The Influence of the Culture of France and Italy on the Genre of Masque in England

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Abstract---The article discusses the ways of interaction of the French court ballet, the Italian carnival, Italian dance and the English court Masque. The features of royal entertainment in France, known since the reign of Henry II, are revealed. The origin of the French court ballet was determined, its socio-political functions aimed at the hierarchical structuring of the royal court, strengthening the authority of the monarch, the unification of the aristocratic nobility and the removal of hotbeds of tension in society were revealed, which were characteristic features for the functional features of the English court Masque. The stages of the origin, formation, heyday, and decline of the French court ballet are described. A parallel is drawn between the burlesque roles of the king in the court ballet and the birth of an antimasque, the founder of which was was B. Johnson, a poet and playwright. It was established that the Italian style coexisted in England with other European styles during the period of the Stuart reign, and Italian dances, costumes, librettos and stage designs were used in the performances of English Masques.

Keywords---allegorical style, carnival, court ballet, European musical theatre, Renaissance.

Introduction

In the first half of the XVIIth century, the Masque genre dominated and was strongly cultivated in the court culture of the Stuart royal court. The Court Masque is England's unique contribution to the development of European musical theatre (Matare, 2009; Le Conte et al., 2015; Strait et al., 2012). The intellectual scenarios of the famous English playwright B. Johnson and designer I. John endowed the Masque genre with socio-cultural power, put London on a par with Paris and Madrid, and turned it into a world cultural centre of influence. The Court Masques were distinguished by allegorical style, magnificent costumes and scenery, and complex stage effects (Zhang et al., 2013; Okonski & Gibbs Jr, 2019). The core of the Masque was dance. The British mentality of the

Renaissance is not only tolerance towards various innovations, but also the ability to interact with other cultures, primarily French and Italian culture. In the twentieth century, a number of English researchers came to the conclusion that the development of the English Masque in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was greatly influenced by the traditions of the French and Italian carnival, as well as the French court ballet. Understanding the origins of interaction with other continental cultures and the subsequent transformation of the Masque genre into new, but well-recognized forms of art, is a significant contribution to the history of foreign and world culture.

The origin of the French court ballet is closely connected with the medieval carnival. The social function of the carnival was determined by its duality: Men played the role of women, the aristocrat disguised himself as a servant, people turned into gods, and the gods condescended to human problems. Carnival denied reality. The carnival erased the rules, and relations were built without any restrictions (Jabbour et al., 2018; Aggarwal & Damodaran, 2020). The carnival tradition was borrowed and successfully tested in court ballet in France. According to historian F. Bossan, in the court ballet, as in the carnival, "all roles change, society turns upside down, all functions are violated, the King obeys, the lord becomes a donkey, the gendarme is a thief, the fool is a sage, and then a kind of temporary freedom is established, physical and moral. No one is shy: the XVII-th century is not at all what they think of (Bossan, 2002). French ballet had a peculiarity that related it to the English court masque – this form of art was a collective work. The court nobility or the king's favourites involved in staging one or another ballet usually chose status companions for themselves, and were also responsible for selecting professional musicians, choreographers, poets, designers "suitable for the dignity of the highest nobility" (De Pure, 2009).

French court ballet, like the English court masque, equally carried a certain political subtext, strengthened the authority of the monarch, removed the inevitable foci of tension among members of the royal family, courtiers and favourites of the monarch, who inevitably clashed with each other. However, these goals could not have been achieved without the aesthetic component of ballet. That is why huge amounts of money, at that time, were allocated for royal entertainment for luxurious costumes, expensive stage effects, and titled choreography teachers dispatched from Italy. The purpose of the dance in both the French court ballet and the English Masque is difficult to formulate. Dance is not subject to the general drama of the performance, but rather is a pleasant bonus to the entertainment function of these genres. The French court ballet of the late sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century undoubtedly influenced the development of the genre of the English court masque, primarily due to the dominant presence of French choreographers in the Palace of Whitehall. The court masques that were performed on the stage of the Whitehall during the reign of the royal Stuart dynasty had specific signs characteristic of the French ballet, and, according to contemporaries, looked "French, especially in terms of movements in dancing" (Loret, 2018).

