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DOI <https://doi.org/10.24919/2308-4863/83-3-18>**Denys SHARYKOV,***orcid.org/0000-0002-3757-5559**PhD in Art Criticism, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor at the Department of Circus Genres
Kyiv Municipal Academy of Circus and Performing Arts
(Kyiv, Ukraine) d.ballet77@gmail.com***Stepan KUTS,***orcid.org/0009-0007-9364-3767**Independent Researcher
(Truskavets, Ukraine) stepan.kuts96@gmail.com***Vasyl KUTS,***orcid.org/0009-0005-9547-4747**Independent Researcher
(Truskavets, Ukraine) I.vasyl.kuts@gmail.com*

PROFESSIONAL CIRCUS SPECIFICS OF TRAINING DUET JUGGLERS FOR INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS

The article examines an interesting problem of contemporary circus art, namely, the specifics of the methodology for preparing Duet Jugglers for participation in International Festivals. The study of such topics is poorly understood and very superficial, if we rely on the scientific research of Marina Malykhina, Elena Pazharskaya, Nina Araya Berrios. In general, these scientific studies concerned circus art in the context of Art Criticism, which is not objective enough due to the fact that their authors are not professional artists and performers of Circus Art and understand their own research in the circus industry through the prism of general processes in Art Culture and contemporary in Stage and Performing Arts.

This superficial approach to the scientific research entails an incomplete picture of the perception of information and its practical component and specificity. Many studies of circus topics relate specifically to the practical aspect in such a topic. For example, researchers – Yulia Romanenkova, Denis Sharykov, Lyudmila Shevchenko, Dmytro Orel, Inessa Lvova, who specifically emphasize the professional aspect of the study of Circus Art, namely science in contemporary Art Criticism – Circology. The technical, psychological and creative aspects of working on a circus act of duet jugglers, as well as the role of cooperation between circus artists as the basis for a successful performance are analyzed. The main stages of the training and rehearsal process, methods for improving synchronicity and adapting to competition conditions and the international environment are described. Practical methods for warming up the body immediately before the performance are proposed. Particular attention is paid to ways to relieve stress and tuning to the performance with the help of special exercises.

The relevance of the study is due to the fact that jugglers' training techniques rarely become the subject of systematic analysis. In the context of constant improvement of the juggling process and the emergence of new patterns and combinations, there is a need to develop contemporary methods and approaches to training. These innovations, although they play a key role in the professional growth of artists, remain largely under-researched, which underlines the importance of this work.

Key words: *Art criticism, contemporary Stage and Performance Art duet juggling, juggling, training jugglers, International Festivals, synchronization of movements, psychological preparation of circus performers, rehearsal process, creative approach of professional performers, training process of professional circus artists, circus artists, circus performers, circus artists.*

Денис ШАРИКОВ,*orcid.org/0000-0002-3757-5559**кандидат мистецтвознавства, доцент,
професор кафедри циркових жанрів
Київської муніципальної академії естрадного та циркового мистецтва
(Київ, Україна) d.ballet77@gmail.com*

Степан КУЦ,
orcid.org/0009-0007-9364-3767
незалежний дослідник
(Трускавець, Україна) stepan.kuts96@gmail.com

Василь КУЦ,
orcid.org/0009-0005-9547-4747
незалежний дослідник
(Трускавець, Україна) I.vasyl.kuts@gmail.com

ПРОФЕСІЙНА ЦИРКОВА СПЕЦИФІКА ПІДГОТОВКИ ПАРНИХ ЖОНГЛЕРІВ ДЛЯ МІЖНАРОДНИХ ФЕСТИВАЛІВ

У статті досліджується цікава проблема сучасного циркового мистецтва, а саме – специфіка методики підготовки юних жонглерів до участі у Міжнародних фестивалях. Дослідження подібної тематики маловивчене та дуже поверхове, якщо спиратися на наукові дослідження Марина Малихіна, Олена Пажарська, Ніна Арая Берріос. Загалом ці наукові дослідження стосувалися, саме циркового мистецтва в контексті мистецтвознавства, що досить не об'єктивно через те, що їхні автори не є професійними артистами та виконавцями циркового мистецтва та розуміють власні дослідження у цирковій галузі через призму загальних процесів у художній культурі та сучасному сценічному та виконавському мистецтвах.

