

## **Abstract of the PhD dissertation**

*Development of ballet in Warsaw, Petersburg, and in Moscow from the 18th century to the half of the 19th century. Changes, connections, aesthetic*

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The purpose of *Development of ballet in Warsaw, Petersburg, and in Moscow from the 18th century to the half of the 19th century. Changes, connections, aesthetic.* is to present the events in Polish ballet which had occurred from the beginnings of the first ballet hubs in Poland to the difficult period of Poland's annexation by Russia. To broaden the perspective, the history of ballet in Warsaw is presented in parallel with events of ballet in Petersburg and Moscow. The similarity of changes, mutual influence, and aesthetic patterns allow for a better understanding of the stages of growth in this artistic domain. To this end, the discourse refers to a wide range of specialized Russian literature as a means of filling the gaps in Polish sources, which are a result of the destruction of the Teatr Wielki archives as well as the Warsaw ballet school documents during the events of World War II.

Within the first chapter, a presentation of the circumstances of the creation of the first ballet performances in Poland, Russia, and serf theatres. The prestige of ballet performances among the western-european monarchies resulted in the Polish royal court and aristocracy wanting to have their own illustrious ballet corps, and the Russian royal court and magnates soon followed. Because of this, Italian and French performers were employed and created the foundations of professional ballet corps. Their engagement with the Polish and Russian royal courts allowed not only for a high standard of performance, but also made it possible to become acquainted with the newest achievements in ballet by staging the works of prestigious reformers of 18th century ballet, such as Jean-Georges Noverre and Gasparo Angiolini.

One particularly noteworthy achievement of 18th century ballet in Poland was the founding of His Royal Majesty's National Dancers corps, which consisted solely of native Polish performers, who performed on the stages of royal and public theatres, first in Operalnia, followed by the Radziwiłł Palace Theatre and the National Theatre on Plac Krasińskich.

In the second chapter, the focus is shifted to an overview of the developmental period of hubs of ballet activity in Warsaw, Petersburg, and Moscow during the first thirty years of

the 19th century. In that time, due to the preference of the audience as well as political events, ballet corps each began creating their own distinct image. The long term employment of Charles-Louis Didelot in the Petersburg ballet resulted in the creation of an exceptional repertoire and a definite improvement in the education of Russian dancers. In 1818 in Warsaw, due to the initiative of Ludwik Osiński, a corps and a ballet school were formed, both led by a crew of French performers led by Louis Thierry. An important even of that time was the staging of *Wedding in Ojców (Wesele w Ojcowie)* in 1823, which is considered to be the first Polish national ballet.

Perhaps the most fruitful period for the development of ballet was the period of romanticism, which provided many literary plots and advancements in scenography. Composers collaborated with choreographers, while Paris became the heart of development of ballet, to which many skilled performers of various nationalities went and shared their experiences onto other european stages. Within the third chapter, a panorama of ballet achievement is displayed in the examples of the Paris Opera and its counterparts in London, Italy, Vienna, Berlin, and Copenhagen. In all those places there worked great choreographers, and many stars of the romantic ballet performed. In time, the peregrinations of those artists reached Warsaw, Petersburg, and Moscow, giving the impulse for the development of romantic ballet in Poland and in Russia. The motif of folklore in romanticism was reflected in ballet performances: the local element was displayed in the form of national dances, which allowed the Warsaw ballet to manifest the essence of Poland encoded in Polish national dances.

In the fourth chapter, the growth of Warsaw ballet during the period of romanticism is shown. The Warsaw Theatre Directorate was propitious towards ballet, which was a favored form of amusement among Russians. Thanks to that, the Warsaw corps gained opportunities for further development: for ten years, Warsaw ballet was led by the choreographer Filippo Taglioni. Thanks to his influence, the repertoire was greatly enriched, the quality of performances rose, and his daughter, the ballet star Maria Taglioni, performed in Warsaw, as did his son Paul, who danced and produced his ballets there. Due to the Taglionis' influence, began the rise of Roman Turczynowicz, a soloist and choreographer, who came to be the director of Warsaw ballet from 1853 to 1867, bringing onto the Polish stage some of the greatest romantic ballets from other european theatres and staging ballets of his own. A great and varied repertoire assured a high standard of performance in Warsaw ballet during a time when Poland was missing from the map of the world.

In the final two chapters, presented are the accomplishments of ballet corps of Petersburg and Moscow during the period of romanticism, as are the differences between the two: Petersburg, the capital of Russia, where the Russian royal family were part of the audience alongside other high-ranking dignitaries, engaged the best choreographers, who were given lucrative contracts. Those artists would spend a couple of years or more in Petersburg, increasing the quality of the repertoire and the Russian dancers' skills. Many of the best foreign soloists made guest appearances, giving Russian dancers opportunity to study their technique. As a result of this magnificent relay, in which took part Filippo and Maria Taglioni, Jules Perrot, Fanny Elssler, Carlotta Grisi, Fanny Cerrito, Arthur Saint-Léon, Amalia Ferraris, and Carolina Rosati, among others, the Petersburg ballet gained a fair share of relevance between the thirties and sixties of the 19th century, slowly pulling ahead of the reigning power of the Paris Opera. Ballet in Moscow received much lower funding and did not employ quite as many choreographers. The Petersburg corps supported ballet in Moscow, but it played a supportive role.

The twilight of romanticism for choreography was the end of an important era, which had changed the aesthetic of ballet performances. It was in that time that female dancers began to dance on the tips of their toes, in pointe shoes - the footwear that made dancers lighter in their movements, which was important for the creation of characters of romantic spirits and visualizations of longing for dreams. Another important element was that of acting, used in ballet pantomime, which served to underline the sequence of events in a ballet's story. In the second half of the 19th century, the political and social changes influenced the form of ballet performances, in which spirituality and passion were replaced by trivial themes that gave room for showing off complex choreographies. As an art, ballet became a play in many parts with a grand setting and many performers and ballerinas who showed of their skills. The employment of Marius Petipa into Petersburg ballet and his long choreographical career resulted in the corps' blossom, which had significant patronage from the Tsar to suit their performance expenses. Thanks to that, since the latter half of the 19th century, Petersburg is considered the european capital of ballet.

The aesthetic of ballet-divertissements, a genre of complex performances from the latter half of the 19th century, was not in the taste of Warsaw's audience, which due to the events of the uprising and the oppression of the annexation, continued to preserve the romantic traditions for the next few years. One form of oppression after the january uprising was the removal of pension rights from dancers whose pensions were sanctioned by the old laws. Because of that, the corps was no longer kept young, as ballet graduates gave up on

practising their craft, and the increasing age of the active performers decreased the quality of ballet performances.

For decades, the pride of Warsaw theatre's repertoire was *Wedding in Ojców*, which with the basis of Polish national dances enriched the traditions of performance and engraved itself into the creation of Polish ballet. It was the Polish mazourka dancers, such as Roman Turczynowicz, Jan Popiel, Feliks Krzesiński, Hipolit Meunier, and Władysław Przedpełski, but also Polish ballerinas, such as Julia Mierzyńska, Konstancja Turczynowicz, Filipina Damse, Karolina Straus, Matylda Dylewska, and Józefa Oliwińska, who expertly interpreted Polish dances and created the identity of the national ballet, taking part in ballets and dances from the operas of Stanisław Moniuszko. The traditions of performance of Polish dances survived the period of annexation and became a tool for the rebirth of Polish ballet in 1918.