The french court ballet of the XVI-XVII centuries

Dance was considered "one of the three main exercises of nobility" and occupied an important place in French education along with a thorough knowledge of etiquette, riding skills and fencing (some fencing techniques, such as inverted legs and arm positions, were used in ballet choreography). The duty of the French nobleman who wanted to succeed in life was dancing, provided of course, the dances corresponded to his character and taste. The French love for dance has become a byword. Madame de Sevigne's correspondence with her daughter has been preserved. "After dinner, everyone danced: steps, minuets, and even village dances. Finally, midnight struck and Great Lent came" (De Rabutin-Chantal, 1861). In the XVII-th century, dance was an art uniting French society. Such French regions as Brittany, Poitou, Auvergne, Provence made a significant contribution to the enrichment of the country's choreographic and musical repertoire. King Alphonse II wrote that "he appreciated the kindness of the French, but could not tolerate the lightness that usually led them to dances that were important to the reputation of the French as much as the importance of trade to them" (De Grenaille & Vizier, 2003).

Lindley et al. (1995), analyzing the characteristic features of court entertainments, known since the reign of Henry II, conditionally divides them into two main types: grandiose performances and shows held in the open air (carnivals) and smaller-scale performances that took place in palaces or in more modest, according to the size of the premises, (court entertainment). Court entertainments, in his opinion, are divided into those in which the literary text predominates and into entertainments in which the dance was the core of the performance. The defining characteristics of ballet in France were the consistency in the storyline, the combination of melodramatic and carnival traditions, the combination of visual, auditory, vocal and choreographic elements, the balance of dance, music, poetry, costumes, and stage effects (Kassing, 2007). Thus, court ballet is a kind of culmination of the transformation of a medieval French carnival into an art form with elements of poetry, painting, music, and drama.

Ballet, as an independent genre, won its full independence in France at the court of Queen Catherine de Medici, one of the most powerful woman in the Europe of the XVIth century, considered the patroness of art. Catherine de Medici invited musicians and choreographers from the choreographic school of Milan. The performance of the Queen's Comedy Ballet (Circe), held at the Louvre Royal Palace in Paris on October 15, 1581, in fact became the first fully fledged ballet performance in the history of world theatre and laid the foundation for the development of classical French ballet. The production of "Circe" paved the way for a new genre – court ballet (Osés, 2012). The ballet, staged by the royal musician, composer and choreographer Balthazar de Beaujouille, was a ballet drama. Ten thousand spectators watched it, and the duration of the action exceeded their wildest fantasies: the ballet lasted from in the morning, the inclusion of monologues and dialogues with drama elements in the ballet became the main reason for the duration of the action.

The plot is based on the myths of ancient culture, as well as "pious rhymes of the dignitary of Chenier". According to the artist's artistic plan, each of his acts ended

with a pas de trois of young priests who swore an eternal love for the Queen. One of the dances was rhythmic steps along a spiral trajectory with a squat on one knee and a victorious wave of a hand clutching a wand. The main male role, de Laroche, was performed by the orderly musketeer from the Queen's personal guard. His role was technically challenging – high jumps turning into splits, as well as supporting host figures of dancers (Osés, 2012). The final scene of the performance was a dance performed by Balthazar de Beaujouille and a grand final dance of all participants, which brought together the actors and the audience present, actually becoming the prototype of a joint dance with the audience, the so-called "feast" – revel, which marked the end of the performance of the English court masque since the reign of the kings of the Stuarts.

Another, most notable ballet production, is the "Polish Ballet" ("Le Ballet des Polonais"), dedicated to the visit of Polish ambassadors to Paris in 1573. The ballet's choreography, amazing for that time, belonged to Balthazar de Beaujouille, and the music was written by Roland de Lassus (Koana, 2005). The ballet impressed with its stage ideas and effects, and also had a political colouring. Sixteen women, each of which was a province of France, selected from among the most beautiful, took their place in special niches in the form of clouds. At the sound of music, they went down, and the divine sound of more than thirty violins and lighting with an "infinity of torches" made the atmosphere unforgettable. The Polish Ballet is associated with "The Masque of Blackness", which was written in 1605 by the renowned English poet and playwright B. Johnson, in close collaboration with the designer Inigo Jones, at the request of King James I's wife Anna Danish (Stevens, 2009). Queen Anna Danish and her court ladies were dressed in costumes of blue, silver and pearl colour, in harmony with the black colour of their faces (special make-up) and were housed in a giant pearl-coloured sea shell swaying in waves.

