

CROSSROADS OF ARTS: INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE OF CHOREOGRAPHIC AND THEATRICAL PRACTICES OF THE UKRAINIAN DIASPORA IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

ENCRUZILHADAS DAS ARTES: DIÁLOGO INTERCULTURAL DAS PRÁTICAS COREOGRÁFICAS E TEATRAIS DA DIÁSPORA UCRANIANA NA SEGUNDA METADE DO SÉCULO XX

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Abstract. The article explores the role of choreographic and theatrical practices in the Ukrainian diaspora during the second half of the 20th century as a means of preserving national identity and fostering intercultural dialogue. Through the lens of migration and cultural adaptation, the study examines how Ukrainian artists, spread across North America, Europe, and Australia, utilized dance and theatre as tools for both cultural preservation and artistic innovation. The fusion of traditional Ukrainian folk elements with the artistic traditions of host countries became a key feature of this creative process, resulting in performances that resonated with diverse audiences while maintaining a strong connection to Ukrainian heritage. The article investigates the contributions of prominent figures and ensembles, highlighting their impact on both the Ukrainian community and the broader cultural landscape. By integrating historical analysis with an exploration of contemporary practices, the study reveals the transformative potential of diaspora arts in bridging cultural divides, enriching global artistic practices, and reinforcing a sense of collective identity. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the cultural dynamics within the Ukrainian diaspora and their role in the global dialogue of artistic exchange.

Keywords: Ukrainian diaspora; choreographic practices; theatrical practices; intercultural dialogue; national identity; cultural heritage; folk choreography; theatrical art; folklore interpretation; synthesis of arts

Resumo. O artigo explora o papel das práticas coreográficas e teatrais na diáspora ucraniana durante a segunda metade do século XX como meio de preservar a identidade nacional e fomentar o diálogo intercultural. Através da lente da migração e da adaptação cultural, o estudo analisa como artistas ucranianos, espalhados pela América do Norte, Europa e Austrália, utilizaram a dança e o teatro como ferramentas tanto para a preservação cultural quanto para a inovação artística. A fusão de elementos folclóricos tradicionais ucranianos com as tradições artísticas dos países anfitriões tornou-se uma característica central desse processo criativo, resultando em performances que ressoavam com públicos diversos, ao mesmo tempo que mantinham uma forte conexão com a herança ucraniana. O artigo investiga as contribuições de figuras e grupos proeminentes, destacando seu impacto tanto na comunidade ucraniana quanto no cenário cultural mais amplo. Ao integrar a análise histórica com uma exploração das práticas contemporâneas, o estudo revela o potencial transformador das artes da diáspora para superar barreiras culturais, enriquecer as práticas artísticas globais e reforçar um sentido de identidade coletiva. Esta pesquisa contribui para uma compreensão mais profunda da dinâmica cultural dentro da diáspora ucraniana e de seu papel no diálogo global do intercâmbio artístico.

Palavras-chave: Diáspora ucraniana; práticas coreográficas; práticas teatrais; diálogo intercultural; identidade nacional; patrimônio cultural; coreografia folclórica; arte teatral; interpretação do folclore; síntese das artes.



1. INTRODUCTION

The second half of the 20th century was a period of active cultural exchange and adaptation for the Ukrainian diaspora, shaped by global migration trends and the desire to preserve national identity in foreign environments. Ukrainian emigrants, dispersed across North America, Europe, and Australia, faced the challenge of integrating into new societies while maintaining a connection to their cultural heritage.

Choreographic and theatrical practices emerged as vital mediums for preserving and transmitting Ukrainian traditions. These art forms not only served as tools for cultural preservation but also became platforms for intercultural dialogue, blending elements of Ukrainian folklore with the artistic traditions of host countries. Through performances, workshops, and collaborative projects, Ukrainian artists engaged with diverse audiences, fostering mutual understanding and enriching global artistic landscapes.

This article explores the role of Ukrainian diaspora's choreographic and theatrical practices in bridging cultural divides, emphasizing their contribution to the preservation of Ukrainian identity and their impact on the cultural landscapes of host nations. By examining key figures, notable performances, and the evolution of these practices, we aim to uncover the mechanisms of cultural adaptation and innovation that defined this unique artistic phenomenon.

