COMPOSERS AND THE BALLETS RUSSES - CONVENTION, INNOVATION, AND EVOLUTION AS SEEN THROUGH THE LESSER-KNOWN WORKS.

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SCHOOL OF ARTS, LANGUAGES AND CULTURES
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Abstract

The primary focus of this thesis is a selection of lesser-known *Ballets Russes* works, which, despite being largely neglected in academic studies, constitute important chapters in the history of the company. The bright light of publicity that shone on Stravinsky - in particular on *Le Sacre du Printemps* - has cast shadows over other *Ballets Russes* works, creating an over-simplified historical perspective. This is not to deny that *Le Sacre* was a watershed moment for the company, and in seeking to enrich our understanding of its place within broader musical trends, the thesis is divided into three sections, representing works composed before, around the same time as, and after, Stravinsky’s notorious masterpiece.

Following a brief introduction, and a descriptive chapter outlining Diaghilev’s artistic heritage, as well as Paris before the arrival of his company, the first section deals with the *Ballets Russes*’s early *modus operandi*; focusing on Nikolai Tcherepnin’s *Le Pavillon d’Armide* and Reynaldo Hahn’s *Le Dieu bleu*. The next explores the *Ballets Russes* in the wake of *Le Sacre du Printemps*, using Erik Satie’s *Parade* as an example of a ballet indebted to Stravinsky’s innovations. However, influence was not entirely a one-way phenomenon, and part of this section also discusses connections between the early *Ballets Russes* works and *Le Sacre*. Finally, the season of French ballets performed in 1924 allows me to reflect on the stylistic changes that occurred in the later years of the company, using Darius Milhaud’s *Le Train bleu*, Georges Auric’s *Les Fâcheux*, and Francis Poulenc’s *Les Biches* as examples of the company’s shift to an enterprise that placed greater emphasis on the visual.

This research argues that even the lesser-known works, despite their apparent lack of musical innovation, contributed to the more path-breaking scores that have come to command scholarly interest. Moreover, the seasons I have highlighted reflect the changing ideologies of Diaghilev and his company, as it evolved from a Russian troupe inspired by the *Mir Iskusstva*, to a European artistic collective presenting the ideas of Cocteau and *Les Six* to Paris.

Areas of future research extend from this thesis, as many other lesser-known ballets not encompassed here would clearly benefit from detailed scrutiny. Applying the principles of musical examination here outlined, together with an open-minded approach to new historical perspectives, should further help to redress the balance of scholarly attention that has skewed the overall understanding of the *Ballets Russes*. 

5
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Acknowledgement

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Conventions

The ballet titles and composers’ names of my focal works are given in their French spellings, as current at the time of the Ballets Russes.

Many ballet titles are given in shortened form after their first mention (e.g. Le Sacre for Le Sacre du Printemps)

Dates provided for each ballet are of premières, unless otherwise stated.
Introduction: The significance and selection of lesser-known works

In a lifespan of only two decades (1909-1929), Serge Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes etched its name into the history books as one of the most influential companies in the history of ballet. Gathering together some of the most prominent names in music, art and dance and in the words of Nicolas Nabokov, acting as a ‘centre around which a great constellation of modern masters derived a precise if not easily definable direction’, the Ballets Russes produced premières of 68 ballets during its existence: over half of these are still being danced today. Because of this unparalleled body of work, the Ballets Russes has spawned an embarrassment of riches for academics from all disciplines. The symbiosis of the greatest masters of visual art, maestros of composition and visionaries of dance has proven irresistible to scholars from many different backgrounds, and has ensured that in the near century since the company’s collapse (at the time of Diaghilev’s death) the fame of the troupe and the notoriety of its founder have continued to grow.

The most critically acclaimed composers associated with the Ballets Russes - Igor Stravinsky, Serge Prokofiev and Claude Debussy - have each generated a vast amount of research. Likewise, the enigmatic appeal of the young Vaslav Nijinsky and the raw talent of Michel Fokine have drawn input from both dance and theatre scholars. Furthermore, a large roster of visual artists queued up to work with Diaghilev’s company - Alexander Benois, Léon Bakst and Pablo Picasso among them - and as a result, numerous large-scale exhibitions dedicated to the works each created for the Ballets Russes have been presented around the world.

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On 16 June 1913, the critic Émile Vuillermoz wrote that ‘some day the successive steps of this movement [The Russian Ballet] and its influence on our decorative art should be studied’.³ In the years since this prophetic statement many academics have done just what Vuillermoz ordered. It is with this overwhelming body of work in mind that this thesis attempts, with some trepidation, to add new information and interpretation. The brightest of lights has been shone on a small number of outstanding works, above all Le Sacre du Printemps (1913), and as a result a shadow has been cast on those surrounding it. Yet an examination of these lesser-known works affords a fuller understanding of the modus operandi of Diaghilev and his company. As John Drummond stated, ‘even those [ballets] that have been forgotten, by their innovation and ambition added several new chapters to the history of the theatre’.⁴ But it turns out that those chapters have not by any means been fully written.

The explosive première of Le Sacre on 29 May 1913 was a turning point within the company’s history, changing the trajectory of its output and shifting its focus so that it became known for the scandal value of its innovations. This phenomenon provides the prime motivation for my research. Initially I had it in mind to identify whether Le Sacre was a unique moment set to define the Ballets Russes, or rather a fluke of creative genius. However, it soon became evident that other ballets around Le Sacre had been largely ignored, certainly in the world of musicology, and therefore needed closer examination on their own merits. In the spirit of Drummond’s assertion, my selection of near-forgotten works focuses on those that were nevertheless important to the company’s evolution. First, I will consider some unexplored but focal ballets before Le Sacre that define the default practices of the Ballets Russes in its earliest seasons.

⁴ Drummond, Speaking of Diaghilev, 11.
Succeeding chapters will explore the impact of these early works leading up to *Le Sacre*, and the evolution of the *Ballets Russes*’s style following the war. Finally, I will investigate the ways in which post-*Sacre* ballets differed from those that preceded Stravinsky’s seminal work.

The methodology I will be using to unpick the various strands of the topic draws on aspects of cultural studies, ideas of gender and social history. Meanwhile, the inclusion of musical examples and my focus on how scores were created means that my work is also rooted in a more narrowly defined musicological approach. All the same, ballet music is functional, being created for the stage as part of a visual performance and not necessarily intended for autonomous existence in the concert hall. Therefore, it should not be expected to be as rich in intrinsic interest as concert music, and its value has constantly to be seen in the light of its relation to spectacle and choreography. My research accordingly draws on the ideas of scholars such as Lynn Garafola, and her extensive discussions concerning the *Ballets Russes* and dance, as well as Mary Davis and her understanding of the company and fashion. Building on the research of such academics, alongside my own overview of the music and information on how individual ballets were created, I seek to offer a new perspective on the topic.

For many years the only published writings about the *Ballets Russes* were non-specialised, since the topic had apparently become an ideal source for coffee-table books. The visually captivating exhibits from the company’s tempestuous history have provided an abundance of material for large, catalogue-like volumes. In recent years this has changed, however, and academic interest in the topic has placed it on a higher platform, inviting in-depth study from a variety of disciplines. Nonetheless, the musical history of the company has still been comparatively ignored, with focus placed on either
individual composers’ contributions to the company (as with Stephen Press’s book about Prokofiev and Diaghilev)\(^5\) or on the artistic history of the company, as evident in Lynn Garafola’s *Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes*.\(^6\) Of the extensive collection of writings on Diaghilev’s company, these two are among the most relevant to my own research; Garafola for her in-depth study of the history of the company, and Press for the way in which he discusses Prokofiev’s music alongside a contextual understanding of the events leading to a ballet’s creation - a style I have emulated to a certain extent, albeit on a smaller scale.

Lynn Garafola’s *Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes* was first published in 1989 and provides the most detailed historical framework from which to understand the practical existence of the *Ballets Russes*. The work is not written as a historical chronology, but is instead divided into three sections, as summarised by Stephen Gallup: ‘the first traces the artistic evolution of ballet from St. Petersburg in the 1890s to pre-war Paris where Diaghilev founded the *Ballets Russes* in 1911 and concludes in 1929 when Diaghilev died, as did his unique institution.’\(^7\)

Garafola’s book provides the most comprehensive guide to the social, economic and political engagements of the *Ballets Russes*, explaining in great detail the complex relationships between the impresario and the various musicians, dancers, financiers and collaborators who helped to shape the company. However, as a dance scholar, her bias is towards the lives of the company’s celebrated choreographers, so that the way in which new ballets were presented on the stage draws most of her attention. Indeed, Garafola’s presentation of the social history of the company arguably romanticises the

reality of events at this time, and although her work is a valuable resource for understanding the genesis of the *Ballets Russes*, little attention is given in it to the more detailed aspects of any individual ballet’s final production or to its critical response. The book is as much a history of dance, as seen through the eyes of a *Ballets Russes* admirer, as it is a history of the company in its own right. It is in the nature of the book that no musical analysis whatsoever is undertaken, and indeed references of any kind to the music are fleeting. This can be seen in her various discussions of *Le Sacre du Printemps*, in which all focus is placed on the work’s importance as part of the ‘new ballet’ style created by Michel Fokine. However, with these potential shortcomings outlined, it should be noted that there are several points in this book that are indeed pertinent to the discussions raised in my own writing. For example, Garafola explores the notion of the *Ballets Russes* as a *Gesamtkunstwerk* collective: an idea discussed at several points in the following chapters (particularly section 2.3), and one which affords me the opportunity to extend and sometimes challenge her opinions on this theory.

By contrast, Press’s *Prokofiev’s Ballets for Diaghilev* first published in 2006, provides not only a thorough examination of the composer’s complicated relationship with the impresario, but also detailed analyses of the music. Focusing primarily on *Chout*, *Le Pas D’Acier* and *L’Enfant Prodigue* (all ballets discussed in greater detail in section 2.4), Press outlines the ways in which Prokofiev created his scores, with particular reference to thematic and rhythmic elements. In doing so, Press also places these compositions as part of Prokofiev’s wider oeuvre, and to some extent of that of his fellow composers, with particular attention given to similarities with Stravinsky’s ballets. It is for his engagement with Stravinsky’s compositions that Press is particularly important to this thesis: Prokofiev is by no means an unknown composer, and as such

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8 Garafola, *Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes*, 50.
his works will not be subject to analytical investigation in this thesis. However, the way in which Press discusses the mutual influence that flowed between Diaghilev’s two most prized composers does feature in the narrative of my own research, particularly in chapter 4. Press’s focus on one composer provides a model, and also leaves the way open, for the following chapters to discuss other aspects of composers and the Ballets Russes.

The nature of the dissertation, examining the Ballets Russes as both a musical company and a cultural phenomenon, means that several key terms concerning Paris and the arts, especially at the turn of the twentieth-century, are used. Each brings with it a baggage of pre-existing academic discussion, with definitions frequently being contested. My own use of such terms is not intended to question the meaning of any given word or to engage in discussions regarding its ‘correct’ interpretation. However, I have felt the need to offer at least a broad definition where relevant throughout the thesis: for instance, ‘exoticism’ is particularly addressed in section 3.10. Exoticism has often been identified as a specialism of the company in general, and the term has frequently been applied to ballets on a ‘foreign’ subject performed by Diaghilev’s troupe. This issue will be raised as part of an examination of Reynaldo Hahn’s Le Dieu bleu; rather than probing the discussion around the Ballets Russes and exoticism in this Introduction, I shall explore it at the appropriate point in direct relationship to Hahn’s ballet.

Having said that, the notion of the ‘avant-garde’ - frequently associated with twentieth-century Europe, and more contested than almost any other - needs to be defined from the outset. This term was disseminated through all fields of art, and its definition varies widely. Indeed, in some circles avant-gardism has since become almost synonymous with a variety of more specialised terms, which also appear within this thesis.
Modernism - that talismanic word which has been applied to a variety of artistic and musical movements for over a century - is often included under the wider heading of avant-gardism, as is surrealism. Indeed, many scholars have debated how to understand modernism from a variety of angles, including but not exclusively musical and visual art perspectives. Barbara Kelly, for one, tackles this very issue, introducing the notion of ‘ultra-modernism’ as a means of engaging with the discussion surrounding modernism and modernity, creating a distinction between different eras of modernism.\(^9\) I do not seek to enter into the already heated arena in which the question of what avant-garde or modernism ‘mean’ is debated. However, my use of avant-garde needs clarifying, as it has been broadly applied to the *Ballets Russes*, as, for instance, by Susan Au:

> There was, in a sense, a symbiotic relationship between the avant-garde and the Ballet Russes, for the modernists lent the ballet the air of contemporaneity and novelty that Diaghilev prized, while the ballet reciprocated by giving modern art and music wide exposure and popularity.\(^10\)

Consequently, it is necessary to explain that within this research that avant-garde is used to describe, as Jim Samson states, ‘any artists who have made radical departures from tradition’.\(^11\) Therefore, within the context of this thesis, modernism is the deliberate rejection of classical and traditional ideas on a broader scale, intended to challenge existing genres and innovate in new ways.

The above explanation of modernism, and the important role Kelly plays in defining such a key phrase, is symptomatic of the importance of her work to this topic. Her

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Music and Ultra-Modernism in France, published whilst my own thesis write-up was under way, focuses primarily on French music in the 1920s. As such, its influence becomes especially pertinent in the latter stages of this dissertation. My research lies in a similar sphere to Kelly’s: whilst her book documents and examines the impact of modernism on the works of composers such as Darius Milhaud and other members of Les Six, my own writing runs parallel to these ideas in relation to Diaghilev and his company. Kelly’s extensive research on the impact of Les Six on French music is used as a reference tool for my own study, in particular her detailed historiography of the group’s activities and publications. Significantly, Kelly focuses on works by Les Six that have been afforded little scholarly attention, most notably Francis Poulenc’s Les Biches (1924), rendering any further analytical input on this work unnecessary at this stage. As with Stephen Press, her writing style is one that I have taken as a template for this thesis. However, Kelly’s work analyses specific sections of a given piece in order to discuss the relevance of the said composition to the on-going development of musical modernism in France, and in doing so at no point does she seek to provide a musical overview of any one work. Additionally, the vast topic of musical modernism from 1913-1939 means that, although specific references to the Ballets Russes is made (such as with Poulenc or Milhaud’s ballets), these are in the form of footnotes to the overall development of music in France, rather than related to the development of an individual composer or company. Therefore, although my own research crosses paths with Kelly’s at several junctures, this thesis provides a more in-depth focus on the Ballets Russes and its own progression throughout movements such as modernism.

With the above key phrases explained, and the most relevant literature discussed, it is possible now to define the criteria by which my focal ballets were selected. The most celebrated ballets have already been accorded extensive scholarly attention, and are
therefore judged not to require re-consideration here. Nonetheless, a brief introduction to them is to be found in the second chapter (2.4), which serves to as a historical framework within which my chosen ballets are located.

All my selected ballets were original creations for the Ballets Russes, while the many arrangements of earlier works will not be looked at. Secondly, having generated limited academic interest in comparison to works by the likes of Debussy, Prokofiev and Stravinsky (as discussed in the following chapter), each can be labelled lesser-known without fear of contradiction. Finally, using the Le Sacre as a pivotal moment within the company’s history, ballets have been chosen in order to create a balanced representation of works on either side of it. The early ballets played an important part in the creation of Le Sacre, if only in the sense that they provided a testing-ground for some of the ideas followed through more systematically and radically in Stravinsky’s ballet. Without the styles they helped to benchmark, Le Sacre would arguably not exist in the form it does, and therefore neither would the works that followed in its wake. Two focal seasons, 1912 and 1924, provide book-ending examples of how the company progressed, even though hardly any of the new works produced then have stood the test of time. In addition, the explicitly French nature of these two seasons (as discussed in greater detail in chapters 3 and 5), offers points of comparison, allowing for an assessment of the changes within the Ballets Russes’s lifetime. The ballets from these seasons will be discussed as case studies: each will be presented in a stand-alone chapter-section, in which historical context, analysis of the music, and finally an overview of the impact of the ballet are offered, those elements sometimes overlapping. This analysis will provide a general overview of each of these works, with gradations of detail offered when necessary.
The ballets selected for discussion within this thesis are listed below (Fig. 1.1). For a full list of all Ballets Russes productions, see Appendix 1.

Figure 1.1 - Focal ballets discussed in this dissertation

*Le Pavillon d'Armide* - Nikolai Tcherepnin (1909)
*Narcisse et Echo* - Nikolai Tcherepnin (1911)
*Le Dieu bleu* - Reynaldo Hahn (1912)
*Le Sacre du Printemps* - Igor Stravinsky (1913)
*Parade* - Erik Satie (1917)
*Les Biches* - Francis Poulenc (1924)
*Les Fâcheux* - Georges Auric (1924)
*Le Train bleu* - Darius Milhaud (1924)

Erik Satie’s *Parade* is the exception to the rule within this thesis. Hardly an unexplored work, it is comparable to Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre* in terms of the reaction it provoked and the impact it exerted on other composers and artists. Because of this, *Parade* is considered as a yardstick for the shift in overall aesthetic for Diaghilev and his company in the wake of *Le Sacre*, whilst simultaneously opening up the question of whether it was possible to create a work with a similar impact. Moreover, this ballet acts as a representative of war-time Ballets Russes, as discussed in section 4.4.

Sections 3.3-3.5, which focus on *Le Pavillon d’Armide*, provide both a historical background for the work (including a segment on the similarities between Stravinsky and Tcherepnin) as well as relevant musical examples. This format, embracing both compositional analysis and aspects of cultural history, will be used throughout the following chapters, with more or less extensive musical examination depending on the relative accessibility of the music. This principle is not applied to every focal ballet, since some, such as *Les Biches*, have already been the subject of relatively intricate musical analysis.
The ballets will be discussed in chronological order, so that it is possible to identify their place within the general evolution of Diaghilev’s company, whilst also grouping the pre- and post-\textit{Sacre} ballets together. However, other groupings would certainly be revealing. They could, for instance, be categorised based by subject matter or style, as well as the resultant correlations that can be drawn with \textit{Le Sacre}. For example, Hahn’s \textit{Le Dieu bleu} was one of Diaghilev’s original ‘exotic’ ballets, which explored the inclusion of religious rituals, in this instance those of Hinduism. This idea was revisited in \textit{Le Sacre} in the following year, with Stravinsky’s ballet now being acknowledged as a defining moment for exoticism in music and for representing non-western religious rituals: whilst Cocteau includes Hindu themes, Roerich recreated his ideas of traditional, Pagan Russia in an ethnographically accurate way.\textsuperscript{12} Furthermore, the unusual choreographic style Fokine used in \textit{Le Dieu} again suggests comparisons with the ideas that Nijinsky explored in \textit{Le Sacre}, such as the inclusion of a bacchanal: something which occurs in both Ravel’s \textit{Daphnis et Chloé} and Tcherepnin’s \textit{Pavillon}. The subject of choreography and its developments in Diaghilev’s company could in itself determine the structure of any writing about the \textit{Ballets Russes}. An obvious example of this would be Nijinsky’s choreography for \textit{Le Sacre}, in which he created dance with a new kind of physicality. This style reappeared four years later in Massine’s 1917 choreography for \textit{Parade}, with both ballets featuring unnatural movements and a rejection of classical ballet conventions. As a final example, one could group works based on their use of female dominance, sexual martyrdom and Diaghilev’s rejection of heteronormative roles, as will be discussed in chapters 2 and 3.

