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# I. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES AND PRINCIPLES OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF PER- SONALITY PROFESSIONALIZATION



## FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL BALLET REPERTOIRE IN CHINA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PEDAGOGICAL INFLUENCE OF THE RUSSIAN BALLET TRADITION

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**Summary.** The article reveals some aspects of the development of the Chinese ballet repertoire in the second half of the 20th century. Particular attention is paid to the analysis of the influence of pedagogical models of teaching ballet dance in Russia. The influence of the ballet repertoire of Western European countries on the development of national ballet culture in China is also shown.

**Keywords:** ballet; choreography; Chinese ballet; Russian ballet; Russian ballet school.

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In the early 20th century, foreign ballet companies came to China, but their cultural influence on China's national dance heritage was limited. Mostly Russian emigrants and ballet experts began to come to China to create amateur private ballet schools: Shanghai, Tianjin, Harbin and other places are more influential, which had a positive effect on educational ballet education in China.

Undoubtedly, the real rise and development of ballet in China also occurred after the founding of the People's Republic of China, which is closely related to the main policy of the Chinese government to actively develop and support all the outstanding cultures and arts of world importance.

Initially, the Russian school influenced Chinese ballet. Since February 1954, many Soviet experts in the field of ballet choreography were invited to Beijing to conduct the first pedagogical «Teacher Training Courses», and in 1958 the first classical ballet «Swan Lake» was staged in China. During this period, the powerful pedagogical heritage of the Russian ballet school played a big role.

The students of the first «Pedagogical class» (most of them had an elementary ballet education) completed the program of grades 1–6 of the Soviet dance school in six months and passed strict exams. It was this generation that became the pedagogical backbone of the Beijing Dance School, founded in the same year and specializing in ballet. Since then, this generation has continued to im-

prove in practice and has become a real ballet teacher, nurturing outstanding talents generation after generation.

An important measure to achieve the «three-level methodological development» of the Chinese school of ballet is the practice and execution of exercises during training. During this period, famous Soviet ballet dancers often came to China with performances, and their magnificent performances attracted a large number of spectators, the Chinese gradually became familiar with this art and fell in love with it [1, 3, 6].

In 1957, the first complete ballet was staged in China: «The Wayward» («The Poorly guarded girl» and also known as «The Girl Who Needed Watching»). Works by J. Dauberval have a realistic style, corresponding to the current level of Chinese ballet dancers of that time, and the performance improved the team.

In October 1958, under the direction of Pyotr Gusev, the Beijing Dance School concentrated its efforts and successfully staged the world-famous classical ballet «Swan Lake» (performed by Odette Bai Shuxiang), which caused a great response at home and abroad. Through strict rehearsals, a ballet troupe with different talents was created at great speed. Today «Swan Lake» is a huge stage success in China – it has become the most attractive ballet repertoire for the audience.

In late 1959, the Experimental Ballet Company of the Beijing Dance School was established, the first professional ballet company in Chinese history. The following year, a dance school was established in Shanghai with the same system as in Beijing, and the task of cultivating professional ballet talent was also set.

Following «Swan Lake», in 1959 and 1960 under the direction of Gusev, the young Chinese ballet company successfully staged «Le Corsaire» and «Giselle», the famous ballet with different styles has become more calm.

During this period China sent Jiang Zuhui, Wang Xixian and other specialists to the Department of Choreography and Directing of the Moscow State Academy of Drama for further education.

After returning to China, Jiang Zuhui released her thesis – «The Spanish Daughter» (adapted the famous poetic play «Yangquan Village» by the famous European writer Lope de Vega of the Renaissance, which premiered at the Tianjin Song and Dance Theater in 1961) [2].

Wang Xixian in Beijing staged and performed his thesis work «The Fountain of Tears» (based on the famous poem by the Russian poet A. Pushkin), which premiered at the Experimental Ballet Company of the Beijing Dance School.

