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PROBLEMS OF INTEGRATION OF AZERBAIJANI CIRCUS ART INTO WORLD CULTURE DURING THE YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

Abstract: The article discusses the path of the Azerbaijan national circus art during the years of independence, the problems it faces and its achievements. The names of artists representing our people with honor in the international arena are mentioned in this article. Referring to the historical experience of the Azerbaijan circus, it is noted that the art of the circus, due to its specific features, has greater opportunities than other types of art to bring our national values to the world. For this reason, there is a need to mobilize our talented circus artists, who perform in different parts of the world, as well as the creative forces in the country, and direct them to the development of this field.

Key words: state independence, national-moral values, circus art, festivals, tours.

Introduction. The Azerbaijani national circus art, which has its origins in ancient folk games, sports competitions and outdoor performances, has become a perfect art form that introduces our art to the world over time. Our professional circus performers – wrestlers Sali Suleyman, Rashid Yusifov, animal trainer Alakbar Farrukh and many others performed successfully far from home and brought fame to our people at the beginning of the last century.

The interpretation of the main material. Wide opportunities were created for the recognition of our national circus in the world by the development of professional circus art in our country. So, the first professional

national circus program “Azerbaijan Wedding”, which was created in 1946 on the initiative of the great composer, prominent statesman Uzeyir bey Hajibeyli, reflected the richness, diversity and beauty of not only the circus art, but also the national culture of Azerbaijan as a whole with elements of national music, dance and ancient folk ceremonies. Famous tightrope dancer Rza Alikhan, “Ulduz” sisters dancing on a wire - Sona, Shafiga and Gulnaz, Maralkhanim Shirinova with trained dogs, acrobat Ismail Mirzayev, Nikolai Gorkovenko, Victor Khelaya and Khosrov Abdullayev with “Three Brothers” acrobat program, Shuriya Samadova with a rubber program and snake handler Sofu Jafarov demonstrated high skills. Programs such as “Kosa-kosa” with the participation of Dadash Sharapli, Yunus Aghayev, Asad Rzayev, “Nasraddin and Bahlul Dananda” humorous scenes by brothers Yunus and Yusuf Aghayev, “Zorkhana” scene performed by a group of wrestlers led by famous athlete Sali Suleyman in the final of the performance brought a special atmosphere to the performance and created excitement in the audience. The whole performance was accompanied by an orchestra and national music and dances [2, p. 6].

People’s writer Ilyas Efendiyev emphasized that the program not only reflects our national culture, but also deserves to be shown in Europe in his review about the performance: “The Azerbaijani circus is a product of the intellect, sharp mind and inexhaustible talent of our people. The basis of this circus is our people’s great customs and traditions. Staff who makes circus was quite right in this aspect. They prepared skillfully artistic samples and miraculous movements created by the genius and the spirit of the people with the achievements of European circus art” [1].

Indeed, circus art, mainly of a mobile nature, began soon to play a key role in the promotion of Azerbaijani art, national and spiritual values, customs and traditions of our people abroad. The National Circus troupe of Azerbaijani professional circus performers left for Moscow on a tour after a few days of spectacular performances at the Baku State Circus. The first performance of the Azerbaijan National Circus took place in the arena of the Moscow State Circus awarded the Order of Lenin on July 3, 1946 [5]. The team worked for about a month and a half in Moscow and managed to gather more than 150 thousand spectators [4]. This success of the program has laid a great foundation for future tours. This success of the program laid a great foundation for future tours. Our circus performers performed with this program until 1951 and were able to demonstrate their skills, our national and

spiritual values and our people's traditions at a high level in many cities of the Soviet Union. As the experience of creating national circus programs justified itself fully and brought great fame to our republic, circus programs with new staff, new content such as "We are from Baku" (1959), "A sign on the rock" (1966), "Azerbaijan lights" (1987) were created in Azerbaijan and performed successfully in the USSR.

Of course, since Azerbaijan was part of the Soviet Union at that time, our performers did not accept these tours as foreign trips, they always improved their professionalism with the desire to go to other countries. Circus art operated within a centralized system during the Soviet era. This body was originally called "Central Office of State Circuses" (1922-1931) beginning from the 20s of the last century. "All-Union State Circus Art-Production Union" was established in 1957 on the basis of the organizations operating under the names "Union of Music, Variety Art and Circus Enterprises" (1931-1936), "Main Circus Department" (1936-1957) in the following years. This union, which was subordinated to the USSR Ministry of Culture, ensured the economic activity of circus enterprises, supervised the creative work of stationary circuses and circus groups and carried out the training process of performers working in various genres. 61 stationary and 15 mobile circus enterprises including the Baku State Circus, 14 national circus collectives, 55 "Circus on stage" collective including the Azerbaijani collective, as well as special programs such as "Water circus", "Circus on Ice", which were subordinated to this union, were operated in the 70s of the last century [8, p. 356]. At the same time, the union organized the Soviet circus's foreign touring activities. These tours not only brought fame to the country, but also brought in a large amount of financial means. "The first foreign tour of the Soviet circus program took place in 1956. First our performers won the International Circus Festival in Warsaw, then performed in Belgium, France and England and then almost in all countries of the world. These tours spread the fame of the Soviet circus all over the world" [7, p. 6].

