TRADITIONAL PUPPET THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE SKILLS

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Abstract. This article analyzes the historical roots, types, and performance skills of traditional puppet theatre. It examines important components such as puppet manipulation techniques, vocal artistry, character creation, stage communication, and improvisation. In addition, the article discusses the future development prospects of puppet theatre in the modern era and its pedagogical significance. The study serves as a valuable resource for scientific research and practical activities in the fields of theatre studies and arts pedagogy.

Keywords: puppet theatre, traditional art, performance skills, vocal art, improvisation, theatre pedagogy.

Culture and art have played a significant role throughout human history in preserving social and aesthetic values. Traditional puppet theatre, which constitutes an important part of folk creativity, has developed as a unique art form and represents the cultural heritage of many nations. Puppet theatre is not only a means of entertainment but also possesses considerable educational, moral, and enlightening value. This article explores the elements of performance skills in traditional puppet theatre and their practical significance.

Let us examine the historical development and formation of traditional puppet theatre. The history of puppet theatre dates back thousands of years. Various forms of puppet theatre exist worldwide, including shadow theatre, hand puppets, and marionettes, each possessing its own distinctive performance style and technique. In the cultural heritage of Uzbekistan, traditional forms of performance such as clowning and tightrope-walking are closely associated with folk theatrical traditions.

These theatrical forms have played an important role in preserving oral cultural heritage and conveying moral and educational values to society. Furthermore, the development of performing arts and directing approaches has contributed to the advancement and refinement of puppet theatre productions.

The main types of traditional puppet theatre include:

- **Shadow Puppet Theatre** – creating images through light and shadow.
- **Hand Puppets** – puppets controlled directly by the performer's hands.
- **Marionettes** – puppets manipulated by strings.
- **Tabletop Puppets** – puppets performed on small stages or tables.
- **Finger Puppets** – small puppets worn on the fingers.

Each type requires specific technical and creative approaches from the performer. Performance mastery plays a crucial role in bringing this art form to life and creating convincing characters.

The primary elements of performance skills in traditional puppet theatre are reflected in the following aspects:

1. Puppet Manipulation Technique

The performer must master precise, rhythmic, and balanced techniques to move the puppet naturally and expressively. Since each type of puppet requires a different method of control, proficiency in manipulation is one of the key indicators of a performer's skill.

2. Vocal Artistry

Voice acting is an essential tool for bringing puppet characters to life. The ability to find an appropriate vocal tone for each character, vary intonation, speech style, and timbre, and effectively engage the audience is a significant aspect of performance art.

3. Character Creation and Emotional Expression

Through the puppet, the performer portrays various personalities and emotions. In this process, the harmony between movement, facial expressions (when applicable), voice, and stage presence is of great importance.

4. Improvisation and Audience Interaction

In some performances, the performer may interact directly with the audience. Therefore, the ability to improvise, quickly adapt to changing situations, and maintain the continuity of the performance constitutes an integral part of professional mastery.

5. Harmony with Music and Stage Design

Working in coordination with music, lighting, and stage decoration enhances the quality of puppet theatre performances. Synchronizing movements with musical rhythm further improves the performer's professional competence.

With technological advancement and the expansion of multimedia tools, new opportunities are emerging in puppet theatre. Interactivity, robotics, and advanced lighting effects enrich theatrical art. At the same time, national traditions and master-apprentice schools should be preserved and further developed. In Uzbekistan, the establishment of new theatres and the development of educational programs will strengthen the future position of puppet theatre.

In conclusion, traditional puppet theatre is an invaluable part of national culture that comes to life through the mastery of performance. Puppet manipulation, voice acting, character creation, improvisation, and harmony with the stage environment are fundamental requirements for contemporary performers. Combined with modern technologies, traditional puppet theatre can further enhance its pedagogical and cultural significance and become a valuable heritage for future generations.

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