The Early Life and Works of George Balanchine (1913-1928)

Dissertation
zur Erlangung des Grades eines
Doktors der Philosophie
im Fachbereich Philosophie und Geisteswissenschaften:
Theaterwissenschaft

Freie Universität Berlin

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Sommer 2008

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Disputation 15. Juli 2008

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank my advisor, Prof. Dr. Gabriele Brandstetter at the Free University Berlin for her consistent support during the course of this project. Without her carefully thought through input, this project would not have been possible.

I would also like to especially thank Vera Vielhaber from the Eastern European Division of the National Library in Berlin for the many weekends she spent working on much of the hand written Russian documentation that has been used as a vital source in this study as well as working with me on the translation of the letters in Appendix II.

Susan Kraft and the other staff at the Dance Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts deserve thanks for their helpfulness in allowing access to their archives. I am especially grateful for their kind permission to quote from the Oral History Archives.

Millicent Hodson is owed special thanks for granting an interview and allowing me to quote her. Her work in reconstructing Balanchine's early ballets inspired this project. I would also like to extend thanks to Kim Kokich for granting permission to quote from recorded interviews of Alexandra Danilova and to John Gruen for allowing me to quote from many of the interviews he conducted in the 1970's which are now part of the Oral History Archives at the Dance Division of New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. I am grateful to Ellen Sorrin at the George Balanchine Foundation for her permission to translate the correspondence from George Balanchine to Serge Diaghilev.

Chapter 1
Introduction

In 1924 a small unknown group of young ballet dancers left St. Petersburg for what was to be a four month educational tour of Germany. The dancers were to get the chance to see the world outside of Russia, and the tour was to include a few recitals to show what artists in the new Soviet Union were doing. As the time came for them to return home, the Soviet Dancers, whose members included George Balanchine, Alexandra Danilova, Tamara Geva, and Nicholas Efimov, decided to stay in Western Europe despite having no jobs, money, or visas. The decision not to return had major influence on ballet, not only in Western Europe and the United States, but on future Russian ballet as well. Three of the dancers became international stars. After dancing with Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, Geva went to America, eventually becoming a Broadway star particularly known for her role in the Broadway musical *On Your Toes*. Danilova toured Europe with the Ballets Russes, and also toured Europe, South America and the United States with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Later she performed with her own company in Japan. She danced in hundreds of small towns and cities in front of audiences who had never before seen ballet, building a following of balletomanes and future dancers. Later, when Balanchine hired her to instruct the classical technique and repertory as they had learned it in Russia, she taught several of Balanchine's American ballerinas while they were still young students at the School of American Ballet in New York.

Balanchine's contribution to the art cannot be underestimated. The "Balanchine dancer"-tall, slender girls, with high, flexible extension, and clean lines has become the standard physique. Although the developments of these qualities in ballet dancers partially paralleled changing fashions and sport trends, even as a young dancer and choreographer in the 1920's Balanchine began creating dances on women who exemplified this ideal. The basic physique of the dancers, however, is only one small element in the transformation Balanchine made to ballet in the first decades of the 20th century. Combining elements of the St. Petersburg Imperial Ballet, the Soviet avant-garde movement in theater and dance together with Diaghilev's innovations in Western Europe, Balanchine transformed the face of ballet, both in terms of basic technique and choreography. No longer the art form that

had all but died out in Western Europe and had stagnated in czarist Russia, he created an entirely new direction in the art of dance, one whose ramifications extended far beyond his own company of dancers.

Balanchine began his experimental work during a time of great creativity in the Soviet Union. However, this burst of creative energy was not to last there. Although he left before Stalin came to power, the direction of the Academic Theaters at both the Maryinsky in St. Petersburg and the Bolshoi in Moscow was moving clearly in the direction of the preservation of the classics, to the exclusion of more modern, experimental choreographic forms. Had he not left the Soviet Union, it is certain that he would not have developed into the choreographer that he did, possibly falling into obscurity as Goleizovsky did later in life, or abandoning experimentation in the face of opposition as did Lopukhov. One can only speculate how modern ballet, even in Russia, would now look. It certainly would not have attained the status that it has.

This study is two-fold, a historiography as well as a choreographic study of Balanchine's early life and work, beginning as a student at the Imperial Theater School, then tracing his development as an artist. Many biographies have been written on Balanchine's life, most notably, Bernard Taper's *Balanchine: A Biography* and Richard Buckle's *George Balanchine: Ballet Master,* each of these dedicating a few chapters to his early life and works. Much of the material presented in these two accounts is based on Yuri Slonimsky's essay "Balanchine: the Early Years." Later a Soviet dance historian, Slonimsky was a teenage friend and collaborator of Balanchine, and also a witness to Balanchine's youth and first works. In addition to his own memories, his article contains the accounts of many others. The first chapters of this study, those covering Russia, tell the story of Balanchine's youth through the eyes of those who knew him best. Accounts in Slonimsky's essay are compared with the memoirs of those who left the Soviet Union with Balanchine and whose details therefore do not appear in Slonimsky's article, most importantly Alexandra Danilova and Tamara Geva. In chapter five, the study continues with the transition period between the Maryinsky and the Ballets Russes: the 1924 tour of the Soviet Dancers in Germany, England and France. It addresses the very important question of why he and his friends chose to stay in Western Europe rather than return to the Soviet Union as they had planned. Chapter six covers Balanchine's work at the Ballets Russes, again based on the accounts of Danilova and Geva,

but including the accounts of other dancers at the Ballets Russes, especially those of Alicia Markova and Felia Doubrovska.

The material used for the chapter on the tour of the Soviet Dancers is dealt with differently than the material preceding and following it. Although this subject has been studied very little, all the dancers who participated remember it as being a crucial point in their lives. Since the aim of this study is to examine Balanchine's life through the eyes of his friends, the main part will consist of their memories. It will, however, include other historical information to help the reader better understand their statements. This section will also deal with the question of why Balanchine and the other Soviet Dancers chose to remain in the West rather than returning to Russia as planned.

The second aim of this study is to provide a choreographic examination of Balanchine's early works, starting with his first choreography, *La Nuit* (1920) and ending with *Apollon Musagète* (1928), his self described turning point. Documentation on these works will be analyzed in detail, primarily using information passed on to us by witnesses. This will include oral histories, written memoirs and other historical documentation. It will examine the different influences that came together in Balanchine's work and later culminated in neo-classicism. As in the historical study, it will be based primarily on the memories of the dancers who performed these roles. Other studies use similar methods to piece together as much information as possible about one particular ballet for the purpose of reconstruction. This study, however, is not pursuing the goal of such a revival; its primary focus is those ballets for which little information is available and reconstructions would most likely not be possible. In examining the early vocabulary of Balanchine, these dances provide vital clues to both his development as a choreographer, as well as giving hints to elements in other early works. In addition to the ballets for which little information is available, ballets that have been reconstructed, as well as *Apollo*, which has remained in the repertory, are included to give the reader a more complete picture of Balanchine's earliest works. It would be impossible to gain a complete picture of all of Balanchine's earliest works: many have completely disappeared, but many have been mentioned in various memoirs. The most complete listing of Balanchine's works can be found in *Choreography by George Balanchine: A Catalogue of Works,* hereafter called the *Catalogue,* which was compiled with the help of Balanchine, dancers, and dance historians in the U.S., Europe and Russia. It lists several early works of Balanchine that are not included in this study since, other than this catalogue, they

were not mentioned by the dancers, nor were any choreographic elements detailed in memoirs or interviews that were initially done in English or have since been translated. It is possible however, that more details on the dances listed can be learned from other sources, in particular in Russian and French materials. This applies to all of Balanchine's choreography for the Ballets Russes. Regarding his earliest works, it would be particularly relevant for the ballets *La Nuit* (1920), *Valse Triste* (1922), and *Poème* (1921) which were all performed for decades in the Soviet Union, long after Balanchine left.

This book is structured chronologically, beginning at the point where three of the four Soviet Dancers first met at the Imperial Theater School and ending at the point where Balanchine reached maturity as a choreographer. This period of time encompasses Balanchine's youth and education: from his earliest ballet classes, his first performances in children's roles in Petipa's ballets on the Maryinsky stage, his emergence on the scene as an avant-garde choreographer in St. Petersburg, and finally the process of polishing as he worked for Diaghilev. The study will end with the creation of *Apollo*. This ballet marks the point at which Balanchine's development as a choreographer came full circle and he showed a distinct return to the classical tradition of Petipa, transformed through his experiences with Soviet art movements and the Ballets Russes of the twenties.

The historical study and the choreographic study go hand in hand, and for this reason the choreographic analysis has been included in the chapters at the time they were either first created or were performed at an important concert or event. The development of the arts is inextricably bound together with the historical events, both those with sweeping impact on international politics as well as the sometimes insignificant moments that later proved to be turning points. Geva described these moments as "split seconds of decision." (Geva 1984, 329) For example, the Revolution itself opened up new artistic possibilities for Balanchine. In her introduction to Souritz's book *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920s,* Banes described that "this was the time of the greatest freedom and innovation in the arts, the formative years of the country and the culture, when debates and experiments were deemed not only possible, but important." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 2) Without the Revolution, the door would not have been open for Balanchine to begin experimenting as he did. Small, seemingly unimportant events also served to have a large impact on the work of Balanchine. For example, the dancers of the Young Ballet all recall having seen Goleizovsky's Chamber Ballet perform in St. Petersburg, and all say that Balanchine was greatly influenced by what

he saw, directly copying many of Goleizovsky's innovations in his own work. Some of these elements remained distinguishing characteristics of Balanchine's choreography throughout his career; his short visit to the theater had as much a lasting impact on his work as did the Revolution that enabled him to experiment.

Three appendixes are included in this book. The first is a catalogue of Balanchine's early ballets described by him and witnesses in various memoirs, interviews and studies, as well as some historical documentation such as newspaper reviews. These sources detail the most important innovations and choreographic elements of the works. The material presented is the same as that which is analyzed in the text, but is presented in a more concise form for quick reference, and does not contain an analysis. My aim is that scholars and reconstructors will find it a useful tool for further study of Balanchine's work. The second appendix contains four letters Balanchine wrote to Diaghilev while he was choreographer for the Ballets Russes. These letters have been translated into English from the original Russian and French text and are presented in this dissertation to give the reader a view into the workings of the Ballets Russes, in particular in the exchange between the two men. The French to English translation is mine, and the Russian to English translation was done together with Vera Vielhaber from the Eastern European section of the National Library in Berlin. The third appendix deals with the challenges and methods of dance reconstruction. Two important sources used in this study are products of reconstructions: Fyodor Lopukhov's reconstructions of the classical repertory and Hodson and Archer's reconstructions of three of Balanchine's early ballets.

1.1 Sources

Before discussing the research method of this study, I would like to describe the main sources, since these weigh greatly on the method chosen. As has been stated, much has been studied regarding the work of Petipa and the classical repertory, and most biographies on Balanchine dedicate a few chapters to his early life. For this study, the primary source of reference will be the personal accounts of Balanchine himself and those who knew him best: his school comrades, fellow members of the Maryinsky corps de ballets, collaborators in the Young Ballet, and the dancers on whom he created some of his most interesting roles at the Ballets Russes.

For accounts of Balanchine's life and choreography in Russia, the most reliable source of information is Slonimsky's essay, which was translated into English and published in *Ballet Review* in 1976. In addition to his own recollection and the memories of other witnesses, including Vera Kostrovitskaya, Peter Gusev, and Olga Mungalova, the essay contains essential information from newspaper reviews as well. Many other biographies on Balanchine's life contain chapters based largely on this article; however, they are generally focused on the facts of Balanchine's life, and contain little choreographic information, a deficiency in earlier biographies that Slonimsky sought to rectify in his article. In correspondence between Slonimsky and Balanchine before the article was actually written, Balanchine bemoans that others works are "not accurate regarding my life" and do not "say anything that is essential to the art of choreography." (Balanchine 1973) Slonimsky responded to Balanchine, stating his intent to write a "worthwhile book" about him. (Slonimsky 1973) This article is the most accurate source of information on Balanchine's early choreography available in English, and has been used in this project as a basis for the choreographic analysis of the dances Balanchine created in the Soviet Union between 1920 and 1924. In cases where accounts of events or choreography differ, I have presented all the points of view, and attempted to reconcile the differing account or explain possible reasons for the discrepancies. In my analysis, when inconsistencies are so large that only one can be correct, Slonimsky material is given precedence.

Missing from Slonimsky's article are the witnesses who were no longer living in Russia when it was written, most notably two of Balanchine's closest collaborators, his first wife Tamara Geva, and Alexandra Danilova, who did not officially marry Balanchine, but lived with him and was presented as his wife after his breakup with Geva. (Danilova 1988, 82) Their importance as early witnesses, not only as members of the Soviet Dancers, but as two of his first muses, lies in that some of Balanchine's early ballets were choreographed on them, some of the ballets were choreographed on someone else but later performed by Danilova and Geva, and some dances were "worked out" on the two women, but then given to someone else to perform. In their autobiographies, other articles, and interviews, both of them talk of the dances Balanchine created. These sources are used extensively in this study.

The personal accounts have been taken from several sources, one of the most important being the Oral History Archives of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Dance Division. In hours of unpublished taped interviews of those who

knew and worked with Balanchine, a picture of him as a youth and a young man as well as his earliest work begins to emerge. Although these interviews have been used for other projects, they have not been analyzed for their choreographic content. Comparison of these interviews with various published interviews, memoirs, biographies, and other accounts, especially those in Slonimsky's essay, helps to provide a more complete view of Balanchine's life and work as perceived by his closest friends and collaborators.

Histories have been written on the topics of the Imperial Theater School, the Maryinsky Theater, notably Murray Frame's *The St. Petersburg Imperial Theaters: Stage and State in Revolutionary Russia 1900-1920*. The social, political and artistic ramifications of the Revolution have been covered in countless histories. I have used information about these subjects sparingly, only as it directly relates to the lives and work of the children and dancers. This project is intended to be their story, in particular Balanchine's, not the story of the Theaters, the Revolution or the general artistic movement that accompanied it.

Slonimsky's essay ends with the death of Lydia Ivanova, friend and fellow dancer who was to accompany the dancers on their trip to Germany. In essence, the story of the lives and work of the four dancers in Russia ends here and a new chapter, a time of transition between the Soviet Union and the Ballets Russes begins. The tour lasted the summer and autumn months of 1924 and followed the dancers from Berlin to the German Rhineland, then to London and ending in Paris where Diaghilev tracked down the small group and invited them to join his company. Although this tour represents a time of important decisions for the dancers who participated, little is known about it. Most books give it merely a paragraph's attention, one exception being the postscript to Tamara Geva's autobiography, *Split Seconds: A Remembrance.* Again, the main source of information for this section comes from the memories of the dancers themselves, in particular Danilova and Geva. The details provided by the dancers provide a spring board for the study of the tour, and I have attempted to analyze these details in the context of contemporary newspapers and journals including the revue scene in Berlin and the German Rhineland as well as London. This inclusion of this material should enable the reader to better understand the impressions the dancers had and the statements they made, shedding light on the group's final decision to remain in Western Europe despite their apparent failure as a tour ensemble. The translations of German sources into the English language are mine.

In addition to the accounts of those persons who worked with Balanchine both in the Soviet Union and in the West, Alicia Markova and Felia Doubrovska's accounts have been used extensively in chapter six, which deals with Balanchine's years as choreographer for the Ballets Russes. He created some of his most memorable roles on these two dancers and worked closely with them. Outside of the memoirs, there is an abundance of documentation available on the ballets he did at the Ballets Russes. This study focuses on the memories of the dancers and includes other information only as it directly relates to those memories to aid in completing the picture of the ballets, as well as to help the reader put the dances into context.

In the accounts of the work Balanchine did for the Ballets Russes, memoirs and interviews by dancer and later director of the Paris Opera Serge Lifar are not used as extensively as those of the other principal dancers since much of what he left behind is in French. This study, in particular Appendix I: Summary of George Balanchine's Early Choreography, is intended to provide a resource of English language accounts. It is my intention that it be used by others to for comparing different sources, including those in Russian and French.

The choreographic analysis in this section is different than those in earlier chapters for one overriding reason: much more material on the dances Balanchine choreographed for the Ballets Russes exists than for those choreographed earlier. Whereas many of his dances in Soviet St. Petersburg were performed once for a small audience and then forgotten, many of the ballets he choreographed for the Ballets Russes were performed dozens of times in several countries over the span of years. Because of the notoriety of the company, ballets are recorded not only by the informal memories of witnesses, but also by countless newspaper reviews. In addition, the numbers of those who saw the ballets are greater, giving the scholar the chance to compare different accounts. For this reason, I have limited my analysis to those elements about the ballets that were most prominent in the recollections of the witnesses, again giving enough information from other sources for the reader to put the dances into context, but leaving much detail out since it is readily available elsewhere.

The reader will also note the use of three documentary films as sources in chapter six: *Diaghilev: a Portrait, Four Emperors and a Nightingale,* and *Reflections of a Dancer: Alexandra Danilova, Prima Ballerina Assoluta.* Each of these films contains substantial footage of the

dancers listed above speaking about their lives and the ballets in which they performed. Their statements have been used to tell the story in their own words, similar to the way they are used in the spoken interviews from the Oral History Archives.

The reader will also note that I have not corrected the grammar of the speakers in quoting oral sources. Some of the written interviews were also recorded; others have corrected the English. I have quoted each source as it stands in the record. From written documentation, I have also left the original spelling intact. For example, in his 1928 review of *Apollo* for *The Dancing Times,* Evans spells Diaghilev, "Diaghileff" and writes about "Apollon Musagétes." The reader will also note that some of the names of the dances are given in English, some in French. I have generally used the name as it most often appears in literature, but included different names in the catalogue. For this reason, some appear in their French version, for example *La Chatte* instead of *The Cat*, as it was listed in the billings in England, and some in English, such as *Funeral March* instead of *Marche Funèbre.* The title *Apollon Musagète* was later changed by the artists themselves, and appears most often as *Apollo* in literature, therefore, I have usually called this ballet by its common name as well.

Chapter seven contains an analysis of the only ballet from this time period that has survived in the repertory, namely *Apollo* (1928). The study will end with, but also include, this ballet. The analysis will show how Balanchine's transformation of ballet, beginning with his education at the Imperial Theater School through his experimentation in Soviet St. Petersburg and his polishing at the Ballets Russes, culminate in this ballet. The method, however, will differ greatly from that of other chapters in that the analysis of this dance will be based on a video material and live performances as well as documentation. Many elements from the other dances Balanchine had choreographed before this time appear in this ballet. Because of its ready availability both in video form and live performances, comparisons drawn between *Apollo* and the other dances enable the reader to gain a better mental image of the other works for which there is only written documentation.

The analyses of three of the ballets in this study owe much to Millicent Hodson and Kenneth Archer's carefully researched reconstructions of three of Balanchine's early works: *Valse Triste* (1923), *Le Chant du Rossignol* (1925), and *La Chatte* (1927). I have cited them extensively in the analysis of these dances. Their research was so thorough that in many cases, I was unable to find any new information that they had not already used in their

research for their reconstructions. In several of their projects, they had the privilege of working directly with both Markova and Danilova. Hodson and Archer explain that in their work with these and other witnesses, the dancers would often refer to other early works of Balanchine to explain certain steps: "During our work on Balanchine's ballets from 1932, the dancers from these productions often observed that we could learn much about the early repertoire from surviving works like *Apollo* and *Prodigal Son*. They explained steps, sequences, performance style and atmosphere through comparison. Evoking the fateful ethos of *Cotillon* they referred often to *Le Bal* from 1929." (Hodson and Archer January 2004, 77) In a similar manner, I have included the reconstructed ballets from this time period as well as *Apollo* in order to give the reader the opportunity to compare these dances with the documentation from other early works. Reconstructions are never able to be an exact copy of the original production, and lost choreography has to be filled in by the reconstructor. In this study, I have been careful to quote those things which describe only Balanchine's original choreography, and not the lost sections which have been filled in by Hodson and Archer using Balanchine's early vocabulary. The problematic of dance reconstruction is considered in Appendix III.

1.2 Research Method

The research method of this project directly results from the choice of sources. Beginning with the standard procedure used in dance reconstructions, I began to examine all kinds of materials, looking for clues of where to go. Similar processes have been used by Lopukhov in his reconstruction of the classics in the 1920's, by Hodson and Archer in their reconstructions of various productions from the twenties and thirties, and also by the researchers who participated in the 1999 reconstruction of the original production of *Sleeping Beauty* at the Maryinsky. According to Hodson, she approaches lost dances "as a puzzle, putting together all the diverse documents, if only to see what was then still missing." (Hodson 1996, xx) My method is similar: I will look at Balanchine's early vocabulary as a puzzle and put together accounts of as many ballets as possible. My goal is not to see what is missing so that it can be filled in and a stage-worthy production made. Rather, I have attempted to find what information does exist regarding Balanchine's earliest vocabulary in order to compare different sources to discover as much as possible about his early vocabulary, in particular from dances about which only a few details are known. The work of

a reconstructor differs as far as which dances can be studied because of their end goal. Hodson and Archer choose to study only those ballets for which there exists enough documentation to reconstruct fifty percent of the original choreography, the other half being choreographed by the reconstructor in the style of the original choreographer. This study has a different goal: it includes many dances for which very little documentation exists, far less than fifty percent. Its importance lies in the increased knowledge of the vocabulary that Balanchine used in these years, making the little documentation that does exist more useful to later projects where another would, in attempting a reconstruction, understand a particular step or phrase better.

Memories have constituted one of my primary sources of information, and I have compiled as many personal accounts as were available. These include the events of their daily lives as well as choreographic details. I looked at the accounts chronologically, putting the dances into their historical context. For example, although *La Nuit* was performed by the Young Ballet, it is included in the chapter on Balanchine's years at Theater School, since he choreographed it as a student, on students, and for the students. *Enigma* is analyzed in the chapter on the tour of the Soviet Dancers, since Balanchine and Geva performed this dance for their audition for Diaghilev, a more important performance than its original staging at a ball at the Maryinsky. After compiling different accounts of the choreography, I examined the versions, looking for likenesses and discrepancies, both in accounts from different people and accounts from the same people given at different time periods. Sometimes decades existed between one telling and another. I have quoted many of the descriptions here, and given my analysis on how I would put the pieces together.

There is an abundance of research on the Russian ballet before, during, and after Balanchine's time. The same is true for the Ballets Russes and its impact on the art movement in Western Europe. Notable sources are Souritz's *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* Tim Scholl's *From Petipa to Balanchine: Classical Revival and the Modernization of Ballet,* and Lynn Garafola's *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*. I have decided to focus primarily on the personal accounts of the dancers. Where more information is needed to evaluate the impact of different choreographers on Balanchine's work, other sources have been used, but their presence is there to complement accounts of the witnesses and to examine their claims by looking at some of the basic choreographic elements of those artists. If a choreographer was not mentioned by a witness as having impacted Balanchine's work, he does not appear in this

study. For this reason, Gorsky is not included, although his ballets *The Little Humpbacked Horse* and *Don Quixote* were reconstructed by Lopukhov for the Maryinsky in 1922, (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920s,* 260) and it is certain that Balanchine was familiar with them and possibly even danced in them. No account claims any connection between Gorsky's choreographic innovations and Balanchine's early experiments; therefore he does not appear in this book despite his importance as an innovative Soviet choreographer in the early 20th century. Regarding Nijinsky, Nijinska, and Massine: Balanchine knew them and their work, performed in their ballets and presented his own choreography in programs at the Ballets Russes with dances done by these choreographers. However, since neither Balanchine nor the other dancers directly stated them as being influential, they seem to not have played an important role in his choreographic development, and therefore are also rarely mentioned.

Regarding the choreography that Balanchine created in Russia, I have taken as many English sources as possible into consideration. The reader may notice that I have often quoted many seemingly identical statements, have analyzed them in the chapter and listed them side by side in the appendix. I have done this purposefully, since so little information is available on many of the ballets. In the analysis of the dances, the reader will note that sometimes the small differences spoken by different people at different times, or even by the same person at a different time are significant, one word giving vital information to a dance. By bringing as much of the available information together, an ever increasing picture of Balanchine's early works can be created. My hope is that other scholars will be able to use the information presented in this work, compare it to Russian and French sources, and add more pieces to the puzzle.

1.3 Questions of Authenticity

In the cautious work of the historian, the subject of authenticity demands some attention, particularly in a study which uses oral histories and other memories as its primary source of information. This method has one major failing; namely that memories themselves fail, and that people not only perceive and remember things differently, but things are often forgotten or even changed to the advantage of the person reporting them. For this reason, while studying these records and comparing different accounts, I have not looked for absolutes, but have attempted to discover the most probable truth. I have presented as many

versions of events and dances as possible and then explained why I believe one particular account to be more accurate than another. To give an example from witness documentation, sources differ as to when the role of Terpsichore was performed by Danilova and when it was performed by Nikitina in the original production of *Apollon Musagète*. In Danilova's autobiography *Choura: the Memoirs of Alexandra Danilova,* she said that she danced the London performances, but had to let Nikitina perform the Paris premiere. (Danilova 1988, 98) In another interview she recalls having given Nikitina the London premiere. (Danilova 1927 *Part 1,* 44) Because the critics in London (Evans 1928, 488) reviewed Nikitina's performance of Terpsichore, it would seem that Danilova danced the Paris and Nikitina the London performances. This example has a clear solution since a review with the casting is available- others are not as simple, particularly in cases where only oral history or remembrances are available, and especially in these cases, I have attempted to include as many versions as possible. It is, however, important to note that newspaper reviews and articles, while providing important facts and details, are not necessarily accurate and also require careful and critical examination. For example, *The New York Times* stated in 1927 that Geva's "career has not been without distinction in Europe. Educated in the ballet school of the Maryinsky Theater in Petrograd, she later danced leading parts there and also with Diagileff's ballet." (Martin 1927) Compared to her own accounts, this article contains obvious mistakes; the only really accurate statement in these sentences is that she trained at the ballet school of the Maryinsky. In this study, however, the article has not been discounted because it contains valuable descriptions about two solos Balanchine choreographed for Geva. Again, rather than simply presenting to the reader only my conclusions, I wish to enable others to examine the same materials, allowing for the possibility of different conclusions to be drawn, especially with regards to the choreographic analysis. This applies to those who will compare these recollections with others not included in this study, as well as to those who might examine only the memories presented in this project and interpret them differently than I do.

Some might think that, in light of the shortcomings of using memories, it is unproductive to undertake such a study; however, I believe that what can be gained from such an undertaking far outweighs the negatives. In his essay about Balanchine's early choreography, Slonimsky also describes the problems of studying the dances from this time period. He states that "it is very difficult to make a list of the Young Ballet's repertory and to evaluate it. Much has been forgotten, much is perceived differently today, and much was not

even properly evaluated at the time." (Slonimsky 1991, 62) He made this statement both as a direct witness of the events, and also as a Soviet dance historian with access to the official reviews of the newspapers and the records of the Maryinsky Theater during the time in question. Since our study is even further removed through time, distance, language and the deaths of the witnesses, our evaluation is even more problematic. However, I believe that it is not only possible to work through the material to find valuable jewels of knowledge, but I think that it is important to do so, since it opens up the possibility for greater understanding of Balanchine's early life and work, even if a complete picture can never be achieved.

As stated, Slonimsky's essay, in particular the section where he quotes Vera Kostrovitskaya, witness, dancer and collaborator in the Young Ballet, is used as a basis for much of the choreographic evaluation of Balanchine's work in the Soviet Union since this is the most accurate source available. Where discrepancies occur between his accounts and others, I have given his account priority. After Slonimsky's account, I consider Danilova's recollections of the choreography to be the most reliable. While her accounts of personal events are sometimes less than accurate, she was known to have had a very sharp mind when it came to recalling choreography. She described herself as having the "memory of an elephant," (Danilova 1974) and Geva also said that she "remembered everything." (Geva 1976) Balanchine later hired her to teach the classics to the students and to the New York City Ballet because he knew that she was able not only to accurately remember the dances in which she performed, but was able to remember the entire ballets. For the ballets performed at the Ballets Russes, Markova was also known to have had a "fabled memory." (Reynolds 1995 "Dame Alicia and the *Rossignol* of '95," 17) Both of these women worked extensively with Hodson and Archer in the reconstructions of *La Chatte* and *Le Chant du Rossignol.* Some of the information contained in this book was told directly to them by Danilova and Markova as they worked on the reconstructions.

Appendix III addresses the issue of the challenges of dance reconstruction; however, since the authenticity of reconstructed works is often called into question, I will briefly state my point of view on this topic for the purposes of this study. Two important reconstructors are discussed in detail in this book: Fyodor Lopukhov and the team of Millicent Hodson and Kenneth Archer. In the Maryinsky seasons of 1921-1923, Lopukhov carried out the task of reconstructing the classical repertory, which had suffered in the years directly following the Revolution. While preserving much of the choreography of Petipa and others for future

generations, his work was and remains controversial for two reasons. First of all, much of the original choreography had been forgotten and had to be filled in, but was presented as the "original." Secondly, Lopukhov "corrected" what he believed to have been the "mistakes" of the original choreographer. Balanchine participated in these reconstructions as well as having performed in many of Petipa's ballets in children's roles both before and after the Revolution. Several of Balanchine's early ballets show the influence of Petipa. In this study the reader should bear in mind that while Balanchine had directly seen the work of other choreographers, Goleizovsky, Lopukhov, Fokine and Duncan, his knowledge of Petipa had been filtered both through the small changes a company makes in different productions of the same ballets and also through Lopukhov's work.

In their reconstructions of *Valse Triste, La Chatte,* and *Le Chant du Rossignol*, Hodson and Archer have also had to fill in missing sections, but unlike Lopukhov, who purposely changed much of the choreography, they had the stated goal of not changing or adding anything to the dance that the original choreographer did not do or that would change the original intent. Because of this, I believe that they are reliable in their passing on of the information they received, in particular from Danilova and Markova.

1.4 Changing Bodies and Styles

Another issue, related to the topic of authenticity, deals with the changing trends in both body style and technique. Our study will not directly result in any reconstructions; however this issue will be specifically addressed because it affects how the reader sees the dances in his mind's eye leading to, in the words of Slonimsky, the dances being perceived differently today than they were by the original audience. In order to present the following materials as accurately as possible, body style and technical differences that have evolved since the 1920's will be examined here to help the reader to develop a more accurate picture of the dances described in this project.

The changes which occurred in ballet over the last century found their way back to Russia even during the years in which the Soviet Union was a relatively closed society. Many of these changes can be attributed to Balanchine himself, who even at an early date began looking toward a new style, beginning with his first muse, Lydia Ivanova. Her height, as well as her high extension and split leaps are typical of modern ballet dancers, but at the time

were extraordinary. As his first muse, Hodson believes that Balanchine was ever after striving for many of her qualities, as well as Danilova's, in his dancers. Later at the Ballets Russes, Balanchine choreographed numerous roles, including Polyhymnia in *Apollon Musagète* and the Siren in *Prodigal Son*, on Felia Doubrovska, who was five foot six inches tall. Diaghilev thought she was too tall to perform classical roles, despite her having been a soloist at the Maryinsky. Danilova said that she was so tall compared to everyone else that it would have been easy for her to look "freakish." Tracy and De Lano called her "almost a prototype of what would later be called 'a Balanchine dancer': tall, thin, elegant with long legs." (Tracy and Delano 1983, 37) With the exception of these two dancers, the physique and style of most of the dancers Balanchine worked with in Russia were of the old style. At his arrival at the Ballets Russes in 1925, he worked with his first baby ballerina, Alicia Markova, and began to train dancers who were young enough to be formed into his vision, but he still spent years working with other dancers before he founded his own school in New York in the 1930's. For the purposes of this book, the dancers of the Young Ballet, the Soviet Dancers as well as the dancers of the Ballets Russes were exclusively trained in what will referred to in this project as the "old school."

At this point I would like to discuss a few of the differences in the styles of movement and body types from the 1920's and today so the reader will have a better understanding of how the dancers looked in the original performances of the ballets examined in the project. Examining these differences will give more clarity in the analysis of the dances. The differences are so marked that even a superficial comparison of photographs taken in the first half of the 20th century with those taken in later decades shows stark differences in the basic positions and the figures of the dancers. Early films reveal the differences in movement dynamics.

The most vital change in ballet begins with overall physique: a decreased weight and increased height of the dancers creating a quite different picture of the basic choreography. As previously stated, dancers today are generally taller than their historical counterparts, a change reflecting the same developments in fashion as well as other sports. Danilova described this as having been a major difference between her American students at the School of American Ballet and herself and comrades at the Imperial Theater School. She said that no one cared how much they weighed in Russia. (Danilova 1988, 200) Although her last years at Theater School and first years at the Maryinsky were during the near starvation time

after the Revolution, she does not attribute the lack of attention to body fat to that situation. Rather, she states that Russian women were more voluptuous than American girls, who are generally more athletic. (Danilova 1988, 200) Markova also recalled that no one ever dieted in those days. (Markova 1972)

Consistent with the physique of his first muse Ivanova, correspondence between Balanchine and Diaghilev showed that he was looking for girls who were both tall and thin at an early date. In a letter dated September 4, 1925, Balanchine wrote to Diaghilev about getting dancers for the corps de ballet, and highly recommended a dancer whom he described as "slim and beautiful."(Balanchine September 4, 1925) In another letter dated September 15, 1925, he describes one dancer as being "a beautiful woman, slim and taller than average" and another as "not at all fat and not particularly tall." (Balanchine September 15, 1925) These letters seem to support the notion that Balanchine was already looking for these qualities in his dancers.

The taller, thinner figures of the dancers caused a change in the line of the body. Although in the classical tradition, the Russian development of the épaulement of the shoulders added to lengthening line of the body, it was more fully developed by Balanchine. In the words of Danilova, it was he who "taught us that the body should be streamlined," an interesting description, since "streamlined" is a word usually used to describe sport cars. (Danilova 1988, 201) The line of the body refers to, for example, when the arms are extended at right angles to the shoulders, the imaginary line that could be drawn from the tip of one finger, through the arm, both shoulders, along the other arm to the tip on the other finger. In arabesque, the imaginary line extends from the tip on the arm extended to the front to the tip on the toe on the extended leg. By raising the leg above ninety degrees, Balanchine lengthened the line and altered the classical position slightly. In a modern versus truly classical arabesque, the line of the leg is also altered by winging the foot. Instead of the straight line going through the middle of the turned out leg from the hip to the foot, the straight line is drawn on the underside of the turned out leg, going out to the inside of the foot, which is not extended straight from the leg, but is instead lifted upwards. This minimal change gives the impression that the leg is longer than in the true classical style.

The line of the body is also changed by increasing extension; a term which refers to the general flexibility of a dancer, affecting her ability to raise the leg off the ground in one of

many positions or to perform a full split in jumps. A dancer's extension makes itself most notable in adagio, although differences can also be noted in faster dances as well where développés and grands battements are performed at an increased tempo, or in the case of a grande jeté or tour jeté performed with the legs forming a complete split. Danilova said that "a high extension was considered vulgar" in Russia, limiting the dancer's extension to just above the hip. (Danilova 1988, 191) Today's standards require dancers to have an extension well above ninety degrees in all directions, completely altering the line of the body. For example in a typical Petipa pas de deux, the female dancer performs développés supported by the hand or the waist by her partner. While standing on pointe on one foot, the other leg slowly unfolds, with the foot following a path from the ankle of the other leg to the knee and then being extended and straightened either fully to an arabesque position or bent in attitude. Whether the leg unfolds at ninety degrees or higher changes both the position of the leg, the exact point of balance for the dancers, as well as giving the movement a different dynamic. The développé is often held in position and is followed by a supported balance or a promenade in which the man turns the woman slowly on her pointe in a circle. In this slow combination, the line formed by the female dancer alone as well as the picture created by the pair is of primary importance, the change in the lines and the angles giving a greatly altered picture for the same steps.

When one couples the changed lines of the body with the higher extension, the increased height and decreased weight of the dancers as well as the muscles that have been trained to be stronger but longer and thinner, the picture of a ballet dancer, whether standing in position or dancing is completely different. This difference is so marked, that it is noticeable not only when the dancer performs in leotards, as Balanchine did in many of his ballets in order to emphasize the lines of the dancers, but also when the dancer is maximally covered in a Romantic tutu.

The second important change in the styles occurred in the movement dynamics. This is related to increased flexibility and extensions. Danilova described: "It is only because of Balanchine, who wanted the leg higher, that dancers have begun to develop their extensions, and I personally agree with Mr. B. The leg in développé should not be stopped, if it is, the movement becomes stiff and mechanical. Instead, I think the leg should just go, reaching upward, the movement must be free if it is to be graceful." (Danilova 1988, 191) Just as the extensions have lengthened, so have the movements. Even quick movements show this

lengthening, in which a classical step is held in position a split second longer, or the leg is allowed to swing higher. The lengthening of the movements in modern ballet has changed the dynamics so much that Danilova claimed that most dancers today are not able to correctly perform the classics. She commented that "students today have trouble dancing in the classical style-it is different from what they are used to, the movement is more tightly framed." (Danilova 1988, 183) She also describes a change he made in pointe technique: "Balanchine insisted that his dancers relevé by rolling up and down through the foot, instead of hopping onto pointe, all in one movement…but in my classes I teach relevé as I learned it in Russia, not rolling through the foot but using the knee and pushing with the heel; this enables you to make the transition to pointe more quickly. For a relevé that travels, they have to jump onto pointe. So it is necessary for dancers today to know both ways." (Danilova 1988, 194) When dancing on pointe, whether a dancer gets onto the ends of her toes by jumping onto pointe or by rolling through the feet changes the overall flow of the dance, the first version making the movement clean and sharp, the other creating a smooth, lyrical feeling.

Danilova also described how Balanchine made changes in movement vocabulary, which greatly affected the overall dynamics of the movement. She said that Balanchine had sped up many of the classical steps, making the dancers move much faster: "…there is all this movement, dragging the foot behind, or sideways, or front, changing. Really, he enrich vocabulary of dance…it was new, it was strange…" (Danilova *Part 2* 1973, 59) She explained:

> Mostly I would say that the slight revisions Balanchine introduced involve speeding up the movement or syncopating movements that in classical dancing are rhythmically very even. Pas de bourrée, for instance, in Petipa would be: one, two, three. But in Balanchine's choreography, it would be slightly different: for example, one-and-two, hold three-the first two steps are faster, so that you get where you're going more quickly. Or…the old way of doing pas de chat is to lift one leg, then the other-one at a time. But Balanchine sped up the timing so that the second leg immediately follows that first and you see a clear position-both legs up-in the air. Balanchine took classical ballet steps and sharpened the focus, so that you see a perfect fifth position or a jump at its height, and the time it takes the dancer get from one position to the next is shorter, because she moves faster in between. (Danilova 1988, 199)

The changes in line, extension and movement dynamics are a direct result of the training a young dancer receives. Balanchine, Danilova and Geva said that the training they gave at the School of American Ballet (SAB) was exactly what was taught at Theater School. However, though the method may be similar, even when Danilova, Doubrovska and Balanchine were teaching there, the result was different. Geva said that SAB was the same and probably better than Theater School. (Geva 1976) She also recalls that the dancers of those days were "technically all right," but that they were "not half as well developed as kids today." (Geva 1976) At another place she described advances made in ballet, saying that the dancers in New York City Ballet today dance like no one ever hoped to dance, saying that one is better than the other, and that they "defy the laws of momentum." (Geva 1973) Doubrovska said that "it's the same," but she went on to say that there is "more technique here now. Generally it is more developed. We take more time with the students." (Doubrovska 1975) Danilova also recalled that many of the girls at Theater School trained badly. Regarding daily class, she said that "these are exercises that must be done correctly and with care; otherwise they can overdevelop the muscles of the thigh. Looking back, I realize that many of the girls I grew up with at the Theater School had big claves and thighs, overdeveloped because they had overworked those particular muscles. Mr. B., when he taught, was always very conscious of which muscles he was working and was careful not to abuse them." (Danilova 1988, 192)

In conclusion, the evidence shows that even at an early date Balanchine was striving for a new body style: tall and slender dancers. He developed technique far beyond where it had been before, the average dancer being capable of things that only the most capable dancers of the 1920's were able to do. He choreographed many of his early works on dancers who bore traits what would later be typical of "Balanchine dancers": Doubrovska's physique and Markova's technical capacity. When he could, he used these women in his ballets. However, until he was able to train his own dancers, he created his ballets on dancers with the old physique and technique. Although the original dances may have been created on these particular dancers, I believe that restaging them with modern dancers possessing the physique and range of technique that he himself advanced does not violate his intent. In all likelihood it comes closer to realizing his artistic vision than the original performers were able.

Chapter 2

First Encounters at Theater School (1913-1920)

Balanchine's early childhood has been described in detail by several scholars and witnesses. In *Balanchine: the Early Years*, Yuri Slonimsky provides the most detailed and likely the most accurate account. Both Geva and Danilova tell of their childhoods in their autobiographies. As classmates, collaborators in the Young Ballet and lifelong friends of Balanchine, their accounts provide an invaluable source of information. Taper's *Balanchine: a Biography,* one of the most prominent historiographies on Balanchine also draws heavily from these sources. The following chapter examines the point where Balanchine, Geva, Danilova, and others first became acquainted, at the Theater School of the Imperial Theater in St. Petersburg. Much of the information presented here is based on the recollections of the dancers themselves. Although the times were politically explosive, the earliest memories of the dancers were about their day to day lives and experiences, not those of sweeping political and social change. First as young adults did they become more involved in controversies, but their interests seem to have been limited to the arts, in particular the ballet, and how it affected their own lives and work directly. The greater issues are mentioned here only in passing, and for the purpose of clarifying events as recalled by the dancers themselves.

Balanchine, Danilova, Efimov and Ivanova began their studies at Theater School before the Revolution. Danilova and Efimov, along with his twin brother, were in the same class, (Danilova 1988, 24) and Ivanova and Balanchine were one year younger. (Danilova 1988, 41) Geva came to the school later when an evening program was opened for students as part of the new system. Both Balanchine and Danilova recalled having difficult starts to their education, Balanchine going so far as to run away to his aunt's house in St. Petersburg, (Balanchine 1972) a transgression for which he could have been expelled. Taper said that his unhappiness was rooted in his not really understanding the reasons for all the hard work and discipline. (Taper 1984, 38) Interestingly, like Balanchine, Danilova did not really know what ballet was, having been brought to audition for the school because she had danced well in a Christmas pageant. She said that she "hadn't really understood what it meant to perform-I was just having a wonderful time doing my dance." (Danilova 1988, 13) Balanchine recalled the early days at Theater School:

> …I was nine years old and I started as ballet dancer. It took about eight years and I graduated. I started with Emperor Nicolai II, and we lived very beautifully. Our place of study was really fantastic. We lived there and we dressed in uniforms. We were sort of like pages. We were trained to music and drama. You could choose finally if you wanted to be actor or musician or dancer...then came the Revolution. I can't tell you how terrible it was." (Gruen 1975, 279-280)

Danilova described:

> Our lives revolved around our classes and outside of class our little intrigues. The Theater School was our nest. It gave us none of the freedom children have today: we were told what to study, where to go, when to eat...Occasionally, we went against the rules, but never did we question the school's authority over us. We felt secure there and took that security for granted-which is the way it should be for children. Our education, our dance training, our lives would run their course, guided by the school. We proceeded from one day to the next, year after year, looking ahead sometimes, but never worrying about the future. (Danilova 1988, 33)

The complete security she experienced did not last long as the Revolution threw their lives into turmoil.

By most accounts, Balanchine's early difficulties changed when he performed a children's role in the ballet *Sleeping Beauty*. Slonimsky said "it was the source of Balanchine's most vivid impressions as a child, and later as a young man-the ballet which directed his thought toward the future and made him fall in love with the art of dance." (Slonimsky 1991, 24) Taper said Balanchine's experience that evening was a "revelation" for him. (Taper 1984, 38) He explained: "That night, as he watched the dancers…the boy was stirred by the realization that every one of them had gone through the very same schooling as he, in the same building and with many of the same teachers. He admired these dancers and wanted to emulate them." (Taper 1984, 39) Balanchine was so impressed with the memories of this performance that he later tried to put children's roles in his ballets so that the children could have the same experience that he had. Danilova also recalled that these children's roles impacted her future. Her first performance was in the opera *Faust,* her role easy and unrehearsed: she was only supposed to walk across stage and drink wine. Besides actually trying to drink the wine, which was paint mixed with water, she spoke too loud on stage and

had to be hushed by the adults. (Danilova 1988, 30) She also recalled being so terrified that she had to be dragged across stage by the other girls. (Belle 1981) Like Balanchine, performing in *Sleeping Beauty* was a significant experience for her: "In *Sleeping Beauty*, I was a little page, carrying the queen's train. From where I stood by her side, I could see all of the dancing, and so I learned everybody's parts, which I still remember." (Danilova 1988, 31) She claimed to have been chosen for every ballet that required children, something that not only cemented her love of the art, but also enabled her to pass on the choreography of Petipa's ballets.

Balanchine himself also recalled another important moment about a year after he ran away, one that also became a turning point for his future:

> Somehow, I was unhappy for about a year. There were a lot of examinations-very hard. Then I saw, through a little keyhole, three dancers. They were working with my professor Andreyanov. One was Karssvina, the other was Baganova, and the third was Gert. I looked through the keyhole, and I saw this working and it was very interesting. It was like a little game. So since then, I decided that it would be very interesting to look at something like that. (Gruen 1975, 280)

At this point, Balanchine evidently had a turn around, Danilova recalling that they were both "counted as very good students-interesting and talented," (Gruen 1975, 31) although she also says that she was not a good student in her first year, and that she was neither hard working nor attentive, resulting in her having to repeat that grade. (Danilova 1988, 26)

During the first year of the Revolution, the Theater School was closed for a time due to the uncertainty of ballet's place in the new Communist society[1]. After being saved by Anatoly Lunacharsky, Commissar of Enlightenment, the theaters and schools were reopened, but the situation had changed dramatically. Danilova recalled that they were cold and hungry. She said that the students at the school received a little more food than others did, but it was still very little: dirty water instead of tea, two spoons of brew for lunch and dinner and one small piece of bread every two days. (Danilova 1974) In her autobiography she described: "we were all hungry and began to develop boils-at one time I had five, but that was nothing compared with George who had thirty. There was no nourishment." (Danilova 1988, 47) She also recalled that the boys and teachers went to the attic of the school to collect boards for firewood, "dismantling the floor and whatever furniture had

been put there in storage. As time wore on, we marveled that the building was still standing." (Danilova 1988, 48) Taper said that the boys were sent to the streets to look for firewood. (Taper 1984, 49) When Theater School was closed, it was for an unknown period of time and the students were either sent home or had to fend for themselves. Nobody knew if the school would ever be reopened. Danilova, who recalled in detail their hardships in many interviews and in her memoirs, said that her art saved her in the Revolution. (Danilova 1988, 5) She said "the theater was a refuge for us, almost a paradise. Outside lay only the chaotic aftermath of the war and the Revolution. But regardless of how the government had changed, what went on inside the theater was more or less the same." (Danilova 1988, 51)

Both Danilova and Geva mentions one school master who had an important influence on Balanchine during his school years, Grigori Grigorevitch Grigoriev. Danilova described him as "an intellectual, one of the boys' schoolmasters" who "took George on as his protégé, inviting him to his apartment for lunch on Sundays, introducing him to music and books." (Danilova 1988, 43) Geva said that he was the school's director and that he had "been in charge of the school since the good old days of the Czars." (Geva 1984, 271) She recalled:

> George…had been cut off from his family for years…Mr. G.G. (Grigoriev) had taken him in when, in the toughest years of the Revolution, Theater School had closed, throwing its pupils out in the street, and George had literally no place to go. George was duly grateful, but I doubt that his life under Mr. G.G.'s wing pleased him. The old man's affection bore unmistakable marks of latent homosexuality and a possessiveness that were at odds with George's masculinity. (Geva 1984, 282-283)

It was he who encouraged Balanchine to study music at the conservatory. (Danilova 1991, 2)

Upon his graduation from Theater School in 1921, Balanchine was taken into the corps de ballets of the company. At the same time he enrolled in the Petrograd Conservatory of Music where he spent three years studying musical theory and piano. (Taper 1984, 50) Slonimsky described his education:

> Balanchine did not succeed in finishing the Conservatory. But nevertheless… became an accomplished musician-and not only a pianist. He attended classes of harmony, studied counterpoint and composition, wrote music, and most often improvised easily and

> quickly, as if drawing from innumerable prepared ideas. He wrote compositions for piano and dance, for recitation to music, and for voice…Working in the theater, Balanchine frequently tried his hand at the violin, the French horn, the drums, and the trumpet. And always he mastered the music despite the difficulties of quickly learning any new instrument. Judging from the recollections of ballet artists of the older generation, the compositions of Balanchine were somewhat lacking in originality…It is worth noting that he rarely composed dances to his own music, but most often used the works of composers of the nineteenth century and the beginning of this one…In any case, Balanchine in those years made himself into a professional musician within the ballet theater; this to a large extent determined the character and direction of his creative work in the future. (Slonimsky 1991, 33-34)

This quote describes the extent of his musical study and explains the importance of it, namely that it determined the direction that Balanchine's choreography would take, his education enabling him to develop the special sense of musicality that became one of the most important qualities of his mature work.

As the Revolution brought drastic changes for the current Theater School students, it also brought one resoundingly positive development for Geva, namely the opening of an evening program[2], designed to combat the elitism of the former Imperial Theaters. Having been forbidden by her father to dance as a child, Geva was later trained as a private ballet student by an aging ballerina named Madame Sokolova. She was held in high regard at all levels of the dance world, and had been invited to teach at Theater School, but declined because she "couldn't abide that hoard of brats." (Geva 1984, 141) Because she was not a student at Theater School, Geva recalled that no matter how good she ever became, she would be condemned to obscurity and cut off from the glamour and glory of the Imperial Theaters: "It was held as a verity that only their own schools could discover and correctly train the talent suitable for that glorious establishment…the rule established for almost two centuries stood inviolate." (Geva 1984, 81) Entrance into the evening program opened the doors for her future career in more ways than one. Geva first laid eyes on Balanchine at a ballroom class[3] where the shortage of boys in the evening courses was compensated by some day students.

Geva and Balanchine began dancing together regularly after that point, and Balanchine often visited at the Gevergeyeva[4] household. Before the Revolution Geva's father had owned a museum collection which included paintings, lithographs, posters,

sketches and models of stage sets. (Geva 1984, 62) Geva recalled having spent hours in the museum looking at books, old programs and photographs of celebrities. (Geva 1984, 173) In addition to the museum Gevergeyeva had a modern two story building next to his house named "Theater Miniature" which he used to promote new ideas and encourage new talent. In the days before the Revolution, when tradition still had a strong hold on most artistic endeavors, and anything avant-garde was discouraged by the authorities, Gevergeyeva gave moral and financial support to struggling young artists of every field. He was surrounded by writers, poets, artists, some of whom were famous, others unknown. He preferred the unknown, thinking that they needed him more. (Geva 1984, 65)

Because of his former wealth and his honorific title "By Appointment of the Czar," Gevergeyeva was arrested during the Revolution. News of his arrest spread quickly among literary and theatrical circles, and his former activities among the artists saved him. A petition containing sixty signatures of artists from all disciplines including the recently recognized revolutionary poets Mayakovsky and Yesesnin was sent to the seat of government at Smolny College. The petition claimed that Gevergeyeva was a man of good character and enumerated the good deeds he had done over the years. He was not only released from prison, but was further granted permission to keep what remained of his museum in his house and eventually became its director. (Geva 1984, 111) Although his circumstances changed drastically and he was no longer in the position to help Balanchine as he had so many others, Balanchine had many of the qualities he admired in a young artist: he had talent, was a non-conformist, had the determination to follow his own course, and kept his convictions despite opposition. (Geva 1984, 282) It was he who suggested that Balanchine and Geva get married, saying it would make their lives easier in the uncertain times, and that if it didn't work out they could always get divorced later. In 1922, at the ages of 15 and 18, they were married. (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 14)

2.1 The Cream of the Young Maryinsky

Upon their graduation in 1921, Balanchine and Efimov joined the corps de ballets. By that point, Ivanova and Danilova, also officially in the corps, were "up and coming" in the Maryinsky company, Danilova being named soloist in 1922. (Tracy and De Lano1983, 20) Danilova described this group, the dancers Dimitriev later chose to take with him to Germany, as the "cream of the young Maryinsky crop." (Danilova 1988, 60) Doubrovska

said that Danilova had the opportunity to be cast in solo roles earlier than she had been because hierarchy in the theater was not as strict as it had been before the Revolution. (Doubrovska 1975) Danilova, however, did describe the hierarchy in detail in her memoirs. She recalled that the dancers were

> stacked according to our ranking in the company, with those of us in the corps at the very bottom. The soloists, who occupied more exalted positions, hardly ever spoke to us. This was simply the way of the company, standard practice, not at all surprising…a handsome soloist who I danced with and immediately fell a little bit in love with, refused to acknowledge me off the stage…when we met in the corridor or on the street, he would turn and look the other way. (Danilova 1988, 52)

Danilova also recalled that she, Balanchine and Ivanova performed the pas de trios from *Paquita* together the year before they graduated, (Danilova 1988, 41) and that she and Efimov danced together for their graduation performance. (Danilova 1988, 49)

Balanchine's career as a dancer was relatively short, having been injured during a performance at Ballets Russes. Geva said that he accidentally hit himself on the knee while performing a *lezghinka*, a warrior's dance with two knives, (Geva 1991, 12) resulting in a wandering cartilage which caused his knee to lock back sometimes. After an operation in Monte Carlo, he was able to dance sometimes, but was more interested in choreography. Geva said he didn't push it when he danced. (Geva 1976) She recalled that he was not a strictly classical dancer, but was very wiring and quick, and Doubrovska mentioned that he had an enormous elevation. (Doubrovska 1975) He himself said, "I was myself a dancer, and I wasn't bad either. When I was twenty I could jump and I was a good acrobat. I did everything better than maybe lots of people now." (Gruen 1975, 285) His talent as a dancer was confirmed by reviews he received for his performances at the Maryinsky, in particular for his performance of the Harlequin Hoop Dance in *The Nutcracker*. He hardly touched the ground "…jumping several times through the hoop, moving forward toward the orchestra." (Geva 1976) Danilova said that he "was popular and well respected. He was given solo roles, most of them demi-charatère. In *The Nutcracker*, he always brought down the house in the Candy Cane variation, with his sensational jumps through a hoop. His distinguishing features, I would say, were speed, musicality, a big jump, and a sharp attack." (Danilova 1988, 58)

In his essay, Slonimsky also quoted some of the reviews Balanchine got in this particular dance, saying that "the praise for his performance in this dance gradually grew into a large chorus…the dance caused a sensation. It conquered the audience from the front rows to the upper balcony." (Slonimsky 1991, 44) He quoted that dance critic Volynsky, who later became one of the Young Ballet's sharpest critics, was generous with his praise for Balanchine as he described his performance:

> Balanchivadze dances a jester with a hoop…He stands obliquely in the hoop with his profile towards the public wearing a sparkling silver costume. His face is deathly pale from excitement…he is full of wild tension. He waves the hoops and throws it under his legs. Then he sweeps it around himself and moves underneath like a hurricane. (Boris) Romanov won fame in his day in this piece. But Balanchivadze today had outdone Romanov with his young, energetic, and superbly disciplined talent. (Slonimsky 1991, 45)

Danilova also recalled his outstanding talent in mime. She said that "in mime he was also marvelous. In Fokine's *Petrouchka,* he did the old man on the balcony so well that nobody looked at the dancers!" (Danilova 1991, 3) Kostrovitskaya mentioned his role in the first scene of the ballet *Esmeralda:* "And suddenly a cripple[5] appeared on the stage, moving about almost on all fours with one eye, protruding ears, and an enormous, swollen, potato like nose. He moved and used pantomime in such a way that the audience burst out laughing and everyone on stage laughed hilariously to the point of tears." (Slonimsky 1991, 46)

Accounts differ as to whether Balanchine was a first rate or a mediocre dancer, a subject which Slonimsky covered extensively in his essay, since some of the newspaper accounts[6] praised his work, and others criticized it. Many of the reports about his performances at the Maryinsky were positive, and it is reasonable to assume that he had the potential to be a very good dancer. Slonimsky, however, said that his performance was not always consistently good, partially due to his being more interested in some roles than in others. He also offered another feasible explanation for the differing opinions on Balanchine's talents and his apparent lack of progress as a classical dancer:

> Balanchine's limited development as a performer must be attributed to unbelievable overwork. He was torn between daily work in the theater…studies at the Conservatory, earning money for subsistence by playing the piano in Vecheslova's class (from 1921 he played three hours a day) and for dances at concerts and the movies. He had no time to

> spend on training!...Indefatigable, he went to premieres of the Petrograd theaters and to visiting performances of the Moscow theaters, to philharmonic concerts and stage productions, to art exhibitions and museums. He could not deny himself contact with new developments in the arts, of which there were so many at the time. He participated in the innumerable controversies concerning literature, music, and dance…He undeniably did spread himself thin from the view point of colleagues in the theater who had only one goal- to dance more and better, to climb up the ladder to leading roles. He did appear disorderly, unpunctual, because of his incessant desire to succeed in everything…Such a lifestyle could not fail to have an effect on the young Balanchine, already somewhat weakened by years of undernourishment. (Slonimsky 1991, 46-47)

Slonimsky said that the entire generation lived this way, adding that "Balanchine and Lydia Ivanova, more than others in the ballet, were capable of neglecting their artistic interest for something which they considered immeasurably more important and urgent." (Slonimsky 1991, 47) This statement did not just explain Balanchine's "limited development as a performer," but also described his interest in other forms of art and other ideas, experiences which educated him beyond what he had learned at Theater School. Balanchine's unquenchable interest in all forms of art prepared him to work with Diaghilev who always took it upon himself to educate his choreographers, taking them to museums across Europe and exposing them to the leading artists and musicians of the day.

Interest in things other than those directly related to their lives at Theater School and their futures in the Imperial Theater was not typical of the dancers before the Revolution. Danilova recalled that "I thought dancing was everything, that it wasn't necessary for me to learn academic subjects. I was a complete moron…it was only as I grew older that I came to see the importance of knowing about something besides ballet." (Danilova 1988, 40) She said that they did not even study choreography at Theater School, just dance and subjects related to it: history of dance, history of costumes, history of art, music, character and national dance, as well as speech, since the children often participated in performances in all the theaters[7] and were sometimes required to do speaking roles. (Danilova 1974) In her autobiography, she said that many of these classes along with English were introduced first after the Revolution. (Danilova 1988, 47) Geva recalled that her father, despite being an important patron of the arts, did not allow his daughter to attend the school as a child, saying that she was to have an education, something that was, in his words, "sadly neglected in that

establishment." He considered the children there to be like trained seals[8], good only for dancing and he wanted his daughter to have the "tools to fight life with." (Geva 1984, 80) Later on however, they were neither cut off from the other arts and the outside world, nor were they encouraged to be so. Danilova remembered that artistic director Lopukhov became a mentor to the young dancers in the company and would scold them when they got morose about the hard times. She quoted him: "What's the matter? You are young and talented! Go to the theater, go to the museums, see everything! Study languages, study history. Go to concerts." (Danilova 1988, 53) Danilova said she followed his advice and began to study French and art history as well as going to concerts outside the Academic Theaters. (Danilova 1988, 53) It would seem however, that Balanchine and Ivanova were more extreme than most in their pursuits, as was Geva: "With all these activities, schoolwork was bound to suffer. As a result, I flunked more than one subject in the spring exams at the Gymnasia, and was kicked out irrevocably." (Geva 1984, 286)

Even before Balanchine was exposed to the world of Soviet art, his interests expanded far beyond those of simply being a dancer. By all accounts his extraordinary talents as a choreographer appeared while he was still in school. *La Nuit*, his first ballet done at the age of sixteen, was choreographed well before his introduction into the world of the Soviet avant-garde. At this point in his life, his only influences would have been those of his teachers at the Maryinsky and its repertory, most importantly the classical tradition of Marius Petipa and the reforms of Mikhail Fokine.

