

URGENT ISSUES IN TRAINING DIRECTORS OF VARIETY AND MASS PERFORMANCES

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Abstract. This article examines the pressing issues in the training of directors of variety and mass performances, including the development of their media competence and the current state of using innovative media technologies. It also analyzes the experiences of developed foreign countries in relation to this topic.

Keywords: celebration, performance, theatricalization, media technology, hologram, artificial intelligence, drone show.

In the foundation of the educational and cultural reforms being carried out in New Uzbekistan lies the primary objective of training competitive and highly qualified specialists. In the field of culture and art as well, there is a need to study as a pedagogical issue the training of personnel, including talented directors, and the development of their professional competencies.

In particular, it is essential to fundamentally reform the existing pedagogical process in the training of directors of variety and mass performances, integrating modern innovative technologies and international best practices into the education system.

First and foremost, it should be noted that in recent years, our country has accumulated extensive experience in the field of directing mass celebrations and performances, as well as organizing and hosting international festivals.

In this regard, the contributions of experienced directors such as Bahodir Yuldashev, Rustam Hamidov, Bakhtiyor Sayfullayev, Bakhtiyor Hamidov, Marat Azimov, Nosir Otaboyev, and Rustam Shamsutdinov deserve special recognition. Their dedicated work laid the foundation for the formation of the Uzbek national school of directing mass festivities. Young directors such as Shamsiddin Usmonov, Asqar Kholmo'minov, and Ruslan Haydarov, who are continuing the path of their mentors, are actively introducing modern and innovative trends into the directing of mass celebrations.

Today, in our Republic, major open-air celebrations are held on a grand scale in honor of Independence Day, Navruz, the Day of Remembrance and Honor, as well as festivals such as Boysun Bahori, Sharq Taronalari (Melodies of the East), the International Maqam Forum, the International Bakhshi Festival, the International Handicrafts Festival, and the Silk and Spices Festival.

It should be particularly emphasized that during mass celebrations held in our country, the great history, national values, traditions, customs, and rituals of our people are presented through theatrical mass scenes. Through these celebrations, the ancient and eternal culture of the Uzbek nation, along with its unique artistic heritage, is promoted to the international community. The

annual increase in the number of participating countries in international festivals is clear evidence of this.

In mass celebrations, along with the creation of plot-based mise-en-scenes through live performances, theatrical shows, and large-scale stage compositions, initial steps are also being taken in the use of modern media technologies. This can be observed in the artistic integration of the main stage with LED screens, drone shows, and ceremonial fireworks.

However, when comparing mass celebrations held in developed countries with those in our country, significant differences can be observed. It would not be an exaggeration to state that developed countries have made much greater progress in the practical application of modern media technologies in mass events.

In particular, the People's Republic of China can be distinguished as a leading country in the world in the field of directing mass celebrations. This is because, in the Chinese experience, great importance is attached to direction, scriptwriting, theatrical mise-en-scenes, technical and technological solutions, symbolic and metaphorical imagery, as well as the artistic synthesis and synchronization of large groups of performers.

A vivid example of this can be seen in the grand opening ceremonies of the 2008 and 2022 Summer and Winter Olympic Games held in Beijing. Under the direction of stage director Zhang Yimou and his creative team, the dramaturgy of the opening ceremonies was based on symbolic, historical, cultural, and diplomatic content, achieving a unique artistic synthesis of music, theatre, sports, and national imagery.

One of the most fundamental traditions specific to Chinese directing of mass celebrations is the synchronized movement of large-scale mass scenes. The Chinese consider this process as the harmonious management of human resources, ensuring the synchronized movement of a large number of participants—ranging from 1,000 to 15,000 individuals—wearing identical costumes. This approach is characterized by strict preparation, military-style discipline, systematized dynamic visual staging, and mass choreography, all regarded as a method of public mobilization. A world record was set during the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, where 15,000 performers moved in perfect synchronization simultaneously.

The second distinctive feature of Chinese directors of mass celebrations is the use of technological and visual design solutions. In this regard, they widely utilize drone shows, AR/VR elements, holograms, digital screens, lasers, 3D mapping, and artificial light design to create astonishing visual effects. According to the Guinness World Records, the record for the “Largest aerial image formed by drones” was set by Chinese specialists on June 16, 2025, in the city of Chongqing, where 11,787 drones simultaneously ascended into the sky to create a massive and precise visual formation. Similarly, during the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, the world's largest drone-based “sky screen” show was presented with the participation of over 1,000 drones.

As is well known, artificial intelligence has increasingly penetrated every sphere of our social life in recent years. This trend has also directly influenced the directing of mass celebrations and performances. A clear example is the opening ceremony of the “Games of the Future” held in 2024 in Kazan, Russian Federation, with the participation of athletes from 107 countries. This international sporting event, organized in a “phygital” format combining cybersports, technology, and digital environments, widely incorporated AR/VR technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, digital environments, and esports.

The central concept of this directing format is the synthesis of traditional (physical) sports and digital (cyber) sports, requiring directors to work simultaneously in two environments: the real

and the virtual. In this regard, the event is recognized as the world's first high-level phygital Olympics, marking an innovative turning point in the history of mass performance directing. In the dramaturgy of this production, the storyline based on the imagery of "people of the future" was conceptualized through artificial intelligence. Another significant aspect was that the audience became an active part of the show through VR headsets, interactive walls, and sensory panels.

The analysis clearly revealed that the experience of using modern technologies in mass celebrations and performances held in our country remains insufficient. This situation can be attributed to two main reasons. The first is the lack of media competence among stage directors and the shortage of specialists proficient in modern technologies, such as multimedia designers, event technologists, digital scenographers, and interactive show directors. The second reason is the absence of specialized media technology subjects in the current system of personnel training. From the above considerations, it becomes evident that for a modern mass celebration director, possessing media competence alongside professional competence is a critical necessity. In this regard, it is essential to introduce media technology disciplines into the relevant fields of education, attract experienced foreign specialists, and facilitate professional development of teachers and students in foreign higher education institutions.

Currently, in order to address the existing challenges, the leadership of our institute is organizing master classes with the participation of experienced specialists from advanced higher education institutions. The master classes conducted by experts from the Russian State Institute of Theatre Arts (GITIS), as well as the participation of our students in the "I-Eurasia Student Theatre Festival" organized by Sungkyul University of the Republic of Korea, serve as initial steps toward solving the aforementioned issues.

One of the most pressing issues in training highly qualified personnel in the field of directing is the artistic thinking of students. It is no secret that the development of artistic thinking and the promotion of reading culture among youth has been elevated to the level of state policy. In this regard, several decrees and resolutions have been signed by our esteemed President, and various competitions are being held to encourage reading among young people.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that fostering the artistic thinking of young people and elevating reading to a daily necessity is of vital importance. I firmly believe that if we succeed in cultivating a culture of reading among youth, we will be able to find solutions to all challenges in this field.

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