The sixteenth century French court ballet developed rapidly, attracting the best musicians and choreographers from many countries of Europe to France. The technique of dancing was not complicated, but the execution of technical elements was complicated by lush and not very comfortable costumes, and the presence of hats that were not customary to remove. Thanks to the lessons of talented teachers, mainly of Italian origin, the dancers acquired virtuosity, specializing in the performance of certain dances. Very soon, ballet becomes part of the court culture of France, an important tool to support the absolute monarchy and gradually takes on the features of classical ballet. It turns into one of the most popular entertainments at the French court, which at that time was a structurally formed institution and inherited the traditions of the Burgundy and Breton courtyards of the XVth century.

Ballet is a kind of mirror, which reflected the entire French royal court with its advantages and disadvantages. Royal people, as well as representatives of foreign powers actively participated in all possible representations of the royal court. Ballet united the King and his courtiers; it became the only art form in which the nobility of France took part. Ballet was a political weapon for the King of France, an additional means of "taming" the aristocratic nobility. Choreographers, in this situation, acted as intermediaries between the king, the royal court, and subjects of the king, that is, his people. Thanks to ballet, the French King's domestic policy

is turning into the art of political compromise, the art of maneuvering opportunities and political tolerance. "Entertainment at the royal court", – wrote M. Paco, – "served the purpose of the highest royal will, not only by formalizing the nobility, but also turning it into an instrument that allowed the King to get closer to his people" (Paquot, 1932). Louis XIII and Louis XIV, using expensive court ballet productions, hierarchically structure the royal court, "putting" the nobility "under arms" in the service of the King.

The presence of the allegorical component in the script of the court ballet made it possible to consider the problematic moments of the social life of that time, as well as express the nature of things, realize the philosophical, and political aspirations of a person through the prism of art. Allegory allowed political propaganda and praise of the king through the images of the Greek Gods. At the same time, the exorbitant costs of luxurious court life, also characteristic of the English royal court, are gradually destroying and undermining the foundations of royal power. Many contemporaries indignantly noted the inadmissible luxury of clothing, an abundance of precious stones, "the redundancy was such that it extended from the ends of the hair to the shoes" (De Lestoille, 1837).

Louis XIII estimated the cost of staging a ballet as "one of the most destructive and worthless expenses of his state" (Howarth et al., 1997). However, even an understanding of the destructiveness of this policy, which was able to shake the financial foundations of the state, did not become an obstacle for Louis XIII, spending on royal entertainment only increased from year to year. The courtiers longed for the spectacles. Aristocratic youth, eagerly seeking entertainment, took great pleasure in participating in ballet productions. Monarchs and nobles of the Royal Palace of France took an active part in the productions of various ballet plots. Louis XIII personally participated in the production of the Marlezon Ballet, which took place on March 15, 1635 in the Chantilly Castle and even invented "steps and clothes" (Howarth *et al.,* 1997). It is interesting to note that the role of the King in court ballet was subordinate to the logic of carnival, possessing duality. The images that the kings on stage easily lived in, exceeded the wildest fantasies and impressed the sophisticated audience: they ranged from the images of a drunk beggar, a simple farmer to an old woman and a bitter drunkard. During the carnival days, Louis XIII went on stage in the image of a drunkard, a thief or a crook. From 1651 to 1661, Louis XIV appeared as a drunken crook, Furies, Passion, Fury, Libertine, crazy Spirit, Hate, Demon and Moor. However, we note that Louis XIV also played noble roles: the role of the Rising Sun in 1653, Apollo in 1654, the role of the Advocate in 1656 and the role of Happiness in 1659:

"Then - in the King's Ballet
There was a lord himself, as usual,
Brilliant, majestic, able,
Tall, dressed like a god, and brave.
He danced three different roles" (Mousnier, 1954).