\textsuperscript{12} The idea of an ethnographically informed setting by Roerich is discussed at length by Martin Zenck, in ‘Ritual or Imaginary Ethnography in Stravinsky’s “\textit{Le Sacre du Printemps}?”’, \textit{The World of Music}, 40 (1998), 61-78.
These focal ballets have been chosen, within the parameters outlined above, because each is indicative of an emerging creative style for the *Ballets Russes*. For example, Tcherepnin’s ballets provide a template for the early artistic process for Diaghilev and his troupe, whilst Hahn’s *Le Dieu bleu* provides an opportunity to discuss exoticism within the pre-*Sacre* company. Similarly, the final sections within this thesis discuss the ways in which the modernist ideas of *Les Six* helped to steer the *Ballets Russes* from a principally Russian musical company to one that prided itself on its visually captivating, European productions.

This research has not been without its complications. Having decided to tackle the lesser-known works, there was inherently a difficulty in accessing relevant materials. Many of the complete scores, and most evidence of the scenery and (in particular) original choreographic sketches, have been lost. Therefore, particular difficulties arise when discussing the *Ballets Russes*’s choreography, because of the inherent limitations in accessing original materials. Very few ballets were recorded in any Labonation-style scoring, and much of the generally understood knowledge on the subject is based only on eye-witness accounts and iconography, rather than any definitive and replicable instructions. This means that there are definite restrictions to studying the choreography of the company in depth. However, there are some notable dance scholars who have tackled this topic, such as Joan Acocella, Jonnie Greene, and the already mentioned Lynn Garafola. The writings of these academics will form the basis of my understanding of any choreography relevant to my focal ballets.

Whilst the scores and designs for the more celebrated works have remained largely in circulation, it has become increasingly difficult to reimagine the original settings of the ballets that, in the past decades, have faded from memory. The library at the Paris
Opéra, where I spent some time researching this topic in October 2013, does contain
cast lists for various productions, photographic evidence of designs and productions,
and a selection of letters between relevant collaborators. However, the materials for the
works performed outside Paris are far less readily accessible. A complete history of the
*Ballets Russes*, examining all the ballets to an extent similar to within this thesis, thus
faces enormous obstacles. Nonetheless, this should not detract from the potential
advances in academic perspective that could be gained from challenging the existing
vantage-point from which scholars have examined Diaghilev and his company. For
example, my use of the 1924 season as a period reflecting the company’s change in
national influence could stimulate further research into the *Ballets Russes* as a French
company, or even, as the ‘*Ballets Français*’.

A separate appendix accompanies this thesis, containing my own translations from
score annotations, ballet synopses and relevant timelines pertinent to each chapter, and
as such it will be referenced throughout. This appendix is the only place where this
information has been collated and presented in an easily accessible format. It may
therefore serve a reference tool.

In sum, this thesis will discuss a selection of eight ballets in chronological order,
 focusing on lesser-known compositions. These works will be divided between three
 chapters (pre-Sacre works, *Le Sacre du Printemps* and *Parade*, and post-Sacre works),
 which follow my introduction and an opening section on the origins of the company.
 This research reveals that, although undeniably a seminal moment for the *Ballets
 Russes*, Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre du Printemps* has inadvertently over-shadowed lesser-
 known works, which have subsequently been marginalised from overviews of the
*Ballets Russes* phenomenon. Although it was obviously a ground-breaking creation, *Le
Sacre du Printemps was part of a larger arc of artistic and musical development, possible only because of the unified approach to creating works that had been established with its forerunners.

Before a discussion of these lesser-known works begins, however, it is necessary to explore the background and context from which the Ballets Russes was created, and how it came to perform in Paris. Therefore, the following chapter outlines the Ballets Russes at the beginning of its life, identifying the origins of the now celebrated company, as well as contextualising Diaghilev and his company’s arrival in Paris in the early years of the twentieth-century.
Serge Diaghilev, the visionary leader of the *Ballets Russes*, moulded his company into a unique entity, capable of achieving both artistic and commercial success. Under Diaghilev’s guidance, the *Ballets Russes* brought a new, more inclusive approach to the staging of a ballet. Borrowing from Wagner’s notion of *Gesamtkunstwerk* (‘Total Artwork’), Diaghilev encouraged a unified and immersive approach to ballet production, in which staging, music, dance, and costumes became equally significant. As Lynn Garafola states, ‘common wisdom holds that collaboration - that talismanic word - was the key to the *Ballets Russes* success’. It is the ways in which Diaghilev created his company under this banner that will be the focus of this chapter. However, before a discussion of Diaghilev and his ideas can take place, it is necessary to examine another contributor to the success of the *Ballets Russes*: the city in which they were resident. When they arrived in Paris they became part of a highly cultured and multicultural community, which had recently begun to outgrow its pre-existing suspicion towards the East, and in particular, Russia.

**2.1: The Many Faces of Paris**

This dramatic change in attitude began at the end of the nineteenth-century, and continued until the First World War. During the two decades in which the *Ballets Russes* were in residence, Paris (and Europe at large) experienced a highly accelerated rate of change. By the time the *Ballets Russes* arrived, the city was an amalgam of ideologies, and the ever-expanding population was a mix of liberal bohemians and conservative bourgeoisie. Coupled with the thriving new art scene at the turn of the

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twentieth-century, this led to a seemingly endless influx of artistic talent to Paris. Described by Dan Franck as the ‘incarnation of tolerance [and] the champion of human rights’, Paris, with its beautiful architecture and romantic attitude towards life, attracted artists and musicians alike. They gravitated towards the city in which all ideas, life-styles and opinions were seemingly accepted with open arms. However, older generations were far more inward-looking, and a lack of understanding and a fear of the unknown had been the dominant opinions in much of the country before the turn of the twentieth-century. As such, Russia, as part of the exotic East, was feared alongside many other countries that fell outside European borders. Nancy Berman relates these misapprehensions to the lasting impression made on the Parisian public by the Marquis de Custine’s famous 1854 publication La Russie en 1839. Custine described a rabid, uncivilised Russia in which the finer points of European life had been passed over in this ‘savage state’. Although extreme, Custine’s account was typical of many French writings at this time: whilst Paris saw itself as refined, cultured, and peaceful, it viewed Russia as barbaric and primitive. As Berman explains, this idea began to change towards the end of the nineteenth-century, with the influx of Russian literature from 1880 onwards, plus new economic deals between Russia and France, leading to a shift of public opinion. However, it was not until the turn of the twentieth-century that the caricature-like opinions of Custine and others would begin to be forgotten. This coincided with the development of transport technologies and infrastructure, which gave new access to far-off lands; these systems allowed educated elites from Europe to travel further than before, and upon their return wax lyrical about this newly found Other. The accounts of these sophisticated and liberal-minded travellers helped to dispel the

16 Ibid., 67.
17 Ibid., 72.
'Russophobia' created so avidly in the previous century, gradually replacing it with an infatuation with all things Russian.\textsuperscript{18} Once so vehemently chastised and pitied, this vast Eastern nation spanning Europe and Asia became a source of curiosity rather than fear, gradually metamorphosing into a pin-up for the European obsession with exoticism.

One of the most notable contributors to Paris’s altered attitude to the East was the myriad of cultural exhibitions that began to appear around the city. These showcases were dubbed ‘milestones of global integration’ and ‘the genesis of global culture’, proving invaluable in engaging Paris with the outside world.\textsuperscript{19} Events such as these had become frequent throughout Europe and America at the end of the nineteenth-century, as exemplified by the 1889 Paris Exhibition, which provided the opportunity to see a large selection of displays incorporating both scientific discoveries and cultural artefacts. One of the most successful of its kind, this exhibition attracted 28-30 million visitors in total, with an average of 175,000 per day.\textsuperscript{20} Whilst it is most remembered today for Gustave Eiffel’s tower, the impact it had on the French public as the instigator of a musical,\textsuperscript{21} and cultural awakening should not be underestimated.\textsuperscript{22} Claude Debussy was just one among many artists who were bowled over by the opportunity it offered to encounter the exotic East.\textsuperscript{23}

The \textit{Ballets Russes} capitalised on this growing infatuation with the East, with Diaghilev and his troupe being amongst the first groups to shift its base from the ‘exotic East’ to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 75.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Patrick Young, ‘From the Eiffel Tower to the Javanese Dancer: Envisioning Cultural Globalisation at the 1889 Paris Exhibition’, \textit{The History Teacher}, 41 (2008), 339-362; here, 340.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 341.
\item \textsuperscript{21} For more information on the musical impact of the 1889 and 1900 Paris Exhibitions, see, Annegret Fauser, \textit{Musical Encounters at the 1889 Paris World’s Fair} (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2005).
\item \textsuperscript{22} Young, ‘From the Eiffel Tower to the Javanese Dancer: Envisioning Cultural Globalisation at the 1889 Paris Exhibition’, 339.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 357.
\end{itemize}
‘Paris’s civilised West’. As such, the Ballets Russes had a great responsibility in helping to form the new opinion of cultural Russia. It was a role welcomed by Diaghilev, who ‘from the start … rested upon a different set of ideological imperatives than his predecessors and contemporaries. First and foremost the Ballets Russes was galvanised by a sense of national purpose and identity, imbued with a commitment to cultural nationalism’. 24 Nicolas Nabokov explains that Diaghilev ‘had taken upon himself the task of acquainting Paris - and through Paris Western Europe - with Russian achievements in the fields of music, opera, and ballet.’ 25 However, this urge to promote all that was Russian would fade during his time in France. Diaghilev had left Russia three years earlier in 1906, and Europe (in particular France) became his adopted homeland for the rest of his life. His ideas, lifestyle and even the Ballets Russes itself all increasingly reflected his changed national allegiances. The ‘all-Russian’ programming of his earliest seasons gradually gave way to a more French-influenced output. Furthermore, the constant tours the Ballets Russes embarked upon also allowed the impresario and his troupe to visit large parts of Europe and South America. Each time Diaghilev and his company explored a new country, the cultural influences of that nation can be seen to permeate the following seasons. Jean-Pierre Pastori describes this mutation in national identity of the company, explaining that ‘insensiblement, son répertoire s’europeanise’. 26 It was largely Diaghilev’s chameleon-like ability to absorb the cultural traditions of his different surroundings that ensured the Ballets Russes maintained its innovative status. The nomadic tendencies of the company meant that despite much political and financial uncertainty, the Ballets Russes stayed open to new

creative ideas, and as a result also remained at the cutting-edge of musical and artistic life.

Nonetheless, what is constant about Diaghilev’s time in a multicultural and politically charged Paris, is that despite the ever-changing tides and constantly choppy seas, the impresario captained the company’s ship safely, steering the change in artistic vision of his company to evolve as the tastes of its audience did.

2.2: Diaghilev and the ‘-isms’

Diaghilev’s larger-than-life character has dominated writings on the *Ballets Russes*, partly because of his extraordinary ability to entice figures such as Prokofiev, Stravinsky and Picasso into collaboration, and partly because of his infamously difficult personality and colourful social life.

This extremely savvy businessman, whose own attempts at a creative career as a composer had failed, managed to carve for himself a vocation which allowed him artistic control over those who invariably had more talent than he. However, despite his many perceived faults, such as his stubbornness, many personal grudges, or inability to comply with financial obligations, Diaghilev succeeded in spearheading a musical and artistic revolution both in his native Russia and in his adopted Paris.

Born on 19 March 1872 in the province of Novgorod, Diaghilev epitomises all that was exaggerated about the wealthiest elite in Russia, living a life of luxury and absolute entitlement. Soon after he was born, Diaghilev’s mother Yevgenia died, leaving his
father Pavel Pavlovich alone to raise him.\textsuperscript{27} Soon after Yevgenia’s death, the Diaghilev family moved to St. Petersburg, where they took up a comfortable residence surrounded by some of the most respected figures in Russian cultural life. Pavel Pavlovich had a keen interest in music, which often manifested itself in evenings of musical performance at the Diaghilev residence. Serge inherited his father’s musical interests, becoming an accomplished amateur pianist and singer, with ambitions to be a composer. As he grew up, Diaghilev intended to follow his passion and enrol in the St. Petersburg Conservatory, but his aunt Anna Filosofova’s protestations to the contrary meant that the future impresario did not become a pupil. Instead, he studied composition privately with two of the institute’s professors, Nikolai Solovyov and Nikolai Sokolov, whilst reading law.\textsuperscript{28} Despite this highly privileged musical education, Diaghilev’s compositional desires were stopped abruptly by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, who upon receiving copies of his compositions informed him somewhat bluntly that he had no talent for the craft.\textsuperscript{29} From this point on, the young impresario decided instead to focus on art publishing and organising exhibitions, eventually settling on presenting music and ballet shows in Paris.\textsuperscript{30} Regardless of Diaghilev’s apparent failings as a composer or performer, his ability to ensconce himself alongside the most influential cultural figures was fundamental to his character, a trait that became apparent throughout his student years.

Having completed his law degree, Diaghilev began to find work in areas that supported

\textsuperscript{27} Sjeng Scheijen, \textit{Diaghilev: A Life} (London: Profile Books, 2009), 9. This book has been discredited as a source lacking in original, historically accurate research, by Hanna Järvinen in \textit{The Journal of the Society for Dance Research}, 8 (2010), 242-244. However, Scheijen’s borrowed ideas on Diaghilev’s life do draw together some key dates. Therefore, although this book will not be used in my discussions on the music of the \textit{Ballets Russes}, infrequent references to it are made when dealing with dates from within Diaghilev’s life.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 56.

\textsuperscript{29} Garafola, \textit{Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes}, 438 (7).

the arts. Arguably, his breakthrough position was as editor of the *Annual Yearbook of the Imperial Theatres* in 1899.\(^{31}\) As Annabel Rutherford describes, Diaghilev’s success in this role ‘gained him personal acknowledgment from the Tsar and an appointment as special assistant to the Director of the Imperial Theatres’.\(^{32}\) However, his rapid rise within the establishment caused bitterness from his colleagues, who in response complained about his homosexuality and overly flamboyant nature.\(^{33}\) When Diaghilev refused to change his mannerisms and dress to rectify this, he was dismissed from the Imperial Theatres.\(^{34}\) Nonetheless, despite its abrupt end, Diaghilev’s employment within the Imperial system serves to illustrate his constant ability to network, earning him positions for which many questioned his credentials.

An attempt to survey the panorama of the social connections between Diaghilev and his many confidants, financiers, lovers, friends, collaborators and even family, is futile. He was notorious both for declaring his closest allies as enemies for seemingly little cause, and for his tendency to remain friends with those who would back his beloved artistic ventures, financially or otherwise, regardless of his affections for the person. What was evident, however, is that those who had been part of Diaghilev’s entourage at one time or another would become key players in the history of the *Ballets Russes*. This is due to Diaghilev’s habit of relying on the opinions and advice of his close friends, as well as for forging relationships purely for financial gain. However, to suggest that his seemingly fickle character was detrimental to business would be wholly unjust. Instead, it is should be noted that Diaghilev was fiercely loyal to those with whom he shared a close friendship, and as a result his most trusted advisors remained allies throughout

\(^{32}\text{Ibid.}\n
\(^{33}\text{Ibid.}\n
\(^{34}\text{Ibid.}\)
many difficult personal and financial times. His eye for talent, undoubtedly shaped by his time studying music and art, and his ability to network (a skill perfected in the salons of St. Petersburg) were invaluable traits. It was with this highly experienced résumé that Diaghilev became the founder of the Ballets Russes. In this role, his name has become synonymous with the term impresario. However, he did not necessarily conform to the pre-existing ideas of what an impresario was.

The profession of ‘impresario’ stemmed from a rich tradition of theatrical origins, including both lyric and prose theatres. The role had developed from eighteenth-century Italy, where individuals were responsible for coordinating musicians, composers and theatres, to create musical performances that would in turn generate profit. As John Rosselli explains, in this respect, ‘impresari were businessmen’, no different in their desires for financial gain from any other tradesman.\(^{35}\) However, what separated them from theatre executives or programme arrangers, was that their input did not stop at simply booking talent and promoting events; many actually exerted artistic influence over how a performance sounded or appeared. Moreover, they were also responsible for keeping the peace between venue owners, performers, stagehands, and every other person involved in any production. In nineteenth-century Italy, impresari had been seen as public servants, which is to say that their role in presenting operas to regular theatre-goers made them responsible (at least in the eyes of the audience, who often knew the impresario by name) for bringing the ‘correct’ music to their home city.\(^{36}\) By the time Diaghilev arrived in Paris, however, this perception had changed, and rather than being held accountable by the public, Diaghilev himself was as much a part of the celebrity entourage as were his composers and dancers.


\(^{36}\) Ibid., 156.
Diaghilev’s image as a harbinger of new art and music had been forged before the Ballets Russes even arrived in Paris, with his ventures from 1906-1908 (the Exhibition of Russian Art in 1906, the Russian concert series in 1907 and his production of Boris Godunov in 1908) acquiring the new impresario, in the words of Lynn Garafola, ‘a growing legion of partisans, the embryo of the cultivated elite that formed his most important public up to the War’. Support from these quarters would prove invaluable in the early years of the Ballets Russes.

The skills that Diaghilev brought to this role were endless, and his first-hand involvement with his company’s productions reshaped how future impresari produced music (for example Rolf De Maré, as discussed in section 5.1). Diaghilev’s time as a student under Nikolai Solovyov and Nikolai Sokolov gave him enough technical understanding of composition to hold valid opinions on the works of his composers. Similarly, his experience curating Russian art exhibitions afforded him enough artistic understanding to hold his own during discussions concerning the various designs created for the Ballets Russes, a skill not all musical impresarios could boast. In addition, his ability to coax financial investment from the wealthiest backers, and to manipulate audiences and shape reviews, have since become the stuff of legend. It was this blend of experimentally minded exponent of new musical and artistic ideas and socially aware and politically engaged personality, which made Diaghilev unique, and were key to his role as editor of the Mir Iskusstva journal.

2.3: Mir Iskusstva

One of the most defining aspects of Diaghilev’s character was that he had been known first and foremost as an aficionado of visual art, as defined by his time working with the Mir Iskusstva. A decade prior to his involvement with ballet, Diaghilev was making a name for himself in the politically sensitive world of Russian art. The skills he honed here, as an impassioned advocate of what he believed worthy and as a caustic critic of what he did not, would become the hallmarks of his personality as he made his way into the focus of the Parisian public. Therefore, before discussing the Ballets Russes and its influence on art, we need first to understand Diaghilev’s own infatuation with the Great Russian artists.

