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THEATRICAL STUDIES: HISTORY AND TIME

Abstract: This article discusses the emergence of theatre science, its social status, achievements, shortcomings and problems in the development of the field and ways to overcome them.

Key words: Theatre, theatre criticism, history, art, traditional theatre, modern theatre.

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Introduction

The simple fact is that theatre art, like all historical reality, is the product of an era. Accordingly, each period creates its own theatre and sees its own reflection in it. In other words, in theatrical productions, the unique scenes of a certain period come to life in their art and theatrical forms and affect the audience. As such, this process cannot circumvent even ideological principles. It is believed that the earliest elements of theatrical art date back to several thousand years B.C. Archaeological finds and data from various written and oral sources bring these hypotheses closer to reality. However, no matter how ancient, enchanting and important this strange art form, which is a product of human thinking and talent, flashes in an instant, like a candle burning in the light of existence, you will be swallowed by nothingness and never see it again. This is probably why, since time immemorial, people, driven by this mysterious light, have imprinted their wonder and feelings on stone, cloth, paper and even on sculptures and everyday objects. Theatrical landscapes have come down to us through the years, centuries, and eras. The landscape appeared in examples of folklore, classical literature and the fine arts (the art of miniature in the East) even before the formation of formal theatrical science. In particular, the works of Hazrat Mir Alisher Navoi, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, Farobi, and a number of our classics describe and classify the performing arts and performances of amateur khafiz, sorcerers, clowns, imitators and puppeteers and other

professionals. All this is a reliable source for contemporary theatre scholarship, especially for studying, understanding, experiencing and exploring its historical roots. Since theatre studies is a science that studies the history and theory of theatre, it is always important and relevant to study its roots in depth. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that academician Mamajon Rakhmonov's major study on the history of Uzbek theatre, which covers almost 3,000 years from ancient times to the beginning of the 20th century, is an important event in the science of theatre studies. Based on historical facts, Mamajon Rakhmonov has scientifically substantiated the development of the art of spectacle in our country, which is a shining example of a great civilization, even at a time when some countries were not yet on the world map. This study provides valuable information about the discovery of ancient pottery, sculptures and other objects made of ceramics, gold, silver and other metals, reflecting the plates of the performing arts in our country. The scientific value of the research was further enhanced by the fact that among them were objects depicting scenes from Euripides' tragedies. Returning to the ancient world, we recall the famous treatises of Aristotle, which laid down the first principles of theoretical reflection on this form of art. This ancient legacy, which has come down to us from the depths of time, continues to be an important source for studying drama theory from a new, modern perspective in our own time. Thus, we can see that modern theatre studies is moving in two

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directions: the study of theatre history and theory. Obviously, both are logically complementary.

Main Body

Speaking of history, one cannot fail to mention Professor Mukhsin Kadyrov's research into the history of Uzbek performing arts. These are the result of many years of study, knowledge and experience of the scholar. They provide excellent information on the historical roots of traditional theatre, stages of development, all types and genres, famous representatives, dramaturgy and all its peculiarities. As a worthy acknowledgement of many years of diligence and scientific potential of the scholar, we believe that M. Kadyrov's research in the form of a book titled "Uzbek Traditional Theatre" has been awarded the State Award of Uzbekistan.

Over a century-long historical period in the establishment of the Uzbek professional theatre of the European model nothing has happened in the life of our national theatre art. As the ideological pressure and barriers of the former Soviet era intensified, the permanent repertoire that went to the theatres of the former Soviet Union has also come to our theatres. However, in any case, Uzbek theatre art did not lose its distinctive identity and mingled with other foreign movements. Especially in musical dramas loved by our people, we see serious efforts to preserve national traditions. The production of national classics, folk songs and proverbs, and the inclusion of laparayas in musical dramas have played an important part in preserving national identity. Thus, Uzbek theatrical art sought to find its contemporary face on the basis of various experiments and studies.

As for Uzbek theatre studies, its first appearances are associated with the works of some Uzbek intellectuals of the late 19th and early 20th centuries who were influenced by European theatres, especially Russian ones. In particular, Ahmad Donish, who was well acquainted with Russian cultural life at the end of the 19th century through historical sources and scholarly research, wrote about Russian theatrical performances of that time, and Zokirjon Kholmukhammad ogli produced his play "*Suvorov*" in the Turkestan Provincial Paper of October 12, 1890; interesting information about his poetic reviews and comments on music and even on ballet. M. Rakhmonov noted that Furkat specifically sketches scenes of Russian theatre of that time in his plays, compares them with our traditional theatre, and notes the differences and peculiarities between the plays and those performed on the European-type stage. According to Furkat, it was evident that he too dreamt of such a modern theatre. Apart from Ahmad Donish and Furkat, another enlightened man named Haji Muhammad Zuhur recalled his travels to Russia. Excitedly recounting his impressions of the performance, the actors' acting, and the stage culture, he, like Furkat, contributes to the emergence of this