Impresarios who organized circus business abroad followed the development of circus art in the Soviet Union closely and competed with their colleagues to invite the best circus programs and attractions. The program "Moscow Circus" became a world brand in a short time. Circus programs were sent to more than 60 countries around the world every year and brought in large amounts of financial means to the country. It is true that performers were paid only a small part of this amount according to Soviet

law, the rest was spent on the construction of stationary circuses, guest houses for performers to live in these circuses, the creation of new circus works, the purchase of exotic animals for domestication, etc. Many Azerbaijani performers have successfully promoted our national culture outside the country. It is true that the national circus collective of Azerbaijan, despite having a very good staff, never performed abroad with a full staff. Our compatriots participated in both International Circus festivals and circus programs in foreign countries during the Soviet era, until the 90s of the last century. So, People's Artist of Azerbaijan Khosrov Abdullayev performed successfully first as a juggler, then with the illusion attraction, where he was the head, in many countries around the world, including Iran, India, Burma, Romania, Belgium and other countries. Famous illusionist and manipulator, as well as performing with a large attraction of domesticated animals, Honored Artist of Azerbaijan Mansur Shirvani took part in long tours in Mongolia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Besides, he also played Hungarian illusionist in the film "Two Smiles" (1970), directed by Yakov Segel at the "Mosfilm" studio. We can also see the animals trained by Mansur Shirvani in sequences of the film where his granddaughter Irina Volkova-Shirvani played a role of a child. Mansur Shirvani participated in another international film project in 1975. He played in another film "Solo Performance with an Elephant Orchestra" ("Соло для слона с оркестром") made by "Barrandov" (Czechoslovakia) and "Mosfilm" (USSR) film studios. Directed by Oldrich Lipsky, the film focuses on Rezi, an elephant trained by Mansur Shirvani. The center of all events was an elephant – Rezi trained by Mansur Shirvani in this film directed by Oldrich Lipsky. Tofiq Akhundov, People's Artist of Azerbaijan, as well as the Russian Federation, a master of equilibrium, acrobat, who domesticated hippopotamus and monkeys in the following years, performed successfully in many countries around the world. Each of his tour was met with great interest and he was invited to film with a hippopotamus named "Juja" during his performance in South America. Mime-clowns brothers Alik and Ilya Nisanov, air gymnasts Tamilla Nazirova and Honored Artist of the RF Rufat Nazirov, equilibrium master, acrobat, Honored Artist of the RF Rauf Rasulov, clown, musical eccentric Elchin Shirinov, Aslan Abdullayev, who performed in the tightrope dancer's program "Gobustan boards", Eric Israfilov, who performed with domesticated camels, Sabir Samadov, Kamal Jabrailov and Azer Hamzayev, who performed in Yuri Merdenov's "Kubanskiye Cossack"

equestrian-acrobat group, Honored Artist of the RF Murad Abdullayev, who performed with domesticated monkeys, Maksim Muslumov, who worked in the famous “Prometheus” tightrope dancer’s team, acrobat, aerial gymnast, equilibrium master Irada Isgandarova-Stolyarova and many others from our compatriots represented our people with honor on foreign tours of the Soviet circus during the Soviet era.

