

# DANCE IN ARCHITECTURAL SPACE: EXPERIENCE AND INNOVATIONS OF CHOREOGRAPHIC PRACTICES

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**ABSTRACT:** *The article analyzes various ways of manifesting an architectural space in the choreographic practice of mankind. There is a close relationship between architectural forms, and aesthetics of dance, inherent in certain cultural and historical paradigms. The paper offers the analysis of the demonstration of choreographic concepts of the use of dance synthesis and architecture. From the generalization of the experience of a multi-faceted consideration of the problems of expressive means of architecture in dance art, the author logically proceeds to investigate the problems of his interpretation in the choreography, including the modern innovative practice of the 20th -21st centuries. Art-shaped metamorphoses of staging choreographic decisions taking place in different types of architectural spaces are considered. This peculiar artistic and visual synthesis appears in the dynamics of the genre, and in the style of the author's scenic context.*

**Keywords:** architectural space, dance functioning, staging decision, choreographic practices, synthesis of architecture and dance

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Expressive means and the ability to synthesize various types of artistic creativity as a type of art research takes a not so frequent place in domestic, and foreign art studies. Not to mention, that aspects of the inter-relations, and interaction of the linguistic features of individual art pairs have not yet received sufficient theoretical and historiographical coverage. However, the cognitive value of synthetic phenomena requires analytical study, and comprehension of the accumulated experience. Architecture and dance, and hence the resulting architectural space in a conceptual connection with theatrical performance; are interesting in it of itself.

The relevance of this study is determined by the need to create a new scientific approach in the conduct of art research, dedicated to the main expressive property of architecture - space and subsequently, the problem of the stage dance space organization, conditioned by the historical, stylistic and theoretical problems of choreography. The study of the specific nature of the ballet as a spectacular phenomenon is, first of all, an urgent research task, since it was ballet, like no other genre of theatrical art, left in the 20<sup>th</sup> century's heritage and will leave, probably in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, extremely diverse artistic examples of space-scenic creativity. Dance in the architectural space is a complex, multi-faceted problem, the borderline between art, philosophy and construction equipment. This study considers this topic as an artistic and aesthetic category. The analysis of space unfolds in the direction of investigating the diversity of its manifestation in the context of choreographic art, where it finds its creative comprehension and artistic representation through dance.

In addition, the problem of interpretation of dance in the architectural space as an independent subject of research is important in connection with the structure and evolution of the artistic image in contemporary choreographic art, and against the backdrop of post-modern style trends. As the global creative principle of post-culture, this topic, which includes wide general aesthetic associations, is becoming one of the keys to understanding the artistic process in contemporary art in general.

If problems of a morphology of the dance, its linguistic nature are adequately covered in the modern scientific

literature, a problem of the architectural space involved in choreographic art is also partly considered in theatrical studies on scenography [1-2]. Despite the fact that space as an expressive means in the composition of dance as an important section is studied by future choreographers in training courses and is designed to form a conscious attitude, and motivation in working with space [3-5], the theme "Dance in the architectural space" from the positions of the architectural component, remains practically unexplored. Secondarily, it is touched upon in the ballet literature in connection with the dilution of the theoreticians of dance: J. Noverre, R. Zakharova, and also in the work context of a number of choreographers M. Petipa, M. Fokine, K. Goleizovsky, L. Jacobson, Yu. Grigorovich, B. Eifman, M. Graham, M.R. Von Labana, M. Kannigreham, M. Bejart, E. Panfilov and other choreographers, and dancers who brought a bright artistic and spatial concept to the art of dance [6-8].

Another group of studies considers theatrical space as a philosophical category [9-13]. In some new articles, one can find blurring about the integrative principle of modern architecture: "Many-element forms of creativity, first of all, theatre, cinema, television, and modern choreography, correspond with the current architectural tendencies of" directing "and" entertainment." Despite the relative nature of this relationship, a number of phenomena and approaches to the sphere of spectacular arts can be characterized as actual principles of architecture: scriptuality, emphasized visual expressiveness, the building of volumes and spaces as "mise-en-scene" of the play, architectural "scenery," the change of "frames" of spatial impressions in motion. The principle of theatricalization, which has a long tradition, today expands its scope, turning into a factor of theatrical-cinematic integration, and architectural "show." [26] Indeed, the art of architecture, as well as the art of dance, has long followed the law of artistic integration, and the architect and the choreographer apply artistic synthesis as a kind of integrated integration method of professional activity [1, 2, 7].