Цей поверхневий підхід до наукового дослідження спричиняє нецілісну картину сприйняття інформації та її практичну складову та специфіку. Багато досліджень циркової тематики належать саме до практичного аспекту у подібній тематиці. Наприклад, дослідники – Юлія Романенкова, Денис Шариков, Людмила Шевченко, Дмитро Орел, Інеса Львова, які саме наголошують на професійному аспекті дослідження циркового мистецтва, а саме науки у сучасному мистецтвознавстві – циркології.

Проаналізовано технічні, психологічні та творчі аспекти роботи над цирковим номером дуетних жонглерів, а також роль співпраці між цирковими артистами як основи успішного виступу. Описано основні етапи тренувального та репетиційного процесу, методи покращення синхронності та адаптації до умов змагань та міжнародного середовища. Запропоновано практичні методи розігріву тіла безпосередньо перед виступом. Особлива увага приділяється способам зняття напруги та налаштування на виступ за допомогою спеціальних вправ.

Актуальність дослідження зумовлена тим, що техніки підготовки жонглерів рідко стають предметом систематичного аналізу. У контексті постійного вдосконалення процесу жонглювання та появи нових патернів та комбінацій виникає потреба у розробці сучасних методик та підходів до тренувань. Ці інновації, хоч і грають ключову роль професійному зростанні артистів, здебільшого залишаються недостатньо дослідженими, що підкреслює важливість цієї роботи.

Ключові слова: жонглювання, міжнародні фестивалі, парне жонглювання, репетиційний процес, психологічна підготовка циркових виконавців, сучасне сценічне та виконавче мистецтво, синхронізація рухів, художня культура, творчий підхід професійних виконавців, тренувальний процес професійних циркових артистів.

Formulation of the problem. The principle and specifics of training duet jugglers to participate in International Circus Festivals remain insufficiently studied in contemporary circus. Although duet juggling is an important circus genre in the format of International competitions and Festivals. Its technical, psychological, creative and artistic aspects, especially in terms of cooperation between professional partners. Such scientific research rarely becomes the subject of systematic analysis in contemporary circus.

For example, such topics are partially traced in scientific research – Marina Malykhina, Elena Pazharskaya, Nina Araya Berrios. But these scientific studies are not objective enough due to the fact that the researchers, firstly, are not professional circus performers, but only study such topics in the context of contemporary Art culture. Secondly, without deeply understanding the specifics of circus genres,

especially stunts, circus composition and technical techniques of performance, these researchers usually determine biased and shallow conclusions.

Given the constant development of circus art, training jugglers requires a contemporary approach that takes into account not only technical skill but also harmonious interaction between artists. In addition, practical aspects of training processes are often ignored. This problem is relevant in light of the growing competition in the international arena, where it is the perfection of performance and the originality of numbers that determine the success of circus artists today.

Research Analysis. The problems of circus criticism, the history of circus genres and teaching, as well as issues of circology are associated with researchers – (Ernest Albrecht, 2006), (Lvova I., 2020), (Malykhina M., 2012; 2016); (Orel D., 2019; 2022),

(Pozharska O., 2020), (Romanenkova Yu., 2020), (Sharykov D., 2023), (Shevchenko L., 2023).

The **purpose of the article** – aims to fill the existing gap in professional circus practice by creating high-quality content and contemporary effective methods and techniques that will help circus artists adapt to the demands of the festival environment and ensure their competitiveness in the international arena.

Narration of the main material.

Contemporary reality reveals a wide, constantly growing and changing variety of forms of Art culture. One of such forms is the Festival, which embodies the image of the National Holiday in the contemporary cultural picture.

