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**ON THE ISSUE OF SYNTHESIS OF GEORGIAN TRADITIONAL
DANCE WITH MODERN CHOREOGRAPHIC TRENDS.**

In this paper, I would like to present my practical experience of synthesizing modern trends in Georgian dance and attempts to find new expressive methods in choreography and the film industry.

My interest has always been the connection between different cultures, where the body speaks and share each other's identity. This is the language that people speak and communicate through movement.

I have had the opportunity to be involved in projects and collaborate with different countries and dance genres, which became a unique example of how we can all speak the same language and create a dialogue between cultures.

In 2018, Spanish dancer Genaro Arteaga, who has been involved in the art of dancing for 50 years, visited Georgia at my invitation and conducted master classes in Flamenco dance for Georgian dancers. I made every effort to introduce him to Georgian dance and polyphony. In this process, the idea was born to perform an experimental synthesis of Spanish and Georgian dance. Furthermore, after listening to the song "Autumn has Come to the Door" performed by the Chikhladzes, Genaro Arteaga decided to perform an improvised Spanish "Flamenco" dance to the aforementioned piece. Through the performed dance, we witnessed how the Spanish dancer, to whom we deliberately did not translate the song lyrics, conveyed the character of the song through choreography. Our goal was to find out how the dancer could transform dynamic flamenco into a lyrical one and adapt it to the Spanish character. As it is known, Spanish dance "Flamenco" is a very fiery and rhythmic dance, which is a synthesis of Spanish, Gypsy, and Arabic dances. "Flamenco" originated in Andalusia, acquired its complete form in the 18th century, and established itself as a type of private genre of music and dance. Traditionally, "Flamenco" is performed to the accompaniment of dance, song and guitar. The dance is accompanied by exclamations, clapping and finger snapping; men perform the dance with strong, rhythmic movements of legs, and women with fiery arm and body movements. On 16 November 2010, UNESCO granted Flamenco the status of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

In 2019, I visited the Canary at the invitation of the Flamenco Academy, which is headed by Mr. Genaro Arteaga. where I had already conducted master classes of Georgian dances for Spanish dancers. Within the framework of the project, together with Mr. Genaro, we presented a joint performance of Georgian and Spanish dance, which received

a great response in both Spain and Georgia, and also gained popularity on social media platforms. This dance became a demonstration of friendship and common cultural values between the two countries. While working on the project, common lines inherent in the identity of the two countries were highlighted in practice: the rhythm, the tempo, the tact the dance vocabulary involving the strong and strict footwork of the men, as well as the soulful, temperamental movements of the women's hands and body. The song and music which is characterized by heightened emotional excitement, a flexible scale (mode), its own wonderful rhythm, and an abundance of chromatics. In the process of work, you sense and touch all these things, discovering that art—the universal language of world culture—is purely expressive. At this moment, a reciprocal exchange of dance and musical techniques takes place, which enriches the art represented by each country. We live on earth, which is our home; it is necessary to keep the doors of the room open in order to make the coexistence more interesting and diverse. To return to the project's working process, you will clearly discover similarities at first glance. for example: just as in Georgian folk dances, there is a distance maintained between the man and the woman during the dance — the man never touches the woman, the same can be said about the musical rhythm, the expression of the emotions, and the conveyance of historical, lyrical, or compositional dramaturgy. As we know, dance is a complex of rhythmic movements, each conveying the state of a person, which is organized musical, and every movement conveys the human condition and existence, which is musically organized. All this creates a narrative (plot) that tells a specific story. Georgian dance, too, is charged with every day, romantic (love), martial, and ritual content.

Over time, the art of choreography has developed in terms of both dance technique, music, traditional costume, and contemporary trends. Every performer imbued it with their individual spirit and style, which continues to this day. However, this development process is very cautious in how this art can be advanced without breaking its authentic line. But, art is free and open to those artists who possess a knowledge base rooted in the past, and who create and search for something new based on that experience. It is like a solid foundation that withstands centuries, and that is what makes its existence is unique.

The development of contemporary world culture is often enriched by the discovery of forgotten or lesser-known examples and acquires a new spirit; I would like to share this with you through the example of my own experience, when I was invited to London, to work on the Hollywood film "*Kingsman*". The film's main character had to perform a battle scene incorporating elements of folk dance. Fifteen countries were participating in the competition, and I was present as a representative of Georgian dance folklore. Fortunately for us, the choice fell upon Georgian dance, and I was commissioned both to stage the fight scene with dance elements and to perform it, as well as to double the main character. The first working week proved to be the most difficult, because I had no experience in martial arts or working as a stunt performer. However, the team working

on the film, led by legendary actor and stuntman Jackie Chan, did everything to teach me the necessary elements for performance. My dance technique and skills in performing specific movements were also of great help to me. After all, Georgian dance is a reflection of our historical past, where combat occupies a very significant place and is reflected in the folklore of every region of Georgia.

