

## The Ideological Concept of the Monograph “Theatrical and Dramatic Collections of the World”

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### Abstract

*This monograph presents the first comprehensive study of museums and private collections of theatrical and dramatic profile. Addressing the origins of the creation and the process of formation of collections, the author focuses on the peculiarities of works and objects displayed in the exhibitions and stored in the collections of theatre museums of the world. The author devotes attention to the most interesting and significant collections of different countries. The presented rarities range from the rarest, unique things and works of art acquired in the time of the creation of the museum funds to the monuments of theatrical culture coming to museums these days. The author considers the specifics of theatrical collections, classifying them by type: theatre museums, museums in theatres, private theatrical collections, and dramatic museums. The majestic and chamber architecture of the museums located in the central squares and old streets of the cities leads the readers to the museum halls, where they can get acquainted with the theatrical heritage, touch the expressive and picturesque nature of the theatre language reflected in documentary photos, portraits, sketches of costumes and scenery, personal belongings of artists, written sources, and other materials.*

*The monograph is written in the genre of review with extensive use of illustrative and reference tools, providing analytical conclusions for each chapter.*

*The study is based on the use of art materials, archival documents in private collections, domestic and foreign museums, as well as catalogues of various collections and exhibitions.*

**Keywords:** Theatrical and Dramatic Museums, Classification of Collections, Theatre Language, Theatrical Heritage

### Introduction

The rapid penetration of information technology into human life constantly introduces changes to the urban socio-cultural environment. Traditional notions of the role and place of cultural and educational institutions in the life of a modern person are changing, as well as their purpose, functions and the list of services they provide. Museum functions at different times were completely different, sometimes deeply contradictory. As of now, their evolution process is focused on the search for new cultural paradigms and is characterized by the creation of a new socio-cultural institution. The importance of actualization of museums through the creation of open cultural and educational sites is enhanced by the rapid processes of societal transformation and largely depends not only on modern technical equipment, renovation of exhibitions, and reinforcement of the facilities [1]. To a large extent, it depends on the professional education of museum staff and their willingness to use the new principles of interaction while working with visitors.

Museums, being the custodians and translators of cultural heritage, are among the institutions that contribute to the common cultural space of national identity. In the modern country, the policy of cultural heritage preservation has not yet reached sustainable development, because there are cases of destruction of protected areas, underfunding of restoration projects for historical and cultural monuments, and maintenance of cultural institutions in proper condition. This puts many layers of cultural heritage at risk, threatening with the destruction of the cultural and natural human environment. At the same time, there is a steady trend towards the revival of ethnographic and folklore traditions, the restoration of religious and national shrines, and the opening of new dimensions of the historical and cultural heritage [2].

The social importance and demand for museum collections increases in the conditions of the revival of interest to the history of the region and genealogy of an individual, promoting personification and spiritualization of the national history. Museums are designed to preserve and pass the cultural and historical code of the nation from one generation to another. It is museums that contribute to the understanding of history from a humanitarian point of view and make

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it possible to trace the interrelation of the history of the country, the region, the family, and the fate of an individual, to appreciate being a part of the historical process. Museums are created there and when a public need arises to institutionalize a certain amount of accumulated cultural and historical experience of generations. The new organization is designed to accumulate this experience, transmitting the accumulated values into the sphere of collective socio-cultural consciousness, thus integrating history and specific experience into the universal context. In this sense, the museum is not just a mirror reflection of history, but rather a sense-making social institution.

At present, museological research is being carried out in developed countries, enhancing the role of museums in the cultural space, developing interactivity as a means of museum institution development, and identifying ways for museum interaction, in particular, creation of a network covering museums of different levels and types: national, regional, local, and galleries. The concept of territorial development through culture, including the theatre, remains relevant both at the city and regional levels. The idea of city development through culture assumes a great burden over the museum: not only should it maintain its own existence and service to visitors, but also create campaigns attracting attention to the region, creating its unique image. Theatre museums are a special phenomenon; they do not exist in every capital city or even country. Museums face the matter of PR communications with the public as well. Nowadays, museums do not usually have dedicated departments or specialists involved in the advertisement of the institution, its new expositions and exhibitions [3].

The influence of museums on the cultural national space can contribute to the identity quest in the new historical environment, implementing the public mission of museums, namely collecting things for the sake of preservation for future generations in service before the society and its development. After all, such service manifests the responsibility to the social development on the basis of cultural values and shapes the universal responsibility to the future. The museums becoming aware of their role in the formation of public consciousness, the transmission of culture, the establishment of mutual understanding between peoples, and the humanistic education of people of the 21st century will promote the reinforcement of their importance as a factor of modern culture. The roadmap of the program of cultural development and enrichment should be a step in this direction, with the actualization of the national cultural heritage taking an important place. Monuments of culture and art are rightfully valued and preserved only when the entire society recognizes them as values that should be preserved for future generations [4].

