

**ABSTRACT**  
**of the doctoral dissertation by Ilzat Rishatovich Aukhadiev**  
**«Methodology of directing in national ballets by Kazakhstani choreographers**  
**(2005–2017)», submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the**  
**specialty «6D040600 – Directing»**

The diversification of 20th-century choreography into numerous genres and styles (modern, expressionism, neoclassicism, dramatic ballet, symphonism, abstractionism, postmodernism) has, on the one hand, greatly enriched ballet theater, but on the other hand, has significantly complicated the methodology of choreographers' artistic creativity. Each of these dance art movements developed its own aesthetic program. For example, in modern dance and German expressionism, the primary task is considered to be the free self-expression of the dancer through movement; in symphonism and, to some extent, neoclassicism, the main place is given to music, which becomes decisive in the structure of the dance action; dramatic ballet contributed to the convergence of dramatic theater and ballet direction; Abstract expressionism proclaims dance as an independent artistic phenomenon of performance that needs neither a plot nor musical motivation; and postmodernism equates all known trends and styles of choreography, building ballet performances on the basis of a synthesis of their aesthetic principles and directorial methods. Thus, the methodology of directing contemporary ballet is becoming one of the most multifaceted and complex phenomena of choreographic art at the beginning of the 21st century for scientific analysis.

In light of the above, the **relevance of this dissertation** research lies in its first-ever attempt to identify the characteristics of the influence of world choreographic art on the development of contemporary Kazakh ballet theater by analyzing the directing methodology of national ballets by Kazakhstani choreographers staged between 2005 and 2017.

**Degree of research on the problem**

The problems of directing in ballet have been examined by authors such as F. V. Lopukhov, R. V. Zakharov, V. M. Gaevsky, V. Yu. Nikitin, J. Lawson, M. Bremser, G. N. Dobrovolskaya, K. Ya. Goleizovsky, Yu. Yu. Ryazanova.

Issues of the synthesis of literature, music, choreography, and painting in ballet were considered by Yu. I. Slonimsky, V. V. Vanslov, Yu. B. Abdokov, V. M. Krasovskaya, S. V. Lavrova, B. Haggin, S. Jordan, Yu. Yu. Ryazanova, M. V. Pereverzeva, A. V. Epishin, A. A. Ivanov, V. Ya. Svetlov, E. V. Panova, A. Chuzhoy, E. A. Tumina, A. T. Wellington, N. V. Argamakova, E. V. Kisieva, A. A. Ivanov, N. Shakhmuradova and G. Saitova.

The fundamentals of scriptwriting, musical, and visual direction in 18th-century ballet have been explored by V. M. Krasovskaya, M. E. Perugini, D. G. Lomtev, D. Lynham, M. H. Winter, I. Guest, P. Michaut, V. M. Pasyutinskaya, D. Z. Khazieva, and L. V. Kirillina. Of particular value are the publications of renowned ballet masters and dance theorists of the Enlightenment era, such as J. Weaver, J. J. Noverre, and G. Anzolini.

The divertissement and architectonics in classical ballet heritage have been analyzed in the works of authors such as A. A. Pleshcheyev, V. Ya. Svetlov, A. Ya. Levinson, S. N. Khudekov, L. D. Blok, Yu. A. Bakhrushin, S. V. Katanova, O. A. Petrov, A. P. Demidov, E. V. Panova, V. M. Gaevsky, A. M. Polubentsev, F. V. Lopukhov Jr., B. A. Illarionov. The memoirs of outstanding choreographers M. I. Petipa, M. M. Fokin, renowned ballerina E. O. Vazem, and others are of great importance in defining the methodology of ballet academicism.

The specifics of dramatic and symphonic ballets of the 20th century were discussed in the works of Yu. I. Slonimsky, V. M. Krasovskaya, F. V. Lopukhov, R. V. Zakharov, V. M.

Gaevsky, P. M. Karpa, V. V. Vanslov, E. Ya. Surits, G. N. Dobrovolskaya, B. A. Lvov-Anokhin. The main factual basis was provided by published materials, recollections, articles, and memoirs of famous Soviet ballet masters A. A. Gorsky, K. Ya. Goleizovsky, L. M. Lavrovsky, A. B. Messerer, M. M. Plisetskaya and others.

