

Hnatyuk Anatolii,
*People's Artist of Ukraine,
Associate Professor at the Department of Philosophical Anthropology,
Philosophy of Culture and Cultural Studies of the Educational and Research Institute of Philosophy
and Educational Policy,
Dragomanov Ukrainian State University
orcid.org/0009-0001-3118-7432*

THE ROLE OF THE IVAN FRANKO KYIV NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATER IN THE FORMATION OF UKRAINIAN THEATRICAL CULTURE IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

The purpose of the article is to highlight the basic principles of the Ivan Franko Kyiv National Academic Drama Theater and to identify its influence on the formation of Ukrainian theatrical culture in the early twentieth century. The theater began its functioning in a difficult socio-political situation that significantly affected the course of cultural processes in Ukraine. The study highlights the prerequisites for the formation of Ukrainian theater, identifies the main problems of cultural institutions and artists at the beginning of the 20th century, which are related to the establishment of Soviet power and its oppression, censorship and control, from which the whole nation suffered. It is noted that the directions of activity and development of theatrical life were divided into two movements – those who preferred the forms of theater of “direct life correspondences” (according to Hnat Yura) and those who preferred “left” art, which established conventional forms on the stage (according to Les Kurbas). The article also pays attention to the main spectrums of development that influenced the popular recognition of the Ivan Franko Theater. Among them are repertoire policy, educational work, and the synthesis of the principles of the Theatre of Coryphaei and artistic stereotypes of the new time.

An important part of the study is the characterization of the repertoire policy of the theater, which is covered in three main perspectives: polystylism, synthesis of traditions and innovations, and the direction of creativity towards realism. The main features that influenced the general theatrical culture of Ukraine in the early twentieth century are identified, including the tendency to realism and the factor of accessibility and comprehensibility for an ordinary viewer.

Research methodology. The article uses a retrospective method, methods of analysis, selection, systematization and generalization.

The scientific novelty of the article lies in the study of the activities and influence of the Ivan Franko Kyiv National Academic Drama Theater through the prism of historical retrospection, with an eye to the current assessment of aspects established in Soviet times.

As a result of the study, the main activities of the Ivan Franko Kyiv National Academic Drama Theater were identified and the main criteria for its influence on the Ukrainian theatrical space of the early twentieth century were outlined.

Key words: Ivan Franko Kyiv National Academic Drama Theater, theatrical culture, Frankovites.

Гнатюк Анатолій Васильович,
*Народний артист України, доцент кафедри філософської антропології,
філософії культури та культурології
Навчально-наукового інституту філософії та освітньої політики
Українського державного університету імені Михайла Драгоманова
orcid.org/0009-0001-3118-7432*

РОЛЬ КИЇВСЬКОГО НАЦІОНАЛЬНОГО АКАДЕМІЧНОГО ДРАМАТИЧНОГО ТЕАТРУ ІМЕНІ ІВАНА ФРАНКА У ФОРМУВАННІ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ТЕАТРАЛЬНОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ НА ПОЧАТКУ ХХ СТОЛІТТЯ

Метою статті є висвітлення основних засад діяльності Київського національного академічного драматичного театру імені Івана Франка та виявлення його впливу на формування української театральної культури

на початку ХХ ст. Театр розпочав своє функціонування в умовах складної суспільно-політичної ситуації, яка значною мірою вплинула на перебіг культурних процесів в Україні. В дослідженні висвітлено передумови формування українського театру, означено основні проблеми роботи культурних інституцій та митців на початку ХХ ст., що пов'язані зі становленням радянського уряду та його утисками, цензурою і контролем, від якого потерпало все суспільство країни. Означено, що напрями діяльності та розвитку театрального життя розділилися на дві течії – ті, які воліли до форм театру «прямих життєвих відповідностей» (за Гнатом Юрою) та ті, що надавали перевагу «лівому» мистецтву, яке утверджувало на сцені умовні форми (за Лесем Курбасом). У статті також приділено увагу основним спектрам розвитку, що вплинули на народне визнання театру імені І. Франка. Серед них – репертуарна політика, просвітницька робота, синтез принципів «театру корифеїв» й художніх стереотипів нового часу.