2.2 The Russian Tradition

In the West today, "Russian ballet" normally refers to the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow and the Maryinsky in St. Petersburg, known in Soviet times as the Kirov. For dancers and balletomanes, the "Russian school" is used to refer to the Vaganova method of training and style of ballet developed by Agrippa Vaganova at the former Theater School of the Maryinsky, now known as the Vaganova Ballet Academy. Although Danilova mentioned having been trained and coached by Vaganova[9] in her last years at Theater School and as a member of the corps de ballet, the Vaganova method was far from developed in the early 1920's and none of the dancers of the Young Ballet, the Soviet Dancers or the dancers of the Ballets Russes spoke of her as being a great influence on their training. (Danilova 1988, 50-51) Since both Danilova and Geva claimed that the education given to dancers at the School

of American Ballet in New York was exactly like the one they received at the original Imperial Theater School, and Vaganova later developed a system of education so specific that the school bears her name today, it is arguable that the tradition carried on in the West is as much directly descended from Petipa as the current Russian ballet. Danilova said that "my technique is what I learned at the Imperial School, but I also try to prepare the students for the modern styles of choreographers like Balanchine and Robbins. I battle every lesson with the arms. Ten years ago I thought they were awful, but they are much better now. I really try to pay enormous attention to *port de bras*. At the Imperial School the arms were always emphasized." (Ackerman and Summer 1982, 40) The Maryinsky can claim a constant residence at the theater since Petipa's great phase of creativity in the last half of the 19th century, and under the direction of Lopukhov the classics, *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Little Humpbacked Horse*, *Giselle, La Bayadère* and others were restaged and preserved for future generation. In 1988 Danilova described her impression of the direction Soviet ballet had taken, saying:

> I can see in the Soviet style an extension of the way I was trained, but I think what happened here in ballet in our century is much more interesting than what happened there…Somehow, in Russia, ballet has become the exhibition of dancing. Soviet dancers no longer want to show the story or the mood so much as they want to show their technique-this one can turn three times in the air, lifting both his legs, and that one can do something else. But it's no longer expression; it's exhibitionism. (Danilova 1988, 185)

In 1908 Diaghilev brought the first group of dancers trained at the Imperial Theaters to Western Europe. Many of these dancers had worked directly under Petipa, and many never returned to Russia. From 1908 to 1924, numerous great dancers who later became teachers and choreographers around the world emigrated, including Pavlova, Nijinsky, Nijinska, Massine, Fokine, Lifar, Doubrovska, Lopukhova, sister of Lopukhov, Cecchetti, like Petipa not Russian, but with great influence on Russian ballet both as a dancer at the Maryinsky in Petipa's ballets and later as ballet master at the Ballets Russes, and finally Danilova, Geva and Balanchine. These dancers worked extensively in Europe, the United States and South America, some up until the 1980's, planting "Russian ballet" throughout the world. Doubrovska said that "little by little ballerinas all opened schools and started to teach-then good dancers began to appear." (Doubrovska 1975) With the exception of

Bolshoi trained Massine, all these dancers were trained in St. Petersburg, spreading its style around the world. Scholl described this process:

> The gradual closing of the borders and increasing isolation represented a…problem for the young Soviet ballet, particularly as large numbers of those associated with the Russian ballet's most illustrious era were now working abroad and the vast majority would not return. By 1917, this diaspora helped established ballet as a viable art form beyond Russian borders. The émigré ballet metamorphosed rapidly; although its nucleus remained mostly Russian for a time, its outlook was international from the start. (Scholl 2004, 65)

In our study, the term Russian ballet will refer to the pure classical tradition that blossomed in St. Petersburg in the second half of the 19th century while ballet in the West was experiencing a general decline, not the style based on Vaganova technique. Western European ballerinas had toured in Russia, most notably Italian ones who were technically much stronger than the Russians; Petipa created some of his most famous roles on Italian dancers[10]. However, the decline of the ballet in the West as a whole was well noted in Russia. Scholl quoted Petipa's statements from the December 2, 1896 edition of the *Petersburg Gazeta*, stating that the "Italian School is ruining ballet" and that the ballet in Paris was dying. (Scholl 1994, 20) First when the Ballets Russes arrived in Paris and began to produce ballets with the collaboration of famous artists and musicians such as Matisse, Picasso, Benois, Debussy, Satie, Stravinsky and Cocteau did ballet begin to receive a newer, more elevated status among the arts. At the dispersion of the company at the death of Diaghilev in 1929, this caliber of creativity and artistic invention coupled with the background and training from the Imperial Theater School was spread around the world. After this point, due to the lack of exchange between the dancers in Russia and those in Europe, ballet in the West and in the Soviet Union developed in different directions, the Soviets defending the preservation of the classics and on "technical exhibitions," the Western artists developing new works and styles while maintaining the classical repertory.

2.3 Marius Petipa: Father of the Classics

Balanchine's early choreography showed a combination of the influence of other contemporary choreographers as well as a determined rebellion against the institutions created by the authorities at the Academic Theaters. Taper said that "virtually nothing of Petipa showed in *Marche Funèbre*, *Extase,* or the other dances the young choreographer was

devising for his first program of the Young Ballet. The Petipa material was then present within him, but buried." (Taper 1984, 57) However, although his own choreography was strikingly un-classical and received much criticism from the champions of tradition, Souritz believed that he never intended to completely reject the classics as other choreographers of his time did. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 76) Geva said that she, Balanchine, and Efimov performed the pas de trio from Petipa's *Harlequinade* in Moscow in costumes smuggled from the Maryinsky Theater. (Geva 1984, 287) She also recalled that their program in Germany included classical numbers: "The tainted Berliners didn't respond to the classical excerpts danced by Danilova and Efimov…" (Geva 1984, 327) Danilova said that she and Efimov had danced the "pas de deux from *Sylvia* we had performed for our graduation from school." (Danilova 1988, 62) The dance, done to music by Delibes, "was Mme. Preobrajenskaya's choreography-long, not interesting, an awful number." (Danilova 1988, 49) She also recalled having performed the pas de deux from *Coppélia* with Efimov. (Danilova 1973 *Part I,* 40)

As chief choreographer at the Maryinsky for several decades in the second half of the nineteen century and the beginning of the twentieth, Petipa is credited with having created the classical style as well as being instrumental in the establishment of its rules of dance. Balanchine was trained into this tradition and most of the ballets he performed as a child and later as a corps dancer were Petipa's. Since much of his repertory had been bastardized during the second decade of the 20th century, director of the Maryinsky Fyodor Lopukhov embarked on the project of reconstructing his ballets in 1922-1924. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 260) According to Slonimsky, in the years immediately before the reconstructions, the following ballets were performed; in 1918-1919: *The Sleeping Beauty, Swan Lake, Raymonda, Giselle, Le Corsaire, The Little Humpbacked Horse, Paquita, The Daughter of Pharaoh,* and *Esmeralda.* He also mentioned the inclusion of several one act ballets. The 1919-1920 season[11] retained those ballets and added others by Petipa and Fokine: *La Bayadère, La Fille Mal Gardée, Harlequinade, Don Quixote, The Nutcracker, Le Pavillon d'Armide, Chopiniana* and *Carnaval.* (Slonimsky 1991, 37-38) A declaration was made by the management in 1922 describing the problem with the dances as they were performed: since the original choreography of these dances had been changed for a variety of reasons during the years directly following the Revolution, the management of the Maryinsky began to make "special efforts…to carefully preserve the original choreographic text, which during the past decade

unfortunately has been quite distorted with various insertions and restorations…The goal of the management is to remove from Petipa's ballets everything borrowed and alien…" (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 257) Balanchine and Danilova, as well as most of the other members of the Young Ballet participated in these reconstructions. Their participation brought these dancers as close as was possible for their generation to be to the original source. This fact is significant in that the versions brought by Danilova and Balanchine to America are not any further removed from the original choreography than the versions in Russia. Despite his youthful experiments, Balanchine was respectful of the work done before him; as Taper described, the material was "buried" in him and he had not yet learned to combine elements from the art movements around him with those of his classical background in his own choreography.

One component of Petipa's work always present for Balanchine was Petipa's musicality; his ballets demonstrated a musical precision resulting from the close work between choreographer and composer. Some of Tchaikovsky's most famous works were ballets, some of the most well known being *The Sleeping Beauty, Swan Lake,* and *The Nutcracker.* His musicality was passed on to both Fokine and Lopukhov, also influential in some of Balanchine's earliest work. Like Petipa and Tchaikovsky, Balanchine and Stravinsky had a collaborative relationship that spanned decades. The music to two of Balanchine's early successes at the Ballets Russes, *Le Chant du Rossignol* and *Apollo,* were composed by Stravinsky.

While some tributes to Petipa's ballets can be found in Balanchine's early work, much of his St. Petersburg choreography was done in direct defiance of the rules and standards of the Academic Theater. The following section will examine some of the elements of Petipa's choreography to see which elements Balanchine incorporated into his own work, and which he rejected.

In Petipa's ballets, the corps de ballet was known above all for its symmetry. The dancers formed lines from upstage to downstage at the sides or in lines across from stage right to stage left. Steps were often performed while the dancers maintained these formations, or the corps was used to frame the stage, leaving the center open for soloists. In addition to being used to form a background for the ballet, the corps was used to create a dramatic presence on the stage. Scholl described: "The miracle of these scenes is the quick

transformation of the ensemble from a decorative picture frame for solo dancers, to a palpable dramatic presence on stage, and rapidity with which Petipa's corps can transform an intimate space on the stage into one which seems to transcend the walls of the theater." (Scholl 1994, 13)

Balanchine's use of the corps did show the influence of Petipa. He did not overthrow the symmetry of the groups as Nijinsky did. For example, in *Funeral March*, the dancers entered and exited the stage in an orderly fashion. Balanchine extended the use of the corps de ballet beyond what Petipa had done, partially as a result of his own experimentation and partially the influence of other avant-garde artists. Balanchine's use of the corps to create a cortege for the Man at the end of *La Chatte* showed clear Constructivist influence and much of the choreography bore the marks of Biomechanics. Petipa's influence is seen in the use of an even number of men and other formations. For example, on extant photograph shows the dancers in a straight line across the stage from right to left.

Petipa expanded the use of pointe technique for the female dancers, this being most prominent in female solos and pas de deux. *The Sleeping Beauty*, considered the crown of Petipa's achievement, demonstrated the new technique, in particular in the Prologue of the ballet. In the original production, six fairies variations were performed by six ballerinas. Each of these variations[12] was specifically choreographed to demonstrate the dancers' capability with much of the dances consisting of walks and runs on pointe, a feat made possible by more advanced pointe technique as well as the development of a harder pointe shoe. The choreography of the grand pas de deux in Petipa's ballets also called for hardened shoes and advanced pointe technique: long, supported balances and pirouettes during the duet itself, series of turns across the floor as well as the feat of performing 32 fouettés in the coda all became staples in Petipa's ballets as well as basic training tools for students of ballet.

Petipa's use of space and combinations of steps in solo dances was also consistent in most of his ballets. The term *variation* described the general pattern of his solos; a few combinations of steps are repeated and altered slightly at different points in the music. They often end with a series of turns which move diagonally across the stage or are done in a circle around the stage. To give an example, the Black Swan variation from the grand pas de deux from *Swan Lake* demonstrates these patterns clearly. Beginning upstage right, the dancer repeats a combination consisting of pas de bourrées, pirouettes in attitude and développé

three times. She then runs from one corner of the stage to the other, repeats the combination upstage left to down stage right. Next, she runs to the first corner and performs a similar but not identical combination from upstage right to downstage left. She then runs back to the starting point and does a series of turns across the stage and the solo ends. This variation clearly shows two of the elements of Petipa's choreography which Soviet choreographers such as Goleizovsky and Balanchine sought to reform. First of all, Goleizovsky was opposed to what he considered to be the endless tricks in the choreography of the Academic Theater: solos consisting of combinations which were repeated with minor changes as well as series of turns. In addition, the reader may note the frequent use of the word "ran." Between combinations, the dancer paused, ran to another corner and then began a new variation on the combination, breaking the general flow of the dance. Both Goleizovsky and Balanchine sought to change this by creating dance with fluid movements where one combination flowed into the next with no clear breaks in the movement.

In Petipa's ballets, solos were also presented between the dramatic action, not as a means of moving the story forward by itself. The story was told through mimed sections between the dances, rather than through the dance itself, an important point of contention for the new generation. Choreographers such as Fokine and Gorsky in Moscow believed that the dance itself could be used to advance the plot, and Duncan showed that emotions could be expressed directly through the dance. *Valse Triste,* choreographed in 1923 by Balanchine and Lydia Ivanova, shows a marked departure from Petipa's solos. Inspired by Duncan, the dance demonstrated fluid movements rather than series of steps. More importantly, Balanchine and Ivanova choreographed a solo dance on pointe which expressed plastic emotion through the dance, something that was completely absent in Petipa's solos.

According to Danilova, Balanchine brought the expression of emotion into the pas de deux, making it also a crucial part of creating a mood or advancing a plot :

> It was Balanchine who made adagio more important. Before he came along, it was just développé à la seconde, arabesque, pirouette, and lift. Real dancing together-it's Balanchine who invented that…Balanchine made the man more equal to the woman in adagio. In the old ballets, it was adagio, his variation, her variation, and coda. With her partner, the ballerina did the steps she couldn't do by herself, or did other steps better than she could do them by herself. But in a Balanchine ballet, the adagio would be more like a

> dance, conveying a mood. The man and woman create something together. The pas de deux isn't dancing as an exhibition of technique, but dance as love or hate or whatever-there's a situation or a story to it…(Danilova 1988, 103)

Danilova's description accurately described the grand pas de deux, which served as the climax in many of Petipa's ballets. It consisted of a duet between the hero and the heroine, sometimes a male solo, a female solo, and ended with a coda, normally a series of jumps and turns done separately by the man and the woman, the end position accompanied by a "big bang" in the music. The traditions of the Maryinsky were most prominent in the rules pertaining to pas de deux, where the points of contact between the man and the woman were carefully regulated to protect the respectability of the dancers and the art. Danilova recalled that "during my years at school, we didn't lift the legs high-it was considered not classical, rather daring, a little bit vulgar. 'You are not in the circus,' our teachers would scold if développés or grands battements got too big. Just a teeny bit above the waist was as high as we were allowed. The Victorian attitudes still prevailed." (Danilova 1988, 40) She also recalled the flip side of the lives of the dancers:

> At every performance, the first few rows of the theater were filled with balletomanes, many of whom had mistresses in the company. And just above the box for the tsar was one for the grand dukes, who had easy access to the dancers: a special passage led directly from their box to the stage. I would say that maybe half of the dancers in the company had "protectors," but they were discreet about it-those things were kept secret then. Kchessinskaya was the exception. She flaunted her affairs with her grand dukes…they gave her precious jewelry, built her a magnificent palace. My aunt warned me that under no circumstances should I ever accept an invitation to Kchessinskaya's palace, because it was considered not nice. Girls went there to pick up a protector or to be in vogue with the men." (Danilova 1988, 38)

Danilova's description is interesting in that it seems to indicate that in Russia dancers were not automatically considered to be women of questionable morals as was often the case in Western Europe in the second half of the 19th century. Her aunt's warning implies that her reputation would be maintained if she stayed away from that sort of environment. Geva also said that the reputation of a dancer was not automatically linked to a disreputable life, recalling that some of the dancers of the Maryinsky thought that her family's home had a bad

reputation due to her mother's incessant revelry and string of lovers. Another dancer told her that only her home had a bad reputation, but that she did not. (Geva 1984, 297)

After the Revolution, the dancers who chose this way of life became more open about it. As is generally the case in times of crisis, post-revolutionary St. Petersburg experienced a moral decline, and what had before been considered lewd behavior became common and, to an extent, socially acceptable. Ivanova reveled in this lifestyle, something that in the end proved to be her downfall. Geva said that many young dancers were drawn into the scene by the hardships and described one particularly notorious nightclub:

> It was called Donon, and it had all the luxurious fittings of the past…The prices were out of reach for the general public, but every era manufactures its own elite and the upper crust of government officials and speculators could afford to get whatever they wanted. Both elements vied for the favors of young dancers, seducing them with food and gifts, and many a young girl succumbed to the lure. Leda Ivanova was often seen at Donon's, supping in the company of questionable characters, and one night, when taking a bow…I spotted her at a ring side table…" (Geva 1984, 298)

Danilova, in recalling Ivanova's escapades, said that she was by no means drawn into her friend's intrigues: "She was much more sophisticated than I was-always smartly dressed, with a lot of admirers, especially among the Bolshevik elite. Now I understand that she discovered sex before I did, in this regard, I was a little bit retarded. And Lidia never told me anything that might have disrupted my innocence." (Danilova 1988, 56)

The standards of behavior propagated by the Maryinsky before the Revolutionary years were reflected in the choreography of the duet of the grand pas de deux. In large part, these dances consisted of the man helping the woman balance on pointe on one leg with the other leg in a variety of positions; attitudes in all directions, arabesques, penchés etc. He was allowed either to hold the hand of the female dancer, hold her waist, or she would hold the balance herself by placing her hands on his arms or shoulders. Supported pirouettes were also done with the hands on the waist or the hand.

Danilova's description of the acceptable height of the leg also gives insight into how a Petipa pas de deux performed by Maryinsky dancers a hundred years ago differed from the same choreography performed by modern dancers on the same stage. The height of the leg,

in particular in a pas de deux full of slow movements and balances, has great bearing on the overall aesthetic of positions. The leg being held en avant, à la seconde or en arrière in arabesque or attitude creates a completely different line if it is held at ninety degrees or higher.

The height of the leg does not have a large impact on the execution of some other steps, in particular pirouettes, small jumps, or turns on the diagonal typical of Petipa's variation, but the changes that have occurred in movement dynamics does. As Balanchine developed his technique in later years, elements such as the lengthening of movements, creating a more lyrical transition from step to step, changed the performance quality of Petipa's vocabulary, creating not only different lines, but also different movement qualities in dancers trained after Balanchine. These changes made their way back to Russia, and even in the home of Petipa, ballets have been performed with high extensions and lengthened movements for decades.

The rules of the Academic Theater applied not only to points of contact, but also to other aspects of ballet, most importantly those of the costumes. Dances done on pointe required that the female dancer wear a tutu, and dancing barefoot was forbidden. Danilova vividly remembered these rules and the stories and scandals reported by others. In his ballet *Eunice* Fokine wanted his dancers to perform barefoot, but was not allowed, and his dancers were forced to wear sandals and tights with toenails painted on them. (Danilova 1988, 41) Nijinsky was fired from the Maryinsky over a costuming issue. Years later he still had a notorious reputation at the Theater School and the Maryinsky. Danilova recalled being told about "how fabulous a dancer Nijinsky had been, but we also knew of the scandal that had led to his dismissal from the Maryinsky, his refusal to wear bloomers over his tights (and there were no dance belts at that time)." (Danilova 1988, 51) Balanchine's choreography and costume decisions showed a direct rebellion against many of these standards, his dances demonstrating a complete departure from the rules regarding points of contact between the dancers. In his very first piece he consciously broke these rules first by placing his female dance in a tunic and pointe shoes, and also by having the dancers to hold a balance with a kiss on the lips. Because of his young age, this obvious rebellion against the Academic Theater could have been as much a demonstration of a teenager pushing his boundaries as an artistic experiment.

Petipa's pas de deux also demonstrated similar breaks in the movement that were in the solos. Combination of promenades, supported pirouettes and balances alternated with the dancers separating, taking steps away and then towards one another, at which time they would perform another combination. As in the solos, reformers sought to create dances with the steps flowing into one another. In addition, the pas de deux did not directly have dramatic content, but rather was a result of its placement of the action. The grand pas de deux of *Swan Lake* takes place at a ball given in the honor of the prince where he is to choose a bride from among the young ladies in attendance. This plot is only understandable through the mime and the setting of the act. When this dance is performed alone, which it often is as part of a mixed program, without the program notes, the audience would not understand its original purpose and could give it any number of meanings.

2.4 Mikhail Fokine: The Reformer

Although most sources do not expand upon Fokine's[13] influence on Balanchine's early works, Slonimsky claimed that "the best works of Balanchine seem to grow out of his experience of Fokine." (Slonimsky 1991, 38) His ballets were in the repertory[14] of both the Maryinsky and the Ballets Russes while Balanchine was a young dancer and choreographer. Considered forward thinking for his time, Fokine did not completely reject the classical precepts laid down by Petipa, but in his work in Russia chose to work with the authorities rather than offending them. However, like many others of his generation, he saw great need for reform and at an early stage began to explore the narrative possibilities of ballet, drawing inspiration from the new theater movements.

Fokine's first successes as a choreographer came in 1907, several years before Balanchine entered Theater School. In that year he produced *Chopiniana*[15] and *Le Pavillon d'Armide*. In 1910 he choreographed the ballet *Carnaval*. All three of these ballets were shown during the 1919-1920 season at the Maryinsky as well as belonging to the repertory of the Ballets Russes[16]. Slonimsky said that all the students took part in these ballets and that Fokine "could not but have an enormous importance in the biography of a ballet master." (Slonimsky 1991, 38)

Scholl described Fokine's reforms as he laid them out in his two manifestos published in 1916: "Briefly stated, the dance should be interpretative and should express the

epoch of the work in question: costumes should be appropriate to the theme and the music and movement harmonious; the ballet should represent a unity of music, painting, and dancing; applause should not interrupt the dance." (Scholl 1994, 60) Slonimsky said that he "achieved an astonishingly complex simplicity and an ideal interdependence of music and dance" noting the "unprecedented intricacy of its symphonic composition." (Slonimsky 1994, 38) This certainly impacted Balanchine, for whom musicality was also a vital element to his work.

Chopiniana seems to have made a great impact on the young Balanchine. Done to various orchestrated piano pieces of Chopin, this ballet used non-ballet music for choreography, but also demonstrated Fokine use of aesthetics from other eras. Known as *Les Sylphides* in the West, this ballet resurrected one of the fantastic characters from Romantic Era, the Sylph. According to Scholl,

> *Sylphides* re-created the era of romantic ballet, the age of *Giselle* and the original Sylphide, the period when point technique was still developing…*Sylphides* effectively isolates the nineteenth-century ballet's white act, or vision scene, making it the ballet's subject while omitting any notion of a plot. Fokine's ballerinas, possessed of the full range of techniques their Russian trainers afforded them, were not asked to use it. (Scholl 1994, 64)

Purely abstract, this ballet expressed feeling rather than a story. Many dance historians look to this ballet as a breakthrough in the history of dance although Scholl has pointed out that many of his reforms had already been put into practice by others[17]. As to its impact on Balanchine's work, Gusev said that "Balanchine called *Chopiniana* his favorite ballet and often by himself performed various dances from it." (Slonimsky 1991, 38*)* Despite it being one of his favorite ballets, he evidently only performed it once, at a special performance at the Royal Theater in Copenhagen during the 1930-1931 season for the deceased dancer Elna Lassen. Balanchine danced the male role, but the spotlight was left empty for the parts Lassen should have danced. (Poulsen 1991, 95) It was Balanchine's initial experience with pure dance, and according to Taper it was the first time that Balanchine had seen a ballet that could evoke a mood through the dance itself, without a story, since at the time he took for granted that all ballets were required to tell a story. Taper said he "kept puzzling over it, trying to figure out what it meant," (Taper 1984, 58) which would possibly explain the reason that he danced it over and over, as Gusev recalled. *Les Sylphides* was included in Kostrovitskaya's list of ballets

prepared for the first performance of the young ballet, on the same program as *Funeral March,* also with music from Chopin. (Slonimsky 1991, 62-63)

Fokine's primary influence on Balanchine's early work was not in concrete choreographic elements, perhaps the reason that he was not mentioned as often by Balanchine's contemporaries as, for example, Goleizovsky, despite having had more extensive contact with Fokine's work than with Goleizovsky's. As will be demonstrated in the choreographic analysis of *La Nuit,* the accounts of the witnesses described the mood he created in that dance, but none of those who saw the dance directly related these elements to Fokine, although their descriptions clearly showed a connection. While the influence of Fokine may not be as evident in the early works of Balanchine as that of more progressive artists like Goleizovsky, his aesthetics permeated Balanchine's mature work, beginning with his first neo-classical work, *Apollo* (1928), and his first ballet in America, *Serenade* (1935), making their importance to his later work no less than that of other artists.

Balanchine rarely delved into the exotic worlds that Fokine presented in his works, but the influence of Fokine's ballets done in the Romantic style, especially *Les Sylphides* was evident in both these ballets. Both accomplished one of the main qualities of *Les Sylphides*: they achieved a mood through the dance itself, not through the story. Like *Les Sylphides*, *Serenade* was a completely abstract ballet, and *Apollo*, while portraying the birth of the god and his interaction with the muses, presented very little direct dramatic action and concentrated on the creation of a mood. It was modeled after *Les Sylphides* in that it also "featured one male and three female principal dancers in a 'plotless' exercise- a narrative which neither suggests nor precludes concrete relationships among the principal dancers." (Scholl 1994, 95) To a large extent, in all three ballets, the atmosphere was created by the similarities in costuming. In addition, each used the short one act format which was typical of the programs of the Ballets Russes. The costumes of *Apollo* were changed several times by Balanchine himself, from the original tutus to tunics more reminiscent of the practice clothes his dancers wore in *La Nuit*, *Poème*, *Etudes* and *Enigma* than the Greek tunics worn by Duncan. The Muses have always been dressed in white, and the long light blue costumes of *Serenade*[18] reflected of the age of Romantic ballet, recreating the atmosphere of the 19th century ballet blanc as much as Fokine's work did. As Slonimsky said, many of his best works do seem to grow out of Fokine. This growth did not happen right away; rather, it seems that he brought Fokine's elements, back into his work in a strong way, rather that

combining them immediately with the new influences of the Soviet avant-garde. This was not done out of his rejection of the aesthetics of Fokine anymore than Petipa. His inclusion of *Les Sylphides* in his programs of the Young Ballets demonstrated how much he admired the work. Rather, as a young artist, he had not yet learned to combine the different elements of the choreographers he admired. At the early stage in his choreography he was still trying out different building blocks, but not rebelling completely against the academic ballet as some other choreographers did.

2.5 Choreographic Beginnings: *La Nuit*

In 1920 at the age of 16 (Danilova 1972) Balanchine "asked and was granted permission to choreograph something for our annual school performance." (Danilova 1988, 44) His first work, *La Nuit* or *Night* was performed to Anton Rubenstein's *Romance*[19], the musical accompaniment originally being both a piano and a violin (Slonimsky 1991, 63). This dance was performed during the tour of the Soviet Dancers in 1924. Since the musicians who had come along on the tour returned to Russia when they received a telegram from the Soviet authorities demanding their immediate return, it was probably performed simply to a piano in Germany and possibly to an orchestra or a piano and violin at the Empire Theater in London. Slonimsky said that it was originally arranged for Olga Mungalova and Pyotr Gusev (Slonimsky 1991, 54), and Gusev said the same. (Slonimsky 1991, 67) Geva said she later danced it with Balanchine. (Geva 1976) Kostrovitskaya recalled that it created quite an uproar at the Theater School, since Balanchine was doing the choreography in secret, behind closed doors guarded by two students. (Slonimsky 1991, 63) Geva said that Balanchine worked quickly, finishing the choreography in two weeks time. (Geva 1976)

In this ballet, Balanchine demonstrated without question his intentions of breaking the traditions of the Maryinsky. From the entrance of the dancers on stage, it would have been obvious to the audience by the costumes that they wore that they were in for a surprise. Kostrovitskaya described that "in 1921 there were still few who appeared onstage in tunics. Dancing on pointe was done only in tutus. The head was adorned with diadems, artificial flowers, and various tinsel. Mungalova wore a light bright tunic and instead of the headdress a narrow ribbon was tied freely around her blond curls" (Slonimsky 1991, 63). Recalling that it was a strict rule of the Imperial Theaters that dancing on pointe was to be done only when the girl wore a tutu, not merely a tradition followed by everyone, (Mc Donagh 1983, 20) by

breaking this rule Balanchine declared his intentions even before dancers took their first steps. The choice of costume also showed the beginning of something that later became common practice for Balanchine and other choreographers, namely the dancers performing in their training clothes. Balanchine, like Goleizovsky had begun to free the dancer from bulky costumes, allowing the audience to see the dancer's body, placing more emphasis on the dance itself rather than the other components. Wearing a tunic in the 1920's would be comparable to dancers performing on stage in leotards and tights, a practice that Balanchine continued throughout his career. This was a stark break from the elaborate sets and costumes in Petipa's ballets and indicated that he would take a different direction both from these productions as well as the equally elaborate productions of the Ballets Russes. Whereas these artists sought to achieve Wagner's Gesamtkunstwerk, Balanchine worked to develop choreography as the primary intention of a work even at an early stage.

Although by today's standards the ballet would be considered "chaste" in the words of Gusev, (Slonimsky 1991, 67) at the time it was a complete break from the standards required by the Maryinsky Theater and caused an uproar for its eroticism. Souritz also quoted Balanchine, saying that: "…some of the teachers considered this piece not academic enough, and, most importantly, 'scandalous.' They talked about its 'eroticism.' 'As I remember it today,' said Balanchine, 'it would be perfectly suitable for a presentation in a young ladies' seminary.'" (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 74) In another source he recalled: "I was in trouble…because I made a pas de deux in which I lay on the floor and the girl leaned over in an arabesque and touched me with her lips. That was thought indecent and at age 15, I was nearly thrown out." (Joseph 2002, 42)

Danilova recalled that the story was about "a young girl and young boy sort of courting." (Danilova 1978-1979) She went on to explain that she "thought it was the first sexy ballet…talking in vulgar language—that we saw and this awakened let's say first emotions…in form of dancing, not in form of mime…which was new to all of us." (Danilova 1978) In this statement Danilova explained an important change that was taking place in the transformation of ballet, namely that emotions could be portrayed on stage simply by dance, and not by the use of standard classical mime vocabulary as was typical in both romantic and classical ballets. The simple act of expressing the emotions through dance represented an important break from the classical traditions, interesting especially because this was Balanchine's very first choreographic attempt and he seemed to be expanding what

ballet could be even from the first. Kostrovitskaya described how he departed from the norm:

> We were accustomed to seeing in the former Maryinsky Theater and in the school the usual adagio développés, traditional turns from fourth position which the ballerina performed with support from her partner. Before the turns, there would be fear on her face, and a relieved smile at the conclusion. There was none of that here. Rubenstein's *Night*, in Balanchine's dance, was a lyrical duet of restrained passion-half poses, half arabesques…tender passages of adagio without the conventional movements of legs raised on the principle of 'the higher, the better.' Of course, later on in various concert pieces, artists performed love duets, called adagios, with disregard for the traditions of Petipa. But then, and especially in the school, this was completely new. (Slonimsky 1991, 63)

Gusev claimed that this dance was a direct imitation of the early Goleizovsky, (Slonimsky 1991, 67) although Balanchine first saw the Moscow Chamber Ballet perform years later. It is possible that he had heard of the Goleizovsky's experiments, or that he was simply working with the same elements. Kostrovitskaya's description of *La Nuit* did imply that, like Goleizovsky, the combinations and poses flowed together in fluid movement as opposed to the held positions and series of combinations typical of Petipa's pas de deux. In addition, Goleizovsky wanted his dancers to wear as little clothing as possible so that the audience could see their bodies. Having the girl dance in a tunic definitely allowed the audience to see more than if she had worn a traditional tutu. Like Goleizovsky, Balanchine had begun to work with the concept of pure dance, using the dance itself to express deep emotions, rather than using mimed sections between the dances to express things.

Although according to the statements of the witnesses of this dance it would seem that Balanchine was successful in expressing emotions, he achieved this more fully in the dance he choreographed together with Ivanova, *Valse Triste. La Nuit* was created two years before Balanchine saw Duncan perform in St. Petersburg. Fokine was also strongly influenced by her work, and it is likely that expressing emotions through the dance was something that Balanchine picked up from him. However, this characteristic became much more evident in *Valse Triste*, which Balanchine and Ivanova choreographed as a result of having seen Duncan perform, and was a direct imitation of her work. It is important to note that fundamental characteristics of both Goleizovsky and Duncan had found their way indirectly into Balanchine's work long before he saw them perform, indicating the extent of

the influence their reforms were already having on the Russian artistic world, in particular the dance world.

In addition to the use of dance itself to express emotion, Balanchine demonstrated another specific break from the classical tradition in his choice of steps. He used partnering moves which were innovative choreographically, advancing the plot. The most memorable was an arabesque supported by a kiss. Geva said that he was "standing on one knee and I was bent forward in a very high arabesque. My arms were back and I held my mouth to his mouth in a kiss and that's where the balance was." (Geva 1976) It is unclear if Balanchine was performing this position on one knee or two-either is possible. In one source he says he was lying on the floor, (Joseph 2002, 42) but it is more likely that he was kneeling, out of simple anatomical reasons. This arm position in arabesque is also a direct copy of the Swan Queen in *Swan Lake.* (Geva 1976) In another source Geva recalled: "Balanchine was on his knees, and I had to hold myself in an arabesque just on my mouth or lose my balance. I didn't hold it long, believe me. That's an example of erotic dance that Balanchine could produce-he always had a little bit of eroticism everywhere in his work." (Geva 1991, 12) Holding the balance with their mouths was a shocking step for Balanchine to make, again, one maybe typical for a teenager trying to shake up his elders rather than an artist making sweeping reforms.

Another step recalled by the dancers later became a distinguishing feature of Soviet partnering, namely the use of a lift high over the head. Danilova described that final pose: "At the end, young male dancer pulls girl dancer on arabesque with straight arm over his head. It was sensational; we never saw anything like it." (Derby 1980, 9) In another interview she recalled that he carried her away in this lift. (Danilova 1978) Mungalova said that "for the first time, acrobatic lifts appeared in our school." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 74) The erotic connotations of this move also shocked both the students and the teachers. "The boy conquered the girl: he lifted her in arabesque and held her with a straight arm overhead, then carried her off into the wings-so she was his!" (Danilova 1988, 44) In another source she said that "It was shocking, yes, that the boy sort of succeeded in taking the girl. "(Danilova 1978-1979) This move certainly astonished the students accustomed to a school environment that kept the boys and girls strictly separated from one another, awaking in the students what Gusev described as "animal passions." (Slonimsky 1991, 67)

Equal or perhaps surpassing the positive astonishment of the student was the negative reaction of the school authorities. Danilova recalled that the directress of the school thought that Balanchine should be expelled for such a daring number. (Danilova 1978-1979) Gusev, however, said that they were merely reproached for indecency. (Slonimsky 1991, 67) Interestingly, however, Slonimsky reported a different reaction: despite the upset over *La Nuit*, many began to see Balanchine's potential as a choreographer and people began to speak of him as a prospective ballet master. (Slonimsky 1991, 54)

La Nuit made such an impression that even after Balanchine left it continued to be performed for decades in the Soviet Union, (Slonimsky 1991, 54) most likely perpetuated by the dancers it was originally choreographed on, Gusev and Mungalova, who, according to Kostrovitskaya, performed it on various stages in St. Petersburg long after the Soviet Dancers completed their tour of Germany and the dance was "lost" to the West. (Slonimsky 1991, 63)

2.6 Summary and Analysis Chapter 2

In addressing the question of how Balanchine transformed ballet and examining his early training, this chapter has shown that the foundation of his art was classical ballet in its purist form. He trained at the Theater School both before and after the Revolution and danced in the Maryinsky, where Petipa worked as chief choreographer for several decades. Balanchine was too young to have worked directly with Petipa however he learned the style, the vocabulary and the choreography from those who had worked directly with him. This vocabulary was the basis for his ballets for his entire career- he never rejected it completely despite his sometimes extreme experiments during his teenage years. In short, he had the most direct classical foundation that a dancer of his generation could have had. Added to this foundation, during the time that Balanchine was a student, Fokine's ballets were regularly performed both in St. Petersburg and in Western Europe by the Ballets Russes. Balanchine was well acquainted with his work and recalled that the ballet *Les Sylphides* impacted him in two ways. First, it was the first abstract ballet in which he came into contact. It is well known that his mature work was primarily plotless, sometimes having an underlying theme, but rarely a complete storyline. Secondly, Fokine's use of the aesthetic of the ballet blanc became an important element in several of Balanchine's later ballets, most notably *Serenade* (1934) and *Apollo* (1928).

At the time that he created *La Nuit*, Balanchine had not yet seen the work of the choreographers Goleizovsky or Duncan, both of whom strongly influenced his work just a few years later. However, it is clear that from the very first Balanchine would not be content following the rules of the Academic Theaters[20]. His placement of the female dancer in pointe shoes and practice clothes was a departure from the classical style with its elaborate sets and costumes. This gesture alone set him apart from his classmates in that he had the courage to go against the rules. In addition to his courage in the realm of costuming, he immediately began to expand upon what he had learned in school in the choreography itself, creating an adagio with movements which flowed together, as opposed to the series of combinations typical of Petipa's ballets. In this ballet he even went so far as to create new partnering moves: the overhead lift. Such lifts are common place today, but when *La Nuit* was first performed it created a sensation because it was the first time anyone had seen anything like it. As Slonimsky recalled, this ballet was so unique for the time that people began to see a potential ballet master in the sixteen year old student.

As stated, at this point in his development, Balanchine learned the vocabulary of ballet and began to expand upon what he had learned as well as to rebel against the institutions which he disliked. However, his innovations had not yet strayed far from his classical background. At this early date, he was working with dancers trained at Theater School most of whom did not have what later became known as the Balanchine body. It was after he graduated from Theater School that he began to be exposed to choreographers and art movements outside the Academic Theater. It was then that his experiments became more extreme, and his dances began to resemble classical ballet less and less.

Chapter 3

Early Soviet Influences:

From Classical to the Avant-garde

Times were desperate in St. Petersburg in the early 1920's. Since the Revolution of 1917, the population was lacking in the essentials: food, heat and medicine. Funeral processions were a daily sight on the streets. Theater School, where Balanchine and his friends studied, was closed for a time, but was later reopened. Danilova described how the students lived and worked in these conditions:

> We continued our lessons, but suddenly we had nothing to eat and finally hunger came. There was no heat and no food and it was difficult to dance. Everything was slowly decaying. It was gruesome, and I was thinking this would be my life, and you live only once…It was kind of terror in a way, you know-petrified of being arrested suddenly for your thoughts or a wrong word at a wrong time. Everything started to demoralize, slowly but surely. There was no future." (Danilova 182)

During the first years after the Revolution, ballet's future in the Soviet Union was uncertain; many in the new government suggested that it be completely disbanded. As a relic of a corrupt czarist society, it had no place in the revolutionary society. The intervention of Anatoly Lunacharsky, Commissar of Enlightenment, allowed for the continuation of the former Imperial Theaters and Schools, renaming them "Academic". Their new purpose, however, rather than to entertain the elite, would be to promote Communist ideology. Souritz discussed a conference that was held in May 1924 at the Theatrical Museum concerning the ideological and artistic goals of the official theaters. She said that "here Lunacharsky expressed his views concerning the abilities of opera and ballet to create a *féerie* or heroic spectacle essential to the masses. There is every reason to think that Lopukhov, as the leader of the opera and the ballet theater company, was at this conference and that what Lunacharsky said could only have strengthened his intention to present a dance allegory." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 279) Lunacharsky's ideas spread quickly, and in that same year one American paper reported that "the Soviet government has decided to introduce a definitely proletarian element onto the ballet stage." (*M Post* 1924 "Revolutionary

Ballet for Moscow") In 1929, in an article describing the Communist ballet *The Red Poppy, Dance Magazine* stated that the new Soviet choreographers

> …are anxious to get away from the old hackneyed poses and steps of prescribed mannerism and get closer the modern drama by displaying dramatic postures, individuality, modern dynamics and all that goes with our mechanical age. We are no longer dancing to the loafing bourgeois rich, but to the hard working proletarians. We do not emphasize so much the idea of amusement as we do that of a dramatic cult and intellectual awakening." (Narody 1929, 55)

Two large scale ballets done with contemporary themes were Lopukhov's *The Red Whirlwind* (1924) and Goleizovsky's ballet *The Whirlwind* (1927). These two works had similar subjects as well as titles. According to Souritz, the choreographers "chose exactly the same symbolic image-the image of the vortex, a whirlwind, a hurricane passing over the earth, smashing and uprooting everything old." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 278) Lunacharsky's hopes for the ballet as a means of promoting Communist ideology, however, did not fall on fertile soil. Ballets containing revolutionary themes were not successful with audiences, and most were performed very few times. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 277) Lopukhov himself considered *The Red Whirlwind* to be his greatest failure.

Much to the surprise of the government and the old school authorities at the State Academic Theaters, however, the new proletarian public was enthralled with the old ballets, and the new non-subscription public "packed the theater to overflowing" and "applauded and howled with such violence that all the old theater rats scurried off in horror to the snuggest little holes." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's*, 43-44) The positive response surprised many in the government and in the old school, and helped to secure the future of ballet. The ballet became so popular that instead of the usual 40 or 50 performances a year, there were 60 to 70 performances in the 1919-1920 Maryinsky season, some done under the most extreme circumstances. One reporter recalled that "during the years of cold and famine performances were staged…with the thermometer registering at 6 degrees below zero. The dancers' shoulders steamed. Their breath floated like clouds. The audience, composed of Red soldiers and workmen dressed in sheepskin coats and felt boots, stamped their feet in the orchestra stalls to keep warm." (McLove 1925, 9) Supplies were also short. Instead of changing their shoes at every act of the performances, the dancers had to

wear one pair for up to fourteen performances. Since everyone was undernourished, many dancers fell ill. However, despite these extreme conditions, not a single performance was canceled for years. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 44)

In addition to the desperate living conditions, this period was a time of great political upheaval. Differing factions were vying for power, a dangerous situation for everyone. Danilova's description of her fear of being arrested for the wrong thoughts demonstrates the insecurity in which the citizens of St. Petersburg lived. In the summer of 1924 these fears were realized among the members of the Young Ballet when one of their friends, the celebrated dancer Lydia Ivanova, was murdered by the secret police for being privy to information that was not to leave the Soviet Union just days before she planned to tour Germany with Balanchine, Geva, and Danilova. (Danilova 1988, 62) Like Danilova, Geva recalled that they felt a constant threat, even before Ivanova's death. (Geva 1976)

Paradoxically, the unstable political situation in Russia in the 1920's enabled a great blossoming of the arts. The grip of the Czar and his strict rule for artistic endeavors, especially those undertaken in his personally funded ballet company, had been released by his overthrow, and the restrictions later imposed by Stalin had not yet come into play.[1] This outpouring of creativity was evident in all the arts, and Balanchine could not help but to be greatly influenced by this atmosphere. Hunger also encouraged Balanchine and other artists to seek new venues for their work, a practice that had been forbidden to Maryinsky dancers in former times, but was now being overlooked due to the extreme poverty. Related to, but not directly a part of, the booming black market in St. Petersburg, a circuit of variety and cabaret type programs sprang up all over St. Petersburg. These shows, known as halutras, took place in small theaters or concert halls. Geva described these performances as being "part recital, part vaudeville-with comedians, singers, jugglers, dancers, concert pianists all flung together in one show." (Geva 1984, 228) Several Maryinsky dancers including well known soloists performed in the halutras as a means of extra income. Payment was made in money, or, equally as welcome, in food, flour or salt.

The amount of halutras running at any given time varied, partially due to its illegal status. Although they were officially prohibited, their existence was tolerated because of the hard times. (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 30) Raids on the black market tended to slow down halutras for short periods of time, but the breaks were never long, and they provided

entertainment and distraction from hardship. In addition to performing for extra income, some dancers and artists used them to experiment with new styles and ideas. For Balanchine and his dancers, it was the ideal environment to try out his new dances on an audience and provided almost inexhaustible performance opportunities. Danilova recalled that as soon as they had performed one new dance, Balanchine had already begun to choreograph the next.

During this time, Balanchine performed in small groups, primarily with Tamara Geva, his wife, as well as Alexandra Danilova and Lydia Ivanova. These two young Maryinsky soloists were well known in St. Petersburg and regularly performed in halutras to earn extra income.[2] Although they had been acquainted with Balanchine since childhood, they became aware of his choreographic talents when he performed some of his pieces with Geva. Eventually a group of 15 students and young Maryinsky dancers came together and formed what became known as the Young Ballet.

Balanchine's earliest inspirations were born out of his training at Theater School and as a corps dancer in the Maryinsky. Equally important to his early works was the work of three experimental choreographers who left undeniable marks on Soviet dance: Kasian Goleizovsky, Fyodor Lopukhov, and Isadora Duncan. Before analyzing the repertory of the Young Ballet, an examination of the work of these three choreographers shows the origin of central elements which became trademarks of Balanchine's mature work.

3.1 Kasian Goleizovsky: Preacher of Pure Dance

Describing Soviet ballet, in 1952 Slonimsky said that "in the 1920's Soviet Ballet went through all the phases of barefoot naturalism, strident constructivism, unnatural plastic expressionism and erotic orientalism." (Taper 1984, 57) A child of his times, all of these elements can be found in Balanchine's early works. Slonimsky went on to say that "time and reality, as usual, exposed the fallacy of the then prevailing conceptions," (Taper 1984, 57) a statement which equally applies to Balanchine's work. Through his different choreographic experiments, he brought ballet though a transformation, maintaining some of the elements of the Soviet avant-garde, discarding others. Of his early ballets, *Funeral March* shows the most direct influence of the Constructivists, whose ideas permeated all the art forms of this decade. It was especially present in Meyerhold's[3] theater and in the work of Moscow choreographer Kasian Goleizovsky who had worked directly with Meyerhold. In autumn

1922 Goleizovsky's Chamber Ballet performed in St. Petersburg, and all of Balanchine's friends report that he was greatly inspired by what he saw. Peter Gusev, collaborator and friend of Balanchine, recalled that "Goleizovsky seemed miraculous to us…Balanchine raved about him. We never missed one concert of his Chamber Ballet and spoke about it endlessly." (Slonimsky 1991, 50)

Of the Soviet choreographers of the 1920's, Goleizovsky is one of the most important. Despite having lived out his career in relative obscurity after Soviet ballet turned its focus towards preserving the classics, Soviet dance historians still recognized his contribution. One Soviet book on dance history published in 1948 stated that "one may well imagine how important Goleizovsky's contribution to the Soviet ballet is. Indeed, there is hardly a single choreographer today who has not drawn on the new forms introduced by Goleizovsky." (Mamontov 1947, 60) Goleizovsky had studied ballet first in Moscow and then in St. Petersburg and, for a short time, had been a member of the Maryinsky before joining the Bolshoi. In 1918, he left to form his own school and ensemble, later known as the Moscow Chamber Ballet, which existed from 1919 to 1925. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 165) He, along with many others, felt that the ballet had become too institutionalized and that it possessed no more creative impulse. In his manifesto he wrote that "at the present time the art of that classical dance is experiencing its decadence. The stunt on which this dance is built, unpoeticized, is not illuminated by an idea, but on the contrary, is bared and the spectator goes into raptures chiefly over such combinations as thirty-two and more fouettés, six or eight turns à la terre, etc." (Banes 1983, 71) In his mind, performances at the Academic Theaters were merely pure technique combined with spectacle. Souritz said that his was an "art born in protest. The choreographer rebelled against the old morality, against the stagnant forms and the stagnant content of the old ballet." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 169) His choreography broke with the stereotypical series of steps and cliques typical of the classical tradition. In breaking with tradition, he changed "…the poised harmony of the corps de ballet to the screaming colors of a musical revue, graceful tour en l'air and refined attitudes to intricate sculptural groups and acrobatic virtuosity." (Mamontov 1947, 59-60) With the "passion of a preacher" he supported the development of "pure dance." Rather than using an external plot, he sought to express emotions through the dance itself: "Goleizovsky did not need an external plot at all; his dances are the dynamic, plastic expression of emotion" (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers*

of the 1920's, 170) in which steps unfolded in fluid movement. He introduced the sixth position to ballet described by him as "when both a person's feet are on the floor, touching one another closely at the heels and the big toes." (Banes 1983, 73) Balanchine often used this position in his early works, especially to be noted for its use in *Valse Triste* and *Apollo*. Gusev said that "for Goleizovsky…the line is broken, curved, softened, with no inner strength, as it would have been in circus or acrobatics, but refined and delicately bizarre, with a persistent rejection of everything resembling the classical." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 180) Rather than telling a story or developing the characters, he tried to communicate all their emotions through dance movements. Like other reformers working both in Russia and with the Ballets Russes in western Europe, he chose musical accompaniment that had no obvious rhythm, but was subtle and complicated, using composers such as Prokofiev, Strauss, Liszt, Scriabin, and Debussy, who had up to then been considered inappropriate for dance. His dancers wore as little clothing as possible to enable the utmost freedom of movement. He wanted to "reveal to the audience the body of the dancer as a whole, unencumbered by any extraneous detail." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 183) As later with Balanchine, many protested against his lack of costumes. According to Souritz:

> Sometimes-especially in the NEP years-there was a desire to shock the audience, which saw in these productions only nudity and voluptuous movements. Many critics were irritated by 'the twisted poses, the everlasting embraces of legs.' They warned the choreographer that he was 'balancing on the very edge of the precipice called pornography'…But gradually, without compromising what was most important, Goleizovsky freed himself from decadent tendencies and moved on to brighter, more noble images. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 176)

At first sight, it may seem that the qualities which describe Goleizovsky are similar to many other dance experiments in the 1920's in Russia. However his work differed from that of other influential choreographers, most notably Isadora Duncan, in that his Chamber Ballet consisted of well trained ballet dancers. Souritz said that he did not at all reject classical dance and was "delighted with its innumerable possibilities, especially with the system of educating the performer." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers in the 1920's,* 178) Their movements, however, did not resemble the classical dance. Danilova recalled that, although

all the dancers were classically trained, their movements were unusual and "sometimes bizarre." (Danilova 1988, 58)

Not all were supportive of the new artist trends. In both Moscow and St. Petersburg a conflict soon arose in the Academic Theaters between those wanting reform in the ballet and those determined to preserve the classics. In a 1925 article on Goleizovsky's reforms, the New York Times reported that:

> Moscow is divided into two camps: one group insists on retaining the old forms of dancing, the other clamors for a 'revolution' in the ballet. In other words, one group supports the classical, while the other advocates the so-called 'constructive' ballet …To the first belong those who value art in itself, independent of modern labels; to the second, those who, first of all are looking for new forms in arts and who are ready to bow to any one who declares himself a leader in revolutionary art. (Mc Love 1925, 8)

At one point Goleizovsky was officially banned from the Bolshoi[4] and began working instead in variety theaters. As the influence of Moscow's experimental choreographers spread to St. Petersburg, so did the conflict. At an early stage it became clear to Balanchine that the directors of the Academic Theaters were tending towards the classics and that his choreographic endeavors were being frowned upon. Since he would have no future there as a choreographer, he turned to other venues such as halutras to perform his dances.

In 1922 the Chamber Ballet came to St. Petersburg and presented a program which included *The Afternoon of a Faun*, music by Claude Debussy, the same to which Nijinsky had also choreographed his *Afternoon of a Faun*. In addition they performed *Salomé* to Richard Strauss, and two other ballets, *Medtneriana* and S*criabiniana.* (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 167) *Salomé* was not based on the story of Salomé[5] and John the Baptist, but was "something like a dance of seven veils." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 175) Recalling the performance, Danilova told about the costume worn by a dancer in the ballet *Salomé.* "She wore a tulle leotard with a transparent brassiere, so that she looked absolutely naked" (Danilova 1988, 58). She also recalled that "there were twelve boys who threw Salomé into the air; they did all kinds of things." (Danilova 1988, 58) Souritz described the dance:

> A high scaffold was built onstage. When Salomé…appeared on it, a huge moon shone behind her and the dancer seemed to be surrounded with radiance. Young men stood below the scaffold. The lighting of this scene was designed so that, according to Goleizovsky, "it was as if the radiance came from the ballerina herself, and her hands were illuminated by another color." She began her "conversation" with the youths with her arms, spreading them wide apart and moving them slowly, "creating the impression that her fingers were growing infinitely longer," then the ballerina rushed down from the scaffold and the youths all caught her as she leaped. She wore multi-colored veils…and each of the veils corresponded to a specific movement of the body and a specific set of gestures. While dancing, Salomé went to each of the youths in turn; for each of them was destined one of the veils and the movements associated with it. The youths encircled her in a frenzy of passion and ecstasy catching her every gesture, every glance…By the end of the dance, Salome was almost completely naked. The youths gathered together again and lifted her to the upper platform… (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 175)

This description gives clues as to some of the elements which impacted Balanchine's choreography of this time period as well as those of his works at the Ballets Russes and even later. Minimal costumes and eroticism do appear in some of his early works, such as *Enigma. Apollo* and *Le Chant du Rossignol* both utilized platforms and placed dancers on different levels. Goleizovsky's influence on these works will be discussed in more detail in this study when these ballets are analyzed.

Souritz said that *The Afternoon of a Faun* was one of Goleizovsky's most significant works. It was performed on several platforms with their ledges one above another and, on the sides, two sets of stairs. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 173) The dancers did not leave their platforms, but performed on them. "Everything was swaying, bending, and flowing, as if its contours were blurred. This voluptuous dance, pervaded with languid laziness, undoubtedly expressed the qualities of Debussy's meditative, sensual music." (Souritz 1990, *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 175) She described the choreography:

> Acrobatic and gymnastic elements were widely used in the dance; it was built on shifting poses that were extravagant, affected, tense, and unfamiliar…two platforms of the set are visible; on the upper one Ualenta…is standing in a mannered pose; the faun…supports her with one hand. The ballerina's bare leg is lifted and forms a sharp angle; her bare foot rests on the head of another dancer (a nymph), positioned a step lower. The latter is half reclining, lifting a bent leg upward and resting the other on a lower step of the

> set. On the lower step, yet another dancer repeats this pose, slightly altered. Alongside stands a fourth, grasping her lifted bare leg in her hand. All this together forms a complex, interwoven pattern of lifted legs, arms, heads, and bodies wound and braided with a cord…this pattern constantly changed although the dancers almost never left their places… (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,*, 174-175).

The use of the platforms was seen in Balanchine's later ballets, notably in later versions of *Apollo*. This ballet also demonstrated another important element that found its way into Balanchine's later choreography, one that appeared first in *Apollo*, and a few years later in S*erenade*, namely that of the knotting and unknotting of arms with the dancers connected to one another through the arms or legs. In addition, the formation of the bodies on different levels, as Balanchine later used in *Funeral March* and *La Chatte* possibly had its origins in this ballet.

It is also possible that another of Goleizovsky's ballets directly influenced Balanchine's work; *Medtneriana* included a funeral march danced by five women. Souritz said that "in the beginning the dancers moved slowly with heavy steps and bowed heads, forming a compact group; then their tight formation broke apart." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 172) In addition, Souritz says that they wore costumes clearly outlined with crosses, and that the ballerinas wore black caps. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 173) The description of this dance is strikingly similar to Kostrovitskaya's description of Balanchine's *Funeral March.*

Balanchine was impressed and inspired by these new forms of movement. Slonimsky said that after seeing the concerts, the members of the Young Ballet knew in which direction they should proceed, and it would seem that much of Balanchine's early work was directly copied from Goleizovsky. (Slonimsky 1991 67) Danilova believed that he went one step further than Goleizovsky:

> He was influenced by Kasian Goleizovsky, but Goleizovsky was more narrower. Balanchine's point of view on art is much broader. Goleizovsky was a step between…Goleizovsky show us that we can be different style of dancing than just position and *développé à la seconde*. Balanchine would do anything. You know, if you think that classic is all on the toes, and then we go bourréeing on flat feet…it was a different way of dancing." (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 23)

Later in his life, Balanchine became famous for the further development of Goleizovsky's idea of pure dance although at this point in his career his interests encompassed many other things as well. Seeing Goleizovsky's experiments gave him the courage to stray from convention, and to try "something completely different from what ballet had always been." (Danilova 1988, 59) He became motivated to go ever further than Goleizovsky had gone in his own experiments with the Young Ballet.

3.2 Fyodor Lopukhov: Creator of the *Dance Symphony*

Fyodor Lopukhov's influence on Balanchine's work was as lasting as Goleizovsky's. His experimental ballet, *Dance Symphony: The Magnificence of the Universe*, was, according to Slonimsky, one of the "most memorable and important events of their creative lives and a springboard for further development" for those who participated. (Slonimsky 1991, 56) A brief description of it is vital, since most of the dancers who performed in it were members of the Young Ballet, including Danilova, Ivanova, Balanchine, and Gusev[6].

Lopukhov became artistic director of the Maryinsky in 1922 and, when Balanchine joined the company, had already begun his important work of reconstructing the old ballets. (Souritz 1990 "The Young Balanchine in Russia," 69) According to Souritz:

> For the first five years after the revolution, classical ballets were shown day after day, in the theater in the winter and on the stages of various parks in the summer. Not only were the scenery and costumes worn out, but also distortions had been introduced into the choreography. Cutbacks in the company required a reduction of the cast in many dances; one section would be thrown out, another hurriedly inserted. The design was ruined and the choreography rendered meaningless. The old ballets urgently needed to be put back in order." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 257)

Artist and set designer for the Ballets Russes Alexander Benois, also recalled that the old choreography had changed beyond recognition simply because of time. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 258) Balanchine and the other dancers of the Young Ballet performed at the Maryinsky during the 1922-1923 and 1923-1924 seasons, the primary years in which Lopukhov restored almost all of the ballets from the past.[7] The significance in these dates lies in that Balanchine and Danilova, who were instrumental in staging the classical repertory in the United States, had directly performed in Lopukhov's reconstructions of the

classics. In addition, despite Balanchine's rebellion against the classics in his own choreography at the time, the programs of the Young Ballet were mixed and always included pas de deux by Petipa and dances by Fokine. According to Souritz, "this implied, incidentally, that Balanchivadze was not planning to renounce the legacy of the past completely." (Souritz 1990, *Soviet Choreographers of the1920's,* 76)

In his own choreography, Lopukhov is credited with having tried out every fashionable trend, including acrobatics, folkdances, sports movements, using classical dance only for virtuosity, even going so far as to create dances without music and dances which included speech and song. (Mamontov 1947, 61) In his version of the *Firebird* (1921) which he choreographed on Danilova, "he used acrobatic movements and supports that were new to the academic stage. There were high lifts with promenades during which the dancer sat on her partner's shoulders or chest. All sorts of circling, turning movements were used…" (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 264) While choreographing the *Firebird*[8], Lopukhov began developing his sense of the musicality, something which he had first learned from Petipa's ballets.

The creation of *Dance Symphony* began as Lopukhov proposed that Balanchine's group join him in creating a ballet to Beethoven's Fourth Symphony. The production was "experimental, unfunded, and had to be rehearsed in the summer, during vacation." (Slonimsky 1991, 55) Souritz said that *Dance Symphony* expressed one of the most important trends in dance in the twentieth century, namely "the rapprochement of dance with symphonic music to the point of creating ballets that are movement analogous to symphonic works."(Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 267) This step was a natural result of Duncan's performances to symphonic music. Souritz stated that Lopukhov's goal was to create a picture that corresponded to the musical images. He called it "dancing the music," not "close to the music," "to the music," or "in the music"[9]. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 275) In addition to his use of symphonic music, he sought to create a work of "pure dance outside of concrete action" which was "intended to express thoughts drawn from the symphony and therefore formally subordinated to its structure as well." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 267) He hoped to prove that dance alone could be the highest goal of a work, not merely a means to express a drama. Eighteen dancers performed in this dance which had no plot, but contained steps that were both classical and a kind of "demi-character free movement interspersed with elements of

acrobatics." (Willis-Aarnio 2002, 389) Danilova recalled that it was the first time she was confronted with syncopation. (Twysden 1947, 45)

Lincoln Kirstein, who later convinced Balanchine to come to America to start a ballet company, said that the *Dance Symphony* became a prototype for Balanchine's work, particularly his first American piece, *Serenade* (1935). (Kirstein 1984, 218) Souritz best described its importance on Balanchine's choreography, stating that he became a master of this type of ballet in the West, especially the "dance composition as an analogue to musical composition, beyond literary conjectures, dramatic concretization, and subjective interpretation." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 276) His participation in this ballet seems to foreshadow his later work. Gusev described Balanchine's role in the rehearsals:

> When we were preparing *Dance Symphony*, Lopukhov did not fully explain to us the structure and composition of his work. He showed us what to do and we did it. We would not have understood all of the finer points of the choreography (two, three, and four parallel 'voices' in choreographic counterpoint, the leading 'voice' the accompaniment, and so on), if Balanchine had not given it deep thought and had not interpreted it for us…In his treatment of Chopin's *Funeral March,* I see Lopukhov's *Dance Symphony.*"(Slonimsky 1991, 68)

Balanchine himself described the influence of this dance on him: "What Lopukhov did was amazing for that time. He was inspired by literature and painting, but it was basically pure dance, real choreography. You could say it was a work of genius! Others tried to come up with something interesting, but it was nonsense, only Lopukhov was a true genius…Others stood around and criticized Lopukhov, but not I; I tried, I worked with him I learned from him." (Volkov 1985, 70) One newspaper critic said that Balanchine "executed" the dance "with enthusiasm that new fresh type of art that has not yet become boring to them." (Souritz 1990 "The Young Balanchine in Russia," 65) Unfortunately, others did not see the genius of Lopukhov's ballet, and it had only one performance. Its bad reception was partially due to the positioning of its performance after an especially long *Swan Lake* and due to the "pretentious program and fantastic commentaries" which caused him to be attacked by the press. (Slonimsky 1991, 57) The audience seemed unsure of how to react. Danilova said that "about one-third of the audiences applauded and the others were whistling and booing. The theater was in shambles." (Derby 1980, 9) Another performer, Niklas Soliannikov

remembered that "instead of the usual roar of applause there was the silence of the tomb." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 273)

Although he had planned on choreographing other symphonic ballets, the failure of *Dance Symphony* put a halt to Lopukhov's experiments. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographer of the 1920's,* 276) Kirstein believed that the authorities found this work to be "unserviceable to a proletarian revolution and unintelligible to the masses," (Kirstein 1984, 218) perhaps explaining the revolutionary theme of his next ballet, *The Red Whirlwind*[10]. Souritz also mentioned that there seems to have been resistance against the idea of any ballet with no concrete dramatic content until the late 1950's in the Soviet Union. (Souritz 1990, *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 276)

Equally important to his role as artistic director and choreographer was Lopukhov's role as mentor for the young dancers. Slonimsky said that he devoted himself to the dancers. (Slonimsky 1991, 54) Danilova especially remembered him for this role in her life and said that "he guided us and told us to go to the museums to study, to go to the concerts, to be intellectual, to study the languages…he showed deep interest in youth." (Danilova 1978-1979) She also recalled that he helped them to not lose sight of their goals despite the desperate political and social situation. To help them improve, he cast them in roles a little bit beyond their abilities and encouraged them to find something new in themselves to present to the audience at each different role. (Danilova 1988, 54) Throughout his career as the director of the Leningrad Ballet (formerly the Maryinsky), he continued to foster many young dancers. (Mamontov 1947, 61)

3.3 Isadora Duncan: Plastic Expressionism

When the American Isadora Duncan first performed in Russia in 1904, her dancing caused a sensation. She danced barefoot to symphonic music wearing only a tunic and tried to free dance from what she saw as the constraints of technique. Souritz said that her influence extended far beyond the world of dance because Russian thought was ripe for her ideas:

> At that time in Russia, revolutionary changes were taking place on all levels of life. Old standards were being rejected and new trends promoted in literature, painting, music, and theater. What Duncan proclaimed had a special appeal because if corresponded to the

> requirements of this epoch. Her urgings to defy old conventions, to follow one's instincts and to follow nature were easily understood by Russian intellectuals…The free movements of a body liberated from restrain represented a chance to form emancipated individuals. (Souritz 1995, 282)

In 1911 dance critic Andre Levinson explained why her dances found so much resonance:

> Isadora's dances appealed to the advocates of the new theater for a number of reasons. First, her movement idiom was largely self-taught and free-form, a perfect dionysian antithesis to the rigors of the nineteenth-century ballet's apollonian *danse d'école*. Second, the public received her dances as antique artifacts, despite their obvious unauthenticity, and the fact that Isadora preferred to discuss them as dances of the future, not the past." (quoted in Scholl 1994, 52)

Scholl explained that "she demonstrated the possibility of producing and performing dances outside the academy…her dances struck at the heart of the art form: movement to music. Her use of 'concert' music and unorthodox movement vocabulary challenged Russian dance artists to rethink the most basic definitions of their arts." (Scholl 1994, 53) Up to this point, symphonic music had not been used for ballet, but it became normality shortly thereafter as Fokine began choreographing for the Maryinsky and later the Ballets Russes. Her ideas went so far as to completely reject the classical dance; Russian ballerina Kschessinskaya recalled her claiming that it was only a matter of time before academic dance give way to "her new school, based on the study of dance steps and movements of ancient Greece." (Willis-Aarnio 2002, 155-156) Despite her strong anti-ballet stance, and according to Slonimsky, her "extremely limited range of movements" which "at times discredited her very best intentions," (Slonimsky 1991, 49) most of the influential dancers of the first decade of the twentieth century were drawn to her because of her obvious talent and passion.

