

Audronė ŽIŪRAITYTĖ

# The Ballet *Ant marių kranto* in a Cultural-Ideological Context and in the Creative Work of Julius Juzeliūnas

*Baletas „Ant marių kranto“ kultūriniame ideologiniame ir Juliaus Juzeliūno kūrybos kontekste*

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## Abstract

On the occasion of Julius Juzeliūnas' 100<sup>th</sup> jubilee (b. 2016), one of Lithuania's most illustrious composers, a music teacher, a musicologist and activist in public affairs, the author of the article looks back to the early creative period of the composer's work. Analysing the writing, production and the great success and popularity of the ballet *Ant marių kranto* (*On the Seashore*, 1953) in Lithuania and abroad as well as the cultural ideological context that determined them. The last fundamental monograph, *Julius Juzeliūnas. Gyvenimo ir veiklos panorama. Kūrybos įžvalgos* (Julius Juzeliūnas: Panorama of his Life and Activities. Creative Insights; 2015) by Algirdas Ambrazas, a researcher of the composer's work, created the preconditions for examining the wider context. The goal of the article is to highlight the talent of the composer, a symphonic dramatist and a lyricist that was demonstrated in the ballet "national in its form and Soviet in its content". However, the composer never dissociated himself from his earliest compositions. The author also aimed to recall the emotional richness of the composer's "romantic" period that is in strong contrast to the later "modernistic" rational, constructive period, which best showed the composer's individuality. Remembering the earlier composition by Juzeliūnas we better perceive the amplitude of the evolution of the composer's creative life.

**Keywords:** Julius Juzeliūnas, *Ant marių kranto* (*On the Seashore*), Vytautas Grivickas, cultural and ideological contexts, libretto, premises to symphonisation, emotional richness, melodiousness, nationality.

## Anotacija

Straipsnyje Juliaus Juzeliūno 100-mečio proga (2016) grįžtama į kompozitoriaus ankstyvąjį, pirmąjį kūrybos periodą, analizuojamas baletas „Ant marių kranto“ (1953) atsiradimas, pastatymas ir didžiulė sėkmė bei populiarumą Lietuvoje ir už jos ribų nulėmęs kultūrinis bei ideologinis kontekstas. Jį plačiau išskleisti paskatino bei prielaidas tam sudarė ir paskutinis, fundamentalus J. Juzeliūno kūrybos tyrinėtojo Algirdo Ambrazo veikalas – knyga „Julius Juzeliūnas. Gyvenimo ir veiklos panorama. Kūrybos įžvalgos“ (2015). Straipsnyje siekiama išryškinti kompozitoriaus simfonisto dramaturgo talentą, atsivėrusį „nacionalinio savo forma ir tarybinio savo turiniu“ veikale, kurio autorius niekada neišsižadėjo. Siekiama prisiminti emocinį „romantinio“ kompozitoriaus periodo turtingumą, kuris sudaro ryškų kontrastą vėlesniam „modernistiniam“, labiausiai kompozitoriaus individualumą atskleidusiam racionaliai konstruktyviam laikotarpiui. Prisiminę ankstyvąjį J. Juzeliūno kūrinį geriau suvokiame kompozitoriaus kūrybinio kelio evoliucijos amplitudę.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** Julius Juzeliūnas, „Ant marių kranto“, Vytautas Grivickas, kultūrinis ideologinis kontekstas, libretas, simfonizacijos prielaidos, emocinis turtingumas, dainingumas, tautiškumas.

## Preamble

According to Algirdas Ambrazas, researcher of Julius Juzeliūnas' creative work, the individuality and originality of this composer is best revealed in the music of his "modernist" period. That the musicologist tentatively distinguished in the works of this composer beginning with the 1961 orchestral suite *Afrikietiški eskizai*<sup>1</sup> (*African Sketches*; incidentally, the appearance of this suite was inspired by the idea of writing a ballet with an African theme). However, at the same time, Ambrazas notes that:

... the advantages and achievements of the music of this period were accompanied by some losses. The prevailing rational constructive thinking made an impact on the decreased emotional influence of some pieces.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile the earlier works of the composer Julius Juzeliūnas' "romantic" period were highly professional and were marked by the power of expression.

The emotional richness of his music was best demonstrated in lyrical pieces with sonorous folk intonations in the entire melodious texture. It is not by chance that the composer's most important compositions written between 1948 and 1958 (among them the ballet *Ant marių kranto*) were very popular with the audiences and were critically acclaimed by professionals. It is noteworthy that in 1953–1964, the ballet was performed 250 times at the Vilnius Opera House, it was also produced in Riga, Tallinn and Lvov theatres, performances were also planned at the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre. Juzeliūnas was twice nominated (for Second Symphony and the ballet) for the highest award

in the USSR – the State (Stalin) Prize. The composer never dissociated himself from his earliest compositions, approved of the performances of the ballet praised by the Soviets and the opera *Sukilėliai* (*The Insurgents*) that was condemned by the ideologists (see Ambrasas Ibid.: 571–572).

