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**ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЇ БАЛЕТУ П. ЧАЙКОВСЬКОГО  
«ЛУСКУНЧИК» БАЛЕТМЕЙСТЕРОМ Р. ПОКЛІТАРУ**

Обґрунтовано стилістичні особливості новаторського хореографічного прочитання видатного класичного балету П. І. Чайковського «Лускунчик» кївським балетмейстером Р. Поклітару. Визначено нестандартне творче бачення хореографом балетної спадщини, специфіку його балетмейстерського почерку, режисерський підхід до інтерпретації сюжету казки Е.Т.А. Гофмана. У контексті сюжету «Лускунчика» Р. Поклітару виявлено новаторство балетної лексики і драматургії балету, обґрунтовано популярність цієї вистави на сучасній балетній сцені.

**Ключові слова:** «Лускунчик», Р. Поклітару, герої балету, класична версія, інтерпретація, хореографічна лексика.

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**ОСОБЕННОСТИ ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИИ БАЛЕТА П. ЧАЙКОВСКОГО  
«ЩЕЛКУНЧИК» БАЛЕТМЕЙСТЕРОМ Р. ПОКЛИТАРУ**

Обоснованы стилистические особенности новаторского хореографического прочтения известного классического балета П. И. Чайковского «Щелкунчик» киевским балетмейстером Р. Поклитару. Определены нестандартное творческое видение хореографом балетной наследия, специфика его балетмейстерского почерка, режиссерский подход к интерпретации сказки Э.Т.А. Гофмана. В контексте сюжета «Щелкунчика» Р. Поклитару обнаружено новаторство балетной лексики и драматургии балета, обосновано популярность этого спектакля на современной балетной сцене.

**Ключевые слова:** «Щелкунчик», Р. Поклитару, герои балета, классическая версия, интерпретация, хореографическая лексика.

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**NEW INTERPRETATION OF TCHAIKOVSKY'S 'THE NUTCRACKER'  
BY R. POKLITARU**

The article deals with the stylistic features of a new choreographic interpretation of P. Tchaikovsky's famous ballet 'The Nutcracker' by R. Poklitaru. The aithoe explores the choreographer's non-standard creative vision, his specific style and a new approach to Hoffmann's tale. The paper inquires into the innovation of the ballet vocabulary and its dramatic composition, the similarities and differences between the classical stagings and Poklitaru's version.

**Key words:** 'The Nutcracker', R. Poklitaru, ballet characters, classical version, interpretation, choreographic vocabulary.

For nearly two centuries Tchaikovsky's ballet 'The Nutcracker' has been part of the repertoire of all professional ballet theatres. Depending on the artistic trends, ideology and problems of the epoch, modern ballet-masters constantly search for new interpretations of this ballet. It is Tchaikovsky's score that remains unchanged. Nuriyev, Balanchine, Neumayer, Born, Mayo staged it offering their own visions.

Ukrainian choreographer Radu Poklitaru offered an entirely new version of the ballet. The founder of 'Kiev Modern Ballet', the only contemporary dance theatre in Ukraine, Poklitaru is the only representative of post-modern dance in this country. Therefore, it is interesting to inquire into his interpretation of Tchaikovsky's score.

Most information about Poklitaru's creative work comes from ballet reviews, journal articles and electronic publications. Today there is only one study devoted to Poklitaru's work, namely O. Uzun's 'Radu Poklitaru. The Free Dance' where the author systematizes the ballet-master's best performances.

The purpose of this article is to identify the characteristic features of Poklitaru's version of 'The Nutcracker'. The author analyzes the innovative ballet vocabulary and dramaturgy, the philosophical aspects of the ballet and explains its popularity.

Poklitaru's extraordinary creative style allows us to consider him one of the most outstanding choreographers of the 21st century. His stagings are characterized by originality, uniqueness and freedom of expression. This is the performance which was once called 'the symphony of childhood'.

The ballet combines a unique choreographic language with the classical ballet score, adding to it the talent of the artists and the director's deep psychological insight. The choreographer combines fairy tale with death, dream with cynical routine.

According to the story, the unfortunate beggar girl falls asleep forever under the window in the frosty night. Here is present the parallel with the tale of G. Anderson «The Little Match Girl», but according to A. Vystavkina, the main conflict of the story is based on the plot of Hoffman: «... The concept of «The Nutcracker» is undoubtedly built according to Hoffmann — for Poklitaru all the signs of the semiosphere of the Hoffman texts are important: phantasmagoria, werewolves, twins, somnambulist, mechanisms, dream turning into reality and vice versa» [3].

At first, Marie dreams that she gets home for Christmas as a member of the family, but nobody understands her here. This is clearly embodied in *mise-en-scenes*, choreography and relations of the actors. Already in the first appearance of Mary in *Shtaulbams* when the guests finish their dance with a typical utilitarian and monotonous vocabulary and see Marie, whose choreographic language on the contrary, dominates with amplitude jumps and rotations. In *mise-en-scenes* the main character is always separated from all and the guests are concentrated either in the dense composition or along the backdrop away from Marie. In general merriment nobody either pays attention to her or makes fun of her, and presents are given to the girl with complete disdain. The hosts and the guests busy with themselves and their passions.