The work process was very interesting, considering how to merge various specific techniques with martial arts, and how to utilize dances from different regions together. In the course of the work, however, much became clear, and I selected mountainous regions, from which I would mainly borrow dance vocabulary; Specifically, these regions were Mtiuleti and Khevsureti, utilizing their strict, fiery, and rhythmic movements, fencing (with swords), and aerial movements involving the knees. The situation was complicated by the fact that the film's character was not Georgian, and the application of this expressive language by a person of another nationality felt somewhat unpleasant and uncomfortable. However, the director's vision was completely different. He was concerned only with the spectacular quality of the battle and did not attach any importance to the nationality. All this subsequently made my work on the film easier and removed all barriers.

Immediately upon its release, the film garnered immense acclaim, and the scene performed with Georgian dance techniques was specifically highlighted as the main one, bringing great success in 2022 to me, the film, Georgian dance, Georgia, and the global film industry. At the highest stunt awards ceremony in Hollywood—Taurus World Stunt Awards, known as the “Oscar for stunts”, this scene was nominated in the category of the 5 best battle scenes in the world. However, that was not all: when I arrived at the awards ceremony, an even bigger miracle occurred, and I became the winner. This was the first precedent in Hollywood where a dancer won this award for the best stunt and battle performance. I also became the first Georgian dancer in the history of Georgia to win this award in Hollywood. This year, I was invited to serve as a jury member and presenter for the same award ceremony.

All this is the merit of Georgian dance and folklore, an example of how traditional art can develop without losing its authentic line, while simultaneously becoming a discovery and bringing innovation to the world in this field of art. Working in this direction has completely turned my life upside down, and now it has effectively become a new profession for me. I hope I will have another opportunity to create and further develop this branch of art with more Georgian elements, allowing it to secure its rightful place in the global film industry in this direction.

Choreography, as a means of kinetic expression, is encountered in various styles. Over the centuries, it has acquired and transformed into distinct forms, establishing itself as a specific genre, much like the world of music. Contemporary dance developed in the 20th century thanks to the American ballet dancer Isadora Duncan, a pioneer of modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance. In the early 1900s, she rejected the rigid techniques

of classical dance and ballet in favor of embracing the natural lines and energy of the human body. By doing so, she aimed to create a dance style characterized by softer movement and emotional resonance. Other renowned dancers and choreographers quickly followed Duncan's leadership, each being responsible for the innovations that ultimately defined modern dance and resulted in a new genre for us: "contemporary dance". This style is a more interpretive form of dance, incorporating innovations and combining techniques from various genres, including classical ballet, jazz, folklore, modern dance, and lyrical dance. This genre of dance is not restricted by the rules that govern traditional dance forms. Instead, it relies on improvisation and variety. Furthermore, it is characterized by freedom of movement, which allows dancers to explore the mind-body connection and, ideally, elicit emotion in the audience.

Contemporary dance is sometimes considered a form of storytelling, and dancers may use this medium to portray characters, recount events, or convey personal stories. Its routine can also communicate abstract ideas, such as ethical values, self-acceptance, and social issues. Costumes typically reflect the theme or tone of the accompanying music, and dancers often perform barefoot. Performers can execute this type of dance to various musical styles, spoken poetry and songs, or to silence. In 2017, the Japanese choreographer Takako Suzuki, from the Berlin - based 'Sasha Waltz' company, decided in collaboration with the Goethe Institute to create a performance titled *More Than One Species*—a synthesis structured from contemporary and Georgian dance in Tbilisi. The project encompassed both choreographic and musical synthesis in the modern and folklore directions. I participated in this project as a dancing-actor, gaining extensive experience in how to speak through free and improvised dance, starting from canonical movements. The production represents a dialogue about the sexuality that is both concealed and overtly expressed in Georgian culture and society. Its main axis is the perception of the body, freedom of its expression, and the existing limitations. Together with the choreographer and the composer, we created a performance where the work process became harmonious with traditional techniques, as if an entirely different genre, an Ethno-contemporary dance was infused with the traditional scent while wearing a new costume.

Dance, which emerged simultaneously with the existence of humankind, continues to develop alongside time and everyday life, acting as the world's contemporary, its companion, and the chronicler of history. Choreography will always be distinct among nations, defined by its character and identity. However, it is interesting to consider what further evolution of choreography will be like—a process that is inevitable and cannot be halted by man.