

CREATIVE INTERPRETATIONS OF I. STRAVINSKY'S BALLET "THE RITE OF SPRING" AT THE MARIINSKY THEATER IN THE LATE 20TH – THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY

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INTRODUCTION

"The Rite of Spring" by I. Stravinsky is of an outstanding importance in the cultural history of the twentieth century. This score had the character of a true manifesto proclaiming the new ways of musical thinking and gave an unprecedented boost to the further development of choreography. The author of the libretto and stage setting of "The Rite of Spring" Nicholas Roerich, the choreographer (known to most as a dancer) Vaslav Nijinsky together with the composer paved new ways of artistic avant-garde, the importance of which is only interpreted in these latter days.

Despite the fact that the first night of "The Rite of Spring" was held in Paris, V. Nijinsky was a representative of the St. Petersburg Ballet School and its tradition bearer, following Michael Fokine. They eventually developed the traditions and reoriented the aesthetics of ballet performance, taking into account the expressive means of the related arts, thus anticipating the emergence of contemporary choreography. In addition, the Mariinsky Theater is one of the world's leading ballet theaters, and "The Rite of Spring" is one of the most popular ballets until today. Therefore, the study of interpretations of "The Rite of Spring" at the Mariinsky Theater is very necessary, because these productions have played a significant role in the history of transformation, not only of the plot and choreographic text of the ballet itself, but also in general in the development of the plastique language of modern ballet. The late 20th – the early 21st century is a period of time when the Mariinsky Theater varied the interpretations of "The Rite of Spring" in the performances of such famous directors as E. Panfilov (1997), D. Pandurska and M. Shemyakin (2007) and S. Waltz (2013).

Thorough understanding of the artistic value of the ballet interpretations of "The Rite of Spring" at the Mariinsky Theater in the late 20th – the early 21st century partly held in the candidate thesis by O. V. Gryzunova "Choreographic Ballet Interpretations by

Igor Stravinsky of the “Russian Period” (2017), in the scientific articles by O. Kirpichenkova, N. Chumina, as well as in periodicals, where the reviews of S. Avvakum, L. Barykina, M. Yeliseyeva, O. Ignatieva are presented. The study of these sources indicates a lack of scientific studies of the designated theme, in particular in the field of Ukrainian choreology.

Thus, the purpose of the article is to determine the features of the ballet interpretations by I. Stravinsky “The Rite of Spring” at the Mariinsky Theater in the late 20th – the early 21st century.

1. Features of the score “The Rite of Spring” by I. Stravinsky: innovation, uniqueness, timeless relevance

The very first version of “The Rite of Spring” (1913) was aimed precisely at the reformist movement, as pagan themes had not still appeared on the ballet stage.

The leading idea of “The Rite of Spring” is the instinct of procreation, the sacred center is the circle – a symbol of the sun, where one sacrifices for the sake of life and the renewal of the soil, the basis of the ballet dramaturgy is the reproduction of a certain ritual. The plot in the traditional sense is absent here. Both the music of I. Stravinsky and the radical choreography of V. Nijinsky at that time became unusual and unexpected. All this caused a controversial and even negative attitude towards this ballet, which lasted for many years (until the interpretation of M. Bejart in 1959).

American Choreographer, Ballet Reconstruction Specialist Millicent Hodson, along with the artist Kenneth Archer, resumed the ballet in 1987 at the Joffrey Ballet. By that time, the audience had already experienced the perception of modernist and postmodernist performances, so the restored “The Rite of Spring” successfully took its rightful place in the repertoire of the world theaters. At the Mariinsky Theater this reconstruction was carried out only in 2003.

The value of “The Rite of Spring” lies especially in its musical score. I. Stravinsky abstracted the folklore material to such an extent that its source became invisible. Folk tunes were “woven” by the composer into the musical texture to such an extent that the generalization of stylistic elements of folk music became the basis for the development of musical thinking. The composer “sought in folk songs something more fundamental to his musical language and technique, using them as part of

his own liberation from the basic artistic tendency – and even a complete rejection of it”¹.

I. Stravinsky showed a rite in which the race conjures the deifying forces of nature, saturating this action with energy and drama, which gave a multiple meaning to the pictorial representations of pagan Rus and created allusions with modernity. V. Smirnov identifies the leading factors of I. Stravinsky’s musical thinking in “The Rite of Spring”: handling of melodies that are reduced to simple, archaic contours, that is, melodic formulas and an extremely effective, dynamic rhythm².

The theme of “The Rite of Spring”, according to the musicologist, is based on the invocative calls of spring folk songs, three-chord carols, some intonations of wedding songs. The composer is interested not so much in individual differences of tunes, but in their typing, a reduction to a certain symbolic archetype. He turned this technique into a creative principle.