Her dances provided inspiration to many choreographers, most notably Fokine and Gorsky[11], who at the time sought to free themselves from the constraints of the Academic Theaters. The extent of her influence on Fokine, and through him on Balanchine, is a much contested subject. Souritz said that to Fokine she represented "freedom from pas de deux, pas de trios, and so forth, and freedom from compulsory academic postures." (Souritz 1995, 283) Russian dance historian Vera Krasovskaya also recalled how Duncan influenced his work *Eunice*: "When he himself turned to free dance, he told his performers…to forget the

classical positions of legs and arms, and the toe technique as well. Instead of this, he gave them the movements of dance, like animating the multi-figured compositions from ancient vase paintings." (Willis-Aarnio 2002, 297) Like Duncan, Fokine used Greek art as an inspiration for his dances, as did Nijinsky and Balanchine when they worked as choreographers for Diaghilev.

Although Greek themes have always been present in all forms of western art, Duncan's Greek dances were one of her most obvious legacies for ballet. Just as her dances were based on the images of ancient Greek friezes, vases, and sculptor, other dancers found inspiration in these ancient works of art as well. (Scholl 1994, 52) In *Afternoon of a Faun,* Nijinsky created an entire dance in which the performers moved to give the audience a flat picture. Arms and legs were not moved as they would normally be on the three dimensional stage, but rather were used to fill a two dimensional space, giving the audience an impression similar to the flat pictures of Greek art. Goleizovsky's *Afternoon of a Faun* gave a similar effect in that the dancers moved on platforms, generally not leaving or changing platforms, but using their own space, giving a similar picture to the rows of figures often found on vases. Balanchine's *La Chatte*, based on Aesop's fable the Cat Maiden, was also directly influenced by this tradition. The visual arts also played a role in Balanchine's early choreography. As a young choreographer, Diaghilev "educated" Balanchine by taking him to museums throughout Europe. *La Chatte* ends with a cortege: the dead man is carried off stage by his friends. According to Hodson, Danilova recalled that this position was based on a vase which Balanchine had most likely seen in a museum in Berlin.

It is however, important to note, that while Duncan's dances definitely influenced the use of Greek themes by other choreographers, Greek themes were by no means something new. Joseph explained that both Stravinsky and Benois were impacted by "the ascetic spirit of a Greek inspired classicism epitomized most regally during the monarchy of Louis XIV." (Joseph 2002, 75) Scholl also explained that both Stravinsky and Balanchine had not looked to Duncan in creating *Apollo,* but said that the ballet was as much influenced by French neo-classicism as by Greek antiquity. Both said that some of the symbols in the ballet-the chariot, the three horses and the sun disc-were all symbols of Louis XIV, the sun king. (Scholl 1994, 96) It could be argued that Stravinsky's interest in "everything Greek" (Joseph 2002, 92) could be traced to Duncan's influence, but it was most definitely not the sole source. Petipa's *Sleeping Beauty*, a ballet which served as one of greatest inspirations for many

of the dancers, choreographers, artists, and composers of the Ballets Russes was a grandiose representation of Louis court. The connection between Greek classicism and the court of Louis XIV cannot be overlooked.

Scholl claimed that "Fokine suffered chronic anxiety of influence throughout his career especially where Isadora Duncan was concerned." (Scholl 1994, 59) While she definitely had great influence on his work, it is possible that his problems in this area stemmed to his overreacting to Diaghilev having given Duncan too much credit for his work. (Willis-Aarnio 2002, 267) De Valois thought that much of his inspiration, which has been attributed to Duncan came from another source: "Lovely as the Russian *plastique* work can be, and undeniably their major contribution to the modern classical school, this style is a follow-through of Fokine's style and the influence of the romantic school on him (*not the influence of Isadora Duncan*) leading up to his own choreographic evolution." (de Valois 1977, 141) This statement has obvious bearing on the extent of Duncan's influence on Fokine's aesthetic, particularly regarding his Romantic ballets, in particular *Les Sylphides*. This ballet was one of Balanchine's favorites, and strongly influenced some of his most important works, including *Apollo* and *Serenade*. It is true that the romantic style is much softer and more fluid than the ballet of Petipa's time. The use of harder pointe shoes and more advanced technique led on the one side to more virtuosity, but on the other side made the movement less organic. In this respect de Valois' observations are true. Fokine's reforms are partially a result of his use of not only the style, but also the technique of the Romantic ballets. Fokine's style was, as much of a result of romantic ballet as of Duncan free dance.

In addition to bringing the Greek themes into dance, Duncan showed that emotional depth and expressionism which had been lacking in the Russian ballet were possible. Having seen this expressionism in her performance, its influence on Balanchine's work was direct and undeniable. Balanchine had begun to experiment with expressing emotion through the dance in his first work *La Nuit*. It was the expressionism that Duncan exemplified that Balanchine sought when he worked with Ivanova on *Valse Triste* after they and the other members of the Young Ballet saw her perform. By the time Duncan returned to St. Petersburg in January 1921, she was past her prime.[12] Souritz said that dance critic and historian Yuri Bakhruskin wrote to a friend that she was "too old, too fat, and he was shocked to see her bare one of her breasts at a particularly pathetic moment of her dance, the breast of a not-too-young woman not being nice to look at." (Souritz 1995, 288) In

addition, it would seem that by this time she was already old fashioned. Souritz says that "in the 1920's neither Russian free dance nor Russian ballet had anything more to gain from Duncan. And Duncan's own hostility toward ballet was also out of date, as ballet was in favor with the mass audiences, which appreciated the lavish productions and virtuoso stunts of the ballerinas." (Souritz 1995, 288) However, her passion and dynamic personality still did not fail to influence both the artistic and political world.

Despite her obvious shortcomings, Duncan's performance impacted the dancers of the Young Ballet. Danilova later recalled that, although she was neither as young nor as beautiful as she had been, "never since then has she seen a modern dancer who could be compared with her." (Twysden 1947, 48) Although years later Balanchine said in an interview that "to me it was absolutely unbelievable-a drunken fat woman who for hours was rolling around like a pig. It was the most awful thing," (Taper 1984, 59) he saw in her something he wanted to use in his own choreography. Slonimsky recalled that "Balanchine…went to Duncan's concerts, applauded her performance of the Sixth Symphony of Tchaikovsky and of the 'Internationale' agreed that the liberation of the body was to the music's advantage, and recognized her talent." (Slonimsky 1991, 49) Slonimsky described that both he and Ivanova were "seeking an intensely dramatic plastic expressiveness for dance," something that Duncan's performances embodied. Their ballet *Valse Triste* demonstrated, again in Slonimsky's words, "a kind of Duncanesque rhythmic plasticity," (Slonimsky 1991, 66) which Hodson and Archer also describe as emphasizing the "'Duncanesque *plastique'*, the free torso and fluid port de bras that characterized all Duncan's work." (Hodson and Archer 2003, 1)

3.4 The Young Ballet

After *La Nuit,* Balanchine's choreographic experiments leaned in the direction of the most extreme avant-garde choreographers rather than the academically accepted work of Petipa and Fokine. For this reason, Balanchine's opportunities as choreographer at the Maryinsky became slimmer and slimmer. Shortly after graduation, he formed his own group of dancers known as the Young Ballet. Danilova recalled that "the Youth Ballet was just beginning to gather some momentum when, suddenly, we were summoned by the Maryinsky directors: if we continued to work with Balanchine, we would be expelled from the Theater…as punishment for his experiments. We were all shocked and discouraged…(Danilova 1988,) As time wore on, it became clear that he did not have much

future in the Academic Theaters in Russia, and consequently turned to other venues for his work.

The title of Balanchine's first program for the Young Ballet was called the "Evolution of Ballet, from Petipa, to Fokine through to Balanchivadze". This statement was not unusual for the times. (Taper 1984, 57) The social and political upheaval of the young Soviet Union was seen as the apex of historical development. In essence, all that had happened before had been leading up to this point, the high point in all of human society: political, social, as well as intellectual and artistic. This attitude was reflected in many of the works of the time. Although at the time Balanchine's title was a rather pompous statement to be made by a young choreographer fresh out of Theater School, in hindsight it accurately described the direction the art of ballet took. (Taper 1984, 56)

At this time Balanchine was still a teenager rebelling and experimenting. Some of his ballets showed innovation and promise, but many were unimpressive, probably the reason Balanchine did not continue to perform them and they were subsequently forgotten. They are interesting because of what Balanchine later became, and studying those gives insight into the process his work went through as he transformed ballet. At this point the transformation was in its infant stage.

Balanchine formed his own group of fifteen dancers consisting of students and other young members of the Maryinsky corps de ballet to perform an evening program. This group became known as the Young Ballet and performed in various venues in St. Petersburg in the years 1922-1924. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 73) His friends called his early works "experiments". Danilova recalled that there were "many evenings of experiments then." (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 23) Geva recalled that Balanchine choreographed a lot of small numbers that were performed once, and then he moved on. (Geva 1976) Gusev, Balanchine's closest friend and, according to Slonimsky, his leading male dancer and principal collaborator of the Young Ballet, recalled working with Balanchine: "It was fun to be a kind of guinea pig to him. He always used Mungalova and me like this; and then later he would give the particular work in question to others. We didn't mind in the least. We knew that the next day he would drag us back onstage and torment us until night with more experiments. What a joyous torment it was!" (Slonimsky 1991, 67) Geva also described how she and Balanchine worked together:

> George and I worked almost every evening after class except for those days when he appeared in the ballet at the Maryinsky. We often worked on Saturday afternoons, George experimented, creating combinations that freed the body from the strict bondage of classical form without destroying that form, but in fact extending and expanding it. Because he was an excellent musician…he was able to play movements against sound in a wholly new way…We had many engagements, and no sooner had he tried out a dance in public that George would start choreographing a new one" (Geva 1984, 279).

This group worked long into the night after they had finished their other rehearsals and performances. They sewed their own costumes. (Taper 1984, 55) Souritz described all aspects of the Young Ballet's activities as "haphazard," saying that their music was not selected wisely, and the critic Gvovzdev stated that he used "works by Arensky and Rubinstein that have been played to death, there is a Vilbushevich polka, and there's an amateurish foxtrot." He went on to call Balanchine to "find himself" and to "extricate himself from this state of rebellious restlessness and …fulfill his talents without the assistance of the Moscow decadents." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 76) By Moscow decadents the author was referring to Goleizovsky and Lutkin, another Moscow choreographer, but one which did not seem to have had much influence on Balanchine, despite the critic's claim. However, this statement does accurately describe how he had been impacted by and sought to imitate Goleizovsky.

3.5 Summary and Analysis of Chapter 3

During this phase of Balanchine's career he came into contact with some of the most revolutionary choreographers of his time. Three in particular left a strong mark on him: Lopukhov, Goleizovsky, and Duncan. At the Maryinsky Balanchine worked regularly with Ballet Master Lopukhov both in original choreography as well as his reconstructions of Petipa's ballets. Most importantly for his future development as a choreographer, Balanchine participated in Lopukhov's groundbreaking ballet *Dance Symphony.* In this ballet, Balanchine was first exposed to a dance in which the steps matched the music precisely. Although this ballet was considered a failure, Balanchine saw its value and taking what he had learned, became well known throughout his career for his ability to merge dance and music in a way that no one else was able. As already stated, he perfected the dance symphony; something which today is a common element in ballet, but before Lopukhov, was unknown.

Goleizovsky's influence was as long lasting as Lopukhov's. While still as student, Balanchine had begun to experiment and rebel, but after having seen Goleizovsky perform in St. Petersburg he gained the courage to go beyond what he had been doing before. In particular, Goleizovsky's use of bare feet and the parallel sixth position in his ballets were elements that Balanchine chose to employ in the ballets like *Enigma.* Equally important was the element that Goleizovsky's borrowed from Meyerhold's theater productions: the use of platforms to place the dancers on different levels. This element appears directly in Balanchine's 1925 ballet *Le Chant du Rossignol.* Indirectly, Balanchine began to use bodies to create multi-level formations, as in *Funeral March* and *La Chatte.* These formations took the use of levels one step further than Goleizovsky had gone. Like the overhead lift in *La Nuit,* they were revolutionary. Finally, from Goleizovsky, Balanchine learned to form arm chains in which the dancers held hands or other body parts and wove in and out of formation. This element appears in *Apollo* and *Serenade,* as well as in later works.

Finally, Balanchine was impressed by the expressionism he saw in Duncan. Shortly after seeing her perform in St. Petersburg in 1922, he choreographed the dance *Valse Triste*, a dance meant to be Duncan on pointe. While this dance was very successful, Balanchine seems to have rejected the path of expressionism in his future dances. On the contrary, he is well known to have created dances for the sake of beauty and not to express ideas or emotions. From his contact with Duncan, we first see that Balanchine was impacted by another artist, tried something out, and decided that he no longer wanted to follow that particular direction.

The following chapter gives a detailed examination of some of Balanchine's early works, showing how he began to incorporate elements he had learned from Goleizovsky, Lopukhov, and Duncan as well as Petipa and Fokine into his own work. Most of his earliest dances have been lost and relegated to the pages of history, and for most of them not enough information is available to do full scale reconstructions or stagings. However, they give important clues to Balanchine's early vocabulary and demonstrate his development as a choreographer.

Chapter Four

The Repertory of the Young Ballet

Much of Balanchine's early choreography has been forgotten, even by the dancers who performed it. Putting together different accounts of those dances enables a better, but by no means complete picture. In this endeavor, Slonimsky stated the greatest challenge to the study of Balanchine's early works: "Much has been forgotten, much is perceived differently today, and much was not even properly evaluated at the time." (Slonimsky 1991, 62) While it is important to keep these issues in mind, it does not rule out the importance of evaluating what does exist, nor does it exclude the possibility of coming to a more complete understanding of the times and the choreography.

The most inclusive list of those ballets performed by the Young Ballet was given by Vera Kostrovitskaya[1] in her account in Slonimsky's essay, "Balanchine, the Early Years." The most complete list of Balanchine's early ballets can be found in *Choreography by Balanchine: A Catalogue of Works*. An updated version of this catalogue can be accessed online on the Balanchine Foundation's website. This work was compiled by dancers, witnesses, and dance historians in Russia and other countries. Some of his earliest works were mentioned in the *Catalogue* only in passing under the title *Concert Works* describing that "as a young man, Balanchine frequently created, as he says, 'informal little things,' performed once or twice and then forgotten." (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 54) Geva described that "we had many engagements, and no sooner had we tried out a dance in public than George would start choreographing a new one." (Geva 1984, 279) As Slonimsky said, much of Balanchine's early work has been forgotten, much of it consisted of small dances that he made and tried out in front of an audience, and then dropped, moving on to the next dance.

This chapter will give a choreographic analysis of several of Balanchine's early ballets based on the memories of witnesses. Included are all the ballets in which choreographic details, even if they only involve a few moves, were given by Balanchine, Danilova, Geva, and the accounts in Slonimsky's essay. The following dances[2] were listed in the *Catalogue* but will not be analyzed here: *Waltz and Adagio* (1922), *Romanza* (1922), *Matelotte* (1922), *Valse Caprice* (1923), *Waltz* (1923) *Adagio* (1923), *Spanish Dance* (1923), *Extase* (1923), *Pas de Deux*

(1923), *Polka* (1923), *Oriental Dance* (1923-1924), *Hungarian Gypsy Dance* (1922-1923), *Elegy* (1923), *Invitation to the Dance* (1924), and *Pas de Duex* (1924). Many of these dances were described in newspaper accounts and in Russian literature, but they have not been included in the analysis since no choreographic details can be found in the interviews and documentation used for this analysis.

The first two ballets examined, *The Twelve* (1923) and *Funeral March* (1923), were the only dances that Balanchine choreographed for a larger group of dancers in Russia. The other dances included are solos, duets, and trios: *Orientalia* (1922), *Poème* (1921), *Étude* (1923-1924), various *Waltzes* (1923-1924), and *Valse Triste* (1922).

4.1 *The Twelve*

One of the most memorable performances of the Young Ballet took place at the Duma auditorium. Two numbers in particular, *The Twelve* and *Funeral March*, were recalled by the dancers who performed in them. One of the most outstanding aspects of these two ballets was that they were choreographed specifically to be performed on a circular stage, but could easily be adapted to a normal stage. (Slonimsky 1991, 64) Geva recalled that, at that time, Balanchine "contended that dancing, like sculpture, should be complete and interesting to view from all four sides." (Geva 1984, 300) The fascination described by Geva was inspired by Vsevolod Vsevolodsky-Gerngross, the leader of the experimental Ethnographic Theater in St. Petersburg. Souritz said that he was "obsessed with the idea of an amphitheater for performance, a circular stage surrounded on all sides by seats." This was the kind of stage he built at the Duma auditorium. (Souritz 1990 "The Young Balanchine in Russia," 68)

Souritz also credited Vsevolodsky-Gerngross with the idea for the ballet *The Twelve*. Balanchine was a regular visitor at his home and was familiar with his students' performances. He was particulary impressed by one piece in which a chorus of voices chanted the poem *The Twelve* by Alexander Blok. (Souritz 1990 "The Young Balanchine in Russia," 68) The *Catalogue* said that this dance was done to *The Twelve* and other poems. His use of rhythmic voices rather than music was not only the most memorable aspect of the dance, but also atypical for Balanchine's choreography. Geva recalled that the chorus, composed of fifty of Vsevolodsky-Gerngross' students, "all spoke in rhythm in different

keys, overlapping, stopping." (Geva 1976) Stukolkina, who also performed in this piece, recalled that "what we did was not pantomime, illustrating the text, but a dance." (Stukolkina 1991, 80) Kostrovitskaya, however, said that they were representing in movement what was being chanted by the chorus. (Souritz 1990 "Young Balanchine in Russia," 68) It would seem that the movements did represent the text in some ways. Having been children during the Revolution, many of the themes presented in the poem were close to the dancers of the Young Ballet. The violence and hunger of those years was a daily reminder. In her memoirs, Geva recalled in detail how her house was plundered several times by soldiers and police, something also described in the poem. Death was a daily occurrence in their lives, and the theme appeared often in Balanchine's early work. In addition, the mystical religious symbolism in the poem must have been attractive to Balanchine, who as a child had been fascinated by the rituals of the Russian Orthodox Church.

In the poem itself, Blok combines the elements of the Revolution, which represented Russia's present with mystic Christian elements, which represented Russia's past. Trotsky believed that Blok did not belong to the Revolution[3], but that he accepted it. By writing the poem in 1918, Trotsky believed that he was "reaching out towards us." The price however, was high. "In doing so" continued Trotsky, "he broke down. But the result of his impulse is the most significant work of our epoch." (Trotsky 1924, 125) *The Twelve* was his last poem; he died in 1921, just a few years before Balanchine used his poem for his ballet. Trotsky also believed that this poem was "a cry of despair for the dying past, and yet a cry of despair which rises in a hope for the future." (Trotsky 1924, 125) He used images of the Revolution at its most extreme: a strike of prostitutes, a murder by a member of the Red Guard, the pillaging of a bourgeoisie home. In the last lines of the poem, soldiers were marching and in the very last line, the figure of Jesus Christ appeared.

Describing both *The Twelve* and *Funeral March*, Stukolkina says that "we were asymmetrically moving groups with no real soloists; at times one dancer detached from the group and performed a combination of movements, as if pronouncing a "sentence," then disappearing into the group. The choreography was fluid and strictly subordinated to the music, one pattern running into the other with strict musical and choreographic logic." (Stukolkina 1991, 80) Although she mentions music in this quote, it is possible that the moves described here are a description of *The Twelve,* since the chanting was rhythmic and musical. The dancer detaching herself, dancing a solo, then returning to the group would

serve first to individualize then generalize the twelve soldiers described in the poem. However, it is not clear which sections of the two dances she meant here.

The theme of this poem gives rise to the question of Balanchine's political ideas or involvement at the time. That he later became an American citizen, and demonstrated his patriotism to his new country through his ballet *Stars and Stripes* (1958) is well known. Numerous pictures show him wearing cowboy shirts, hardly typical clothing for a ballet master trained at the Maryinsky. His attraction to American culture began at an early age in St. Petersburg, shown by his association with the experimental group the Factory of Eccentric Actors (FEKS). A short lived group striving for the Americanization of theater, the FEKS claimed Charlie Chaplin as its "ideal and idol" and the circus, jazz, café *chantant*, cinema and boxing to be its 'parents.' (Rudnitsky 1988, 94) Souritz said that it is possible that Balanchine's interest in their work extended to participation. She mentioned a performance of the play *Marriage*: "Kozintzev later remembered this performance as 'fantastic ballet,' and, who knows, maybe Balanchine gave the stage directors at least some advice. He certainly must have seen the production." (Souritz 1990 "The Young Balanchine in Russia," 68) Many of the elements describing the work of the FEKS definitely did reflect many of the elements that Balanchine used in his choreography, from some of his earliest works to his last ones.

One of his first statements upon his return to the Soviet Union in 1962, almost forty years after he left, also revealed his loyalties. Upon his arrival, an interviewer welcomed him to "Russia, home of the classical ballet," to which he replied "I beg your pardon. America is the home of classical ballet. Russia is the home of romantic ballet." (Lewis 2001, 1) Balanchine's response had an aftertaste of disdain, as did other accounts which said that when he was welcomed home, he sharply responded that America was his home and not Russia. (Joseph 2002, 45)This was a sharp contrast to Russian émigrés who left long before the hardships of the Revolution. In the same year, upon his arrival in Russia, Stravinsky "immediately reaffirmed his roots, declaring that he was still Russian to the bone." (Joseph 2002, 45)

While these statements showed his position later in life, they do not reveal where his loyalties were as a young person. Taper mentioned that some of the dancers of the Maryinsky talked about the future of the ballet in the new society. (Taper 1984, 51) He also

said that Balanchine stood in the wings at the Maryinsky listening to debates at the Communist Party meetings, saying that "the debates - grim, involved, devious, tedious- scarcely worked the same magic on him; but they made an impression." (Taper 1984, 48) According to Slonimsky, he participated in numerous discussions: "He could not deny himself contacts with new developments in the arts, of which there were so many at that time. He participated in the innumerable controversies concerning literature, music, and dance engaging in intense discussions on the most diverse subjects." (Slonimsky 1991, 47) Although the "controversies" were mostly artistic in nature, given the times, they could never be debated without political overtones. Slonimsky described these debates:

> It is not surprising that heated debates developed. Is everything in the old repertory good? Are the old fairy-tale plots acceptable? What are the criteria for making decisions, for determining new directions? Subjects which go beyond standard love themes into the great issues of society and humanity? Forms of expressive movement which differ radically from the traditional forms of classical dance? Music which reflects the nature of the new century either in content or in novel forms of expression? ...everywhere there were impassioned discussions on these themes, leading at times to sharp disagreements. Balanchine was swept along in the search for truth and began to speak out. (Slonimsky 1991, 48)

The Revolution itself, although making the lives of him and his friends almost unbearable, also opened the door for his artistic endeavors, something that would have been impossible before.

However, his participation in these debates still does not directly answer the question of his political views at the time. In an interview in 1972, he gave a clue in a short sentence: "I was so sad when Lenin died." (Balanchine 1972) Although he had not been in power for a while, Lenin died in January 1924, only a few months before the Soviet Dancers left St. Petersburg. What Balanchine actually meant by this statement is unclear-in another source he told of his memories of the Bolsheviks and Lenin:

> To survive he was forced to steal food from the Bolshevik troops-troops that eventually closed and occupied the Imperial Ballet Academy in which he was training. Balanchine vividly remembered standing in the crowd below the palace balcony of prima ballerina assoluta Mathilda Kchessinska as Lenin addressed the public: "I remember hearing him that night. I had gone with a group of my fellow students from the school…All of us

> thought the man on the balcony must be a lunatic. Then we were young; we did not understand the Revolution." These were frightening, enduring impressions that left the young man first perplexed, then embittered. (Joseph 2002, 44-45)

In interviews in later years he rarely spoke about the circumstances in St. Petersburg. As in other accounts, in the interview in 1972 he addressed some of the events of his youth, but made only limited statements about the difficult circumstances: "Then came the Revolution. I can't tell you how terrible it was. Finally I left.[4]" (Gruen 1975, 280) Although the restrictions against those who did not strictly follow party lines had begun, Balanchine and other free thinkers continued to work in the years 1922-1924. Stalin, already known for his intolerance within the party, took power in May 1924, and it was only shortly thereafter that Lydia Ivanova was murdered by members of the GPU, the secret police. It is not likely that her death could be directly attributed to Stalin's rise to power, but her murder definitely foreshadowed the brutality of his regime. It would seem that, up to the time of Ivanova's death, Balanchine was skeptical of the political storm around him, his interest and involvement touching primarily those issues that affected him personally. However, Ivanova's death most certainly affected his decision not to return to the Soviet Union.

It would be impossible to get a complete understanding of how this poem would have sounded in its performance by Vsevolodsky-Gerngross' students, partially because it was not simply read aloud from front to back, but was a dramatic interpretation of the piece. In addition the flow and rhythm of the language is very difficult to study through a translation. However, some aspects can be gleaned by looking at a small part of the poem. In her article of the different English translations, Dietz described the rhythm of the poem as being irregular, abrupt and even broken, yet still highly musical. She said that it "combined slogans with marching songs, religious with secular and obscene language." (Dietz 108) In section twelve, in the final verses of the poem, the sound of gunfire was represented.

Geva's described that they spoke in different keys, sometimes overlapping. Possibly the "crack-crack-crack" of gunfire was one of the phrases used to overlap with other sections of the text. This, however, is pure speculation since where or how the overlapping occurred was not described. None of the accounts of the dancers clarified if the overlapping was always within one of the twelve sections, if Balanchine choreographed twelve sections of his dance to the twelve sections of the poem, or if all twelve sections were mixed together.

Dietz also explained that in sections two and three the author used rhythmic couplets and c*hastushki,* "witty colloquial texts sung to a simple melody." (Dietz 110) Geva also recalled the *chastushki* which she described as a "rhythmic reading aloud of Russian limericks." (Geva 1984, 300) An example both of a *chastushki* and the couplets was seen in section three when the soldiers chant their "revolutionary intentions:" (Briggs 1990, 31)

> Our sons have gone
> To serve the Reds
> To serve the Reds
> To risk their heads
> (Blok *The Twelve* Section III)

Again, the rhythm cannot be seen in a translation, but from Geva's description, it is possible to imagine that Balanchine chose to choreograph to this poem in particular because Blok's specific use of language opened up many rhythmic opportunities.

Dressed in national costume, ten or twelve[5] dancers performed a dance something like a Russian square dance. Geva said that "it was George's variation on a Russian square dance done to a boldly changing rhythm that at times approached syncopation."(Geva 1984, 300) Stukolkina described that "the dance had movements very much like Russian folk dances. The rhythm was difficult to grasp. Before performing it to Blok's text, we had many rehearsals with Balanchivadze counting for us." (Stukolkina 1991, 80) Stukolkina's statement that they did not illustrate the text, but merely danced to it is important. Balanchine was not particularly politically inclined, and although he participated in debates regarding the arts at the time and had contact with many who could be considered friends of the Revolution, I do not believe that he chose this poem for its content, but rather for its rhythmic possibilities. It is also possible that he was so impressed with Vsevolodsky-Gerngross' interpretation, which had been performed without movement at the Duma a few days after the Young Ballets first performance there (Souritz 1990 "Young Balanchine in Russia," 68), that he wanted to choreograph to it.

The Twelve was the only ballet Balanchine choreographed for the Young Ballet without music. However, at about the same time, late 1923, the *Catalogue* said that "the Carousel, an 'intellectual cabaret,' opened in Petrograd. For this occasion and subsequently, Balanchine devised movement for poems set to music." (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 65) Although he did choreograph and work with the staging for operas and plays both in St. Petersburg and for

the Ballets Russes, his work was decisively moving in another direction: the symphonism he had encountered in Lopukhov's *Dance Symphony*.

4.2 *Funeral March*

Whereas little choreographic information can be found regarding *The Twelve,* Kostrovitskaya gave a detailed description of *Funeral March*, done to Chopin's music of the same name in Slonimsky's essay. It was also recalled by many who danced in it and saw it. At the time, Balanchine was a great admirer of Chopin, even going so far as to imitate him in his clothing and hairstyle, as early photos show. (Twysden 1947, 46-47)

Most of the dancers vividly recalled the costumes worn by the female dancers for this performance. Danilova said that this was the first time they had costumes for a performance outside the Maryinsky. (Danilova 1972) Kostrovitskaya said that they sewed their own costumes from old calico they had found at home. The "short, grey, close-fitting, sleeveless dresses had a black and silver pattern. The plain gray caps with small discs on the sides of the ears were also embroidered in black and silver. The usual ballet tights and slippers completed the costume." (Slonimsky 1991, 65) Danilova described that they "all had tunics, like they have more or less now with short skirts." (Danilova 1978-1979) In another account she described the headpieces they wore as "cups." (Danilova 1972) Furthermore, she added that "we looked like amazons." (Danilova 1978-1979) These descriptions bear some resemblance to the costumes worn by Goleizovsky's dancers in his funeral march in the ballet *Medtneriana.*

No mention was made of any sets for this ballet, and it is reasonable to assume that, as in all his works in the Soviet Union, he did so without sets. However, Slonimsky did make one reference to the lighting in this ballet. He mentioned a "passage of the dancers followed by light through the audience," (Slonimsky 1991, 65) something that Tatiana Bruni also described in her account of the dance: "As best I recall, the cortege came onto the stage through the audience under a spotlight in the dark." (Slonimsky 1991, 65) This obviously described Geva's entrance as she was carried onto stage, indicating that the dancers entered stage through the audience, not directly from backstage to the stage itself. I would assume that he was referring to the dancers' exit from the stage as well, as this would be the most

logical place in the dance for the performers to move through the audience based on the descriptions of the dance.

Although the non-traditional choice of stage demonstrated the most obvious influence of Constructivist theater in the piece, elements prevailed throughout the ballet. The theme of death itself and the use of Chopin's march brought the everyday reality of those viewing the dance together with the piece. Because the music was heard regularly on the streets of St. Petersburg, the theme of death was unmistakable for the original audience. Geva said that the dancers were mourners, the dead themselves, or spirits. (Geva 1984, 300) Slonimsky said that this dance was a direct reflection of the times, since funeral processions were a daily occurrence in the city and it was typical for Chopin's *Funeral March* to be played for them. (Slonimsky 1991, 65) Slonimsky went on to explain that:

> The slightest opportunity was taken to lay a bridge between the audience and the stage, emphasizing the unity of what was being performed and what had been experienced, the unity of spirit between the audience and the stage heroes. This explains the passage of the dancers followed by light through the audience and the modeling of sculptural groups as if to generalize individual experience. In this respect, Meyerhold[6] was the teacher of everyone-including Balanchine. (Slonimsky 1991, 65-66)

Danilova added to this theme in her description of the women's costumes: "we wore caps and our hair was under inside of caps which really unites every dancer, because you couldn't see different color of hair." (Danilova 1978-1979) Again, the theme of death, in which every person, high and low, both performer and audience is equalized, was reflected in the dancers being united and their individual traits, their hair color, being covered up. As Slonimsky described, the individual was generalized. The dead had no personality and no physical characteristics to tell them apart, no wealth or lack of it to give them a place in society. Since death was the one certain thing for every person who has ever lived, the theme itself united the performers and the audience together in their common fate.

Kostrovitskaya gave this ballet a lot of attention in Slonimsky's essay, describing in detail the different sections of the dance according to their musical sections. Because her detailed description gave a concise picture of the choreography section by section, I will quote it extensively and use it as a base for the comparison of different sources and to analyze the information.

1. Vera Kostrovitskaya in *Funeral March* (1923)

2. Nina Stukolkina in *Funeral March* (1923)

In the first section Kostrovitskaya described how "six female dancers stepped out slowly on pointe, one after another, bowing their heads with sorrow and crossing their arms downward. Reaching the center of the stage, all of them separated with the same steps into a large circle. Raising their crossed arms into the air for a second, they dropped to one knee, facing the outer parts of the stage. They bent forward, arms and head toward the floor." (Slonimsky 1991, 64) The initial steps of the ballet can easily be imagined by this description, especially when the description is compared to the extant photograph of Kostrovitskaya in this ballet. (Photograph 1) Geva stated that they were "building a design of uncompromising grief to the dark down beat" (Geva 1984, 300). This statement clarifies at which point in the music the dancer took steps. The placement of the foot into the fourth position on pointe occurred at the down beat of the music, both in the initial entrance, in the circle which followed and in the dancers' final exit from stage.

At this point, it is important to consider the perspective of the audience viewing this section from all sides. Onlookers from various points in the theater viewed the entrance of the dancers slightly differently, but the circle gave a uniform view to every seat in the auditorium. It is interesting to note that these general patterns were also typical of corps de

ballet numbers of classical ballet; namely the corps entering the stage one after another, performing the same step, as well as the circle formation. Interestingly, Geva mentioned *Giselle*[7] in her description of *Funeral March* in her memoirs. (Geva 1984, 300) The corps de ballet's position on the knee in a circle was reminiscent of the corps dance in the second act of *Giselle.* However, the similarity ends with the basic pattern, since Balanchine intended this formation to be viewed from all sides, a strong break from the classical tradition.[8]

Kostrovitskaya described the next phrase: "Then, to a new musical phrase from the same passage, three young men carried away a girl lying on their back, whom they had lifted high on extended arms…they proceed slowly across the entire stage, slowing down even more at moments of *forte*, and lowering the girl to the floor at the opposite exit. At the same time, they dropped to their knees in the same pose as the others." (Slonimsky 1991, 64) The position of the girls seemed to imply that she was lying flat on her back and being carried across the stage as pallbearers would carry a coffin. Geva, who most likely performed this role, recalled that she was held by the men in a high bridge. (Geva 1976) However, since she was also carried off stage by the men at the end of the ballet, and in light of Kostrovitskaya's description, I think it is likely that she only performed the bridge at the exit, and not at the entrance. She said that "Mungalova and Geva performed this role alternately without any fear during the high lifts, which everyone was still afraid of then and didn't know how to do properly." (Slonimsky 1991, 64)

Danilova also stated that they were carried in certain groups: "Instead of making groups on floor, it was groups in the air." (Danilova 1978-1979) Bruni referred to these groups as well: "the groupings were composed in a very interesting, individual manner." (Slonimsky 1991, 65) The statement directly followed her description of the spotlight, which clearly applied to Geva's group, but immediately after, she seemed to describe other groups as well. Her use of the plural as well as Danilova's description of groups in the air (she also uses the plural) opens the question of whether other dancers also performed group formations and at what point in the ballet they did so. I would suggest that these groups were performed by the dancers after being awakened by Danilova in the second part. Although the descriptions of this part did not specifically describe them, neither did they exclude them.

Kostrovitskaya continued:

> The middle, lyric section of the March began…Danilova appeared; with light, flying steps she went around each kneeling figure as if to waken the pure, human soul from an eternal sleep. Scarcely touching them, she gave them life and, making them rise slowly one by one, she executed slow turns in attitude. Everything somber disappeared; the folded arms became straight; the expression of the faces changed; their eyes became bright, focused on something beautiful far away…There were arabesques on the floor with the body bent forward followed by deep backbends... (Slonimsky 1991, 64-65)

Interesting in this section was Balanchine's use of acrobatics, showing again the Constructivist influence on his work. Geva described this section in her memoirs as well, and recalled that their bodies were "twisting into arches and crosses." (Geva 1984, 300) She also described "whirling spirits," implying turns, not limited to just backbends and arabesques on the floor. Although Kostrovitskaya only specifically mentioned the floor work, it is likely that the dancers performed other steps standing as well (she said that Danilova made them rise). The statement "whirling spirits" could also refer to Danilova's attitude pirouettes; however, I think this is unlikely since hers were said to have been slow. It is feasible, however, that, after rising, the dancers also performed these attitudes. In addition, since Danilova awakened the dancers one at a time and they began to dance, it is reasonable to assume that the dancers in this section were not dancing in unity, but rather at different time performing a similar set of steps, giving the entire picture a feeling of the chaos implied by "whirling spirits." This section showed another important Constructivist influence, namely that of Meyerhold's Biomechanics, demonstrated by Balanchine's use of acrobatics, the bridges and arabesques on the floor as well as the modeling of groups in the air. In contemporary and future works the elements of the Constructivists were also reflected, but they seemed to culminate in Balanchine's *La Chatte,* in which all the elements with which Balanchine experimented in *Funeral March*, the use of non-traditional sets, costumes and lighting, the use of acrobatics and the modeling of the dancers on the floor as well as in the air, were used.

Another interesting aspect in this section of the dance was the different ways those who remember it interpreted this section. Geva said they built a "design of compromising grief to the dark down beat, changing from the mourners into the dead, into whirling spirits, our bodies twisting into arches and crosses." (Geva 1984, 300) This description, "whirling spirits" who "twisted into arches and crosses" seemed to continue the theme of death without hope, the dead are merely joined by all the living, their fate sealed. Kostrovitskaya's

description gave a completely different picture: "everything somber disappeared…the expression of the faces changed; their eyes became bright, focused on something beautiful far away." (Slonimsky 1991, 65) Perhaps these different interpretations merely reflected the speakers' own personal feelings towards death itself, or were an indication of their personal way of dealing with the catastrophic situation surrounding their everyday lives. In any case, I believe that Kostrovitskaya's interpretation of this section is closer to Balanchine's original intentions, simply because he seems to have had a light disposition.

The third and final section of the ballet was described thus: "In the third section of the *March*, musically analogous to the first, all of the dancers-Danilova first, followed by the young men with the girl on their arms and the other six girls-went slowly from the stage one after another, as in the beginning, stretching their arms forward in a gesture of hope." (Slonimsky 1991, 64-65) Again Kostrovitskaya described the "gesture of hope," shown by an extant photograph of dancer Stukolkina. (Photograph 2) It is also probable that this was the section Geva meant when describing that she was held high in the air in an arch. Interestingly, there is no mention of this girl dancing at any other point, perhaps she did simply play the role of the dead, who is later joined in death by those mourning her passing.

The Twelve and *Funeral March*, both choreographed to be performed in the non-traditional round stage of the Duma Arena, were the only ballets choreographed by Balanchine to be viewed from all sides. He did, however, expand upon this experiment of perspectives on a traditional stage at the Ballets Russes from his very first ballet there, *Le Chant du Rossignol*, where he created a double audience of both the emperor and the real audience, effectively making the dance equally viewable from two sides rather than only from the front. According to Hodson and Archer, "Balanchine devised his dances as a double mirror image, reversing movements on either side of the perpendicular and addressing it to both the fictional audience, the Emperor, and the real one beyond the footlights." (Hodson and Archer 1999/2000, 8) The three dimensional formations created by the bodies of the four dancers in *Apollo* also reflected an extension of his experiments with the perspective of the audience in *The Twelve* and *Funeral March*. Although the forms were made to be viewed from the front on a traditional stage, their sculptural nature probably had its origins in these two works.

4.3 *Orientalia*

Orientalia was performed by Geva and Balanchine in Germany, and Geva said that they also performed it at the Empire Theater in London. She said it was a very "strange little dance" performed to the music by Cui. "George played a blind beggar in the street, an old man with a bear, and I was either his daughter or his dancing girl. He rolled out a little carpet, sat down, and mimed playing a string instrument, and I danced on the rug. When we finished the dance, we packed everything up and went away." (Geva 1991, 13) Slonimsky recalled it as having been choreographed when Balanchine's work had already become known in St. Petersburg. According to him, the original oriental dancer was Mlodzinskaya, and was later performed by Geva. He described the dance: "The old man sat on the floor with his legs crossed in oriental fashion and 'spoke' to the dancer with sounds from the tambourine as if prompting her movements." (Slonimsky 1991, 53) It is interesting to note that Geva recalled a string instrument, whereas Slonimsky mentioned a tambourine. A tambourine would be the more likely instrument for a dancer to use to prompt another to movement as Slonimsky described, but it is possible that different instruments were used as an accompaniment in different performances. It is also possible that Balanchine used different props in different performances. However, Danilova said that "Tamara and I would do an Oriental dance with tambourines, from *Khovanshchina*." (Danilova 1988, 62) The catalogue includes *Oriental Dance* from the opera *Khovanshchina*, but lists the cast as Geva and Balanchine. There is a possibility that the dancers confused these two dances.

It would not have been unusual for Balanchine to have chosen to work with an oriental theme since Fokine had produced ballets with oriental themes in the first two decades of the twentieth century. *Orientalia* was very successful with audiences. Slonimsky said that the dancer often took bows for a long time as the old man stood modestly behind her. He recalled that one might have imagined that this was only an accompanist if one did not know that this role was performed by Balanchine. (Slonimsky 1991, 53)

This dance was well liked because it was entertaining, but it did not contain any choreographic innovations. Little was recalled about the dance itself or the costumes worn by the dancers. Souritz listed a few of Balanchine's early ballets, which "from all accounts…did not contain any choreographic innovations." Among these were *Waltz and*

Adagio composed and choreographed by Balanchine for Mungalova and Gusev, *Poème*, *Hungarian Gypsy Dance*, and *Orientalia.* (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 74)

4.4 *Poème* and *Waltzes*

Poème and various *Waltzes* were pas de deux performed by the dancers of the Young Ballet at different performances. None are described in detail in the records, but a few elements are mentioned and it is worthwhile to examine them.

Poème was performed by Balanchine and Danilova to the music of Fibich. Danilova said that first she danced it with Balanchine, and later with Mikhail Dudko, who became a famous soloist with the Kirov Ballet. (Danilova 1978-1979) Kostrovitskaya described Danilova as being "irreproachably formed…with her finely molded severe features framed in golden hair, wearing a transparent bright blue tunic." She was the "embodiment of pure, cold beauty." (Slonimsky 1991, 63) Kostrovitskaya recalled the choreography:

> Balanchine …lifted Danilova in the classic arabesque and lowered her softly on pointe. The adagio began, but again without the usual turns and technical tricks (although Danilova had many opportunities to do them). Sometimes the performances were accompanied without violin, only by a piano, but the lines of the dance were so melodious that one could always imagine the violin's presence anyway. At the end of *Poème*, Balanchine carried Danilova off, lifting her high in an arabesque with his arms extended. One had the impression that she herself, without a partner's support , was gliding through the air away from the audience to finish 'singing' her dance somewhere far, far away. The *Poème* gave rise to many imitations. (Slonimsky 1991, 63-64)

That Balanchine did not use the "usual turns and technical tricks" showed Goleizovsky's influence as did Danilova's "transparent" tunic, a word used by Danilova to describe Salome's costume.

It is interesting to compare this ballet with Balanchine's first ballet, *La Nuit*. Both used a violin and a piano, and he used a high lift in arabesque in both ballets. The dancer also danced on pointe in a tunic rather than a tutu, and from Kostrovitskaya's description, it seems to have also been a lyrical adagio void of the technical tricks typical of Petipa.

Interestingly, Souritz said that this ballet did not contain any choreographic innovations, (Souritz 1991 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's* 1990, 74) but it seems to have left an impression, since Kostrovitskaya said that it gave rise to many imitations. It continued to be performed for many years in the Soviet Union, and was performed by dance historian Krasovskaya at a school concert as late as 1932. (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 55)

Waltz, also a pas de deux, was performed by Balanchine and Danilova. Little mention of it is found in the records. Danilova says that she did not recall the dance, only that she had danced it with Balanchine. She says it was nothing unusual, only a couple of lifts, but was able to remember nothing else. (Danilova 1978-1979) The *Catalogue* mentioned two waltzes performed by Danilova and Balanchine which could be the one described by Danilova: *Waltz and Adagio* was performed by Danilova and Balanchine in 1922 and later by Gusev and Mungalova at the Young Ballet's first concert in 1923. Gusev told about it in an unpublished interview with Poel Karp. (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 56) An extant photograph shows Gusev and Mungalova executing an overhead lift in this ballet. *Waltz* was performed by Danilova and Balanchine, but neither could recall what the music was. (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 57)

Danilova also performed some solo waltzes. The *Catalogue* also describes another dance Danilova performed: "a Dringo *Waltz* was performed by Alexandra Danilova as a member of the Principal Dancers of the Russian State Ballet on the summer tour of Germany in 1924. It may have been this composition, but more probably was the waltz from Petipa's short ballet *The Lovely Pearl* (Dringo), which was in the repertory of the Young Ballet." (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 56) In addition, Slonimsky mentioned that on June 15, 1924 at the opening of the summer season in Pavlovsk, Danilova performed the Waltz and Geva the Polka of Vilbuschevich. (Slonimsky 1991, 77) Because of the time proximity of this performance to the tour, it is possible that the *Waltz* recalled by Danilova was this one. This performance took place the day before a tragic event took place, one that changed the course of the lives of the young dancers: the death of Lydia Ivanova.

4.5 *Valse Triste* and the One Left Behind

Originally, five dancers were contracted to tour Germany with the Soviet Dancers: George Balanchine, Tamara Geva, Alexandra Danilova, Nicholas Efimov, and Lydia Ivanova. Only four went due to the untimely death of Ivanova just days before group was

scheduled to leave. The memory of Lydia Ivanova and the mysterious circumstances surrounding her death were constant companions for the other four members of the Soviet Dancers for the duration of the tour, leaving a life-long impact on them.

Ivanova had been a student at Theater School with Balanchine, Danilova and Efimov. One year behind Danilova in age, the two girls were among the best dancers in the school and were cast together in school performances. This pairing up continued when they joined the company after graduation and Danilova reported in her memoirs that they both had many admirers who measured their progress and compared them to one another, some being her fans, some Ivanova's. She said that this did not cause a rivalry between the two women, since they danced in completely different styles which complemented one another. (Danilova 1988, 41) As young, up-and-coming members of the company, they were often cast together.[9] Because of their close working relationship, the two were close friends. (Danilova 1988, 55)

In addition to their performances at the Maryinsky, Danilova and Ivanova often danced together as a duo at halutras, affording them both even more exposure to the St. Petersburg public. Geva recalled that they did not exert themselves in these performances, but would dance "something easy to familiar music- Schubert's "Moment Musical," for instance, in which they danced, garbed as nymphs, in appalling choreography a la Dalcroze." (Geva 1984, 286) Geva believed that they began to work with the Young Ballet because noticed that the audience reacted well to Balanchine's work when the two pairs performed in the same halutra. As students at Theater School, they had also been witnesses to his first work, *La Nuit*.

After graduation from Theater School, Ivanova became an immediate success with the St. Petersburg public. She charmed the audiences with her spontaneity and love of life. Balanchine was particularly drawn to Ivanova's special qualities as a dancer. For one, she was taller and had higher extensions than most of the dancers of the time. Hodson, who reconstructed *Valse Triste*, explained that Danilova and Ivanova "provided Balanchine with a kind of polarity of style, Danilova, a blond virtuoso, was essentially an allegro dancer, quick and light with great elevation. Ivanova was a brunette, a dramatic dancer, whose strength was adagio, although she had powerful leaps." Danilova described Ivanova as "a good actress, very expressive, coquettish, earthy beautiful in adagio, with a big extension. And she used her

extension in her jump, which was not very high but looked enormous because she could leap with her legs in a split." (Danilova 1988, 41) She also described her as being "the most incredible dancer I have ever seen. She was like a gift from God. She was the only woman I've seen who jumped like a man-just soared in the air." (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 31) She also compared the two dancers:

> Both were already prominent soloists at the Maryinsky, and both were very talented in different ways. Danilova of the Biblical face and green eyes was the more precise and technical, while Ivanova leaned toward lyricism. She was famous for an extraordinary elevation usually seen only in men. She could rise in a leap and literally hang in the air for a second, leaving the audience breathless. Her looks corresponded to her ethereal qualities-an oval face with an angelic expression, a long Taglioni neck, a tiny waist-but they concealed a wild nature, reckless and sensual. (Geva 1984, 285)

Slonimsky saw in her a talent that equaled that of Balanchine. He said that "in Ivanova he found a champion of dance, equal to himself, with whom he could capture the audience." (Slonimsky 1991, 66) She was his first muse, the first woman to inspire his choreographic endeavors.

Danilova described Ivanova as having been much more mature and sophisticated than she had been as a young woman and said that she had many admirers among the Bolshevik elite. (Danilova 1988, 56) Her recklessness and connections with men involved in government activities proved in the end to be her downfall. During this time period, the power struggle within the unstable new government was ensuing, and those vying for power were insecure and suspicious of one another. (Danilova 1988, 61) Ivanova's friends had warned her not to spend so much time with people who were not trustworthy, but she brushed their warnings aside. She was regularly seen at clubs and cabarets frequented by powerful men in the government and had often been invited to the club of the GPU, the secret police.

Geva recalled that she had clothing that was hard to come by during those times, and that they never knew where Ivanova had gotten them. (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 31) She also described a conversation with Efimov where he said that "she's in the know about everything. I sometimes think she knows too much. It isn't healthy." (Geva 1984, 312) It proved to not only to not have been healthy, but to have been disastrous.

Both Geva and Danilova said that about one month before the group was scheduled to leave for Germany, Ivanova announced that she would not be going because she had met a fortune teller who had warned her to stay away from water. Ivanova interpreted this as a warning to stay away from the steamer which planned to take the troop from St. Petersburg to Stettin. Her fateful meeting with water, however, occurred a few weeks later when she was invited to spend the day with a few of her officer friends. When she failed to arrive at the last performance she and Danilova were to perform at before leaving for Germany, her friends were informed that she had been killed in a boating accident. The events surrounding her death were more than a little suspicious. Witnesses said that a ferry had collided with the motor boat in which she had been riding and Ivanova and her three officer friends had been thrown overboard. The captain of the ferry said that the three men had been thrown three ropes and lifebelts and had been rescued unharmed when the smaller boat capsized, but that she had been pulled under the propellers. (Danilova 1988, 61) Geva also believed that the existence of only three ropes to rescue the officers as well as the confused account of the captain of the ferry was evidence that the incident had been a premeditated act of murder. The reaction to her death proved to be as mysterious as the death itself. The three officers were seen in public having dinner in high spirits the night following Ivanova's death. (Danilova 1988, 62) In addition, despite the tragedy, there were no announcements at the Maryinsky, nor was there any kind of memorial. Ivanova's mother called for an investigation, but none was ever made. Her friends had been given a strict warning to not get involved and to not ask questions. Despite the warning, one of Ivanova's boyfriends hired a diver to look for the body. He reported that he had seen it, and that there was a hole in her head, but the body was never recovered. (Danilova 1988, 62) Balanchine later said, "I think it was all a set up…I had heard that Lida knew some big secret and they didn't want her to go to the West. They decided to fake an accident." (Buckle 1988, 26) Geva and Danilova were convinced of the same. Although the incident was officially ruled an accident, there is no reason in the historical record or in any personal accounts that Ivanova's death can be attributed to anything other than foul play.

In 1923 Balanchine and Ivanova choreographed a solo for Ivanova to the music *Valse Triste* by Sibelius. They had been inspired by Duncan's performance of the Sixth Symphony of Tchaikovsky, which they had seen with other members of the Young Ballet. In the dance, a young woman was pursued by some sort of evil and in the end was overcome by it.

Ivanova's death shortly thereafter seemed to be a strange case of life imitating art, her death becoming the meaning attached to the dance.

The ballet *Valse Triste* was included in Kostrovitskaya's account of the repertory of the Young Ballet as having been choreographed by Ivanova together with Balanchine. (Slonimsky 1991, 63) In the same essay, Slonimsky says that she had done it either together with Balanchine or under his direction. (Slonimsky 1991, 66) The dance itself is well documented in the Russian book *Leningrad Choreography: the Green Years,* written by Mikhail Mikhailov as well as by other St. Petersburg peers of Balanchine, namely Slonimsky and Cherepnin. (Hodson and Archer 2003, 1) Hodson and Archer used these sources extensively in their 2004 reconstruction of this dance. This is the earliest of Balanchine's ballets to have been reconstructed. Examining some of their work puts this dance into context with Balanchine's other early works. In addition to these sources, Slonimsky quotes Cherepnin, a newspaper critic giving some details of the dance in his 1976 essay. Like *La Nuit*, this dance was performed in the Soviet Union long after Balanchine left and was "forgotten" in the West. As late as 1976, Slonimsky wrote that the dance had "lasted to this present day in the performances of various female dancers." (Slonimsky 1991, 66)

In *Valse Triste*, a young woman was "pursued by some evil force, a terrible fate, which some critics interpret as death itself." (Hodson and Archer 2003, 1) She was dressed in a red tunic dress with a deep blue scarf and her long black hair hung on her shoulders. The solo consisted of three parts, the prelude, the struggle and the defeat. The dance opened with the "ray of a searchlight finding the dancer, huddled in a scarf, trying to escape from something." (Hodson and Archer 2003, 1) Hodson and archer explained this section in detail:

> …Caught periodically in the searchlight, the dancer travels across the top of the stage from one side to the other. She keeps her back to the audience, moving laterally through abrupt ankle flexions and sudden *pointe tendus*. Sometimes her arms are stretched out in front of her body, as though to shield herself from a stalking menace. Sometimes she turns, enfolding herself in the scarf, so that the public never sees her face. She falls back into deep *cambré* the scarf dropping to reveal her long hair. Then she collapses and lifts her face, which the public now see is tormented with vulnerability and despair. (Hodson and Archer 2003, 1)

One extant photograph of Ivanova shows her in this dance. (Photograph 3) She was holding the scarf to her head, and was looking out from underneath it. Her feet were turned

in, one foot behind her, as if she has just taken a step. She was looking to the back as if to try to see what was pursuing her. This section included elements borrowed from other choreographers as well as combinations and steps used by Balanchine in other early works. Balanchine made extensive use of Goleizovsky's sixth position in this dance, especially when the dancer was on pointe. The description of her being "tormented with vulnerability and despair" demonstrated Balanchine and Ivanova's use of Duncan's plastic expressionism in this dance. The spotlight, here used as a searchlight, appeared for the first time in *Funeral March* and later in *Apollo*.

The second section of this dance, the struggle, shows the dancer trying to fight her fate: "…the dancer clings to life, doing arabesques with fast directional changes, waltzing and almost skipping with the Duncan signature *sissonne* step in parallel. As the music reaches a crescendo, she performs ever more expansive *jetés*, *jetés entrelaces* and sharp *tours en l'air* in heroic defiance of death." (Hodson and Archer 2003, 2) Recalling that those who remembered Ivanova as a dancer mentioned her ability to jump, this section revealed that she and Balanchine chose steps which would show her best qualities. Danilova mentioned her ability to perform a complete split during her jetés, which most dancers were not able to do in the 1920's, and Geva recalled her ability to remain suspended in the air. Both these traits could be shown to their best advantage in the section where she performed the "ever more expansive jetés," the jetés entrelaces and the air turns. Hodson and Archer also said that Balanchine made use of other strengths as well: "her supple arms and hand he trapped in the scarf at the moment when she seems caught in a tightening circle, trembling from head to foot." (Hodson and Archer 2003, 2)

The next part of the struggle was one section recalled by many observers:

> Strong accents in the music make her realize that she is entrapped…she stops, trembling. She edges to the back of the stage, then, like a somnambulist, moves in a straight line to the footlights. Unexpectedly, at the last instant, turns her back to the audience in a quick motion and becomes frozen for a moment. Toward the end of the music, according to Mikhailov, the dancer, with her back to the public, 'her arms stretched in front of her,

3. Lydia Ivanova in *Valse Triste* about 1922.

> as if trying to protect herself from a wall of waves advancing on her, moved back to the footlights,' as though she would step into the orchestra pit. Instead she falls on the spot, 'nearly dead, not able to continue the fight.' (Hodson and Archer 2003, 2)

Slonimsky also discussed the same elements, which were recorded by the Moscow critic Cherepnin:

> In one small composition…there appeared two devises of great expressiveness…the female dancer, developing her feelings of horror and moving in a kind of emotional crescendo in a straight line from the rear of the stage to the footlight, unexpectedly, at the last instance of high intensity, turns her back to the audience in a quick motion and becomes frozen for a moment. This fermata makes an enormous impression. (Slonimsky 1991, 66)

Geva also recalled this section. She mentioned the straight line from the rear of the stage to the front. She says she was a "somnambulist[10], dressed in a tunic like dress down to the knees. That dance frightened the audience because I moved forward towards the very edge of the proscenium as though I were blind and were about to go right off into the pit." (Geva 1991, 13) Through these descriptions it is clear that emotional expression the

choreographers sought was achieved: one account told that it made an "enormous impression" and another told of frightening the audience.

In the final section, the defeat, Balanchine borrowed from elements from the silent films. Cherepnin said that "the final emotional intensity is conveyed superbly with a completely new device-the silent scream of a widely opened mouth." (Slonimsky 1991, 66) This last position, in which the young woman succumbs to her fate made a lasting impression on the audiences who saw this dance. The use of the open mouth also appears in variations of the Muses in *Apollo*.

The memories of Ivanova's death never left her friends. Although Balanchine had many muses throughout his life, he never forgot his first. Tributes to her are found in several of his ballets. Hodson and Archer explained: "She was a continuing presence in their lives. Ivanova can be recognized, transfigured, in a number of Balanchine's ballets-the woman searching for her fate in *Errante* (1933), the free-spirited Russian girl in *Serenade* (1934), perhaps others." (Hodson and Archer Summer 2005, 3) They described that another ballet also may have been inspired by her memory: "Kochno intimated in an interview that *Le Bal* was a very personal story for Balanchine but he would never elaborate. Perhaps it was a choreographic game of Nemesis in which a beautiful girl, with the help of a fortune-teller, outwits an officer." (Hodson and Archer Summer 2005, 5)

Although *Valse Triste* later came to be the symbol of Ivanova's death, its initial performances by her most likely touched the audiences who had become use to death and fear since the Revolution. Balanchine used choreographic elements which, rather than completely rejecting the classical tradition, combined classical pointe technique with new influences like Goleizovsky's sixth position and Duncan's free torso and fluid arm movements. The theme of death, appearing once again in his early works, reflected the desperation of the times and gives us an important clue as to why Balanchine and the other Soviet Dancers chose not to return to their homeland. Only days after Ivanova's death, the other four Soviet Dancers left for their tour of Germany. At that time, none of them thought that they would never return, and none could image the impact that decision would have on the course of the art of ballet.

4.6 Summary and Analysis of Chapter 4

The repertory of the Young Ballet shows a striking departure from the style that Balanchine and his collaborators had learned and at that point in time still continued to dance when they performed Petipa's ballets. Balanchine was impressed with what he had seen in the work of Duncan and Goleizovsky outside the Academic Theater as well as what he had learned directly from Lopukhov within the Theater. His own choreography began to resemble theirs more than the classics in the years 1921 to 1924.

Two of his most memorable works from this time period were *The Twelve* and *Funeral March* both choreographed for larger groups and both performed in an arena theater. *The Twelve* did not contain many choreographic innovations, but was outstanding because it was done to voices rather than movements. It was the only dance that Balanchine every choreographed without music. This demonstrates his willingness to experiment many different elements, and to keep or to reject them. Choreographically, *Funeral March* was important to his development as a choreographer and to his transformation of ballet. In this dance, he used several dancers to create "formations in the air," including a woman in a bridge position being held high over the air. As stated before, we see him expanding on what he had learned from Goleizovsky's Constructivist ballets as well as going beyond what he had begun in the invention of the first overhead lift in his first ballet L*a Nuit.* Once again, overhead lifts have become so commonplace in ballet, that it is almost unimaginable that they did not exist before this time. The addition of overhead lifts is an example of one element which clearly shows into what Balanchine transformed the classical ballet.

Balanchine's other dances showed varying amounts of innovation. *Poème* demonstrated how he was breaking away from the traditional phrases and combinations of the classical pas de deux and incorporating lyrical steps which flowed into one another. While not originating with Balanchine, this change in choreography was revolutionary for the time, and is a vital element that he incorporated into neo-classical dance. It demonstrates a stark difference to classical choreography; he used classical vocabulary, but put the steps together into phrases which flowed into one another as opposed to repeating combinations with breaks in between. In this dance it is clear that Balanchine was beginning to transform the classical, not completely overthrow it.

Finally, in *Valse Triste,* Balanchine experimented with an element, in this case plastic expressionism, and then rejecting it in his future work. This dance however, does foreshadow one of the most fundamental changes he brought to ballet: his choice of body type. An untypical dancer for her time, Ivanova exemplified what would later become the Balanchine dancer. The choreography of *Valse Triste* magnified her strengths. Her untimely death left an indelible mark on Balanchine, and it would seem that he was ever after trying to find dancers who resembled her.

Chapter 5

Germany: The Bridge from East to West

In 1924 four young dancers from the Maryinsky Theater and School embarked on what was to be a two month educational tour of Germany. When Balanchine, Danilova, Geva and Efimov, calling themselves the Soviet Dancers[1] chose to ignore a telegram from the Soviet authorities demanding their immediate return, no one could have predicted the impact their decision would have on the history of ballet. This chapter will cover the time period of the spring of 1924 shortly before they left the Soviet Union and end a few months later, in autumn of the same year when the group auditioned for and was accepted into the Ballets Russes.