The emergence and development of neoclassicism, expressionism, modernism, and abstractionism in ballet have been studied by N. P. Roslavleva, S. V. Lavrova, O. N. Polisadova, K. K. Bradley, A. A. Kaidanovskaya, R. Climenhaga, V. I. Maximov, M. N. Pogrebnyak, O. A. Vinogradova, N. A. De La Torre, V. M. Gaevsky and P. D. Gershenson and others.

The problems of contemporary ballet direction have been studied by authors such as F. Reyna, A. Haskell, J. Lawson, B. Haggin, S. Gordon, J. Anderson, M. Bremser, S. Au, S. Jordan, C. Lee, N. Raynolds & M. McCormick, R. Gottlieb, M. Naughtin, E. Ya. Surits, E. V. Vasenina, V. Yu. Nikitin, E. L. Ozdeviz, T. A. Kudryavtseva, Yu. Yu. Ryazanova, M. V. Pereverzeva, G. A. Komarov, Yu. B. Abdokov, S. V. Lavrova, Yu. M. Churko and others.

The distinctive features of national ballets by Kazakh choreographers of the 20th and early 21st centuries were examined in the works of L. P. Sarynova, S. A. Kuzyembayeva, Sh. B. Zhienkulova, D. T. Abirova, O. V. Vsevolodskaya-Golushkevich, B. G. Ayukhanova, G. T. Zhumaseitova, F. B. Musina, L. A. Mambetova, A. B. Shankibaeva, A. K. Kulbekova, T. O. Izim, L. A. Zhuykova, A. T. Moldakhmetova, A. A. Sadykova, A. E. Kussanova and others.

The achievements of modern Kazakh ballet studies allow us to paint a complete picture of the development of domestic choreographic art from its origins to the beginning of the 21st century. The key characteristics of the work of famous choreographers are clearly highlighted. However, the methodology of directing national ballets in the context of the influence of leading trends, directions, and styles of world choreography has not been fully revealed and has not become the subject of a separate study.

**The object of the study** is the methodology of directing in various directions and styles of world choreographic art.

**The subject of the study** is the methodology of directing national ballets by Kazakhstani choreographers from 2005 to 2017, in the context of contemporary trends in the development of world choreographic art.

**The aim of the study** is a comprehensive interdisciplinary analysis of the methodology of directing in Kazakh national ballet at the beginning of the 21st century in the context of trends in the development of various directions in foreign dance art.

### **Research objectives:**

- 1) to examine the emergence of ballet as an independent art form in the 18th century through the prism of scriptwriting, painting, and musical direction;
- 2) to analyze and highlight the characteristics of contemporary ballet direction in the context of the mutual influence of dramaturgy, music, choreography, and visual technologies;
- 3) to explore divertissement and architectonics as key principles of directing classical ballet heritage;
- 4) to reveal dramaturgy and music as structuring components in dramatic and symphonic ballets of the Soviet era;
- 5) to determine the specifics of experimental directing in choreographic neoclassicism, expressionism, modernism, and abstractionism;
- 6) to examine the world of characters, architectonics, and the divertissement structure of the action in the ballet «Alqissa»;

- 7) analyze the synthesis of staging principles of dramaballet, symphonism, and contemporary choreography in the ballets «Kyz Zhibek» and «Zheztynak»;
- 8) analyze the adaptation of global directing trends in national ballets.

**The methodological basis** for the analysis was a synthesis of various ballet theories of the late 20th century: Yuri Slonimsky's theory of musical and choreographic dramaturgy in ballet, combined with Vladimir Vanslov's theory of the synthetic essence of ballet and Yuri Abdokov's theory of musical poetics in ballet. These theories cover various aspects of ballet directing methodology. Y. I. Slonimsky examines musical and choreographic dramaturgy in 19th-century ballets. His theory was not applied in the analysis of performances of the 20th and early 21st centuries. Y. B. Abdokov's work touches on various forms of mutual influence between music and choreography alone. Therefore, dramaturgy and design remain outside the scope of his scientific interests. The patterns of interaction between all components of ballet (dramaturgy, music, choreography, design) are examined in V. V. Vanslov's theory of the synthetic essence of ballet. However, Vanslov illustrates his work using examples from the work of Soviet choreographers only. In this case, performances by foreign ballet masters are not included in the scientific analysis. Thus, for a comprehensive analysis of the methodology of directing in the choreographic art of the 18th, 19th, 20th, and early 21st centuries, a synthesis of the above theories is necessary.

