

KYIV THEATRE AND ENTERTAINMENT SPACES IN THE PERIOD FROM THE ELEVENTH TO EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

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INTRODUCTION

Kyiv was the centre of cultural and artistic life, in particular, of theatrical life under Kyivan Rus, as the frescoes of the Cathedral of St. Sophia, built in the reign of Yaroslav the Wise (the first half of the 11th century), are preserved to this day, had depicted performances of professional entertaining fellows – skomorokhs.¹ Kyiv, as well as other medieval cities, attracted these yesterday's wisecrackers and dancers. However, the first theatrical forms – elements of actor's transformations, costume, stage make-up, mimic dance, vocal performance, music – are associated with ritual games of a mimic nature and arose at an early stage in the development of the social relations and persisted for centuries.

With D. Antonovych's research, the first documented date of the theatre onstage performance in the Ukrainian language was defined. It was August 29, 1619: "On this day two Ukrainian interludes were performed at the fair in the town of Kamiianka Strumyl'ova, near Lviv".² A small wooden theatre behind the Jesuit Gate in Lviv (in the area of the modern square of I. Pidkova, closer to the Poltva river) is considered by the scientists to be the first permanent entertainment public institution in the territory of modern Ukraine. This house, adapted to theatrical needs, was a ranked theatre with a distinct parting into circles with boxes and the stalls with a gallery. The theatre had a short-lived existence, and it

¹ Teatry Kieva [Kyiv Theaters] (1985). Kudrytskyi A. V. (ed.) *Kyiv: Entsiklopedycheskyi spravochnik*. Kyiv: Glavnaia redaktsiia Ukrainskoi sovetskoi entsiklopedii, pp. 604–606.

² Antonovych D. (1925) *Trysta rokiv ukrainskoho teatru. 1619–1919* [Three hundred years of Ukrainian theater. 1619–1919]. Prague: Ukrainskyi hromadskyi vydavnychy fond, citation p. 7.

was dismantled in 1783.³ The religious building of the Gothic Church of the Holy Cross at the Franciscan monastery was transformed into the first in Lviv stone permanent theatre (1787-1872). There were 36 boxes in two circles, 114 folding chairs and 200 seats, rather simply benches, in the stalls and standing places in the gallery.⁴ The theatre remained in the church building until the middle of the 19th century.

1. The Birth of Theatrical Traditions in Kyiv

Kyiv, the capital of modern Ukraine, developing as a political and administrative centre, has remained a cultural centre of the Slavic peoples throughout the centuries. Since ancient times the spiritual life of the Old City of Kyiv has been connected with the theatre art. The word "skomorokh" was first mentioned in the 1068 Laurentian Chronicle. It was used to call those who entertained the people "entertaining fellows" – who not only sang and danced, but also showed trained animals, put on "faces" and "masks", performed comic scenes. The frescoes of the Cathedral of St. Sophia, which are attributed by the scientists to 1037, illustrate the activities of skomorokhs in the territory of Kyivan Rus. The performance in the prince's palace, judging by the fresco, began with a prologue: one skomorokh, opening the curtain, addresses to the audience. In the centre, there is dancing accompanied by two pipe players and two musicians with string instruments. One of them is playing a flute and dancing and the second one is hitting the cymbals. On the right, there is a scene with acrobats: one of them is holding the pole, and the other one is climbing it up. On the left there are fighters are waiting for their exit.

After the dark ages of the Tartar-Mongol ruin and the Lithuanian-Polish domination, the depressed spiritual life of the city began to develop in Podil – in the part of Kyiv, which suffered the least and managed to rebuild as soon as possible thanks to its advantageous location near the Dnieper trade routes. This process intensified in times of national consciousness revival particularly actively, when there was the beginning of the liberation struggles of our people. Formation of the Kyiv Brotherhood in 1615 with the support of the Cossack army headed

³ Proskuriakov V. I. (2002) *Pryntsypy rozvytku arkhitekturnoi typolohii ukrainskoho teatru* [Principles of development of the architectural typology of the Ukrainian theater] (PhD Thesis), Lviv: National University "Lviv Polytechnic", 147.