Важливою частиною дослідження є характеристика репертуарної політики театру, яка висвітлена в трьох основних ракурсах: полістелістичності, синтезу традицій та новацій, спрямуванні творчості до реалізму. Виявлено основні риси, які вплинули на загальну театральну культуру України початку ХХ ст., серед яких тяжіння до реалізму та фактор доступності, зрозумілості для простого глядача.

У статті використано ретроспективний метод, методи аналізу, відбору, систематизації та узагальнення.

Наукова новизна статті полягає у дослідженні діяльності та впливу Київського національного академічного драматичного театру імені Івана Франка через призму історичної ретроспективи з оглядом на актуальну оцінку щодо усталених у радянській час аспектів.

В результаті проведеного дослідження виявлено основні напрями діяльності Київського національного академічного драматичного театру імені Івана Франка та означено основні критерії його впливу на український театральний простір початку ХХ ст.

Ключові слова: Київський національний академічний драматичний театр імені Івана Франка, театральна культура, франківці.

Introduction. The events that have recently shaken our country are increasingly turning us to the study of phenomena that were once covered through historical curvature, dictated by government policy, its tendency to change the facts in a way that would strengthen the authority of the ruling elite. The attempt to make society think alike provoked a number of measures that penetrated theatrical culture in particular.

Artists who worked at the beginning of the 20th century faced ambiguous conditions. Based on the recommendations of the government, which was a mandatory participant in all processes, they tried to preserve traditional heritage, national identity, and time-hardened classics.

One of the participants in this process was the Ivan Franko Kyiv National Academic Drama Theater, which, despite historical perturbations, managed to stay on the Ukrainian stage and preserve its identity. In addition, by combining traditions and innovations, forming a new type of reality theater, it influenced the activities of the cultural theater space of Ukraine in the early twentieth century.

The purpose of the study is to reveal the main aspects of the work of the Ivan Franko Kyiv National Academic Drama Theater in the early twentieth century in the context of political and social changes, to trace its influence on the evolution of theatrical culture in twentieth-century Ukraine.

Literature Review. The history of the Ukrainian theater is studied in the works of M. Yosypenko, M. Hordiychuk, Y. Boboshko, P. Nesterovskyi (Yosypenko, 1970), R. Pylypchuk (Pylypchuk, 2019). Research on the activities of the Ivan Franko Kyiv National Academic Drama Theater was conducted by scholars S. Chorny (Chorny, 1980), I. Vanina (Vanina, 1966), and O. Krasnylnikova (Krasnylnikova, 1981). Philosophical and cultural aspects of the methodology of such research are important (Prokopovych L., & Rozova T., 2018; Rusakov S., 2012). A separate part of the literature that vividly reveals various aspects of the theater's functioning are the memoirs of actors – A. Buchma, T. Demchuk, P. Kovalenko, Y. Kosach, I. Marianenko, H. Yura and collections dedicated to the theater's anniversaries.

Results and Discussion. Ukrainian theater, like any other theater in the world, has its roots in the era of pagan times – in family and household festivals and rituals related to agriculture, the calendar circle, and the life cycle. It was the ritual games, dances, and traditions of the Slavs, in which elements of theatricalization played an important role (fancy-dress carolers with a nativity scene, the farewell to Shrovetide with the burning of Marena, wedding and funeral performances) that became the harbingers of the phenomenon of Ukrainian theater, which is outstanding and immense in its achievements and significance.

In the second half of the seventeenth century,

fraternal colleges and the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy began to stage school dramas with music based on religious themes, which was dictated by the theological orientation of education. These works were created by teachers of poetry and rhetoric and performed together with students. Among the most common genres were mysteries, miracles, and moralities. The works of teachers and students of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, such as Mytrofan Dovhalevskyi, Dymytrii Tuptal, Heorhii Koniskyi, and others, have survived to this day.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the content of school drama expanded, and secular themes, in particular historical ones, began to be used for the plot (F. Prokopovych *Volodymyr* (1705), an unknown author *The Grace of God* (1708)).