In the first act in the images of *Shtalbaums* and their guests director emphasizes the vices and sins of mankind: pride, disgust, alcoholism, anger, lust, envy, idleness and hatred. Only a old magician *Droselmeyer* supports the girl, having not quite parental feelings to her. To soothe and cheer up the aggrieved Marie, he proposes to make fun of others, introducing them into a state of hypnosis, in which some of the guests start dancing in «pure» classical style, which causes incredible laughter of the others. Then, under the influence of *Droselmeyer's* magic first a couple of the *Shtalbaums*, and then the guests start fighting, which at first scares and then enlivens Marie. Moreover the choreographer often uses talking, laughing, and singing on stage.

Feeling incredible passion for the girl, but without getting reciprocity, the magician gives her a doll of *Nutcracker* - the prototype of himself in youth - with the same black bandage over one eye, as he has. Marie rejects the gift, but later gets interested in it. Ballet critic T. Kuznetsova, analyzing this aspect of the play, said about its similarity with the Nabokov's novel «*Lolita*»: «Invented by the choreographer love conflict is a kind of «*Lolita*» turned inside out: devoid of paternal affection girl falls in love with an elderly bald one-eyed hypnotist *Drosselmeyer* looking like the settled down pirate. He, torn with affection to the underage and the remnants of morality creates his young clone — *Drosselmeyer, Jr.* (aka *Nutcracker*) and during the whole performance is tormented by jealousy, watching the playfulness of youth» [4].

Gradually *Drosselmeyer* implements his plan. After *Grosse Vater*, drunk and completely mesmerized visitors leave the stage, «in a mouse manner» following the *Droselmeyer* as in a Soviet cartoon «*Niels and a magic pipe*» where the main character with the help of magic flute one by one drowned all the rats. However, the magician has no need to get rid of the enchanted guests. Left alone, Marie finally admires

the Nutcracker. This is confirmed by elevated repeat of the movements which in the previous stage were performed by the Droselmeyer's doll, controlled by his sweep, and the completion of his solo drawing in the air the contour of the heart, in which she shoots from an imaginary bow like a Cupid. The scene ends with Marie finding among the gifts left accidentally or specifically by the Droselmeyer amulet, with which he introduced everybody into the state of hypnosis, even he was subjected to its influence. Playing with amulet, the girl also falls into oblivion.

Then there is a parallel with the versions of «The Nutcracker» by R. Nureyev and N. Bourne: a happy dream becomes nightmare. On the call of the Droselmeyer from the fireplace appear one after another mice, as in the novel by Mikhail Bulgakov «Master and Margarita» during the Satan ball appeared spirits, and moreover at first appear the King and the Queen of mice who resemble the couple of Shtalbaums and the remaining mice — guests. This similarity can be interpreted in different ways: either guests are turned mice by the Droselmeyer, or in Marie's nightmares they are the personification of the girl's complexes and therefore are similar to those who treated her with contempt. At first the mice scare and beat Marie with whips (the same as in the fight of Shtalbaums), the New Year's tree turns into a cage where the main character imprisoned the main character. Again, there appears Droselmeyer calling mice to another conspiracy in which he either becomes The Nutcracker, or leaves instead a revived doll that represents him in his youth. The Nutcracker rescues Mary, demonstrating his strength and advantage over mice, after what they bow with respect to the «Prince". The choreographic language varies with the mice's mood: aggressive and rapid jerky movements symbolize the predatory nature of the animal world. T. Chernova even compares them with devils: «In the imagination of the choreographer fabulous Hoffmann's mice for a moment become like Gogol's devils, then completely transform into a sort of monsters (...). Hence comes the nature of the movements — sharp, sometimes rude, but surprisingly bright, expressive» [9]. And after Nutcracker conquers the rodents, their plastic changes: in it appears grotesque, parody of classical dance, ironic character.

Here the choreographer emphasized common and distinctive features of the humans' and animals' world, whereby the mice are shown kinder than people in the Poklitaru performance. Although initially these rodents scare Marie, trying to separate her from the Nutcracker, or seduce him, but then when lovers get into the kingdom of the Mice King, they feel safe. Here we deal with the psychological aspect of a sense of security not among the proud, conceited, cold and bad people

but among animals that were originally quite predatory, but unlike people who remain unchanged, animals become Marie's allies (in the first act a mouse that wraps the girl in a cloak when people turn away from her, in the second mice arrange the newlyweds a real festival, which they lack when they are among people, in the final it is not a human who shows sympathy to Marie but a mouse).