V. Smirnov pays special attention to the rhythm as an important way of imaginative expression: the composer “gives the rhythm a conjuring function in the “Dancing Earth” and especially in the “Great Sacred Dance”. The rhythm overturns the “barrier” of the barline, breathes in freely alternating metres, forming a complex polymetric background”³.

There are such innovations in the score of “The Rite of Spring” that are related to the art movement of “neofolk”, for example: the appeal to the unseen layers of traditional culture and the creative freedom of the composer (or an interpreter), their development on the basis of the latest technologies and compositional means. There are significant features of avant-garde thinking. The heuristic potential of “The Rite of Spring” was so powerful for the further progress of art that its score can be considered the manifesto of music of the 20th century. Everything that became characteristic of modern composer’s thinking was programmed here (the works by Ch. Ives, B. Bartok, A. Webern, S. Prokofiev, A. Schoenberg). The upgrade charge contained in this score was related to qualitative shifts and a break from previous traditions. “The Rite of Spring” fixed the birth of a new world, a sharp break in the way of life, a radical

¹ Kirstein Lincoln. Four centuries of ballet. Fifty masterworks. New York : Praeger, 1970. 290 p.

² Смирнов В. В. «Весна священная» И. Стравинского. *История зарубежной музыки. Начало XX века – середина XX века*. URL: <http://www.classic-music.ru/bzm023.html> (дата обращения: 23.12.2019).

³ Там же.

change in every area of life, which was partly to identify the complex aggressiveness as one of the most important impulses of the early 20th century. Dark instincts and negative motives, such as resentment, violence, and mass extremism make a break for the open existence.

It is clear that not everything in the “The Rite of Spring” is reduced to unambiguous manifestations. There are also episodes here that embody the feminine, contrasting with the dominant male. Both poetry and lyrical expression, and even a touch of idylls are found in music. But such episodes are more likely to be short-lived moments of aggressive manifestations of energy. In the process of deployment, it acquires more tension, conflict, expansive coloring, and menacing, frightening nature.

The image of the Chosen One, created by I. Stravinsky, appeared in the early 20th century and was related to the myth-creation of W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, and S. Freud. The latter, in his book “Totem and Taboo” also addressed the theme of human sacrifice. At the centre of the recreated myth there is the image of the “female” artist, which was a weakness of the literature of symbolism, painting and drama. However, in “The Rite of Spring” this image was softened, devoid of androgyny and acquired the form of a “safe” appearance for a young girl – the traditional ballet means of atoning sacrifice. The Chosen One was first and foremost the product of the male carnal desire of the 20th century. Thus, the state of consciousness was reflected: more psychological side – the unknown mysterious Other than reality was determined. For some, the Other was expressed in the image of a woman, for others – in the unconscious. If modernized Europe sought all this in exotic countries, then for the European periphery, this consciousness manifested itself in their own national identity – in the Old Slavic culture. In the aesthetics of primitivism, these two worlds came together and bore the fruits of modernism.

Such innovation and uniqueness of the musical work of I. Stravinsky and his extraordinary choreographic incarnation and artistic design led to many choreographic interpretations of “The Rite of Spring”, which according to the “Stravinsky the Global Dancer” database has more than 200. The reason for the demand for O. Kirpichenko’s ballet is substantiated by the ideological, semantic and structural and stylistic features of the work: the proximity of the artistic views of the authors of the original and the artists of the next generations, the programmatic nature of the ballet, which allows you to interpret the artistic images

freely; a suite form, the triumph of a rhythmic beginning in all its diversity and the absence of a plot dictate⁴.

Some versions have gained worldwide recognition of “The Rite of Spring”: ballets by L. Horton (1937), M. Wigman (1957), M. Bejart (1959), N. Kasatkina and V. Vasilyov (1965), J. Neumeier (1972), P. Bausch (1975), M. Eco (1984), M. Graham (1984), R. Obadia (2003), S. Waltz (2013) and many others.

S. Waltz’s interpretation is also the most successful attempt at the Mariinsky Theater, but the versions of E. Panfilov and D. Pandurska – M. Shemyakin have also been represented.

2. The meaning of the “Chosen One” in the interpretation of “The Rite of Spring” by E. Panfilov

The Renowned Permian choreographer E. Panfilov staged the ballet “The Rite of Spring” at the Mariinsky Theater in 1997 (conducted by Valery Gergiev) in the stage setting of the Australian artist I. Caruso (1956-2002). It was an ambitious decision, as E. Panfilov was never a ballet master who relies on the academic traditions, in faith and testimony whereof were his projects significantly distant from the traditional ballet art (“Ballet of the Thick”, “Fight Club”), however, it was he who became the first ballet dancer in Russia to create a professional modern dance theater and, consequently, one of the founders of contemporary dance in this country.

