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## THE PHENOMENON OF THE COMIC IN CONTEMPORARY VARIETY ART

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The purpose of the scientific paper is to determine the functional, form-building and artistic-shaped features of the comic in the system of original genres of contemporary variety art. The research methods. In the process of analyzing the phenomenon of the comic, an interdisciplinary approach based on the principle of corporatism is used and involves the interpretation and comparison of sociocultural, philosophical, aesthetic, psychological, historical, and art critic aspects of the study of the identified issues in the context of the specifics of variety art. The range of problems of the comic as a phenomenon of contemporary variety art is considered comprehensively, using general scientific, cultural, and art criticism methods and approaches: systemic (for a comprehensive consideration of the phenomenon of comic and the specifics of the evolution of variety art); structural (for the study of variety art in terms of genre morphology); genre-typological method (for analyzing the features of the use of comic techniques in the process of creating variety turns), etc., in order to study the comic in a socio-cultural context and a social art context. The scientific novelty. The category of “comic” as a phenomenon of variety art of the XXI century has been studied in an interdisciplinary aspect; functional, form-building and artistic-figurative features of creating a comic in the system of original genres of contemporary variety art have been defined. Conclusions. In the system of original genres of variety art, such as pantomime, musical eccentricity, mime-clownery, manipulation, etc., comic tricks, jokes or gags are important means of expressiveness. The phenomenon of the comic in contemporary variety art implements a relaxation function and is characterized by an active search for new comedic situations in original genres. The use of various unique techniques in the process of creating a variety turn generates innovative shades of the comic, which causes the viewer to an appropriate emotional state.

*Keywords:* comic; variety art; gag; humor; satire; slapstick; grotesque.

### Introduction

Aspects of the aesthetic category “comic” in the transformational conditions of the twenty-first century are positioned not only as integral elements of traditional forms of laughing culture, since they are actively integrated into popular mass art. For example, in variety art, which gives a person vivid emotional and intellectual impulses for further development, comic art is an important component of a performance, with the help of which any, even

important issues are solved. In the scientific dimension, the specifics of the comic as a phenomenon of variety art of the twenty-first century has not yet received comprehensive coverage. This actualizes the study of the features of the forms of its identification in the structure of contemporary variety art.

Many fundamental works of researchers are devoted to the categories of the comic, as an important component of many types of art. In particular, the problems of individual aspects of the comic in the context of variety art were considered by I. Isnyuk ("The ideal of the comic in representations of the modern art Space of Ukraine", 2014), exploring the aesthetic principles of the author's manner of creating a comic based on the analysis of the creative heritage of leading Ukrainian stage masters, and distinguishing specific manifestations of the comic typical for their performances; T. Grinie ("The trick and gag as the basis of musical eccentricity and clownery", 2018), showing specific differences between the trick and gag as the main instrument of expressiveness of genres, offering an innovative approach to theoretical understanding of the clownery genre and musical eccentricity, etc. However, the specific features of the comic in the context of the genre diversity of contemporary variety art require a detailed study of art history.

### **The purpose of the article**

The purpose of the scientific paper is to determine the functional, form-building and artistic-imaginative features of the comic in the system of original genres of contemporary variety art; identification of elements of the category "comic" and their significance in the artistic structure of the variety turn.

### **Presentation of the main material**

The comic is a complex phenomenon, sensitive to socio-cultural and socio-artistic changes. Authoritative researcher Yu. Borev (2002, p. 81) notes that in the comic theory there are three methodological approaches that generate the diversity of the designated concept: comic as an objective property of the subject; comic as a result of subjective abilities of a personality; comic as a consequence of the relationship between subject and object. The scientist proposes his own definition, arguing that comic is a phenomenon that represents reality in an unexpected perspective, revealing its internal contradictions and causing in the mind of man an active opposition of the subject to aesthetic ideals, and the diversity of laughter shades is the result of the interaction of aesthetic properties of reality, ideals and aesthetic needs of a person (Borev, 2002, p. 85).

The comedic processing of life material, which reveals comedy as an aesthetic property of reality, requires the use of artistic means by which contradictions are exacerbated, the effect of surprise is stimulated, and the opposition of aesthetic ideals to a ridiculing phenomenon is activated (Borev, 2002, p. 91).