In 1963 the Central Opera and Dance Theater was created and the ballet troupe at the school completed its experimental activities and became a national theater. Soon Jiang Zuhui staged another famous ballet «Nortre-Dame de Paris» (based on the novel of the same name by the famous French writer Hugo, which premiered at the Central Opera and Dance Theatre). After only 10 years in Chi-

na, choreographers and actors were basically able to independently control the creation, rehearsals and staging of classical ballets. This is how the national ballet school of China was formed.

Since 1964, China has started the national creative practice of Chinese ballet. In fact, most of the first generation ballet choreographers have moved from the study of folk dance to the specialty of ballet, and his national cultural background will undoubtedly contribute to the study of Chinese ballet style.

Although the staging of the large-scale Chinese ballet «The Red Detachment of Women» is not strictly the «first recording» (before that, there were ballet studies of various types, scales and effects), but it can be said the first and most successful large-scale Chinese ballet – from content to form, it has a bright pronounced Chinese style. The Red Women's Squad premiered in 1964 [4]. This dance drama has won many praises since its inception with its shocking tragic and solemn plot, magnificent scenes, original characters and regional customs of Hainan Island. In this artwork for the first time on the Chinese ballet stage the heroic image of the Chinese squad of women «in pointe shoes», combining the essence of ballet with the Chinese style, adding a beautiful flower to the world of world ballet.

«The Gray-haired Girl» was released at the same time as «The Red Detachment of Women». Another successful study of Chinese ballet. The premiere of «The Gray-haired Girl» took place in 1965 [4]. The opera «Grey-haired Girl» touched thousands of Chinese with a real story about how «...the old society turned people into ghosts, and the new society turned ghosts into people» [6, p. 197]. This ballet did not follow the original work, reducing it, but recreated it in accordance with the characteristics of ballet art. It skillfully uses the material of Chinese classical and folk dance, combines realistic and romantic methods of showing the plot in ballet.

The «Red Women's Squad» and «The Gray-haired Girl» have played significant roles in the history of Chinese ballet. This is a deeper practice of using foreign countries to be used by China, and they stand apart in the world of ballet with their unique Chinese characteristics. In contrast to the fate of other dance and dance-drama works, these two works were labeled as «exemplary dramas» during the «Cultural Revolution» – two dance dramas that were rarely allowed to be staged at that time. Having stood the test of time and society, the «Red Women's Squad» and «The Gray-haired Girl» still retain their artistic vitality. Both works have been recognized as classics of Chinese ballet of the 20th century.

Chinese ballet of the new era shows a rapid development trend, which is as follow: to absorb and learn from the outside art world with a more open vision, and not be limited to the influence of one Russian school.

Since the early 1980s, renowned ballet dancers from Great Britain, France, Germany, Switzerland, Canada and other countries have been passing on their skills in the form of a friendly exchange. There were veterans of the ballet A. Dowling, a famous choreographer. B. Stevenson and others have staged and rehearsed their own pieces at the National Ballet of China: male and female «Don

Quixote», «Prelude» and «Serende» by the famous choreographer Ba Balanchine, most of which became the company's low-key dance program.

In addition, a number of Western classical plays of different styles have been staged in China in succession, such as: in 1980, the choreographer of the Paris Opera, Lisette, under the direction of The National Ballet of China presented the famous French romantic ballet «Silvia» [2]. In 1985 famous R. Nureyev under the direction of Polyakov and others, performed «Don Quixote», as well as «Romeo and Juliet» (1989, directed by R. Walker) and «Sleeping Beauty» (1994, directed by M. Parker) – and everything was a tremendous success.

In particular, Nureyev, with his unsurpassed excellent skill and deep understanding of dramatic characters, combined with the realities of the National Ballet of China, carried out rigorous training, «... which greatly contributed to raising the level of performers, leaving a mark on the history of a precious page of Chinese ballet» [1, p. 47]. In the aforementioned international exchange activities, Dai Ailian has played a very good role as a bridge to connect different cultures.

At the same time, the Beijing Dance Academy adhered to the good tradition of combining study and practice and consistently staged «Coppelia» (1979) and «Dancer» (1981).

