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“DECEMBER RAIN” BY KRISTINA PAULIN: TRANSFORMATION OF THE BIOGRAPHICAL BALLET GENRE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Annotation

The paper is dedicated to the investigation of contemporary biographical ballet with special reference to the ballet “December Rain” of Kristina Paulin premiered at the “Astana Ballet” Theatre in 2024. It investigates the principal features of choreographic and musical language of the performance, as well as tradition continuity of John Neumeier and the genre development tendencies of the 21st century. The structure of the performance, its retrospective composition and incorporation of elements of postdramatic theater, immersive techniques and the naturalistic portrayal of characters are analyzed. Special attention is given to the interaction between Frédéric Chopin’s music and contemporary sonic environment, which creates a multilayered emotional space as a whole. A new model of ballet storytelling is revealed through intertextuality and multilingual nature of its artistic means, turning the dance into a form of cultural memory. The study demonstrates that biographical ballet in the 21st century is evolving toward profound psychological depth and genuine emotional expressiveness. In this context, “December Rain” highlights the relevance of synthesizing tradition and innovation affirming ballet as a living art of the contemporary world.

The paper investigates contemporary biographical ballet through the case of Kristina Paulin’s “December Rain”, premiered at the “Astana Ballet” Theatre in 2024. The study examines the choreographic and musical language of the production and traces the continuity of John Neumeier’s tradition within the genre’s current development. The structure of the ballet, its retrospective composition, and the use of postdramatic elements, immersive techniques and naturalistic character portrayal are considered. Particular attention is given to the interaction between Frédéric Chopin’s music and the contemporary sonic environment. The research applies analytical, comparative, cultural-historical, semiotic and intertextual methods. The novelty of the study lies in offering the first comprehensive examination of “December Rain” in the context of 21st-century biographical ballet. The findings may be of practical relevance to choreographers and researchers exploring contemporary approaches to narrative and expressive strategies in ballet. The results demonstrate that the genre is moving toward greater psychological depth and emotional nuance, with “December Rain” exemplifying this shift.

Key words

ballet performance, biographical ballet, choreographic art, ballet of the 21st century, Western European choreography.

Cite

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КРИСТИНА ПОЛИННИҢ «ЖЕЛТОҚСАН ЖАҢБЫРЫ»: ХХІ ҒАСЫРДАҒЫ ӨМІРБАЯНДЫҚ БАЛЕТ ЖАНРЫНЫҢ ӨЗГЕРУІ

Аннотация

Мақала 2024 жылы «Астана Балет» театрында қойылған Кристина Полиннің «Желтоқсан жаңбыры» спектаклі мысалында заманауи өмірбаяндық балетті зерттеуге арналған. Қойылымның хореографиялық және музыкалық тілінің негізгі ерекшеліктері, сондай-ақ Джон Ноймайер дәстүрлерінің сабақтастығы және ХХІ ғасырдағы жанрдың даму тенденциялары қарастырылады. Спектакльдің құрылымы, оның ретроспективті композициясы және драмадан кейінгі театр элементтерін пайдалану, кейіпкерлердің иммерсивтілігі мен натурализациясы талданады. Фредерик Шопен музыкасы мен көп деңгейлі эмоционалды кеңістікті қалыптастыратын заманауи дыбыстық ортаның өзара әрекеттесуіне ерекше назар аударылады. Көркем құралдардың интертекстуалдылығы мен көптілділігі арқылы балеттік баяндаудың жаңа моделі ашылады, онда би мәдени жадының формасына айналады. Зерттеу көрсеткендей, ХХІ ғасырдағы өмірбаяндық балет терең психологиялық және шынайы эмоционалды экспрессивтілікке қарай дамиды. Бұл тұрғыда «Желтоқсан жаңбыры» дәстүр мен жаңашылдық синтезінің өзектілігін растайды, балетті қазіргі заманның тірі өнері ретінде растайды.

