

Stage costumes and runway fashion: aspects of interaction

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Abstract. The article traces the collaboration between clothing designers, directors, and performers in the context of the integration of theater into contemporary fashion shows and the influence of fashion on the creation of stage costumes.

Keywords: stage costume, fashion, theater, scenography, fashion show.

I. Statement of the problem.

Today, the interpenetration of the stage and the runway can be traced throughout the world. Fashion shows are becoming more and more spectacular, and the stage costumes of stars, and sometimes even theater costumes, correspond to all fashion trends. Designers are trying to turn their shows into theatrical performances, and stars are creating new styles in clothing.

II. Analysis of existing research.

The stage and fashion have always influenced each other. The history of costume and culture in general is full of examples where leading actors actively promoted fashion and were its “ambassadors” because they were active supporters of it themselves, and stage costumes and requirements for them had not yet been established at that time: actors performed in what they wore every day. People adopted fashion from the stage because they wanted to be like a famous actress and her style. The modern encyclopedia “Fashion and Style,” edited by V. A. Volodin, notes that at the beginning of the 20th century, the significant shift of women from long skirts took place to a certain extent under the influence of the famous A. Duncan, who danced on stage in a light, short dress in the antique style. Such attire allowed the dancer to move completely freely [1, p. 385]. I. V. Blokhina emphasizes in her work that one of the first famous works of P. Poiret, which brought the master success, was a collection of dresses for the French dramatic actress G. Régine. In the era of tight corsets, Régine showed the public a kimono-style cloak, which became known as “Confucius” [2, p. 341].

Over time, the requirements for stage costumes have changed, and they have come to reflect the time and era. In fact, stage costumes have become practically less influenced by fashion trends. Many authors have studied theatrical costumes separately, including K. V. Gradova, R. V. Zakharzhevskaya, S. P. Isenko, R. M. Kirsanova, K. A. Stepanova, and separately fashion and clothing design – T. O. Berdnik, T. V. Vetlitskaya, G. M. Guseinov, Ya. N. Nerserov. However, there is a lack of information concerning the contemporary interaction between the stage and fashion.

III. Formulation of the article's objectives:

to explore the connection and mutual influence of contemporary fashion and scenography.

IV. Research results.

Initially, fashion shows had no musical accompaniment, special lighting, or scenography as such. Fashion shows were then used to promote fashionable items. And since fashion weeks began to be held regularly, shows have acquired new scenography principles: it has become mandatory to design the space and provide a visual setting for the spectacle. The main task of seasonal shows is to present new fashionable looks. Fashion is a sociocultural phenomenon whose representative function is to disseminate (advertise) examples of fashionable clothing, style, value preferences, and aesthetic ideals generated within the art of costume. For fashion, the runway is the same stage as for theatrical art. Both have a certain storyline today.

By the end of the 20th century, fashion show scenography had developed into something akin to a theatrical performance. Today, fashion shows for seasonal collections and shows at competitions for young clothing designers have become as close as possible to theatrical performances. Well-known fashion houses strive to surprise the public not only with fashionable clothes, but also with the storyline of the show: staging, musical accompaniment, decorations; which also helps to better convey the main creative idea of the new collection. It is no longer just a show of current or exclusive items, it is a demonstration of a certain lifestyle. And this is precisely what the choice of the show space, musical accompaniment, lighting, scenery, length, placement, height of the runway, and choice of models (age, gender, type, nationality, hair color) are aimed at. Everything is geared towards the realization of the intended image.

The viewer tries on these suggestions, correlating them with their own emotions, impressions, and experiences. A fashion show is just a moment, a game that does not last long. Various types of advertising, commercials, glossy magazines, etc., are subordinate to it and work to repeat and reproduce the “visual illusion.”

Examples of narrative shows: Hermes installed propellers on the runway, Alexander McQueen dumped a mountain of rubbish on the runway. Models, who were long referred to as “coat hangers,” now dance on the runway, move freely, and perform theatrical miniatures. In addition, designers bring animals to the runway: dogs, cats, chickens, horses. For example, Karl Lagerfeld, working for Chanel, used a huge haystack as a backdrop for one of his latest shows (2009), which emphasized the folkloric nature of the collection. For another show of his fur collection (2010), the famous designer specially ordered a piece of a real iceberg from the north, which melted throughout the show and created large puddles on the runway.

J. Galliano made his first show famous – it took place in a dilapidated suburban house, where chandeliers hung down to the floor and the wind blew leaves across the hall. It is these unusual shows that are the designer's calling card and bring him great popularity. The venues for these events are increasingly unusual for fashion shows: circuses, train stations, theaters, and opera houses. In one of Galliano's shows, the models included dwarfs, bodybuilders, children, elderly people, overweight women, and graceful dancers (2006). With such things, the designer secured for himself the title of “king of provocation.” The final point in the theatrical performance that is each Galliano show is always the designer's original bow.

Ukrainian designers are not lagging behind in directing shows. L. Litkovska agreed to stain her new collection for the sake of visual effect—her models walked the runway in water tinted with red paint. And the famous Ukrainian designer and provocateur O. Zalevsky positions himself more as a director-choreographer than a clothing designer. Very often, Ukrainian show business stars become models at his shows, some of whom order their stage outfits from the designer. He was the first and only one at fashion week to deform the runway, turning it 90 degrees and building steps. This allowed the audience to watch the models' runway exclusively from the side (2005).

The organizers of the famous international competition for young designers “Parom” (Kharkiv) are the fashion theater “Ananas,” headed by M. Moiseenko. Therefore, the competition always offers very interesting, non-standard approaches to fashion shows. The professional models of the fashion theater also have acting skills, which helps the show's director M. Moiseenko turn the presentation of some collections into theatrical miniatures.

