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The Politics of *Belle Époque* Ballet

By

Rachana P Vajjhala

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Music

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Richard Taruskin, Chair
Professor James Davies
Professor Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby

Spring 2015

Abstract

The Politics of *Belle Époque* Ballet

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Doctor of Philosophy in Music

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In "The Politics of *Belle Époque* Ballet," I confront the complex enmeshment of music and dance both historically as well as historiographically. To that end, the dissertation is divided into two broad sections. The first chapter considers the understudied dancer Natasha Trouhanova, whose ubiquity on all sorts of Parisian stages is belied by the critical silence surrounding her life and performances. Her eclecticism has made Trouhanova into something of a historical curiosity, worthy of passing interest but by no means a pivotal character in the story of ballet, or even dance more broadly, in Paris. Her varied career complicates neat demarcations historians have tended to make between the activities of lightly clad performers in popular venues, fragile émigré ballerinas, and the hallowed generation of female modernists who overhauled contemporary choreographic practice. I examine an evening performance she gave in the spring of 1912, which included works by Dukas, d'Indy, and Ravel. Her simulated nudity in *Istar* and her lilting *coquetterie* in *Adélaïde, ou le langage des fleurs* expose competing notions of beauty and femininity that themselves were products of the nation's declining birthrate and the resultant pronatalist movement. Chapter Two discusses *Daphnis et Chloé* and *L'Après-midi d'un faune*. While an examination of Trouhanova's career yielded a surfeit of uncombed historical evidence, these ballets by Ravel and Debussy have received much more critical attention. That said, scholars have yet to think fully about the choreographed component of these works within the larger gestural life of *belle époque* Paris. I present links between Fokine and Nijinsky's movements for *Daphnis* and *Faune* respectively and interest in contemporary optical technologies like chronophotography to animate classical statuary. Such connections reveal a new culture of visuality, one that privileged *Faune*'s minute flexing of the observed physique over *Daphnis*'s fluid and fluent gestures of the contemplated body.

The second half of the dissertation examines the attendant methodological complications of historiography on dance. My discussions of Trouhanova and *Faune* and *Daphnis* benefited from a comparative abundance of archival material, thereby allowing consideration not only of larger gestural context but also of specific choreography. *Jeux*, the topic of the third chapter, has had a respectable, though curious, material afterlife. That afterlife, however, has animated other problems, namely the continued bifurcation, indeed amputation, of gesture and music by admirers and critics alike. This chapter, and the one that follows, offer an opportunity to meditate on the potential yield and lingering limitations of studying so-called "lost" works. Chapter Three argues that *Jeux*'s gradual evaporation—its transformation

from material balletic production to immaterial abstracted score—serves as a parable of sorts. While I suggest that said evaporation was a function of the social divergence between supposedly healthy athleticism and enervating intellectualism, it is, I also argue, symptomatic of a larger problem with current historiographical practice, detectable in the Darmstadt reception of and reverence for *Jeux* and amplified in musicological writing to follow. The final chapter reflects on the most acute cases in the dissertation: *La Boîte à joujoux* and *Dolly*. Neither of these ballets have mobilized sustained critical interest. How then does one write about such works, which lack consistent documentation, and whose most stable artifact is the musical score itself? Through a reading of *belle époque* toy culture and Dalcrozean theory (among other contemporary sources), I suggest that, like the genre of ballet itself, French childhood faced a crossroads: an emphasis on physical excellence—whether in danced virtuosity or potentially militaristic training—upended concerns about emotiveness and individuation. I reach such a conclusion through a more speculative and searching approach to critical inquiry than has previously been used when thinking about ballet.

Contents

Acknowledgements		ii
	Introduction	iii
1.	Beauty's Body: Trouhanova's Ballet Evening	1
2.	Statues and Stasis, *Daphnis* and *Faune*	28
3.	Flex, Flex, Flex! Debussy and Nijinsky's *Jeux*	66
4.	Fauré, Debussy, and *Les Bébés* in Toyland	92
	Epilogue	116
Selected Bibliography		120

Acknowledgements

Graduate school has given me much, but it has diminished my capacity to remember things beyond music and history. For that reason, I apologize in advance for gratitudes unexpressed here—they are not, however, unfelt.

My route to musicology was less than linear. When I arrived at Berkeley, most of my musical education was based in performance rather than in academics. Doing music history was something new. The faculty in the department were remarkably patient with me as I found my way, and continued to support me through the dissertation writing process. I particularly want to thank the members of my committee, Richard Taruskin, James Davies, and Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby. Professor Taruskin has read more of my writing than I care to admit, and with more attention than it at times deserved. He has made me a better writer and thinker, both through the example of his own scholarship and by his continual guidance. Our walks at Point Isabel not only helped me finish my dissertation, but also allowed me to exercise my dog in the process (not a small benefit when one is pressed for time). James's kindness cannot be overstated. He helped make my too-big ideas more manageable, and to locate those same ideas when they disappeared into heaps of historical detail. During my first year at Berkeley, I took a seminar in the Art History Department with Darcy. She always made me feel a welcome presence, rather than an intellectual interloper, and her own astonishing flexibility of thinking still serves as an inspiration. Though Mary Ann Smart was not a formal member of my committee, she read the entirety of my dissertation and offered invaluable feedback that always left me motivated rather than unsure. Her generosity as a mentor is unmatched, and something for which I will be always grateful. My colleagues in the department are too wonderful and too numerous to acknowledge properly here—you all are the best. And finally, I want to thank the staff of the Music Department and the Hargrove Library, without whom I would still be trying to wrest paper from generations of photocopiers, or to locate materials through GLADIS.

I have been so fortunate to have kind—in fact, the kindest—parents. Even though I come from a family steeped in science, engineering, medicine, and business, they never once questioned my love of music and my pursuit of a degree in the humanities (however far removed from their own educational experience). My brother has always offered support and humor in spades. He remains the funniest person I know, and has the best heart. New York's best boroughs—Brooklyn and Queens—are home to my dearest friends, who, despite geographical distance, have stayed present in my life. Here's hoping for many more (modest) mountains in our future together.

During most of my childhood, my paternal grandparents lived with us, tirelessly moving around the mid-Atlantic region and gamely enduring temperatures unimaginable in their own childhood homes in India. My grandfather would walk us to school on even the coldest winter days, and my grandmother would greet us in the afternoons with South Indian delicacies, the names of which I am sure I would not be able to transliterate here. It is from them that I learned my love of books and knowledge. My grandmother has, time after time, shown that education need not happen in a classroom or produce fancy degrees, and certainly should not stop even as an octogenarian. My grandfather's appetite for knowledge was similarly insatiable. I dedicate this dissertation to him. Tata, I love and miss you.

Introduction

Belle époque Paris adored dance. Whether at the music-hall or in more refined theaters, audiences flocked to see the spectacles offered them by the likes of Isadora Duncan, Diaghilev's flashy company, or an embarrassment of Salomes. After languishing in the shadow of opera for much of the nineteenth century, ballet found itself part of this kinetic constellation. The innovative productions of the Ballets Russes sparked a revitalization of the genre, with more domestic efforts following on the heels of these émigré contributions. As the critic André Levinson reminisced in 1911, Parisians who were "only yesterday indifferent, perhaps, and strangers to the beautiful art of dance," were a few short years later "deeply fascinated" converts to ballet.[1] But dance was more than delectation. In the wake of military defeat and anxieties about national vitality, the Third Republic invested heavily in the bodies of its citizens. The era was obsessed with physical culture, as it sought to rehabilitate French bodies and therefore the French nation. Dance was enlisted in service of this mission. As Guillaume Apollinaire wrote in 1907, it was "hygienic exercise, recreational gymnastic, an artistic sport, moral and joyous."[2] Although a capacious claim, Apollinaire's assertion would be amply vindicated during the remainder of the *belle époque*.

The thesis this dissertation will advance is that French ballet rehearsed and performed shifting notions of citizenship as expressed through popular physical culture. Both the body of the citizen and the balletic body underwent important qualitative changes in this milieu. This dissertation will trace those shifts through several demographic cohorts and productions in the immediate prewar years. France's rehabilitative efforts implicated all segments of its population; the vigor and virility of men, the beauty and fecundity of women, and the appropriate education of children all fell under their purview.

Diaghilev's aesthetic ascendancy has often dominated accounts of the period, with many dance and music historians concentrating on the glamorous happenings of the Ballets Russes. Lynn Garafola has offered the most comprehensive treatment of the company in her monograph, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, which spans the length of the troupe's sojourn in Paris. She concludes her exhaustive study with a statement on the impresario's ability "to marshal talent in the creation of an art that touched the consciousness of an era."[3] The proliferation of Diaghilev biographies buttresses such claims, eclipsed only by the scholarly and popular fascination with the other magnetic personality of the troupe.[4] Nijinsky's abbreviated career and mysterious deterioration have provided rich fodder for many historians.[5] Whether discussing his tortured creative process or speculating about his mental decline, critics have perpetuated the cherished perspective on these years: that émigré

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[1] André Levinson, *Ballet Old and New*, trans. Susan Cook Summer (NY: Dance Horizons, 1982), 2.

[2] "Qu'elle reste ce qu'elle est et ce qu'elle doit être: un exercice hygiénique, une gymnastique récréative, un sport artistique, moral et joyeux." *La Culture physique*, February 01, 1907.

[3] Lynn Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1989), 378. Garafola closes that sentence, and her entire book, with the question: "who can claim even to aspire to that?" This interrogative further cements the larger-than-life position Diaghilev occupied in ballet during these and ensuing years.

[4] To name but two: Richard Buckle, *Diaghilev* (NY: Atheneum, 1979) and John Drummond, *Speaking of Diaghilev* (Boston: Faber, 1998).

[5] Richard Buckle has also written a biography of the dancer: *Nijinsky: A Life of Genius and Madness* (NY: Pegasus, 2012). Peter Otswald foregrounds the ever-intriguing issue of Nijinsky's psychological maladies in his monograph. See *Vaslav Njinsky: A Leap into Madness* (NY: Carol Publishing Group, 1990).

contributions constitute the entire narrative about dance in prewar Paris, and that all other productions were subordinate to the chic parade mounted by the Ballets Russes.

A few intrepid scholars have attempted to correct this critical myopia by offering a less centralized perspective on the *debut-de-siècle* dance scene. Deborah Mawer's recent monograph, *The Ballets of Maurice Ravel*, begins to fill a longstanding gap in English-language scholarship on the composer. She provides a measured consideration of the six full-length scores that Ravel either envisioned or repurposed as ballets, grouping them in a rough chronology that pauses at moments to examine shared topical ground. Of particular value in her approach is the effort to align each ballet with specific socio-cultural trends, discussing *Ma Mère l'oye* in the context of childhood, for example, or *Adélaïde, ou le langage des fleurs* in terms of a waltz *topos*. Others have preferred the microscopic over the synoptic, with most focusing on *Daphnis et Chloé*, Ravel's first score conceived from the outset as a ballet.[6] Lawrence Kramer and Michael Puri, though their conclusions differ, have located the ballet in the context of *fin-de-siècle* consumer culture; the former opts to situate the work amidst contemporary interest in seductive exoticisms, while the latter frames the Baudelarian figure of the *flâneur* in terms of his psychobiographical project to illuminate the question of Ravel's opaque sexuality.[7] Simon Morrison undertakes a "thick description," collecting historical paraphernalia such as photographs from the Fokine library to anchor this elusive, in his estimation always already "lost," ballet.[8] Brief though it is, this literature review does include the bulk of musicological research on Ravel's ballets from the period.

Debussy's have hardly fared better. Though fewer in number than his compatriot's, his ballets (*Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* and *Jeux*) have had seismic influence on the genre. Pierre Boulez, in his usual vatic style, characterizes *Faune* as the awakening of modern music.[9] It has proved a concert staple, though—in a manner similar to Ravel's later dance scores—entirely devoid of balletic overlay. Criticism has been similarly dismissive of the choreographic dimension, with only a smattering of article-length considerations of these two Debussy works. *Faune*'s music has attracted much attention, given its basis in Mallarmé's text and the attendant symbolist implications. Discussions of the staged version, however, are sketchy at best.[10] Stephanie Jordan's "Debussy, the Dance, and the *Faune*" provides a survey of the ballet and its context. She is especially sensitive to an asymmetry that she identifies between expressive registers, which contributed to Debussy's distaste for Nijinsky's choreography. The efflorescence of Attic classicism in *fin-de-siècle / debut-de-siècle* France provides another intertext for her chapter, though she limits her remarks to a few observations about different styles of Greek sculpture. Laurence Berman notes the shared *topos*—what he calls the "near-identity of their plots"—of these two ballets despite the vast

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[6] One could make the argument that it is the *only* one of his scores to retain its foothold, however tenuous, in the repertoire as a stage work. The barely known "Fanfare" from *L'éventail de Jeanne* and the much later *Boléro* have by and large shed their choreographic overlay.

[7] Lawrence Kramer, "Consuming the Exotic: Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe*," in *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (Berkeley, UC Press, 1995), 202-27. Michael Puri, "Dandy, Interrupted: Sublimation, Repression, and Self-Portraiture in Maurice Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* (1909-1912)," *JAMS* 60, N2 (2007): 317-372.

[8] Simon Morrison, "The Origins of *Daphnis et Chloé* (1912)," *19th-Century Music* 28, N1 (2004): 50-76.

[9] One source for this oft-quoted statement: Matthew Brown, *Debussy Redux: The Impact of his Music on Popular Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 1.

[10] See for example David Code's "Hearing Debussy Reading Mallarmé: Music 'après Wagner' in the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*," *JAMS* 54, N3 (2001): 493-554. His article takes as its mission a closer wedding of the collaboration between poet and composer, especially in light of Debussy's paling enthusiasm for Wagner by the 1890s. While an excellent secondary source for this project, it does not make any attempt to consider *Faune*'s afterlife as a ballet.

historical distance between their scenarios.[11] Based on this congruence, he goes on to argue that the later ballet is the true dance partner of Mallarmé's poem, a mature realization of *Faune*'s preoccupations. As in contemporaneous articles about *Jeux*, Berman's paper circumnavigates the tricky issue of actual balletic gesture.[12] The choreography of both of these ballets has elicited keen attention from dance historians, perhaps due to the cult of celebrity surrounding Nijinsky and his work, with *Faune* and *Jeux* making up fully half of his choreographic output. In her monograph on *Jeux*, Millicent Hodson deciphers sketches, then offers a reconstruction of the original choreography for the work.[13] Similar efforts exist for *Faune*, though this type of critical work has remained largely remote from mainstream musicological discussions.[14]

This dissertation chooses a different perspective. Instead of addressing the period encompassing the *fin de siècle / début de siècle*, or, indeed, the entire duration of the Third Republic, it will confine itself to the close of the *belle époque* (1912 to 1914). These years marked the apex of prewar ballets by French composers, including Ravel and Debussy, but also such sidelined yet seminal artists as d'Indy and Dukas. A view of French ballet in this period offers the opportunity to take account of its morphology in a textured but also synoptic manner. My method will be anthropological, drawing on a variety of historical sources both music-related and otherwise. Such a method confronts the particular difficulties of writing about dance, namely the problem of instantaneous evaporation and inconstant notation. By comparison, writing about music is mowing in high grass. The gestural information offered by intertexts relating to physical culture will amplify the kinetic detail so difficult to come by in historical accounts of ballet.

* * *

During the first months of 1912, the erudite journal *Le Courrier musical* hosted a gentlemanly *tête-à-tête* between Albert Bertelin and Jean d'Udine (né Albert Cozanet). The exchange stemmed from an article Bertelin published in a January issue, titled "L'Art de la danse." As such accounts often did, the narrative began in the distant past, in the far away locale of ancient Greece. Critics acknowledged that the then ubiquitous Tanagra figurines offered limited insight into the actualities of Hellenic dance. Gestural depictions on recovered vases were similarly inadequate. After an extended musing about potential clues on extant archaeological artifacts, Bertelin presented a second obstacle: what about ancient Greek music? Even surviving texts such as *L'Hymne à Apollon* could not, in the end, offer "any artistic gratification."[15] Bertelin did, however, laud the total synergy among Hellenic music, rhythm, and dance, an equilibrium absent from contemporary balletic practice. A

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[11] Laurence Berman, "*Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* and *Jeux*: Debussy's Summer Rites," *19th-Century Music* 3, N3 (1980): 225-238.

[12] Jann Pasler's consideration of the ballet is heavily analytical. She aims to account for the (at times exasperating) swarm of tempo fluctuations and thereby reveal a submerged continuity in the work, which has often been criticized as arbitrary and disjunct. "*Jeux*: Playing with Time and Form," *19th-Century Music* 6, N1 (1982): 60-75.

[13] Millicent Hodson, *Nijinsky's Bloomsbury Ballet: Reconstruction of Dance and Design for* Jeux (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2008).

[14] See for example Ann Hutchinson Guest, *Nijinsky's* Faune *Restored* (Amsterdam: Gordon & Breach, 1991).

[15] "Ceci simplement pour prouver qu'un texte inifiniment plus complexe que celui d'un hymne serait pour nous d'une assimilation bien plus difficile encore; il pourrait nous intéresser par son antiquité même et à titre simplement documentaire, mais nous serions bien incapables d'en tirer aucune jouissance artistique." *Le Courrier musical*, January 15, 1912.

production of *Roussalka*, mounted at the Académie nationale de musique, provided him the occasion to complain: "[W]hile the succession of *entrechats*, *jettés battus*, and other excellent acrobatics are beautifully executed by outstanding ballerinas, I cannot help but ask myself how an art that attained a near absolute perfection during antiquity has now arrived at such a degree of decadence."[16] That physical excess was not, in itself, reprehensible; gymnastic excellence required an admirable degree of dedication and training. But problems arose when flashy acrobatics eclipsed true artistry.

Unlike critics who located the sole source of modern ballet's degeneracy in virtuosity, Bertelin acknowledged other causes for concern, dance's uneasy and uneven peace with music chief among them:

> Even if we no longer observe such productions, our existing choreographers do not hold sufficiently to the rhythms provided them by composers; in many cases, certain sections of a ballet could, with no trouble, be danced to music completely other than that accompanying it. This is a grave error, one of the greatest weaknesses of the genre as it stands. I would like to respond to an objection I anticipate will definitely be made: what about the Ballets Russes? These productions, blessed by an immense and ubiquitous talent from set designer to extras, are most certainly a special case and of undeniable artistic quality—in any case, far superior to those we are accustomed to watching in most European theaters. They do not, however, totally escape the general criticisms I have already articulated, and I do not believe that this is the correct path to follow should one want, through renovative efforts, to give the art of dance new momentum.[17]

Rather than dwell on such miseries, Bertelin enumerated possible solutions. The work of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (whom we will meet again in the last chapter of this dissertation), as disseminated by d'Udine, was one viable alternative. Dalcroze's insistence on profound correspondences between music and gesture aligned with Bertelin's own call for "a truly new, truly unified, truly aesthetic form of art."[18]

D'Udine's response came the next month in the form of an open letter. "Le Bilatéral" graciously acknowledged Bertelin's compliments about Dalcrozean practice before

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[16] "Et tandis que se succédaient les entrechats, les jettés battus et autres acrobaties excellemment exécutés d'ailleurs par de très remarquables ballerines, je me demandais comment un art qui avait dû atteindre dans l'antiquité à une perfection presqu'absolue en était arrivé à un tel degré de décadence." *Le Courrier musical*, January 15, 1912.

[17] "Si nous n'assistons plus à de pareilles scènes, néanmoins nos chorégraphes actuels ne tiennent pas toujours assez compte des rythmes qui leur sont fournis par les compositeurs; dans bien des cas certains pas de ballet pourraient. sans inconvénient, être dansés sur toute autre musique que celle qui les accompagne. C'est là une erreur capitale, une des pires faiblesses du genre actuel. Par avance je tiens à répondre à une objection qui me sera certainement faite: et les ballets russes, qu'en dites-vous? Ce genre de spectacle, grâce à l'immense somme de talent dépensé par tous ceux qui y prennent part, depuis le décorateur jusqu-au dernier figurants, est certainement une chose unique et d'une impression artistique indéniable, en tout cas fort supérieur à ce que nous sommes habitués à contempler sur la plupart des scènes lyriques d'Europe, malgré cela il n'échappe pas complètement aux critiques que j'ai formulées d'une manière générale et je ne crois pas que ce soit dans cette voie qu'il faille s'engager si l'on veut, en le rénovant, donner à l'art de la danse une impulsion nouvelle." *Le Courrier musical*, January 15, 1912.

[18] "Souhaitons donc que Jean d'Udine continue les recherches qu'il a si heureusement commencées; souhaitons que peu à peu et malgré la force d'inertie opposée par la routine, ses idées fassent leur chemin et que grâce à lui nous soyons dotés d'une forme d'art vraiment neuve, vraiment harmonieuse, vraiment esthétique." *Le Courrier musical*, January 15, 1912.

addressing what he saw as the true complaint. Underlying Bertelin's concern over the efficacy of *gymnastique rythmique*, d'Udine detected a more profound issue:

> But it [Bertelin's article] expresses at its core, I am sure, a deeply rooted sentimental belief about the relationship and reciprocal value of Music and Dance. This is what saddens me, because almost all contemporary musicians share this same opinion; it is exceedingly fruitless, it sullies the rest of your article, which otherwise I find to be appealing. But that is only half of it, because your beliefs, based in emotion, will not cede easily to either facts or reason.[19]

Music and dance could, and should, be equal partners. D'Udine's discomfort, however, arose from what he perceived to be the inevitable enslavement of gesture to sound. Dance had rights as well, chiefly the engagement in a "bilateral contract."[20] But justice was not all. Ballet music needed to change its tune, or, more precisely, its rhythmic profile. For d'Udine, rhythm encompassed not only value and duration, but also dynamics and articulation. If it failed to make more concessions to music, dance would be forever condemned to its current profligacy.

While d'Udine went on to explicate his ideas further—including the recognition of composers such as Schumann who avoided writing music inherently antagonistic to gesture—he made his main point early and often.[21] Composers needed to internalize and then musicalize gesture, rather than expect choreographers to adapt to whatever score they were given. Bertelin concluded the gentlemanly exchange in *Le Courrier musical* with an article titled "A propos de l'Art de la Danse." It was well and good to envision an equitable and symbiotic collaboration between music and dance, between composers and choreographers, he argued, but pragmatics, too, needed consideration:

> *A priori*, I do not see any reason why musicians should not "engage in dance." The only objection I have—and it is a serious one—is the expertise a composer must acquire in a great number of areas in order to "know his craft." If you were to count them with me, you would see that the average human lifespan is hardly sufficient to master them all. […] Our heirs will, at their convenience, meditate on this motto: *Vita brevis, ars longa*.[22]

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[19] "Si la phrase de votre article, que je viens de rapporter n'était qu'une boutade de votre esprit, vous la retireriez donc bien vite devant l'évidence. Mais, au fond, elle exprime, j'en suis sûr, une conviction sentimentale, profondément ancrée en vous, sur les rapports et la valeur réciproques de la Musique et de la Danse. Et c'est ce qui me désole, parce que, cette opinion, presques tous les musiciens contemporains la partagent avec vous; elle est terriblement stérilisante, elle entache d'erreur votre article tout entier, qui veut m'être sympathique et ne l'est qu'à demi, et parce qu'étant sentimentale, votre croyance ne cèdera facilement ni devant des faits, ni devant des raisons." *Le Courrier musical*, February 01, 1912.

[20] "Tout votre article, synthétisé dans ses derniers paragraphes, revient en effet à dire: 'Il y a un lien fatal, nécessaire, méconnu par la chorégraphie classique, entre la musique et la danse. La musique a des droits sur la danse et celle-ci des devoirs envers la musique.' D'accord, cher monsieur Bertelin, d'accord! Mais ce n'est pas d'un contrat unilatéral, c'est d'un contrat bilatéral qu'il s'agit entre les deux arts." D'Udine, "Le Bilatéral."

[21] "Schumann aussi est naturellement plein de rythmes plastiques. La plupart des mouvements de ses symphonies fourniraient des danses merveilleuses." *Le Courrier musical*, February 01, 1912.

[22] "*A priori* je ne vois aucune raison, en effet, pour que les musiciens 'n'entrent pas dans la danse,' la seule objection à faire à ce projet, et elle est sérieuse, c'est la multiplicité des connaissances qu'un compositeur doit acquérir pour 'savoir son métier.' Si vous voulez bien les dénombrer avec moi vous verrez qu'une vie humaine moyenne ne serait pas trop longue pour arriver à les assimiler toutes. […] Nos successeurs pourront à leur aise méditer cette devise: *Vita brevis*, *ars longa*." *Le Courrier musical*, February 15, 1912.

Philosophical epithets aside, Bertelin's reservations attested to the gulf separating the utopic theories of multimedial visionaries from the realities of both modern balletic productions and modern artistic training.

As quibbles go, this one was, and is, persistent. It will crop up in every chapter of this dissertation: in Trouhanova's supposed corruption of *Istar*, in Nijinsky's perceived subjugation of *Faune* and *Jeux*, in Laloy's unwelcome conversion of *Dolly* to raucous theatrical spectacle. The perceived tension between music and dance informs every aspect of my project. The Bertelin-d'Udine exchange outlines the terms of the debate as it stood at the end of the *belle époque*. But the historiographical is itself historical. Even when scholars enumerate the difficulties—and they are indeed multifarious—in studying staged dance works with musical accompaniment, they do so under particular disciplinary constraints. At present these include investment in so-called "faithful" reconstructions and reluctance to imagine manifold and flexible connections between sound and gesture.

The last chapter of this dissertation, which treats Debussy's *La Boîte à joujoux*, represents the culmination not only of its historical narrative, but also of its historiographical argument. The composer envisioned that his ballet be performed by marionettes instead of live dancers. I mention this fact in advance in order to make a critical gesture of my own. While this dissertation seeks to place dance in dialogue with diverse aspects of Parisian civic life, it also has a larger, disciplinary objective. Scholars in both musicology and dance studies have often retreated from discussions of anything other than the most exhaustively documented choreographies. Works such as *La Boîte*, which lack an extensive archival afterlife, are therefore neglected. In some ways, the situation parallels one that plagued musicology decades ago. Interest in historical performance practice spawned the myth of an "authentic" interpretation that not only recreated the conditions of a work's premiere, but also captured the composer's intentions. As Richard Taruskin contended, "Authenticity stems from conviction. Conviction in turn stems as much from belief as it does from knowledge."[23] I suggest in this dissertation that scholarship on danced works of any kind could benefit from a more potent admixture of belief and knowledge, a methodology more pliant, as those long-lost bodies themselves once were.

* * *

The first chapter of this dissertation will consider an evening of ballets by the émigré dancer Natasha Trouhanova and engage with questions of beauty and femininity. Trouhanova herself was an eclectic who graced stages ranging from risqué music-halls to high theater. In the spring of 1912, she directed and starred in an ambitious concert that featured ballets by four eminent composers of the French music scene: Schmitt, Dukas, Ravel, and d'Indy. The last two offered preexisting scores adapted for the stage. Both were notable failures that evening: d'Indy's *Istar* on account of Trouhanova's simulation of nudity and Ravel's diminutive *Adélaïde, ou le langage des fleurs* on account of its too-conventional choreography. This chapter will suggest that these two moments reveal the complications of staging feminine beauty during the *belle époque*. In its musical salubrity, *Istar* presented heath and wholesomeness—physical, aesthetic, national; Trouhanova's seemingly nude body, however, corrupted d'Indy's pure score. *Adélaïde* was the greater problem. Narrating the romantic foibles of a courtesan and her two suitors, the ballet offered a perspective on feminine beauty that provoked anxieties about its propriety. Instead of *Istar*'s salubrious and

[23] Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1995), 58.

generative aesthetic, *Adélaïde* seemed to promote a self-indulgent beauty that valued pleasure over fecundity. Because the nation was then witnessing a declining birthrate, such a suggestion was particularly charged in Third Republic France. In its eclectic presentation of these divergent construals of beauty, Trouhanova's risky concert not only contributed to the revitalization of French ballet, but also intersected with larger projects of national rehabilitation.

Chapter Two moves to a discussion of the stone bodies cluttering Paris's expansive, Haussmannized boulevards. Public intellectuals ranted that a plague of *statuomanie* had descended on the city. Like city planners, choreographers were also fascinated by statuary, with two seminal works drawing upon Greek sculptural artifacts for inspiration: Ravel and Fokine's *Daphnis et Chloé* and Debussy and Nijinsky's *Faune*. This chapter will consider these two ballets in light of *Faune*'s presentation of "empirical" choreography, a style of choreographic gesture developed by Nijinsky and based on archaeological artifacts such as bas-reliefs and friezes. *Daphnis* and *Faune* are two examples of the *belle époque*'s "incomparable fascination," according to Levinson, with ancient Greece.[24] Historians such as Maurice Emmanuel undertook grand studies of *orchestics*, systematizing and cataloging the gestures memorialized in Greek statuary.[25] Contemporary technology played a crucial role in such scholarship. Chronophotography, the proto-cinematic invention of Etienne-Jules Marey, assisted in reanimating these static images. Such technologies, in addition, offered a new epistemology of the moving body. As Henri Bergson noted, chronophotography removed the representative and the aesthetic from the contemplation of motion. This chapter will suggest that *Daphnis* and *Faune* provide evidence for the changing nature of *belle époque* spectatorship. Unlike *Daphnis*, *Faune* participated in the analysis of the kinetic body that characterized studies such as Marey's, and thereby presented audiences with a newly "scientized" vision of the dancing body.

Debussy's next balletic venture was a collaboration with Diaghilev and Nijinsky, one he agreed to against his better judgment. *Jeux* amplified some of the preoccupations of *Faune*: choreographic innovation taken from visual art and intricate geometries of desire to name but two. It also further alienated the spheres of dance and music. Commentators noted this friction, and lambasted Nijinsky's choreography, which, in the view of many, overpowered and detracted from Debussy's diaphanous score. This sentiment has had an odd longevity, governing most accounts of the work from the moment of its premiere. The Darmstadt generation—Boulez, Stockhausen, and their modernist colleagues—revered *Jeux*, and insisted on divorcing it entirely from its balletic context. Such excellent musicologists as Jann Pasler, Laurence Berman, and Robert Orledge have offered highly analytical treatments of the score that give no clues, and almost no mention, of its danced dimension. This third chapter will ask why historiographical problems in writing about dance and music become particularly acute in relation to *Jeux*. I will begin by examining the ballet's premiere and reception, embedding it in the context of intellectualism and athleticism during the *belle époque*, in order to suggest that issues of physical vigor and its proper relation to intellectualism are dramatized in the ballet's materials. The remainder of the chapter will consider how and why the chasm between mind and body has persisted in current scholarship on *Jeux*, suggesting that dance and music historians have only begun to confront this divide when writing about ballet.

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[24] Levinson, *Ballet Old and New*, 65.

[25] Maurice Emmanuel, *Essai sur l'orchestique grecque, étude de ses mouvements d'après les monuments figurés* (Paris: Hachette, 1895).

The final chapter extends the argument made about *Jeux* to two children's ballets and, finally, to a disciplinary critique. As a demographic cohort, children were described as France's future, particularly in the face of impending conflict. Albert Surier, founder of the popular bodybuilding publication and political mouthpiece *La Culture physique*, declared them the nation's "best defense." By the close of the *belle époque*, the question of children's physical education had taken on a new urgency. The chapter will begin by considering two ballets that offer divergent yet complementary constructions of childhood: Fauré's *Dolly* and Debussy's *La Boîte à joujoux*. To that end, it will present relevant frameworks—contemporary toy culture, physical education for children, and the teachings of Jaques-Dalcroze—though its ultimate objective is historiographical. In these last pages, I will confront a methodological impasse, namely the difficulty of discussing works without extensive historical documentation or extended discursive afterlives. I argue for a reframing of the rules of engagement with *Dolly* and *La Boîte*, rather than the complete avoidance of such ballets' supposedly "unrecovered" (and perhaps "unrecoverable") gestural dimension currently *de rigueur*.

* * *

At the 2013 annual meeting of the American Musicological Society in Pittsburgh, I attended the inaugural panel presented by the Music and Dance Study Group, formed the previous year. It was an evening of insightful commentary by several distinguished professors and lively discussion with younger scholars such as myself in the audience. Participating in this session strengthened my conviction that situating and nurturing the study of dance within musicology is one of the discipline's most pressing tasks. I submit this dissertation in hopes of contributing to that effort.

1. Beauty's Body: Trouhanova's Ballet Evening

"You are right, Gentlemen, beauty first! Beauty above all!"
—Nelly Roussel (1914)
"Feminism owes a great deal to my blond hair."
—Marguerite Durand (1903)

Less than half a year before war foreclosed any possible continuation of a *belle époque*, Nelly Roussel made an impassioned plea for women's suffrage and their place as fully-functional members of the Republic. "We want to be 'citizens' the way you are 'citizens,' Gentlemen," she declared,

> under the same conditions and for exactly the same reasons. We want to be *citizens* like you, because we are workers like you, *taxpayers* like you, and *subject to trial* like you…We want to be citizens because experience has taught us sufficiently that we can expect nothing from any social organization whatsoever to which we do not provide active and direct assistance.[1]

A seasoned orator, Roussel made her argument forcefully. Women should be granted full rights because they needed to protect their small but hard-won gains over the last thirty years. Women could only learn to exercise their faculties on governmental issues by voting; the rebuttal that they were not competent in such matters was akin, in Roussel's estimation, to the ludicrous suggestion that "an educational system…[wait] for a child to learn to write before putting a pen in his hand."[2] The most insidious protest against suffrage—that women would lose their delicious and prized attributes of "grace, beauty, and charm" if allowed to participate in public life and politics—raised Roussel's reddest ire. This argument was "the oldest, most worn-out of all and has served to fight our demands one by one, at all levels and in no matter what connection."[3] Her caustic exclamation, which serves as the first epigraph to this chapter, encapsulates the scorn Roussel felt in the face of such condescension. Her version of beauty had sharp teeth.

As Roussel's speech demonstrates, beauty was a highly politicized topic in Third Republic France, a symptom of the era's obsession with both theatricality and self-presentation. Due to the complex social negotiations around issues of rights and roles, women were particularly implicated in such discourse. Ballet offers a rich opportunity to examine this shifting aesthetics of women's bodies, not only because of the centrality of the body to dance's materials, but also because of the way beauty was performed during the *belle époque*. Scholars have been attentive to these issues in the more popular contexts of the music-hall and the *caf'con*'; dance and music history, however, have only begun to situate French ballet of the period in such a textured environment. This chapter will focus on the émigré dancer Natasha Trouhanova, a glamorous fixture on various Parisian stages from the time of her arrival there in 1904. Her career encompassed a wide variety of roles and

[1] Jennifer Waleti-Walters and Steven C. Hause, eds., *Feminisms of the Belle Epoque* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 279.
[2] Waleti-Walters and Hause, 286.
[3] Waleti-Walters and Hause, 282.

gestural styles, though the high point of her prewar concertizing was the evening of ballets she presented in 1912, the subject of this chapter [Figure 1].

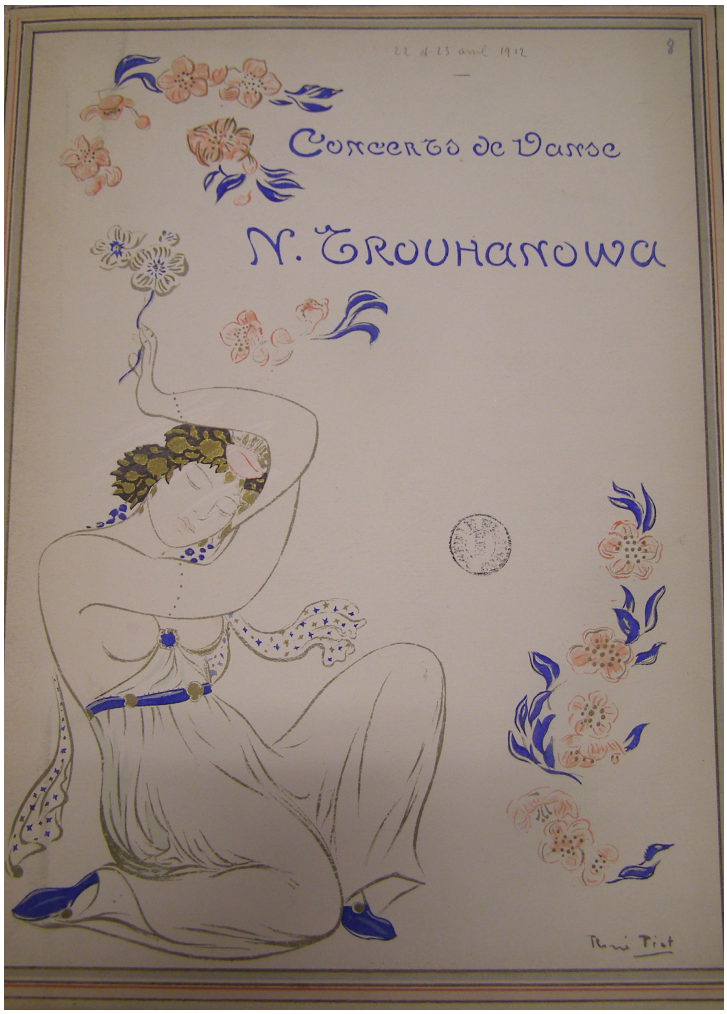


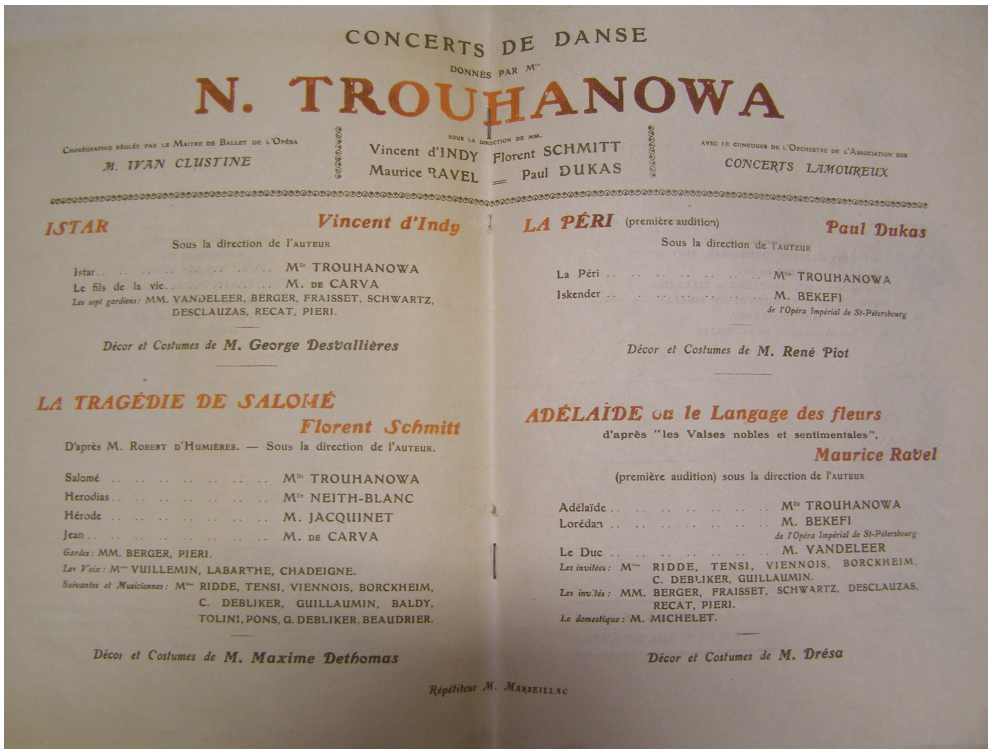
Figure One

Critics hailed her concert as a turning point in the fortunes of French ballet, casting Trouhanova in the role of lovely and unassuming savior. Writing for *La Phalange*, Georges Haller called it "the purest and most beautiful artistic production of the year," a sentiment that the bulk of his colleagues echoed.[4] Robert Brussel was among the most fulsome, crowning the event as a date to remember in the nation's artistic history and Trouhanova as more than a mere ballerina. Instead, she was an "artist" who "had defended the cause of the finest music."[5] Trouhanova began by programming works by some of the foremost

[4] "Après deux mois de 'season' et autres spectacles bariolés et coûteux, les concerts de danse de Mlle Natacha Trouhanowa—dont on n'attendra plus ici un compte-rendu—restent dans notre souvenir comme la plus belle et la plus pure manifestation d'art de l'année." *La Phalange*, June 20, 1912.

[5] "Il est entendu que, depuis quelque temps, ces spectacles passionnent le monde musical; je sais aussi—pour y avoir assisté—que le premier et le second se sont terminés dans une manière de troimphe; je me réjouis infiniment pour Mlle Trouhanowa et ses collaborateurs de cette faveur marquée et de ce succès; mais ma joie la plus grande vient de ce qu'une danseuse—il est vrai que celle-ci est bien autre chose qu'une ballerine: une artiste—a défendu la cause de la meilleure musique, et qu'elle a magnifié son art en montrant qu'il était

composers of the Parisian musical scene. She and her collaborator, the impresario Jacques Rouché, solicited scores from Schmitt, Dukas, Ravel, and d'Indy, with the last two offering extant works remade for the stage [Figure 2].



CONCERTS DE DANSE

DONNÉS PAR Mme

N. TROUHANOWA

Chorégraphie réglée par le Maître de Ballet de l'Opéra
M. IVAN CLUSTINE

Sous la direction de MM.
Vincent d'INDY Florent SCHMITT
Maurice RAVEL — Paul DUKAS

Avec le concours de l'Orchestre de l'Association des
CONCERTS LAMOUREUX

ISTAR — Vincent d'Indy

Sous la direction de l'Auteur

Istar . . . . . Mlle TROUHANOWA
Le fils de la vie . . . . . M. DE CARVA
Les sept gardiens: MM. VANDELEER, BERGER, FRAISSET, SCHWARTZ, DESCLAUZAS, RECAT, PIERI.

Décor et Costumes de M. George Desvallières

LA PÉRI (première audition) — Paul Dukas

Sous la direction de l'Auteur

La Péri . . . . . Mlle TROUHANOWA
Iskender . . . . . M. BEKEFI
de l'Opéra Impérial de St-Pétersbourg

Décor et Costumes de M. René Piot

LA TRAGÉDIE DE SALOMÉ

Florent Schmitt

D'après M. Robert d'Humières. — Sous la direction de l'Auteur.

Salomé . . . . . Mlle TROUHANOWA
Herodias . . . . . Mlle NEITH-BLANC
Hérode . . . . . M. JACQUINET
Jean . . . . . M. DE CARVA
Gardes: MM. BERGER, PIERI.
Les Voix: Mmes VUILLEMIN, LABARTHE, CHADEIGNE.
Suivantes et Musiciennes: Mmes RIDDE, TENSI, VIENNOIS, BORCKHEIM, C. DEBLIKER, GUILLAUMIN, BALDY, TOLINI, PONS, G. DEBLIKER, BEAUDRIER.

Décor et Costumes de M. Maxime Dethomas

ADÉLAÏDE ou le Langage des fleurs

d'après "les Valses nobles et sentimentales".

Maurice Ravel

(première audition) sous la direction de l'Auteur

Adélaïde . . . . . Mlle TROUHANOWA
Lorédan . . . . . M. BEKEFI
de l'Opéra Impérial de St-Pétersbourg
Le Duc . . . . . M. VANDELEER
Les invitées: Mmes RIDDE, TENSI, VIENNOIS, BORCKHEIM, C. DEBLIKER, GUILLAUMIN.
Les invités: MM. BERGER, FRAISSET, SCHWARTZ, DESCLAUZAS, RECAT, PIERI.
Le domestique: M. MICHELET.

Décor et Costumes de M. Drésa

Répétiteur M. Marseillac

Figure Two

Ravel orchestrated and affixed a scenario to his angular piano suite *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, while d'Indy presented his *Istar* variations, the programmatic title of which easily lent itself to balletic interpretation. Dukas's *La Péri* was to receive its premiere that evening, though it had been completed and scheduled on a Ballets Russes program the preceding season. In an interview with *Le Gaulois*, Trouhanova summarized the aims of her concert: "these two arts owe each other the most complete support, and in ballet, music should have the same standing as choreography."[6] Rather than mincing ballets with skimpy scenarios, she found an "intimate union" among all the facets of the evening's productions.[7]

Such a synthesis was no small thing for the nation's artistic prestige. Reflecting on the evening in the *Revue musicale SIM*, Brussel asked: "What is so special about Mlle Trouhanova's concerts? They are truly French, a fact that, for the French, is of some importance; the music is foremost which, for the musicians, is not less so; and finally the interpreter, who is also the creator of these productions, acquits herself at a level that is

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susceptible de pathétique autant que de sensibilité et de charme. C'est là que réside la véritable leçon de ces séances." *Le Figaro*, April 24, 1912.

[6] […] "ces deux arts se doivent l'aide la plus complète et que, dans le ballet, la musique doit même avoir le pas sur la chorégraphie." *Le Gaulois*, April 17, 1912.

[7] "Et ainsi Mlle Trouhanowa aura réalisé l'union intime des trois arts: la musique, la peinture et la danse […]." *Le Gaulois*, April 22, 1912.

absolutely new, and we may even say, never hoped for in a dancer."[8] In these lines, Brussel touched upon the main issue plaguing contemporary French ballet, a problem that contributed to its already waning prestige and easy eclipse by Diaghilev's flashy troupe. The nation had let this indigenous genre languish. It had become a vehicle for frivolous, virtuosic gesture and mismatching expressive registers; the music, prefabricated and of low quality, was often quilted to clashing choreography. Louis Vuillemin began his review of Trouhanova's concert with an extended meditation on this deplorable state:

> French ballet has died because it has never evolved. Old, outdated, it only need take its cues from new and youthful music. Inexpressive or, more accurately, expressive of only the most juvenile feelings, it could not accommodate the needs of contemporary Art. It disdained composers, just as they did it. Between them lay all the distance between past and present, classic and modern, rudimentary and refined. The harmonic riches, the instrumental polyphony existed only to accompany *pirouettes*. The symphony's nobility was sullied by these *entrechats* and *jetés-battus*. By the same token, Dance—useless, mechanical, as still practiced in many a ballet—would suffer from the composer's eloquence, if in any case the former sufficed to provoke the latter. In short, wherever dance ruled, music did not. And those who honored music did not do the same for dance.[9]

He went on to acknowledge that the Russians in general and the Ballets Russes in particular had already renovated the genre to much acclaim; in France, he declared, "the *malaise* continues." Vuillemin offered a concise explication of what critics saw as a more diffuse problem. In his exhaustive study *Le Ballet contemporain*, Svetlov declared: "The end of the nineteenth- and beginning of the twentieth-centuries were the years of a most sorrowful decadence in ballet. It seemed to have survived on its own, only to fall forever into ruins, never to be revived."[10] Others concurred. Excessive virtuosity, Albert Bertelin argued, was to blame for this decadence, as ballet's development was stifled by a greater and greater emphasis on bodily contortions over expression.[11] Music was the most obvious casualty of these acrobatics, trampled by the frenzied movements of the bodies it accompanied.

Trouhanova's concert not only redressed this imbalance—reconciling those "two old French enemies," music and dance—but also offered a path for future efforts. Her performance style was generally eclectic, synthesizing pantomime, classical ballet, and other

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[8] "Qu'ont donc apporté de particulier les concerts de Mlle Trouhanowa? Ils sont tout d'abord essentiellement français, ce qui, pour des francais, est d'une certaine importance; ensuite, la musique y est au premier plan, ce qui, pour des musiciens, ne l'est pas moins; enfin l'apport de l'interprète, en tant que créatrice de spectacle, est d'une qualité absolument neuve et inespérée, disons-le, chez une danseuse." *Revue musicale SIM*, May 1912.

[9] "La Danse, celle de chez nous se mourait de n'avoir pas évoulé. Vielle, désuète, elle n'avait que faire de musiques neuves et jeunes. Inexpressive, ou, si vous préférez, expressive seulement de sentiments enfantins, elle ne pouvait s'accomoder des exigences de l'Art musical contemporain. Elle dédaignait les compositeurs, autant que les compositeurs la dédaignaient elle-même. Il y avait entre eux toute la distance du passé au présent, du classique au moderne, du rudimentaire au raffiné. La richesse harmonique, la polyphonie instrumentale, se seraient plaisemment d'accompagner des pirouettes. La noblesse de la symphonie se fût prostitutée au contact des entrechats et des jetés-battus. Pour ce qui est de la réciproque, la Danse—mécanique et inutile, telle qu'on la pratique encore dans maints ballets—eût pâti terriblement de l'éloquence du compositeur, si l'on admet, toutefois, la suffisance de la première à provoquer la seconde. Bref, là où régnait la danse, pas de musique. Aux lieux respectueux de la musique, pas de danse." *Comoedia*, April 24, 1912.

[10] "Les dernièrs années du dix-neuvième siècle et les premièrs du vingtième furent le temps de la plus triste décadence du ballet. Cette forme semblait avoir survécu à soi-même, être tombée irrémédialement en ruins pour ne jamais ressuciter." Vladimir Svetlov, *Le Ballet contemporain* (Paris: M. de Brunoff, 1912), 31.

[11] *Le Courrier musical*, January 15, 1912.

plastique on stages ranging from collaborations with Diaghilev's troupe to titillating Folies-Bergère productions alongside the equally quicksilver Colette. *Le Courrier musical* spoke of a "tasteful eclecticism," one of many such applications of the term to her.[12] She herself detested "the fanaticism of 'specialization,'" preferring "the prevailing eclecticism of our tastes."[13] It was just this catholicity—what Pierre Lalo called a "synthesis of the art of our time"— that most charmed reviewers of her ballet evening, and promised the greatest possibility for renewal.[14] Rather than the musty artistic conventions of the loathed *ancien régime*, Trouhanova infused her performance with a varied gestural repertoire that complemented rather than subjugated music.

While this eclecticism aided her balletic efforts, it has made Trouhanova into something of a historical oddity, worthy of passing investigation but by no means a pivotal character in the story of ballet, or even of dance more broadly, in Paris. Her varied career complicates the neat demarcations historians have tended to make between the activities of lightly clad performers in popular venues, fragile émigré ballerinas, and the hallowed generation of female modernists who overhauled contemporary choreographic practice. As Lynn Garafola has noted, figures such as Trouhanova have "disappeared from the historical record because they fall outside prevailing conceptual categories"; instead, "they exist in a nameless, invisible limbo."[15] Her very slipperiness, however, can be for us a historiographical asset. Trouhanova's dashing public persona—*femme fatale*, dedicated sportswoman, and sponsor of beauty products—alongside her wide stage repertoire offers an opportunity to consider the intersection of republican physical culture with traditional French ballet, her own dancing body serving us as cultural weathervane.

Her eclecticism extended to her self-presentation, a frequent topic both in reviews of her performances as well as in the more modish Parisian press. On the occasion of the ballet concert that is the focus of this chapter, Georges Pioch published an ecstatic poem on the front page of *Comoedia*, saluting her "effort, talent, and beauty." He compared her to a slave, a priestess and a courtesan, able to incite revolutions with just her steps.[16] Even more prosaic commentators could not help but remark upon her chameleon-like appearance, inserting petite odes to her eyes, her arms, her legs, and sundry other physical features amid buttoned-up critical pronouncements. More than other dancers of the period, Trouhanova's public persona incited wildly opposing characterizations, summed up in the Comtesse de Noailles's catchy couplet:

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[12] "[…] un éclectisme de bon goût." *Le Courrier musical*, July 01, 1913.
[13] *Petit-Parisien*, February 10, 1922.
[14] "Les Concerts de danse qu'a donnés Mlle Natacha Trouhanowa, et dont je vous parle bien tard, ont formé le spectacle le plus choisi et le plus beau, le plus harmonieux et le plus complet qui nous ait été offert cette année." *Le Temps*, June 18, 1912.
[15] Lynn Garafola, *Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 148.
[16] […] "Esclave des vainqueurs, tu mimas dans les guerres
La volupté du sang et l'ivresse du feu;
Et prêtresse, en ce temps où l'homme s'est fait dieu,
Tu fus le geste aimable et savant des mystères
Courtisane, tu fis aux siècles épuisés
Des guirlandes de chairs ardentes et jaillies;
Et tu sembles, parmi les gloires abolies,
Le visible parfum de tes anciens baisers.
Frivole avec les rois, farouche avec la foule,
Resumant tout dessein en tes séductions,
Tu peux l'oubli, tu peux la justice et la houle;
Et ton pas a sonné les Révolutions…" […] *Comoedia*, April 22, 1912.

Your dancing is as solemn as a priest,
As hot as animals.[17]

She herself fueled such commentary in her shifting attitudes toward her own body. Using the rich example of her 1912 concert, this chapter will ask the questions: how did competing politics of beauty—both bodily and musical—intersect with the evening's variegated reception? Why did Trouhanova's concert fail decisively enough that she wanted to leave dance, and what do those moments of failure tell us about the shifting priorities of French ballet at this time? Her inconstant perspective on nudity, as required by d'Indy's *Istar*, represented a version of the "cult of the nude" apart from the one historians have generally mapped onto the period. Rather than using her unclothed body as a tool of risqué subversion or modernist reform, her performance that evening complicated the model of "natural" beauty that contemporary republican discourse so zealously promoted. A comparison of Dukas' *La Péri* and Ravel's *Adélaïde, ou le langage des fleurs*, the most successful and the most maligned works on the program respectively, concludes the chapter. These pieces offer an opportunity to examine the preoccupations of French ballet—narrative, musical, and choreographic—in their contrasting materials.