As in Antimasque, created by the English playwright B. Johnson and a prelude to the main part of the Masque, the disorder in the French ballet was temporary, and the King's status was usually rehabilitated in the last act of the ballet. The

performance of such burlesque roles by monarchs testifies to their desire to be closer to the people, to the absence of "red lines" for which the kings were not allowed to cross, unlike the English Masque, where the greatness of the King was not questioned under any circumstances. The endurance and skill of some eminent aristocratic dancers amazed many contemporaries. Some of them could dance ballet all night long, from early Sunday hours until the next morning (Lacroix, 1868). In 1636, the King, who took part in the ballet, learned his role in 6 days "without much effort and without long studies", because "long rehearsals make the ballet boring and unbearable" (Mersenne, 1636). Only the great royal ballet, which was staged on the royal stage once a year, was carefully rehearsed, because, in essence, it was the hallmark of the royal court of France.

Ballet, as a stage action, had another function: regardless of the age or status of the ballet participants, this type of art exposed all the strengths, weaknesses, complexes of the performer, starting from his figure, degree of giftedness, character, temperament, and even moral qualities. Ballet theorist Abbot de Pure wrote in his treatise: "In dance you are who you are and all your "pa", all your actions convey to the eyes of the audience, show them both good and evil, which Art and Nature have awarded or deprived your person" (Bossan, 2002). The production of any royal ballet carried an entertaining function, was politically significant for the court of the king, as well as for numerous foreign ambassadors. Parisian ballet fashion extended to European states and to England. At this point in time, French ballet is rapidly gaining popularity on the European continent. So, Rene Descartes, a famous French philosopher, mathematician, mechanic, physicist and physiologist, at the invitation of the Swedish Queen Christina I in October 1649 visits Stockholm on the occasion of the conclusion of the Muenster Peace (treaty between the Republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands and Spain, signed in 1648) and at the request of the Queen writes the ballet in verse for the ball, although she categorically refuses to participate in the ballet.

In 1615, a ballet was staged in Rome, authored by the Ambassador of the King Marquis de Trenell (Lacroix, 1868; Woods, 2018). The French kings took care of their reputation and took public opinion into account, trying their best to avoid bloody uprisings and revolutions by giving the French the opportunity to be involved in the victories of the King. Thus, the monarchs showed their subjects the ability to adequately govern the country. The royal authorities intuitively and unconsciously seek excuses for the French people for the sometimes harsh decisions and subordinate position of their subjects. The King is rehabilitated in the eyes of the people by providing entertainment. In his memoirs, Louis XIV wrote: "People enjoy the sight, and in the end, we always strive to please them, all our subjects are generally happy to see what we like, and this makes them better. By this we hold their spirit and heart to a greater extent than for reward and benefit" (De Cassan *et al.*, 2000).

So, in 1654, in The Wedding of Peleus and Thetis, an Italian opera mixed with ballet and staged at the Petit Bourbon Theatre, which seats 3,000 spectators, the performance went on for ten nights in a row. Therefore, it can be argued that the ballet was attended by 30.000 Parisians, a tenth of the population of Paris. The French priest Menestrie noted: "Greatness is the duty of the Kings, but to make the entertainment more enjoyable and free, the great ones are happy to go down

from their Olympus for a few hours, and be equal to those whom they almost always see at their feet" (De Ménestrier, 1988). Grenay criticizes the dance for "maintaining idleness", but he is forced to admit, however, that distraction "can be allowed to the heroes after an outstanding accomplishment of an outstanding feat" (De Grenaille & Vizier, 2003; Li & Huan, 2019).

