leave Ukraine. She moved to Paris, where she spent a year in residence at Cité

⁸ Про перформанс «В полі зору». Jam Factory Art Center. URL: <https://jamfactory.ua/projects/in-one-s-sight-dance-performance/#/>

⁹ Хромова Оксана. «В полі зору» танцювальний перформанс українсько-фінської лабораторії. "Lab for Ukraine". Газета «Еспресо». Розділ «Культура». URL: <https://espresso.tv/kultura-u-kyevi-pokazhut-tantsyuvalniy-performans-ii-mova-pro-vnutrishnyu-oporu-ta-formuvannya-kulturnoi-identichnosti>

Internationale des Arts. During this time, she created and presented her performance *"THE TRAP."* Recently, Rita completed her studies in the *Hérodote* program at *Beaux-Arts de Paris*.

The performance *"THE TRAP"* by Ukrainian choreographer Rita Lyra has a strong philosophical foundation. She states: *"Have you ever felt trapped inside and outside your own body? It's as if you created the trap yourself, and yet you cannot escape. How do you feel inside? How can you find the way out?"* This performance explores the feeling of being stuck—within oneself and within the surrounding environment. The costume consists of a cocoon-like *"second skin,"* with long fabric strands extending outward, attaching to surrounding objects, illustrating both physical and psychological entrapment. The idea for this project came to Rita during a sleepless night, haunted by fears and a lack of direction. *"I found myself in a state of paralysis—mentally, trapped in my thoughts and emotions, and physically, literally unable to move from my bed. I realized that the barriers holding me back existed only in my mind, yet I still could not move"*¹⁰/

The performance was filmed by director of photography Denys Lisovets, with music composed by Yana Shliabanska and video editing by Oleksandra Legostaieva.

On February 25, 2023, the performance *"Untitled"* took place, created by multidisciplinary Ukrainian artist Sasha Kurmaz and choreographed by Danya Zubkov and Lora Konup. The idea for this piece originated in the summer of 2023, after Kurmaz heard about two Ukrainian sisters who were detained by police for dancing in a cemetery near the graves of soldiers, including their father. This event sparked his reflections on movement as a possible form of commemoration for the deceased. *"There are universally recognized gestures of mourning—kneeling, placing a hand over the heart,"* says Kurmaz. *"These movements are immediately perceived by society as gestures of remembrance. I became curious about how movement can be used in more complex ways to express grief and commemoration."* *"Can we create a new gesture, a new form, a new movement that also conveys mourning but in a more profound way than simply kneeling or placing a hand on the heart?"* The performance took place in a space partially destroyed by missile strikes from the Russian army. Performers assumed various postures, slowly and almost imperceptibly shifting between them. Some spectators had tears in their eyes. The audience moved around the

¹⁰ Ліра Ріта. «THE TRAP». Платформа сучасного танцю. URL: https://danceplatform.org.ua/database_of_performances/the_trap

performers, occasionally stopping themselves—sometimes because the shattered glass on the floor slowed their steps¹¹.

The choreography was executed by the *Workshop of Contemporary Dance* team. Performance director Danya Zubkov emphasized that the movements embodied respect and remembrance, and this sense of reverence guided the dancers' execution. The project involved ten performers: Olia Salo, Daryna Panas, Kateryna Domotenko, Mykhailo Myrnyi, Hanna Volchkova, Maryna Semenchenko, Anastasiia Shvydenko, Anastasiia Sia, and Yana Kurliak.

2. Features of Dance Performances by European Choreographers in the Second Half of the 20th and 21st Centuries

The performative turn that began in the 1960s in Europe influenced both dance and theater. Although performance art permeated these forms with different semantic nuances and motivations, it brought them closer to a certain extent. Contemporary dance began to institutionalize within contemporary art and was introduced into museum spaces. Modern art borrowed from dance its interest in corporeality and the idea of liberating the body, as promoted by representatives of Viennese Actionism, feminist performance, and body art.

Theater, on the other hand, sought to avoid institutional constraints, fostering multimedia and intermedial practices that deconstruct visual impressions. While dismantling linear narratives, forms, and genre boundaries, theater also adopted conceptualism and materiality from contemporary art—focusing on the pure presence of objects, things, or the human body.