kind of art in our country. The author cites a number of other people who dreamt of the emergence of a new theatre. Finally, Behbudi was one of the first to write "*Padarkush*" and to stage it in Samarqand and Tashkent at the beginning of 1914, which laid the foundation of the European Uzbek theatre art. At the same time, Russian, Tatar and Azerbaijani theatre troupes toured the country and staged performances, which gave impetus to the rapid development of the national theatrical movement. There was a prominent writer of the period who sought to try his hand at writing drama. Contemporary poems by Abdullah Avloni, Nusratullah Kudratullah, Abdullah Qadiri, Abdullah Badri, Haji Muin Shukrullo, Hamza Hakimzoda Niazi, Ghulom Zafari, Khurshid, Cholpon, Fitrat, Mannon Uygur will soon be performed by various companies. Intellectual educators such as Munavvar Kori Abdurashidhonov, who are among these processes, regularly give propaganda speeches, articles, talks and plays about modern Uzbek theatre, and have revived its movements. The periodical press has begun to publish a number of articles on the state of the new theatre, what it should be, and its moral, spiritual, educational and organisational aspects. Almost all writers and intellectuals of the time took part in the discussions. Finally, Mahmudkhoja Behbudi published an article "*What is theatre?*" in the May 16, 1914 issue of "*Oyina*". To the question posed in the article, the author himself wrote the answer in capital letters: "*Theatre is a model!*" It defined the educational, moral, ethical-aesthetic, spiritual-educational and, if necessary, social-philosophical principles of the Uzbek national theatre art. Thereafter, one would speak, comment on, assess and give recommendations about theatre based on these criteria.

In the 24-26s of the last century, with the sending of a group of young talents to theatrical studios in Moscow and Baku and their return after graduation, theatre became a professional track.

Mirmulla Shermukhamedov (1886-1928) is mentioned as one of the theatrical propagandists of that period. Being fluent in Russian and Uzbek, Shermukhamedov actively participated in staging and writing articles and reviews; to a certain extent, he was not only a theatre propagandist but also one of the pioneers of theatre criticism. Detailed information about his life and creative work can be found in scientific works of S. Akhmedov, a candidate of art criticism.

As theatre became more professional, theatre studies also emerged as a science. The establishment in 1945 of the Tashkent Institute of Theatre Art and later of the only research institute of art criticism in Central Asia paved the way for the training of mature professionals in this field.

Of course, over a century of history, our national theatre has undergone various creative, organisational and ideological changes. The repertory policy has

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changed accordingly. All these processes have subsequently been studied by professional theatre critics and recorded in history. In a word, dozens of studies on all kinds, genres and trends as well as on individual aspects of theatre art have been conducted and many monographs, articles, reviews, essays and portraits have been published. The main studies of M. Rahmonov, M. Kadyrov, T. Obidov and P. Tashkenbaev (circus art), B. Shodiev and I. Abdurakhmanov on types of theatrical art, the history of traditional theatre, and contemporary theatre history of T. Tursunov and T. Bayandiev, world classics, western drama by E. T. Tursunbaev, opera, musical drama and national dance and choreography by L. Avdeeva, R. Karimova, M. Khamidova, E. Panova, M. Isroilov, direction, acting and drama by T. Silmilstein, M. Tulakhodjaeva, F. Juraev, N. Zohidova, S. Kadyrova, D. Rahmutullaeva, O. Tajiboeva, O. Rizaev, Kh. Ikramov, M. Akhmajanova, G. Sosnovskaya, and D. Kadyrova on scenography, R. Sayfutdinov, L. Khojaeva, S. Inomkhojaev, I. Pulatov, A. Nosirova, and H. Holikulova on scenic speech, J. Teshaboyev, and H. Akbarov on cinematography; there are dozens of studies by specialists such as S. Abulkasimov, S. Khojaev, S. Khayitmatov, F. Faiziev and N. Karimov, each of whom is a masterpiece of Uzbek professional theatre art. It is clear that the study of historical stages

in the development of domestic theatre can also be the subject of serious academic research.

Conclusion

Since the official recognition of Uzbekistan as an independent State, the State, along with all other areas, has created great opportunities for the theatrical arts. Practically all theatrical buildings have been thoroughly renovated and provided with the latest technical equipment, and exemplary work is under way to provide young qualified specialists. In particular, the establishment of the Uzbek State Institute of Arts and Culture, the building of a new building with workshops fitted out with modern technical equipment and the operation of a special art history department to train theatre critics have placed great responsibility on the theatre. All conditions have been created for them to carry out their duties. In the last two years five doctoral students in the department have successfully defended their dissertations and received PhDs in art history, and four more are currently preparing to defend their dissertations.

We must not forget that one of the most important and urgent tasks is to create the conditions for the modernization of Uzbekistan, to make the most of the opportunities available, to improve the science of theatre to the level of modern requirements and to take its rightful place in public life.

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