In the course of our research, the following problems are revealed: the examination of the expressive means of dance and architecture, and the establishment of a common and specific expressive pictorial nature of their artistic language; revealing the degree of influence of architectural principles

on the drama of the dance language, choreographic composition, and vice versa; presentation and analysis of examples of interpretation of dance staging decisions in the architectural space.

## 2. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

A methodological concept of the research is based on the principles of a holistic study of the functioning of dance in the architectural space: from philosophical-aesthetic, artistic-figurative and linguistic-stylistic questions of its consideration. A material of the study was a written feedback on choreographic productions, reviews of performances in the periodical press; works of the literary heritage of choreographers; review materials; video recordings and photographs of ballet performances; personal viewer's impressions of the author, and conversations with choreographers, teachers, ballet dancers. Exploring some historical aspects of the synthesis of dance and architecture, the author seeks to evaluate events and phenomena from theatrical life from modern positions, taking into account that the theme is chosen for this work - a commonwealth of the playwright - a director and an architect - is of immediate importance for the creative practice of our days and is relevant not only for the Russian but also for the world international theater.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analyzing forms of an integration of architecture and dance, we note that the basis of the ballet performance is also a solid construction, and not a cardboard house, which can crumble in an instant. Even still, K. Stanislavsky highly posed the art of *mise-en-scène*, required an accurate scheme of movements of the actor in space, a clear work with the subject. He called the actor an engineer, an architect of the role. A choreographic image cannot exist without a spatial structure, and without a found thoughtful constructive principle determining a pulse of the whole formulation. The corps de ballet masses, formed in various forms during the performance, also form a spatial environment and have a kind of tectonics. An architectonics of the ballet performance consists of two verbal components. One goes into an image, a decoration, an organization of space, and the other remains in the dance. S.Ya. Remez noted: "Directing is the art of building" [20 p.103]. To find a spatial principle of the performance is a fascinating task for a choreographer.

Originating in Italy in the 16<sup>th</sup>-century scene - a box in the setting of court architectural representations, and primitive fairgrounds, on which wandering actors amused the crowd, gathered in the square created two systems of theatrical spaces, which can be designated as closed, and open. Closed, existing on the stage, inside the interior of the theatre building and open, extending to the natural-architectural environment. M. Bejart, called architecture an art seriously affecting the ballet: "I worked a lot with architects, maybe not with very famous ones. They created me a new stage space, which is an important element of the play. My best performances are on the Italian stage with a canvas rising in the depths. My scenes are differently equipped each time. The scene of the "Petrarch" was for Bobola, the stage of the "Gulistan" for Persepolis, the "Baudelaire" stage for the Palace of Sports and this was undoubtedly one of the best

scenes of the time. The auditorium was divided into five parts, and the sloping parts of the scene curled in a circle. The architecture created an impression of depth, an extraordinary sense of space." [18 pp.7-8]

In the first, traditional, as we noted above, their tectonics create scenery and costumes. Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, perspective on stage develops as well; it is able to visually deepen the architectonics of scenic action. Even conditional-abstract scenery depicting architectural structures can emphasize and strengthen the spatially imaginative beginning of the play.

Another space concept, based on the relationship of light architecture and dance - this is not an invention of the modern era. It was already laid in a hidden form in the concept of manor architecture of the royal amusement residences of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Tsaritsyno, Arkhangelsk, Kuskovo, Ostankino, and Peterhof, where the moment of dramatization was particularly significant. Even earlier, Louis XIV, representing on behalf of French culture, an impudent innovator and zealot of folk traditions, a characteristic exponent of the French mind, ironic and poetic at the same time, always carefully thought through the artistic concept of his designs. He firmly held in his hands their realization from the first scenario drafts - projects until the final completion. He showed a vivid example of the author - the director of the entire Versailles ensemble, showing equal concern both for his "artistic" perfection and for the broad "spectator" masses. The very architecture of these ensembles with their planning principles was designed for a theatrical spatial game, a change of processions, and also acquired a theatrical character. It could be illuminated by lanterns and lights of fireworks. This light technique developed in full accordance with the court canons, without falling out from the general context of the national cultural tradition. The 18<sup>th</sup> century dreamed and sought to create its epic of the new time. The theatrical extravaganza, created by a decorative character of coloured lights of the lanterns, has not yet reached in terms of organizing the space of the geometric logic of light rays similar to modern stage equipment. At the same time, one should also take into account the conventionality of the style characteristics of the architectural ensembles themselves and the absence of clear boundaries between them. Sometimes architects combine features of different style directions, work at their junction; based on the decorative-emotional principles, and not from the functional and technical complement of the structural plastic by ornamental.