Much of the material in this chapter is based on the personal recollections of the dancers themselves. With the exception of Geva's autobiography, *Split Seconds: A Remembrance,* their accounts were short, and many important details were told only as a side note. A historical study of the tour is designed to answer the question of what actually happened to the dancers on the tour, placing them and their work in its setting: the Russian émigré community as well as the circuit of variety shows both in Berlin and in the Rhineland region. The performances in the concert hall in Berlin as well as those in the variety shows in the Rhineland are interesting in that they were a break from the elaborate productions of the Maryinsky and Ballets Russes, but were in many ways similar in nature to the halutras in St. Petersburg. Through his association with the FEKS, Balanchine also had come in contact with some aspects of the variety shows of Western Europe. These elements later found themselves in his Ballets Russes ballets *La Chatte*, *Jack in the Box* and *The Triumph of Neptune.* Working as a pianist for silent films exposed him to jazz and ragtime before he ever left Russia.

The contracts made between the dancers and their manager, Vladimir Dimitriev, will be examined, since they shed light on some of the statements made by the dancers in their memoirs and interviews. They give clear dates and cities: both where the contracts were signed as well as providing itineraries. These details do not necessarily reflect where the actual performances took place; in many cases they reveal the group's lack of experience

more than giving any actual tour facts. The memoirs of the dancers do contain a few of the cities they performed in, but none of these sources gave details as to the exact location or dates of certain performances, and the lack of billing or reviews makes it difficult to locate the exact halls in which they performed. However, in order to give a clearer picture of the environment in which they performed and to understand the comments the dancers made in their memoirs regarding the tour, general information about the variety scene as well as the general attitude towards the art of ballet from contemporary German sources will be quoted.

5.1 St. Petersburg: the Beginning of an Adventure

The tour of the Soviet Dancers was the brainchild of Vladimir Dimitriev, a former baritone with the Maryinsky Opera. In the years directly following the Revolution, he earned what amounted to a fortune in St. Petersburg, working as a croupier at a casino, a legal enterprise at the time it was shut down. In light of the unstable political climate, it would have been too dangerous to keep the money; at the time it was not unusual for certain "authorities" to appear at the door of private residences without warning and confiscate property, as described by both Geva and Danilova in their autobiographies. Exactly how he was able to arrange for the tour was not known. Geva wrote:

> Dimitriev must have worked on his scheme for a long time, probably while he was still at the casino, because there he became friendly with many important government officials. At any rate, he never disclosed how he achieved the incredible result, but somehow he got to the very top people in government and presented his idea. As a loyal Soviet citizen, he said, he didn't want to spend the money on himself, Instead he proposed to spend it on some talented young people in the arts, whom he would take on a two month educational tour of Germany at his expense. He would bring the group back in time for the fall season, with information and photographs of what was happening in the outside world. He suggested, also that it was high time for Europe to get a glimpse of Soviet culture, and with that in mind, he would arrange for the young artists to give one or two recitals in Berlin. He confessed modestly that he wanted nothing for himself but a chance to serve the Soviet Union and its great art. Incredible as it seems, he got permission. (Geva 1984, 309)

Dimitriev knew which dancers he wanted to take on the trip, and got their visas approved even before asking them if they wanted to go. He chose Balanchine, which automatically included taking his wife Geva, Efimov, and the two well known Maryinsky

dancers Danilova and Ivanova. In addition to the five dancers, musicians were arranged for the trip. Danilova recalls that a pianist and a singer were arranged. (Ackermann and Summer 1982, 12) In her autobiography she said that they were accompanied by Dranisnikov, their conductor from the Maryinsky and his girlfriend, a soprano from the opera. (Danilova 1988, 60) The original contract, dated April 4, 1924 in Leningrad, lists a total of ten persons: the five dancers, Dimitriev, and the following persons, most likely the musicians and conductor mentioned by the dancers in their memoirs: O.F. Mshanskaya, V.A. Dranisnikov, G.D. Neliubim, and E.G. Olkovsky. Dimitriev is listed as manager, Neliubim as administrator, and Olkovsky as the authorized representative of the group. The last three persons were to receive an additional 5% off the top of any income the group made. (Balanchivadze et. al. April 4, 1924) The dancers stood under contract from the day after the end of the Maryinsky season to September, and were expected to pay their own expenses out of their earnings from their performances. The contract resembles the western, capitalistic style of contracts made by Russian touring groups during the days of the czar. Its commercial nature indicates the relative freedom the artists enjoyed compared to later years under Stalin when all tours and contracts were tightly controlled by the state. Exactly how Dimitriev's plan as described by Geva was suppose to function in light of this contract is not clear. Geva explained, namely, that Dimitriev wanted to take the dancers on the educational tour, implying that he was to pay for their expenses out of his fortune, since "as a loyal Soviet citizen, he did not want to spend the money on himself." (Geva 1984, 309) Balanchine also recalled that this was to be a sort of cultural exchange. (Balanchine 1972) Whatever the conditions of the original contract, they were short lived, as the group discovered that they did not have enough money for even a short stay, and new solutions needed to be made. Geva explained: "It soon became evident that Dimitriev had greatly overstated his financial position and that he had made no plans or preparations for the recitals. Thwarted by the new metropolis, he was totally inadequate…" (Geva 1984, 326)

An undated, handwritten supplement to the original contract described the planned itinerary, and also contained some confusing financial details, which confirm the dancers' recollections that Dimitriev had not only overestimated his fortune, but also his ability to arrange concerts. The original contract stated that he somehow thought he would be able to exchange $2000 for 1500 rubles. (Balanchivadze et. al. April 4, 1924) The supplement changed the amount to $1100 for 2200 rubles, moving in the right direction in terms of the

worth of the money, but still far from a realistic expectation. Interestingly, in the supplement, he began to speak of payments being made in Swedish Crowns, and listed an itinerary: changing their route to the following countries: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Belgium, England and the Netherlands. (Balanchivadze et. al. Supplement to April 4, 1924) Another interesting detail regarding the supplement was that it was not signed by all the participants: it was signed by Dimitriev, the dancers, and Neliubim and Mshanskaya, but not Olkovsky, the group's authorized representative or Dranisnikov, the conductor, or Ivanova, who died shortly before the group's planned departure. However, Dranisnikov's name appeared on a new contract made in Stettin on July 7, 1924. (Balanchivadze et. al. July 7, 1924) By this point in time, the group had already been recalled by the authorities, and all the other musicians, as well as the administrator and official representative, had returned to the Soviet Union without ever having actually performed in Germany.[2] (Taper 1984, 70) This discrepancy could have different meanings. It is possible that Dimitriev made the supplement at a time when the others weren't present, but he would most likely have had them sign it at a later time, since their absence in the contract, particularly that of the authorized representative, is not explained. However, since Ivanova's name did not appear on this supplement, it is possible that he quickly made a new contract in the few days between her death and the planned departure, and there was no time for the others to sign. Another possible explanation fits with Geva's statement that Dimitriev worked on his plan for a long time and finally was able to obtain permission for the trip. The first contract was very official and was type written, containing the names of all ten participants. The supplement was hand written and contained details regarding plans to visit several countries not mentioned in the original contract. It is possible that the first contract was the one presented to and approved by Soviet authorities and the supplement showed Dimitriev's real intentions. Possibly he did not trust the other musicians completely, and Ivanova's connections to the secret police would have made it precarious to inform her of the plans as well. The real reason for the discrepancy will most likely remain unknown due to the missing date, but in any case, it is clear that Dimitriev's visionary plan to visit several countries was greatly out of reach to the small, inexperienced group. The length of this contract was two and one half months, indicating that the group still planned on returning to Russia. (Balanchivadze et. al. Supplement to April 4, 1924)

5.2 Stettin: The First Stop

Since the trip was to be short, Geva said they brought only a couple of suitcases of costumes. (Geva 1976) Leaving with only the clothes on their backs and one small bundle of possessions, none of the young people were aware at the time that they might never see their homes or families again. On the boat which brought them from Russia to the German port of Stettin, one thing stayed in the memories of the dancers for the rest of their lives: their amazement at the abundance of food. Geva recalled that in Stettin

> everything was neat and orderly-a garland of shrubbery surrounding the house; the stairs to the front door flanked by rows of plants inside, spotless walls; chintzy furniture, comforters beaten into fluffy heaps on top of beds, brass gleaming…But the most glorious experience was the meal…here we found real German home cooking: hot bread and butter and cookies and a plethora of rich sauces and vegetables and other culinary marvels, all temptingly fragrant. (Geva 1984, 325)

Such meals were a luxury for the group after the near starvation condition of the post-Revolutionary Russia. Danilova recalled that "the supply of bread seemed endless" and that they had "forgotten what it felt like to be full." (Danilova 1988, 64)

The telegram recalling the group home must have arrived while they were in Stettin, since here the contract from April 4, 1924 was annulled and a new one was made, this time signed by Dimitriev, Balanchine, Danilova, Geva, Efimov, and Dranisnikov. Interestingly, Dimitriev required that each of the participants give $50 to his investment of $330 towards the trip to give the group a total starting capital of $580. Exactly why he was calculating in dollars is unclear, perhaps that was the currency he was able to get to exchange his rubles. Equally unclear is how he thought that the young dancers would be able to come up with a sum of $50. In addition, obviously irritated that many of the participants had broken contract, he added a clause requiring the members to pay $100 in case of breach of contract, (Balanchivadze et. al. July 7, 1924) another unreachably high sum of money for teenagers who up to this point had been living in starvation conditions. In addition, he included a clause forbidding the dancers to participate in any performances without his permission. (Balanchivadze et. al. July 7, 1924) Acting as their manager and administrator of all aspects of the careers and performances, the dancers had to run everything through him. (Balanchivadze et. al. July 7, 1924) In effect this contract bound the dancers to him making it

impossible for them to do anything on their own. Exactly how legally binding the contract was is questionable, however, the dancers obviously did not consider breaking it.

Although none in the group planned on remaining in the West, when a telegram arrived demanding their immediate return even before they had given their first recital, all the dancers and Dimitriev opted to stay, despite having no money, no visas and no real plan. All the musicians eventually returned home, evident in that even Dranisnikov's name does not appear in the next contract made among Dimitriev and the dancers in Wiesbaden on September 6, 1924. (Balanchivadze et. al. September 6, 1924) Whether he participated in the first performance in Berlin is uncertain but he definitely did not complete the planned tour.

Ivanova's untimely death definitely played a major role in the dancers' decision not to return to the Soviet Union, but the dancers also recalled several other issues that were instrumental in their choice. Both Geva and Danilova came from wealthy families, and Geva recalled several episodes in which the "authorities," whomever they happened to be at the time, showed up at her house and turned the entire house upside down looking for anything valuable. She also knew that it was partially luck that her father was released from prison after his arrest for his former connections, and the authorities could easily have chosen to ignore the petition that saved his life. Danilova also recalled the loss of her family's wealth. She said that the family was forced to move into a smaller apartment, twelve rooms being considered too much, and that their servants left, stealing much of their property.[3] (Danilova 1988, 46) Additionally, in the cases of Danilova, Geva and Balanchine, none of the dancers had a close family back in Russia. Danilova had been orphaned as a young child and her adopted mother and uncle had died before the Revolution. Geva described the family situations of both herself and Balanchine: "I was alone, and so was he. A visible family functioned around me, but I lived in solitude with my thought, hopes and dreams. My rare moments of communion with Father could not close the gap between the rest of the family…George, too, had no one. He had been cut off from his family for years, and though lately they had begun to exchange letters, there was no real bond." (Geva 1984, 282)

Since Danilova also recalled having been full for the first time in years, it is easy to see why the dancers made the decision to stay in the West. The only reason they would have had to return would have been to advance their careers, something that was only realistic for Danilova, who said that she was supposed to dance the role of Kitri in *Don Quixote*. This role

would have been an important stepping stone in her career, and she still planned on returning to the Maryinsky up to the point that she made her contract with Diaghilev. She had wanted to see what the world outside the Soviet Union was like, but had no ambition to stay permanently. In an interview in 1973 she emphatically claimed: "we did intend to come back. Oh yes definitely. Yes, we wanted to come back, but everybody seemed so interested in us, what we were doing…" (Danilova 1973 *Part I*, 40) The short length of both the original contract and the supplement confirmed Danilova's statement. However, since the group had directly disobeyed the order to return immediately, it is questionable if she would have even been able to go back had she wanted to, especially in light of Ivanova's fate. At the time however, one can only speculate as to how the young Danilova perceived these dangers. It was clear to Balanchine that he had no future as a choreographer in the Academic Theaters, and given his background, it is unlikely that he would have been able to content himself giving small concerts for the rest of his life. Geva described that "it was not logic however, that swayed us to a decision, but a sudden blast of realization that they could never, never return to the dreariness, the privations, and the restrictions of (their) past existence. Come what may, we were going to stay." (Geva 1984, 330) Danilova also recalled not being able to imagine returning to Russia for similar reasons: no heat, no food, no transportation, and personal freedoms becoming more and more restricted. She knew she wanted plenty of good food and beautiful clothes, which were not to be had in Russia. In addition, she at some point came to the conclusion that the Soviet Union was a hopeless place to build a career. Exactly when she decided this is unclear, and it may have been an unconscious decision up to the point that she signed her contract with Diaghilev, since she was somehow planning on returning for the next Maryinsky season, despite this option becoming more and more unlikely as time went on. Balanchine described his decision in more vague terms: "after the Revolution, I wouldn't tell you how terrible it was. Anyhow finally I left with my friends Danilova and Tamara Gevergeva…we were call ourselves Soviet Dancers. We went to Germany for just a few weeks. They gave us permission because it was an understanding like a cultural exchange…I decided to go because I couldn't stand being there." (Balanchine 1972)

Knowing that the physical situation for them was hopeless, that their prospects for building their careers were small, and living with the fear and insecurity of the unstable political situation, staying in Western Europe was a very attractive option. However unstable

and transient their stays in different towns were, for the first time in years they were warm, well fed and had no fears of the "knock on the door." The situation gave the dancers a new perspective on life.

5.3 Berlin: The First Performance

The group took a train from Stettin to Berlin where they stayed in a boarding house on Potsdamer Platz, the city center of the 1920's. Berlin was a natural choice of destination for the group, since many other groups of Russian performers had settled in or passed through the city. (Behl 1923, 81) Members of the upper class of Russian society had been forced to flee during the Revolution and the civil war that followed, and many went to Germany because of its location in central Europe, either as a transition place or as a place of permanent residence.[4] (Dodenhoeft 1993, 12-13) Berlin had the largest population, but Wiesbaden and Baden Baden also claimed large groups of Russian émigré, since before the Revolution the area was a well loved vacation spot for many Russian nobles and their families.

According to an article written by Russian émigré Lew Lunz in 1923 these refugees, in addition to the nobility, included business men, political migrants representing dozens of small political parties which were now obsolete in Russia, and the "classical Russian intellectuals" who could be found in Berlin "like sand in the sea." (Lenz 1923, 159-160) Dodenhoeft confirms this, describing the refugees as being from the upper classes: "the Russian emigrant community consisted mainly of the nobility, upper military, civil servants, freelance occupations, artists and politicians of all color." (Dodenhoeft 1993, 11) In addition to those who fled the Revolution in 1917 and the chaos following it, 160 writers, philosophers, politicians and scholars were exiled from the Soviet Union for being suspected of counter revolutionary activities and for being "bothersome thinkers and critics" of the Bolsheviks.[5] (Dodenhoeft 1993, 57)

Geva told of her first impressions of Berlin. "Finally, Berlin-blazing with lights in the indigo of the early evening brilliant store windows, girls with bobbed hair, electric signs, horns tooting, traffic-it was enough to take one's breath away." (Geva 1984, 325-326) Danilova also recalled that the group went to see Max Reinhardt's production of *Die Fledermaus*. She recalled that "during the famous waltz, one dancing couple made a circle of

the stage while the floor revolved-we were flabbergasted." (Danilova 1988, 64) Danilova said that "Germany seemed to us so clean, so comfortable, so punctual. I loved Berlin especially-there were so many trees." (Danilova 1988, 63-64) She also recalled that "it was very clean and everything was on time. It was run so perfectly. And then, of course, they have all this schlagsahne (whipped cream), and I became like a barrel. I gained so much weight." (Danilova Undated, 183) Danilova and Geva also recalled being surprised by the decadence of the city, which they did not really understand. (Geva 1984, 326) Although the young women had by no means been sheltered in the previous years, and had performed in many venues other than the Maryinsky, they seemed to have still been a bit naïve of the standards of Western Europe. The following quote describes 1920's Berlin in colorful terms, showing the state of entertainment establishments since the war:

> Shufflers, whose entire culture is the moneybag, have come to power and require satisfaction of their sense of art. This art rabble screams for more and more new sensations for its lust. The more obscene the means were, the larger the material success of the organizer, who determined the entrance price based on how far the neckline plunged and on how short the skirts were cut on the performing ladies. The first "Beauty Evenings" grew out of this lust for sensation. Of course in Berlin!...
>
> This epoch in the contemporary development of dance is so sad that one cannot be warned enough of this art prostitution. There may be a few dancers who are acting in good faith, but they should think of the public sitting in front of them and not throw their pearls to the pigs. (Stern 1921, 25)

Geva and Danilova were not only disturbed by the cafés, but were "shocked by the suggestive posters and the young men and women flagrantly soliciting in the streets even in daytime." (Geva 1984, 326) Interestingly, much of Balanchine's choreography was described as erotic by his peers and decried as indecent by his critics, and Geva also recalled the orgy which accompanied her one and only performance on the stage of the Maryinsky. (Geva 1984, 299) Evidently, the young people were confronted with a new level of "indecency" in Berlin, one that surprised even Geva despite her mother's reputation for wild parties and her string of not so secret lovers. (Geva 1984, 297)

Dimitriev had greatly overestimated his fortune's worth in Germany. Inexperienced, without money, the group was unable to arrange any performances on their own. Their arrival had been announced in one Russian paper, and a few Russians came to visit them, to

hear news about the homeland and to offer their friendship and assistance. Their new friends helped by "tirelessly investigating all the possibilities" and "guided him to the people who could help him organize a performance." (Geva 1984, 326) They were able to book one recital, with the possibility of a second one, although this option was cancelled by the owner of the hall where they performed. Geva reports that "our concerts over there were a travesty." (Geva 1976) The audience was small since Berlin was deserted for the summer holiday, and the group knew nothing about advertising, and even if they had, had no money for it. Geva described: "By European standards, our costumes were niggardly, the tempo of the performances slow, and the whole presentation, to the tinkling of one piano amateurish." (Geva 1984, 327)

Geva said that in Germany, Danilova and Efimov performed the classical variations, while she and Balanchine performed the modern ones. Danilova said she and Efimov danced a pas de deux from *La Fille Mal Gardée,* (Ackermann and Summer 1982, 12) and in another source she said that the two danced the pas de deux from act III of *Coppélia.* (Danilova 1991, 5) In her autobiography she described the repertory as such:

> Our repertoire was limited but varied: Kola and I would dance the pas de deux from Sylvia that we had performed for our graduation from the school. Tamara and I would do an Oriental dance with tambourines, from Khovanshchina. I would dance two solos George had made for me, one to music by Scriabin and the other to a waltz George had written on the piano himself and dedicated to me. Tamara and George danced two numbers together, both George's choreography-very modern. As a closing number, George, Kola and I danced a Russian sailor dance, based on a popular folk dance, which George also arranged. (Danilova 1988, 62)

In addition to their own deficiencies, Geva believed that the people were tainted by the decadent art culture of Berlin in the twenties, and were not even impressed by the classical pieces they performed. (Geva 1984, 327) The art scene was described in similar terms by many critics of the time. One described the artistic element as being inferior, "especially in Berlin, where business is trump and wine consumption represents the artistic ideal." (Herrmann 1921, 169)

Interestingly, the same author criticized the Russian cabaret, the Blaue Vogel, for being too boring, saying that its performances "show no political, no erotic, not even

intellectual or artistic superiority, rather nicely polished artistic business, arranged around a smooth nothing or around something from yesterday." He thought it lacked the "riskiness, coarseness, sassiness of our time." (Herrmann 1922, 68) Although Herrmann's critique was directed towards a cabaret where the Soviet Dancers did not perform, his account of another Russian show bore striking resemblance to the reports by the Soviet Dancers themselves, describing their own performances in both Germany and London as being too slow, colorless, and in general too boring. These statements combined to give an explanation to what Geva experienced. Both the art culture in Berlin was corrupt and the contemporary Russian style, themes and tempos were completely different and out of date compared to those popular in Germany.

In addition to these factors, ballet did not enjoy the popularity in Germany that it did in France and England. Another critic of the Blaue Vogel saw the cabaret as being a weak imitation of the great art demonstrated by the Ballets Russes, and wonders that it seems to be more successful than the ballet: "It is still unexplainable that the 'Blaue Vogel' in Berlin, a weak reflection of this art in the smallest format, is a sensation whereas the Ballets Russes' performances in Berlin do not seem to cause much of a stir. The author is not able to explain why revues, where the main sensation is mediocre dancers and costumes, which, in the best case, are still far below what the Russians have to offer, play to houses which have been sold out for several months, while the Ballets Russes remained relatively unknown." (Cohen-Portheim 1925, 18)

The revue format enjoyed much more popularity than the traditional ballet stage, even among the community of Russian exiles, despite its large percentage of members of the former upper class, the normal patrons of the ballet. This could explain why, in the Rhineland, the Soviet Dancers performed primarily in revues, despite their low artistic quality. It must be remembered that these young people had trained and danced at the Maryinsky, and had been part of the cutting edge of the Soviet avant-garde movement, and shortly thereafter were taken into Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, the trendsetter in Paris, with Balanchine as the new choreographer. Given their immediate past and immediate future, their lack of success could not be attributed to lack of talent, but most certainly to lack of experience in the new culture.

Because of the failure of the first performance in Berlin, the option for the second was cancelled. Geva said that this could also have been attributed to an underlying hostility towards anything connected with Soviet Russia. (Geva 1984, 327) Political discussions abounded in the years following the First World War and the Russian Revolution. Most people were suspicious in general of Communism, discussions extending into all areas, including theater journals. (Jacob 1919, 235) In addition to the political situation, the problems connected with having well over 500,000 refugees in a country recently impoverished by war cannot be overlooked. As it became obvious to the German population that most of the Russian émigré were there to stay, many became concerned that jobs and apartments could be lost to them, fostering a general attitude of hostility both in the press and in the general population. (Dodenhoeft 1993, 18)

However, not denying that the group really was as bad as Geva reports, it is important to note that the ballet was not as well received by the German population as it had been in other parts of Europe. German papers reporting on the Parisian theater scene said very little (and that was usually negative) about the Diaghilev Ballet.[6] In addition, when the Ballets Russes performed in Berlin in 1925, only six months after the Soviet Dancers appeared there, the performances were not successful with the German public, being attended mostly by Russians. Paradoxically, so many Russians attended that the stay had to be lengthened. (Cohen-Portheim 1925, 15) In his article *The Diaghilev Ballet and Germany (Das Diaghilevballett und Deutschland)* Cohen-Portheim described why it remained closed off from the general public:

> With little exception, the newspaper critics said nothing. The painters, sculptors, musicians, writers, who crowd these performances in other cities (to which they owe endless stimulation), were almost completely absent. The Russian ballet is largely unknown in Berlin and, despite its reappearance, stayed that way. It is even stranger since there is an active interest in dance here, but the general opinion towards ballet is exactly as it was during the first appearance of the Russians in the pre-war time: ballet is without content and soulless pointe technique. People fabricate an opposition between…this and the modern…(Cohen-Portheim 1925, 16)

Ballet simply was not growing in popularity in Germany as it was in some other countries, and modern dance was taking a stronger foothold both in the artistic community and the

general public.[7] The performances of the Soviet Dancers in Berlin were in every respect the wrong people doing the wrong thing in the wrong place at the wrong time.

5.4 Rhineland: The Variety Circuit

After the failure in Berlin, Dimitriev managed to arrange a series of performances in the Rhineland. Geva said that "Dimitriev got hold of some impresario in Wiesbaden who offered us a contract for a series of recitals along the Rhine. We were given a definite guarantee, but he refused to specify any details or give us an advance until the group…arrived in Wiesbaden…" (Geva 1984, 327) Danilova remembered it a bit differently. She says that the recitals were arranged by "a Mr. Kessler[8], who represented a German piano manufacturer in Leningrad." (Danilova 1988, 60) According to her, he arranged for their performances in Wiesbaden, Baden Baden, and Frankfurt am Main and secured their visas. The group was to give a series of performances at spa resorts where a large population of white Russians resided. (Danilova 1988, 60) In addition to the Russians who had settled in the area, the spas were full of summer vacationers, providing a natural audience for variety performances. (Mc Donaugh 1983, 30) Some of the spas, such as one of the larger ones in Wiesbaden even had their own concert hall where various groups gave performances to the visitors. (Mielert 1926, 24) Larger cities had opera houses, and much energy was exerted to rebuild the arts in this area after the destruction of the First World War, but it is unlikely that the dancers performed in any of these houses. (Hartmann 1921-1922, 136) Audiences here seemed even less interested in ballet than the audiences in Berlin where the Ballets Russes enjoyed a following at least among the Russian émigré population. The *Rheinische Thalia* reported regular operas and theater pieces being performed, but ballets were rarely seen on its schedule. In addition, no articles on ballet appeared in these papers, but numerous articles on modern dance were written. (*Rheinische Thalia Blätter* 1921-1922) Similarly *Die Neue Schaubühne*, a German wide journal on theater published articles on modern dance in the same years, notably two articles by Mary Wigman (Wigman 1921, 98, Wigman 1922, 30) about her own dance and that of Rudolf von Laban, but contained almost no mention of ballet. (*Die Neue Schaubühne* September 1921, February 1922) Positive articles on the performances of the Ballets Russes did appear in 1925, but as already stated, these articles attempt to explain why the company did not seem to enjoy the success in Germany that it had in other countries. (Sintenis 1925, 1, Cohen-Portheim 1925, 15)

The music halls and variety theaters in the Rhineland were not as elaborate as the revues in the entertainment palaces in Berlin, but still presented programs with song, dance, circus artists and slapstick. (Uecker 1994, 309) An important venue for modern dance, the variety theaters and circuits in Germany did provide a place to perform outside of the opera houses, and became a major source of work for dancers in the 1920's. (Jansen 1990, 123) In his book on variety shows in the 1920's, Wolfgang Jansen notes that "with very little exception dancers took the opportunity to dance as part of a variety show or in a cabaret production without making a fuss." He continues that the "entertainment stage was more open for new forms of dance expression than the ballet traditionally bound to the opera stage." (Jansen 1990, 127) This statement is interesting because it seems that these shows provided dancers with the opportunity to show non-traditional works that the halutras provided for the dancers in St. Petersburg. Because of the influence of Duncan and Goleizovsky, much of Balanchine's choreography as well as his simple costumes resembled modern dance more than it did ballet. The *Catalogue* listed the following dances as having been performed in Germany: *La Nuit, Schön Rosmarin, Valse Triste, Matelotte, Orientalia, Hungarian Gypsy Dances, Enigma, Elegy,* and *Invitation to the Dance*. The audiences, accustomed to seeing modern dance, would have responded well to Balanchine's modern works. It is however interesting, that although some of his avant-garde works were performed a few times at the Ballets Russes, some of the elements typical of modern dance, like expressionism and barefoot dances all but disappeared from Balanchine's choreography when he began working for the Ballets Russes.

Apparently the spas in Rhineland provided the ideal setting for the Soviet Dancers to perform. It is probable that this venue provided some source of inspiration for Balanchine's work at the Ballets Russes: in Russia he had already been experimenting with acrobatics in his work, but after the tour he began to use more syncopation in his dances, beginning with the solo of the Nightingale in his first ballet for Diaghilev, *Le Chant du Rossignol*. Before beginning her ballet training, Markova worked as a child dancer and pantomime performer in variety shows in London, so it is not surprising that she was able to understand Balanchine's musicality, making her the ideal person to dance both the Nightingale and later the Cat in *La Chatte*. In addition, back minstrel dancers often performed in the variety shows in Europe and were common especially in London. (Niemeyer 1984, 144) Characters representing these dancers appeared in two of his Ballets Russes works, *Jack in the Box* and *The Triumph of*

Neptune. Another ballet, *Barabau,* was described as having Charlie Chaplin type humor, a slapstick comedy act that was typical of the variety shows before it appeared in the silent movies where Balanchine was likely to have seen him perform when he played the piano for the silent film in St. Petersburg.[9]

Geva said that out of mistrust of Soviet citizens, Kessler required some of the dancers to arrive in Wiesbaden with their costumes before he was willing to make a contract with them. Since the group did not have enough money for them all to make the trip, the women were left behind in Berlin while the men made arrangements. Completely broke, it was during this time that Geva sold her hair. Soon thereafter the entire group met in Wiesbaden where they spent time rehearsing to improve their repertory, trying to make it more up-to-date for the public. (Geva 1984, 328)

In Wiesbaden, Dimitriev and the dancers made a new contract, this one without Dranisnikov. It was a short, handwritten contract, signed on September 6, 1924 to extend the contract made in Stettin, which was to expire on September 7. (Balanchivadze et. al. September 6, 1924) Again, the contract was only to last two months, indicating that the group still planned on returning to the Soviet Union. Danilova, however, recalled that it was becoming more and more unlikely. She said that

> It was in July, while we were on tour in Germany, that an invitation arrived from the Empire Theater in London. We were asked to come for an engagement in November. The others agreed immediately and signed the contract. But I at first refused to sign. We were expected back at the Maryinsky on September 1, to begin rehearsals, so the decision to go to London was also a decision not to go back to Russia-not just yet. But the West was for us an adventure, and we were not ready for it to be over. In the end, I signed. (Danilova 1988, 65)

The dancers reported that they did two things in Rhineland. They danced and they ate. When they weren't dancing, they were eating. (Geva 1984, 328) Danilova says that she ate so much of the good German food that she gained too much weight, and a few months later at the Ballets Russes, Anton Dolin claimed he had difficulties performing his variation after lifting her, complaining, "What do you think I am, a piano mover?" (Danilova 1988, 73) They performed at least once a week, sometimes more, in every possible place: in halls, summer theaters, open air theaters, at private parties, and even in an insane asylum. The performance in the asylum was interesting for the dancers because the writer Ernst Toller

was a patient at the time. His work *Die Hinkemann* had been translated into Russian and played in St. Petersburg. Geva recalled that "it was a cry against war, a first protest play against war." (Geva 1976) She recalled that after that all the dancers were interested in the play. (Geva 1976)

Danilova recalled that the group traveled down the Rhine by boat and was impressed by the castles. She also said that at one point the group traveled to Vienna to hear Rachmaninoff play and that the dancers met him backstage. She said, "We were very admiring, paying tribute to him as if he were a god. 'I would like very much to choreograph a ballet to your beautiful concerto,' George told him. 'A ballet!...To my music! Are you crazy?' And he threw us out of his dressing room." (Danilova 1988, 65)

According to Geva the dancers performed in Mainz, Wiesbaden, Ems, Mosel and other small towns of the Rhine provinces. (Geva 1984, 329) Danilova recalled that recitals were arranged in Wiesbaden, Baden Baden and Frankfurt am Main. (Danilova 1988, 60) Their last performance was a variety show in a beer garden in Mainz. The success of the performances was reported differently by Danilova and Geva, with Geva's account being more believable. Danilova stated that "our performances were well received. We were one act on a bill with many others, playing variety theaters in spa towns along the Rhine. One of the other acts was a clown, who made eyes at me as part of his routine." (Danilova 1988, 64) Geva described their last performance in a beer garden in Mainz as such: "Birds flew overhead, the stage was slippery and the…audience was drinking beer and occasionally bursting into song. We followed a dog act." (Geva 1984, 329) Her description was consistent with the purpose of many of the establishments where the Soviet Dancers performed in Germany, namely to relax and to be amused rather than to be artistically uplifted. (Uecker 1994, 309)

Geva stated that they "had made no impression so far, gained no recognition." (Geva 1984, 329) In another source she went so far as to say that "we were a flop in Germany, absolute disaster." (Geva 1991, 13) Danilova did not really describe how bad the group was, saying in one place only that "we had lovely time in Germany,"[10] (Danilova 1991, 5) and in another that "the critics said we were a very talented little group but that we needed a little alteration." (Ackermann and Summer 1982, 12)

5.5 London and Paris: The Empire Theater and Diaghilev's Discovery

After completing the Germany tour, the group was given a one month engagement at the Empire Theater in London, a "glamorized vaudeville house" (Geva 1976) which had a tradition of presenting ballet as part of their program. Once again, Dimitriev bound the dancers to himself with a new contract, dated November 3, 1924. This contract was more detailed than the last one, reaffirming his complete control over all financial arrangements and all performance contracts. The contract was to last five months, an indication that the atmosphere was changing: they had already long passed the beginning of the Maryinsky season, and although Danilova says she still considered returning, from the stipulations of the contract and the places and dates, it does not seem to have been realistic. This contract had another condition; one that had long term effects on the dancers after the five month period came to an end. Officially to end on April 3, 1925, almost one year after the original contract was signed, it contained a clause which bound the dancers to continue to pay Dimitriev as their manager and administrator for the duration of any contract which was made with the group while they stood under this contract. (Balanchivadze et. al. November 3, 1924) The consequence of this clause was that, when the dancers joined the Ballets Russes one month later in December, they were bound to Dimitriev until they no longer worked for the Ballets Russes, for Geva until 1927 and for the other three dancers until Diaghilev's death in 1929.

At the Empire, Danilova recalled that she and Efimov danced the pas de deux from *Coppélia* and *Oriental Dances* from *Khovanshchina* with Geva. (Danilova 1973 *Part I,* 40) Geva reported that they did not understand the precision of music hall timing and, since their costumes were not made for quick changes, they were late for almost every entrance, and the orchestra had to keep repeating their music. (Geva 1984, 330-331) She recalled that all their "costumes had little hooks and nothing was done for speed, quick changes. So when we started dancing there, we had these long waits between numbers." (Geva 1976) Finally, they were told that the others could not wait for them to change the costumes and were fired, leaving them with the question of where to go to next. They could not return home, since they had not responded to the telegram from the Soviet officials requesting their immediate return. They had no work permits to stay in England, and no visas to go back to Germany. Soviet passports were frowned upon in most places, but were accepted in France.[11]

Perhaps Geva's description of the group at this phase best described them as they finally arrived in Paris: "when we traveled and danced everywhere, we never thought about what was going to happen. In fact we were in some sort of state of suspension…we got to Paris with our last bits of money and were sitting in this little hotel on la Place de la Republique…" (Geva 1976) It was at this point that Diaghilev contacted them. Geva recalled that Balanchine got the phone call and reported to the others "it was Diaghilev. He found us. How he found us I don't know, but he wants us to come and audition for him." (Geva 1976) Geva said that they never really knew how Diaghilev had tracked them down to Paris, (Geva 1973) but that Anton Dolin had seen them perform in London and had informed Diaghilev. (Geva 1991, 13) Danilova said that Lidia Lopukhova, Fyodor Lopukhov's sister who had formerly danced for the Ballets Russes, came to visit them in their dressing room after one of their performances. She also said that Diaghilev had sent his cousin to look for the group in Germany, but had missed them there, finally catching up with them in London. According to another account, he was not able to contact them until the group arrived in Paris. (Danilova 1988, 65)

Most of the corps de ballet of the Ballets Russes had returned to Russia at the beginning of the War, and Diaghilev had not been able to get new dancers from Russia for several years. Since much of the early success of the Ballets Russes could be attributed to an entire company of dancers trained with the discipline of the Maryinsky, the absence of such dancers caused the quality to decline, and Diaghilev saw the opportunity to bring in some fresh talent. Lifar, who was present at the audition, recalled:

> So I was taken to Madame (Misia) Sert's by Diaghilev to see the Soviet dancers who had chosen freedom. They did not invite the directress, who was Nijinska…I went to Madame Sert's, and in the large salon I saw the young dancers. There were four of them. I looked at them and saw that they were dancers of my generation, and I said to Diaghilev-knowing nothing about their qualities-I said to Diaghilev, "We must take these youngsters," and Diaghilev agreed. (Joseph 2002, 46)

For their audition, Danilova performed a variation from Lopukhov's *Firebird*, and Balanchine and Geva performed either *Enigma* or *Étude* or both. Danilova describes the audition:

> After tea, the furniture was moved to clear a space at the end of the room, where Tamara and George did their number in costume, but in bare feet. It was George's choreography to some Arensky music from *Une Nuit d'Egypte*-very modern. When they had

> finished, Diaghilev turned to me and said, "And you, Miss Danilova, what will you dance for me?"
> "Dance for you?" I said. "What do you mean?"
> He said, "Well, they danced, and I thought maybe you would-it's like a little audition."
> "Do you know that I come from the Maryinsky Theater?...If I am good enough for the Maryinsky Theater, I am good enough for you." Can you imagine how fresh I was? (Danilova 1988, 66)

To celebrate, Danilova said that the group sold Balanchine's suit, which was relatively new and well cut, and bought enough food to have a feast on that day and to hold them over until they joined Diaghilev's company back in London and got advances on their salaries. (Danilova 1988, 67)

The dancers were hired for the remainder of the season, from December 1, 1924 to July 1, 1925 (Balanchinvadze et. al. December 1, 1924), receiving contracts based on their status at the Maryinsky: Danilova as a soloist, Efimov in the corps de ballet and Geva, in the corps, but with the least pay since she had still been a student at Theater School when they left. To solidify their standing contract with Dimitriev, shortly thereafter in London, a request was sent to Diaghilev asking that all payment be made to Dimitriev, not directly to the dancers. (Balanchinvadze et. al. December 11, 1924) Danilova described that she and Balanchine fulfilled this agreement: "George still felt responsible Mr. Dmitriev, and we still lived by our old agreement, that everything we earned would be put together and divided evenly. Mr. Dmitriev wanted to open a photography studio, to do portraits of society people. He moved with us into the little apartment we found…" (Danilova 1988, 85) She says that the arrangement lasted for years, extending beyond Diaghilev's death, at which point she felt it was time to make a break with him. Balanchine, however, still felt obliged to him since he had brought them out of Russia. Danilova recalled that

> He had a strong personality, and during the years when we danced with the Diaghilev company, he refused to let go. George and I brought our salaries home, put them into one pot, and divided them three ways; Mr. Dmitriev didn't work but he had brought us out of Russia. When Diaghilev died, it seemed time to break with Dmitriev, but George said, 'No, not yet-we are obliged to him.' Although he took up photography, he never really made a career out of it." (Danilova 1988, 109)

5.6 *Enigma* and *Étude*

Accounts differ as to whether Balanchine and Geva performed *Enigma* or *Étude* for their audition for Diaghilev. The dances bore some similarities to each other, so it is possible that they were confused in the recollections of the dancers. However, it is equally probable that they showed Diaghilev both dances. Much less is written about the pas de deux *Étude,* choreographed to the music of Scriabin in 1923. Since it is not listed among the dances in Kostrovitskaya's list of ballets of the Young Ballet, it may have not been shown during these performances, or it may be the adagio number thirteen: "Geva and Balanchine: adagio with high lifts (I don't remember whose music)." (Slonimsky 1991, 62-63) It also could have been part of a smaller performance or halutras where only Balanchine and Geva performed.

The *Catalogue* said that "this was probably performed by Balanchine and Geva as an audition piece for Diaghilev in Paris" and they both evidently performed this for the matinee performances in Monte Carlo for the Ballets Russes. (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 65) It said similar things about *Enigma*, that it was used by Balanchine and Geva as an audition piece and that it was performed at least three times by the Ballets Russes. (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 63)

Enigma was mentioned as being one of Balanchine's most memorable early works. It also enjoyed a longer life than *Étude;* it was performed in the Soviet Union up until the 1930's. (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 63) Originally it was choreographed for Ivanova, but Balanchine and Geva also performed it both at the Donon as well as for a benefit concert given at the Maryinsky. It is interesting that at least one of Balanchine's most extreme avant-garde works did make it to the Maryinsky stage, even if the concert was unorthodox. Since this was the dance he and Geva performed for Diaghilev at their audition for the Ballets Russes, (Mc Donagh 1983, 32) it is probable that Balanchine either particularly liked this dance or that he and Geva danced it particularly well, or else he would have chosen something else to show the legendary Diaghilev at their first encounter.

Like many of Balanchine's early works, the costumes declared Balanchine's loyalties (or lack of loyalties to tradition) before the dance even began: both he and Geva appeared in tunics. Geva described that they "danced barefoot wearing chiffon tunics covering our torsos." (Geva 1984, 298) She compared this dance to Isadora Duncan, most likely because

of the costumes and bare feet. However, she added that "it required real technique." (Geva 1991, 12) Recalling that Fokine was forced to dress his dancers in tights and shoes with toenails painted on them rather than break the ironclad rule forbidding bare legs onstage, this was a daring step for Balanchine to take, particularly for a dance that was choreographed to be performed on the Maryinsky stage itself. This does, however, show how radically times had changed in St. Petersburg. Those in charge of the Academic Theaters disapproved of Balanchine's work and tried to oppose it through the press and by forbidding the dancers of the Theater to take part in his productions. However, performing this number in the Maryinsky would have been unthinkable a decade earlier.

The original performance of this dance was Geva's one and only performance on the Maryinsky stage (Geva 1976), given at a benefit concert. She remembered it vividly:

> Standing in the wings as we awaited our turn I felt a painful letdown. I was about to step out on the stage I had only dared to dream of, but it was far from what I had imagined. The lights in the auditorium were only partly dimmed, the audience was standing, none of the important dancers were taking part, and one could hear distant voices and laughter…in the hullabaloo, it was impossible to determine the degree of our success or failure, but we took three bows. I think the audience was a bit stunned…the crowd of well over a thousand, bizarre in its conglomeration of fancy costumes, ordinary clothes and a few leftover evening dresses and dinner jackets was getting unruly. People ate and drank gluttonously, spending their last rubles on what had been denied them for years. Unaccustomed to drink, they were thrown off balance, and though in Soviet Russia any public display of affection was suppressed, eroticism was rampant. One had only to open a door to the antechamber of a box to come upon entwined bodies. It was madness-a ball during a plague. The theater, the beautiful blue and gold dignified theater, was the scene of a drunken carnival." (Geva 1984, 299)

Given the description of the audience, it is ironic that this dance was criticized for being obscene. However, it is exactly this point that was later remembered by the dancers and those who saw the performance. Balanchine committed two transgressions in this ballet, the first being at the very beginning. An extant photograph of Geva and Balanchine show a position which was certainly offensive to those championing the Academic Theater. Souritz says that this photograph is a picture of the ballet *Étude*, (Souritz 1990 "The Young Balanchine in Russia," 69) but Taper says that the photograph could have been either *Étude*, music by Scriabin or *Enigma*, music by Arensky. (Taper 1984, 61) Kochno, who had been

present at the audition of the Soviet Dancers, mistakenly says that Balanchine danced a pas de deux with Danilova, not Geva, but claimed to have a photograph of this dance: "Balanchine lifting up Danilova, who covered him with her skirt." (Kochno 1991, 82) Because there are so few photographs of Balanchine's early works, his statement seems to support that this is a picture of *Enigma*. Geva says that they performed *Enigma* in their audition for Diaghilev, but since Diaghilev shortly thereafter criticized Balanchine's use of Scriabin, it is possible that it was *Étude* instead. It is likely that the two dances were very similar to one another, and that one was kept in the program for the tour in Germany and the other left out. In light of this, it is probable that, whichever ballet this photograph shows, the positions appeared in both ballets.

4. George Balanchine and Tamara Geva
In *Enigma* or *Étude* in 1923.

The dancers were dressed in chiffon tunics and were barefoot as described by Geva. Her tunic was light colored, Balanchine's was a little darker, and it crossed over only one shoulder and continued under the other arm, similar to the sleeves on the costumes from

Funeral March. They were bound at the waist and Balanchine was wearing a headdress. It is not possible to see if Geva was wearing a headdress since she was wearing her hair open and was in an upside down position in the picture, but since their costumes were otherwise very similar, she probably also had a headdress. The photograph showed Balanchine with the girl, lying on her back, slung over his shoulder. Both her legs were bent, and one held the position by wrapping itself around the man. The other was held in a forward attitude position. Since she was for the most part upside down, her tunic did not even cover half of her thighs. The almost full body contact the girl had with the boy showed Balanchine's most extreme violation of the standards of the Maryinsky up to that point.

Balanchine was not the only choreographer to use an upside down position in a pas de deux. In Lopukhov's *Firebird*, the press criticized the adagio for sweeping the dancer upside down across the floor like a broom. Souritz quoted Mungalova who described the move:

> The final struggle takes place. The bird flies upward, the Tsarevich catches her in an arabesque, and sets her on the ground in this position, holding the raised leg; he violently pulls the bird toward him, so that she turns. Immediately he throws her to his chest, and for a second turns together with her, lowering her head to the ground, then placing the bird back on his chest, takes several steps." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 264)

The steps described here show that the traditions being broken by Balanchine were also being broken by Lopukhov, the artistic director of the Maryinsky: the points of contact between the partners and the position of the woman upside down.

The second offense Balanchine committed in this ballet was more drastic. Near the end, the girl positioned herself in a backbend and the man performed a darting jump across her body. This move, performed when the music reached its climax, was extreme. Gusev recalled how shocked they were:

> I remember that in this piece for the first time a woman arched into a 'bridge'. This shocked people but was accepted. But when her partner leaped across the 'bridge', making a grand jeté with his bent leg, this produced general indignation and protest. Even Lopukhov told us that such a stunt was coarse and served no purpose…We told Balanchine to listen to

> the criticism and remove the jump. But he stubbornly continued to jump all he wanted. (Slonimsky 1991, 67)

Interestingly, Lopukhov later used the same jump on Gusev and Mungalova in a duet of acrobats in the opera *Judith*. (Slonimsky 1991, 67)

The tour of the Soviet Dancers marks the end of Balanchine's extreme experiments in the aesthetics of the Soviet avant-garde, partially because it was clear to both him and the other Soviet Dancers that the styles that had been cutting edge in Russia were behind the times and not well accepted in Western Europe. Diaghilev introduced Balanchine to new things, taking him to museums all over Europe and giving him the opportunity to work with the best artists and composers of the time. In his first ballet for Diaghilev, *Le Chant du Rossignol*, Balanchine did pay one last tribute to his days in St. Petersburg in the role he choreographed for himself, the Mechanical Nightingale. According to Hodson, in this role he made fun of himself and his own extreme experiments, done only a short time before. (Bank and Van Schaik 2004)

In addition, with the exception of the few performances of the Young Ballet, most of his performances in Russia and Germany were small recitals or part of variety shows, and as Diaghilev's choreographer he had an entire company of dancers at his disposal, from corps de ballets to seasoned principals, who danced in real theaters and opera houses with the finest sets and costumes money could buy. The contrast to the ragged, half starved group of students and young corps members from the Maryinsky dancing in whatever venue they could find, wearing costumes that they themselves had made out of whatever old cloth they could find, could not have been greater.

After this point, Balanchine's ballets began to resemble ballet far more than it did modern dance. While he continued to use certain experimental elements in a refined form, there were many that he no longer utilized. He rarely choreographed dances for only one or two people. Solos and duets were choreographed, but usually as part of ballets with larger casts. In addition, for the time being, he no longer dressed his dancers in tunics as he did in *La Nuit, Poème, Enigma, Étude* and *Valse Triste*. It was quite a bit later that he returned to this characteristic, dressing his dancers in leotards to enable the audience to see the body more completely. The next photographic evidence to show his dancers wearing practice tunics in a

performance is in the original *Serenade*[12] in 1935. From the very first ballet he did at the Ballets Russes, Balanchine and his dancers were again wearing costumes of the quality they had enjoyed at the Maryinsky before the Revolution when the ballet was still well funded by the czar. Finally, his experiments with barefoot dances practically end here. None of his ballets at the Ballets Russes had the dancers dancing barefoot.

5.7 Choreographer

Diaghilev was also in need of a new choreographer at the time and decided to give Balanchine a chance to show what he could do. Kochno says that Diaghilev wanted to get Goleizovsky as choreographer for his company about the time that Balanchine arrived on the scene, but since he was unable, he began to groom Balanchine for the role. (Joseph 2002, 62) In London, he let him work with the company for a few hours to set one of his ballets. He chose to set *Funeral March* on the company, something which surprised the dancers because of its oppressive theme. De Valois recalled that day:

> When we were in London, I and four or five other girls got a summons to go to Madame Serafima Astafieva's studio on a Sunday morning, because the young man joining the company was to arrange a piece of choreography on us for Diaghilev to see. So there we all went, angry about having our Sunday morning lost. Except we did like Balanchine, he was sweet, only twenty. Of all things, he arranged a little number for the five or six of us to the *Funeral March* of Chopin. I only think of that music for royal family funerals. It seemed so strange that he used that. Diaghilev came in about two hours later and looked at it with Kochno and Grigoriev. That was the start. (de Valois 1991, 86)

Since *Funeral March* showed a definite influence of Goleizovsky and the Constructivist theater in the Soviet Union, it may have encouraged Diaghilev in his decision to hire Balanchine. The current choreographer for the company, Nijinska, quit almost immediately, making Balanchine, who weeks before had been a total failure on the variety circuit in Germany and a music hall in London, the chief choreographer of the legendary Ballets Russes.

5.8 Summary and Analysis Chapter 5

Balanchine did not create any new ballets during the 1924 tour of the Soviet Dancers. Rather, the tour was a failure in every sense except one: the dancers were discovered and

hired by Diaghilev in December 1924. Its importance lies in that this tour enable them to leave the Soviet Union and become part of the Ballets Russes. Because the Academic Theaters moved so decisively in the direction of preserving the classics, had Balanchine stayed in the Soviet Union, he would not have been able to develop his art the way he did in the West, and ballet would not have been transformed into the neo-classical.

Why the Soviet Dancers decided to remain in the West although they were planning on returning to St. Petersburg after only a few months was one of the questions presented by this study. There is no clear answer: it would seem that the young people were simply living day to day, and themselves came to the realization that they would remain. It is certain that the poverty, the lack of opportunity, and the shadow of Ivanova's untimely death played important roles.

The dance performed by Balanchine and Geva at their audition for Diaghilev was either *Étude* or *Enigma*. These pas de deux resembled one another and both showed Balanchine's experimentation at its most extreme. They clearly demonstrate his phase of development in which his choreography least resembled the classics. Balanchine and his partner danced barefoot, another radical departure. St. Petersburg had been taken by storm by Duncan's barefoot dances, and Goleizovsky also had his classically trained dancers perform barefoot. Interestingly, in the case of *Enigma* and *Étude* we once again see that Balanchine was influenced by the artists around him, experimented with what he saw, and then decisively rejected it. After joining the Ballets Russes, he no longer choreographed barefoot dances.

Secondly Balanchine completely broke with the rules of the Academic Theater regarding points of contact in these dances; the dancers had almost full body contact. This represents a radical change from classical pas de deux which allowed contact only at the hands and waist. This change was long lasting, and also shows how Balanchine transformed the classical into neo-classical. Allowing body contact between the dancers expanded the vocabulary of partnering beyond combinations, balances and turns. The photograph of Balanchine and Geva clearly shows a new partnering move, one that would have been forbidden in the Academic Theater. (Photograph 4) Other memorable partnering moves appeared later in *La Chatte* and *Apollo*.

The end of the tour also represents the end of Balanchine's extreme experimentation. While he continued to experiment and transform dance at the Ballets Russes, his experiments were less extreme, and the road to neo classicism becomes clearer.

Chapter 6
Choreographer for the Ballets Russes (1925-1927)

It has been said that Balanchine's education took place in two phases: the first in Russia where he was formally trained in the classical dance vocabulary, in music, and was an active part of the Soviet avant-garde movement of the early 1920's. There he participated in theatrical and dance projects on every level. The second phase took place while he was chief choreographer of the Ballets Russes, where Diaghilev helped him refine his work. Serge Diaghilev, with his uncanny ability to detect artistic genius, saw Balanchine's potential, but described him as having talent without taste. Taper illustrated Diaghilev's opinion:

> Diaghilev remarked that the music Balanchine had used till then- Scriabin and such- was not really very good music. Diaghilev also pointed out that in what he had seen of his choreography false, crude, or disappointing effects often marred passages of great beauty, and he added that Balanchine was like someone who carefully prepares an elegant and delicious meal for his guests and then, when they are waiting for just the right wine to go with it, brings them a big jug of water. (Taper 1984, 75)

Since Balanchine and Geva danced *Étude* to Scriabin[1] for their audition with Diaghilev, it is likely that Diaghilev was directly referring to this dance.

In the Soviet Union as well as in Germany, Balanchine's own choreography was performed in simple productions, many in small theaters and nightclubs, and all without sets, the dancers wearing simple homemade costumes. As a child he had performed in the elaborate productions of the Maryinsky, complete with sets and costumes that could only be financed by the Czar himself. These productions continued after the Revolution, even though the costumes and sets were worn down over time. At the Ballets Russes, Balanchine was given the opportunity to set his own ballets on a large stage with sets and costumes created by the most talented artists of the time. He was definitely prepared for this venture, and choreographed his first full length ballet for the Ballets Russes in 1925, *Le Chant du Rossignol* to Stravinsky's score with sets and costumes by Matisse.

The following chapter will cover the years that the former Soviet Dancers spent as members of the Ballets Russes, beginning in 1924 and ending in 1928 as well as analyzing some of the choreography Balanchine did for the company. Since so much has been written on the Ballets Russes and Diaghilev[2], the chapter will only briefly describe the time period before 1924 to allow the reader to put the events and choreographic development into context. The rest of the chapter will primarily deal with those issues directly related to the dancers themselves, their memories, and the dances they performed in. The main sources are the memories of Danilova, Geva and Balanchine, with two important additions: Felia Doubrovska and Alicia Markova[3]. Balanchine created some of his most important early works on these dancers. In addition to the recorded interviews from the Oral History Archives at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, and various published interviews of these two dancers, Markova wrote an autobiography, *Markova Remembers. Dance Chronicle* published an extensive article on Doubrovska's life in 1983 by Victoria Huckenpahler. In Appendix II of this book, four letters from Balanchine to Diaghilev discussing various dancers are translated into English. Since they give insight into Balanchine's choice of dancers as well as his working relationship with Diaghilev, they will be analyzed in this chapter. These sources have been used at length together with the materials from the other dancers to examine the choreography. To supplement the accounts from direct witnesses, material has been taken from the work of Hodson and Archer who worked directly with Markova and Danilova at different levels in many of their reconstructions. (Hodson and Archer 1991, 42, 46) Their work provides an important secondary source of information for the ballets described here. In addition, quotations of the dancers from archival film footage shown in documentaries have been used.

One major difference does exist in the study of Balanchine's early ballets at the Ballets Russes in comparison to his work in the Soviet Union, namely the amount of documentation available. Not only were the ballets better recorded, but the memories of the dancers seem to be clearer at this time, perhaps due to the more stable environment in which they were living.

6.1 Serge Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes

In the documentary film *Four Emperors and a Nightingale,* Christophe Maillet, Artistic Director of Les Ballets de Monte Carlo, described the Ballets Russes as the father and

mother all ballet companies today. (Bank and Van Schaik 2004) Its founder and the motivating force behind it, Serge Diaghilev, first became interested in art as a student in St. Petersburg, where he, along with some of his friends, including the artist Benois, produced a journal known as the *World of Art* which propagated the members' opinions on various topics. Petipa's *Sleeping Beauty* inspired them in what later became the goal of the Ballets Russes: the realization of Wagner's Gesamtkunstwerk. Diaghilev worked at the Maryinsky for a short time, but was dismissed, according to Geva because his arrogance made him unpopular and because of the gradual disclosure of his homosexuality. (Geva 1979) Because of his dismissal, Diaghilev sought other venues for his endeavors, at first bringing an exhibit of Russian art to Western Europe followed by a season of opera. In 1908 he brought a program of ballet and opera to Paris, the ballet becoming more successful than he had imagined. After their first Russian Season in Paris, the Ballets Russes became the forefront of the avant-garde art movement in Western Europe, with many of the best artist and musicians of the day collaborating on ballets: Stravinsky, Picasso, Matisse, Cocteau, Debussy and Satie worked together with choreographers Fokine, Massine, Nijinsky, Nijinska and Balanchine to create ballets that both shocked and entertained all of Europe as the group toured from city to city. It has been accurately described as "far more than a ballet company…it was a whole artistic movement." (Taper 1984, 76) Driven almost completely by its founder and director, the Ballets Russes remained on the cutting edge of art in Europe until his death in 1929 when the company dispersed. Geva said that "he had perfect taste and an unfailing sense of discovery, and there was no other man in France who commanded equal respect in the world of the arts. Surrounded by great painters, composers and authors, he ruled his domain and manipulated his people like puppets." (Geva 1984, 333-334)

During the Ballets Russes' first seasons, much of the success of the company was owed to choreographer Fokine, who staged some of his ballets that had been performed at the Maryinsky as well as choreographing new ones. In Western Europe his work was not stifled by the rules of the Academic Theaters as it had been in St. Petersburg. The first seasons of the Ballets Russes took place during the holidays of the Imperial Theater, the dancers returning to perform in the regular season. This provided Diaghilev with dancers trained and maintained by the Maryinsky and kept the dancers in Russia up-to-date on happenings in Western Europe. Eventually, the company became a full time enterprise under

the patronage of the royal family of Monte Carlo, where the company rehearsed and had a permanent home.

Most of the premiers took place in Paris where the company enjoyed great popularity and a fixed place in Parisian society:

> A Diaghilev premier in Paris was always an event of electric excitement. There was in the air the feeling…that *everybody* who mattered was seated in that audience-the *haut monde,* the artists, the intellectuals. With tense anticipation they awaited the curtain rise, wondering what new discoveries Diaghilev was going to reveal, what new trends in art and fashions in styles were about to be set; what new reputations would be made, what scandals perpetrated. (Taper 1984, 76)

The years of the Ballets Russes abound with scandals, some of the most spectacular involving the renowned dancer Nijinsky.[4] One of his highly experimental works, *The Afternoon of a Faun,* choreographed to Debussy, ended with the Faun making an autoerotic gesture. *Sacre du Printemps* caused a legendary uproar when its anti-classical choreography was first performed to Stravinsky's music. By the time the Soviet Dancers joined the company, Nijinsky had been gone for many years, and none of the witnesses mention his choreography as having influenced him,[5] but his reputation both as a dancer and choreographer preceded him. Balanchine recalls:

> Nijinsky, of course was magnificent. He literally flew through the air, powerfully…They call it "Nijinsky's secret"; but a lot of Nijinsky's technique is accessible to other dancers. I can put it this way: one dancer can do one thing well, and another something else…But only Nijinsky could do them all! He could do everything! And that was his secret. People argue over whether Nijinsky was a good choreographer. What I saw was promising. I would say that he could have become a real ballet master if he had been given the chance. Nijinsky knew how to invent interesting things. They should have asked for more new ballets from him…Nijinsky did his ballets to complicated music, it was too hard for him. Still, I think that Nijinsky was more talented than his sister Bronislava, even though she did a few interesting things herself. Of course, I probably would have done Stravinsky's *Les Noces* differently from what she did. (Volkov 1985, 213-214)

Of Nijinsky's ballets, only *The Afternoon of a Faun* was still being performed when Balanchine joined the company, and it is possible that the dancers showed him some of the moves from

his other ballets. However, works of all three of the other choreographers, Fokine, Massine and Nijinska remained in the repertory of the Ballets Russes, and Balanchine knew and performed in many of these ballets. He does not, however, seem to have been greatly influenced by Massine or Nijinska's choreography, since none of his contemporaries discuss elements of their choreography that were influential in Balanchine's work.

Although the other choreographers did not impact his work directly, the influence of Diaghilev, himself not an artist, on Balanchine and many other dancers was immeasurable. Balanchine once said "if it weren't for Diaghilev, I wouldn't be here!" (Gruen 1982, 104) Danilova recalled "we owe everything to Diaghilev," (Belle 1981) and Markova also said "I owe him my career." (Geva 1979*)* As with all his choreographers, Diaghilev took it upon himself to educate Balanchine. Danilova recalled that Balanchine was included in Diaghilev's inner circle and was often invited to lunches and dinners with famous and important people that she and other dancers were not allowed to attend. Lifar recalled that they did this together, saying "Diaghilev educated us both, taking us to museums, showing us sculptors and paintings, all those Christs." (Lifar 1982, 25) Balanchine recalled that he was a "very nice man. Intelligent. Tall. Enormous head. And half-dark, half-white natural hair." (Gruen 1975, 281) Doubrovska said that he was "nice, very nice. I adored him." (Doubrovska 1982, 3) Markova said that Diaghilev became a father to her, since her own father had died shortly before she joined the Ballets Russes at the age of 14. (Markova 1972) She recalled: "I think the company thought he's gone crazy because he didn't care for children." (Markova 1993) Diaghilev took special interest in her education: "Some members of the company were frightened of Diaghilev. None…understood why he should be so interested in me. Diaghilev worried about my education and arranged for me to have French lessons as soon as I arrived. He insisted that I grow my hair from its "Buster Brown" cut to something longer and more classical. He took me to museums and told me to listen to music." (Markova 1986, 19-20) Geva recalled that Diaghilev was "immersed" in educating Nijinsky during the first seasons of the Ballets Russes. (Geva 1979)

Descriptions of Diaghilev's character varied greatly, Geva saying that "he had all the characteristics of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, his personality changing from overwhelming charm to the roughness of a truck driver at any sign of opposition." (Geva 1984, 333) Ninette de Valois said that he was very kind, and he showed this kindness to individuals, but never the whole company. (Geva 1979) Few dancers had a personal relationship with

Diaghilev. Some recalled Diaghilev's greatness, others his faults. To most he seemed to have been a distant dictator. Geva described him as being "a king-a great talented man…But I think in his behavior he was a ruler, he was ruthless, he played with the lives of people right and left, without taking anything into consideration. I feel that it is so and I had a few examples that prove it. But everyone would really shake when he walked into a room. He could also charm the birds off the trees." (Geva 1974) A man known for his refined tastes, she also recalled he could "swear like a truck driver," mostly in Russian, saying "that's when he was at his most imaginative." (Geva 1976) She recalled an incident at the opening of the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* in Paris. The surrealist artists who had made a pact not to do any commercial work objected to Miró's participation in the ballet. They started a riot during the performance, and the dancers were unable to hear the music. Diaghilev insisted that they keep dancing:

> We were dancing and terrified because they turned on the lights in the audience. We couldn't hear the music from the other side because the noise absorbed it. Diaghilev stood in the wings and he wanted us to continue dancing and he swore at us in Russian, in a way that I have never heard duplicated. It was just absolutely incredible! Just a flow of obscenities that came at us…When peace came about, he turned into a very charming man and he came up, made one slow move on stage and said in French, "Ladies and gentlemen, we are very sorry. From the beginning..." And the whole ballet started from the beginning. (Geva 1976)

Doubrovska also recalled his power over the company. She said that if he decided that someone else was to dance a particular role on a particular evening, it was done, even if it were someone else's turn to dance it. (Doubrovska 1975) The absolute power again seems only to have been towards dancers of lesser status in the company, not to those in the inner circle, as Doubrovska also recalled that "Diaghilev generally didn't decide the dancers for a ballet himself. Of course he was the boss, but also he would call the composer, the choreographer, and the designers together, and they would discuss and he would listen to everybody's opinion. Then he would decide: 'Yes, this I like. You are right. You are not right…'" (Doubrovska 1982, 7)

Some recalled another aspect of Diaghilev: he created an environment where the dancers were pitted against one another in competition for roles and status. Dolin said that "with masterly strategy he played off one ballerina against another, often withholding the

parts they most coveted. No one dared relax or rest on their laurels, as there were always other splendid dancers only too anxious and capable of stepping into the shoes of the slackers and the self satisfied…" (Dolin 1953, 108) Dolin's statement was likely true for many of the dancers, but not all recalled being intensely competitive. Markova and Danilova were good friends by all accounts. This environment, on the other hand seemed to have been one of the issues Geva found intolerable about the Ballets Russes, making her employment in the company relatively short, only two years. Diaghilev tried to keep her on by promising her the roles of Sokolova when she retired, a situation most likely as difficult for Sokolova, who knew someone was waiting in the wings for her slow down, as for Geva who waited for a chance that never came.