The choreographic decision of “The Rite of Spring” differs from the preceding productions in that it involves only male performers, among whom are the Chosen One, the Young Men, the Idol and the Oldest and the Wisest. L. Barykina writes about it, “In their plastique interaction, there is a dynamic and tension of the performance, where there is no plot as such”⁵.

In the “The Rite of Spring” by E. Panfilov, this meant, in fact, the engagement, the reverse of which is solitude, and the fatality of death time that catches everyone, regardless of the unique qualities or capabilities. The ballet master gave the soloist dance strength, confidence

⁴ Кирпиченкова О. В. «Весна священная»: страницы из века истории. Вестник Академии Русского балета им. А. Я. Вагановой. Санкт-Петербург, 2013. № 29 (1). С. 375–385.

⁵ Барыкина Л. «Весна священная»: Панфилов в интерьере Мариинского театра. Балет. 1997. № 93. С. 18–19.

and, at the same time, extraordinary softness and flexibility, and to the corps de ballet – assertiveness and brutality, using the principle of synchronous movements as the motive of masculine unity and strength (thanks to stylish costumes this is perceived as a contemporary situation). As referred to in O. Gryzunova: “The Chosen One gave way to the ensemble of the trained dancers. Their dance, which gave rise to the brutal pressure, was mesmerizing with synchronicity. They came out on stage with stools in their hands and made quick simple manipulations with the objects in the whole act (“Spring Divination”)...”⁶. In E. Panfilov’s decision, the episodes traditionally regarded as lyrical (for example, “Girl’s Circle Dance”) had a fantastic character, some of them have been resolved as a hidden parody (like the scene “The Kingdom of the Shades” from *La Bayadère* (meaning The Temple Dancer or The Temple Maiden)). “The performance is full of hints, allusions and memories of the ballet theater of the past, as referred to in L. Barykina, but from that its philosophical significance and emotional elevation are more likely to be lost than persuaded”⁷.

In 1997 E. Panfilov’s production seemed extremely radical with computer projections, a male troupe, with aggressive plastique at the Mariinsky Theater. However, much looked unusual and spectacular.

For example, the dance of the long-haired “Siamese twins”, whose costume did not allow them to break away from each other, but the harmony of the duo’s work, the singular synchronicity of their dance performance, made a tremendous impression. The ballet was full of power movements, acrobatics, and tricks on the ropes. The stage director produced “The Rite of Spring” on the contrasts of colour, everyday and theatrical costumes, classical choreography and contemporary dance, movement and statics, running and walking. His ideological principles were the clashes of an energetic male community and the lonely Chosen One, emphasized by his solo parties, which at no time coincided with the corps de ballet dances. His party was dominated by the most complex pirouettes and classic jumps one second; and the next, on the contrary, he lost rhythmical expressiveness and walked on the stools to his fate with everyday movements, and in the final, he remained motionless while the

⁶ Грызунова О. В. Хореографические интерпретации балетов Игоря Стравинского «русского периода»: дис. ... канд. Искусствоведения : 17.00.09. Саратов, 2017. 200 с.

⁷ Барыкина Л. «Весна священная»: Панфилов в интерьере Мариинского театра. Балет. 1997. № 93. С. 18–19.

boys performed intricate expressive combinations with the stools, then the Chosen One stretched his arms forward and fell, whereby the traditional sacrifice was represented, but there he was probably an outsider, the only one not accepted by the society. But the public was not ready for such an encrypted and irrational action. Just like the ballet dancers who in 1997 could not fully feel and subordinate their body, brought up solely on the classical dance, to new choreographic style, stunning pa, and unusual and uncomfortable dance poses. However, not only the lack of recognition of this version caused its failure: although the director attempted an innovative interpretation, E. Panfilov failed to convey the depth of the idea of I. Stravinsky's score and to create the choreographic dramaturgy and the plastique matching the music. The performance quickly came off the stage. Only today it is possible to realize the importance of the innovative ballet by E. Panfilov that enabled the St. Petersburgers to look at ballet art from a new angle, offering a radical vision of "The Rite of Spring" at that time and to establish the style of contemporary at the Mariinsky Theater.