Diaghilev founded the journal Mir Iskusstva [World of Art] in 1898, acting as editor until the publication’s demise six years later. Although this journal was not the only contemporary Russian magazine devoted to the arts, the way it was run, by youthful practitioners rather than ageing critics, did serve to distinguish it from other publications. The fashion in which Diaghilev became the publication’s leader is prophetic of his actions with the Ballets Russes a decade later. However, the ideas explored in this publication had been around for several years prior to his involvement, originating from a group calling themselves The Nevsky Pickwickians, sons of wealthy Russians who had literary and artistic aspirations. Their credo was that ‘art was subjective, individual, and expressive of personal feelings and thoughts’, ideas entirely contradictory to the established Russian schools at this time. Diaghilev had been part of the social circles from whence The Nevsky Pickwickians had emerged, and as such,

41 Ibid., 29.
his association with the group seems in retrospect to have been inevitable. However, Diaghilev was the first person to attempt to organise the collective, having the knowledge and political savoir-faire to become its self-appointed leader.

The *Mir Iskusstva* journal (a cover of which is shown below, Fig. 2.1) gave a platform to the new wave of Russian artists. Maya Gervits explains that within the *Mir Iskusstva*, ‘members of the group for the first time systematically studied Russian art from the eighteenth to the first half of the nineteenth-century’.

Figure 2.1 - Léon Bakst, cover for the journal *Mir Iskusstva*, 1902

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Significantly, the collection of artists extended their interests past the canvas, also examining stage-designs and architecture, as well as academic prose and the history of their homeland.\(^{44}\) These individuals included artists Alexander Benois, Konstantin Somov and Mstislav Dobujinsky, all-round artist and illustrator Eugene Lanseré, and painter and designer Leon Bakst.\(^{45}\) As Stuart Grover asserts, these artists were ‘typical of the group - retrospective, highly stylised, often dealing with erotic themes’.\(^{46}\) Ann Kodicek succinctly summarises the overall style of this collective:

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[\textbf{The Mir Iskusstvo had an}] \text{avowedly didactic agenda. To introduce the Russian public to art from the West that they would not have seen before; to reintroduce forgotten aspects of their indigenous culture; and to eradicate ingrained prejudices towards the interpretation of art.}^{47}\]

This reintroduction to indigenous culture is clearly linked with Diaghilev’s future ambitions to educate Paris in artistic Russian life. Furthermore, Diaghilev’s publication also sought to introduce new artistic styles, an idea summarised by Garafola in her discussions about the \textit{Mir Iskusstva}, stating that its focus was ‘converting the educated public to the aesthetic of symbolism’.\(^{48}\) It was this engagement with symbolism that became highly important for Michel Fokine as he began to explore new choreographic styles.\(^{49}\) Fokine’s understanding of symbolism, as defined by Garafola, will form the basis of my interpretation of this term within the coming chapters: ‘Fokine’s symbolism staked out ideological terrain: it embodied an individualist ideal that stood as the antithesis to the collectivist thesis of naturalism’.\(^{50}\) However, this definition would suggest that symbolism was only concerned with individualism, when in actuality it extends far beyond this. Symbolism is about more than the physical, it can also mean

\begin{itemize}
  \item \[^{44}\text{Gervits, ‘Russian Art and Architecture’, 42.}\]
  \item \[^{45}\text{Grover, ‘The World of Art Movement in Russia’, 37.}\]
  \item \[^{46}\text{Ibid.}\]
  \item \[^{47}\text{Kodicek, \textit{Diaghilev, Creator of the Ballets Russes}, 26.}\]
  \item \[^{48}\text{Garafola, \textit{Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes}, 26.}\]
  \item \[^{49}\text{Ibid., 25.}\]
  \item \[^{50}\text{Ibid.}\]
\end{itemize}
that elements of art are symbolic of elements of the human psyche, with particular significance in ballet placed on the more fantastical, dream-like aspects of any work. Therefore, symbolism within the context of this thesis refers to both the individualist and fantastical interpretations of the term.

The more detailed aims for the *Mir Iskusstva* were laid out in the form of four essays by Diaghilev, which were presented in the first two issues:

Here Diaghilev set forth the tenets of his creed: his belief in the autonomy and subjectivity of art, his worship of beauty and his identification of this with the revelation of the artist’s personality, his vision of art as an act of communion between the personality of the artist and that of the spectator.\(^51\)

Through his involvement with the *Mir Iskusstva* and the many art exhibitions he organised (as discussed below), Diaghilev began to promote Russia to the West, celebrating all that he believed to be unique about his homeland.

The *Mir Iskusstva* afforded Diaghilev the opportunity to work with the most influential figures in Russian art, whilst somehow steering the many contrasting opinions of those individuals towards one collective, creative output. This experience would prove invaluable to him a decade later, as he began to fashion himself as a musical impresario. Moreover, the principles of the *Mir Iskusstva* would remain a constant theme throughout Diaghilev’s time as leader of the *Ballets Russes*. One of the most defining ideas within his company was that of an all-encompassing entity of music, art, and dance, which had been a concept integral to the ideas of the *Mir Iskusstva*, as members had viewed stage-design as one part of an aesthetically complex entity. As Garafola describes, the group’s fascination with Wagner’s stage works was at the basis of this

\(^{51}\) Ibid., 26.
aesthetic ideology: ‘Wagnerian thought gave this “fusion” a name - Gesamtkunstwerk - and a theoretical framework, even if the means and model derived from elsewhere.’ Garafola quotes art historian Janet Kennedy’s statement that ‘ideas associated with Wagner and his operas were …. the greatest single influence on the attitude of the Mir Iskusstva group towards the theatre.’ Although Diaghilev’s time as leader of the Mir Iskusstva was valuable because it allowed him to hone his impresaric-skills, one could argue that he also learned a more important lesson whilst working with the collective, and that was the significance of a unified collaboration between the visual and audible.

This Gesamtkunstwerk-inspired style of stage-design became the life-blood of the Ballets Russes throughout the opening years of the company. David Roberts confirms this opinion, stating that it ‘had one aim: to contribute to the regeneration of Russian culture by creating the Russian version of the Gesamtkunstwerk, based not on the opera but on the ballet’.

However, Garafola herself questions the exact use of the term Gesamtkunstwerk in discussions surrounding the Ballets Russes, suggesting that it would be better to view Diaghilev’s interpretation of this style as a ‘quasi-mystical Gesamtkunstwerk’, placing the impresario as a ‘producer-autocrat’ within his productions. This idea would undoubtedly suit Diaghilev, who in his youth had a keen interest in Wagner, even travelling to Germany to listen to the composer’s operas. Indeed, Diaghilev and Alexander Benois, two of the most influential figures within both the Mir Iskusstva and the Ballets Russes, had been great advocates of Wagner, his music, and his ideas during their time in Russia.

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52 Ibid., 45.
53 Janet Kennedy, quoted in Garafola, Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, 45.
54 David Roberts, The Total Work of Art in European Modernism (New York: Cornell University, 2011), 150.
55 Garafola, Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, 159.
56 Scheijen, Diaghilev: A Life, 59.
individuals would apply Wagnerian ideas in the works on which they collaborated. Such was Diaghilev’s interest in Wagner that he even published (in the words of Rosamund Bartlett) ‘translated extracts from Henri Lichtenberg’s influential literary and philosophical study of Wagner’s music and ideas’ in an 1898 edition of the Mir Iskusstva.58

The tsarist control over opera in St. Petersburg and Moscow meant that it was only through concert performances, rather than staged productions, that Wagner was first heard in Russia, from the 1850s onwards.59 Nonetheless, his music quickly became highly celebrated, with his philosophical ideas becoming a studied subject throughout the arts, and as a result, Wagner had been evident in Russian musical consciousness since the middle of the nineteenth-century. Despite this, Diaghilev’s time in Paris altered his opinions on the Germanic school of composition, and it could be said that his later ballets favoured a promotion of French ideas over Germanic ones, with Diaghilev distancing himself from Wagnerian ideas in the aftermath of the war. However, Diaghilev and his company were still indebted to Wagner for his ideas on creation. Robert Orledge expands upon this point, quoting Edward Lockspeiser in the process:

If one looks back on the Ballets Russes as a vital artistic force created as a reaction against Wagnerism and the Wagnerian approach to art, an important point is missed, for there were many similarities ‘between the Symbolist movements, which had evolved under the influence of Wagner, and those of Diaghilev.60

Nonetheless, Diaghilev’s deliberate removal of himself from any association with Wagner further calls into question whether it is correct to appropriate the term Gesamtkunstwerk within discussions of the Ballets Russes. It is possible to see

58 Ibid., 67.
60 Ibid., 149.
Diaghilev’s early infatuation with the composer as merely the basis from which he would take on the role of ‘producer-autocrat’, altering the Gesamtkunstwerk style to fit his Franco-Russian allegiances. In this case, the specific nature of Diaghilev’s position as a ‘producer-autocrat’ further distances him from the Wagnerian principle of Gesamtkunstwerk. Diaghilev set the agenda for each ballet, had artistic input into each creation, and played an important part in identifying artistic trends and bringing relevant collaborators together. However, he did not contribute to the work in any practical sense: he did not compose, choreograph or design any of the ballets, though he certainly oversaw each element. This fundamentally differs from Wagner’s roles within his productions, in which the composer also dictated the designs and mise-en-scène. Instead, Diaghilev brought with him a holistic approach to creating a ballet: everything from the music and dance to lighting and publicity was created under his ever-watchful eye. In this respect, Diaghilev’s role as a ‘producer-autocrat’ meant that he was creating ballets by means of collaboration, under the direction of just himself, (an idea challenged by Stravinsky and Roerich, and later Cocteau, from 1914 onwards).

Accordingly, Diaghilev’s Gesamtkunstwerk inspired modus operandi, described by Patricia Faivre as ‘dance, music, set and costumes [being] in perfect harmony and the basic elements of a common artistic project’, will be referred to as a ‘unified collaboration’ within this thesis.61

Diaghilev had already established a reputation in Paris before the arrival of the Ballets Russes in 1909. His desire to showcase Russian artistry outside his homeland, as with the Mir Iskusstva, had manifested itself in two earlier events in Paris: first, an Exhibition of Russian Art in 1906, and then a series of musical performances under the banner the Saison Russes, which took place from 1907-1909. The Exhibition of Russian Art, which

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opened on 6 October 1906, presented ‘twelve rooms in the Grand Palais contain[ing] almost 750 works’ by Russian artists. This exhibition was well received, and has been acknowledged as a turning point in the artistic history of Russia. This was not, however, Diaghilev’s first major cultural showcase. He had previously created a *Historical Exhibition of Russian Portraits*, which opened on 6 March 1905 at St. Petersburg’s Tauride Palace and ran for six months. These two exhibitions serve to illustrate Diaghilev's ability to return a profit from his artistic ventures, whilst also furthering his own cause of championing Russian art.

Although Diaghilev had focused on visual art in the early years of his career, throughout this period his love for music did not waiver. Instead, whilst publishing *Mir Iskusstva*, Diaghilev wrote reviews of Russian concerts for several publications and maintained his position within the social circles of leading composers and musicians. Therefore, following the success of his Parisian debut as an exhibition curator, Diaghilev wanted to afford the same treatment to his beloved Russian music. With this in mind, he created a *Saison Russes*, which began in 1907, and which was the first time he had showcased his skills as a producer for musical works outside Russia. The *Saison Russes* would in turn give birth to the *Ballets Russes*, and as such it is a key moment in the history of the company. The *Saison Russes* included ‘five historical performances’, taking place at the Paris Opéra. Among these carefully selected works was Modest Musorgsky’s *Boris Godunov*, which when performed in 1908 was the opera’s première outside of Russia. As Irina Vershinina describes, this piece represented ‘a vivid national originality’, and

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64 Ibid., 51.
65 Ibid.
was chosen to best represent all that was good in Russian music.\textsuperscript{67} These performances also constituted Diaghilev’s first attempt at a full-scale music production, for which he enlisted the entire chorus of Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre, alongside the best singers from the Mariinsky Theatre, performing under the leadership of Feodor Chaliapin.\textsuperscript{68} This successful attempt to capitalise on the Parisians’ love for Russian music was the turning point for Diaghilev. Following the extraordinarily well-received performances of the Russian operas, he would not return to Russia to work, instead beginning to design future productions for performance in Paris.

A condensed timeline of Diaghilev’s involvement in artistic and musical productions is shown below, Fig. 2.2.\textsuperscript{69}

Figure 2.2 - Diaghilev’s involvement in artistic and musical productions

1898 - Diaghilev founds the Mir Iskusstva magazine
1904 - Mir Iskusstva magazine closes
1905 - Historical Exhibition of Russian Portraits - Tauride Palace, St. Petersburg: created by Diaghilev
1906 - Exhibition of Russian Art - Paris, Salon d’Automne: created by Diaghilev
1907 - (until 1909) Saisons Russes
1908 - First performance of Boris Godunov outside Russia - Paris Opéra: Diaghilev exports Imperial production
1909 - Diaghilev’s first season of ballet and opera in Paris - Théâtre du Châtelet
Beginning of what become known as the Ballets Russes
1910 - Diaghilev’s second season of ballet - Paris Opéra
1911 - Diaghilev officially founds the Ballets Russes

As this timeline shows, the founding of the Ballets Russes can be viewed as a progression from Diaghilev’s first musical productions, which developed from his time as an editor and gallery curator: without his success in creating exhibitions of Russian art, Diaghilev would most likely never have made the transition to ballet impresario. As

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{69} These dates are adapted from Kodicek’s, Diaghilev, Creator of the Ballets Russes, 120-122.
André Boll explains, Diaghilev went on to encompass many of the evolving artistic and musical movements within his time as an impresario. However, this skill (a key part of the Ballets Russes’s future appeal), was undoubtedly learnt during his formative years between 1905 and 1909.

During these twenty years.... (Diaghilev) passed through the “-isms.” While the avant-garde was fighting the last bursts of Wagnerism and of Impressionism, he was, at the time of Jeux, a staunch champion of realism. Convinced by Dadaism, and cubism with Parade, he flirted with surrealism.... with Balanchine’s Apollon Musagète [he was] on the shores of neo-classicism.70

It was this ability to straddle every movement, without conforming to just one, that separated Diaghilev from his contemporaries. His capacity to lead trends would steer the ever-evolving Ballets Russes throughout its twenty-year history. Indeed, his decision to stage ballets in Paris revolutionised how dance was presented in the capital. However, this revolution took place not because of the novelty of the medium, but rather by means of the radicalisation of it.

2.4: The not lesser-known

Although this thesis focuses on lesser-known ballets, it is pertinent at this point to provide an introduction to some of the most celebrated and widely studied ballets that were created and performed as part of the Ballets Russes’s repertoire. These compositions have come to shape the common knowledge around Diaghilev and his company, and by introducing them at this point, a wider contextual framework is created in which it is possible to better place the comparatively narrow scope of my own research.

Serge Prokofiev’s *Chout* (1921), *Le Pas D’Acier* (1926) and *L’Enfant Prodigue* (1929); Claude Debussy’s *L’Après-midi d’un faune* (1912) and *Jeux* (1913) and Maurice Ravel’s *Daphnis et Chloé* (1912) are arguably the most widely discussed *Ballets Russes* works, alongside those of Stravinsky (a complete list of his compositions for the *Ballets Russes* is given in Fig. 2.3).

Figure 2.3 - Stravinsky’s compositions for the *Ballets Russes*

- *L’Oiseau de feu* - 1910
- Pétrouchka - 1911
- *Le Sacre du Printemps* - 1913
- *Le Rossignol* - 1914
- *Feu d’artifice* - 1917
- *Le Chant du Rossignol* - 1920
- Pulcinella - 1920
- *Le Renard* - 1922
- *Les Noces* - 1923
- *Apollon Musagète* - 1928

Within this group, Prokofiev is the composer now most associated with the company, becoming one of its most influential figures and later dubbed as Diaghilev’s ‘second son’ after Stravinsky.71 Prokofiev’s best-known ballets - *Romeo and Juliet* (1938) and *Cinderella* (1945) - were created after his return to the Soviet Union, and as such have no impact on the *Ballets Russes*. Nonetheless, the experience he gained in his collaborations with Diaghilev’s troupe inflected those works, helping to shape Prokofiev’s oeuvre at the same time as indirectly enhancing Diaghilev’s celebrity.72 However, the ballets he did create for Diaghilev (*Chout, Le Pas d’Acier, and L’Enfant Prodigue*) became defining works of the final years of the *Ballets Russes*, allowing Diaghilev to return to a kind of ‘Russian-ness’, which had been lost during his time working with French collaborators (such as in the 1924 season, discussed in chapter 5).

This resumption of a Russian cultural idiom suggests an homage to Stravinsky’s initial works for Diaghilev. The influence of Stravinsky’s early trilogy (L’Oiseau de feu, Pétrouchka, Le Sacre du Printemps) on Prokofiev’s three Ballets Russes creations has been discussed at length. However, in order to better place the direct impact of Le Sacre on other composers, Prokofiev’s ballets and Stravinsky’s bearing on them, are discussed in greater detail in section 4.5. This separate discussion about these works is necessary, because unlike Debussy and Ravel, Prokofiev’s compositions for the Ballets Russes can be viewed as a reaction to Le Sacre, having been composed amongst the waves created by Stravinsky’s celebrated balletic trilogy.

Whereas Prokofiev was fully integrated as a Ballets Russes operative, Debussy’s position was much more marginal. His first collaboration with Diaghilev, L’Après-midi d’un faune (1912), has become one of the ballets most associated with the company, and when first performed it was considered a ground-breaking work, with a public reception that anticipated the scandal of Le Sacre. Pushing the boundaries of what was then deemed acceptable (at least in terms of scenario and sexual content), it caused a controversy of its own, which raises another element discussed in this thesis: the notion of the succès de scandale. At this level, an easy comparison between Le Sacre and L’Après-midi d’un faune can readily be drawn: both caused controversy. Nonetheless, unlike Stravinsky’s ballets, Debussy’s music for Faune had been created many years before the Ballets Russes staged the work, with the orchestral version Prelude à l’Après-midi d’un faune first performed on 22 December 1894.73 This in itself removes Faune from being a directly collaborative work, as the score was not informed by any of the visual aspects of the ballet, which followed 18 years later. However, the Parisian

public had already been won over by the music before it was fully staged, with the score being perceived as ‘something of a classic’.\textsuperscript{74} The 1912 production was thus novel in that it presented the work as dance, rather than as concert music. Its innovation lay in the altered relationship between narrative and movement: in Penny Farfan’s words, ‘rather than the plot serving as the occasion for dancing, the movement of the choreography through time is itself the dramatic plot’.\textsuperscript{75} This different emphasis on choreography as the primary site of meaning in the ballet, alongside the scandal that followed Nijinsky’s actions on, means that Faune may be perceived as directly precursory to Le Sacre; by pushing the limits of what was deemed socially acceptable, it acted as a testing ground for Diaghilev, proving that notoriety could help, rather than hinder, the commercial and artistic success of a work.