The Shanghai Ballet staged «Napoli» (also known as «The Fisherman»). The Tianjin Song and Dance Theater reconstructed «The Spanish Daughter» (1982). In addition, the Liaoning Ballet, founded in 1981, released «The Sea Man» (1983) [4]. This not only enriched the culture of mass life, but through the leadership and performance of the masterpieces of classical ballet, a new generation of ballet talent quickly grew up.

In the new situation, the study of Chinese ballet also took a new step. The ballet, adapted from well-known Chinese literature and drama, has achieved remarkable results. Such as: «Thunderstorm» (original work by Cao Yuya), «House» (original work by Ba Jin), «Soul», «Death» (original works by Lu Xun), etc. [4]. In terms of structure and expression, some breakthrough studies have been made that are nothing less than bold and useful attempts to apply the methodological principles of the USSR ballet choreographic school to the realities of Chinese dance culture. Among such works, the dance drama of the same name based on the famous novel by Lu Xun «Blessing» and «Lin Daiyu» based on the masterpiece of Cao are very influential.

Premiere of «Lin Daiyu» was held in 1982 [5]. Written by a Qing Dynasty writer in the late 19th century, this magnificent work sounded the death knell of China's feudal society, describing the rise and fall of famous feudal families. There are hundreds of characters in the book with different personalities, each with their own voice and smile. The ballet «Lin Daiyu» refuses the painstaking work and complex plot of the original work, and captures the most touching love story – the emotional entanglement between Lin Daiyu, Jia Baoyu and Xue Baochai and the final tragic ending. Death is very creative. It depicts that Daiyu, who «... is dying, still loves Baoyu unforgettably, holds the sign of love – a silk

resort and suffers from hallucinations... Suddenly she feels Baoyu near, and they sincerely speak to each other» [5, p. 60]. The choreographer boldly used the stream-of-consciousness technique to fully reveal Dayu's mental path with nationalized ballet vocabulary that is highly contagious.

We also note the works that were created in the traditions of the Soviet ballet school: «Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai» (1983) choreographed by Zhang Huli and Ali from Liaoning Ballet, «In Search of Light» (1985) and «Orchid Flower» by Shu Junjun, Young Choreographer (1988) and «Red Chamber Fantasy» Xiao Suhua (1992). These works are a vivid legacy of the ballet aesthetics of the Russian dance culture, as well as the result of the methodological and pedagogical influence of Russian specialists on the formation of the national ballet school of China.

In addition to ballet positions in Beijing and Shanghai, Tianjin formally established a ballet company in 1992 and staged «Arabian Nights», «Swan Lake», and other performances; in 1995 the Guangzhou City Ballet staged «Anna Karenina».

Thus, for more than half a century, the art of ballet has developed in China by leaps and bounds, and now China is ambitiously striding into the world ranks of the «ballet country».

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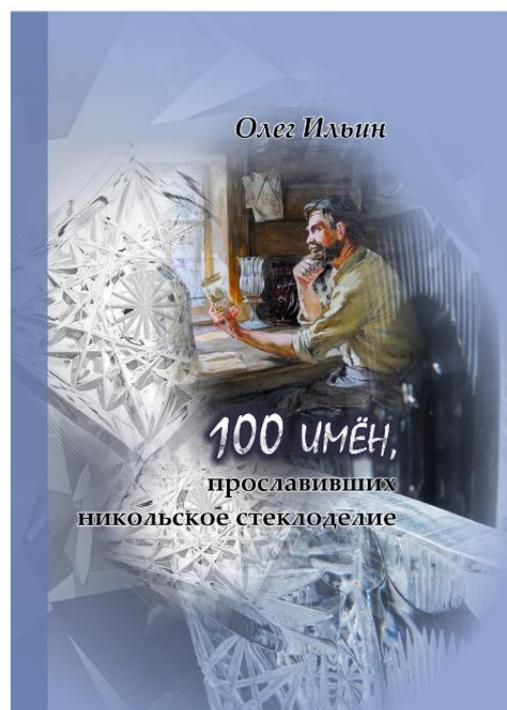
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