In his Memoirs, Louis XIV himself wrote about the tradition for the French monarchy that "entertainment teaches the monarchs to communicate with people". In 1641, a ballet was staged in France, the mission of which was to confirm the greatness of the coat of arms of France. "After we have won many battles and can boast of many victories that are blessed by heaven, everything must be done so that glee flashes in the hearts of our subjects" (Lacroix, 1868). "We take this opportunity to glorify the royal power and the feat of the King. The royal power, through ballet, completed the improvement of French unity. Not only the King and his valiant warriors deserved entertainment, and all the people should rejoice" (Howarth *et al.*, 1997). "If a people obey, then at least sometimes it will be the undisputed winner" (De Ménestrier, 1988). Court French ballet cannot be attributed to works of high art. The names of the ballets spoke for themselves: "Windmills and flower pots" (1610), "Headless women" (1610), "Bakers" (1617). Gradually, the court ballet of France turned into a "magnificent gigantic masquerade", in fact being a grandiose masquerade ball (Prunieres, 1934).

Ballet lost in quality of performance because of amateur dancers who took part in the productions, but who did not possess either musicality, a sense of rhythm, or plastic movement. To participate in the ballet, it was "not necessary to know how to dance properly, because you can make even the lame to dance to ballets" (Lacroix, 1868). However, they did not pay attention to unprofessional performance if the performer was a high status courtier. To maintain the reputation of the royal ballet "because of the poor quality of the dance spoiled by ignorant people" (Loret, 2018), Louis XIV created the Royal Dance Academy in 1662. The Royal Academy was called upon to provide the royal court with professional dancers. In 1670, Louis XIV refuses to take part in court ballets, which, according to scientist-researcher Akiko Koan, symbolizes the death of the court ballet. The true motive of King Louis XIV, which would explain the reason for such a strange decision, is still the subject of study for many researchers.

A turn in the history of court ballet, abandonment of style, buffalo and burlesque scenes, a return to the heroic style leads to the disappearance of the masquerade ballet. The French aristocracy distorted the true spirit of ballet and brought this art form into decline. However, a talented person, to whom, without a doubt, can be considered an opera composer, the founder of the French musical theatre and the outstanding theatre figure Zh.B. Lully, was able to return the ballet to the mainstream of high art. The heyday of professional ballet falls on the heyday of the works of Zh.B. Lully, who staged choreographic performances on the stage of the Opera in Paris. Ballet evolved towards refinement and sophistication, and the choreography gradually became more complicated.

In the XVI-XVII centuries there was a tendency when, in search of a better life, French poets, musicians, choreographers, emigrated to London, where they found high patrons, dominating the Stuart royal court. French choreographers with

pleasure taught the dance wisdom of English aristocrats and performed on the stage of White Hall as professional dancers in B. Johnson's Antimasque. The grotesque nature of the images, which seem to be pleased to include the French Kings with subsequent reputation rehabilitation in the last acts of the ballet, can be compared with anti-masques (invented by B. Johnson), which also introduced humorous and grotesque elements to the Masque, which contrasted with the elegance and virtue of the main Masque. For decades, ballet and the English Masque have been «sensitively capturing» the changes that have taken place in the cultural and political life of countries, have been modified and gradually transformed into well-recognized modern forms.

The French theatre in the XVIIth century

Theatres of the late sixteenth century in Paris often did not have permanent premises: the scenes were narrow, and there were no opportunities for setting scenery. By the beginning of the XVIIth century, theatrical performances underwent rigorous structuring: performances started with an interlude of a comic nature that preceded the act of tragedy or tragicomedy, and the final song, often performed together with the audience and reminiscent of the final scene (revel) in the English court Masque, the completed the action. French aristocrats occupied special places in the gallery of nobles, and the stalls hosted an audience from different social groups. Approving (or disapproving) shouts were encouraged during the performance of the actors. Such a location and the behaviour of a theatrical public would be decisively impossible at court performances in the royal court of France or England (Forestier, 1996).

Being an actor in the first half of the XVIIth century in France was a difficult mission. Unlike the court dancers, who were honoured by the royal court and ordinary French people (after all, dance was a favourite form of art among the population), the actors were despised and ridiculed. The church was full of suspicion of acting and accused them of a lack of morality. On the advice of the bishops, priests refused actors communion, baptism, and even burial. Moliere, despite his piety, was indebted to the personal intervention of Louis XIV, in order to be able to be buried in the cemetery of St. Joseph. In 1641, a declaration was published stating the dignity of the acting profession, thus the dispute about the status of an actor, actively supported by the church, was stopped (Forestier, 1996). Foreign actors arriving from Italy and Spain were becoming the source of new ideas that were being successfully implemented on the stage.