Мақала 2024 жылы «Астана Балет» театрында қойылған Кристина Полиннің «Желтоқсан жаңбыры» спектаклі мысалында заманауи өмірбаяндық балетті зерттеуге арналған. Зерттеу қойылымның хореографиялық және музыкалық тіліне талдау жасап, Джон Ноймайер дәстүрінің сабақтастығын және жанрдың қазіргі кезеңдегі даму үрдістерін айқындайды. Балеттің құрылымы, оның ретроспективті композициясы, сондай-ақ постдрамалық элементтерді, иммерсивті тәсілдерді және кейіпкерлердің натуралистік бейнеленуін пайдалану қарастырылады. Фредерик Шопен музыкасы мен заманауи дыбыстық ортаның өзара ықпалына ерекше назар аударылады. Зерттеу барысында аналитикалық, салыстырмалы, мәдени-тарихи, семиотикалық және интертекстуалдық әдістер қолданылды. Жұмыстың жаңалығы «Желтоқсан жаңбыры» спектаклін ХХІ ғасыр өмірбаяндық балеті контекстінде алғаш рет кешенді түрде талдауға негізделеді. Нәтижелер қазіргі балеттегі баяндау мен экспрессивтік тәсілдерді зерттейтін хореографтар мен ғалымдар үшін пайдалы болуы мүмкін. Жанрдың психологиялық тереңдік пен эмоциялық нақыштарға қарай дамуы айқындалып, Желтоқсан жаңбыры осы бағыттың маңызды үлгісі ретінде көрініс табады.

Түйінді сөздер

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«ДЕКАБРЬСКИЙ ДОЖДЬ» КРИСТИНЫ ПОЛИН: ТРАНСФОРМАЦИЯ ЖАНРА БИОГРАФИЧЕСКОГО БАЛЕТА В XXI ВЕКЕ

Аннотация

Статья посвящена исследованию современного биографического балета на примере спектакля «Декабрьский дождь» Кристины Полин, поставленного в театре «Астана Балет» в 2024 году. Рассматриваются основные особенности хореографического и музыкального языка постановки, а также преемственность традиций Джона Ноймайера и тенденции развития жанра в XXI веке. Анализируется структура спектакля, его ретроспективная композиция и использование элементов постдраматического театра, иммерсивности и натурализации персонажей. Особое внимание уделяется взаимодействию музыки Фредерика Шопена и современной звуковой среды, формирующих многоуровневое эмоциональное пространство. Через интертекстуальность и полиязычность художественных средств раскрывается новая модель балетного повествования, где танец становится формой культурной памяти. Исследование демонстрирует, что биографический балет XXI века эволюционирует в сторону глубокой психологичности и подлинной эмоциональной выразительности. В этом контексте «Декабрьский дождь» подтверждает актуальность синтеза традиции и новаторства, утверждая балет как живое искусство современности.

Статья посвящена исследованию современного биографического балета на примере спектакля «Декабрьский дождь» Кристины Полин, премьера которого состоялась в театре «Астана Балет» в 2024 году. В работе анализируется хореографический и музыкальный язык постановки, а также прослеживается преемственность традиции Джона Ноймайера в контексте современного развития жанра. Рассматриваются структура балета, его ретроспективная композиция, а также использование элементов постдраматического театра, иммерсивных приёмов и натуралистического изображения персонажей. Особое внимание уделяется взаимодействию музыки Фредерика Шопена и современной звуковой среды. В исследовании применяются аналитический, сравнительный, культурно-исторический, семиотический и интертекстуальный методы. Научная новизна заключается в первом опыте комплексного анализа спектакля «Декабрьский дождь» в контексте биографического балета XXI века. Результаты могут быть полезны хореографам и исследователям, изучающим современные подходы к нарративным и выразительным стратегиям в балете. Сделаны выводы, что жанр развивается в направлении большей психологической глубины и тонкости эмоционального выражения, а «Декабрьский дождь» наглядно отражает эту тенденцию.

Ключевые слова

балетный спектакль, биографический балет, хореографическое искусство, балет XXI века, западно-европейская хореография.

Для цитирования

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Introduction. A crucial criterion in analyzing a ballet performance is the study of the work as an integrated whole within a given context. The work can be considered in relation to the social and cultural context, genre specificity, and other frameworks including the oeuvre of a single choreographer. As the analysis deepens, patterns and interconnections become visible and identifying them is essential for understanding the creative method of a particular artist. This is particularly important when a choreographer consciously or unconsciously continues the tradition of a teacher or mentor. Such is the case in “December Rain” by Kristina Paulin premiered at the Astana Ballet Theatre in 2024.