3. Features of the ballet interpretation of "The Rite of Spring" by the creative tandem of M. Shemyakin and D. Pandurska

After the return of V. Nijinsky's version in the reconstruction of M. Hodson and K. Archer at the Mariinsky Theater, the theatre invited a creative duet familiar to the people of St. Petersburg to create a ballet premiere: the artist Mikhail Shemyakin and the choreographer Donvena Pandurska. The authors transferred the action of "The Rite of Spring" to the world of insects. In the fairy tale of M. Shemyakin and D. Pandurska elves, ants, butterflies, etc. become the victims of the insidious Spider who hypnotizes them and controls their will. Extremely large for a 40-minute ballet, the libretto recalls the best traditions of a thriller production.

O. Makarova gives the following quote from it: "The Spider strikes the deadly sting into the heart of the Elf. The crowd triumphs, and then everyone runs away in a scare, feeling that it is time to choose the next victim. Only Sylphide, escaping from the Beetles, runs into the centre and bends over the Elf's body and mourns her beloved. On the stage there is a colourful fashion show of costumes, as referred to in O. Makarova, – the eye barely has time to get used to the next batch of diversity of colours, you barely have time to decide who is big-eyed or what kind of red-tailed creatures with tails are, as there is a new company

of characters. And here it is no longer about dancing, the attention simply does not focus on the movements: the characters have too few choreographic lines, and the characters themselves are too many. Apparently, only the Spider has a recognizable, villainous, viscous plastique during the action”⁸.

M. Shemyakin does not consider his work a fairy tale for children, and it is clear: I. Stravinsky’s music is not designed for the children’s adaptation. But this version of “The Rite of Spring” was perceived as a cartoon story. This is not a solitary case. It is known that Igor Stravinsky had a negative attitude toward W. Disney’s cartoon “Fantasia” (1940 film), with the story direction by Joe Grant and Dick Huemer (musical director Edward H. Plumb). The animator came up with the idea of a film ever since his work on “Funny Symphonies”, in which the plot was closely intertwined with musical works.

“Fantasia” is a cartoon interpretation of “The Rite of Spring” – an ambitious experiment with sound, colour and image, an attempt to convey music in lines and colours, subordinating the drawing to the music context. There are nine differently illustrated music episodes in the film. In particular, against the background of “The Rite of Spring”, a colourful plot of the creation of the world unfolds – first material, then animal. In I. Stravinsky’s music W. Disney heard the echo of the pre-human, primary and cruel world that first emerges from cells, and then develops into various forms of animal life that learn to crawl, walk, fly, fight and finally die, not so much in this struggle as in planetary cataclysms.

In the 1960s “Fantasia” got a second life – when all sections of society began to involve massively the works of other genres in classical music. The same fate has befallen “The Rite of Spring” by I. Stravinsky (i.e. a piece of music). If in 1913 it was perceived as a challenge to common sense and music tradition, then in the 1960s (especially after I. Stravinsky’s tour in the USSR), it was already in the time-tested classics of the twentieth century, which was performed throughout the world.

I. Stravinsky said that the paint is the enemy of the sound: “... excessive diversity of colours, fancifulness of scenery and costumes

⁸ Макарова Ольга. Мультяшки для взрослых. Петербургский театральный журнал. Санкт-Петербург, 2006. №4. С. 43.

hinder the perception of music, distract from it”⁹. However, M. Shemyakin as a set designer, judging by the peculiarities of his design, holds the opposite opinions. And this applies not only to the colour of the scenery and costumes, but also to the formative approach to the choice of the performance space.

I. Stravinsky’s “The Rite of Spring” was the third part of the ballet evening by D. Pandurska and M. Shemyakin at the Mariinsky Theater. Also included are “A Gentle Creature” (sometimes also translated as “The Meek One”) by F. Dostoevsky for the music of the Second Symphony of S. Rachmaninov, “Metaphysics” for the music of the Second Symphony of S. Prokofiev.

I. Stravinsky recalled that the original impetus of music for the ballet “was born out of the picture that he had had a dream: the wise old ancient priests watching the dance of a girl convicted by them for the ritual murder”.

At the same time, the composer emphasized that “... there is no certain plot in his ballet”¹⁰. In fact, this is not true. In order for spring to come, a sacrifice is needed. And such a young girl is chosen. She dances with a fanatic joy, even with pleasure, until death. In contrast, an amazing tale of the life of insects was shown at the Mariinsky Theater, a magical story of an evil Spider that had subjugated insects, but the courageous Sylphide eventually defeated the villain. That is, the libretto with a view of classical ballet during the feminist preferences turned everyone familiar from the childhood of “Mucha-Tsokotukha” (“Buzzy-Wuzzy Busy Fly”) by K. Chukovsky into a creature that deals with the Spider without the help of Komarik (Gnat).