The school drama had three acts, with short interludes between them – separate one-act plays. Their role was to entertain the audience, to provide an opportunity to take a break from the serious events on stage during the main work.

A striking example of theatricalization was not only acting but also special effects, including the sounds of thunder, lightning, earthquakes, flying in the air, picturesque scenery, and more. There was a certain symbolism in the costuming of the characters – each image had its own meaning. In general, the school drama followed the traditions of the Baroque era in which it was created – its components were aimed at impressing the viewer (Корній, 2011, p. 93). And this most clearly corresponds to the leading trends of theater today.

Music was an integral part of the school drama. Its role was to enhance the emotional state of the characters, provide soundtrack to natural phenomena, imitate the sounds of nature, and have an affecting and empathic effect on the viewer. Traditional baroque genres such as cant, solo city song, and instrumental music were usually used in the performance. The performance of these genres is associated with the emergence of the vertep, a puppet theater whose authors and performers were students of fraternal schools.

The vertep was very popular among all segments of the population. The plays for it consisted of two acts: the first was based on a religious legend about the birth of Christ and his persecution by King Herod, and the second was based on folk and household motifs and was not related to the first. It was a series of comic genre scenes. Over time, the nativity scene was performed by shop musicians who played a live (not puppet) nativity scene.

The first documented mention of amateur theater is the information in the *Daily Notes of the Little Russian General Treasurer* by Ukrainian writer-memoirist, Hetmanate statesman Yakiv Markovych about a comedy performance in the house of military and statesman S. Miklashevsky on April 7, 1730 in Hlukhiv: “At Miklashevsky's house, an inspector and children staged a comedy” (Markovych, 1859, p. 2). The first professional theater that functioned on the territory of Ukraine was a theater troupe from St. Petersburg that was brought to the residence of Kyrylo Razumovsky, Hetman of the Left Bank of Ukraine, in 1750, a large part of which was composed of foreigners, mostly Italians, who were later replaced by Ukrainians. The theater also had a ballet company and an orchestra. The first comedy to debut in Razumovsky's theater on December 19 (30), 1751, was the play *Izyum Fair* (Rudchuk, 2010, p. 78).

A striking phenomenon is the Theatre of Coryphaei, which appeared in 1882 and marked the birth of the Ukrainian professional theater and the liberation from imperial influence. Its founder was M. Kropyvnytskyi. Other members included the Tobilevych brothers, M. Starytskyi, M. Zankovetska, E. Zarnytska, and others. This was the beginning of the “golden age” of professional theater in Ukraine, which gave impetus to its further development on the basis of nationality and accessibility to the audience.

Thus, at the beginning of its inception and in the first stages of its functioning, theatrical performance was a complex genre, the components of which laid the main aspects of the further formation and development of the phenomenon of professional Ukrainian theater.

The beginning of the twentieth century in the history of Ukraine was complicated due to its political, economic, and social fluctuations, which became a catalyst for changes in the arts. The Ukrainian culture of this period can be characterized as a culture of resistance, which did its best to resist the new ideology that was just beginning to influence all areas of life. The Soviet government's artistic policy focused on collective unification and bringing culture “to the people” through the influence of music, theater, and other art forms, which could only promote works authorized by the government. Thus, the formation of ideological thinking became primary, and the importance of aesthetics faded into the background.

However, it is worth noting that in the 1920s there was a short-lived Ukrainization and reform

of legislation that had a positive impact on the social conditions of creative teams. In particular, stationary theaters appeared in Kyiv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, and Chernihiv. In addition, the new conditions ousted amateurism and gave place to professionalism on the stage, thus improving the quality of acting. This period after the revolutions is marked, as L. Protsyk notes, by “the practical implementation of artistic programs of avant-garde and traditionalist aesthetics,” which opened a new stage in the development of Ukrainian theater.

Two systems functioned in theater art in the early twentieth century:

- representation of theater forms of “direct life correspondences” (Hnat Yura);
- “leftist” art, which asserted conventional forms on the stage (Les Kurbas) (Protsyk, 2005, p. 8).