⁴ At the same place, pp. 152–153.

by Hetman Petro Sahaidachny once again made the city the centre of Ukrainian spiritual life. Kyiv-Mohyla Collegium was set up on this powerful basis. It was the first higher educational institution in Ukraine and Eastern Europe, which in 1701, having received the status of the academy, became the first centre of Kyiv theatre life.⁵ The Collegium was initiated in 1632 by the association of Kyiv Brotherhood and Lavra Schools, which had the tradition of stage performances by the students. In its new building, built with the assistance of Hetman Ivan Mazepa in Podil in 1703-1704 (architect – I. Shchyrskiy, rebuilt in 1735 by architect J.-G. Schaedel⁶) the students and the academics of the Academy – Simeon Polotskyi, Dmytro Tuptalo, Theophan Prokopovych performed their dramatic works. From the academic building on Kontraktova Square, the art of the theatre, which existed at that time in the form of school drama, with the efforts of students began to go out to Podil during the fairs. But this centre of theatrical culture exported stage art not only to our city, but also to the great Russian Empire, under whose control Ukraine was at that time.

In particular, Simeon Polotskyi, who worked at the Moscow Zaikonospaska school in the 1660s, where the Moscow Theological Academy was formed later basing on his ideas, initiated the production and performance of his dramatic works in Moscow. And Dmytro Tuptalo, who became metropolitan Dymytriy Rostovskyi in Russia, supported first city theatre troupes in Yaroslavl at the beginning of the 18th century. Among other things, it was his play *Repenting Sinner* that was performed at the court of Elizabeth, empress of Russia, in the early 1750s and among the first performances of the famous Yaroslavl theatre troupe under the management of Fedor Volkov, it was the one from which the Russian state theatre originates.⁷

But the times changed and the outdated aesthetic principles of school drama and the archaic organizational principles of its stage performance began to restrain the development of the theatre. The thing was that the

⁵ Teatry Kieva [Kyiv Theatres] (1985). Kudrytskyi A.V. (ed.) *Kyiv: Entsiklopedycheskyi spravochnik*. Kyiv: Glavnaia redaktsiia Ukrainskoi sovetskoi entsiklopedii, pp. 604–606.

⁶ Sherotskyi K. V. (1994) *Kyiv [Kyiv]: putivnyk: reprintsne vidtvorennia vydannia 1917 roku*. Kyiv: Kobza, 166–167.

⁷ Vsevolodskiy-Hernhross V. N. (1977) *Istoria russkogo dramatycheskoho teatra. Vol. 1: Ot istokov do kontsa XVIII veka* [History of the Russian Drama Theatre. Vol. 1: From the origin to the end of the 18th century]. Moscow: Iskusstvo, citation p. 80.

participants of the school's theatre process did not aim to become professional actors, and even more – they were afraid of this, because in tsarist Russia at that time the professional stage career automatically blocked up the way to the students from the aristocratic strata of society to use their status privileges. And such students were the overwhelming majority in the Academy. In addition, in 1817, the tsarist government closed the Academy, which irritated the Moscow authorities with their Ukrainophilia sentiments. The Mazepa building of the Academy did not survive, but the spirit of the theatre living in this building remained within the ancient Podil.

2. Temporary Theatrical and Entertainment Premises of Kyiv

The "vaccination" with the theatre took place, and later theatrical traditions were found in other parts of the city. In particular, in 1789-90, in one of the wings of the Mariinsky Palace in Pechersk, public theatrical performances were held.⁸ The city authorities were sympathetic to create theatres, seeing them as not only an attribute of the prestige of the city as a cultural centre but also a commercial benefit from the taxpayer.

In 1811 a huge fire occurred in Podil, after which almost all the Lower Town, as Podil was also called, had to be redesigned and rebuilt again. The well-known Kyiv architect W. Hastie supervised these works. According to his project, developed in co-authorship with another famous Kyiv architect A. Melenskyi, a grand building in the style of classicism – the Contracts House – was erected on the Kontraktova square, not far from the Academy, when it was closed in 1817.

The main purpose of this building was to serve the famous contract fairs, which at the end of the 18th century were transferred to Kyiv from Dubno. In this regard, on the first floor, there were offices of banks, premises for negotiations and agreements, as well as restaurants. And on the second floor, there was a large theatre and concert hall, as the fairs were accompanied by performances by well-known actors and theatrical troupes, as well as balls and masquerades. It is precisely known that in the hall of the Contracts House, the residents of Kyiv saw performances by the Italian opera, the singer A. Catalani and the musician's brothers

⁸ Marynyskyi dvorets [Mariinsky Palace] (1985). Kudrytskyi A. V. (ed.) *Kyiv: Entsiklopedycheskyi spravochnik*. Kyiv: Glavnaia redaktsiya Ukrainskoi sovetskoi entsiklopedii, 376–377.

G. and Yu. Wieniawski. And a memorial plaque on the house says about the tours of the prominent Hungarian composer and pianist Franz Liszt.