Humor (a person's ability to perceive the comic in all its diversity; it is characterized by a sympathetic attitude to the object of derision) and satire

(ruthless, injurious rethinking of the object of the image and criticism, which is solved by laughing; a specific way of artistic reproduction of reality revealing it as something meaningless, false, internally incapable by using means of laughing, revealing and ridiculing images) belong to the main types of the comic (Redkozubova, 2009, p. 53).

Analyzing the transformation of the comic phenomenon in a historical retrospective view, scientists define it as a kind of necessary relaxation “from oppressive and absolute mechanical system”, focusing on a striking difference from traditional folk laughter, the nature of which is world-viewing, synthesizing, combining man and world (Kasimov, 2007, p. 198).

It is worth noting that the comic, in the conditions of the stage space of contemporary variety art, is positioned not only as a reaction to current events. According to D. Nikolaev (2011, p. 59), although variety art provides great opportunities for a direct reaction to scenes from the life of society that are relevant to the viewer, but “it can talk about eternity, and not about an instant, like any other form of performance mastery because the way of communication with the viewer does not determine the hierarchy with regard to the degree of artistry or the level of generalization”. But the well-known researcher E. Uvarova (Uvarova, 1991, p. 8) notices that it is topicality that is a specific quality of variety art, emphasizing its connection with the improvisation inherent in variety art, “especially the narrator’s comments, parody, satirical song”.

Taking into consideration the nature of the comic, improvisation (in the context of the ability to create a stable text for a turn instantly) in variety dramaturgy allows us to immediately use various artistic findings, since in small genres “there is no need to accumulate a comic, to develop or build a joke, here the funny does not dissolve in unfunny (...) the comic here is often have inherent worth, it is primary, and the characters and collisions are secondary” (Nikolaev, 2011, p. 59).

I. Bogdanov (2005, p. 167), analyzing the artistic structure of the variety turn, identifies the main comic units – *a comic trick (or a gag) and a reprise*.

It should be noted that in variety art, as opposed to circus art, the main function of the trick is not to surprise the viewers, but to make them laugh. Accordingly, the comic trick, also known as “gag” – the historical form of French humor, “laughter painted with safe horror, reflecting the alienation of people in the industrial world” is dominant, especially in the system of original genres (Borev, 2002, p. 93); that thing which turns the real into the fantastic, the ordinary into the incredible, the normal into the absurd (Bogdanov, Vinogradskiy, 2009, p. 64).

In accordance with the specifics of variety art, the gag is always based on the visual perception of the viewer.

There is a generally accepted typology of comic tricks:

- corporal (performed by means of external physical expressiveness of the artist, using plastic and acrobatic elements);
- mechanical (based on the use of technical equipment);
- narrative (long according to running time, with a tangible semantic content, sometimes it is the basis for the composition of variety turns);

– transient (short according to running time, with no semantic content).

Reprise – an explosive comic effect in a variety turn, expressed through the word (Bogdanov, 2005, p. 174); a small scene, characterized by the presence of a bright verbal moment. There are also verbal-effective reprises.

Reprise in the genre of variety clownery – a complete combination of tricks. Provided that the replica is placed into a reprise, it is pulverized by the comic trick, as it serves as a background reinforcement of a plastic solution.

In order to compose reprise in the variety turn, such verbal comic constructions are used as a *pun* (a play on words that uses the meaning of a term or a word with a similar sound for the intended humoristic effect), an *irony* (pretense, intention to joke or say something mockingly opposite to what the person thinks, however, to say in such a way as to reveal the true meaning of the situation) and a *paradox* (the statement that, despite obvious reasonable reflections, leads to obviously contradictory or logically unacceptable conclusions; includes contradictory, but interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and remain unchanged over time) (Smith, Lewis, 2011, p. 382). Specific means of composing a reprise are: logical incompatibility, pseudo-thoughtfulness, meaningless detalization; erroneous opposition; literality of metaphors; shifting of linguistic styles, unusual expansion of the usual abbreviation, etc.

Gags acquire particular importance in the structure of variety clownery turn, currently the most popular types of which is musical eccentric – comic plots played by clowns using musical instruments (Bogdanov, 2005, p. 189), and mime-clownery (in contrast to pantomime, real subjects are actively played, not imaginary ones), since comic tricks and unexpected plot twists and turns are the basis of their performance.