The scientific novelty of the publication is based on a comprehensive analysis of the choreographic and theatrical practices of the Ukrainian diaspora in the second half of the 20th century as a form of intercultural dialogue. The mechanisms of adapting Ukrainian choreography and theatre to new socio-cultural conditions are revealed, particularly through the interpretation of folk elements in contemporary art.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OR LITERATURE REVIEW

The national character served as a strong basis for the artistic and aesthetic system of Ukrainian music and drama theater, upon which the country's repertoire, artistic musical and dramatic performance forms, performance principles, directing, scenography, and the type of scenery, costumes, and choreography were all built. The effective incorporation of vibrant forms of expression into the dramatic action, such as vocal and musical (musical images, folk songs), as well as choreographic (diversion, folk dance, choreographic creation), was a noteworthy feature of the national distinctiveness of theater performances (Yan 2021). The diaspora made all efforts to retain and preserve these traditions, conveying them to foreign public.

According to Horbatovsky (2005), the development of interethnic ties was a key aspect of Ukrainian music and theater activities. The development of artistic ties between Ukrainian and Polish artists at the start of the 20th century, the sharing of directing and acting skills, and the staging of musical and dramatic productions such as "Galka" by S. Moniushko, "Mazepa" by Yu. Slovatskyi, "The Enchanted Circle", and "From a Good Heart" by L. Riedel are examples of intercultural dialogue in the sociosphere of theater. This earlier experience, naturally, contributed to further intercultural dialogue of Ukrainian diaspora in choreographic and theatrical practices.

V. Haydabura has made a significant contribution to the study of the creative work of theater artists within the Ukrainian diaspora, particularly in the field of the theatrical realization of works by Ivan Franko. Over the past two decades, his research has helped illuminate the ways in which Franko's literary heritage has been brought to life on stage by Ukrainian theater practitioners abroad. His work highlights the challenges and successes of adapting and interpreting Franko's plays in diaspora communities, considering both historical contexts and the evolving artistic approaches that shaped these performances (Haydabura, 2013a).



Haydabura's scholarship is integral to understanding how Ukrainian theater maintained its cultural relevance in new environments, particularly in terms of preserving national identity and continuing the legacy of literary giants like Franko through theater. His research provides important insights into the role of theater in the Ukrainian diaspora, offering a deeper understanding of its cultural significance and impact. Being a Ukrainian scholar, cultural expert, and researcher of theatrical heritage, Vladimir Haydabura has made significant contributions to the study of Ukrainian diaspora artists, particularly in the realm of stage adaptations of works by Ivan Franko. His research provides a deeper understanding of how Ukrainian literature and theatre evolved in the context of emigration and how they played a crucial role in preserving cultural identity for Ukrainians abroad.

One of Haydabura's key research areas involves examining the adaptation of classical Ukrainian works for theatrical productions in countries where the Ukrainian diaspora resides. He analyzes how these productions have contributed to the national consciousness of Ukrainians in the diaspora. Furthermore, he explores the impact of Ukrainian theatre on the cultural processes of the host countries (Haydabura, 2013a).

Haydabura's work also emphasizes the role of theatre as a tool for intercultural dialogue. By integrating traditional elements of Ukrainian culture with contemporary artistic approaches, diaspora theatre has become an important instrument for preserving and promoting Ukrainian identity on the global stage. His studies contribute to the development of theoretical frameworks for understanding the culture of the Ukrainian diaspora and its interaction with global cultural trends (Haydabura, 2013b).

Overall, Haydabura's scholarly work has significantly advanced the study of how Ukrainian theatre in the diaspora contributes to the preservation and dissemination of Ukrainian culture worldwide.

The Theater of the Coryphaeus and the Theater "Berezil" are also interesting constituents of Ukrainian literature and culture. While in Soviet literary studies there were many studies about the Theater of the Coryphaeus and its founders, works about "Berezil" after the 1930s mainly appeared in the diaspora.