The turn of the 19th – 20th centuries is a very important stage in the life of Kyiv. It was during this period that the city was rapidly developing. So, if in 1806 the city had 27.2 thousand population, in 1850 – 50 thousand, in 1897 – 247.7 thousand, then in 1913 the population of Kyiv was 626 thousand people.⁹ That is, for one hundred years the number of inhabitants has grown by 23 times. This was due to the rapid growth of industry, transport, construction and service sectors. Kyiv of the first half of the nineteenth century was already the third-largest city in the Russian Empire. In general, in the late XVIII – early XIX centuries the first city theatres appeared on the territory of Ukraine. The oldest of them was built in Kharkiv in 1789. In 1804-1806 the wooden building of the first Municipal Theater in Kyiv was built and from 1806 mobile bondmen troupes performed there.¹⁰

It is known that Kyiv as a European-type city consisted of four main parts – the Old City (the ancient city of Yaroslav), Podil, Pechersk, as well as the suburbs: Ploska Sloboda, Lukianivka, Kurenivka and others.¹¹ Each of these administrative units, with the exception of the suburbs, played a leading role in the city's social and cultural life at various historical times. And insofar as some of the parts occupied a dominant position, there appeared centres of theatrical life that performed their communicative functions.

The increase in the population, which occurred primarily because of the migration of rural residents and residents of other cities, led to the typical processes for urban culture at that time. This social and cultural phenomenon is connected with the solution of the problem of creating a unique association of people – the population of a certain city, in this case – Kyiv. Of course, under the conditions of the social and political imperial system of tsarist Russia, it was impossible to create a

⁹ Rybakov M. O. (1997) *Nevidomi ta malovidomi storinky istorii Kyieva* [Unknown and little-known pages of the history of Kiev]. Kyiv: Kyi, 183, 191, 194.

¹⁰ Bernadska H. (1994) *Kyivskiy miskiy teatr (do istorii orhanizatsiinykh form)* [Kyiv City Theater (to the history of organizational forms)]. *Aktualni problemy orhanizatsii teatralnoi spravy* [Actual problems of theatrical affairs organization]: tematychnyi zbirnyk naukovykh prats, Kyiv: Kompas.

¹¹ Kudrytskyi A. K. (ed.) (1982) *Kyiv: Istorychnyi ohliad: (Karty, iliustratsii, dokumenty)* [Kyiv: Historical overview: (Maps, illustrations, documents)]. Kyiv: Holovna redaktsiia Ukrainskoi radianskoi entsyklopedii, pp. 69–70.

homogeneous urban population – it was stratified by certain urban social groups. In order to solve this problem, it was necessary to invent certain communicative means that would allow various members of the society with their far from the same social, cultural and educational level to feel as the united city community. And such a communicative lever in the city appeared – it was the theatre.

Here's how this social and cultural mission of scenic art is determined by the researcher of the social psychology of arts, Nikolai Khrenov. Studying the peculiarities of communicative opportunities of cities at the turn of the XIX–XX centuries and spectacular forms of communication, he said: "In the development of urban culture, one can trace the stages when the city could not use the means of communication, capable of resolving many of its communicative contradictions immediately and fundamentally. Initially, the city tried to regulate the emotional life of the new community of people by traditional means. It resorted to spectacles, in particular to the theatre. The theatre [...] is the immediate successor of spectacle and play forms [...], only adapted to the conditions of the city". The author further states, that under the conditions of domination of illiterate and ignorant urban population, theatrical art had communicative advantages over book-printing. As a result, "the theatre flourished at the initial stages of the urban culture formation. It seemed to replace other types of arts".¹²

3. Stationary Theater and Entertainment Places – Centers of Theatrical Culture of Kyiv

Nevertheless, the need for a special theatre for the city, whose theatrical life was developing quite rapidly, was felt more and more acutely. The supporters of Melpomene no longer arranged the performances that were given in random non-adapted premises, for example, on the Podol in the house of the former prison. It is precisely to this period of Kyiv's theatrical life that I.K. Karpenko-Kary wrote the words reported by P.K. Saksahanskyi in March 1897 at the First All-Russian Congress of Stage Actors in Moscow. It went about the situation and prospects of the theatre development in general on the territory of Ukraine and Russia and theatre premises in particular: "There are no

¹² Khrenov N. A. (1981) *Sotsialno-psikhologicheskie aspekty vzaimodeistviia iskusstva i publiki* [Social and psychological aspects of the interaction of art and the public]. Moscow: Nauka, citation pp. 198–199.

theatres in the province and the performances are given in bad, cold, sheds with drafts and without amenities for the public, which are more suitable for stables than for the theatre".¹³