Theatrical and dramatic museums and collections of the world have their special features [5]. Like no other art form, theatre reflects reality in the readily available forms of life itself. Such availability defines the peculiarity of its ideological and aesthetic impact, the dialectics of the relationship between the theatrical work and the audience, and the secret of the most active sensual perception that is based on the sympathy for the hero and the author. The modern theatre tends to be diverse, appealing not only to people sufficiently educated or related to the professional artistic world, but attracting more and more spectators instead, which testifies to the expansion of the social profile of the audience, and to the public becoming ready to such artistic contacts. In much the same way that the performance is

a complex, multi-faceted, synthetic entity (as it combines the work of a director, actor, artist, composer, decorator, sound engineer, etc.), the theme and structure of theatrical exhibitions are extensive. The very abundance of theatrical ideas, meanings, forms, "behavioral" styles, goals, evaluations, and foci of the theatre provides the development and renewal of the artistic culture through a new combination of its structural elements. The circle of worldly material (objects) offering ideas for theatre exhibitions and tours to museum specialists is truly limitless. Theatre tours can be general or dedicated to a specific topic, as well as urban, suburban, or museum-confined. The latter are of special importance, as they lively reveal the essence of the theatrical art, its masters, the process of preparation of plays, etc. The museum collections contain plenty of documents about the history of the theatres. After all, nowhere else can the theatrical art be preserved for history, despite being so difficult to capture in all its individual originality. The specificity of the museum's attitude towards the theatrical heritage determines the uniqueness of the theatre museum as a global cultural phenomenon.

Theatre museums can be classified into three types: general profile museums in all their entirety, museums of specific theatres with permanent exhibitions focused at the history of said theatre and its company, and memorial museums dedicated to life and work of outstanding figures of theatrical arts (actors, directors). Exhibitions of the most famous theatre museums, such as A. Bakhrushin theatre museum (Moscow), Museum of theatrical and musical culture (Saint Petersburg), Paris theatre "Grand Opera", Milan theatre "La Scala", London theatre Covent garden, the New York "Metropolitan Opera", the Museum of the State Academic Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow and Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg, are based on the spectacular nature of theatrical art and its specifics. Such museums have vast archives storing manuscripts, plans, and directors' design works for performances demonstrating the preparatory process [6-8].

Memorial museums are the most intimate of them all (the House Museum of K. S. Stanislavsky, the House Museum of M. N. Ermolova, the House Museum of G. S. Ulanova, etc.). As a rule, a memorial museum represents a theatrical figure in the most diverse manifestations of their character, conveying the environment where famous persons lived and worked. The exhibits of such museums become invaluable over time as the rarest testament to the talent of these persons, especially when many pages of the theatrical history are forgotten; the visitors (theatre-goers) will gladly learn the phenomena these actors were for our culture [9,10].

Theatre museums provide their collections (manuscripts, iconographic, decorative, photo and video materials) to researchers for studying stylistic techniques, creative personalities, and stage principles of scenery and costumes of certain historical periods. These include the director's explications of the performances, the memories of the theatre figures and their epistolary heritage, enabling rendering individual facts and events of the theatre life. Unlike art museums where materials are separated by their technique, there can be no such clear division here, as the performance is in unity. After all, it is important for the researcher to imagine characters in costumes and stage environment, to get into the creative laboratory of the director and the artist, to understand the process of stage images' creation. The principle of collection used in theatre museums enables preserving the unity originally laid down in the iconographic or decorative material, which in turn helps and facilitates the study of the art of the theatre as a whole. At present, numerous works on the

history of theatre and dramatic art, monographs and separate articles about the leading directors, actors, playwrights, and stage designers have been written and published on the basis of extensive materials provided by theatre museums. These include significant theoretical works by M.N. Stroeva, V.V. Vanslov, M.M. Pozharskaia, F.Y. Syrkina, E.M. Kostina, R.I. Vlasova, V.M. Gaevsky, V.I. Berezkin, and others. This important noble task applies to the collections of both the oldest and the newest theatre museums; it remains relevant in the future with all the imaginative information material, clear organized structure of exhibitions and storage funds.

Modern theatre museums of the country are trying to combine both innovative and traditional features. In general, theatre museums, as well as any other museums, have to adapt to the new socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions, because, thanks to the latest digital technologies, any potential visitors have a variety of types of leisure activities and knowledge opportunities. If there are no visitors in the theatre museum, it is a failure not only for the theatre but for the museum as well. For these visitors to come, one has to learn to talk to them, developing the communicative function of the museum. That's why theatre museums can be even more interesting through modern working methods, virtual space, and technological advances.

The newest methods can draw the interest of the visitors of the museum through the discovery of new talents and aspects of a person, interactive tours and exhibitions, presentations, creativity, fantasy and game, contests and dramatic performances. More and more museologists are talking about the concept of museum theatricalization, which is seen as one of the means of communication between the visitor and the museum. In this regard, museums should involve museum educators, representatives of creative organizations and associations. In the first case, museum theatricalization occurs when the exhibition is presented as a stage, where the exhibits become "actors" and each visitor becomes the "director" of their unique "play" based on their personal perception of the exhibition. The second one is aimed at "introducing the exhibition of expressive elements from the field of theatrical action and other entertainment with the use of various sound, light and noise effects, game presentation of exhibits and other forms of interactivity". The third direction involves the use of elements of the so-called "outside museum activities": various theatrical activities carried out by museums in the form of mass cultural events. These include not only modern performances, art actions or historical narrative reconstructions, but also full-fledged dramatic plays. Such various theatrical forms deepen and expand the given topic from the "live" and more demonstrative perspective, turning the museum into a cultural communication centre.

Thus, the modern activities of the theatre museum increasingly expand its possibilities, attracting a wider range of visitors. To expand their audience, theatre museums should expand their cooperation with tourism companies and educational institutions; to raise funds, they should do the same with business structures, sponsorships, and charitable organizations. Museums should enhance their cooperation with the mass media as well, as they can contribute to the promotion and dissemination of information about museum activities among the population of a given country. Theatrical gathering and collecting should be comprehensive and multidisciplinary to provide the main basis for scientific, educational and educational activities of theatre museums.

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