Yu. Lavrinenko rightly believed that the traditions of the Berezil Theater were fully developed by Ukrainian emigrant artists. Thus, according to the literary critic, namely the Hirnyak Theater-Studio was a bridge to the future of a new modern Ukrainian theater. Joseph Hirnyak is described as an outstanding actor, director, teacher, supporter of modern theatrical art, a student of Les Kurbas, who worthily continued the work of his teacher. The artistic director of the Theater-Studio, which he organized together with his wife Olimpia Dobrovolskaya and actor Volodymyr Zmii in emigration to Llandek (1945-1954), in 1947 returned to the stage the plays that Les Kurbas and the Berezil artists had staged in Soviet Ukraine, in particular the poem "Haydamaki", which was popular in the displace persons camps (DP camps) in Europe (Lushchii, 2021).

After the Ukrainians from the DP camps moved to Europe, America, and Australia, theater groups and studios immediately began to emerge there. The peculiarities of theatrical life in Australia are discussed in the thorough article by M. Pavlishin "Culture and Emigrant Self-Consciousness: Ukrainian Theater in Australia in 1949-1989". Namely from this source, one can find information about the first theater groups that performed in Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney in 1950. Later, they also appeared in other cities. As the scientist emphasized, "the society of the DP camps became accustomed to theatrical entertainment, which is why it is not surprising that Ukrainian emigrants, settling in North America and Australia after 1948, considered theater to be a necessary and natural part of their lives" (Pavlishin, 1997, p. 391). The organizers of such circles were professional actors, singers, musicians, well acquainted with the works of Ukrainian directors, in particular, Les Kurbas. It was in Melbourne that the Les Kurbas Theater was founded. According to M. Pavlyshyn, it became the best among

Ukrainian emigration theaters. It has 13 performances to its credit, with which it performed during 1951-1963. The theater had a theater studio, in which a new theater actors staff was prepared. Young people underwent a special training course, having listened to and conducted 80 hours of lectures and practical classes. They studied the history of Ukrainian and world theater, as well as the theory of theater art.

The drama “Marusya Boguslavka: by M. Starytskyi, which the Les Kurbas Theatre staged in 1958, was especially popular with the audience. In the article “Theatre Studio in Melbourne”, published in the newspaper “Vilna Dumka” on April 27, 1957, Pavlo Dubiv mentioned this production, finding out the reasons for its popularity. In his opinion, the main conflict of the play is the main character loves both Ukraine, and her husband and children. However, she cannot return to her homeland. This conflict was relevant for emigrants to Australia, “since it can be perceived as a kind of parable about mixed marriages” (Dubiv, as cited in Pavlishin, 1997).

Analyzing the repertoire of Australian theaters, M. Pavlyshyn noted that the most popular were “Natalka Poltavka” and “Oh, Don’t Go, Hrytsyu” by Mykhailo Starytsky. Each of these plays had six separate performances. Plays from the golden age of domestic theater dominated: plays by Mykhailo Starytsky were staged seven times, by Mark Kropyvnytsky – nine times, and by Ivan Tobilevich - no less than thirteen” (Pavlishin, 1997, p. 399). Such attention of Ukrainian emigrants to the works of luminaries of the playwrights was not accidental. Driven into a foreign land, far from their native land, with no hope of returning there, they constantly turned to classical art, which for them was the personification of the Fatherland. These plays seemed to transport the audience to Ukraine, visualizing its image.

The research of diaspora scholars on the Theater of coryphaeus and the “Berezil” theater has occupied an important place in the history of Ukrainian literary studies.

Also, V. Gatselyuk (2018) highlights little-known pages in the history of the development of the Ukrainian diaspora culture in the United States, in particular, the creative activity of the outstanding choreographer of Ukrainian origin John Taras (Ivan Tarasenko). The researcher identifies the main factors in the formation of neoclassical choreography, initiated in the United States by J. Balanchine as part of the creation of the New York City Ballet Theater. Gatselyuk also characterized the main directions and stages of the creative activity of the Ukrainian choreographer John Taras in the theater under the direction of J. Balanchine, and proved that, having been brought up in the traditions of Ukrainian folk choreography, John Taras combined elements of authentic culture and originality in world-class neoclassical ballet productions.