### Ballet culture and the ideological context

The first years of the post-war period of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the end of modern processes, which appeared in the first decade of Lithuania's independence<sup>3</sup> and which was determined by historical circumstances and Soviet occupation, as well as the official cultural policy.<sup>4</sup> The art of ballet found itself in a paradoxical situation. Professional Lithuanian ballet came into being with Delibes' *Coppelia* at the State Theatre in Kaunas in 1925 ballet (produced by Pavel Petrov). The natural processes of its development were interrupted. Theatre critic Aliodija Ruzgaitė expressed doubts about the trend chosen for ballet in the post-war years admitting:

... choreographers of the post-war decade attempted to reveal real life on stage often forgetting that the conditional and original language of dance has its own laws and its own psychological truth.<sup>5</sup>

The chance to present their work during the Lithuanian Literature and Art Ten-Day Festival (called Dekada) in Moscow was a great stimulus for Lithuanian artists. Already in the autumn of 1941 it was planned to show Palknis' ballet *Sužadėtinė* (*The Betrothed*) at such a festival, but the event was not held until 1954; new performances of Račiūnas' opera *Marytė* and Juzeliūnas' ballet *Ant marių kranto* were presented.<sup>6</sup> Both works corresponded with the joyful aesthetics and heroic pathos of Soviet ideology that was a norm, which, according to Nerija Putinaitė, Lithuania after it was incorporated into the Soviet Union had to accept since the images of Soviet realities created for it were more important than facts or real experience.<sup>7</sup> In the philosopher's opinion, "the creative intelligentsia did the adaptive work even if it did not believe in the value of what it was doing".<sup>8</sup>

Although Juzeliūnas had promised himself not to write any ballets, unexpectedly even to himself, he agreed to collaborate and accepted the choreographer Vytautas Grivickas' suggestion (see Ambrasas Ibid: 74). Grivickas' libretto told the story of the life of the people of a collective farm situated by the sea and their all-consuming passions.<sup>9</sup> It seems it was not a very suitable theme for the genre of ballet, but the Soviet authorities approved of and cultivated the so-called realistic dramatic ballet (called "drama-ballet"). Besides, as Lidija Motiejūnaitė wrote aptly:

The roots of Grivickas' creative work (from direction to choreography to painting, which was his favourite pastime) were in a real, rich and tangible world. His feet are firmly planted on the ground, which gives him strength.<sup>10</sup>

As a young man, Grivickas went to Moscow to study at the Lunacharsky Institute of Theatre Art from 1947 to 1952 under Prof. Zacharov, one of the most talented Soviet choreographers and opera directors. Zacharov was an enthusiast and creator of the artistic trend of ballet, who paid great attention to ideologically important lines of the plot, psychological characteristics of personages, dramaturgy, effective dances, which realistically expressed the dramatic content. These principles became the mainstay of the creative work of his disciple – famous Lithuanian choreographer and director Grivickas. Zacharov promoted contemporary Soviet themes. Klebanov's *Svetlana* (1951) chosen by Grivickas portrayed the Soviet youth. In order to depict life realistically the young choreographer was not able to avoid being illustrative and drawing upon naturalism.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, it was a preparatory stage for Juzeliūnas' ballet *Ant marių kranto* that was produced in 1953<sup>12</sup> and was presented at the Lithuanian literary and art festival in Moscow in 1954. Grivickas created mass dances and *mise-en-scenes* for the ballet. Meserer, a Bolshoi Theatre pedagogue and choreographer, staged solo parts (Kastė and Marius' duets, Jonis' character sketch). From 1954 until 1971 (with an interval), Grivickas worked as a senior choreographer of the Lithuanian company.<sup>13</sup>

The ballet libretto suggested to Juzeliūnas, in the composer's opinion, was insipid, unnatural, and dramaturgically not integral. Working on the libretto, the composer searched for a dramaturgical line with meaning, thus bringing to life Jonis' vivid character and a romantic love triangle (see Ambrasas 2015: 74). According to Ruzgaitė's reminiscences, the main theme of the ballet was a love triangle and Soviet ideology was not strongly felt on the stage (Ruzgaitė 2010: 89). Nevertheless, in a 1953 discussion, in preparation for the Lithuanian Literature and Art Ten-Day Festival in Moscow and in the presence of well known Russian music and theatre figures, the ballet libretto whose shortcomings unavoidably influenced its musical dramaturgy was criticized. Attention was drawn to separate long episodes, a divertissement-like finale, the insipid musical characteristics of unsympathetic personages. Faults were found with the ballet's musical language too (dull texture, absence of polyphony; Ambrasas 2015: 105). Despite this, the Russian composer who was present there, Vladimir Jurovski, thought, "the ballet may become a performance that can interest the entire USSR" (quoted from Ambrasas Ibid.).

The content of the ballet *Ant marių kranto* especially the finale reflected very well Soviet ideology and the friendship between Soviet nations that was under the authorities'

control. In the last act, this friendship was recreated by divertissement-like Latvian, Estonian and Russian dances that had nothing to do with the ballet. In Moscow during the Literature and Art Festival, the Lithuanian dances besides the *Wedding polka* were added, while in the finale all the participants holding hands would approach the footlights. This provoked criticism from Lithuanian composers and even Soviet ballet experts. Vainiūnas pointed out the unsatisfactory originality of some themes, criticised the folk dances *Kubilas* and *Gaidys* performed by the State Folk Song and Dance Ensemble added to the final act (incidentally, right before the premiere). Kalinauskas noted the advertisement-like final act was one of the main ballet's shortcomings.<sup>14</sup> Critic Kurilov expressed critique:

... the development of the ballet's plot essentially comes to an end in the second act. With the exception of the enemies' arrest scene, the entire third act is an ordinary ballet divertissement, its dances are thematically disconnected. As a matter of fact, they are very well staged and performed but nevertheless concert items.<sup>15</sup>

The finale of the ballet *Ant marių kranto* reflected the signs of favouritism criticised by artists, tough adaptation, according to Putinaite:

... in the aestheticised reality contrary to society based on the ethical or political norms could happen not convincing the public in the good of the [socialist – A.Ž.] order but as though bewitched, involving it in the racket of common artificial joy.<sup>16</sup>

However, the ballet and its choreography were extolled in high-flown metaphors in the Soviet press (Solodovnikov, Brunak):

Here, the essential thing has been found [what is meant here is the synthesis between classical and Lithuanian national dance – A.Ž.] that undoubtedly will become the basis for further development of the ballet [...]. This is not only an achievement of Lithuanian choreography culture, but also of the entire Soviet choreography.<sup>17</sup>