Critics unanimously celebrated *La Péri* as the triumph of the evening, one of the masterpieces of the year, if not the decade. *Adélaïde* hardly fared so well, though its premiere in no way compared to the scandal of the *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, on which it is based. We will bypass Schmitt's *La Tragédie de Salomé* (1907) for two main reasons: the breadth of studies on the Salome figure and *femme fatale* during the *belle époque*, and Trouhanova's own many incarnations of the role before her 1912 concert. The chapter is instead interested in the way beauty was constructed on stage at this particular moment, when the fortunes of French ballet were themselves in question. A dancer such as Trouhanova offers a valuable opportunity to study the issue of French beauty and femininity on stage not only because of her lifelong eclecticism, but also due to her cosmopolitanism. "By blood and intent," she loved to repeat, "I am cosmopolitan."[18] Her mixed family heritage—French, Polish, Serbian, and Czech—and Russian upbringing made her both an insider and an outsider in Paris itself. Considering such a figure—not quite French, but taken on as one of the nation's artistic heroines—provides insight into what it took to be appropriately feminine in *belle époque* Paris. Trouhanova's performance and self-presentation thereby confronted not only the aesthetic complexities of staging beauty, but also the more diffuse struggle for women to find a place as subjects and citizens in Third Republic France.

* * *

In the winter of 1910, Senator Bérenger launched an indecency campaign against the dancer Régina Badet. Known for her luminous, irresistible smile, Badet starred in a stage adaption of Pierre Louÿs's risqué novel *La Femme et le pantin*, a performance that transformed her fame into titillating notoriety. The novel's strident protagonist, Conchita Perez, had archetypes in Manon de Lescaut and Carmen (she too worked in a cigarette factory), though it was her provocative gestures and dancing rather than her man-eating proclivities that caused Bérenger to mobilize his official forces. He was particularly scandalized by the third act of the production, during which Conchita danced for a group of Englishmen "à peu près

[17] "Tu danses, grave comme un prêtre,"
"Chaude comme les animaux."
[18] "De sang et de goût, je suis cosmopolite."

nue"—paying customers like Badet's own audience, who were stimulated to "la plus grande joie des lorgnettes."[19] While in the end a failed effort, the campaign made even more of a splash than Badet's original performance. Debates raged in contemporary periodicals. Was *La Femme et le pantin* an indecent and immoral spectacle? Were Bérenger—saddled with the milquetoast nickname "Père la Pudeur"—and his lackeys in the *Ligue contre la license des rues* thereby obligated to toss Badet off stage? The director of the work, M. Gémier, commented in papers such as *Le Matin*. "We produce art at the Theater-Antoine," he declared, "[and] I have never done and will never do anything else in my life."[20] His attack turned tauntingly *ad hominem* in *Comoedia*: "I am convinced that a fully nude Régina Badet is far more chaste than a fully clothed M. Bérenger!"[21] In the end, the Senator dispatched the chief of police, M. Valette, to render final judgment, though the outcome hardly lived up to the proportions of the scandal:

> The chief of the mobile brigade, like a good bourgeois, took himself to the theater to have a look. He surveyed the room and the scene. And my God, he left without being too scandalized, it seems. "From feet to waist," he wrote to the *procureur*, "Mme Régina Badet wore a flesh-colored *maillot* which covered her entirely. But from the waist up, her neckline was rather racy." And added: "In any case, no one in the theater protested."
>
> Justice is served. Just as her predecessors in antiquity, Mme Régina Badet simply, and to our pleasure, danced.[22]

Other periodicals also mentioned the humble *maillot* Badet sported, which while successful at concealing her body, did not protect her from Bérenger's censorious gaze. In a fawning article detailing Badet's career in general and her beauty in particular, columnist Solange Bernot described how the audience waited to see the dancer in "all of her splendid nudity…But, despite all the frenzied gestures, her wrap remained closed. In the space of a few seconds, we could just barely glimpse a black and pink *maillot*. And, without any other interest for us, the scene continued."[23] The *Journal amusant* was less disaffected in its pronouncement: "One of our national treasures, Mme Régina Badet is an exquisite little morsel, deliciously rounded, more seductress than dancer in her academic *maillot*."[24] During this entire exchange, *La Femme et le pantin* continued to play, without interruption or reinterpretation. After it closed, Badet resumed her regular gig as a dancer at the Opéra-Comique, though now with an expanded resume: sometime *comedienne* and no one's puppet.

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[19] *Comoedia*, December 08, 1910.

[20] *Le Matin*, December 23, 1910.

[21] *Comoedia*, December 23, 1910.

[22] "Le chef de la brigade mobile, comme un bon bourgeois, s'en est donc allé au théâtre et il a vu. Il a vu la scène, il a vu la salle. Et mon Dieu, il est parti sans être, paraît-il, trop scandalisé. 'Des pieds à la ceinture a-t-il écrit au procureur, Mme Régina Badet porte un maillot chair qui la couvre entièrement. Mais à partir de la ceinture, le décolleté est peut-être un peu osé.' Et il a ajouté: 'En tout cas, personne ne proteste dans la salle.' "La justince est renseignée. Tout simplement, ainsi que sa compagne des temps anciens, Mme Régina Badet danse et plaît." *Le Matin*, December 28, 1910.

[23] "On attend, là, à voir apparaître l'artiste dans toute las splendeur de sa nudité…Mais, même au milieu des mouvements les plus désordonnés, le châle reste docilement fermé. A peine, l'espace de quelques seconds, a-t-on pu entrevoir un maillot noir et rose. Et la scène se poursuit, sans autre intérêt pour nous." *La Culture physique*, February 01, 1911.

[24] "Mme Régina Badet, une de nos gloires nationales, est une exquise petite boulotte, roulée dans ses formes, plus lascive que plastique en son maillot académique." *Journal amusant*, December 24, 1910.

Before Badet, however, Bérenger went a warm-up round with Isadora Duncan. The American modern dancer staged the Bacchanale section of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, an old familiar to Parisian scandals. Through the grapevine, the newspaper man about town Georges-Michel learned that Bérenger was contemplating censure of Duncan. The journalist recounted a conversation with the Senator in the pages of *Gil Blas*:

> —[…] Every evening, this dancer exposes herself shamelessly…
> —She is not nude…Have you seen her? …
> —Me, go see? Do you want to make me crazy? People have *reported* it to me! … Ta, ta, ta… I know very well what your response will be. It's a question of Art, Art with a capital "A." No, sir, Art can do without such things! Whether at the music-hall or the theater, such *exhibitions* are intolerable…Art? … No, sir, it is simply crap [*cochonnerie*]. Crap!! …[25]

Duncan did not let such smears against her lofty Art pass unnoticed. She penned columns for two consecutive days in response to Bérenger's prudish pronouncements. One reprinted Wagner's indications regarding the Bacchanale, which repeatedly detail the "voluptuousness" of the scene; she presented the idea that she herself was merely a cipher for the dramatic apex of the bacchanale, thereby implying the transcendence of her nudity in the scene.[26] In the other, she quibbled with Georges-Michel briefly before presenting what amounted to a petite artistic credo: "If I am boring you, I will go dance in the forest, nude, nude, nude…with birdsong for my orchestra and the sounds of the stream…"[27] Her performance in *Tannhäuser* embodied her larger aesthetic which, as Sally Banes describes, "characterizes female sexuality as fresh and vital, and also graphically joins it to nature."[28] In that way, Duncan provides a counterpoint to Badet in this historical moment: her nude performance in *Tannhäuser* demonstrates the prominence and fluency of this cultural trope.

As historical parables go, those concerning *La Femme et le pantin* and *Tannhäuser* offer a neat example of the complexities of staging the nude female body during the *belle époque*—a perhaps unexpected reticence in a reliably permissive era obsessed with salubrity and naturalness. After defeat at the hands of Bismarck, republican officials peddled the notion that the decadence of the nineteenth century—at its apices during the feckless July Monarchy and the opulent Second Empire—was responsible for France's fall. The obvious prescription, then, was to get healthy. As Mary Lynn Stewart has detailed, the nation had long attempted to enact better public health regulations; being trounced by the Germans

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[25] —"[…] Cette danseuse s'exhibe tous les soirs dans une tenue inadmissible…
—"Elle n'est pas nue… Avez-vous vu? …
—"Moi, voir? … Vous voulez que je me fâche? On m'a *rapporté* cela! … Ta, ta, ta… Je sais bien ce que vous allez me rétorquer. Il y a une question d'Art, avec un grand ! Non, monsieur, l'Art peut se passer de ces choses! Et que ce soit au music-hall ou au théâtre, ces *exhibitions* ne sont pas tolérables… De l'art? … Non, monsieur, c'est de la cochonnerie, tout simplement. De la cochonnerie!!…"*Gil Blas*, 05 December 1911.

[26] "Faut-il avoir devant les yeux la représentation grossière de ces visions? Ne préféreriez-vous pas, fixant vos yeux dans les espaces flous, voir Europa aux bras souples enlaçant le cou du grand taureau, et faisant à ses compagnes, qui appellent du rivage, un ultime geste d'adieu? Ne préféreriez-vous pas, fixant vos yeux dans l'ombre, apercevoir Léda à demi couverte par les ailes du Cygne, pantelante sous le baiser proche? Peut-être répondriez-vous: 'Oui.' Pourquoi êtes-vous là?' Moi, je vous dis simplement: 'Je suis peut-être une indication.'" *Gil Blas*, December 08, 1911.

[27] "Si l'on m'ennuie, j'irai danser dans une forêt, nue, nue, nue…avec pour orchestre le chant des oiseaux et le bruit des sources…" December 07, 1911.

[28] Sally Banes, *Dancing Women: Female Bodies on Stage* (NY: Routledge, 2003), 76.

made such projects all the more urgent.[29] Large-scale urban renovations, such as improvements in sewer systems, obviously fell under the purview of the government. But more than any other population, campaigns targeted women as overseers of hygiene in the home, officials having surmised that public hygiene required the cultivation of private hygiene.[30] Initially targeting such pressing issues as infant mortality, these initiatives soon gave way to more commercial concerns, resulting in a tide of advertisements by companies that manufactured home cleaning supplies and personal care products. Health was now for sale in the form of sparklingly clean furniture and glowing skin.

Yoking together health, beauty, and morality, the physician Ernest Monin published several tomes for women, including the watershed *The Hygiene of Beauty*.[31] His later encyclopedic monograph, *Secrets de santé et de beauté: hygiène et médicine féminines*, reiterated those messages, demonstrating the tenacity of such notions in the *belle époque* popular imagination. "Beauty," he intoned, "is a natural gift that one must safeguard. But it isn't enough to have a perfect physical form: an inner fire must burn in Galatea. Therefore, the cult of beauty is essentially one of morality."[32] Efforts to instill such values commenced early, embedded in the republican directives of a now-secularized school system. "Fin-de-siècle health and physical education curricula presented French girls in particular with a persistent linking of physical beauty and moral goodness," notes Patricia Tilburg, creating the ideological infrastructure for appropriate self-care as mature women.[33]

Investment in the health and resultant beauty of the female form did not, however, allay anxieties about it in its fully "natural" state. The issue of nudity animated peculiar tensions within republican ideologies of the body. As Tilburg has argued in her study of Colette's numerous near and fully nude performances, such displays may be read not as a flouting of durable conventions to shock the prim, but instead as a "novel but equally exacting moral code regulating the relationship between body and soul."[34] Other performers reveal a yet more complex negotiation of nudity on stage. In the wake of *La Femme et le pantin*, Trouhanova determined to alter her occupation quite radically. Her repertoire had boasted heaps of roles of the erotic type, such as her seductive, idol-making performance of the "Dance of the Seven Veils" in Astruc's 1907 production of Strauss's *Salome*. The publicity material for the Ballets Russes season four years later included a provocative photograph of the dancer in diaphanous garb. "Reclining on a richly carpeted step," Mary Davis writes, "the barefoot Trouhanova smiles enigmatically and raises her arm in a gesture of welcome; her body, roped in jewelry, is otherwise revealed by a transparent dress allowing a clear view of her breast and nipple."[35] Numerous images survive of her nude from the waist up or posing in costumes that reveal more than they conceal [Figures 3 & 4].

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[29] *For Health and Beauty* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001). See Chapter Three, "Hygiene and Housewifery," in particular.

[30] Stewart, *For Health and Beauty*, 59.

[31] Stewart discusses this source and Monin.

[32] "La beauté est un présent naturel qu'il faut savoir garder. Mais il ne suffit pas d'une plastique irréprochable: il faut que la flamme intérieure anime Galatée. Aussi, le culte du beau est-il essentiellement moralisateur." Ernest Monin, *Secrets de santé et de beauté: hygiène et médicine féminines* (Paris: F. Tedesco, 1904), 62.

[33] Patricia Tilburg, *Colette's Republic: Work, Gender, and Popular Culture in France, 1870-1914*, (NY: Berghahn Books, 2009), 137.

[34] Tilburg, *Colette's Republic*, 156.

[35] Mary Davis, *Classic Chic* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2006), 18.



Figure Three



Figure Four

Georges-Michel went further. He published a fond reminiscence about the first time he laid eyes on Trouhanova at the Deauville shore:

> The vexing creature went down to the beach, followed by all of the visitors to the Casino.
> —Oh! The beautiful beast! her companion Chaliapine exclaimed.
> Because she was bathing in the sea, but bare-chested. Like a beautiful marble, her rounded torso reflected the light from the sky and the droplets

> from the ocean. She kept going, the white cloth that barely concealed her from the waist down eventually floating away like a wing on the water, soon lost.
>
> She swam for a while. All the binoculars turned toward her dark hair, or her arms which, from time to time, lifted.[36]

While nude bathing at the beach was not quite the same as appearing nude in performance, the virtual stadium of binoculars evokes nothing so much as the nineteenth-century ballet theater, when, as Gautier so memorably put it, one ogled a favorite *danseuse* not with "those light country binoculars that fit into a jacket pocket, but large military binoculars, twin monsters, optical howitzers that will make future generations think we were a race of giants!"[37] Reminiscent of the collection of *lorgnettes* attentively trained on Badet, this impromptu nude outing characterized Trouhanova's early career and performance style.

La Femme et le pantin inclined Trouhanova to become newly circumspect. As Georges Pioch chronicled for *Gil Blas*, she embarked on an enacted polemic against Badet, a former colleague with whom she had shared many a stage. "Calmly, suddenly," he wrote, "in her own fashion, she demurely refused public nudity in the role of a dancer, a dancer whose entire purpose is to seductively earn the sympathies of Nabuchodonosor. Her taking of the veil, in the Church-sanctioned sense of the phrase, could not have happened more slowly. In several 'interviews,' Mlle Trouhanova has not neglected to explain the deceptive reserve of her gesture."[38] Written on the occasion of her performance in *Aphrodite*, another Louÿs creation, Pioch's column dripped with sarcasm, mocking this disconcertingly prim incarnation of beauty and new subscriber to a "less than natural morality."[39] Even after *Aphrodite* had closed at the Opéra-Comique, Trouhanova continued to testify about her conversion. One such interview was an extended feature for *La Culture physique*, the very same periodical that had rhapsodized about Badet in the wake of the Bérenger debacle. "I am not bothered by those performers who desire to be nude on stage," she pronounced, "but I myself refuse to disrobe on stage. I find it presumptuous to display your body to the public, as though it is something beautiful and uncommon. A beautiful body is not as rare as one might think. What is rarer is modesty, the self-respect that consists of not offering up oneself to brightly-lit, packed rooms. I am worried that people will think of me as less talented if I appear nude on stage."[40] Lest Rose-Nicole think that her protestations were due

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[36] "Cette paradoxale créature était descendue sur la plage et tout le Casino l'avait suivie.
—Oh! la belle bête! s'était écrié son compagnon Chaliapine.
Car elle se baignait. Mais elle se baignait les seins nus. Le torse rond, et comme un
beau marbre, faisant rejaillir la lumière du ciel et les gouttelettes de la mer, elle avançait, un grand pagne blanc la couvrant à peine, et qui, bientôt se détacha comme une aile, flotta et se perdit dans l'eau.
Elle nagea longtemps, toutes les jumelles tournées vers le point noir de sa chevelure, ou vers son bras qu'elle élevait de temps en temps."

[37] Quoted in Marian Smith, "Dance and dancers," in *The Cambridge Companion to Grand Opera* (NY: Cambridge UP, 2003), 105.

[38] "Calmoniat, soudain," he wrote, "sa forme et son rythme, elle refusa publiquement sa nudité à l'incarnation d'une danseuse dont tout le rôle était de flatter sensuellement le sympathique Nabuchodonosor. Une prise de voile, dans le sens que l'Eglise donne à cette solennité, n'eût pas eu plus de relentissement. Mlle Trouhanova n'ayant pas dédaigné de préciser, en quelques 'interviews,' la décevante réserve de son geste." *Gil Blas*, May 02, 1911.

[39] […] "une morale peu naturelle." *Gil Blas*, May 02, 1911.

[40] "Se montre nue qui veut, dit-elle, peu m'importe, mais moi je ne puis consentir à me dévoiler. Je trouve présomptueux de montrer au public son corps comme une rareté et une merveille. Un beau coups n'est pas une chose si rare que l'on croit; ce qui est rare c'est la modestie, c'est le respect de soir qui consiste à ne pas

to something other than true modesty, Trouhanova produced an old photograph of herself nude from the waist up to prove her beauty. And the image seems to have served its actually less-than-modest purpose, for the interviewer lamented that "[i]t is a pity that [she] is so modest and shy, as she keeps for her eyes alone her perfect, athletic, healthy figure. But I cannot fault her reasoning."[41]

That newfound reasoning, however, posed a problem for Trouhanova in her performance of d'Indy's *Istar* which, at its barest, is a striptease set to mythology and music. Istar, so the story goes, must pass through seven doors to retrieve her lover from his imprisonment in the *pays immuable*. At each door, she is required to remove an item of clothing or jewelry; by the time she passes through door number seven, she is fully nude and triumphant in her selfless quest. D'Indy used an inventive musical conceit to illustrate this disrobing in the orchestral version of the work. Premiered in 1896, *Istar* is a set of variations in reverse; that is to say, the theme appears unadorned only at the very end, neatly narrating the heroine's journey. Her musical *déshabille* includes the stripping away of ornate orchestral embroidery among other aspects, until all that is left is a statement of the theme in simple unison. As the verses taken from the epic poem d'Indy based his variations on detail, Istar sheds the following baubles: a tiara, pendant earrings, a heavy necklace, a breastplate, a belt, rings adorning her hands and feet, and finally her remaining veil.

When embodied, however, this morality tale became problematic. There were those critics, such as the prudish Debay, who fretted over the possibility that d'Indy's virtue-laden score would be corrupted by an actual nude body on stage: "I must admit that I was painfully surprised when M. Vincent d'Indy's laudable *Istar* served as a pretext for the disrobing that is, in choreographic terms, Mlle Trouhanowa's specialty." In his moral panic, he seems not to have discerned that any nudity that night was simulated and, by all accounts, not that skillfully. The dancer had devised a solution, however clumsily executed, to allay both her inconstant squeamishness about nudity and potential critical volleys. Upon jettisoning her *dernier voile*, in Gauthier-Villars's astonished recounting, she "wrapped herself in a hermetically-sealed saffron *peignoir*, under which she also sported a traditional *maillot*"—victorious nudity indeed. Garbed in silken armor of *peignoir* and *maillot*, Trouhanova found herself in the very same state of undress as her nemesis, Badet.

A comparison of the two productions, however, reveals a different story. For many a viewer, Badet's Concha barely achieved a modicum of humanity, and totally lacked the nuanced psychology of Louÿs's protagonist. *Gil Blas* conceded that the bumbling Mateo was, as the title of the work suggested, nothing but a puppet in her hands [Figure 5]. "But her, a woman?" Raoul Aubry asked incredulously, "Certainly not: a small, strange animal, agitated and cruel."[42] For *Figaro*, Concha was without a question not just a woman, but *the* archetypical she-devil: "It is well known that Concha Perez is a monstrous exception. She is a synthesis, a summary, an amalgamation of all those destructive forces, all that abrasiveness

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s'offrir qu regard allumé des foules. J'aurais peur en me montrant nue de me trouver inférieure à mon talent." *La Culture physique*, June 15, 1911.

[41] "Et c'est vraiment dommage que Natache Trouhanova soit si modeste et si pudique, et garde pour elle seule le mystère de son corps parfait, vigoureux et sain."
"Mais je ne puis m'empêcher de lui donner raison." *La Culture physique*, June 15, 1911.

[42] "Lui, c'est entendu: un pantin. Mais elle, une femme? Non point, certes: un petit animal bizarre, agité, cruel." *Gil Blas*, December 09, 1910.

and irrationality, and all such strident elements sprinkled in the characters of millions of women…And you can tell such a statement is no small thing!"[43]



Figure Five

If Concha functioned as a sort of limit case for feminine bad behavior, Istar was her antipode. The poem repeatedly refers to her through her lineage: she is a *fille de Sin*, ostensibly reformed through her noble quest. Concha embodied the ugliest of feminine failings; Istar provided a transcendent counterpoint. Stripped of all ornament, savior of man, and bearer of immortality, she embodied not only those cultural ideals of naturalness, but also obliquely alluded to that most nationalistic of all female efforts—resubstantiating France's own body, its citizenry.

As detailed toward the end of her *Culure physique* interview, there was one further issue concerning *Istar*'s staging. In Trouhanova's estimation, "[d]ance benefits from veils, cloths that caress, gauzes, flowers and pearls, colors that shimmer. The dancing nude does not reveal rhythm's soul, it shows a body at work. And that is not what one wants to see. The stationary nude is certainly a thing of beauty, but a nude body in motion, dancing, loses its regality and modesty."[44] Her commentary here rebuts *avant la lettre* Adorée Villany's famous pronouncement from later that same year. In response to German officials grumbling about her unabashed nude performances, Villany declared, "I dance with my

[43] "Il est bien entendu que Concha Perez constitue une exception monstrueuse. C'est une synthèse, un résumé, un amalgame de toutes les forces énervantes, de toutes les ressources crispantes, de tous les illogismes et de tous les éléments combatifs dans les caractères de millions de femmes…Vous voyez que ça n'est pas peu dire!" *Le Figaro*, December 09, 1910.

[44] "D'ailleurs, la danse aime les voiles, les caresses des étoffes, des gazes, des fleurs et des perles, le chatoiement des couleurs. Danser nue, ce n'est plus être l'âme du rythme, c'est être un corps dans l'effort. Et puis, chacun son idéal, n'est-ce pas. Le nu immobile sans doute peut être beau, le nu animé, dansant, perd sa majesté, et sa pudeur." *La Culture physique*, June 15, 1911.

entire body, and not only with my legs. My unveiled body bares my soul."[45] By comparison, Trouhanova's soul was coy in performance, preferring to remain unseen in her clothed body. Her distinction between the static and kinetic nude also contrasts her simulated nudity in *Istar* and Badet's histrionic, lascivious gestures in *La Femme et le pantin*. In a letter to d'Indy from over a year before the actual production, Trouhanova provided several pages of detailed explication concerning her performance.[46] Along with her sketches of the *mise-en-scène*, she included brief statements pertaining to the gestural rubric she planned to follow at each of the seven doors [Figure 6].

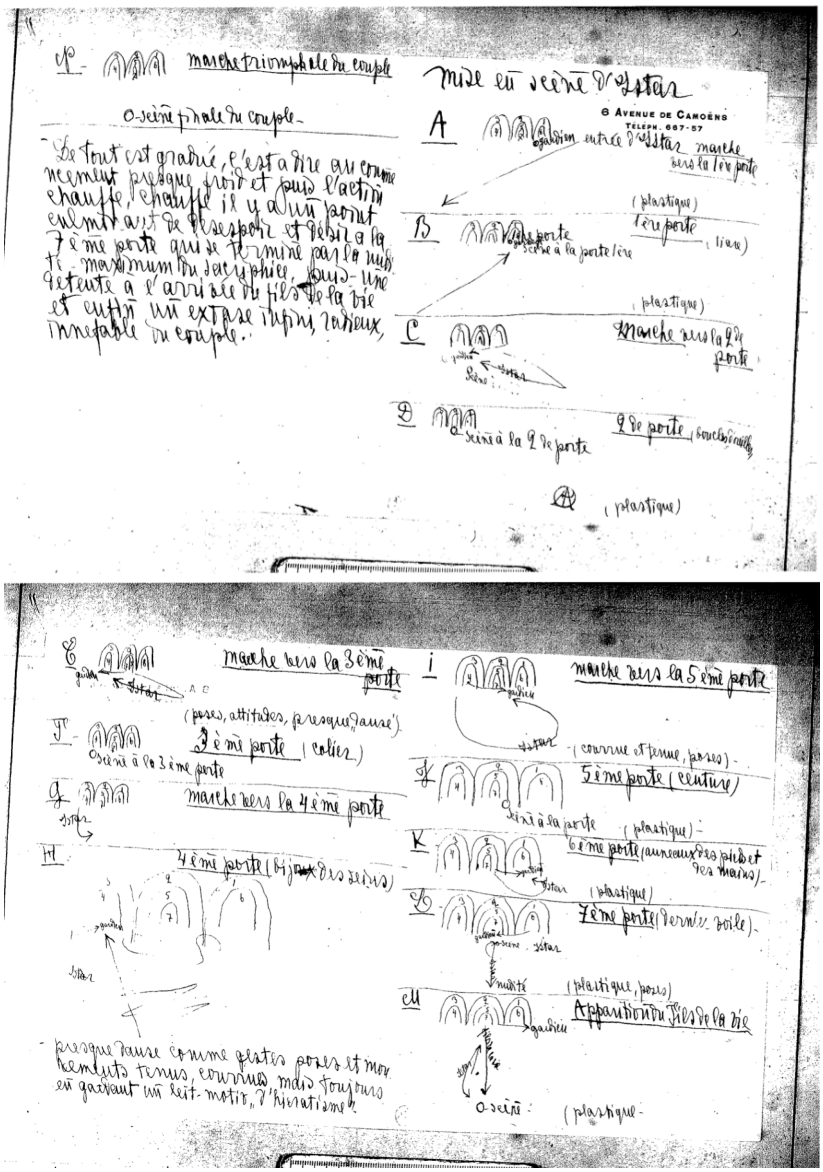


Figure Six

[45] "Je danse avec mon corps, et non pas seulement avec mes jambes. Mon corps dévoilé met à nue mon âme." *Le Temps*, (14 December 1911). Translation from Tilburg, *Colette's Republic*, 150.

[46] Unpublished letter, April 01, 1911. Held at the Bibliothèque-musée de l'opéra, LAS Trouhanova.

Her movements fall into three broad categories: *plastique*, *poses*, and *presque danse*. What is surprising is the dearth of danced sections in *Istar*; it is only at two of the doors that her gestures were anything other than mimed moments or held poses. She indicated *presque danse* at the third and forth portals, when she sheds her necklace, encrusted with gems, and her heavy breastplate. The music of these variations is among the most dissonant of the work, utilizing remote keys (such as b-flat minor and F-sharp major) and angular meters (including 5/4 and 15/8). One might imagine Trouhanova's near-dancing as congruent with the sentiment underlying these sections, comprising disjunct movements that revealed the exertions of her slowly denuded body. Beneath her sketch for the fourth portal, however, she clarified: "Almost dance, meaning gestures, poses, and held movements, rushed, but always keeping in mind the 'hieratic' theme."[47] This notation suggests that, despite the *presque danse* indication of these sketches, Trouhanova adapted her choreographic practice so as to conceal the image of the dancing nude body, a kinetic body marked by its efforts.

An eager participant in the *belle époque* discourse that preached a concatenation of work, beauty, and good character—Rose-Nicole described her as a lovely model of "moral, healthy strength"—Trouhanova offered an ideology of the nude body distinct from that of her colleagues. Her performance in *Istar* underscored the paradox at the heart of republican official discourse concerning women. Staging this "natural" model of beauty required some deft maneuvering: the unadorned female form needed to be countered by a concealment of work and effort, as well as an investment in beauty "above all." Trouhanova's performance complicates the feminine bodily aesthetic historians have mapped on to the period. *Belle époque* nude performances, as argued by scholars such as Tilburg, were not merely the licentious blooms of a decadent era, but an important cultural apparatus: "celebration of the power of physical beauty, especially the nude, intersected in the belle époque with a vision of Frenchwomen as the guardians of the abstract values of the Beautiful and the True."[48] Dating from just one year before the premiere of *La Femme et le pantin*, Gustave-Joseph-Alphonse Witkowski's magisterial history of the nude in the theater concluded with just this sentiment: "We must here declare that the female nude is one of the most admirable manifestations of beauty, and in no way excludes modesty and chastity. It evokes poetry and idealism."[49] Trouhanova, however, in both word and deed offered a different perspective. Her ritualized stasis in *Istar* presented an aesthetic code apart from that embodied by either Badet or Duncan. Instead of using her (simulated) nudity as a tool of reform, injecting dance with a healthy dose of "naturalness," she offered a more ambitious ethics of the body, of her body. Disavowing the moral torpor that she felt led to such exposing performances, Trouhanova managed to negotiate the pitfalls of nudity with remarkable equipoise—a simultaneous performance of physical and moral salubrity, a counterpoint to d'Indy's gradually denuded score.

* * *

[47] "Presque danse comme gestes poses et mouvements tenus, courue, mais toujours en gardent un leit-motif 'd'hieratisme.'" Unpublished letter, April 01, 1911.
[48] Tilburg, *Colette's Republic*, 151.
[49] "Nous nous devons à nous-mêmes de proclamer ici que le nu féminin est une des manifestations les plus admirables du Beau, qu'il n'est nullement exclusif de pudeur, de chasteté, et qu'il est évocateur de poésie et d'idéal," Gustave-Joseph-Alphonse Witkowski, *Le Nu au théâtre depuis l'antiquité jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Daragon, 1909), 420.

As the Third Republic slowly cohered and stabilized, one of the most pressing issues it confronted was the nation's precipitously declining birthrate. One could hardly read a newspaper without encountering a column—sometimes somber, sometimes sensationalist—on the problem of *natalité française*. As Dr. Lucien Nass wrote in his *La Rançon du progrès*, "It is banal to talk about the depopulation of France. So many sociologists, so many journalists have broached this problem from multiple angles, that after them, we can only repeat after La Bruyère: 'Everything has been said…'"[50] Spoken or no, anxieties over France's depopulation inflected discussions of various issues, not least among which was discourse about the question of women's roles and responsibilities. In his multivolume *L'École des dames*, Léo Claretie included a section on feminism, eventually concluding that it was

> an excellent idea in theory—that women should have equal rights—but less ideal in practice. Isn't the actual power of women their frailty? The more a woman is *touchante*, the more she holds men in her thrall. A lovely woman's tears are far more efficacious than lofty attitudes on beauty.
>
> Feminism is not tenable for one reason in particular: it would supplant the duty of motherhood.
>
> Oh, the day women are no longer mothers…
>
> Then the world will end, and any such discussions of feminism would be superfluous. I now lay my pleas at your feet, madam, and beg of you to remember that the worst mistake a woman can make is to become a man.[51]

Such an apocalyptic vision may appear melodramatic in hindsight—France, of course, lives on—but it reveals the desperation that propelled such debates. The opposition, led by vociferous feminists such as Roussel, was no less vehement. In her speech on citizenship, she too cited the depopulation crisis, though she yoked it to notions of precious feminine beauty. While politicians counseled that motherhood constituted nothing less than a woman's patriotic duty, it did not leave her body unravaged: "If we are truly the fragile and charming 'trinkets' before whom you tremble, Gentlemen, the luxurious dolls who have no other function but to cultivate and conserve a beauty that pleases you, then for goodness' sake be logical. Do not ask of us precisely what compromises and makes this beauty fade more than anything else: *numerous pregnancies* and *housework*."[52] Beauty here stands in uneasy relationship to motherhood. Depopulation implicated women's bodies, but maternity inexorably robbed those bodies of their most prized attribute.

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[50] "Il devient banal de parler de la dépopulation française. Tant de sociologues, tant de journalistes ont abordé sous ses faces multiples ce redoutable problème qu'après eux, on ne peut, semble-t-il, que répéter comme La Bruyère: 'Tout est dit…'" Lucien Nass, *La Rançon du progrès* (Paris: Juven, 1909), 96.

[51] "Méditez tout cela, madame, et vous serez de plus en plus convaincue que le féminisme est excellent en soi et vrai théoretiquement, que la femme a tous les droits, mais qu'elle a intérêt à ne jamais les réclamer. La force de la femme? N'est-ce pas sa faiblesse? Plus la femme est touchante et plus l'homme est son esclave. Les pleurs d'une jolie créature ont beaucoup plus d'efficacité que l'attitude altière de la beauté. Le féminisme ne peut être réalisable et pratique qu'à une condition, qui est de supprimer la maternité. Ah! du jour où la femme cessera d'être mère…Mais alors, le monde finira, et il deviendra tout à fait superflu de discuter sur le féminisme, avec lequel j'ai l'honneur, madame, de mettre mes hommages sous vos pieds, en vous suppliant de vous rappeler que le plus grave défaut pour une femme, c'est d'être un homme." Léo Claretie, *L'École des dames* (Paris: Sansot, 1907), 11.

[52] Waleti-Walters and Hause, 282-83.

Trouhanova's ballet evening included no fewer than two works, *Istar* and *La Péri*, that cast women as the holders or bestowers of eternal life. Upon her arrival in the *pays immuable*, Istar's first act is not to find appropriate cover, or even to embrace her lover, but instead to drink the Water of Life. In her triumphant nudity, she presents the visual equation of the female body with generative power. *La Péri*, based on the legend of Iskendar's search for the flower of immortality, narrates the lilting battle between the Péri and her would-be assailant. While first blinded by the possibility of eternal life, Iskendar's desire for the flower's guardian soon eclipses all else. He is, however, unilaterally thwarted, and the Péri regains the flower for the kingdom of Orzmud. Updated to a notion of patriotic motherhood in republican terms, the flower had not one guardian but a potential battalion—the nation's beautiful women turned mothers. Unanimously fêted, *La Péri* was central to the salvation of French ballet that evening, in much the same way that its narrative coincided with France's larger rehabilitative project. Brussel hailed it as representative of the genre's future; Haller called it "a flawless masterpiece [*un parfait chef-d'oeuvre*]."[53] The work's success was due in large part to two factors: Dukas's lush yet svelte score and Trouhanova's emphasis on mime over other *plastique*. *La Péri* "disdained any precious effects," in Pillois's estimation, and the choreography was at once "discreetly sensual and well-suited" to the music.[54]

In its near-perfect balance between expressive registers—dance and music at last reconciled—Dukas's ballet overshadowed the other works on offer that evening. But as more than one critic noted, the ballet that most suffered from comparisons to *La Péri* was the one that immediately preceded it that evening: Ravel's *Adélaïde, ou le langage des fleurs*. Set in 1820 Vienna, Ravel's toothsome scenario narrates the romantic foibles of the courtesan Adélaïde as a callow Poet and an aging Duke vie for her attentions. Each suitor makes his overture, communicating his desires through a mutually understood flower language. True to form, the rich Duke offers Adélaïde a diamond necklace, which she accepts and dons immediately. Witnessing their exchange, the Poet increases his efforts, though Adélaïde only rebuffs him coquettishly. Despairing that she is completely lost to him, he brandishes a pistol, and the drama reaches its melodramatic apogee. But when Adélaïde divests him of the weapon and a red rose—the flower of true love—flutters to his feet, all ends well.

Adélaïde was the most utter failure in Trouhanova's program, surpassing even complaints about the nudity in *Istar*. As Roger-Ducasse bluntly declared, it "marred" the entire evening.[55] Though critics bickered about many aspects of the production—an insipid scenario and hastily pastiched décor, for example—they sighted two main targets: Ravel's diminutive and remade score, and Trouhanova's purified balletic gestures. The composer reaped scorn from papers such as *Le Gaulois*, which considered both the *Valses nobles et sentimentales* and its subsequent orchestration to be among Ravel's less commendable works.[56]

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[53] Emphasis in original.

[54] "Dans un délicieux costume qu'Istar, Salomé, et Adélaïde durent envier, Mlle Trouhanowa mima avec goût le dialogue de cette poétique légende, qu'elle orna d'une danse discrètement voluptueuse et mieux appropriée. M. Paul Dukas a enveloppé cette charmante affabulation d'une noble musique, riche des multiples conquêtes modernes et dédaigneuse des petits effets." *Le Courrier Musical* May 01, 1912.

[55] "Vous avez dû lire le succès des Danses de Trouhanowa. Il paraît que seule *Adelaïde* [*sic*] *ou le langage des fleurs*, alias *Valses nobles et sentimentales* dépare le spectacle…Il [Marliave] appelle *Adélaïde* l'*Art d'accompagner les vestes* et Debussy m'a assuré, et j'ai marché pendant dix minutes, que Weingartner allait jouer les *Valses nobles et sentimentales* ou *Adélaïde ou le langage des pleurs* avec des paroles funèbres sur la perte du *Titanic*." Jacques Depaulis, ed., *Lettres à son ami André Lambinet* (Sprimont: Pierre Mardaga, 2001), 90.

[56] "Je ne m'attarderai pas sur *Adélaïde ou le Langage des fleurs*, de M. Maurice Ravel. Cette ébauche est l'orchestration des *Valses nobles et sentimentales* dont j'ai parlé récemment et qui n'est pas l'oeuvre de M. Ravel que j'affectionne le plus." *Le Gaulois*, April 25, 1912.

Columnists including Gaiffe, writing for the *Revue française de musique*, concurred: "But *Adélaïde ou le Langage des Fleurs* comprises a pleasing commentary on the famous *Valses nobles et sentimentales* that I persist—both before and after its orchestration—to consider a mistake by M. Ravel."[57] Jean Marnold at *Mercure de France* offered a fuller explication of this critical proclivity. He began with the statement that the *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, after Schubert, "add nothing to their predecessors," and were laden with "harmonies too complicated for their thin pretext." "Without a doubt," he declared, "we find here once again the skill the composer is known for, although we cannot help regretting that he squanders his talents and seems further and further from the much admired *Miroirs*, which roused so many of our hopes."[58] Mauclair seconded these charges against Ravel. There was no love lost for *Adélaïde* or Ravel's preceding ballet, *Ma Mère l'oye*; instead, he awaited "a great work, and the years pass, and the trajectory of this inarguable talent does not seem to ascend. Surely it appears viable for him to exercise his virtuosity in an ever smaller field, and to confine it to a juggler's arena: I regret this shrinking of ideals, and my disaffection, does it come from having expected too much?"[59] These critiques culminated in Vuillemin's conclusions about the evening as a whole:

> "French Ballets" exist after all. There are even enough of them to stage an entire concert […] Even better still, it appears that three of these works—if we put aside M. Ravel's ballet, full of charm, but in the characteristic precious manner of its composer—are solid, noble, beautifully constructed, defying any immediate competition in their size and power. Moreover, they are inspired. They will be more than sufficient to demonstrate that the best French music can do without those decadent formulas that its most zealous advocates propagate blindly.[60]

The rest of this chapter will suggest that *Adélaïde*'s failure stemmed from the particular type of *belle époque* beauty it presented, one that stood in contrast to the regenerative, healthful aesthetics of *Istar* and *La Péri*. The ballet offered a more ambiguous figure of French beauty and femininity, one that coincided with the perceived shortcomings of Ravel's score and Trouhanova's dancing. *Adélaïde* spoke the wrong language—botanically, musically, choreographically—that evening, a language Dukas and d'Indy seemed easily to surpass.

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[57] "Mais *Adélaïde ou le Langage des Fleurs* forme un agréable commentaire des fameuses *Valses nobles et sentimentales* que je persiste—après comme avant l'orchestration—à considérer comme une erreur de M. Ravel." *Revue française de musique*, May 15, 1912.

[58] "Sans doute, on retrouve ici l'habileté propre à l'auteur, mais on ne peut que déplorer qu'il disperse ainsi son talent et semble de plus en plus s'éloigner du bel effort qui naguère nous valut les *Miroirs*, et qui autorisait tant d'espérances." *Mercure de France*, May 01, 1912.

[59] […]"une oeuvre haute, et les années passent, et la courbe de cet incontestable talent ne me semble point ascendante. Assurément il lui est loisible de se borner à exercer sa virtuosité dans un cercle de plus en plus restreint, et de la faire tenir dans le cerceau du jongleur: je regrette cette diminution d'idéal, et ma désaffection viendrait-elle de ce que j'avais trop bien auguré?" *Le Courrier musical*, June 15, 1912.

[60] "Désormais, des 'Ballets français' existent. Ils existent même en nombre suffisant pour assurer l'integralité d'un spectacle. […] Avantage précieux encore, il ressort que trois de ces oeuvres—si l'on met à part le ballet de M. Ravel, plein de charme, mais fidèle, il va de soi, à la manière précieuse de son auteur—sont fortes, hautaines, merveilleusement construites, defiant en grandeur et en puissance toute concurrence immédiate. Elles sont, de plus, inspirées. Elles suffiront à demontrer au delà des frontières à quel point le génie musical français s'est évadé de ces formules du décadentisme que de trop zélés disciples propagèrent aveuglement." *Comoedia*, April 29, 1912.

Under the cryptic headline "Ne maltraitons pas les fleurs même pour une femme," *Gil Blas* published what amounted to a plea against the bioengineering of flowers. The author of the piece, one Jean Barouy, compared such an endeavor to the use of cosmetics: "Natural flowers are suffering their own small crisis. We doll them up with chemical procedures, and they thus become as deceitful as simple women."[61] In the process of making such an argument, however, he offered an odd, disturbing hypothetical:

> Suppose that you threw some money out of the window, convinced that your generosity was aimed at Mlle Régina Badet, and that you all of a sudden realized that, in place of Mlle Régina Badet, you had made advances towards Senator Bérenger, disguised as a dancer and outrageously made-up…you would be quite angry. Enough! You would shout that you had been robbed and that you wanted your money back…etc…Your anger would be legitimate. […]
>
> Flowers themselves suffer the indignities of chemical procedures. They die poisoned. Because flowers have more pride than women, they do not tolerate artificial beauty at all.[62]

The bizarre image of the prissy Senator in drag may have choked a startled laugh out of readers, but it also obliquely commented on the vexed place feminine beauty and its attendant manipulations occupied during the *belle époque*. Barouy's absurd tale is a caution against cosmetic adornment—underneath all of that face paint may not be a woman at all, but instead a man, and a rabid enemy to boot. Towards the end of his article, Barouy opined: "Men would be overjoyed if women were more like flowers even outside of poetry!"[63] If women were more flower-like, they would be beautiful, natural, and generative. As Deborah Silverman has described, *art nouveau* representations of women underscored this aesthetic through their dissemination of the *femme-fleur*, a chimerical creature who, like the ideal French woman, was "fresh, variable, receptive, and revitalizing as nature herself."[64] When threatened by artificial modification, whether chemical or cosmetic, those values were compromised.

Looking further back to the inception of *le langage des fleurs* to which *Adélaïde* refers in its subtitle, this idea is rendered even more starkly. Although scholars have not confirmed any one particular source, Deborah Mawer concludes that "it is hard to imagine that Ravel's scenario is not at some level derived from the highly influential book of the same name, *Le langage des fleurs*, published in 1819 by Charlotte de Latour and itself much indebted to *Emblèmes de flore* by Alexis Lucot, which had appeared earlier in the year."[65] Latour's volume interleaved narration and catalogue, explicating the meaning of each flower through a short

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[61] "Les fleurs naturelles subissent leur petite crise. On les maquille au moyen de procédés chimiques, et elles deviennent, ainsi, trompeuses comme de simples femmes." *Gil Blas*, January 07, 1911.

[62] "Supposez que vous jetiez l'argent par les fenêtres, persuadé que vos prodigalités s'adressent à Mlle Régina Badet, et que vous vous aperceviez tout d'un coup qu'au lieu de Mlle Régina Badet vous avez fait des avances à M. le sénateur Bérenger, déguisé en danseuse et outrageusement maquillé…vous seriez très vexé. Il y aurait de quoi! Vous crieriez que vous avez été volé et que vous n'en avez pas eu pour votre argent… etc… Votre colère serait légitime. […]. La fleur elle-même souffre de ces procédés chimiques et indignes. Elle meurt empoisonnée. Car les fleurs ont plus d'amour-propre que les femmes et ne s'accomodent point d'une beauté artificielle." *Gil Blas*, January 07, 1911.

[63] "Ce serait la joie de hommes si les femmes ressemblaient aux fleurs autrement que dans les poèmes!" *Gil Blas*, January 07, 1911.

[64] Deborah Silverman, *Art-Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1989), 206.

[65] Deborah Mawer, *The Ballets of Maurice Ravel* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 129.

origin tale. Folded into these narratives were morality tales, directed at the publication's presumed readers: young girls on the verge of courtship and, they hoped, marriage. The introduction cautioned: "[t]he art of love means, for women, the art of defending themselves; the more they have of scruples and delicacy, the more worthy they are of the homages that are given to them…True love does not know tricks and schemes. Its power is in its innocence. Only true love lays the way for blessed unions and happy marriages; without it, everything perishes in *langueur*."[66] After this pedantic introduction, Latour catalogued flowers by the time of year at which they bloom, discussing such specimens as the ubiquitous rose, but also its humble sister the *armoise*. Latour also hoped to inflect future developments in the scientific study of plants with her moral agenda. "I would like," she wrote, "for botanists to attach a moral connotation to each of the plants they describe: they would, through such a project, form a universal dictionary of sorts, available to every person. It would be as durable as the earth itself as it would be remade each spring, though without any change in character."[67] This idea of codifying a living morality in the ontology of plants demonstrated Latour's greater vision of *le langage des fleurs*: a tool to inscribe in impressionable young girls the virtuous route to true love. In discussing the bulgosse flower, one potential path to vulgarity drew Latour's exacting pedagogical attentions. Representative of *mensonge*, the bulgosse's brightly colored root system paralleled a woman's penchant for *maquillage*. Invoking the seventeenth-century moralist La Bruyère, who also detested *l'art de se farder*, she condemned those who attempted to manufacture freshness and beauty through make-up. "If we want to charm for all time," she counseled, "if we want to charm always, let us remove the falseness from our hearts, from our lips and our face, and constantly repeat the words of the poet who said: 'The only beauty is truth; only truth is pleasing.'"[68]

By the turn of the century, *le langage des fleurs* had fallen out of widespread usage, a wilted emblem of a prim past. Claretie declared it entirely obsolete, while others attempted halfhearted resurrections.[69] Among them was the prolific author of beauty manuals for women, the Comtesse de Tramar. Unlike Latour's moral exactitude and rigorous defense of naturalness, Tramar's flower language confirmed Barouy's worst fears: these "delicate sisters" suffered the bruises of modern life and love, no longer fragrant and lovely, but instead languishing in envy of their fresher counterparts.[70] Latour had counseled the use of *le langage des fleurs* as a communicative lubricant for courtship—say it with flowers if you could not with words—in highly proper contexts. Tramar not only discarded Latour's

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[66] "L'art de se faire aimer est chez les femmes l'art de se defender; plus elles ont de scruples et de délicatesse, plus elles sont dignes des hommages qu'on leur rend…Le veritable amour ne connaît ni ruse ni calcul; son innocence fait sa force; c'est lui seul qui prépare les saintes unions, les heureux marriages; sans lui tout périrait dans la langueur." Charlotte de Latour, *Le Langage des fleurs* (Paris: Audot, 1834?).

[67] "Je voudrais que nos botanistes attachassent une idée morale à toutes les plantes qu'ils décrivent: ils formeraient ainsi une sorte de dictionnaire universel, entendu de tous les peuples, et durable comme le monde, puisque chaque printemps le fait renaître, sans jamais en altérer les caractères." De Latour, *Le Langage des fleurs*, 96.

[68] "Voulons-nous plaire long-temps, voulons-nous plaire toujours, écartons le mensonge de nos coeurs, de nos lèvres et de notre visage, et répétons sans cesse avec le poète: 'Rien n'est beau que le vrai, le vrai seul est aimable." De Latour, *Le Langage des fleurs*, 42.

[69] Claretie, *L'École des dames*, 236.

[70] "Mais, nous verrons toujours la femme disposer artistement les fleurs, trouvant ainsi la complémentaire de sa grâce, de sa beauté. Ces soeurs fragiles, délicates et modestes, après avoir exhalé de leurs corolles transparentes les effluves de leur suave parfum, languissantes, meurtries; jalouses peut-être! s'inclinent silencieuses, résignées et meurent dans l'atmosphère attiédie, ou les amours et les baisers mettent des harmonies mystérieuses et tendres, qui accompagnent leurs âmes à travers les espaces." Comtesse de Tramar, *Que veut la femme?: être jolie, être aimée et dominer* (Paris: Malet, 1911), 403-04.

pedantry, but also updated the equation of women with flowers for the twentieth century. "Poetry and chivalry compare women to flowers," she wrote. "What appears to be a charming allegory on its surface is in reality the actual truth."[71] *Que veut la femme*?, the manual in which she made this comparison, counseled the deployment of *le langage des fleurs* as yet another tool in a woman's seductive arsenal—all a far cry from Latour's original conception.

The metamorphosis of *le langages des fleurs* encapsulates beauty's shifting social implications. Women now needed delicate weaponry to inherit their birthright: true love and a comfortable life. The model of sexual complementarity, which preached that men and women were equals, but that they had individual, harmonizing social roles to fulfill, waned under the Third Republic. As women began to attain greater official rights such as with the Sée education law and the conditional legalization of divorce in 1884, complementarity needed a makeover. Women deserted their *foyers* for more public arenas and the strict division of sexual labor became blurred, resulting in changes not only to France's workforce but also to the nation's marriages: affect trumped arrangement. While the model of complementarity had not been entirely discarded—women were still seen as men's predestined helpmeets—it was now forced to make allowances for attraction and courtship in a way not previously deemed necessary. One consequence of this shift was the expanded role physical attractiveness and seductive wiles played in securing a mate, an issue that found expression in the proliferation of popular instruction manuals by so-called "beauty countesses" such as Tramar. Authors of such works were rarely noble by birth, but their assumption of social rank brought heightened credibility to their advice. The Baronne Staffe, one of Tramar's colleagues, instructed that the cultivation of beauty was not optional, but instead required of all women who aspired to a satisfying domestic life: "It is a woman's duty to be beautiful. The flirtation [*coquetterie*] that we should arouse in men is not only permitted, it is prescribed." Beauty was a social imperative, and needed to be acquired by whatever means—natural or otherwise—possible.

Pioch's front-page ode to Trouhanova, in which he compared her to a priestess and a courtesan, culminated in the transformation of Trouhanova and her art into a flower, and a limitless, unending blossom at that.[72] The type of flower she resembled, however, was less clear. In her interview with Rose-Nicole, she was the epitome of natural health, clean-scrubbed and fresh-faced. But she also appeared in at least one advertisement dating from the same year as her Châtelet evening, promoting the beauty products of the esteemed Parisian house Gellé Frères [Figure 7]. Under the headline "Nos artistes chez elles," the image depicts an earnest, coroneted Trouhanova at her cluttered dressing table; arrested as though in mid-flourish, she holds a small jar of merchandise. "And after just one try," she testified in her own rotund handwriting, "I have become a loyal user of [their] products."

[71] "La poésie, la galanterie comparent la femme à une fleur. Ce qui apparaît superficiellement être une allégorie charmante est en réalité la vérité dans toute son expression." Tramar, *Que veut la femme*?.

[72] "Tu lêves à jamais tes pétales chanteurs coeurs, / Danse, innombrable fleur au long du temps éclose!"



Figure Seven

Gellé Frères had splashed announcements for their perfume "Séduction" through the pages of the prestigious arts journal, *Comoedia*, for much of 1911; to my knowledge, however, Trouhanova was the lone dancer hawking their or any other company's products.

Adélaïde too stood apart from the other characters onstage that evening, a courtesan in the company of goddesses and princesses. As Adolphe Jullien wrote in the *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*:

> Istar, Salomé, the Péri, Adélaïde: these are the four figures, with the exception of one that is remarkably dissimilar from the others, that Mlle Trouhanova has evoked and attempted to render as distinctly as possible for us through her gestures and steps. But despite the learnedness of the choreography, they, with the exception of Adélaïde, appeared always to be the same princess or goddess acting and dancing before us.[73]

Julien suggested that this divergence appeared not only in feminine typology but also in gesture. Even critics as seduced by Trouhanova's concert as Brussel noted laconically that she traced in *Adélaïde* a more "conventional ballet silhouette."[74] Gauthier-Villars presented the fullest—and most truculent—account of the ballet's choreography:

> It would be a shame to discourage Mlle Trouhanova from her heartfelt efforts, but it would be criminal to let her believe that she has enough technique to fully realize them: for no price should she ever again attempt the classical dancing of *Adélaïde*; she could however usefully develop the very real

[73] "Istar, Salomé, la Péri, Adélaïde: telles sont donc les quatre figures, dont une seule est absolument dissemblables des autres, que Mlle Trouhanowa s'est plus à evoquer devant nous et qu'elle s'est efforcée de rendre aussi differentes que possible, et par ses gestes et par ses pas. Mais le domaine de la chorégraphie, même la plus étudiée, a des limites assez étroites et il faut bien avouer que, sauf pour Adélaïde, c'était toujours un peu la même divinité ou la même princesse lointaine que nous voyions agir et danser." *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, May 03, 1912.