Researching the history of choreographic culture, the famous Ukrainian scholar Yu. Stanishevsky emphasized the importance of various choreographers of the Ukrainian diaspora who raised this art to a highly professional level. These include, in particular, such figures as: Gennady Zadniprovsky/Pidlisny (Vaclav Orlikovsky), who revived and headed the Vienna Opera Ballet after World War II, and later - the Ballet Theater of Switzerland; Alex Ursulyak, a Bukovinian born in Canada, who for over twenty years headed the best European Ballet Academy named after John Cranko and the widely known ballet troupe of the Stuttgart Opera; and the brilliant classical dancer Volodymyr Derevyanko, who was the “pearl” of the ballet of the Milanese La Scala Theater, and then headed the Grand German Opera in Dresden (Stanishevsky, 2005).

Thus, the history of the development of Ukrainian culture is inextricably linked with the names of prominent Ukrainians of the diaspora, who, through their creative activities, affirmed the Ukrainian component in the development of the global cultural heritage.

3. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the goal of the article, a comprehensive approach has been employed, combining various research methods: historical-chronological method – used to analyze the



development of choreographic and theatrical practices of the Ukrainian diaspora in the second half of the 20th century, tracing key stages in the evolution of artistic forms in the context of historical events; comparative method – used to analyze the interaction of Ukrainian artistic traditions with the cultural practices of different countries, studying the commonalities and differences in the choreography and theatrical productions of the diaspora; cultural approach – allows for the exploration of the role of choreographic and theatrical arts in preserving national identity, as well as analyzing the impact of Ukrainian diaspora artists on the development of intercultural dialogue; source analysis – the study of scholarly works dedicated to Ukrainian culture abroad; empirical method – the analysis of specific choreographic and theatrical productions, their themes, composition, and stage implementation.

These methods enable a comprehensive examination of the phenomenon of intercultural dialogue in the arts of the Ukrainian diaspora and highlight the key factors of its influence on the preservation and development of Ukrainian cultural heritage beyond Ukraine's borders.

4. RESULTS AND DESCUSSION

The research reveals several key findings regarding the role of choreographic and theatrical practices in the Ukrainian diaspora, their contribution to preserving national identity.

Ukrainian choreographic and theatrical practices in the diaspora have proven to be vital tools for preserving and transmitting Ukrainian national identity. These artistic forms acted as a means of connecting successive generations of emigrants to their cultural roots, creating a strong sense of community, and mitigating the effects of cultural assimilation. By reinterpreting traditional folk elements in a contemporary context, these practices ensured that Ukrainian culture remained vibrant and relevant in a rapidly changing world (Kvetsko, 2016).

Ukrainian communities organized cultural societies, amateur theatre troupes, and choreographic ensembles. Creative associations such as the Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences (UVAN), the Ukrainian National Association, and the Union of Ukrainian Women played an important role. They supported artistic initiatives, published literature, and organized festivals and performances (Kvetsko, 2021).

Among the leading figures of this period, it is important to mention choreographers and directors who combined choreography and theatre in their productions. For example, in North America, artists such as Vasyl Avramenko, who promoted Ukrainian folk dance, and theatre directors Les Kurbas (through his students) and Yosyp Hirniak, were actively involved.

Choreographic and theatrical productions served a dual function: on one hand, they preserved authentic examples of Ukrainian culture, and on the other, they acted as a means of integrating Ukrainians into new cultural environments. For example, Ukrainian dance ensembles participated in international festivals, representing Ukraine as an independent cultural community (Kvetsko et al., 2023).

The cultural development of the diaspora after World War II laid a solid foundation for the synthesis of artistic practices. Theatre performances often incorporated elements of choreography, while dance ensembles drew inspiration from dramaturgy. This became the basis for intercultural dialogue, which later expanded on a larger scale.

Leading artists of the Ukrainian diaspora, such as Vasyl Avramenko and Roma Pryma-Bohachevska, focused on recreating authentic dances collected in Ukraine, adapting them for the stage. They emphasized the importance of preserving the original structure of the dance, particularly the ornamental patterns, rhythms, and costumes. This work became the foundation for the creation of Ukrainian dance ensembles that operated in Canada, the USA, Argentina, and Australia (Nahachewsky, 2001).