The Soviet press praised Juzeliūnas' ballet "as one of the best ballet performances with a contemporary theme" (Grosheva; quote from Ambrasas 2015: 107). Theatre critic Solodovnikov wrote that Juzeliūnas' ballet just like the composer from Azerbaijan Kara Karajev's *Seven Beauties* was "a great achievement of the entire Soviet culture" (Solodovnikov Ibid.). Juzeliūnas together with other Lithuanian artists was awarded the Order of Lenin, the highest Soviet award. Several days later Juzeliūnas received the honorary title of the Republic's Merited Artist. The Lithuanian Composers Union nominated the ballet for the State Prize (then still Stalin Prize; see Ambrasas Ibid.). It should be noted that the ballet was included in the Bolshoi Theatre's plans; discussions were held to stage it

at the Bolshoi Theatre, and it was suggested the composer should edit it.

In the autumn of 1954 Juzeliūnas added several new dances that made the dramaturgical line of the main dancers more pronounced (Marius and the men's dance, Kastė and Onė's dances in Act 3), made essential changes to some other episodes (Jonis' dance in Act 1, the final Kastė and Marius' Adagio). The idea of staging the ballet did not take hold as the composer did not make any concessions, refusing to make radical change to the dramaturgy that was insisted on in order to make ideological stresses stronger (Ambrasas Ibid: 108). As the composer recalled, the Lithuanian ballet enjoyed the patronage of the distinguished Russian ballet dancer Galina Ulanova:

... many letters were written demanding the ballet should be performed, but there were behind-the-scene factors that prevented it, and it was not produced at the Bolshoi Theatre. The reasons were not recorded in order not to show what or who interfered with its production.<sup>18</sup>

The first Soviet Lithuanian ballets (Indra's *Audronė* too) became part of the Soviet Union's context of ballet. Young artists of the socialist republics were encouraged to deal with urgent social themes, to make the genre of ballet more relevant. Composers made attempts to write democratic music, classical traditions combined with the characteristic features of national music, the musical content was made more definite with sonorous melodies and folklore citations. These were the compositions of the so-called "romantic realism". Their national colouring was emphasised by many folk dance suites, as well as combining classical choreography with movement characteristic of folk dances. The style of "romantic realism" was natural to Juzeliūnas, who was then a postgraduate student (1949–1952) at the Leningrad (now St Petersburg) Conservatory. Lithuanian folk music was a focus for the composer in all periods of his creative work (he completed his postgraduate course with the thesis *The Lithuanian Song in the Symphonic Music of Lithuanian Composers*), music of other non-European nations. Besides its folk character, sincerity and unaffectedness, the music of the ballet reveals the great talent of the composer as an author of symphony music (he completed his postgraduate course with Symphony No. 2). Mention should be made of his heroic opera *Sukilėliai* (*Insurgents*) composed by Juzeliūnas in 1957, which finished the composer's early creative period. Due to ideological reasons, it was not produced until 1977. The features of the neoromantic style – melodiousness, emotional richness, power of expression, marked the period.

*Ant marių kranto* was the first national ballet by a Lithuanian composer that crossed the borders of the republic (produced in Riga in 1954, Lvov in 1956, Tallinn in 1958). Following the premiere in Tallinn the press praised it highly



(the article was entitled “Joy of Life”) in the style that causes surprise nowadays:

The finale of the premiere is natural: followed by thunderous applause the Lithuanian Merited Artist V. Grivickas flew upwards to the stage ceiling on the hands of the dancers. The ballet ‘won’ in another city, we became friends, came closer to the nice guys and girls of the Lithuanian seashore. It gave us a taste of spring and beautiful life. When you walk forwards, you walk and win.<sup>19</sup>

In 1958 the ballet performed in Leningrad also received a particular anonymous praise:

... what richness of the sensations of the ‘choreographic life’, what ideal truth of the feelings [...]. Watching the first act, I did not have the libretto, but was able to comprehend everything from the duets – Kastė and Jonis, his hope and love for her, her love of Marius. I even understood Marius’ return and his love for his native land, the jokes by the pretty girl Onė. I saw the people who hated, loved, joked and lived in the dance. Their dance flooded the hall by a hot wave bringing new thoughts, the vivid pulse of life.<sup>20</sup>

In spite of the success of the first Soviet ballet, its renewal in 1975 did not remind of the triumph of the 1950s. It affirms the all-embracing integrity of this work, musical-choreographic and dramaturgical, which is inseparable from the time it was created. The idea of the *Ant marių kranto* ballet when the flow of the music was diverted by a detailed, ideologically determined plot that had completely lost its relevancy, and the then natural musical language of “romantic realism” was an important stage although already a thing of the past, out-of-date. The composer had also taken a new modern musical path from 1961. Juzeliūnas had never denounced his compositions written in an earlier style, claiming that he did everything sincerely, without any pretence.<sup>21</sup> In the opinion of Balys Dvarionas, an authority on music of post-war years, “the ballet’s music enchants listeners with the first chords charming them with its sincerity, its picturesqueness and simplicity.”<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, even Juzeliūnas’ compositions written while still a student at the Kaunas Conservatoire was a more independent and original stage of creative work (1947–1948). The First Sonata for piano and First Symphony, according to Ambrazas, were written in a comparatively original language for that time’s music.. The ballet belongs to the most traditional, even most conservative creative period (1949–1954) – compositions written during his post-graduate studies at the Leningrad Conservatoire and later (besides the ballet, Heroic Poem, Second Symphony). At that time Juzeliūnas improved his compositional technique in the academic framework, in the shadow of the famous Russian composers-romantics of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (particularly that of Tchaikovsky; see Ambrazas 2007:

109). However then, following the premieres of his Second Symphony and ballet *Ant marių kranto* the composer was idolised, becoming an authority for young composers (according to Viliūtė, see Ambrazas 2015: 87).