[74] *Revue Musicale SIM*, May 1912.

> talents as a mime and a tragedienne that she demonstrates in *Salomé* […]. Pleasing poses yes, but no more pointe work and no more elevations ever![75]

Preceding descriptions and images of her dance style emphasize her reliance on her arms rather than her legs as a mode of expression. Nozière, for example, nearly went into raptures over Trouhanova's lithe arms: "I adore Mlle Trouhanova's arms. I am quite serious; I mean this in terms of her dancing. It is true that Mlle Trouhanova dances as much with her arms and her torso—and perhaps more—than with her legs."[76] The final, hyphenated clause of this sentence reads as a ginger echo of the sentiment Gauthier-Villars communicated. Trouhanova's best expressive features were her face and her arms, as images of her from the period—as a Bacchante, a Salome, a Péri —underscore [Figure 8].



Figure Eight

Apart from a few early poses of her in a traditional confectionary tutu and pointe shoes, she preferred to be depicted flat-footed, and often only from the waist up. Photographs of her in *Adélaïde*, then, are anomalous by comparison. Modishly coiffed and turbaned,

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[75] "Il serait coupable de détourner Mlle Trouhanowa de ses passionnants projets, mais il serait criminel de lui laisser croire qu'elle possède une techique [*sic*] assez complète pour les réaliser: à aucun prix elle ne devera renouveler l'essai de danse classique de l'*Adélaïde*, mais elle pourra plus utilement développer les réelles qualités de mime et de tragédienne qu'elle manifesta dans *Salomé*, encore que *le Courrier musical* l'ait accusée de 'lèse-intensité et de lèse-cohesion.' Des attitudes harmonieuses, mais plus de pointes ni d'élévations, plus jamais!" *Mercure de France*, May 16, 1912.

[76] "J'apprécie les bras de Mlle Trouhanowa. Je suis très sérieux; je me place au point de vue de la danse. Il est certain que Mlle Trouhanowa danse avec ses bras et son buste autant,—et peut-être mieux,—qu'avec ses jambes." *Gil Blas*.

Trouhanova perches somewhat precariously on pointe. Her heavy costume—puffed sleeves and tiers of flounces trim her flowered gown—only contributes to the incongruity of the image, and contrasts the fleetness of Drésa's *maquette* included in the evening's program [Figures 9 & 10].

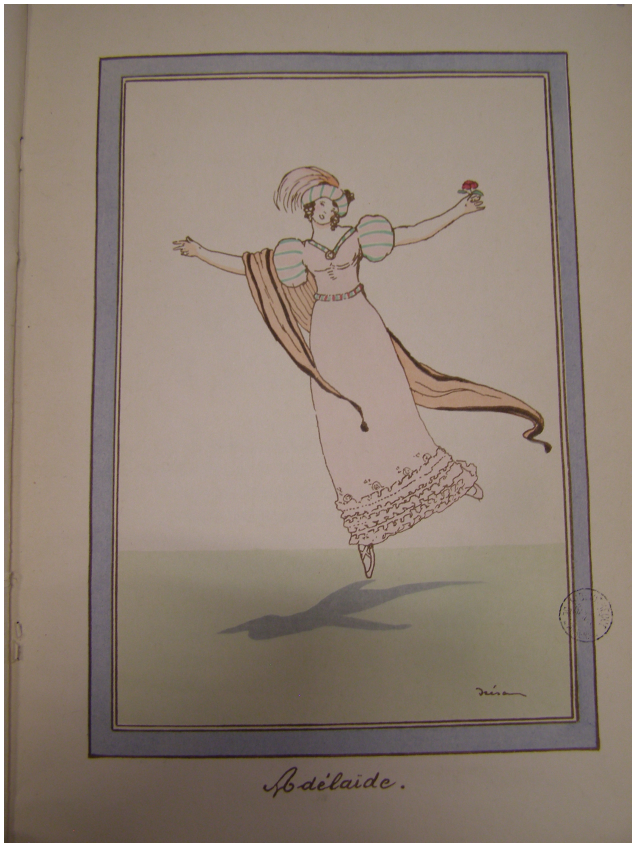


Figure Nine



Figure Ten

Though a photograph cannot reveal any actual kinetic awkwardness, Trouhanova's body language and arrested gesture here seem to contradict the notion of a lissome ballerina subverting gravity. She appears stiff and braced—by no means the pliable mime audiences had so long fêted. Trouhanova did herself no favors by jettisoning her signature eclecticism in *Adélaïde*. Whether the decision was due to the substitution of *le langage des fleurs* for the communicative possibilities of mime, or if it stemmed from the centrality of waltzing to the ballet's scenario, her gestural repertoire in that work not only garnered criticism, but also conflicted with the larger project of the evening. Pierre Lalo opened his review of the concert by detailing how it diverged from the nation's typical balletic fare. No tutus, no senseless emphasis on choreographic symmetry: instead, dance and music were on equal footing, and gesture, through the use of pantomime and action, melded seamlessly. In short, "it differed from French ballet in every aspect of its constitution."[77] Minus the tutus, however, *Adélaïde* conformed to just those balletic strictures Lalo condemned.

It also contrasted with the other works that evening in terms of music, diverging from the ostensible purity of d'Indy's score or the tasteful sensuality of Dukas's. Ravel's orchestration blunted some of the acerbity of the *Valses*, though the addition of plush strings only emphasized the hedonistic and "delicious" pleasures of *Adélaïde*. It is possible that the ballet included more music than the piano version. For the occasion of Trouhanova's concert, each composer created a fanfare to precede his work. Writing for *Gil Blas*, Nozière found d'Indy's to express, "through full sonorities, a rather military tautness"; Dukas's was simply "spiritual." Ravel's, however, was "nostalgic," an odd sentiment for a fanfare.[78] For a piece steeped in longing for a lost past and that concludes with an "Epilogue" (which is itself a tapestry of the preceding waltzes), a nostalgic fanfare would only emphasize the circularity of its structure.

In his recent study of epilogism in the *Valses*, Michael Puri intermittently draws upon the scenario for *Adélaïde* to speculate about the various recurrences of Waltz IV, particularly in the final section. He argues that "the libretto for *Adélaïde* suggests a psychological rationale that associates this waltz with happier times and the desire to recollect them. […] Loredan's will to remember and stay true to his passion provides another way to rationalize thematic recollection in the Epilogue—specifically, the frequent citation of Waltz IV, the same waltz during which he and Adélaïde first danced together and demonstrated their mutual affection."[79] This supposition depends on reading *Adélaïde* as having a definitive ending. But does it? Critics then and now have nearly always overlooked the fact that the work ends with a dream sequence that divests the narrative of any stable sense of closure, making this "*mince intrigue*" more complex than it first appears. Mawer notes that Adélaïde lets the rose fall, rather than offering it to the Poet. "Additional meaning," she suggests, "could easily be ascribed to this gesture: is she still only playing her teasing games?"[80] One

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[77] "Il diffère des ballets français par toute sa nature et par tout son aspect, par l'absence des jupes de gaze rangées en ordre régulier, comme par celle des évolutions classiques et symétriques des quadrilles, par la part plus grande faite à la pantomime et à l'action, enfin par la prééminence accordée à l'action, enfin par la prééminence accordée à la musique, dont le libre développement commande ici aux évolutions de la chorégraphie au lieu d'être soumis aux prescriptions du chorégraphe; comme il a toujours été de règle dans les ballets de l'Opéra." *Le Temps*, June 18, 1912.

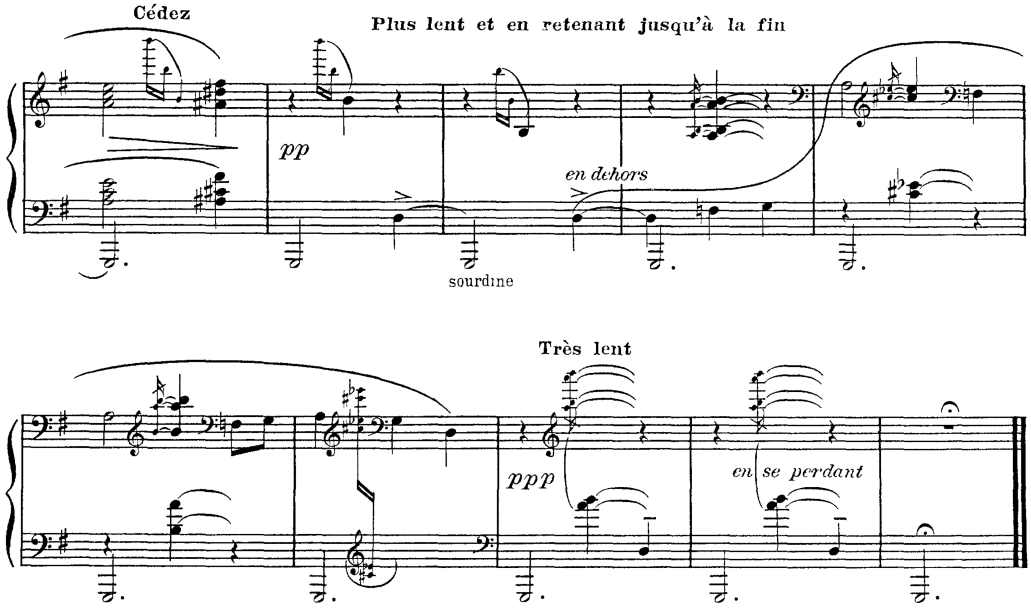
[78] […]"une raideur un peu militaire et par des sonorités solides" […] There is some doubt as to whether the fanfare ever actually exited, as Nozière is the only critic to make mention of it in the research I have done. Hahn, for example, cites compositions by Dukas, Schmitt, and d'Indy, but not Ravel.

[79] Michael Puri, *Ravel the Decadent* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 147.

[80] Mawer, *The Ballets of Maurice Ravel*, 133.

could go further, placing the "union" of the two lovers in the fickle mind of Adélaïde. Will she wake, only to continue her playful, stinging courting and *coquetterie*?

The Epilogue's music underscores these uncertainties. While the entire section evokes the translucent melancholy of Waltz II, its thematic material only appears at the *plus lent et en retenant jusqu'à la fin* nine bars before the end [Example 1].



Example One

Puri makes the valuable observation that the quotation has been lifted not from the opening, but from the reprise, as the melody's F-natural in place of E demonstrates. I would suggest, however, that that knowledge arrives one full beat earlier, with the piquant C-sharp / E-flat chord. This diminished third alternates with a more pedestrian major second (A / B), rather plain looking next to its gaudier neighbor; though spelled differently, they sound like the same interval—another instance of Ravel's sleight of hand, supposed change that, in the end, changes not at all. Coupled with the melody's use of the darkly timbred clarinet, replacing Waltz II's flute, these embellishments complicate the ballet's ostensible fairytale ending. Closing *Adélaïde* with a reminiscence of the couple's first dance may suggest sweetness, but it also intimates the reinstatement of the courtship cycle. If *Istar* culminated in *musique pure* (in every sense of the word) and the unornamented female body, a savior to her man and perhaps even mankind, *Adélaïde* concluded almost exactly where it had begun: a beautiful courtesan embarking on her romantic misadventures, all to a score that folds back on itself.

Adélaïde needed to be quarantined from the project of the evening due to its problematic materials—a narrative and score that favored nostalgia over heroic teleology, choreography that consisted of poorly executed fripperies—that themselves underscored the unsettling typology of femininity presented in the ballet. Due to the depopulation crisis, the government endorsed the image of the patriotic French woman as natural, healthy, and fecund—values that *Istar* and *La Péri* confirmed. Ravel's ballet, however, appeared nostalgic for a time in the nation's history that undermined the republican aims being promoted through physical culture initiatives. *Adélaïde* is set during the Bourbon Restoration, on the cusp between Napoleon's First Empire and the July Monarchy. It was a period that had to

make an uneasy peace with the legacy of the Revolution even as it reinstated a monarchy, now constitutional rather than absolute. As the nation entered what would be the most durable governmental installation in its history, the Third Republic, the ideals of republicanism were once again thrust to the fore. In her study of beauty practices in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France, the scholar Morag Martin writes: "to create an idealized world of republican fraternity, the spendthrift, sexually voracious, politically aware, and painted courtesan had to be replaced by the prudent, virtuous, domesticated, and natural mother."[81] Though Martin here is referring to the First French Republic, her statement is no less true for its longer, later incarnation. *Adélaïde* not only declined such a substitution, it invested in an epistemology of beauty that promised less than desirable socio-political consequences for the nation. The disconcerting circularity of Ravel's music and Trouhanova's all-too-present embodiment of the title role highlighted corresponding social dissonances concerning appropriate French femininity.

[81] Morag Martin, *Selling Beauty* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 2009), 74.

2. Telling Time: Statues and Stasis, *Daphnis* and *Faune*

In the spring of 1911, the daily paper *Excelsior* published a series of articles detailing Beethoven's fate in Paris. The Beethoven under consideration was a sculpture by M. de Charmoy, to be erected at Ranelagh on the western outskirts of the city [Figure 1].



Figure One

The statue, however, met with an unfortunate end at the hands of the *Conseil municipal.* Tired of the ceaseless parade of statuary "invading" Paris, the committee terminated plans for the monument in the name of urban aesthetics. The musical greatness of "le Père des *Neuf-symphonies*" could not override the threat of *statuomanie*, in full efflorescence since the advent of the Third Republic. Public intellectuals and snippy columnists alike ranted about the surfeit of statues cluttering the city's expansive, Haussmannized boulevards. An editorial in *Gil Blas* titled "La Question des Statues" lauded the government official in charge of such projects, one M. Le Corbellier, for taking a categorical position: "it consists, pure and simple, of refusing all new locations marked for the erection of statues in the interior of Paris."[1] In his *Économie esthétique*, M. Maignan suggested a more moderate solution. No statue should be erected, he advised, unless the topography of the location appeared to call for one.[2] A slim

[1] "[…] il consiste à refuser purement et simplement tout nouvel emplacement destiné à l'érection d'une statue dans l'intérieur de Paris." *Excelsior*, August 02, 1910.

[2] "Enfin, la statuomanie qui tourmente les perspectives aura vécu parce que, l'appropriation esthétique affirmera ceci: Une place publique ne peut recevoir une statue ou un monument que lorsqu'un vide dans sa composition récleme cette statue ou ce monument. Le sculpteur doit donc venir là, combler une lacune,

pamphlet, however, contained the most vehement protest. Gustave Pessard's *Statuomanie parisienne—étude critique sur l'abus des statues* provided an astonishing tally of the new monuments in Paris—the number of statues raised between 1870 and 1911 was six times that of statues erected in the preceding seventy years.[3] "The way things are going," he warned,

> we run the risk of seeing before long not only the Luxembourg, Parc Monceau, the Cours la Reine, but all the squares of Paris including the Champs-Elysées and the Tuileries, and even the smallest empty spaces left to us, invaded by a gaggle of unknown nobles, garbed in frock coats and pantaloons, with bizarre accessories that verge on the ridiculous, that shock our eyes, that blemish and sadden the aesthetics of our promenades, and transform our gardens into veritable cemeteries.[4]

Pessard's rhetorical histrionics aside, his underlying claims were sound, particularly about the types of new statues being disseminated. Instead of presenting abstracted, ancient heroes, these monuments were didactic: Louis Pasteur standing for "Scientific Progress" and Victor Hugo for "Liberty."[5] Charmoy's Beethoven, with its rippling torso and Hellenic grandeur, might have met the main administrative requirement for new public statuary—the subject must have been dead for ten years—but it ultimately proved incompatible with the prevailing political winds.

As Maurice Agulhon notes, "the Third Republic came to appear in retrospect the most statuemaniacal regime of all."[6] Republicanism had a spotty history in France. Statues offered it a simple, silent ratification. By their mere presence, these stone representations of accomplished men embodied the laic virtues officials hoped to promote. While not an explicit governmental program, *statuomanie* had a public educational function akin to other, more obvious civic reforms.

In the same year as Pessard's jeremiad, ballet engaged in its own *statuomanie*, with two works drawing upon Greek artifacts for inspiration: Ravel and Fokine's *Daphnis et Chloé* and Debussy and Nijinsky's *L'après-midi d'un faune*. Just as the Third Republic sought to rid itself of the decadence of Second Empire excess, so too were choreographers searching for alternatives to the empty, overwrought gestures of classical ballet; ancient Greece—full of stark lines and simple garb—seemed a fruitful source of inspiration. This chapter will situate both *Daphnis* and *Faune* within three critical frameworks: first in terms of the disputes over

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perfectionner une ordonnance artistique. C'est assez dire que l'oeuvre à ajoindre doit avoir été conçue en complet accord, en totale subordination avec le milieu destiné. On ne peut venir là, coller de force une statue faite sans but décoratif, comme il est procédé à notre époque. Cette statue serait-elle ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler un chef-d'oeuvre, elle y détonnera perpétuellement." M. Maignan, *Économie esthétique: la question sociale sera résolue par l'esthétique* (Paris: Édition de *l'Art décoratif*, 1912), 230-31.

[3] Simon Baker, *Surrealism, History and Revolution* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2007), 151.

[4] "Autrement, du train dont vont les choses, on risquerait fort de voir avant qu'il soit longtemps, non seulement le Luxembourg, le Parc Monceau, le Cours la Reine, mais tous les squares de Paris y compris les Champs-Elysées et les Tuileries, et même jusqu'aux moindres espaces libres qui nous restent, envahis par une foule de nobles inconnus en redingote et en pantalon collant dont l'accoutrement bizarre autant que ridicule, choque l'oeil, dénature et attriste l'ensemble artistique de nos promenades, en transformant nos jardins en véritables nécropoles.'" Gustave Pessard, *Statuomanie parisienne—étude critique sur l'abus des statues* (Paris: Daragon, 1912), 12.

[5] These examples come from Michael D. Graval, *"A Dream of Stone": Fame, Vision, and Monumentality in Nineteenth-Century French Literary Culture* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004), 31.

[6] "C'est ce qui explique qu'après 1870—et cette fois la chose est bien connue et partout citée—la III^e^ République ait pu paraître dans l'histoire comme le régime statuomanique par excellence." Maurice Agulhon, "La 'statuomanie' et l'histoire," *Ethnologie française* 8, N2 (1978): 148.

urban statuary with which we began, second through contemporary debates about the nature of time, and third in relation to developments in technologies of observation. I have chosen these frameworks in order to suggest that, despite their contemporaneity, these ballets bookend a shifting notion of spectatorship. I argue that the dancing body as staged in *Faune* is fundamentally different from that of *Daphnis*, and points to the ways in which *belle époque* viewership responded to critical shifts in ways of seeing. In both ballets, the animation of statuary is at once retrospective and prospective, thereby confronting issues of time and timeliness so endemic to the art of this period.

During the first decades of the twentieth century, dance was strongly associated with antiquities in the work of Isadora Duncan. In 1903, she and her brother Raymond (also a dancer) spent a year in Greece with the rest of her family, interrupting their fledgling dance careers in order to immerse themselves in the culture of Hellenic antiquity. They retraced Ulysses' journey in Homer's *Odyssey*, draped in the diaphanous tunics that would become Isadora's signature.[7] In her memoirs, she recalled her intention that "Clan Duncan should remain in Athens eternally, and there build a temple that should be characteristic of us." Although these plans were unrealized, Greece lingered in her memory and art. She later visited London, again with Raymond, where they together devoted themselves to the study of ancient artifacts: "We bought some cot beds for the studio and hired a piano, but we spent most of our time in the British Museum, where Raymond made sketches of all the Greek vases and bas-reliefs, and I tried to express them to whatever music seemed to me to be in harmony with the rhythms of the feet and the Dionysiac set of the head, and the tossing of the thyrsis."[8] In his history *Ballet contemporain*, the critic Vladimir Svetlov discusses Duncan and her career at length, calling her a "statue come to life, an embodiment of the myth of Galatea"; her dancing evokes "for us, in all of its varied colors, scenes of life in ancient Greece."[9] But as Anthony Sheppard notes, Duncan's Greece was her own invention: a general stimulus, rather than an archetype to emulate.[10] Seen in that respect, *Daphnis* and *Faune* diverged from the Hellenism of Duncan's art. Both Fokine and Nijinsky adopted specific ancient artifacts as models for their respective choreographic projects, but not as collaborators. Their simmering rivalry would overflow in the wake of these premieres.

The inception of *Daphnis* predated that of *Faune* by several years. Diaghilev himself had broached the topic to Ravel in 1909, the first year in which he presented ballets in Paris; but Fokine's interest in Longus's romance had been kindled years earlier, even before he arrived in France.[11] Inspired by the Russian Symbolist Dmitriy Merezhkovsky's 1895 translation of the work, Fokine envisioned a ballet that avoided artificial and ahistorical

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[7] Barbara O'Connor, *Barefoot Dancer: The Story of Isadora Duncan* (Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books, 2001), 38.
[8] Isadora Duncan, *My Life* (NY: Norton, 1995), 44.
[9] "[…] et la danseuse, une statue animée, une réalisation du mythe de Galathée," And: "Mais revenons à Duncan. Ses danses évoquent pour nous, dans toute leur couleur, des tableaux de la vie aux temps antiques de la Grèce. Pour être compréhensibles, les scènes de mythologie exigent une très expressive mimique; les danses Scythes exigent un tempérament impétueux; les scènes de lyrisme, une disposition douce, et enfin l'appareil extérieur, le dessin plastique de la danse exigent le sentiment du rythme. C'est dire que son art comprend tous les éléments dont doive se composer la personnalité artistique de la danseuse." Vladimir Svetlov, *Ballet contemporain* (Paris: M. de Brunoff, 1912), 32-34.
[10] Anthony Sheppard, *Revealing Masks: Exotic Influences and Ritualized Performance in Modernist Music Theater* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2001), 48. For a further discussion of Duncan's interest in Greece, see the chapter "Freedom in a Tunic versus Frieze-Dried Classicism: Hellenism in Modernist Performance."
[11] The exact date of his budding interest has been obscured by Fokine's own well-known prevarications, usually ascribed to his anxiety surrounding Isadora Duncan's influence on him.

stylization in favor of something more grounded and accurate, in keeping with the principles of the *Mir iskusstva* collective, several of whose members would be Fokine's future collaborators. In his memoirs, he described the specific archaisms that shaped *Daphnis*'s choreography, reflecting his faith that such gestural archaeology would actually enhance the fluid "naturalism" of the movements:

> The dances of shepherds and shepherdesses, bacchantes, warriors, Chloe, and Daphnis were based on the Greek *plastique* of the period of Greece prime. In the dances of Darkon and the nymphs I used more archaic poses. The nymphs were less human than the other mortals. Their positions were almost stylized and exclusively in profile. Darkon was supposed to convey the impression of being rough and clumsy in contrast to the agile and graceful Daphnis with whom he decided to compete in dancing. That is why, for the composition of Darkon's part, I utilized more angular positions. Of course all the dancers were either barefoot or in sandals.[12]

As Lynn Garafola has emphasized, naturalism, by now a long maligned concept, was during the prewar period "a galvanizing imaginative force," one that functioned symbiotically with the earnest antiquarianism Fokine was attempting.[13] The bacchanale finale, for example, with its mutable groupings of the *corps de ballet*, resembled a flickering bas-relief, especially in the "intertwined arms" of the dancers.[14] *Daphnis*'s choreography thus represented the ideas of an intellectual constellation that had its inception in Russia, but achieved realization only in Paris.

In contrast to Fokine's preoccupation with actual antiquarianism, Ravel's score was in his own words "a vast musical fresco, less concerned with archaism than with faithfulness to the Greece of my dreams, which is similar to that imagined and painted by French artists at the end of the eighteenth century."[15] The composer's nostalgic conception of the ballet's historical setting was exactly the sort of thing Fokine wished to supersede with accurate gestural recreation. This tension between Fokine's desire for purification and Ravel's own for hazy aestheticism amounted to a collision of two visions of archaism, bringing questions of timeliness and synthesis to a head. Fokine had actually inquired of his collaborator whether it might be conceivable to recreate "authentic" Greek music. The composer quickly disabused him of that possibility. Instead, the score of *Daphnis* deploys Ravel's customary sensuality, which critics either lauded or loathed. Emile Vuillermoz fell into the first camp, writing of the "spontaneity of the harmonic language, the freshness of these new inventions, the cohesion of the orchestra, whose remarkable sonorousness never appears effortful or polemical—all pointing to a strong and successful artistry."[16] It was a "true synthesis" of materials.[17] Others, however, found the music perplexing, to say the least. *Le Gaulois* mulled over its place in the history of music. Was it "the music of tomorrow?" Or at least of "a new school?" Not venturing an answer, the paper merely concluded that the work was

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[12] Anatole Chujoy, ed., *Fokine: Memoirs of a Ballet Master* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1961), 213.
[13] Lynn Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1989), 9.
[14] Chujoy, *Fokine*, 211.
[15] Quoted in Deborah Mawer, "Ballet and the Apotheosis of the Dance," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel* (NY: Cambridge UP, 2000), 143.
[16] "[…] la spontanéité de ce langage harmonique, la fraîcheur de ses pensées neuves, la pâte de cet orchestre où la sonorité exceptionnelle ne donne jamais l'impression de l'effort ou du parti-pris, tout annonce un art solide et enfin abouti." *Revue musicale SIM*, June 1912.
[17] "La synthèse de **Daphnis et Chloé** fut, au contraire, très complète." The contrast is to *Faune*, which Vuillermoz discusses in the same article. *Revue musicale SIM*, June 1912.

"curious" and "disconcerting."[18] The most specific critique focused on the work's alleged lack of rhythmic vitality. Writing for *Le Temps*, Pierre Lalo published the baldest accusation: "[i]t is missing the most important quality of ballet music: rhythm."[19] Arthur Pougin at *Le Ménestrel* agreed, though the question of rhythm only appeared at the end of a bewildering admixture of anemic praise and vague complaints.[20] Gustave Samazeuilh was more circumspect, admiring the vigor of the pirate music and the finale while simultaneously wishing for greater "rhythmic contrast" elsewhere.[21] These critiques in fact echoed Fokine's own misgivings that Ravel's score lacked a certain "virility" except for the very same sections Samazeuilh identified in his article.

Complaints such as the ones leveled by Lalo, Pougin, and Samazeuilh obscure the fact that, at certain moments in Ravel's supposedly flabby score, music directly inspires the choreography and at times actually *replaces* movement. Dorcon's *danse grotesque* is a case in point. With its incessant duple meter, awkwardly accented on the first beat, the opening timpani rhythm on repeated Es recalls nothing so much as relentless barefoot stomping [Example 1].[22] It becomes a sort of vestigial aural marker, on which Fokine could then base his gestures.

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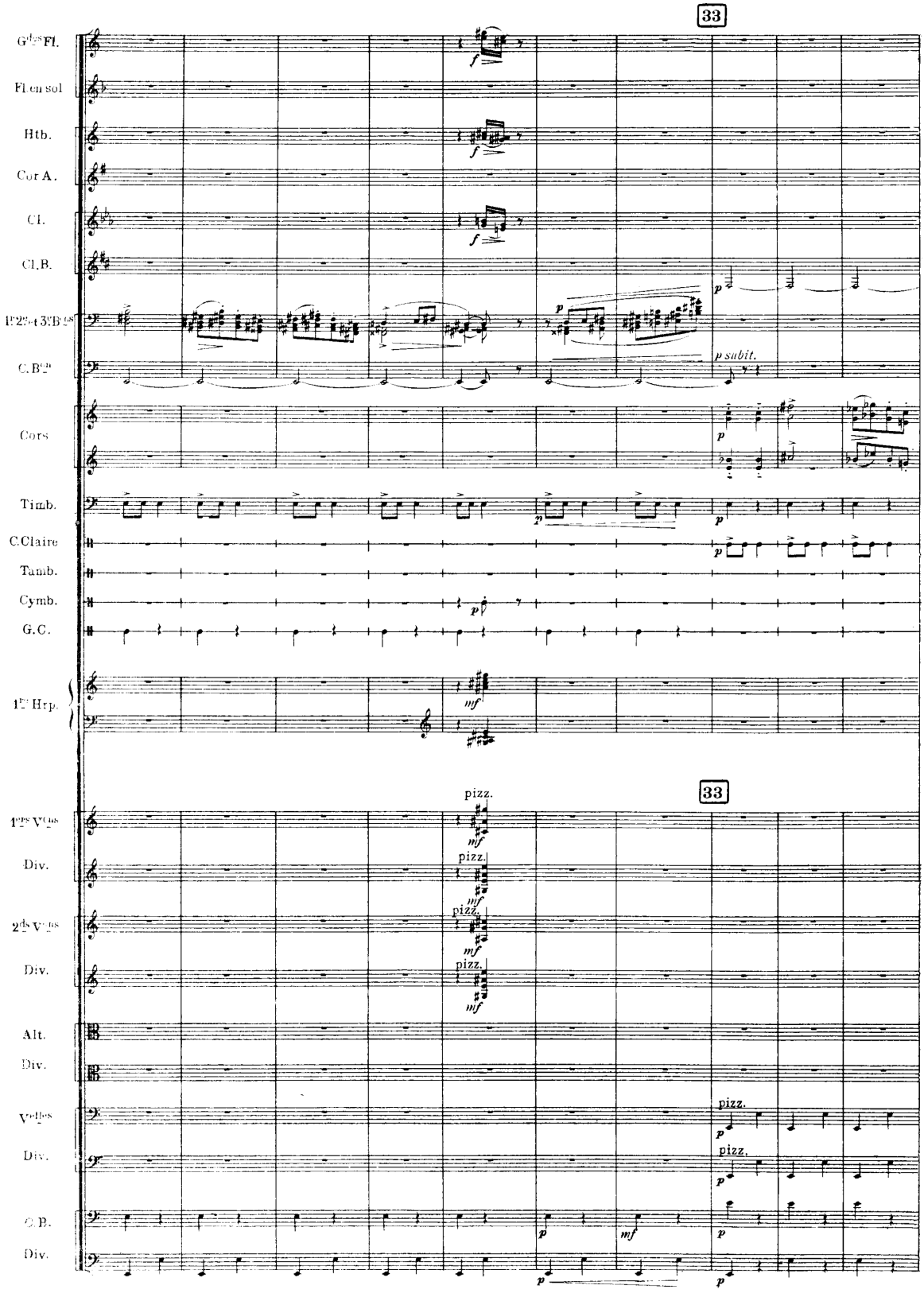
[18] "Est-ce la musique de demain? Est-ce l'aboutissant d'une école nouvelle? je n'en sais rien; je ne peux que dire ceci pour le moment: l'oeuvre est curieuse et déconcertante à la fois." *Le Gaulois*, June 09, 1912.

[19] "Mais il lui manque ce qui est la première qualité d'une musique de ballet: le rythme." *Le Temps*, June 11, 1912.

[20] "[…] pour de la musique de danse, pas assez de franchise dans les rythmes." *Le Ménestrel*, June 15, 1912.

[21] "Peut-être le charme pénétrant de ces épisodes aurait-il gagné à être mis en évidence par un contraste plus accenuté avec les parties mouvementées de l'oeuvre, telles que la danse des pirates et la danse finale, auxquelles certains pourraient parfois désirer plus d'oppositions dans les rythmes et dans l'instrumentation, si habile et si chatoyante que soit cette dernière." *Le Courrier musical*, June 15, 1912.

[22] Gurminder Bhogal makes even more of the rhythmic regularity here: "Daphnis's association with ornament and metric dissonance is linked directly to his depiction as a sensitive, effeminate character. This observation is most compelling when we compare his emotional dance with his rival's inartistic efforts. Dorcon's *Danse grotesque* represents one of the ballet's most *regular* rhythmic and metric moments. And as such, this crude, duple-time dance aligns itself with the music of the other insensitive brutes of the ballet, the pirates; their music…projects the longest stretch of a regular duple meter in the entire work….the percussive, periodic articulation of a crotchet pulse portrays Dorcon as an unrefined cowherd, whose unrelenting metric consonance is met with mockery and laughter. In contrast, Ravel casts Daphnis's fluid dance (its disruptive flourishes, fluctuating meters, and grouping dissonances) as the epitome of refined expression." "Debussy's Arabesque and Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* (1912)," *Twentieth-Century Music* 3, N2 (2006): 187.


44
33
G^des Fl.
Fl en sol
Htb.
Cor A.
Cl.
Cl.B.
1er 2es et 3e B^ons
C.B^on
Cors
Timb.
C.Claire
Tamb.
Cymb.
G.C.
1er Hrp.
33
pizz.
1ers V^lons
Div.
2ds V^lons
Div.
Alt.
Div.
V^celles
Div.
C.B.
Div.
p subit.
pizz.

Example One

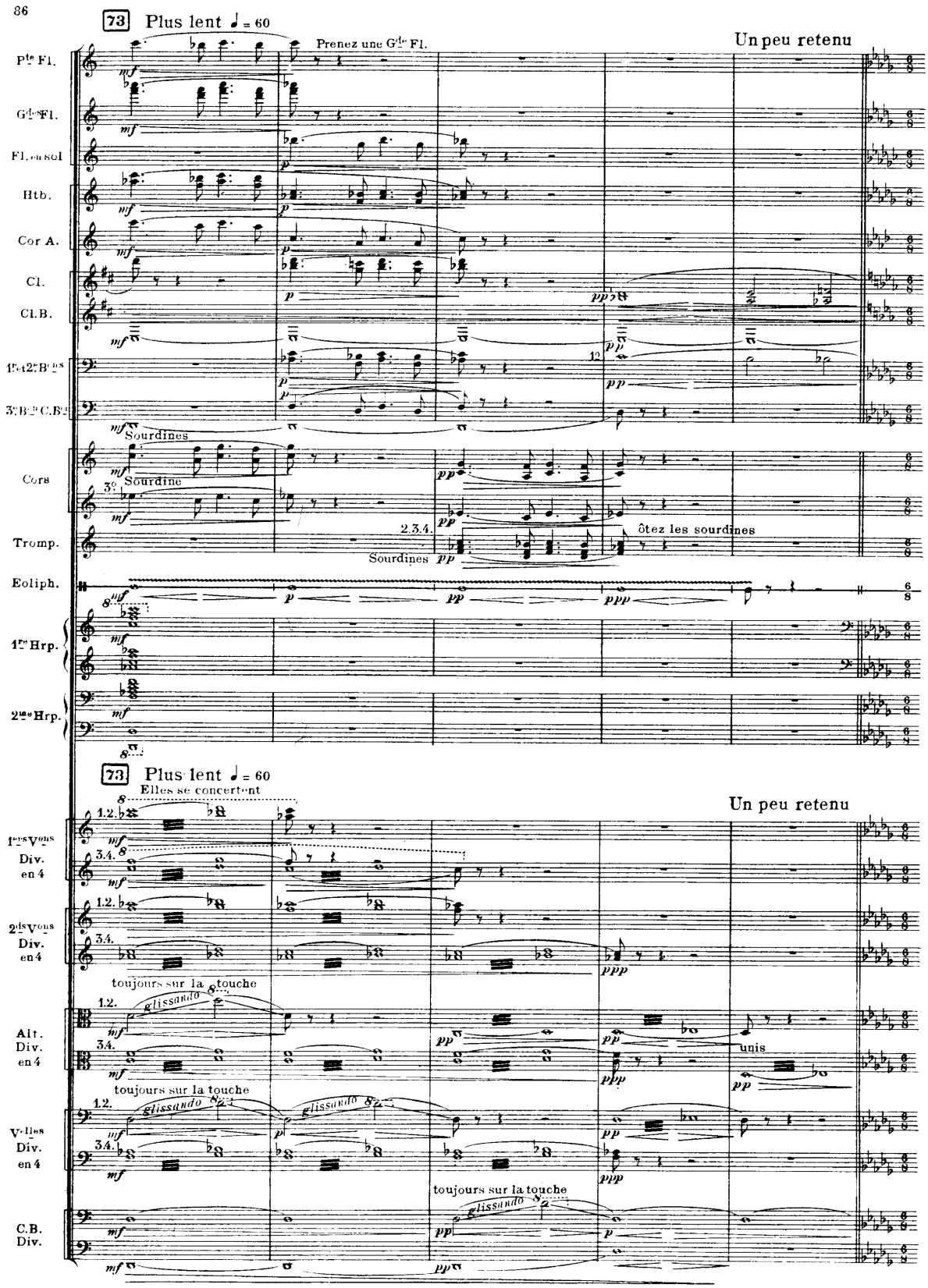
In his extended review of *Daphnis* and *Faune* for *Comoedia illustré*, Henri Gauthier-Villars describes the number, as well as Daphnis's fleet response. His collapsing of rhythm into an audio-visual *mélange* is striking, especially given the accusations critics leveled at Ravel's supposedly invertebrate score. "The *danse grotesque* of the cowherd Dorcon," he writes, "punctuated by Bolm with truly remarkable passion, vigor, and metrical precision, is full of innovative and pleasing gestures; the poetic dance of Daphnis where Nijinsky's bare arms spill out of his open tunic […] will be one of the most artistic inventions of this astonishing creator of visual rhythms."[23] Though lacking in vigorous infrastructure of the kind expected in ballet music—that is to say, insistent rhythmic motives that help to propel gesture—*Daphnis* presented an alternative in this particular moment with the timpani: illustrative rhythmic gestures that yielded corresponding visual translation. In that way, music became archetypical in a way related to Fokine's use of statuary. If his choreography was based on animating statues, then Ravel's music provided an aural, animating force too, one that ratcheted the relationship between music and gesture from the complementary to the synthetic.

This dynamic was amplified in sections utilizing the eoliphone (also known by its more casual designation, the wind machine), the unquestioned instrumental celebrity of the score. An orchestral novelty, it had made dramatic appearances in works such as Strauss's *Don Quixote*; in *Daphnis*, however, its function was more than atmospheric, though its usage did contribute to the "hazy sensuality" of Ravel's ancient Greece. As critics then and now have noted, the ballet's scenario has little action and intrigue, apart from some fruitless pirate shenanigans.[24] The slight narrative derives all of its meager momentum from Pan's two timely appearances. (Even Daphnis and Chloé's only real coupling occurs while in disguise as the god and his beloved prey, Syrinx.) A description of the opening setting demonstrates his strange centrality to the work: "A meadow at the edge of a sacred wood. In the background, hills. To the right, a grotto, at the entrance of which, hewn out of the rock, is an antique sculpture of three Nymphs. Somewhat toward the background, to the left, a large rock vaguely resembles the form of the god Pan." Daphnis himself comes across as a pliant, clueless bystander, swooning at Chloé's abduction and remaining absent through all of Part Two, only to resurface after her safe return. It is at his behest that Pan and his bevy of nymphs accomplish the rescue. Daphnis prostrates himself before the sculpture of the Nymphs who, perceiving his distress, slowly come to life. The Nymphs move first to otherworldly strings, then halting winds, and finally, the eoliphone (in its first appearance in the ballet). After presenting a *danse lent et mystérieuse*, they spot the prone Daphnis. They dry his tears, lead him toward the rough hewn rock, and there invoke the god Pan. The eoliophone sounds intermittently through this sequence, accompanying the Nymphs' actions [Example 2]. When Daphnis moves to offer himself in supplication, it falls silent, cementing its association with non-mortal beings. Ravel exchanges the eoliphone for a *pianissimo* bass drum roll as Pan's outline appears on the rock face; its deeper register underscores the ominous forces at work.

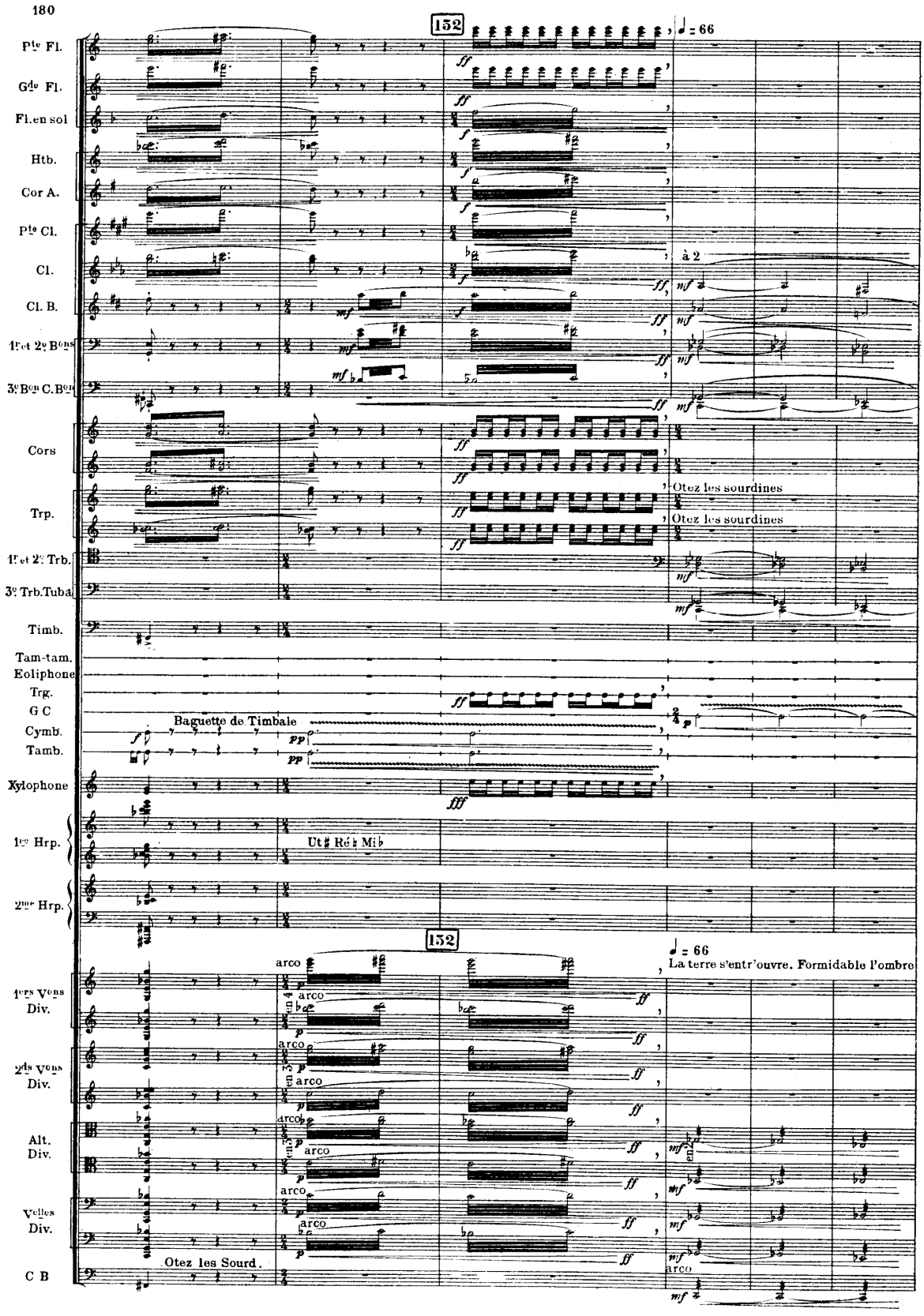
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[23] "La danse grotesque du bouvier Dorcon, rythmée par Bolm avec une fougue, une vigueur et une précision métrique réellement splendides, abonde en trouvailles plastiques fort heureuses; la danse poétique de Daphnis où le bras nu de Nijinsky jaillissant de la tunique immaculée largement fendue, s'allonge élégamment sur la houlette qui courbe sa nuque, comptera parmi les plus artistiques inventions de cet étonnant créateur de rythmes visuels […]" *Comoedia illustré,* June 15, 1912.

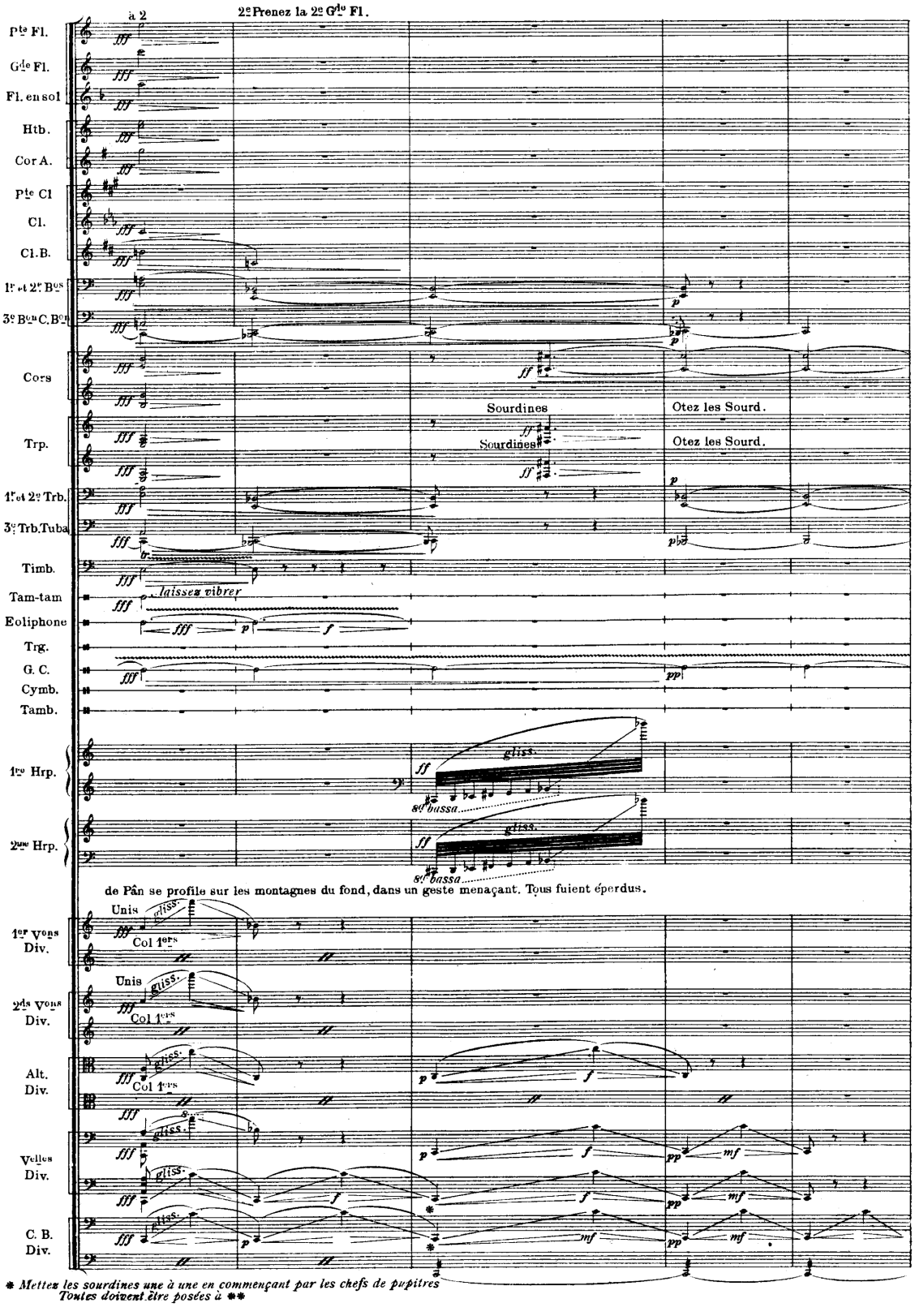
[24] "Il m'a semblé que trois tableaux et cent vingt pages de musique c'était peut-être beaucoup pour un si mince sujet." *Comoedia illustré,* June 15, 1912.


86
73 Plus lent ♩ = 60
Prenez une Gde Fl.
Un peu retenu
Pte Fl.
Gde Fl.
Fl. en sol
Htb.
Cor A.
Cl.
Cl.B.
1er et 2e B.ns
3e B.n C.B.s
Sourdines
Cors
3e Sourdine
Tromp.
2.3.4.
Sourdines
ôtez les sourdines
Eoliph.
1er Hrp.
2me Hrp.
73 Plus lent ♩ = 60
Elles se concertent
Un peu retenu
1ers Vons Div. en 4
2ds Vons Div. en 4
toujours sur la touche
glissando
Alt. Div. en 4
unis
V-lles Div. en 4
C.B. Div.

Example Two



Example Three



Example Three [continued]

The eoliphone, however, is directly associated with Pan at his second and final appearance. Having grown tired of watching Chloé's wilting dance, the pirate king Bryaxis moves to carry her off (presumably to rape her), but supernatural effects suddenly beset the atmosphere. Satyrs—Pan's traditional coterie—surround the brigands, and the god's "fearsome shadow is outlined on the hills in the background, making a threatening gesture." A swell to *fortissimo* on the eoliphone accompanies this moment, after which the pirates flee [Example 3]. As with the nymphs, the sound of the machine announces the movement of a superhuman figure. Here Pan's "action," however, is reduced to an unspecified gesture or, more accurately, an image of a gesture—akin to the bas-reliefs and sculptures *Daphnis* was based on, as are the animated Nymphs. Ravel's use of the eoliphone here and in the preceding instance presents a pair of moments in the ballet that can be extrapolated as a larger comment on the work's production. Dorcon's labored lumbering and Daphnis' fancy footwork provide examples of the way Ravel's music illustrated gestures, but the appearance of the eoliphone suggests something further: that sound not only facilitates physical animation, it also replaces it at crucial junctures. The moment of greatest tension—indeed, one of the few moments during which people are not merely standing around watching others dance—requires no action on the part of its instigator. Instead, the eoliphone functions as a surrogate, sound replacing movement in a way generally unfamiliar to ballets of the period.[25]

Fokine's use of statuary in *Daphnis* was thus subsumed into the larger undertaking of the ballet, the integration of gesture and music to produce a holistic, legible product, naturalistic replacing archaeological verisimilitude. Since leaving Russia, he had aimed for a kind of realism that bordered on the naturalistic, creating a renovated vocabulary of movement that replaced the abstracted, decorative gestures of classical ballet. "Just as life differs in different epochs," he explained,

> and gestures differ among human beings, so the dance which expresses life must vary. The Egyptian of the time of the Pharaohs was very different from the Marquis of the eighteenth century. The ardent Spaniard and the phlegmatic dweller in the north not only speak different languages, but use different gestures. These are not invented. They are created by life itself.[26]

Artistic synthesis, however, trumped realism in turn. While not necessarily opposed to it, the demands of synthesis inhibited Fokine's realistic bent: antiquarianism gave way to the holistic principle guiding the ballet. *Daphnis* staged an alternative to the ossified gestures of conventional balletic gesture, but not to artistic synthesis. Ravel's illustrative score suggests the extent to which synthetic integration of media mattered to both collaborators. Despite dabbling, as was *au courant*, in statuary, the ballet remained faithful to a familiar aesthetic model from the nineteenth century and, more specifically, Wagner. *Daphnis* privileged the holistic—symbiotic gesture and music—over a desire for the realistic. Not so *Faune*.

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The urban absurdity of *statuomanie* illustrates France's political priorities, which coincided with ballet's own: renovations of the present through restagings of the past. But the nation

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[25] For an example of a ballet (one among many) that declined this sort of synthesis, see Davinia Caddy's discussion of *Le lac des aulnes*. Critics lampooned the scenario as well as the dancing, which Caddy describes as "non-natural, non-dance, non-art." *The Ballets Russes and Beyond* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 30.
[26] Quoted in Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 9.

was in addition undertaking a much more practical reevaluation of time. Between the 15th and the 23rd of October 1912, Paris hosted the *Conference internationale de l'heure*. Greenwich had been the zero meridian for nearly thirty years, but the French had stubbornly refused to submit to its ticking rigors. Recognizing both the value and the inevitability of global standardization, President Raymond Poincaré organized a conference that would begin the process in France. A wily political move, it served to diminish any lingering exasperation with the nation's clocks. Though endless quibbles delayed standardization for another year, 1912 marked a watershed, as Stephen Kern describes it, in the effort "to rationalize public time."[27] Time itself, however, was simultaneously entangled in its own ontological complications. Was it cellular, a parade of discrete instants, or more hydroponic, emerging from a continuous and indivisible stream? And how did one reconcile the new strictures of public time with the intense subjectivity of private time?

Proust grappled famously with these questions, but the most influential contribution came from the philosopher Henri Bergson, who provided an aggressive, if elegantly packaged, attack on prevailing notions of time. For Bergson, true lived experience depended on the concept of *durée*, which he described as "the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances."[28] *Durée* was heterogeneous, subjective, sequential, interior, whereas its falsely objective counterpart was homogeneous, spatialized, simultaneous, and public. Bergson's argument took aim at positivist thinkers of the time, whom he berated for their plodding, segmented analyses of the known world. True knowledge came instead from intuition, a perceptual mode that evaded analysis. As he wrote in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, "[b]y intuition is meant the kind of *intellectual sympathy* by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible. […] [I]ntuition, if intuition is possible, is a simple act."[29] Intuition offered true perception, an unmediated experience of reality.