Diaspora ensembles, such as “Shumka” in Canada or the “Ukrainian Dance Ensemble” and the “Barvinok” Ukrainian Dance School in the Canada, not only performed on local stages but

also participated in international festivals, representing Ukrainian culture. Their repertoire consisted of classic folk dances, such as the “Hopak”, “Kolomyika”, and “Arkan” which choreographers enriched with stage interpretations (Kvetsko et al., 2023).

Among the notable artists of the Ukrainian diaspora who popularized Ukrainian folk dance on theater stages abroad, there was Roma Pryma-Bohachevska. Roma Pryma-Bohachevska (March 3, 1927, Peremyshl – May 25, 2004, New York) was a prominent Ukrainian dancer, choreographer, and educator, known for her significant contributions to the development and promotion of Ukrainian dance, particularly within the diaspora. She was born in a musical family - Roma’s mother, Ivanna Shmerykivska, was a professional pianist, cellist, and singer, while her father, Ostap Pryma, was a doctor. At the age of five, Roma began her dance studies in Lviv, enrolling in a rhythmic dance school following the methods of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, and later in the ballet school of the Lviv Opera. By the age of 13, she made her debut on the Lviv Opera stage, performing roles in operas such as “Aida”, “Carmen”, and “Faust”, as well as in ballets like “Don Quixote” and “Serpank Pereti”.

During World War II, Roma moved with her mother to Austria, and in 1947, she graduated with honors from the Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts in Vienna. She then joined the ballet troupe of the National Theatre in Innsbruck and Salzburg. Later, she emigrated to Canada, where she performed in the Royal Ballet of Winnipeg and the Ruth Sorel Theatre in Montreal. In 1951, she settled in New York, where she became part of Martha Graham’s company.

In New York, Roma Pryma-Bohachevska established her own ballet school and Ukrainian folk dance school, training thousands of students of 5-18 years. Whole families were visiting Roma’s classes. During forty years of working with children, Pryma-Bohachevskaya taught thousands of young Americans, most of whom were of Ukrainian origin, to dance. The school also staged the plays “Peer Gynt” and “The Fern Flower”. She also organized summer dance camps that became popular among the Ukrainian diaspora. Among her students, there was renowned singer Kvitka Cisyk, who, inspired by ballet, participated in her productions, including the “Cinderella” performance.

Roma Pryma-Bohachevska’s choreographic works were deeply infused with Ukrainian themes, which she lovingly conveyed through each character and movement. She skillfully blended classical dance with elements of Ukrainian folk dance, enabling her to academicize her theatrical-dance performances. By merging these two traditions, she created performances that were both rooted in Ukrainian cultural expression and aligned with Western ballet aesthetics, enriching the theatrical experience with a unique fusion of styles.

Roma Pryma-Bohachevska made a significant contribution to the preservation and promotion of Ukrainian dance and culture, especially in the context of the diaspora. Through her unique approach to combining classical ballet with elements of Ukrainian folk dance, she not only academicized traditional dance forms but also introduced them to an international audience, helping to preserve and advance Ukrainian identity abroad. Her choreographic works, focused on Ukrainian themes and narratives, helped merge folk traditions with formal theatrical arts, allowing Ukrainian dance to occupy a prominent place on the global cultural stage.

Furthermore, through her pedagogical work, Roma Pryma-Bohachevska influenced the formation of future generations of dancers, ensuring the preservation of Ukrainian cultural heritage. Her creativity served as a bridge between tradition and modern art, laying a strong foundation for intercultural dialogue and the further development of Ukrainian dance worldwide (Kvetsko et al., 2023).

In 1978, the ballerina created the ensemble of the Ukrainian folk dance “Syzokrily” (*Blue-winged*), which she managed to bring to a high professional level. For many years, Pryma-Bohachevska dreamed of bringing her students to Ukraine, but she was unable to do so under

Soviet rule. Her dream came true only in 1992, already at the time of independent Ukraine - then “Syzokrily” performed with great success in Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kyiv, and Kharkiv.