Whilst L’Après-midi d’un faune illustrates Diaghilev’s attraction to succès de scandale, Debussy’s Jeux raises the issue of a ballet being overshadowed by Le Sacre. First performed on 15 May 1913, just two weeks before Le Sacre, Jeux received a response ‘rang[ing] from mild irritation to mild acceptance’.\textsuperscript{76} This reception, especially when contrasted with the commotion created by Le Sacre fourteen days later, spurred Diaghilev to remove Debussy’s second composition from the company’s repertoire: it was never performed again. However, despite being largely neglected by musicologists during the time of the Ballets Russes, Jeux has provoked greater academic interest in recent years, removing it from the canon of unfamiliar works within this research.\textsuperscript{77} Nonetheless, the way in which the ‘scandal’ of Le Sacre eclipsed Debussy’s newest

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 227.
\textsuperscript{75} Penny Farfan ‘Man as Beast: Nijinsky’s Faun’, South Central Review, 25 (2008), 74-92; here, 78.
\textsuperscript{76} Berman, ‘Debussy’s Summer Rites’, 226.
\textsuperscript{77} Robert Orledge wrote an article published in 1987, which was one of the first pieces of scholarly writing dedicated to providing a historical understanding of Jeux’s composition, as well as a commentary of the construction of the score. For more information on this topic, refer to the original paper: ‘The Genesis of Debussy’s “Jeux”’, The Musical Times, 128 (1987), 68-73.
composition provides a prime example of a work that was undeservedly overshadowed at the time of its première, pushing the ballet to the margins in most examinations of the *Ballets Russes*.

Ravel’s association with the *Ballets Russes*, like that of Debussy, was also short-lived. *Daphnis et Chloé* was first performed on 8 June 1912 at the Théâtre du Châtelet, in the season between *Pétrouchka* and *Le Sacre*, when no Stravinsky work was heard. As Ravel’s first ballet, *Daphnis et Chloé* has been extensively studied. However, the original choreography for the ballet has been lost (with the exception of some early choreographic sketches and rehearsal photographs), making an examination of the relationship between Fokine’s movements and Ravel’s music problematic. Instead, Stravinsky’s influence on the score is what primarily brings *Daphnis et Chloé* into discussions concerning *Le Sacre*. Ravel was concerned that in the wake of *L’Oiseau de feu* and *Pétrouchka*, the Parisian public had become expectant of a new style of music on every occasion. From this apprehension, a new kind of compositional rivalry emerged, with Ravel rewriting parts of his supposedly completed score for *Daphnis et Chloé* as late as April 1911. Simon Morrison argues that the completed version of *Daphnis et Chloé* displays ‘a Stravinskian quality’, drawing extensive similarities between the *Finale* of *Daphnis et Chloé* and the early ballets by Stravinsky. Furthermore, although there is limited knowledge of Fokine’s choreography, the existing materials (such as critical reviews and rehearsal pictures) do indicate intriguing correlations of effect between Nijinsky’s dancing and Ravel’s score. Danielle Cohen-Levinas states that

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78 This was not Ravel’s first ballet composition. Instead, *Mother Goose* was composed earlier but orchestrated later and staged only much later still, making *Daphnis et Chloé* his ballet debut.
80 Ibid., 64.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., 69. This article discusses several similarities between Ravel and Stravinsky’s music, with examples to illustrate each extract.
Ravel incorporated ‘sublimated physical gestures or “pulsations” into the music of
*Daphnis et Chloé*, thereby transforming the music into a simulacrum of a hypothetical
choreography’.\(^{83}\) This idea of music punctuating or accenting the dance is evocative of
Stravinsky’s techniques, and was fully realised in *Le Sacre* in the following season.
Therefore, the similarity in compositional style and the close relationship between
music and dance means that *Daphnis et Chloé* forms an important part of discussions
around both Stravinsky’s influence on other composers, as well as an overall
understanding of the *Ballets Russes*.

The decisive contributions of Prokofiev, Debussy, Ravel, and Stravinsky were
emblematic of new ideas within Diaghilev’s company at various stages of the *Ballets
Russes*’s life. However, *Le Sacre* has become studied for such a broad variety of reasons
that it stands apart from the other works discussed above: its innovative use of rhythm,
metre, harmony and form, disguised use of Russian folk material and intimate
relationship between music and dance, as well as Nicolas Roerich’s ideas for presenting
Russian paganism on the stage, have all been forensically examined.\(^{84}\) Moreover, *Le
Sacre* helped to clear the way for Stravinsky’s later *Ballets Russes* creations, such as *Les
Noces*, which was indebted to the compositional practices of the earlier ballet, a point
discussed in section 4.5.

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\(^{83}\) Danielle Cohen-Levinas, quoted in ibid.
2.5: ‘Yet Another Spectacularisation of the Performing Body’

Paris’s connection with ballet long predated Diaghilev’s arrival in the city and acted as the epicentre of European dance throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1669 Louis XIV established the Académie Royale de Musique, marking the first French institution dedicated to studying and perfecting his much loved pastime, ballet. Originally an all-male institution, the Academy began to allow female dancers to take the lead in productions from the end of the seventeenth-century, and in this way the tradition of the prima ballerina was begun. In 1713 balletic education took another important step, with the Paris Opéra beginning its own dance school, an establishment still in existence today.

With such an august heritage, it is easy to understand why Paris has long been seen as the capital of ballet. However, the French capital was not the only city studying this art form, with a particular competitor being Russia. Moreover, as ballet went through its many evolutionary phases in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries, countries such as Denmark, England and North America joined Russia and France as leading exponents of the various new styles. Russia was likely the greatest challenger to Paris’s title as the ballet capital of the world, however, despite the different types of dance education each country practiced, France and Russia have been ‘united through dance’ since the eighteenth-century. This connection began in 1738 when the St. Petersburg School of Dance was first established, at which time the French dancer Jean-Baptiste Landé was placed as the school’s inaugural ballet master. The Imperial Theatre School was

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87 Ibid., 16.
88 Ibid., 150.
89 Faivre, *The Russian Seasons at the Châtelet Theatre*, 23.
90 Ibid.
subsequently formed in 1779, following a merging of this school and several other academies. Subsequently formed in 1779, following a merging of this school and several other academies. The St. Petersburg school was so successful, that between its opening in 1738 and a survey taken in 1888, 891 artists - 626 women and 265 men - had graduated from it. These figures show two things: the volume of people that had received training at the School, and the gender bias towards female dancers. The predominance of female dancers will be discussed in greater detail in section 2.5. This tradition of French dancers teaching in Russia continued for many years, with Charles le Picq, Charles Louis Didelot, Antoine Titus, Jules Perrot, Arthur Saint-Leon and (most famously of all) Marius Petipa being successive leaders of the Russian ballet. The employment of French dancers created a tangible connection between the Parisian and Russian academies, and despite the different styles of emotive presentation, the basic foundations of technique and athleticism were shared between the two cities. No figure better exemplified this connection than Marius Petipa (1818-1910), dance master from 1871-1900, and the most influential figure in Russian dance at that time. Petipa was a French dancer who taught many future Diaghilev collaborators, such as Michel Fokine, Vaslav Nijinsky, Tamara Karsavina, and Anna Pavlova, whilst in St. Petersburg. This French education in Russia meant that dancers such as Fokine and Nijinsky were bringing French techniques back to Paris, but in an evolved style that embraced the raw masculinity honed in Russia. Therefore, although new and exciting by virtue of expression, the Russian dancers (at least in the early years of the Ballets Russes) could be described as French by education, and Russian by emotion: the perfect combination to impress the Parisian audiences already used to Petipa’s style, whilst also exciting to those who opposed the strictness of it.

91 Ibid.
93 Faivre, The Russian Seasons at the Châtelet Theatre, 23.
94 Ibid., 24.
At the end of the nineteenth-century, the dance style being practised by the French schools was one retrospectively called *La Décadence*, and relates to female dancers in pointe shoes submitting themselves to the artistic tastes of moneyed investors.\(^95\) This period coincided with a decline in funding for the Parisian schools, which had a direct impact on the balletic output in the capital. Therefore, as Alexander Schouvaloff explains, ‘by the second half of the nineteenth-century the art of ballet had declined so much in the West that [it] all but disappeared’.\(^96\) In contrast, ballet in the Imperial Theatres in Russia had continued to flourish, with its dancer’s considering the Parisian style to be overly reliant on extravagant sets and devoid of any true representation of human emotion.\(^97\) This Russian revival was thanks in no small part to Petipa, whose involvement in some decisive moments for Russian dance rejuvenated the public’s interest in ballet. The works which best illustrate this period are the three by Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840-1893), which have remained emblematic of ballet to this day: *Le Lac des cygnes*, 1877 (choreography by Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov), *Le Belle au Bois Dormant*, 1890 (choreography by Marius Petipa) and *Casse-noisette*, 1892 (choreography by Georges Balanchine - although Petipa had an influence).\(^98\) These pieces epitomised the Romantic and Classical ideas of ballet: large ensembles dancing in unison, solo ballerinas dancing on pointe, elaborate staging and scenarios based on fairy tales. Importantly, such ballets were fashionable, and as Parisian ballet was facing a steady decline in popularity (an anti-climax from the reception for ballets such as *La Sylphide* - Jean Schneitzhoeffer, 1832), Russian dance had reached its peak.

\(^{95}\) Greskovic, *Ballet 101*, 84.
\(^{97}\) Kodicek, *Diaghilev, Creator of the Ballets Russes*, 87.
On the back of this decline, Diaghilev’s company arrived in Paris ready to explore new ideas for ballet, highlighting by contrast the limitations of their Parisian counterparts.\(^9^9\) Because of its new, physical style, the 1909 appearance of the *Ballets Russes* in Paris brought with it a revolution in European ballet, which continued after the end of the company. Ilyana Karthas discusses this revival of ballet, stating that:

> Ballet re-entered the cultural consciousness of Western Europe and gained international allure between 1909 and 1938 - a period when notions about the body, athleticism, nationalism, gender, sexuality, politics and the arts were being radically rethought and transformed.\(^1^0^0\)

Karthas continues, that having once been the pride of royal courts, ‘at the end of the nineteenth-century, ballet was reduced to a feminized, eroticized, and often popular entertainment’.\(^1^0^1\) This perception of contemporary ballet as effeminate played an important part in the success of the *Ballets Russes*, allowing the company to change how ballet was danced, but also the way in which companies were constructed. At the beginning of its 1909 season, the *Ballets Russes* had nearly eighty dancers on its register. This number is larger than today’s typical company, but half the size of either the Mariinsky or Bolshoi companies at the time of its existence.\(^1^0^2\) This 1909 company comprised 42 female and 34 male dancers.\(^1^0^3\) Garafola offers that this nearly equal gender split went against the ‘high degree of feminisation of ballet outside Russia’, creating a unique experience for the Parisian audiences, by providing ‘the unfamiliar thrill of testosterone’.\(^1^0^4\) It should be pointed out here that although unusual for theatre-goers at the time, the male dominance of ballet had previously reached an initial peak in Europe in the eighteenth-century, with female dancers usually being cast in supporting

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\(^9^9\) Ibid., 51.
\(^1^0^0\) Karthas, ‘The Politics of Gender and the Revival of Ballet in Early Twentieth Century France’, 961.
\(^1^0^1\) Ibid.
\(^1^0^2\) Garafola, ‘Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes: A New Kind of Company’, 34.
\(^1^0^3\) Ibid., 35.
\(^1^0^4\) Ibid.
parts and men taking all leading roles. Therefore, although seemingly new and exciting to the contemporary Parisian audience, the unorthodox gender-roles shown by Diaghilev and his company can actually be seen as ballet returning to its roots.  

For example, as discussed by Ramsay Burt, the Ballets Russes reintroduced ‘male partnering in the pas de deux’ to the West, as well as a male corps de ballet, as seen in the Polovtsian Dancers from Prince Igor (1909). Moreover, Le Spectre de la Rose (1911) showed Nijinsky as the clear lead, whilst Karsavina’s female role was purely supportive. A decade later, the Ballets Russes used the strength of the male dancers to reintroduce coupled lifts, in Le Belle au Bois Dormant (1921). This reinstatement of males as the dominant characters redressed the gender imbalance that many perceived to be prevalent in ballet (particularly in Russia) - Garafola summarises this opinion: ‘it entailed the displacement of women associated with the “old ballet” and their replacement by men identified with the “new”’. Garafola continues that the Parisian public accepted the new gender roles in ballet, brought about by the Ballets Russes, because the make-up of the audience had in itself changed. She continues that the new following for ballet ‘came from the highly sophisticated le tout Paris: the great connoisseurs, collectors, musicals patrons, and salonnières of the French capital - many of whom were women’. This audience embraced the ‘strength, athleticism, and scale of the male body’, which was being exploited in choreographies for works such as those by Nijinsky. As one unknown critic wrote in 1933, ‘ever since the Ballets Russes, nothing has appeared on the stage in the realm of dance that has brought as much novelty, quality and above all possibility’. It was with the enthusiasm of this new

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105 Greskovic, Ballet 101, 29.
107 Ibid.
108 Ibid.
111 Ibid.
audience that Diaghilev and his company could present a male-dominated dance company.

This topic is one that has been extensively researched, with particular interest placed on the Ballets Russes’s distortion of gender-roles within the fields of sociology and gender studies. In this realm it has been suggested that Diaghilev’s homosexuality was a driving force behind his preference for male dancers. Famously, the impresario was in a tumultuous relationship with Vaslav Nijinsky, his lead dancer from 1911 to 1913, favouring his lover over those around him and selecting roles that would best suit his talents (as discussed in section 3.11). Regardless of the reasons for the unconventional gender-roles in Ballets Russes productions, this new balance, in which male dancers were usurping the traditionally female leads excited the Parisian public. With reference to male dancers on stage, Charles Batson claims that ‘never in modern Parisian theatrical history had the public’s eye been so attracted, stimulated and excited’. As Franck further explains, this ‘choreographic evolution’ became the foundation of modern ballet in France.

In summary, up to this point Paris had been crucial in leading the charge for Europe as the greatest exponent of ballet and art. However, as Robert Greskovic explains, Diaghilev’s Russian invasion ensured that the roles of these countries were reversed:


with the appearance of the *Ballets Russes*, and its choreographer Fokine, ‘European ballet got a firm jolt of resuscitation’.\textsuperscript{116}

A highly important figure for the *Ballets Russes*, Michel Fokine was one of six resident choreographers to work for the company during its lifetime (see Fig. 2.4):

Figure 2.4 - Resident choreographers for the *Ballets Russes*  
(and the seasons in which each was involved)

- Michel Fokine (1880-1942), 1909-1914
- Vaslav Nijinsky (1889-1950), 1912-1913
- Boris Romanoff (1891-1957), 1913
- Léonide Massine (1896-1979), 1915-1920, 1925-1928
- Bronislava Nijinska (1891-1972), 1922-1926
- Georges Balanchine (1904-1983), 1925-1929

Each choreographer championed different ideas and techniques, whilst always advancing the company towards a cutting-edge style. Fokine, the original *Ballets Russes* contributor, helped to define the company’s place as a leading advocate for Russian techniques on the Parisian stage, whilst his successor Nijinsky drove the company into the controversial areas of ‘non-balletic’ movements and sexual suggestiveness. Similarly, Georges Balanchine’s time would see the company evolve into an avant-garde collective, in which androgynous and mechanically informed dances became the hallmark. These choreographers became as much a part of reimagining the ideas of the *Ballets Russes*, as did Diaghilev or any of his other artistic and musical contributors. Such was the influence of each choreographer that some academics have even divided the *Ballets Russes*’s catalogue chronologically according to this change in personnel.

\textsuperscript{116} Greskovic, *Ballet 101*, 53.
As the Ballets Russes’s first choreographer, Fokine is most relevant when discussing the arrival of Russian dancers in Paris. During his time as a pupil, he had been a highly successful student of the Imperial Theatre. However, he soon grew tired of the creative rigidity that was enforced by the establishment, seeking instead a less restrictive output for his ideas. As a result, he began to adapt the classical techniques from his education to incorporate a greater range of emotional language. Fokine believed that the best form of expression could be obtained by using his academic dance training for technical ability, whilst ‘bend[ing] its rules for the sake of dramatic unity’. These ideas came into clearer focus after a 1905 strike against the Mariinsky Theatre, a topic explored by Carrie J. Preston, during which Fokine lead the protests calling for ‘artistic freedom and better working conditions’. As a result of this revolution, many dancers moved to Paris, following Fokine and his contemporaries who believed the city held the key to unifying the techniques of the Russian schools with the creative freedom of Paris. As his choreographic tastes developed, Fokine began to form his own ideas on the aesthetics of dance and art, applying the resulting developments to his creations for the Ballets Russes.

Fokine was also vocal amongst artistic circles. For example, in 1907 he hosted a gathering of Mir Iskusstva members (including Benois) in order to discuss a paper by Pyotr Mikhailov entitled ‘On the subject of the desirability of the union of the world of painters, musicians and so forth’. Fokine continued to be a vocal proponent on new styles even after his time with the Ballets Russes. On 6 July 1914, nearly a decade after the artist strike in Russia, Fokine wrote an open letter to the editor of the London Times,

117 Ibid., 49.
119 Garafola, Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, 7.
which as Gayle Kassing explains, ‘outlined his five principles for ballet reform, which became the guidelines for the new 20th-century ballet’. These principles are listed below, in an abbreviated version:

1. Each dance should use new forms of movement suitable to its subject and period.
2. Dance and mime should be used to express dramatic action.
3. Mime should be used only when the ballet’s style dictates so; in other cases the dancer’s whole body, not only the hands, should be used to communicate.
4. The *corps de ballet* should be used for plot development and as a means of expression.
5. Ballet reflects the alliance of all the arts involved in it: music, scenery, dancing, costuming. Music should be a unified composition that is dramatically integrated with the plot.

From these choreographic principles it is clear to see points that have been adapted from Fokine’s time at the *Ballets Russes*, as well as those which can be traced as retrospectively evident in certain works. For example, point one is prevalent in *L’Oiseau de feu*, in which the female lead is transformed into the Firebird through spectacular movements of the body. Furthermore, points two and three apply to his work on *Pétrouchka*, in which the idea of a dancer using his or her whole body to appear like a marionette was fundamental to his choreography. However, point five is the most interesting within this manifesto, as it clearly correlates to his designs for Diaghilev, in which the idea of creation by means of collaboration was a constant idea.

The influence of each resident *Ballets Russes* choreographer on the overall style of the company’s output was immeasurable. No period greater exemplified this than the pre-*Sacre* ballets, which followed the tastes and aesthetic outlook of the leader of the Russian balletic exodus, Michel Fokine.

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121 Ibid.
Creating a Modus Operandi

Nikolai Tcherepnin and Reynaldo Hahn were among the first to compose for the newly formed Ballets Russes. Their scores carved out a template for composition as part of a unified collaboration, knowledge of which clarifies what extent works for the ensuing Ballets Russes seasons (and in particular Le Sacre du Printemps) were truly innovatory or a continuation of an established modus operandi.