### Musical structure (premises for symphonisation)

As far back as the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the principles of the continuous development of opera and ballet as well as dramaturgy with leitmotifs were formed. Most often, they make ballet music more symphonic. This concept supposes the ability to fully reveal the idea promoted, intensively develop music themes. However, the extent to which instrumental symphonic genres are developed in ballet is determined by a “slower” tempo of dance, while in a ballet with a plot a specific tempo of stage dramaturgy also influences it. Since a long time ago, an expositional type of the distribution of musical material and traditional divertissement form have been characteristic of ballet.

Juzeliūnas based musical dramaturgy of ballet on a 61-number system, which encompasses 24 numbered pantomime scenes, employing a widely branched system of leitmotifs. According to Ambrazas, *Ant marių kranto* is a somewhat symphonized “ballet of numbers” (Ambrazas Ibid: 681). The planned change of dance and pantomime scenes unfold action, conflict grows, and musical dramaturgy has a purpose. The drama of the main characters’ feelings is also entwined into the flow of the numbers. Among the dynamic events, there are several more developed scenes: two Kastė and Marius’ Adagios (Nos. 20, 60),<sup>23</sup> of which the second is the lyrical culmination of the ballet; also Kastė and Jonis’ duet (No. 9).

As an important beginning of Jonis’ drama, this duet is inseparable from the continuous development of his musical characteristic. A dramatic character is seen for the first time on the stage of Lithuanian ballet. Dramatic situations, Jonis’ temperament full of contradictions form new features of his personality. Similar musical images take on different features: Jonis’ leitmotif is transformed and moves away from the original image, getting closer to the musical characterisation of negative characters – diatonics is followed by chromaticisms. The dynamics of Jonis’ themes is made more pronounced by Kastė’s leitmotif that is emotionally constant (not responding to Jonis’ feelings she remains faithful to Marius). The leitmotifs are intensive in two acts, while Act 3 does not follow from earlier musical events.

The symphonic picture *Audra* (*Storm*; No. 40, end of Act 2) is the culmination of the drama. An illustrative picture of the sea, painted by orchestral colours includes the leitmotifs of the main heroes. The scene of Jonis’ death sounds like the coda of the symphonic picture, which is the climax of the main drama line. The symphonic picture

*Audra* can be considered an argument of the symphonisation of the ballet, as the creation of this composition for stage started with it. The ballet was written at the Soviet creative workers' home in Ivanovo in 1951.

When I was working in Ivanovo [recalls Juzeliūnas], its plot and the plan of dramaturgy were not final yet. However, I knew that in any case there would be a storm and I would include it in one way or another. The symphonic picture *Audra* was the first to appear and at the beginning it was a separate composition.<sup>24</sup>

After a public hearing at Vilnius Radiophone (conductor Rimas Geniušas) the symphonic picture received favourable appraisal that was expressed with such superlatives as “Wagnerian aim, perfect instrumentation, harmony, the music is expressive, creatively mature”.<sup>25</sup> In 1952, *Audra* was performed several times in Leningrad (conductors Chaikin, Tons from Latvia; Ambrasas Ibid: 76). In a 1952 Leningrad Conservatoire report it was written that in the hall of the Vilnius Philharmonic, the Lithuanian Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Geniušas performed the *Heroic Poem*, Second Symphony and extracts from the ballet that was being written: the symphonic poem *Audra*, Prelude (Act I Adagio) and a dance.<sup>26</sup>

Russian composer Marian Koval in his 1953 review emphasised Juzeliūnas' ability to expand the ballet's musical themes in a symphony-like manner, as well as to recreate the picturesqueness of the scene of nature by an orchestral means of expression.<sup>27</sup> According to Ambrasas:

... the ballet's instrumentation is based on the principals dominating in the Second Symphony. Employing the same triple orchestra structure, several additional features came to light. Attention should be paid to the chamber-like, subtly refined nuances of lyrical episodes (e.g. Kastė and Marius' final Adagio: the violin solo cantilena at the beginning, string tremolo, azure harp passages). (Ambrasas Ibid: 449)

Ambrasas wrote:

We will not find so many easily memorised melodies in any other of Juzeliūnas' composition. (Ambrasas Ibid: 448)

In this case, Asafiev's maxim about the treatment of melody in the ballet as thinking in the form of dramaturgy (Слонимский 1959: 385) is quite apt. At the same time, Adagio which embodies the melody, according to Asafiev, becomes a “sonata-like ballet form” (Асафьев 1974). This is particularly characteristic of Indra's ballet *Audronė* (1957). Juzeliūnas' consultations given to Indra who edited the ballet, left their mark. The Adagios in Juzeliūnas' *Ant marių kranto* mark the moments of dramaturgy particularly important for the specificity of the genre of ballet, reflects outbursts of feelings (No. 20), their culmination (No. 60), while Andantino (No. 9) reveals the psychological drama of the “love triangle”.

Figure 1. Kastė and Marius' final Adagio No. 60: Ballet piano score (Москва: Советский композитор, 1959, p. 217–218)

The melodies of the lyrical scenes bring to mind Slonimski's words that dance starts with melody and ensues from it<sup>28</sup>. The expansion of the lyrical scenes (when the highest point of climax is reached in consistent waves most often coincides with the beginning of the reprise), as well as some ways of instrumentation (Adagio – solo violin, in culminations brass winds surrounded by strings and woodwinds) prove Tchaikovsky's influence. The symphonisation of Tchaikovsky's ballets is also reminded by the use of the waltz, which helps Juzeliūnas to create an integral composition – the arch principle (No. 12 and 15; No. 24 and 49) strengthens the form, contrasting the next episodes.