In the version of Shemyakin-Pandurska, the set design played a key role, as it is often typical for the ballets, where M. Shemyakin stands in as an artist: “...There is a variety of grasses on the stage, with giant emerald gobbled frogs on the sides. On the stems of grasses there are ridiculous caterpillars with funny faces from the Soviet cartoon about Neznayka (“Dunno in the Flower City”), on the background there is a deliciously painted dried barrel with three black holes. It is a cartoon, but not a Disney one at all. Shemyakin is the most ace deuce of all contemporary artists. All his horrors are not horrors, but children’s

⁹ Стравинский И. Диалоги. Воспоминания. Размышления. Комментарии. Ленинград : Музыка, 1975. 415 с.

¹⁰ Стравинский И. Диалоги. Воспоминания. Размышления. Комментарии. Ленинград : Музыка, 1975. 415 с.

“horrors”, writes one of the critics. Shemyakin is a kitsch genius. Everything that is in this genre of living, childish, magical is all Shemyakin”¹¹.

As for the choreography, D. Pandurska staged not the archaic dances, as the composer envisioned in the early 20th century, but an ancient ballet of the eighteenth century, which is not characterized by the serious content, and the costumes and stage effects play a pivotal role. In this sense, the genre of the ballet must be defined as farce extravaganza. Whereas the girls and boys circulate in ceremonial dances in I. Stravinsky’s, the cheerful insects idle and dance in D. Pandurska’s and M. Shemyakin’s. The classic dance suddenly turned to the parterre, and the corps de ballet dancing emphasized the decoration rather than performed the dramatic function. In the climax, tiny green frogs (the children from the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet) ran out on stage. These characters have huge, popping heads – like in Disneyland.

That is, the audience is not watching the movements of the dancers, but the costumes and stage effects, rising the most successful ones in applause, as it was in the eighteenth century. Instead of the Wise Old Man, who condemns the girl to a great sacrifice, D. Pandurska and M. Shemyakin have a villain who weaves the insect kingdom with a web. On the stage, it is this web that is faithfully portrayed. “From top to bottom, the net woven from the ropes stretches. With curiosity, the audience watches what the director and the artist will invent again. It can be assumed that the Disney characters and attractions are better than ritual sacrifice for them. And it is possible that there is a wise irony in this story: “Everything starts with a sinister myth of how sweet it is to die young for the sake of the future spring, <...> and ends with a fairy tale of how to kill a goddamn villain”¹².

So, the impression of the musical “deafness” of the producers of the performance somewhat balances the colourfulness of the stage design, although, in general, these qualities do not compensate for the lost meaningfulness. “It is unclear, the critic writes, what it is the fault of this autistic act – Shemyakin’s penchant for colour dreams, Pandurska’s susceptibility to the hypnosis of a strong personality, or her own glamorous ideas of “metaphysics”, because Stravinsky’s all-consuming

¹¹ Елисеев Н. Как убить злодея. Эксперт Северо-Запад. 2006. URL: http://expert.ru/northwest/2006/44/muha_cokotuha/.

¹² Там же.

avalanche of music has become the backdrop of these “children’s scenes”, the baseless reason for the senseless dancing of elves, sylphids and various small entomological living creatures”¹³.

However, in the middle of the “scenes of pagan Rus” decorated with felt-tip pens the burgher virtues of the standard dance pa have changed at least with some irony (though borrowed from comics). Many liked the “Spider-Man” – a clone of the same film character – performed by M. Lobukhin quite flexible and in a frightening way. The Spider will after all drive asunder the living creatures (and together a croaking marsh land) that is silly humming, to the predicted by I. Stravinsky centrifugal speed, and the absurd variety of the cabbage festival is finally mixed into a swirl of shimmering colours”¹⁴.

Despite its controversial emotional content and ideological orientation, the critics suggest that the performance is a continuation of the new ballet extravaganza genre, because M. Shemyakin is actually the head of other artistic projects at the Mariinsky Theater – “Nutcracker” (2001), “The Magic Nut” (2005), where the striking component of expressive means is the impressive decoration and original costumes, along with the lack of logic of plot development and imaginative choreographic decision.

4. “The Rite of Spring” by S. Waltz: a generalization of previous experience

In May 2013, one of the most famous contemporary choreographers Sasha Waltz (Germany) showed her version of “The Rite of Spring” at the Mariinsky Theater to the 100th anniversary of its premiere. Her creative style comes from one of the pioneers of German expressive dance – Mary Wigman, after all, S. Waltz studied dance in Karlsruhe with Waltraud Kornhaas, a pupil of Mary Wigman. In 1983-1986 S. Waltz continued her studies in Amsterdam, in 1986-1987 – in New York. And in 1993, she founded her own company, Sasha Waltz & Guests. Later, in 1999–2004, she, together with Thomas Ostermeier, directed the Schaubühne Theater in Berlin. O. Gryzunova in her research considers this ballet master as a significant personality in the choreographic world, and her “The Rite of Spring” as an important

¹³ Елисеев Н. Как убить злодея. Эксперт Северо-Запад. 2006. URL: http://expert.ru/northwest/2006/44/muha_cokotuha/.