And finally, in 1804, a decision was made to build the first special theatrical premise in Kyiv for 470 seats under the project of A. Melensky, already mentioned by us. The place was chosen at the beginning of the Khreshchata valley, on the square, which then was called Kinna (now European), in the place where the palace of arts "Ukrainian House" is now located. It was chosen not accidentally – it was there that the main paths that united all the scattered areas of the city converged. When at the beginning of XIX century the process of their administrative unions was completed, this "umbilical cord" of the new European city needed a certain spiritual centre that would unite the inhabitants of the Old City, Podil, Pechersk and the suburbs. And the first in Kyiv special theatre premise played the role of this centre, thanks to which the old Kinna Square became known as the Theater Square, while the new main street of the city – Khreschatyk for some time was called Theater street.

After this wooden premise had seen long service and was dismantled in 1851, this place did not lose the status of the city's theatrical life centre. In 1882, in front of the place where the first theatre was located, and then the European Hotel (which gave the new name to the square), the famous Kyiv architect V. Nikolaiev built the house of the Merchants' Assembly at the expense of Kyiv merchant M. Dehtiariv. Its hall was characterized by extremely good acoustics, and there were constant concerts and plays, balls and masquerades. No wonder this building today belongs to the National Philharmonic of Ukraine and is considered to be the best concert hall of the country.

Behind the House of the Merchants' Assembly in the summer garden, which carried the same name – Merchant, the premises of the summer theatre were built in 1890, which became popular with the public belonging to different social classes due to the fact that there were mostly Ukrainian theatre troupes of M. Kropyvnytskyi, P. Saksahanskyi, "The Society of Ukrainian Actors with the Participation of Maria Zankovetska and Panas Saksahanskyi under the command of Ivan

¹³ Karpenko-Karyi I. K. (Tobilevych, I. K.) (1985) Zapyska do z'izdu stsenichnykh diiachiv [A note to the congress of stage figures]. *Tvory. Vol. 3: Dramatychni tvory. Statti. Lysty* [Works. Vol. 3: Dramatic works. Articles. Letters]. Kyiv: Dnipro, citation p. 279.

Marianenko" and others. In the same building in 1917-1919, the first Ukrainian stationary theatre of Mykola Sadovskyi held its last seasons in Kyiv.

A little far ahead of the European square in the depths of the park area, to the left of Oleksandrivska street (now M. Hrushevskiyi street), which led to Pechersk, since 1863 there was a park entertainment centre "Chateau de Fler" ("Castle of flowers"). This spectacle building, which greeted Kyivers with beautifully decorated entrance from Oleksandrivska street, united in itself a cafe, a restaurant and two summer theatre stages. The latter were sometimes taken by the troupes of the Russian Drama Society, and more often by some groups of actors who "performed light theatrical genres" – farce, variety, miniatures, operettas.

By the way, the second city theatre, especially for the operetta, was built in 1912. It was located next to "Chateau de Fleur", on the corner of Oleksandrivska and Parkova streets (Petrivska Alley). Unfortunately, this building did not survive – in its place today there is the central entrance to the Dynamo Stadium. The same fate happened to all the other (except for the Merchant's House) premises of this centre of the theatrical and cultural life of our city, that perished in the whirlwind of dramatic historical events that the 20th century was so rich in.

By the end of the 1840s, the old building of the first Kyiv City Theatre became unfit for work, and there was a need for the construction of a new theatre. Kyiv authorities faced the question of where to build a new theatre. After a long search, it was decided that the place on the corner of Volodymyrska and Kadetska streets (now B. Khmelnytskyi Boulevard) will become the new theatrical centre. And it was not by chance since it was at that time that the Old City and its adjoining territories began to revive. A new cultural centre of Kyiv was formed in this neighbourhood, which centred around the new building of Saint Volodymyr University, built by architects Vincent and Alexander Beretti in 1837, as well as the buildings of the 2nd and 1st Kyiv Gymnasiums, built respectively in 1850 and 1852 according to O. Beretti's projects on both sides of Volodymyrska Street on Bibikovskiyi Boulevard (now T. Shevchenko Boulevard).

That is why, the third element of spiritual culture – the temple of art had to continue this street of science and education. And it was built in 1856 a quarter away from these houses, almost under the walls of the Old City. Now there is the National Opera of Ukraine. The new theatre was called the Second City Stone Theatre. The theatre opened on October 2, 1856. Academician of Architecture I.V. Shtrom was the

author of the project for the new theatre building. The new stone theatre, for which the treasury spent 130,000 rubles, turned out to be very successful in terms of theatrical architecture and stage technique. He had a well-developed Italian stage box and a beautifully decorated auditorium for 849 seats, which, moreover, had devices for transforming into a ballroom. Here, along with dramatic performances, opera and ballet performances were given.