In the process of explicating the indivisibility of *durée*, Bergson turned to music:

> Listen to a melody with your eyes closed, thinking of it alone, no longer juxtaposing on paper or an imaginary keyboard notes which you thus preserved one for the other, which then agreed to become simultaneous and renounced their fluid continuity in time to congeal in space; you will rediscover, undivided and indivisible, the melody or portion of the melody that you will have replaced within pure duration. Now, our inner duration, considered from the first to the last moment of our conscious life, is something like this melody.[30]

As Kern has noted, Bergson's definitions of *durée* were notoriously, and willfully, opaque.[31] Music, however, provided a comparatively straightforward analogy. Melody, when

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[27] Stephen Kern, *The Cultures of Time and Space* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 14.
[28] Keith Ansell Pearson and John Mullarkey, eds., *Henri Bergson: Key Writings* (NY: Continuum, 2002), 173.
[29] T.E. Hulme, trans., *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), 7-8.
[30] Pearson and Mullarkey, *Henri Bergson*, 208.
[31] "In a final effort to provide an approximate analogy Bergson directed the reader to imagine 'an infinitely elastic body [which cannot be imagined], contracted, if it were possible [which it is not] to a mathematical point.' Imagine a line drawn out of that point, and then focus not on the line but on the action by which it is traced. Then 'let us free ourselves from the space which underlies the movement in order to consider only the movement itself, the act of tension or extension, in short pure mobility. We shall have this time a more faithful image of the development of our self in duration.' Bergson thus asks us to imagine something which is unimaginable, conceive of an action of that unimaginable image which is inconceivable, and then effect a limitation of our attention to an aspect of that action which is impossible. The effect of this trying analogy is to

apprehended in fluent sequence rather than spatial simultaneity, mirrored the processes of one's own lived experience in time. Others related Bergson and his work to music as well. Writing for *Comoedia*, the critic Louis Laloy published an article titled "M. Henri Bergson et la Musique" in 1914. After a brief *précis* of key philosophical concepts, Laloy sketched a parallel between music and *durée*:

> Music is a temporal art. Without a doubt the reading of a poem is successive, and we contemplate a picture or a statue like we might browse a book. But the difference here is that music is only complete once performed, and this performance does not depend solely on the duration that we would like to choose, but a particular duration, of which the form and the movements are determined. It is by this property that music comes so easily to us, while we listen to a soul that is its own, and not ours.[32]

Laloy went so far as to describe a modern trinity, made up of Bergson, Debussy, and Rodin. Each, in his respective medium, "manifested the state of our society even as they determined it. It is for this reason that secret connections unify them, and one can say that such music could not be produced except for in the company of such philosophy, and vice versa."[33] The links between Bergson and Debussy struck Laloy so strongly that he neglected to include Rodin and his art in the final phrase. Bergson himself had acknowledged having an "intuitive predilection" for Debussy's music, describing it as "a music of duration because of the use of a continuous melody that accompanies and expresses the unique and uninterrupted current of dramatic emotion."[34] *Faune*, with its stealthy variations on a guiding melody, epitomizes this phrase. Indeed, Bergson's statement will form the grounding for the rest of this section, in which I will examine the score of *Faune* in order to suggest that the work's large and small structure embodies Bergson's concepts of *durée* and indivisibility.

Unlike *Daphnis*, the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* began its life as a stand-alone orchestral score. Composed between 1891 and 1894, it was Debussy's breakout work, his only effort of comparable size up to that point being the far less original symphonic suite *Printemps*, written during his Prix de Rome sojourn. Based on the nearly eponymous poem by Stéphane Mallarmé, the *Prélude* derived inspiration from the text without attempting, as Debussy professed, any exact illustrative effects. Calling it "the general impression of the poem" in a letter to critic and friend Henri Gauthier-Villars, he continued: "If the music were to follow it more closely it would run out of breath, like a dray-horse competing for the

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underline the difficulty of expressing in words the true nature of our existence in time, which he called 'duration [*durée*]." Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space*, 25.

[32] "La musique est l'art du temps. Sans doute la lecture d'un poème est successive, et meme nous ne contemplons une peinture ou une statue qu'en la parcourant des yeux comme un livre. Mais il y a cette difference que la musique n'est complète que par son exécution, et que cette exécution ne depend pas seulement de la durée qu'il nous plaira de choisir, mais d'une durée particulière dont la forme et le mouvement sont determinés. C'est par cette propriété sans doute que la musique parvient si aisement à nous faire, pendant que nous l'écoutons, une âme qui est la sienne, et non plus la nôtre." *Comoedia*, February 19, 1914.

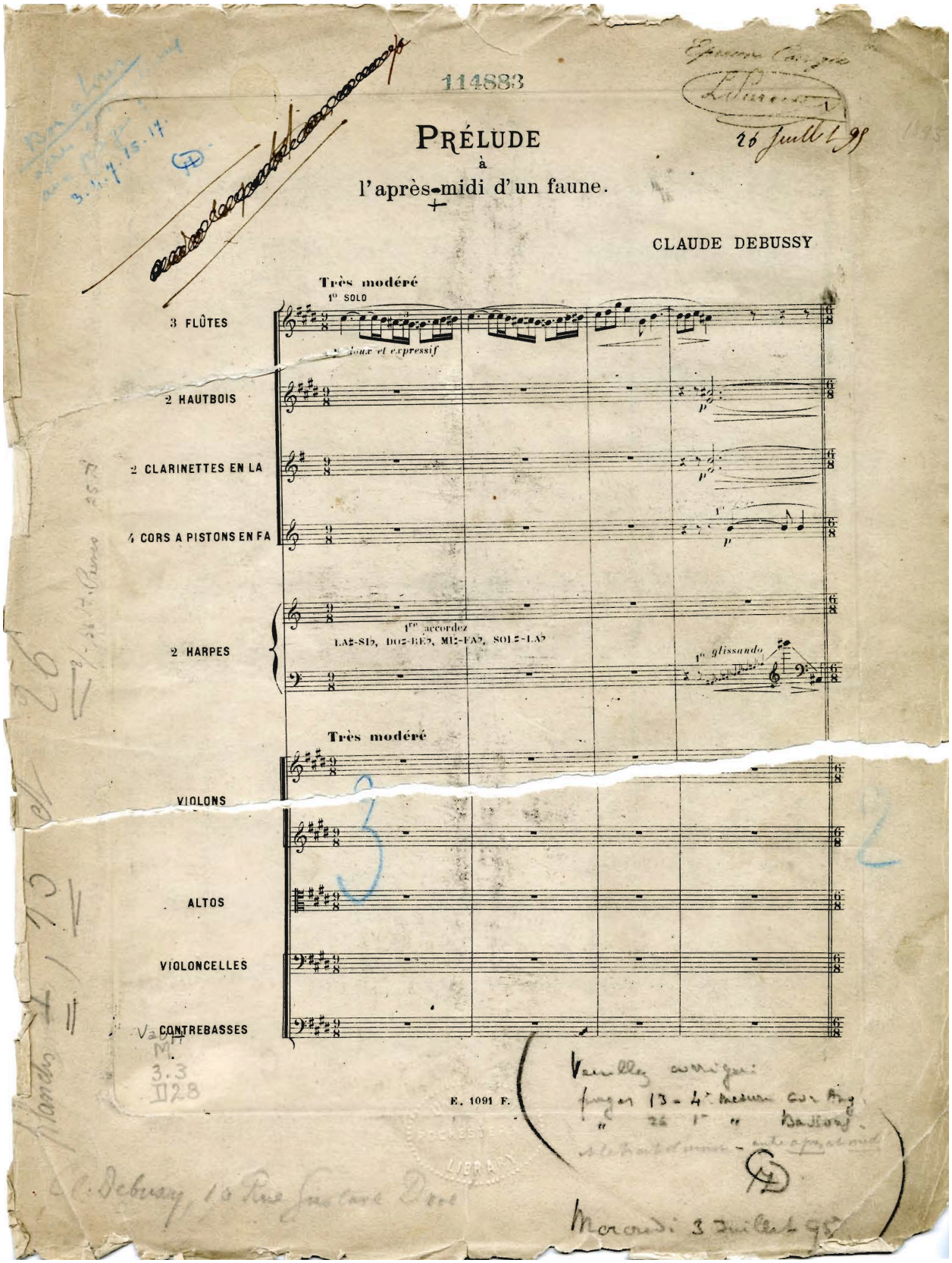
[33] "M. Bergson est le philosophe de notre temps, comme M. Debussy en est le musician, comme M. Rodin en est le sculpteur. Chacun de ces grands esprits manifeste à sa manière l'état de notre civilization, en meme temps qu'il le determine. C'est pourquoi des liens secrets les unissent, et on peut dire qu'une telle musique ne pouvait se produire que dans le voisinage d'une telle philosophie, et réciproquement." *Comoedia*, February 19, 1914.

[34] These statements are quoted in Jann Pasler, *Writing Through Music* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 90. Pasler uses this connection in the service of a larger argument about the "spectral revolution," though she also discusses Debussy's *Jeux* at length. The musical structure of the score allows her to posit links between the two men.

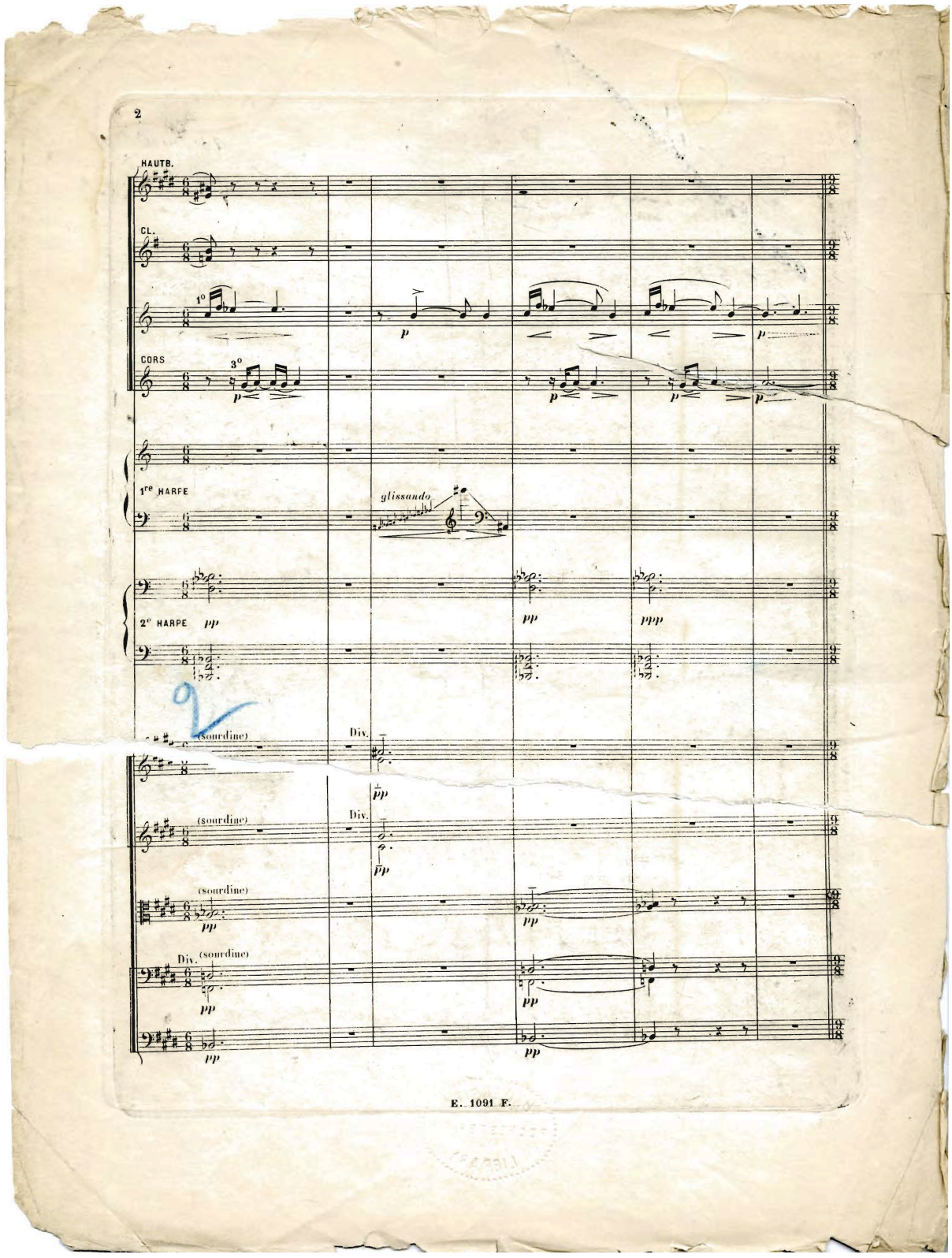
Grand Prix with a thoroughbred."[35] In that way, the music of *Faune*, at least by intention, already stands at one remove from that of *Daphnis*. Even before it became a ballet, Debussy's score shunned any specificity of representation—the haziness of Ravel's vision of Greece appears precise in comparison to his compatriot's deliberately vague effort.

In his revisions for the first edition published score, amidst a handful of dynamic and phrasing corrections, Debussy emphasized the metrical shifts of *Faune*. At various points in the score, he penciled in the reduction of each time signature [Example 4]. The markings date from mid-1895, suggesting that they may have been in reaction to the premiere and subsequent performances. These notations, however, do not appear in the final version of the printed score. So what is their purpose? Unlike Ravel's manipulation of meter, which serves to distinguish dancing duds (Dorcon) from dynamos (Daphnis), Debussy's renders *Faune* more musically obscure than narratively legible. The shifts from groupings of three to four do not register as contrasts, but as a wash of passing, indivisible time, where a strong sense of meter fades to relative unimportance.

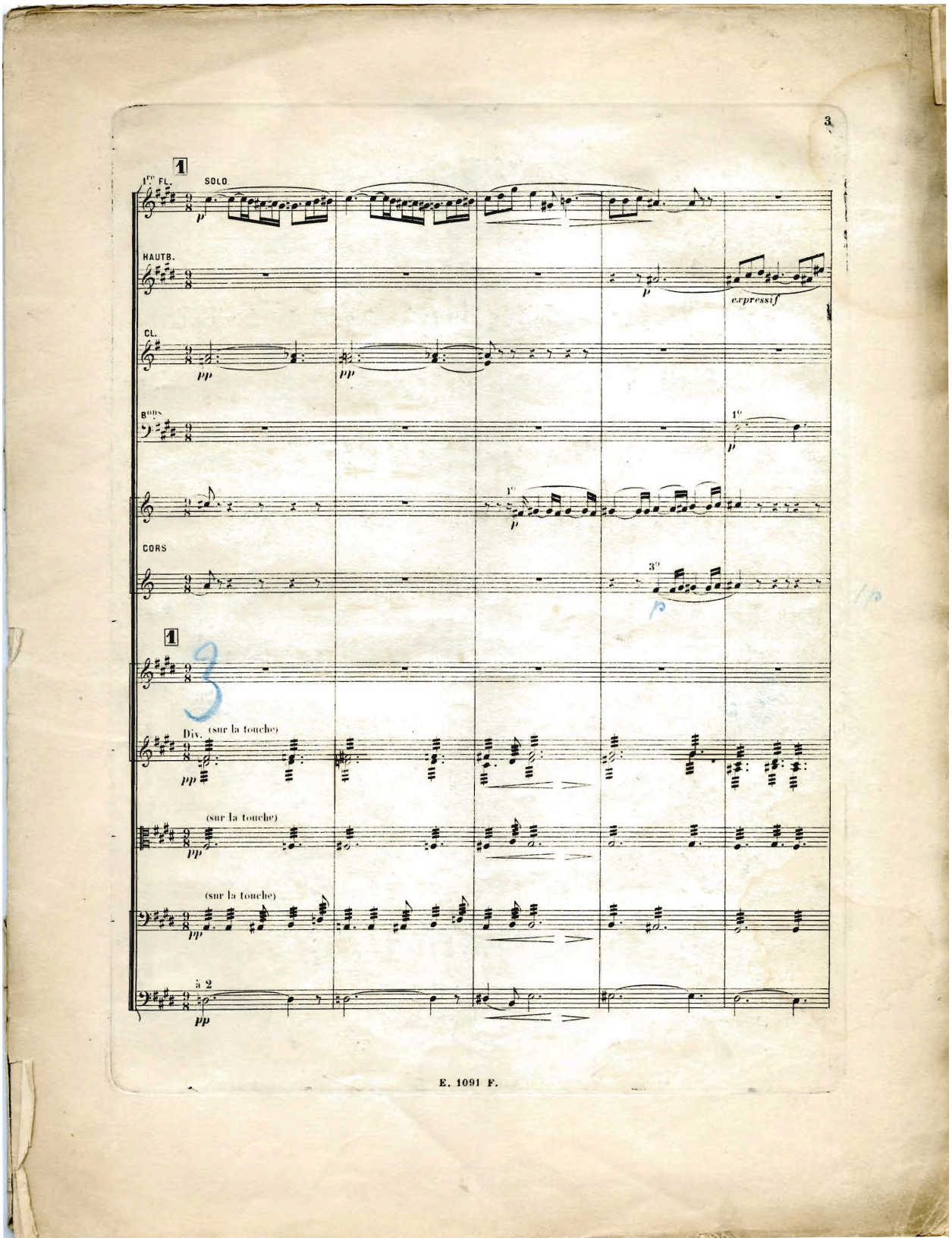
[35] *Debussy Letters* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 84. Meeting such protestations with skepticism is certainly *de rigeur* for scholars. As David Code has exhaustively shown, precise correspondences between the music and its poetic source exist. See "Hearing Debussy Reading Mallarmé: Music *après Wagner* in the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 54, N3 (2001): 493-554.



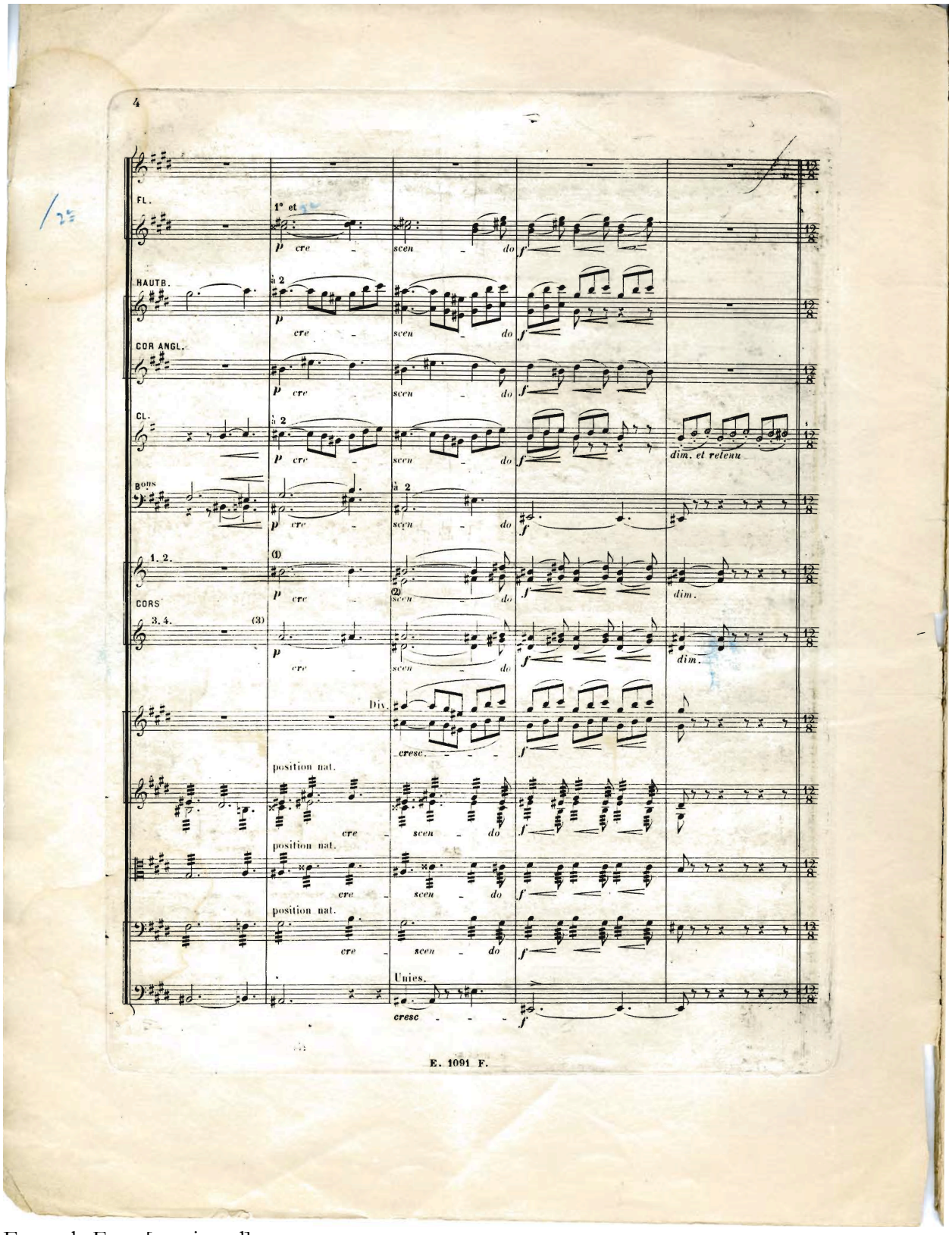
Example Four



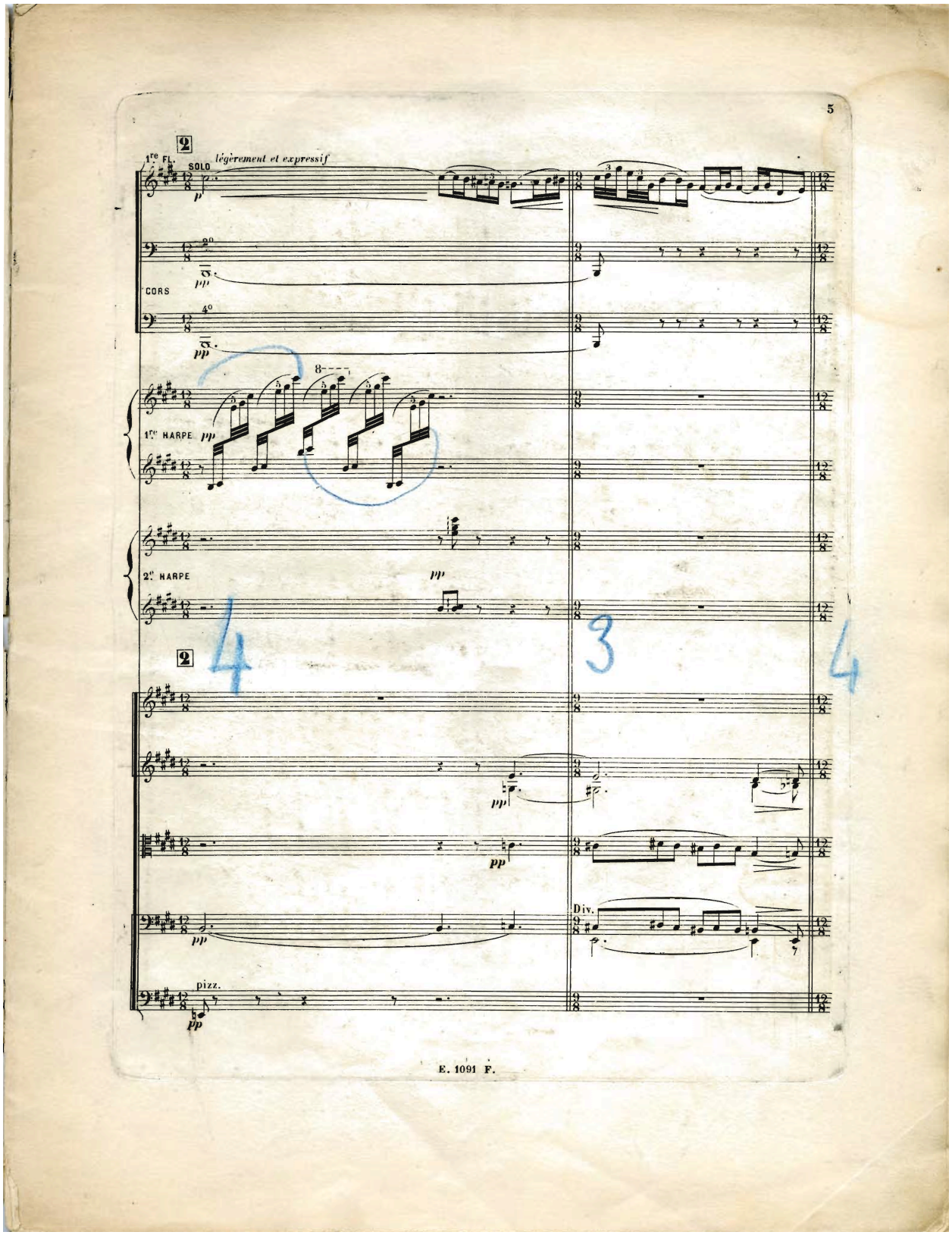
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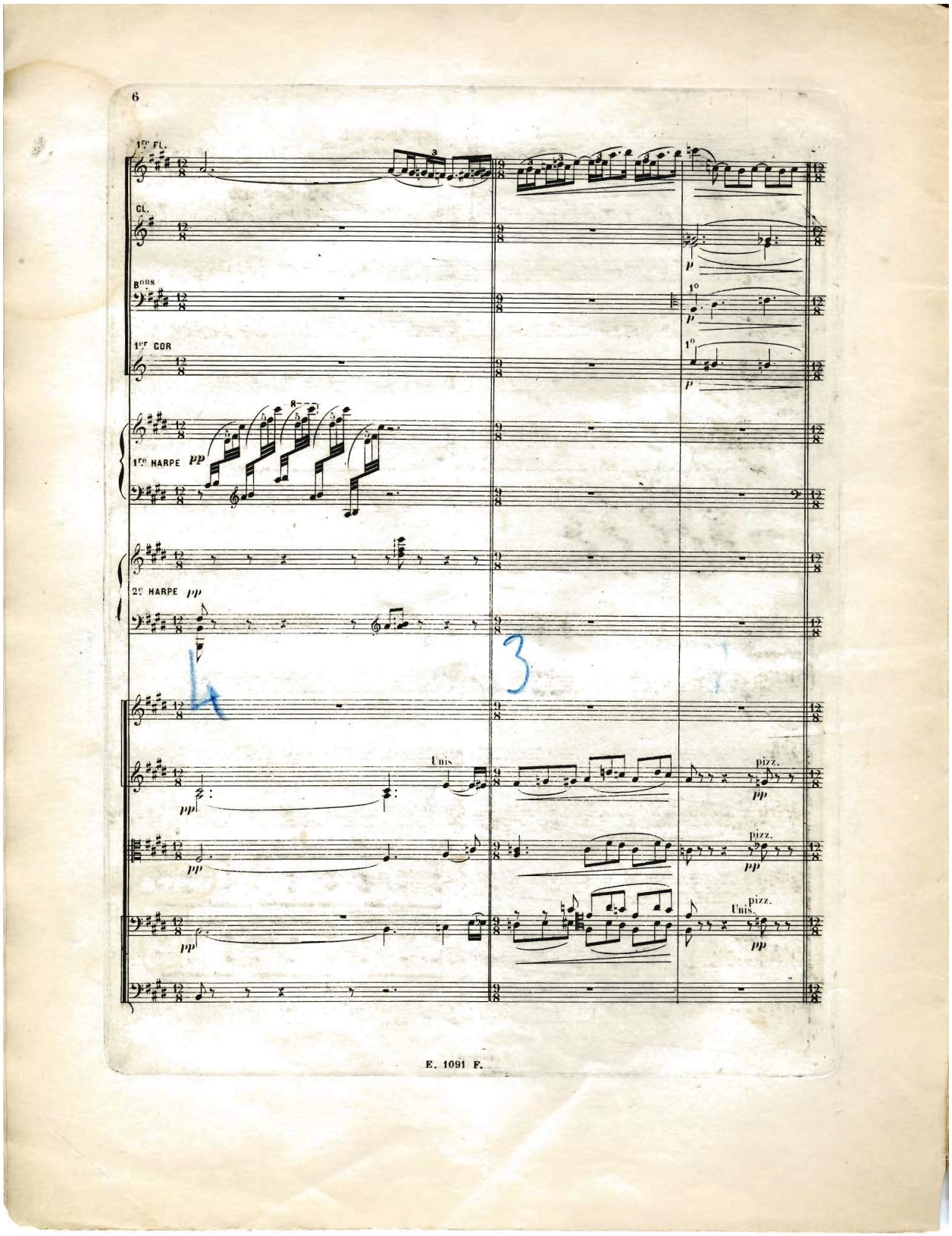
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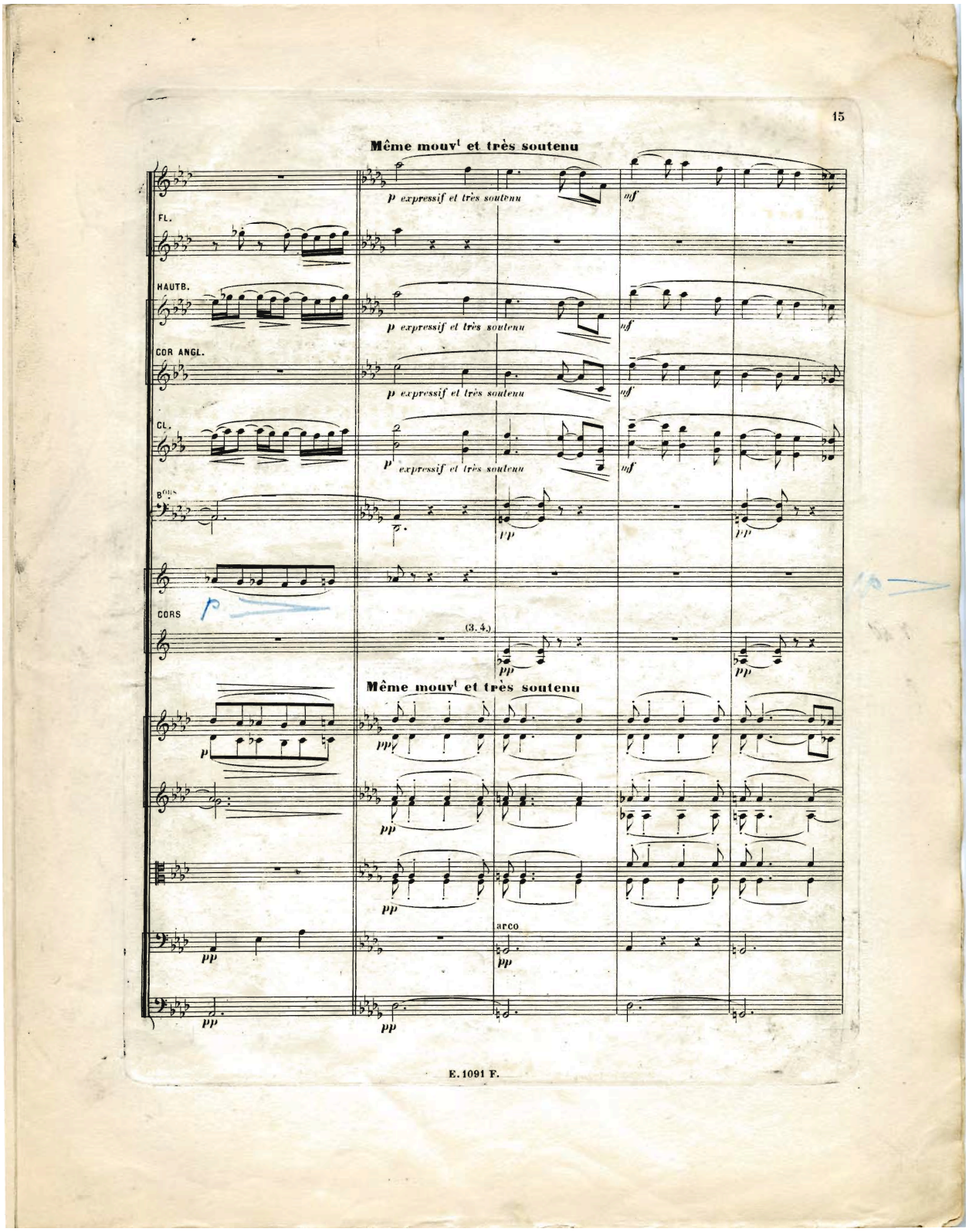
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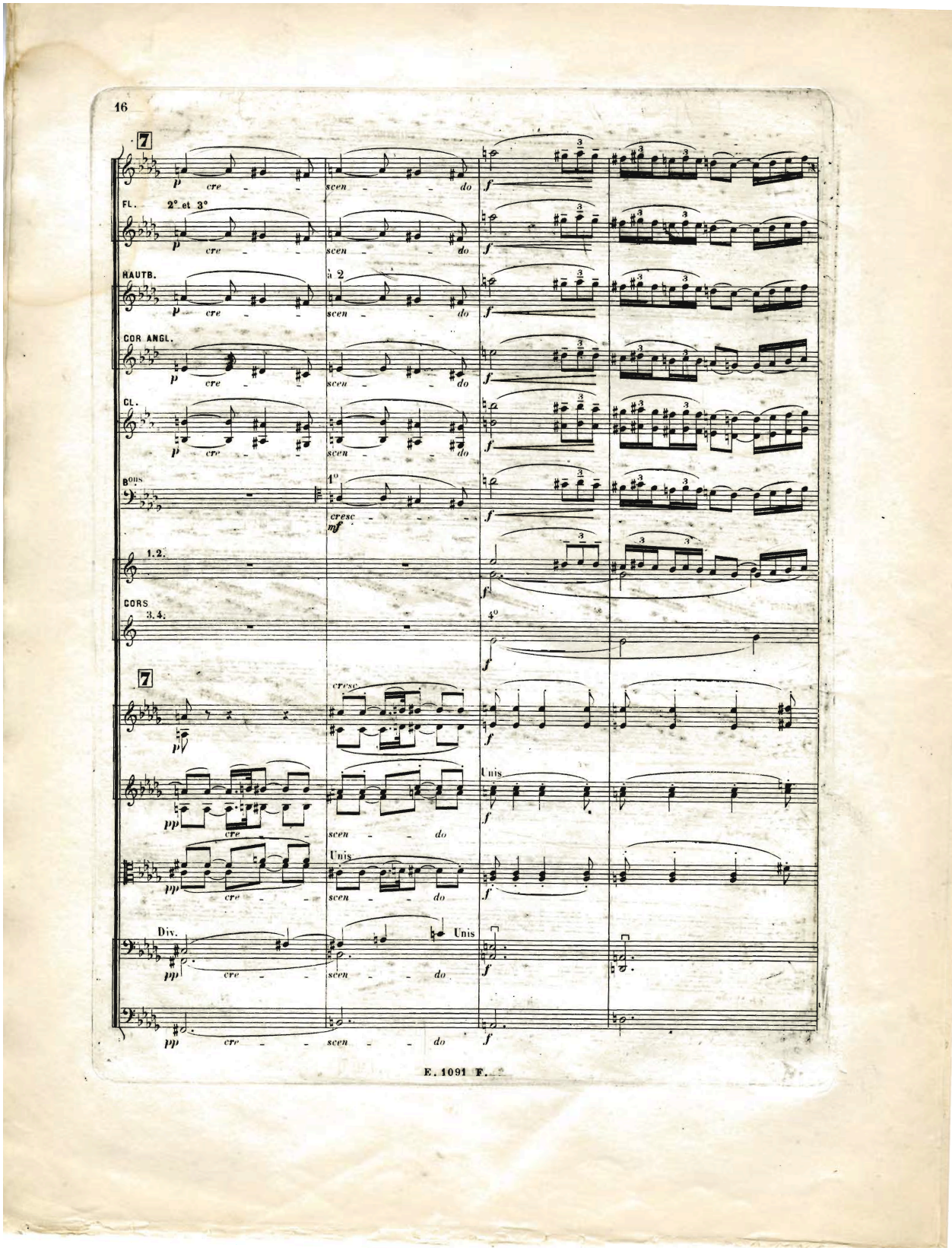
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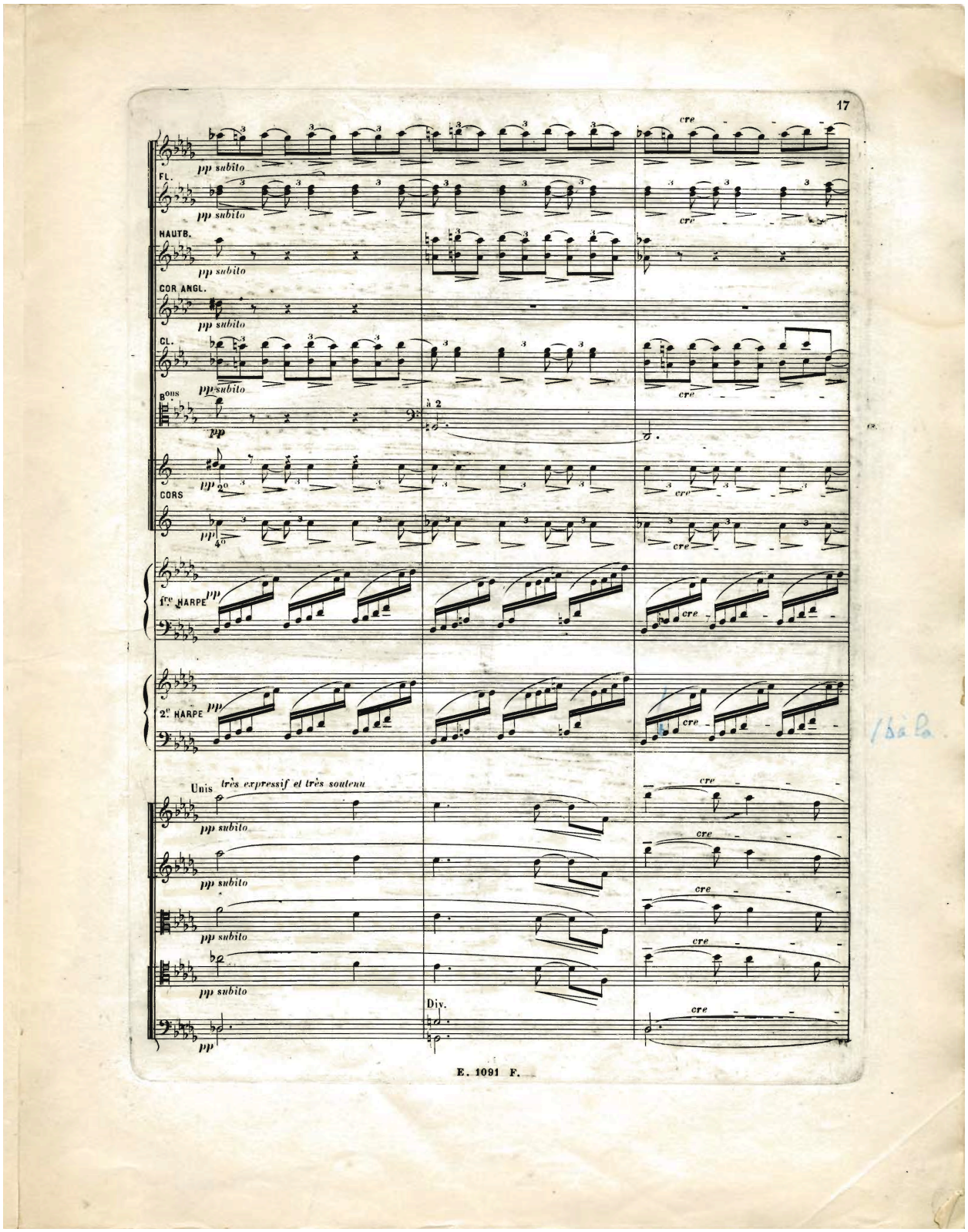
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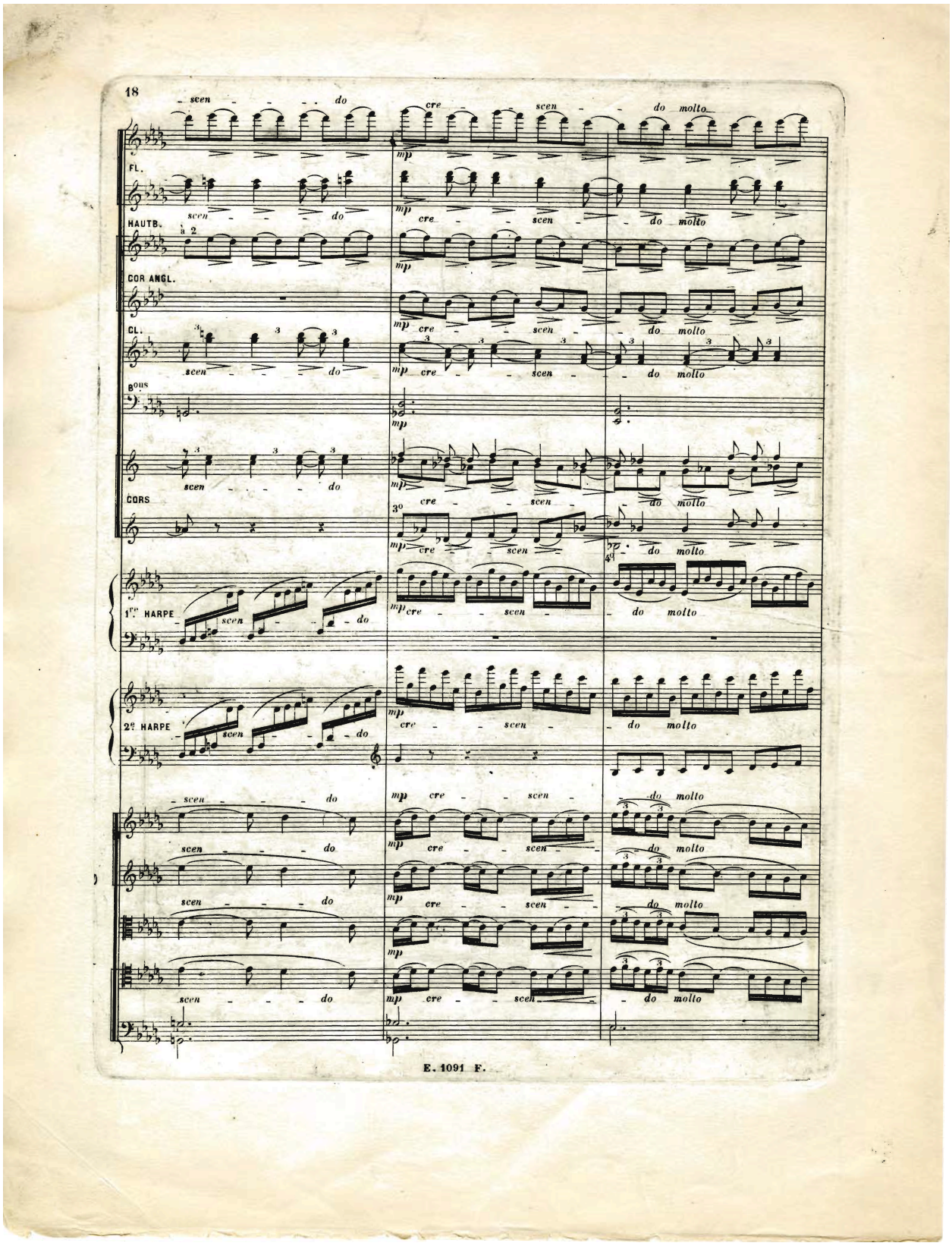
Example Five



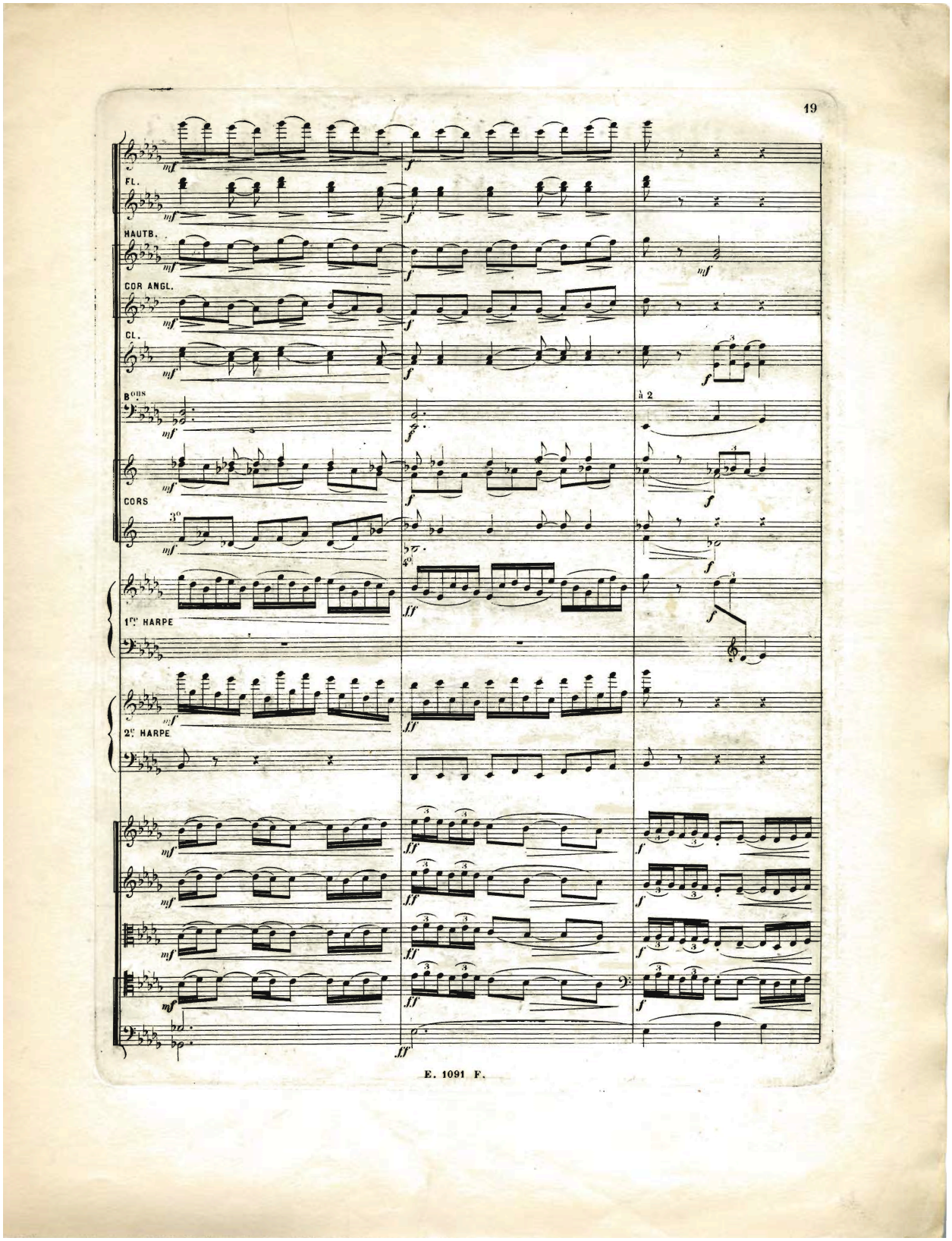
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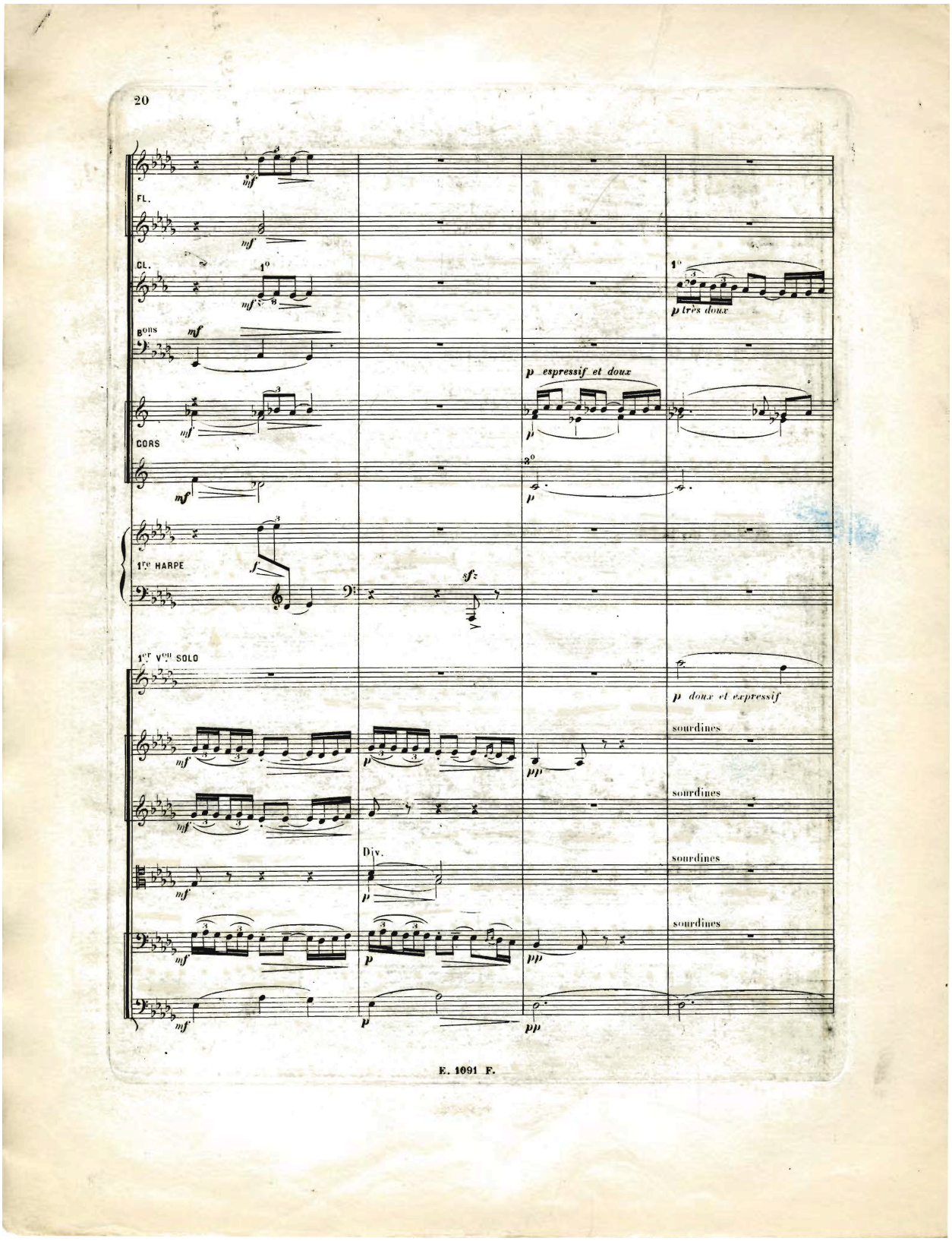
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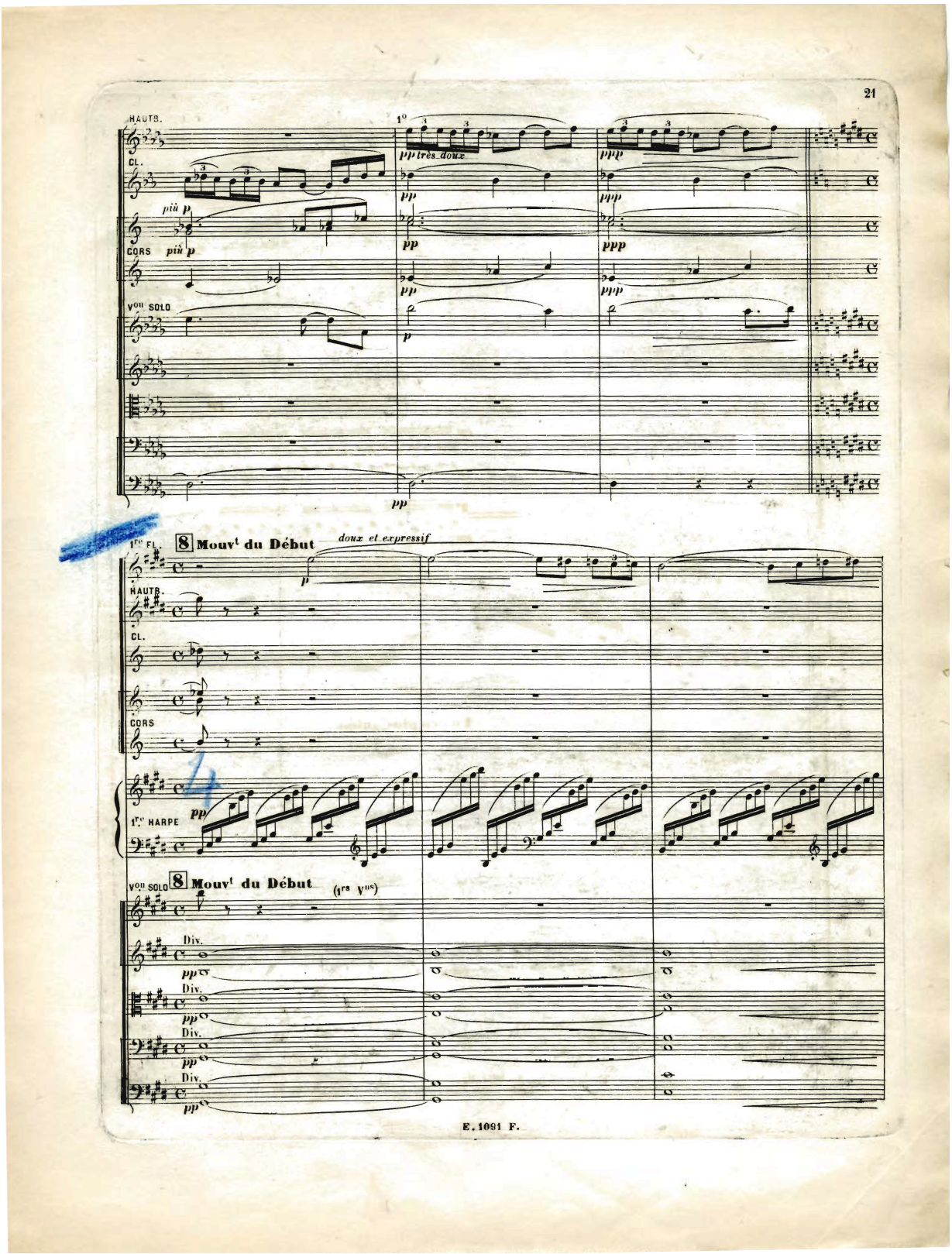
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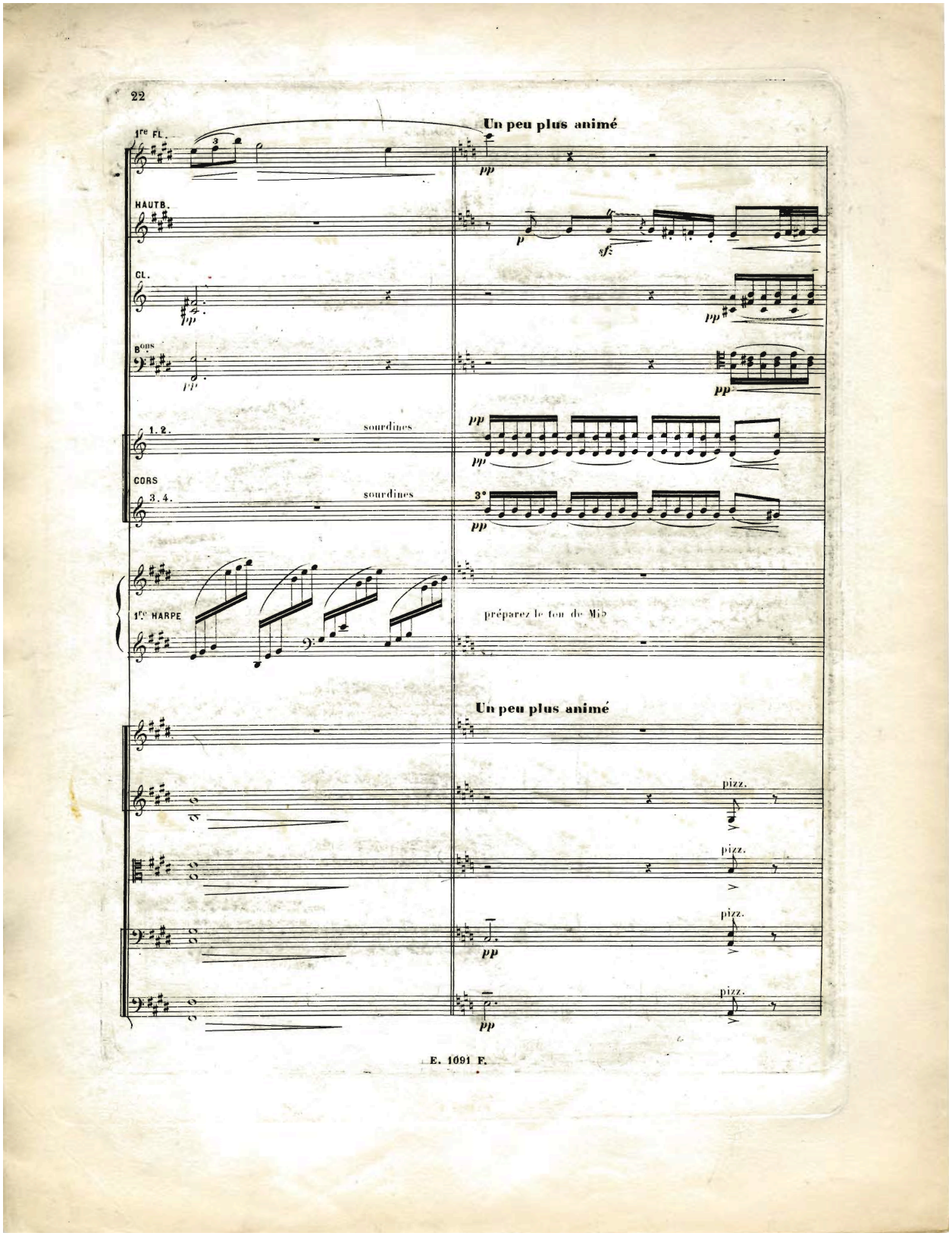
Example Five [continued]



Example Five [continued]



Example Five [continued]



Example Five [continued]

The penciled indications demonstrate the composer's commitment to metrical fluidity and emphasis on larger rhythmic units. The most extended stretch of one meter, spanning measures 45 to 79, contains the climax of the work [Example 5]. Cast in D-flat major (the enharmonic parallel major of the ostensible opening tonality), the section utilizes an unimpeded triple signature. But as Debussy builds the music, he simultaneously integrates triplets phrased in two, adding a new and disorienting level of subdivision. The effect can be compared with Bergson's heterogeneous, uninterrupted flow of time and melody. As in *Daphnis*, *Faune*'s governing musico-poetic aesthetic is holistic and synthetic. But whereas Ravel and Fokine aimed for an uninterrupted flow of music to support a specific, and ultimately retrospective, artistic ideal, the Bergsonian aesthetic of Debussy's score had more contemporary cultural origins. In *Faune*, we can hear the influence of a prevailing philosophy of interiorized time that stood in contrast to an increasing rationalization of public time. Nijinsky's quirky *statuomanie*, as we will see, proved a difficult partner to the music of *Faune*.