In a tragic play, mice build a humorous tone. They become protagonists, provoking characters, create permanent obstacles for them, dominate over the young lovers, not leaving them alone: the Queen always tries to seduce the Nutcracker and the King squires Marie. T. Kuznetsova in her review of the performance condemns the choreographer: «Thus, the duet of main characters now and then turns into the human-mice quartet, extremely obscure in form and meaning. It seems that the choreographer is afraid to leave the main characters alone. Indeed, the love duets are the Achilles' heel of Radu Poklitaru. Being afraid of sweetness, he emphasizes the ungraceful physiologisms: all his lovers sniff and lick each other, attach the partners' heels to their faces, deliberately ugly stretch legs. In «The Nutcracker», rich for long love scenes, Mr. Poklitaru throws to help their heroes all the scenic men: rodents-guests (and the costume designer Anna Ipatieva made them very charming - plush, with a meaningful cunning muzzles, thick bellies, plump thighs, bare pink heels and pink tails) practically do not leave them alone"[4]. Also the critic believes that such a move is a good solution of the performance as Poklitaru is the most successful in the corps de ballet dancing, not love duets: «... the corps de ballet dancing, especially the «Waltz of the Snowflakes» performed by mice dressed in tutus, become the main choreographic achievements of this performance» [4].

The waltz of snowflakes, which completes the first act — is the path of lovers to the Mice Kingdom — another comic scene of the play: mice depict a lyrical dance, and then sing vocalize and escort characters in their own world.

The second act begins with the lyrical adagio of Marie and the Nutcracker, which, like all other duets, consists more of acrobatic elements and supports with not always cleverly used erotic component. The unknown author of the review: «The Nutcracker by Radu Poklytaru. Pictures of Baltyus. Provocation according to Freud or ...?» makes parallels with the pictures of Baltyus — artist with philosophical and Freudian vision of relations between men and women. His paintings distinguishes the photographic statics and fancy poses, and the main theme is female portraits and figures at home in moments of so-called

«femininity, that awakens» [10]. Indeed some poses of the main character resemble the images of girls depicted in paintings of Baltyus.

The divertissement of the second act, which in classic versions presents spectacular dances of different nations, in the ballet of R. Poklitaru has another implication. For the bride and groom mice arrange a performance — a kind of «theater in the theater» - a parody of classical ballet and histories in the style of black humor, each of which ends with the death of one of the actors (overture of the tragic end). Thus, in the «Arabian Dance» there are the sheikh and odalisques who choked their master, in the «Chinese» — sumo wrestlers, one of whom dies in combat. To the music of «Spanish Dance» the mice play the story of Carmen, to the music of «Trepatsi» Siegfried shoots Odette, in Dancing of shepherds — Little Red Riding Hood gloats that the Wolf choked with a cake. The choreographic vocabulary of the divertissement is based on a parody dance with excessive grotesque, and one can agree with the authors of reviews who confirm that it looks like a skit or a children's party in the Youth Theater with growth dolls.

After the comic divertissement the mice play the wedding of Marie and the Nutcracker, who in the parting mind of the girl after all becomes old Drosselmeyer. Marie's Sleep ends sadly: the heroine dies, and a lonely mouse is leaning over her. «In something the performance of Poklitaru and the similar — witty parodies — are a protest against the sweetness and stereotype of many ballet performances. But (...) the intrinsic value of «The Nutcracker» by P. Tchaikovsky is in that, that viewers of any age find in it an answer to their requests: a child — the fascinating story, a teenager - his dreams of the future (surely gorgeous) love, an adult — reflections about the ambiguity of life and the concept of beauty"[8].

Conclusions. Thus, R. Poklitaru delivers an original interpretation of P. Tchaikovsky ballet «The Nutcracker», creates innovative choreographic language that combines classical dance, contemporary and experiments in the sphere of the postmodern theater, trying to put topical issues, and deeply reveal the complex inner world of the individual, saturates the performance with unexpected twists, psychology and philosophy. Throughout the whole performance the director uses the topic of death — it becomes the leading in the ballet and gradually leads to a tragic end: «In general, I believe that the highest expression of the tragedy is death. It is madly theatrical in its nature! Can anything touch you more than the death of a character, whom you loved, know about his advantages and disadvantages, and studied his affections ... and suddenly he leaves you. In a sense, it's almost like the death of a close person. A good director builds his performance in a such way that

during the theater action viewer fell in love with the main character, and he became was someone very close for him» [2].

In addition, the choreographer cannot accurately embody the musical idea of the composer, use the full score without cuts and also scandalously distorts the classical plots, which on the one hand is explained by the fact that the use of the score, written in the nineteenth century for the classical ballet and the common conception of artists of the era — M. Petipa and P. Tchaikovsky — for creating the performances of the XXI century is not quite correct and logical move, because the music of P. Tchaikovsky and the plot of M. Petipa were created under the influence of the past art world rules, tastes, fashion, which have changed today, transformed, and lost their relevance and left as a model of classical ballet performance. On the other hand, the reduced use of scores is explained by the fact that R. Poklitaru performances are part of show business. His plots capture the modern viewer with intense emotionality of performers, a combination of drama, satire, parody and phantasmagoria, excessive spectacular scenery and costumes, and most importantly, expressive action and rapid change of events, which can not be achieved in modern performance using a score without notes. The internal pace of the modern performance is much faster than in the nineteenth century. But by the same laws of demand for goods art becomes commercial, referring to the tastes of the majority. And the performances of R. Poklitaru haven't avoided the fashion of creating «remakes» according to the classic plots that for sure provides full halls. And the impact of business brings to his performances kitsch and shock.

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