Life for everyone was hard in the company, even under the patronage of the Monte Carlo royals. After World War I, the dancers were cut off from Russia. Since there was nowhere else to work in Europe, the dancers were trapped.[6] Geva reported that they were paid badly, and only during the season so that everyone was concerned when the vacation time came. In addition, the dancers paid not only for their own living expenses, but for their pointe shoes and tights as well. (Geva 1976) Markova recalled that they had daily class at 9 a.m. regardless of how late they had worked the night before, adding that it was not uncommon for a rehearsal to last until 2 a.m. (Markova 1972) Geva described the daily schedule: company class was taught from 9 to 10 a.m. by ballet master Cecchetti, followed by rehearsal until 1 p.m., when they broke for lunch. Rehearsals resumed from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Dinner was followed by performances in the evening, call was at 7 p.m. (Geva 1976) She further described Cecchetti's classes: "we did the same steps on Monday, every Monday, and another set of steps every Tuesday. He had divided them over the week and you knew exactly what you were going to do on Monday, on Tuesday, on Wednesday, and Thursday…They were taxing. They were difficult. But they were not interesting at all." (Geva 1976) Doubrovska also recalled training with Cecchetti: "His style was wrong; he taught everything posed, artificial…But during the winter everyone…went for two months to Italy to study with him because he gave us *la force*, strength." (Doubrovska 1982, 9) Markova said that "it was Maestro and Madame Cecchetti. Because Maestro didn't take the corps. It was Madame Cecchetti took the corps and some of the soloists. And Maestro only took the principals." (Markova 1993) It is not clear if Markova was only speaking of the time directly after she joined the Ballets Russes, since Geva was a member of the corps and remembers

Cecchetti's classes in detail. It is probable that Cecchetti taught different groups within the company at different times.

6.2 The Young Choreographer

Balanchine created 10 ballets for the Ballets Russes: *Le Chant du Rossignol, Barabau, La Pastorale, La Chatte, The Triumph of Neptune, Jack in the Box, Apollon Musagète, The Gods go a Begging, Prodigal Son,* and *Le Bal.* In addition, he created two new solos for Geva in 1927, *Grotesque Espanol* and *Sarcasm* when she left the Ballets Russes to go on tour in the United States with Chauve Souris. When Balanchine and the other dancers first arrived at the Ballets Russes, the quality of the dancers was not particularly good, according to Doubrovska, because most of the corps de ballets had returned to Russia during the First World War, leaving Diaghilev without dancers who possessed the discipline and training of the Imperial Theaters. This deficiency was definitely one of his motivations for finding and hiring the Soviet Dancers. Danilova recalled that they were not well received by the other dancers in the company since Diaghilev had fired other dancers to make room for the "awful Soviets." (Danilova 1978-1979) Balanchine said that the corps was a disaster, but that the soloists were good, and Dolin believed that the principals had strong personalities. (Geva 1979*)* Markova gave an interesting insight into the quality of the corps:

> Well, looking back the corps, to begin with, were older than the corps today, they were more mature as artists. Maybe their technique wasn't quite as strong as the corps we have today, but then today they concentrate on technique first, and in some of the works that are still danced there are things that are missing now…the accent today is on the athletic aspect of technique, but during that period technique was supposed to express simplicity. No preparations, so that you didn't see any of the mechanics, whereas today it's the opposite, the first thing they want to do is to impress everyone with how hard it is, how much they're doing how high, or whatever…(Vaughan 1977, 56)

De Valois also noted that the dancers in the company were not up to Balanchine's standards, but she gave a different reason:

> He brought back far more classicism. We had had a *demi-charatère* period with Massine. Nijinska started to move out of that, but Balanchine brought back a lot of pure classicism. When he arrived, he was horrified with the dancing of the company. He didn't

> think any of the dancers were any good. He was looking for classical dancers, and such a lot of them were character dancers. (de Valois 1991 87)

Scholl supported this notion, saying that the choreography of the ballets became less interesting as the focus of the works was pointed towards the décor and dramatization. (Scholl 1994, 65) Geva also recalled that "Diaghilev's corps was awful…just absolutely terrible…What the kids dance now could never have been even attempted by the dancers in the Diaghilev company." (Joseph 2002, 46)

The letters Balanchine wrote to Diaghilev in September 1925 and 1927 showed him trying to remedy the problem of the quality of the dancers. Whether the reason was the lack of training or simply that the company consisted mostly of character dancers at that point, Balanchine attempted to get dancers for the company who had been trained in Russia. In the letter dated September 4, 1925, Balanchine discussed some dancers whom he wished to hire for the upcoming season. Many of these dancers were at the time in Western Europe (Berlin, Paris, and Riga) making it easier for them to be hired. One dancer he described as "slim and beautiful…not a bad dancer, about the same style as the quartet group." (Balanchine September 4, 1925) Exactly what he means by the style of the quartet group is unclear. He could have meant that she would be able to dance demi-soloist roles, such as pas de quatres. Since this letter was written only months after the premiere of *Le Chant du Rossignol,* it is also possible that he was referring to the four dancers on whom Balanchine choreographed a special section in that ballet. According to Hodson and Archer, these dancers were unhappy that Diaghilev had cast Markova in the role of the Rossignol, and Balanchine choreographed a pas de quatre for them. (Hodson and Archer 1999/2000, 9)

In this letter Balanchine also discussed another dancer, Susan Gercenberg, from the Bolshoi, who at the time was at Riga. He probably had not seen her dance, but, having received confirmation that she indeed had been "in the service of the Bolshoi," wanted to hire her. (Balanchine September 4, 1925) This seems to confirm that he was working very hard to hire classical dancers for the company. A second letter to Diaghilev discussed more dancers located in Western Europe, one in Berlin, another in Finland. Balanchine mentioned the years in which some of these dancers had graduated from Theater School and described them in detail. His description of some of the women demonstrated that he was looking for a certain type of dancer. One woman he said was "a beautiful woman, taller than average."

Another was "an intelligent, classical dancer, not at all fat and not particularly tall…she is an accomplished classical dancer." (Balanchine September 15, 1925) It is clear that he was not only looking for beautiful women, but slim ones as well. He obviously was conscious of their heights.[7]

After 1925, it would seem that in their search for dancers, Balanchine and Diaghilev had exhausted their resources in Western Europe. In another letter, dated only September 5, but most likely written after 1925, Balanchine discusses the dancers he was attempting to get from Russia. A telegram and a letter dated September 26, 1927 also show that Balanchine and Diaghilev were still attempting to get dancers directly from Russian, but they do not seem to have been successful. Interesting is that Balanchine was trying to get his former classmates and Young Ballet collaborators. In the letter from September 5, Balanchine tells Diaghilev that Mungalova did not want to leave Russia, and that Kostrovitskaya had married and would be willing to come with her new spouse. Mikhailov, Archipova and Stukolkina would be ready to leave immediately. A handwritten copy of a telegram from Diaghilev to Balanchine tells him to hire these dancers immediately. On September 26, 1927 he again mentioned that Stukolkina and Archipova would be ready to come immediately, and he added Mlodzinskaya to the dancers he was trying to obtain. These dancers appear in Slonimsky's list of members of the Young Ballet. (Slonimsky 1991, 61) However, it would seem that they were not able to leave the Soviet Union,[8] and Balanchine was forced to work with the dancers he had.

As in Maryinsky, the company was divided into a strict hierarchy, Lifar explained: "when I entered the company in France, the atmosphere was that of a hierarchy. Talent didn't count for much, but seniority. The very young people were treated like errand boys and girls who had to go buy cigarettes for aging dancers who no longer knew how to dance." (Lifar 1972). The hierarchy was set for the Soviet Dancers from the beginning, their status and pay in the company based partially on their former status at the Maryinsky. Balanchine was hired as choreographer, giving him the largest income, Danilova was hired as a soloist, Efimov and Geva in the corps de ballet. Geva received the least pay since she had still been a student at Theater School when the group left. She recalled that this was a bit of a blow after the months they had spent together in Germany. On tour they were all of equal status, and she felt like she had been "quite successful" in the work she did with Balanchine. (Geva

1974) In addition, it must have been difficult to be married to the choreographer who belonged to Diaghilev's inner circle, a place where she was not welcomed.

The following section will look in detail at some of Balanchine's most important works for the Ballets Russes. It will focus on the elements that he brought with him from the Soviet Union and show how he began to combine them with what he had learned from Diaghilev. The two solos he created for Geva for Chauve-Souris, *Grotesque Espanol* (1927) and *Sarcasm* (1927) will be examined as well as six of the ballets choreographed for the Ballets Russes. Two of these ballets, *Le Chant du Rossignol* (1925) and *La Chatte* (1927) have been studied in detail and reconstructed by Hodson and Archer. Since these ballets give important clues to choreographic elements of the other works, they have been included in this section. The other four ballets, *Barabau* (1925)*, La Pastorale* (1926)*, Jack in the Box* (1926), and *The Triumph of Neptune* (1926)*,* have not been reconstructed, and most of the information in this section is from the recollections of the dancers themselves. This study has a different goal than the reconstructor; there is not enough documentation for stage worthy reconstructions of many of these ballets, but examining the materials that do exist can give vital information to Balanchine's early vocabulary, furthering the goal of creating as complete a picture as possible. The size of sections on each dance is not based on my personal determination of the historical importance of certain works, but on the availability of material. Dances that have been recalled in detail by numerous dancers are described in more detail here. If the dancers claimed the dance to have not been as significant or as important as another, it has been stated here, but I have made no such distinction myself. In addition to the memories of Geva and Danilova, which continue to provide a rich source of information, the recollections of Markova and Doubrovska have been used extensively, since these dancers not only participated in the creation of these ballets, but also numerous interviews in English detailing their experiences in these ballets and giving clues to the choreographic experiments in these ballets.

In contrast to the difficulties presented in the study of Balanchine's pre-Ballets Russes works, these ballets are well documented, many of the dances having been performed all over Europe for several years. Even the memoirs of the dancers seem to be more complete. This is probably not due so much to the time span separating the interviews and the actual events; only a few months and years separate the performances of the Young Ballet and Balanchine's first successes at the Ballets Russes, rather the dancers had left the

chaos of post-revolutionary Russia, and it is likely that they have clearer memories. More sources not directly relating to the memories of the dancers are used; however, the reader will note that this study is based to a large extent on the recollections of the artists.

6.3 *Le Chant du Rossignol*

Le Chant du Rossignol or *Song of the Nightingale* represents a number of firsts: "Balanchine's first creation after he left the Soviet Union, his first production for Serge Diaghilev and his first project with Igor Stravinsky." (Hodson and Archer 1999/2000, 7) It was also Balanchine's first full length ballet, and the first time he worked with a baby ballerina. (Markova 1972) In 1995 Markova recreated her role on video for the Interpreters Archive of the George Balanchine Foundation. The video, entitled *Alicia Markova Recreating Excerpts from Le Chant du Rossignol* gives a "verbal analysis, not only of the steps (with seasoned advice as to their technical execution and projection of their movement qualities), but of the motivations behind the steps…" (Reynolds 1995, 17) Using this project as a starting point, Hodson and Archer reconstructed the entire ballet for the Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo. The film *Four Emperors and a Nightingale* details their process and gives many important details about the original production from 1925. This section will look at those aspects that were influenced by Balanchine's St. Petersburg past, the classical, avant-garde, as well as his own choreography and put it in context with other, less documented works. The memoirs of the dancers give a more complete picture of what the dancers and witnesses experienced while rehearsing and performing this ballet, especially when examined in conjunction with other sources.

The score to *Le Chant du Rossignol* had been written by Stravinsky and first staged as an opera in 1914. Buckle said that Balanchine was already familiar with the music since he "had played a small role in the complete opera in St. Petersburg…and thought the flute in the ballet version was no substitute for the soprano voice." (Buckle 1988, 34) The score was very difficult, and no one except Stravinsky was able to play it for rehearsal, so he made a copy for the pianolas to be used during rehearsals. (Markova 1993) The original sets had been destroyed in World War I so new sets had to be made when the music was staged as a ballet in 1920. Choreographed by Massine, the ballet was not successful and was dropped after only a few performances, partially because it was overloaded with the sets and costumes, but primarily because he had choreographed against the music, making the

audience think that the dancers had been poorly rehearsed and "had no ear." (Goodwin 2002, 45) While re-choreographing the ballet, Balanchine got rid of many of the sets and props that had burdened the Massine production. Hodson described it as being "a fascinating study of Balanchine's aesthetics because he cleans deck and gets rid of a lot of detail in the props and costumes and streamlines the movement." (McCarthy 2002, 3) Danilova also said that streamlining the movements of ballet was one of the qualities Balanchine brought to the dance. It would seem that in this ballet he began to work on this element, which, like in many other works was progressing towards what later became the important elements of his work.

Boris Kochno said that Diaghilev gave Balanchine this project to try out his skills as a choreographer. (Kochno 1991, 82) Doubrovska recalled Balanchine's initial conversation with Diaghilev about the ballet:

> Then he said to Balanchine: "Well I heard you know music so well. I have a ballet *Le Rossignol* by Stravinsky. Two people have tried it already, but it was not very successful and it's in the cellar now, all the costumes and scenery. I want to give you a chance to try it. I want to see how you can do it."
>
> So Balanchine said: "All right" and Diaghilev asked: "You are not afraid to do Stravinsky's music?" And Balanchine answered: "No, I know it very well." (Doubrovska 1975)

Balanchine himself recalled that Diaghilev asked how quickly he could choreograph: "He said 'Can you do it very fast?' I said 'of course I can do it very fast.' I was young. When you're young you do anything. So I grabbed the opportunity, and that's how it started." (Gruen 1975, 280)

Balanchine admitted that at the time his knowledge of the arts did not extend beyond dance and music. He recalled: "the first year I had to do a ballet called *Le Chant du Rossignol*. Matisse was there. I didn't know who the hell he was. I didn't know the names of the people or the wonderful painters. [9] I was absolutely stupid. I never read anything. Nothing…" (Gruen 1975, 280) His youth and lack of experience when choreographing caused Balanchine to sometimes be caught between the older, more experienced collaborators. In archival footage, he tells of being caught between Stravinsky and Diaghilev, both insisting on a different tempo for the music. (Bank and Van Schaik 2004)

The role of the Nightingale was choreographed on 14 year old Alicia Markova. An English girl who spoke neither Russian nor French, she was a student of the Russian ballerina Serafina Astafieva in London and had been performing professionally since she was a very young child, being billed as "Little Alicia, the Child Pavlova." (Markova 1986, 12) Diaghilev discovered her when she was ten years old, and she recalled that he was so impressed with her that he wanted to include her in the Prologue of the *Sleeping Princess* as the Fairy Dewdrop, the smallest fairy with a variation choreographed for her by Nijinska. She unfortunately became too ill to perform. (Markova 1986, 14) Markova said that Diaghilev kept up on her progress and eventually had her audition for him and Nijinska, at which time she was told she "was to be considered as a member of the Ballets Russes in the New Year of 1925, and…would be able to live with the Nijinska family…" (Markova 1986, 15) Because of Nijinska's sudden departure from the company, Markova was forced to audition again, this time for Balanchine, specifically for the role of the Nightingale. She said "I was small and was doing anything he asked me to do. I was doing 16 fouettés 32 fouettés, double turns in the air, all kinds of things." (Markova 1972) She also recalled having done acrobatic movements. (Markova 1986, 15) and "'landing on her tummy' after being flung through the air." (Joseph 2002, 61) The description of "landing on her tummy" was reminiscent of the Cat's slide on the floor at her final exit from stage in *La Chatte*.

Doubrovska recalled that Markova was a "tiny child." (Doubrovska 1982, 4) and Geva said that when the ballet was choreographed she was at an awkward age: "Markova was all in long white tights from top to bottom, sitting in a cage. She was very awkward at the time. She was all legs and arms, terribly skinny. I always wondered, she didn't look to me like a rossignol, she looked more like some sort of chick that has been plucked." (Geva 1976) Her extreme youth itself presented its own difficulties, but Markova remembered that she got on well with Balanchine, since he himself was also very young, twenty, at the time. She said that "I think being very young I found him most intriguing." (Markova 1972) Markova said that she began to cry at her first rehearsal because she was unable to understand the music and was sure that she would be sent home. At that point Stravinsky himself was put in charge of her musical education: "He took me aside. 'Little one,' he used to say, or 'little bird' he said, 'Don't worry. Now if you learn by ear, you have to learn music by ear, you will never have any more worries…' Stravinsky said you have to learn by ear. Everyone else was counting." (Markova 1972) Markova also recalled her special friendship with Danilova. Since

Markova only spoke English when she arrived at the company, and all calls were posted in Russian, Danilova wrote her name in Russian for her so she would know when she was up. (Geva 1979) Danilova also recalled that "George and I 'adopted' little Alicia Markova, and for her sixteenth birthday we took her out to dinner, ordered her first glass of champagne, and gave her her first bottle of perfume." (Danilova 1988, 105) Markova said "Alexandra Danilova …became like an elder sister to me, because she spoke a little English, and she was then, as she remains to this day, one of my dearest friends." (Markova 1986, 19)

Markova's role in the ballet was one of the most memorable, and many of the witnesses refer to movements she made during her solos when recalling the ballet Markova recalled her role: "Rossignol was an isolated role, a little bird and it didn't involve partnering…the action of the ballet wasn't divertissement style. It went straight through. But there was the marvelous pas de deux between Death and the Nightingale." (Markova 1991, 91) The video taping of Markova reconstructing the solo showed some of the steps of the Nightingale's solo:

> The Nightingale "sings" with fluttering fingers (somewhat in the manner of the Songbird Fairy), but with hands flat and angular arms, crossed in front of her chest. She delicately sails around in a front attitude, but with the working toe touching the opposite hand. In the reverse of this turn, the knee is directed toward the floor, this time with the toe reaching for the other hand, with the arm crooked backward over the shoulder. The Nightingale walks on pointe with knees and insteps forward. Her dainty but ground-hugging crouches would strain the thighs of any dancer. All these turned in positions were challenging…(Reynolds 1995, 18)

Markova recalled how difficult it was to do Balanchine's style: "In the morning I would have my classes with Cecchetti and he would be instilling me to turn out, and then I would have to come in the evenings with Balanchine, and all these wonderful modern things he was giving me, all turned in. I found that rather confusing. In which direction do I go?" (Drummond 1997, 250-251) She recalled that he "opened up new doors" for her after learning the classical tradition. She said "what fascinated me was that it was rather like mathematics. It appealed to the mind. The way it evolved and worked out." (Markova 1972) "Rossignol was filled with invention that have become commonplace today, because subsequent choreographers have stolen them from George. George even stole from himself." (Markova 1991, 91) Geva said that he used a "hard-edged gymnastic style" in this

ballet and it would seem that Balanchine's experiences playing ragtime and blues in cabarets and silent cinemas in St. Petersburg helped shape the dances of the Mandarins and other court figures. (Hodson and Archer 1999/2000, 9) Petipa's influence was also directly seen in this ballet. Danilova said that he adapted the entrance of the Shades in *La Bayadère* for the procession of the court ladies when they thought that the Emperor had died. (Hodson and Archer 1999/2000, 9) While Balanchine gave his tribute to his classical past in these movements, Markova emphasized that the movements were not classical. (Reynolds 1995, 18) Danilova also mentioned another invention from this ballet, one that could be seen in the Nightingale's solo: "Balanchine introduced chaîné turns with the arms open, then closed, then open again-no one had ever seen that before." (Danilova 1988, 72)

Markova's original costume was not only artistically beautiful, it showed how different the Ballets Russes productions were in comparison to those in Russia where the academic rules were still very much in place. She recalled that her costume was

> all over white silk tights, with large diamond bracelets on my ankles, and my arms, my wrists, and with a little white chiffon bonnet rimmed with white osprey. It was all very modern, something to do with the Chinese legend of white being associated with death…That was perfect for the Paris opening, because nobody had any objections to a female appearing on-stage in all-over tights. But two years later, for the London première at Prince's Theater, suddenly the manager was in a panic because of Lord Chamberlain. At that time it wasn't permitted to appear like that…That was when he (Matisse) designed those little white chiffon trousers to go over the tights, studded with rhinestone, and this little tunic that went over that also to make me decent. But today, to think about these things! It was very strange. (Drummond 1997, 251)

Both Geva and Danilova danced the role of the Ladies in Waiting. Geva described that role as having been "rather cumbersome the whole thing. Long, floating around and what not." (Geva 1976) Danilova said "I danced in the corps de ballets…we had to come in certain procession. Then we lie on the floor in certain way, prostrated. Then they brought in the cage with the bird." (Danilova 1978-1979) Hodson said that Danilova and the other principal dancers of the Ballets Russes, Doubrovska, Nikitina, and de Valois, were displeased that Markova had been cast in the role of the Nightingale, so "to appease them Balanchine embedded a *pas de quatre* in the female corps, calling these dancers, endearingly, 'the divas.'" (Hodson and Archer 1999/2000, 9)

The role of Death was alternated by Doubrovska and Sokolova. (Reynolds 1995, 18) Hodson explained that "Massine made the original role on Sokolova, whom Balanchine inherited for his own choreography. Once the chance came, however, Balanchine cast long-limbed Doubrovska as Death and extended the choreography." Doubrovska[10] embodied what later became known as the Balanchine dancer. She recalled her first meeting with Diaghilev: "Before I danced for him, he looked at me and said, 'You will do for character parts.' I said, 'no. I am a classical dancer, not a character dancer. At the Maryinsky I was a soloist in classical parts...' My graduation performance, I danced Black Swan with Oboukhoff and the last part I had done in Russia before leaving was Lilac Fairy." (Doubrovska 1982, 2-3) For Balanchine, however, she had many qualities he admired: long legs, high extension, and pure classicism, qualities essential to what he considered the ideal ballerina. (Huckenpahler 1983, 388)

Like the Nightingale, Death's costume showed a departure from the strict rules of the Maryinsky, and his leaning towards costumes that freed the body and allowed the audience to see the movement. Matisse's costume for Doubrovska "consisted of body tights in a demonic shade of red, with face painted to match, over which Matisse personally traced skeletal lines." (Huckenpahler 1983, 388) Doubrovska said it was one of the first times she wore just tights, no tutu. (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 40) She wore a necklace of skulls around her neck, an instrument eventually used by the Nightingale to entrap and defeat her.

In the final scene of the ballet, Death came to take the Emperor away and his plan is thwarted only by the Nightingale. The role of Death was inspired by military salutes, consisting of high kicks and arm movements, movements which complimented Doubrovska's tall body and long legs Hodson said that "Death's stalking, predatory moves and her ambiguous sexuality belong to the archetypal femme fatale of the 1920s and Geva said this sort of Balanchine woman owed something to the *Salomé* of his mentor, the iconoclastic choreographer Kasian Goleizovsky." (Hodson and Archer 1999/2000, 9) She continued, "The violence of the *pas de deux* shocked the critics. André Levinson recoiled as Death 'put her foot on the spine of the frail and white Nightingale,' but was won over by what he deemed a new classicism in this Balanchine duet (*Comoedia,* 22 June 1925)." (Hodson and Archer 1999/2000, 9)

Balanchine himself danced the role of the Mechanical Nightingale. In this dance, Hodson said Balanchine made fun of his avant-garde past. In one performance, he was forced to dance the role of the real Nightingale, once again demonstrating his ability for comical character roles (although the role was not meant to be funny). Diaghilev never let a performance be cancelled, and one night Markova was ill, and since there was no understudy for the role, Balanchine was forced to do it.[11] (Geva 1979) Kochno described his costume in detail:

> Having, with considerable difficulty, gotten into Markova's transparent, child sized costume, Balanchine dreamed up for himself what he believed to be the makeup for a fairy character in the Chinese theater, but was, in actuality, a clown's. He smeared his face with a thick layer of white grease paint and, in order to look like a bird, completed his mask with a stork's beak.
>
> His entrance onstage was greeted by a stunned silence that gave way to shouts of laughter throughout the theater, and, finally, to thunderous applause; people supposed they were witnessing a comedy number. But they were soon disappointed, for Balanchine was so paralyzed by the audience's response that he forgot all his own choreography and was unable to improvise a single step.
>
> For subsequent programs that season, *Le Chant du Rossignol* was prudently struck from the announcements. (Kochno 1970,144)

When he appeared on stage the people started to laugh and he froze. Having forgotten the choreography, he began to improvise, making it almost impossible for Death to react in the final scene. Danilova said he was eating and drinking, which Markova never did, and that everyone was laughing to tears, even Diaghilev. The princess of Monte Carlo liked it so much that she wanted to see it performed by Balanchine again. (Danilova 1978-1979) Geva said "so George put on white tights and got in the cage. So when he emerged, he burst into some light fantastic dance trying to remember his own choreography. Of course he couldn't dance on pointe, so it was quite different. He didn't imitate a bird when he danced, but he laughed himself sick. So did the audience." (Geva 1991, 15) Doubrovska recalled that in that same performance she was for some reason wearing the wrong dress, making it hard to kill the Nightingale. She did not recall if she actually managed to kill it in the performance or not. (Doubrovska 1976)

Hodson also described this as "a very eclectic work, with a lot of detailed quotes form Petipa and the Meyerhold Russian Constructivist theater, all kinds of things are brought in

with the general aesthetic very clean." (McCarthy 2002, 3) She describes exactly how Balanchine utilized what he had learned:

> Vsevelod Meyerhold presented an avant-garde production at the Maryinsky Theater in 1918. Meyerhold seated singers on benches and surrounded them with dancers, emphasizing the horizontal axis of the stage. We realized it was probably Meyerhold's *mise-en-scène* that showed Balanchine how to exploit the Emperor's static central placement in Matisse's décor. Ballet designers usually seat monarchs to the side so that dancers have full use of the diagonals. But Matisse put his throne and dais at the top, dead center, establishing two polarized points of reference, the Emperor upstage and the public downstage. Balanchine devised his dances as a double mirror image, reversing movements on either side of the perpendicular and addressing it to both the fictional audience, the Emperor, and the real ones beyond the footlights. (Hodson and Archer 1999/2000, 8)

It is interesting to consider that this was the first time that Balanchine worked with platforms as sets for a ballet that he choreographed himself. He had seen the work of Meyerhold and also said that Goleizovsky was one of his biggest early influences. Goleizovsky used platforms extensively in his ballets, most notably in the ballet *Joseph the Beautiful* and *The Afternoon of a Faun*. That Balanchine had not yet used a platform in one of his ballets could have been due to a lack of interest in building them, but, bearing in mind that the costumes were even handmade, I think that lack of funding for anything such as sets in his performances in St. Petersburg is also a likely reason. In addition, many of his dances were performed in small nightclubs and on various stages in St. Petersburg as shorter numbers in variety shows, making it impossible to have any sort of stage setting other than what was provided by the facilities where the performances took place. In addition, it would have been unrealistic to bring sets along on the tour of the Soviet Dancers. Whatever the reason for the lack of sets, the fact that Balanchine did not work with sets at an early stage probably enabled him to develop in a different direction, namely that he began to use the bodies of the dancers to build different levels, as in *Funeral March*, something that he expanded upon in *La Chatte*.

6.4 *Barabau*

Although *Barabau*, also choreographed in 1925, was well received by the public, there is little information available about it despite the large cast. According to Geva, "we all danced in *Barabau*." (Geva 1976) Kochno said that is was successful, but was removed from

the repertory because of "production difficulties created by the inclusion of the chorus." (Kochno 1970, 233) Sokolova described them as "a chorus of mournful-looking citizens in black bowler hats and gloves who popped up from behind a fence and sang a deadpan commentary on the action." (Sokolova 1989, 240)

Vaughan described the scenario as:

> …a kind of contemporary commedia dell'arte piece in which a wily peasant (Leon Woizikowski) outwits a troop of rapacious soldiers, led by Lifar, who are billeted on his farm, by playing dead. There were also flirtatious episodes between the military and the women of the village, with the danseurs disguised with false noses and padded posteriors, performing the grotesque antics devised by Balanchine and generally entering into the spirit of this vulgar, knockabout farce with appropriate gusto. (Vaughan 1979, 65)

Kochno described this work as "ballet with chorus of singers," with music Diaghilev commissioned Italian composer Vittorio Rieti to write specifically for a ballet. (Kochno 1970, 230) Geva recalled that the ballet was based on a little Italian verse: "It was something about ruining a vegetable garden…and old song and 'Barabau, Barabau, the soldiers came in and they ruined your vegetable garden—what are you going to do?' That's the thing that Diaghilev presented to George one night…He said, 'Now we are going to do this ballet.'" (Geva 1976) *Barabau* was created especially with Lifar[12] in mind. He said that "with *Barabau*, Balanchine became *my* choreographer." (Lifar 1982, 25) Geva recalled that the dance contained no solo for the women, since it was done for Lifar, who played a soldier. She said that they wore boots instead of pointe shoes. Her description of the dancing was short: "It looked like a dancing Charlie Chaplin. It was very funny. George invented all sorts of incredible things, idiotic ones. The audience roared, just roared throughout." (Geva 1976)

Danilova also recalled her roll in *Barabau*, saying it "was the first Balanchine ballet I did for Diaghilev. It was one on the Italian song. It was funny. We all been padded with bosoms and derrières. The choir stood behind the wooden fence. Maybe twelve, sixteen people in funny hats. And they be singing and we be dancing. Diaghilev did it, I think, as a little bit of a tribute to Monte Carlo. It was gay and Italian, with eating and drinking." (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 25)

Sokolova described that Woizikowski was "in his element, with long black moustaches, eating imaginary spaghetti, swilling it down with Chianti straight from the flask, doing amazing tricks and dancing on top of an enormous barrel." (Sokolova 1989, 239-240) Sokolova's performance in this work was also essential to its success. It was not originally created on her, but Tatiana Chamié was not able to "quite bring it off." (Sokolova 1989, 240) Sokolova recalled:

> It was not long before I took over the role. I realized I must do something to make it a success. The costume was a blouse and skirt, red stockings, black boots and an upturned straw hat. I got a switch of false hair and pinned it on top of my head, then planted the hat on top of that. Next I stuck a piece of wax on the end of my nose, raised my eyebrows and reddened my lower lip only. I was rewarded by a burst of spontaneous laughter as I came onto the stage-the first time that such a thing had happened to me, and it was a wonderful experience. (Sokolova 1989, 240)

Little was written in detail about the choreography of this ballet, although the dancers recall that it was inventive. Its chief elements seem to have been the costumes and the comedy of the ballet.

In 1930, when Balanchine spent one season working at the Royal Danish Ballet, he set this ballet on the company. Ulla Poulsen recalled that it "was not well liked by the Danish audience. It was an amusing, grotesque little ballet. We liked it because it reminded us of *La Sylphides* and some of Bournonville, but the audience wanted to see another kind of ballet. The critics wrote terrible things, and it was taken off." (Poulsen 1991, 95) She did not elaborate on what parts reminded her of the Romantic ballet.

6.5 *La Pastorale*

Premiering in London in 1926, *La Pastorale* was not as successful as *Le Chant du Rossignol;* however, it was often mentioned in memoirs. Doubrovska said that Diaghilev was astonished at how well Balanchine had accepted Stravinsky's music and asked him to do another ballet, "this one for Doubrovska and Lifar." (Doubrovska 1982, 4) From most of the accounts, its primary importance was how Balanchine worked with Doubrovska, a dancer whose body typified what would later be known as the "Balanchine body," and most accounts deal primarily with her performance.

The scenario written in twelve scenes by Boris Kochno told the following story:

> …it dealt with a telegraph boy (Lifar) who yields to the lure of a beautiful summer day. Tossing his deliveries aside, he whiles away an afternoon enjoying the pleasures of the countryside. To his surprise a film crew breaks in on the peace of the meadow. The Star (Doubrovska) is an alluring woman, quite unlike the naïve country lasses of the boy's experience. Together they dance a novel duet, the boy falling prey to the star's fascination, and the star enjoying her power over him. At length the boy's defection is discovered by irate villagers, who demand their mail. The film troupe leaves, and the boy returns to his peasant love (Danilova and Gevergeva, alternately). (Huckenpahler 1983, 389)

Kochno, who wrote the scenario for the ballet, admitted that "the action was confused, and the plot, based on antic situations that arise between some screen actors and villagers acting as extras in a film being shot outdoors, was incomprehensible to the audience." He added that "despite many happy inspirations in the solo dances, Balanchine's choreography lacked substance." (Kochno 1970, 238) The boy's fiancé was originally danced by Geva, but Danilova took over the role when Geva left the company.

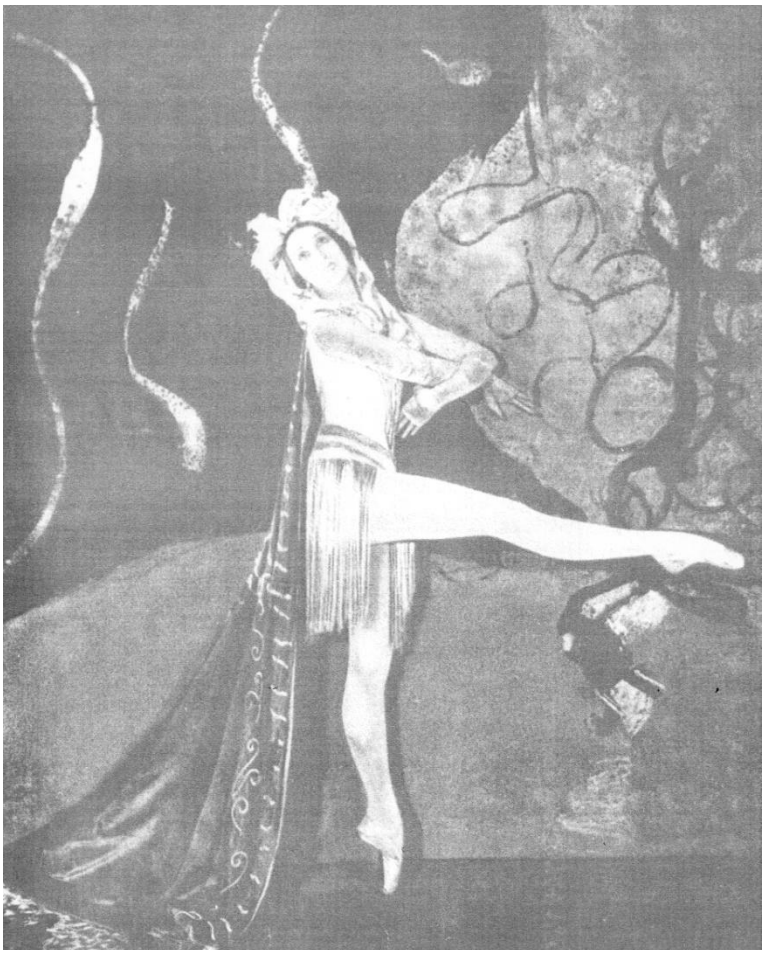
Sokolova also said that this ballet "had no importance." She remembered "Doubrovska in the guise of a film star unlike any seen before or since wearing a short, fringed skirt and a long velvet train, extending her elegant white legs, pointing her lovely arched feet, being followed about by a silly little camera on a tripod and interrupted by Lifar riding a bicycle." (Sokolova 1989, 248) Doubrovska also recalled that Lifar "runs around and throw everyone the letters." (Doubrovska 1976) Danilova said that the choreography for this piece demonstrated that early on Balanchine loved to choreograph on tall women. She said "it was a perfect role for Doubrovska because she had such long, long legs and arms-though very beautiful, she looked different from everybody else, almost freakish. And Balanchine, in his choreography for her, used to exaggerate her uniqueness. (Later, in *The Prodigal Son*, he made her into the Siren who devours the young man and had her wear a very high hat to make her appear even taller)." (Danilova 1988, 79) It is interesting to compare the description of Doubrovska with that of Balanchine's first muse, Ivanova. Also tall with long legs and arms, Balanchine made use of her strengths in the choreography of *Valse Triste*, creating large jumps and movements which accentuated her size, lengthening the movements. When Danilova described that in the classical dance of the Imperial Theaters the movements were hindered by stopping the leg at ninety degrees, she also automatically

implied that legs that go over ninety are no longer "tight" as in the pure classical traditions. By using the développés over ninety degrees, Balanchine not only changed the line of the dancer, but her movement dynamics as well, the movements becoming longer as they become larger. It is also important to note that it is unlikely that Balanchine could have created this role on another dancer at the time, since most of the other dancers were shorter with less extension.

Buckle said that Diaghilev liked *La Pastorale* and kept it in the repertory until 1929, despite the bad reviews[13] it received in England. Since he could not read English at the time, Balanchine was not troubled by the bad reviews. Later, however, he said "I was living in a (fool's) paradise…if I had known at the time the language I should have committed suicide. But I can judge for myself. If I don't like what I do, I throw it away." (Buckle 1988, 38-39) The ballet was criticized for its lack of classicism and for the use of steps that appeared to be acrobatic and to have been taken from the music hall. The criticism gave another clue to how this ballet was an extension of Balanchine's Soviet work. His use of acrobatics and music hall moves showed the influence of Biomechanics and as well as the FEKS. It is interesting that the ballet was criticized for these aspects, since the Ballets Russes had created other successful works which combined the high and low arts[14] for years. However, the criticism seemed to be justified because the piece simply was not very good, and was not solely due to the incorporation of popular culture.

The dance had several elements that prefigured Balanchine's later works. According to Huckenpahler, "classicism was the base, but it frequently culminated in positions and movements reminiscent of the musical stage or athletic field. In the principal pas de deux Doubrovska was given a series of développés, not to be performed in the ordinary manner, but passed over the head of her partner as if to affirm her confident glamour." (Huckenpahler 1983, 389) This description again indicated that extension was more to be expected of modern ballet dancers, a stark contrast to Danilova's description of their training at Theater School. It foreshadows one of Balanchine's most important transformations to ballet.

The most important aspect of *La Pastorale* was the introduction of a new step. Doubrovska described it: "the adagio for Lifar and me was new and very difficult. Lifar turns me by the knee while I am standing on one foot with my other leg in very high arabesque. It is the same movement that you see now in *Serenade*, only more difficult because now there is



5. Felia Doubrovska in *La Pastorale* in 1926.

a long tutu, and in *La Pastorale* I have a very short dress so the audience sees the whole movement." (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 42) Doubrovska also recalled that the step was very difficult since she "had to uphold my body myself." (Doubrovska 1975) Danilova says that at the time this move was considered "daring." (Danilova 1978-1979) Doubrovska felt privileged to be used so often by Balanchine to try out new things, saying "he called me his guinea pig." (Huckenpahler 1983, 392) Her flexibility allowed her to be used to create some of Balanchine most interesting early roles including Death in *Le Chant du Rossignol*, Polyhymnia in *Apollo,* and the Siren in *The Prodigal Son*. In learning the new style, she said that Balanchine would explain what she had to do, and that the technique would develop naturally while creating new ballets. She insisted that when a dancer knows the classical technique well enough, she can build on it. (Doubrovska 1975)

6.6 *Jack in the Box*

Jack in the Box, also choreographed in 1926, was even less memorable than *Barabau*, perhaps because it was an extremely short ballet. Extant photographs showed Danilova dressed as the Black Dancer together with Stanislas Idzikowski. In one photograph, she was shown in second position plié on pointe, one hand holding her dress, the other held up, palm facing her partner who was standing beside her also gesturing with his hand. Her costume included black gloves and a black wig, but her pointe shoes were still white and in it she had a black face. Doubrovska and Tchernicheva also danced in this ballet, and wore complementing costumes. The wig and the costumes were divided into two, one half blue and the other white. (Danilova 1978-1979)

Three piano pieces by Eric Satie entitled *Jack in the Box* were discovered after his death and were orchestrated and used by Diaghilev as the score to the ballet. (Kochno 1970, 243) Sokolova said that the ballet was short and had few performances, most likely the reason that there is little information available about it. (Sokolova 1989, 248)

Danilova recalled her role in this ballet:

> It was a very small ballet and it was for Idzikowski and myself and he was Jack in the Box, so the box opens and he jumps out, and then the box opens and I jump out…You know it was more circus. It sort of left people a little bit empty. The curtain opens very fast. The two women…two sides different, dance. Then they open this box and we jump out and we do pas de deux and then get in the box again…that was it." (Danilova 1978-1979)

Danilova also said that she "was lying on my back, back to back doing like a can-can legs up and he was sort of walking." (Danilova 1978-1979) This position was shown in one of the extant photographs of the ballet. Danilova emphasized that the ballet "was nothing-nothing very important I would say." (Danilova 1978-1979)

6.7 *The Triumph of Neptune*

The Triumph of Neptune was first performed in London in 1926. The original cast as well as a description of the action was described in detail in Beaumont's *Complete Book of Ballets*. (Beaumont 1956, 968-970) Some sources described the choreography of this dance,

but it is mainly known for its sets and costumes as well as the story. Geva rightly described the libretto as a "very silly scenario." (Geva 1976) A review from the original production at Lyceum Theater dated December 9, 1926 gave a brief description of the scenario:

> In *The Triumph of Neptune*, which was produced at the Lyceum Theater, they gave us a ballet version of the English pantomime *circa* 1855…the new ballet is spectacular. Round a selection of 12 old scenic designs, which have been faithfully reproduced, Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell has constructed a story about a sailor and a journalist who go off on a voyage to fairyland. The voyage…is subsidized by two rival newspapers. Unfortunately the journalist is sawn in two by ogres (and no box conceals his bisection from the horrified audience) and the sailor finds himself cut off from communication with the world of reality. However he settles down with the Fairy Queen, while the girl he left behind him consoles herself with a "dandy"…So the drama ends splendidly with a "Grand Transformation Scene," "The Triumph of Neptune." (Author unknown)

Sokolova recalled that the ballet was too long and that some scenes were cut after the first performance. (Sokolova 1989, 253) Beaumont said that a scene with ogres disappeared because it was not successful. (Beaumont 1956, 972) The music for the ballet was composed by Lord Berners, and Diaghilev drew the ideas for the English pantomime from the "penny plain and twopence coloured" sheets of the Juvenile Drama, which Diaghilev purchased from Pollock's historic shop in Hoxton. (Beaumont 1956, 971) Like the ballets of Fokine which drew themes from past eras, this ballet was based on the theater world of mid-nineteenth century England. Pollock's contained prints of the actors of those days posed in bold positions, taken directly from popular pantomimes, melodramas, comedies, and tragedies. The mass produced prints were often decorated with spangles. (Ricco 1977, 81) The following described their use for reviving this era in the ballet:

> From these prints one could get an idea of what the style of gesture in these productions was like, and could even reconstruct the tricks of the final harlequinade that traditionally followed the transformations scene, when the actors would trade their original costumes for motley, harlequins and their cohorts would appear, and the stage scene would blossom into a shimmering tinsel-draped fairy world. The set were elaborate productions…and these too, were preserved at reduced scale in the prints…(Ricco 1977, 81)

Evidently, Balanchine copied some of his poses from these prints, something Beaumont criticizes: "The actual dancing in these scenes lost something owing to the jerky arm

movements devised by the choreographer and the angular position of the arms above the head, a position copied from some of the prints of fairies, which Balanchine might have taken for authentic pose of the period instead of being merely the result of faulty drawing." (Beaumont 1956, 971-972)

Danilova, who danced the role of the Fairy Queen, together with Lifar as the sailor Tom Tug, pointed to this description, particularly the shimmering tinsel-draped fairy world. In her words, it was a "flying ballet, lots of spangles; it was very, very fancy. All our costumes were based on gravures…Actually it was very fast and interesting; people liked that." (Danilova 1978-1979) Beaumont also mentioned a scene called "'The Frozen Wood' which gave opportunities for dances in the tradition of the classical ballet" and said there was a "lovely flying ballet" there, but neither he nor Danilova described this flying scene. (Beaumont 1956, 971) None of the memoirs described exactly what they meant by "flying." The hoisting of actors on ropes was a common theatrical device in 19th century theater, and since Balanchine was recreating the scenes from the Juvenile Theater in London, he probably included this technique as a tribute to it. Sokolova said that at the end of the ballet she was hoisted up for the final pose, and this could be what the dancers were referring to, but her description is not completely consistent with "flying," so it is possible that another effect was being described. One critic also described this scene, telling about "Victorian figures moving demurely and its shimmering fairies recalling the old time tinsel pictures, also the delicate grace of the scene presenting the snow, with all the appeal of pantomime transformation scenes, in is dainty snowflake fairies, its gallantly sentimental prince and princess and, echo childhood's Christmas enchantments, its flying fays on wires." (Henry 1926, 202) Danilova also recalled that she and Lifar performed the lift that Balanchine had invented in *La Nuit*, "Lifar lifted me in arabesque up over his head, on a straight arm." (Danilova 1988, 87)

Like the sets, the costumes were detailed reproductions of the costumes worn in the Juvenile Theater, but were "jumbled with Diaghilevian whimsy: a goddess was clad in a spangled tunic, a Glengarry, tartan garters, and red shoes, and the fairy queen danced with her sailor in a wide dress with trousers underneath topped by a cocked straw boater." (Ricco 1977, 84) Danilova recalled this change of costume: "in the last act I changed. I did a variation and then I went to the wings and put my trousers on and did a sailor's dance." (Danilova 1978-1979) She described that "I was on pointe but before the last number I put shoes and there I always out danced Lifar…he could never get some movements as fast as I

could." (Danilova 1978-1979) Beaumont also described this dance, a hornpipe, saying it was "so precisely phrased and rendered with such spirit that it provoked the most enthusiastic applause." (Beaumont 1956, 972) Danilova said that the ballet was a big hit in London, and that her face reminded the people of a young Queen Victoria. (Danilova 1978-1979)

Sokolova was the first to dance the role of Britannia. According to Beaumont she wore a "sparkling tunic of the period which consisted of innumerable pieces of cut glass" and performed a solo in front of the curtain. (Beaumont 1956, 972) Her dance was choreographed during the final rehearsal for the premier. Slighted that she had only a small role in an English ballet, she approached Diaghilev and told him she would rather be left out completely than deal with the presses and the public's reaction to her being given so little to do in "our English ballet." After lunch that day, she was told that

> …a perfect place for my appearance had been found. A gay hornpipe tune was played during one of the scene changes, and I was to dance this in front of the drop curtain. 'Go and get a dance fixed up,' he said. George Balanchine had the quickest invention of any choreographer I ever knew. We went under the stage together and I showed him a few steps from the Scottish reel…We hummed, sang and got the hornpipe organized in no time, without a pianist. Meanwhile the orchestra had continued rehearsing, as the ballet was to be run through again with the scenery. When my time came, George pushed me out on the stage on my correct beat, and I rattled through that dance without a mistake. (Sokolova 1989, 252)

One critic recalled that this number contained touches of "music hall song." (Henry 1926, 202) To work her into the last scene, consistent with the flying dances of the Frozen Woods, "somebody had that idea of hoisting me up in the air above a big statue of Neptune, which occupied the centre of the stage. I was to rise straight up behind Neptune and have a spotlight turned on me." (Sokolova 1989, 253)

Geva also said that she played the role of Britannia. "I wore a suit of armor that weighed something like 75 pounds made out of very tiny mirrors. I had only one number and one great tableau. The number I did was in front of the curtain, separate, a solo. It was a jig. And to dance jig with a thing like that hanging on your shoulders is pretty tough. I had bruises all over me." (Geva 1976)

Balanchine himself danced the role of Snowball in blackface in this ballet. Beaumont reported that he danced a "wonderful Negro dance." (Beaumont 1956, 972) This dance was also described as being "excellently executed" (Henry 1926, 202) and was, according to Beaumont, a "a dance full of subtly contrasted rhythms, strutting walks, mincing steps, and surging backward bendings of the body, borrowed from the cake-walk…a paradoxical blend of pretended nervous apprehension and blustering confidence." (Buckle 1988, 40) Since the black minstrel dancer had been common place both on street corners and in the music halls of London since the 19th century, Balanchine's inclusion of this role in this ballet is based not only on the Juvenile Theater, but most likely on his own experiences in London, including the short stint of the Soviet Dancers at the Empire Theater in 1924. In addition, black faced dancers as well as black dancers were common performers in the silent films of the 1920's, and it is possible that Balanchine first saw them as a pianist for silent films in St. Petersburg.

Danilova also explained how Balanchine began to use what he had learned from Petipa and changed it, making it more modern in this ballet:

> …it seemed very up-to-the-minute, not really old-fashioned. The positions were classical as in Petipa, but the steps were speeded up, faster than they would have been if Petipa had choreographed them. A port de bras that in Petipa would take two measures, Balanchine did in one measure. In Petipa's ballets, you might have a balance on two legs. Balanchine had me stand for one moment on both legs, then lift one leg and balance on the other. So it was a little more interesting that traditional classical choreography. It was also a more conscientious interpretation of the score than Petipa's choreography. Balanchine's steps had more detailed relationship to the music. (Danilova 1988, 88)

6.8 *Grotesque Espanol* and *Sarcasm*

In 1927, Geva left the Ballets Russes to go on tour in America with the Nikita Balieff's Chauve Souris company as a guest star with three separate spots. (Geva 1984, 348) She said that she decided to go elsewhere after she and Balanchine ended their marriage because she was not happy with the direction her career was going.[15] Having been promised that she would dance Sokolova's roles when she retired, Geva was growing impatient: "And there was no further mention of Sokolova's[16] retirement. Clearly, I had no chance for advancement under the current setup. My disillusionment with the company and its intrigues was increasing, and I saw nothing to look forward to unless some drastic changes took place.

Vacation would soon begin, and then back again to the same grind and fatigue, the same ballets and the same cities, the same limitations and boredom." (Geva 1984, 347)

Geva choreographed one of her dances herself, and the other two were done for her by Balanchine. The *Catalogue* said that these two works, *Grotesque Espanol* and *Sarcasm* were the first of Balanchine's choreography to be performed in America and the first works to be seen by Lincoln Kirstein. (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 83) Geva said that the dances were "carefully thought out to sneak up on the audience gradually, not to scare them with this new kind of dancing…They were all technically difficult, and they all departed from the expected form." (Geva 1984, 352) Geva described her dances: "He choreographed a takeoff on a bullfight, *Grotesque Espanol,* to Isaac Albéniz' music. It had a tragic quality, and an unexpected development of movements." (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 33) The New York Times carried a review of her performance written by "John Martin, the dean of ballet critics" (Geva 1984, 352) and gave more details to the choreography:

> Her second number, the "Grotesque Espanol," carries her rebellion to its height artistically, through she rebels even more violently in her last number. With a consummate energy that makes ever her moments of motionlessness dynamic, she dashes through a mad fantasie on Spanish themes, garbed in a costume at once hideous, unbecoming, fascinating and exactly right. The actual choreography defies description; its like has ever been seen on land or sea, but the fire is grotesquely that of Spain. Conceived though it is in the spirit of cartoon, its comment transcends its mood and lifts it into a significant art form. There is…something more than buffoonery in the moment when she halts the swing of the hips and the undulations of the torso, and rising to more than her full height, solemnly crosses herself (in the Russian fashion, by the way) with a an impious religiosity, only to resume immediately her blatant seductiveness. (Martin 1927)

This description along with the photograph demonstrated the general direction that Balanchine's choreography in this dance. His use of the classical Spanish arms showed that he had not completely rejected the classical tradition, but was expanding upon it: the "swing of the hips and the undulations of the torso."

Although Martin's article never mentioned the choreographer's name and the review was focused on Geva's performance, it still gave clues as to how the dance looked. In addition, a photograph of Geva accompanied the article. (Photograph 6) The name of the dance was not given, but since Geva was holding her arms in a classical Spanish fourth position, it was most likely *Grotesque Espanol.*

6. Tamara Geva in *Grotesque Espanol* in 1927.

Geva also described *Sarcasm*, choreographed to Prokofiev, as "very outrageous in 1927." (Tracy and De Lano 1984, 33) In another source she described it as "virtuoso abstraction." (Geva 1984, 352) Martin also described this dance, saying that it passed "out of the bounds of reason" becoming "pure nonsense." It was "wild and weird and novel, and even though it seems to be nothing more than a clever dancer having a bit of fun out of her mat exercises, its comment is biting and its finish exquisite." (Martin 1927) He did not give any choreographic detail, but by his description, Balanchine had choreographed a dance that was funny and entertaining, and, as with other dancers, obviously tailored to Geva's strengths as a dancer.

6.9 *La Chatte*

Hodson and Archer described *La Chatte* as "Balanchine's first hit." (Hodson and Archer 1991, 43) Kochno also said that this ballet was a "tremendous success, thanks to several factors-the ingenious choreography of Balanchine; the luminous presence and poetic interpretation of Spessivtseva[17] who was vigorously partnered by Lifar; the novelty of the décor; and the melodic score, brilliantly orchestrated by Sauguet." (Kochno 1970, 253) Premiering in 1927, Balanchine combined elements of the Soviet avant-garde with the new influence of Diaghilev in this ballet. The libretto by Kochno was based on an Aesop's fable *The Cat Maiden*. Program notes for *La Chatte (The Cat)* for the London performances gave the following description:

> In love with a cat, a young man deserts his companions and prays daily to Aphrodite to transform the beloved animal so that he may express his affections.
>
> The goddess moved, agrees, and the cat becomes a young girl who is won by the lad's graceful wooing.
>
> But, during the lovemaking of the two sweethearts, Aphrodite desires to test the love of the metamorphosed cat, sends to tempt her a mouse which scampers across the nuptial chamber. The girl sees it and at once leaves her lover to pursue it. The goddess then causes her to return to her original shape, under the eyes of her sorrowing lover. (English Souvenir Program for *The Cat*)

The music was written by Henri Sauguet, who was assisted by Rieti, the composer of *Barabau*. It was upbeat and the choreography had many interesting elements. However, by far the most interesting thing about this ballet was the sets created by the Russian sculptors Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner. These artists had left Russia after the Revolution, enabling them, like Balanchine, to have been part of the artistic movements of the early Soviet Union. Hodson and Archer said that "their presence must have strengthened the aesthetic tendencies of Balanchine's exciting Leningrad days…" (Hodson and Archer 1991, 43) Kochno recalled that their "abstract work seemed to the antithesis of the simple limpid music of *La Chatte*." (Kochno 1970, 253) Sokolova, who witnessed the premier described the "interplanetary quality" of the sets which consisted of "cut out structures and abstract objects from a new material, talc: rising against hangings of black American oil cloth, these flashed as they caught the light their message of an amazing new plastic age to the incredulous and blinking public." (Sokolova 1989, 259)

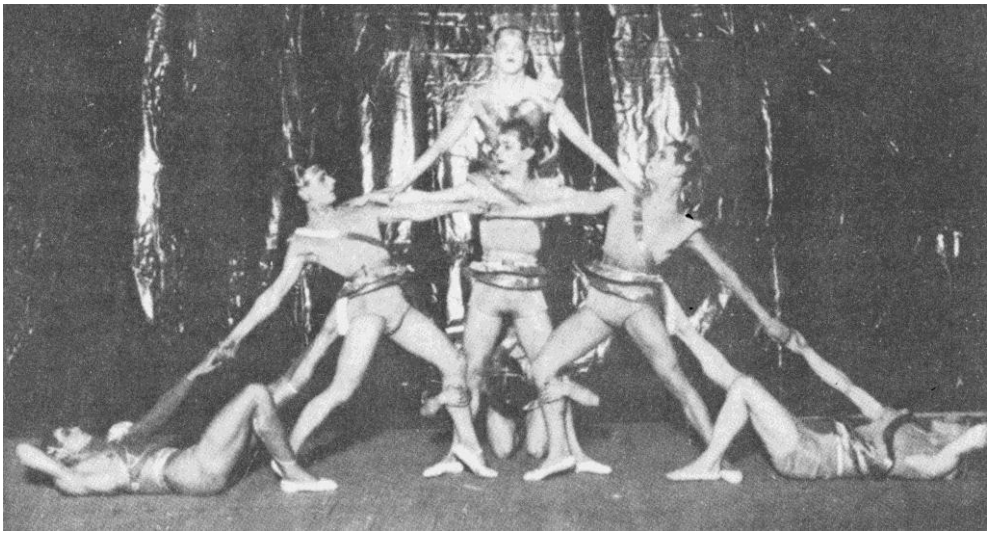
Photographs of the first production showed these plastic sets reflecting the stage lights. The sets primarily performed a visual purpose, creating the world in which the story takes place. The largest part was a transparent plastic construction consisting of walls in differing heights, reminiscent of the different levels of platforms in Soviet Constructivist theater. A circle in the middle of the structure showed the face and the paws of the cat during the first section. The face of the cat disappeared when she was turned into a human by Aphrodite, and the dancer appeared on stage. At the end of the ballet, when she was turned back into a cat, the dancer disappeared and the face reappeared.

A low ramp on stage right was used by one of the main characters (he jumps over it), but other than this, it was not used as extensively by the dancers as the sets were used by Goleizovsky in *Joseph the Beautiful* or *The Afternoon of a Faun*, or even as Balanchine used the platform for the Emperor in *Le Chant du Rossignol.* Large square and round plastic props were used by the male dancers in their number, as one extant photograph shows. This added an interesting element to this ballet, melding the dancers with the sets creating a three dimensional picture. The props are held in front of the dancers, their material the same transparent plastic as many of the sets, putting the men in the corps de ballets "into" the set, making them part of it. Hodson and Archer explain: "…the sculptural objects do not obtrude: first, because they were placed upstage; second, because their transparency let the audience see through them; and third, because the sleek lines of the décor extended those of the dance. Balanchine's acrobatics made sense in this setting, which reminded some spectators of a laboratory." (Hodson and Archer 1991, 43)

Not only was this material used for the sets, but the costumes also contained it. The cat wore a traditional tutu with a twist: her tutu had a layer of plastic on the top and she wore a plastic hat shaped like cat ears. The man's costume, as well as the costumes worn by the all male corps de ballets, did not contain plastic, but still maintained a space quality about them. It would seem, however, that the man's costume had a purpose other than to extend the sets, namely to show off Lifar's beautiful physique and to cover up his technical deficiencies.

The scene opened with six men and Lifar dancing. All the men were scantily dressed and performed a dance containing many athletic moves, many of them based directly on sports, a reminder of Biomechanics. Hodson believed that these movements show the

gymnastic movements influenced by the painting and ancient Greek vases studied by Balanchine and Diaghilev in Berlin, London and Paris. (McCarthy 2002, 3)



7. Serge Lifar and the corps de ballets in *La Chatte* in 1927.

Constructivist influence in the sets, costumes, and choreography was most prominent in this dance. Having seen the plays in Meyerhold's theater and Goleizovsky's ballets, Balanchine began to experiment early on using space by creating different levels. Photographs showed the progression of the use of platforms to the use of bodies: actors performed on different levels in Meyerhold's plays and later dancers danced on different levels in Goleizovsky's ballets, and were connected with one another; a photograph of *Joseph the Beautiful* showed the dancers holding hands forming a long chain that covered not only a large section of the stage, but connected the dancers placed on different levels on the platforms. In *The Afternoon of a Faun*, the levels of the platforms were even more varied, and the dancers were connected with other body parts, for example, the foot of one dancer touching the head of another. Balanchine removed the platforms entirely and began to experiment with forming constellations of dancers on different levels in *Funeral March*. He brought this concept even further in *La Chatte*. In the first dance, seven dancers, the corps de ballets plus Lifar, formed a pyramid. An extant photograph showed the levels achieved by the dancers themselves: two lay on the floor in mirror images of each other, one was kneeling on the floor with his head down, holding onto the legs of another dancer who was standing as well as the legs of two other dancers who were in a lunge position. The dancer who was standing with straight legs was directly in front of the dancer on his knees. A seventh man, Lifar, stood on the back of the man kneeling. The dancers were linked together

by arms and legs, positions reminiscent of both *Joseph the Beautiful* and *The Afternoon of a Faun*, arms creating a perfect triangular frame for the pyramid. (Photograph 7)

At the end of the ballet, the corps built a cortege carrying away their friend. Hodson said that Danilova told them in an interview in the summer of 1989 that this formation was based directly on a vase that Balanchine had seen in a museum in Berlin. Again the cortege was built by the dancers using their bodies alone to form different levels. It was also reminiscent of the role played by Geva in *Funeral March:* she was carried on and off stage, in the beginning in a flat corpse position and in the end in a high bridge over the heads of the men carrying her. These positions are much simpler versions of the cortege shown in the photographs of *La Chatte*.