After Roma Pryima-Bohachevska’s passing, her contributions to Ukrainian dance and culture continue to inspire new generations of artists and art enthusiasts. Her artistic legacy remains a significant part of Ukrainian cultural heritage in the diaspora. For further exploration of her life and work, the video “Famous Lvivians: Roma Pryima-Bohachevska” provides valuable insight into her legacy. Roma Pryima-Bohachevska passed away on May 23, 2004, but the ensemble she founded still exists and performs. It has 35 members, including 18 women and girls, ethnic Ukrainians, in whose families the love for national culture is passed down from generation to generation. The hallmark of the group is the dance-performance “Fight for Ukraine”, which tells about the most dramatic moments in the history of the country in the language of choreography. Those who had the chance to see this mini-performance talk about a vivid cultural and emotional impression - it is not for nothing that they said about the founder of the ensemble Roma Pryima-Bohachevska that she “opens the world of the human soul with the language of movement” (Hrabenko, 2024). Today, on various world stages, this dance attracts people’s attention to the war in Ukraine.

It should be noted that after World War II, the Ukrainian diaspora actively developed theatrical arts as a powerful means of preserving national culture. In many countries across Western Europe, North and South America, as well as Australia, theatrical groups were established, which later grew into professional and amateur theaters. These centers became places for the preservation of the Ukrainian language, literature, and dramaturgy.

Ukrainian theatrical groups began to emerge in the 1940s and 1950s in countries such as Germany, Canada, the United States, Argentina, and Australia. These groups often operated within Ukrainian cultural centers or church communities, playing a pivotal role in preserving Ukrainian language, literature, and drama. One of the first such theaters was the Theatre Studio of Joseph Hirnyak in New York, which specialized in staging classic Ukrainian plays such as “Nataliya Poltavka” by Ivan Kotliarevsky, as well as contemporary Ukrainian drama.

In Canada, theatrical groups under the auspices of the Ukrainian National Federation played a significant role in promoting works by prominent Ukrainian writers, including Lesya Ukrainka, Ivan Franko, and Mykola Kulish. For example, the production of Kulish's “Maklena Hras” in Montreal became a symbol of protest against the repression in Soviet Ukraine. These productions not only helped preserve Ukrainian cultural heritage but also acted as a form of resistance against political oppression. The theaters of the Ukrainian diaspora not only staged classic works but also created new dramatic pieces that reflected the lives of Ukrainians in their new countries. The themes often revolved around emigration, adaptation, and the loss of the homeland. Works such as “Zaslantsi” and “Doroha na Chuzhynu” (*The Road to Exile*) were filled with nostalgia, while also expressing hope for the future.

A distinct feature of the diaspora’s dramaturgy was its intercultural aspect: the repertoire often included plays by local authors, translated into Ukrainian. This practice helped integrate Ukrainian theater into the cultural space of the countries where Ukrainians had settled, bridging the gap between Ukrainian traditions and local cultures. By performing works in both Ukrainian and the language of the host country, these theaters not only preserved their own cultural identity but also fostered cross-cultural dialogue (Kukuruza, 2020b).

The scenography of the Ukrainian diaspora theaters often combined traditional Ukrainian elements with modernist approaches. For example, productions of diaspora theaters frequently featured authentic folk costumes that had been preserved by emigrants or newly created costumes based on ethnographic patterns. These costumes helped to visually maintain the connection to Ukrainian traditions while adapting to the artistic context of the new cultural environments.

An important aspect of diaspora theater scenography was the involvement of emigrant artists who worked on decorations and posters. Notably, in the United States, Ukrainian artists Vasyl Krychevsky and Mykhailo Moroz created unique stage designs that blended traditional Ukrainian styles with modern trends. Their work not only preserved Ukrainian visual culture but also contributed to integrating it with contemporary artistic movements, making it relevant for both diaspora audiences and broader international audiences. This fusion of tradition and modernism became a hallmark of the cultural output of Ukrainian theaters in the diaspora, enabling the community to maintain its cultural heritage while participating in the dynamic artistic dialogue of their new countries.

Theatrical performances in the Ukrainian diaspora served not only as artistic events but also as a means of community cohesion. In countries like Argentina, theater performances were often accompanied by choreographic numbers and musical interludes, creating multi-genre cultural evenings. These events helped strengthen bonds within the Ukrainian community while also showcasing their rich cultural heritage to the broader public. Through this integration of dance, music, and drama, diaspora theaters fostered a sense of unity and pride among Ukrainians living abroad, offering a space for cultural exchange and collective identity formation (Nahachewsky, 2012).

