

# **A Study of the Theatre Costume Designs expressed in Picasso's Parade**

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## **I . Introduction**

Pablo Picasso (1881~1973) harmonized his paintings with structural forms of theatre costume, and presented abstract experimental images combined with cubist and celestial images in his work "Parade". It had so much influence on fashion designers of the time that tube dresses, the 1920s fashion gained an aesthetic basis.

This study attempts to examine theatre costume worn by each character in "Parade", which reflects Picasso's art world, and then to analyze the characteristics of the costume. As for study methods, Picasso paintings and the contents of "Parade" are analyzed through literature; and the costume is analyzed based on his sketches and photographs in order to analogize its features.

## **II . Analysis of "Parade"**

The ballet "Parade" was constructed by Jean Cocteau (1889~1963) and performed at Theatre Chatelet, Paris in May 18, 1917. It was hated by romantic ballet lovers at that time, making its audience furious from the premiere night. Erik Satie composed the music, Diaghilev choreographed and directed, and Picasso was in charge of costume and stage setting.

Characters including Chinese magician, American girl and Acrobats created by Cocteau, highlighted their tedium and hidden aspects of the touring troupe rather than wit. The ballet was performed in Paris street by setting up temporary market buildings at the back of the stage. Acrobats, Chinese magician and American girl entertained the audience, each with their own programs. The three gigantic Managers, created promptly by Picasso, made the audience laugh with their funny gestures in queer cubist garments.

The ballet consists of seven characters: Chinese magician, American girl, 2 Acrobats, and 3 Managers. <Table 1> shows Picasso's theatre costume in which he tried surreal expression in order to represent features of the characters.

<Table 1> Features of each character's costume

Character	Form	Color	Material
Chinese magician	Tunic style	Jacket: red, yellow, black Trousers: black, yellow	Jacket: quilted silk Trousers: silk, calf
American girl	Sailer jacket Pleat skirt	Jacket: blue Skirt: white	
Acrobats	Male	Body line Tights	Blue, white
	Female	Body line Tights	Blue, white
French manager	Cubist structure	Hat: black Face, body: white, black	Silk, strawboard, canvas, metal
American manager	Cubist structure	Jacket: blue Skirt: white	Silk, strawboard, canvas, metal
Horse & Black manager	Manager: cypress Horse: Cubist structure	Hat, face: black Shirt: white	Manager: Silk, strawboard, canvas, metal Horse: clothes, wood

### III. Features of "Parade" Theatre Costume

The theatre costume of "Parade" can be divided largely into universal costume and experimental costume as shown in <Table 2>.

<Table 2> Analysis of "Parade" theater costume

Classification	Characters	Motives	Features	Movement in Painting	
Universal costume	Chinese magician	Rays of light, swirls, cloud, ocean waves, sun, moon	Celestial images Collage	Red Period	
	American girl	Bow		Blue Period	
	Acrobats	M	Swirls, stars	Celestial images	Blue Period
		F	Star	Celestial images	Blue Period
Experimental costume	French manager	Cubist structure Pipe, baton	Cubist images Collage	Cubist Period	
	American anager	Cubist structure skyscraper, megaphone	Celestial images Collage	Cubist images	
	Horse & Black manager	Cubist structure Geometric horse	Cubist images Collage	Cubist Period	

### IV. Conclusion

So far I have examined the theatre costume of "Parade". Picasso mixed his art world with structural form of theatre costume to present experimental dress, and gave a fresh shock and inspiration to fashion designers of the time. The ballet costume may be divided into two: universal and experimental dresses.

Universal costume, firstly, was influenced by Picasso's early art world which can be seen in dresses worn by Chinese magician influenced by his Red Period, American girl by the Blue Period, and Acrobats.

Picasso expressed his unique Spanish senses in Magician's dress that he showed in his paintings. Red and yellow used on Magician are the colors native to Spain, and black and white also relate to his native country mentally. The color blue, deep and cold, is perfect for expressing nihilism, poverty and a kind of despair. Blue in the dresses of American Girl and Acrobats is the result of the state of his inner world.

Secondly, Chinese magician costume uses rays of light, swirls, cloud, ocean waves, and celestial images like the sun and the moon; Acrobat costume is decorated with patterns of swirls and stars. Celestial images were the symbol of Chung Ling So, the most famous magician of the time. Seemingly he imitated Chung's images. In a deeper sense, however, Picasso made them abstract using a metaphorical method in order to symbolize his creative mind.

The first characteristic of experimental theatre costume is the reflection of Picasso's cubist painting in theatre costume. It is well shown the three managers' garments who were newly created. Some early works for the managers were the adaptation of his *Halequin* (1915), the collage produced by overlapping the plane of canvas.

Second characteristic is the use of cubist images. Picasso tried to introduce cubist painting and collage to develop his cubism by using revolutionary materials for manager costume, and put various forms of structure on their bodies.

As a result, the theatre costume of "Parade" promoted the development of modern dance, a revolt against classical ballet, and this corresponds to ever changing thought he pursued endlessly. The creative costume shown in "Parade" became an example: pure art can be applied to theatre costume, and theatre costume can lead fashion influencing trends of the time. Therefore this survey may be a very meaningful work.

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