The All-Union Circus Union, which reminds of a giant empire, began to disintegrate through uniting the entire circus system around it with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Russian Circus Company, which was established on April 9, 1992 in the place of the Union, gathered around the best circus programs of other republics and the rest performers were fired and sent home. Many of our compatriots working in the circus system lost suddenly their jobs. Although the Baku State Circus was transferred to the Ministry of Culture of Azerbaijan as a stationary institution, the ministry did not take any steps to organize circus work in the new conditions and provide jobs for unemployed performers. Performers of the Azerbaijani circus collective, which was founded in 1987, – the equestrian-acrobatic group “Land of Fire” led by Sabir Samadov, acrobatic ensemble “Azerbaijan Rhythms” led by Mirza Abbasov and other circus programs ceased to exist. The members of the group went to work in other countries, especially in Russia. The Russian circus company accepted other high-income programs of the Azerbaijani collective into its ranks. No substantial steps have been taken to organize circus work in Azerbaijan during the nearly 30 years since then. Many of our world-famous circus masters, who can be considered the golden fund of our art, not only were employed by foreign companies, but also became the citizenship of those countries. Unfortunately, our performers, who have succeeded in many prestigious circus festivals around the world, have represented foreign countries, not their homeland during the years of independence. Juggler Aydin Israfilov, who performed on a monocycle with his trained monkey, was awarded the “Silver Clown” in the “Premiere Rampe” competition for young performers at the International Circus Festival in Monte Carlo in 1997 and a special prize at the “Festival Mondial Cirque De Demain” in Paris. In addition, Aydin performed successfully at International Circus Festivals in Zhuhai, China, in Liege, Belgium and in Grenoble, France and won various awards. Two more of our compatriots succeeded as part of famous circus groups at the Monte Carlo Festival, which is considered the number one festival in the world – Namig Bagirov, who performed in the acrobat group “Russian Swing” led by Vladimir Doveyko, was awarded the

“Silver Clown” in 1994 and Maxim Muslimov, who performed in the staff of the famous “Prometheus” attraction, in 1998. Air gymnast Allahverdi Israfilov and his opponent Galina Golovachova won the “Bronze Clown” award at the festival in 2012.

Anar Jabrailov, who has won many international festivals since his youth, performs in the genre of “Juggler with hats”. He won the festival in Israel in 2015 and the “April Spring” festival in Pyongyang in 2018 [6, p. 60]. The International Circus Festival held in Monte Carlo has a very high reputation in the world and even the “Golden Clown Award” given for the winners of this is equal to the “Oscar” award in cinema festival in the circus world. Of course, if our compatriots represented Azerbaijan at this festival, they would bring great glory to our country.

Science, culture, sports, the press and many other areas in Azerbaijan overshadowed by the Soviet regime and have entered a new stage of development during the years of independence. Various state programs based on our national and moral values, Azerbaijani ideology and world integration policy have been adopted for the development of strategically important areas in our country. It is a pity that our circus masters, who have a wide audience in the world and are met with great interest in every country, are left out of these processes. For this reason, our experienced circus performers, who have achieved great success in the world circus world, as well as representatives of the younger generation turn to the world’s leading circus companies to work. So, People’s Artist of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation Tofig Akhundov, who performs an exotic attraction consisting of domesticated hippopotamuses and monkeys, trainer Erik Israfilov, who performs with domesticated camels, and father and son Kamal and Anar Jabrailov, who perform with domesticated monkeys work at the Russian State Circus Company, Alikhan Alikhanov, the leader of a group of tightrope dancers performing in an unusual style, as well as a complex perche program “Travelers” works at the Moscow Circus named after Y. Nikulin, clown under the pseudonym Gino Francini, music eccentric Elchin Shirinov works at the world’s largest stationary circus Chime-Long International Circus in China, Honored Artist of the Russian Federation Rafiq Aliyev, the head of a large acrobatic group of family members, works at the Kazan Circus. Our talented performers – equilibrium master Uzeyir Novruzov, gymnast Araz Hamzayev and acrobat Ayla Ahmadova were invited to “Cirque du Soleil” company of Canada, the world’s number one circus, in different years and now all three of our performers work in the circus of this company in Las Vegas. Uzeyir

Novruzov's brothers Oktay and Telman have worked in various European countries for many years and performed at international circus festivals. Oktay, who is loved for his role of humorous "conductor" on the wire, performs acrobatic power programs with his younger brother Telman. Aydin Israfilov, who is still considered one of the best circus masters in the world in his genre, represents the Minsk Circus now.

The Baku State Circus has done estimable work to promote the art of the national circus abroad since the first years of our independence. The circus collective, who has been performing in Turkey and Iran since 1992, has guided the program in the national spirit. The first tour of the circus took place in Turkey. The performances, which started in Ankara on July 18, 1992, were met with great interest. The tour was led by the director of the Baku State Circus, Honored Cultural Worker Magbet Bunyatov. A circus tent with a capacity of 3000 spectators, which was rented for performances, was set up in the center of Ankara, in an area called "Hippodrome Square". An equestrian acrobatic group led by Sabir Samadov, an acrobatic ensemble led by Mirza Abbasov, Konstantin Bessonov, who was originally from Baku, with a domesticated bear, Ramiz Ibrahimov, who performed "Dance with Dagger", tightrope dancer Hasanaga Hamdullayev, Rashid Aminov with equestrian program on small balls and others participated in the program. The program was accompanied by the orchestra of the Baku State Circus. Every performance of Azerbaijani performers was met with great enthusiasm. Newspaper "Yeni Ulus" wrote about this: "The Baku State Circus begins its performances with a 65-member troupe of performers and a large number of domesticated animals, including performers from the Moscow Circus, which is known as the world's most famous circus. The circus performances in front of the Ataturk Cultural Center will serve to develop friendly and fraternal relationships between the two countries" [3].