Italian actors on the stage of Paris contributed to the search for solutions in the field of stage mechanization (Italians had always been ahead of many European states and England in setting stage effects), and also pay special attention to gestures and plastic movement (Howarth *et al.*, 1997). The French were considered fans of the wandering Italian acting troupe, Commedia dell'arte. Thus, the structure of the theatre, its goals, functional features, markedly differed from the goals and functions of court performances in France, Italy, and England.

Tragicomedy is gradually giving way to two genres for which it was only a temporary link: tragedy and comedy. Spanish comedy inspired French authors, accustomed to rely on the traditions of French art, and on creative exploits. The

credibility of action is the basic principle of the laws of French tragedy. The plot of the tragedy cannot go beyond certain propriety. The behaviour of the actors on the stage should have corresponded to their age and social status. Nothing happening on stage should cause a shock to the viewer. Scenes of violence and physical intimacy are prohibited for display. The finale of the French tragedy corresponded to a certain canon: the viewer expects a dramatic denouement of events. Thus, classical tragedy corresponded to the catharsis principle defined by Aristotle.

The moral aspect in theatrical productions was of great importance. Through the highest acting skills, through compassion and empathy, the viewer had to leave the theatre morally cleansed and exalted. According to Moliere, to correct human vices is necessary through entertainment. By the end of the XVIIth century, the theatre was losing the support of the King under the influence of Madame de Maintenon, the teacher of the children of Louis XIV, and later the official favourite of the King, and again found herself in a fierce conflict with the Church (Forestier, 1996). With the death of the main dramatic authors (Pierre du Ryer, Georges de Scudéry, Jean Rotrou, etc) who brought fame to the French theatre, the classical theatre, like the French court ballet, fades away with the departure of the seventeenth century.

Italian carnival

Italy of the Renaissance is the territory of politically and culturally diverse city-states. Masquerade carnivals are an integral part of Italian culture. The centuries of the existence of carnival traditions in Italy have made them famous not only in Italy, but also far beyond its borders – in France, Spain, and England. Understanding the origins of the Venetian carnival for a long time has been a difficult task for researchers. Some scholars have suggested that Italian carnival traditions date back to pre-Christian pagan holidays. Carnival, as a form of public entertainment, was first mentioned in 1092 in Doge Vitale Faliero documents. In 1296, in an official document of the Senate of Serenissima (the name of the Republic of Venice), used in solemn occasions, the carnival in Venice was declared a public festival (Cerulli, 2010).

In Catholic communities, the carnival was seen as a period of repentance before the beginning of Lent, 40 days before Easter. The code of laws regulated the time and place of wearing masks, which proves the exceptional role of the mask in Italian culture. So masks were not allowed to appear at night, wearing masks was strictly forbidden in monasteries and during the plague epidemic. A masked man was not allowed to carry a weapon or any other object capable of harming another person. By the sixteenth century, carnival celebrations took on a royal scale and impressed with their luxury (Cerulli, 2010). The celebration lasted from December 26 to the beginning of Lent. In general, masks were allowed to be worn for six months. Carnival performances were carefully structured and directed, distinguished by excellent choreographic performances, as well as by the amazing peacefulness of the people participating in the celebration.

The presence of the mask provided an excellent opportunity to hide his identity, does not worry about a negative reaction or retaliation from people belonging to

the highest social class. The lower social strata could easily mix in the crowd with the higher social strata. The mask made it possible to turn entertainment into a game and add intrigue. The anonymity inherent in all Italian carnivals thanks to the masks ideally eliminated social inequality, even if this phenomenon had a temporary effect, contributed to the manifestation of public criticism of the aristocracy. This was allowed and encouraged by the authorities with the aim of removing the hotbeds of tension and discontent ripening in society.