The cumbersome construction of the great stage production of M. Petipa and L. Ivanov, the constructivist experiments of K. Goleizovsky - these are all examples of the use of various spatial systems. Figures of the artists create the architecture themselves, placing the viewer, as it were, inside, or outside their own spatial structure. Dancers of M. Petipa and L. Ivanov gravitate towards an even ensemble, preserving the living immediacy of each image. The corps de ballet groups of swans, Willys, Shadows in the "Swan Lake", "Giselle" and "La Bayadere", forming parallel, diagonal and other rows on the stage tablet, created that amazing geometry of the dance, without which the choreography of these ballets is inconceivable. K. Goleizovsky led actor groups to an elementary schematic simplicity, acquired due to over-

complexity, developing not horizontally, but vertically, in contrast to L. Ivanov and M. Petipa. In the design, he used stairs, and other architectural elements (here the interaction of architectonic tectonics with the tectonics of figures of artists in space occurred). This was the most extreme manifestation of choreographic tectonic rationalism (1920), the naked constructiveness of which was so consonant with the architectural quest of that time. An example of a bold and original reception of the interaction of choreography and architecture can be the setting of dances directly in the interiors of structures, bypassing the traditional stage space. The idea of human movement in space from hall to hall, the excitement that encompasses the viewer as a result of the change of concrete, successively changing impressions, was visually revealed in the production of L. Jacobson's art miniatures in the halls of the museum of ceramics - the estate of 'Kuskovo'. An open space became a basis of the composition, a suite of rooms, which do not have clearly delineated boundaries and symmetrical axes, but at the same time are subordinate to a certain rhythmic regularity. This space is not topographic, and not mathematical, but alive and acting. The flow of the dance moves from one room to another. Here there is an energetic deployment of the action, a sharp alternation of scenes, a rapid change of backgrounds, a playing of details, a foreshortening look. When the look moves, numerous architectural elements and details (doors, openings, windows, columns, chandeliers, decorations, etc.) that participate in the creation of an internal emotional mood come into view. The contrasts of spaces, forms, textures, and directions, give rise to that multiplicity of impressions, which constantly attracts the viewer, who does not tire of its monotony. The principle of the deployment of spaces built on its successive replacement acquires a special structural significance. Choreographic numbers are constructed as a complex plexus of various spaces and times, the degree of reality of which fluctuates. Everything creates an unexpected dynamic environment, which even represents an artistic phenomenon itself. American architect F. Johnson proposed the concept of "professional" architecture, arguing that "the design of space and modelling of volumes are only added to the main thing - the organization of processes. In his opinion, "beauty lies in the way you move in space." [25 p.188]

Architect theorist A. Ikonnikov in reply to this, writes: "This view may seem paradoxical, but it emphasizes one of the Greek specifics of architecture very convincingly." [14 p. 8]

Here, in our example, one can feel with special fullness and comprehension that organic nature of artistic thinking, that a rare skill of harmoniously combining different forms of art into a coherent ensemble perfectly used by L. Jacobson.

In the second non-traditional theatrical system, choreography develops architecture not only in their coexistence, it is itself, as we stated, built architecture, helping the viewer to feel as if inside its own spatial structure [12]. This attempt of plastically - architectural understanding was carried out by M. Bejart, who worked with the French and Russian troupes in St. Petersburg. Against the backdrop of Neva's embankments, Mikhailovsky Castle, Peter and Paul Fortress, Kazan Cathedral, Nevsky Bridges unforgettable choreographic images were born, as if they are filled with the atmosphere of a modern city. Thus, a basic conceptual setting

in the choreographic issue "The Knight in a Tiger's Skin" was an artistic-tectonic idea, the subordination of compositions and views of dance with the aesthetic principles of tectonics with the heroic scale of the architectural forms of the colonnade of the Kazan Cathedral.

Recently, performances of dances and whole performances in the open air against the backdrop of architectural structures: "Zeus" by A. Petrov in ruins of the temple of Zeus in Olympia (Greece), choreographic plays showed against the background of a silhouette of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, etc., Choreography tactfully entered a natural space, without disrupting visual connections with the existing architecture. The need for effective dance obliges a director to constantly remember about conditions of the scene. These conditions have no formal meaning. They are pre-determined by the inner nature of drama. Here, the conditional three-dimensional space of the stage box became less conditional, it did not destroy nature of the choreographic image. Equivalence of the image and background most decisively influenced the structure of the images of dance, dominant became the principle of harmonization. Creatively using existing experience, choreographers and artists form a stage environment, and space in general [23]. A requirement of harmonic unity of architecture, space, artist and spectator, in the sense of influencing his feelings, becomes the main concept of the formation of this environment.