In music, as in abstract art, following the reflections by Skaidra Trilupaitytė, in musical idiom and even stylistics, the “requirements” of the artist's loyalty to the socialist artistic system is not reflected and the concepts of “Soviet prohibitions” often become speculative (see Trilupaitytė 2007: 112).<sup>29</sup>

### From national romanticism to national modernism

According to Ambrasas, creating an exceptionally national ballet, Juzeliūnas used a lot of folklore material. Thanks to ample folk melodies it could be called, the

researcher wrote, to be an ethnographic ballet, although it is not mostly based on folklore songs but dances – waltzes and polkas.<sup>30</sup> However, “the original melodies stand out by the organic integration of intonational, harmonious, and rhythmic features characteristic of musical folklore”.<sup>31</sup> Heroic Poem (1950) and Second Symphony (1951) were also permeated by the national spirit by quoting and re-intoning folklore. In the opera *Sukilėliai* (*The Insurgents*, 1957), there were many premises for an approaching turning point in the composer’s style. We already note the beginning of the renewal of Juzeliūnas’ musical language.<sup>32</sup>

Julius Juzeliūnas said:

The situation of our music in the post-war years made me think. Composers’ music was too uniform; a 1948 decree, without any doubt, added much that artists’ individuality receded into the background and all of them used the same source for their ideas. Almost the same intonations prevail, fragments of folk songs, some mode turns. For example, from the angle of musical language my ballet or the Second Symphony became very similar to Klovā’s opera *Pilėnai*, Indra’s ballet *Audronė*. Although the composers are quite different even I listening to the radio found I could no longer distinguish between my own and their music. I was greatly concerned with such a loss of creative individuality and felt discontent. Remembering Gruodis’ statement that we should derive individuality from our national culture, I started an in-depth study of the structural characteristics of the Lithuanian folk melody system, looking for new ways of their meaningful use. [...] I kept remembering Gruodis’ words that composers have to speak the language of their time. This gave me a stimulus to study Bartok, Messiaen, Hindemith, Schönberg; I paid great attention to Prokofiev’s and Shostakovich’s work.<sup>33</sup>

Another stimulus to renew musical language was work at the ballet’s African theme. Hopes to perform the ballet were ruined, but the orchestral suite *Afrikietiški eskizai* (*African Sketches*, 1961) was created. This suite marks the beginning of the creation of a unique tonal-harmony system by Juzeliūnas based on Lithuanian folklore and contemporary means of expression (using non-tertian structure chords). According to the composer:

I imagined I was in Africa, but it turned out that I am still in a Lithuanian village – all melody structures completely correspond with our folk spirit.<sup>34</sup>

Intense intellectual work and a change in political situation influenced composers to move from national romanticism to modernism in early 1960s. Besides the *Afrikietiški eskizai* other Lithuanian composers’ compositions marked the beginning of a new period in Lithuanian music. In 1958, Vainiūnas’ Symphony in C-sharp minor, Balsys’ Second concerto for violin and orchestra were performed, Indra’s Symphony *Griuvėsių miestas* (*City of RUins*, 1960) appeared. The advantages of the musical dramaturgy of Lithuanian ballets discussed here are the system of leitmotifs, dynamic characters, an active dramaturgical function of suites, and expressive expanded lyrical scenes were creatively taken up by Balsys’ ballet *Eglė žalčių karalienė* (*Eglė – the Queen of Grass Snakes*, 1960), which is characterised also by a more generalised folklore treatment. In Jonas Bruveris’ opinion:

[It was *Eglė* that] by its stylistics and a more creative attitude by the composer to the nature of ballet demonstrated that the renewal process of our music also touched the genre of ballet. (Bruveris 1979)



Figure 2. *Ant marių kranto* (*On the Seashore*), Genovaitė Sabaliauskaitė and Henrikas Banys, 1953





Figure 3. *Ant marių kranto* (*On the Seashore*), Leokadija Aškelevičiūtė and Vytautas Kudzma, 1975

### Ideological and stylistic intersections

It is a paradox but Juzeliūnas' styles that represented various periods of his creative work were favoured by official Soviet ideology, which propagated the idea of "nations' friendship" and internationalism. In a rather simple or even primitive way (repertoire of a countryside orchestra, according to Ambrasas<sup>35</sup>) this idea is expressed in the ballet *Ant marių kranto* when in folk dance suites the composer uses not only Lithuanian folk dances but also quotes Latvian, Estonian, and Russian dances. On the contrary, it appears in the *Afrikietiški eskizai* in a more refined and original way. This suite for symphony orchestra was highly praised in Moscow – it was performed by several Soviet orchestras all over the USSR, its full score published. Ambrasas noted:

Moscow propagated the *Afrikietiški eskizai* with political purposes. With certain processes taking place in Africa, it was useful to show that the Soviet Union was interested in the continent.<sup>36</sup>

In these cases, different types of the artist's attitudes that naturally corresponded with the creative development of his creative work in the conditions of the absence of political freedom were approved by ideologues. However, other cases are also known in Juzeliūnas' creative biography.

It should be remembered that the "national" concept of the opera *Sukilėliai* ("The Insurgents", 1957) that raised the role of Father Mackevičius during the 1863 uprising was condemned by Soviet ideologues. Ambrasas testified that:

... two years later after the premiere of *Sukilėliai* was banned, Julius Juzeliūnas was surrounded by an oppressive atmosphere of ideological and moral pressure.<sup>37</sup>

However, the international recognition of the *Afrikietiški eskizai* fully 'rehabilitated' the composer in the eyes of the ideological leaders of Lithuanian musical culture (Ambrasas Ibid: 147). Julius Juzeliūnas managed to remain an authentic Lithuanian and world composer under various circumstances, who was a stranger to xenophobia. Ballets in Juzeliūnas' creative work were more successful than operas although the composer had as if given them up as a genre.