3.1: A Privileged Youth

Nikolai Tcherepnin (1873-1945) has a special place in the history of the Ballets Russes, as he was responsible for the first score which was to be performed by the newly established company. Nevertheless, he has been largely overlooked in the scholarly literature, in favour of his compatriot, Stravinsky, and his own son, Alexander. However, Tcherepnin and Stravinsky shared a common heritage in both an educational and biographical sense, and their early lives were in many ways intertwined. Because of this, a brief biographical section on both composers is provided in order to illustrate the numerous similarities between them, and highlight by contrast the different paths their lives took: in doing this, one can view Tcherepnin as being outshone not only within the Ballets Russes, but in a more general sense, by Stravinsky as well.

Born in St. Petersburg on 3 May 1873, Nikolai Tcherepnin was raised in a wealthy

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122 There are multiple spellings of the name Nikolai Tcherepnin, including the following:
Nikolay Tcherepnin - as in The New Grove Dictionary.
Nikolai Cherepnin - the least common of the spellings, with most Western writings adopting the Tcherepnin surname instead.
Nikolai Tcherepnin - found more frequently in recent writings on the composer, is the version adopted within this thesis. This is also the form used in Ludmila Karobelnikova, Anna Winestein (tr.), Sue-Ellen Hershman-Tcherepnin (ed.), Alexander Tcherepnin, The Saga of a Russian Emigré Composer (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008).
aristocratic household. His father, Alexander, was a well-known physician to the Russian elite, with a patient roster that boasted highly influential members of the political, artistic and musical worlds. Such was Alexander’s stature that he was even present at the death of Dostoyevsky. Nikolai’s mother died when he was an infant, and his ‘unsympathetic’ step-mother Marie became an influential figure throughout the composer’s life. Alexander’s reputation, coupled with the family’s wealth, meant that the young Nikolai was raised in an affluent and well-connected home, which played an active role in the social engagements of the wealthiest Russians. Arising from these associations, the Tcherepnin household had a particularly strong connection with music, hosting Tuesday afternoon musical gatherings where the most in-vogue composers and singers would be in attendance, events similar to those of Diaghilev in his youth. It was from here that Nikolai’s interest in music began; with a rather pleasing symmetry, this process would repeat itself many years later when the composer was part of the musical elite, hosting such evenings himself. His composer son, Alexander, wrote fondly of such evenings in Paris:

Music in our home was a religion. I was the only child and, as a result, I was admitted to all musical gatherings and rehearsal at home (where the guests included Rimsky-Korsakov, Liadov, Cui, Glazunov, Stravinsky, Prokofieff, Diaghilev, Benois, Fokine, Pavlova, and Chaliapin).

What should be noted from Alexander’s recollections, is the names that appeared on his list of attendees. He names many of the Ballets Russes’s most important figures as guests of these events, and reaffirms Tcherepnin’s place as a significant member within this Diaghilev-lead collective.

124 Ibid.
The effect of Nikolai Tcherepnin’s early exposure to the Russian musical world reached its apogee in his student years, when, after abandoning his studies as a law student, he underwent musical training at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire, graduating in 1898.\textsuperscript{126} Whilst at the Conservatoire, Tcherepnin studied under many composers, before eventually receiving tuition from Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov.\textsuperscript{127} During his time as Rimsky-Korsakov’s pupil, Tcherepnin thrived, and the relationship between the two quickly developed into a close friendship, in which both men acted more as intellectual equals than as teacher and student.\textsuperscript{128} Following his graduation, Tcherepnin worked in a succession of prominent musical positions (see Fig. 3.1, below), returning to the Conservatory from 1905 as a teacher before progressing to the role of professor in 1909.\textsuperscript{129}

Like so many others during this period of world turmoil, Tcherepnin’s life story was a turbulent one, with the composer eventually living out his life in exile in Paris after the October Revolution. He left for France (via Constantinople) in 1921, after he and his family were granted French visas, having stayed in Tbilisi, Georgia from 1918.\textsuperscript{130} Cementing his place in the academic exclusive, Tcherepnin eventually took up the position of director at the Conservatoire de musique russe from 1925 to 1929.\textsuperscript{131}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{126} Marlisa Ross, ‘The Ballets and Operas of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945)’, PhD Dissertation, The University of Manchester, 2006, 35.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{128} ‘Biography of Nikolai Tcherepnin’, \textit{Tcherepnin Society}.
\textsuperscript{130} Ross, ‘The Ballets and Operas of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945)’, 36.
\textsuperscript{131} Roger Nichols, \textit{The Harlequin Years, Music in Paris 1917-1929} (London: Thames and Hudson, 2002), 262.
\end{flushright}
Figure 3.1 - A timeline of Nikolai Tcherepnin’s professional and personal life

1873 - 3 May, born in St. Petersburg

1898 - Studies composition under Rimsky-Korsakov - receives an advanced diploma from St. Petersburg Conservatory and marries Marie Benois, niece of the artist Alexander

1898 - Joins St. Petersburg’s Mariinsky Theatre as a choral conductor

1908 - Joins St. Petersburg Conservatory as a teacher of composition and conducting - teaches Prokofiev

1909 - Première of Le Pavillon d’Armide with the Ballets Russes

1909 - Begins to conduct for the Ballets Russes

1911 - Le Pavillon d’Armide chosen for a special performance by the Ballets Russes to mark the coronation of George V in London

1911 - Narcisse et Echo premièred by the Ballets Russes

1913 - Composition of Le Masque de la mort rouge completed (commissioned by Diaghilev but never performed by the Ballets Russes)

1918 - Son Alexander develops scurvy (influences decision to move)

1918 - Moves to Tbilisi, Georgia

1921 - Receives French visa and emigrates to Paris

1925 - Appointed Director of the Conservatoire de musique russe, Paris (until 1929)

1932 - Guest conductor of Boston Symphony Orchestra

1945 - 26 June, dies in Paris

Despite being an adopted Frenchman in his later life, the associates Tcherepnin had made in Russia would form the basis of his musical career. Significantly, his connections to the Belyayev Circle would prove important in his eventual collaboration with Diaghilev. Tcherepnin’s tutor Rimsky-Korsakov was the leader of the Belyayev Circle, a group of individuals who aimed to present Russian music in a modern form in the wake of ‘The Five’. The group’s patron and godfather was Mitrofan Belyayev.

Prokofiev studied both composition and conducting with Tcherepnin. The duo exchanged letters frequently, and consulted on various compositions. Tcherepnin also became a staunch supporter of Prokofiev and his works. David Nice, Prokofiev, From Russia to the West (London: Yale University Press, 2003), 44 and 63.
Born into vast wealth on his father’s side, Belyayev was part of an ever-increasing circle of exceptionally wealthy Russians with an expensive hobby of funding artistic enterprises, and like all ‘good’ Russians at this time, he was ‘loyal to the Tsar […] and patriotic’. However, Belyayev was highly educated, and provided much more than just money to this cause. He used his seemingly infinite capital to support his great love of music, through such ventures as creating a publishing house to support his favoured composers. An amateur string player himself, he revered the musicians who could create and play the music he so admired. In 1884 Belyayev was placed in complete control of his father’s estate, and from this point he dedicated himself to ‘the advancement of Russian music’, taking a particular interest in the works of the young Alexander Glazunov. Funded by Belyayev, a collection of composers began to meet on Fridays, earning them the title The Belyayev Circle. Within this group, the likes of Glazunov and Anatoly Lyadov began to discuss ideas together with Rimsky-Korsakov, on which basis a New Russian School of composition was created. It was Tcherepnin’s association with the Belyayev Circle that would prove key in his career as both a composer and teacher, with the friends made in these gatherings becoming the ones who championed his involvement with the Ballets Russes.

On the back of Tcherepnin’s impressive *curriculum vitae*, and his connection to the Belyayev Circle, it can be argued that he has received far greater credit for his academic achievements (as well as for fathering his more famous son, Alexander) than for his musical output. Nonetheless, his compositional catalogue was extensive, including seven complete ballets (as shown in Fig. 3.2), alongside numerous single balletic scenes.

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134 Ibid.
135 Ibid.
Figure 3.2 - Nikolai Tcherepnin’s ballets

1901-1907 - *Le Pavillon d’Armide* - performed by the *Ballets Russes*
1911 - *Narcissus and Echo* - performed by the *Ballets Russes*
1912 - *Mask of the Red Death*
1916 - *The Tale of the Princess Ulyba*
1912 - *Mask of the Red Death*
1916 - *The Tale of the Princess Ulyba*
1922 - *Dionysius*
1923 - *Russian Fairy Tales*
1937 - *Golden Fish*

The *Ballets Russes* performed only Tcherepnin’s first two ballets. However, his association with the company did not end with the première of *Narcisse* in 1911. Instead, he took up the baton for Diaghilev, conducting for the company in Paris, London, Berlin, Monte Carlo and Rome, whilst working on some of the most famous ballets in the company’s repertoire.\(^{136}\)

**3.2: An Invidious Comparison: Tcherepnin and Stravinsky**

Tcherepnin’s upbringing in Russia, coupled with his education at the Conservatoire and his association with celebrated Russian composers, not to mention his time with the *Ballets Russes*, are far from the only striking similarities between himself and Igor Stravinsky. Both young composers were raised in a musical household: Stravinsky in the presence of his singer father Fyodor (a celebrated opera singer who counted the likes of Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin and Musorgsky amongst his close acquaintances), and Tcherepnin among the musicians his father admired.\(^{137}\) Throughout their infancy both aspiring composers were enthusiastic and gifted piano pupils who also composed small melodies and practised arranging scores. For Stravinsky, however, it was not until a close friendship blossomed with his classmate at the Law School, Vladimir Rimsky-  

\(^{136}\) Ross, ‘The Ballets and Operas of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945)’, 36.

Korsakov (Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov’s son), that the possibility of a compositional education became a reality. The relationship between these two students led to their vacationing together at the Rimsky-Korsakov family home, during which time Stravinsky showed his early compositional sketches to Vladimir’s father. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov evidently found some spark of inspiration within Stravinsky’s early works, and from 1902 onwards (soon after the pair were first introduced and despite Stravinsky not being an official pupil at the Conservatoire) the young composer began frequent lessons with the master. Tcherepnin had graduated four years previously, having also converted to the Conservatoire from a law degree in order to study under Rimsky-Korsakov.138

The close relationship between Tcherepnin and Rimsky-Korsakov was a key aspect of the former’s early reputation as a composer and teacher. However, Stravinsky was also very close to his one-time teacher, and, as Eric Walter White suggests, Rimsky-Korsakov was actually closer to Stravinsky than to Tcherepnin.139 White describes the death of Stravinsky’s father on 21 November 1902 as a key moment in his relationship with Rimsky-Korsakov, as it altered the nature of their relationship from pupil and teacher to father and metaphorically adoptive son. Furthermore, White believes that the loss of his father ignited the rebellious Stravinsky to reject the tight constraints his family had placed on him, moving closer to the paternal figure of Rimsky-Korsakov and his family.140 During this time Stravinsky began to attend the weekly meetings of Rimsky-Korsakov’s pupils at the teacher’s home, eventually having a few of his early compositions performed during these sessions. This close friendship continued for several years, once again on the basis of intellectual equals rather than student-teacher,

140 Ibid.
in a manner similar to Tcherepnin a few years previously. Fig. 3.3 tabulates the parallels between the two composers.

Figure 3.3 - Similarities between Tcherepnin and Stravinsky

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tcherepnin</th>
<th>Stravinsky</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Studied law at St. Petersburg University</td>
<td>Studied law at St. Petersburg University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Converted to composition at the St. Petersburg conservatoire</td>
<td>Converted to composition at the St. Petersburg conservatoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studied composition under Rimsky-Korsakov</td>
<td>Studied composition under Rimsky-Korsakov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next ballet for the <em>Ballets Russes</em> performed in 1911 (<em>Narcisse</em>)</td>
<td>Next ballet for the <em>Ballets Russes</em> performed in 1911 (<em>Pétrouchka</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducted nine ballets for the <em>Ballets Russes</em> (including his own two)</td>
<td>Had nine works performed by the <em>Ballets Russes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composed for the <em>Ballets Russes</em> from 1909-1911</td>
<td>Composed for the <em>Ballets Russes</em> from 1910-1928</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prior to their involvement with Diaghilev, the pair were on a more or less level playing field in terms of education, social connections and compositional style. Yet the eventual path down which each travelled created vastly different legacies: one as a genre-defining and ground-breaking composer, the other as a well-respected, academically-minded and faithful Rimsky-Korsakov epigone.

In certain respects the significance of the relationship between Tcherepnin and Stravinsky remains contentious. They are known to have had several interactions in their early life, and yet Stravinsky in his later years claimed little knowledge of these, making any definitive understanding of influence passing between the two more difficult to pinpoint. There are two main schools of thought. The first, advocated by Marlisa Ross, with supporting arguments from Richard Taruskin and the composer’s son Alexander, is that Tcherepnin was actually a
highly influential figure in Stravinsky’s compositional life. As Ross relays, a letter exists between Stravinsky and Count Osten-Sacken, in which the composer mentions his plans to take compositional lessons from Tcherepnin on the recommendation of Rimsky-Korsakov, however, there is no record of these ever taking place.  

Furthermore, Taruskin claims that Stravinsky’s *The Nightingale* Act I (1914) illustrates the influence of Tcherepnin especially clearly, stating that ‘no other composition of the young star was quite so Tcherepninesque’. In addition, Alexander Tcherepnin’s memoirs state that his father was frequently visited by Stravinsky seeking opinions on his compositions whilst living in Russia, particularly around the time of his early involvement with Diaghilev. However, the second school of thought, as supported by White and Stephen Walsh, omits Tcherepnin from any discussion surrounding Stravinsky’s influences. Instead, any possible similarities between their works is dismissed as coincidental and the result of a common educational and environmental background. One of the main reasons Tcherepnin is often mentioned in writings on Stravinsky is that it was either himself or Lyadov who was Diaghilev’s first choice as composer for *L’Oiseau du feu*, before Stravinsky eventually agreed to its composition.

Whether or not Tcherepnin and Stravinsky did share musical ideas in their earlier years, both would become fundamental figures in shaping how the *Ballets Russes* was first perceived by the Parisian public. However, it was Tcherepnin’s *Le Pavillon d’Armide* that first planted the *Ballets Russes*’s flag in Paris, clearly stating the aesthetic aims of Diaghilev and his collective.

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141 Ross, ‘The Ballets and Operas of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945)’, 64.
143 Ross, ‘The Ballets and Operas of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945)’, 67.
3.3: Diaghilev’s First Ballet

The newly formed Ballets Russes first took to the stage on 19 May 1909, at Paris’s Théâtre du Châtelet. On the programme for its inaugural performance was Le Pavillon d’Armide, The Polovtsian Dances from Prince Igor (Alexander Borodin) and Le Festin (Mikhail Glinka). Pavillon was the first work to be performed. It comprised music by Tcherepnin, choreography by Michel Fokine and designs by Alexandre Benois, and was performed by the company’s principal dancers, Anna Pavlova, Vaslav Nijinsky and Alexis Bulgakov.

Final discussions about a season of ballet for Diaghilev and his company took place in June 1908, with Bakst, Nouvel and Prince Argutinsky (among others) in attendance. However, Diaghilev had started discussing the possibility of staging a ballet several years previously. It is likely that Diaghilev saw ballet as a way in which he could adhere to the artistic vision of the Miriskusniki (the name given to members of the Mir Iskusstva), marrying together different artistic mediums. The impresario had initially harboured no great affinity for ballet, championing his much-loved opera and art over ballet and concert works. However, Benois provided the leading voice for the decision to perform ballets instead, by appealing to the ever-pragmatic Diaghilev with two convincing arguments. First, the skills honed by the Mariinsky’s troupe of dancers offered a perfect, pre-existing source of highly trained individuals, who were keen to escape the constraints of the Russian Imperialist style. Their type of dancing had been largely unseen outside Russia, and the opportunity to promote this already well-formed style to a wider audience promised both artistic and financial gain, whilst also adhering to Diaghilev’s desire to promote Russian culture in the West. Secondly, the cost of staging ballets was less than that of operas: with ballet, only a few different pieces of

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scenery and a relatively small cast were needed (a typical corps de ballet featured far fewer people than many opera choruses). Because of these positive financial and artistic factors, Diaghilev set out to put his sharply honed skills as director, curator, promoter and champion of Russia, to new use in ballet.

This decision to concentrate on ballet rather than opera for the 1909 season resulted in lengthy discussions concerning which composer should be selected. Pavillon was one of several possible ballets suggested at this first committee meeting; its connection to Théophile Gautier (1811-1872) through its libretto, appealing to the followers of the Miriskusniki, as the group had been greatly influenced by the writer’s works. Gautier was much admired within the Mir Iskusstva for several reasons, but his opinions on ballet as an all-encompassing art form, coupled with his work as librettist for Giselle (1841), resonated in particular with the group’s discussions regarding artistic unity. Moreover, although Tcherepnin’s ballet was chosen as the première work for Diaghilev and his company, it was not created especially for this occasion, but instead emerged from a complicated history, and as such needed little time to be adapted for the Parisian stage.

The ballet had originally been performed at the Mariinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg on 25 November 1907, with choreography by Fokine and designs by Bakst.146 However, the process by which Diaghilev came into contact with Pavillon, and the way in which it made it to the stage in 1907, were complex. Alexander Benois had originally created the scenario for Pavillon in 1901, based on Gautier’s Omphale, and wanted to find a composer to complete his ballet.147 Tcherepnin had been married to the artist’s niece

146 Serge Grigoriev, Vera Bowen (tr.), The Diaghilev Ballet 1909-1929 (Alton: Dance Books, 2009), 263.
147 Ross, ‘The Ballets and Operas of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945)’, 91.
since 1898, and the two men had become friends.\textsuperscript{148} Because of their familiarity, Benois approached Tcherepnin to compose the score for this venture, and the music was completed in the autumn of 1903. As early as 1900 Benois had decided he wanted to create a three-act ballet, following which he began to search for material on which to base his idea. Initially, it had been his friend and fellow artist Constantin Somov who had suggested \textit{Omphale} as a suitable subject for this project. Benois subsequently chose \textit{Omphale}, writing many years later in his memoirs that Gautier’s story appealed to him, because ‘the dramatic quality of \textit{Omphale} would give my ballet sufficient seriousness to save it from being merely commonplace and gay as the fashion of the times it prescribed.’\textsuperscript{149} Using Gautier’s plot as a basis, Benois adapted the existing leading characters and modernised the plot slightly, to suit his contemporary audience. Paulo de Castro describes these alterations, explaining the significance of the resultant changes on the overall effect of the work:

Benois … turned the original Omphale into Armide the enchantress, thus inscribing his work within a rich musico-theatrical tradition (of Lully, Gluck and Rossini), but also creating a plausible framework for the evocation of the Orient in a series of colourful vignettes, in keeping with the Baroque taste for \textit{turquerie}.\textsuperscript{150}

Benois’ adaptation was set in the time of Louis XIV, and tells the story of Le Vicomte de Beaugency, (for a full translated synopsis of the ballet and score annotations, see Appendix 2). The ballet opens with the young Vicomte sheltering for the night in a pavilion adorned with glorious tapestries. The young man falls asleep, and whilst he is dreaming, the tapestries come to life. He falls in love a figure from one of the tapestries, who resembles his fiancé. Following a period of flirtation, the pair begin their marriage

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{149} Alexander Benois, Mary Britnieva (tr.), \textit{Reminiscences of the Russian Ballet} (London: Wyman and Sons, 1941), 255.
rituals with the blessing of another fictional character, King Hydrao, who is in fact a magician posing as the King. When the Vicomte awakens, he finds Armide’s scarf lying next to him, blurring the perception between what was real and what was imagined. The Vicomte realises he has been the target of trickery and dies, as described by Ann Kodicek, of ‘fear and horror before the gloatin g eyes of his villainous host’.\textsuperscript{151} This synopsis contains clear parallels with some of the most famous ballets from previous decades, in particular those composed by Tchaikovsky. First the story of \textit{Pavillon} shows similarities with \textit{Le Lac des cygnes} (1876), based on a Germanic folkloric tale in which a genie is disguised as an owl, in order to deceive the central character.\textsuperscript{152} \textit{Pavillon} is based on a similar premise, except that the magician here is dressed as a King rather than an owl. Similarly, the use of a royal figure as a negative character resembles \textit{Le Belle au Bois Dormant} (1890), in which the evil (royal-by-marriage) step-mother ruses the naive princess: a detail similar to the magician acting as King Hydrao in order to trick the young lovers.