“December Rain” is a ballet inspired by the life and creative legacy of the great Polish-French composer Frédéric Chopin. It focuses on the final years of the composer’s life, beginning at the moment when he was mortally ill, and also reveals his relationship with writer George Sand (the pseudonym of Amandine Aurore Lucile Dupin / Dudevant). The author of the choreography as well as the director and scenographer Kristina Paulin, who spent more than ten years as a member of John Neumeier’s Hamburg Ballet, participating in his premieres and developing her own artistic voice, she became fully devoted to choreography after ending her dancing career in 2021. In “December Rain” she continues Neumeier’s tradition of biographical

ballet through the use and development of characteristic techniques associated with his concept of new expanded dance dramaturgy.

In the late 20th and 21st centuries biographical ballet evolved into a new form of stage expression transcending boundaries of narrative ballet. As a synthetic art form, ballet underwent a transformation in the 20th century shaped by the emergence of new dance styles. Modern and later postmodern choreography rejected principles of classical ballet, namely its aesthetics, technique, and conceptual foundations in favor of corporeality and physical essence of movement. Recent research increasingly emphasizes that the nonverbal expressive means of dance enhance the possibilities for the psychological self-disclosure of characters, particularly in productions devoted to historical figures (Borowski 2023; Uhiara and Cobello 2021).

Nevertheless, narrative classical ballet persisted, undergoing changes through interactions with other 20th century art forms. Literature, dramatic theatre, and visual arts revitalized classical ballet giving rise to new forms of stage expression. Choreographers of the second half of the 20th century incorporated ideas of postdramatic theatre into their work fundamentally transforming the structure and content of ballet. Within this context, biographical ballet, whose main features were established in the works of German choreographer John

Neumeier, emerged as a distinct genre. The aim of this study is to analyse how “December Rain” combines documentary material, psychological themes and modern stage techniques. The study also highlights approaches that may inform contemporary staging and dramaturgy in ballet.

Materials and methods of research.

The following methods commonly used in the analysis of choreographic art and musical theatre were applied in the article:

- analytical and descriptive method for structural analysis of the performance;
- comparative method for identifying continuity within the biographical ballet genre;
- cultural and historical method for analyzing artistic and social tendencies of the period;
- semiotic analysis for interpreting stage signs and symbols embodying psychological and philosophical concepts of the performance;
- intertextual analysis for examining the interaction of various artistic languages to reveal multilayered and multilingual nature of the performance.

Literature review. John Neumeier himself was a successor to traditions established by his mentor John Cranko, and he was not the only choreographer working in the direction of biographical ballet. Other choreographers also contributed to the development of the biographical ballet genre: Martha Graham with “Letter to the World”

(about Emily Dickinson); Kenneth MacMillan with “Mayerling” (about Crown Prince Rudolf of Habsburg) and “Isadora” (about Isadora Duncan); Maurice Béjart with “Leonardo da Vinci” and “Becket”; and Yuri Grigorovich with symbolic portraits such as “Spartacus” and “Ivan the Terrible”. Later, Boris Eifman created biographical works such as “Tchaikovsky. Pro et Contra”, “Red Giselle” (about Olga Spessivtseva), and “Rodin”. The performance “Nureyev” (2017), directed by Kirill Serebrennikov and choreographed by Yuri Possokhov, sparked significant debate in the Russian-speaking cultural sphere.

In Kazakhstan, biographical ballet remains a relatively new and rare genre, represented by Bulat Ayukhanov’s “The White Cloud of Genghis Khan” (2010) and Mukaram Avakhri’s “Sultan Beibars” (2020).

Nevertheless, it was John Neumeier’s works of the 1970s and beyond that led German critics to identify a distinct trend toward “biographical ballets” (Wendland 1974), based on the life stories of remarkable figures.