Musical eccentric is a variety genre in which the performance of musical works using special techniques on standard or special instruments (for example, a set of bottles, pots, bells, etc.) is combined with the artist's eccentric behavior (Grinie 2015, p. 135).

The main means of expressiveness in the genre of musical eccentric are the following tricks: playing a musical instrument in an unusual way; playing an unusual musical instrument; playing several musical instruments at the same time. But the gag (cut-in comic episode; emotional effect, surprise factor; a joke, which helps to reveal the nature of the characters) is an important auxiliary instrument of expressiveness.

Note that in the musical eccentric turns, in accordance with the specifics of the genre, the basic comic techniques are directly related to the use of unusual or trick-oriented musical instruments:

- the device as a musical instrument, a household item non-standard for musical practice;
- playing an eccentric (too small or too large) musical instrument;
- “struggle” with a musical instrument, positioned as a partner-opponent of the performer (based on such turns – a comic conflict).

The genre of musical eccentric, along with the use of its own basic techniques, sublimates a variety of additional means of expressiveness.

Contemporary turns represent an organic synthesis of musical eccentric with acrobatics, pantomime, choreography, plasticity, juggling, and primarily with clownery, actively using gag as the main instrument of expressiveness.

Gag in mime-clownery – a comic trick, which is the main instrument of expressiveness; a laughter unit; a joke which is solved visually; a comic effect that is achieved in various ways (for example, a combination of the incompatible, the creation of imaginary difficulties and obstacles, parody, etc.); a colloquial pun; a metaphorical image that becomes reality and vice versa.

Based on the analysis of contemporary turns in the mim-clownery genre, one can identify the main specific artistic techniques used to achieve a comic effect:

- grotesque exaggeration (the artist focuses on a certain minor action, making it important or problematic; the technique is often expressed in the grotesque assessment of the action and reactions: for example, instead of waking off the subject, the clown performs a cascade of several flips);
- the use of objects for purposes other than intended (unusual actions with ordinary objects significantly increase the element of entertainment and surprise);
- contrast technique;
- changing clothes.

T. Grinier (Grinie, 2018), analyzing contemporary turns of musical eccentric and clownery, focuses on the tendency for convergence and mutual enrichment of two genres – in musical eccentric, gag is used as an element of a spectacular accompaniment, and in some clownery turns, a trick, along with a gag, becomes an important instrument of expressiveness. However, according to the researcher, the final synthesis and dissolution of the basic means of expressiveness of these genres does not occur.

An important aspect of achieving a comic effect in a variety turn is its specific tempo-rhythmic composition – the alternation of explosive laughing culminations with pauses for the viewer's inner rest between them.

The French philosopher A. Bergson defines three main techniques for creating the comic: the image of the mechanical and the alive, tightly inserted into each other, the manifestation of the physical side of personality when it comes to the moral side, as well as when the personality creates the image of a thing (Bergson, 2005, p. 23).

In the variety turn, the comic effect is created by such circumstances as the discrepancy between the desired and the actual and the violation of cause-effect relationships, are reflected in *buffoonish* (technique of artistic expressiveness, based on striking exaggeration, creating caricature images, phenomena and actions), *eccentric*, *grotesque* (aesthetic concept that is the basis of the artistic image and is represented by excessive, hyperbolic and illogical actions of the performer, in which the action takes place in the form of compositional contrast, an unexpected shift of serious, important or tragic to comic) and *parody* techniques.

It should be noted that in variety art, the artist's use of clownery-like comic techniques, is also characteristic for the illusion genre – for reliable positioning

of the illusive as true using special manipulations. However, as opposed to clownery, in which the comic is achieved by playing situations and directly by participants, the goal in illusion is achieved thanks to the skills of the artist, with the help of sleight of hand and deceptive messages that distract the viewer's attention.

The scientific novelty of the research is determined by the consideration of the category of "comic" as a phenomenon of variety art of the XXI century in an interdisciplinary aspect; in the definition of functional, form-building and artistic-figurative features of creating a comic in the system of original genres of contemporary variety art.

## Conclusions

In the system of original genres of variety art, such as pantomime, musical eccentricity, mime-clowning, manipulation, etc., comic tricks, jokes or gags are important means of expressiveness.

The phenomenon of the comic in contemporary variety art implements a relaxation function and is characterized by an active search for new comedic situations in original genres. The use of various unique techniques in the process of creating a variety turn generates innovative shades of the comic, which causes the viewer to an appropriate emotional state.