School and youth theater studios played a crucial role in passing down traditions to new generations within the Ukrainian diaspora. For example, the Lesya Ukrainka Theater in Canada organized training courses in acting, scenography, and directing, engaging young people in the arts. These initiatives not only nurtured future artists but also ensured the continuity of cultural practices and values.

Ukrainian theatrical practices in the diaspora demonstrated how the arts could preserve national identity even in distant emigration. At the same time, theater became an important tool for intercultural dialogue, fostering understanding between the Ukrainian community and the local population. Through these performances, Ukrainian artists not only kept their cultural heritage alive but also facilitated cultural exchange and integration, bridging communities and promoting mutual respect.

Joseph Hirniak (1919 – 2002) was a prominent Ukrainian theater director, actor, and educator who made a significant contribution to the development of Ukrainian theater art in emigration. Born in Ukraine, he was forced to leave his homeland during World War II, initially finding refuge in Germany before relocating to the United States, where he continued his creative work (Kukuruza et al., 2022).

Hirniak is known as the founder of the Theater Studio in New York, which became an important cultural center for Ukrainians living in the U.S. He specialized in staging classical Ukrainian plays, such as “Natalka Poltavka” by Ivan Kotliarevskyi, as well as contemporary Ukrainian dramatic works. His theater became a hub for preserving and popularizing Ukrainian culture, and also played a key role in training new generations of actors and theater artists.

In his work, Hirniak combined Ukrainian traditions with modern theatrical trends, which allowed him to create innovative productions that reflected the cultural and social realities of the Ukrainian diaspora. He actively engaged youth in his performances, conducting training and workshops on acting and theater directing.

Under his leadership, the Theater Studio became an important cultural center, not only preserving the Ukrainian language and literature but also promoting the integration of Ukrainian culture into the American cultural environment. His contribution to the development of Ukrainian theater art in emigration was recognized as one of the greatest among Ukrainian diaspora figures (Nahachewsky, 2001; Nahachewsky, 2008).

Joseph Hirniak, as a theatrical director, was known for his productions of both classical Ukrainian plays and contemporary works, which preserved and enhanced Ukrainian cultural heritage in the context of emigration:

- “Natalka Poltavka” by Ivan Kotliarevskyi - one of Hirniak’s earliest and most significant productions in New York. It became a symbol of not only theatrical skill but also national identity for the Ukrainian diaspora. Kotliarevskyi’s play, deeply rooted in folk traditions, was adapted to the emigration context, preserving its authenticity while adjusting to new cultural conditions.
- Modern Ukrainian Dramatic Works – Hirniak also actively staged plays based on contemporary Ukrainian works, blending traditional elements with new dramaturgical trends.
- “Myna Mazailo” by Mykola Kulish – a performance that became a symbol of protest against the repression in Soviet Ukraine. This production in New York had profound significance for the Ukrainian diaspora, as it addressed important political and social themes related to emigration and the political situation in Ukraine.

As it was mentioned above, Hirniak succeeded in combining traditional Ukrainian theater elements with modern theatrical practices, contributing to the creation of new, relevant performances for Ukrainians abroad.

Borys Berest (1924–2001) was a prominent Ukrainian theater figure, actor, director, and educator whose contributions were pivotal to the development of Ukrainian theater in the diaspora. After World War II, he emigrated to Canada, where he played a central role in preserving and promoting Ukrainian culture abroad (Kukuruza, 2020a).

A key aspect of his work was his commitment to mentoring youth, creating educational programs, and leading workshops in acting and directing. Berest’s involvement in theater was not limited to performance but extended to the theoretical and pedagogical dimensions, where he emphasized the importance of understanding and adapting theatrical traditions in the context of emigration.

He was also an active organizer of cultural events that helped maintain the Ukrainian language and literature among the diaspora’s new generations. His theatrical productions often combined traditional Ukrainian artistic elements with contemporary theater practices, fostering innovative and relevant performances.