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Though Fokine's choreography for *Daphnis* was based on actual Greek statuary, Nijinsky's, so the story goes, owed as much to ancient Egyptian artifacts at the Louvre as to true classical works. As Nijinska recounts in her memoirs, her brother declared: "I want to move away from the classical Greece that Fokine likes to use. Instead, I want to use the archaic Greece that is less known and, so far, little used in the theater. However, this is only to be the source of my inspiration. I want to render it in my own way. Any sweetly sentimental line in the form or in the movement will be excluded."[36] Even before *Faune*'s premiere, then, its aesthetic sensibilities were divergent from Ravel's hazy, eighteenth-century Greece or Fokine's naturalistic yet rotund Hellenic gestures. And the collaboration—if it could even be called that—between Nijinsky and Debussy shunned the sort of synthesis *Daphnis* so prized. Indeed, it was only Diaghilev's teflon charm and deep pockets that solidified the project in the face of the composer's reluctance. Nijinska recounts the torturous inception of the choreography, recalling that the ballet required an exactitude of execution at odds with conventional balletic practice, which often benefited from the embellishment and improvisation of the artist. Nijinsky, however,

> was the first to demand that his whole choreographic material should be executed not only exactly as he saw it but also according to his artistic interpretation. Never was a ballet performed with such musical and choreographic exactness as *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune*. Each position of the dance, each position of the body down to the gesture of each finger, was mounted according to a strict choreographic plan. One must remember that the majority of dancers in this ballet could not understand Vaslav's composition. They did not like the choreography at all. They felt they were restricted and would often complain, saying such things as "What kind of ballet is this? … There is not a single dancing *pas*—not a single free

[36] Quoted in Stephanie Jordan, "Debussy, the Dance, and the *Faune*," in *Debussy in Performance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 130.

> movement—not a single solo—no dances at all…We feel as though we are carved out of stone."[37]

If Nijinsky turned his faune and nymphs into statues, his sister served as his clay. For hours, he would use her pliable form to sculpt the postures he saw so clearly in his mind's eye, but that eluded the descriptive language needed to convey these ideas to his dancers. His Chief Nymph, Lydia Nelidova, proved the most problematic. Nelidova had been exported from Russia expressly for the role—her remarkable height and commanding presence lent her the appropriate *gravitas*. She, however, would exclaim: "Have I come all the way for *this*?"[38] Nelidova's caustic attitude, coupled with Nijinsky's own doubts about his readiness for this choreographic undertaking and the simmering rivalry between him and Fokine, amplified tensions in the weeks leading up to *Faune*'s premiere.

Those tensions have obscured more subtle, complex contexts for *Faune*, contexts that speak to the issues of artistic synthesis (or lack thereof), as well as those of spectatorship. The *scandale* of *Faune*'s ending—an onanistic spasm and then melting relaxation—has been the subject of many a savored retelling.[39] And much has been made of the arduous collaboration (or, more precisely, lack of collaboration) between Debussy and Nijinsky: sinuous music overlaid with jerky gesture. Dance and music historians have attributed the asymmetry of the ballet's expressive registers to conflicting aesthetic aims. I would suggest, however, that the friction between the aural and visual dimensions of the ballet reflects a deeper conflict, one having to do with the era's competing ontologies of time, and resultantly, of spectatorship. *Daphnis* and *Faune* diverged not only in their relationship to synthesis as a guiding principle, but also in the model of viewership each demanded.

It is in the work of Bergson that issues of time and technology were embedded in the *accoutrements* of modern life. In the final chapter of his *Creative Evolution*, Bergson exploits the unsurpassed analytic capabilities of the cinematograph. Attacking the prevailing notion that cinematography animated the frozen image, Bergson suggests instead that it provides the *illusion* of motion—"immobility set beside immobility," rather than fluid, unbroken movement. The parade of static images that comprised film merely simulated motion through the movement of the reel itself. Bergson exposes the artificiality of cinematography in order to present the false perceptual model of analysis rather than the truth of intuition. But in the process of making this argument, he offers deep insight into the mechanism of film as such:

> Of the gallop of a horse our eye perceives chiefly a characteristic, essential or rather schematic attitude, a form that appears to radiate over a whole period

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[37] Irina Nijinska and Jean Rawlinson, eds., *Bronislava Nijinska: Early Memoirs* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 428.

[38] Quoted in Richard Buckle, *Nijinsky: A Life of Genius and Madness* (NY: Pegasus Books, 2012).

[39] To summarize: the editor of the establishment daily *Le Figaro*, Gaston Calmette, refused to publish a review by leading music critic Robert Brussel. Instead, he ran an editorial called "Un Faux Pas," which railed against the production's ostensible onanistic ending. The next day, the paper ran Odilon Redon's and Auguste Rodin's defense of the ballet, as well as Diaghilev's laconic rejoinder to Calmette. But the editor remained unfazed by this impressive battalion of artists rising to defend one of their own. He wrote: "I don't want to argue with M. Serge de Diaghilew; he is the impresario of the production; consequently, he cannot but find admirable his own programming. His program certainly had some very beautiful moments, and I have only pointed to a 'faux pas' in the ballet. That 'faux pas' is unspeakable." Other papers such as *Le Gaulois*, however, found words, particularly once the scandal reached uneasy resolution. At the second performance of *Faune*, Nijinsky apparently modified the closing gesture to a melancholic consideration of the Nymph's veil, rather than an orgasmic embracing of it.

> and so fill up the time of gallop. It is this attitude that sculpture has fixed on the frieze of the Parthenon. But instantaneous photography isolates any moment; it puts them all in the same rank, and thus the gallop of a horse spreads out for it into as many successive attitudes as it wishes, instead of massing itself into a single attitude, which is supposed to flash out in a privileged moment and illuminate a whole period.[40]

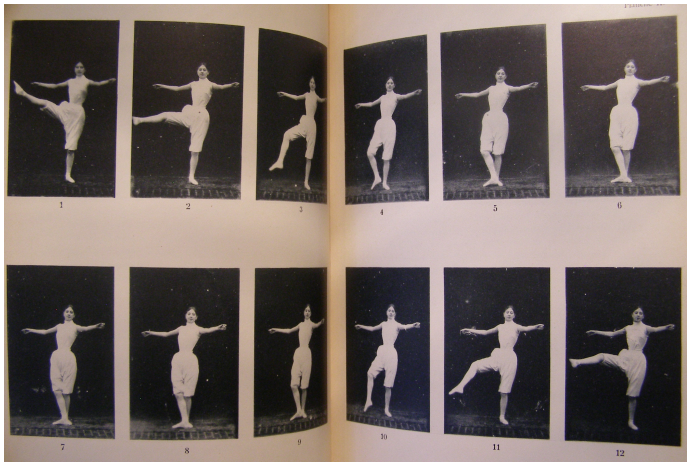
Film removed the representative and the aesthetic from the contemplation of motion. Instead of an elegant summation of a specific gestural moment (as in sculpture), technology, in its indifference, presented randomized views of any movement under consideration. In that way, cinematography stood in opposition to the concepts of intuition and *durée*. All it could offer was an unselective optical mode that supported analytical renderings at odds with the lived experience Bergson championed. The implications for *Faune* were great: rather than the indivisible holism of Debussy's score, the gestures of the ballet subscribed to a much more fragmentary conception, which itself was rooted in the apparatuses that Bergson abhorred.

Technologies such as the chronophotograph and the cinematograph were brought to bear on *Faune* through contemporary critical studies, one example being Maurice Emmanuel's thesis on the issue of animating images from antiquity. He undertook a study of Greek *orchestique* for his doctoral work, the point of which was, in his words, "an archaeological restoration of which the components are the orchestics furnished by the *monuments figurés*."[41] The main methodology for his reconstruction of ancient dance was an examination and reanimation of artifacts. Chronophotography played an integral role in this thesis. Emmanuel utilized the technology to dismantle complex motions, as he does with a plainly garbed female model among others, and then compare them to the images from antiquity [Figure 2].

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[40] Quoted in Sarah Danius, *The Senses of Modernism: Technology, Perception, and Aesthetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 105.

[41] "Le but de cette étude, en effet, est une restauration archéologique dont les éléments sont les types orchestiques fournis par les monuments figurés. En prenant pour guide la danse moderne, je devais ne lui demander que des termes de comparaison et reléguer ce qui ne devait pas servir à l'interprétation des images antiques. J'avais le droit, enfin, de philosopher un peu et d'emprunter aux sciences quelques éléments d'explication." Maurice Emmanuel, *Essai sur l'orchestique grecque, étude de ses mouvements d'après les monuments figurés* (Paris: Hachette, 1895), 68. Emmanuel's work even caught the attention of Havelock Ellis, who mentioned the monograph in his 1914 article for *Mercure de France*: "La danse grecque ancienne était essentiellement classique, de cette manière. Dans le livre intéressant qu'Emmanuel lui a consacré, nous voyons, sur les vases grecs, le même jeu des bras, la même façon de pivoter, le même renversement du corps que ceux représentés, bien avant, sur les monuments d'Egypte." *Mercure de France*, April 01, 1914.


Figure Two

Around the same time, one of Bergson's illustrious colleagues at the Collège de France was also using the apparatus to launch a revolutionary, scientific study of bodily mechanics. Though Etienne-Jules Marey began his studies with the apparatus as early as the 1850s, his most important contributions date from the *fin de siècle*. In his 1891 explication of chronophotography for the *Revue générale des sciences*, he granted that conventional photography allowed the study of objects and beings at rest "to perfection," but failed when motion entered into the equation.[42] How might one harness the unique abilities of the camera, he asked, in order to observe things in motion with the same acuity? Chronophotography provided the answer. In its ability to both fix otherwise undetectable motions on film and depict motion through rapid succession, the technology invited a range of applications Marey detailed in his *Revue générale* article. Scientists and other interested parties could now study terrestrial, aquatic, and aerial motion of humans and other animals with new precision. He even provided representative illustrations of men running, tortoises swimming, and birds flying among other images.

Nested between these applications, however, was a section titled "Application aux beaux-arts." Marey suggested that certain artists had already taken advantage of documentary photography to achieve an "authentic image [of] the attitudes of man or animals in their most rapid states of movement."[43] Art from antiquity, he argued, presented a less accurate depiction—more frenzied, less balanced—of running figures, whereas modern images aligned more with reality, courtesy of photography. For his example of the former, he offered an image from *un vase panathéaïque*. On its surface, the artifact resembles the chronophotographic images Marey reproduces throughout the article: a picture of four nude, muscular runners [Figure 3].

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[42] "La photographie est venue porter à la perfection la représentation des objets immobiles; elle nous en donne les images avec les détails les plus délicats; elle sait en réduire ou en agrandir la dimension, à une échelle connue et avec une précision que nulle autre méthode ne saurait atteindre." *Revue générale des sciences*, November 15, 1891.

[43] "Dans les arts, le document photographique a déjà rendu des services réels: certains maîtres l'acceptent ouvertement; beaucoup d'artistes l'utilisent, ainsi qu'on peut s'en assurer en comparant les oeuvres les plus récentes à celles qui datent de quelques années à peine. C'est la photographie instantanée surtout qui a exercé une influence sensible sur les arts, en permettant de fixer en une image authentique les attitudes de l'homme ou des animaux dans leurs mouvements les plus rapides." *Revue générale des sciences*, November 15, 1891.

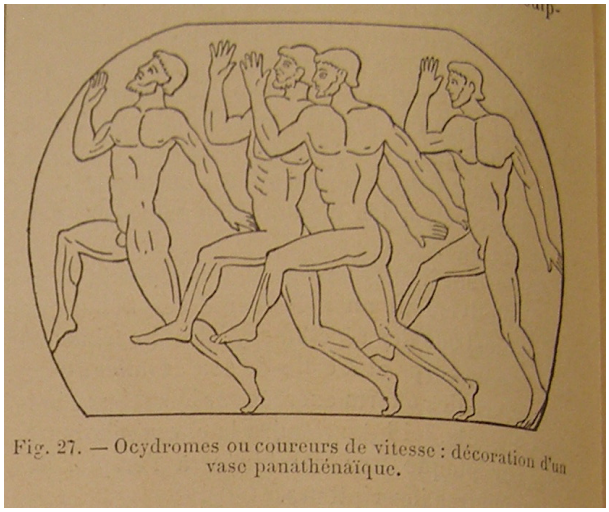

Fig. 27. — Ocydromes ou coureurs de vitesse : décoration d'un vase panathénaïque.

Figure Three

He even identifies a certain congruence between one of the figures and a photographic image of a man running provided in his next example. But whereas the photographic image captures a randomized moment, Bergson would say, the vase represents deliberate, stylized summaries of four postures in running—the difference between the optical mode of the chronophotograph as opposed to perception grounded in an experience of *durée*. Marey's triumphant description of the technology's manifold possibilities was thereby dependent on a model of rationalized time opposed to Bergson's "heterogeneous flux," to borrow Marta Braun's apt phrase.[44] By this logic, the gestural repertoire of Debussy and Nijinsky's ballet stood in direct contrast to the music's guiding principle. Unlike *Daphnis*'s subscription to a principle of untroubled symbiosis, then, *Faune* engaged in a friction-filled production as well as collaboration.

Several reviewer noted the disjunction between Debussy's svelte, Bergsonian score and Nijinsky's spasmodic choreography. In *Le Temps*, Pierre Lalo described the music's "so supple and undulating lines," in contrast to the "rigid, mechanical postures," with "everything angular and jerky."[45] Even as it scolded *Faune*'s conclusion, *Le Gaulois* deigned to mention Debussy's "exquisite" score.[46] Vuillermoz offered the most verbose comparison, writing of the "voluptuous suppleness" of the music and the "marionette-like gestures" of the dancers.[47] As these excerpts suggest, what disturbed critics was the contrast between the

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[44] Marta Braun, *Picturing Time: The Work of Etienne-Jules Marey (1830—1904)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 278.

[45] "Ce n'est pas tout: qu'ont de commun, avec un poésie d'un symbolisme si subtil et si flottant, avec un musique d'une ligne si ondoyante et si souple, ces poses et ces gestes rigides, mécaniques, tout en angles et tout en saccades, ces figures d'hommes et de femmes qui ont l'aspect de figures de géométrie?" *Le Temps*, June 11, 1912.

[46] "Cet épisode, qui de toute façon est de trop, est donc une erreur. Il y a là une suppression à faire. Il faut la faire tout de suite. Il est seulement à regretter qu'elle n'ait pas été faite avant la représentation. La page d'orchestre de M. Debussy est exquise et nous nous empresserons d'en rendre compte quand la satisfaction que réclame avec nous le public honnête lui aura été donné." *Le Gaulois*, May 30, 1912.

[47] "Et la musique se venge: c'est elle qui dénonce les gestes de marionnettes des danseuses aux poignets de bois, aux bras en compas, qui se déplacent laminées aux flancs d'un vase invisible, les épaules de face et les hanches de profil! C'est parce que la mélodie s'étire avec une voluptueuse souplesse de chatte amoureuse que nous souffrons soudain de nous apercevoir que le long du corps de telle artiste, filiforme comme les petits

music, inviolate in its timeless, recondite harmony and gestures that took on the signifiers of modern life. The disjunction drew attention to the conflicting expressive registers of the ballet, and the new model of viewership the choreography demanded. Mechanical, linear, geometric even—these adjectives were echoed in other publications. The *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires* spoke of "brusque, automatic movements," resembling the dancing of "mechanical dolls,"[48] while *Le Courrier musical* dubbed the ballet a "scientific" pantomime.[49] Charles Méryel even compared the dancing to a cinematographic animation of bas-reliefs.[50] Lalo went the furthest in his flagellation of the unartful choreography: "Dismantle is the right word: nymphs and faun 'take movement apart,' exactly like military exercises; one thinks of the gestures of an automaton, and of the Prussian infantry on parade."[51] This insinuation of the darkly militaristic lent the movements of *Faune* an ominous cast.

Lalo's description recalls one of the primary uses of proto-cinematic technologies during the *fin de siècle* and the *belle époque*: that of analyzing the mechanisms of the body to make its deployment more efficient, particularly for national defense purposes. After defeat at the hands of Bismarck, officials made military service mandatory early in the tenure of the Third Republic. As Braun has noted, the French soldier changed qualitatively at this time. Remade "in terms of the new citizen," recruits were required to be "physically resistant, morally virtuous, and intellectually developed."[52] Just as women were encouraged to cultivate a specific type of beauty and femininity in the face of depopulation, so their male counterparts strove to improve the military fortunes of the nation through physical education. Marey's proto-cinematic experiments aided these efforts. The campaign was spearheaded by his disciple Demeny, who aimed, in Braun's summation, "to rationalize the whole process of physical education and give it a scientific foundation."[53] His idea was to scrutinize the body's systems—respiration, locomotion, and so forth—in order to streamline gestures such as marching or other army-related activities. Such study necessitated the fragmenting of gesture, breaking it down into separately observable segments. Demeny and Marey's experiments succeeded grandly. They offered heretofore unavailable efficiency to soldiers in their basic training, a result of great importance to a nation still reeling from military defeat. By the end of the century, Demeny and his research had garnered enough attention to be featured prominently in J.L. Breton's history of *chronophotographie*. Breton saw

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personnages schématiques des rébus, les bras et les jambes s'ouvrent comme les quatre lames d'un canif." *Revue musicale SIM*, June 1912.

[48] "En terms plus clairs, toutes les belles théories que M. Nijinsky a formulées ou qu'on lui prête sur 'la danse cubiste' se rapprochant de celles que les peintres qui ont adopté cette épithète prétendent réaliser, aboutissent à ceci: une représentation vivante des fresques antiques par gestes saccadés, anguleux, presque contorsionnés, par mouvements brusques, automatiques, puis comme fixés, qui n'ont presque plus rien de la danse animée et semblent être éxécutés par des poupées mécaniques. Etrange progrès, en vérité." *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, June 09, 1912.

[49] "Son enterprise d'une rénovation absolue de la danse au moyen d'une plastique plus adéquate à la cadence logique, à la modulation rationnelle des mouvements musculaires, d'une mimique plus condensée d'une pantomime esthétique et plus scientifique à la fois, l'a conduit à la réalisation chorégraphique de l'*Après-midi d'un Faune*, sur la musique de M. Debussy." *Le Courrier musical*, May 01, 1912.

[50] "Mais une fois admis le principe de cette cinématographie de bas-reliefs, avec quelle ingéniosité l'interprète parvint à la justifier!" *Comoedia illustré*, 1912.

[51] "Décomposer est le mot propre: nymphes et faune 'décomposent le mouvement,' exactement comme dans l'exercises militaire; ils font penser à la fois à des gestes d'automate, et au pas de parade de l'infanterie prussienne." *Le Temps*, June 11, 1912.

[52] Braun, *Picturing Time*, 69.

[53] Braun, *Picturing Time*, 70.

Demeny's work and improvements to the apparatus as vital to the future of the technology.[54] The rationalization of time therefore coincided with this larger project of rationalizing the bodies of the citizenry, courtesy of technological advances such as Marey's invention.

The ballets under consideration demonstrate conflicting allegiances to this new ontology of time and resulting epistemology of viewership. *Daphnis* privileges contemplation (protracted, reflective looking) over observation (keen consideration preceding analysis). In the ballet, characters stand around and watch each other dance for much of the time, acting as a sort of diegetic audience framing the opening contest, Lyceion's attempted seduction of Daphnis, Chloe's dance of supplication for the pirates, and the pantomime between "Pan" and "Syrinx" before the rollicking finale. Even the wordless chorus—a nod to Greek theater in another guise—contributes to the impression of elysian sensuality rather than observing or commenting on the ensuing action. With the exception of Dorcon's graceless number, which is presumably met with laughter from both sets of audiences (onstage and off), each of these moments depicts exemplary dancing. Whatever their sentiments about the music, the sets, the scenario, or other aspects of the production, critics unanimously praised the performances of Nijinsky and Karsavina: his "grace and eurythmic agility," her "languid charm."[55] These performances within the ballet thus recreate the act of watching *Daphnis* itself, subscribing to an older model of viewership, holistic and contemplative. Ravel worked to create a score that translated Fokine's "silent language of arms and legs" into music, so much so that sound even superseded gesture at times.[56] It was "systematically danceable."[57] The seamless holism of the Ravel-Fokine collaboration governed the dancing bodies of *Daphnis*.

Faune, however, presented the balletic body as something to be empirically observed. In his memoirs, Fokine suggested that *Faune* could be classified as a pantomime rather than a ballet with "no harm done":

> But harm can be done when this series of poses is introduced as a new form of dance and the new road along which, from 1912 on, the ballet should develop. That course was being seriously suggested at the time. It is fortunate that this prediction, made for publicity purposes, did not materialize. In the twenty-eight years since the *premiere* of "Faune," ballet has not made a single step in the direction indicated by Nijinsky's work. But how could it have been otherwise? How could dance develop on a base completely devoid of dancing?[58]

Fokine's sarcasm was directed at Nijinsky's idiosyncratic gestural repertoire, much of which concentrated on the minute manipulations of one body part to the exclusion of all else.

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[54] "Une voie qui nous semble très bonne pour atteindre cette perfection est celle dans laquelle s'est engagé M. G. Demeny en augmentant d'une façon très sensible la grandeur des épreuves analytiques du mouvement, comme l'indique clairement notre figure 266 qui représente en vraie grandeur un fragment de bande pelliculaire positive de son chronophotographe décrit plus haut; il est évident que cette augmentation des dimensions des images permet un agrandissement bien plus considérable avec une netteté beaucoup plus grande." *La Chronophotographie, la photographie animée, analyse et synthèse du mouvement* (Paris: E. Bernard, 1898), 213.

[55] "Je ne pourrais que me répéter en louant la grâce et l'agilité eurythmique de M. Nijinsky (Daphnis), le charme languide tout à fait exquis de Mlle Karsavina (Chloé) […]" *Le Gaulois*, June 09, 1912.

[56] "La partition de Maurice Ravel est une partition de ballet et non un poème symphonique plus ou moins heureusement mis en scène et plus ou moins fidèlement traduit dans le langage silencieux des bras et des jambes. Le compositeur qui est de sa nature méticuleux et précis avait pris sa tâche particulièrement au sérieux et sa musique est toute hérissée de gestes." *Revue musicale SIM*, June 1912.

[57] "Cette musique est systématique dansable." *Comoedia illustré* (1912).

[58] Chujoy, *Fokine*.

While *Daphnis* is narratively static, *Faune* is choreographically so.[59] The opening depicts the Faune reclining on his rocky ledge, playing his flute with offhand indolence. Abandoning his instrument, he tastes some grapes before being distracted by the arrival of the lovely Nymphs. Much of the next section deploys the mechanistic stepping, nearly marching, so reviled by Nijinsky's colleagues and critics alike. Between the sparse movements, the Nymphs pose in groups resembling antique statuary—usually in threes, as was customary in such artifacts. Preparing for her bath, the Chief Nymph drops her final veil and is left alone with the intently observing Faune. They engage in a protracted interaction, he stalking and she (reluctantly) retreating.



Figure Four

Their denuded *pas de deux* culminates in one of the ballet's few moments of physical contact: interlocked elbows that coincide with the beginning of the musical denouement [Figure 4]. The ballet concludes with the Faune's procurement of his escaped prey's veil, and the ensuing dance he enacts with this surrogate. Choreographically the ballet remains angular and static, focusing on specific parts of the anatomy: most memorably a flat, outstretched palm with splayed thumb.

[59] I am basing the following discussion of the choreography on Ann Hutchinson Guest's and Claudia Jeschke's reconstruction on video.

As Emmanuel writes in his study, "[m]echanical movements and expressive movements are clearly distinguished in our era from the orchestics of the Greeks. Orchestic movements are neither purely mechanical nor strictly mimetic."[60] As reviewers noted, the dancers in *Faune* resembled modern machinery of the time, a curious conflation of the retrospective and the prospective. Critics such as Svetlov had made such comparisons before, though in the context of virtuosity: "The human being transforms itself into a machine, and a machine can deploy a technique as pure and abundant as one could wish. And that is why everything this mechanism produces […] ceases to be interesting."[61] When reviewers harnessed the language of mechanicity and automatism to describe Nijinsky's choreography, however, it was not in response to his virtuosity. There was only one leap in the entire ballet, which the Faune executes in his pursuit of the Chief Nymph. Far from a moment of transcendence, it was instead an animalistic pawing given flight. The ballet shunned impressive gesture in favor of an unhurried examination of flexing musculature and held postures.

In that way, *Faune*'s choreography reflects the developing technologies of observation that fragmented and scrutinized the body for greater efficiency, unlike the parade of ballets it preceded. It even diverged from Ravel and Fokine's production, with which it shared the intertext of antiquarianism. Its bodies are fragmented and disjointed; it declines the familiar musical and choreographic cohesion; and it chooses observation as its optical mode. In perhaps the most charged moment of the work—when the Faune and the Chief Nymph are alone on stage, engaged in their protean courtship—they interact through their eyes as much as, if not more than, through their bodies. Davinia Caddy has read this moment as one of audiophilia, when the characters are hypnotized by Debussy's music: "stage gesture [or rather a lack of it] sets the music apart as an object of attention, one that is seemingly experienced by characters on stage…This beautiful, gushy, overripe, clichéd, Romantic, *bel canto* theme inveigles the characters into a sensual immediacy betrayed by their exaggerated stillness—a stillness that in turn betrays music's infamous power to enthrall."[62] Such a reading, however, bypasses the intensity of their visual connections. During the stasis Caddy identifies, the Faune and the Nymph engage in a kind of charged observation that belies their stillness. Each scrutinizes the other, plotting the next, protracted foray. At the most Bergsonian moment in the score—when musical and experiential time gush forth unimpeded—the gaze becomes acutely intent and gestures minimal. The choreography's stasis sets the music's kinesis in even sharper relief, delineating the incongruence between the optical and aural registers: music moves, bodies do not.

Historians have long noted the rupture between music and dance in *Faune*. Hanna Järvinen writes of how audiences had to reconcile "new kinds of relations between the musical score and the bodies of the dancers performing on stage […]." Her argument is that

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[60] "Les mouvements mécaniques et les mouvements expressifs ou gestes se distinguent nettement, à notre époque et dans nos moeurs, des mouvements de la dans ou *mouvements orchestiques*, dans le langage des Grecs. Les mouvements orchestiques ne sont, en effet, ni purement mécaniques ni proprement imitatifs." Emmanuel, *Essai sur l'orchestique grecque*, 42.

[61] "…L'être humain se transforme en machine, et une machine peut exécuter un travail technique aussi pur et aussi abondant qu'on voudra. Et c'est par là que cesse d'être intéressant tout ce mécanisme produisant à foison des fouettés. Le développement de la danse classique e virtuosité ne mène pas plus loin; et à partir de ce point, l'art chorégraphique, acculé à l'impasse du mécanisme pur et simple, devait inévitablement s'arrêter—ou bien passer au cirque et à l'arène des acrobates, où s'en perd le caractère de délicatesse." Svetlov, *Le Ballet contemporain*, 9.

[62] Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and Beyond*, 103.

Nijinsky's ballet proved important because "it emphasized the choreographer as the absent author of dance" due to its jarring formal qualities.[63] In Caddy's consideration of the work, she also questions the relationship between the ballet and changing practices of spectatorship. She, however, then makes an imaginative leap to Charcot's Salpetrière and the contorted, hysterical bodies on display there. While arriving at a similar conclusion, I have suggested that the modes of contemplation and observation stemmed from a far closer source. Ballet and the nation engaged in statuomania for the purposes of renovation, but that engagement had unanticipated consequences for dance in the form of *Faune*.

Which returns us to the statues with which we started. Beethoven's luckless Parisian fate aside, the city's investment in public monuments for civic purposes provides a setting for ballet's own statuomania. During the *belle époque*, physical culture shaped dance, through such conduits as beauty culture for women, bodybuilding and other sportive pursuits for men, and gymnastic education for children. *Daphnis* and *Faune* participated in this larger context through a reformation of ballet's own public face. To use Agulhon's turn of phrase, the "didactic monumentalism" of statues aimed to renovate civic virtue and thereby help the nation cohere, particularly in the face of impending military conflict. The balletic body seems to have felt this influence in the shift from a flurried and frivolous gestural repertoire to one more grounded and, as we have seen, searchingly realistic. That realism, however, had consequences not only for dancers, but also viewers, who themselves were grappling with a new culture of visuality based on emerging optical technologies. Martin Jay has persuasively argued that ocularcentrism was itself under assault during the *fin de siècle* and the *belle époque*.[64] I have attempted to demonstrate that a multimedia art form such as ballet underwent its own curious *dérangement*: in *Daphnis*, the substitution of sound for action, which reinforced the synthesizing principle at work in its production; in *Faune*, the morphology from the fluid and fluent gestures of the contemplated body to the minute flexing of the observed physique. In that way, juxtaposing these two works presents a compact perspective on the larger issue of spectatorship during the *belle époque*, and its relationship to Parisian civic life.

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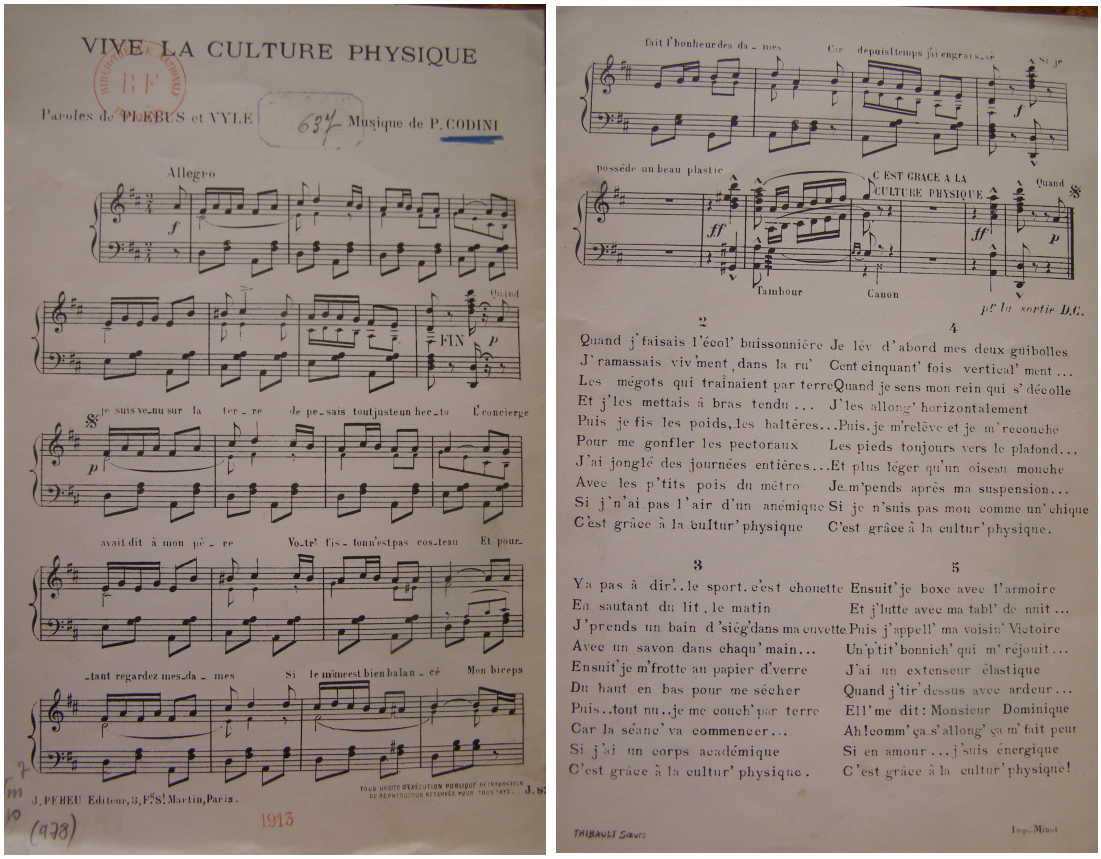
[63] Hanna Järvinen, "Dancing without Space—On Nijinsky's *L'après-midi d'un faune* (1912)," *Dance Research* 27, N1 (2009): 55.

[64] Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1993). For a discussion of the period under consideration, see "The Crisis of the Ancien Scopic Régime: From the Impressionists to Bergson": "there is ample evidence to demonstrate that the waning years of the nineteenth century did see an accelerated interrogation of the privileged scopic regime of the modern era, that which we have called Cartesian perspectivalism. And, as we have tried to demonstrate, technological innovations such as the camera contributed to the undermining of its privileged status." Jay, *Downcast Eyes*, 150.

3. Flex, Flex, Flex! Debussy and Nijinsky's *Jeux*

"*Jeux* is *Faune* in sports clothes."
—Pierre Boulez (1968)

Here is a score I stumbled upon at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France's Music Department [Example 1].



Example One

Titled "La Culture Physique," it is a rollicking anthem for male chorus extolling the virtues of athleticism and fitness. "My biceps make the ladies happy," they sing, "For since the last time I bulked up / If I have a beautiful physique / It is through physical culture." It never strays from its optimistic D-Major tonal center, and even punctuates the end of each of the five verses with a drumroll and a gunshot. The straightforwardness of its musical language underscores the vigorous, wholesome sentiment of its verses. After stanzas detailing muscular specifics and hygiene rituals, the final verse forecasts success in affairs of the heart: "If in love…I am energetic / It is through physical culture!" Diligent care of the body thus becomes more than mere masculine posturing. As this manly ditty demonstrates, physical fitness encompassed not only such expected domains as admirable musculature, but also the ways in which those qualities enabled more refined, amorous pursuits.

"La Culture Physique" appears to have entered the library's collection in 1913—a seminal moment for ballet to be sure, what with the storied premiere of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps* in May. But another work from Nijinsky's brief though seismic output—*Jeux*, a collaboration with Debussy—had its first performance in the same theater earlier that month, and will provide the main focus of this chapter. The chapter's aims are several. The most basic goal is to counter the eclipse of *Jeux* by its more famous balletic neighbors on either side: the previous year's *L'après-midi d'un faune* and, of course, *Le Sacre*. But it will also ask what it was about this ballet that sat so uneasily with audiences and critics. One of my contentions is that Boulez's pithy observation, which serves as the epigraph to the chapter, has misled historians from asking the right questions of *Jeux*. How and why does *Jeux* stand apart from its more famous Nijinskian counterparts? What was tennis, or indeed any sport, doing in any ballet, let alone one produced by a Russian émigré company? What can *Jeux* tell us about aesthetic constructions of modern masculinity through its depiction of a certain kind of stylized athleticism?

The Boulezian epigraph serves another purpose in this chapter as well. *Jeux* held a particular pride of place with the so-called Darmstadt generation of midcentury avant-gardists, including Karlheinz Stockhausen and Herbert Eimert along with Boulez himself. For them, Debussy ranked below only Anton Webern as a composer engaged in an "elliptical pulverisation of language."[1] But in their idolization of the work, these high modernists entirely neglected its choreographed aspect. Current musicological scholarship has been similarly disinclined to examine the danced dimension of *Jeux*. The last section of this chapter will therefore resume the issues broached earlier—the tensions between the ballet's hyper-intellectual score and its overtly sportive gestures. I will suggest that the case of *Jeux*, far from isolated, is representative both historically and historiographically. The evident rupture between the ballet's expressive media—its choreography and its music—is not only symptomatic of *belle époque* cultural anxieties, but also encapsulates the subsequent discursive bifurcation between disciplinary historiographies.

Jeux was not the first ballet to incorporate sports into its scenario and movements. As Cyril W. Beaumont notes, "When Nijinsky produced *Jeux* in 1913, the idea of using a branch of sport as a theme for ballet was acclaimed as a stroke of genius. Yet here is a dance of tennis-players produced almost two hundred years ago!"[2] One of Luigi Manzotti's precise and lavish *balli grandi* had also utilized the topic of athleticism. *Sport*, which premiered at Milan's La Scala in 1897, encompassed athletic activities of all kinds, including tennis. As Barbara Barker reminds us, the *fin-de-siècle* productions of the Kiralfy brothers in New York also made use of this trope.[3]

Ballets such as *Le Train bleu* and *Les Biches* (both premiered in 1924) extended the preoccupations of *Jeux* into the interwar period, marking it as a harbinger. As Lynn Garafola observes, these works embodied the characteristically postwar trend of "lifestyle modernism," an art of "the sophisticated commonplace."[4] *Le Train bleu*, a collaboration between Darius Milhaud and Bronislava Nijinska to a scenario by the agreeably louche Jean Cocteau, featured a female tennis player as one of its main characters. Cocteau provides gestural specifics for her in his text:

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[1] Quoted in M.J. Grant, *Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics: Compositional Theory in Post-War Europe* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 120.

[2] Cyril W. Beaumont, Preface to *New and Curious School of Theatrical Dancing*, by Gregorio Lambranzi (London: The Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, 1928), 13.

[3] Barbara Barker, "Nijinsky's 'Jeux,'" *The Drama Review* 26, N1 (1982): 54.

[4] Lynn Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1989), 98.

> Scene VI
>
> The tennis champion enters from the right (*her gait, her poses, her dance, her entire role should take inspiration from magazine snapshots; it should be the same for the golf player*). People racing—photographed with a foot in the air—in front; people talking—photographed with their mouths open; people jumping, tennis: (*reverse, collecting balls, etc*…)[5]

The kinetic energy of this scene is palpable. Garafola notes Cocteau's utilization of the modern "action shot" for his description of the character's movements. Tennis, however, is not the only sport *Le Train bleu* incorporates into its sultry goings-on. The *joueuse* meets her match in *un joueur de golf*, with whom she engages in a sportive *pas de deux*:

> Scene IX
>
> Fugue…for the tennis champion and the golf player. Gesticulation. While one of the two gesticulates, the other crosses his/her arms and listens, eyes in the air. (*The two, side by side, should be almost still, as the man moves the bottom of his foot, while raising an eye to the sky, and the woman shrugs her shoulders, etc*…)[6]

Cocteau here uses the designation of a musical technique—fugue—to describe complex gestural counterpoint, though it bears little resemblance to conventional balletic choreography. Instead, as we will also see in *Jeux*, *Le Train bleu* draws upon the movements of modern urban life to depict its stylish, stylized scenario.

While not as topically connected to *Jeux* as *Le Train bleu*, *Les Biches* also inherited and repurposed some of its predecessor's preoccupations. Cocteau again provided the scenario, though his composer-collaborator this time was the young Francis Poulenc. The subtext of *Le Train bleu*'s disaffected leisure was, of course, sex; in *Les Biches*, that topic, no longer a subtext, governed not only the narrative but also the costumes and décor. In Garafola's assessment, *Les Biches* "explored a host of taboo themes—narcissism, voyeurism, female sexual power, castration, sapphism—with a directness hitherto unparalleled on the ballet stage."[7] If the erotics were sharpened, the athletics were diffused. Rather than specific sports, *Les Biches* featured a trio of male athletes, who demonstrated their physical prowess through bicep flexion (also used, as we will see, in *Jeux*) and the like. This general posturing, however, was less concerned with sports than with highlighting gender differences. Women were leggy, promiscuous coquettes, and their male counterparts pretty toys to be, well, toyed with.

Nijinska created the choreography for both *Le Train bleu* and *Les Biches*. If Nijinsky had sought a fresh gestural repertoire in the motions of tennis, his sister abstracted from sports a physicalized signifier of the decadent leisure culture presented in both of her ballets, as well as in postwar life itself. Writing for *La Revue de Paris*, Cocteau had this to say about *Les Biches* (in contrast to the earlier *Les Noces*):

> In *Les Biches*, Nijinska has managed to achieve greatness without premeditation. She was saved by the lack of narrative and by the supposed lightness of the musical style. For the beauty, the melancholy of *Les Biches* does not come from any artifice. I doubt whether this music is aware of the harm it does. I would attribute it to the youthful hard-heartedness that challenges us with its impertinent contempt. These rhythms have a sportive

[5] Quoted in Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 109.
[6] Quoted in Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 109-110.
[7] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 129-30.

> conceit. They resemble the proud, sweaty girls, who pass by with racquets under their arms, and put us in the shade.[8]

In these lines, Cocteau detected a certain cocky sportiveness in the music, which Nijinska translated (with, perhaps, some force) into choreography. But while *Le Train bleu* and *Les Biches* interpreted some of *Jeux*'s innovations—*Jeux* having perhaps anticipated the modernist developments of the twenties—Debussy and Nijinsky's earlier ballet staged sports to quite different effect.

This claim is prompted by the *belle époque*'s quite different relationship to sporting culture. The influential *La Culture physique* published several articles detailing the athletic component of dance, including ballet. As we saw in the first chapter, the periodical in question had devoted a lengthy feature to Natasha Trouhanova, a fixture on Parisian stages. In 1907, none other than Guillaume Apollinaire penned an article which, in its very title, made it explicit: "La Danse est un Sport." After offering a history of early dance practice, he suggested: "Stripped of all its mysticism and solemnity, dance today takes on an elevated designation. Dance is now a sport in every sense of the word: entertainment as much as exercise, it is also a high-minded activity. There is no doubt that some of dance's qualities are like exercises. It makes muscles supple and strong, corrects perverted attitudes, and confers ease, agility, grace, and elegance."[9] Apollinaire goes on to detail the many conditions dance could cure, or better yet, prevent, and mentions several *étoiles* of the day: Fanny Elssler, Loïe Fuller, Isadora Duncan [Figure 1].

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[8] "Dans les *Biches* madame Nijinska vient d'atteindre la grandeur sans préméditation. Elle en fut préservée par l'absence de sujet et par l'apparente légèreté du style musical. Car la beauté, la mélancolie des *Biches* ne résultent d'aucun artifice. Je doute que cette musique sache qu'elle fait du mal. Je lui suppose le coeur dur de la jeunesse qui nous bouscule avec un mépris impertinent. Ses rythmes possèdent un prestige sportif. Ils ressemblent aux filles superbes qui passent en sueur, une raquette sous le bras, et qui nous jettent de l'ombre." *La Revue de Paris*, June 15, 1924.

[9] "Dépouillée de tout mysticisme et de toute solennité, la danse revêt aujourd'hui un haut les paroles. La danse est aujourd'hui un sport dans toutes les acceptions que ce terme comporte: divertissement autant qu'exercice, elle est en même temps un sport moral.
"On ne saurait douter des qualités de la danse considérée comme un exercice. Elle assouplit et fortifie les muscles, corrige bien des attitudes vicieuses, donne de l'aisance, de l'agilité, de la grâce et de l'élégance." *La Culture physique*, February 01, 1907.



Fanny Essler dansant El Zapateado
(Litho de l'époque)

Fanny Elssler
dansant la Cracovienne.
(Litho de l'époque)

Figure One

The article culminates in two "wishes":

> In the future, let dance be protected within the army. In Germany, during marches, at each halt. Soldiers organize dances that distract them, relax them, and keep them fit, better than being immobile beside a ditch.
>
> In the future, let dance be considered a complement to education, so that the government regards it as a useful sport, an element in the health of the body and spirit, and inscribe it into the curricula of young boys and girls. We do not, however, need the many subjects required by science for exams and placements.[10]

In light of these suggestions, which inform this chapter and the one that follows, it is evident that the new French emphasis on sportive qualities of dance was not frivolous work for the otherwise indolent. The future of the nation was at stake, as Apollinaire's passing yet significant reference to Germany makes clear. By putting *Jeux* in dialogue with sports culture, and tennis culture in particular, we can see the ways in which the athletic turn was conditioned by contemporaneous military anxieties. Modern masculinity and its proper cultivation were viewed through the dark glass of another potential conflict with Germany.

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[10] "Que dans l'avenir la danse soit protégée a l'Armée. En Allemagne, pendant les marches, à chaque halte. Les soldats organisent des danses qui les distrayent, les reposent et les maintiennent en forme, mieux que l'immobilité au bord d'un fossé.
"Qu'à l'avenir, la danse soit considérée comme un complément de l'éducation, que les pouvoirs publics le regardent comme un sport utile, un facteur de la santé du corps et de l'esprit, l'inscrivent dans les programmes des lycées de jeunes gens et de jeunes filles. Qu'on ne la mette cependant pas au nombre des matières dont la science est exigée dans les examens et aux concours." *La Culture physique*, February 01, 1907.

In the next and final chapter, we will look at the place of children on *belle époque* stages, and in doing so observe the reflection of Apollinaire's second wish, for the health of the French citizenry as well as French dance: "Let it remain what it is and should be: a hygienic exercise, an entertaining gymnastic, an artistic sport, moral and joyous."[11]

The case of *Jeux*—both its premiere and its curious afterlife—is instructive for an additional reason. In previous chapters, a historicist toolkit was summoned to illuminate the ways in which changing notions of femininity and spectatorship inflected ballet productions and their reception. This chapter and the one that follows continue to examine specific *belle époque* ballets, but they are also attentive to the obstacles facing historical narratives that involve a gestural component, as well as the scholarly politics of methodologies deployed in the face of such obstacles. *Jeux* here, and *Dolly* and *La Boîte à joujoux* later on, reveal the difficulties in constructing such narratives, and the resultant fractiousness those narratives can engender in scholars. *Jeux*'s gradual evaporation—its transformation from material balletic production to immaterial abstracted score—serves as a parable of sorts. While I suggest that that evaporation was a function of the social bifurcation between supposedly healthy athleticism and enervating intellectualism, it is, I also argue, symptomatic of a larger problem with current historiographical practice—the topic of the final chapter of this dissertation.

* * *

Debussy was understandably reluctant to renew relations with Diaghilev and company on the cloven heels of *Faune*. It was, the story goes, only after a substantial amount of cajoling and an equally substantial financial incentive—some 10,000 francs—that the composer agreed to provide another score for choreographic purposes. Instead of a beastly man (or a manly beast) in a suggestive bodystocking, *Jeux* featured Nijinsky in laddish tennis whites; his costars, Karsavina and Schollar (replacing the pregnant Nijinska) completed the look with their crisp, corresponding ensembles. While accounts of the scenario's inception vary and conflict, it appears that the idea for a ballet set in the *milieu* of tennis was Nijinsky's own, one that Debussy at first dismissed as banal with his usual sugared contempt. Eventually, however, Debussy found in the narrative an intriguing, "slightly evil *je ne sais quoi* that accompanies twilight," and produced a seductive, cryptic score to accompany the action.

The ballet depicts the vagaries of modern life and love. A "slightly larger than normal" tennis ball bounces onto an empty stage, pursued by a young man with a racquet in hand. He soon disappears, and two girls enter, partners and confidantes. The young man returns, and various ductile romantic geometries unfold. First the young man couples with only one of the *jeunes filles*. They flirt and dance, while the excluded girl fumes and pouts. The young man transfers his attentions to her, once again engaging in a romantic and choreographed duet of sorts, when in fact the situation—and the newly excluded party—demands more. Through some glib maneuvering, the three come together in an implied *ménage à trois*, which Nijinsky represented through the famous "fountain pose" and ensuing "triple kiss." Just when the encounter seems settled, however, another tennis ball bounces on stage, and the three scatter—presumably onward to more such nonchalant liaisons.

Jeux's mutable music echoes these romantic caprices. Debussy began work on the complex score just weeks after the *Faune*'s (disastrous) danced debut. As Robert Orledge

[11] "Qu'elle reste ce qu'elle est et ce qu'elle doit être: un exercice hygiénique, une gymnastique récréative, un sport artistique, moral et joyeux." *La Culture physique*, February 01, 1907.

notes, the composer's efforts often bore fruit only after a protracted period of gestation, making *Jeux*'s "swift composition" rather remarkable.[12] Unusual too are the revisions the composer agreed to complete at Diaghilev's forceful behest. Both the climax as well as the conclusion of *Jeux* exist in several versions.[13] Indeed, the scenario originally ended not with the mysterious reappearance of the outsized tennis ball, but instead with an airplane crash. Such a sudden and catastrophic finish was distasteful to Debussy—Diaghilev was characteristically suave in placating him, offering to "delete" the "dirigible"—and the less decisive, more suggestive ending that exists today was settled upon.