### References

- 1 Ambrasas 2015: 572: „Juzeliūno muzikos savitumas ir individualumas labiausiai atsiskleidė jo *modernistinio* periodo kūrinuose, pradedant 1961 m. sukurtais *Afrikietiškais eskizais*“. Further some of the most significant quotes will also be given in the original language.
- 2 Ambrasas Ibid: „*Modernistinio* periodo muzikos privalumus ir pasiekimus lydėjo ir kai kurie praradimai. Įsivyravęs racionalus, konstruktyvus mąstymas atsiliepė kai kurių kūrinų emociniam poveikiui“.
- 3 From the point of view of Gruodis' (N. Zverevs) *Jūratė ir Kastytis*, Bacevičius' *Šokių sukūryje* (1933). Back in pre-war Lithuania, there were also other signs of ballet becoming modern. The prestigious, "world" page of Lithuanian ballet should be linked to the early work of choreographer G. Balanchine, who later consolidated the neoclassical style. The 1932 production of Balanchine's *Aubade* (music by Poulenc) was performed in Kaunas shortly after its world premiere in Paris (1930, Ballets Russes de Vera Nemchinova). Unfortunately, we stopped at the work of the distinguished choreographer. Balanchine's "The prodigal Son" (1929; music by Prokofiev) was performed in our theatre in 2004 (producer Paul Boos, USA), while Balanchine's mature works, which later became 20<sup>th</sup> century classics have not been staged yet at the National Opera and Ballet Theatre.
- 4 <sup>5</sup> See The Communist Party (Bolshevik) 10 Feb. 1948 decree "About V. Muradeli's opera "Great Friendship". Severely criticised for formalism, Shostakovich, Prokofiev and Khachaturian were rehabilitated ten years later.
- 5 Ruzgaitė 1979: 343: „Pokario dešimtmečio baletmeisteriai stengėsi atskleisti scenoje gyvenimo tiesą, dažniausiai pamiršdami, kad sąlygiška ir savita šokio kalba turi savus dėsnius, savą meninę psichologinę tiesą“.
- 6 The first Lithuanian ballet master Bronius Kelbauskas staged several versions of Juozas Pakalnis' ballet *Sužadėtinė*. In 1940 when the Soviets occupied Lithuania and preparations for the first Lithuanian Literature and Art Ten-Day Festival in Moscow started in 1941, composer and theatre conductor Pakalnis composed the ballet *Sužadėtinė*. Its premiere was not given in Moscow, but during the next occupation – that of the Nazis in 1943 – at the State Theatre in Kaunas. With