But this remarkable building gave Kyivans pleasure of communicating with the art of the scene only for 40 years – in 1896 the theatre was almost completely burnt down because of a not-put out a candle in an actor's dressing room. And again there was the question about the construction of the main theatre for the city. There was no longer a need to look for a place for it, as the Kyivans firmly associated corner of Volodymyrska and Fundukleivska streets (former Kadetska, and now B. Khmelnytskyi street) with the city's most important theatrical centre.

And this is no accident because modern studies on social psychology have shown that in the mass consciousness of people – the potential audience – among the many factors that determine the choice of viewing the performance of this or that theatre, the place of its location is very important. That is, in the process of aesthetic preference formation in the human psyche there is a subconscious association with a certain theatrical space. The builders of the new premises of the first Kyiv City Theatre could not then know about these much later scientific findings, but the path of empirical experience led them to make the right decision.

The construction of the new theatre was preceded by an international competition under the auspices of the Imperial Society of Architecture, in which the project of the famous Russian designer of theatre premises, Professor V. Shreter won. By that time he had already gained the fame of the architect of the theatres in Nizhny Novgorod, Tiflis, Irkutsk, Rybinsk and the head of the reconstruction of the Imperial Maryisk (St. Petersburg) and the Bolshoi (Moscow) theatres. Therefore, the choice of Kyivers was not accidental and the project was implemented in three years under the guidance of the famous Kyiv architect V. Nikolaiev. The Kyiv Opera House became a remarkable ensemble of the facade of a neo-Renaissance structure with a successful functional purpose: the architect took care of the convenience of both actors and spectators, creating exquisite interiors that combine the classical style and the so-called "Vienna Modern", which perfectly fitted in the architecture of all major European cities.

The three-circle hall could seat 1683 spectators at the same time. After two reconstructions (1935 and 1988), the theatre now has just over 1300 seats due to the orchestra hole expansion and removal of inconvenient seats. On September 16 (29), 1901, the solemn performance of cantata "Kyiv" by the Swedish composer Wilhelm Hartevelde, written especially for this event, and the play "A Life for the Tsar" by M. Hlinka made the grand opening of the new building of the theatre. Taras Shevchenko National Opera of Ukraine works there now¹⁴.

Incidentally, the appearance of another theatrical space, which completed the formation of this centre of the city's theatrical life is connected with the name of the already mentioned chief architect of Kyiv V. Nikolaiev. We mean the so-called "Berhonier Theatre" in Fundukleivska street two blocks below the first city theatre. The history of this theatre is quite interesting.

In 1868, Frenchman O. Berhonier bought a manor on the corner of Fundukleivska and Novo-Lyzavetynska streets (now Pushkinska street) to build a circus. In 1875 the circus theatre "Alcazar", created under the project of V. Nikolaiev between the houses of not spectacular purpose, was opened at this place. But in Kyiv at that time, similar to present days, there were not enough special theatre premises, so in 1878 the circus was rebuilt and turned into a theatre. The interior space between the buildings became a theatre, like a circled theatre in Spain of the Renaissance. The yard was covered with a roof, the stalls and the backstage were formed below, and the boxes and the balconies were made from the interior windows and floors of the houses. That is why, for "Berhonier Theatre" (it was called so until 1919), for a long time, until the later reconstruction, it was not possible to use the premises of the nearby houses where the hotel, restaurant and shops were located.

This stage, where Lesia Ukrainka National Academic Theatre of Russian Drama currently operates, saw many prominent masters. In particular, there were Ukrainian troupes of coryphaeus, as evidenced by the memorial plaque, "Molodyi Theatre" and "Berezil" by Les Kurbas, the Society of Dramatic Actors of M. Solovtsov.

With the latter – an outstanding actor, director and organizer of a theatrical affair, creation of another centre of theatrical culture in Kyiv is

¹⁴ Turkevych V. Pro teatr [About the theatre] *Natsionalna Opera Ukrainy* [Official site]. Retrieved from: <https://www.opera.com.ua/about/istoriya-teatru> (accessed 4 May 2019).

connected. It appeared in the so-called "Merinhivskiy square" – the place of the last major redevelopment of the central part of Kyiv, which gave it a completed territorial and architectural appearance. This land plot between Khreshchatyk, Instytutska, Bankivska and Lutheranska streets belonged to Professor of Kyiv University F. Mering, and after his death, it was sold to Joint-Stock Housebuilding Company for 800 thousand rubles, that was specially formed for the redevelopment of the block.