In the contemporary Art culture of Ukraine, a festival is, firstly, a demonstration of the achievements of music, theater, ballet, circus, cinema and other types of contemporary art. Secondly, it is a mass celebration consisting of a series of concerts and performances united by a common name, a single program and held in a particularly solemn atmosphere annually or once every few years (Yakovlev O.V., Araya Berrios N.V., 2023: 343–364).

Based on these data, the Circus Festival can be defined as a regularly repeating mass celebration consisting of a series of performances united by a common theme, and the purpose of demonstrating the achievements of circus art. Such events are a platform for demonstrating professional innovations, professional achievements and creative potential of circus artists.

At the same time, participation in circus festivals, especially at the International level, puts forward high demands on circus artists. This is not only about technical mastery, but also about the ability to create a harmonious, emotionally charged performance. For duet jugglers working in tandem, the basis for such a successful performance is a common vision. Preparing duet jugglers for international festivals is not only about improving technical skills, but also about creating a harmonious and holistic performance that will leave an unforgettable impression on the audience and jury. Unlike solo numbers, where the focus is on individual abilities, duet juggling requires perfect synchronicity, trust and a common vision (Sharykov D., 2023: 46–49).

Forming a common vision of the partners working in a duet becomes the foundation for all stages of preparation – from developing the concept to staging circus tricks. A common vision is an agreed-upon idea of both partners about the purpose of their performance, its style, theme, atmosphere and emotional message. It is a unity of ideas that allows two artists to work harmoniously, developing not only the tech-

nical but also the emotional aspect of the circus act. In order to create a common vision, it is necessary to define the concept of the act. The concept must be understandable to both partners and have the potential to be expressed through juggling technique.

The selection for the International Circus Festivals consists of several main stages. Submission of an application: each artist or team sends a video recording of the act, a detailed description of the concept of the performance, a list of technical requirements and a professional resume. Preview: the organizers and jury members review the submitted materials, assessing the technical level, innovation and overall quality of the performance. Only the best acts receive an invitation to participate with subsequent instructions on the organization and performance. Selection criteria: To be selected, an act must meet a number of key criteria for professional circus performers.

Technical skill. High quality of trick execution, precision of trick execution, confidence. Cleanliness of execution: the jury pays attention to every detail: body position, arm and leg lines, as well as the synchronization of movements, the fall of props during the act such as balls or clubs.

It is important not only to perform a trick once, but also to do it consistently under stress, stage lighting and the attention of a large audience. In duet juggling, control and sophistication play an important role, even complex elements should look easy and natural.

Mastery is demonstrated in the artist's ability to control his body so that it seems effortless. The audience should be captivated by the ease with which the artist performs even the most difficult tricks. Paired jugglers must work as a single mechanism. The slightest inaccuracy in the rhythm or trajectory of the throws can disrupt the composition and lead to the fall of objects. If one of the jugglers makes a mistake, it will affect the work of both. Preparing for an international festival performance requires a systematic approach that includes a clear training plan, individual and collaborative work between partners, and an emphasis on complex performance elements.

As soon as the artists learn that they have been selected to participate in the festival, they are incredibly happy and begin active preparation for the performance. There is usually little time – only six months, but this is enough to prepare and perfect the technical and original aspects of the act. Therefore, the artists immediately begin to work. The training plan usually looks like this: daily two-hour classes with a mandatory full performance of the act to music, regardless of whether the performance is successful or not.

It is important to focus on those tricks that often fail and make the main emphasis on them. For exam-

ple, if one of the partners regularly drops a club during solo juggling with five clubs, he should devote more time to this trick during the individual warm-up. If the problem occurs in pair juggling, both partners should focus on this element together.

Preparation before working together

Before the start of training, each artist warms up separately for 15–20 minutes, repeating all the elements and tricks that will be used in the performance. Particular attention is paid to those elements that require additional development.