Hodson and Archer described in detail how the Greek artifacts combined with the pyramid and other configurations: "These structures required group awareness, interdependency, and shared weight, all of which made physical statements of social ideas. Such constructivist dance sculptures stood as a metaphor for community or, at least for the male corps in *La Chatte,* as a metaphor for camaraderie." (Hodson and Archer 1991, 45)

Balanchine said that in *La Chatte,* "I did several things that had never been done before." (Balanchine 1972) The pas de deux between the man and the cat demonstrated some of the changes Balanchine had already begun to make in classical dance. Points of contact were expanded beyond the rules of the Maryinsky, Balanchine using positions that would have been considered obscene by academic standards. He went so far in this ballet as to have the cat wrapping her leg around the man's waist. Paris, however, was far away from St. Petersburg, and had witnessed the experimental work of the Ballets Russes for almost two decades, and the moves did not have the same effect here that they did in Russia.[18] Balanchine also used what later became one his signature steps in this pas de deux, the corkscrew turn. Sokolova described the step: "The Cat at one moment did *pirouettes* on her left point, supported by a finger above her head, and as she spun round she sank in a deep *plié* to the ground, still remaining on the tip of her left toe." (Sokolova 1989, 260)

Programs showed that the role was alternated by Markova and Nikitina, and witnesses said that the role was originally created for ballerina Spessivtseva. Each of the dancers interpreted the role differently, and demonstrated one of Balanchine's outstanding

qualities as a choreographer: his ability to make his dances fit the dancers rather than forcing them to fit into his choreography. Danilova described this quality: "some dancers can't do certain things. They do certain things better than others. But Balanchine always turns towards no only follows his own design, but if you can't do it—it doesn't work well with your body—he will change" the choreography. (Danilova 1978-1979) Although the original dance was not choreographed on Danilova, Balanchine tried out many of the steps on her, and during the reconstruction she was able to recall much of the ballet. (Hodson and Archer 1991, 46)

Diaghilev wanted the role to be danced by Spessivtseva. Having been a classical ballerina in St. Petersburg up to 1921, Balanchine was probably familiar with her performances in *La Esmeralda, Paquita, Chopiniana, Le Corsaire, Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty* and her most famous role, *Giselle.* Diaghilev brought her to the Ballets Russes to dance the role of Aurora in his production of the *Sleeping Princess.*[19] (Fern 1960, 42) She seems to have had difficulties with her music, making the rehearsals for *La Chatte* difficult, in particular for the extremely musical choreographer. (Vaughan 1979, 69) According to Danilova, "she couldn't learn to count it. Balanchine had to count it for her all the time in rehearsals, and he worried that she would miss her entrance." (Danilova 1988, 89) Although each of these dancers mastered different elements of ballet, witnesses remember that each was successful in the role: Spessivtseva's ethereal style, Nikitina's personality, and Markova's technical abilities. Spessivtseva performed the role only once, and was unable to perform it again, by most accounts due to an injury.[20] Hodson and Archer, however, said she was not really injured, but that "she was so unsympathetic to Balanchine's innovations that she feigned an injury to avoid dancing the Paris premier." (Hodson and Archer 1998, 1109) Geva said she was "quite wonderful, especially her appearance was so incredible. The sense of almost ethereal presence. She barely touched the ground…there was a feeling of floating in the air." (Geva 1976) Doubrovska recalled that she had "good elevations and she pleased Diaghilev. He liked her style and long legs. She did a very good Chatte." (Doubrovska 1972)

When Nikitina took over the role, it changed primarily through her interpretation of the choreography, not because the steps had been changed. Her hair was cut in a bob which under the plastic hat gave the cat the character of a flapper. Sauguet "thought Nikitina truly mastered the mannerisms he had built into the music, including the meowing of his own cat which he transcribed for orchestra on oboe and English horn. Balanchine turned the sound

into movement." (Hodson and Archer 1998, 1109) By all accounts she was the embodiment of the young women of the 1920s. Doubrovska said that "she was not a strong dancer, but had a nice line and attractive presentation." (Doubrovska 1976) In another account she said that Nikitina "was not strong technically and not very pretty, but she had a small head, nice neck, and lovely arms and legs; and when she danced, she had personality and elegance." (Doubrovska 1982, 4)

Nikitina alternated the role with Markova, and for her Balanchine changed the choreography. Like Doubrovska, Markova was more willing to experiment than some of the other dancers, able to find solutions to bring out the choreography that Balanchine actually wanted. She said when she started dancing the role, she

> had noticed that they had complained so much about the floor, because it was black, American cloth, terribly slippery in certain areas. And other areas, because of the very modern design, were like cotton, two surfaces, and I figured out what was causing the accidents. So when I took over, Balanchine put in the most difficult things, adding to what he had already choreographed…I had to solve this problem somehow, with this slippery floor, because otherwise I wasn't going to be able to do all these double turns in the air that Balanchine had given to me, and all those pirouettes on pointe which he had added, so I suddenly remembered when I danced on a ballroom floor, I used to have rubbers put on my ballet shoes…And that was the solution to the problem for me." (Drummond 1997, 253)

She described the changes Balanchine made for her: "When I followed Nikitina in the role, George redid the variation. He made it a very difficult one for me, with syncopations and corkscrew pirouettes. The other dancers said such thing would ruin their legs, but I was young and willing to try. It didn't hurt me." (Markova 1991, 91) She also said that he added double turns in the air for her version of the variation, continuing that "he was able to give me syncopated things, that first variation, musically—even when I tried now for the reconstruction to help them, people can't do the speed…" (Markova 1993) Hodson and Archer also described what Markova told them while they were reconstructing the ballet: "double tours landing in plié turns, fouettés with the whipping leg overcrossing the body and the internal evolution of steps each time they are repeated-in the manner of jazz riffs." (Hodson and Archer 1998, 1109) This statement demonstrated how technically advanced Markova was for her time. In general dancers today are technically much stronger than they were in the 1920's, but these dancers still have trouble dancing her role. Her costume was

also changed because she was unable to perform the role in the plastic tutu. According to Vaughan, the movements "look forward to the new-classicism of the American Balanchine, with its jazz-influenced syncopations-there's even a little tap step…" (Vaughan 1991, 1109) Balanchine had worked with popular music in cafés, variety theaters and music in the Soviet Union, Germany, and in London, as well as having played the piano for the silent movies. As a child performer, Markova had worked in similar venues, and it is likely that the two of them were able to create this role because of their similar theatrical experiences.

The male role was danced by Lifar. By many accounts, it was choreographed to show off his strengths: namely his good looks and good physique, and to cover up his technical flaws. In his *Complete Book of Ballets*, Beaumont said that "the choreography appeared to have little connection with the theme which served mainly as an excuse for a series of movements in which a number of lightly-clad bronzed young men, led by Lifar, then in the flower of his youth, executed a series of movements reminiscent of a gymnastic display…" (Beaumont 1956, 973) Hodson and Archer, however, contend that the role was not technically easy either for Lifar or the corps de ballets, consisting as it did of "leaps, turns, and beats in the air." (Hodson and Archer 1991, 46) Geva recalled, and photographs showed, that he was beautifully proportioned with long legs and Egyptian looking facial features. She said that when he came to the Ballets Russes, he had an unexotic personality, like a little peasant boy, "someone who is in the field" and that Diaghilev had him made over, meaning plastic surgery. (Geva 1976) Doubrovska recalled that "he was marvelous. When Lifar was in Diaghilev's company he was such a nice boy. He didn't realize that he was such a big success." (Doubrovska 1972) As to his dancing, Geva said "he danced all right. I must be honest; this is my opinion. I think he danced all right. I don't think he was especially good." (Geva 1976) Lifar was by no means as well trained as the other soloist and principal dancers of the Ballets Russes and probably less trained than many of the corps dancers. In Russia he had studied with Nijinska for one month and then spent two years, in his own words, working alone "with the coaching of my friends, the better pupils; the students themselves became my teachers." (Lifar 1982, 24) In 1922, when Nijinska sent to Russia for her students to come to strengthen the ranks of the Ballets Russes, Lifar came un-beckoned, replacing another student who was unable to come. Danilova recalled that "he wasn't trained well" and so Diaghilev invited Cecchetti to give him lessons. She said "he was working really hard."(Danilova 1978-1979) Lifar said he was sent to Turin for two months in secret. "When

I returned, I was able to do triple tours en l'air and twelve pirouettes, which astonished everyone. I was criticized by the company because my fifth position on landing was not perfect, but I challenged them to do better..." (Lifar 1982, 25)

Lifar vividly recalled how Balanchine created the role for him and Spessivtseva. He said that

> Balanchine created a new style of choreography because in Spessivtseva and me he had flexible instruments...I danced with my legs and with my head. It was a very athletic role, full of poses and *plastique*, not at all classical. That ballet offered the first modern virtuosity; there was a corps of six men who moved like horses and at the end of my variation, I lay on the stage like a mummy, stretched out stiff on my side and holding my head off the ground." (Lifar 1982, 26)

Lifar's statement about himself may have been true, but his opinion of Spessivtseva in the role contradicts most other accounts. Although she danced the role well according to most, she was not flexible and did not like non-classical choreography. Balanchine was only able to realize his ideal choreography much later with Markova, who was both technically very capable and also willing to take risks in learning and dancing the role.

Efimov also performed in the corps de ballets in this ballet. Not much information is available about him, except that, according to Danilova, he went with Lifar to Paris after Diaghilev's death. She said that Lifar took certain boys with him who had danced in *La Chatte*. Danilova said that "he was quite capable boy," but that "…he was not an important dancer…not everybody is the tops." (Danilova 1978-1979) She did say that Diaghilev gave him little solos. Geva said the "he became sort of a second hand partner because everybody was second hand to the man who happened to be Mr. Diaghilev's boyfriend at the time." (Geva 1976)

True to the scandals that always accompanied new works at the Ballets Russes, *La Chatte* had a story of its own. According to Balanchine, "one day Diaghilev called me. He said that Massine was very angry because I stole his ideas. I asked him how I could steal his ideas. Diaghilev told me that Massine said, 'I wanted to do that for a long time, and I never did it.' Diaghilev told him, 'Well, if you think people are stealing your ideas, then don't think!'" (Gruen 1975, 281)

I suggest that this ballet is the last one in which Balanchine "experimented" with the elements of the Constructivists and others. Many of these elements, which he started to use in the Soviet Union in *Funeral March*, expanded in *Le Chant du Rossignol*, culminated in *La Chatte*. After this point, Balanchine was no longer trying things out. By the time he created his next major work, *Apollo*, he had reached a point where he had created something new, completing his transformation of classical dance.

6.10 Summary and Analysis Chapter 6

While working at the Ballets Russes, Balanchine was for the first time able to choreograph dances on a full company of dancers who performed with sets and costumes in larger theaters. He continued to experiment however he did it under the careful eye of Diaghilev. The ballets which he choreographed between 1925 and 1927 show some of the elements of Constructivism with which he had begun to experiment in St. Petersburg. *Le Chant du Rossignol* made use of a platform, the first time that Balanchine was able to use sets in a ballet. Creating levels by having dancers on platforms later appeared in *Apollo*. *La Chatte* also had outstanding Constructivist sets however they did not have a functional role. In this ballet Balanchine created levels by using the bodies of the dancers, an extension to the experiments he had begun in *Funeral March*. The use of bodies to create levels and formations is a signature of Balanchine's mature work, one of the crucial aspects which separate his choreography from that of any other choreographer before or during his time and something which clearly shows the transformation he made from classical dance to neo-classical.

Balanchine also created new vocabulary, some of which became signature steps of neo-classical choreography, during this time. In *La Pastorale,* the male dancer turned the woman in promenade by holding her leg, rather than her hands or waist as was standard in classical dance. This move appeared later in *Serenade*. In *La Chatte,* Balanchine invented the cork screw turn, which later appeared in *Apollo*. The creation of a new vocabulary clearly shows how Balanchine was expanding the classical dance beyond what it had been at the Academic Theaters.

While choreographer for the Ballets Russes, Balanchine was once again able to work with a dancer who exemplified the body type that he preferred: Felia Doubrovska. Tall like Ivanova, photographs show her to have had a physique that resembled that of modern ballet

dancers far more than most of her contemporaries. Balanchine choreographed some of his most interesting roles, in particular in *Le Chant du Rossignol, Apollo* and *The Prodigal Son* on her.

Finally, we also see in Balanchine's work something that he later rejected: the extensive use of sets and costumes which were typical of Diaghilev's ballets. While Balanchine clearly appreciated the work of the great visual artists of the time, he did not choose to continue to work with these collaborations after Diaghilev's death. He did however expand his musicality; beginning with *Le Chant du Rossignol,* he developed a lifelong working relationship with composer Stravinsky.

While choreographer for the Ballets Russes, Balanchine began to incorporate elements of the classical with his various experiments. Even as early as 1925 in *Le Chant du Rossignol* he incorporated elements of Constructivist theater as well as corps de ballet patters from Petipa's ballets. This transformation became complete in 1928 as he created the ballet *Apollo.*

Chapter 7

Apollo: The Final Transformation (1928)

Choreographed in 1928, *Apollo*[1] is the first of his own ballets Balanchine included in his book *Balanchine's Complete Stories of the Great Ballets*. (Balanchine and Mason, 1977) Its inclusion and the absence of his earlier works speak volumes for the status of this ballet in his own mind: he considered this ballet his first important work. A pivotal point in the history of ballet, this ballet is the first peak in Balanchine's life work, and much has been written about it and his work after this point. This book is an examination of Balanchine's early work, and looks at how he combined elements of the classical vocabulary with the modern developments both in the Soviet Union and in Western Europe. In his combination of these elements, Balanchine changed the face of ballet, creating a new style, already known as neo-classicism as early as 1928. The transformation culminates in *Apollo;* this is the last ballet to be examined in this study. I will end where others begin.

Much has been written about *Apollo*; Scholl's *From Petipa to Balanchine: Classical Revival and the Modernization of Ballet* put the ballet in the context of other important Russian choreographers of the first decades of the 20th century. Joseph's *Stravinsky and Balanchine: A Journey of Invention* contained chapters which address the choreography and music of *Apollo* in detail. The following chapter will examine the elements of the original production directly related to Balanchine's development as a choreographer, giving special attention to how these innovations fit into the larger picture of his early work and dance vocabulary. Since this ballet has remained in the repertory and has been performed countless times over the past eighty years, studying this ballet presents many advantages as well as difficulties. The most obvious advantage: not only are several generations of dancers still living who learned the ballet from Balanchine himself, but the choreography can be studied directly in videos as well as live performances, not simply from the pages of documentation. However, its costumes, sets, and choreography were changed several times by Balanchine himself, the last major change being made in 1979 only a few years before his death when he removed the entire first section of the ballet. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the choreography of *Apollo* and put it into context with Balanchine's other early work. The changes he made open the question of whether modern production represent enough of the "original" to be used

both as a comparison and as a sounding board for other early works, and this chapter will discuss some of the most relevant differences. In discussing those elements born out of Balanchine's development as a choreographer-vocabulary learned and borrowed from classical tradition, the early Soviet avant-garde, and the Ballets Russes-I do believe that it is valid to examine later versions of the ballet. Despite the many changes made since the original production, the essentials have remained the same and the origin of these ideas can still be traced to his European and Russian past. For example, in post World War II productions in America, Balanchine removed the mountains, but added the use of a scaffolding to represent Mount Olympus. This prop was a striking departure from the elaborate representation depicted in André Bauchant's sets in 1928, but the use of the scaffolding to create different levels for the dancers has obvious roots in Soviet Constructivist theater and Goleizovsky's ballets. The removal of all the sets in the final version represents the process he began very early on: maintaining the best parts of the choreography while purifying it from extraneous elements.

This chapter will examine various elements of the dance based on different performances, primarily: *Apollo* in the film, *Dance in America: Baryshnikov Dances Balanchine*, which shows Balanchine's last version, both in terms of choreography, costume, and sets (or lack thereof); the January 13, 2005 Balanchine Gala at the Teatro dell' Opera di Roma, and the June 10, 2005 Balanchine-Ballettabend of the Staatsballett Berlin, both titled *Apollon Musagète*, and including the birth of Apollo. In this study, I believe it is vital to use performances of this ballet either in video, stage productions or rehearsal form. Viewing the dance allows the reader to see things in his mind's eye, enabling him to visualize Balanchine's early vocabulary and to get a clearer picture of other dances for which there is only written documentation. The picture will never be exact, but I believe that what is to be gained far outweighs the problematic of the method.

In addition to the videos and performances, personal recollections of the dancers as well as Balanchine's description of this ballet in *Balanchine's Complete Stories of the Great Ballets* will be used. Unlike his earlier works where research is dependent on written and recorded documentation, Balanchine himself taught this ballet to several dancers, many of whom are still teaching it to other companies, and the integrity of the work stands under the protection of the Balanchine Foundation. Although Balanchine reworked the choreography on different dancers and changed the costumes several times, it is important to note that it was the

original choreographer reworking his own piece. These later versions of a ballet which has always existed in the repertory are greatly different from the reconstructions of lost works such as Hodson/Archer's reconstruction of *La Chatte*. The original choreography of *Apollo* has never been forgotten and had to be reworked with missing sections filled in by the reconstructor. Some of the changes Balanchine himself made either out of artistic reasons or to accommodate different dancers will be mentioned in this chapter[2], but the primary focus will be placed on similarities between this ballet and earlier works since many of the elements that Balanchine integrated in his dances over the years 1920 to 1928 culminated in *Apollo*.

This study looks at documentation from the original 1928 Ballets Russes production and uses the footage and documentation from later productions for clarification. In addition to the changes in sets and choreography, Balanchine changed the costumes several times, something which, while having little effect on the choreography, still changed the aesthetic of the ballet completely. As Gruen describes, "*Apollo*, as we know it, is a far cry from the 1928 original-at least visually." (Gruen 1987, 158) He quotes Balanchine's description of the original costumes:

> All the girls in Apollo were dressed like hell-like old bags. One muse had a long tutu which was cut out in front. Another had the tutu cut out in back, and the other at the sides. It looked awful! Then he covered their hair with some wigs that looked like rows of Easter eggs…But Coco Chanel was there, and *she* saw…She started to scream at him: 'Serge! How can you do this to those poor girls? Look at those terrible costumes…Look at what you have done to their hair!' So on the next day, we all went to Chanel's atelier…and she dressed the girls in wonderful soft materials-it was haute couture! (Gruen 1987, 158)

Lifar's costume was not much better: It was red and gold, and "very badly made." (Joseph 2002, 91) From the very first modification in the women's costuming, beginning with the change from tutus to the simple mid-thigh length dresses by Chanel, to white leotards and skirts, which have been standard since the 1950's, the lines have become cleaner and simpler. This choice of costumes has not only not changed the basic theme of the ballet blanc, but has served to present it more fully. Apollo's costume was also finally reduced to white tights, sometimes with a white half shirt. It is, however, interesting to note that in some productions Apollo wore dark tights with a white top, reminiscent of the costume worn by the man in *Les Sylphides*.

7.1 Stravinsky's Apollo

An analysis of the ballet *Apollo* rightly begins with Stravinsky, since it was he who first conceived the idea, and who also wrote the libretto. The music was commissioned on behalf of the Library of Congress for a ballet of not more than 30 minutes for three or four dancers, to be performed at a contemporary music festival. Originally choreographed by Adolph Bohm, it was performed only once on April 27, 1928. (Goodwin 2002, 49) A few weeks later, Balanchine choreographed his version of the dance, and the ballet had its premiere in June 1928. Alternating in the role of Terpsichore, Muse of Dance and Song, in the original cast were Nikitina and Danilova. Tchernicheva danced Calliope, Muse of Poetry, and Doubrovska Polyhymnia, Muse of Mime. Lifar performed the role of Apollo, and like many of the roles created for him by Balanchine at Diaghilev's request, much of the choreography of the entire ballet centered on him, and it would seem that he was instrumental in the creation of the dance. According to Joseph, "the original typescript of one of Stravinsky and Craft's conversation books, *Memories and Commentaries*…clearly shows that *Apollo* was jointly choreographed by Lifar and Balanchine; but when Stravinsky proofed the typescript, he deleted Lifar's name. Perhaps the composer dropped the reference because…he was no longer on speaking terms with Lifar." (Joseph 2002, 86) Lifar's influence on the choreography is by no means an anomaly in Balanchine's work. He choreographed the solo *Valse Triste* together with Ivanova, and is well known to have changed choreography to accompany the abilities of different dancers, a process which by nature involves the dancer himself. In the original creation of *Apollo,* Danilova described the process:

> George would come to rehearsal with a definite plan in mind, but the details, the actual steps, he would mold on the dancers. He could choreograph them right there, straight away, because he knew the capacity of each dancer so well. He would show me what he wanted me to do. If it didn't work, he would say, "All right, then I will simplify it or make it different." The movements in *Apollo* were unusual and intricate, but the style and the sense we could pick up from Balanchine because he always demonstrated." (Danilova 1988 97-98)

What appears atypical about *Apollo* in comparison with Balanchine's later work is that the ballet, like the others he choreographed for the Ballets Russes, was built around a male dancer. According to Gruen, ballet was "not yet woman in 1928" for Balanchine. (Gruen

1987, 158) As an employee of Diaghilev, Balanchine was obliged to follow his wishes, which often entailed dances being created for specific dancers, in this case Diaghilev's lover Lifar. The results were *La Pastorale* (1926), *La Chatte* (1927), *Apollon Musagète* (1928), and *The Prodigal Son* (1929), all featuring Lifar[3] in the male lead.

A 1928 review of the London production described the level of artistic achievement reached by both Balanchine and Stravinsky in this ballet:

> Stravinsky's music is for strings only…The texture is strictly polyphonic, but the material is not of the kind that is most commonly used to form such a texture, being smooth-sometimes almost sleek-where one is accustomed to some degree of angularity…It is far from sensational, but has a calm beauty that culminates in two exquisite concluding numbers. Balanchine's choreography travels the same road, attaining its summit in a *pas de deux* danced by Apollo (Lifar) with Terpsichore (Nikitina), which is a revelation. Of course the dancing includes some features with classical purists may not welcome, but if they can only bring themselves to regard it objectively they would at least find the explanation of the high regard in which he is held by those whose interpretation of tradition is less rigid. That *pas de deux*, despite the novelty of the movements, retains the essential form of the classical ballet. Quietly, unostentatiously as it presents itself, "Apollon Musagètes" is really a striking example of neo-classicism alike in its music, its choreography, and the scenic setting… (Evens 1928, 489)

This review clearly described the relation between the music and the choreography. Balanchine effectively created Stravinsky's ballet blanc by reflecting the string orchestra as Stravinsky had envisioned it. In his description of *Apollo*, Balanchine quoted from Stravinsky's 1936 *Autobiography:*

> I had especially in my thoughts what is known as the 'white ballet,' in which to my mind the very essence of this art reveals itself in all its purity. I found that the absence of many-colored effects and of all superfluities produced a wonderful freshness. This inspired me to write of an analogous character. It seemed to me that diatonic composition was the most appropriate for this purpose and the austerity of its style determined what my instrumental ensemble must be… (Balanchine and Mason 1977, 28)

He further added that "Balanchine had designed for the choreography of *Apollo* groups, movements, and lines of great dignity and plastic elegance as inspired by the beauty of

classical forms." (Balanchine and Mason 1977, 29) In turn, Balanchine wrote that "in studying the score I first understood how gestures, like tones in music and shades in painting, have certain family relations. As groups they impose their own laws. The more conscious an artist is, the more he comes to understand these laws and to respond to them.[4]" (Balanchine and Mason 1977, 28) These passages of text demonstrate the effective collaborative effort between Balanchine and Stravinsky and show how highly each regarded the work of the other, an admiration that lasted for their entire lives.

In choreographing *Apollo* Balanchine realized the ballet blanc which Stravinsky had visualized as he wrote the music. Like Fokine's *Les Sylphides*, a ballet from which he received much of his aesthetic inspiration, it recreated the atmosphere of another time: the Romantic *Giselle* and *La Sylphide* as well as Ivanov's white scenes in *Swan Lake*. Scholl also saw more inspiration from *Les Sylphides* in *Apollo*:

> In the course of the ballet Apollo undergoes a transformation; he is, in Balanchine's words a "wild, half human youth who acquires nobility through art" (Balanchine and Mason 1977, 26). But Apollo's muses also "derived inspiration from Apollo's teaching" (ibid., 22), according to the choreographer. The model for this ambiguous relationship is probably Fokine's *Les Sylphides*, the most famous of the twentieth century's *ballet blanc*, which also featured one male and three female principal dancers in a "plotless" exercise- a narrative which neither suggests not precludes concrete relationships among the principal dancers. (Scholl 1994, 95)

Apollo seems also to have been a landmark for Balanchine's work for Diaghilev for another important reason: its simplicity and focus on the music and choreography were in sharp contrast to all the other ballets he did for the Ballets Russes. In his book on the collaboration of Stravinsky and Balanchine, Joseph explained that

> *Apollo* was an appreciable cut above the shallow plots and musical vapidity of …*La Pastorale*,…*The Triumph of Neptune*,…and *La Chatte*, all of which Diaghilev assigned to Balanchine in 1926-1927…The vitiating dead-end experimentation during the waning years of Diaghilev's company quickly disillusioned the enterprising Balanchine. Still, he was in no position to argue. Stravinsky's ballet provided a way out. Its classicism afforded the ideal crucible for Balanchine to test his ideas. (Joseph 2002, 77-78)

Although he was forced to use Diaghilev's sets and costumes for the first performances of *Apollo*, and was still subject to his censure, in particular regarding Terpsichore's variation, the ballet still comes much closer to the simplistic aesthetic to which he was striving in the Soviet Union in his imitation of Goleizovsky's pure dance. Reports of Diaghilev's opinion of the ballet are not clear: on the one side he is heard to have claimed that *Apollon Musagète* "is magnificent," on the other hand, Stravinsky believed that he not only disliked the music, but was also suspicious of Balanchine's choreographic innovations. Kochno believed that his main concern was "his impious young choreographer's growing emancipation." (Joseph 2002, 85)

7.2 The Constructivist Influence: the Creation of Levels and Formations of Bodies

Apollo demonstrated the influence of the Soviet Constructivists to a larger extent than any of his previous ballets; in this ballet he perfected the creation of formations and levels with bodies. In the original version, sets and platforms were used to create levels in the prologue and in the last position of the ballet. In his final version, Balanchine removed these levels, this last change taking place in 1979 when he revised the work for the New York City Ballet. He explains:

> I looked at *Apollo* and decided to change it…I looked at the birth scene. I decided it wasn't interesting. I mean, who cares that somebody is born. I thought back on how it used to be. There was this woman with hair that looked like hard-boiled eggs, and she was sitting there in a tutu-giving birth. I wanted to eliminate that, and I did. Then I remembered the mountains in the second part. I thought, "Who cares about mountains? Mountains aren't interesting." So I took them away. Later, I put in a scaffolding with stairs. But I thought that looked silly, too. And I took that away. You know, in the Diaghilev production, there was a chariot that came to take Apollo to Olympus. But I never used that chariot in America.
>
> You see, all that is unimportant. What is important is the dancing…only the dancing. Pas de deux, variation, and coda…that's important. So I changed…I know why I changed it. I took out all the garbage-that's why! (Gruen 1987, 165)

In this statement Balanchine explained how he transformation of ballet by merging it with the elements of the Constructivist theater: first he used sets to create the levels, but he eventually eliminated what he considered extraneous sets because it was "unimportant."

This statement clearly shows that his intent, to make the dance be the most important part of a ballet.

While Stravinsky would have balked at the exclusion of a large part of his music from the ballet[5], it is worthwhile to note that Balanchine's simplifications are consistent with Stravinsky's intent as well as his own. Even Stravinsky's libretto, which was printed in the original program booklets of *Apollo,* seems to foreshadow Balanchine's final alteration: almost half of the text is dedicated to explaining Apollo's birth and his dance with the handmaidens, although the prologue itself is relatively short. The remainder of the ballet needs less text: the dancing speaks for itself. (Souvenir Program *Apollon Musagète* June 4, 1929)

The version of the ballet including Apollo's birth is still widely performed, the scaffolding Balanchine incorporated in his American productions is used both in the beginning to represent the island of Delos as well as Mount Olympus in the final scene (the original curtain and sets depicting mountains included by Diaghilev were only used for the Ballets Russes productions), leaving dance and music the main components of the ballet. In the original production, Balanchine described that "there was a front curtain with an enormous vase of flowers with a landscape in the background. In front of the curtain sat Leto, the mother of Apollo, and she was giving birth to him. Then, when the curtain lifted, you saw some gray mountains, and that's where Apollo danced with the muses." (Gruen 1987, 158) Balanchine described that Diaghilev was "always full of gimmicks and full of ideas," (Gruen 1987, 158) and the sets and a chariot, which Apollo rode off stage in the end, were included in the Ballets Russes production demonstrate this.

Diaghilev's influence extended to the dancing, beginning with his choice of Nikitina in the role of Terpsichore, alternating with Danilova. Danilova recalled that "I suppose to dance the first performance, and Diaghilev comes to me and says Lord Rothermere giving him 3000 Pounds for London season if Nikitina will dance the first night, and will I allow this? I said, 'By all means.' Otherwise, we wouldn't have season, so she did create first evening they danced. But then we change.[6]" (Danilova 1973 *Part I* 44) According to Lincoln Kirstein, Lord Rothermere later removed his funding anyway, and Diaghilev vented his anger on Nikitina by cutting out her solo. (Joseph 2002, 120) According to Balanchine, he cut out the pas de deux between Apollo and Terpsichore on tour because he didn't like it (Gruen

1982, 104), and Danilova recalled that he didn't like the Terpsichore solo and it was cut until Balanchine revised it. (Danilova 1988, 98) Geva also said that he did not like the variation:

> He thought it too long, too repetitious…and he told George that the variation was no good, and that he didn't like the music. George said, "It is your dancer that isn't any good,"…George wouldn't change the variation so Diaghilev took it out. And one day, in Covent Garden, just before the performance of *Apollo*, Diaghilev rushed in looking for George absolutely in such a state of fear that George said he was trembling…"Put the variation in quickly…Stravinsky is in the audience." So George had to grab the lady who was dancing Terpsichore and quickly rehearse her just before she went onstage…" (Joseph 2002, 50)

None of the cuts Diaghilev made to the dance were permanent, and his sets and costumes were eventually completely discarded since they fit neither Balanchine's nor Stravinsky's ideal. Interestingly, although from our point of view the sets and costumes would be elaborate in comparison to the more recent versions of *Apollo* as well as the general aesthetic, they were not nearly as elaborate as in many of the other ballets Balanchine had done for Diaghilev, most notably *Le Chant du Rossignol, La Chatte* and *The Triumph of Neptune*. Describing the 1928 London season, the Dancing Times reported that "…Stravinsky's 'Apollon Musagètes,' formed the central feature of the programme. This is one of the soberest productions Diaghileff has ever presented-sober in that, neither in the orchestra or on the stage is there the slightest attempt to dazzle the eye or the ear with colouristic or ornamental devices. It argues great courage to dispense with these useful aids to success." (Evans 1928, 489)

Although it is clear that in Balanchine's opinion these elements and the prologue were less "interesting" and "garbage" in relation to the dancing, I will examine them in this section since they demonstrate not only the influence of Diaghilev, but also the Goleizovsky and Soviet Constructivist theater, as well as reflecting aspects of other earlier works. Balanchine described the beginning:

> Back in the distance, in a shaft of light, Leto gives birth to the child whom the all-powerful Zeus has sired. She sits high on a barren rock and holds up her arms to the light. The music quickens, the woman buries her face in her hands, a hurried crescendo is cut off sharply, the strings are plucked and Apollo is born. Leto disappears, and in the shaft of light

> at the base of the high rock stands the infant god, wrapped tightly in swaddling clothes. (Balanchine and Mason 1977, 24)

This narrative, first published in 1954, described the mountains in the background, stating that Leto was located high above them while she gives birth. In the original production, Balanchine described that Leto was sitting in front of the curtain giving birth, but does not mention whether she was elevated or the placement of Apollo. In any case, in modern productions which include this section and in later productions by Balanchine, a scaffolding structure was used at the back part of the stage for the birth, with Leto located at the top of the scaffolding, while Apollo was standing inside the construction directly below her. At the point where he was born, he jumps out of the opening in which he is standing. This use of the platform is a clear reminder of Soviet Constructivist theater and the influence of Goleizovsky both in the use of the platforms placing the dancers on different levels as in the general choreography: Leto's dance bore a resemblance to Goleizovsky's *Afternoon of a Faun* in that her moves were limited to a sitting position on a very small space, much like Goleizovsky's use of platforms and dancers on small spaces with a limited vocabulary, the dancers pulsated on their platform, with little movement from one platform to the other.

After Apollo was born, shown by the end of Leto's pains and his emergence from the place in the structure he had been standing, two handmaids appeared and "begin to unwrap his swaddling clothes. They circle the god, unwinding the rich cloth, but before they can finish, Apollo spins suddenly and frees himself of the garment and looks about in dark world, not seeing clearly, not knowing how to move. After this burst of energy, he is frightened…the young god is bewildered." (Balanchine and Mason 1977, 25) This description showed similarities to two of Balanchine's ballets in St. Petersburg, first of all for its use of darkness and light to represent emotional turmoil. In *Funeral March*, Slonimsky describes "a passage of the dancers followed by light through the audience," (Slonimsky 1991, 66) and *Valse Triste* also made use of a spotlight on a darkened stage to expose the frightened girl as she is "caught periodically in the searchlight." (Archer and Hodson 2003, 1) The use of a cloth as a prop was a device also used by Balanchine in *Valse Triste*. After the cloth was discarded, the handmaids left, and the next section of the ballet, the part which Balanchine considered superior to the beginning section, began.

The stage was well lit and Apollo performed a solo with a lute. Originally the role was choreographed for Lifar and tailored to his talents: his beautiful body and less than perfect classical technique. It would seem that only at the Ballets Russes did Balanchine create roles which were focused on a male figure. Shortly after Diaghilev's death, he shifted his focus decisively in the direction of the ballerina in the early 1930's, especially as he began to work intensively with his new "baby ballerina," the teenager Tamara Toumanova[7]. (Danilova 1988, 119)

Apollo was then joined by the three Muses and the pas d'action which follows demonstrated Balanchine's extension of the Constructivist influence. Beginning with the ballet *Funeral March* (1923), where "groups in the air" were described by Danilova (Danilova 1978-1979) and the "modeling of sculptural groups" was recalled by Slonimsky, (Slonimsky 1991, 66), Balanchine built upon the technique using the bodies of the dancers to create formations to an extent that he had not done before, even in *La Chatte*. While in *La Chatte* the formations were made out of seven men, enabling them to hold each other at different levels, (a task while possible in some formations with women is greatly reduced due to simple physical strength), Balanchine created three different geometrical, three dimensional constructions out of the bodies of the dancers. Once again it is clear that in *Apollo,* Balanchine perfected an element with which he had earlier been experimenting. These formations were nonexistent in classical ballet; it was Balanchine who first incorporated them into dance.

Scholl described some of these formations, focusing on the contrast between Nijinsky's two dimensional figures in *Afternoon of a Faun* and Balanchine's use of bodies to create three dimensional forms in *Apollo*:

> This juxtaposition of two-and three-dimensionality speaks to the ballet's central theme…The pas d'action, the danced quasi-narrative sections that follow, examines the three dimensional, architectural potential of the human form…the muses reach Apollo they stand around him, right hands raised in salute behind his head…This figure is repeated, with variations, twice in the section. In the next of these, the muses face the kneeling Apollo, extending their legs in high arabesque as Apollo raises the lute. The final variation on this pose comes at the end of the pas d'action. This time, the muses, (again in arabesque) face outward. This sequence establishes an important motif of the choreography: the expansion

> of movement, from self-contained to expansive poses, from spatially introspective movement to choreography that covers the stage. (Scholl 1994, 98-99)

In demonstrating the three dimensionality of the body, Balanchine probably was making a comparison to the two dimensionality of Nijinsky's work as Scholl stated, but his experiments with the forms of the body can be traced to his days in the Soviet Union and the influence of Constructivist theater. His experiments in the Duma hall were focused partially on creating ballets to be viewed from all sides, in particular *The Twelve* and *Funeral March.* His concept of viewing the dance from more than one side probably influenced his use of the bodies and formation of three dimensional figures in *Apollo.*

In the first formation, the Muses surround Apollo who was holding the lute. Their positions and the line from the extended arm to the pointed toe formed a three sided pyramid with Apollo on the inside. Their left foot was in tendu derriere, and their right arms met at the top, in a position whose classical line is broken by the flexed hands with palms facing each other at the apex of the pyramid. The points of the toes formed a long line to the heel of the hand, a gesture which elongated the classical arm, which would have been held softer. If these lines were viewed as the edges of a pyramid, the Muses encased Apollo in a three dimensional, three sided pyramid. Balanchine had also used the bodies of dancers to create a pyramid in *La Chatte*, however, that pyramid was a two dimensional formation with the dancers forming different levels from kneeling and lying on the floor to one dancer sitting on the shoulders of a standing dancer. The pyramid formation[8] in *Apollo* is a clear extension of the earlier work.

In the second formation, a variation on the first, Apollo was no longer surrounded by the Muses, but he himself was emerging from their middle, the lute he was holding in his hand being held overhead. The muses were facing inward, all three in a penché position, the Muses to the right and left holding one of Apollo's shoulders, the other hands connected to each other. The third muse was performing a penché directly behind Apollo, holding her balance with both hands on his shoulders. Again a three sided, three dimensional formation was achieved.

The next major formation demonstrating three dimensionality as well as different levels was a moving one, with two of the Muses kneeling on the floor facing one another.

Apollo stood above them in plié, and one Muse bourréed in a circle around the group, feet in parallel, on pointe. The arms and hands of the dancers were linked to one another and the three dancers on the lower levels naturally swayed from side to side as the other Muse makes her circle, each of the dancers alternating extending one of her legs in an arabesque position with the foot on the floor. The gentle swaying of the group was reminiscent of the movements describing Goleizovsky's *Afternoon of a Faun.*

The next formation appeared near the end of the pas d'action described by Scholl. Apollo was placed outside rather than inside and the four dancers were holding hands. The Muses each performed a penché, this time facing inside. Apollo stood at the back, connected to the others by the hands. The execution of this and the other formations which utilized penché arabesque demonstrated one of the crucial changes Balanchine made in technique and its impact on the choreography, in particular in the case of this particular geographic form. Modern dancers generally perform "six o'clock penchés" almost in a full split, their feet well above the head of Apollo, in the third formation the legs forming a solid pyramid formation with clean lines, the feet not crossing. Since most of the dancers in the 1920's did not possess this flexibility, and none of the dancers in the original production had been trained by him, photographs of the original production showed that the dancers' legs were crossed in the middle, and that their feet reached the height of Lifar's shoulder, not even coming close to extending beyond his head. This difference in the height of the leg alters the angle of the formation, completely changes the lines and the geometrical shapes, although the dancers are performing exactly the same steps. This difference is an example of Balanchine attaining his ideal in a later production-it was he who taught dancers to have longer lines and higher extension, and when the dance was performed by dancers he trained, they created the new geometric form. This formation also demonstrated one of the crucial elements of ballet which were altered by Balanchine. As photographs 8 and 9 show the entire picture created by the same formation is completely altered by the high extension of the dancers.

8. *Apollon Musagète* in 1928.

9. *Apollo* in 1982.

Three more important formations were created by the dancers near the end of the ballet. In one, all three Muses were sitting on one knee on the floor with the other leg extended forward, Apollo standing over them with his hand extended. In sequence, each dancer raised her foot to Apollo's hand until her toes touched his hand, and a structure was created that itself was three dimensional, but contained a two dimensional pyramid within it. In the next formation, one that was also in movement, the dancers created a chariot

formation where the arms were linked together and Apollo was pulling the Muses. This chariot formation differed strongly from the chariot formation Balanchine made in *La Chatte* since the main character was not carried in the air. The final important formation created by all four dancers was the Sunburst, a position which ended the ballet in Balanchine's final version where no platform was available. In earlier productions the dancers climbed the platform or mountain to show their ascent on Mount Olympus. Again, Balanchine experimented with the use of levels however, this time he employed the height of the legs in arabesque to create them. In this formation, the three Muses were standing directly behind one another in a row. They were holding onto Apollo, who was posed in a lunge, for support, the lines of the formation completed by the leg extended behind creating a fourth level with the women's legs, and his arm extended forward.

Related to Balanchine's building of formations in this ballet was his use of arm chains, one among several elements which he borrowed from Goleizovsky. In her introduction to Souritz's book on Soviet choreographers Banes mentioned "in particular his laconic, erotic style of flowing and knotted composition." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 15) In *Apollo*, Balanchine went beyond what he had already done, particularly in *La Chatte* where in the pyramid formation the sides of the pyramid were formed by the arms and the legs of the dancers. This pyramid is a stable formation, resembling those formed by modern cheerleaders. Similarly, when Apollo chose Terpsichore, and he was on the floor with his arm extended and finger pointed behind him and Terpsichore, standing, touched his finger with one of hers and extended the line to the other end of her hand which was held up, the four arms of the dancers formed a long line. The use of still poses were expanded upon in phrases where the dancers were connected at the hands or arms, but rather than standing still the groups were moving, intertwining, winding and unwinding. In the formation where the two Muses were kneeling, Apollo was standing in plié and one Muse was bourréeing around the group. All the dancers' arms were linked in such a way that they did not need to be released for the third dancer to complete her circle around the other dancers. Near the end of the ballet the dancers again all link arms with Apollo as he pulled them across the stage. These particular phrases of the dance demonstrate another one of the elements which revolutionized ballet: as opposed to Petipa's series of combinations, Balanchine created phrases in which steps flowed into one another, one movement to the

next without breaks in between. Even as a group with their bodies connected to one another the dancers continued to move.

7.3 Extending the Classical Vocabulary: the Use of the Parallel and Lines Extended and Broken

Apollo demonstrated the influence of many different artists, beginning with the aesthetic he borrowed from Fokine. Fokine did not experiment with the classical vocabulary to the extent that Balanchine did, but he created reforms particularly in the use of dance narrative and by resurrecting the styles of earlier epochs. Balanchine was particularly influenced by Fokine's works which depicted the ballet blanc of the Romantic period. Balanchine maintained this aesthetic in *Apollo*, but in the dance vocabulary he borrowed elements from other choreographers: the classical vocabulary based on his education at Theater School and the ballets of Petipa, in particular *Swan Lake*; the linked arms forming chains found in Goleizovsky's *Joseph the Beautiful* and the feet and the arms connecting dancers on different levels like in Goleizovsky's *The Afternoon of a Faun*; the musicality based on his own musical education as well as the influence of Lopukhov's *Dance Symphony;* the creation of three dimensional forms resulting from his experiments on Vsevolodsky-Gerngross' stage at the Duma Auditorium; the expansion of Meyerhold's and Goleizovsky's use of platforms to create levels in Constructivist theater to creating those forms and levels solely out of the bodies of the dancers; and finally the influence of popular culture, including the use of the wide opened mouth from the silent cinema and the incorporation of jazz rhythms in his dances. While many of these elements appeared in his other early works, the classical parts and the new influences were first combined in a way that created a memorable work of choreography in *Apollo*.

Edward Villella, who learned the role from Balanchine in the 1960's, also explained the way Balanchine extended the classical positions: the "…very first gesture of Apollo's variation with the arms up and hands horizontal is really fifth position high. In this one simple gesture of Apollo's, Balanchine just took fifth position and extended it! Neoclassicism is exemplified by that *single* move." (Joseph 2002, 88) Danilova recalled that all these elements created a new vocabulary that was difficult to learn: "in 1928 he had us flex our feet, shortening them in our toe shoes, and half the theater in Paris was stunned and liked it and the other half did not. And we used angular hands instead of rounded classical hands.

Without any ceremony Apollo lifts Terpsichore onto his back! It was free movement. That is what Mr. B. gave us: a completely new vocabulary." (Danilova 1991, 5) She recalled that the ballet "was revolutionary for the simple reason that at times we had to dance on flat feet-that was astonishing." (Danilova 1988, 96) She also said that the pas de deux was difficult for both her and Lifar "because it was such a new approach, different from anything he had ever danced before. In the pas d'action, he had to partner all three of us together." (Danilova 1988, 99) Despite the difficulties the dancers had in executing Balanchine's ideas, Danilova emphasized that he knew each of the dancers so well he would change or simplify things if they didn't work. (Danilova 1988, 98)

Goleizovsky's influence was seen not only in the use of architectural formations and arm chains, but was also evident in the movement vocabulary of the dancers, beginning with Apollo's solo. Balanchine had already used Goleizovsky's sixth position extensively in *Valse Triste* and *Le Chant du Rossignol*, but in this ballet not only did he make ample use of the sixth position, but many steps and jumps are changed from their purely classical form by being performed parallel[9], a natural consequence of using the sixth position. A pirouette combinations performed by Apollo clearly showed Goleizovsky's influence and Balanchine's extension both of his work and of Petipa's. Out of the parallel sixth position, the steps are performed with the feet, legs and knees parallel in the fourth position preparation, and the knee facing front in retiré, rather than opening to the side, during the pirouette itself. While this combination utilized elements which are commonplace in contemporary ballet and modern choreography, in the 1920's, it was a radical departure. In this particular combination, Balanchine expanded the classical vocabulary one step further: not only did he use parallel feet and legs in a traditional combination, but he kept Apollo on the demi-pointe, with the knees in plié. This combination accurately shows Balanchine's transformation: he did not completely throw out the classical steps, but by performing them parallel, he added to the classical vocabulary. All these use new ways of executing classical steps demonstrate why Balanchine's transformation of ballet had already been coined "neo-classical" by Evan in his 1928 review of the London performances.

The line of the arms was also altered by the use of flexed hands on the end of otherwise classical arms. Classical arms particularly in the second position and first arabesque were lengthened to the point of being straightened, but the line was broken by the flexing of the hands with the palms facing outward, again a clear demonstration of expanding and

changing the classical vocabulary. This arm position was also used in the entrance of the Muses who move towards Apollo performing grand battements forward. Between the battements, the dancers balanced on pointe in fourth position with their arms extended in a second position with the palm facing outward[10]. In oppositions to the sections where the dancers did steps on the heels, the dancers stayed on pointe for their entire entrance, a combination technically difficult for both the original and later performers. The placement of the foot in fourth position on pointe between the battements was reminiscent of the entrance of the dancers in *Funeral March*. The timing of the battements of the three dancers also demonstrated Balanchine's use of the subtleties in the music. At first glance, they seemed to occur almost randomly, but a careful comparison of the steps to the music reveals that each of the Muses performed the battement at a particular place in the music.

Joseph described Balanchine's break with Petipa's vocabulary: "the discrete positioning of the body, the use of the arms, the treatment of the ensemble in itself as well as in its relationship to the soloist-all were frequently altered, even skewed…The turned-in legs, torso distortions, inverted gestures, unusually wide poses, jutting hips and shoulders…"(Joseph 2002, 87) The use of the feet parallel (or turned in) was extensive in *Apollo*, and Danilova said that "this gives Apollo a different, more natural kind of beauty." (Danilova 1988, 97) The elements described by Joseph can be seen in Balanchine's treatment of one of the most common steps in classical ballet: the bourrée. In *Apollo* he played with this step both in its form and its execution, primarily the use of turn out and the pointe. Not only did the dancers stand in the sixth position, they bourréed in sixth position. Their use was not exclusive: turned out bourrées in fifth were used in some combination, parallel ones in others. The section of the dance immediately following the entrance of the Muses demonstrated this merging of the classical with the modern. In the first section of the dance the Muses entered stage bourréeing in parallel. They then made the first formation, resembling a pyramid, bowed to Apollo, then created the variation on the first formation, this one with the four dancers in the same position, but with the Muses holding their legs in penché rather than tendu derriere. They again bourréed, but this time in the fifth position, and shortly thereafter, when two of the Muses separated from the other one, the solo girl bourréed in parallel where as the other two perform classical bourrées in fifth position with classical arms, using these bourrées as traveling steps, bringing them into position. Shortly after this separation, the two Muses and Apollo made a formation, the Muses on their knees,

Apollo standing in a plié position, the solo Muse circling the form in bourrées with their feet parallel.

The nontraditional use of the bourrée step extended beyond the parallel to their being executed on their heels, with the feet completely flexed, the toes pointing upward in an antithesis of the pointe. This step corresponded to the arm position often used by the Muses throughout the dance, beginning with their entrance, namely both arms extended straight to the side, hands flexed, and palms outward. Both of these elements represented an alteration of the classical, not a complete rejection of it. The movement dynamics of the bourrées on the heels was still similar to that of a traditional step: small quick movements of the feet used to travel from one point to the other. Again, Balanchine's choice of using a step so typical showed that he had not rejected the classical, but was changing it, extending the classical vocabulary. Interestingly, at the point where all the Muses bourréed on their heels, the dancers were in a formation reminiscent of the "wheel" of the classical dance where one dancer formed a center, in this case Apollo, and the other dancers, in a row, formed the spoke and travelled around the center point. The partially classical formation, however, was expanded beyond its original form by the unconventional use of the arms: the dancers were joined together by holding the backs and the cheeks of the persons next to them.

7.4 Mixing the Classical Vocabulary with the Modern

This ballet symbolized the birth of a new style of dance, the classical having been transformed, not eliminated. Bourrées, executed both on pointe and on the heels, as well as preparations and pirouettes were performed in the parallel, demonstrating the transformation of the classical. Whereas before Diaghilev had criticized[11] Balanchine's early choreography for its use of "false, crude, or disappointing effects" which "marred passages of great beauty," (Taper 1984, 75) in *Apollo,* Balanchine seems to have found the balance between the classical and the modern.

There were many tributes to Balanchine's St. Petersburg past[12] in this ballet: The use of classical steps and positions in their original form was seen throughout as in the example of the bourrées of the two Muses with their feet in fifth and their arms in a typical classical position. In the final dance of the ballet, the Muses danced combinations reminiscent of Petipa: they did a series of phrases on various pathways across the stage. In the first

combination, the Muses repeatedly performed plié relevé with the leg in arabesque and the arms swinging into a circle formation to the fifth position. Changing direction, they then performed another combination, this one repeated piqué arabesques forward and back with arms in second arabesque. This combination resembled combinations from the Lilac Fairy's variation in the prologue of *Sleeping Beauty*[13] as well as Aurora's variation in the grand pas de deux. Directly following this combination, a third was performed. Mirror images of one another, the Muses moved from upstage directly towards the audience, a path similar to that used by the dancer in *Valse Triste*. Here a third series of the same combination appears, which includes first arabesque followed by double pirouettes, arms fifth. The performance of the series of steps on different paths on the stage is an obvious tribute to the Petipa variation.

Scholl believed that the unison of the Polyhymnia and Calliope was meant as a foil to Terpsichore's pas de deux with Apollo:

> The pas de deux that follows is a lesson in complementary movement, a study of the body's geometric and mechanical possibilities (and a prelude to the extreme examination of interdependent strength and balance in the pas de deux of Balanchine's *Agon* (1957)) Calliope and Polyhymnia return at the end of the pas de deux. Their movements echo many of Terpsichore's gestures, yet their unison repetition suggests a kind of deficiency, a lame recitation of Terpsichore's eloquent speech." (Scholl 1994, 101)

Not only were the movements a recitation of Terpsichore's movements, but the use of elements of classical choreography and the tribute to Petipa made by the two Muses as opposed to the new possibilities demonstrated by Terpsichore also showed her superiority. Their combinations in this section remained classical; Terpsichore's embodied the neo-classical.

Other tributes to his Maryinsky past were scattered throughout the ballet. Directly following the entrance of Muses, the three women stood in a row on the diagonal, bowing to Apollo in a révérence reminiscent of the 17th century court dance Petipa featured in *Sleeping Beauty*. One foot is extended to the front in tendu, the standing leg is in plié, and the arms pass through first position, the upper body leaning slightly forward. This step begins a direct copy of the court bows of earlier centuries, something Balanchine learned as part of the curriculum of Theater School as well as in Petipa's ballets, elements which he later

incorporated in his *Ballet Imperial*. Again, like in other aspects, Balanchine did not stop with the older form, and while performing the bow, the dancers continued the circle of the arms from beyond the demi-second, pulling them completely behind their backs in a form resembling "swan arms." These arms were again repeated by all three dancers when, in a row, feet parallel, they performed a series of plié relevés, alternating arms forward and arms behind them, similar to swan position. It is likely that Balanchine used the arms in this form as an extension of the classical, but the likeness to *Swan Lake*[14], the only classical ballet to use a position where the arms are pulled behind the body, is unmistakable, and fits into the theme of the ballet blanc sought after by Stravinsky. The arms appeared a third time in the pas de deux. Terpsichore lay on Apollo's back while he was kneeling, leaning forward. She balanced on his back, her legs bent and crosses in a position similar to that of the "bluebird" lift from the Bluebird pas de deux in *Sleeping Beauty*. The dancers slowly performed a port de bras similar to swimming: the moves are from arms in first position to an extension to the back, alternating front and back. Apollo did not support Terpsichore with his hands, something Balanchine began to experiment with as early as his first dance, *La Nuit*. Another element from *Sleeping Beauty* was performed by Terpsichore at the end of her variation: she performed a deep cambré to the back, which she executed with fluttering fingers, similar to those of the Nightingale in *Le Chant du Rossignol* and the Canary Fairy in *Sleeping Beauty*. A deep cambré was also seen in *Valse Triste*. These examples clearly show that Balanchine had learned to combine the classical with the modern in *Apollo*.

In many parts of the first section of the ballet, the three Muses danced as a traditional corps de ballet, and in modern productions they are dressed identically and are on an equal level in the choreography, making it impossible for the audience to distinguish between the Muses in the first section. This was not the case, however, in the original production, where Diaghilev dressed the Muses in tutus cut to different lengths. Another section showed tributes to the corps de ballet section in the white act of *Swan Lake*. At one of the most memorable points in this act, the corps stood in a straight row, one dancer directly behind another, arms in fifth position. The position was broken when the dancers in unison open their arms. Describing the music and Apollo's role in this section, Balanchine said that: "Now the three Muses stand again in a close line. The lower strings play the poignant theme with deep strength, and Apollo circles the stage in broad, free leaps as the girls move their arms in rhythm to the music." (Balanchine and Mason 1977, 25) At two points Balanchine

placed the three Muses in a row with their arms in fifth position, but used the classical position and formation and expanded upon it. The first time this position appeared, the dancers performed a series of upper body moves in cannon, arms in fifth leaning to the left, straightening, leaning to the right. Reflecting the cannon in the music as they did in their entrance, the first dancer leaned left, and as she straightened, the second followed her to the left. As the first dancer leaned right, the second straightened, the third leaned left. After completing the first three positions, the first dancer quickly returned to the first position leaning left, and the combination was repeated.[15] Consistent with the uniformity of the Muses at this point in the ballet, the dancers then broke out of the line one after the other, performing a cork screw turn with Apollo, a partnering move Balanchine first used in *La Chatte*.

The mixing of the classical and the modern was also evident in the variations of all three Muses, where classical movements were intermitted with non-classical ones or classical steps which had been transformed. Calliope performs the first variation. In her dance, classical positions are broken by contractions performed by the dancer, and the open mouth is used, particularly in the first section. The line of the dancer was extended by the use of a pointed finger, which was placed in such a way that it not only extended the line of the arm, but complemented the line of the leg. The use of the pointed finger was a theme from Petipa's ballets, another device from the Prologue to *Sleeping Beauty*. Danilova explained that "the so called 'finger variation' is about fate, which pushes you first here, then there, the fingers always pointing." (Danilova 1988, 185) According to Hodson and Archer, "the darkness that plagues Balanchine's bright occasions is rarely embodied in a character, but rather perceived as a presence, usually understood as fate, giving his ballets in this genre a touch of Greek tragedy, whatever their period or pretext." (Hodson and Archer "Fate at the Fetê" 2005) The theme of fate appeared in two of the works he did shortly thereafter, in *Le Bal* (1929) as well as in the "Hand of Fate" pas de deux in the ballet *Cotillon* (1932). The pointed finger was also used in Polyhymnia's variation, but in this dance, it was placed in front of the mouth of the dancer who performs difficult series of jumps and turns without removing it from its position, making it technically much more difficult. In particular, the dancer performed a combination piqué turns landing in arabesque, holding the finger at her mouth the entire time, making the dancer unable to use her arms to hold the balance in the

turn and the landing. This step again demonstrated the radical new direction Balanchine had taken ballet technique.

In Polyhymnia's variation, Balanchine also used the technique of the open mouth, but he reserved it for the very end, his dancer exemplifying Diaghilev's concept of the polished dancer who showed no emotion dancing, but who loses control of herself at the end, and was then embarrassed by her lack of propriety. In the variations of both Calliope and Polyhymnia, the use of the opened mouth was not used to express the deep emotions that it was used to portray in *Valse Triste*. Doubrovska recalled that at the Maryinsky, a ballerina was allowed to "express something of her own and show what she feels." (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 40) But she explained, "Diaghilev generally didn't like too much emotion from a woman on stage, and if Diaghilev decided something, there was no discussion. One day, Boris called me to Diaghilev, who said to me, 'Where do you dance?' 'Here for Diaghilev.' 'Do we agree that this is not a music-hall? Why do you do so much with your face, your eyes? You have to have more dignity.'" (Doubrovska 1982, 6) Doubrovska believed that "Balanchine learned from Diaghilev that being modern is being cool. No feeling." (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 40) This was an example of Diaghilev's sophistication, but it also exemplifies the character of the dancers in *Apollo*. According to Danilova, "*Apollo* doesn't just demand good dancers; it demands goddesses." (Danilova 1988, 100)

7.5 Conclusion: The Final Transformation

This study ends with *Apollo*, but in wider context, *Apollo* is the beginning; this was the first ballet Balanchine included in his own book on ballet because this was where he realized what he had been striving to achieve in the years before. With his first ballet, *La Nuit*, his choreography began a steady progression towards this point. In 1952 Slonimsky wrote that "in the 1920's Soviet Ballet went through all the phases of barefoot naturalism, strident constructivism, unnatural plastic expressionism and erotic orientalism." Taking elements he had learned from Goleizovsky, Duncan and Lopukhov, Balanchine's work exhibited "barefoot naturalism" in *Etude* and *Enigma.* "Strident constructivism" was evident in *Funeral March, La Chatte* and *Apollo,* and many of the elements he learned from the Constructivist theater became vital to his later works, in particular *Serenade* and *Agon*. He experimented with "plastic expressionism" in *Valse Triste,* showing him to be a child of his age. Slonimsky went on the say that "time and reality, as usual, exposed the fallacy of the then prevailing

conceptions," (Taper 1984 57), certainly referring to the triumph of the classical ballet in the Soviet Union. This statement, however, rings true for the triumph of neo-classicism in the West: Balanchine moved beyond the extreme experimentation of the Soviet Avant-garde while working at the Ballets Russes, and there he transformed the ballet by integrating the new innovations into Petipa's classical vocabulary. He incorporated the musicality of Lopukhov's *Dance Symphony* in his interpretation of Stravinsky's music, and extended the use of the Fokine's abstract ballet and Romantic aesthetic. These aspects he combined with the best of the others, purifying them.

This study has demonstrated how Balanchine took the art of ballet from the classical tradition of the Academic Theaters in St. Petersburg through a complete transformation and turned it into something it had not been. He did not simply add a few new steps or create some interesting choreography. Rather, he revolutionized it from the ground up. He did this in three ways: first, he changed the physique and technical capabilities of ballet dancers, the "material" of a choreographer. Secondly, he added steps to the vocabulary of ballet which did not exist before, and radically changing the way pas de deux was danced in both the phrasing of movement and the body contact of the partners. Finally, he incorporated elements from Soviet Constructivist theater into his use of levels and the creation of formation by using the bodies of the dancers.

The role played by the change of the dancers' physique cannot be underestimated. The photographs (pictures 9 and 10) of the same formation by the original cast of *Apollo* and one taking in 1982 one year before his death clearly demonstrate how radical the difference is. Taller, thinner dancers with higher extensions change the line of the dance, not only in Balanchine's work, but also when the classics are performed. Even the same steps in a Petipa pas de deux look completely different on modern ballerinas than they looked on the original dancers. The transformation of dance has been so complete that no dancer would consider dancing even the classics in its "original form;" dancers always use the full extent of their extensions. This change also determines the direction that choreographers after Balanchine have taken; dances are made on the dancers available.

The addition of new steps into the classical vocabulary, in particular in pas de deux has also radically changed the way pas de deux is performed. The overhead lift that he first used in L*a Nuit* became commonplace in the West, but was also a distinguishing feature of

Soviet choreography for decades. These lifts have also long since been incorporated into different versions of Petipa's ballets. Transforming adagios from balances and turns into lyrical combinations flowing into one another like *Poème* and *Apollo* has also become a standard. While rejecting his more extreme experiments like the barefoot dancing in *Etude* and *Enigma,* he never the less maintained an important element from these dances: by increasing the points of contact between the dancers he increased the vocabulary of pas de deux. *La Chatte, La Pastorale,* and *Apollo* all contained innovative partnering moves which became signature steps of neo-classical dance. From several of his earliest dances he also maintained the use of practice clothes as costumes. In later years tunics were replaced by leotards and tights, but the theme remained. In the 1920's it would have been unthinkable for dancers at the Maryinsky to perform in their practice clothes. Today, it is commonplace in every major ballet company in the world.

Finally, it is clear that Balanchine's exposure to Constructivist theater in St. Petersburg radically changed the way he structured his dances. In classical dance, the corps de ballets was limited to geometrical formations, and the dancers rarely had physical contact with one another. The possibility of creating levels was consigned to standing, kneeling, or sitting. Goleizovsky's opened the door to other choreographers when his dancers connected to one another by their hands and feet, and danced on platforms of varying heights. Balanchine took what he had learned from him and perfected it. By having the dancers create formations in the air in *Funeral March,* two dimensional pyramids in *La Chatte,* and the three dimensional formations in *Apollo,* Balanchine clearly showed that levels can be created by the dancers alone. He clearly achieved his goal of creating dances in which the dance was of primary importance. Today, while audiences enjoy ballets with sets and costumes, it is commonplace for abstract ballets with simple costumes to be performed, and their artistic value is not questioned. This was not the case in 1928, and the change can be unquestionable attributed to a large extent to Balanchine's influence on dance.