Through his efforts, Ukrainian cultural heritage continued to thrive and adapt to new contexts. Berest’s legacy is especially significant in the preservation of national identity through the arts, and his work contributed to fostering cultural dialogue across communities, keeping Ukrainian theater vibrant in the global diaspora.

Moreover, his commitment to theater criticism and his analyses of Ukrainian dramatic arts contributed significantly to the preservation of Ukrainian heritage in the diaspora. His legacy includes helping to shape the future of theater and film studies, especially within the Ukrainian community abroad, and his work continues to influence research in these fields today.

It is also worth mentioning the names of Boris Dniprovii and his wife Eugenia Chaika (1910-1985) – artists and directors who worked in Paris in the “Ukrainian Art Society” they founded (it was also called the “Ensemble of Ukrainian Actors”, “Ukrainian Theatre Ensemble”) from the end of 1947 to 1961, and then left for Canada. What distinguished them from other artists of the diaspora was that, in addition to theatrical work, they also worked abroad in cinema – they filmed and with great success demonstrated “Natalka Poltavka”, “Maiska Nich” (“When the Gardens Bloom”), “The Fern Flower”, as well as a series of documentaries, including “Ukrainians in France”, “Proscha of Ukrainians to Lourdes”, “View of the monument to Simon Petliura in Paris”.

Among the more recent diaspora representatives, one should mention the well-known Ukrainian dance group in Calgary, that was established in September 1974 when seven committed individuals assembled the foundation for the Tryzub Ukrainian Dance Ensemble.

The Ensemble's goal is to transmit this part of Ukrainian-Canadian culture throughout the multicultural community while also preserving and promoting Ukrainian dancing.

5. CONCLUSION

Ukrainians in the diaspora successfully created a powerful cultural movement that combined traditional elements of folk art with innovative theatrical and choreographic approaches, preserving the Ukrainian language, literature, music, and folk dance.

Notably, choreographers, ballet masters, and directors such as Roma Pryma-Bohachevsky, Vasyl Avramenko, and Joseph Hirniak, among many others, developed Ukrainian dance on the theatrical stage, integrating classical ballet and folk elements into a unique synthesis that presented Ukrainian culture on the international stage. At the same time, theatrical companies worked actively on preserving and popularizing Ukrainian plays and dramaturgy, which not only helped preserve cultural heritage but also facilitated integration into the cultural spaces of the countries where the Ukrainian diaspora resided.

Overall, the study of the creative work of diaspora artists through cultural practices allows for the preservation of national traditions while adapting them to the modern world. This contributes to intercultural dialogue and supports national identity on a global scale.

Continuing the exploration of the influence of Ukrainian diaspora artists and their cultural practices, it is clear that they not only preserved and developed Ukrainian heritage but also actively adapted it to new cultural contexts. This enabled Ukrainian culture to find its place on international stages and facilitated the development of intercultural dialogue in countries of emigration.

Thus, the study of the creative work of diaspora artists highlight the importance of integrating cultural traditions with modern scientific approaches to support national identity and mental health in today's world. This process not only helps preserve cultural heritage but also actively influences the development of international cultural exchange and mutual understanding between different peoples.

The choreographic and theatrical practices of the Ukrainian diaspora in the second half of the 20th century played a crucial role in preserving national identity, promoting Ukrainian culture, and shaping cultural heritage in new socio-cultural contexts. Ukrainian artists in the diaspora created a unique synthesis of traditional elements with influences from various cultures, enriching both Ukrainian and global artistic practices. The use of folk motifs in contemporary performances allowed for the adaptation of Ukrainian traditions to new conditions, making them relevant and attractive to a broader audience.

The experiences of the choreographic and theatrical groups of the Ukrainian diaspora can be utilized by modern artists and cultural organizations to promote Ukrainian culture on a global scale.

The choreographic and theatrical practices of the Ukrainian diaspora have become not only a means of preserving cultural memory but also a powerful tool for integrating Ukrainian heritage into the global cultural context. It is important to further investigate the contribution of Ukrainian diaspora theatre directors, actors, and choreographers to the developments of classical ballet art with all its avant-garde and neoclassical tendencies in the context of the global cultural and artistic development.

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