In Europe during the 20th century, expressionist dance (*Ausdruckstanz*) developed, represented by the work of Rudolf Laban and Kurt Jooss, who laid the foundation for movement analysis and dramatic dance.

As a form of artistic expression, dance performance in European countries evolved under the influence of socio-political changes. Today, it serves not only as a means of aesthetic self-expression but also as a tool for social and political protest. Experimental dance is a form of art where movement acts as the primary medium for conveying ideas, emotions, or concepts. It often incorporates elements of theater, music, visual arts, and media. Performances can take place on stage, in museums, on the streets, and in unexpected locations, emphasizing their universality and adaptability.

¹¹ Бакієва Марина. Кожен із нас - на своїй території болю. Саша Курмаз порушує питання вшанування пам'яті загиблих у своєму перформансі. DTF Magazine. URL: <https://donttakefake.com/kozhen-iz-nas-na-svoyij-terytoriyi-bolyu-sasha-kurmaz-pidnimaye-pytannya-vshanuvannya-pam-yati-zagiblyh-u-svoyemu-performansi/>

At the end of the 20th century, dance performance in Europe became integrated into contemporary art, combining movement with visual and performative elements. Key figures of this period include Pina Bausch (dance theater), William Forsythe (experiments with ballet form), and Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker (geometry of movement). At the same time, somatic methods (Feldenkrais Method, BMC, Gaga) were actively incorporated into dance performance practices, promoting conscious movement and bodily autonomy.

It is necessary to classify dance performances in European countries according to their purpose: research-based, informational, and creative. Additionally, dance performances can be categorized by dance style into modern, postmodern, and neoclassical performances.

Postmodern dance performances are characterized by action for the sake of action, often aesthetically grotesque or primitive in form, contact improvisation, and the use of any form of amateur art or everyday activities.

As part of the XXI Open Look Contemporary Dance Festival, a postmodern dance performance featuring digital choreography by Swiss choreographer Gilles Jobin, in collaboration with the VR Artanim studio, was presented under the title "VR I." Using motion sensors on dancers and immersive virtual reality, a model was created to project the performers' movements onto a screen. Five audience members then wore special sensor-equipped suits and VR headsets to observe the performers from different locations. While the spectators could touch one another, they could no longer look away from the scene unless they removed their headsets. This integration of choreography and technology redefines the perception of dance as an art form. The audience witnesses how 3D models replicate human dance movements and interact with other viewers through technology. The development of such technologies presents an ideal method for representing contemporary dance, making it more accessible and expanding its potential for future stage performances. Dancers typically train in a rehearsal studio with a choreographer, but on stage, their movements become a work of art.

The French dance company "Adrien M. & Claire B.," created by Adrien Mondot and Claire Bardainne, uses digital technology and video projection as the primary expressive tools in their dance performances. In the production "Pixel," eleven dancers interact with video projections displayed on the floor, backdrop, and transparent curtain at the front of the stage. The projections feature pixel graphics that mimic natural phenomena (such as rain) or sometimes appear as abstract patterns. These graphics are generated and animated in real-time, interacting with the performers.

As noted in the research of D. Sharykov, neoclassical choreographic performances are built on a dance-plastic foundation with a visual representation where improvisation and pictorial or poetic narrative are present¹².

In neoclassical ballet performances, there is a synthesis of contemporary choreography with illusionism, which involves lighting effects from specialized professional devices, stage lighting, and special effects like fire and smoke curtains. The choreography is represented by pantomime, contact improvisation, acrobatics, cape dances with fabric effects, contemporary jazz dance, and neoclassical ballet techniques. Alongside the ballet, a video format is shown on a screen, emphasizing the surreal world that connects with reality and the inner world of the human being—its heart and mind. The most important aspects of neoclassical performance are the clear ethical and aesthetic verticals, the plot, and the theatrical representation of the artistic image on stage¹³.