The owner of the "Khalil Oghab" circus in the Islamic Republic of Iran applied to the Baku circus and offered to perform in Iran together in 1994. Although the performances were planned in a large circus tent belonging to the "Khalil Oghab" circus, it was decided later to work in sports palaces in big Iranian cities. The circus collective consisted only of men due to the ban on women performing in Iran. The orchestra of Baku Circus, wrestler Rahimjon Hakimov, a group of tightrope dancers led by Tahirjon Egamberdiyev, Vladimir Katayev with domesticated animals, Igor Yenkovsky with trained dogs and other performers performed in the program. The Iranian circus was represented by Ibrahim Oghab, who performed with domesticated lions and

equilibrium programs. The performances aroused great interest in Babulsar, Shahrud, Arak, Khorramabad, Hamadan, Tehran and other cities. Baku State Circus was invited to Rasht, Iran in 1998. The performances at the Rasht Central Sports Palace were met with great enthusiasm.

The Baku State Circus was invited to Turkey in the following years. The collective performed successfully in Ankara in 1997 and 1998, in Eskisehir in March 1998, in Kayseri in 1999, in Trabzon, Malatya, Erzurum, Erzinjan and Kars in 2000. We can talk about the foreign tours of the Baku Circus, the importance of these tours, its artistic level, but this topic requires a separate study.

Conclusion. One of the main tasks facing cultural workers is to convey our national and moral values, the true voice of our people to the world at the modern stage of development of independent Azerbaijan. The national circus art has great opportunities in carrying out this task. First of all, the development concept of national circus art must be prepared, all the creative forces representing the Azerbaijani circus must unite around one center for its development and promotion in the world. The Baku State Circus can also play the role of such a center. It is possible to train young performers, create new circus works, as well as organize domestic and foreign tours of Azerbaijani performers here. World experience confirms the effectiveness of such an approach. For example, each province of China has its own circus and each circus has three troupes. The means earned by one of them working in the country and the other abroad creates an opportunity to prepare a third troupe. There are great prospects for circus work in our country. Simply, it is necessary to involve professionals in the circus and create the necessary conditions for them.

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Rəcəb Məmmədov (Azərbaycan)

MÜSTƏQİLLİK İLLƏRİNDƏ AZƏRBAYCAN SİRK SƏNƏTİNİN DÜNYA MƏDƏNİYYƏTİNƏ İNTEQRASIYA PROBLEMLƏRİ

Məqalədə Azərbaycan milli sirk sənətinin peşəkar tarixi fonunda nəzəri və təşkilati problemləri önə çəkilərək, qloballaşma dövründə müasir sirkin qarşısında duran vəzifələrdən, milli-mənəvi dəyərlərimizin qorunması və dünyada təbliği üçün görülə biləcək işlərdən bəhs olunur. Azərbaycan sirkinin tarixi təcrübəsinə istinad olunaraq qeyd edilir ki, sirk sənəti, öz spesifik xüsusiyyətlərinə görə, milli dəyərlərimizin dünyaya çıxarılması məsələsində, digər sənət növləri ilə müqayisədə, daha böyük imkanlara malikdir. Bu səbəbdən dünyanın müxtəlif yerlərində çıxış edən istedadlı sirk artistlərimizi, eləcə də respublikadakı yaradıcı qüvvələri səfərbər edərək, bu sahənin inkişafına yönəltməyə ehtiyac var.

Açar sözlər: qloballaşma, milli-mənəvi dəyərlər, sirk sənəti, festivallar, gastrollar.

Раджаб Мамедов (Азербайджан)

ПРОБЛЕМЫ ИНТЕГРАЦИИ ЦИРКОВОГО ИСКУССТВА НЕЗАВИСИМОГО АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНА В МИРОВУЮ КУЛЬТУРУ

В статье повествуется о путях развития Азербайджанского национального циркового искусства в годы независимости, о проблемах и достижениях этого периода, а также об артистах, достойно представляющих наш народ на международной арене. Обращаясь к историческому опыту азербайджанского цирка, отмечается, что цирковое искусство в силу своей специфики имеет большие, чем другие виды искусства возможности для пропаганды наших национальных ценностей за рубежом. Поэтому существует необходимость мобилизовать наших мастеров цирка, выступающих по всему миру, а также творческие силы в стране, для развития этого вида искусства.

Ключевые слова: государственная независимость, национально-духовные ценности, цирковое искусство, фестивали, гастроли.