Reviews of Debussy's music shorn of Nijinsky's choreography reveal much about the score's importance within the composer's *oeuvre*. Gabriel Pierné presented *Jeux* in concert nearly one year after its balletic premiere. Humorous accounts such as one in the *Revue musicale SIM* declared several "[n]ew victories of dance […] Nijinsky's laurels prevent our conductors from sleeping. Each symphonic concert brings a sensational reprise of one of his roles: from the small podium, whose railing was carefully reinforced for the occasion, Chevillard mimed Daphnis, Pierné danced Jeux, and Monteux stamped Petrushka."[14] Others were more serious. *Le Gaulois*, for example, reminded its readers of "the aggressively shared opinions" Nijinsky's choreography had elicited the previous spring.[15] The concert performance was equally divisive. But that did not stop the reviewer from extolling the music's manifold virtues:

> The music of *Jeux* is admittedly ingenious; ideas are always colorful even in their compactness; sonorities are full of charm in their boldness, in their unexpected timbral combinations. There is in this ballet a pleasant lack of precision, reminiscent of *La Mer*'s orchestral "blur," as well as a contour, a movement, a capricious rhythmic allure similar to the magnificent *Iberia*.[16]

As these lines suggest, even shortly after its premiere, *Jeux* was considered by some to be the culmination of Debussy's storied career. Its intricate metrical manipulations far superseded the Bergsonian heterogeneity of *Faune*. Indeed, the compositional virtuosity of *Jeux* not only belied its denuded choreographic overlay, but also obscured its status as an accompaniment to movement in later scholarly considerations.

Journalists found much to criticize in the original danced production. Emile Vuillermoz stated baldly: "Nijinsky has sinned against Debussy. His translation of 'Jeux' constitutes a betrayal." He goes on to discuss the ballet at length:

> We were mistaken to be surprised by finding in each of Nijinsky's new creations the "marionette" style of his "Petrushka." This *parti pris* is a sensible response to the new aesthetic: the automatism and impassivity of

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[12] Robert Orledge, "The Genesis of Debussy's 'Jeux,'" *The Musical Times* 128, N1728 (1987): 68.

[13] These are also detailed in Orledge's "The Genesis of Debussy's 'Jeux.'"

[14] "[…] [n]ouvelles victoires de la danse […] Les lauriers de Nijinsky empêchent nos chefs d'orchestre de dormir. Chaque concert symphonique amène une reprise sensasionnelle d'un de ses rôles: sur la petite estrade de direction, dont le garde-fou a été prudemment renforcé pour la circonstance, Chevillard a mimé *Daphnis*, Pierné a dansé *Jeux* et Monteux a trépigné *Pétrouchka*." *Revue musicale SIM*, 1914.

[15] "Nous connaissons les *Jeux*, de M. Debussy; ce ballet avait été donné en mai dernier au théâtre des Champs-Elysées et la chorégraphie de M. Nijinsky n'avait pas été sans déchaîner des opinions agressivement partagées." *Le Gaulois*, March 03, 1914.

[16] "Il faut reconnaître que la musique des *Jeux* est ingénieuse; les idées en sont toujours pittoresques en leur tenuité; les sonorités en sont pleines de charme en leur hardiesse, en leurs combinaisons imprévues de timbres. Il y a dans ce ballet une imprécision des plus agréables qui rappelle le 'flou' orchestral de la *Mer*, en même temps qu'un relief, un mouvement, une allure capricante des rythmes qui apparentent aussi cette oeuvre au somptueux *Ibéria*." *Le Gaulois*, March 03, 1914.

> these "divine dolls" glorify what is immaterial in this stylization of beauty and human sensibility. The complex flirtation of the tennis players does not animate the porcelain visages of these three white *pupazzi* that invisible operators above make jump and dance. Sometimes the hand that supports the airs and their dry, rhythmic imprint abandons one of the dolls, who falls into a corner of the stage, arms and legs dangling, in a sadly comic stillness; then the string tightens once more and the frantic dance begins again. They do not act like living creatures but conventional figures for whom a perfectly articulated joint allows all sorts of linear games suavely "intellectualized."[17]

For Vuillermoz, the issue became not merely misunderstanding in collaboration, but instead one of national identity and pride. Debussy offered the very best of his French artistry to Nijinsky, only to have his diaphanous score trampled by supposedly sportive choreography. Indeed, he concluded by calling for future protections against such unconscionable abuse of Gallic art. In the *Journal des débats politiques et littérraires*, Adolphe Jullien also compared the dancers to "jointed puppets [*pantins articulés*]."[18] The reliably cranky Pierre Lalo seconded these pronouncements in his extended review for *Le Temps*. Like Vuillermoz, he contrasted Debussy's "subtle and delicate" music with Nijinsky's "rigid, mechanical," and ultimately "overwhelming" gestures. Lalo went further, however, suggesting that the topic of tennis never once arose choreographically:

> Various admirers of M. Nijinsky's choreography have stated that this choreography "stylizes" sportive gestures, and that this constitutes its meaning and value. But in *Jeux*, we do not see a single such gesture, nor its "stylization": they do not play any tennis; they only flirt, and the only stylization we could find would be that of their flirtation. But then the gestures of sport do not need to be stylized; they have their own style in and of themselves. Finally, it is not enough, if you want to create something worthy of being called style, to take any old point of view, the first one that comes to hand, ugly and senseless to boot: there must be beauty; and a system is not a style.[19]

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[17] "Nijinsky a péché contre Debussy. Sa traduction de 'Jeux' fut une trahison." […] On a eut tort de s'étonner en retrouvant dans chaque nouvelle création de Nijinsky le style 'marionette' qui avait créé le charme puéril et profond de son 'Petrouchka.' Ce partipris répond logiquement à l'esthétique nouvelle: l'automatisme et l'impassabilité de ces 'poupées divines' exaltent ce qu'il y a d'immatériel dans cette stylisation de la beauté et de la sensibilité humaines. Le flirt compliqué des joueurs de tennis n'anime pas les visages de porcelaine des trois blancs pupazzi que d'invisibles fils font sautiller au-dessus des parterres. Parfois, la main qui les soutient les airs et leur imprime de rythmiques saccades abandonne l'un des pantins qui choit alors dans un coin de la scène, jambes et bras ballants, dans une immobilité d'un comique douloureux; puis le fil se tend de nouveau et la danse éperdue recommence. Il ne s'agit donc pas de créatures vivantes mais de figurines conventionelles à qui une articulation perfectionnée permet toutes sortes de jeux linéaires suavement 'intellectualisés.'" *Revue musicale SIM*, 1913.

[18] "La musique que M. Debussy a composée exprès pour ce 'rien du tout subtil' est vraiment charmante et d'une légèreté, d'une fluidité, d'une tenuité singulière, avec vous n'en sauriez douter infiniment de 'jeux' sonores très minutieux, qui s'accordent assez mal, au moins jusqu'à l'ensemble final, je le répète, avec ces 'jeux' chorégraphiques si raides, si saccadés, de danseurs qu'on prendrait pour des pantins articulés, et peut-être tout l'agrément de cette petite partition nous sera-t-il même plus sensible lorsque nous l'entendrons au concert et que notre imagination, sur trois lignes de texte, aura toute liberté de broder à sa guise." *Journal des débats politiques et littérraires*, May 25, 1913.

[19] "Divers admirateurs de la chorégraphie de M. Nijinsky ont proclamé que cette chorégraphie 'stylisait' les gestes du sport que c'étaient là sa signification et sa valeur. Mais on ne voit pas dans *Jeux* un seul geste de sport, ni sa 'stylisation': on n'y joue point du tout au tennis; on n'y fait rien d'autre que flirter, et la seule

Instead, *Jeux* continued the unartful choreographic style of *Faune*. But whereas at least in its topic *Faune* coincided with more angular, geometric figurations, in the later ballet there seemed to be no excuse for Nijinsky's folly.

The day before the premiere, Hector Cahusac published in *Le Figaro* a perhaps embellished account of *Jeux*'s inception and development, which included Nijinsky's extended description of his vision for the ballet:

> The man I see before anyone else on stage, he says, is the modern man. I dream of clothing, of gesture, of movement characteristic of our time. There are certainly in the human body elements that signify the era from which they came: when one sees today a man walking, reading a magazine or dancing the tango, one sees nothing in common between his gestures and those, for example, of a *flâneur* under Louis XV, of a gentleman dancing the minuet, or of a monk studiously reading a manuscript in the thirteenth century.
>
> The careful study I did of polo, golf, and tennis convinced me that these games are not merely hygienic relaxation, but at the same time the source of beautiful gestures. And through this study, I take hope that our era will be characterized, in the future, by a style as expressive as those we admire most readily in the past.[20]

Though Nijinsky may have exaggerated the extent of his research, his attentiveness to the gestures of athleticism highlights the significance the topic of tennis had for *Jeux*. It merits serious investigation.

* * *

To assert that *Jeux*'s portrayed diversions were strictly metaphorical, romantic rather than athletic, is to overlook the place of tennis in *belle époque* culture. Scholars such as Hanna Järvinen, while noting the ballet's sporting context, nevertheless suggests that "after all, *Jeux* was not about sport as much as it was about modernity and sexual games."[21] Yet contemporary accounts of tennis shed considerable light on the ballet and its *moeurs*. In his 1914 monograph on the game, André Lichtenberger described tennis as: "A varied sport, healthy and valorous, combining the merits of sound traditionalism with those of the highest modernism. A nationally and internationally recognized social institution, tennis is a clever

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stylisation qu'on y pourrait trouver serait celle du flirt. Puis les gestes du sport n'ont nul besoin d'être stylisés; ils ont leur style en eux-mêmes. Enfin il ne suffit pas, pour créer quelque chose qui ait droit au nom de style, d'adopter un parti pris quelconque, le premier parti pris venu, quelles, qu'en soient d'ailleurs la laideur et la déraison: il y faut de la beauté; et un système n'est pas un style." *Le Temps*, June 03, 1913.

[20] "L'homme que je vois avant tout autre sur la scène, dit-il, c'est l'homme moderne. Je rêve d'un costume. d'une plastique, d'un mouvement qui seraient caractéristique de notre temps. Il y a sûrement dans le corps humain des éléments qui sont significatifs de l'époque où s'il exprime: Lorsqu'on voit aujourd'hui un homme se promener, lire un journal ou danser le tango, on n'aperçoit rien de commun entre ses gestes et ceux, par exemple, d'un flâneur sous Louis XV, d'un gentilhomme courant le menuet, ou d'un moine lisant studieusement un manuscrit au treizième siècle.

"L'examen attentif que j'ai fait des polos, des golfs et des tennis m'a persuadé que ces jeux ne sont pas seulement un délassement hygiénique, mais qu'ils sont également créateurs de beauté plastique. Et de cette étude j'ai rapporté cet espoir que notre temps serait caracterisé, dans l'avenir, par un style tout aussi expressif que ceux que nous admirons le plus volontiers dans le passé." *Le Figaro*, May 14, 1913.

[21] Hanna Järvinen, "Critical Silence: The Unseemly Games of Love in *Jeux* (1913)," *Dance Research* 27, N2 (2009): 211.

and elegant microcosm of contemporary civilization."[22] The well-known French champion Max Decugis created an eponymous bi-monthly periodical devoted to the sport, which not only detailed recent events and tournaments, but also treated more subtle philosophical questions related to tennis. One issue toward the end of the publication's first year included an article titled "Supériorité du Tennis." The author, Etienne Micard, discussed overtly combative sporting activities first, then turned to more refined encounters such as tennis and fencing, in which finesse and subtlety tempered sheer brute strength. "I would go further," he rhapsodized,

> sure of being understood by all the virtuosos of the racquet: when natural talent is placed at the service of a tenacious will and developed by an individual's intense work, tennis approaches Art. The emotion felt by a player who has made a beautiful shot closely resembles what he experiences when inspired by any one of the nine muses… And for a knowing audience, watching a match between two champions can move them as much as contemplating a painting by Rembrandt or hearing a melody by Schumann.[23]

In the following month's issue, an intrepid reader submitted musical transcriptions of the gestures of renowned tennis players [Figure 2].

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[22] "Sport varié, hygiénique et valeureux, unissant les mérites d'un sain traditionalisme à ceux du modernisme le plus aigu, institution sociale reconnue d'agrément national et international, le tennis apparaît comme un microcosme ingénieux et élégant de la civilisation contemporaine." André Lichtenberger, *Le Tennis, notes, méditations, souvenirs* (Paris: G. Oudin, 1914), 105-06.

[23] "J'irai plus loin sûr d'être compris par tous les virtuoses de la raquette: par tous les dons naturels mis au service d'une volonté tenace et développés par un travail intense qu'il exige chez l'individu, le tennis se rapproche de l'Art. L'émotion ressentie par le joueur qui exécute un joli coup ressemble fort à celle qu'il éprouve lorsqu'il est inspiré par l'une quelconque des neuf muses…Et pour les spectateurs compétents, le spectacle d'un match entre deux champions les fait autant vibrer que la contemplation d'une toile de Rembrandt ou l'audition d'une mélodie de Schumann." *Tennis*, November 13, 1910.

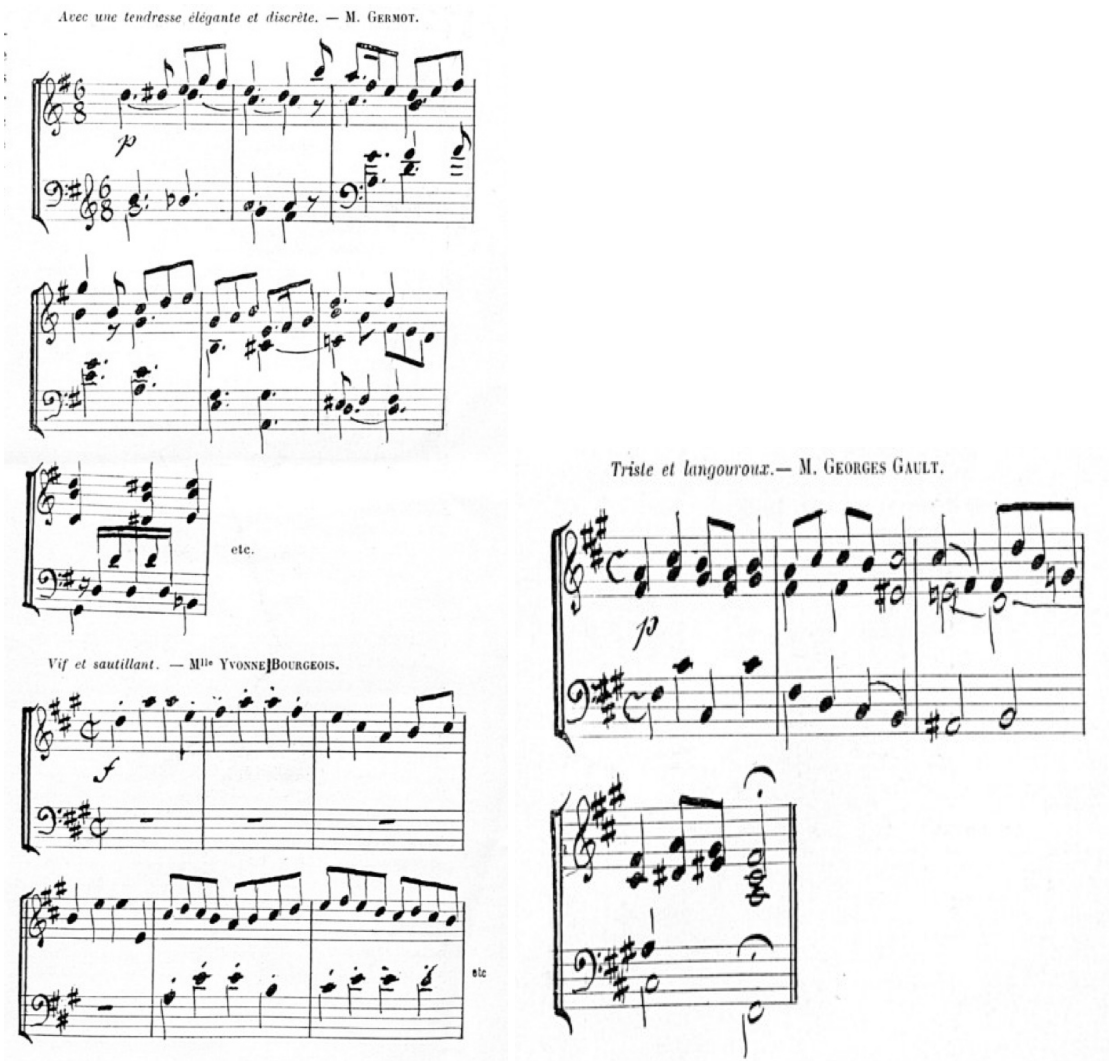


Figure Two

He prefaced his contribution by reminding his readers that "the strings of a racquet and those of a violin are made by the same little lambs. The two arts are brothers; and when I assist in a beautiful shot, musical feelings are awakened in me."[24]

In the years that followed, the periodical remained attentive to contemporary aesthetic life. During the summer of 1912, *Tennis* covered "Le Championnat des Artistes Musiciens," in which such luminaries as Ricardo Viñes and Alfred Cortot, as well as the wives of famous composers including Chausson, took part. The periodical published an image of Pablo Casals executing an overhead smash, and recognized his excellent competitive spirit, perhaps the best in the entire tournament [Figure 3].

[24] "D'ailleurs, les cordes des raquettes et celles des violons sont produites par les mêmes petits agneaux. Les deux arts sont donc frères; et quand j'assiste à une belle partie, des sensations musicales s'éveillent en moi-même." *Tennis*, December 11, 1910.

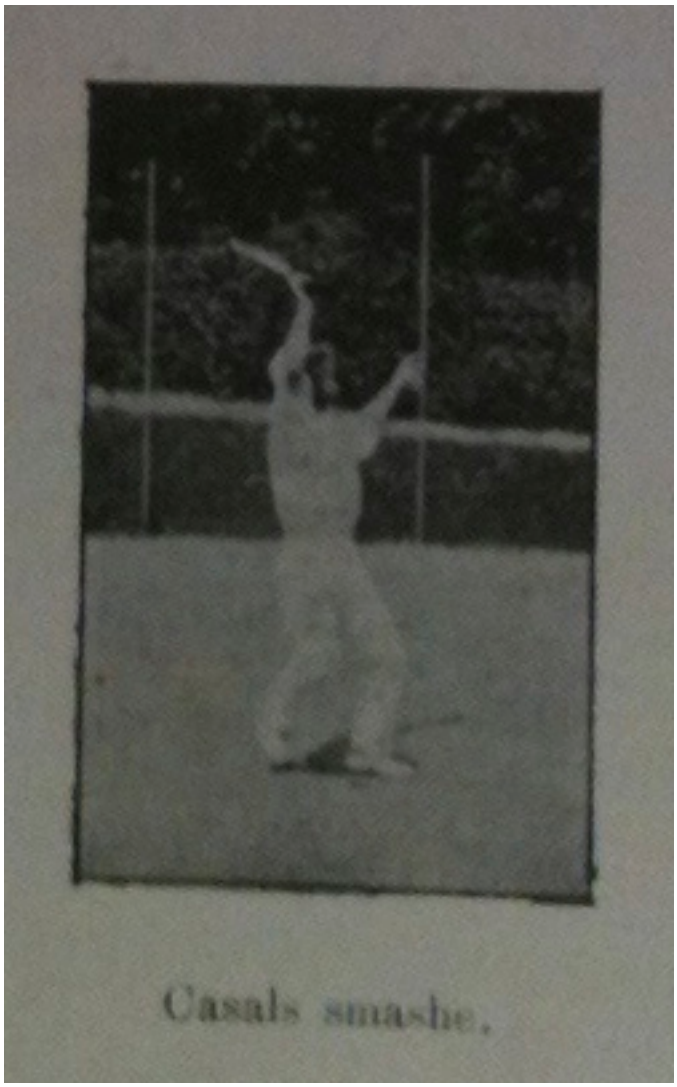


Figure Three

"He played non-stop for hours," the author Hadl noted, "he played well, trotting on his little legs from one end of the court to the other, shaking his head topped with a handkerchief and a panama, wielding a mean racquet, and chatting endlessly with the referee, with the audience, with his opponent, with his partner…and with himself, and never tiring. What a guy!"[25] Another tournament elicited additional musical accompaniment, "Notes d'un Tzigane" [Figure 4].

[25] "Il a joué sans s'arrêter pendant des heures, il a bien joué, trottant de ses petites jambes d'un bout à l'autre du cours, secouant son chef garni d'un mouchoir et d'un panama, brandissant une raquette vindicative, et trouvant encore moyen de bavarder inlassablement avec l'arbitre, avec les spectateurs, avec son adversaire, avec son partenaire…et avec lui-même, et jamais fatigué. Quelle nature!!" *Tennis*, July 07, 1912.

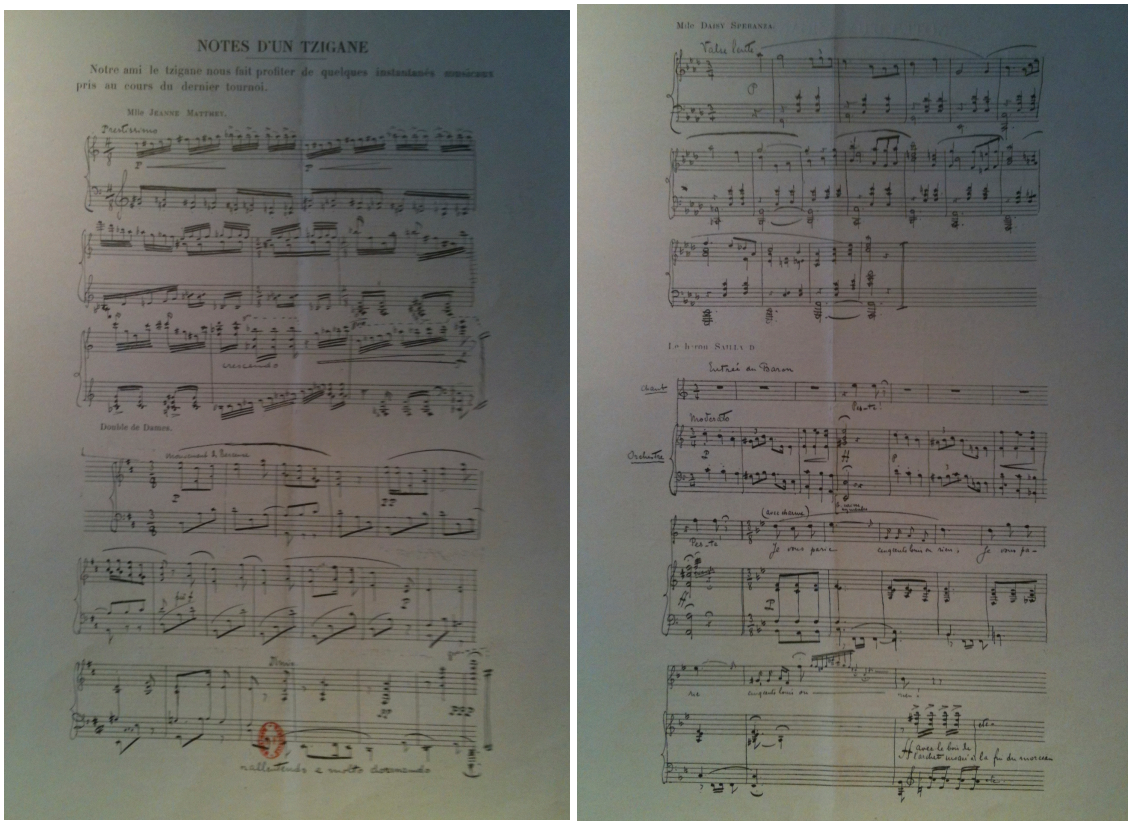


Figure Four

Renowned champion Jeanne Matthey received a highly chromatic *prestissimo* characterization, while the women's doubles excerpt was in the style of an elegant berceuse. The remaining snippets were akin to the first, in that they named particular celebrities of the tennis world: a placid, A-flat major waltz for Daisy Speranza (mixed doubles specialist) and a dramatic, texted orchestral finale for the Baron de S. Though *Tennis* devoted itself for the most part to reporting tournament statistics and other notable happenings, its attentiveness to the art world in general and the musical community in particular is striking. Indeed, the periodical even took notice of *Jeux*'s premiere in its "Propos de Couloirs" section. Henry Dispan wrote, "For nearly a fortnight, our dearest sport has made a sensational appearance at the M. Astruc's theater. Without fanfare, but not without violins and cellos, M. Nijinsky, assisted by two lovely ladies and the music of M. Debussy, tried, in *Jeux*, to choreograph tennis as he saw it."[26] Thus tennis straddled the line between frothy diversion and serious athleticism, between the physical rigors of sport and the sublime intellectualism of art.

While Nijinsky's choreography may not have accurately integrated gestures from the sport as such, the ballet's setting foregrounds contemporaneous concerns about masculinity and its proper uses.[27] The *belle époque* was a time during which masculinity was in something

[26] "Voilà bientôt quinze jours que le sport qui nous est cher fit une apparition sensationnelle au théâtre de M. Astruc. Sans tambour ni trompette, mais non point sans violons et violoncelles, M. Nijinski, aidé par deux aimables demoiselles et la musique de M. Debussy, essaya, dans *Jeux*, de nous chorégraphier le tennis comme il le voit." *Tennis*, June 06, 1913.

[27] Nijinska, nevertheless, writes in her memoirs that "[o]ften instead of rehearsal we would go to the nearby tennis courts and watch tennis being played. Vaslav studied the movements of the body and paid close attention to the technique of striking the ball, also the positions of the arm and the grip holding the tennis

of a crisis. "Insofar as it entailed the expansion of largely sedentary and cerebral professions," writes Michael E. Forth, "modernity was increasingly identified as exercising a negative, even feminizing effect upon the very men who constituted the nation's elite: those who benefitted most from the educational system to secure bourgeois occupations."[28] The onslaught of manuals touting fitness regimens during the *fin de siècle* and the *belle époque* attests to a burgeoning national obsession with athletics. While the defeat of 1870 provided the initial impetus, Forth suggests that domestic conflicts such as the protracted and divisive Dreyfus Affair made the issue more urgent. The second modern Olympic Games, held in Paris in 1900, fueled interest as well, injecting sporting culture with a healthy dose of celebrity and drama.[29] A tireless proselytizer of physical exercise, Edmund Desbonnet even published an advertisement in *La Culture physique* specifically targeting intellectuals [Figures 5 & 6].



Figure Five

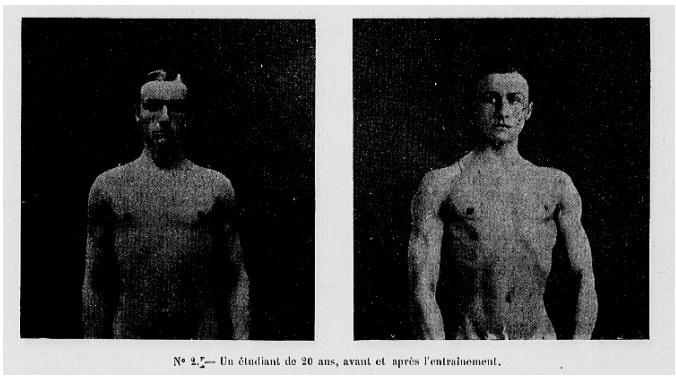


Figure Six

The botanically garbed model in this image is heralded as a prime specimen of muscular masculinity, a visual antipode to a photograph of the pale, feeble *scolaire* featured in an issue from the following year.

As the physician Fr. Messerli noted in his *Histoire générale de la culture physique et de la gymnastique médicale*, "Social gymnastics developed later in France than in Germany […] The Franco-Prussian War revived the popular sentiment of the French people, who realized the how great was the need for physical exercise."[30] Messerli was only one among many who

racquet." Irina Nijinska and Jean Rawlinson, eds., *Bronislava Nijinska: Early Memoirs* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 444.

[28] Michael E. Forth, *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University press, 2004), 8.

[29] The Paris Olympics followed the initial modern revival in Athens four years earlier. The event was held in conjunction with the World's Fair. Tennis was one of the sports on the roster. Even in advance of the Paris games, Édouard Audouin noted the importance of these types of events not only for athletic excellence, but also for cultural significance and renewal: "Ainsi le nom d'Olympie ne doit point représenter seulement, à nos yeux, le triomphe de la gymnastique. Car on y glorifiait trois choses, qui avaient plus de prix encore pour les Hellènes: la religion, la patrie et l'art." *Olympie et les jeux Olympiques* (Poitiers: Oudin, 1896), 15.

[30] "La gymnastique de société se développa plus tardivement en France qu'en Allemagne […] La guerre franco-allemande réveilla la sentiment populaire du peuple français, qui comprit combien grande était la nécessité de

peddled the same sentiment in various guises. After prophesying inevitable national decline, these (invariably male) authors would offer specific regimens to combat *faiblesse*. C. C. Pages' plainly titled *Manuel de Culture Physique* offers one exhaustive example of this type of work. Published in 1911, the text opens with the following epigraph: "Never stop sculpting your statue."[31] This directive connects physical culture with the *statuomanie* noted in the previous chapter, which had a real and proximate influence on the French civic body. Here we see the sportive body as something to be sculpted and refined, for both hygienic and aesthetic purposes. Physical culture was the key to good character as well as an admirable physique—"*les premier des arts*."[32] The author in addition provides different categories of exercises: for better health, for strength, and for beauty. Before getting into specific regimens, however, he highlighted the importance of such exercises for men in particular. "Men and women are too different, physically as well as morally, to depend on the same means of improvement. I will examine them separately; but I accord physical culture a greater importance for the man than for the woman, because he possesses more specialized skills, and because he clearly controls the future of the species."[33] The structure of his monograph underscores this sentiment. Though titled *Livre II*, the section devoted to women's health seems an afterthought at best.[34] The preponderance of male-specific exercises and accompanying illustrative detail in the *Manuel* echoes Forth's assertions about the prominence of physical culture—and in particular *male* physical culture—during the *belle époque* [Figure 7].

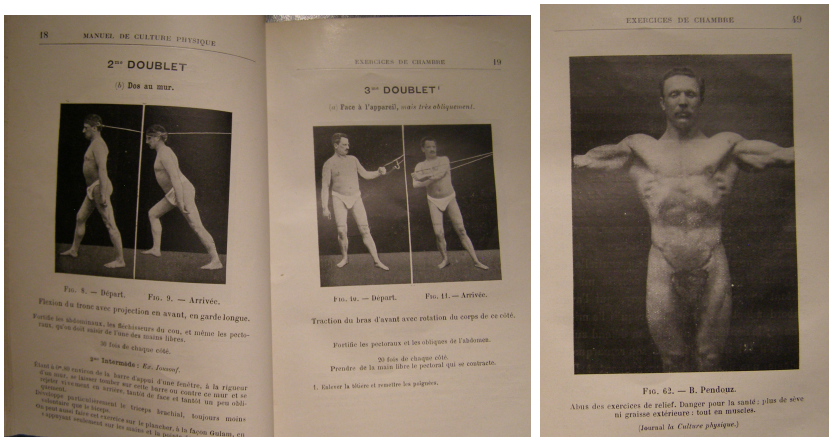


Figure Seven

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l'exercice corporel." F.R. Messerli, *Histoire générale de la culture physique et de la gymnastique médicale* (Lausanne: T. Sack, 1916), 107.

[31] "Ne cesse pas de modeler ta statue." Calixte Pagès, *Manuel de culture physique* (Paris: Vigot, 1911).

[32] Emphasis in original. Pagès, *Manuel de culture physique*, vii.

[33] "L'homme et la femme sont trop différents, physiquement aussi bien que moralement, pour être tributaires des mêmes moyens de perfectionnement. Je les étudierai donc séparément; mais j'accorderai à la Culture physique de l'homme une importance beaucoup plus grande qu'à celle de la femme, parce qu'il porte à un plus haut degré la spécialisation des aptitudes, et qu'il domine nettement dans la perpétuation de l'espèce." Pagès, *Manuel de culture physique*, vii.

[34] The first two sentences declare as much: "L'homme doit être *juste* et la femme *belle*. L'homme doit être juste pour gouverner le monde; la femme belle pour le perpétuer." Pagès, *Manuel de culture physique*, 219. In that way, women are conduits, lovely to contemplate but largely ornamental other than for reproductive purposes—yet another iteration of the framework we saw in the first chapter of this dissertation.

One consequence of ignoring directives such as Pages's was the condition then known as neurasthenia.[35] The American physician George Miller Beard coined and then popularized the term during the middle of the nineteenth century. His work was recognized and augmented in several European locales, in France by the physician team Adrien Proust and Gilbert Ballet. Their 1897 study, *L'Hygiène du neurasthénique*, became something of a classic in the medical community. While, they note, the condition was not specific to the modern era, it had become representative and characteristic of modernity as such. "It is not without reason," they write, "that it has been called 'the disease of the century.'"[36] Though geographically delocalized, neurasthenia had certain pet populations [Figure 8]. Men, for example, were more susceptible to its clutches than women by a factor of over two to one.[37] The middle-aged—not too young, not too old—also fell prey in greater numbers. One's profession proved no less significant than sex or age, as the following table purported to demonstrate. The common denominator was *surmenage cérébral*, overworking one's intellect (to the neglect of one's physical body).

Professions. — **La répartition des cas suivant les professions n'est pas moins significative. Les statistiques qui ont été dressées à ce point de vue mettent bien en évidence l'influence prédominante du surmenage cérébral dans le développement de la neurasthénie. Sur 598 malades on trouve[2] :**

Commerçants et industriels	198
Employés	130
Professeurs	68
Étudiants	56
Officiers	38
Artistes	33
Sans profession	19
Médecins	17
Agriculteurs	17
Ecclésiastiques	10
Savants	6
Écoliers	6
Ouvriers	6

1. Von Hössling, in *Handbuch der Neurasthenie herausgeg.* von Franz Muller, Leipzig, 1893.
2. Von Hössling, *loco cit.*

Figure Eight

Businessmen and industrialists topped the chart, followed closely by employees (presumably office drones of some kind), and then professors. Laborers and schoolchildren escaped with the fewest diagnoses. Proust and Ballet offer the following analysis of these statistics: "Although relative, these figures are nevertheless quite instructive; they show an extreme rarity of neurosis among working-class individuals, and an almost exclusive limitation to the educated classes, businessmen and professionals, in a word, to populations subjected to

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35 For an exhaustive discussion of neurasthenia in various geographical locales and historical moments, see Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Roy Porter, eds., *Cultures of Neurasthenia from Beard to the First World War* (New York: Rodopi, 2001).

36 "Ce n'est pas sans raison qu'on l'a nommée 'la maladie du siècle.'" Adrien Proust and Gilbert Ballet, *L'Hygiène du neurasthénique* (Paris: Masson, 1897), 8.

37 Proust and Ballet offer the following statistic, cited from an earlier study: "La neurasthénie est plus commune chez l'homme que chez la femme. Sur un total de 828 malades, Von Hössling a compté 604 cas dans le sexe masculin, et 224 seulement dans le sexe féminin."

constant intellectual work."[38] Though cautioning against over-interpreting their chart, the authors clearly indicate that excessive brainwork was a strong harbinger of neurasthenic symptoms.

General fitness and somatic upkeep were both prophylactic and therapeutic. Psychotherapy, hydrotherapy, and even climatotherapy also aided in treatment, but the recurrent emphasis on physical exercise and proper nutrition predominated in Proust and Ballet's estimation. Parents of children hereditarily susceptible to neurasthenia were counseled to implement a rigorous scheme of physical development, without, of course, neglecting moral instruction. Affected adults, too, needed to be vigilant custodians of these aspects of their wellbeing. Indeed, the fitness manuals mentioned above did not neglect to emphasize the preventative effects of their regimens. One Doctor Bonnaymé, author of the preface to August Clause's *L'Art de devenir fort et bien portant*, put the general sentiment succinctly: "Development of the brain over the body is an abuse whose consequences will be inevitably felt."[39] He went on to implicate neurasthenia by name, and to suggest that schools themselves were perhaps incubators for the affliction. "Should we be surprised," he chastised, "since we have already demonstrated that our schools are, too often, nurseries for neurasthenia? The fundamentals of arts and sciences are, in fact, the most difficult to study, and the excessive intellectual burden that results is even more intense."[40] In the text's second preface, Doctor Gautheron intoned that

> The cultivation of the body, being helpful to that of the mind, and morale-building as well, thus furthers the triple regeneration—physical, intellectual, and moral—of our race. Qualities, either acquired or augmented, can be passed on to our descendants. It is not reckless therefore to believe that physical culture promotes and hastens the advent of a more beautiful humanity, one developed and perfected. This is not utopia, but instead a dream destined to become reality—such a beautiful dream as must provoke immediately the effort of generous natures.[41]

Utopic prophecies aside, Gautheron's statements recall Apollinaire's quoted at the beginning of this chapter. While Apollinaire made particular reference to dance, Gautheron saw in physical culture the same redemptive potential. The plates that followed of idealized male physiques—equipped as always with the requisite, modesty-preserving foliage—provided visual proof [Figure 9].

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[38] "Bien qu'ils n'aient qu'une valeur toute relative ces chiffres n'en sont pas moins fort instructifs; ils montrent d'une part l'extrême rareté de la névrose parmi les individus de la classe ouvrière et sa limitation presque exclusive aux classes cultivées, au monde des affaires ou des carrières libérales, en un mot aux catégories sociales assujetties par état à un labeur cérébral habituel." Proust and Ballet, *L'Hygiène du neurasthénique*, 13.

[39] "Développer le cerveau au détriment du corps est un abus dont les conséquences se font fatalement sentir." Preface to *L'Art de devenir fort et bien portant* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1910), xv.

[40] "Faut-il s'étonner, d'après ce que nous avons exposé que nos écoles soient trop souvent des pépinières de neurasthéniques? Les premières notions des sciences et des arts sont précisément les plus difficiles à étudier et le surmenage intellectuel qui en résulte est d'autant plus intense." Preface to *L'Art de devenir fort et bien portant*, xx.

[41] "La culture du corps étant favorable à celle de l'esprit, et moralisatrice, ainsi se poursuivra la triple régénération intellectuelle, physique et morale de notre race. Les qualités acquises ou simplement accrues devant se transmettre à nos descendants, il n'est donc pas témèraire de croire que la culture du corps favorisera et hâtera l'avènement d'une humanité plus belle, d'une humanité idéalisée et agrandie. Ceci n'est pas une utopie, mais un rêve destiné à devenir une réalité, si beau du reste qu'il doit tenter les efforts immédiats des esprits généreux" Preface to *L'Art de devenir fort et bien portant*, xlvii.

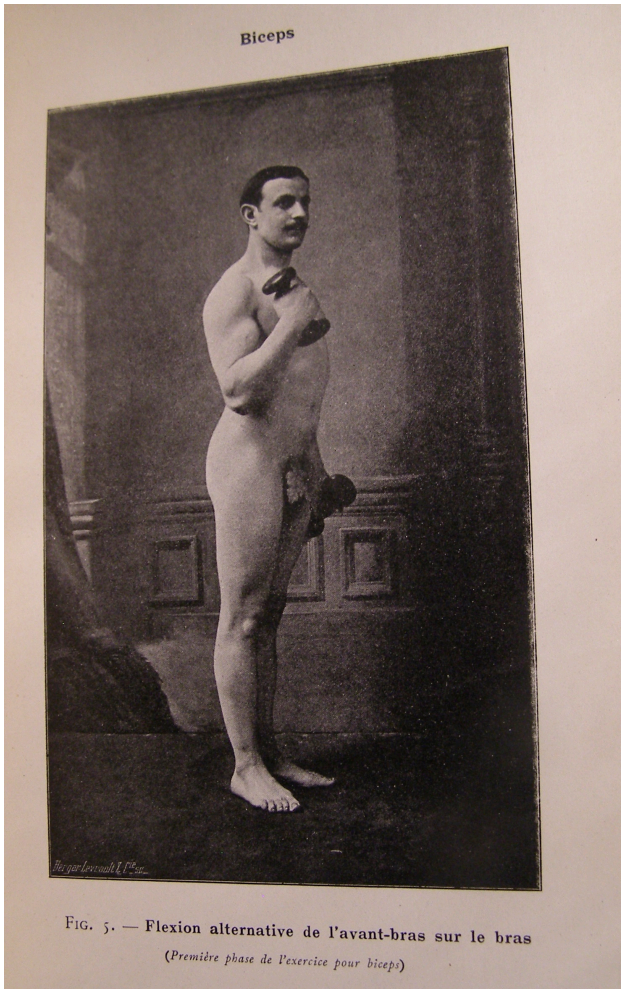


Fig. 5. — **Flexion alternative de l'avant-bras sur le bras**
(*Première phase de l'exercice pour biceps*)

Figure Nine

Tennis, however, proved a complicated case. Some critics called into question the very masculinity of its players. *La Culture physique*—arbiter of all things sportive—concluded a 1909 article by suggesting that "tennis is a sport—from the feminine perspective—and an effeminate diversion—from the masculine."[42] In his monograph *Les sports à la mode*, Camille Meillac reminded his readers of tennis's original purpose: "to amuse women."[43] And even someone such as the Comtesse de Tramar, who figured in our first chapter, numbered tennis among the handful of acceptable sports for her fledgling ladies.[44] Tennis was one of the most "elegant" athletic activities available to men and women alike.[45]

The peculiar status of tennis at this moment helps explain the seemingly arbitrary caprices of *Jeux*. While scholars have from time to time noted the ballet's complex gender matrix, rarely have they paid sustained attention to the way its sportive context might

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[42] "C'est peut-être pour prouver tout simplement que le tennis est un sport—au point de vue féminin,—et un divertissement efféminé—au point de vue masculin." *La Culture physique*, July 15, 1909.
[43] "Le tennis a été inventé dans le but de distraire des dames." Camille Meillac, *Les sports à la mode* (Paris: P. Paclot, 1909), 25.
[44] "Les jeux de plein air, le lawn-tennis, le polo, à présent le tir à l'arc, sont autant d'exercices qui demandent de la grâce, de l'adresse." Comtesse de Tramar, *Usages mondains: guide de savoir-vivre moderne dans toutes les circonstances de la vie* (Paris: Victor-Havard, 1901), 294.
[45] George Rozet, *L'Avènement du sport féminin* (S.I., 1919), 1565.

illuminate such issues. *Faune*'s choreography was seen to corrupt—aesthetically as well as morally—the extant and beloved music. In the case of *Jeux*, both expressive registers were conceived in tandem. As the cited reviews suggest, *Jeux*'s bewildering and alarming choreography eclipsed any substantive discussions of the music until its concert performance the following year. The ballet's gestures astonished critics and audiences alike—nothing less than one would expect from a Diaghilev production—but they also invoked contemporary debates about masculinity. That is one of the reasons why any discussion of the music was postponed until the year after its staged premiere, and why a thorough acknowledgement of its timeliness and modernity was delayed until midcentury.

Two moments from *Jeux* will especially reward detailed consideration: the opening sequence and the climax of the work.[46] An examination of these two choreographic moments will help to expose the ways in which Nijinsky's gestures served to complicate facile conceptions of masculinity (and, correspondingly, of femininity). The ballet opens with fittingly ambiguous sonorities—short chromatic meanderings around sustained Bs—which soon give way to atmospheric strings and fleetingly melodic winds. A short *scherzando* section follows, featuring impish figurations made slightly more menacing by the use of percussion. After a brief recollection of the opening harmonies, the curtain lifts to reveal an empty, twilit park; the music once again flits by, only presenting a *sforzando* arrival with the bounce of a tennis ball across the stage. A young man gripping a racquet follows, leaping lithely while loosely imitating the motion of a tennis service [Figure 10].



Figure Ten

He is gone as quickly as the ball, and we are left once again to contemplate the empty park. Soon, from opposite sides of the stage, two young women enter. Mirror images, they slowly

[46] For this discussion of *Jeux*'s gestures, I will draw upon a variety of sources: notations in the score, extant images (such as maquettes and photographs), textual accounts (in periodicals and memoirs), and finally, Millicent Hodson's reconstruction of the ballet. This last source, of course, animates difficult questions as to what constitutes a reconstruction as such, questions that I raise in the introduction to this dissertation, and will return to at its conclusion.

glide toward one another with tiny *pas de bourrée*. As Nijinska recalled in her memoirs, describing a rehearsal for *Jeux* before she was replaced, "[o]ur bodies faced the audience, but our hands remained facing each other; both arms were bent up in a half-circle, to one side, with the fingers lightly clenched and the wrists bent."[47] Nijinska here seems to be describing the arm position in an often reproduced photograph from the production, in which Schollar poses in a stylized bicep flexion [Figures 11 & 12].


Figure Eleven


Figure Twelve

Even in these first few minutes of *Jeux*, games have begun, in music and gesture alike. Debussy, for his part, has subverted listener expectations by postponing any sort of thematic presentation—so unlike *Faune*'s spotlit, unaccompanied flute melody—and, when such a presentation does finally occur, it does not accompany anything similarly fluid, but rather the marionette-like movements of Karsavina and Schollar. Their likely use of *pointe* or at least *demi-pointe*—the feminine balletic technique *par excellence*—contradicts the implied virility of their bicep curls.

Nijinsky's own entrance as the young man presents complementary gender ambiguities. Unlike *Faune*, which opens to his sensuous idling, with fruits and flute as voluptuous diversions, *Jeux*'s curtain does not rise on its star. Instead, he dashes across the stage, leaping more and farther in those few seconds than in the entire length of *Faune* (in which his animalistic pawing given flight toward the end of the work is its only *jeté*). To be sure, this sudden display of virtuosity sets *Jeux* apart from its predecessor, but these aerial maneuvers only dimly reflect Nijinsky's original plans for the *jeune homme*'s choreography. He had hoped to dance portions of the work *en pointe* himself, and thus appropriate the ballerina's signature and inviolate technique. As Diaghilev informed Debussy in a letter:

> As regards the style—of the ballet—Nijinsky says that he mainly envisions "the dance"—scherzo, waltz—as lots of *pointe* work for all <u>three</u>. This is top secret because until now, no man has ever danced *en pointe* before. He would be the first, and I think it will be very elegant. He sees the dance as a whole, from beginning to end, as with *Spectre de la rose*. He says he is trying to preserve a uniform style for all three dancers, in order to make them as nearly

[47] Irina Nijinska and Jean Rawlinson, eds., *Bronislava Nijinska: Early Memoirs* (NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981), 445.

> identical as possible. This is the general style, and as you can see, it has nothing in common with the ideas he expressed in *Faune*.[48]

Though Nijinsky ultimately discarded that plan, the idea testifies to a vision of *Jeux* as a ballet that, despite its sportive topic, explored the liminal aspects of gender representation, for which the *topos* of tennis provided a particularly fertile backdrop. Between the pallid *intellectuel* and the strapping *garconne* lay *Jeux*'s complex personages. The ballet traded in sexual ambiguities to match the harmonic indeterminacy of the score.

Heralded by a recapitulation of *Jeux*'s main lyrical theme, here scored for lush brass and dark cellos, the ballet's climactic section shows the three characters reconciled and at last united. They dance in various geometric configurations—no doubt the source of observations (and, often, complaints) that the ballet was *cubiste* in choreographic style—culminating in the famous fountain pose [Figures 13 & 14].[49]



Figure Thirteen



Figure Fourteen

On the way to this moment, the three dance together with increasing abandon, though their ecstatic frenzy is quickly transformed into choreographed catastrophe. Nijinsky tosses Schollar into the air, but leaves her to land on her own. As Nijinska detailed in her memoirs, she was here being taught "to use all my strength to come down as lightly by myself as I would with a partner's support, and not like a bundle. […] Vaslav was using an entirely different technique of support of the ballerina than was used in the old Petipa ballets. In these practice sessions with Vaslav, I discovered a new choreographic world."[50] She continues:

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[48] Quoted in Sjeng Scheijen, *Diaghilev* (London: GBR, 2010), 261.

[49] Indeed, that characterization lingered so long in the minds of critics such as Gaston Carraud, who as late as 1919 wrote the following lines indicting *Jeux*: "Que ne nous a-t-on plutôt tendu, en fait de ballet, *Jeux*, qui est l'un des meilleurs ouvrages de la dernière manière de Debussy. Les cubisteries ridicules de M. Nijinski l'avaient tant compromis, hélas! qu'on l'oublie…même au concert, bien qu'il ait été réellement conçu pour être dansé." *Le Ménestrel*, December 19, 1919.

[50] Nijinska and Rawlinson, *Bronislava Nijinska*, 443.

> Dancing with ballerinas like Pavlova, Karsavina, and Kshessinska, Vaslav was an attentive partner…he did not experiment with them. But dancing with me he would say, "Bronia, you are my sister and must dance differently from them. I am not a *porteur*. I dance too. You must stand on toe by yourself and not rely on me. You must turn alone in your *pirouettes* without my assistance. You must jump high and then come down softly. I can only be in harmony with you and reflect your dance. Even if the *pas de deux* is mounted in such a way that the sole purpose of the male dancer is to be a supporter or *porteur*, we must dance these *pas de deux* differently. We must conceal all the supports so that the *pas de deux* will be an artistic choreographic art form and not, as it is now, an acrobatic circus act."[51]

These lines demonstrate the radical reformation of conventional balletic stereotypes Nijinsky had in mind for his own choreographic vision. By neglecting one of the most basic functions of the male dancer, he recast his role, and that of the romantic partner. *Jeux*'s airborne *jeune fille* is summarily left to her own devices, and once descended, finally rejoins her partners to create the iconic fountain and (in)famous triple kiss. Leading up to this figuration, the music has risen to a sonic tizzy, culminating in Debussy's indication *violent*, the only such marking in all of his music. At the moment of the fountain pose, bodies and sound finally arrive. The preceding ferocity dissipates, and the dancers interleave their limbs so as to appear one lithe organism, in which bodies and identities, in a manner foreshadowed throughout the ballet, melt visually into one another. The consummation of the trio's liaisons suggests sexual gratification, but more than that, it proposes a gender matrix that challenges stereotypes of *belle époque* masculinity's bulging biceps and prurient prowess.

* * *

In contrast to his initial bristling at *Jeux*'s premiere, Vuillermoz rhapsodized about the postwar production mounted by Rolf de Maré's splashy Ballets Suédois, with a new choreography by Jean Borlin. Henry Prunières dedicated an entire issue of the freshly minted *Revue musicale* to Debussy. In his contribution, Vuillermoz chose to revisit *Jeux* as now revived by this upstart competitor to Diaghilev's troupe:

> [W]hat grace, what elegance and inexhaustible linear riches these sportive gestures have brought to us. It is to these new gestural harmonies, this strict and precise beauty of sports costumes that Debussy's score intended to pay homage. Supple, and ever ready with instant tensions, this music is of an inconceivable dexterity. It is as lively as the players it describes. It changes tempo and nuance every two measures. It relinquishes a structure, a timbre, an impulse, in order to race in another direction. The melody is recapitulated through a clever "reversal": the theme, skillfully restated, is launched on a volley or a half-volley, clearly blocked or veering like a "curve ball"…This is not the description of a game of tennis, but an intuitive translation of its agile and fleet technique.[52]

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[51] Nijinska and Rawlinson, *Bronislava Nijinska*, 442-43.

[52] "Et pourtant, que de grâce forte, de ferme élégance et de richesses linéaires inépuisables nous ont apportées les gestes sportifs! C'est à ces harmonies plastiques nouvelles, c'est à la beauté stricte et précise des costumes même du sport que la partition de Debussy se proposait de rendre hommage. Souple, toujours prête aux voltes instantanées, cette musique est d'une inconcevable prestesse. Elle est en éveil comme les joueurs qu'elle décrit. Elle change de mouvement et de nuances toutes les deux mesures. Elle abandonne un dessin, un timbre, un

Unlike the perceived prewar betrayal, this performance delivered such a profound symbiosis that musical movement and physical gesture seemed to echo each other in their nimbleness. Others agreed. The new production aroused "immense joy" in *La Revue hebdomadaire*'s Maurice Bex. Borlin "has realized a deliberately simple choreography, free from any heaviness, which does not spoil the music and even assists with the understanding of it, as this music is not the clearest ever written."[53] Pierre Scize also admired the coherence of the production—notable praise after the multiple excoriations following *Jeux*'s premiere.