In defining the concept of «ballet directing methodology», the author drew on the work of the following researchers: F. V. Lopukhov, Yu. I. Slonimsky, V. M. Krasovskaya, R. V. Zakharov, P. M. Karp, V. V. Vanslov, N. Reynolds & M. McCormick, M. Bremser, V. Yu. Nikitin.

In studying the origins of script, musical, and pictorial direction in 18th-century ballet, the author relied on publications by well-known ballet masters and dance theorists of the Enlightenment era, J. Weaver, J. J. Noverre, G. Anzolini, as well as the research of V. M. Krasovskaya, M. E. Perugini, D. G. Lomtev, D. Lynham, M. H. Winter, I. Guest, P. Michaut, A. Ya. Levinson and others.

The memoirs of outstanding choreographers M. I. Petipa, M. M. Fokin and the works of ballet scholars A. A. Pleshcheyev, V. Ya. Svetlov, Yu. I. Slonimsky, I. Guest, Yu. A. Bakhrushin, F. V. Lopukhov, V. M. Krasovskaya, O. A. Petrova, E. V. Panova, V. M. Gaevsky and others.

The characteristics of 20th-century ballet theater, with its diversity of different directions and methods of directing, have been compiled thanks to the works of R. V. Zakharov, P. M. Karpa, V. V. Vanslov, E. Ya. Surits, G. N. Dobrovolskaya, N. P. Roslavleva, S. V. Lavrova, O. N. Polisadova, K. K. Bradley, R. Climenhaga, V. I. Maksimova, O. A. Vinogradova, N. A. De La Torre, V. M. Gaevsky and P. D. Gershenzon, N. Shakhmuradova and G. Saitova and others.

To reveal the directing methods of Kazakh choreographers in the context of the history and trends in the development of Kazakh ballet, the author relied on the research of L. P. Sarynova, S. A. Kuzyembaeva, Sh. B. Zhienkulova, D. T. Abirova, O. V. Vsevolodskaya-Golushkevich, B. G. Ayukhanova, G. T. Zhumaseitova, F. B. Musina, L. A. Mambetova, A. B. Shankibaeva, A. K. Kulbekova, T. O. Izim, L. A. Zhuykova, A. T. Moldakhmetova, A. A. Sadykova, A. E. Kussanova and others.

The dissertation employed various combinations of the following **research methods**:

- 1) **Retrospective analysis** and a **cross-cultural approach** are used in this work to consistently track the cause-and-effect relationships in the formation and development of ballet directing methodology from its origins to the beginning of the 21st century, as well as

to identify and compare the characteristics of different periods of cultural development, prevailing ideologies in art, aesthetic programs, trends, and their influence on ballet directing methodology in the context of glocalization;

2) **Structural and comparative analysis** made it possible to study the specifics of the structure of action in ballets, the relationship between scenes and episodes, and their role in the dramaturgy of the entire performance. In the context of various domestic and foreign studies devoted to the problems of the synthesis of the arts, the peculiarities of different directions in choreographic art and the corresponding aesthetic principles and methodology of ballet directing, it was possible to examine the structural and synthetic components of ballet (dramaturgy, music, choreography, and design) and compare the directorial methods of their synthesis. Conceptual similarities and differences in the directorial approaches of Kazakhstani and foreign choreographers were also identified.

3) **Stylistic analysis and interviews** helped to identify a system of stable forms, expressive means, and directorial methods in a particular ballet, as well as the substantive and formal characteristics that allow it to be attributed to a particular style or direction. During interviews with Kazakhstani choreographers, the peculiarities of their directing approaches and methods, forms, and expressive means used in the context of the structural and stylistic features of Kazakh national ballets were revealed.

4) **Visual and hermeneutic methods** made it possible to analyze video recordings of ballets to identify various methods and approaches to directing and their connections with different styles and trends in choreographic art, as well as to study the contemporary visual elements of ballets (video and photo projections) in order to reveal their content and influence on the semantic context of ballet.