In 1903, after Benois and Tcherepnin had completed the original version of \textit{Pavillon}, the pair approached the then Director of the Imperial Theatres, Vladimir Telyakovskiy, with the intention of staging a full production.\textsuperscript{153} However, their request was unsuccessful; Telyakovskiy deemed the work unfashionable, owing to its overly complex structure and the lack of an obligatory waltz section. Benois was most likely surprised by Telyakovskiy’s response, as he had created well-received designs for the hugely successful production of Wagner’s \textit{Götterdämmerung} at the Mariinsky Theatre in 1902.\textsuperscript{154} Despite disagreeing with the Director’s opinions, the two were left with little

\textsuperscript{152} Robert Greskovic, \textit{Ballet 101} (New Jersey: Limelight Editions, 2005), 42.
\textsuperscript{153} Ross, ‘The Ballets and Operas of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945)’, 92.
option other than to pacify Telyakovsky, and amend their ballet accordingly.

In the following months, Benois and Tcherepnin worked to incorporate the structural changes requested by Telyakovsky: most notably the inclusion of a waltz section.\textsuperscript{155} It seems, however, that despite their best efforts the revisions were deemed insufficient, and the ballet was shelved indefinitely. Alexander Schouvaloff offers a slightly different perspective on events, arguing that Telyakovsky did agree to stage the work if further changes were implemented, and that it was Benois himself who effectively halted the production because he felt demeaned by Telyakovsky’s insistence on communicating with him through his secretarial staff.\textsuperscript{156} Be that as it may, the Imperial Theatres never performed the ballet. It was not until a few years later that a full performance of the ballet became a reality, following the involvement of Michel Fokine.

Fokine had always been a keen traveller, spending his holidays in ‘the hinterlands of Russia, far from St. Petersburg.\textsuperscript{157} Having completed his studies as a dancer, Fokine continued this hobby, now with a renewed vigour in order to find inspiration for his future works, inspired by the dancer’s revolt, as discussed in section 2.5. The result of these travels was a voluminous choreographic output, and between February 1906 and March 1909 Fokine choreographed at least two dozen ballets, many of which were relatively small.\textsuperscript{158}

During a search for new material, in this instance for inclusion in a student showcase, he witnessed the performance of a Suite of music from \textit{Pavillon}, adapted by Tcherepnin for

\textsuperscript{155} Ross, ‘The Ballets and Operas of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945)’, 93.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 7.
concert performance following Telyakovsky’s rejection of the ballet. Fokine was so taken with the score that upon learning that the composer was backstage he went to introduce himself and ask for permission to stage the ballet. This meeting was to bring an end to Benois’ and Tcherepnin’s five-year wait to see their most prized ballet reach the stage. As soon as Tcherepnin granted Fokine permission to choreograph his work, the process of creating a full balletic adaptation of Benois’ story began.

The fact that Pavillon was completed with music, dance and designs before Diaghilev and his company became involved with it, makes it unlike the other ballets discussed in this research. However, it still conforms to the idea of a work created by means of unified collaboration, since Benois and Tcherepnin had worked closely together before Fokine came on board and altered some of the structure to fit his ideas of dance. Therefore, although Diaghilev did not take his place as producer-autocrat in respect of this ballet from the outset, his adoption of the creative process, initially presented by his Mir Iskusstva colleague Benois, means that Pavillon can still be understood as important in helping to shape the Ballets Russes’s early modus operandi.

Its first performance in St. Petersburg on 25 November 1907 was met with a favourable reception. One interested spectator was Alexander Krupensky (now Director of the Imperial Theatres), who had high praise for the work and promptly requested that Fokine present the ballet for the Imperial Theatre. This complete staging would

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159 Ross, ‘The Ballets and Operas of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945)’, 94.
160 Ibid.
161 Michel Fokine, Vitale Fokine (tr.), Memoirs of a Ballet Master (Boston: Little Brown, 1961), 106. Le Pavillon d’Armide, also known as The Animated Tapestry, is referred to in some literature as The Animated Goblin. The use of the title The Animated Goblin as opposed to The Animated Tapestry can be linked to a mistranslation at some point in the production’s history. In French, gobelin means tapestry, however, the obvious similarity to the English word goblin would explain the appropriation of both titles. A goblin never appears at any point in either the ballet or the original libretto.
162 Ross, ‘The Ballets and Operas of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945)’, 94.
reunite Benois, as set and costume designer, with the work he had originally created and presented to Tcherepnin. Fokine’s only major change was to alter the structure from three acts to one act with three scenes. Fokine believed that ‘old ballets, which took up the entire evening, suffered from being drawn out [and…] seemed always to have much that was unnecessary’. In restructuring his ballet in this manner, Fokine began a trend that he would continue during his time as resident choreographer for Diaghilev. Fig. 3.4 shows the various Ballets Russes productions that he created, replicating this one-act-multiple-scene setting. Indeed, it could be argued that Fokine in many ways used Pavillon as a testing-ground for new ideas such as this: ideas that would become fundamental to the modus operandi of the Ballets Russes throughout his association with the company.

Figure 3.4 - Ballets in one act choreographed by Fokine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ballet</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Scenery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Le Pavillon d’Armide</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Tcherepnin</td>
<td>Three scenes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Oiseau de feu</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Stravinsky</td>
<td>Four scenes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pétrouchka</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Stravinsky</td>
<td>Two scenes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daphnis et Cléopâtre</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Ravel</td>
<td>Three tableaux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Coq d’Or **</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Rimsky-Korsakov</td>
<td>Three tableaux</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** An opera, but still choreographed by Fokine

The production of Pavillon by the Imperial Theatres was a significant moment in Russian music, as it brought together the trained dancers from St. Petersburg with the ideas of Benois, acting as a precursor to Diaghilev’s future. Furthermore, the choice of a young heroine as a powerful figure and the conclusion in (as Castro describes) ‘erotic fulfilment... often proving fatal to the male protagonist’ created a sub-genre of sexual martyrdom that can be traced through to future Ballets Russes productions. Indeed, Tcherepnin’s next ballet Narcisse et Echo (discussed in the following sections) also fits

163 Fokine, Memoirs of a Ballet Master, 108.
into the category of sexual martyrdom. In *Narcisse* the male lead is approached by the dominant female, who upon realising that she cannot have the object of her desire, seeks revenge on her potential but reluctant lover. It is the manner in which Narcisse is deceived that lends itself neatly to the strong female protagonist category. The sexual martyrdom is entirely literal in this instance. Narcisse’s weakness is his sexual desire for himself, which leads him to sacrifice his life in order to satisfy his impulse. Not only is a strong female character responsible for the eventual demise of the male lead, but also the sexually themed nature of his expiration is a shocking twist. This categorisation of the scenarios is another way in which one could catalogue *Ballets Russes* productions. The table below (Fig.3.5) shows *Ballets Russes* works in which a male lead succumbs to sexual martyrdom at the hands of a dominant female.

**Figure 3.5 - Sexual martyrdom in *Ballets Russes* productions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Le Pavillon d’Armide</em></td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Cléopâtre</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Schéhérazade</em></td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pétrouchka</em></td>
<td>1911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Narcisse et Echo</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Thamar</em></td>
<td>1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>La Légende de Joseph</em></td>
<td>1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Le Coq d’Or</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before the issue of sexual martyrdom in Tcherepnin’s ballet could become pertinent to the *Ballets Russes*, Diaghilev had to first become aware of its existence. It was during the rehearsals for the 1907 production at the Mariinsky Theatre that the impresario (attending at the invitation of Benois) first heard *Pavillon*. This occasion did not pass

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165 This list of works is compiled from Castro’s, ‘Le Pavillon d’Armide and the Ideologies of the Ballets russes’, 373. However, *Narcisse et Echo* is not included in this article. It is added here because it is discussed in section 3.6.
without drama, since Diaghilev, still *persona non grata* following his dismissal from the Imperial Theatres in 1901, was forced by the police to leave the theatre.\(^{166}\) Even so, the snippet of Tcherepnin’s ballet that Diaghilev did manage to see was enough to pique his interest. He returned for the opening night and according to legend, he spoke with Benois immediately after the final curtain, stating that ‘this work must be shown to Europe’.\(^{167}\) Whilst the authenticity of this story is questionable, it is not disputed that Diaghilev did indeed think very highly of the work, if for no other reason than that it had the backing of Anatoly Lyadov, whom Diaghilev held in high esteem. Lyadov, a member of *Mir Iskusstva*, offered a great deal of encouragement to Tcherepnin throughout the ballet’s creation, believing the young composer to be in the possession of great harmonic skill.\(^{168}\) Such was the Lyadov’s influence on Tcherepnin during this time that the first publication of the score was dedicated to him.\(^{169}\) Writing in his memoirs many years later, Tcherepnin recalled how the dedication arose from the mutual respect the pair held for each other:

Lyadov wished to associate his well-known name with mine, and dedicated to me such gems as his ‘The Enchanted Lake’ and ‘Kikimora’. I was able modestly to return the favor by dedicating to him my first ballet ‘Le Pavillon d’Armide’, whose music he liked.\(^{170}\)

*Pavillon* now had two of Diaghilev’s most trusted advisors, Lyadov and Benois, in vocal support of its production. The influence of these figures, coupled with Diaghilev’s enjoyment at witnessing the work on stage, cemented its fate as the first *Ballets Russes* production of its inaugural 1909 season.

This opening season was to be funded by the Grand Duke Vladimir, the uncle of Tsar

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\(^{167}\) Sergei Diaghilev, quoted in ibid., 36.


\(^{169}\) Ibid.

\(^{170}\) Ibid.
Nicholas II and an enthusiastic exponent of all things Russian. Vladimir and Diaghilev had been acquaintances for many years, and the Duke’s involvement with the season provided an invaluable influx of funds, as well as vital connections to the Mariinsky Theatre (from whose stores several of the costumes and designs were borrowed).\textsuperscript{171} However, soon after the contract between the two had been agreed, the Duke died, and therefore the \textit{Ballets Russes} would need other investors for future productions.\textsuperscript{172} With this in mind, Gabriel Astruc (Diaghilev’s Parisian agent) approached a group of French investors in the spring of 1909, securing Fr.100,000 as capital for the following year.\textsuperscript{173} This collection of investors was made up of wealthy French nationals, many of whom were from established Jewish banking families. In the following season, between April-December 1910, Diaghilev developed these agreements further and negotiated contracts with major opera house directors and impresarios for touring productions, who were in charge of venues and orchestras such as New York’s Metropolitan Opera and The Thomas Beecham Opera Company.\textsuperscript{174} This support allowed financial certainty for the 1911-1912 and 1912-1913 seasons, during which time Diaghilev created some of his most celebrated works. This economically comfortable situation did not last, however, and in the latter half of the company’s life, Diaghilev struggled to finance his ballets. This issue is discussed in section 5.1.

It is difficult to say how much the \textit{Ballets Russes} spent on each season, and therefore, how expensive the company was to run. However, whilst on a research trip to Paris in October 2013, I discovered a monetary agreement from the 1909 season in the archives at the Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra, BNF.\textsuperscript{175} This particular microfilm was untitled.

\textsuperscript{171} Grigoriev, \textit{The Diaghilev Ballet, 1909-1929}, 11.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{174} Garafola, \textit{Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes}, 180.
\textsuperscript{175} Opéra site of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Kochno: Album 2240 (accessed 18 October 2013).
but appeared as part of a collection of materials under the heading ‘Ballets Russes’. This
document, typewritten with hand-made corrections, would support the above statement
about donations. The first page (see Fig. 3.6 below for a recreation) shows a contract
agreeing the benefits received for agreeing to contribute 100,000 francs. On the
following page (Fig. 3.7), a list of expenditures from the opening seasons is presented.
See Appendix 9 for a reproduction of the original microfilms.

Figure 3.6 - Financial contract for the 1909 season

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAISON RUSSE 1909</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of capital guarantee of 100,000 francs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits for subscribers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For a ten-thousand franc share:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 seats for general rehearsals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 seats for a première performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance into the theatre for 20 performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to the foyer of the theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% of the profits, should there be any</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.7 - List of costs for the 1909 season

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistance Publique</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Droites d’auteurs</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaliapine</td>
<td>55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autres solistes du chant</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solistes de Ballet</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corps de Ballet</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choeurs</td>
<td>55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchestre</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyer du Châtelet</td>
<td>65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aménagement et lumière</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicité (Journaux &amp; Arffiches)</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>565,000 Frs</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table provides a seemingly accurate account of the costs, as it lists Chaliapine as a
solo performer, which would fit with his salary for appearing in Prince Igor in 1909.
Moreover, it supports Garafola’s comments about the company receiving investments of
100,000 francs. What this document shows is that, although perhaps cheaper than
staging an opera, the production of *Ballets Russes*’s works was by no mean inexpensive, reaffirming Diaghilev’s need to secure monetary support. However, with the financial backing of several important investors secured by 1909, Diaghilev could begin to plan his opening season.

### 3.4: An ‘Anti-Wagnerian’ Ballet?

Among the few scholars dealing with the compositional style of *Le Pavillon d’Armide* (as opposed to its history or subsequent influence) is Paulo F. de Castro. One of Castro’s main points of discussion is Tcherepnin’s use of motifs. He regards Tcherepnin’s music as a deliberate rejection of Wagner’s widely emulated motivic technique, describing the ballet as ‘fundamentally anti-Wagnerian’.176 The following sections analyse the music of both *Pavillon* and Tcherepnin’s other *Ballets Russes* creation, *Narcisse et Echo* (1911), in light of Castro’s statement. Starting with *Pavillon*, I have selected the main melodic themes within the score, each of which represents a particular moment within the ballet’s story, as shown in Fig. 3.8 below. This use of thematic writing, in which a theme is a representation of a plot development rather than of an individual character or situation, certainly runs counter to Wagnerian leitmotivic writing as typically understood, though Castro does concede that in *Pavillon* motivic development does occur, but in a non-Wagnerian manner.177 This use of thematic writing and the implications of an ‘anti-Wagnerian’ method are explored in more detail in the subsequent section on the music of *Narcisse* (see 3.8, below). Ross, who also offers a brief overview of the score, describes the tonal framework of *Pavillon* succinctly:

> E major is clearly the tonic, and the dramatic scenes usually include the keys of A major and C major. However, these tonalities have no clear

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177 Ibid.
relations to any particular character...The opening of the ballet and the transformation of the tapestry are characterised by diminished 7th chords, and on both occasions they resolve onto the tonic E major.\textsuperscript{178}

Although Ross’s overview is a useful one, I do not agree entirely with her identification of themes, which accompanies this appraisal, as she lists only five motifs. In order to show where our opinions match, I have listed Ross’s motifs as part of Fig.3.8, alongside her comments as to where she believes each motif returns.

\textsuperscript{178} Ross, ‘The Ballets and Operas of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945)’, 148.
Figure 3.8 - Themes within *Le Pavillon d’Armide*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Identified Themes</th>
<th>Ross’s Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand and Noble Waltz</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armide’s Lament</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Theme 5: Plainte d’Armide’, [38] bb. 6-7. Also appears in No.5, ‘Scène et grand pas d’action’ and No.7c, ‘Variation pour Armide’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing Boys (Small Ethiopian slaves)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bacchanal</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter Magicians and Dancing Boys</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance of the Jesters</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above figure shows each scene/section within the ballet, and the separate themes I have identified in each. The following section discusses these in chronological order, from the ‘Introduction and Opening Scene’ to the ‘Dance of the Jesters’.

The first section, the ‘Introduction and Opening Scene’, is one of only three scenes that feature more than one original theme, with three separate themes appearing in this relatively short opening passage. The first theme (Ex. 3.1) sets the stage, evoking a park with an old pavilion. On the walls of this building hangs a tapestry, said to hold the spirit of the Marquise de Fierbois. The opening bars create a sense of suspense, with timpani rolls and woodwind-led crescendos supported by interjections from the whole orchestra. The first theme is heard as this sense of nervousness gives way to one of ethereal calm. The full orchestration of the opening bars is replaced by a languid string melody, supported by various solo woodwind instruments. As the first theme is repeated throughout this opening section, horns and lower strings begin to evolve alongside the melody, growing together until bar 52, at which point the entire orchestra is involved once again, and theme 1 reaches its full unfolding.

Example 3.1: Tcherepnin, *Pavillon*, Introduction and Opening Scene (Theme 1)\(^\text{179}\)

![Example 3.1: Tcherepnin, *Pavillon*, Introduction and Opening Scene (Theme 1)\(^\text{179}\)](image)

Theme 2 (Ex. 3.2) follows on from this string melody, appearing as the curtain is fully opened to reveal a young count entering with his servants, who hurry around preparing

a room for him to rest in. Starting with the flute, the woodwind pass this melody between them as the lower brass punctuates the first beat of the bar, and solo instruments emphasise the staccato nature of the passage. There is a lively, regulated feel to the music, which reflects the hurried gestures of the participants on stage. Theme 3 (Ex. 3.3) closes the opening section, while the action shows the young count approaching the tapestry with interest. The count believes he has seen the tapestry move, but before his suspicion can be investigated, his servants interrupt him and instruct him to begin his sleep. Theme 3 occurs at this point, with the flute and piccolo playing a much regimented melody, marked *pesante*, creating a sound similar to that of a musical box. The woodwind remain with the melody as the orchestra dies down to a very delicate pizzicato. This section reflects the emotions of the young man: after the bustle of the opening scene, his fear of approaching the tapestry subsides, and calm falls across the stage ready for him to sleep.