- this ballet, the theatre started the 1944 season, when the Nazis were driven out of the city and the Soviets returned.
- 7 See Putinaitė 2007: 74: „Sovietų Sąjungos dalimi tapusi Lietuva turėjo perimti sovietinę džiugėsio estetiką ir heroizmo etosą“. Ibid: 23: „Sovietinės tikrovės pagrindinis bruožas buvo tas, kad sukurtieji jos vaizdiniai buvo daug svarbesni nei faktai ar reali patirtis“.
- 8 Putinaitė Ibid: 20: „Kūrybinė inteligentija atliko pritaikomąjį darbą, net jei ji dirbdama pati juo vertybiškai netikėjo“.
- 9 The choreographer's libretto tells of the life of Lithuanian fishermen and sabotage of the people's enemies' opposing collectivisation: they turned off the beacon light that the fisherman Jonas, who overcame his erroneous views, turned it on again at the price of his life. This served as the background for the love story between Marius, who had just returned from the war, and Kastė, a forewoman. See Šabasevičius 2009:70.
- 10 Motiejūnaitė, quote from *Vytautas Grivickas*, 2005: 364–365: „V. Grivicko kūrybos šaknys (ir režisūros, ir choreografijos, ir jo pamėgtos laisvalaikio tapybos) – realus, sodrus, apčiuopiamas pasaulis. Jis tvirtai stovi ant žemės, ir tai yra jo jėga“.
- 11 See Ruzgaitė 1979: 334: „Tačiau jaunas choreografas, siekdamas baletu gyvenimiškos tiesos, neišvengė ir natūralizmo“.
- 12 The premiere was held on 10 May 1953 at the Lithuanian State Opera and Ballet Theatre, conductor Rimas Geniušas, sets and costumes by Jonas Surkevičius and Regina Songailaitė.
- 13 From 1972 (after a 1954–1971 spell as a senior ballet master) Grivickas was the theatre's senior director; from 1976, a Lithuanian TV senior director; in 1979 he returned to the theatre as a ballet master.
- 14 Vainiūnas, Kalinauskas; Ambrazas Ibid: 104.
- 15 Quoted from Ruzgaitė Ibid: 337: „...baletu siužeto plėtojimas iš esmės pasibaigia antrajame veiksmo. Išskyrus priešų suėmimo sceną, visas trečiasis veiksmas yra paprastas baletu divertimentas, jo šokiai temiška nesusiję – tai veikia puikiai pastatyti ir atlikti, bet vis dėlto – koncertiniai numeriai“.
- 16 Putinaitė 2007: 22: „Estetizuotoje tikrovėje, priešingai nei etinėmis ar politinėmis normomis grindžiamoje visuomenėje, prisitaikymas galėjo vykti ne įtikinant tvarkos gėriu, o tarytum apžavint, įtraukiant į bendrą dirbtinio džiaugsmo šurmulį“.
- 17 Quoted from Ruzgaitė Ibid: 337: „Čia rastas grūdas (turima omenyje klasikinio ir lietuvių nacionalinio šokio sintezė – A.Ž.), kuris be abejonės taps baletu tolesnio vystymosi pagrindu [...] Tai ne tik lietuvių, bet ir visos tarybinės choreografinės kultūros laimėjimas“.
- 18 Quote by Julius Juzeliūnas, from *Vytautas Grivickas* 2005: 449: „Ulanova globojo, buvo daugybė raštų, kurie tvirtino, kad baletas turi pasirodyti, tačiau užkulisiniai veiksniai kliudė, ir dėl to Maskvos Didžiajame teatre baletas nebuvo pastatytas. Priešais turbūt stegtasi nedokumentuoti, kad nesimatytu, kas kliudė“.
- One more time besides other ballets (*Eglė žalčių karalienė, Delibes' Silvia) Ant marių kranto* was performed during the 1963 Lithuanian theatre tour in Moscow.
- 19 Kukanov, quote from *Vytautas Grivickas* Ibid: 181: „...ir visiškai dėsningas premjeros finalas, kai audringai žiūrovams pritariant artistų rankų pagautas Lietuvos nusipelnęs artistas V. Grivickas atliko keletą skrydžių į scenos palubę. Baletas „nugalėjo“ dar viename mieste, susibūčiuliavom, suartėjom su puikiais lietuvių pajūrio žvejų vaikinais ir merginomis. Jis pagirdė mus pavasariu, šviesiu gyvenimu. Kai eini į priekį, eini ir laimi“.
- 20 Quote from *Vytautas Grivickas* Ibid: 187–188: „...koks „choreografinio gyvenimo“ pojūčių turtingumas, kokia ideali išgyvenimų tiesa... Žiūrėdama pirmą veiksma dar neturėjau
- libreto, bet viską supratau iš duetų – Kastės ir Jonio, jo viltį ir atsakymą, maldavimą ir Jonio meilę jai, jos meilę Mariui. Aš net supratau Mariaus grįžimą ir jo meilę gimtajam kraštui, žaviosios Onės juokus. Mačiau žmones, kurie nekenė, mylėjo, juokavo ir gyveno šokyje. Jų šokis karšta banga užliedavo salę naujomis mintimis, gyvybingu gyvenimo pulsą“.
- 21 See Juzeliūnas 2002: 280: „...viską dariau nuoširdžiai, neapsimetinėjant“.
- 22 Dvarionas, quote from Ambrazas 2015: 104: „J. Juzeliūno muzika nuo pirmųjų akordų pagauna klausytoją ir pavergia jį savo jautriu nuoširdumu, vaizdingumu ir paprastumu“.
- 23 Ballets' numbers are given according to the piano score (Москва: Советский композитор, 1959).
- 24 Quote from Ambrazas Ibid: 75: „Darbuojantis Ivanove baletu siužetas, dramaturginis dar planas nebuvo galutinai nusistovėjęs. Tačiau žinojau, kad kaip ten bebūtų, audra vis vien kils ir aš ją vienaip ar kitaip įkomponuosiu. Taip pirmiausia ir atsirado simfoninis paveikslas „Audra“, kuris pradžioje funkcionavo kaip savarankiškas kūrinys“.
- 25 See Ambrazas Ibid: 76: „vagneriškas užsimojimas, puiki instrumentuotė, harmonija, muzika vaizdinga, kūrybinis subrendimas“.
- 26 From the music of the ballet that was being composed Juzeliūnas prepared more fragments for concert performance. Five of them made up a ballet suite (*Žvejų grįžimas, Senių šokis, Vaikų šokis, Merginų šokis, Finalas*, 1951). A year later he presented the future Marius and Kastė's duet (Adagio from the end of Act 1) as a symphonic prelude. See Ambrazas Ibid.
- 27 Ambrazas Ibid: 104: „Rusų kompozitorius Marianas Kovalis savo recenzijoje ypač pabrėžė J. Juzeliūno sugebėjimą simfoniskai išplėtoti muzikines temas, taip pat orkestro priemonėmis tarybiškai atkurti gamtos vaizdų spalvingumą“.
- 28 Слонимский 1968: 210: „Танец начинается с мелодии, основывается на ней, вырастает из нее“.
- 29 A deeper insight into various circumstances of other local contexts often made clear that the only “requirement” for national socialist art systems was linked not so much with the issues of artistic idiom or style but more with the artists' loyalty to the system which was hardly identified in the artistic idiom (in the systems of some socialist countries modernistic expression and abstraction were more tolerated; in others, it was figurative art etc). Therefore, the speculativeness of the concept of “Soviet time bans” has also been recognized.
- 30 See Ambrazas Ibid: 449–450: „Kurdamas pabrėžtinai tautinį baletą, J. Juzeliūnas, savaime suprantama, gausiai naudojo folklorinę medžiagą. Dėl liaudies melodijų gausos jį galima būtų netgi pavadinti etnografiniu baletu [...] Savajame baletu Juzeliūnas pirmiausiai rėmėsi lietuvių liaudies šokiais (valsais, polkomis – A.Ž.)“.
- 31 See Ambrazas Ibid: 451, 452: „Nemaža dalis originalių melodijų [...] pasižymi muzikiniui folklorui būdingų intonacijų, derminių, ritminių savybių organišku integravimu“.
- 32 See Ibid: 435, 466, 468, 550, 682.
- 33 Quote from Ambrazas Ibid: 135–136: „Mūsų muzikos padėtis pokario laikotarpiu mane privertė susimąstyti. Kompozitoriai pernelyg suvienodėjo, 1948 m. nutarimas, be abejo, daug prisidėjo prie to, kad menininko individualybė nuėjo į antrą planą ir visi pradėjo semtis iš vieno katilo. Įsivyravo maždaug tos pačios intonacijos, liaudies dainų nuotrupos, kai kurie derminiai posūčiai. Pavyzdžiui, muzikinės kalbos atžvilgiu visiškai supanašėjo mano baletas arba Antroji simfonija su V. Klovos opera „Pilėnai“, Indros baletu „Audronė“. Nors