Conveying factual information about a person’s life through dance alone is both impossible and artistically meaningless. Biographical ballet of the second half of the 20th century became a deeper, more philosophical phenomenon. The contemporary researchers describe it as a genre in which choreography, through the synthesis of documentary elements, poetics, and movement, acquires

philosophical and cultural depth. It preserves artistic tradition while offering new ways to interpret personality and history through dance (Gorbatsevich 2020; Menshikov and Zhironova 2024; Seznec 2021). The genre of biographical ballet has also been described as “a profound philosophical statement by the author about the facets of the human soul and the processes of contemporary society” (Sycheva 2024). Another scholar, analyzing the music of “Nijinsky” by Neumeier characterizes the genre as “a dualistic synthesis of narrative ballet and program-symphonic ballet, interweaving the real and symbolic, retrospection and the present” (Astakhova 2021, 23).

Series of biographical ballets by Neumeier “Meyerbeer–Schumann” (1974), “The Fourth Symphony of Gustav Mahler” (1974), “Illusions like Swan Lake” (1976), “Vaslav” (1979), “Window on Mozart” (1991), “Bernstein Dances” (1998), “Nijinsky” (2000), “Duse” (2016) established his signature style. In these works, biography becomes the semantic core, and dance, music, and visual imagery evoke the inner world and psychological portrait of the protagonist rather than merely portraying factual events. The article offers a new perspective by considering musical multilayering, intertextuality and immersive elements together.

The results of the study. The multilayered artistic structure of Kristina Paulin’s “December Rain”

closely echoes Neumeier’s aesthetic. The two-act structure is built on retrospection and follows a circular composition, beginning and ending with the same scene (the death of Chopin). Though the technique itself is not new, Paulin’s inclination toward nonlinear dramaturgy, layering, and circularity aligns strongly with Neumeier’s dramaturgical approach (“Nijinsky”, “Illusions Like Swan Lake”, “St. Matthew Passion”, “Window to Mozart”). His method of developing action in a spiral and shifting characters between reality, dream, and memory resonates in Paulin’s ballet. Although past and present do not merge seamlessly in “December Rain”, the simultaneous presence of real figures, illusory characters, and imagined phantoms of Chopin is a recurring motif. These include George Sand’s Alter Ego, the personified Music, and Two actors representing illness and hallucination. Real historical figures include Sand’s children Maurice and Solange, Chopin’s sister Ludwika, and Franz Liszt. The decision to bring them onto the stage is explained by the principles of dramaturgical logic prioritizing imagery and emotional meaning. Interpretation arises through emotionally rich solos and duets, ensemble scenes, movement, lighting, visual effects, spatial dynamics, and scenography. The lighting design reinforces this dramaturgy: pastel tones gradually darken as if a heavy shadow falls over the unfolding story.

The primary dramatic arc, derived from Chopin's biography, intersects with themes familiar from Neumeier's "Nijinsky": abandonment, loneliness, and internal fragmentation leading to madness. In Nijinsky, these themes reflect the dancer's genuine psychological illness and conflict with Sergei Diaghilev. In "December Rain" the theme emerges through Chopin's progressing tuberculosis, his increasingly strained relationship with George Sand and her family, and the trauma of the 1830 November Uprising in Poland. It should be noted that this is not unique to the choreographers of the Hamburg Ballet; for example, similar themes appear in Boris Eifman's "Red Giselle", where emigration, isolation, and madness are central to the life of Olga Spessivtseva.

A key feature of contemporary biographical ballet is the rethinking of musical accompaniment and its interaction with choreography. Thanks to the experiments of the "Ballets Russes" under Sergei Diaghilev, in the early 20th century music of any complexity has been viewed as suitable for choreography, giving rise to "ballet symphonism", a new direction in organizing choreographic action. As already mentioned, Kristina Paulin, inspired by Chopin's life and music, created her own choreo-symphony based on his works. However, their sound undergoes significant reinterpretation in the performance. Paulin weaves quotations from several

works into a mosaic enriched with diverse sonic elements. The overall tone is minor and melancholic: the ballet notably lacks Chopin's more familiar bravura mazurkas and polonaises. The musical score can be divided into four layers:

a) Chopin's works in piano and orchestral arrangements in two forms:

- recorded music;
- performed live by an onstage pianist who appears on the same spatial stage and interacts with characters;

b) modern compositions by Davidson Jaconello, representing Chopin's fears and illness-induced convulsions;

c) recordings of letters by Sand and Chopin, voiced by Gulnara Omasheva and Daniyar Turanov;

d) various everyday sounds (Sand's voice, Chopin's coughing, hoofbeats, rain, etc.)