The culmination of the combination of the classical with the modern is seen in *Apollo*. With this ballet, Balanchine had completed his transformation of the art. Throughout his life he continued to refine and purify his work, keeping those things that he considered the best and most important and removing the superfluous. His decision to cut down the final version of *Apollo* in 1979, only a few years before his death in 1983, is a clear demonstration

of this. In the end, throughout his long career, he brought ballet into the 20th century and enabled it to gain its rightful place alongside the other arts.

Appendix I

Summary of George Balanchine's Early Choreography (1920-1928)

La Nuit/Night/Romance (1920)

Music: Anton Rubinstein. Original accompaniment: a piano and a violin. (Slonimsky 1991, 63)

First Performance: 1920 in St. Petersburg for the annual school performance of Theater School. (Danilova 1988, 44)

Original Cast: Olga Mungalova and Peter Gusev. (Slonimsky 1991, 54)

Other Casts and Performances: *Slonimsky* says that it continued to be performed for decades in the Soviet Union. (Slonimsky 1991, 54) *Kostrovitskaya* says that Gusev and Mungalova performed it on various stages in St. Petersburg. (Slonimsky 1991, 63)

Geva says she performed the dance with Balanchine. (Geva 1976, 11) *Choreography by George Balanchine: A Catalogue of Works* says that this was performed by the Soviet Dancers as well as being "performed for many years in the Soviet Union after Balanchine's departure." (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 53)

Costumes: *Kostrovitskaya*: "…In 1921 there were still few who appeared onstage in tunics. Dancing on pointe was done only in tutus. The head was adorned with diadems, artificial flowers, and various tinsel. Mungalova wore a light bright tunic and instead of the headdress a narrow ribbon was tied freely around her blond curls." (Slonimsky 1991, 63)

Choreographic Details from Witnesses: *Danilova*: The story was about "a young girl and young boy sort of courting." (Danilova 1978-1979) "It was the first sexy ballet…talking in vulgar language—that we saw and this awakened let's say first emotions, really emotional ballet; emotions in form of dancing, not in form of mime…which was new to all of us." (Danilova 1978-1979)

Kostrovitskaya: "We were accustomed to seeing in the former Maryinsky Theater and in the school the usual adagio développés, traditional turns from fourth position which the ballerina performed with support from her partner. Before the turns, there would be fear on her face, and a relieved smile at the conclusion. There was none of that here. Rubenstein's *Night*, in Balanchine's dance, was a lyrical duet of restrained passion-half poses, half arabesques…tender passages of adagio without the conventional movements of legs raised on the principle of 'the higher the better.' Of course, later on in various concert pieces, artists performed love duets called adagios, with disregard for the traditions of Petipa. But then, and especially in the school, this was completely new." (Slonimsky 1991, 63)

Gusev claims that this dance was a direct imitation of the early Goleizovsky. (Slonimsky 1991, 67)

-Arabesque balance:

Balanchine: "I was in trouble…because I made a pas de deux in which I lay on the floor and the girl leaned over in an arabesque and touched me with her lips. That was thought indecent and at age 15, I was nearly thrown out." (Joseph 2002, 42)

Geva: "Balanchine was standing on one knee and I was bent forward in a very high arabesque. My arms were back and I held my mouth to his mouth in a kiss and that's were the balance was." This arm position in arabesque is also a direct copy of the Swan Queen in *Swan Lake*. (Geva 1976) "Balanchine was on his knees, and I had to hold myself in an arabesque just on my mouth or lose my balance. I didn't hold it long, believe me. That's an example of erotic dance that Balanchine could produce-he always had a little bit or eroticism everywhere in his work." (Geva 1991, 12)

-Final Pose-High lift over the head:

Danilova: "At the end, young male dancer pulls girl dancer on arabesque with straight arm over his head. It was sensational; we never saw anything like it." (Danilova 1980, 9) "The boy conquers the girl: he lifted her in arabesque and held her with a straight arm overhead, then carried her off into the wings-so she was his!" (Danilova 1988, 44) "It was shocking, yes, that the boy sort of succeeded in taking the girl. "(Danilova 1978-1979)

Mungalova: "For the first time, acrobatic lifts appeared in our school." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 74)

Other Aspects of This Work: *Kostrovitskaya* recalls that the process created quite an uproar at the Theater School, since Balanchine was doing the choreography in secret, behind closed doors guarded by two students. (Slonimsky 1991, 63)

Geva says that Balanchine finished the choreography in two weeks time. (Geva 1976)

Gusev says that by today's standards the ballet would be considered "chaste." (Slonimsky 1991, 67)

Balanchine: "As I remember it today…it would be perfectly suitable for a presentation in a young ladies' seminary." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 74)

Danilova: The directress of the school thought that Balanchine should be expelled for such a daring number. (Danilova 1978-1979)

Slonimsky reports a different reaction: despite the upset over *La Nuit*, many began to see Balanchine's potential as a choreographer and people began to speak of him as a prospective ballet master. (Slonimsky 1991, 54)

Poème (1921)

Music: Zdenek Fibich.

Original Performance: Concert at Theater School, St. Petersburg 1921.

Original Cast: George Balanchine and Alexandra Danilova.

Other Performances and Casts: Danilova and Mikhail Dudko danced it at Donon Restaurant in 1923. (Danilova 1978-1979, Simmonds et. al. 1983, 55) Soviet dance historian Vera Krasovskaya performed it in a school concert in 1932. (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 55)

Costumes: *Kostrovitskaya*: Danilova was "irreproachably formed…with her finely molded severe features framed in golden hair, wearing a transparent bright blue tunic." She was the "embodiment of pure, cold beauty." (Slonimsky 1991, 63)

Choreographic Details from Witnesses: *Kostrovitskaya*: "Balanchine …lifted Danilova in the classic arabesque and lowered her softly on pointe. The adagio began but again without the usual turns and technical tricks (although Danilova had many opportunities to do them.) Sometimes the performers were accompanied without violin only by a piano, but the lines of the dance were so meticulous that one could always imagine the violin's presence anyway. At the end of *Poème*, Balanchine carried Danilova off, lifting her high in an arabesque with his arms extended. One had the impression that she herself, with out a partner's support , was gliding through the air away from the audience to finish 'singing' her dance somewhere far, far away. The *Poème* gave rise to many imitations." (Slonimsky 1991, 63-64)

Valse Triste (1922)

Music: Jean Sibelius.

Original Performance: 1922 at Sestroretsk, near St. Petersburg. (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 57)

Original Cast: Lydia Ivanova.

Costume: Ivanova had a "dark red tunic, deep blue scarf and long black hair falling over her shoulders." (Hodson and Archer 2003, 1)

Other Performances and Casts: Tamara Geva and Alexandra Danilova in Germany and London in 1924. As late as 1976, *Slonimsky* wrote that the dance had "lasted to this present day in the performances of various female dancers." (Slonimsky 1991, 66) The *Catalogue* on the website of the Balanchine Foundation states that "the solo was taught in class at the Vaganova Academy at least as late as 1990." The ballet was reconstructed by Hodson and Archer for the Finnish National Ballet in 2004.

Choreographic Details from Witnesses: *Cherepnin*: "In one small composition…there appeared two devises of great expressiveness…the female dancer, developing her feelings of horror and moving in a kind of emotional crescendo in a straight line from the rear of the stage to the footlight, unexpectedly, at the last instance of high intensity, turns her back to the audience in a quick motion and becomes frozen for a moment. This fermata makes an enormous impression…In the same piece the final emotional intensity is conveyed superbly with a completely new device-the silent scream of a widely opened mouth…" (Slonimsky 1991, 66)

Geva: "I was a 'somnambulist' dressed in a tuniclike dress down to the knees. That dance frightened the audience because I moved forward towards the very edge of the proscenium as though I were blind and were about to go right off into the pit." (Geva 1991, 13)

Choreographic Details from other Sources: A detailed choreographic description of this dance in English can be found in "The Sad Twist of Valse Triste: Balanchine's Tragic Solo Reconstructed" by Hodson and Archer. Their reconstruction of this dance was based largely based on the firsthand accounts of Slonimsky, Mikhailov, and Cherepnin. (Hodson and Archer 2003, 1)

Other Aspects of this Work: This ballet was choreographed either by Balanchine and Ivanova together or with Balanchine directing Ivanova. (Slonimsky 1991, 66) Balanchine and Ivanova were inspired by Duncan's performance of the Sixth Symphony of Tchaikovsky which they had seen with other members of the Young Ballet. It is meant to be Isadora Duncan on pointe, although Balanchine used it sparingly in this dance. (Hodson and Archer 2003, 1)

One extant photograph of Ivanova showed her in this ballet.

Orientalia (1922-1923)

Music: César Cui.

Original Performance: 1922 or 1923 in St. Petersburg.

Original Cast: Nina Mlodzinskaya and George Balanchine. (Slonimsky 1991, 53)

Other Performances and Casts: Tamara Geva and George Balanchine. This dance was performed by the Soviet Dancers in Germany.

Choreographic Details from Witness: *Geva*: "George played a blind beggar in the street, as old man with a bear, and I was either his daughter or his dancing girl. He rolled out a little carpet, sat down, and mimed playing a string instrument, and I danced on the rug. When we finished the dance, we packed everything up and went away." (Geva 1991, 13)

Slonimsky: "The old man sat on the floor with his legs crossed in oriental fashion and 'spoke' to the dancer with sounds from the tambourine as if prompting her movements." (Slonimsky 1991, 53)

Funeral March/Marche Funèbre (1923)

Music: Frédéric Chopin.

Original Performance: June 1, 1923 at the Duma Auditorium in St. Petersburg by the Young Ballet. (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 61)

Original Cast: Olga Mungalova, Tamara Geva, Alexandra Danilova, (Slonimsky 1991, 64) ensemble including Nina Stukolkina and Vera Kostrovitskaya.

Other Performances and Casts: Taught to five or six members of the Ballets Russes in London including Ninette de Valois (De Valois 1991, 86), but was never performed on stage in Western Europe.

Costumes: *Kostrovitskaya* says that they sewed their own costumes from old calico they had found at home. The "short, grey, close-fitting, sleeveless dresses had a black and silver pattern. The plain gray caps with small discs on the sides of the ears were also embroidered in black and silver. The usual ballet tights and slippers completed the costume" (Slonimsky 1991, 65).

Danilova describes that they "all had tunics, like they have more or less now with short skirts." (Danilova 1978-1979) In another account she described the headpieces they wore as "cups." (Danilova 1972) She also says that "we wore caps and our hair was under inside of caps which really unites every dancer, because you couldn't see different color of hair." (Danilova 1978-1979) "We looked like amazons." (Danilova 1978-1979)

Choreographic Details from Witnesses: *Geva* says that the dancers were mourners, the dead themselves, or spirits and that they built a "design of compromising grief to the dark down beat, changing from the mourners into the dead, into whirling spirits, our bodies twisting into arches and crosses." (Geva 1984, 300)

Danilova: States that they were carried in certain groups: "Instead of making groups on the floor, it was groups in the air." (Danilova 1978-1979)

Bruni: "The cortege came onto the stage through the audience under a spotlight in the dark. The groupings were composed in a very interesting, individual manner." (Slonimsky 1991, 65)

Kostrovitskaya gives a detailed description of this dance in her accounts of the repertory of the Young Ballet in Slonimsky's essay, "Balanchine: the Early Years." (Slonimsky 1991, 64-66)

Other Aspects of this Work:

-The Circular Stage

Kostrovitskaya explains "One of our concerts took place in the building of the Institute of the Living Word on the square of the former Alexandrinsky Theater. Seats for the audience were arranged in an amphitheater, as in the circus; the stage was a semicircle. With this in mind, Balanchine choreographed the Chopin *Funeral March* for a circular stage, but in such a way that it could be performed, if necessary, on an ordinary stage with little modification." (Slonimsky 1991, 64)

Geva recalls that, at that time, Balanchine "contended that dancing, like sculpture, should be complete and interesting to view from all four sides." (Geva 1984, 300)

-The Constructivist Influence

Slonimsky explains that "the slightest opportunity was taken to lay a bridge between the audience and the stage, emphasizing the unity of what was being performed and what had been experienced, the unity of spirit between the audience and the stage heroes. This explains the passage of the dancers followed by light through the audience and the modeling of sculptural groups as if to generalize individual experience. In this respect, Meyerhold was the teacher of everyone-including Balanchine." (Slonimsky 1991, 65-66)

Two extant photographs show the dancers Stukolkina and Kostrovitskaya in costumes and poses described by Kostrovitskaya in her description of this dance in Slonimsky's essay.

Enigma (1923)

Music: Anton Arensky.

Original Performance: 1923 in St. Petersburg.

Original Cast: Lydia Ivanova and George Balanchine.

Other Performances and Casts: Tamara Geva and George Balanchine in St. Petersburg at the Maryinsky (Geva 1984, 299) and the Donon Restaurant. (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 63) Part of the repertory of the Soviet Dancers in Germany and London. Performed at least three times in Monte Carlo by the Ballets Russes. (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 63)

Costumes: *Geva:* "Danced barefoot wearing chiffon tunics covering our torsos." (Geva 1984, 298)

Choreographic Details from Witnesses: *Geva* compares this dance to Isadora Duncan, most likely because of the costumes and bare feet. However, she adds that "it required real technique." (Geva 1991, 12)

Gusev: "I recall that in this piece for the first time a woman arched into a 'bridge'. This shocked people but was accepted. But when her partner leaped across the 'bridge', making a grand jeté with his bent leg, this produced general indignation and protest. Even Lopukhov told us that such a stunt was coarse and served no purpose…we told Balanchine to listen to the criticism and remove the jump, but he stubbornly continued to jump all he wanted." (Slonimsky 1991, 67)

Other Aspects of this Work: *Enigma* was performed in the Soviet Union up until the 1930's. (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 63)

Balanchine and Geva performed for Diaghilev at their audition for the Ballets Russes. (Simmons et. al. 1983, 32)

An extant photograph of Balanchine and Geva, with Geva laying up side down over Balanchine's shoulder may be this dance or *Étude*.

The Twelve/Chorus Reading (1923)

Music: Done to a chorus recitation of Vsevolodsky-Gerngross' dramatic interpretation of Alexander Blok's poem, *The Twelve* (1918). (Souritz 1990 "The Young Balanchine in Russia," 68) The *Catalogue* says that it was done to "*The Twelve* and other poems." (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 64) *Geva* recalls that the chorus composed of fifty voices "all spoke in rhythm in different keys, overlapping, stopping." (Geva 1976)

Original Performance: 1923 at the Duma Auditorium in St. Petersburg by the Young Ballet.

Original Cast: Ten or twelve dancers. (Geva 1976, Simmonds et. al. 1983, 64)

Other Casts and Performances: Performed only once.

Costumes: National costumes.

Choreographic Details from Witnesses: *Geva*: "It was George's variation on a Russian square dance done to a boldly changing rhythm that at times approached syncopation."(Geva 1984, 300)

Stukolkina: "What we did was not pantomime, illustrating the text, but a dance. The dance had movements very much like Russian folkdances. The rhythm was difficult to grasp. Before performing it to Blok's text, we had many rehearsals with Balanchivadze counting for us." (Stukolkina 1991, 80) "I recall two group works I took part in, *Marche Funèbre* to Chopin and *The Twelve*. We were asymmetrically moving groups with no real soloists; at times one dancer detached from the group and performed a combination of movements, as if pronouncing a 'sentence,' then disappearing into the group. The choreography was fluid and strictly subordinated to the music, one pattern running into the other with strict musical and choreographic logic." (Stukolkina 1991, 80)

Kostrovitskaya says that they were representing in movement what was being chanted by the chorus. (Souritz 1990 "The Young Balanchine in Russia," 68)

Other Aspects of this work: Souritz says that Vsevolodsky-Gerngross' was obsessed "with the idea of an amphitheater for performance, a circular stage surrounded on all sides by seats." Both *Funeral March* and *The Twelve* were performed on his round stage. (Souritz 1990 "The Young Balanchine in Russia," 68)

Étude (1923)

Music: Alexander Scriabin.

Original Performance: 1923 in St. Petersburg.

Original Cast: Tamara Geva and George Balanchine.

Other Performances and Casts: The *Catalogue* says that this dance was probably performed by Balanchine and Geva as an audition piece for Diaghilev in Paris. The Ballets Russes also presented it matinee performances in Monte Carlo. (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 65)

Costumes: Souritz says that an extant photograph of Geva and Balanchine shows *Étude*, (Souritz 1990 "The Young Balanchine in Russia," 69) both dancers wore similar short tunics.

Other Aspects of this Work: This dance seems to have many similarities with *Enigma*.

Le Chant du Rossignol/The Song of the Nightingale (1925)

Music: Igor Stravinsky.

Original Performance: 1925 in Paris by the Ballets Russes.

Original Cast: Nightingale: Alicia Markova, Death: Felia Doubrovska, Mechanical Nightingale: George Balanchine and ensemble.

Other Performances and Casts: Part of the repertory of the Ballets Russes. There was no alternate cast and no understudies. On one occasion Balanchine danced the role of the Nightingale when Markova was unable to perform. This ballet was reconstructed by Hodson and Archer for Les Ballets de Monte Carlo in 2000.

Costumes: *Geva*: "Markova was all in long white tights from top to bottom, sitting in a cage. She was very awkward at the time. She was all legs and arms, terribly skinny. I always

wondered, she didn't look to me like a Rossignol, she looked more like some sort of chick that had been plucked." (Geva 1976)

Markova says she wore "all over white silk tights, with large diamond bracelets on my ankles, and my arms, my wrists, and with a little white chiffon bonnet rimmed with white osprey. It was all very modern, something to do with the Chinese legend of white being associated with death…That was perfect for the Paris opening, because nobody had any objections to a female appearing on-stage in all-over tights. But two years later, for the London première at Prince's Theater, suddenly the manager was in a panic because of Lord Chamberlain. At that time it wasn't permitted to appear like that…That was when he (Matisse) designed those little white chiffon trousers to go over the tights, studded with rhinestone, and this little tunic that went over that also to make me decent. But today, to think about these things! It was very strange." (Drummond 1997, 251)

Doubrovska's costume "consisted of body tights in a demonic shade of red, with face painted to match, over which Matisse personally traced skeletal lines." (Huckenpahler 1983, 388) Doubrovska said it was one of the first times she wore just tights, no tutu. (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 40) She also wore a necklace of skulls. (Hodson and Archer 1999/2000, 9)

Choreographic Details from Witnesses: *Markova*: "Rossignol was filled with invention that have become commonplace today, because subsequent choreographers have stolen them from George. George even stole from himself." (Markova 1991, 91)

Geva said that he used a "hard-edged gymnastic style" in this ballet. (Hodson and Archer 1999/2000, 9) She describes her role as a Lady in Waiting as "rather cumbersome the whole thing. Long, floating around and what not." (Geva 1976)

Danilova: The Nightingale's solo: "Balanchine introduced chaîné turns with the arms open, then closed, then open again-no one had ever seen that before." (Danilova 1988, 72)

Choreographic Details from other Sources: "Balanchine demanded double sauts de basques…fouettés in which the working leg whips around in the back, and penché arabesques on pointe, performed in syncopation with the music." (Reynolds 1995, 18)

"The Nightingale 'sings' with fluttering fingers (somewhat in the manner of the Songbird Fairy), but with hands flat and angular arms, crossed in front of her chest. She delicately sails around in a front attitude, but with the working toe touching the opposite hand. In the reverse of this turn, the knee is directed toward the floor, this time with the toe reaching for the other hand, with the arm crooked backward over the shoulder. The Nightingale walks on pointe with knees and insteps forward. Her dainty but ground-hugging crouches would strain the thighs of any dancer." (Reynolds 1995, 18)

"The violence of the pas de deux shocked the critics. André Levinson recoiled as Death 'put her foot on the spine of the frail and white Nightingale,' but was won over by what he deemed a new classicism in this Balanchine duet (*Comoedia,* 22 June 1925)." (Hodson and Archer 1999/2000, 9)

Other Aspects of this Work: Non-traditional use of space: "Vsevolod Meyerhold presented an avant-garde production at the Maryinsky Theater in 1918. Meyerhold seated singers on

benches and surrounded them with dancers, emphasizing the horizontal axis of the stage…it was probably Meyerhold's *mise-en-scène* that showed Balanchine how to exploit the Emperor's static central placement in Matisse's décor. Ballet designers usually seat monarchs to the side so that dancers have full use of the diagonals. But Matisse put his throne and dais at the top, dead center, establishing two polarized points of reference: the Emperor upstage and the public downstage. Balanchine devised his dances as a double mirror image, reversing movements on either side of the perpendicular and addressing it to both the fictional audience, the Emperor, and the real ones beyond the footlights." (Hodson and Archer 1999/2000, 8)

The process of the reconstruction of this work is recorded in the documentary film *Four Emperors and a Nightingale*. In addition, the film *Alicia Markova Recreating Excerpts from Le Chant du Rossignol* gives many choreographic details to the role of the Nightingale.

Barabau (1925)

Music: Music and book by Vittorio Rieti.

Original Performance: 1925 in London by the Ballets Russes.

Original Cast: Leon Woizikowski, Serge Lifar, Alice Nikitina, Alexandra Danilova, Tamara Geva. *Geva*: "we all danced in *Barabau*." (Geva 1976)

Other Performances and Casts: Lydia Sokolova joined in later Ballets Russes performances.

Costumes: *Sokolova*: "It was not long before I took over the role. I realized I must do something to make it a success. The costume was a blouse and skirt, red stockings, black boots and an upturned straw hat. I got a switch of false hair and pinned it on top of my head, then planted the hat on top of that. Next I stuck a piece of wax on the end of my nose, raised my eyebrows and reddened my lower lip only. I was rewarded by a burst of spontaneous laughter as I came onto the stage-the first time that such a thing had happened to me, and it was a wonderful experience." (Sokolova 1989, 240)

Choreographic Details from Witnesses: *Sokolova*: "A chorus of mournful-looking citizens in black bowler hats and gloves who popped up from behind a fence, and sang a deadpan commentary on the action." (Sokolova 1989, 240) Woizikowski was "in his element, with long black moustaches, eating imaginary spaghetti, swilling it down with Chianti straight from the flask, doing amazing tricks and dancing on top of an enormous barrel." (Sokolova 1989, 239-240)

Geva: "It looked like a dancing Charlie Chaplin and was very funny. George invented all sorts of incredible things, idiotic ones. The audience roared, just roared throughout." (Geva 1976)

Danilova: It "was the first Balanchine ballet I did for Diaghilev. It was done on the Italian song. It was funny. We all been padded with bosoms and derrières. The choir stood behind

the wooden fence. Maybe twelve, sixteen people in funny hats. And they be singing and we be dancing. Diaghilev did it, I think, as a little bit of a tribute to Monte Carlo. It was gay and Italian, with eating and drinking." (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 25)

Choreographic Details from Other Sources: Libretto: "…a kind of contemporary commedia dell'arte piece in which a wily peasant (Leon Woizikowski) outwits a troop of rapacious soldiers, led by Lifar, who are billeted on his farm, by playing dead. There were also flirtatious episodes between the military and the women of the village, with the danseurs disguised with false noses and padded posteriors, performing the grotesque antics devised by Balanchine and generally entering into the spirit of this vulgar, knockabout farce with appropriate gusto." (Vaughan 1979, 65)

Other Aspects of this Work: Kochno described this work as "ballet with chorus of singers," with music Diaghilev commissioned Italian composer Vittorio Rieti to write specifically for a ballet. (Kochno 1970, 230)

La Pastorale (1926)

Music: Georges Auric, book by Boris Kochno.

Original Performance: 1926 in Paris by the Ballets Russes.

Original Cast: Star: Felia Doubrovska, Telegraph Boy: Serge Lifar, His Fiancée: Tamara Geva, ensemble.

Other Performances and Casts: In the repertory of the Ballets Russes. Alexandra Danilova took over Geva's role when she left the company in 1927.

Choreographic Details from Witness: *Sokolova*: The ballet showed "Doubrovska…wearing a short, fringed skirt and a long velvet train, extending her elegant white legs, pointing her lovely arched feet, being followed about by a silly little camera on a tripod and interrupted by Lifar riding a bicycle." (Sokolova 1989, 248)

Danilova: "It was a perfect role for Doubrovska because she had such long, long legs and arms-though very beautiful, she looked different from everybody else, almost freakish. And Balanchine, in his choreography for her, used to exaggerate her uniqueness. (Later, in *The Prodigal Son*, he made her into the Siren who devours the young man and had her wear a very high hat to make her appear even taller)." (Danilova 1988, 78)

-Promenade in arabesque

Doubrovska: "The adagio for Lifar and me was new and very difficult. Lifar turns me by the knee while I am standing on one foot with my other leg in very high arabesque. It is the same movement that you see now in *Serenade*, only more difficult because now there is a long tutu, and in *La Pastorale* I have a very short dress so the audience sees the whole movement." (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 42) She recalls that she "had to uphold my body myself." (Doubrovska 1975)

Danilova says that at the time this move was considered "daring." (Danilova 1978-1979)

Choreographic Details from Other Sources: "Classicism was the base, but it frequently culminated in positions and movements reminiscent of the musical stage or athletic field. In the principal pas de deux Doubrovska was given a series of développés, not to be performed in the ordinary manner, but passed over the head of her partner as if to affirm her confident glamour." (Huckenpahler 1983, 389)

Other Aspects of this Work: This ballet was, by many accounts, not successful. Kochno, who wrote the scenario for the ballet, admitted that "the action was confused, and the plot, based on antic situations that arise between some screen actors and villagers acting as extras in a film being shot outdoors, was incomprehensible to the audience." He added that "despite many happy inspirations in the solo dances, Balanchine's choreography lacked substance." (Kochno 1970, 238) Buckle said that Diaghilev liked *La Pastorale* and kept it in the repertory until 1929, despite the bad reviews it received in England. Balanchine was unaware of the critiques: "I was living in a (fool's) paradise…if I had known at the time language I should have committed suicide. But I can judge for myself. If I don't like what I do, I throw it away." (Buckle 1988, 38-39) Sokolova said that this ballet "had no importance." (Sokolova 1989, 248)

Jack in the Box (1926)

Music: Eric Satie.

Original Performance: 1926 in Paris by the Ballets Russes.

Original Cast: Jack in the Box: Stanislas Idzikowsky, Black Dancer: Alexandra Danilova, ensemble.

Other Performances and Casts: Sokolova said that the ballet was short and had few performances. (Sokolova 1989, 248)

Choreographic Details from Witnesses: *Danilova*: "It was a very small ballet and it was for Idzikowski and myself and he was Jack in the Box, so the box opens and he jumps out, and then the box opens and I jump out…You know it was more circus. It sort of left people a little bit empty. The curtain opens very fast. The two women,…two sides different, dance. Then they open this box and we jump out and we do pas de deux and then get in the box again…that was it." (Danilova 1978-1979) She also recalls that she "was lying on my back, back to back doing like can-can, legs up and he was sort of walking." (Danilova 1978-1979)

Other Aspects of this Work: Three piano pieces by Eric Satie entitled *Jack in the Box* were discovered after his death and were orchestrated and used by Diaghilev as the score to the ballet. (Kochno 1970, 243) Danilova says that this ballet "was nothing-nothing very important I would say." (Danilova 1978-1979)

The Triumph of Neptune/Le Triomphe de Neptune (1926)

Music: Lord Berners, book by Sacheverell Sitwell.

Original Performance: 1926 in London by the Ballets Russes.

Original Cast: Alexandra Danilova, Serge Lifar and ensemble.

Other Performances and Casts: In the repertory of the Ballets Russes.

Costumes: The sets the costumes were detailed reproductions of the costumes worn in the 19th century Juvenile Theater in London, but were "jumbled with Diaghilevian whimsy: a goddess was clad in a spangled tunic, a Glengarry, tartan garters, and red shoes, and the fairy queen danced with her sailor in a wide dress with trousers underneath topped by a cocked straw boater." (Ricco 1977, 84)

Danilova: It was a "flying ballet, lots of spangles; it was very, very fancy. All our costumes were based on gravures…Actually it was very fast and interesting; people liked that." (Danilova 1978-1979) She recalls her own costume: "in the last act I changed. I did a variation and then I went to the wings and put my trousers on and did a sailor's dance." (Danilova 1978-1979)

Geva describes the costume worn by her and Sokolova for the role of Britannia: "I wore a suit of armor that weighed something like 75 pounds made out of very tiny mirrors. I had only one number and one great tableau. The number I did was in front of the curtain, separate, a solo. It was a jig. And to dance jig with a thing like that hanging on your shoulders is pretty tough. I had bruises all over me." (Geva 1976)

Beaumont says that this was a "sparkling tunic of the period which consisted of innumerable pieces of cut glass."(Beaumont 1956, 972)

Choreographic Details from Witnesses: *Danilova:* Balanchine used the same lift he had invented in *La Nuit*, "Lifar lifted me in arabesque up over his head, on a straight arm." (Danilova 1988, 87) She describes her last number: "I was on pointe but before the last number I put shoes and there I always out danced Lifar…he could never get some movements as fast as I could." (Danilova 1978-1979) She describes that "…it seemed very up-to-the-minute, not really old-fashioned. The positions were classical as in Petipa, but the steps were speeded up, faster than they would have been if Petipa had choreographed them. A port de bras that in Petipa would take two measures, Balanchine did in one measure. In Petipa's ballets, you might have a balance on two legs. Balanchine had me stand for one moment on both legs, then lift one leg and balance on the other. So it was a little more interesting that traditional classical choreography. It was also a more conscientious interpretation of the score than Petipa's choreography. Balanchine's steps had more detailed relationship to the music." (Danilova 1988, 88)

Sokolova: "Somebody had that idea of hoisting me up in the air above a big statue of Neptune, which occupied the centre of the stage. I was to rise straight up behind Neptune and have a spotlight turned on me." (Sokolova 1989, 253)

Henry: "Victorian figures moving demurely and its shimmering fairies recalling the old time tinsel pictures, also the delicate grace of the scene presenting the snow, with all the appeal of pantomime transformation scenes, in is dainty snowflake fairies, its gallantly sentimental prince and princess and, echo childhood's Christmas enchantments, its flying fays on wires." (Henry 1926, 202)

Choreographic Details from other Sources: *Beaumont* criticizes: "The actual dancing in these scenes lost something owing to the jerky arm movements devised by the choreographer and the angular position of the arms above the had, a position copied from some of the prints of fairies, which Balanchine might have taken for authentic pose of the period instead of being merely the result of faulty drawing." (Beaumont 1956, 971-972) He also describes "'the Frozen Wood' which gave opportunities for dances in the tradition of the classical ballet" and said there was a "lovely flying ballet." (Beaumont 1956, 971) In addition, he described, a hornpipe, saying it was "so precisely phrased and rendered with such spirit that it provoked the most enthusiastic applause." (Beaumont 1956, 972)

Balanchine performed a "wonderful Negro dance." (Beaumont 1956, 972)This dance was also described as being "excellently executed" (Henry 1926, 202) and was, according to Beaumont, a "a dance full of subtly contrasted rhythms, strutting walks, mincing steps, and surging backward bendings of the body, borrowed from the cake-walk…a paradoxical blend of pretended nervous apprehension and blustering confidence." (Buckle 1988, 40)

Other Aspects of this Work: Diaghilev drew the ideas for the English pantomime from the "penny plain and twopence coloured" sheets of the Juvenile Drama, which Diaghilev purchased from Pollock's historic shop in Hoxton. (Beaumont 1956 971)

Geva describes the libretto as a "very silly scenario" (Geva 1976)

A review of the original production details the action: "In *the Triumph of Neptune*, which was produced at the Lyceum Theater, they gave us a ballet version of the English pantomime *circa* 1855…the new ballet is spectacular. Round a selection of 12 old scenic designs, which have been faithfully reproduced, Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell has constructed a story about a sailor and a journalist who go off on a voyage to fairyland. The voyage…is subsidized by two rival newspapers. Unfortunately the journalist is sawn in two by ogres (and no box conceals his bisection from the horrified audience) and the sailor finds himself cut off from communication with the world of reality. However he settles down with the Fairy Queen, while the girl he left behind him consoles herself with a 'dandy'…So the drama ends splendidly with a 'Grand Transformation Scene,' 'The Triumph of Neptune.'" (Author unknown)

Sokolova recalled that the ballet was too long and that some scenes were cut after the first performance. (Sokolova 1989, 253) *Beaumont* said that a scene with ogres disappeared because it was not successful. (Beaumont 1956, 972)

Grotesque Espanol (1927)

Music: Isaac Albéniz.

Original Performance: 1927 in New York by Balieff's Chauve-Souris.

Original Cast: Tamara Geva.

Other Performances and Casts: Choreographed for specifically for Geva for this tour of the Chauve-Souris.

Costumes: Geva was "garbed in a costume that is at once hideous, unbecoming, fascinating and exactly right." (Martin 1927)

Choreographic Details from Witnesses: *Geva*: The dances were "carefully thought out to sneak up on the audience gradually, not to scare them with this new kind of dancing…They were all technically difficult, and they all departed from the expected form." (Geva 1984, 352) She says that "he choreographed a takeoff on a bullfight… It had a tragic quality, and an unexpected development of movements." (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 33)
Martin: "The actual choreography defies description; its like has never been seen on land or sea, but the fire is grotesquely that of Spain. Conceived though it is in the spirit of cartoon, its comment transcends its mood and lifts it into a significant art form. There is…something more than buffoonery in the moment when she halts the swing of the hips and the undulations of the torso, and rising to more than her full height, solemnly crosses herself (in the Russian fashion, by the way) with a an impious religiosity, only to resume immediately her blatant seductiveness." (Martin 1927)

Other Aspects of this Work: A photograph accompanies the New York Times article of these performances. The name of the dance is not given, but since Geva is holding her arms in a variation on classical Spanish fourth position, it is most likely *Grotesque Espanol*.

This dance and *Sarcasm,* both performed in the same program, were the first of Balanchine's ballets to be performed in America and the first of his dances seen by Lincoln Kirstein. (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 83)

Sarcasm (1927)

Music: Sergei Prokofiev.

Original Performance: 1927 in New York by Balieff's Chauve-Souris.

Original Cast: Tamara Geva.

Other Performances and Casts: Choreographed for Geva for this tour of Chauve-Souris.

Costumes: Martin describes that this dance is "in a setting of modernistic absurdity and a costume of the same tone…" (Martin 1927)

Choreographic Details from Witness: *Geva*: Like *Grotesque Espanol,* this dance was "carefully thought out to sneak up on the audience gradually, not to scare them with this new kind of dancing…They were all technically difficult, and they all departed from the expected form." (Geva 1984, 352)

Sarcasm was a "virtuoso abstraction." (Geva 1984, 352)

Martin: This dance was "wild and weird and novel, and even though it seems to be nothing more than a clever dancer having a bit of fun out of her mat exercises, its comment is biting and its finish exquisite." (Martin 1927)

Other Aspects of this Work: *Geva* also described it as "very outrageous in 1927." (Tracy and De Lano 1984, 33)

Like *Grotesque Espanol*, this was one of the first of Balanchine's ballets performed in America and the first one's seen by Lincoln Kirstein. (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 83)

La Chatte/The Cat (1927)

Music: Henri Sauguet, assisted by Vittorio Rieti, book by Boris Kochno after one of Aesop's fable.

Original Performance: 1927 in Monte Carlo by the Ballets Russes.

Original Cast: The Cat: Olga Spessivtseva, The Young Man: Serge Lifar, ensemble of six men.

Other Performances and Casts: In the repertory of the Ballets Russes. Spessivtseva performed the role only once, and it was later alternated between Alice Nikitina and Alicia Markova. The ballet was reconstructed by Hodson and Archer for Les Grands Ballets Canadiens in 1991.

Costumes and Sets: The cat wore a tutu with a layer of plastic on the top and she wore a plastic hat shaped like cat ears. The man's costume, as well as the costumes worn by the all male corps de ballets, did not contain plastic, but still maintained a space quality about them. The man's costume effectively showed off Lifar's beautiful physique. Photographs show that Markova's tutu did not have plastic on it.

Choreographic Details from Witnesses: *Markova*: "I had noticed that they had complained so much about the floor, because it was black, American cloth, terribly slippery in certain areas. And other areas, because of the very modern design, were like cotton, two surfaces, and I figured out what was causing the accidents. So when I took over, Balanchine put in the most difficult things, adding to what he had already choreographed…I had to

solve this problem somehow, with this slippery floor, because otherwise I wasn't going to be able to do all these double turns in the air that Balanchine had given to me, and all those pirouettes on pointe which he had added. So I suddenly remembered when I danced on a ballroom floor, I used to have rubbers put on my ballet shoes…And that was the solution to the problem for me." (Drummond 1997, 253) She describes her version of the variation: "with me he was able to give me syncopated things, that first variation, musically—even when I tried now for the reconstruction to help them, people can't do the speed…" (Markova 1993)

Lifar: "I danced with my legs and with my head. It was a very athletic role, full of poses and *plastique*, not at all classical. That ballet offered the first modern virtuosity; there was a corps of six men who moved like horses and at the end of my variation, I lay on the stage like a mummy, stretched out stiff on my side and holding my head off the ground." (Lifar 1982, 26)

-cork screw turn

Sokolova: "The Cat at one moment did *pirouettes* on her left point, supported by a finger above her head, and as she spun round she sank in a deep *plié* to the ground, still remaining on the tip of her left toe." (Sokolova 1989, 260)

Markova: "When I followed Nikitina in the role, George redid the variation. He made it a very difficult one for me, with syncopations and corkscrew pirouettes. The other dancers said such thing would ruin their legs, but I was young and willing to try. It didn't hurt me." (Markova 1991, 91)

Choreographic Details from Other Sources: *Beaumont* said that "the choreography appears to have little connection with the theme which served mainly as an excuse for a series of movements in which a number of lightly-clad bronzed young men, led by Lifar, then in the flower of his youth, executed a series of movements reminiscent of a gymnastic display…" (Beaumont 1956, 973)

Hodson and Archer say that the role Lifar and the corps de ballets was difficult, consisting as it did of "leaps, turns, and beats in the air." (Hodson and Archer 1991, 46)

Other Aspects of this Work: One of the most interesting things about this ballet was the sets created by the Russian sculptors Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner.

Sokolova describes the "interplanetary quality" of the sets which consisted of "cut out structures and abstract objects from a new material, talc: rising against hangings of black American oil cloth, these flashed as they caught the light their message of an amazing new plastic age to the incredulous and blinking public." (Sokolova 1989, 259)

Hodson and Archer explain the effect of the sets: "…the sculptural objects do not obtrude: first, because they were placed upstage; second, because their transparency let the audience see through them; and third, because the sleek lines of the décor extended those of the dance. Balanchine's acrobatics made sense in this setting, which reminded some spectators of a laboratory." (Hodson and Archer 1991, 43)

Apollon Musagète/Apollo (1928)

Music: Igor Stravinsky.

Original Performance: 1928 in Paris by the Ballets Russes.

Original Cast: Apollo: Serge Lifar, Terpsichore: Alice Nikitina, Calliope Lubov Tchernicheva, Polyhymnia: Felia Doubrovska.

Other Performances and Casts: Alexandra Danilova alternated the role of Terpsichore with Nikitina.

Costumes: *Balanchine*: "All the girls in Apollo were dressed like hell-like old bags. One muse had a long tutu which was cut out in front. Another had the tutu cut out in back, and the other at the sides. It looked awful! Then he covered their hair with some wigs that looked like rows of Easter eggs…But Coco Chanel was there, and *she* saw…She started to scream at him: 'Serge! How can you do this to those poor girls? Look at those terrible costumes…Look at what you have done to their hair!' So on the next day, we all went to Chanel's atelier…and she dressed the girls in wonderful soft materials-it was haute couture!" (Gruen 1987 158)

Choreographic Details from Witnesses: *Danilova*: "The movements in *Apollo* were unusual and intricate, but the style and the sense we could pick up from Balanchine because he always demonstrated." (Danilova 1988 99-101)

"In 1928 he had us flex our feet, shortening them in our toe shoes, and half the theater in Paris was stunned and liked it and the other half did not. And we used angular hands instead of rounded classical hands. Without any ceremony Apollo lifts Terpsichore onto his back! It was free movement. That is what Mr. B. gave us: a completely new vocabulary." (Danilova 1991, 5)

This ballet "was revolutionary for the simple reason that at times we had to dance on flat feet-that was astonishing." (Danilova 1988, 96)

She also says that the pas de deux was difficult for both her and Lifar "because it was such a new approach, different from anything he had ever danced before. In the pas d'action, he had to partner all three of us together." (Danilova 1988, 99) The use of the feet parallel "gives Apollo a different, more natural kind of beauty." (Danilova 1988, 97)

The steps were "lighter, smaller and quicker. I did fifth, arabesque, fifth, arabesque. Nobody does that anymore…I did sissones-my version was jumpier that the one they dance today." (Danilova 1988, 99)

Today the dancers "emphasize the angular aspects and accelerate everything in between…when we all went on the toes and then off the toes onto our heels, I was as light on my heels as I was on my toes. Now dancers go very light on their toes but then stamp

their feet when they go on their heels…Balanchine was doing something new, but he was not simply trying to shock…The idea was to make all these things part of a whole, not to show the contrast between them. Going up on the toes was what everybody expected to see in a ballet; going down on the heels wasn't, but we didn't call attention to it, by making one movement graceful and the other movement awkward-we gave each movement equal weight. Our job was to make it look as if we went on our heels all the time, as if it were not a big event, no more unusual than opening and closing the arms in pirouette. (Danilova 1988, 99-100)

Evans: "Stravinsky's music is for strings only…The texture is strictly polyphonic, but the material is not of the kind that is most commonly used to form such a texture, being smooth-sometimes almost sleek-where one is accustomed to some degree of angularity…It is far from sensational, but has a calm beauty that culminates in two exquisite concluding numbers. Balanchine's choreography travels the same road, attaining its summit in a *pas de deux* danced by Apollo (Lifar) with Terpsichore (Nikitina), which is a revelation. Of course the dancing includes some features with classical purists may not welcome, but if they can only bring themselves to regard it objectively they would at least find the explanation of the high regard in which he is held by those whose interpretation of tradition is less rigid. That *pas de deux*, despite the novelty of the movements, retains the essential form of the classical ballet. Quietly, unostentatiously as it presents itself, "Apollon Musagètes" is really a striking example of neo-classicism alike in its music, its choreography, and the scenic setting…" (Evens 1928, 489)

Balanchine: "In studying the score that I first understood how gestures, like tones in music and shades in painting, have certain family relations. As groups they impose their own laws. The more conscious an artist is, the more he comes to understand these laws and to respond to them." (Balanchine and Mason 1977, 28)

Choreographic Details from Other Sources: "The discrete positioning of the body, the use of the arms, the treatment of the ensemble in itself as well as in its relationship to the soloist-all were frequently altered, even skewed…The turned-in legs, torso distortions, inverted gestures, unusually wide poses, jutting hips and shoulders…"(Joseph 2002, 87)

Other Aspects of this Work: *Stravinsky*: "I had especially in my thoughts what is known as the 'white ballet,' in which to my mind the very essence of this art reveals itself in all its purity. I found that the absence of many-colored effects and of all superfluities produced a wonderful freshness. This inspired me to write of an analogous character. It seemed to me that diatonic composition was the most appropriate for this purpose and the austerity of its style determined what my instrumental ensemble must be…" (Balanchine and Mason 1977 28)

Balanchine: "I looked at *Apollo* and decided to change it…I looked at the birth scene. I decided it wasn't interesting. I mean, who cares that somebody is born. I thought back on how it used to be. There was this woman with hair that looked like hard-boiled eggs, and she was sitting there in a tutu-giving birth. I wanted to eliminate that, and I did. Then I remembered the mountains in the second part. I thought, "Who cares about mountains? Mountains aren't interesting." So I took them away. Later, I put a scaffolding with stairs. But I thought that looked silly too. And I took that away. You know, in the Diaghilev

production, there was a chariot that came to take Apollo to Olympus. But I never used that chariot in America.

You see, all that is unimportant. What is important is the dancing…only the dancing. Pas de deux, variation, and coda…that's important. So I changed…I know why I changed it. I took out all the garbage-that's why!" (Gruen 1987 165)

Detailed descriptions of the original scenario, the one including the birth of Apollo which Balanchine cut in his final version of the ballet in 1979, can be found in Balanchine and Mason's *Balanchine's Complete Stories of the Great Ballets.*

Appendix II
Correspondence from George Balanchine to Serge Diaghilev (1925-1927)

Translated from Russian and French by
Vera Vielhaber and Elizabeth Kattner-Ulrich

A.

September 4, 1925

Dear Serge Pavlovich,

I'm concerned about the fate of my first letter. I don't think you received it since I have not yet received an answer from you.

I'll repeat everything I wrote and add a few things. There are two dancers, Miss Vadimova and Miss Barash. The Third, Miss Pavlova, has already left for Russia because she could not wait for an answer. Of course she is not longer in question.

Miss Vadimova and Miss Barash are here; the first is in Germany and the second in Paris. Both would fit well in the corps de ballet. I don't particularly recommend Miss Barash. We can take her as a last resort. We must take Miss Vadimova; she is slim and beautiful, is not a bad dancer, about the same style of the dancers in the quartet group.

Recently I received the description of a young dancer named Susanne Gercenberg from the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow. (She had been recommended to me quite a while ago. I told you about her in London.) The description doesn't say much, but in any case it confirms that the girl was actually in the service of the Bolshoi Theater.

I think it wouldn't be a bad idea to get this girl as a reserve for the corps de ballet, especially since she is very nice and well groomed, and especially because she is in Riga, which makes it all much easier. If it's not too much, please be so good as to send me an answer as soon as possible, since this girl cannot stay in Riga without money for too much longer and would be forced to return to Russia.

Respectfully,

Balanchine

B.

September 15, 1925

5 Rue Gavarni Passy

George Balanchine

Dear Serge Pavlovich,

After I received your telegram, I sent an invitation to Miss Barash and wrote to Miss Gercenberg from Riga. She obtained her own visa, but I sent her 1000 Francs out of my own funds for the trip. I sent Miss Vadimova a letter and asked her to let you know her address and anything else she needs for the trip. Besides her there is one more dancer from the Maryinsky Theater in Berlin, Mr. Kundzing, who now uses the last name Futlin.

He finished the School about the same time as Mr. Viltzak. His looks are dazzling. Light brown hair of the English sort, perfect figure and an outstanding dancer. (Classical and very expressive). I don't know how he dances now. I have not seen him in two years. I absolutely recommend that you take him, and I think you won't regret it. But! There is one problem: he cannot separate from his partner. I've only seen her in an everyday situation (not on stage). She is a beautiful woman, slim and taller than average, twenty-four years old, but I have no idea how she dances. But I don't think he would be together with an untalented diva. We can talk to him about all this and work something out; it would be a pity if we were not able to get him. Besides him there is the dancer Sakselin; he finished our School in 1919, has been in Finland up to now, and presently is on his way to Paris. He's not a bad dancer and is also not an untalented actor. He can dance everything-roles of simple people to crowned royalty. He's someone from the old school, and possesses much more theater experience than Mr. Ungerov (with simple and heroic figures) and it would be a sin to let him get away. Besides this, Miss Goreva, Mr. Plaslov's wife is here. She is an intelligent, classical dancer, not at all fat and not particularly tall; she finished the School in 1918. She is an accomplished classical dancer.

I think that the more dancers like this we get, the more interesting the performances of your ballets will be. I hope you agree.

Please let me know what we should do with these people.

Respectfully,

Balanchivadze

The following letter, written in Russian, contains only the date September 5, making it difficult to determine the year in which it was written. The letter contains a small section written in French in a different handwriting, most likely notes taken by Diaghilev or someone else with the names of cities and places and the short phrases of a telegram answering Balanchine's letter. Some parts have been crossed out and rewritten. It is signed with a letter which is unclear, but is probably a "D." The final section was written in Russian in the original handwriting and was part of the original letter. The separate section is dated September 13, 1925 and mentions hiring the dancers Stukolkina, Archipova and Mikhailov, all of whom appear in the letter. However, from its content, neither this letter nor the telegram seems to fit with the other letters written in September 1925. Another letter to Diaghilev dated September 26, 1927also discusses Stukolkina and Archipova.

C.

September 5

Dear Serge Pavlovich,

I just received a letter from Leningrad from Mr. Mikhailov (the young dancer I told you about in London). He writes that he would be ready to leave immediately, that he has already gotten together the necessary paperwork, and only needs the visa, contract, and money. Besides that, he wrote that he spoke with the people I asked him to. Miss Mungalova doesn't want to leave. Miss Kostrovitskaya has (by the way) married a very talented artist named Dimitriev who works at the Maryinsky, and she would only be willing to come with him. Miss Stukolkina and Miss Archipova would be ready to come immediately.

At the moment, I think it would be to no disadvantage to hire all three as soon as possible. All three dance good classical dance and everything else too.

I'm waiting for your answer.

Balanchivadze

Copy September 13, 1925

Balanchine Pension Clos Thelemites Playe Vaux
Nauzan Saint Palais Royan
Engage per telegram Michailow, Stoukolkina, Archipova. Send a telegraph to me at Exelsior in Rome with the addresses and first names of the artists for their visas.

P.S. I think we need to try to get them here as soon as possible, since they will not be able leave after the season begins, if I am correct, on September 15.

D.

Georges Balanchine

September 26, 1927

5, rue des Petites Écuries

Paris

Dear Serge Pavlovich,

Here is the present state of things.

I've received two letters from Leningrad from Miss Stukolkina and Miss Mlodzinskaya. They absolutely need to be sent contracts and visas. I don't think they will be able to make it by the beginning of the season.

Miss Gevergeva will not be available this year. Thanks to her crazy dieting concoctions, her doctor has forbidden her to dance. She has turned to Mr. Balieff, and will sing in a Gypsy chorus and clap her hands.

Please let me know, when you will be returning to Paris.

For now I wish you well. Give my regards to Boris Evgenievich-

Respectfully,

Balanchine

I just received the letter, which you sent to Royan and I will quickly answer your urgent questions. Unfortunately I received news from Russia that the ballet will run as always, opening on October 1. It wouldn't be bad if we would be able to get Miss Lipch., Miss Stuk(olkina) and Miss Arch(ipova), but I don't think it's worthwhile to think about the others I wrote about above for now.

My foot is unfortunately only slowly healing, so I don't think I will be allowed to work to intensively at the beginning.

Respectfully,

Balanchivadze

I sent a telegram to Russia, that you are ready to take them and to immediately send the necessary documents.

Appendix III

The Challenges of Dance Reconstruction and Restaging

Questions of authenticity abound in a study that works with sources based on dance reconstructions. It is difficult, if not impossible, to speak of "the original" work created by the artists when dealing with live performances. Whereas in some cases works were performed only once, others had many performances. Changes occur over time for various reasons. A particular ballet claiming to have been choreographed by a particular person is in the end notably different than the work initially created. Some of these changes occur accidentally over time, or are implemented to accommodate a particular stage or dancer, others are purposely done to correct mistakes or to update a particular number. This appendix will address three issues, all of which deal with the question of authenticity. The first issue deals with the removal of a work from its social, political and historical context, the second with the question of different physiques and casts, and the third with the question of the intent of both the original choreographer and the reconstructor. It will touch on different choreographers, but will focus on the work of two of the most important choreographers in ballet, Marius Petipa and George Balanchine, and the work of the reconstructors who have passed on their ballets, Fyodor Lopukhov and the team of Kenneth Archer and Millicent Hodson. In addition, the transference of Balanchine's *Apollo*, which was changed several times by the choreographer himself, as well as the classical dances staged by Balanchine and Danilova in the United States, will be discussed.

A. The Removal of a Work from its Social, Political and Historical Context

The particular question of whether a theatrical piece, in this case a dance work, should be revived by later generations is described by Soviet theater historian Konstantin Rudnitsky in detail in his preface to his book *Russian and Soviet Theater: Traditions and the Avant-garde:*

> …I personally have no confidence in such undertakings. This is not only because the authenticity of a 'copy' separated from the original by the space of fifty years is clearly dubious, nor even because the roles which in the past were played by actors of incomparable genius…are now performed by diligent and conscientious, but far from brilliant amateurs rendering the 'copy' colourless and tarnished as it tries in vain to convey the emotional wealth of the original. No, the main reason is that any theatrical event which is isolated from the social situation that engendered it, torn from the artistic soil where it was originally rooted and artificially transplanted to another, inevitably loses almost all its energy and beauty.
>
> As distinct from painting, architecture, sculpture, poetry, prose or music, the art of the theater is always, by its very nature, contemporary and cannot live a full-blooded existence outside its *own* time...When we see the famous theatrical stars of the 1920's, recorded on celluloid film from the era of silent cinematography, their mime, gestures, poses, almost seem like caricature. But that's the way it is, for their time has passed, and those for whom they were great and famous are no longer alive.
>
> There is no chance that what is great in the art of the theater today will also be great tomorrow. Tomorrow it will become something different. (Rudnitsky 1988 7)

Rudnitsky clearly describes one of the most important challenges of reviving theatrical pieces decades after their first performance, namely that they never have the same meaning for the modern audience that they had for the original. He argues that, revivals and reconstructions of theatrical pieces from the past can never hold the "magic" that they held for the original audience, and should not be revived at all, relegating them to the pages of history. While his argument definitely rings true in the sense that no theatrical piece can have the same meaning for one generation that it did for another, there are other reasons for restaging works. Rudnitsky himself says that other art forms, namely music and art, are able to give "aesthetic pleasure to people of many generations." (Rudnitsky 1988, 7) He clearly tries to separate these art forms from theater, which, like dance, is dependent on the live performance. However, his argument against revivals of theater pieces can be applied as much to music and art. As with theater and dance, these art forms neither give the same magic, nor do they have the same meaning they had with their original recipients. However, just as he says that their value lies in that they can give aesthetic value to many generations, the same is true of many theatrical productions. The plays of Shakespeare give aesthetic pleasure hundreds of years after they were initially performed. The same can be said of the ballets of Petipa.

Others take a less extreme view, agreeing that not every work should be revived, but only those which have a modern resonance. This standpoint is taken by Hodson and Archer, who choose which works they reconstruct partially based on whether they are compatible with contemporary issues and tastes. (McCarthy 2002, 2) Slonimsky also addresses this issue briefly as he discusses Balanchine's early ballets: Bruni, a witness to *Funeral March* (1923), says that "the tragic feeling was vividly expressed. It seems to me that one could look at this work even now." Slonimsky does not agree on this point, but agrees that the audience was always moved. (Slonimsky 1991, 65) From this statement, it is clear that this issue is one that has a certain basis in taste and opinion.

Rudnitsky's position is that any such performance has no purpose if it has been removed from its original social setting. Hodson and Archer would argue the opposite: that reviving lost master works which have a particularly important role in history creates, in the case of dance, a "useable history," (McCarthy 2002, 1) something which other art forms, music and art in particular, already have. Their philosophy extends to the usefulness that reconstructions have on modern choreography: "My hypothesis, as I embarked on the reconstruction, was that the ballet might prove as interesting in its own right as the often told tale of its opening. To be sure, a reconstructed *Sacre* would not diminish the attraction of future choreographers to the score. On the contrary, it might give them, and anyone else who loved dance a more concrete sense of history." (Hodson 1996, xxi) Hodson does not deny that her reconstructions do not carry the same meaning for modern audiences that they did for the original ones. She contends that revival and reconstructions, as opposed to mere documentation, help to create a more concrete understanding of dance history.

B. Changing Body Types and Different Dancers

This issue is related to the one above in that, just as a theater piece taken out of its original setting no longer completely communicates the original intention of its creator, a dance is not able to do this to any greater extent. In fact, the problem is exacerbated in dance due to the physical changes from one generation to the next. Dancers today are taller, thinner, stronger, and much more technically capable than they were a century ago. The end result of a production is changed, creating some of the controversy regarding reconstructions and restagings. In his paper on dance styles, Challis goes as far as to explain that one company after a relatively short period of time cannot claim to dance the works of one of its

own choreographers. He uses the example of the Royal Ballet ten years after the death of choreographer Ashton. By this time the technical level and style of the company had changed enough to question if the company was really performing his choreography. Taking his argument a step further, he argues that Balanchine being performed by the Royal Ballet is not really Balanchine, because performing his choreography is not just a case of adapting ballet technique, but also a new way of moving, a change in body concept, line, spatial orientation, speed and musicality. (Challis 1999, 147) Following his argument, I would extend the problem he describes even further to include the changes in physique in the dancers over the last decade. Modern ballets dancers, regardless of whether they have been trained at the Royal Ballet School or the School of American Ballet still resemble one another more in their physique, line, technical ability and motion dynamics than dancers trained at the St. Petersburg Imperial Theater School in 1917 resemble those who graduation from the same school in 2008.

In addition to the general changes in physique and technique, choreography is often changed to accommodate different dancers. Examining the creation of Balanchine's *La Chatte* (1927), which was reconstructed by Hodson and Archer for the Grand Ballet Canadian in 1997, and the history of *Apollo* (1928), which has remained in the repertory but was changed several times by Balanchine himself as he taught it to generations of dancers, can give insight to this issue.

Deciding which version could be considered the original is relatively simple in some reconstructions, for example the role of the Nightingale in *Le Chant du Rossignol* (1925), which Balanchine choreographed on Alicia Markova with no understudy and no alternate cast. In this case the original choreography and interpretation of it are clear. Others are more ambiguous, such as in the case of the ballet *La Chatte*. Originally choreographed for classical ballerina Olga Spessivtseva, she performed the dance only one time in Monte Carlo and the role was then given to Alicia Nikitina who learned the role the day of the Paris premiere, although Balanchine had urged Diaghilev to use Danilova as a substitute since he had initially tried out many of the Cat's moves on her. (Hodson and Archer 1991, 46) The ballet was performed dozens of times in London as well as Paris, Nikitina alternating the role with Markova. This opens an important question: which *La Chatte* is the original? Is it the classical Spessivtseva or the flapper Nikitina? Balanchine evidently changed the role for Markova, who believed that her version was the one that most closely resembled Balanchine's ideal

since she was technically more capable than the other two dancers. It is obvious that attempting to reconstruct the original in this case was not as simple as the reconstruction of the role of the Nightingale in *Le Chant du Rossignol*, in which case the original choreography and interpretation are clear.

In attempting to assign a work of choreography an exact label of "original" or "authentic," it becomes obvious that although this is a difficult, if not impossible, task and while its importance should not be underestimated, neither should it be overestimated. In the case of *La Chatte*, the dance was performed by different dancers under the watchful eyes of the choreographer himself. With the exception of his earliest works in the Soviet Union, Balanchine worked mostly with large ballet companies and produced ballets with the intent that they be performed more than once on different stages in different cities. In most cases, the very nature of a touring company or a large company like New York City Ballet automatically implies that many roles would be performed by alternate casts. This is a premise for choreography in such a setting, even when a ballet is choreographed with a specific dancer in mind. In his long career as a choreographer, Balanchine not only proved that he was effectively able to change dances to fit alternate casts or later generations of dancers, but he was able to rearrange dances on different dancers in a way that showed off their strengths, while always maintaining the integrity of the original work.

At the other extreme, the case is different for a solo performer who choreographs a work on herself, for example, Isadora Duncan. Here, it is definitely a larger issue of authenticity when restaging the dance, since she performed her works herself, and these works were used to promote political and social messages that Balanchine's did not. Reconstructions would be very difficult, since they would not be performed by Duncan herself, and Rudnitsky's argument does ring true for her work. While these dances may be interesting from an aesthetic point of view, outside of their social, historical, and political context, they are by no means able to communicate the social message she used her art to propagate. However, unlike many artists who use dance to communicate a message, Balanchine was not so inclined. Taper quotes Balanchine's description of people who look for implicit meaning in his work: "People never seem to understand unless they can put their finger into things. Like touching dough-when people see bread rising, they smell something and they say, 'Oh, is it going up?' And they poke their finger in it. 'Ah,' they say, 'now I see.'

But of course the dough then goes down. They spoil everything by insisting on touching." (Taper 1984, 7)

Again, since his own intent was not to create a work of art that was directly related to the communication of a particular idea to a particular group of people, but rather a work that exists for enjoyment, the issue of the historical context or the particular dancer who performs it (given that this dancer has reached a particular technical and artistic standard) is lessened, but not completely erased.

A similar issue emerges when one considers the many times the ballet *Apollo* has been performed. As with *La Chatte*, Balanchine himself changed this dance often to accommodate the dancers performing it. Danilova, who originally danced the role of Terpsichore, describes some of the differences between her version of the dance and that performed by later ballerinas. She describes that the steps for her variation were "lighter, smaller and quicker. I did fifth, arabesque, fifth, arabesque. Nobody does that anymore…I did sissones-my version was jumpier that the one they dance today." (Danilova 1988, 99) She attributes this to the staging Balanchine did for Susanne Farrell, who, according to Danilova, was taller than she was and couldn't jump as well. She goes on to explain what she believes to have been Balanchine's original intent in choosing some of the steps, and how she thinks that the modern interpretations of the dance miss this. According to her, many dancers today "emphasize the angular aspects and accelerate everything in between." In addition, she says "when we all went on the toes and then off the toes onto our heels, I was as light on my heels as I was on my toes. Now dancers go very light on their toes but then stamp their feet when they go on their heels." (Danilova 1988, 99) Danilova says that she danced both of these aspects more in harmony with one another, not trying to emphasize the differences between the angular and non-angular movements, or the flat feet and relevés, but rather, she says that the "idea was to make all these things part of a whole, not to show the contrast between them." (Danilova 1988, 99) She explains what Balanchine was trying to achieve with his choreography:

> Balanchine was doing something new, but he was not simply trying to shock…The idea was to make all these things part of a whole, not to show the contrast between them. Going up on the toes was what everybody expected to see in a ballet; going down on the heels wasn't, but we didn't call attention to it, by making one movements graceful and the

> other movement awkward-we gave each movement equal weight. Out job was to make it look as if we went on our heels all the time, as if it were not a big event, no more unusual than opening and closing the arms in pirouette. (Danilova 1988, 97-98)

While she admits that the modern dancers not only use different steps, but also seem to miss the original intent of the choreographer, she goes on to explain why this is not an issue that would by any means be a hindrance to new productions. She states that she and the other dancers were

> The first ones to interpret Balanchine's movements, to find that path. The steps were very difficult to perform. It was for the second generation to take what we had done and build on it. After seeing somebody else perform a role, you can think, 'Oh, I know how I can do it better.' The dancers who came after us in *Apollo* could look to our performances and copy what we did or dismiss is. That was their privilege, it was not ours-we had a hard enough time grasping that new style and finding a way to express it." (Danilova 1988, 199)

Both the example of *La Chatte* and *Apollo* demonstrate the problematic associated with attempting to produce an exact replica of an original work. However, despite the challenges, these same issues are what make dance a living dynamic thing, enabling works that may otherwise fall into obscurity to remain available to new generations simply because they are by nature automatically updated to new generations because of continual performances or revivals.