autorai labai nevienodi, tačiau net aš klausydamasis per radiją pradėjau nebeatskirti savo ir jų muzikos. Toks individualaus kūrybinio veido praradimas man kelė didelį rūpestį ir vidinį nepasitenkinimą. Prisiminęs Gruodžio teiginius, kad individualumo reikia semtis iš tautinės kultūros klodų, pradėjau giliau studijuoti lietuvių liaudies melodikos struktūrines ypatybes, ieškoti naujų jų įprasminimo būdų. [...] Nuolat prisimindavau Gruodžio žodžius, kad kompozitorius turi kalbėti savo laikotarpio kalba. Tai mane skatino studijuoti Bartoką, Messiaeną, Hindemithą, Schönbergą; daug dėmesio buvo skirta Prokofjevo bei Šostakovičiaus kūrybai“.

- <sup>34</sup> Quote from Ambrazas Ibid: 145: „Įsivaizdavau, kad Afrikoje esu, bet pasirodė, kad tebesu lietuviškame kaime – visos melodinės struktūros visiškai atitinka mūsų liaudies dvasią“. Several years later, the suite received a choreographic solution. On Adamkevičienės initiative, Žebrauskas produced *Afrikietiški eskizai* for Lithuanian television; at the Kaunas Music Theatre in 1972, Kondratavičius created the one-act ballet *Arhegono žemė* based on *Afrikietiški eskizai*, and later Brazdylis staged it with the M.K. Čiurlionis Art School students of the ballet department.
- <sup>35</sup> Divertissements consisting of dances sounded like a repertoire of a countryside orchestra arranged for symphony orchestra. *Sadutė* stands out among them for its rather artistic form. See Ambrazas Ibid: 451: „Iš šokių sudaryti divertismentai skambėjo tarsi simfoniniam orkestrui aranžuotas kaimo kapelų repertuaras. Tarp jų gana išradinga išdaila išsiskiria *Sadutė*“.
- <sup>36</sup> See Ambrazas Ibid: 146–147: „Kas be ko – Maskva *Afrikietiškus eskizus* propagavo ir konjunktūriniais sumetimais. Afrikoje vykstant tam tikriems judėjimams, buvo naudinga pademonstruoti, kad Sovietų Sąjunga domisi šiuo kontinentu.“
- <sup>37</sup> After the situation changed a little in 1977, *Sukilėliai* was produced (conductor Jonas Aleksa). The last performance was in 1979. See Ambrazas Ibid: 130.

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## Santrauka

Juliaus Juzeliūno baletas „Ant marių kranto“ sukurtas 1953 metais pagal choreografo V. Grivicko parašytą libretą. Tais pačiais metais baletas pastatytas Lietuvos TSR valstybiniame operos ir baletų teatre. Šis spektaklis tapo sovietinio meno – „nacionalinio savo forma ir tarybinio savo turiniu“ – etalonu, buvo įtrauktas į 1954 m. Maskvoje vykusią Lietuvos TSR literatūros ir meno dekadą. Baletas sužetas atitinka normatyvinę sovietų ideologijos džiugėsio estetiką, heroizmo patosas derinamas su lyrine meilės trikampio tema.

„Ant marių kranto“ – pirmasis lietuvių muzikinis sceninis veikalas, peržengęs respublikos ribas, pastatytas Rygos, Lvovo, Talino teatruose. Tai lėmė sovietams aktuali baletas tematika, jų propaguojamo dramatinio baletas kanonus atitinkantis pastatymas, taip pat talentinga kompozitoriaus muzika. Vadinamas „romantinio realizmo“ stilius J. Juzeliūnui, baigusiam Leningrado (Sankt Peterburgo) konservatorijos aspirantūros studijas, buvo natūralus (1949–1952 m. jis tobulinosi V. Vološinovo klasėje). Kompozitorius visais kūrybos laikotarpiais domėjosi lietuvių liaudies muzika (aspirantūrą jis baigė parašęs disertaciją „Lietuvių liaudies daina kai kurių lietuvių kompozitorių simfoninėje kūryboje“), taip pat kitų ir neeuropinių tautų kūryba. Baletas greta muzikos kalbos dainingumo, liaudiškumo, nuoširdaus lyrizmo iškyla ir kompozitoriaus simfonisto (aspirantūrą baigė sukurdamas Simfonią Nr. 2) bei dramaturgo talentas. Minėtina 1957 m. J. Juzeliūno sukurta, bet dėl ideologinių priežasčių tik 1977 m. pastatyta herojinė opera „Sukilėliai“, kuri užbaigė ankstyvą J. Juzeliūno kūrybos laikotarpį, pasižymintį neoromantinio stiliaus bruožais – daininga melodika, didele kuriamos muzikos emocinio poveikio jėga.

Senasis „Ant marių kranto“ pastatymas buvo pakartotas 1975 m., tačiau netapo repertuaro puošmena kaip prieš kelis dešimtmečius. Akivaizdu, kad reikšmingas baletas istorijos etapas tapo jau praeitimi. Toks požiūris turi pozityvumo, nes liudija visaapimantį – muzikinį choreografinį, dramaturginį ir nuo kuriamojo laikotarpio kultūrinio ideologinio konteksto neatskiriamą – veikalo integralumą. Tai nepanaikina akivaizdžiai ryškių kompozitoriaus talento ir meistriškumo žymių, pastangų simfonizuoti baletas žanrą. Prisiminę kompozitoriaus kūrybinio kelio pradžią geriau suvokiame jo evoliucijos amplitudę.