Some nocturnes and preludes are heard in full, while others are deliberately interrupted. Selected quotations from the composer are assembled into a mosaic, echoed by the cinematic shifts in the action. Each excerpt reflects a replayed situation, a revelation in a letter, or a fantasy of Chopin. Thanks to this, the action acquires a biographical discourse, and the dance becomes more than just a visual embodiment of the music. This interpretation of musicality makes a psychological portrait of Chopin more vivid than any choreography in his various sensual and emotional impulses. In this form long-known music from the

past acquires new meanings, is updated, becoming a “living” part of the observed story. This effect is not new; it was already achieved by J. Neumeier in his ballet “Meyerbeer-Schumann” about the conductor and composer (Gorbatsevich 2020, 10). But Kristina Paulin also introduces performer-pianist as an additional character on stage. On the one hand he is not the only additional character; the ballet is full of phantoms, symbolic images, and visions. But on the other hand, he is a participant in a performative event that disrupts the dual system of “artist-audience” in which artist and recipient are opposed and separated. The presence of the pianist and live performer on stage and in the orchestra pit as figures with direct reference to the protagonists of the performance Chopin, the composer and pianist elevates the ballet beyond the frames of “performance” to the category of “emotional experience”. We first see him at the very beginning in the scene of Chopin’s death, and as he steps off the stage into the orchestra pit and sits at the piano beginning the narrative; the story becomes a story

about “himself” which returns us to the biographical narrative again.

While Chopin’s scores draw our attention to a dialogue with the soul of composer-creator and his love for music and George Sand, the growing inner threat of illness and associated changes in consciousness and psyche are depicted through the electronic compositions of Davidson Jaconello. His noise treatment of certain transitions between choreographic numbers featuring the Two Actors in Act I also anticipates the main scene of Chopin’s hallucinations caused by illness and torments in Act II (Fig. 1). The blending of musical styles and incorporation of real sounds reflect the influence of two 20th century tendencies: postmodernism with its rejection of traditional musicality in favor of the “sound sphere”, and neoclassicism with its desire to reinterpret and “expand” classical musical texts. Additionally, the presence of voices, in the form of voice-over readings of letters and individual words and sounds reproduced by the main characters, create an entire sound system.



Fig. 1. *Baurzhan Buranbayev and Timur Zagidullin as Two Actors, and Sundet Sultanov as Frédéric Chopin. Photo by A. Nurekin.*

This musical mix certainly intentionally creates atmospheric density together with the visual language and movement, affecting the audience through aesthetic-cognitive experience. Furthermore, the use of voiced letters as a postdramatic theater tool comments on the events and helps overcome complexity of the emerging polylingual and multilayered expression.

The use of expressive means of postdramatic theatre in the genre of biographical ballet was noted not coincidentally since the introduction of voice as a technique is included in such contemporary theatrical techniques as the invasion of reality onto the stage and immersive effect.

A direct immersive technique into a unified field (or a striving for this unification) of perception between performers and audience exists in the scenes of Chopin's performance in the first and second acts. The performance of the dancer Chopin and the pianist who replaces him transforms the stage into an act where personal and collective experiences coincide. The choreography becomes a performance observed by the Parisian salon, Sand, and the audience. Reality joins this performance delicately and unobtrusively, and contact with the audience is constant.

This process unfolds through the eyes of George Sand. Chopin's life and work form the core of the plot, but in the revelations of Sand's voiced letters she

is the one who enters into dialogue with the audience. She breaks the barrier of the fourth wall and steps offstage into the audience space; she sits with her Alter Ego on a chair at the beginning of Act II in a silent scene before the closed curtain; she smokes cigars and removes her ballet shoes. Consequently, Sand's position helps us to perceive the action as an experience transcending established understanding of ballet as a performance. This may also be due to the fact that choreographer Kristina Paulin was driven by a desire to speak from a woman's perspective expanding the narrative discourse.