**The scientific novelty** of the dissertation research lies in the fact that, for the first time:

1) The emergence of ballet in 18th-century dance culture is examined through the prism of scriptwriting, painting, and musical direction, which has made it possible to trace the origins and patterns of the formation of choreographic art direction.

2) The methodology of contemporary ballet directing is analyzed in the context of the mutual influence of dramaturgy, music, choreography, and visual technologies, which allows us to consider the directing of 21st-century performances in the context of the synthesis of the arts.

3) divertissement and architectonics are revealed as principles of directing classical ballet heritage, which allows these categories to be used as criteria for analyzing productions: to what extent the architectonics of form or divertissement structure are preserved, and how they are transformed in contemporary directing;

4) dramaturgy and music are analyzed as structuring components of dramatic and symphonic ballets, which makes it possible to trace how contemporary directing either departs from these principles (moving towards non-narrativity and fragmentation) or reinterprets them;

5) the characteristics of experimental choreographic direction in neoclassicism, expressionism, modernism, and abstractionism are identified, which makes it possible to present contemporary ballet as the result of the synthesis and reinterpretation of various experimental methods of direction;

6) The world of characters, architectonics, and divertissement structure of the ballet «Alqissa» are examined in the context of ballet academicism directing, revealing the peculiarities of the ballet's imagery and dramaturgy, showing it as a synthesis of national content and academic form.

7) reveals the synthesis of the staging principles of drama ballet, symphonism, and contemporary choreography in the ballets «Qyz Zhibek» and «Zheztyrnak», which allows us to argue that contemporary national ballet direction goes beyond traditional illustrativeness and operates with interpretive approaches characteristic of postmodern theater;

8) non-narrativity, compilation, and polystylistics are analyzed as adapted methods of contemporary directing in the ballets of Kazakhstani choreographers, demonstrating how they master and adapt global trends (non-narrativity, polystylistics, compilation) by creating their own versions of contemporary ballet directing.

#### **Provisions put forward for defense:**

1) The key reform of 18th-century ballet performances was the establishment of narrative integrity, whereby dramatic action became the basis of composition and subordinated choreographic and musical material to itself. Expressive choreography became a means of revealing characters and dramatic conflicts, marking a transition to psychologically motivated dance movements. The musical and plastic synthesis reinforces the unity of the action: music determines the rhythmic, intonational, and figurative structure of the dance, which will later become the basis for the symphonization of ballet. The picturesque design of the stage creates a spatial and spectacular environment and reinforces the figurative structure of the work.

These processes together formed the fundamental basis of ballet dramaturgy, where the action is structured according to the laws of theatrical logic, and also laid the methodological foundations for the development of directing: scriptwriting (the construction of the dramaturgy of the performance), musical (the organization of the score in unity with the choreography), and pictorial (creating a visual atmosphere). Therefore, it is precisely the 18th century that can be considered the birth of a holistic system of ballet theater, in which the synthesis of music, plastic arts, and painting is interpreted by the director and becomes the basis for the further evolution of ballet art in the 19th and 20th centuries.

2) Contemporary ballet direction is characterized by eclecticism and fragmentation, caused by the synthesis of diverse artistic methods, authorial interpretations of the plot, compilation of musical works, active use of multimedia tools, and stylistic mixing of different dance techniques. The dominant principle of dramaturgy is formal experimentation, which takes precedence over substantive integrity, leading to blurred images, a loss of plot logic, and the predominance of kitsch and shock value aesthetics.

3) The direction of classical ballet is based on fairy-tale plots, the architectonic nature of the character system, the divertissement nature of the action, and the suite-like nature of the musical form. This model lays the foundations for symphonism in ballet direction, while elements of «white» (symphonic) ballet were used only partially, acting as a component rather than a dominant principle of dramaturgy.

5) In terms of symphonic and neoclassical direction, ballet is based on the dominance of symphonic-type musical dramaturgy, which determines the structure, imagery system, and expressive forms of choreography. All synthetic components of the performance are subordinate to musical logic, dance takes a subordinate position, and the search for musical and choreographic synthesis is carried out through generalized forms, the rejection of linear narration (anti-narrativity), compilation, and stylistic allusions. Symphonic music acts as the organizing principle in tonal, figurative, and metrorhythmic unity with the plastic solution of ballet.