An original philosophical neoclassical dance performance is "Bataille and the Dawn of New Days" by Polish choreographers Slawomir Krawczyński and Anna Godowska. This performance was held on the stage of the Kyiv Academic Youth Theater on the final day of the International Dance Space Festival. The performance is dedicated to the legendary dancer Vaslav Nijinsky. For example, in the solo performance "Nijinsky. The Festival of Dreams," performed by Tomasz Wygoda, the eras of classical ballet and contemporary dance are combined. Wygoda does not try to outdance Nijinsky: the 20th and 21st centuries intersect through the recreation of the inner state of a genius. The performance was created based on Nijinsky's diaries and deep research into his emotional breakdown. Now, for the new performance, the Polish choreographers delved into the study of philosophical texts, dreams, and experiences of predecessors, exploring the explosions of "here and now".

Today, museums in Europe are increasingly incorporating performative exhibitions into their strategy, aiming to provide audiences with stronger emotional experiences and unique engagement. The role of performance in the new century has been further reinforced by the transformation of museums in the 2000s into cultural hubs, where visitors come not only for exhibitions but also to actively participate in artistic events.

¹² Шариков Д. І. Неокласицизм у хореографічній культурі: генеза і концепція балетного театру: монографія. Вінниця: Нілан-ЛТД, 2018. 334 с.:

¹³ Шариков Д. І. Естетична та мистецтвознавча теорія неокласицизму в хореографії в ХХ – на початку ХХІ столітті. *Міжнародний науковий журнал «Парадигми пізнання: гуманітарні питання»*. Серія «Мистецтво. Мистецтвознавство». К.: Центр міжнародного та наукового співробітництва ТК Меганом, 2015. № 2 (5). С. 118–127.

French performer Xavier Le Roy was invited by the Antoni Tàpies Foundation in Barcelona to stage the performance "The Rite of Spring" in a museum space where he acts as a conductor addressing the audience. In this performance, the artist created choreography based on conducting gestures directed toward a virtual orchestra, with pre-recorded music by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle. Through an in-depth analysis of the specificity of conducting gestures, closely connected with 20th-century musical avant-garde movements, Le Roy establishes the fundamental equivalence between the energy of a musician's (conductor's) gesture and that of a dancer in performance. The conceptual trajectories explored in this work extend far beyond the historical narrative of "The Rite of Spring," reinforcing its relevance as a generative discourse for contemporary choreographic practices¹⁴.

Le Roy's choreography critiques and reinterprets not only the music of "The Rite of Spring" but also its history of interpretations, expanding its artistic space through a series of new performative gestures within the conceptual frameworks of contemporary dance. In this unique ballet-conducting performance, the representation of the dancer/conductor's body transforms into a hypnotic entity with the power to captivate the audience. Viewers realize that in this case, it is not just the music generating movement but the body itself, producing conducting gestures that seem to bring the music into existence. The conducting gesture as a performative space in Le Roy's work raises questions about its nature and whether it can be understood within the choreographic context. He was particularly interested in exploring how the relationship with the audience would shift if the traditional theatrical space was replaced by a museum setting. However, due to the presence of numerous columns in the exhibition hall, which significantly limited visibility, Le Roy decided to fragment his work and distribute it among multiple dancers positioned throughout the space.

This conceptual experiment eventually led to the creation of "Retrospective," a performance Le Roy later staged with different groups of performers in Paris, Hamburg, New York, and other cities. In this piece, dancers present fragments of his works from various time periods, weaving them together with personal narratives and dance movements drawn from their own artistic journeys. The ideas of avant-garde movements such as Symbolism and Constructivism are frequently reflected in dance practices, contributing to the emergence of new forms of performative expression.

¹⁴ Ксав'є Лєрє розмовляє з Уїллом Роулзом. Movement research. URL: <https://movementresearch.org/publications/critical-correspondence/xavier-le-roy-in-conversation-with-will-rawls/>

A significant figure in German performance art from the late 20th to the 21st century is Sasha Waltz—a German choreographer, dancer, director, and performer. One of the key directions in her work is the creation of large-scale choreographic performances for the opening of new museum spaces. Sasha Waltz developed the improvisational format "Dialogues" in the early 1990s in Berlin, where she experimented with new choreographic approaches. Together with Jochen Sandig, she founded the Sasha Waltz & Guests dance company.

She soon expanded the concept of "Dialogues" by incorporating choreographic responses to architecture. In 2009, in the recently reconstructed New Museum in Berlin, 10,000 spectators moved through different halls, following dancers performing throughout the space. This project, "Dialogue 09 – New Museum," transformed the museum environment into an immersive performance space. The same year, her production "Dialogue 09 – MAXXI I" inaugurated the MAXXI Museum of 20th-Century Art in Rome.