¹⁴ Там же.

milestone in the development of contemporary choreography: “Modern criticism honored Waltz with the title of master of the dance avant-garde, equally in demand for work both on the new productions of the ancient operas, and on the new-fashioned performances of the performative character. Her “The Rite of Spring” at the Mariinsky Theater was the generalization of the experience of all-European contemporary dance”¹⁵.

The critics who wrote about the new version of I. Stravinsky’s ballet rightly noted that all the rage Diaghilev-Stravinsky-Nijinsky’s ballet had been in the world art was hardly heard in their hometown – in St. Petersburg – even a restored version of the 1913 performance was staged only in the early 21st century. That’s why, S. Waltz’s performance is perceived as staged for the artists and viewers, who do not have any associations and who cannot evaluate, what is distinct in M. Bejart’s and V. Nijinsky’s versions, or in J. Neumeier’s and P. Bausch’s versions. At a time when choreographers around the world were in the throes of a re-look at the ballet, comparable only with the “Nutcracker” for its popularity, S. Waltz created an amazingly beautiful form of the performance, which includes many allusions created by the predecessors, as evidenced by S. Waltz herself in one of her interviews on the eve of the premiere. In particular, she confirmed that she had invited M. Hodson and K. Archer to join her troupe. They were engaged in the reconstruction and transference of the “The Rite of Spring” by V. Nijinsky to the theatres of the world. S. Waltz wanted to establish a counterpoint to her own and the original version. Her dancers studied the original version of the production. But later S. Waltz decided that that ballet should not have been performed by a modern dance troupe. At first it was the first extreme performance with a new sense of body-control for the classical ballet dancers. The performers of the “modern” dance already possess all the qualities that V. Nijinsky only envisioned. This requires some research and rethinking. Together with M. Hodson and K. Archer, S. Waltz gave the master classes and deconstructed the original version in detail. The ballet master, together with the dancers, enthusiastically plunged into a musical score. Later S. Waltz sought support in music, as in the old version, especially, as the Mariinsky Theater dancers are well familiar with it, because it is included in the

¹⁵ Грызунова О. В. Хореографические интерпретации балетов Игоря Стравинского «русского периода»: дис. ... канд. Искусствоведения : 17.00.09. Саратов, 2017. 200 с.

repertoire of the theater. But, after all, according to S. Waltz, her version is not so much connected with V. Nijinsky's interpretation.

"The idea of sacrifice is both in libretto and in music, says S. Waltz. As far as I know, all the creators of this ballet initially worked precisely to create a literary libretto. Then I. Stravinsky began to work on the music, M. Roerich on the stage setting, and V. Nijinsky on the movement. In addition to the idea of sacrifice, the idea of the collective, the idea of the community, is important to me. But this is not a situation where a person is completely dissolved in the mass. The focus is all the time directed at someone individually, and we realize that everyone can be chosen. It goes on for a long time until it becomes clear that only the woman will be the Bride (the Chosen One)"¹⁶.

S. Waltz tries to approach the subject primarily proceeding from music, explaining that "... The music is even more archaic, it is not formalized, and it is harsh, even rough. It is filled with pure energy. Here I go from the elements of music to form, and not vice versa. It is alien to me and very different from all my works. Everything should be as if it was not artistically crafted, as if we participated in the dance of the Earth. It is like a volcanic eruption"¹⁷.

This is the origin of the choreographic language. The ballet dancer is interested in new strategies in dance, the inexhaustible potential of the human body, the incredible space for its study, for example, "... The study of physical personality, of how one body moves to another, breaking down boundaries. This is how a new language is born. You should not try to make everyone the same. You need to connect one particular character with another and create a new space, as in a laboratory. That is how the scientists work when they set up experiments. Only in this way the new forms of choreography are developed..."¹⁸. It is important for her to give artists the freedom to express themselves, to use them not as material entities, but as artists, co-authors; to create a system, in which all creative components are in an unbroken unity, complementing and developing each other.

S. Waltz's performance begins with the scene of the crowd scattering natural sand on stage, like in Pina Bausch's performance. In general,

¹⁶ Вальц Саша: «Потенциал тела неисчерпаем». Мариинский театр. 2013. № 5–6. С. 7.

¹⁷ Там же.

¹⁸ Вальц Саша: «Потенциал тела неисчерпаем». Мариинский театр. 2013. № 5–6. С. 7.