C. The Intentions of the Reconstructor

The issue of intentions of the reconstructor deals with how the choreographer works with the available documentation of the original choreography. Methods of ballet reconstructions are generally the same. Documentation from original performances is collected. If the ballet has been lost, but had many performances, such as the case of *La Chatte*, documentation from as many sources as possible can be examined. This documentation consists of dance notation and videos, where they exist, newspaper reviews, photographs, memoirs and living witnesses. Where notation exists, it is an invaluable tool, but it is important to note that dance notation is not enough to ensure an exact remembrance of choreography, nor does it exclude the conflict that arises in the pursuit of original choreography.

Of all reconstructions in the ballet world, some of the most problematic were those done by Lopukhov in the 1922-1923 and the 1923-1924 seasons at the Maryinsky. Ironically, these versions of the classical repertory have been generally accepted as being "correct" for decades. According to Souritz, because of the chaos of the years following the Revolution, "classical ballets were shown day after day, in the theater in the winter and on the stages of various parks in the summer. Not only were the scenery and costumes worn out, but also, distortions had been introduced into the choreography. Cutbacks in the company required a reduction of the cast in many dances; one section would be thrown out, another hurriedly inserted. The design was ruined and the choreography rendered meaningless." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 257) Both she and Scholl quote the declaration made by the leadership of the ballet in October 1922, published in the *Petrogradskie teatry* describing their intent to save the classical repertory:

> The new management has, for the most part, chosen the most vibrant classical creations of Marius Petipa as the basis of the repertory. The management will devote special care to the thorough conservation of the original choreographic text, which, unfortunately, was noticeably soiled in the past decade by various interpolations and revivals from "notations."
>
> The management has as its goal to reject all that is alien and foreign to the ballets of Petipa, which, by the way, was accepted not only by the audience, but also those "connoisseurs of ballet" as the authentic inspiration of Petipa. (quoted in Scholl 2004, 107)

According to Souritz, the statement regarding distortions in the choreography and incorrect notational scores is a direct attempt to tarnish the reputation of former chief director of the Maryinsky, Nikolai Sergeyev (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 258), who had emigrated to Western Europe after the Revolution, at which time he took with him the archive of Stepanov's notation for dozens of ballets and dances from operas with him. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 258) The unavoidable political issues involved in all areas of the arts during the 1920's had a deep impact on the transference of Petipa's ballets, in particular since shortly before this time the very existence of ballet as a relic of the corrupt czarist culture had been called into question by those creating a new society. Unsuccessful attempts at political ballets were replaced by the classics when it became obvious that the old classical repertory was well received by the new proletarian audience. These developments inseparably tied the direction of the Academic Theaters to politics,

making Sergeyev's emigration an act of disloyalty, resulting in the accuracy of all his work to be called into question, independent of the actual quality of his efforts.

In disregarding Sergeyev's notation, Lopukhov lost a valuable tool in his stagings, but he still had access to innumerable dancers and other witnesses who had either seen or participated in the original productions. However, the difficulties with his reconstructions are based not so much in Lopukhov's lack of available documentation or memories of the choreography, but rather in that he purposely changed the original choreography of many of the dances, which were then later posted as the "Original Version." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 259) His primary failure was his attempts to "correct" the original versions where he felt that the choreographers had made "mistakes." He added scenes to *The Sleeping Beauty* where before only a musical interlude had existed, and in *Raymonda*, according to Souritz "staged his own version of the finale in the second act. According to Benois, Petipa left an obvious 'blank' here, which urgently needed to be 'filled.'…In Benois's opinion, Lopukhov did this 'superbly, not allowing himself anything that would destroy the conventional style of the ballet.'" (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 259) One of Lopukhov's greatest strengths as a reconstructor, namely his ability to fill in holes with choreography so close to the original choreographer's that it was indistinguishable from the original dances, was at the same time his downfall. Without this component of reconstructions, a stage-worthy production cannot be achieved. The choreographer has to fill in the holes with phrases that fit the vocabulary of the rest of the ballet. In taking the liberty to add or completely change dances in the style of the original choreographers, Lopukhov created ballets that worked for generations, however, these ballets maintained the reputation of having been choreographed by someone other than himself. For example, the scenes he added to *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Raymonda* were not ones where the choreography had been forgotten, but were ones where Petipa had left a "blank" and Lopukhov felt needed to be filled. Whether this is true that a blank existed from the point of view of a master craftsman is not the issue here, rather the issue is the changing of a work of art by someone else and then claiming it to be the original work.

Souritz does discuss Lopukhov's successes, in particular with his reconstructions of Gorsky's version of *The Little Humpbacked Horse* and *Don Quixote* as well as Fokine's ballets.

He

> …tried to keep what was best in them and …restore what had been lost. For example, in his opinion, in *Don Quixote*, a 'series of small details, flashing sparks typical of Gorsky,' had been forgotten. Lopukhov tried to reconstruct the choreography well-known in the Moscow production; in particular he replaced the fandango staged in Petersburg by Legat with another one in Gorsky's style. In *The Little Humpbacked Horse*, which was presented in Petrograd in a separate version distinct from the Moscow one, he reworked the dances, binging them closer to the ones he remembered, paying particular attention to Gorsky's 'tsar-maiden' variation. Lopukhov also carefully rehearsed Fokine's ballets- *Une Nuit d'Égypte, Eros,* and *Le Pavillon d'Armide*-trying to recreate lost features and nuances. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 260)

While Souritz mentions that Lopukhov had "failures," she focuses on his success:

> Thus during two seasons, 1922-1923 and 1923-1924, almost all of the repertory ballets from the past were put in order. This kind of reconstruction by the Petrograd experts proved more fruitful than Gorsky's revivals in Moscow. While in Moscow there was a tendency to depart further and further from the author's versions, in Leningrad the originals were preserved for the future. Thanks to this activity the Leningrad ballet for many years became the chief guardian of the ballet legacy. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 260)

She does however, point to his biggest failure, one that led to the loss of the Lev Ivanova's choreography of the "Waltz of the Snowflakes" in *The Nutcracker*. Lopukhov believed that the scene "lacks harmony and growth and is incorrectly developed in terms of musical themes. The figures changing every eight bars cannot be used throughout the 'Waltz of the Snowflakes.'" (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 260) Lopukhov's version was strongly criticized and shortly thereafter dropped from the repertory.

Scholl is much more critical of Lopukhov's work. He details the intentional vilification of dancers who had left Russia and the deliberate changing or ignoring of historical facts and altering of the original choreography to fit new ideologies. He points out the inconsistencies in Lopukhov's written documentation, his attempts to downplay those who had fallen out of the graces of the new management. Scholl says:

> The main details of the vilifying legend are clear here. This tale pits a beautiful but untalented socialite (we are left to wonder if Maria (Petipa) was a lazy or simply a bad dancer) against her father, the genius who, according to Lopukhov's reporting, feared his own dismissal. (This at a time when the director of Imperial Theaters was entrusting the choreographer with a production that reputedly exhausted one-fourth of the St. Petersburg theaters' yearly production budget.) In 1971, Lopukhov wrote that Maria Petipa was "heavy"…He continues this bodily assault in the speech attributed to Gerdt: she had skinny legs and an ample bosom. The abundant photographic record of Maria Petipa in a variety of roles, both classical and otherwise, fails to support Lopukhov's claim. (Scholl 2004, 55)

While Lopukhov is credited with helping to reestablish the classical tradition in Russia, it is clear that his methods were a little dubious.

This issue raises many questions in the study of dance history not only in Russia, but in Western Europe and America as well. For example, when Danilova taught the classics to students at the School of American Ballet just as she learned them in Russia, which version did she mean? She danced as a page in the pre-Revolutionary version of *The Sleeping Beauty*, which was the most like the original production, but then also participated in Lopukhov's reconstructions. Regarding the "finger variation" of the Prologue, which she regularly taught to her students at SAB, she says that "the version of this variation I teach was choreographed by Nijinska. There was a finger variation in Russia-she modernized it and added a few things, and her version became standard in the Diaghilev repertoire." (Danilova 1988, 184) Balanchine also participated in these ballets. The problem of the different versions for him are also present: like Danilova, he appeared as a child in *The Sleeping Beauty,* participated in Lopukhov's reconstruction, and one extant photo shows him in the Ballets Russes production of *The Sleeping Princess.*

The liberties taken by Lopukhov in his reconstructions are by no means an anomaly, perhaps the reason that reconstructions and revivals often fall under criticism. In their stagings of the classics, Danilova recalls the changes she and Balanchine made in their versions. Danilova says that in their production of *Raymonda* they used the choreography which "we loved and remembered from the Maryinsky repertoire." (Danilova 1988, 160) She doesn't mention having made any changes to this ballet. In another restaging, she recalls having had to fill in the missing sections. In 1949 she staged *Paquita* for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo: "we needed a classical ballet to close the program, so I pieced together what I

remembered of Petipa's choreography from Maryinsky production and filled in the holes." (Danilova 1988, 166) Together with Balanchine she set *Coppélia* on the New York City Ballet in 1974, and describes that Balanchine made major changes in the ballet:

> I did the first two acts and he did the last. In my acts, the choreography remained basically the same as before, but sometimes we found it too simple-there were empty places, and Balanchine filled them in. He made the dancing a little more up to date and complicated the movement, mostly in the variations and parts of the adagio. The dances between Swanhilda and her friends and the business with Coppélius and the doll he didn't touch. In the third act, everything was Balanchine's idea-all the movements were new, but of course in the classical style. (Danilova 1988. 184-185)

Furthermore, she tells about her idea for how she would stage *Sleeping Beauty*: "…if I were twenty years younger, I would stage the entire ballet and set it in New Orleans during Mardi Gras. The Prologue would be a big reunion, in a beautiful mansion. In the last act, the party would include variations by people dressed for Carnival as fairy-tale characters, and by the Precious Stones, who embody the qualities of different gems." (Danilova 1988, 183) From these statements, it is clear that she would take even more liberties than Lopukhov did in his revivals.

From these descriptions, it would seem that, like Lopukhov, Danilova nor Balanchine had qualms about adding to or changing sections of classical choreography. While this issue seems to bother many dance historians, it is almost a moot point for many artists. Because of the fleeting nature of dance, it is taken for granted that dances should be and will be changed to accommodate different dancers, stages, and generations. On the other hand, it is worth noting that in his will, Balanchine left the rights to his choreography to a group of several people to ensure that the ballets were correctly transferred to future generations. It would seem that he did not particularly want others to take the liberties with his choreography that he had taken with others.

The question of dance reconstructions is a difficult one. Although there is a great deal of problematic, I believe that what is to be gained by reconstructing lost works far outweighs the difficulties in methodology. While Lopukhov's method of reconstructing Petipa's ballets rightly falls under criticism, it is undeniable that without his efforts more of the classical repertory would have been lost in the chaos of post-revolutionary Russia. His

work led to the preservation of Petipa's works, even if not in their original form. I do, however, agree that authenticity is a subject of great importance, and that had Lopukhov been clearer about which sections were his own and which were original, many of the difficulties may have been avoided. I put forward that the most effective and honest method of reconstruction is that used by Hodson and Archer in their reconstructions of the early 20th century repertory. Their ballets are carefully researched, and every attempt is made to not interfere with the sections of the dance which the original artist created. Missing sections have to be filled in with new choreography in the style of original dance in order to produce a stage worthy production. However, when the original choreography and the new replacements are carefully documented, and the dance is not advertised as the "original production," but as a reconstruction, the problems which were present in Lopukhov's work can be avoided. This documentation does not need to interfere with the performances; most people attending the ballet are interested in having an emotional experience, and are, for the most part, not interested in which sections are original and which are new. However, the availability of clear documentation provides both choreographers and scholars with information for future work. Hodson and Archer's goal to create a workable history for dancers, i.e. stage worthy productions which are clearly documented, provides an invaluable resource for dancers, scholars, and audiences alike.

The subject of which version is the original and which choreography can and should be attributed to which person is, and addressing the subject opens more questions than it answers. What is evident is that it is not possible to speak of absolutes in terms of choreography regarding live performances. The variables: different dancers, different sets and stages, missing sections, changing techniques, make it impossible to ever completely recreate the initial experience. To let lost works to become lost forever because of the difficulties of restaging would deny dancers today as well as those in the future the opportunity to experience the dances of the past. This allows those dances, however imperfect, to give "aesthetic pleasure to people of many generations." (Rudnitsky 1988, 7)

Appendix IV

Zusammenfassung in Deutscher Sprache

Zur Dissertation von Elizabeth Kattner-Ulrich:

The Early Life and Works of George Balanchine (1913-1928)

Im Jahre 1924 verließen vier junge Tänzer die Sowjetunion, um an einem kulturellen Austausch teilzunehmen ihr Anliegen war es, in einer Reihe von Auffuehrungen den Menschen in West- Europa die neue sowjetische Kunst zu zeigen. Als George Balanchine, Alexandra Danilova, Tamara Gevergeva und Nicholai Efimov sich entschlossen, nicht nach Hause zurück zu kehren, konnte niemand ahnen, wie diese Entscheidung die Welt des Tanzes beeinflussen würde.

Während seiner ueber 60 jahrigen Karriere als Choreograph, die ihm erlaubte, mit mehren Truppen in Russland, Europa und Amerika zu arbeiten, revolutioniert Balanchine die Kunst des Balletts und, gruendet schliesslich seine eigne Schule und Tanztruppe in New York. Viele der ästhetischen und technischen Elemente, die er in das Vokabular des Klassischen Balletts einbrachte, können auf seine Jugend in St. Petersburg zurückgefuehrt werden.

Diese Studie beinhaltet zwei Komponenten. Zu Einen ist es eine Historiographie, die das frühere Leben von Balanchine sowohl aus seiner Sicht als auch der seiner engsten Freunde und Mitarbeiter über sich selbst beschreibt. Sie beginnt in seiner Kindheit als Schüler an der Kaiserlichen Theaterschule in St. Petersburg Russland und folgt seiner Entwicklung als Künstler. Es wird ein Bild von Balanchine gezeigt, dass nicht das des berühmten Genies darstellt, sondern das eines Jugendlichen und jungen Mannes, der viel Talent hatte und wie alle jungen Menschen, die Grenzen der damalige Regeln und Traditionen überschritt. Diesen Zeitraum kann man in zwei Abschnitte aufteilen: seine

Jugend und die Schaffung seiner ersten Werke, die er in der Sowjetunion zwischen 1920 bis 1924 choreographierte, und seine Jahre als Choreograph für Serge Diaghilev und die Tänze, die er für die Ballets Russes zwischen 1925 bis 1928 in West Europa erarbeitete. Zwischen diesen zwei Phasen lag eine wichtige Übergangszeit. Von Juni bis Dezember 1924 waren Balanchine und seine Freunde und Mitarbeiter als Tourgruppe „Sowjet Tänzer" in Westeuropa unterwegs. Als Künstler waren die vier Tänzer nicht besonders erfolgreich und in diesen Monaten entwarf Balanchine keine neuen Choreographien. Aber die Gruppe entschloss sich, nicht in die Sowjetunion zurückzukehren. Aus diesem Grund ist diese Tournee, obwohl von kurzer Dauer, sehr wichtig und wird deshalb in dieser Studie intensiver untersucht. In dem Kapitel über diese Tournee werden mehrere Verträge, die die „Sowjet Tänzer" mit ihrem Manager, Vladimir Dimitriev abgeschlossen hatten, analysiert und mit anderen Dokumentationen, inklusive der Erinnerungen der Zeitzeugen, verglichen.

Zum zweiten analysiert diese Arbeit Balanchines fruehe Choreographien: sie erforscht die existierende Dokumentation seiner Ballette von 1920 bis 1928. Einige seiner frühesten Choreografien wurden selbst nach seiner Ausreise weiterhin in der Sowjetunion aufgeführt, darunter sein erstes Stück *La Nuit* (1920), das er noch als Student choreographiert hatte. Doch die meisten seiner Werke wurden bald abgesetzt und gerieten somit in Vergessenheit. Die Suche nach Informationen über diese frühen Werke gestaltet sich schwierig, ist aber keinesfalls erfolglos. Einige von Balanchines engsten damaligen Mitarbeitern, u.a. zwei seiner Musen Geva und Danilova, setzten sich ebenfalls in den Westen ab und hinterließen ihre Memoiren auf Englisch. Diese Erinnerungen enthalten Informationen über Balanchines frühe Choreographien. Darüber hinaus ermöglichen verschiedene andere Interviews und Berichte, die bis in die 1920er Jahre zurückreichen, Rückschlüsse darauf, wie diese Tänze ausgesehen haben könnten. In dieser Studie werden alle Ballette analysiert, von denen die Zeitzeugen choreographische Details erwähnten. Das heißt, viele der aufgelisteten Tänze im *Choreography by George Balanchine, A Catalogue of Works,* das sich auf der Website der George Balanchine Foundation befindet, werden hier nicht untersucht. Erwaehnen jedoch die Zeitzeugen ein oder zwei Tanzschritte, werden sie hier analysiert. Bei den meisten der in dieser Arbeit aufgeführten Tänze ist eine vollständige Rekonstruktion nicht möglich. Das Ziel dieses Projektes besteht darin, das frühe Vokabular von Balanchine zu beleuchten, um den Prozess der Transformation, die Balanchine bewirkte, zu untersuchen. In diesem Streben können kleine Informationstücke manchmal der Schlüssel zu größeren Fragen sein.

Von besonderem Wert in dieser Untersuchung sind die unveröffentlichten Tonbandaufnahmen von George Balanchine, Tamara Geva und Alexandra Danilova, Alicia Markova und Felia Doubrovska, welche sich als Teil des Oral History Projects an der New York Library for the Performing Arts, Dance Division, befinden. Zwar sind diese Interviews mehrfach für verschiedene Projekte benutzt worden, doch sie wurden nie bezüglich ihres choreographischen Inhalts analysiert. Vergleiche dieser Interviews mit bereits verfügbaren veröffentlichten Materialien geben ebenfalls Hinweise darauf, wie Balanchines frühe Werke aussahen. Wenn diese Informationen erst einmal im Detail untersucht sind, können Forscher erkennen, wie sich verschiedene choreographische Elemente und Themen in anderen frühen Werken und sogar in Balanchines späten Arbeiten widerspiegeln.

Die umfangreichste und genaueste Abhandlung über Balanchines Werke in St. Petersburg stellt Yuri Slonimskys Aufsatz „Balanchine, the Early Years" von 1976 dar. Slonimsky, Balanchines und einer seiner Jugendfreunde, beschreibt darin viele der frühen Choreographien. Dabei stützt er sich hauptsächlich auf eigene Erinnerungen, aber auch auf Erzählungen anderer Studenten der Theaterschule und Tänzer des Mariinsky Theaters, insbesondere die der sowjetischen Tanzwissenschaftlerin Vera Kostrovitskaya. Da der Aufsatz jedoch in der Sowjetunion der 1970er Jahre erschien, lässt er sämtliche Informationen von Emigranten wie Geva und Danilova aus. Die Kapitel zwei, drei und vier dieser Arbeit basieren auf den Informationen der oben genannten Quellen.

In Kapitel zwei, drei und vier wird erstmals die Arbeit von verschiedenen Künstlern, die großen Einfluss auf die Werke von Balanchine hatten, beschrieben. Kapitel zwei beschreibt die Choreographien von Marius Petipa und Mikhail Fokine, die Balanchine zuerst als Schüler der Theaterschule der Mariinsky kennengelernt hatte. Zu Beginn wird der Einfluss von Petipa und der russischen klassischen Tradition präsentiert. Seine Choreographien und vor allem das Vokabular des klassischen Tanzes können auf ihn zurückgeführt werden. Damit bilden sie das Fundament, auf dem Balanchine seine Werke aufbaute. Am Mariinsky begegnete Balanchine auch seinem ersten Abstraktballett *Les Sylphides* von Fokine. In diesem Werk, welches eines von Balanchines Lieblingsstücken als junger Mann war, nutzte Fokine die Aesthetik des Romantischen Balletts und hatte damit großen Einfluss sowohl auf Balanchines frühe als auch spätere Werke, insbesondere auf *Apollon Musagète* (1928) und *Serenade* (1935).

Kapitel drei berichtet über den Einfluss der neuen Generation von Choreographen in der jungen Sowjetunion, insbesondere der Experimente von Fyodor Lopukhov, Isadora Duncan und Kasian Goleizowsky. Balanchine tanzte in Lopukhovs *Tanzsymphonie* und „wurde im Westen zum Meister der Tanzsymphonie" nach den Worten von Elizabeth Souritz, Russische Tanzhistorikerin. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 276*).* Duncan besuchte im Jahr 1905 St. Petersburg undhatte indirekt Einfluss auf Balanchine, insbesondere durch Fokine. Ihr zweiter Besuch im Jahr 1922 inspirierte ihn direkt, und er und Lydia Ivanova choreographierten das Solo *Valse Triste* (1922)*,* ein Tanz der nicht nur den leidenschaftlichen Ausdruck von Duncan imitierte, sondern auch die „Duncanesque *plastique*" imitierte. Da Balanchines spätere Werke eher ohne starke Emotionen getanzt werden sollten und Duncans Einfluss von kurzer Dauer zu sein scheinte, hat *Valse Triste* von allen Werken Balanchines in der Sowjetunion, dennoch das längste Leben an der Bühne und wurde bis in die 1990er Jahre in der Vaganova Ballettakademie gelehrt.

Goleizowskys Einfluss war der am weitreichendste. Sein Moskauer Kammerballett besuchte St. Peterburg im Jahr 1922. Insbesondere die Elemente der Konstruktivisten brachten es auf die Ballettbühne. Viele dieser Elemente finden sich in Balanchines Arbeit wieder, insbesondere die Nutzung von Körpern, um Formationen zu bauen, wie in *Marche Funèbre* (1923), und die langen Ketten von Armen wie in *Apollon Musagète.* Diese Konzepte nutzte er sowohl in vielen seiner früheren als auch späteren Werke. Auch Goleizowskys barfuss Tanzen fand sich in Balanchines Balletten *Étude* (1923) und *Enigma* (1923) wieder*,* verschwand jedoch danach aus seinen Choreogaphien.

Doch nicht jedermann unterstützte die neuen Kunstrichtungen. Sowohl in Moskau als auch in Sankt Petersburg entstanden Konflikte an den Staatstheatern. Manche wollten das Ballett reformieren, andere die klassischen Formen bewahren. 1925 berichtete die New York Times in einem Artikel über die Reformen von Goleizowsky: "Moskau ist gespalten in zwei Lager: Eine Gruppe besteht auf der Erhaltung alter Tanzformen, die andere ruft lautstark nach einer Revolution des Balletts. Während die eine Gruppe das klassische Ballett unterstützt, macht sich die andere für das Konstruktivistische stark ... Zur ersten Gruppe gehören jene, die die Kunst an sich schätzen – unabhängig von modernen Kennzeichen. Die zweite Gruppe besteht aus jenen, die nach neuen Kunstformen suchen und sich bereitwillig vor jedem verbeugen, der sich selbst als Anführer einer revolutionären Kunst bezeichnet." (McLove 1925, 8) Je mehr der Einfluss von Goleizowsky und anderen in Sankt Petersburg

wuchs, desto größer wurde der Konflikt. Balanchine war damals noch ein junger Student am Mariinsky Theater, doch die Direktoren der Staatstheater pflegten die klassischen Stücke und missbilligten daher Balanchines choreographische Bemühungen. Da er dort keiner Zukunft als Choreograph entgegensehen konnte, wandte er sich anderen Veranstaltungsorten zu, um seine Stücke aufzuführen. Zuerst trat er in kleinen Clubs im Rahmen von Varietés auf. Später gründete er mit Studenten und anderen jungen Balletttänzern seine eigene Gruppe, die als Junges Ballet bekannt wurde, um abendfüllende Programme aufzuführen.

Die Entwicklung vom Klassischen Ballett zum neoklassischen Ballett kann in vielen seiner früheren Werke gesehen werden. Sein Pas de Deux *Poème* (1921)*,* sowie *Étude, Enigma* und *La Nuit*, zeigen die fließende Qualität, die Goleizowsky auch anstrebte, und nutzten den Tanz selber, um Emotionen auszudrücken. *Valse Triste* zeigt den direkten Einfluss von Duncan. In all diesen Tänzen trugen die Tänzer für das Ballett ungewöhnliche Kostüme: sie trugen eine Tunika, die damalige Trainingskleidung. Sein Ballett *Die Zwölf (1923)* wurde ohne Musik zu einer dramatischen Interpretation von Bloks Gedicht choreographiert, etwas, das Balanchine nicht wiederholte. Ein Stück jedoch, *Marche Funèbre,* das von dem Jungen Ballett im Auditorium der Duma am Newsky Prospekt aufgeführt wurde, zeigt am deutlichsten den Beginn der Transformation.

Der vielleicht auffälligste Aspekt des *Marche Funèbre* war, dass er für eine runde Bühne konzipiert war, sich jedoch auch ohne Probleme an eine normale Bühne anpassen ließ. (Slonimsky 1991, 64) Geva erinnert sich, dass Balanchine damals behauptete, "Tanz solle wie eine Skulptur vollkommen und von allen vier Seiten sehenswert sein." (Geva 1984, 300) Nach Ansicht Souritz war die von Geva beschriebene Faszination von Vsevolod Vsevolodsky-Gerngross inspiriert, dem Leiter des experimentellen Ethnographischen Theaters von Petrograd. Souritz sagt, er sei besessen gewesen von der "Idee eines Amphitheaters für die Vorstellung, einer kreisförmigen Bühne mit Sitzen rundherum". Eine solche Bühne baute er im Auditorium der Duma. (Souritz 1990 „The Young Balanchine in Russia," 68)

Die ungewöhnliche Wahl der Bühne war das offensichtlichste Zeichen für den Einfluss des konstruktivistischen Theaters auf das Stück, aber auch andere Elemente bestimmten das Ballett. Das Thema des Todes sowie Chopins Marsch brachten die alltägliche Realität der Zuschauer auf die Bühne. Da diese Musik regelmäßig auf den Straßen

Sankt Petersburgs bei Trauermärschen gespielt wurde, war die Ausspielung auf den Tod für das damalige Publikum unmissverständlich.

Dieses Ballett enthält Formationen, die aus den Körpern der Tänzer gebaut wurden. Zeitzeugin und Tänzerin der Aufführung Vera Kostrovitskaya beschreibt: "Zu einem neuen Satz aus dem gleichen Musikabschnitt trugen drei junge Männer ein auf dem Rücken liegendes Mädchen. Sie hielten sie hoch auf ihren ausgestreckten Armen und schritten langsam voran, wurden sogar noch etwas langsamer und legten das Mädchen schließlich am gegenüberliegenden Ausgang auf den Boden. Gleichzeitig sanken sie wie die anderen auf ihre Knie." (Slonimsky 1991, 64) Vermutlich lag das Mädchen flach auf seinem Rücken und wurde wie ein Sarg von Leichenträgern über die Bühne getragen. Geva, die selbst diese Rolle verkörpert hat, erinnert sich, dass sie von den Männern in einer hohen Brücke gehalten wurde. (Geva 1976) Auch Danilova beschreibt, dass es verschiedene Gruppen gab: "Statt Gruppen auf dem Boden waren es Gruppen in der Luft." (Danilova 1978-1979) Eine andere Zeitzeugin, Tatjana Bruni sagte: "Die Prozession gelangte unter einem Scheinwerfer durch das Publikum zur Bühne. Die Gruppen waren auf sehr interessante, individuelle Weise angeordnet." (Slonimsky 1991, 65) Diese Aussage bezieht sich ganz klar auf Gevas Gruppe. Doch der Gebrauch des Plurals sowie Danilovas Beschreibung von Gruppen in der Luft lässt die Frage offen, ob andere Tänzer ebenfalls in Gruppenformationen aufgetreten sind. Und wenn ja, an welchen Stellen im Ballett.

Marche Funèbre zeigt einen weiteren wichtigen Einfluss der Konstruktivisten, insbesondere von Meyerholds Biomechanik. Dies demonstrieren Balanchines akrobatische Figuren, die Brücken und Arabesquen am Boden, sowie die Gruppenelemente in der Luft. In späteren zeitgenössischen Stücken zeigen sich ebenfalls konstruktivistische Elemente.

Die Entwicklung kann in Balanchines Arbeit bei der Ballets Russes weiter verfolgt werden. Auch in seinem ersten wichtigen Ballett für Diaghilev, *Le Chant du Rossignol* (1925), zeigte Balanchine den Einfluss der Konstruktivisten. Aber sie scheinen ihren Höhepunkt in dem Ballett *La Chatte* (1927) zu erreichen. Doch all dies sind Elemente, mit denen Balanchine bereits im *Marche Funèbre* experimentierte: der Gebrauch eines ungewöhnlichen Ortes, von Kostümen, Beleuchtung, Akrobatik sowie tänzerischen Figuren am Boden und in der Luft.

La Chatte wurde für ein Paar und ein Corps de ballets von sechs Männern gemacht. Die ungewöhnlichen Bühnenbilder und Kostüme wurden von den russischen Konstruktivisten Naum Gabo und Antoine Pevsner kreiert. Lydia Sokolova beschrieb die „interplanitären Qualitäten" des Bühnenbilds: „ausgeschnittene Strukturen und abstrakte Objekte, die aus einem neuen Material, Talk, gegen Behänge von amerikanischem Ölmaterial aufgehen; sie blitzten, als sie das Licht empfingen." (Sokolova 1989, 259)

Wie in *Marche Funèbre*, arbeitete Balanchine mit verschieden Ebenen und Formationen aus Körpern. In diesem Ballett brachte er seine Ideen weiter als vorher. Am Anfang des Balletts, der Corps de Ballet plus Serge Lifar, der die Hauptrolle tanzte, formierte sich eine Pyramide. Eine Photographie zeigt die Ebenen, erreicht von den Tänzern. Zwei liegen spiegelbildlich am Boden, einer ist auf den Knien, den Kopf nach vorne gebeugt, und hält die Beine von einem anderen Tänzer, der steht. Zwei Tänzer stehen in einem tiefen Plié auf dem einen Bein, das zweite Bein nach hinten gestreckt. Der stehende Tänzer ist direkt vor dem Tänzer, der auf den Knien sitzt. Der Siebte, Lifar, sitzt auf den Schultern des stehenden Mannes. Die Arme der Tänzer formen eine Kette sowohl innerhalb als auch außerhalb der Pyramide. Am Ende des Balletts formen die Tänzer eine Kortege. Diese Formation erinnert an die Kortege in *Marche Funèbre.*

Der Einfluss der Biomechanik zeigt sich in den Bewegungen der Tänzer. Die Choreographie nutzte viele Schritte, die direkt an verschiedene Sportarten der antiken Griechen erinnern. Auch das Solo der Katze, die einzige Frauenrolle des Balletts war durch geprägt. Andere Ballette, die Balanchine für das Ballets Russes choreographierte, zeigten Einflüsse der Biomechanik und Aspekte der Populärkultur. *Barabau* (1925) „sah aus wie ein tanzender Charlie Chaplin" (Geva 1976), und in seiner eigenen Rolle in *Le Triomphe de Neptune* (1926) nutzte Balanchine viele akrobatische Elemente, die an den „cakewalk" der schwarzen Tanzkultur angelehnt waren. (Buckle 1988, 40) In anderen Tänzen nutzte Balanchine Schritte, die noch nie zuvor gemacht worden waren, aber in späteren Balletten auftauchten. Dazu gehörten der „Corkscrew Turn" aus *La Chatte* und eine *promenade* in *arabesque*, in der der Mann die Frau am Bein dreht, anstatt sie mit der Hand herumzuführen. Diese Schritte hatten Doubrovska und Lifar zum ersten Mal in *La Pastorale* (1926) gemacht. Später wurden sie in *Serenade* angewandt. In all diesen Tänzen brachte Balanchine den synkopischen Rhythmus der Jazz- Musik in die Choreographien mit ein, ein Element das bis dato nicht im Balletttanz gefunden wurde.

Balanchine's Transformation des klassischen Tanzes war in *Apollon Musagète* (1928) vervollkommnet worden. Igor Stravinsky schrieb das Libretto und komponierte das Ballett mit dem „ballet blanc" im Sinn. Dieses Thema verwendete Balanchine in dem gesamten Stück und choreographierte dieses Ballett mit großer Genauigkeit zu Stravinskys Musik. Stravinsky sagte, dass „Balanchine die Tänze genau so arrangierte, wie ich sie haben wollte…entsprechend der klassischen Schule….Balanchine …entwerfe die Choreographie von *Apollo*, Gruppen, Bewegungen und Linien von großer Würde und plastischer Eleganz, von der Schönheit der klassischen Formen inspiriert." (Balanchine and Mason 1977 28-29) Seine Wiederkehr zur romantischen Ästhetik des „ballet blanc" zeigte den Einfluss Fokines. Die musikalische Genauigkeit von Balanchines Choreographie wurde sowohl von seinem Hintergrund als Musiker als auch seiner Erfahrung in Lopukhovs *Tanzsymphonie* geprägt.

Von Anfang an zeigte dieser Tanz den Einfluss des konstruktivistischen Theaters: Die Tänzer tanzen auf verschieden Plattformen wie in Goleizowskys Stücken. Wie in *Marche Funèbre* und *La Chatte* wurden Ebenen und Formationen durch Körper verbildlicht. Diese Technik hatte Balanchine in *Apollon Musagète* verfeinert. Einige dreidimensionale Figuren wurden mit den Körpern der Tänzer in architektonischer Form dargestellt.

Auch das klassische Vokabular wurde in *Apollon Musagète* erweitert. Die Frauen tanzten auf Spitzen, aber viele Schritte wurden sowohl auf Zehenspitzen als auch auf den Fußhacken gemacht, eine revolutionäre Entwicklung für diese Zeit. (Danilova 1988, 96) Apollo machte Pirouetten mit einer traditionellen *tombé pas de bouree* Vorbereitung, aber die Schritte wurden mit parallelen Füßen austelle von nach aussen gedrehten Fuessen getazt. Der Schwierigkeitsgrad dieses Balletts war größer als der der klassischen Ballette von Petipa. Eine Tänzerin tanzte ihre ganze Variation mit ihrem Finger vor dem Mund. Danilova sagt, dass es „eine neue Herangehensweise war, anders als alles, was wir vorher gemacht hatten." (Danilova 1988, 99) Auch die klassische Linie hatte Balanchine in diesem Tanz geändert. Zum Beispiel wurden beim Eingang der Musen die Arme der Frauen erst verlängert, aber danach durch eine gebeugte Hand gebrochen.

Durch die Mischung des modernen mit dem klassischen Vokabular hat Balanchine in diesem Ballett etwas Neues geschaffen: den Neo-Klassischen Tanz. Die Akademischen Theater in der Sowjetunion behielten das klassische Repertoire und schlossen die modernen Innovationen aus. Andere Choreographen dieser Zeit versuchten, die Klassik durch die

Moderne zu ersetzen. Balanchine schaffte es, sie effektiv zu kombinieren. Im Jahr 1952 schrieb Slonimsky, dass „in den 1920er Jahren das Sowjetische Ballett durch alle Phasen des barfuss Naturalismus, des durchdringenden Konstruktivismus, des unnatürlichen plastischen Expressionismus und des erotischen Orientalismus ging. Aber Zeit und Realität legten, wie gewöhnlich, den Irrtum der seinerzeit herrschenden Vorstellungen frei.“ (Taper 1984, 57) Slonimsky beschrieb den Sieg des klassischen Tanzes über moderne Formen in der Sowjetunion, aber seine Äußerung beschreibt auch die Prozesse, durch die Balanchines Choreographien in den 1920er Jahre gingen. Er behielt die besten Elementen aus den modernen Tanzbewegungen, kombinierte sie mit der besten Charakteristik des klassischen Vokabulars und schaffte dadurch eine Revolution in der Kunst des Balletts.

Viele Studien über die Werke von Balanchine beginnen mit *Apollon Musagète;* sie beginnen dort, wo die folgende Arbeit zu Ende geht. Es wird demonstriert, wie er zu dem Choreographen wurde, der die Welt des Tanzes veränderte. Durch das verbesserte Verständnis des frühen Lebens und der Werke von Balanchine werden auch Studien, die auf seine späteren Werke fokussiert sind, ein besseres Verständnis erhalten.

Notes

Chapter Two: First Encounters at Theater School (1913-1920)

[1] Taper mentioned that the dancers of the Maryinsky sometimes talked about the future of the ballet in the new society (Taper 1984, 51) and he also mentioned that Balanchine stood in the wings at the Maryinsky listening to debates at the Communist Party meetings. He said that "the debates-grim, involved, devious, tedious-scarcely worked the same magic on him; but they made an impression." (Taper 1984, 48) However, the political controversy surrounding the closing and later reopening of the theaters is not always mentioned in the memoirs of the dancers, and when, only as a side note, often without mentioning any of the political figures involved, nor do any of the dancers seem to have taken a position on these issues. The children were mainly concerned with the reopening of the school and the commencement of their educations as dancers. If they were aware that the entire future of the ballet was in danger, they do not mention it, their concerns focused on basics: food, heat, and dance.

[2] Slonimsky also entered this school and became acquainted with Balanchine when the school opened to "outsiders." He said that the ballet school was forced to share its building with the newly formed School of Russian Drama, for which Slonimsky auditioned and was accepted. He said that his first interest in dance was only as a prerequisite for entering the drama school. (Slonimsky 1991, 35-36)

[3] The dancers always referred to this class as "ballroom," but it bore no resemblance to modern ballroom dancing, rather the students learned court dances such as passepied and minuet. (Geva 1976)

[4] Gevergeyeva will be used to refer to Tamara Geva's father, and she will be referred to by the western version of her name, Geva. She first changed her name to Geva when she left the Ballets Russes and toured America with Chauve-Souris. One review remarked the she "is the dancer who has dropped several syllables from her name and put them into her dancing." (Martin 1927)

[5] Taper explained that Balanchine was doing a parody of V.P. Rapoport, the artistic director of the theater, and that he not only managed to look like him, but was able to imitate his movements so well that "throughout this impersonation stifled sobs of laughter could be heard from what had been the czar's box in the theater but which after the revolution had become the box assigned for the use of artists of the opera and ballet companies." (Taper 1984, 64)

[6] It is possible that the rumors that Balanchine was not a very good dancer come from his short career as a dancer at Ballets Russes. Danilova also recalled that "…he was an excellent dancer, very able. I always was amused that Ninette de Valois never want to give him credit. She said that he was horrible dancer, which wasn't true." (Danilova 1973 *Part I,* 40-41)

[7] Slonimsky said that Balanchine appeared more frequently in children's roles in plays at Alexandrinky Theater than in ballets at the Maryinsky. (Slonimsky 1991, 24)

[8]Gevergeyeva, who had not allowed his daughter to attend Theater School because of the lack of education, later allowed her to become a private ballet student and eventually to audition for the evening program at the School because of the drastic changes the Revolution had brought. He believed that she needed a profession to survive. (Geva 1984, 136)

[9] Regarding Vaganova's training, Danilova recalled: "I can't say that she gave me anything I didn't have before." (Ackerman and Summer 1982, 12)

[10] The original cast of *The Sleeping Beauty* included Carlotta Brianza in the role of Aurora, and Enrico Cecchetti in the roles of Carabosse and the Bluebird.

[11] Danilova recalled that the following ballets, important to our study because of her influence in bringing these ballets to the West, were part of the repertory during those years: *Paquita, Raymonda, Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty, Don Quixote, Esmeralda, La Bayadère, The Nutcracker.* She said, however, that their *Nutcracker* was later changed by the Bolsheviks to replace the traditional religious Christmas setting. (Danilova 1988, 52)

[12] These variations also demonstrate the technical advances dancers have made in the past 100 years, a point often made by those who later became teachers in the West including Danilova, Doubrovska and Geva. Whereas these variations were choreographed for the ballerina's of the Maryinsky, Danilova taught them to her young ballet students in her variations classes at the School of American Ballet. (Danilova 1988, 183)

[13] Taper, said that, with the exception of L*es Sylphides,* Fokine did not influence Balanchine much. (Taper 1984, 58)

[14] Unlike many Russian dancers and choreographers who never returned to work in Russia, Fokine worked both at the Maryinsky and in the West and his ballets remained part of the repertory in the Soviet Union.

[15] This ballet was first performed at the Maryinsky in 1907 under the title *Chopiniana.* It was later performed by the Ballets Russes in the West where it became known as *Les Sylphides.*

[16] Danilova also recalled having performed in Fokine's *Eros* and *Les Preludes,* (Danilova 1988, 53) as well as performing a children's role in his ballet *Eunice* (Danilova 1988, 40) and in his opera *Orpheus and Eurydice.* (Danilova 1988, 31)

[17] Scholl points out that Gorsky had produced a plotless ballet in Moscow before Fokine. (Scholl 1994, 64)

[18] Interestingly, Balanchine used the same music for this ballet that Fokine had already used: "Fokine did Tchaikovsky's *Serenade* for strings, he called it *Eros.* I didn't like it very much, so I did *Serenade* my own way." (Volkov 1985, 215) According to Souritz, this ballet was among those reconstructed by Lopukhov in the early 1920's for the Maryinsky Theater, and it is probable that Balanchine danced in Fokine's version of the dance. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 260) Perhaps at this point he became attracted to the music. Most interesting is that he took a piece of music originally choreographed by Fokine and created

his own ballet to the music, his own choreography but with the artistic aesthetic he had learned from Fokine.

[19] This dance is referred to as *Romance* by Geva in some sources. (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 30)

[20] It is worth mentioning that Balanchine was definitely a rebel in the eyes of both the authorities at the Maryinsky and the press critics of St. Petersburg. He fought against the restrictions of the theater which had canonized the series of rules of dancing. While rejecting these rules, he rejected neither the aesthetics nor the choreography of the man to whom they are generally attributed, Petipa.

Chapter Three: From Classical to the Avant-garde: Early Soviet Influences

[1] In her introduction to Elizabeth Souritz's book *Soviet Choreographer's of the 1920's*, Sally Banes stated that the years 1917 to 1927 were "the time of the greatest freedom and innovation in the arts, the formative years of the country and the culture, when debates and experiments were deemed not only possible, but important. After 1928, with the first five-year plan and the consolidation of the art institutions, stylistic freedom gradually narrowed until the 1934 Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers proclaimed Socialist Realism he only official style." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographer's of the 1920's*, 2)

[2] Geva said that both Danilova and Ivanova often had Efimov as a partner while performing at halutras, (Geva 1984, 309) and Danilova described him as a "quite capable boy." (Danilova 1978-1979)

[3] Meyerhold was instrumental in forming the role of the arts in the new government. When the Bolsheviks invited 20 artists to join them for a meeting to discuss the new role in society, Meyerhold was one of only five artists who accepted. The others were: "the painter and sculptor Natan Altman, the poets Alexander Blok and Rurik Ivnev, the writer, painter and performer Vladimir Mayakovsky, and the theater director Vsevolod Meyerhold." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's*, 4)

[4] While praising the contributions to ballet made by both Lopukhov and Goleizovsky, Mamontov also say that, while having enriched Soviet choreography, they proved to the new generation of Soviet dancers (written about 20 years later) that the "seeking of form alone cannot promote the growth of choreography" and that from this period "classical dance emerged victorious." (Mamontov 1947, 61)

[5] In contrast, Danilova said that Goleizovsky's dance was related to the biblical story. (Danilova 1988, 58)

[6] Souritz listed some of the members: Alexandra Danilova, Lydia Ivanova, Olga Mungalova, Peter Gusev, Nikolai Efimov. She included the visual artist Vladimir Dmitriev, Boris Erbstein Tatiana Bruni, the "art Scholar Yuri Slonimsky" and the musician Vladimir Dranisnikov in her list. (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 75)

[7] Interestingly, although he had worked with Gorsky at the Bolshoi in Moscow (Willis-Aarnio 2002, 293), he took a completely different approach to the classics. Souritz says that

Lopukhov's "kind of reconstruction…proved more fruitful than Gorsky's revivals in Moscow. While in Moscow there was a tendency to depart further and further from the author's versions, in Leningrad the originals were preserved for the future. Thanks to this activity, the Leningrad ballet for many years became the chief guardian of the ballet legacy." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 260)

[8] Souritz says that Balanchine probably danced in the corps de ballet in Lopukhov´s *Firebird*, but that this experience was not as important as his performances in Lopukhov's reconstructions of Petipa's ballets or *Dance Symphony.* (Souritz 1990 "The Young Balanchine in Russia," 68)

[9] It is interesting to compare Lopukhov's musical goals for his work with Martha Graham's description of Balanchine's relationship to music: "It's like watching light pass through a prism. The music passes through him, and the same natural yet marvelous way that a prism refracts light, he refracts music into dance." (Taper 1984, 16)

[10] Lopukhov's greatest success, namely reconstructing the classical ballets seemed to have taken place almost simultaneously with his failures, *Dance Symphony* and *The Red Whirlwind.*

[11] Souritz said that Gorsky claimed that his revival of Petipa's *Little Humpbacked Horse* (1901), as well as dances in *Nur and Anitra* (1907)*,* and *Etudes* (1908), were directly influenced by Duncan. For both Gorsky and Fokine, she represented freedom from the constraints of traditional classic dance, from the costumes, to the academic positions, ending with the traditional groupings of Petipa's ballets. (Souritz 1995, 283)

[12] Souritz also stated that the reviews are "mostly enthusiastic." She went on to explain, however, that her performances and the opening of her dance school in the 1920's was more of a political event than an artistic one. She said that Lunacharsky repeatedly reminded people in his speeches and article that Duncan was an American who "had come to Russia scorning danger and hardship, who rejoiced at the overthrow of the tsarist regime, who was eager to dance for the workers and teach their children." (Souritz 1995, 288)

Chapter Four: The Repertory of the Young Ballet (1921-1924)

[1] Kostrovitskaya said that the following dances were part of the two programs of the Young Ballet: Adagio from *The Little Grace,* the adagio from *Les Sylphides,* pas de trios from *Paquita,* dance of Berenika (with a snake) from *Egyptian Nights, Flight, Night, Flight of the Bumblebee, Ecstase, Valse Triste, Dying Swan, Elegy, Poème,* Geva and Balanchine: adagio with high lifts, Stukolkina and Mikhailov: Spanish Dance, *Spring,* and *Funeral March.* She said that all were prepared and performed at different times. Interesting is that dances were choreographed by many different dancers-Balanchine choreographed some, but not all of the dances. (Slonimsky 1991 62-63)

[2] In addition, pantomimes, operas, and drama stagings will not be analyzed in this study, only works directly choreographed as dances.

[3] This poem was controversial at the time for its combination of revolutionary themes with religious ones. Some revolutionaries believed that Blok's work belonged to the work from before the Revolution, and were not sure what to do with it. However, he was one of the

artists who attended the meeting with the Bolsheviks to discuss the future of Soviet art. Because he "crossed over" to the other side, many of his émigré friends never spoke to him again.

[4] Danilova on the other hand, spoke at length about the difficult circumstances of their lives in Russia, in particular citing it as a reason that she decided not to return. (Danilova1973 *Part I,* 33; Danilova 182; Danilova 1988, 59) The majority of Geva's autobiography covered her life in Russia: the short Postscript and Epilogue covered the tour of the Soviet Dancers and the rest of her career. (Geva 1984)

[5] *Choreography by George Balanchine: A Catalogue of Works* said that ten or twelve dancers performed in this dance; Geva says the same. Because the poem has twelve sections and twelve soldiers compose the primary part of the action, it is likely that the number of dancers was twelve.

[6] Souritz said that Balanchine would have had the opportunity to see several of Meyerhold's productions including *The Magnanimous Cuckold* (1922), *Earth in Turmoil* (1923), *Profitable Post* (1923) and *Give Us Europe* (1924) since the company regularly toured St. Petersburg. (Souritz 1990 "Young Balanchine in Russia," 66)

[7] According to Souritz, Petipa's version of *Giselle* was "almost constantly on the stage in Russia from 1842 onward." (Souritz 1990 *Soviet Choreographers of the 1920's,* 20)

[8] Although Balanchine never saw Nijinsky's *Sacre du Printemps*, a ballet which also deals with the theme of death, it is interesting to note that Nijinsky also used the corps de ballet in a circle formation in an unconventional way. By moving the main focus of the action from the front to the inside of the circle, Nijinsky made a radical break from the classical tradition. However, as opposed to Balanchine who used the circle to create a stage perspective that united the audience and the performers, Nijinsky used this technique to shut out the audience. (Brandstetter 1997, 130)

[9] In C*oppélia*, Danilova danced Prayer, Ivanova Dawn; in the *Little Humpbacked Horse*, they were sea urchins; in *Giselle*, two friends and the two lead Wilis. In *Le Corsaire*, they danced the pas de trios, and alternated the diamond variation in *Sleeping Beauty.* (Danilova 1988, 55)

[10] Geva says that this ballet prefigures Balanchine's ballet, *La Sonnambula.* (Geva 1991, 13)

Chapter Five: The Bridge from East to West: The Tour of the Soviet Dancers (1924)

[1] Accounts of the tour give the dancers different names. Tracy and De Lano called the group the "Soviet State Dancers" in their book *Balanchine's Ballerinas: Conversations with the Muses* (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 20, 31), as did Taper in *Balanchine: A Biography* (Taper 1984 70). In his New School Lecture in 1972, Balanchine called them the "Soviet Dancers," (Balanchine 1972), a name also used by Archer and Hodson (Archer and Hodson 2003, 1). Finally, the group was referred to as the "Principal Dancers of the Russian State Ballet" in *Choreography by George Balanchine: a Catalogue of Works* (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 24).

[2] The dancers said little about the musicians, probably because they returned to Russia so early and never actually performed with the dancers.

[3] Danilova recalled that when her aunt died when she was twelve, she inherited a large sum of money, but never seemed to have benefited from it, since outside of this short sentence, she never mentioned it. She said, "I think my aunt must have named me as her sole heir, because from then on, I was often told, 'You will be very rich, my dear, a nice fiancée.'" (Danilova 1988, 37)

[4] According to Dodenhoeft, the Red Cross reported 560,000 Russian refugees in Germany in 1920. (Dodenhoeft 1993, 9)

[5] Dodenhoeft listed many of the most prominent of these intellectuals.

[6] Issues of the *Neue Schaubühne* from 1921 to 1922 said very little about ballet, but contained numerous articles about modern dance, in particular Mary Wigman and Rudolf von Laban.

[7] According to Woitas, after the First World War, "the Germans developed expressionistic dance as a counter movement to ballet and remained isolated from the latest events happening on the large stages of the world for decades." (Woitas 1996, 21)

[8] It is possible, but unlikely that the person who arranged the recitals was Count Harry Kessler, an important figure in the art world of Germany in the first decades of the 20th century. He had been involved with the Ballets Russes, working with Hofmannsthal on the libretto for the ballet *The Legend of Joseph* (1914). As an advocate of internationalism, he had many connections within both the Russian émigré community as well as the broader German culture and would have had the contacts as well as the desire to help the young struggling group of dancers. (Easton 2002, 209) In 1923 he bought a house in Berlin (Newman L.M. 1995 124), making it likely that he was in the city at the time that the Soviet Dancers arrived, and his connection with the Russian émigré community would make him a likely candidate. However, he was neither a piano representative in Leningrad as Danilova recalled, nor was he in Wiesbaden at the time as Geva recalled, and their descriptions of "Mr. Kessler" do not match those of Count Harry Kessler. In addition, the class conscious women, both of whom dated nobility as some points in their lives, probably would not have failed to mention Count Kessler with his title if he had been the Mr. Kessler who arranged the recitals.

[9] Although the role of Snowball in *The Triumph of Neptune* was based on a real person in the neighborhood of Sitwell, author of the book on which the ballet was based, the dance itself was typical of the black and black-faced performers, which were numerous in the music halls of London.

[10] This was probably a true statement; it just fails to mention the quality of the performances. The dancers had enough to eat for the first time in years and were on an exciting adventure for young people, which certainly could be described as a "lovely time."

[11] World War I had left France with a shortage of workers, and foreigners were welcomed into the country to add to the workforce, accounting for the large number of Russians who settled there. This explains why the Soviet Dancers were able to go to France with their Soviet passports.

[12] This ballet was not intended to be performed in practice clothes. The costumes for the first performance were not ready on time.

Chapter Six: Choreographer for the Ballets Russes

[1] In later years, Balanchine said that he thought Scriabin's "piano sonatas are very, very good. But take his piano concerto: it starts out in an attractive way, quite beautifully, and then wham, there's nothing left, it's all over. And from then on it's painfully uninteresting. Scriabin's symphonies are terribly orchestrated." (Volkov 1985, 209)

[2] In particular, Lynn Garafola's *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, Boris Kochno's *Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes*, and Buckle's *Nijinsky* (1971), *Diaghilev* (1979), and *In the Wake of Diaghilev (1982)*, and *The World of the Ballets Russes* (1999) edited by Lynn Garafola and Nancy Van Norman Baer.

[3] Like Danilova, Markova was known for her memory. She was not only able to remember her own roles in the ballets she danced, but usually could recall the entire ballets. (Vaughan 1977, 56)

[4] Geva thought that Diaghilev fell in love with Nijinsky, and that this could be one of the reasons he decided to bring ballet to the West, (Geva 1979*)* a notion which seems to be supported by Balanchine: "His real interest in ballet was sexual. He could not bear the sight Danilova…Once when I was standing next to him at a rehearsal for *Apollo,* he said 'How beautiful…'" Balanchine mistakenly thought he was referring to the music, but was quickly corrected that Diaghilev was referring to Lifar's physique. (Joseph 2002, 52) In any case Nijinsky did become Diaghilev's lover, and was fired from the company by a heartbroken Diaghilev when he married. This scenario was repeated by Massine. When he married in 1921 after having been Diaghilev's lover and choreographer for a number of years, Diaghilev reportedly became suicidal. (Geva 1979*)*

[5] On the other hand, *From Petipa to Balanchine: Classical Revival and the Modernization of Ballet,* Scholl contended that Balanchine's creation of three dimensional formations in *Apollo* were inspired by and done in contrast to the two dimensional dances Nijinsky created in his *The Afternoon of a Faun*, the only ballet Nijinsky choreographed which Balanchine personally saw. (Scholl 1994, 98)

[6] Buckle said that "for twenty years 'ballet' had meant the Diaghilev Ballet…Outside of Russia, what was there except the famous old Paris Opéra Ballet, which had become a joke, and the Royal Danish Ballet, which nobody knew anything about?" (Buckle 1988, 53-54)

[7] Interestingly, in one letter, Balanchine explains to Diaghilev that Geva will not be able to dance that season because her doctor had forbidden her to dance because of her "crazy diet concoctions." (September 26, 1927) Danilova also recalled getting sick from taking too many dieting pills. (Danilova 1988, 73) It would seem that the dancers of the Ballets Russes were already becoming conscious of the aesthetic worth of slim dancers, something which was not an issue in Russia.

[8] Just as one can speculate as to how ballet in the West would look without Balanchine, one can wonder how Soviet dance history would look without Kostrovitskaya and Mikhailov had they left Russia and joined the Ballets Russes.

[9] Buckle said that the premiere was attended by Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso, but that Balanchine was not particularly impressed because he had hardly heard of them. (Buckle 1988, 35)

[10] Doubrovska left Russia in 1920. (Huckenpahler 1983, 376) She knew Balanchine only slightly since she was eight years older than he was, far ahead of him at Theater School. (Huckenpahler 1983, 388)

[11] Balanchine said that Diaghilev told the princess that the performance had to be cancelled, and that it was she who insisted that Balanchine perform the role of the Nightingale.

[12] Many of the ballets from the last years of the Ballets Russes, those done when Balanchine was choreographer, were built around "the talents and personal beauty of Diaghilev's favorite, Serge Lifar." (Vaughan 1979, 63)

[13] Although in his book on the Ballets Russes, Kochno admitted that the choreography of *La Pastorale* "lacked substance" and that "the action was confused," (Kochno 1970, 238), in another place he said it was a sensation. (Kochno 1991, 83)

[14] For example Massine's 1917 ballet *Parade,* an important work both in terms of the choreography as well as the cubist sets by Picasso, was intentionally created to combine the elements of the low arts with the high, presenting a circus, including acrobats, a Chinese conjuror, and a girl who dances to ragtime music dressed in a dress so common that Picasso had actually bought in a store.

[15] Balanchine and Danilova got together shortly after Geva's breakup with Balanchine, which, according to Danilova, was the reason Geva left the company. (Tracy and De Lano 1983, 24) Although Balanchine choreographed dances for her, he wrote Diaghilev a biting letter on September 26, 1927 saying that "Miss Gevergeva will not be available this year. Thanks to her crazy dieting concoctions, her doctor has forbidden her to dance. She has turned to Mr. Balieff, and will sing in a Gypsy chorus and clap her hands." (Balanchine September 26, 1927)

[16] Diaghilev said she was crazy when he received her resignation, since he had just received Sokolova's resignation as well. (Tracy and De Lano, 1983 33)

[17] The ballerina Olga Spessivtseva trained at Theater School and danced at the Maryinsky from 1918 to 1923 before joining the Ballets Russes. She was known in the West for her performances in *Giselle* and *Swan Lake.* (Dolin 1963, 34-35)

[18] Balanchine's eroticism is almost harmless compared to Nijinsky's *The Afternoon of a Faun.* In Paris he was not the rebel he had been in St. Petersburg, but was free to experiment without restrictions.

[19] Romola Nijinsky, wife of Nijinsky, said that "if she would have been allowed to continue her dancing in a company like the original Maryinsky or the present Bolshoi she would certainly have entered the place which she deserves among the immortal dancers…" (Nijinsky 1960 67)

[20] Doubrovska recalled that she had injured her hip (Doubrovska 1975), Markova, however, said that Nikitina shared the role with Spessivtseva because her foot was acting up. Kochno said she had injured her leg and was then replaced by Nikitina who alternated the role with Markova. (Kochno 1970 255)

Chapter Seven: *Apollo:* The Final Transformation

[1] Originally titled *Apollon Musagète*, Stravinsky renamed the ballet *Apollo*. (Gruen 1987, 156) Both titles are used in productions today, but most English sources refer to it simply as *Apollo*.

[2] Danilova discussed some of the changes in detail in her autobiography, *Choura: the Memoirs of Alexandra Danilova.* (Danilova 1988, 97-100)

[3] It is also telling that in all these ballets, while the female leads and soloists were often in alternating casts, Lifar almost always performed the leading role.

[4] Igor Youskevitch, who also learnt the role of Apollo from Balanchine, described Balanchine's choreography as being mathematical, as did Markova, and explained the connection between the choreography and the music: "I had a kind of a rhythmic passage with certain type of steps to do, and something with my wrists, I had to open and close and so forth, so I asked Mr. Balanchine. I said, 'Any specific thing I have to do with this?' 'No, no, no, no, nothing. It's just simply design, exactly what it is. You close and open your wrist. It corresponds with some sound in the music.'" (Youskevitch 1975)

[5] Balanchine removed this section after Stravinsky's death.

[6] While in this interview Danilova described her willingness to comply to Diaghilev's wishes, in her autobiography, she said she was not happy about having to share the role with Nikitina. (Danilova 1988, 98)

[7] Balanchine's two major works for the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo were centered on Toumanova, *Cotillon* and *La Concurrence*, both of which premiered in 1932 and were performed by the company throughout Europe, North American, South America and Australia. According the *Catalogue*, these ballets are credited with "providing the basis for Balanchine's early reputation in the United States." (Simmonds et. al. 1983, 110)

[8] Both *La Chatte* and *Apollo* were based on ancient Greek themes, and the original productions both utilized two symbols of the ancient world: the pyramid and the chariot. While it is most likely that Balanchine was experimenting with the form of the pyramids mostly for their aesthetic quality, it is not to be overlook that it is also an important symbol of the ancient world.

[9] Most of the dancers who have performed this role describe the feet as "turned in." In this study, I will use the term "parallel" or "sixth position" to distinguish the position from the truly turned in feet Nijinsky used in his anti-ballet, *Sacre du Printemps*, to emphasize that Balanchine sought to extend the classical, not overthrow it.

[10] The execution of the grand battements is another example of steps that have changed radically since the original performance of *Apollo*. Since most of the dancers at that time were not in possession of the high extensions they are today, the original Muses probably performed the battement much lower, probably a little higher than 90 degrees, whereas modern dancers kick much higher.

[11] Interestingly, Diaghilev's criticism of Balanchine's early works in some ways applied to Ballet Russes' weakness: gimmicks distracting from the dancing.

[12] Scholl described that the plot itself was borrowed from the pages of ballet history: "Stravinsky's libretto adapts and abbreviates a favorite plot line of the nineteenth-century ballet: the selection of a mate from a number of suitors, the basic plot of both *Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake*." (Scholl 1994, 94)

[13] There is much controversy surrounding the transference of Petipa's choreography especially in regards to *Sleeping Beauty,* but Balanchine was certainly familiar with the different versions of the dance being performed. He had been in the Maryinsky productions as a child, participated in Lopukhov's reconstructions as a teenager, and had performed in the Diaghilev production. Since the use of piqué arabesques in a backwards diagonal appears in more than one version of the variations of both the Lilac Fairy and Aurora, I believe that these steps do accurately reflects the Petipa style, even if it is possible that they are not directly based on one of his combinations.

[14] Fokine also used the arms in *The Dying Swan*, but this dance was a direct duplication of the vocabulary of *Swan Lake.*

[15] At this point in the ballet, this formation was dynamic, the movements relatively quick, but near the end of the ballet a group formation was made in which one dancer leans left, one right, and one back with the arms in fifth. Apollo was part of this formation, but it was obviously a based on the figure from the earlier point in the ballet.

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