6) Expressionism and modern dance mark a stage of radical revision of choreographic principles, characterized by the liberation of dance from the traditional canons of theatrical choreography and the severing of the synthetic connection with the plot, music, and

scenography. The focus is on the expressiveness of inner states, the emotional impact on the viewer, and the episodic nature of the stage design. There is a reorientation towards socio-political issues and the affirmation of dance's autonomy as a self-sufficient art form, which leads to the loss of the integrative synthesis of the script, music, and visual components of stage action.

7) In the aesthetics of choreographic abstractionism, there is a radical desemiotization of dance, accompanied by a complete loss of connection with literary, musical, and pictorial origins. Dance is established as a self-sufficient form, free from narrative, emotional expression, and rational thought, which leads to the formalization of plastic language and an emphasis on abstract choreographic development. A formalist paradigm of stage action is formed, based on abstract plasticity, self-irony, vague metaphors, and fragmentary images. The loss of artistic synthesis with music and dramaturgy is compensated for by visual and spectacular means (light effects, video and photo projections), which does not make up for the expressive deficit, but leads to a decrease in expressiveness, musical primitivism, and a loss of the substantive depth of the artistic image.

8) The ballet «Alqissa» is distinguished by its strict sequence of action and reliance on a divertissement structure. The script, based on motifs from heroic epics, is organically adapted to the genre of ballet fairy tales. Theatrical effects (the dance of the moths with the magic cloth, the ascension of Aisha and the baby) are integrated into the dramaturgy and subordinated to the aesthetics of the fairy-tale narrative. Act II is characterized by richness and dynamism, but the predominance of divertissement limits the development of the conflict and the image of the main character: Arystan is deprived of emotional, psychological, musical, and choreographic development. As a result, the hierarchy of characters, characteristic of 19th-century academicism, loses its structural architecture.

9) In the ballet «Kyz-Zhibek and Bekezhan», Ayukhanov shifts the dramatic focus to the antagonist for the first time in the history of Kazakh ballet. The plot unfolds as the story of Bekezhan's spiritual downfall, reflecting the innovativeness of the author's concept. The production is based on the principles of dramatic ballet: a clear structure, consistent development of the action, and reworking of the first and second acts to highlight the role of the main character. However, the redistribution of the musical material led to the loss of a coherent climax and limited the symphonic development of the action. The performance combines the methods of dramatic ballet and choreographic symphonism, which brings it closer to the model of psychological theater. Pantomime and dramatically motivated choreography become the leading means of expression. The dance vocabulary is based on a combination of classical and elements of Kazakh national dance.

In the ballet «Zheztyrnak», A. Adamova applied a synthesis of staging principles from choreographic symphonism and contemporary dance, which testifies to the formation of a new type of directorial thinking. The production demonstrates a combination of structural integrity, large-scale form, and the development of images inherent in symphonism with the plastic freedom, fragmentation, and expressiveness of contemporary choreography. Adamova combines the staging methods of academicism, dramatic ballet, and modernist directing. She applies the principles of developing main and secondary parts in dance, improvisation, and analysis of the character's inner state. The poly-stylistic choreography of the performance organically combines classical, contemporary, and Kazakh dance, which enhances the expressiveness of the stage action. The use of such contemporary techniques as montage and genre play with the aesthetics of horror expands the expressive boundaries of ballet.

10) Contemporary ballet direction in Kazakhstan demonstrates the adaptation of global trends in postmodern theater – non-narrativity, compilatory nature, and polystylistics – on national soil. In the ballets by Avakhri (Zhusan), Tutkibayeva (Legends of the Great Steppe), and Sadykova (Turan Dala – Qyran Dala), a new directorial language is being formed, based on the rejection of linear events; on the synthesis of classical, Kazakh, and contemporary dance; the use of video projections and multimedia technologies as meaning-making tools. Postmodernist directing methodology is evident in the contrasting structure of episodes, the polyphonic development of dance, the compilation of musical material, and the use of cinematic editing techniques. Metaphor and symbolism are emphasized in the choreography, and movement becomes a tool for philosophical interpretation of the theme. The work of Kazakhstani choreographers establishes a new model of ballet direction, combining national tradition with the universal artistic principles of contemporary choreography worldwide.