The Company paved Nikolaievska (now Architect Horodetskyi), Olhinska, Nova (now Stanislavski) and Merinhivska (now M. Zankovetska) streets. The redevelopment of these streets was planned by a group of Kyiv architects headed by H. Schleifer. Already by the autumn of 1897, the Merinhovskiy Square was filled with refined houses in a single architectural style – the "Vienna Modern".

M. Solovtsov, who found Berhonier Theatre premises unsuitable, with the support of the city authorities, initiated for the House-building Company the need to build a new theatre at the end of Nikolaievska Street. Its project was developed by Ye. Bradtman and G. Schleifer, and in October 1898, M. Solovtsov's troupe began the next season in the new building, which after the death of this outstanding entrepreneur was called Solovtsov Theatre. Incidentally, this building, like most of the others in the Merinhovskiy square, did not belong to the city. The famous Kyiv businessman Lev Brodsky, who leased it to Solovtsov Theatre was its owner. After the revolution the Russian drama theatre, created on the basis of Solovtsov's troupe, worked in this building, then artistic association "Berezil" under the direction of Les Kurbas played its performances there, and since 1926 it has been occupied by I. Franko National Ukrainian Drama Theatre.

Solovtsov Theatre became a theatrical and spectacular centre, which arose in this fashionable district of Kyiv. In 1899, on Merinhovska street in conjunction with a respectable club, architect G. Schleifer built the so-called "New Theatre" or "Medvedev Theatre", called so by the Kyivans in honour of its master, the outstanding opera singer and teacher M. Medvedev.

After the fire in 1910, the theatre was rebuilt and instead of Medvedev's troupes, there were operetta groups and national troupes. In 1918, the State Drama Theatre was founded in this building, the oldest of the existing Ukrainian theatres (now T. Shevchenko Dnipropetrovsk Ukrainian Music and Drama Theatre). In 1919, there were attempts to create the first Ukrainian state opera theatre – Musical drama on this basis. Later there were different troupes playing there, and from

1933 until the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) there was a drama theatre of Kyiv Special Military District. Unfortunately, the flames of war did not leave us this theatre premise with a well-equipped stage.

Nearer to the head of Mykolaivska Street in 1903 under the G. Schleifer's design another spectacular building was built, which immediately became unique. It is about the premises of the only one at that time, not only in the Russian Empire but even in Europe, a stone two-storey circus that had about 2000 seats. He was called "Hyppo Palace" ("Kinnyi palace"), or Krutikov Circus after the name of its owner. This premise could be transformed and it had quite good acoustics that is not typical for circuses with their dome-shaped ceiling. It was used not only for circus performances but also for other entertainment activities.¹⁵ F. Chaliapin, L. Sobinov, M. Lytvynenko-Volhemuth, M. Battisti sang there, O. Kuprin and V. Maiakovskiy with the team of futurists organized literary evenings. And in 1912, Kyivans saw on this stage the legendary performance of the prominent German director M. Reinhardt "King Oedipus". Unfortunately, this building also was ruined during the Second World War and cinema complex "Ukraine" was there in its place for a long time.

Opposite Krutikov Circus simultaneously with it the premises of "Farce on Nikolaievska" theatre were built. This was a typical premise of a variety show for Kyiv at the time. There were many similar ones on Khreshchatyk, Fundukleivska, Prorizna and other central streets of the city. The researchers calculated about 50 variety shows in Kyiv at this time¹⁶, which united all previously scattered centres of the city's theatre life. In the thirties of the 20th century, the second in Ukraine theatre for children – Kyiv Youth Theatre – worked in the premises of the former "Farce on Nikolaievska" theatre. But again, with sadness, we would like to emphasize that this building also suffered the fate of other spectacle premises of the Merinhovskiy square – at the place where it was located, there is a mini-park now.

¹⁵ Natsionalnyi tsyrk Ukrainy [National circus of Ukraine] (2012) *Kyiv Velychne misto*. Retrieved from: <http://kiev-pravda.kiev.ua/2012/05/nacionalnij-cirk-ukraini/> (accessed 4 May 2019).

¹⁶ Katasonova T. V. (1995) *Funktsionuvannia teatriv malykh form Kyieva u 1917–1918 rr. (sotsiokulturnyi aspekt)* [Functioning of the variety shows of Kyiv in 1917–1918 (socio-cultural aspect)]. (Candidate of science), Kyiv: Kyiv University of Culture.