The rethinking of dance space extends beyond audience involvement as that of an active observer: scenography and props in "December Rain" are executed with realistic precision. Sand's son Maurice's paper sketchbook, the clothes folded in a suitcase, Chopin's piano stool, and the sheet music are all real, and all interactions with them feel "here and now". The scenographic decision takes the form of a double-sided wall of a house, which transforms from a living room into a Parisian salon and back when turned. The movement of the structure sometimes originates from the characters, as in the scene of Maurice's nervous breakdown. His convulsive, hysterical movements eventually collide with one of the walls, which he forces open with great effort, and, exhausted, flees through the opening door. The expansion of the stage also

occurs through the use of the orchestra pit where the pianist-performer descends, with whom the characters of Alter Ego and Franz Liszt subsequently interact there.

The very phenomenon of Western European narrative ballet in its quest to transcend the conventionality of action actively adapts the key element of postdramatic theater in the naturalization of its characters. This is certainly justified in the biographical genre, as the hero becomes a real individual in a complex and ambiguous form ceasing to be merely a symbol. His behavior, movements, and gestures are psychologically motivated and become a form of internal monologue. Emotional realism in overcoming linear dramaturgy and in musical interpretation has replaced external gloss. Ballet as a specific art form in which the beauty of the physical body forms the basis of aesthetics and is the primary criterion for selecting dancers is undergoing significant changes. Artists are no longer simply ideal bodies, and women are no longer "muses". They are all real people with their own pain and experience. And the decorative art form has gradually assumed a position confidently in which the individual is explored, and in which dance has truly become the language of genuine human emotions. The performers of the leading roles in «December Rain» Tatyana Ten, Ainur Abilgazina, Wesley Carvalho, and Sundet Sultanov are distinguished by their extensive life and stage

experience (Fig. 2). This is especially evident in case of performers of George Sand's roles owing to their diverse artistic backgrounds, therefore their

interpretations of the leading female character proved to be the most truthful and heartfelt.



Fig. 2. *Ainur Abilgazina as George Sand and Sundet Sultanov as Frédéric Chopin. Photo by A. Nurekin.*

In staging the performance Kristina Paulin invited Hamburg Ballet soloists Alexander Ryabko and Silvia Azzoni to coach the ensemble, transferring Neumeier's principles of physical authenticity. Alexander Ryabko and Silvia Azzoni worked with the "Astana Ballet" soloists for about three weeks and their mastery of physical authenticity was adopted by the Russian dancers to the extent required by the performance. Despite their advanced age (by ballet standards), Ryabko and Azzoni demonstrated a high level of physical fitness and acting skills during rehearsals.

In terms of choreography despite the tendency toward simplicity of gesture and naturalness of movement the ballet is rich and multifaceted despite an overarching aesthetic of naturalness. Groups of characters employ distinct movement vocabularies. As critic U. Aliyeva notes: «...the choreography of Mats Ek (in Ludwig's dance); Martha Graham's typical contraction-release technique, Pite-style gliding, as well as Kylián's rolls (in the dances of the main characters' phantoms), neoclassicism (in the scene of the Paris salon), Cranko-style lifts (in the love duets), the flying-low floor technique (in the part of Maurice, the two demons, and the

“black” corps de ballet), etc» (Alieva 2024). On the other hand the multi-layered nature of the choreography can also be interpreted as a single technique in which the main criterion is the quotational nature of styles and motifs form additional layers of meaning.

Discussion of Results. The multi-layered nature of the performance exists at various layers (in music, visuals, choreography, and narration through several narrators), as well as techniques such as engaging the audience as an interpreter, the use of real historical letters, and connection of times in the structure of the performance are manifestations of the intertextuality of contemporary choreographic text.