An innovative look at the synthesis of the theatrical action, combined with the architectural monument of antiquity in the context of the museum space, can be considered an exhibition project of A. Alexander, an artist and a photographer. "Giants against the gods" - it seems that in this title of the exhibition, held in one of the halls of the State Museum of Fine Arts named after A. Pushkin, contains a very specific, and at the same time an unusually broad creative program for the organization of space. The project, which represents the recreation (reconstruction) of the famous masterpiece of the Hellenistic era of the sculptural frieze of the Pergamon Altar, showed it in a refreshingly new visual format, suggesting a connection between ancient history and modernity. Antiquity Greek mythology, and modern plastic installation, as well as performance here, were synthesized into a single artistic image. The action is immersed in the conventional space of the canvas, formally unlimited, but at the same time, closed in a theatrical manner. Two-dimensional space and a dramatic action of the heroes shown on it seemed to be quite capable of an understanding of the reconstructive task of the conceived project, not an analytical-scientific one, but the image-creative recreation of the altar was the author's goal. Presumably, A. Alexander analyzes in detail an iconography of all the Pergamon friezes (four of them located on the sides of the world), subtly and observingly catching semantic connections between them and correctly puts the emphasis on the eastern (main) frieze, which he identifies with the compositional center, trying to restore it. Strongly protruding figures above the surface of the background are depicted not only in the traditional form in the profile but also in complex angles and corners - in the front and back. The entire frieze, designed for individual groups, is built on the principle of antithesis: in one dramatic conflict, in another element of battle, in one triumph of harmony

in the images of beautiful goddesses, in another manifestation of the spontaneous, animal origin, one emphasizes the center, the other does not, in one there are only anthropomorphic figures, in the other there are zoomorphic creatures. [21] A development of the plot is presented as a continuous process, in which, like in any forward movement, there is acceleration and deceleration, ups and downs. Many positions of figures on the finished parts of the frieze, such as Hercules, Zeus or Apollo, Athena or Artemis - convey a sense of moving bodily forms, tensed masses, expressive lines that are not borrowed from everyday life, and not just from the head, but from conscious artistic movements. It is no accident that the art of sculpture and the art of pantomime are combined with the concept of "plastic" [10]. An action recorded in the frieze, including the fragments that were not preserved, was photographed by A. Alexander, and the photographs obtained were assembled with photographic frames of the surviving parts of the sculptural masterpiece. As a result, a digital version of the entire frieze was installed, which was printed on a canvas 25 meters long, and 4 meters high, illuminated from inside by light sources. This emotional mood was due to a special processing of black and white film, giving the staff a few archaic views, corresponding to the sculptural casts presented in the hall. However, these double images, the combination of "old" and "new" gave out some bifurcation of the monument. In a method, which is purely theatrical, figures inscribed in the frieze are almost twice the height of normal human growth.

There is not a restoration, but a reconstruction of an ancient masterpiece based on the digital technologies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A. Alexander was close to both, and on the basis of this plasticity in the full sense of the word arose the second birth of the Pergamon frieze. The very atmosphere of the action of the characters does not so much "finish" here for the actor, however exciting our cultural, and historical associations makes imagination fill the contours of the actor's drawing.

A presentation of the exhibition project was accompanied by a performance - a presentation combining possibilities of visual and theatrical creativity. Performance, being a form of modern art, is one of the varieties of actionism aimed at wordless motor action, whose movements are not pre-measured, but are designed for the context of "now and here." This is a kind of synthesis of acting, dance, music and special effects [22]. Thus, the "Pergamon Frieze" in the interpretation of A. Alexander begins to lose a strict subordination to architecture as in the original, he seems to live his life creating a spatial environment that envelops the "scenic" area of the museum hall with a special layer, which contributes to the elimination, and artificial dismemberment of the object to specific architectural, and sculptural details, and allows for perceiving it as a single artistic work.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

An active entry of the artistic language of dance into architecture requires, first of all, a comprehension of the content of aesthetic requirements for choreographic performance. These requirements should form the basis for evaluating the artistic side of such projects, which will create

a basis for professional, literate, objective perception of architectural and dance synthesis. The practical significance of our research is of a broad theoretical and methodological nature,

and can be expressed in its use: in the process of art and cultural studies of the dance space of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; as an auxiliary material in lecture, and seminar classes on the history, and theory of art

(both architecture and choreography); as a methodological material for aesthetic and theoretical comprehension of the artistic process in contemporary art; as a source study basis for further scientific work.

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