If Kurbas's theater preferred “symbolic forms” and the discovery of new trends, Hnat Yura's system sought forms of “direct life correspondences” (Protsyk, 2005, 8), which was manifested in the work of the Ivan Franko Kyiv National Academic Drama Theater, which followed the realistic ideas of the Theatre of Coryphaei. And it was this reliance on realism that became the main factor in revealing the phenomenon of the Ukrainian theatrical Renaissance.

The main features that identify the Ivan Franko Theater were its repertoire policy, educational work, and a synthesis of the principles of the Theatre of Coryphaei and artistic stereotypes of the new time.

Repertoire. H. Yura assigned an important mission to the role of repertoire in the success of theater activities, in the formation of which he relied on the following aspects:

1. Polystylism, which was a prerequisite for the work of playwrights of the early twentieth century who sought professional recognition and were in creative search. This feature is a manifestation of the experimentalism of the theater director H. Yura, who used elements of the grotesque (in comedies), means of conventionality in his productions (A. Lunacharsky *The Flaming Ones*, M. Gogol – M. Kropyvnytskyi (adapted by O. Vyshnia) *Viy*, M. Starytskyi (staged by V. Vasylo) *Chasing Two Hares*), techniques of expressionism, formalism, constructivism (Lope de Vega *Fuente Ovejuna*) (Protsyk, 2012, p.47).

2. Synthesis of tradition and modernity. This feature was manifested in the work of the Ivan Franko Theater in a combination

of different genres. In particular, the theater staged plays of the national repertoire that were already considered classics (I. Karpenko-Kary *Martin Borulia*, *Vanity*, *The Sea of Life*), as well as works by famous authors (H. Hauptman *Sin*, *Black Panther*, *Lies*, V. Vynnychenko *The Drowned Bell*, O. Mirbo *The Evil Shepherds*, Yu. Zhulavsky *Iola*, K. Witfoegel *Red Soldiers*, H. Bergstedt *The Crown Thief*, B. Shaw *St. Ioanna*) and little-known (L. Staritska-Cherniakhivska, *The Matchmaking of King Latina*, S. Cherkasenko *Dramatic Etude 'Must'*) foreign and Ukrainian playwrights (Protsyk, 2012, p. 48).

3. Directing creativity towards realism. Based on the traditional Theatre of Coryphaei, the theater continued its stage search in the realm of realistic art. The combination of this support and the use of the world classical repertoire caused theaters to turn to the genre of social drama in their repertoire. Following the fashion trends based on experimentalism, expressionism, epicism, and politics, Franko's theater rejected stage constructivism, which was actively promoted by W. Meyerhold and L. Kurbas (Protsyk, 2012, p. 47).

Educational work. This form was not unique to the Ivan Franko Theater. All creative teams in various fields of art and education were inclined to it. The work of propaganda brigades is well known, as they traveled to collective farm fields and entertained agrarians with classical and popular music, theater performances, and choreography. Another aspect of propaganda work was concerts and lectures held at plants, factories, libraries, and educational institutions. This type of work is described in H. Yura's memoirs: “It will not be superfluous to recall how, by order of the Gubernational Education Department, the theater traveled to the villages of the Kyiv region for the food tax campaign. It served two povits with its work: Cherkasy and Chyhyryn, visiting many villages and nooks and crannies. We received so many touching thanks from the peasants for the great joy we brought them with our performances” (Hurman, 1940, pp. 17–18). This campaign in the work of the Frankovites was on a large scale and was based not on an ideological and political goal, but on the goal of spreading high art among the common people to improve their aesthetic and artistic education.