A mandatory decoration of each of the “Parom (ferry)” is M. Moiseenko's new spectacular collection with a very flamboyant show, which usually combines elements of fashion shows, theater, and dance.

The staging of the fashion show, the musical accompaniment, and the professionalism of the models are very important in the overall perception of the show by visitors. The finals of almost all Ukrainian competitions have confirmed that a successful staging can lead a mediocre collection to victory, and vice versa.

In addition, fashion week shows often resemble spectacular performances or theatrical productions featuring famous personalities (singers, showmen, comedians, actors), and the outfits worn by performers on stage reflect all the latest fashion trends (most often thanks to the work of designers and stylists).

Thus, fashion shows are becoming more and more like theatrical performances, and singers are setting new fashion trends. As for the latter, many pop stars and clothing designers create quite successful creative tandems. The stage costumes of stars are one of the most striking manifestations of the creativity of fashion designers.

Jean Paul Gaultier gained worldwide fame thanks to the concert outfit of the famous singer Madonna, with its emphatically pointed bustier (1990). Another famous client of the designer is Australian pop singer Kylie Minogue. For her world tour in 2008, the star ordered costumes from Gaultier that successfully emphasized her stage image. One of the most striking was the geisha costume.

A contemporary example of fruitful collaboration in global practice is the work of rising star of contemporary design Moritz Waldemeyer with the kings of Geek Rock OK Go (Fig. 1). Moritz Waldemeyer has been recognized as one of the most innovative and interesting designers of his generation, his creative works combining technology, art, fashion, and design. The band OK Go approached the designer with a request to create costumes that would literally light up the stage. Thousands of LED lights sewn into the jackets of the four performers turned each of them into a moving laser show. Waldemeyer was inspired by the lights of slot machines in Las Vegas casinos. When the band performs on stage, the lights sewn into the jackets flash in a specific sequence that creates the letters O, K, G, O—just like slot machines spinning symbols [3].



Fig. 1. Innovative stage costumes by the geek rock band OK Go.

Designer Moritz Waldemeyer.

<https://www.dezeen.com/2007/11/26/ok-go-stage-costumes-by-moritz-waldemeyer/>

Lady Gaga is considered the most outrageous contemporary performer in the world, and not without reason. The singer constantly surprises the public with her incredibly imaginative stage costumes: distorted silhouettes, unusual materials, masquerade masks, avant-garde makeup, fake blood, flaming costumes, and more. At one of the music awards, Lady Gaga appeared in a red lace dress that covered her face, creating the effect of a lace mask. And the singer's latest performance in a dress made of raw meat caused a real outrage among animal rights organizations and became a sensation in the fashion world. It should be noted that the pop singer's stage wardrobe even includes a costume based on folk motifs. She was the one who brought the effect of theatrical buffoonery and art performance to pop music. However, the singer owes her successful stage style to the famous fashion designer Alexander McQueen and image maker Nicola Formichetti.

As for Ukrainian practice, in one of her collections for Ukrainian Fashion Week, designer O. Telizhenko brought the popular ethno-rock band Haydamaky to the runway (Fig. 2). The collection was called Wild Space in a style that the author called "ethno-couture" [4]. At that time, the band was searching for a new conceptual visual image, so the designer's new collection also became the new concert costumes for Haydamaky. The red and black costumes, which combined elements of rock, military, and ethno styles, harmoniously blended into the images of the ethno-rockers.

In general, cases where performers wear "runway" outfits for their performances are quite common. A new trend is the use of seasonal collections in theatrical performances. Renowned director Meng Jinghui staged the play Love Utopia for the Chinese experimental theater. To recreate the complex dramatic mood of the work, the director chose costumes from Prada's spring-summer 2010 collection (Fig. 3). The refined, sharp details of

jackets and dresses, Japanese prints, gray cardigans worn over white shirts, according to Jinghui, “were not only rich in virtuoso design, but also full of meaning and deep thoughts” [5].

There is also a tendency to simplify stage costumes as much as possible, replacing them with everyday clothing. To a certain extent, this is due to the fact that contemporary art is ceasing to be elitist and is becoming mass, universal, and adapted for everyone to perceive. Therefore, the scenography of this art, costumes in particular, is taken “from the street.”



Fig. 2. The band “Haydamaky.” Costumes from the collection of Olesia Telizhenko
“Wild Space” for the fall–winter 2010–2011 season.



Fig. 3. Meng Jinghui's play *Love Utopia*, 2010.

The actors are wearing costumes from Prada's spring–summer 2010 collection.

In 2009, there was a global trend of using motifs and materials characteristic of theater and opera costumes in the seasonal collections of such well-known brands as D&G, Lanvin, Prada, Dior, Alexander McQueen, Burberry, Etro, Armani, Miu Miu, Alberta Ferretti, and Balenciaga. For designer L. Norsoyan, A. Netrebko's performance of the opera “*La Traviata*” was the source of inspiration for the creation of the collection. It should be noted that some dresses from her collection in the style of prêt-à-porter de luxe look like full-fledged stage costumes.

Conclusions. The interaction between the stage and the runway is constant, inspiring and enriching each other. Modern fashion shows of seasonal collections and shows at competitions for young clothing designers are becoming increasingly spectacular. The stage costumes of famous personalities even give rise to new styles. A large number of well-known clothing designers realize their creative potential by collaborating with theater, cinema, and pop music, which is almost impossible when working on commercial products, where the main focus is on utility and consumer demand.

V. Prospects for further research.

A separate area of stage costume and runway clothing design is the use of folk motifs, which determines the further direction of research.

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