Example 3.2: Tcherepnin, *Pavillon*, Introduction and Opening Scene (Theme 2)

Example 3.3: Tcherepnin, *Pavillon*, Introduction and Opening Scene (Theme 3)
Although each of these three themes is heard in quick succession, there is no musical connection between them. Instead, the themes are starkly contrasting in many ways, including orchestration, tempo and character. Therefore, the overall effect of this opening section is a slightly chaotic one. The lack of inter-related material evident in these opening gestures highlights the separation of ideas between the different themes, constituting the first hint that the leitmotivic compositional style of Wagner will play no role within this ballet.

Theme 4 (Ex. 3.4) is the only gesture present in section 2, ‘Dance of the Hours’, setting up a template for the rest of the ballet. In this scene, a solitary clock ticks, counting until midnight. As the clock strikes twelve, a dozen young boys appear, representing the hour of the night. They complete a group dance, before returning to the body of the clock. Benois describes his imagining of this scene as ‘a procession of lanterns emerging from the monumental clock standing under the tapestry’, an idea eloquently reflected in Tcherepnin’s score. The metronomic feel of theme 3, which represented the disciplined nature of the servants, is developed in theme 4 to reflect the ticking clock. This mechanical rigidity also emphasised the uniformity of the ensemble dancing on stage. The minimal orchestration used in theme 3 to create a calm backdrop for the count also continues into theme 4, just as the young man continues to sleep.

Another giant of the balletic genre can be seen to influence the score here, in the form of Léo Delibes (1836-1891). Delibes’s score for Coppélia incorporated a section called ‘Waltz of the Hours’ in act III (Ex. 3.5), which was part of the ballet entitled ‘Festival of Clocks’, similar in name to Tcherepnin’s own ‘Dance of the Hours’. Because of Tcherepnin’s knowledge of the ballet repertoire, and the similarities the two works

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180 Benois, Reminiscences of the Russian Ballet, 245.
shared, this reference to Delibes is unlikely to be coincidental. Moreover, Coppélia had been a firm favourite of Diaghilev’s in his years at the Mariinsky, with the impresario once describing the ballet as ‘the most beautiful ballet in existence, a pearl which had no equal in the ballet repertory’.\textsuperscript{181} Indeed, Diaghilev and Benois had previously combined to bring the ballet to the Mariinsky stage, and the enthusiasm of these future Ballets Russes collaborators ensured that the Imperial Theatre performed Delibes’s ballet regularly.\textsuperscript{182} Therefore, it is possible that Diaghilev was aware of this connection between the two ballets, and as such, this reference can be seen as another reason behind Diaghilev’s selection of Pavillon as his opening ballet.

Example 3.4: Tcherepnin, Pavillon, Dance of the Hours (Theme 4)

Example 3.5: Delibes, Coppélia, Waltz of the Hours\textsuperscript{183}

\textsuperscript{181} Sergei Diaghilev, quoted in Richard Buckle, Diaghilev (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), 74.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 61.
\textsuperscript{183} Léo Delibes, Coppélia (Paris: Heugel, 1926).
‘The Scene of the Animated Tapestry’ is similar to the ‘Introduction and Opening Scene’, as three themes are present within this passage. The first of these, theme 5 (see Ex. 3.6), is initially heard at bar 280. Here, the expressive and sorrowful melody acts as a precursor to the more dramatic theme 6 (Ex. 3.7), which appears only twenty bars later. Theme 5, first played by solo clarinet, depicts the distant music that awoke the count from his sleep, as indicated in the translations from the score. In this scene the tapestry comes to life, first by radiating a brilliant light, before transforming the stage into an enchanted palace and garden in which Princess Armide and her maids appear. Despite the differing melodic lines of themes 5 and 6, both use very similar accompaniments to sustain the *tranquillo* mood, ensuring that the scene does not feel disjointed. In theme 5 the flutes play divided repeated triplets, whilst in theme 6 the strings play tremolo triplets in the same tonality. This similar accompaniment emphasises further the difference between the two focal melodies and the stories they represent.

Example 3.6: Tcherepnin, *Pavillon*, Scene of the Animated Tapestry (Theme 5)

Example 3.7: Tcherepnin, *Pavillon*, Scene of the Animated Tapestry (Theme 6)
First heard at bar 329, theme 7 is the final motif in ‘The Scene of the Animated Tapestry’. At this point the tapestry has begun to take human form. The sense of nervousness from the previous theme has given way to a regal, delicate sound. As the scene climaxes, with a glissando run leading to crashing cymbals, theme 7 reflects the shift from fear of the unknown to amazement at the arrival of Armide (Ex. 3.8).

Example 3.8: Tcherepnin, *Pavillon*, Scene of the Animated Tapestry (Theme 7)

*Moderato con moto.*

Tcherepnin and Benois’ decision to include a waltz section, at the behest of Telyakovsky, is the motivation for themes 8 (Ex. 3.9) and 9 (Ex. 3.10). The scene comprises two sections, represented by each theme in turn. Although the melodic lines for each theme are different, the timbre remains consistent, with the main melody being played by the strings and woodwind sections, whilst the accompaniment varies from the lower strings in theme 8, to strings and harp in theme 9.
The remaining five scenes are much shorter than their predecessors and feature only one theme per section. Theme 10 (Ex. 3.11) is the first of these isolated themes, taking place within ‘Armide’s Lament’. This sorrowful passage, marked adagio, represents the princess’s loneliness. The score’s published annotations (see Appendix 2) describe how Armide ‘wakes to the accompaniment of harps played by her helpers’, a direction reflected precisely in the harp bass line shown in Ex. 3.11. A simplified version of the theme prior to the harp accompaniment is first heard at bar 629. However, it is not until several bars later that the full theme (as given below) is stated.
Example 3.11: Tcherepnin, *Pavillon*, Armide’s Lament (Theme 10)

Theme 11 (Ex. 3.12) is one of the most melodically simple within the ballet. Similarly to ‘Dance of the Hours’, ‘Dancing Boys’ is an ensemble dance, which is supported by an exaggerated, rhythmic feeling. This technique of creating a rigid rhythmic structure for a group dance was typical of traditional ballet, and would have ensured that choreography for all participants could be easily constructed and simple to follow. This use of group dances would also have appealed to the Imperial Theatre, which was keen to provide material for its large chorus. ‘Dancing Boys’ is the first in a set of three short, ensemble dances that follow in quick succession. Unlike the majority of the other sections, ‘Dancing Boys’ (the shortest of these three) does not develop from its opening theme, instead remaining entirely centred around the few bars shown below (Ex. 3.12).
Example 3.12: Tcherepnin, *Pavillon*, Dancing Boys (Theme 11)

[Allegro risoluto]

Theme 12 (Ex. 3.13) is the only theme from ‘Bacchanal’, the second of this series of group dances. The overall character of this section is very different from the previous one, shifting from an organised and structured feel, to one of frenzy. Traditionally, a bacchanal reflects the actions of an unruly crowd or drunken mob, and Tcherepnin’s dance is no exception. The risoluto bass galvanise the complex melody into action and creates a forceful theme that stands out against the less dominant ones that surround it, contrasting most pointedly with the unobtrusive nature of the previous section’s group number.

Example 3.13: Tcherepnin, *Pavillon*, Bacchanal (Theme 12)

[Tempo Moderato. Risoluto]
Tcherepnin’s use of a bacchanal draws on a long stage tradition. In this instance, the most obvious comparison is with one of the most famous works to have been performed at the Paris Opéra: Wagner’s *Tannhäuser*. Originally composed for performance in Dresden in 1845, Wagner revised his opera for performance in Paris at the theatre in 1861.\(^{184}\) Wagner’s amendments included a dance sequence, as was tradition for pieces shown at the Opéra. As a result, a ballet section was included, and the chosen medium was a bacchanal. By including this type of dance, Tcherepnin acknowledges the rich heritage in which he was composing, and his understanding of the generic conventions within which he was creating. Ross explores this idea in detail in her thesis, and explains that Tcherepnin had a good acquaintance with the existing ballet repertoire,\(^ {185}\) understanding that ‘when composing dance music the ballet composer had an obligation to the dancer that it should be easy to follow’, an idea exemplified in his adoption of the phrasing and techniques of Tchaikovsky, and evident throughout *Pavillon*.\(^ {186}\) It should be noted at this point that this statement is entirely opposed to Stravinsky’s later opinions, with the composer creating music for *Le Sacre* that was notoriously difficult to dance. In this regard, Tcherepnin’s early *Ballets Russes* work, and Stravinsky’s seminal ballet, are worlds apart. As with a discussion about the place of a bacchanal in Tcherepnin’s ballet, it is also possible to view the eventual inclusion of a waltz as another nod to the historical trend within which this ballet was being created. Indeed, as explained by Richard Buckle, pre-*Ballets Russes* ballets frequently contained ‘obligatory marches, waltzes, mazurkas and polonaises’, as exemplified by Delibes.

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185 Ross discusses the similarities in compositional techniques in works by Tchaikovsky, Delibes and Glazunov with *Le Pavillon d’Armide*. She pinpoints six attributes that appear in ballets by these earlier composers, and can be traced in certain moments within *Pavillon*: Phantasmagorical dances, Waltzes, Exotic Percussive Dances, Majestic Dances, Feminine Dances and Heroine’s Dances. Ross, ‘The Ballets and Operas of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945)’, 50.
186 Ibid., 112.
Tchaikovsky and Glazunov.\textsuperscript{187}

‘Entrance and Dance of the Shadows’ is the penultimate section within the ballet. During this scene King Hydrao and other magicians enter the stage, commanding the shadows to dance, before raising their wands and making the shadows disappear. Theme 13 (Ex. 3.14, below) is a playful melody that accompanies the dancing shadows as they move across the stage. This theme is repeated throughout the act, shared between the horn sections and violins. The subdued nature of the theme ends abruptly as a descending riff is passed through the octaves by various instruments. This short closing statement reflects the menacing interruptions of the magicians on the shadow’s dance.

Example 3.14: Tcherepnin, \textit{Pavillon}, Dance of the Magicians and the Shadows (Theme 13)

\begin{figure}[h!]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example314.png}
\end{figure}

The final scene of the ballet is ‘Dance of the Jesters’. Again, only one theme is evident (Theme 14, Ex. 3.15), which is initially heard at bar 993. In this theme all sections of the orchestra interconnect to create a lively passage with a celebratory feel. Throughout the section several interjecting snippets can be heard from the percussion and brass sections, which create short-lived tangents away from the focal melody. However, despite these dalliances, the music abruptly returns to its primary subject at bars 1134 and 1153, reinforcing the importance of this theme within the scene.

\textsuperscript{187} Buckle, \textit{Diaghilev}, 83.
Example 3.15: Tcherepnin, Pavillon, Dance of the Jesters (Theme 14)

[Example music notation]

In summary, although at first glance Tcherepnin’s score may appear simplistic in its construction, at least in terms of modality and tonality, the instrumentation and resourceful writing for ensemble dances do provide important points for discussion. It seems unnecessarily grandiose to argue that Tcherepnin’s use of themes within Pavillon was a principled rejection of Wagnerian technique, though it may indeed run contrary to the latter’s practice. More nuanced is Castro’s statement, that ‘motivic development does occur, but in no way does it warrant any parallel with a true leitmotiv technique’.188 Ross apparently concurs, despite only identifying five separate themes:

The themes are never subjected to development in any way connected to the dramatic events, in the way the Tchaikovsky employed his themes… Tcherepnin’s use of motifs within Le Pavillon d’Armide is closer to that of Glazunov’s, where themes represent characters, but there is no real relationship between the themes and their development is not connected with the drama.189

Tcherepnin’s use of one theme for one plot-phase is surely an intentionally unobtrusive compositional technique. This simplicity means that although Pavillon does not necessarily stand up to scrutiny beside the operatic works of Wagner and his complex deployment of leitmotif, it was perfectly adequate in creating a sonic background for the dancers of the Ballets Russes to explore. This musical framework surely adhered to Tcherepnin’s presumed brief as the first composer for Diaghilev: to create music that

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189 Ross, ‘The Ballets and Operas of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945)’, 151.
neither overpowered, nor was overpowered by, Fokine and Benois’ artistic efforts, whilst acting as a vessel by means of which Diaghilev could announce the arrival of his Russian music on the Parisian stage. The only difference here, is that Tcherepnin had assumed his own brief before Diaghilev had given him one, creating a work that would, in the years after its première, conform neatly to the impresario’s vision.

3.5: Luxuriant Ballet but Uninspiring Music

_Le Pavillon d’Armide_ was neither a triumph nor a catastrophe. It was simply overlooked in favour of _Le Festin_ and the extracts from _Prince Igor_, which were performed alongside it. However, the majority of contemporary reviews focus on the stylistic attributes of the dance and designs, rather than on Tcherepnin’s score. That being said, it did go on to become part of the company’s touring repertoire, being performed in Paris, London and Buenos Aires, suggesting that regardless of any implied criticism, Diaghilev harboured some fondness for the work.

Castro believes that the comparative lack of interest in _Pavillon_, at least in Paris, was not directly the fault of Tcherepnin or his music. He goes so far as to suggest that the ballet was punished simply for being a Diaghilev collaboration, claiming that the ‘artistic and intellectual avant-garde’ would ‘always regard the Diaghilev ballets with a degree of suspicion’, because the work epitomised the Parisians’ burgeoning grudge against Russia.\(^\text{190}\) This French resentment stemmed from the Russian belief that the Imperial Schools could somehow rescue Europe from its own artistic decline.\(^\text{191}\) Statements such as the following by Benois, paraphrased by Natalia Roslavleva, were frequent at the start of the twentieth-century, providing some understanding as to why


\(^{191}\) Ibid.
many Parisians felt it necessary to protect their own national artistic identity:

Every participant in the ‘Russian season’ … felt that Russian barbarians had brought to the artistic capital of the world all that was best in art at that moment in the entire world … all the inimitable features of Russian art, its great sense of conviction, its freshness and spontaneity, its wild force, and, at the same time, its refinement … left far behind the sophistication of Paris.  

Castro contends that as a result of Tcherepnin’s Russian heritage, his music was always likely to be approached with caution. Furthermore, he excuses scepticism towards the ballet by suggesting that the twentieth-century Parisian public and reviewers were ignorant in their understanding of the ballet medium, as until Diaghilev’s arrival in Europe the stage had been dominated by opera. Because of this, Castro feels that the audiences who would pass judgment on Tcherepnin’s ballet were not capable of doing so without the sound of European opera ringing in their ears.

This excuse-ridden passage is not easy to swallow. Whilst the principles behind the defence of Tcherepnin’s ballet may be valid, they do not account for the fate of Russian works that were soon to receive positive reviews. Stravinsky’s L’Oiseau du feu is a prime example. Premièred only thirteen months after Pavillon, in Paris, with a Russian composer, this work enjoyed an overwhelmingly positive response, as attested by Eric Walter White; ‘when the first performance [of L’Oiseau du feu] came (25 June 1910) he [Stravinsky] received a tremendous ovation; and next day the press was full of his praise. At one bound he had become an international figure’. Furthermore, the general consensus around the arrival of the Ballets Russes in Paris was enthusiastic. Admittedly this comparison of reviews from different ballets, or the general opinion of the reception of Diaghilev’s troupe, does not necessarily say much about the variances

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194 White, Stravinsky, The Composer and his Works, 35.
in the skill of the composer or the staging of the ballet. Nonetheless, it does contradict Castro’s notion that all Russian ballets in Paris were somehow doomed to failure.

Benois writes in a similar manner to Castro when reflecting on the response to his Parisian critics. The artist brushes aside the audiences who disliked his backdrops and costumes, stating that those who found the ‘colours too vivid and the grace of our dancers too pretentious’ were simply incapable of understanding his ideas. He explains that those who ‘really understood’ the desired vision of the ballet, thought ‘our Pavillon d’Armide was a revelation’. The fact that Benois deemed a defence of his work necessary in his memoirs suggests that responses to it were not all positive, as the evidence indeed confirms. Regardless of this, Benois asserts with full confidence that ‘Le Pavillon d’Armide fulfilled its mission in Paris’. This comment returns us to what that mission actually was. If it was to showcase Russian dancing, it surely succeeded. This is illustrated by an article written a few years later in 1916. An article written for the Lotus Magazine (an American publication dedicated to art), describes the effect of Nijinsky’s dancing in this ballet in a very positive way: ‘of the ballets in the Nijinsky repertoire Le Pavillon d’Armide still remains perhaps the most complete, as it is certainly the most luxuriant example of ballet-dancing which the Russians have shown us’.

The ticket sales for the opening nights of Le Pavillon d’Armide were positive, with every seat taken by a paying customer. However, this apparent commercial success could be as much a result of the public’s curiosity to witness the birth of the Ballets

196 Ibid.
197 Ibid.
Russes as it was a statement of their interest in Tcherepnin’s ballet. Nonetheless, the ballet was performed seven times in the Ballets Russes’s opening season, following which it was staged throughout Europe in the first decade of the company’s life, even being selected as an exhibition piece for the 1911 Coronation Gala. Overall, the ballet was presented twenty-eight times between 1907 and 1915. In this regard, the work was a short-term success, displaying the ideas and styles of the new Diaghilev collective around Europe. However, there was no long-term after-life for the ballet, and following the end of the War and the evolved style of the Ballets Russes, the work faded into memory. Therefore, although Tcherepnin’s score for Pavillon was apparently a cause for scepticism and derision, it was quite clearly a short-lived balletic success.

3.6: A Substitute for Daphnis?

First performed on 26 April 1911 in Monte Carlo, Narcisse et Echo was Nikolai Tcherepnin’s second and final offering to the Ballets Russes as a composer. Fokine, still resident choreographer at this time, was again involved in the production, with the only member of the creative team differing from Pavillon being its librettist and artistic director: Benois had been replaced by Léon Bakst. Narcisse appeared as part of one of the most successful seasons in the company’s history, with the ballets from this period becoming some of the most celebrated in the lifespan of the Ballets Russes. Indeed, the works presented in this season are synonymous with the Ballets Russes and ballet in a wider sense, becoming staples of both the common ballet repertoire and academic discussions surrounding the company. The ballets performed in the 1911 season are listed in Fig. 3.9.