One cannot fail to mention Commedia dell'arte (the comedy of masks), played by professional Italian actors, which has gained popularity in Italy since the middle of the 16th century. Comedy masks (dell'arte) owe their origin, primarily to the carnival. So, in 1560, a performance was held in Florence with the participation of the masks, in 1565 the same performance was given in Ferrara on the occasion of the arrival of the Prince of Bavaria, and in 1566 in Mantua at the court. In 1568, in Munich, at the Bavarian court, on the occasion of the wedding of the Crown Prince, the Italians staged a performance with improvisational elements – comedy (dell'arte), which proves the fact of the interaction of Italian culture with other cultures.

Turning to the dance art of Italy, it should be noted that the heyday of the dance genre falls on the end of the XIV, and the beginning of the XV century. By the mid-fifteenth century, dances in Italy began to dominate in the various types of palace performances in Italy. In the XVIth century, the dance finally established itself in Italy. Italy becomes the trendsetter of dance fashion: Italian teachers are in demand in all countries of Europe, often emigrating outside the country and spreading the Italian dance style in Europe and England. Italian dance teachers Domenico da Piacenza, master of dance and composer of the Renaissance at the court of the princes of Este in Ferrara, Guglielmo Ebreo, Italian dancer in the most influential aristocratic courtyards in Italy, including Naples, Urbino, Milan and Ferrara, Antonio Cornazano, who wrote the treatise "Book of Dance art", describing the theory and practice of some dances, are the main popularizers of the dance, which acted as a cultural and entertainment tool in the royal court (Simpson, 2007). In their numerous works, a set of rules of dances is fixed, the technique of which is invariably honed at magnificent court balls, and gradually an excellent example of art crystallizes out of amateur dance. Choreography is created based on the steps of court dances. Ballet acts as a representative form of art, combining dance, music, poetry, scenery and spectacular stage effects. Dance turns into the main passion of Italian aristocrats, who find it ideal for use as an entertainment genre.

At the ducal court of Sforza, this is the ruling dynasty in Italy of the Renaissance, the princely court of Este, one of the oldest princely families of Italy, and the court of Gonzaga, which was the signorial family of the hereditary rulers of Mantua, there is a special relationship between dance, music and dramatic performance, which a century later culminated in the French ballet "de cour". In 1520, the Italian writer Baldassare Castiglione and the author of one of the most famous works of the Italian Renaissance, "The Court" describes the dance as a virtue that entered the flesh of the royal court. The court's duties included performing the dance "with a certain dignity, grace and airy sweetness of movements", and it was also prescribed to avoid "quick steps and repetitive repetitions" that were

"completely unacceptable" to a true gentleman (Kastilone, 1996). In the first half of the 16th century in Milan, presumably in 1545, Pompeo Diobono opened the first school for dance masters, where dancers and choreographers acquired the skills that they brought to Europe and received well-deserved recognition there.

Among the students of the dance school of P. Diobono, Balthazar de Beaujouillou, Ludovico Paluello, Bernardo Tetoni, Pietro Martire, Francesco Gera, J. Hernandez, Martino da Asso and Giovanni Varade stand out. Subsequently, Balthazar de Beaujouille, known in secular circles not only as an excellent dancer, but also as a virtuoso violinist, was invited to Paris as a choreographer. It is known that Balthazar de Beaujouille, famous for creating choreographic numbers for the French court, also visited the capital of England. His mission was to teach the art of dance to members of the Stuart royal family (Mortimer, 2011). In the sixteenth century, Italian "intermedio" was widely distributed at the royal court as a link between acts of comedy and tragedy. Sometimes intermedio were thematically related to each other, and, ultimately, represented an action that was more pleasant to the hearing than the main idea.

Sideshows were first performed at the end of the XV-th century between acts of comedies by Titus Mackius Plaut. In some cases, in the interludes only instrumental music was used. Numerous inserts – intermedio in a performance written for a special occasion – the wedding of Ferdinand I Medici and Christina Lorraine in 1589, became one of the best examples of the era of such small plays of the Renaissance (Ketokivi & Choi, 2014; Gross, 1999; Creekmore, 1989). The peak of the distribution of intermedio was at the end of the XVIth century. After XVI century, it mutated and become part of opera. Masques written by renowned English poet, playwright actor and drama theorist Ben Johnson relied heavily on the culture of the Italian Renaissance court, although publicly B. Johnson rejected the connection of the Masques with Italian culture. "Perhaps a few Italian herbs, collected and turned into a salad, can find a sweet recognition, but I prefer the most hearty and healthy dishes in the world", – noticed B. Jonson (Goldsworthy, 1970).