As these reviews suggest, a characteristic coolness ruled *Jeux*'s postwar revival. Whether it was Borlin's elegant choreography, Pierre Bonnard's understated sets, or the clean lines of Jeanne Lanvin's costumes, this incarnation of the ballet went down smoothly with audiences and critics alike. Certainly its aesthetic synergy contrasted with the collaborative asymmetry of 1913. In discussing tennis and masculinity at the end of the *belle époque*, I hope to have demonstrated that the mixed-media discontents of the ballet were but one factor in its complicated reception. I suggest that *Jeux*'s fraught premiere, in contrast to its performance by the Ballets Suédois, reflected existing cultural anxieties about intellectualism versus athleticism. Borlin's choreography adhered to classical conventions, which the dancers executed precisely. Fred Orthys' review in *Le Matin* was typical. Jenny Hasselquist, Carina Ari, and Borlin himself "lead a troupe of perfectly disciplined dancers, presented the highest degree of perfection the art of choreography can attain."[54] Paul Bertrand recalled the earlier version (though he cited the wrong year) in his commentary for *Le Ménestrel*: "Claude Debussy's *Jeux* helps the cubist agenda, as well as that of futurism, even as Nijinsky himself envisioned them at the same theater in 1912. M. Jean Borlin has given us, in Bonnard's limpid décor, a new, subdued version, though no less seminal; a series of flirtations that take place during a game of tennis. We have gladly rediscovered this supple music's powers of seduction, of these subtle harmonies combined by a sorcerer without equal."[55] The critic for *Le Petit Parisien* went so far as to laud its wholesomeness: "This production speaks not only to lovers of grand artistic spectacles, but also to a public looking for theatrical amusement as well as to families seeking a salubrious and honest performance, so rarely on offer."[56] One of the few to dissent was Adolphe Jullien, who offered the following critique in the *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*: "…finally the new choreography created for Debussy's refined score, *Jeux*, originally abused by M. Nijinsky, is not so very worthwhile, nor is it performed by Mlles Jenny Hasselquist and Carina Ari any

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élan, pour se précipiter dans une autre direction. La mélodie est reprise ensuite par un habile 'revers': le thème, adroitement ressaisi, est lancé à la volée ou à la demi-volée, bloqué net ou virant comme une 'balle coupée'… Ce n'est pas la description d'une partie de tennis, mais c'est une transposition instinctive de sa technique agile et remuante." *La Revue musicale*, December 01, 1920.

[53] "Il a réalisé une chorégraphie volontairement simple, exempte de lourdeur, qui ne nuit pas à la musique et aiderait même à la faire comprendre si cette musique n'était la plus limpide qui fut jamais écrite." *La Revue hebdomadaire*, November 20, 1920.

[54] "Trois grands artistes: M. Jean Borlin, Mlles Jenny Hasselquist et Carina Ari, à la tête d'une troupe de danseurs et de danseuses parfaitement disciplinée, montrent jusqu'à quel dégré la perfection dans l'art chorégraphique peut être atteinte." *Le Matin*, October 25, 1920.

[55] "*Jeux*, de Claude Debussy, servit de thème à l'adaptation cubiste, futuriste même, qu'imagina Nijinsky, au même théâtre, en 1912. M. Jean Borlin nous en donne, dans un clair décor de Bonnard, une nouvelle version très assagie, sinon plus significative: un double flirt, au cours d'une partie de tennis anglais. Avec quelle satisfaction nous avons retrouvé toute la puissance de séduction de cette musique fluide, de ces subtiles harmonies dosées par un magicien sans pareil!" *Le Ménestrel*, October 29, 1920.

[56] "Ce spectacle s'adresse non seulement aux amateurs de grandes manifestations d'art, mais aussi à un public qui cherche dans le théâtre une distraction et aux familles auxquelles on offre malheureusement trop rarement des spectacles d'une saine honnêté." *Le Petit Parisien*, October 29, 1920.

better than Nijinsky and Mlles Karsavina and Schollar earlier."[57] For better or worse, the new choreography refused the overt references to sporting life—those bicep flexions by *les jeunes filles*—that Nijinsky had demanded.

Borlin's 1920 *Jeux* therefore offered resolution to the expressive tensions of Nijinsky and Debussy's effort. It used the tennis court as an ominous backdrop for flirtatious volleys—as originally expected by many, perhaps including the composer. Mind and body reached a truce, the dancing body no longer undermining the score's multifarious complexities. The way Darmstadt composers revered *Jeux*'s refusal of expected formal constraints, as well as the more recent devotion to the musical over the danced aspects of the work on the part of musicologists, are the products of that uneasy peace.

In *Jeux*'s protean afterlife, the period between the Ballets Suédois's production and its awed resurrection by the Darmstadt School was one of general dormancy. Within the same commemorative issue of *Revue musicale*, Louis Laloy published a panegyric hailing the composer's staged works, in which he already suggested that *Jeux* was "charming, but strictly speaking, resembles a symphonic poem more than a ballet."[58] Celebrity members of Darmstadt's serialist coterie—Stockhausen, Eimert, and of course, Boulez—would endorse this evaluation decades later. *Jeux* received its Darmstadt premiere (minus any dancing) on 14 July 1956. Analyses of varying impenetrability followed. Stockhausen's initial consideration of the work had already been published two years earlier. Titled "Von Webern zu Debussy: Bermerkungen zur statistischen Form," the essay elaborates his theory of "statistical form" through an analysis of *Jeux*'s "groups" (bounded by parameters such as dynamics, timbre, and pitch, among others).[59] Eimert's was published some years later, in the fifth volume of *Die Reihe*. Though he tried, albeit gently, to shoehorn the score into a rondo form, he reached the following conclusion:

> When a form cannot be made to fit into accepted ideas it resists classification. Either it is not recognised as form, or else it is regarded, because of its deviations, as a new form […] *Jeux*, unamenable to traditional form despite its slight similarity to a rondo, constantly juxtaposes new themes, motives, and arabesques. Incidentally, mere addition does not produce form—except perhaps a potpourri.[60]

As Jennifer Iverson notes, Eimert was quick to assure readers that *Jeux*'s eschewal of easily apprehensible form did not indicate a lack of coherence in the score. Instead, "he focuses above all on the interconnectedness of the thematic material, so that *Jeux* ultimately exhibits

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[57] "[…] enfin les nouveaux gestes ou mouvements qu'il a adaptés à la subtile partition de Debussy, *Jeux*, maltraitée originairement par M. Nijinsky, ne valent pas grand [*sic*] chose et ne l'ont pas mieux servie, exécutés par lui-même et ses camarades Mlles Jenny Hasselquist et Carina Ari, qu'elle n'avait été défendue autrefois par M. Nijinsky et Mlles Karsavina et Schollar. Mais attendons la suite… Que ces quelques reserves ne soient pas cependant pour décourager—autrement j'en serais désolé—ce jeune danseur élégant et gracieux qui voudrait se faire apprécier de nous sous toutes ses faces, à l'exemple d'un Miassine [*sic*] ou d'un Nijinsky." *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, November 07, 1920.

[58] ""Il a encore donné à la scène deux ballets: l'un, dont le titre est *Khamma*, date de 1912 et appartient à une danseuse anglaise, qui ne l'a jamais dansé; l'autre est le ballet de *Jeux*, écrit sur un scénario de M. Nijinski et représenté pour la première fois au théâtre des Champs-Elysées le 15 mai 1913." *La Revue musicale*, December 01, 1920.

[59] *Texte zur elektronischen und instrumentalen Musik* 1 (Cologne: Dumont Schauberg, 1963). See Jennifer Joy Iverson, "Historical Memory and György Ligeti's Sound-Mass Music 1958-1986" (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2009), 60.

[60] Quoted in Iverson, "Historical Memory and György Ligeti's Sound-Mass Music 1958-1986," 42.

coherence even though it is unpredictable, shifting, and 'modern.'"[61] Although she goes on to discuss Ligeti's incorporation of these analyses of *Jeux* into his contemporaneous compositional practice, she offers the general observation that "the Darmstadt composers, despite their rhetoric, relied on historical composers, forms and ideas when it was useful and convenient to do so."[62]

No one was more susceptible to this historical expediency than Boulez. In his entry on Debussy for the *Encyclopédie Fasquelle de la musique*, he meditates on *Jeux*'s relative obscurity, suggesting that after the debacle of its staged premiere, "there has been a kind of 'curse' on *Jeux* and it was rarely played until it was noticed, quite recently, that it is one of Debussy's most remarkable works."[63] For Boulez, Debussy's modernism as embodied in this late orchestral score validated his own creative efforts. Chief among the musical characteristics now esteemed was a balance between innovative formal deviance and rigorous musical unity. Put another way, Boulez aimed to identify his compatriot as an aesthetic progenitor for his own modernism, thereby supplying his seemingly radical compositions with a secure and storied genealogy. After a brief mention of Nijinsky's "unsatisfactory" choreography, he offered the following description of the music:

> Now, far from being feebly fragmented, the structure is rich in invention and shimmeringly complex, and introduces a highly ductile way of thinking based on the notion of irreversible time; in order to *hear* it, one's sole recourse is to submit to its development, since the constant evolution of thematic ideas rules out any question of architectural symmetry (in music, the memory of aural points of reference plays to some extent the same role as the field of vision in the understanding of perspective). *Jeux* marks the arrival of a musical form which, since it involves *instantaneous* self-renewal, implies a way of listening that is no less *instantaneous*. […] Even though the language may be, morphologically, less "advanced" than that used by the generation which immediately followed Debussy, *Jeux* is none the less a major event in the history of modernism.[64]

Like Stockhausen and Eimert, Boulez here emphasized *Jeux*'s inscrutability. That inscrutability demanded submission to a kind of faith-based listening: coherence existed, though the musical mechanisms by which it was achieved remained aurally elusive. While Boulez's Darmstadt colleagues analyzed *Jeux* for more abstract purposes—to promote their aesthetic agenda—he himself invoked Debussy more personally even, as self-justification. All three of them, however, perpetuate, indeed reinforce, the registral split perceptible after the ballet's first performance. At that moment, the musical intricacies of the score were not merely in tension with the stylized athleticism of the choreography, they echoed contemporaneous anxieties about physical versus intellectual culture. Working in a very different time and place, Stockhausen, Eimert, and Boulez nevertheless continued that penchant for immateriality in their own analyses.

Current musicology—to judge by scholarship from the last thirty years or so—has cultivated a similarly lopsided relationship with *Jeux*. If the Darmstadt generation sheared the ballet of its choreography, musicologists in the decades since have done little to repair, or indeed even to address, this state of affairs. Laurence Berman inadvertently explicates the

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[61] Iverson, "Historical Memory and György Ligeti's Sound-Mass Music 1958-1986," 47.
[62] Iverson, "Historical Memory and György Ligeti's Sound-Mass Music 1958-1986," 77.
[63] Reprinted in *Stocktakings from an Apprenticeship* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1991), 274.
[64] Boulez, *Stocktakings from an Apprenticeship*, 274-75.

epigraph above this chapter in his article, "Debussy's Summer Rites." *Jeux*, he argues, in actual fact constitutes a more appropriate partner for Mallarmé's poem than *Faune*. "If there is any consolation to the ephemeral nature of our existence," he writes, "it will be found in the idea of recurrence. For us, the experience may be over and done with. But in the sense that the essentials of it will recur through another set of circumstances and another set of protagonists who succeed us, the experience will have been renewed and perpetuated."[65] Debussy's reliance on thematic recollection rather than abstract, established formal structures connects *Jeux* forcefully to the inchoate assemblages of Mallarmé's poem.

Later articles, such as those by Robert Orledge and Jann Pasler, similarly ignore choreography. Orledge does not so much neglect the danced dimension of the work as shift focus to the musical inception and evolution of the score. Such a study is facilitated by "the completeness of the manuscript record of its genesis left by the usually secretive Debussy."[66] Pasler's heavy analysis examines the music's reliance on temporal structures. At the opening, she, like Berman, presents a *précis* of *Jeux*'s early life as a ballet. Unlike Berman and Orledge, she yokes her musical dissection to specific moments in the scenario, noting, for example, that in the middle section of *Jeux*, "Debussy composes a different quality of sound and time to correspond with each character."[67] But she never connects the scenario to the actual danced gesture. I cite these scholars not to cast aspersions, but to suggest that the misunderstandings that have plagued *Jeux* from the time of its premiere (and perhaps even during its preparation) continue to the present day.

So what are the consequences, if any, of *Jeux*'s continued rarefaction? Its absence from contemporary ballet stages is the most obvious one, thereby reducing Nijinsky's already sparse choreographic output by fully one-quarter. Even on the occasion of its centenary last year, *Jeux* ceded way to *Le Sacre* in both discourse and performance.[68] Such benign neglect slenderizes the repertory, yes, but it also tacitly ratifies the austere methodology deployed in most current scholarship—an issue the next and final chapter of this dissertation will seek to alleviate.

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[65] Laurence Berman, "*Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* and *Jeux*: Debussy's Summer Rites," *19th-Century Music* 3, N3 (1980): 237.

[66] Robert Orledge, "The Genesis of Debussy's 'Jeux,'" *The Musical Times* 128, N1728 (1987): 68.

[67] Jann Pasler, "Debussy's 'Jeux': Playing with Time and Form," *19th-Century Music* 6, N1 (1982): 64.

[68] In his article for *The New York Times*, Anthony Tommasini suggests that Debussy's is actually the more radical of the two ballets, citing the slim performance history of *Jeux* compared to *Le Sacre*, even in concert rather than staged format. "It says something about the relative radicalism of Debussy's 'Jeux' and Stravinsky's 'Rite' that musicians long ago mastered the challenges of the 'Rite,'" he argues, "which conservatory orchestras can play fairly comfortably today […], whereas 'Jeux,' a conductor's nightmare, is not played that often." "Shocking or Subtle, Still Radical," September 18, 2012.

4. Fauré, Debussy, and *Les Bébés* in Toyland

"A nation's best defense is the chest of its children."
—Albert Surier (1910)

Its musicological legacy notwithstanding, *Jeux* was not only Debussy's last great orchestral score, but in fact his final staged work. Other projects, such as *Khamma*, *No-ja-li*, and *La Boîte à joujoux*, failed to reach full production within the composer's lifetime. The mythologies of these three ballets combined has occupied less space in scholarship than either *Faune* or *Jeux* individually. This state of affairs is due in part to the fragmentary ephemera that constitute their material histories. Likewise, Fauré's *Dolly* has hardly mobilized even passing critical interest.[1] How is one to write about works of skimpy documentation, whose most stable artifact is the bare musical score?

In a recent article tracing the premiere and ensuing productions of *La Boîte*, Simon Morrison proposes:

> [T]he early history of *The Toy Box*, from forgotten performances to fragmentary sources, attests to the fundamental instabilities of ballet, its erasure through time and continuing possibility for reinvention. That erasure should not be overinterpreted in this instance as a metaphor for the passing of childhood. […] To engage in the exercise of reconstruction would be to miss the point of a ballet that embraces the imagined over the real and, paradoxically, the permanence of the ephemeral.[2]

Morrison here shifts his attention from the "fundamental instabilities" of ballets in general to the elusiveness of *La Boîte* in particular. Nearly a decade earlier, he had characterized Ravel's *Daphnis* in similar terms, describing the composer's score as "a meditation on the historical fragility of ballet, specifically the erasure through time of its visual facet," and continuing: "In this conception, paradoxically, the first performance of *Daphnis et Chloé* was already the performance of a lost work."[3] Gesture's evanescence should not come as a surprise. That transience does, however, pose important questions for us who write about staged works (and while I focus here on danced works, these problems exist for any production that includes a gestural component). For that reason, I will discuss *La Boîte* and *Dolly*—two particularly ephemeral instances—as a methodological case study, in which to consider not only relevant frameworks, but also the process of writing about always already "lost" works.

As before, I will look for contexts in wider culture that illuminate *Dolly*'s and *La Boîte*'s preoccupations. In this case, those sources will include contemporary theories about toys and play, Dalcrozean and calisthenic regimens, and shifting conceptions of childhood in France at the close of the *belle époque*. The first section of the chapter on *Jeux* quoted Apollinaire's editorial for *La Culture physique*, in which he expressed his hopes for dance's future in French society. Dance, for Apollinaire, was important both from a military and from an educational point of view. Here again is his contention:

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[1] In his excellent *Fauré and French Musical Aesthetics*, for example, Carlo Caballero mentions the work in its original four-hands format, and then only to place it in the context of scores to which the composer gave personal and evocative titles.

[2] Simon Morrison, "Debussy's Toy Stories," *JAMS* 30, N3 (2013): 454-55.

[3] Simon Morrison, "The Origins of *Daphnis et* Chloé," *19th-Century Music* 28, N1 (2004): 74.

> In the future, dance should be considered a complement to education; may the government regard it as a useful sport, an element in the health of the body and spirit, and inscribe it into the curricula of young boys and girls. Let it not, however, be made one of the many subjects whose mastery is enforced by exams and competitions.[4]

His article ended with a vision of dance's bright future: "Let it remain what it is and should be: a healthful exercise, an entertaining gymnastic, an artistic sport, moral and joyous."[5] *Dolly* and *La Boîte*'s children certainly exercised while entertaining, all with much artistry on display. Morality and, more importantly, joy were another story.

Fauré has, until now, been conspicuously absent from this dissertation. Given his beneficent presence in French musical life of the period, such an omission may at first appear a clumsy oversight. However, those familiar with his catalogue will know that he never created music for express choreographic purposes. Diaghilev, no fool, requested a score from Fauré in 1909, the same year he made overtures to Debussy and Ravel.[6] Unlike Ravel, who crafted *Daphnis*, and Debussy, whose originally proposed *Masques et Bergamasques* gave way to Ballets Russes productions of *Faune* and *Jeux*, Fauré politely declined the commission. It was a sensible decision. He had recently ascended to direct the Conservatoire, and continued his review work for *Le Figaro* while also taking on new compositional projects such as the ill-starred *Pénélope*. With the exception of that opera and the earlier *Prométhée*, Fauré left the genre of staged works largely uncultivated.

Even *Dolly* came into existence as a four-hands suite for Hélène Bardac, daughter of the composer's then-mistress.[7] A collection of refined miniatures, the work has six movements: "Berceuse," "Mi-a-ou," "Le jardin de Dolly," "Kitty-valse," "Tendresse," and "Le pas espagnol." Like Ravel's later *Ma Mère l'oye* (also for piano four-hands), *Dolly* was "children's music" in the purest sense: that is, music written for their listening and performance pleasure. *Ma Mère*, however, was given its premiere by actual children. Ravel composed his suite for the young son and daughter of his friends, the Godebskis, to whom he had already dedicated the *Sonatine*. Due to stage fright, which filled Mimi Godebski with "a cold terror," two substitute children played the 1910 premiere instead.[8] Alfred Cortot and Édouard Risler had given the first public performance of *Dolly* over a decade earlier. The circumstances of their premieres were not all that separated *Ma Mère* and *Dolly*. Despite a shared genre and topic, treatments differed. A Ravelian childhood was filled with enchantment, as the musical sorcery in the "Laideronnette" movement, among others, demonstrates. *Dolly* has its own whimsicality, but its fancies are rather more quotidian: pets, siblings, gardens. The furthest afield it ventures is a *pas espagnol* at the end.

With these distinctions in mind, I would like to suggest that *Dolly* and *La Boîte* participated in a curious and significant exteriorization of childhood at the end of the *belle époque*. Earlier music for and about children—Schumann's *Kinderscenen* being the most

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[4] "Qu'à l'avenir, la danse soit considérée comme un complément de l'éducation, que les pouvoirs publics le regardent comme un sport utile, un facteur de la santé du corps et de l'esprit, l'inscrivent dans les programmes des lycées de jeunes gens et de jeunes filles. Qu'on ne la mette cependant pas au nombre des matières dont la science est exigée dans les examens et aux concours." *La Culture physique*, February 01, 1907.

[5] "Qu'elle reste ce qu'elle est et ce qu'elle doit être: un exercice hygiénique, une gymnastique récréative, un sport artistique, moral et joyeux." *La Culture physique*, February 01, 1907.

[6] He had, as Lynn Garafola writes, immediately and astutely "taken the pulse of Parisian life." *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1989), 287.

[7] If that surname sounds familiar, it is because Emma Bardac would go on to become Debussy's second wife.

[8] Quoted in Roger Nichols, *Ravel Remembered* (London: Faber, 1987), 21.

seminal example—concerned itself with their inner lives and feelings, or at least an adult nostalgia for said lives and feelings.[9] In the historical moment I will discuss, a different kind of *enfant* was both preferred and performed. *Dolly* and *La Boîte* date from the immediate prewar period (though *Dolly* was composed much earlier, and *La Boîte* would only have its premiere in the postwar era, to be elaborated on more later). Despite their highly songful, translucent scores, the accompanying choreography depicted a more troubling and troublesome typology of childhood. A look through contemporaneous physical culture for young people, and the corporealized aesthetics of Dalcrozean theory, reveals that what these ballets staged was far from anomalous. A kind of impassivity, an expressive blankness, had replaced the child's mysterious and ingenuous interiority.

In her choreographed guise, the petite and exquisite *Dolly* had teeth. Fauré's protagonist, according to Emile Vuillermoz, possessed a gaze "brilliant with malice" and a "beautiful, reticent smile."[10] Clowns and acrobats peopled the production, charming audiences and critics alike with their shenanigans. In fact, Dolly's cunning ways and the tumbling choreography found themselves at odds with the simple, forthright score. *La Boîte* staged a familiar toyland narrative, replete with strapping heroes and delicate heroines, and even featured a violent battle scene. Like *Dolly*, it presented a gestural language quite different from other children's ballets of the time, one example being *Ma Mère*, whose choreography by Jane Hugard was far more whimsical.[11] Rather than presenting children as darlings to be delighted, then, these ballets offered a more complex—and darker—depiction of their young subjects.

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Onstage or off, children and childhood were fraught subjects in *belle époque* France. Toy culture reflected as much. Baudelaire offered a prescient meditation on the issue. His "Philosophy of Toys" posited many explanations for a child's complex relationship with playthings. The title—"Morale du joujou"—loses something in translation: *joujou* becomes toy, thereby obscuring the babyishness of the repeated syllables. Baudelaire's choice of the word *joujou*, rather than the more standard *jouet*, captures his sense of the intimacy between children and toys: his child is baffled, maddened, and eventually defeated by the toy's persistent lifelessness. "But *where is the soul*?" he writes, "It's here that bewilderment and sadness begins."[12] The toy's inertia, however, stimulates the handler's imagination, which Baudelaire characterizes as "the first initiation of a child to art."[13] In that way, then, though always inanimate, the plaything leads the child to make seminal distinctions between the real and the imagined, between everyday life and art.

Léo Claretie (who made an appearance in the first chapter) later published a more protracted anthropology of toys. Dating from the *fin de siècle*, his *Les Jouets: Histoire,*

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[9] In France, Bizet's *Jeux d'enfants* continued that tradition.

[10] "Dolly nous y invite, il faut obéir aux caprices de Dolly qui tyrannise nonchalamment son entourage et détourne si gentiment son petit visage boudeur pour qu'on n'y suprenne pas l'aveu de ses yeux brillants de malice et la confidence de son joli sourire réticent…" *Revue musicale SIM*, 1913.

[11] "Ce spectacle exquis, encadré de *Fantasio* et des *Dominos* de Couperin, et dont on a lu dans le précédent numéro le compte-rendu autorisé, cette féerie réglée par Mme Hugard et dans un décor stylisé de Drésa, avait attiré de nombreux Amis vers le coquet Théâtre des Arts, les seul peut-être de Paris, où l'on ose chercher des voies nouvelles." *Revue musicale SIM*, 1913.

[12] Quoted in Marina Warner, "Out of an Old Toy Chest," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 43, N2 (2009): 4.

[13] Quoted in Warner, "Out of an Old Toy Chest," 4.

Fabrication consisted of numerous compact chapters that considered such topics as the relationship between playthings and science, geography, prison, luxury, religion, and war, to name but a smattering. The Franco-Prussian War of 1870, for example, influenced the industry by impelling a proliferation of miniature "rifles, guns, swords, kepi, military uniforms" in its wake [Figure 1].[14]



Figure One

Like Baudelaire, Claretie also offered a "Philosophy of Toys" to close his monograph. He acknowledged their cultural importance, exclaiming (in Latin) "from trifles spring truths!" He continued:

> Their story is that of humanity; their individual or social influence is of great significance; their manufacture provides a career for the ingenuity of inventors, the genius of scholars, the living of many others; in this combination of interests, of business, of labors, in the hum of workshops and the intense activity of factories, Toys appear to be the sole symbol of joy and charity, shedding on the world, in a twofold aspect, the double benefit of

[14] "Le contre-coup de la guerre de 1870 s'est fait sentir dans l'industrie du jouet par une énorme fabrication de fusils, canons, sabres, képis, panoplies militaires." Léo Claretie, *Les Jouets: Histoire, fabrication* (Paris: s.n, s.d.), 286.

> life and gaiety, creating livelihood for some and laughter for others, bringing a morsel of bread in a joyful flash, realizing the perfect union of pleasure and utility through their noble and complex function of nourishing the humble and enlivening the young.[15]

The winding syntax of this epic sentence conveys a simple point, one that Debussy's collaborator André Hellé would echo pithily in his preface to *La Boîte*'s scenario: toy boxes are "actually like towns where toys live like people. Or perhaps towns are only just toy boxes where people live like toys" [Figure 2].[16] Toys and people thus engage in an unexpectedly reciprocal commerce.



Figure Two

About four years after the publication of *Les Jouets*, Claretie provided a preface for the newly launched, but ultimately short-lived, *Annuaire officiel des jouets & jeux des bazars*. The piece clarified his philosophical perspective on the topic, and also gave it a more strongly gendered inflection. A doll was "a being, a person."[17] As such, it animated maternal sentiments in its young guardian. Claretie gave over the final phrases of his preface to Victor Hugo, who blurred the already precarious distinction between the imagined and real when he wrote: "a woman's first child is the continuation of her last doll."[18] This sharpening of a

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[15] "*Ex nugis seria*! […] Leur histoire est celle de l'humanité; leur influence individuelle ou sociale est d'une haute portée; leur fabrication donne carrière à toute l'ingéniosité des inventeurs, au génie des savants, fait vivre des milliers d'êtres; dans la mêlée des intérêts, des affaires, des labeurs, dans la bruissement des ateliers et l'activité fiévreuse des cités ouvrières, les Jouets apparaît comme l'unique symbole de joie et de charité, versant sur le monde, en un double courant, le double bienfait de vie et de gaité, faisant vivre les uns et rire les autres, apportant un morceau de pain dans un éclair joyeux, réalisant l'union idéale du plaisir et de l'utilité dans sa noble et complexe fonction de nourrir les humbles et d'égayer les petits." Claretie, *Les Jouets*, 324.

[16] "Les Boîtes à joujoux sont en effet des sortes de villes dans lesquelles les jouets vivent comme des personnes. Ou bien les villes ne sont peut-être que des boîtes à joujoux dans lesquelles les personnes vivent comme des jouets." *La Boîte à joujoux: ballet pour enfants* (Paris: Durand, 1913).

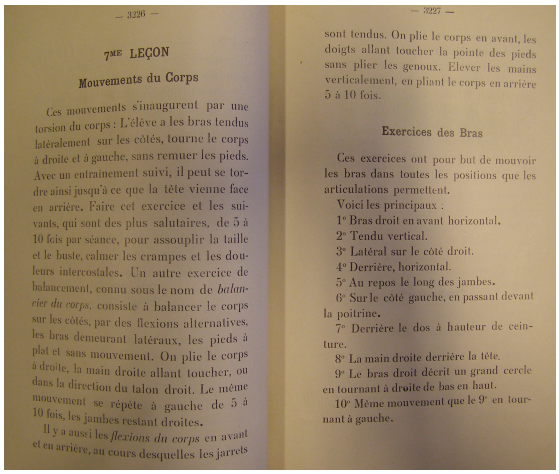
[17] "La poupée est un être, une personne, qui occupe une grande place dans l'existence de l'enfant, et qui éveille chez la petite fille les premiers sentiments d'amour maternel, comme les premières impressions, qu'elle n'oubliera pas." Léo Claretie, Preface to *Annuaire officiel des jouets & jeux des bazars* (Paris: A. Clavel, 1897), 9.

[18] "Le grand poète qui pratiqua de façon si tendre l'art d'être grand père, Victor Hugo, ne s'y était pas trompé, quand il écrivait: 'Se figurer que quelque chose est quelqu'un, tout l'avenir de la femme est là. Tout en rêvant et tout en jouant, tout en faisant de petits trousseaux et de petites layettes, tout en cousant de petites brassières, l'enfant devient jeune fille, la jeune fille devient grande fille, la grande fille devient femme: le premier enfant continuera la dernière poupée.'" Claretie, *Annuaire officiel des jouets*, 9.

sentiment already expressed in *Les Jouets* seems to call into question the way French children were themselves perceived, by their parents and by contemporary social commentators. Were they, too, regarded as impassive beings to be brought to life by their older, wiser handlers?

The appropriate affect and demeanor of children were, by the close of the *belle époque*, matters of national importance. Those concerns were grounded in the question of a young person's bodily health. The issue of pronatalism arose in the first chapter of this dissertation, though there it appeared in order to demonstrate the exhaustive strictures of appropriate femininity available to modern French women. Children themselves were tangential to that discussion. Here, however, the actual fruits of the pronatalist movement take center stage. In *La Protection d'Enfance*, Odette Laguerre and Ida R. Sée reminded their readers that: "[d]uring our time, in all civilized nations, the need to protect childhood is becoming one of the foremost social concerns."[19] It was both a moral and a social imperative, as children constituted "the future of the race."[20] Here Laguerre and Sée echo Surier in this chapter's epigraph, though his statement was cast in more militaristic terms. Like Surier, Laguerre and Sée deemed parents and teachers custodians of their charges' physical as well as mental development.

Once again, *La Protection* cautioned against the social current that valued the psychological over the somatic: "And in education, we no longer separate body and soul […] We view the normal development of the physical being as the first prerequisite of mental balance."[21] Apart from publications such as that of Laguerre and Sée, there existed highly prescriptive texts addressed to the physical needs of the young. Eugène Giraudet's *Mes 40 leçons de tenue et maintien* proves a salient example for this discussion, as it filled an issue of his own *Journal de la danse et du bon ton*. While targeted at students, Giraudet acknowledged the usefulness of these exercises to people of all ages [Figure 3].



— 3226 —

7ME LEÇON

Mouvements du Corps

Ces mouvements s'inaugurent par une torsion du corps : L'élève a les bras tendus latéralement sur les côtés, tourne le corps à droite et à gauche, sans remuer les pieds. Avec un entraînement suivi, il peut se tordre ainsi jusqu'à ce que la tête vienne face en arrière. Faire cet exercice et les suivants, qui sont des plus salutaires, de 5 à 10 fois par séance, pour assouplir la taille et le buste, calmer les crampes et les douleurs intercostales. Un autre exercice de balancement, connu sous le nom de *balancier du corps*, consiste à balancer le corps sur les côtés, par des flexions alternatives, les bras demeurant latéraux, les pieds à plat et sans mouvement. On plie le corps à droite, la main droite allant toucher, ou dans la direction du talon droit. Le même mouvement se répète à gauche de 5 à 10 fois, les jambes restant droites.

Il y a aussi les *flexions du corps* en avant et en arrière, au cours desquelles les jarrets

— 3227 —

sont tendus. On plie le corps en avant, les doigts allant toucher la pointe des pieds sans plier les genoux. Elever les mains verticalement, en pliant le corps en arrière 5 à 10 fois.

Exercices des Bras

Ces exercices ont pour but de mouvoir les bras dans toutes les positions que les articulations permettent.

Voici les principaux :

1° Bras droit en avant horizontal.
2° Tendu vertical.
3° Latéral sur le côté droit.
4° Derrière, horizontal.
5° Au repos le long des jambes.
6° Sur le côté gauche, en passant devant la poitrine.
7° Derrière le dos à hauteur de ceinture.
8° La main droite derrière la tête.
9° Le bras droit décrit un grand cercle en tournant à droite de bas en haut.
10° Même mouvement que le 9e en tournant à gauche.

Figure Three

[19] "A notre époque, chez tous les peuples civilisés, le souci de protéger l'enfance passe au premier rang des préoccupations sociales." Odette Laguerre and Ida R. Sée, *La Protection d'Enfance* (Lyon: Société d'Éducation & d'Action Féministes, 1906), 1.

[20] "Il n'y a pas là seulement l'indice d'une sensibilité plus affinée, plus pitoyable aux faibles, plus atteindre par le charme ingénu de l'enfant; il y a aussi compréhension plus haute du devoir social, de l'intérêt collectif, qui veulent qu'à tout prix soit assuré l'avenir de la race." Laguerre and Sée, *La Protection d'Enfance*, 1.

[21] "Et, dans l'éducation, nous ne séparons plus l'âme du corps […] nous voyons dans l'épanouissement normal de l'être physique la première condition de son équilibre mental." Laguerre and Sée, *La Protection d'Enfance*, 1.

Like other proponents of physical culture, he tethered individual wellbeing to that of the French population as a whole: in his words, fit bodies vouchsafed "the greatness of a nation."[22]

Contemporary interest in *gymnastique rythmique* and other sorts of calisthenic systems moved in step with such national values. Emile Jaques-Dalcroze was the most famed proselytizer on behalf of gestural education. His name came to stand for corporealized pedagogical practice *tout court*. In July of 1912, *Le Temps* published an article cryptically titled "Le temple du rythme." Once past a description of Attic rhythmic culture, the piece focused on Jaques-Dalcroze and his educational philosophy: "What is that severe building at Hellerau? It is a school. It is a school where they teach the art of rhythm, according to the teachings of the high priest of this new religion, M. Jaques-Dalcroze."[23] In his own essay on "Music and the Child" from the same year, Dalcroze argued for the "musicalization" of young people; that is, embedding rhythmic and therefore aural sensitivity in the body before even introducing a specific instrument such as the piano. Singing came first:

> Actually, music, like gymnastics, is primarily not a branch of learning, but a branch of education. The school, before everything else, should aim at moulding the physical and psychic personality of the child; at preparing him for life. If we postponed the study of Roman history till we had reached 20, our general development would not be affected. But to commence our gymnastic exercises and music practice at an adult age would be to lose most of the benefits they should provide. Gymnastics means health; music means harmony and joy. Each of them provides a refuge and a reaction from overwork. To make students sing daily, if only for a quarter of an hour, would be analogous to setting them every day, between each lesson even, a few physical exercises. […] They should inculcate a knowledge not of singing, but of music and how to listen to it.[24]

The distinction here between musical practice and musical engagement was at the heart of Dalcrozean philosophy. If children could develop artistic sensitivity—here a "musical instinct"—not only would they become passionate, engaged musicians throughout their lives (as opposed to passive, facile automata), but they would also help propel social progress. And, as we have seen repeatedly, that possibility was first and foremost cultivated through physical culture.

One of the most impassioned proponents of Dalcrozean theory in France was Jean d'Udine, whom we met in the introductory chapter. He founded the *Ecole Française de Rythme* in Paris to disseminate these ideas, and published a detailed commentary on the system's uses and usefulness. *Pace* Dalcroze, his most basic contention was that a sense of rhythm needed a somatic, not just an auditory, foundation. "This is because a rhythmic sense cannot be developed by music alone," he wrote, "even on the otherwise perfect musician, who has a marvelous feel for tonality and the loftiest senses. If a student lacks meter, he can never perfect it through musical means; you cannot because the feeling of sounded duration

---

[22] "Si ce travail reçoit votre approbation, vous avez le devoir de le répandre parmi vos relations, dans l'intérêt supérieur de la Patrie, car, seule, l'éducation assure la grandeur d'une nation." Eugène Giraudet, *Mes 40 leçons de tenue et maintien* (Paris: E. Giraudet, 1911), 3195.

[23] "Qu'est-ce donc que l'édifice sévère d'Hellerau? C'est une école. C'est une école où l'on enseigne l'art du rythme, d'après les principes du grand-prêtre de la religion nouvelle, M. Jaques-Dalcroze." *Le Temps*, July 11, 1912.

[24] Harold F. Rubinstein, trans., "Music and the Child," in *Rhythm, Music, and Education* (NY: G. Putnam's Sons, 1921), 108-09.

is muscular, not auditory, in origin."[25] Consequently, young pupils developed a sense of musical duration within their bodies, through the organic gestures of arms and legs, chests and heads. Even facial muscles participated. Ideally, such gestures would be tailored to the needs of each individual student, and that student would in turn be free to assign personalized gestures to his or her experience of the sonic event.

Gymnastique rythmique had a complex relationship to dance proper, both in Dalcroze's writings as well as those of his many acolytes. In the same year "Music and the Child" was written, this "high priest" also produced an authoritative essay on "How to Revive Dancing." He admonished those trained in "stage dancing," whose movements were not ratified by the coincident music. Ballet was, of course, one of the worst offenders. "In the modern ballet," Dalcroze wrote, "music and dancing are separated owing to the isolation of musical and choreographic training. This has been the case for so long that there exists very little ballet music suitable for dancing that can inspire composers with original musical ideas. There is no common group between dancers and composers for the ballet, nor any *rapport* between rhythms in time and those in space."[26] Such a sentiment was not *new*—recall Fokine's historicist lamentations about his collaboration with Ravel—but here, rather than identifying either composer or choreographer as culprit, Dalcroze suggested that the process of arts education was itself myopic and insufficient. Not only did instruction need to be personalized; it also required a purpose beyond the decorative. A dancer should strive to express something other than his or her own virtuosity through gesture.[27]

One of Dalcroze's French interpreters, Jean-Félix Bertrand, published an album for practitioners of the system, which he called "a realization in motion of musical values, a kind of *solfege* of the human body."[28] Toward the end of his introduction to the text, he also distinguished between the dancer and said sensitive practitioner: "the dancer dances for the public. The *rythmicien* dances by himself, for himself."[29] Again, the emphasis fell on individuated gestures that, though they might explore and strive for communicative nuance, satisfied an inner need. Adhering to these principles, the images that follow seem more evocative than instructive [Figure 4]. They also, notably, do not evoke ballet's effortless aerialism, suggesting instead contracted, earthbound poses.

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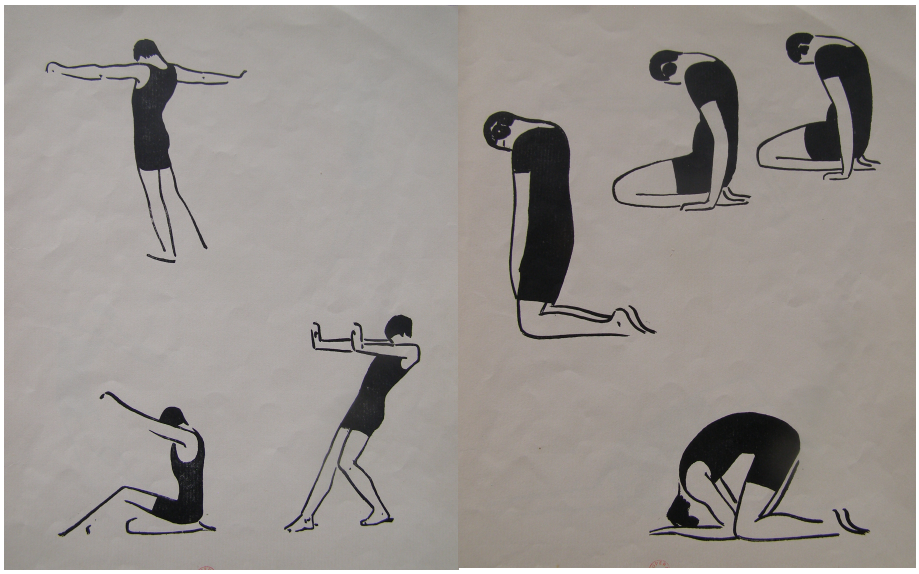
[25] "C'est qu'en effet les sens rythmique ne peut pas se développer par la musique elle-même, fût-on d'ailleurs parfait musicien, possédât-on merveilleusement le sens de la tonalité et de la hauteur des sens. Si un élève manque de mesure, on ne le perfectionne jamais par des méthodes musicales; on ne peut pas le faire, parce que le sentiment de la durée sonore est d'origine musculaire et non d'origine auditive." Jean d'Udine, *La Coordination des mouvements et la culture de la volonté* (Paris: Institut général psychologique, 1911), 2.

[26] Rubinstein, *Rhythm, Music, and Education*, 237.

[27] Rubinstein, *Rhythm, Music, and Education*, 247.

[28] "On a dit de la Méthode Dalcroze qu'elle était une réalisation plastique des valeurs musicales, une sorte de solfège du corps humain." Jean-Félix Bertrand, *Gymnastique rythmique* (Paris: A. Tolmer, ca. 1912), np.

[29] "Et voici qu'un art existe, capable d'exprimer cette émotion musicale, de l'extérioriser au moyen d'attitudes infiniment simples. Et-ce de la danse? Non, car il s'agit d'un langage intérieur, dont le spectateur devine à peine l'intensité. La danseur danse pour le public. Le rythmicien danse en lui-même, pour lui-même." Bertrand, *Gymnastique rythmique*, np.


Figure Four

Despite the rhetorical antagonism between Dalcrozean practice and conventional dancing, there were choreographers who interpolated his system of movement into their work. Indeed, as many scholars have observed, Diaghilev and Nijinsky themselves visited his institute in Hellerau. Lynn Garafola has speculated that Nijinsky encountered Dalcrozean eurythmic demonstrations as early as 1911 in St. Petersburg.[30] The dancer's most famous deployment of these principles was in the form of Marie Rambert's assistance with *Le Sacre*, though Debussy accused him of trampling *Jeux*'s score with these very same methods. Though infusions of eurythmic techniques into otherwise traditional balletic contexts would be widely disparaged by the mid-twenties, Dalcroze's system shaded many productions at both Rouché's Théâtre des Arts and the Opéra itself in the immediate prewar and postwar years.[31]

* * *

La Boîte's prehistory is *a propos* at this point.[32] Both *Ma Mère* and *Dolly* began their lives as piano works, transformed into staged works only later; *La Boîte*, like *Jeux*, was conceptualized as a ballet, though for children instead of jaded urbanites. Free from Diaghilev's charismatic megalomania by the summer of 1913, Debussy turned his attentions to a scenario by Hellé, author of such children's books as *Grosses bêtes et petites bêtes* from 1912 [Figure 5].

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[30] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 60.

[31] See Lynn Garafola, "Forgotten Interlude: Eurhythmic Dancers at the Paris Opéra," *Dance Research* 13, N1 (1995): 59-83.

[32] Though the circumstances surrounding their incubation and debut differ, it is worth registering the connections between *Petrushka* and *La Boîte*. Morrison's recent article notes that the "plot of *La Boîte à joujoux* invokes *Petrushka* in places, including the magical animation at the opening: Debussy and Hellé's conjuring phonograph recalls Stravinsky and Benois's fairground magician." He goes on to mention Robert Orledge's discussion of the musical connections between these two scores. Morrison goes further, however, suggesting that *La Boîte* invokes *L'Oiseau de feu* and *Le Sacre* as well. Morrison, "Debussy's Toy Stories," 428-429.



Figure Five

These boxy, charming illustrations prefigure the work he would do on *La Boîte*, as well as anticipate the curious inexpressivity of that ballet's characters.[33] As Roger Nichols notes, Debussy himself desired that same sense of blankness for *La Boîte*'s personages. In his correspondence with Durand, he suggested that "only marionettes will be able to convey the meaning of the text and the expression of the music," envisaging a production that utilized stringed puppets rather than real live young people. He expanded this statement in an interview with *Comoedia*'s Maurice Montabré the following year:

> You see it is simplicity itself—even childish! But how do you put it over in the theatre—its natural simplicity, I mean? The characters must retain their angular movements, their burlesque appearances as cardboard cut-outs, without which the work would become meaningless. I cannot see how this project could possibly be put on at the Opéra-Comique. But nothing is impossible, after all![34]

Debussy's real-life muse, the young Chouchou, provided the imaginative stimulus for his project. As with *Jeux*, composition went quickly. The summer saw the completion of nearly two-thirds of *La Boîte*, the happy fact of which Debussy detailed to Durand that September. He continued, "[t]he soul of a doll is more mysterious than even Maeterlinck imagines; it doesn't so easily tolerate the kind of humbug so many human souls put up with."[35] These esoteric (though characteristically cheeky) ponderings suggest a complexity of characterization Debussy finally eschewed, at least in the choreographic dimension. No ballet master was needed for the production; instead, the dancers would present "*movements* and not traditional *ballet steps*."[36] If marionettes were not available, then *La Boîte*'s young performers needed to approximate the requisite impassivity both facially as well as gesturally.

The previous year's *Ma Mère* was in expressive counterpoint to *La Boîte*. As noted above, the first incarnation of Ravel's ballet was as a four-hands suite. It was at Jacques Rouché's urging that the composer orchestrated the diminutive score, fortifying it with the addition of a *Prélude* and *Danse du rouet*, as well as various connective passages. The suggestion was a good one, and led to a synergistic effort that was the apex of Ravel's

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[33] Morrison dubs Hellé's aesthetic "studiously naïve," a look he carried over into his *Alphabet de la Grande Guerre, 1914-1916* and his collaboration with Florent Schmitt on *Une Semaine du petit elfe Ferme-l'Oeil*. Morrison, "Debussy's Toy Stories," 426.

[34] Quoted in Robert Orledge, *Debussy and the Theater* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 177.

[35] François Lesure and Roger Nichols, eds., *Debussy Letters*, (NY: Faber, 1987), 278.

[36] Lesure and Nichols, *Debussy Letters*, 289.

balletic collaborations. He detailed as much in a fulsome letter to Rouché a few days after the work's premiere:

> Your idea of mounting *Ma Mère l'Oye* enchanted me from the very beginning. For a long time, I have dreamed of writing a work for the Théâtre des Arts, which is the only theater in France today that brings us something new.
>
> However, I didn't dare hope for the total joy, so delightful to a composer, of seeing a work for the theater realized exactly as he had conceived it. The sumptuous and delicate harmony of Drésa's décor and costumes, whose theatrical logic is so fresh and personal, seem to me the most perfect commentary for my musical fantasy. Madame Hugard also proved to be an intelligent and fine collaborator, who took it upon herself to observe my tiniest instructions, and to realize them in an elegant and sensitive manner. All of my interpreters, including the children young and old, brought to their roles, large and small, an artistic integrity which delighted me and touched me profoundly.[37]

Ravel went on to lavish praise on Gabriel Grovlez, who conducted the premiere, and Rouché himself, that "artistic director whose constant concern is to respect the composer's ideas, while assisting him with the kind of intelligent advice that comes from a gentleman of taste."[38] In contrast to the richness of the ballet's collaborative process, Deborah Mawer notes that *Ma Mère* exemplifies the principle of *dépouillement*, a "removal of inessentials," so prominent in Ravel's *oeuvre*.[39] The denuded score was not, however, reflected in the accompanying choreography. Though not discussed extensively, the ballet's gestural component elicited passing adjectives such as "subtle" and "agreeable"—a far cry from the angularity and inexpressivity of *Dolly* or *La Boîte*.[40]

In his extended review of *Ma Mère*, Daniel Gregory Mason meditated on the lure of childhood as a musical topic before discussing the score proper. Composers were drawn to supposed youthful innocence as an antidote to the excessive refinement so common to current artistic practice. "It amuses him keenly to take a point of view so remote from his own," Mason hypothesized, "to set forth the primitive with all the accumulated resources of his skill, to be more subtly childlike than childhood itself, to improve on his model, as a great architect might build with his children's blocks more wonderful castles than they had ever dreamed of."[41] French composers were particularly susceptible. "It is not surprising, therefore," he continued, "that [they], committed as they are to a singularly sophisticated and in some ways artificial type of music, should relax and amuse themselves by an occasional masquerade in the nursery."[42] Debussy had already done so. Why not Ravel? Mason lumped the two compatriots together, assuming their depictions of childhood functioned as respective respites from each one's customary intricate craft. Indeed, such lumping has continued since then, and continues to occlude the qualitative differences between *Ma Mère* on the one hand, and *La Boîte* and *Dolly* on the other.

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[37] Quoted in Arbie Orenstein, ed., *A Ravel Reader* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1990), 129-30.
[38] Quoted in Orenstein, *A Ravel Reader*, 130.
[39] Deborah Mawer, *The Ballets of Maurice Ravel* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 39.
[40] "M[me] Jeanne Hugard régla habilement des danses aimables et discrètes, et, dans les décors savoureux qu'imagina M. Dresa, *Ma Mère l'Oye* constitue, en vérité, un délicieux spectacle d'une qualité artistique unanime assurément des plus rares." *Mercure de France* 96 (1912): 179.
[41] Daniel Gregory Mason, *The New Music Review* 12 (1912-13): 124.
[42] Mason, *The New Music Review*, 124.

Despite her sundry contributions to many productions during the *début de siècle*, Jeanne Hugard kept a relatively low profile. Her work on *Ma Mère* merited the most mentions both then and now, though she was a skilled dancer and teacher in her own right. *La Plume* lauded not only her choreography in that ballet, but also her performance.[43] She was given almost two full pages in Jean Reutlinger's album of contemporary female notables, alongside such figures as Bessie Abbot and Lina Cavalieri [Figure 6].



Figure Six

Little exists by way of documentation of the gestures she created for *Ma Mère*. They were finely wrought enough to prompt some commentary, but not so extraordinary as to demand protracted discussion. Ravel's own sentiments about the choreography are most telling: "I wanted everything possible to be danced. Dance is a venerable art, and never have I better understood that than through observation of Mlle Hugard's choreography. Mlle Hugon, who played the princess, herself discovered one of the most graceful interpretations of all who have danced the exquisite 'Sleeping Beauty.'"[44] These lines place Ravel's ballet and, resultantly, his depiction of childhood, in contrast to those envisioned in *La Boîte* and *Dolly*. Rather than modern and mechanistic, then, the young people in *Ma Mère* were instead unaffected and prelapsarian.

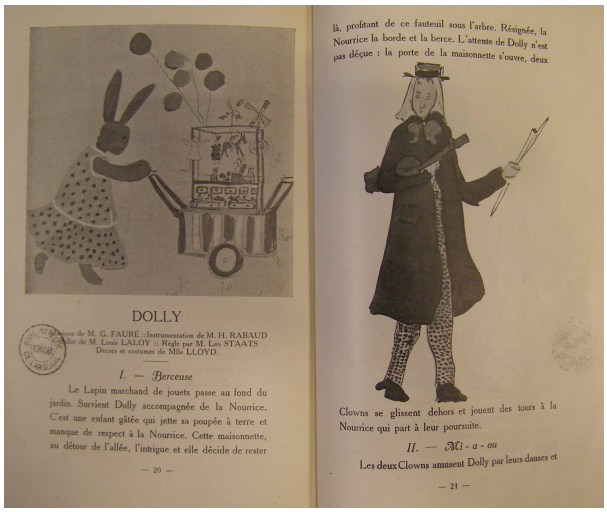
While not precisely impassive like those in *La Boîte*, the performers in *Dolly* did not conform to traditional balletic practice either. The project was the brainchild of Louis Laloy, a cosmopolitan intellectual who focused his writings on the history and criticism of music. A contributor to various Parisian periodicals (and founder of at least two), he floated, in Ravel's words, "the felicitous idea of having these short pieces [i.e., *Dolly*] illustrated for the stage."[45] Henri Rabaud, a composer in his own right, undertook the task of orchestration.[46] By January of 1913, *Dolly* had stomped onto Rouché's Théâtre des Arts stage [Figure 7].

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[43] "Mme Jeanne Hugard a réglé et dansé joliment ces chorégraphies." *La Plume*, 1912.

[44] "J'ai voulu que tout soit dansé, autant que possible. La danse est un art admirable, et jamais je ne m'en suis mieux aperçu qu'en voyant Mme Hugard régler les pas. Mlle Hugon, qui jouera la princesse, a elle-même trouvé quelques-unes des plus gracieuses figures, entre autres une interprétation dansée du 'Réveil de la Belle au Bois dormant,' qui est exquise." *L'Intransigeant*, January 28, 1912.

[45] From Ravel's review of *Dolly* for *Comoedia illustré*, quoted in Orenstein, *A Ravel Reader*, 363.



DOLLY

Berceuse de M. G. FAURÉ :: Instrumentation de M. H. RABAUD
Ballet de M. Louis LALOY :: Réglé par M. Leo STAATS
Décors et costumes de Mlle LLOYD

I. — Berceuse

Le Lapin marchand de jouets passe au fond du jardin. Survient Dolly accompagnée de la Nourrice. C'est une enfant gâtée qui jette sa poupée à terre et manque de respect à la Nourrice. Cette maisonnette, au détour de l'allée, l'intrigue et elle décide de rester

— 20 —

là, profitant de ce fauteuil sous l'arbre. Résignée, la Nourrice la borde et la berce. L'attente de Dolly n'est pas déçue : la porte de la maisonnette s'ouvre, deux

Clowns se glissent dehors et jouent des tours à la Nourrice qui part à leur poursuite.

II. — Mi - a - ou

Les deux Clowns amusent Dolly par leurs danses et

— 21 —

Figure Seven

Despite the placid and untroubled opening movement, the choreography mobilized a kinetic energy that would infuse the entire production. This was hardly *Swan Lake*—or even *The Firebird*, for that matter. As Lalo described in his review for *Le Temps*, the action better resembled "that of an English pantomime, in which we see clowns, a Spanish dancer, a grotesque violinist, a little girl and a rabbit."[47] Critics differed on how that physicality related to the fresh and candid score. In his otherwise laudatory review, Ravel dodged the issue by asking an abstract question. Was it advisable, he wondered to stage "a piece of absolute music"?[48] Adolphe Boschot had made a similar rhetorical feint when discussing the production for *Écho de Paris*. Fauré's original score was already "too beautiful, too perfect" to need gestural garnish. But he noted that adding choreography to an extant score was a way of ensuring its longevity—something many a Fauré work lacked. And besides, "[e]very interpreter is a collaborator." No need, in his estimation, to fret about questions of intent and fidelity.[49]

Lalo predictably lambasted the lack of cohesion between music and gesture, writing, "[b]ut it is altogether impossible to discern the connection between it [gesture] and the music of M. Fauré: we could superimpose these movements just as well on any music, on *Siegfried-*

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[46] Rabaud's biggest hits include his oratorio *Job* (1900) and his opera *Mârouf, savetier du Caire* (1914). He succeeded Fauré's in another way as well, when he headed the Conservatoire from 1922 to 1941 after his older colleague's retirement.