4. Theatre Centers at the Edges of Kyiv

Recently the theatres of the suburbs became the theatrical centres of our city. At the turn of the 19th-20th centuries the district that grew along the former Vasylykivskiy road (Velyka Vasylykivska street) on the place of the so-called "Nove Stroiennia", which stretched to the Lybid and Demiiivka River formed the suburbs of Kyiv. Also, the suburbs of Kyiv were formed by the areas that were built along the streets, which diverged from Lviv square – Lukianivka and Kurenivka, and from Halitskaya Square (now Victory Square) – Shuliavka and Sviatoshyn districts.

Mainly people from villages who moved to Kyiv to find work at new industrial enterprises of the city lived in these areas. That is why there was a very acute problem of providing uniting communicative means to these groups of the population who lost their social orientation as a result of a sharp change in the usual way of life. And this function was again taken over by the theatre.

At the turn of the 19th-20th centuries in Russia, the movement of so-called people's theatres received widespread development, various civic organizations took care of their arrangement, among which there were two distinct ones – the Society for Public Education Promotion and the National Sobriety Curatorship. The latter, in particular, was quite well-off in the financial perspective, since, in addition to charitable contributions, it received subsidies, which the state provided after the introduction of the state wine monopoly in Russia. This activity of the then Minister of Finance, Count S. Witte, who, incidentally, founded the Curatorship, a few years after its introduction became one of the main profitable articles of the budget of the empire. And in the arrangement of people's theatres, then, the government saw a utilitarian means for distracting the masses from drunkenness and revolutionary ideas. Here's how this problem is defined by the modern Russian researcher H. Khaichenko: "For a big city, the need for a people's theatre became an axiom of pure water".¹⁷

There were two main types of people's theatres – professional ones, which set the goal of cultural service of the masses and amateur ones,

¹⁷ Khaichenko H. A. (1975) *Russkiy narodnyi teatr kontsa XIX – nachala XX veka*. [Russian people's theater of the late XIX – early XX century]. Moscow: Nauka, citation p. 100.

where the representatives of these masses performed themselves. In Kyiv, there were both the first and second ones.

The Troitsky People's House of the Society for Public Education Promotion belonged to the first type. It was built in 1903 on Velyka Vasylkivska street. The Troitsky People's House didn't have its own troupe at first, and the Society rented out this cosy theatre to entrepreneurs, provided that they would work for the inhabitants of Kyiv suburbs. Here is how M. Sadovskyi, who founded in Troitskyi People's House the first in Ukraine stationary Ukrainian Theatre in 1907: "The prices in the theatre were so scanty that it was impossible for anyone to compete with them. [...] Of course, I did it in order to attract the poorest public to the theatre. [...] So with every season I brought up the audience that I needed and that before that time was absolutely indifferent to the theatre".¹⁸ Sadovskyi can be understood as Kyiv theatre audience at that time wanted to visit the theatre in an unusual place – in the suburbs and in addition a Ukrainian-language theatre. Sadovskyi's great zeal was that he was able to form a new centre of theatrical culture in Kyiv and for the first time it was a Ukrainian-language theatre.

Lukianivskyi People's House of the National Sobriety Curatorship belonged to the second type. It was built at the corner of Lukianivska Square and Dehtiarivska Street in 1902 under the project of architect M. Artynov. The building in the pseudo-Russian style had a spectator hall for 600 seats. Unlike the Troitsky People's House, Lukianivskyi People's House did not have a permanent theatrical troupe, and there were amateur performances and concerts by the people of Lukianivka on its stage. Sometimes there were performances by the students of M. Lysenko music and drama school, actors of the "Molodyi Theater" and other professional performers. There was a free library, a dining room, a book store, an evening school for adults, a legal aid agency and a kind of a hostel in Lukianivskyi People's House. In Soviet times, the Club of Tram Workers was located here, and now in its walls, there are performances by the young cohort of opera performers and directors of the Kyiv Small Opera.¹⁹

¹⁸ Sadovskyi, M. K. (1956). *Moi teatralni zghadky. 1881–1917* [My theatrical memories. 1881–1917]. Kyiv: Obrazotvorche mystetstvo i literatura, citation p. 171.

¹⁹ Pietushkova M. (2019) Kyivska mala opera: vid budynku tverezosti do miskoho art-prostoru [Kyiv short opera: from the house of sobriety to the urban art space]. *InfoLife*. Retrieved from: <https://life.informator.news/kyivs-ka-mala-opera-vid-budynku-tverezosti-do-mis-koho-art-prostoru/> (accessed 4 May 2019).