The "Dialogues" series by Waltz represents an interaction of architecture, music, dance, and audience engagement. It can be described as a conceptual exploration of an emotionally charged and information-rich environment, temporarily transformed into a stage¹⁵. Simply put, dancing beyond the conventional stage—especially in an energy-charged space like a museum—offers an extraordinary experience, allowing audiences to perceive familiar elements in a new light. Each new exhibition hall introduces new choreography, new movements, and new emphasis. A particularly striking homage was dedicated to Egyptian frescoes and the famous bust of Queen Nefertiti.

Dancers move among the museum's columns, engaging in games with time and hide-and-seek within the fabric of history. One of the most powerful moments of the performance is a girl spinning in a voluminous black dress near the museum's central staircase. This movement carries a primal, childlike quality. The rotation symbolizes eternal return, with the circle itself representing both completion and infinity.

Another remarkable dance performance by Sasha Waltz is "Continu," staged in Zurich in 2010 in collaboration with the Zurich Opera House and commissioned by Sadler's Wells Theatre in London. "Continu" is not merely a dance performance but also an exploration of psychology and cosmic laws. Sasha Waltz presents a world where social connections collapse, where people transform into machines, and where every individual—like in nature—must find their rightful place in society. The choreography of the performance was created by Sasha Waltz, with scenography by Thomas

¹⁵ Смирнова-Гриневич Н. Концептуальний театр Саші Вальц. *Питання театру*, № 7, 2014. С. 13-18

Schenk, Pia Maier Schriever, and Sasha Waltz. The costume designer was Bernd Skodzig, while lighting design was by Martin Hauk. The dramaturgy was overseen by Jochen Sandig, with music composed by Edgar Varèse, Mozart, Claude Vivier, and Iannis Xenakis, and percussion by Robyn Schulkowsky¹⁶.

CONCLUSIONS

Considering the above, it is important to note that:

1. European and Ukrainian choreographers, when creating dance performances, pay significant attention to contemporary philosophical, social, ecological, and political issues of society.

2. The monograph explores the features of contemporary Ukrainian dance performances that address the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. Choreographer and director Kateryna Kuznetsova's *"YIY MOVA"* reflects the painful reality of thousands of people who have experienced war and loss, including the loss of language and the formation of a new cultural identity amid psychological and moral fractures. Choreographer Rita Lyra's *"THE TRAP"* delves into mental traps, war, and the displacement of Ukrainians to other countries. Choreographer Olena Shoptenko's performance *"Motanka"* narrates the struggles of Ukrainian women (as keepers of their lineage) on their path to securing their children's safety during wartime and the loss of their husbands, defenders of the homeland. The postmodern dance performance *"In Sight"* by director Nina Khizhnyia and the performative laboratory *"Lab for Ukraine"* explores inner strength and the formation of cultural identity. The performance *"Untitled"* by Sasha Kurmaz, choreographed by Danya Zubkov and Lora Konup, pays tribute to fallen soldiers of the Russia-Ukraine war. The ideas of cosmism, existentialism, and psychoanalysis are explored in the neoclassical ballet performance *"The Fall of the Fallen Angel"*, directed and choreographed by Denys Sharykov.

3. The study examines the thematic specificity of modern European dance performances, characterized by interdisciplinarity and conceptual depth. In the Polish choreographers Sławomir Krawczyński and Anna Godowska's performance *"Bataille and the Dawn of New Days"*, the spiritual agony of legendary dancer Vaslav Nijinsky is explored. Choreographers and directors stage dance performances in theaters, museums, streets, and other unconventional spaces, emphasizing their versatility and adaptability. French performer Xavier Le Roy presented the performances *"The Rite of Spring"* and *"Retrospective"* in a museum space in Barcelona. The former explores

¹⁶ Болеш Себастьян. Знаменитая немецкая танцовщица и хореограф Саша Вальц представит в Израиле «Continu». Балет. URL: <https://www.israelculture.info/znamenitaya-nemeckaya-tancovshhica-i-xoreograf-sasha-valc-predstavit-v-izraile-continu/>

the fundamental identity of the performative gesture in music (as seen in a conductor) and in dance performance, while the latter interweaves fragments of his past works with personal stories and movements from his creative biography. The performance "*Continu*" by Sasha Waltz tells the story of cosmic laws and depicts a world where social bonds disintegrate, and people transform into robots.