Working on a number in pairs

When the artists begin working together, they perform the entire combination, focusing on the technical component. When going through the routine, they pause on those elements that require additional attention, but try not to get hung up on one in order to leave time for other elements. After 7–10 runs, the artists take a short rest of 10–15 minutes, after which they move on to performing the number to music.

Working with the musical component

Working to music is much more difficult, because in addition to concentrating on technique and tricks, you need to simultaneously monitor the rhythm and melody. You should perform the number to music at least five times, focusing as much as possible on the melody, rhythm, accents and movements.

The key to a successful performance is a large number of runs of the number from beginning to end. Artists should not take into account minor mistakes, such as the fall of a club, ball or other props. The act must be continued as if nothing had happened. If the object falls, it should be picked up as gracefully as possible and less noticeably for the audience.

Peculiarities of the six-club pass between two paired jugglers

Special attention should be paid to the technique of connecting six clubs, because this is one of the most difficult and effective elements of the performance. This technique requires high coordination, synchronization and mutual understanding of the partners. The most common scheme for six clubs is 3:3 (three clubs for each juggler). In this scheme, both jugglers pass and receive clubs from their partner. The most dynamic option is the pass on each throw (1–1), when each juggler passes a club to his partner after each throw. Before the start, the partners stand opposite each other, creating two parallel trajectories for the flight of the clubs.

Position and distance

The distance between the jugglers is usually 2–3 meters, depending on the technique and skill level. The body is slightly relaxed, the arms move in a comfortable range, the face is turned to the partner.

Before the connection begins, one of the partners gives the command «Up», which means the start of the action. Each juggler holds three clubs: two in the right hand and one in the left. Technique:

1. *First throw* – one club from the juggler's right hand is thrown into the left hand.

2. *Second throw* – one club from the left hand is thrown into the right hand.

3. *Third throw* – one club from the right hand is passed to the partner's left hand.

Each club performs one rotation during the flight. It is important that all throws are of the same height and speed, and to avoid collisions, the trajectories of the clubs should be distributed: one on the right, one on the left.

Rhythm and synchronization

To maintain a clear rhythm, partners can use the count: one-two-three or a metronome. This helps to start throws at the same time and maintain the same speed. An even flight height helps to maintain a natural rhythm and avoid chaos. Too fast a tempo can lead to a loss of control, too slow – will make the performance uneven.

Maintaining the rhythm is the basis of a successful approach. It not only helps to avoid col-



Fig. 1. YOUNG STAGE. International Circus Festival Basel, Switzerland, 2021. Trick. «Synchronized juggling» with 10 clubs. Duet juggling: Stepan Kuts and Vasyl Kuts



Fig. 2. Trick. The «Bridge» position – the body is in a semi-recumbent position, leaning on the legs and shoulders of the partner during synchronized juggling. Duet juggling: Stepan Kuts and Vasyly Kuts

lisions, but also makes the performance harmonious and elegant. Combining technical mastery and synchronization, the artists create a striking number that leaves an unforgettable impression on the audience.

Conclusions. Thus, we can state the following conclusions: for professional training of circus artist's duet jugglers for the International Circus Festivals, a systematic and comprehensive program for the implementation of this project is required.

An important factor in the systematic training of duet jugglers is clear and corporate work, as well as a deep understanding of the two partners of their joint work, a single view and the implementation of their professional activities in the context of demonstrating the circus project – duet juggling.

Also, an important fact is the trust of the performers in each other, since they must work in a

coordinated manner, harmoniously and quickly understand and respond to possible changes during the demonstration of their work in preparation for the International Circus Festival. The entire professional part of the training: work in a duet; work on the musical accompaniment of the circus act; features of passing in juggling; position and distance.

All of the above is an important factor in the development of Ukrainian professional circus artist's duet jugglers in the ability to compete in the International space of Circus Festivals.

Representing both their high professionalism and the display of a professional circus school. The methodology and technology of which constitute the «Golden Fund» of our Patriotic and artistic heritage of professional circus samples in the World space of Art Culture today.

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