Contemporary ballet is increasingly becoming more than just an art of movement, but a means of preserving and transmitting cultural memory. Choreographers combine past and present, classical traditions and contemporary forms in one work creating unique “intertextual” world where one art communicates through the other one. Choreographers such as Kristina Paulin and her predecessors Cranko, Neumeier, MacMillan, and Eifman use multilingual approaches: dance, music, light, image, and text create atmospheric density where the audience perceives history not only through their eyes but also through sound, space, and rhythm. Paulin’s choreographic range encompasses the main types of contemporary dance technique, encompassing dozens of

dance forms from virtuoso duets, trios, and heartbreaking psychological solos to small group numbers and ensembles featuring the main character. The richness of the choreographic text, which flows openly and freely through the performers’ remarks and imbues these movements with subtlest nuances of emotional experience affording various levels of expressiveness. As in “Nijinsky” of Neumeier: “...The choreographic fabric becomes an expressive medium that reveals emotional nuance, reminiscent of Neumeier’s “Nijinsky” where every movement becomes an X-ray of consciousness” (Zozulina 2012). The “relatable” Neumeier signature style found its successor in the young choreographer.

In “December Rain” we observe how a performance is constructed through intersection of real events and personal feelings, social themes and individual experience. A series of additional micro-plots and meanings complete the overall concept like fragments of a whole. However, despite all this, nonlinear narrative does not strive for a complete form; the kaleidoscope of images and open structure allow the performance to be perceived as a living process. In biographical genre this function is possible in the blending of past and present when memory and the present moment can coexist in line. Therefore, a single performance features both historical and fictional figures. Dramatic fragmentation

techniques in the form of additional fictional characters connect these opposing layers: Chopin's Alter Ego and Music as doubles of the writer and composer present a reflection and simultaneously a true manifestation of their spiritual impulses in scenes where the real characters reveal none of their feelings in public. Thus, reality and dreams merge in a single moment. But in such a case the presence of documentary evidence is essential to ensure the entire work remains credible. And letters by Sand and Chopin serve as documentary anchors ensuring the credibility of the narrative in "December Rain".

Thus, intertextuality and fragmented dramaturgy transform contemporary ballet into a complex semiotic system where dance becomes an intellectual mode of recording biography and cultural reflection.

Conclusion. The analysis of "December Rain" by Kristina Paulin demonstrates that contemporary biographical ballet is becoming a key space for rethinking classical forms of choreographic narrative. It intersects documentary and fiction, psychologism and philosophy, tradition and contemporaneity. Rather than simply illustrating the life of a famous figure, it reveals the inner world of the character and era, transforming personal history into a universal artistic experience.

Kristina Paulin's work shows that 21st-century biographical ballet inherits the essential discoveries of

Neumeier and his school while contributing new approaches to stage language. For Paulin the goal is not to reconstruct events, but to convey emotional truth –presenting a personal story rather than a chain of facts. "December Rain" combines European dance philosophy with a distinctly female authorial perspective, expanding the interpretive possibilities of the genre.

The interaction between choreography and music plays a central role in the study. Chopin's works, juxtaposed with contemporary compositions and sound effects, create a multilayered soundscape in which past and present enter into dialogue. Music becomes a partner to the dance, shaping psychological dynamics. In this context, Paulin's ballet synthesizes 20th-century "ballet symphonism" with postmodern exploration of the sonic environment.

Paulin uses multilingual expressive language, intertextual structure of the work, fusion of artistic languages, kaleidoscopic composition, and open form enable multiple interpretations. The presence of both historical and imaginary figures allows the ballet to function as a form of cultural memory.

Equally important is the naturalistic portrayal of characters, driven by the influence of postdramatic theater and immersive forms that blur boundaries between stage and audience. Reality enters the performance as a means of communicating with the audience. In

“December Rain” this technique is achieved through a live pianist, voiced letters, and tangible household objects creating a sense of involvement in the action.

Thus, Kristina Paulin’s ballet is a new artistic synthesis where biographical narrative merges with philosophical reflection on creativity, memory, and love. Its intertextuality, multilayered musical–choreographic structure, and immersive stage space transform the performance into a living organism capable of not only telling a story but enabling the audience to experience it.

Contemporary biographical ballet drawing on the traditions of Neumeier, MacMillan, Eifman, and others continues to evolve as a genre that integrates psychological drama, philosophy, and dance. Its significance extends beyond performing arts, offering a means of understanding human individuality and historical experience through the language of movement. In this sense, “December Rain” not only continues but also revitalizes the tradition of European choreographic theater, opening new horizons for 21st century ballet.

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