B. Johnson's contemporary Inigo Jones, an English architect, designer, painter and stage designer, also studied in Italy, where he undoubtedly took over the experience of Italian designers and used sketches of costumes and stage sets taken from elaborate Italian masquerades in productions of English Masques in the palace of Whitehall. It is known that in 1613 year I. Jones visited Florence and carefully studied the development of a scenic perspective, as well as unusual stage machines and devices that were put into practice by Italian artists (Lee, 2002). One of the Scottish dancers of King James I visited Padua and Venice, and later recorded that in the evening a Masque of five English and five Scottish dancers was performed there. This serves as indirect evidence of the interchange of cultural information between England and Italy in those days. In the historical chronicle "Edward II", which was published in 1594 and written by the English poet and playwright K. Marlo, one of the heroes exclaimed: "I have Italian masks in the evening":

"Therefore, I'll have Italian masks by night,
Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows..." (Marlowe, 2014).

The English researcher Enid Welsford found that many of the extant libretto, as well as the stage sketches used for the production of English court Masques, were borrowed from Italian carnivals held in 1608, which, in the author's opinion, shed light on the character and development of the English masque. The research of B. Ravelhofer seems incredibly valuable from a historical and cultural point of view. In her opinion, the Italian artistic and choreographic style was highly appreciated by the European and English royal courts, although the quantitative ratio of Italian treatises related to the development of dance technique is much less than their French counterparts (Ravelhofer, 2006).

The earliest publications of this kind include the treatise Lútio Compasso "Ballo della Galliarda", published in Florence in 1560, as well as the choreography textbooks found in the catalog of the library of Sir Thomas Bodley in 1605, (the textbooks included the publication of Carozo Ballarino) (Ravelhofer, 2006). The English texts of that period suggest that the study of continental dance techniques and etiquette was considered good form. In many English texts, one can find mention of the "stupid habit" of English dancers, which involves kissing one's own hand before and during the dance. This was considered a bad Italian manner. It is also known that Italian galliards (ancient dances of Italian origin) were performed in the English court Masque (Mulryne & Shrewring, 1991). If an ordinary rural family from England was aware of the existence of Italian dances and succeeded in the technique of performing them in 1500, it seems quite natural that Italian choreography was well known to the royal court of the Stuart period. Thus, it can be argued that the Italian dance style was well-known and practiced in the royal court of England in the first half of the 17th century.

Conclusion

The Court Masque, French ballet, the Italian carnival combined dance as a key cementing component of these genres. The above genres, in fact, were a hybrid of dance, music and poetry. Their distinctive features can be called the presence of masks, luxurious costumes and scenery, as well as exorbitant costs associated with the staging of a performance. Financial costs gradually eroded the foundations of royal power in both Europe and England. The Masque, ballet and the Italian carnival, as a form of art, is a collective form of art, becomes an intermediary between the crown and the courtiers, strengthens the authority of the monarchs, signals the negotiability of the royal authority. Presentations helped to remove hotbeds of tension both in the royal court and in society as a whole, thus playing the role of lightning rods and leveling out a number of social problems. Court entertainments in Europe and in England were usually confined to significant events, and the presence of foreign ambassadors at royal shows increased their status, giving the entertainment an international political tone.

The burlesque roles played by the King of France in the performances of the court ballet indirectly served as a prototype of Antimasque, created by the English playwright B. Johnson, one way or another familiar with Italian and French culture. The so-called "revels", which are a joint final dance with the audience and have long been considered an English invention, were used in the final scene of the ballet "Circe" in 1581. The court entertainments of France, Italy and

England were not works of high art and, fading away, evolved into new forms of various genres of art.

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