Synthesis of the principles of the Theatre of Coryphaei and artistic stereotypes of the new time. This principle, which is manifested in a combination of reliance on classical traditions and the introduction

of new ideas, is fundamental to the work of many successful artists, both solo and collective. The Ivan Franko Theater has also successfully used it, but it has been moving toward it subconsciously, testing the concept in practice. In particular, the initial period of the theater's activity, which, according to the terminology of the researcher L. Protsyk, is called "Vinnytsia" (1920–1923) (Protsyk, 2005, p. 17), is characterized by the preservation of traditions, which were understood as following and preserving the traditions of the "old household scene" and turning to Ukrainian and world classics. In particular, these are the works of I. Karpenko-Kary *Savva Chaly*, *Martyn Borulia*, *Palyvoda*, *The evil Spark*, *Beztalanna*, I. Franko *Funeral*, *Stolen Happiness*, T. Shevchenko *Nazar Stodol*, M. Gogol *The Marriage*, H. Ibsen *Ghosts*, J. Moliere *Tartuffe*, L. Ukrainka *Forest Song*, and L. Vega *Fuente Ovejuna*.

Over time, the theater began to psychologize its productions, which corresponds to the latest trends. Plays reveal the psychological aspects of phenomena through the search for new techniques, reflecting the characteristics of the characters (age, nationality, profession, historical place), the influence of society on the individual (V. Vynnychenko *Young Blood*, *Black Panther and the White Bear*, *Panna Mara*, *The Haunting*, M. Gogol *Viy*, L. Ukrainka *The Fireplace Master*). This approach to its work allowed the theater to become a true folk theater in the later "Kharkiv" and "Kyiv" periods (1923–1926, since 1926) (Protsyk, 2005, p. 17).

Relying on these principles in its work, the Ivan Franko Theater played a major role in the evolution of theatrical culture in the early twentieth century. Its greatest influence can be traced to the construction of realism, which this center initially tended to. Mass feedback from Soviet critics approving the chosen direction prompted other institutions to follow the theatrical policy of Frankovites. In his review, M. Romanovskiy wrote that the Franko Theater "follows the path of a special theatrical realism, sharpened by modern grotesque" (Yosypenko, 1970, p. 106). For the realistic embodiment of the plots on stage, H. Yura used naturalistic scenery that reproduced the surroundings of factory workshops, music that imitated the surrounding sounds (the noise of horns, grinding of machines, knocking of wheels, and the roar of production) (Yosypenko, 1970, p. 111).

Another factor that, according to Frankovites, influenced the activity of theater culture in the early

twentieth century was the accessibility and comprehensibility of performances for ordinary viewers: "The factor of accessibility and comprehensibility of the artistic forms of theater for a wide audience is put forward as a primary requirement of the public" (Yosypenko, 1970, p. 114).

These were the performances of the Ivan Franko Theater, which, by means of realistic art, maintained a direct connection between the stage action and real life. These techniques were followed by other Soviet theaters that relied on the experience of the I. Franko Theater.

Conclusions. The roots of Ukrainian theater go back to the pagan era, where it was manifested in rituals, but transforming through religious stories in the Middle Ages, through the nativity scene and school drama, it eventually became available in various circles: from amateur theaters in market squares and estates of the petty nobility to real theater companies in the residence of Hetman Kirill Razumovsky and the Theatre of Coryphaei.

The early twentieth century was marked by social, economic, and political changes that affected the functioning of theaters. In Ukraine, two branches of these centers' formations became widespread: the theater of "direct life correspondences" with Hnat Yura's theater as a prominent representative, and "leftist" art, which asserted conventional forms on the stage, represented by Les Kurbas's theater.

The activity of the Ivan Franko Kyiv National Academic Drama Theater, one of the founders and director of which was H. Yura, is a vivid example of combining leading proletarian ideas without neglecting national interests by promoting Ukrainian repertoire and relying on sustainable classical art. The work of this center reveals the main aspects that strengthened its influence on the theatrical culture of Ukraine in the early twentieth century, including repertoire policy, educational work, and a synthesis of the principles of the Theatre of Coryphaei and artistic stereotypes of the new time.

However, the strongest influence was exerted by the tendency to realism, which was manifested in the manner of acting, music, and stage design. All of this served a single purpose: to make the performances accessible and understandable to the general public.

The activity of the Ivan Franko Kyiv National Academic Drama Theater is multifaceted and ambiguous, which requires further study in terms of political and social factors.

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