S. Waltz's interpretation invokes "The Rite of Spring" by P. Bausch in many respects, whose production became a cult performance of the second half of the 20th century. S. Waltz imitates impressionable stylistics, laconic design, and certain naturalistic and expressionistic features by P. Bausch as well as constantly argues with her, offering her own rhythmical and scenic findings. Thus, in P. Bausch, violence and fear became the main theme of this performance: the characters acted upon the principle of suppressing the weak with the strong, forming a deep relationship that ended in the death of the Chosen One. That is, the creative principle of the producer of play was the desire to understand not the movements of the dancers, but the reasons for these movements¹⁹. Feelings of fear and violence are also at the heart of S. Waltz's performance, but causes a strong association with war and (or) repression in accordance with the history of the country. When the music breaks, and in the sound emptiness, men take off their T-shirts and hug as before the death, and then they fall down, so that the group becomes a pile of half-naked bodies, the association is finally fixed.

Concerning the ideological and flexibility and stretching solution, one can generally see a certain leading idea between the ballet of S. Waltz, P. Bausch and V. Nijinsky, which emphasizes a certain continuity of the tradition of the first performance. Thus, the choice of "primitive" dance vocabulary corresponds to the violent ancient rite, which takes place in real time right in front of the eyes of the audience. The body languages of S. Waltz as well as P. Bausch resemble V. Nijinsky's technique: rhythmic stepping, chest tremors, shortness of breath, swings of arms facing the sky, etc. The physical efforts in the dance are not concealed, but emphasized to convey an internal effort (or powerlessness). Wild jumps, in unison repeated by St. Petersburg dancers and performing artists of the troupe "Sasha Waltz & Guests", – are similar to the dance of V. Nijinsky's Chosen One with its curbed power, and his attraction to the mass action of ornamental rearrangements and asymmetric figures originally transformed by S. Waltz into the chaotic abrupt movements of the performers around the stage, clusters and breakups into small groups. This is complemented by discouraged rotation, frantic tension, that embodies many courses of life of the society, probably depending on the

¹⁹ Пина Бауш (Pina Bausch). Современная хореография. Культура и искусство. URL: http://www.cult-and-art.net/dance/233-pina_baush_pina_bausch__sovremennaja_horeografija_.

choice of each, and a fast circle pit and a sharp transition to duet dancing allude to, on the one hand, the stream of time, on the other, the tide the society goes along with, and, the doom of the personality to clash with this run. The choreographer mentioned “In this play, I want to talk about the relationship between a man and a society, especially in unusual circumstances – for example, when a person is forced to sacrifice himself for the society to continue its existence”²⁰.

The performance applies the geometry of circles whose symbolism was once used to the best effect by M. Bejart. The ideas of A. Preljočaj are also felt in the production of S. Waltz. In his version dark instincts come to the fore and the feeling of fear, the powerlessness of the person prevails, who, despite his own will, becomes a participant in a ritual action with an endless mechanistic repetition of wandering in the twilight of consciousness.

But the ballet of S. Waltz is layered with simple but expressive authorial movements: “... rectangular figures in sarafans strictly pull their hands up, as if appealing to the sun one second, they break at the waist, looking for an illusory balance on one foot in the world the next, where everyone can at any moment fall the victim of a furious crowd, part of which is himself”²¹, that is why, “The Rite of Spring” by S. Waltz is different.

It is highly metaphorical. The images of prisoners and jailers, abusers and executed, those escaped and killed are inserted in the dance, but the author does not insist on anything. On the contrary: if you want, you will see – if you do not want, then you will not. In general, this is an epic: it is out of Time ... Resolutely refusing the magic circle that lay at the heart of P. Bausch’s choreography, S. Waltz offers other solutions: massive groups of people are the spatial basis of ballet, and the most interesting in terms of flexibility is that how these groups live, what a resilient and energetic pattern underlies the choreography. Soon after the start, we notice that there is a bright cutting point from above, which hangs over the stage in the center, like a sword of Damocles. When it is quite low, the Chosen One appears – rather, it’s becoming clear who she is.

²⁰ Из текста к спектаклю «Весна священная» в постановке Саши Вальц. Мариинский театр. URL: http://www.mariinsky.ru/playbill/repertoire/ballet1/vesna_waltz/.

²¹ «Весна священная». Мнения о премьере [Текст] // Мариинский театр. – 2013. – № 5-6. – С. 6.

Kateryna Kondaurova in this role reveals an enormous expressive power and temperament – both dramatic and dynamic. She is lead, exhausted, stiff and deadly pale, and it seems that not of the makeup. She undresses in front of a massive crowd and faces them, with her back to us and her shoulders tightly tucked.