Prospects for further research lie in the implementation of a comprehensive art history analysis of contemporary national variety art in order to identify the specifics of the comic in conversational as well as musical and conversational genres.

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**ФЕНОМЕН КОМІЧНОГО В СУЧАСНОМУ ЕСТРАДНОМУ МИСТЕЦТВІ**

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Метою статті є визначення функціональних, формотворчих та художньо-образних особливостей комічного в системі оригінальних жанрів сучасного естрадного мистецтва. Методологія дослідження. У процесі аналізу феномену комічного використано міждисциплінарний підхід, що ґрунтується на принципі корпоративності й передбачає інтерпретацію та співставлення соціокультурних, філософсько-естетичних, психологічних, історичних та мистецтвознавчих аспектів дослідження означуваної проблематики в контексті специфіки естрадного мистецтва. Проблематика комічного як феномену сучасного естрадного мистецтва розглядається комплексно, з використанням загальнонаукових, культурологічних та мистецтвознавчих методів: системного (для комплексного розгляду феномену комічного та специфіки еволюціонування естрадного мистецтва); структурного (для вивчення естрадного мистецтва з точки зору жанрової морфології); жанрово-типологічного (для проведення аналізу особливостей використання комічних прийомів у процесі створення естрадних номерів) та ін., з метою дослідження комічного в соціокультурному та соціомистецькому контексті. Наукова новизна. Розглянуто категорію «комічне» як феномен естрадного мистецтва ХХІ ст. у міждисциплінарному аспекті; визначено функціональні, формотворчі та художньо-образні особливості створення комічного в системі оригінальних жанрів сучасного естрадного мистецтва. Висновки. У системі оригінальних жанрів естрадного мистецтва, таких як пантоміма, музична ексцентрика, мім-клоунада, маніпуляція та ін., комічні прийоми, жарти або геги є важливими засобами виразності. Феномен комічного в сучасному естрадному мистецтві реалізує релаксаційну функцію і характеризується активним пошуком нових комедійних ситуацій в оригінальних жанрах. Використання різноманітних унікальних прийомів у процесі створення естрадного номера породжує інноваційні відтінки комічного, що викликає в глядача відповідний емоційний стан.

*Ключові слова:* комічне; естрадне мистецтво; комічний трюк; гумор; сатира; буфонада; гротеск.



## ФЕНОМЕН КОМИЧЕСКОГО В СОВРЕМЕННОМ ЭСТРАДНОМ ИСКУССТВЕ

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Целью статьи является определение функциональных, формообразующих и художественно-образных особенностей комического в системе оригинальных жанров современного эстрадного искусства. Методология исследования. В процессе анализа феномена комического использован междисциплинарный подход, основанный на принципе корпоративности и предполагает интерпретацию и сопоставление социокультурных, философско-эстетических, психологических, исторических и искусствоведческих аспектов исследования определяемой проблематики в контексте специфики эстрадного искусства. Проблематика комического как феномена современного эстрадного искусства рассматривается комплексно, с использованием общенаучных, культурологических и искусствоведческих методов: системного (для комплексного рассмотрения феномена комического и специфики эволюционирования эстрадного искусства); структурного (для изучения эстрадного искусства с точки зрения жанровой морфологии); жанрово-типологического (для проведения анализа особенностей использования комических приемов в процессе создания эстрадных номеров) и др., с целью исследования комического в социокультурном контексте и контексте социального искусства. Научная новизна. Рассмотрена категория «комическое» как феномен эстрадного искусства XXI века в междисциплинарном аспекте; определены функциональные, формообразующие и художественно-образные особенности создания комического в системе оригинальных жанров современного эстрадного искусства. Выводы. В системе оригинальных жанров эстрадного искусства, таких как пантомима, музыкальная эксцентрика, мим-клоунада, манипуляция и др., комические приемы, шутки или гэги – важные средства выразительности.

Феномен комического в современном эстрадном искусстве реализует релаксационную функцию и характеризуется активным поиском новых комедийных ситуаций в оригинальных жанрах. Использование различных уникальных приемов в процессе создания эстрадного номера порождает инновационные оттенки комического, что вызывает у зрителя соответствующее эмоциональное состояние.

*Ключевые слова:* комическое; эстрадное искусство; комический трюк; юмор; сатира; буффонада; гротеск.