However, even earlier than Lukianivskiy People's House in Kyiv there was built another building of the same type. It was called People's Audience and belonged to the Society for Public Education Promotion. It was built in 1895 on the Bulvarno-Kudriavska street under the design of the architect M. Beleliubskiy. The Public Literary and Artistic Society, widely known in Kyiv, arranged performances of art workers in this building, which did not have a permanent troupe either. It was created in the same year in 1895 by well-known figures of culture and art O. Andriievskiy, V. Naumenko, M. Tutkovskiy, M. Solovtsov, M. Medvedev, T. Chuzhbynin, M. Roshchyn-Insarov, V. Nikolaiev and others. Later, Lesia Ukrainka, M. Lysenko, M. Starytskyi, M. Sadovskiy, P. Saksahanskyy, M. Zankovetska joined the society. As we can see, among the founders and members of the society there were enough mentioned in our work respectable people, who did a lot for the development of theatre and art centres of Kyiv.

CONCLUSIONS

Summing up, it should be emphasized that we did not aim to reveal insights into the history of all theatres in Kyiv in this article, there were much more than we have listed. For example, we did not talk about the district of the city as Pechersk. Indeed, Pechersk did not have such a defined centre of theatre life as the aforementioned. Therefore, the reason was the fact that this district of Kyiv with the holy shrine of the Orthodox world Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra has been the centre of spiritual and religious life since ancient times. And a negative attitude of the church to the theatre is well known. However, even in Pechersk, there were separate theatre buildings. In particular, the first in Kyiv summer theatre, built in the Tsarskiy garden over the Dnieper in 1834, or the building of General Bilohorskiy that was used as a found space for theatrical performances.

Much more can be said about the theatre premises in Khreshchatyk, among which was the so-called O. Kramskiy Malyy Theatre. Park theatres "Hermitage" on Trukhaniv Island, "Venice" in Nikolska Slobidka, "Eldorado" on Brest-Litovsk Highway. However, this is also the subject of a separate study. The research concerns a highly topical issue, since Kyiv, where no special theatre spaces have been built for the last 100 years, keeps growing and developing.

Theatrical traditions in Kyiv were initiated by the activity of skomorokhs during the Kyivan Rus period, as evidenced by the chronicles and architectural monuments of the 11th-century culture.

Subsequently, in the 17th-18th centuries, the city's theatre culture continued to evolve through the activities of theological seminaries, in particular, the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, in the form of school drama. At the turn of the 19th–20th centuries, the rapid development of Kyiv and the need to establish sustainable and productive social communications in the city led to the construction of specialized premises for the creative and organizational activity of theatrical and spectacular private theatrical enterprises. In 1804, construction of the first special theatre premises in Kyiv in Kinna square (now European square) united the inhabitants of different districts: the Old City, Podil, Pechersk and the suburbs. Subsequently, other establishments of cultural and leisure destination began to appear nearby. In 1856, construction of the Second City Stone Theatre on the corner of Volodymyrska and Kadetska streets (now B. Khmelnytskyi Boulevard) laid the foundation for the formation of a new theatrical centre in Kyiv– a circus theatre "Alcazar" was opened here in 1875. At the turn of the 19th–20th centuries a new city theatre centre was formed around new theatres and Krutikov circus in the new respectable "Merinhivskyi Quarter". There were also several other spaces in the suburbs of the city, in which theatre life seethed, in particular, the Trotsky People's House and Lukianivskyi People's House. Given the location in the Pechersk hills of Kyiv Lavra – the Orthodox centre of spiritual and religious life – theatre buildings were constructed extremely selectively here.

SUMMARY

The purpose of the article is to determine the genesis and basic stages of the theatre and art life centres formation of Kyiv as a social and cultural communicative system in the period from the first half of the 11th to the early 20th century and the role of theatre and entertainment spaces of the city therein. The scientific novelty is determined by the fact that for the first time in the field of art studies, using the activity of theatrical and entertainment premises of Kyiv of the defined period as an example, the centres of theatrical life as social and cultural communicators have been observed and structured. Conclusions. Kyiv theatrical traditions originated in Kyivan Rus. In the 17th-18th centuries, the city's theatrical culture developed in the form of school drama based on the activities of theological seminaries, in particular, the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. At the turn of the 19th–20th centuries, the rapid development of Kyiv and the need to establish sustainable and productive inter-social communications in the city led to the construction of specialized theatre

and entertainment spaces, where four main theatrical centres were gradually formed: near Horse's Square ((Kinna Ploshcha) European Square (Yevropeyska Ploshcha)), at the corner of Vladymyrska and Kadetska streets (now B. Khmelnytskyi Boulevard), in Merinhivskiy Quarter and on the outskirts of the city.

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