And then her crazy solo begins an expressionistic dance-cry. There is a question in it that most doomers exclaim: why me? Yes, one probably goes crazy before the execution. This is the horror of death. And this is death as a full execution.

When the cutting point reaches the tablet of the stage, the Chosen One really falls down as executed.

Her bright party lasts a few minutes, but it is she who helps to reveal the main conflict of “The Rite of Spring” in Sasha Waltz’s interpretation – the crowd against one person, immolate oneself for the sake of life of others. Of course, there is also the theme of awakening nature – the nature of evil and violence, aggression and defenselessness.

The only purpose of the society is to survive at all costs, either gnawing through the human flesh, or trying to crush a competitor or hitting him with a gun at all: in one of the scenes, the female corps de ballet makes a very characteristic gesture with the fingers from children’s games, perfectly matching the orchestral chord. In the final monologue of the Chosen One, the figurative curses are heard on the former relatives, and a weary plea to the Almighty to cease the torment sooner.

However, S. Waltz is able to make expressive compositions of bodies and arrange them on stage beautifully: here are the men who throw the women to the ground, like meat, and here is the woman sitting on the back of the man who lies beating him like a rented mule. S. Waltz presents the story of how the appetites for life, death, carnal desire control the humanity, and aggression clearly demonstrates human qualities. The ballet touches upon the issue of a human population, embraced by the fear of death²².

On the one hand, S. Waltz’s idea is utterly clear, aptly emphasized by the choreographic solution and the selected eloquent metaphors, on the other hand, one can agree with the statement of the choreographer O. Ignatiev, who has not seen the reasons for the collective stress of the crowd: “All of these flexible balancing acts meant collective stress that

²² «Весна священная». Мнения о премьере [Текст] // Мариинский театр. – 2013. – № 5-6. – С. 6.

encompassed many actors. But what involved this action that made a crowd of faceless creatures have kittens or brain freeze, only Sasha Waltz knows about it. In the semi-darkness on stage there was a complete confusion for forty minutes”²³. While the choreographer did not insist on the causes of general stress, she wanted the viewer to realize them independently through associative thinking.

CONCLUSIONS

The Mariinsky (formerly Imperial) Theater in St. Petersburg did not appeal for a long time to the legacy of those artists, who, after underestimating their creative work in Russia, including St. Petersburg, have gained great fame around the world. The ballet “The Rite of Spring” by I. Stravinsky – V. Nijinsky – M. Roerich was recreated and appreciated many years later thanks to the efforts of restorers M. Hodson and K. Archer. However, the interpretations of contemporary choreographers E. Panfilov, D. Pandurska, and M. Shemyakin in the history of choreographic culture are no less valuable and illustrative, especially S. Waltz, who offered the author’s vision of I. Stravinsky’s outstanding, timeless contemporary score. The stage makers have embodied their vision of the ideological concepts of the ballet on the contemporary Mariinsky stage within the framework of the classical motifs of the “The Rite of Spring”, which enrich themselves from the original. The interpretations of the score foreground the ideas of sacrifice, atonement, and “chosen one” embodied in it in various aspects of the present day. All three versions develop the idea of ordering the primordial chaos using the girl-victim with some semantic changes or spatio-temporal displacements, but replacing the pagan tradition with the postmodern cultural space, offering dramatically different interpretations of ballet, which testifies to its uniqueness and the ability to create freely interpretable artistic images and plot within it.

Further development of the study of the topic can be directed towards the cosmological theories that make it possible to view the “The Rite of Spring” in terms of the “living ethics” of the Roerich family and the ballet assessments in the reflection of twentieth-century social and philosophical trends.

²³ Игнатъев О. В. Шаг в никуда. *Вестник Академии Русского балета им. А. Я. Вагановой*. Санкт-Петербург, 2013. №30. С. 289–290.

SUMMARY

The article deals with the problem of an insufficient study of the distinguishing characteristic of creative interpretations of I. Stravinsky's ballet "The Rite of Spring" at the Mariinsky Theater in the late 20th – the early 21st centuries. The author provides a rationale for timeless relevance, artistic significance and demand for I. Stravinsky's score at the ballet theater. It is determined that three versions of the ballet "The Rite of Spring" were shown at the Mariinsky Theatre in the late 20th – the early 21st century in the production by E. Panfilov, the tandem by D. Pandurska and M. Shemyakin, as well as by S. Waltz. The author provides insight into these interpretations, which embody the ideas of the "Chosen One", the ordering of the primordial chaos in various aspects of the present with distinct semantic changes or spatio-temporal displacements, freely interpreted artistic images and plots. The value of the researched versions for the world ballet theater is substantiated.

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