4. Interdisciplinary projects enrich dance performance by creating new forms and means of expression. This interaction expands the boundaries of dance art, making it more flexible and universal.

5. Dance performance plays a crucial role in shaping and expressing national identity. Dance serves as a powerful tool for uniting people around shared goals and values. In the Ukrainian context, dance performances have often reflected the pursuit of national identity, cultural heritage, and historical memory. Dance collectives continue to create works that resonate with collective experiences and national history, fostering a sense of national consciousness.

6. Modern technologies and social media play a crucial role in popularizing dance performance. Various platforms allow choreographers and dancers to share their work with a large audience, significantly increasing accessibility. These platforms make dance performance more popular among different social groups, confirming its significance and demand.

7. One of the key functions of dance performance is its ability to mobilize public opinion. As an art form, dance performance has a unique capacity to capture the audience's attention and evoke emotional responses. This makes it an effective tool for raising awareness about social, environmental, and political issues, stimulating discussion, and increasing public consciousness. For example, performances addressing gender equality, human rights, and environmental concerns can generate societal resonance and contribute to social change.

8. Performances can be classified based on dance styles, forms, and objectives:

- **by dance style:** neoclassical, modernist, and postmodernist;
- **by form:** small forms (solo, duet, trio, quartet) and large forms (group performances);
- **by purpose:** research, informational, and creative.

9. A performance's conceptual depth makes it an instrument for conveying important, critical, and sometimes uncomfortable social issues and a means of educating society.

10. Choreographers use various methods in staging dance performances:

- **futurist method** – rejecting traditional principles in choreography, embracing new technological advancements and industrialization;
- **dadaist method** – protest and irony toward traditional ballet values, fascination with manifestos, spontaneity in creativity;
- **surrealist method** – representation of the subconscious, complete absurdity, juxtaposition of the incompatible, working with associations in an irrational artistic vision;
- **cubist-constructivist method** – structuring dance compositions using geometric shapes in movement patterns, sets, and dance poses, symbolizing mechanical processes;
- **abstract-constructivist method** – creating precisely calculated structures in dance patterns, sets, and props, reducing performers' movements to mechanical functions, stripping emotional content, integrating new technologies and innovations;
- **modern method** – using techniques of Martha Graham, José Limón, Merce Cunningham;
- **postmodernist method** – incorporating body art, video art, techniques of Steve Paxton and William Forsythe.

SUMMARY

The monograph examines and theoretically substantiates the current state of development of dance performances by Ukrainian choreographers (Olena Shoptenko, Dmytro Sharykov, Nina Khizhnyia, Rita Lyra, Sasha Kurmaz, Kateryna Kuznetsova) and European choreographers (Gilles Jobin, Sasha Waltz, Sławomir Krawczyński, Anna Godowska, Xavier Le Roy). The essence of key research concepts such as “performance” and “dance performance” has been clarified and classified.

The study identifies the thematic characteristics of contemporary Ukrainian dance performances, which address issues related to the Russia-Ukraine war: loss of loved ones, loss of home, violence, cruelty, human suffering, destruction, economic damage, stress, psychological trauma, and disability. Meanwhile, the pressing concerns of contemporary European performers revolve around themes of the body, identity, politics, and society.

The monograph highlights the distinguishing features of dance performances by Ukrainian and European choreographers, including interdisciplinarity, conceptual depth, and engagement with current philosophical, social, ecological, and political issues. Dance performances are staged not only in theaters but also in museums, streets, and other unexpected locations, emphasizing their versatility and adaptability. Additionally, dance performance serves as a powerful tool for mobilizing public opinion, shaping and expressing national identity. Modern

technologies and social media play a crucial role in the popularization of dance performance.

The study identifies effective methods used by choreographers in staging dance performances, including futurist, dadaist, surrealist, cubist-constructivist, abstract-constructivist, modern, and postmodern approaches.

The theoretical material presented in the monograph will enable professionals in the field of choreographic art to diversify the themes of dance performances and create more productions on pressing ecological, philosophical, and socio-political issues.

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