[47] "*Dolly*, vous ne l'ignorez pas, est une suite de ravissants petits morceaux que M. Fauré écrivit pour le piano à quatre mains. M. Henri Rabaud les avait orchestrés il y a quelque temps déjà; M. Louis Laloy les orne aujourd'hui d'une action chorégraphique. Cette action, qui ressemble à celle d'une pantomime anglaise, et dans laquelle on voit des clowns, un danseur espagnol, un violoniste grotesque, une petite fille et un lapin, est assez divertissante à voir." *Le Temps*, January 28, 1913.

[48] Quoted in Orenstein, *A Ravel Reader*, 363-64.

[49] "Enfin, *Dolly*, le troisième spectacle, est un double enchantement. Je dis double, car on tente ici d'unir deux choses exquises, mais diverses; à mon avis, on n'y parvient pas: j'en suis fort heureux.
"La musique de cette *Dolly*, où M. Gabriel Fauré a écrit quelques unes de ses pages les plus pénétrantes, n'est vraiment pas faite pour être dansée. Elle est trop belle, trop parfaite par elle-même, pour qu'on y ajoute quoi que ce soit.
"Mais il ne faut pas se fâcher: d'abord si les belles oeuvres méritent qu'on les venère et les respecte, elles meritent aussi qu'on ne les oulie pas. Or, comment voulez-vous qu'on les utilise sans les modifier? Tout interprète est un collaborateur…" *Écho de Paris*, January 11, 1913.

Idyll, for example, or on l'*Après-midi d'un faune*, unless it was l'*Apprenti sorcier*."[50] Though clowns would certainly make a bizarre addition to anything by Wagner, Lalo here uses *Dolly* (slathered in overstatement) to make a larger point about the current *entente* between music and dance. The Russians, he opined, were to blame. They had foisted on their French audiences

> strange ideas and strange habits. Since they have presented their dazzling ballets, in which staging is all and music is nothing, we have accustomed ourselves to watching, to supporting, and to applauding these choreographic diversions in which one combines music not made for the purpose, action that has nothing to do with that music, or perhaps even directly contradicts its meaning. Thus a frenzied clowning accompanies *Dolly*'s fine music; no doubt some day soon we will see pastoral scenes set to the *Marseillaise*, or a nautical pantomime to the *Murmures de la forêt*. […] The Russians have offered us valuable contributions in terms of color and harmony; but they have also tainted our sense of harmony and unity.[51]

These droll lines merely restate an issue that has emerged, differently guised, in each chapter of this dissertation. What *was* the proper relationship between music and dance? Ravel was not the only one to ask whether they needed to be created in tandem, or if there were occasions on which it was acceptable to choreograph an existing score. Works such as *Istar*, *Adélaïde*, *Daphnis*, *Faune*, *Jeux*, and now *Dolly*, proposed (and continue to propose) divergent, at times contradictory, solutions to this thorny problem.

La Boîte's postwar Parisian premiere—the Théâtre Lyrique its unlikely venue—hardly clarified things.[52] With choreography by Quinault (an occasional Trouhanova collaborator) and Inghelbrecht at the orchestra's helm, the ballet fared, on the whole, better than *Dolly*. Unlike his review of the Fauré years earlier, Lalo's assessment was largely approving; only the (lack of) audience incurred his wrath.[53] Some, such as Gaston Carraud, considered the work a "masterpiece," though he equivocated by declaring it "a masterpiece in this place, with this purpose, in this spiritual and charming arrangement with this wickedly childish text and M.

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[50] "Mais il m'est tout à fait impossible de découvrir quel lien peut bien exister entre elle et la musique de M. Fauré: on la superposerait tout aussi bien à n'importe quelle autre musique, à *Siegfried-Idyll*, par exemple, ou bien à l'*Après-midi d'un faune*, à moins que ce ne fût à l'*Apprenti sorcier*." *Le Temps*, January 28, 1913.

[51] "Les Russes nous ont donné là-dessus d'étranges idées et d'étranges habitudes. Depuis qu'ils nous ont montré leurs brillants ballets, où le spectacle est tout et la musique rien, nous nous sommes accoutumes à regarder, à supporter et à applaudir des divertissements chorégraphiques dans lesquels on réunit à une oeuvre musicale qui n'a pas été faite pour cela, une action qui n'a pas le moindre rapport avec cette oeuvre musicale, ou même dont le sens lui est exactement contraire. C'est ainsi qu'on nous montre, sur la fine musique de *Dolly*, une clownerie, échevelée; c'est ainsi qu'un jour prochain sans doute, on nous montera, sur la musique de la *Marseillaise*, des scènes de pastorale, ou sur celle des *Murmures de la forêt*, une pantomime nautique. […] Les Russes nous ont apporté des révélations précieuses quant à la couleur et à la mise en scène; mais, ils ont achevé de corrompre en nous le sentiment de l'harmonie et de l'unité." *Le Temps*, January 28, 1913.

[52] As Morrison notes in his article, this performance was not, in fact, the ballet's début. He identifies the location and date of the actual premiere: the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York City, during its "1916 holiday season." Morrison, "Debussy's Toy Stories," 435.

[53] "La *Boîte à joujoux*, suite de petits morceaux de piano, que Debussy avait commencé d'instrumenter, et dont après sa mort une main habile a terminé l'orchestration, se prête au contraire fort bien à la mise en scène. M. André Hellé, qui avait illustré de plaisantes images d'album des morceaux de piano, n'a guère eu qu'à réaliser ses illustrations sur la scène pour que le ballet se trouvât fait. Mais en dépit du talent des artistes et de l'agrément du spectacle, le public, détourné par le mauvais sort, a continué de ne point venir." *Le Temps*, February 23, 1920.

Hellé's images."[54] In his estimation, *La Boîte* was a relic, a delicate artifact of a halcyon past. Louis d'Hurcourt conceded the ballet "could pass for a veritable masterpiece of grace and imagination."[55] Antoine Banès saw the work more synoptically: "With *la Boîte à joujoux* we find ourselves face to face with the definitive Debussy. The pupil has permanently cast aside his teacher: he is himself. And he has never been more lively or original." He closed his review by crowning *La Boîte à joujoux* a "box of jewels."[56] These reviews, however, yield little evidence of gestural detail. Apart from passing mention of Quinault and his troupe's excellent performances, critics shied away from discussion of the choreography.[57]

Indeed, young Inghelbrecht's movements as conductor drew more extended commentary than any of the stage action. His colleague André Messager published the following description in his article for *Le Gaulois*:

> M. Inghelbrecht conducts the orchestra of this tiny fantasy as if it were the Wagnerian tetralogy. His gestures are remarkable; he gathers the clouds, he lets the thunder ring out and… "a tender flute sighs." His youth excuses this somewhat inappropriate display; he nonetheless has real abilities as a conductor, and his enthusiasm is a valuable attribute.[58]

Other critics found Inghelbrecht's performance "perfect."[59] But his gestures seem to have eclipsed—or at least distracted from—those of Quinault and company. As we have seen, the issue with *Dolly* was the appropriate relationship between music and dance. *La Boîte*, however, raised a separate yet related question: how a consideration of a balletic production's gestural component may need to encompass not only staged dancing (the work of Quinault's company), but also embodied musical performance (such as Inghelbrecht's notable conducting movements).

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[54] "Ce 'ballet pour enfants'—pantomime, plutôt—nous transporte à l'époque où l'écriture musicale de Debussy et sa conception même de son art avaient subi une évolution que le destin fit définitive. On a parlé de chef-d'oeuvre: c'est parler fort. A la vérité, c'en était un—car il en est de toutes les tailles—dans le bel album d'étrennes qui parut au lever de la sinistre année 1914; c'était un chef-d'oeuvre à cette place, avec cet objet, dans cet accord spirituel et charmant avec le texte malicieusement puéril et les images de M. Hellé." *Le Ménestrel*, December 19, 1919.

[55] "*La Boîte à joujoux*, par contre, a obtenu le plus vif succès, et peut passer pour un véritable chef-d'oeuvre de grâce et de fantaisie. C'est une suite d'orchestre composée de 4 numéros qualifiés de tableaux, sur lesquels M. Hellé, le spirituel dessinateur, a composé, et M. Quinault, le remarquable professeur de danse, a reglé le plus charmant ballet-pantomime du monde." *La Presse*, December 10, 1919.

[56] "Avec *la Boîte à joujoux* nous nous trouvons face à face avec le Debussy définitif. L'élève a jeté définitivement son maître par-dessus les moulins: il est lui-même.
[…]
"La *Boîte à joujoux* est une boîte à bijoux. Aux heures de Noël, nous devions la voir paraître. Demain, comme hier, elle ravira tout grands et tout petits." *Le Figaro*, December 10, 1919.

[57] Louis Vuillemin's review for *La Lanterne* is just one example: "Mlle Salchy et M. Quinault le dansent avec quelque esprit." December 11, 1919. Morrison cites the exception. Charles Tenroc, writing for *Le Courrier musical*, took a halfhearted stab. He "defined the dance, for which he admitted to having no eye, as 'three laps' around the set 'and an exit' […]." Morrison, "Debussy's Toy Stories," 434.

[58] "M. Inghelbrecht dirige l'orchestre de cette minuscule fantasie comme si s'agissait de la tétralogie wagnérienne. Son geste est formidable; il assemble les nuées, il va faire éclater le tonnerre et… "une tendre flûte soupire." Sa jeunesse excuse cette ardeur un peu intempestive; il n'en a pas moins de réels dons de chef d'orchestre et, qualités précieuses, il a la ferveur et l'enthousiasme." *Le Gaulois*, December 12, 1919.

[59] The last sentence of the review in *Le Monde illustré*: "L'interprétation est excellente, et M. Ingelbrecht [*sic*] conduit de façon parfaite." December 20, 1919.

So can truths spring from trifles? Do the frameworks—toys, children's physical education, the particulars of *Dolly*'s and *La Boîte*'s premieres—offered above generate new insights into their component parts, or at least present opportunities for critical *divertissements*? A glimpse at *belle époque* toy culture reveals the correspondences (and in Hugo's estimation, interchangeability) of children and their playthings, both impassive beings in need of animation. Dalcrozean theory transposed this idea to the stage. Conventionally-trained dancers, practitioners of ballet among them, were thought among the most incorrigible reprobates, since for them gesture was dazzlingly ornamental rather than deeply expressive. Dalcroze aimed to revitalize arts education by integrating music and the body. His objective was far more ambitious than simple curricular refurbishment: "[a] true pedagogue should be at once psychologist, physiologist, and artist. The complete citizen should leave school capable not only of living normally, but of *feeling* life. He should be in a position both to create and to respond to the creation of others."[60] For him, the aesthetic and the political were one and the same: corporealized arts education for young students would produce a healthier, more vibrant *corps politique*. In that way, *Dolly* and *La Boîte* participated in the same cultural discourses that inflected the other ballets discussed herein. They depict the profoundly conflicted place children occupied by the close of the *belle époque*. Rather than expressive and plastic, young people were akin to the toys they so adored. Like the genre of ballet itself, childhood faced a crossroads: an emphasis on physical excellence—whether in danced virtuosity or potentially militaristic training—trumped individual and emotional expression.

Given the sparse documentation of *Dolly* and *La Boîte*, a consideration of specific moments from these early productions is difficult, if not entirely impossible. The few traces they have left are nevertheless suggestive. They show that while these two ballets share some of the elements of contemporaneous works that anticipated the louche modernism of the twenties, they also reveal much about the cultural status of French childhood by the *belle époque*. Writing about *Dolly* in *Le Monde artiste*, Edmond Stoullig described it as

> a ballet of toys who come to life, dance, twirl, play tricks on each other, fight over a girl, all in a curious stage set consisting of wallpaper, by an astonishing English mime. Sets and costumes designed by Miss Lloyd, are charmingly childlike.[61]

The description of the performers as animate toys—they move, dance, and twirl—recalls nothing so much as *La Boîte*. *Dolly*'s fanciful scenario, contrived by Louis Laloy for the staged production, intermingles human characters (the eponymous heroine, her nanny) with a shopkeeper who happens to be a rabbit. Their gestures on stage resonate with the mechanistic choreography of Debussy's contemporaneous ballet.

Even the décor—*Dolly*'s "curious wallpaper"—had about it an angularity at odds with the lusher productions of the Ballets Russes. A newspaper clipping from 1913, when it seemed *La Boîte* might still have its premiere at the Salle Favart despite the darkening political situation and Debussy's own flagging health, included at the beginning a sketch by Hellé himself [Figure 9].

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[60] Rubinstein, *Rhythm, Music, and Education*, 180.

[61] "Vous connaissez *Dolly*, l'exquise suite de six petites pièces pour piano de M. Gabriel Fauré, qu'orchestra très délicatement M. Henri Rabaud… M. Louis Laloy en a composé un ballet de joujoux qui s'animent, dansent, virevoltent, se font des niches, se battent autour d'une fillette incarnée, dans un curieux décor de papier peint, par une étonnante mime anglaise. Décors et costumes dessinés par miss Lloyd, étaient d'un enfantillage bien amusant." *Le Monde Artiste*, January 18, 1913.

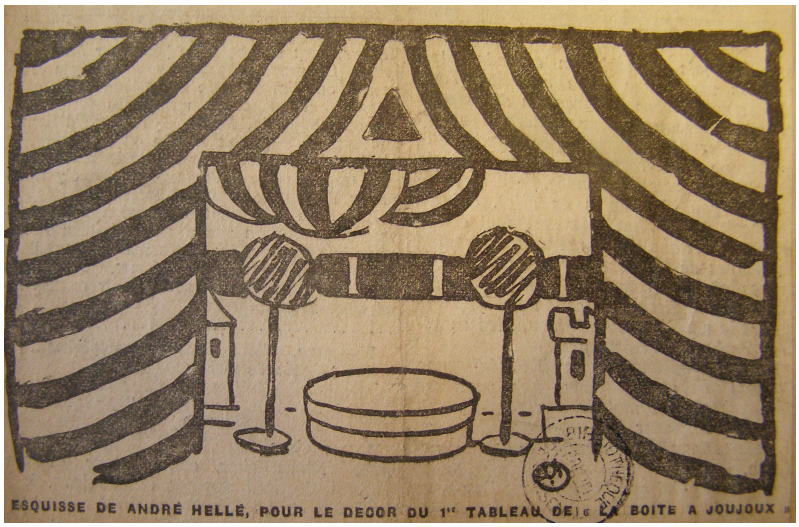


Figure Nine

The article continued with his recounting of *La Boîte*'s guiding aesthetic, this "ballet de poupées":

> —The difficulty, obviously, continues André Hellé, will be to stage this childlike narrative, to maintain the puppet-like quality of our heroes.
> "My performers—in whose talent I have complete faith—must entirely discard the manner in which they dance the usual ballets, to which our work has no connection…
> "It is nevertheless a fundamental matter of rhythm—but in a way different from those normally found in balletic characters. Their gestures should be imprinted, from top to bottom, with a jerky automatism and mechanism, as are the movements of puppets.
> "No fluidity, instead something schematized and dry in which only remain, denuded and systematized, the body's essential gestures…
> "Today triumphant Russian choreography has already brought us, please note, the angularity of gesture that I require…
> "Furthermore, notice the physique of Russian and French dancers. For the latter, the leg is plump, the calf padded; the former's musculature is as if nude, hidden right beneath the skin, all of its work visible. And, I do not know if you agree, but I much prefer this plain and edgy look to the former…
> "As for the sets and costumes, I do not need to tell you that they will have the same simplicity, the same sketchy quality…[62]

[62] "—La difficile, évidemment, continue André Hellé, sera de réaliser scéniquement cette histoire enfantine, de garder à nos héros leur caractère de pantins.
'Il faudrait que mes inteprètes—en l'intelligence desquels j'ai d'ailleurs pleine confiance—abandonnent entièrement le caractère dans lequel ils dansent les habituels ballets avec lesquels notre oeuvre n'a aucun rapport…
'Il s'agit pourtant d'une chose essentiellement rythmique—mais en un sens différent de ce que sont ordinairement les figures de ballet. Il faudrait que leurs gestes fussent empreints, d'un bout à l'autre, de cet automatisme saccadé et mécanique qu'ont les gestes des pantins.

Familiar adjectives recur: systematic, arid, automatic. What is new in this description is the comparison between Gallic roundness and Slavic sinew, the latter to be preferred. It is also worth noting that, in contrast to Trouhanova's statements on the dancing nude cited in the first chapter, Hellé admired corporeal effort made visible, flexing muscles just barely obscured by skin. Trouhanova, referring to the unclothed body, intoned, "[t]he dancing nude does not reveal rhythm's soul, it shows a body at work. And that is not what one wants to see." She presumably had in mind a specifically *female* dancing body. Hellé made no such distinction. Given *La Boîte*'s cast of young people, he, like Debussy, envisioned a stage full of stylized children, and indeed, a stylization of contemporary childhood. That stylization was one that insisted on a mechanized French *corps enfantin*.

Impassivity and expressivity, then, were mapped—at times simultaneously and confusingly—on to children both onstage and off. As we have already seen, *La Boîte* and *Dolly* engaged in their own negotiations between these opposing demeanors, negotiations that ended in the very sort of registral split Dalcrozean theory hoped to repair in its young disciples. Other cultural commentators were similarly attentive to these correspondences between various presentations of childhood. In the summer of 1913, *L'Humanité* covered the "Exposition d'enfance" currently on view at the Musée Galliera. After detailing the historical and modern parts of the exhibition, describing the differences between antique toys and those more recent, the critic took an unexpected rhetorical swerve, suggesting that in contemporary examples, one could detect a "new understanding of childhood." He continued by using the diminutive furniture by M. Gallery as evidence of a "*froebelienné*" perspective toward young people:

> Healthy, sturdy, in simple shapes, this is an integrated framework for balanced education. Hygiene and order emerge from this set of beautiful gifts. Compared to this research, those of Miss Lloyd and Andre Hellé appear refined, subtle, but overall artificial in their tormented figures and delicate lacquers[…].[63]

The mention of Lloyd and Hellé—who created the "looks" for *Dolly* and *La Boîte* respectively—not only reveals the link between these two works in the public imagination, but also the way in which their visual stylings, however cultivated and sophisticated, were read as warped and insincere. No mention is made of music (and even though *La Boîte* had not yet had its premiere, the piano score was published by Durand that year). Despite the scant traces these ballets have left behind, then, their internal aesthetic contradictions vividly reflected larger, ongoing, and at times even bellicose debates.

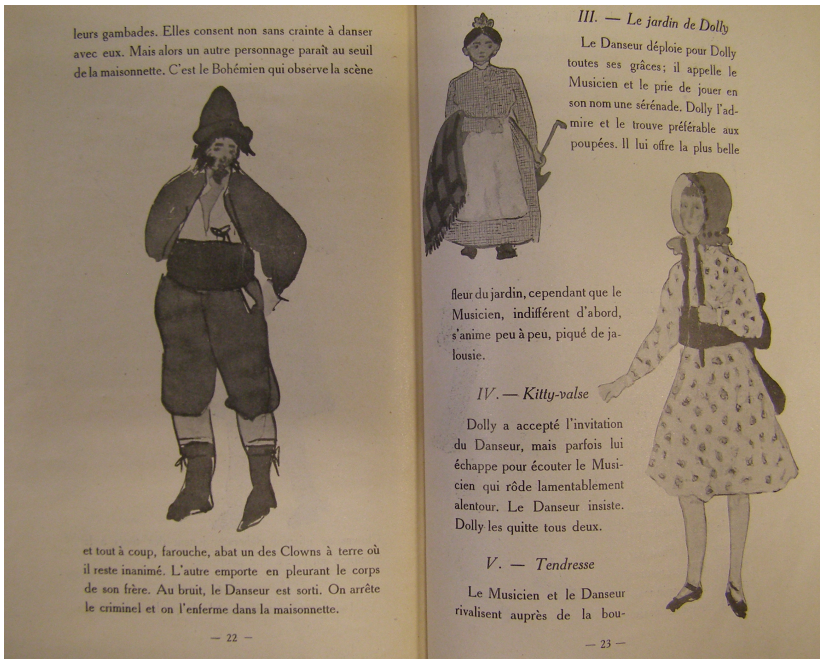
'Pas de souplesse, quelque chose de schématique et de sec qui garde seulement, dépouillés et systématisés, les mouvements essentiels du corps…
'L'art chorégraphique des Russes, aujourd'hui triomphant, nous a déjà apporté, remarquez-le, ce caractère anguleux des gestes que je demande…
'Bien plus, regardez le corps même des artistes russes et des artistes français. Chez les seconds, la jambe est ronde, le mollet comme rembourré; chez les premiers, les muscles sont comme à nu, immédiatement cachés sous la peau, tout leur travail est visible. Et, je ne sais si vous êtes comme moi, mais je préfère infiniment cette apparence nerveuse, un peu sèche même, à la première…
'Quant aux décors et aux costumes, je n'ai pas besoin de vous dire qu'ils auront la même simplicité, le même aspect schématique…'" From *Recueil factice d'articles presse sur "La Boîte à joujoux*," BnF RO 10915.

[63] "Sain, simple de formes, robuste, il est le cadre harmonieux d'une éducation rationnelle. L'hygiène et l'ordre se dégagent de ce clair ensemble où s'affirment de beaux dons le vulgarisateur. Auprès de ces recherches, celles de Miss Lloyd et d'André Hellé nous paraissent raffinées, subtiles, mais surtout artificielles avec leurs formes tourmentées et leurs laquages fragiles. […]." *L'Humanité*, June 17, 1913.

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Apollinaire's criteria, then were only half fulfilled: moral, yes; joyous, no. But the two ballets did not flout that *dictum* in precisely the same manner. It is useful to remember that, despite critics lumping these works together as displaying agreeable music and unlovely choreography, their scores were created nearly two decades apart. Fauré did not himself advocate the acrobatic movements of *Dolly* the way Debussy insisted on the dry puppetry of *La Boîte*. So even within the short timespan of the *belle époque*, the performance of childhood underwent a dramatic *volte-face*.

Dolly and her gamboling coterie offer one stance. The ballet's childish scenario tickles the imaginations of the young and not-so-young alike. After the clowns frolic for Dolly's amusement, a Dancer appears for the "Jardin" movement [Figure 10].


leurs gambades. Elles consent non sans crainte à danser avec eux. Mais alors un autre personnage paraît au seuil de la maisonnette. C'est le Bohémien qui observe la scène

et tout à coup, farouche, abat un des Clowns à terre où il reste inanimé. L'autre emporte en pleurant le corps de son frère. Au bruit, le Danseur est sorti. On arrête le criminel et on l'enferme dans la maisonnette.

— 22 —

III. — Le jardin de Dolly

Le Danseur déploie pour Dolly toutes ses grâces; il appelle le Musicien et le prie de jouer en son nom une sérénade. Dolly l'admire et le trouve préférable aux poupées. Il lui offre la plus belle

fleur du jardin, cependant que le Musicien, indifférent d'abord, s'anime peu à peu, piqué de jalousie.

IV. — Kitty-valse

Dolly a accepté l'invitation du Danseur, mais parfois lui échappe pour écouter le Musicien qui rôde lamentablement alentour. Le Danseur insiste. Dolly les quitte tous deux.

V. — Tendresse

Le Musicien et le Danseur rivalisent auprès de la bou-

— 23 —

Figure Ten

The Dancer charms the petulant protagonist with his elegant gestures, though it is only with the addition of music to his impromptu production that Dolly abandons her tagalong playthings. But before long the Dancer and Musician realize that they must vie for her attentions rather than collaborate. Their efforts backfire, the ever-cross Dolly dismissing them both to run off with her Spanish pirate. For all its whimsicality, this simple tale encapsulates the bipolar relationship music and dance have supposedly maintained: either they exist in complete synchrony, or they undermine and obstruct one another. *Dolly* and *La Boîte* complicate expected narratives about *belle époque* cultures of childhood, and thereby indicate a line of inquiry that might otherwise remain undetected. Though *Dolly*'s Dancer and Musician prove poor diegetic collaborators, and its choreography and score appear to be at artistic loggerheads, those tensions reflected the contested topography of the young French person's body at this time as much as they do aesthetic dissonances.

A glance at *La Boîte*'s conclusion, *vingt ans après*, when almost all has ended well, is differently telling.



Figure Eleven

The dashing solider, here sporting a formidable white beard, poses with his now-plump sweetheart and their many children [Figure 11]. Before the music proper appears, *La Boîte*'s illustrated score introduces its impish *dramatis personae*, complete with cartooned candids and musical motifs [Figure 12].

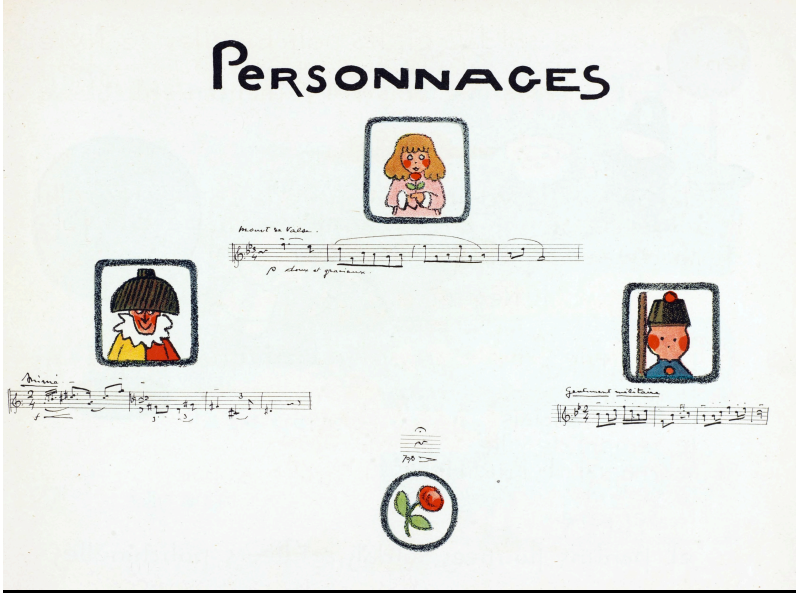
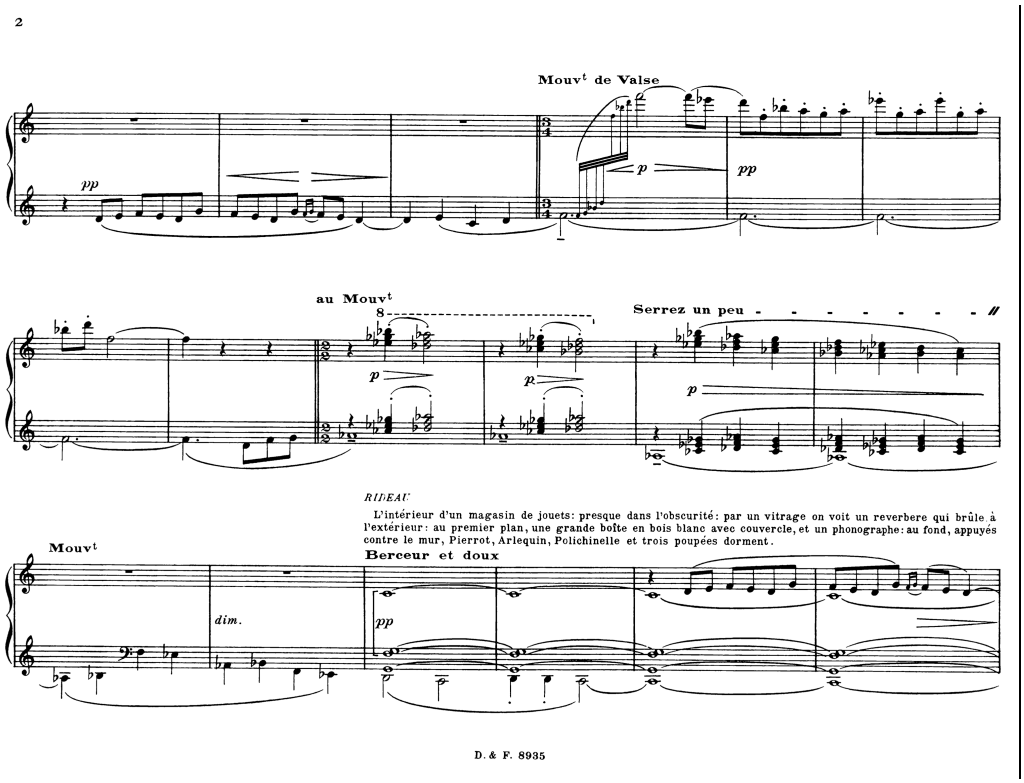


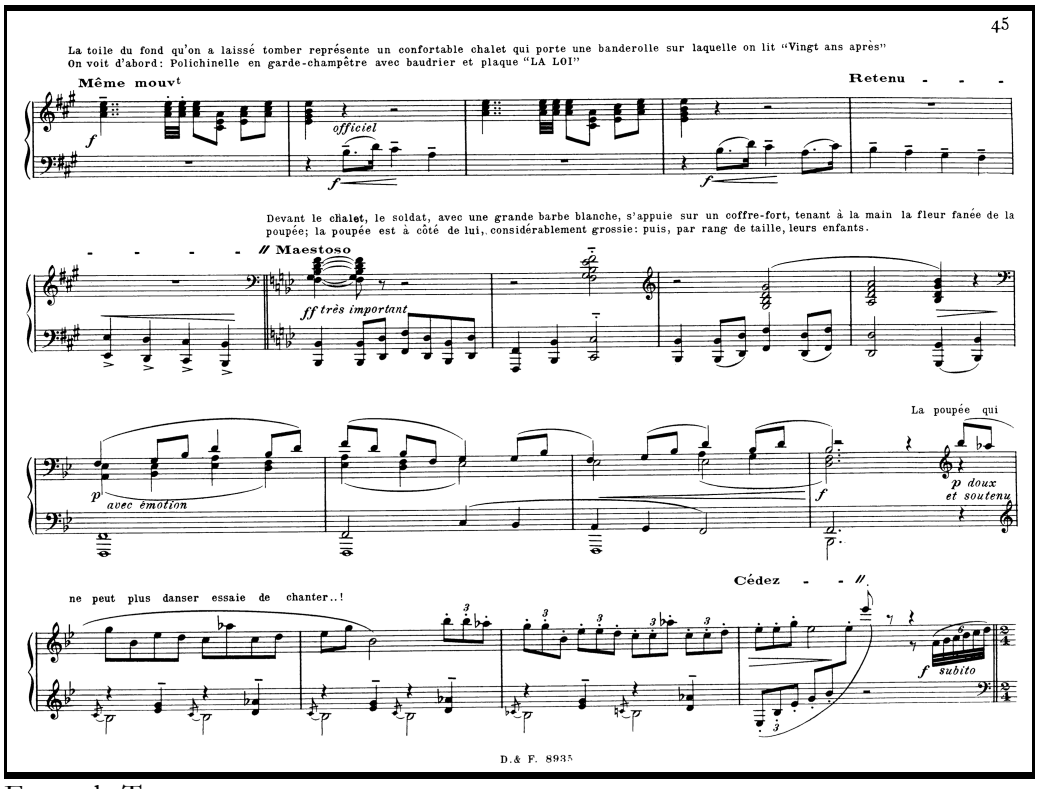
Figure Twelve

The doll's waltzing signature, shimmeringly orchestrated, is presented almost immediately, before the curtain has risen [Example 1].



Example One

By the time all battles have been fought and beloveds won, her music sounds quite different. Stated slowly and awkwardly in four, scored for solo violin rather than celesta, she presumably attempts to recapture her prior fleetness with the lissome triplets the oboe affixes to the melody [Example 2]. But her fleshier physique precludes dancing. Instead, as noted in the score, she "can no longer dance" and "attempts to sing..!" Alas, in these toy stories, ballerinas cannot sing, just as musicians cannot dance. Although winningly jokey, this moment presents a shift in the involvement between music and dance when compared to *Dolly*. In its lilting wind iteration, the doll's music sounds like the gestures she cannot perform, recalling a waltz meter with triplet rhythms. But their sonic twirling only emphasizes her own rotund stasis. This *poupée* has left her youthfulness (and svelte figure) behind, able neither to dance nor to sing. By the end of the ballet, her character mirrors that of the performers in *La Boîte*: music in their hearts, perhaps, but only impassivity visible on their bodies.



Example Two

So even though *Dolly* and *La Boîte* share the troubled *topos* of childhood, they do not end up in the same place. Part of that divergence is due to the not insignificant span of time that separates them. The exteriorization of childhood mapped on to Fauré's ballet *ex post facto* was embedded into the very conception of Debussy's.

What then sets these ballets apart from *Faune* (not to mention those postwar pieces), whose staged flatness read to audiences and critics alike as another kind of somatic mechanization? As argued in the second chapter of this dissertation, *Faune*'s attempted two-dimensionality reflected a change in *belle époque* spectatorship. The cases of *Dolly* and *La Boîte* are different. Rather than attempting a resuscitation of contemporary choreography through an exploration of different movements governed by new artistic parameters, the primary participants in these two children's ballets were not, in fact, aiming to launch careers on the dance scene. Nijinsky, though already an incendiary stage presence, was still establishing himself as a choreographer during these years, which were tragically his last active ones. By contrast, Hellé, Laloy, and Rabaud had different though consonant agendas. Rabaud, for one, had and would continue to stand guard against marauding artistic forces, thereby protecting the sanctity of Gallic art, a sentiment summarized in his refrain: "modernism is the enemy."[64] Though Laloy's scholarly interests lay in ancient and early music, he tirelessly championed his countrymen Debussy and Ravel. Hellé himself proved the depth of his nationalism and his belief in the patriotic role of young French people when he published the *Alphabet de la grande guerre* in 1914 [Figure 13]. Ostensibly for children, the book had a tone that was anything but puerile:

[64] Anne Girardot and Richard Langham Smith, "Rabaud, Henri," *Grove Music Online.*

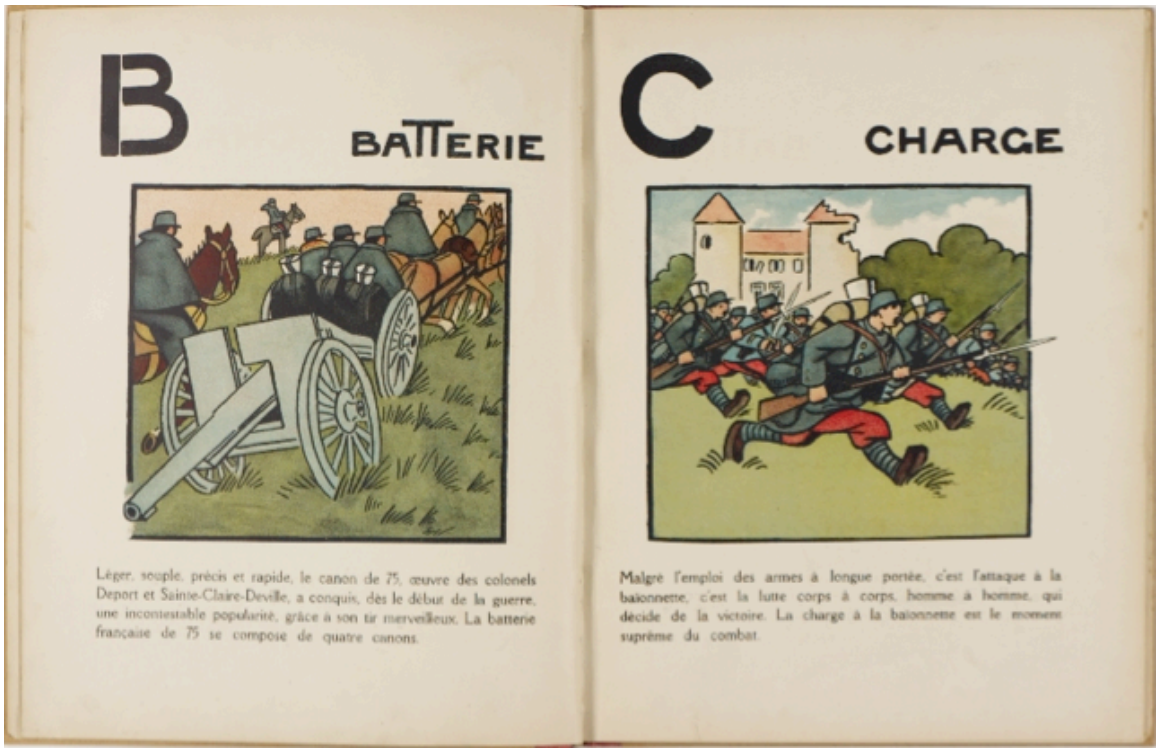


Figure Thirteen

This *Alphabet* stood a long way from tender entries such as *agneau*, *banane*, and *chemise*. It demonstrated, however, Hellé's commitment to the epigraph that began this chapter. In Surier's estimation, the nation's future resided in the fitness of its young people. As *Dolly* and *La Boîte* demonstrate, that fitness was one of body, yes, but also of a certain impassive character. Ravel's *Ma Mère l'oye* stood in contrast to these contemporaneous ballets, but only in the postwar *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* can one detect the implications of this divergence.

Debussy's lavish praise of Stravinsky's compositional thaumaturgy in *Petrushka*, reveals his admiration of the congruence between narrative and score. Music and puppet were both made animate. Fokine's choreography disdained, and at times parodied, the academicism of conventional balletic technique, but it did not ever spurn a very human naturalness. He desired, Garafola writes, "to heighten the expressiveness of the body by extending its lines and enhancing its plasticity and three-dimensionality."[65] The choreographic practice deployed in the two children's ballets under discussion could not be more opposite. Impassivity supplanted expressiveness. The bifurcation at work in *La Boîte* and *Dolly* exposes the difficult and shifting contours of young French subjectivity at this time.

* * *

A playful *topos*, then, does not always yield correspondingly lighthearted critical results. But it also need not dissuade scholars from inquiring beyond the most basic historical details of premieres, performers, and productions. Morrison's contention, cited at the beginning of this chapter, about ballets in general and *La Boîte* in particular, seems to articulate an unspoken conviction shared by many a scholar studying many a danced work. My diagnosis

[65] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 37.

of *Jeux*'s vexed production and reception as a symptom of a larger historiographical problem has, in fact, revealed itself to be a pervasive condition.

Diagnosis demands prognosis. While it would be foolhardy to propose a multipurpose methodology with which to go forth and study all danced works, I would suggest that the ways in which we frame such projects—as histories of bodies rather than recovery efforts for specific choreographies—would shift the focus away from impolitic reconstruction toward what Stephanie Jordan has termed a "choreomusical" attitude, a continued awareness that both dance and music have "common roots in the body."[66] This invocation of the physical, the somatic, the bodily brings to its *dénouement* one of my study's primary arcs. As we have seen, dance reflected various permutations of contemporaneous physical culture on *belle époque* stages: beauty *praxis*, *statuomanie*, sportive pursuits, and the education of children. Instead of subordinating research on gesture to a puritanical allegiance to hermeneutics, or, indeed, declining the pursuit of such inquiry entirely, perhaps a critical legerdemain—one that engages with historical bodies both onstage and off—might forestall the wholesale abandonment of "lost" works.

[66] Stephanie Jordan, *Moving Music* (London: Dance Books, 2000), 59.

Epilogue

Given to delegating the task of orchestration, Debussy left several unfinished scores and unrealized projects upon his death in 1918. André Caplet completed *La Boîte à joujoux* from sketches; *Jeux* was the only score expressly intentioned for ballet that Debussy ever finished. Among the ventures endlessly percolating were two with danced components: *No-ja-li, ou le Palais du silence* and *Crimen amoris*, later retitled *Fêtes galantes*. Debussy embarked upon both works during the years of *Faune* and *Jeux*'s premieres, though neither involved Diaghilev or his Ballets Russes.

The scenario for *Crimen amoris* was adapted by Charles Morice, from a text by Verlaine. Morice, however, having incurred Debussy's displeasure at his less-than-deft handling of his fellow poet's refined lines, was quickly replaced by the reliable Louis Laloy. Though the work was never fully realized, its completion seemed assured, and it appeared in *Comoedia illustré*'s announcement for the 1912 / 1913 season at the Opéra. Among the productions listed, there was only one other ballet (Naquet's and Bruneau's *Les Bacchantes*), the others, such as d'Indy's *Fervaal*, being operas. Classification of *Crimen amoris*, though, is not as straightforward as the notice made it seem. Debussy eventually conceived of it as an "opera-ballet," an unimpeachably French genre with a long aristocratic pedigree.[1] As Davinia Caddy has recently noted, opera-ballets experienced a quiet renaissance around the close of the *belle époque*.[2] She highlights Jacques Rouché's role in this resurgence, at the helm of the short-lived though always innovative Théâtre des Arts, as well as Debussy's own interest in the venerable form, which, in a 1913 article for *L'Excelsior*, he described as ripe for adaptation and rejuvenation, and the removal of its wrinkles.[3] Caddy suggests that, for Rouché and Debussy, opera-ballet may have offered a way out of "the contemporary operatic malaise with a specifically national and crossbred theatrical form."[4] Other composers continued this line, particularly Albert Roussel in *Padmâvatî* and, slightly later and more obliquely, Ravel in *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*.

No-ja-li, for its part, featured an eponymous exotic princess as its heroine. She is captured by a neighboring prince, who, afflicted with muteness, has decreed silence over his entire kingdom. Its fairytale premises presaged a happy ending, though the scenario was not without its diminutive intrigues.[5] Like *Crimen amoris*, *No-ja-li* was generically slippery. It was crafted for the Alhambra Theatre in London, a music-hall that had long boasted balletic fare on its marquee.[6] In a manner similar to *Dolly* and *La Boîte à joujoux*, then, *No-ja-li*, intended for a such a venue, would have inflected "high" art with popular aspects. This was not a new idea, but in the postwar years it took on new significance. As we have seen, physical culture shaped ballet's aesthetic preoccupations during the *belle époque*, an association motivated by prevailing political concerns about national health, strength, and vitality. But ballet needed new ways forward in the postwar period. We can already detect them in these

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[1] Robert Orledge, *Debussy and the Theatre* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 208.
[2] Davinia Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and Beyond* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 200. See particularly her chapter, "Beyond and Behind *Le Coq d'or*."
[3] Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and Beyond*, 201.
[4] Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and Beyond*, 201.
[5] Robert Orledge writes, "[t]he use of non-speaking participants, communication through music and mime, and an allegorical ballet-within-a-ballet are clever ideas: the overall conception has a greater *raison d'être* and scope than many other short ballet scenarios." *Debussy and the Theatre*, 190.
[6] Orledge, *Debussy and the Theatre*, 190.

unfinished projects of Debussy, which sought generic recombination with opera and music-hall type *divertissements*. In this they prefigured such *les années folles* ballets as *Les Biches* and *Le Train bleu*. Like these works by Poulenc and Milhaud, which appeared in 1924, *No-ja-li* would have amplified the attentiveness to contemporary leisure culture one already sees in *Jeux*, just as *Crimen amoris* would have anticipated the blend of opera and dance in *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*.

This last, a collaboration between Colette and Ravel, though complicated and protracted, garnered much acclaim. Monte-Carlo hosted the first performance in 1925, and it received its Paris premiere at the Opéra-Comique early the next year. With varied choreography by Balanchine and with Marie-Thérèse Gauley in a widely praised turn as the Child, *L'Enfant* was, as its subtitle portended, an enchanting *fantasie-lyrique*. But with its prominent danced component, it also continued in the tradition of the opera-ballet that Debussy himself had wished to promote over a decade earlier. Indeed, as a synthesis of two more conventional genres to which he had already made significant contributions, it holds a unique position in Ravel's *oeuvre*: *L'Heure espagnole*, already over a decade old, was the composer's only previous operatic work, and by the 1920s (excepting the freakish, experimental *Boléro*), his balletic years were behind him as well.[7] In his review for *Le Ménestrel* of *L'Enfant*'s Parisian premiere, Roland-Manuel found it quite distinct from Ravel's earlier works, including *Daphnis et Chloé*. Rather than the technically facile, seemingly magical "orchestration" of *L'Heure espagnole*, *L'Enfant* was apprehensibly "orchestral." The composer had succeeded in "giving material form, then, to Colette's lovely visions, making the unreal seem real."[8] Another critic for the same paper situated the work squarely within a Debussyan genealogy, beginning with *La Boîte à joujoux*, which, in his estimation, "has clearly inspired a series of compact works of an identical character," moving to Staats's *la Nuit ensorcelée* (to music by Chopin) and Schmitt and Wolff's *Le Petit Elfe Ferme-l'Œil*, and culminating in *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*.

La Boîte, then, serves not only as a convenient stopping point for the present narrative, but also as a pivot, suggesting that the balletic trends traced here remained influential, though they were profoundly reconfigured in the postwar period. Not least among those reconfigurations was the shift from Debussy's impassive, silent children (rendered humorous onstage by the *poupée*'s unsuccessful attempt to sing) to Ravel's more sentimental Child, whose sigh of *maman* is the point at which all of *L'Enfant*'s impulses, danced or sung, find repose. Perhaps the historied, hybrid genre of opera-ballet was a way for dance—long silent—to find a voice in the postwar period.

* * *

Opera-ballet, then, may provide the threshold through which the creative energies of the *belle époque* passed on their way into the twenties in France. To say this, however, is to address only the historical narrative. Where have we landed in terms of method? In my introduction, I presented the 1912 debate between Bertelin and d'Udine as recursive—that

[7] Commissioned by Ida Rubinstein, the leggy dancer about town for much of the 1910s, and sets by Benois and choreography by Nijinska, *Boléro*'s 1928 premiere was a smash. But it almost immediately left the stage to become Ravel's most popular concert piece.

[8] "Moins *orchestrée* que *l'Heure Espagnole*, l'oeuvre nouvelle est plus *orchestrale*. Le mécanicien du *Tombeau de Couperin* et de *Daphnis*, se surpassant lui-même, nous impose avec une éloquence irréfragable de nouveaux paradoxes instrumentaux […] Il fallait matérialiser sans ridicule les jolis rêves de Colette et donner une espèce de vraisemblance à l'invraisemblable." *Le Ménestrel*, February 05, 1926.

is, as a quarrel about music and dance that has recurred, differently guised, through all the subsequent chapters. In contrast to the prim brevity of that *tête-à-tête* in *Le Courrier musical*, the unruly, short-lived publication *Montjoie!* dedicated the entirety of its antepenultimate issue two years later to "la Danse Contemporaine." A list of contributors reads as a veritable who's who of Parisian artistic life: Rodin, Canudo, Satie, and Matisse, among several others of note. The work of modish performer Valentine de Saint-Point merited much discussion in these pages, likely due to her romantic entanglement with Canudo himself.

Saint-Point's manifesto on *métachorie*, delivered as a speech before its inclusion in this special issue of *Montjoie!*, proposed yet another new theory of dance. In her estimation, dance needed to reassess its relationship to music, to which it had endlessly genuflected, and reclaim its agency and prestige:

> Dance is, therefore, an art of visible shapes, an external manifestation, a fleshly rhythm, instinctive or established, of music.
>
> In proposing a kind of dance that is cerebral in nature, conceived in advance of its material realization, I must, to avoid any confusion, find a name that from the outset will distinguish it from that which we today call dance.[9]

Metachoric dance, unlike the "dictionary" dance she opened with, did not depend on music to generate content, and, indeed, was both synthetic and singular. Its inception was "cerebral" rather than bodily, though it would become "a living organism," of which "idea is the soul, dance the skeleton, and music the flesh."[10] The ostensible reconfiguration here—gesture as structural, music its comely overlay—recalls the exchange between Bertelin and d'Udine, and, indeed, of many before them. Notable, however, is Saint-Point's persistent rarefaction of her project, in which somatic fulfillment is merely a byproduct of a primarily intellectual process.[11]

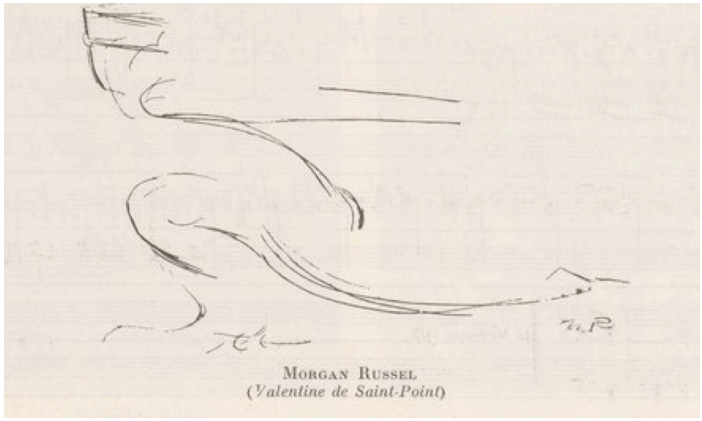


Figure One

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[9] "La danse n'est donc qu'un art plastique, une matérialisation exotérique, un rythme charnel, instinctif ou conventionnel, de la musique.
"Apportant une danse d'essence cérébrale, créée spirituellement et originalement avant d'être réalisée plastiquement, je dus pour éviter toute confusion, lui trouver un nom, qui tout d'abord, la différenciât de ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui la danse." *Montjoie!*, January-February 1914.

[10] "Je le répète, dans la *Métachorie*, c'est l'idée qui en est l'essence, l'âme. La danse et la musique étant suggérées par elle, on peut donc dire que la *Métachorie* forme un organisme vivant, dont l'idée est l'âme, la danse le squelette, et la musique la chair." *Montjoie!*, January-February 1914.

[11] "Ayant créé cérébralement la *Métachorie*, il me fallait la réaliser physiquement." *Montjoie!*, January-February 1914.

Even Morgan Russel's sketch of the dancer, included below the manifesto, presents the *idea* of gesture, of movement, of Saint-Point herself, rather than corporeal particulars [Figure 1].

Have we then returned to our starting point exactly? Are testy negotiations between music and dance inevitable? Perhaps these are, in the end, the wrong questions. Posing them implies an investment in the possibility of naturalization, of utopic equilibrium, between music and dance. We have found *belle époque* ballet, by contrast, to have been a particular instance of a larger critical preoccupation, of the gestural dimension(s) of musical practice—issues of scope, method, reconstitution, and so forth. Saint-Point's manifesto on *métachorie* is one more iteration of the dematerialization and rarefaction already encountered in *Jeux*, *La Boîte*, and *Dolly*, a trend still detectable in historiography. Saint-Point's body performed the dance, certainly, but that corporeal movement was the somatic consequence of the true, intellectual work. My argument for a "critical legerdemain" in the last chapter was a call to reverse this process: to reframe discussions of danced works as narratives about actual historical bodies, bodies that, as we have seen throughout this dissertation, were enmeshed in a vast and deep gestural culture offstage. Pious choreographic reconstruction might wish to privilege certain recovery efforts over others, but I am suggesting that such efforts are, in the end, as chimerical as the narrative sorceries of ballet scenarios themselves.

So why discuss music and dance, or music and gesture, at all? My title, "The Politics of *Belle Époque* Ballet," refers to the civic negotiations over French bodies that were reflected onstage during the period it names, but it also alludes to our current scholarly negotiations in both musicology and dance history. Those historiographical politics—to reconstruct or not, to speculate or not, to hermetically seal or not—inhibit discussions of *praxis*, which only furthers the rarefaction of this music. I am not suggesting that permanently resuturing music to particular choreographies, if even possible, would be laudable or desirable, for to do so would be to fall into the trap of naturalization. What I do believe is that as music's transcendence and gesture's evanescence are repeatedly established in criticism and elsewhere, we sanction, implicitly and repeatedly, the idea that this music is somehow too fragile or too sophisticated for anything other than reverent contemplation. Without such reverence, and without something akin to a historical divining rod, we are left instead with a clutter of bodies that once gestured, sometimes to music. I contend that the aim should be neither bodily resurrection nor reconstruction of works, but instead reinvigoration: of music's bodily aspects, beginning with the musical and gestural techniques that cultivated those very same bodies.[12] The French civic project—to rehabilitate the nation through multiple physical rehabilitations—depended on an equation of actual bodies of citizens with the metaphorical body of the state. Those values, as we have seen, made their way onto balletic stages in various and complex forms. But from our vantage as historians, it is equally useful to run that old, unlikely equation in reverse: these performances of civic virtue were themselves instrumental in shaping *belle époque* bodies. It seems, then, the uses of that past are still with us.

[12] I am thinking here of James Davies's recent work, particularly when he writes: "Few would deny that we are doing things with our bodies when we make music, that bodies make or index music, or that music comes from bodies. Fewer, I think, would venture that the reverse also applies: that bodies come from music. That when one is making music, one is also indexing the body, or rather that one's body is being indexed." *Romantic Anatomies of Performance* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2014), 183.

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