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200 Ross, ‘The Ballets and Operas of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945)’, 171.
201 Ibid., 171.
202 Le Masque de la mort rouge was also composed by Tcherepnin for the Ballets Russes, but it was never actually performed by the company.
Figure 3.9 - Ballets performed in the 1911 season

April: *Le Spectre de la Rose*, Carl Maria von Weber
April: *Narcisse et Echo*, Nikolai Tcherepnin
June: *Sadkó*, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
June: *Pétrouchka*, Igor Stravinsky
February: *Le Lac des Cygnes*, Pyotr Tchaikovsky

Created by Bakst, the scenario of *Narcisse et Echo* presents the myth of a vain nymph (Narcisse) who rejects the affections of another of his kind (Echo). In order to take revenge, Echo has a spell placed upon Narcisse, condemning him only to love that which cannot love him back. Following this, Narcisse sees his own reflection in a lake and becomes transfixed with his own beauty, remaining so still that he is consumed by the forest and turns into a flower. Set in Boeotia, the staging for the ballet allowed a luxurious scenery including mountains, forests and reflective pools, creating a mystical Other.\(^{203}\) Bakst had become fixated with all things related to Greek mythology in the years previous to this work, thanks in large part to his travels around Greece with a *Miriskusniki* colleague in 1907.\(^{204}\) Moreover, he had already been involved in several *Ballets Russes* productions, creating the scenery and costumes for *Cléopâtre* (1909), as well as the scenario and designs for *Le Carnaval* (1910) and *Schéhérazade* (1910).\(^{205}\)

Following the creation of *Narcisse*, Bakst continued to collaborate with Diaghilev for the ballets *Thamar* (Mily Balakirev, 1912) and *Midas* (Maximillien Steinberg, 1914). Most notably, however, Bakst would be largely responsible for creating the vision for both *L’Après-midi d’un faune* and *Daphnis et Chloé* in the following 1912 season, for

\(^{203}\) Boetia (also known as Boeotia) features heavily in Greek mythology, having been one of the centres of the ‘Mycenaean Civilisation (around 1600-1200 B.C.E) - see David Sacks, Lisa Brody (rev.), *Encyclopaedia of The Ancient Greek World* (New York: Facts on File, 2005, 68-69). Dominated by flatlands, Boetia was often the location for battles between the Greek forces, earning it its place in Greek history. It gathered a cult-like following as a place from which great Grecian characters grew - see Robert Buck, *A History of Boeotia* (University of Alberta Press, 1987), 114.


which he designed both scenery and costumes. These three ballets - *Narcisse*, *L’Après-midi d’un faune* and *Daphnis et Chloé* - are all highly significant moments within the history of the *Ballets Russes*. They cemented both the company’s ability to represent mythology on stage and Diaghilev’s preferred mode of operation, for creating works through a process of unified collaboration.

*Narcisse* and *Daphnis* have an unusual symbiotic relationship. Originally *Daphnis* had been intended for the 1911 season. However, Ravel’s failure to meet Diaghilev’s deadline meant that the performance was moved back to the 1912 season. 206 This left a gap in the otherwise complete 1911 programme, and at the insistence of Bakst, Tcherepnin was hastily substituted to provide a Grecian-themed work for this season. This comparatively last-minute alteration to the programme created two exceptionally similar works in terms of theme and content, with several of Bakst’s costumes and staging designs earmarked for *Daphnis* being shoddily incorporated into Tcherepnin’s rushed première (some costumes and pieces of scenery for *Narcisse* are shown below in comparison with those from *Daphnis*, Figs. 3.10 and 3.11). 207 Fokine was particularly against this hurried project, and the usually well-organised Diaghilev found himself in uncharted waters, having failed to secure what would surely become one of his most prized works in time for the season around which he had built it. Instead, he returned to a composer with whom he had previously found little success, and sacrificed the designs for his preferred work in order to fast-track the new project and meet the pressing time constraints. Grigoriev actually suggests that Diaghilev deliberately sabotaged Ravel’s work, preferring for some reason the concept for *Narcisse*. 208 However, this statement seems to have little evidence to support it. It appears much

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207 Ross, ‘The Ballets and Operas of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945)’, 178.
more likely that Diaghilev was just as thrown by the change in personnel as his colleagues were. Regardless of its tempestuous journey to completion, Tcherepnin’s second Diaghilev ballet was hastily staged for the Ballets Russes in Monte Carlo before arriving in Paris. This association between the two ballets would eventually prove fatal to Narcisse, with Daphnis overshadowing its ‘warm-up’ act.

Figure 3.10 - Vera Fokina as ‘Young Boetian Girl’ (1911), and a scene from Narcisse et Echo

(Comedia illustré, 15 June 1911)

Figure 3.11 - Original costumes and scenery for Daphnis et Chloé, Léon Bakst

209 Kodicek, Diaghilev, Creator of the Ballets Russes, 162.
3.7: A Modest Application of Leitmotif

Although the score of *Narcisse et Echo* is stylistically very different from that of *Le Pavillon d’Armide*, it is structured in a similar way, with one scene now divided into several sections. A list of these sections is shown in Fig. 3.12.

**Figure 3.12 - Sections within *Narcisse et Echo***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Un paysage panthéiste</em> A Pantheistic Landscape</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>Un sylvain se réveille, il joue de la flûte</em> A Sylvan wakes, he plays the flute</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Entrée des jeunes Boétiens et boétiennes</em> The Young Boetians Enter</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>Danse de la Bacchante</em> Bacchante Dance</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><em>Chants lointains</em> Distant Songs</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><em>Danse de Narcisse</em> Narcisse’s Dance</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><em>Echo est abandonée</em> Echo is Abandoned</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><em>Entre Narcisse épuisé par la fatigue</em> Enter Narcisse, Exhausted and Fatigued</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><em>L'arrivée de Echo</em> The Arrival of Echo</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><em>Narcisse se transforme en fleur</em> Narcisse is Transformed into a Flower</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with *Pavillon*, each section offers a new melodic character, with only infrequent references back to existing motifs, once again aligning Tcherepnin as not partaking in Wagnerian leitmotivic practice. In the following analysis, each distinct theme is discussed in chronological order, with the additions of the relevant synopsis, in order to better contextualise it.
Fig. 3.13 shows the themes I have identified within this ballet, and the translated stage directions from the French score that accompany them (a full translation of all annotations can be seen in Appendix 3). These themes are taken from a piano reduction of the score, and the instrumentation used has been identified from a recording by the Residentie Orchestra The Hague.\textsuperscript{213} I have verified that this instrumentation is correct, from an extract of the full score.\textsuperscript{214} The thematic labels used within Fig. 3.13 are not listed by Tcherepnin. Instead I have named each theme in accordance with events on stage, in order to facilitate my discussion of the score that follows.

\textsuperscript{213} Residentie Orchestra The Hague, \textit{Narcisse et Echo} (Chandos CHAN 9670, 1998).
\textsuperscript{214} Nikolai Tcherepnin, \textit{Narcisse et Echo} (Moscow: Moscou & Leipzig, 1913).
Figure 3.13 - Themes in *Narcisse et Echo*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Actions on stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pure Nature</td>
<td>A woodland scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>The fauna and the Sylvans sleep in the shade of the trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Joyful Dance</td>
<td>A Sylvan wakes up … he takes his flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Others wake up and begin to dance accompanied by the joyful flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Young Love</td>
<td>Enter a young couple of Boetians (couple in love)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bacchante</td>
<td>Bacchante Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>A General Call to Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Song</td>
<td>Suddenly there is a sound of distant singing. It is the distant voice of Narcisse being repeated by Echo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Narcisse</td>
<td>Amorous nymphs and Boetians, in turn delighted with Narcisse, beg him to continue - Narcisse’s Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Regret</td>
<td>Echo, abandoned, cries and asks to be forgiven for the trespass which has brought her before Narcisse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Desire</td>
<td>The love burns Narcisse’s heart as he realises he can never possess the object of his desire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8b</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Narcisse wants to dance before his own image and seduce himself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Desperation</td>
<td>Echo arrives and tries to pull Narcisse out of his daze, but she fails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Pure Nature</td>
<td>Nightfall. Moonlight passes through the trees… Fireflies appear and create a brilliant light. The basin is transformed into a flower pattern. The woodland beings appear on all sides and look on with astonishment and pleasure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theme 1a (Ex. 3.16) first occurs at bar 18. The lower strings play this dramatic opening motif, based on an Ab⁷ chord, with support from the horn section, underpinned by an ethereal accompaniment repeated in the upper strings. This ostinato accompaniment is unaltered for the opening 25 bars of the ballet, with accented flute breaks being the only
means of interruption. These small riffs act as precursors to the opening statement, sharing the same tonal centre as the main motif before it is first heard.

Example 3.16: Tcherepnin, *Narcisse*, A Pantheistic Landscape (Theme 1a - Pure Nature)

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[Moderato assai.]
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Theme 1b (see below, Ex. 3.17) is one of only two extracts taken from the score that extends from a pre-existing subject. Originally heard at bar 40, its upper string accompaniment, tonality and timbre all remain the same as the initial theme 1a. However, the slight rhythmic alteration to the melody, and the inclusion of an immediate repetition of the phrase an octave up, create enough difference to justify a separate label. Both these themes are created within the opening section of the ballet, and are labelled ‘Pure Nature,’ as a woodland setting is dominant in both variations. In theme 1a the stage is empty, and a woodland vista is the primary focus. As 1b is heard, the attention shifts to a group of mythical creatures who appear on the stage. The continuation of the ostinato violin serves to ensure the scene setting of a forest is firmly lodged in the audience’s mind, whilst the slight melodic change is enough to alert us that some sort of action is about to take place, and that the story of *Narcisse et Echo* is about to unfold.
Example 3.17: Tcherepnin, Narcisse, A Pantheistic Landscape (Theme 1b - Pure Nature)

Theme 1b is also the only example within Tcherepnin’s two Ballets Russes compositions of one theme featuring in two different scenes. After its initial appearance at bar 40, it reappears in its entirety as part of the final section, at bar 1041: the only change being the octave in which it is played. The opening melody accompanies a simple staging in which sleeping mythical creatures and the calmest of woodlands can be seen; it returns in the closing moments of the ballet as Narcisse is completely consumed by Nature and turns into a flower. The recurrence of this theme is significant. Not only does it represent Narcisse’s utter consumption by the woodland and the total return to ‘pure nature’, but it also reinforces the lack of character evolution.

Tcherepnin’s decision not to alter the theme is symptomatic. In most Wagnerian operas (as exemplified by Tristan und Isolde), and indeed in many of Debussy’s works (such as L’Après-midi d’un faune), the development of the leading character(s) is/are tracked and pinpointed by subtle shifts in the way a theme is represented. However, Tcherepnin makes no such changes, keeping every note within this returning melody the same. This could be seen as straightforward compositional naivety. However, it is also an effective strategy for representing Narcisse’s lack of development within the ballet. Unlike the heroic figures of most operatic and balletic ventures, Narcisse has failed in his quest for love. Rather than adapting to the needs of his muse, his utter self-obsession leads to his eventual incarceration at the hands of Nature. Originally represented as a solitary
individual, Narcisse is portrayed as a being abundantly self-assured. Despite his dalliances with Echo at the mid-point of the ballet, Narcisse ends his story in exactly the same fashion he started it—alone with Nature. Therefore, it could be said that the reason Tcherepnin does not develop the opening theme at this point, and by proxy the one adopted in a non-leitmotivic sense by Narcisse, is simple: the theme does not develop because Narcisse’s character does not develop. Indeed, the decision to quote the opening statement of the ballet verbatim serves to reinforce the moral that self-regard leads nowhere.

Theme 2b (Ex. 3.19) is introduced at bar 107, as part of the ‘Joyful Dance’, the first ensemble routine of the ballet, and is the main motif from the second section. As the Sylvan awakes, he takes out his flute and begins to play, encouraging his sleeping companions to join him in his dance. The Sylvan’s flute can clearly be heard playing a cadenza-like passage at the opening of the scene, dominated by a simple repeated phrase (see Ex. 3.18, theme 2a). However, this short motif is lost in the main body of music and replaced by the more forceful theme 2b as the scene unfolds. The full theme 2b is only heard in its entirety once the assorted friends begin to dance, and as a much fuller orchestration is heard.

Example 3.18: Tcherepnin, Narcisse, A Sylvan Wakes (Theme 2a - Joyful Dance)
Labelled ‘Young Love’, theme 3 (Ex. 3.20) occurs when a couple of Boetians enter the stage. Shared between solo oboe and solo violin, the melody is repeated as one lead instrument responds to the call of the previous one: a sequence initiated by the oboe. The simple accompaniment, played by a solo horn, remains constant until both lead instruments expand upon the opening motif. At this point, initiated by the oboe once again and matched by the violin, the opening theme is developed to incorporate fast runs. This elaboration, accompanied by lower strings and a fuller brass section, lasts only momentarily. After this, the couple begin to dance together, and the call-and-response nature of the music is reduced to one voice, much as the two bodies become one on the stage.

Originating in bar 352, theme 4a is the foundation for the bacchanal dance (Ex. 3.21).
Example 3.21: Tcherepnin, *Narcisse*, Bacchanal (Theme 4a - Bacchante)

Accompanied by a simple, gentle harp line, the melody in theme 4a is passed once again between two instruments (the flute and the violin) with tuned percussion adding emphasis to dominant beats. This theme is repeated frequently throughout the scene, with a noticeable change in orchestration when ‘a call to dance is heard’. The calm nature of theme 4a is replaced by a highly percussive, vibrant passage from bar 438, in which a tambourine plays out a dominant dance beat. The theme below (4b) is a more aggressive and faster paced expansion of the melodic shape of theme 4a, retaining the rise-and-fall melodic contour, with the addition of chordal notes and a more dramatic instrumentation, to emphasise the physicality of the Bacchanal. As with *Pavillon*, the Bacchanal is once again expanded from a simple melodic motif to create a more frenzied dance, which gathers momentum as the on-stage ensemble grows. Tcherepnin’s use of Bacchanal can again be seen as a similarity between this work and Ravel’s *Daphnis*, which culminates in a famously flamboyant version of this dance style.
Theme 5 first occurs at bar 531. Here the main melody is divided between solo tenor and soprano voices, accompanied by slow-moving drone-like chords, played by the lower strings. This call-and-response motif is one of the most exact representations of the plot in the entire work. This ‘Song’ theme is created in order to provide a voice for both Narcisse and Echo. At this point within the story two off-stage voices, clearly intended to be those of the lead characters, enter into a ‘distant song’, each calling to the other. As the voice-lines develop, the melodies are punctuated by various solo instruments (such as the oboe and glockenspiel), which interrupt the romantic cries of the two characters as the conversation becomes more dramatic. The alternating voices continue throughout the section, with a climactic ascent towards the mid-point of the scene. During this segment the violin sections, accompanied by various percussive instruments and brass, begin to mimic the previous voices and overpower the vocal melodies, until only the orchestra is heard (Ex. 3.23).

Example 3.23: Tcherepnin, *Narcisse*, Distant Songs (Theme 5 - Song)
Tcherepnin’s inclusion of a wordless chorus is an interesting development from his first Ballets Russes venture. Benois had high praise for its presence, writing that ‘singing à bouche fermée … fully expressed the mysterious horror’ of the character. Yet the rationale for using this compositional technique could be more complex than purely artistic reasons. The vocalise method was becoming a more common tool for composers, featuring for example, in Puccini’s Madama Butterfly (1904, Coro a bocca chiusa), Stravinsky’s Pastorale (1907), and Rachmaninoff’s celebrated Vocalise (although this was not completed until after the première of Narcisse). However, it was French composers who became most associated with it as the twentieth-century progressed. A selection of works from this group is shown below in Fig. 3.14.

Figure 3.14 - French works featuring vocalise
Claude Debussy - Nocturnes (1897-99)
Gabriel Fauré - Vocalise-Étude (1906)
Maurice Ravel - Vocalise en forme d’habanera (1907)
Claude Debussy - Trois chansons de Charles d’Orléans (1898-1908)
Maurice Ravel - Daphnis et Chloé (1912)

Debussy serves as a good example of a prominent French composer who adopted vocalise into his works. As Jane Fulcher describes, he had been creating wordless choruses since his student days, as shown in his early work Printemps: ‘one of the most important compositions of his formative period’. This technique for creating an unearthly aura through non-distinct voices was something that stayed with the young composer and was perfected many years later in Nocturnes. Tcherepnin could hardly have been unaware that Parisian audiences of the time were primed for this timbre, and

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his inclusion of it once again demonstrated his knowledge of popular techniques in music, in a manner similar to his inclusion of a bacchanal in *Le Pavillon d’Armide*.

Whatever the underlying reason, he used the technique sparingly within *Narcisse*. The chorus is present at only four points, and even then each phrase is short lived, as shown in Fig. 3.15.

**Figure 3.15 - Use of vocalise in *Narcisse et Echo***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>(A Pantheistic Landscape)</th>
<th>bars 28-37 and 61-73</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>(Distant Songs)</td>
<td>bars 527-552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>(Narcisse’s Dance)</td>
<td>bars 666-676, 722, 810-812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>(Narcisse is transformed into a Flower)</td>
<td>bars 1016-1020, 1030-1033, 1063-1076</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above examples occur at crucial points within the ballet: when Narcisse is first seen, when he dances alone, and when he turns into a flower. Although Tcherepnin does not employ the traditional association of a particular instrument or sound group with a specific character, his repeated use of the voice as a calling-card for Narcisse’s relationship with Nature is as close as he comes within this work.

Theme 6 (Ex. 3.24) is Narcisse’s focal solo dance. The characteristics of the music reflect the light-footed nymph, predominantly relying on the solo flute melody, which skips from one note to the next with ease, incorporating trills and staccato articulation to support a complex virtuosic dance. A repetitive quaver accompaniment is heard on the piano, strings and woodwind, coloured by a triangle, all playing the smooth lower chords. The melody is then passed to the violin as the orchestration expands to incorporate an array of percussion, including xylophone, timpani and glockenspiel. The
jovial attitude of the section remains until the second half of the scene, at which point Echo arrives. Narcisse stops his dance to admire her, and the tempo winds down to an *adagio*, now dominated by slow-moving melodies in the violin and vocal lines.

Example 3.24: Tcherepnin, *Narcisse*, Narcisse’s Dance (Theme 6 - Narcisse)

\[
\text{[Allegretto giocoso.]} \\
\begin{align*}
\text{Fl.} & \quad \text{Vl., Ww.} \\
\text{b.607} & \quad \text{giocoso}
\end{align*}
\]

Theme 7, ‘Echo is Abandoned’, is part of the shortest scene within the ballet. First heard at bar 815, it consists of a highly expressive upper melody, played by the full violin section, whilst lower strings and horns accompany (Ex. 3.25). The sorrowful lament of the strings reinforces the despair Echo feels as she realises she has been abandoned. During the closing bars of this section, descending chromatic passages with aggressive brass and percussive interjections, are heard.

Example 3.25: Tcherepnin, *Narcisse*, Echo is Abandoned (Theme 7 - Regret)

\[
\text{Poco più mosso} \\
\text{b.815} \\
\begin{align*}
\text{Vl.} & \quad \text{Hn., Vla.} \\
\text{s} & \quad \text{f}
\end{align*}
\]
With the arrival of theme 8a (Ex. 3.26) the calm before the storm has passed and Echo’s sorrow has turned to fear. First heard as Echo’s abandonment becomes apparent, it is the only other example of a motif that reappears in an altered form. Labelled ‘Desire', this theme first occurs at bar 830, when Narcisse’s heart yearns for Echo.

Example 3.26: Tcherepnin, Narcisse, Echo is Abandoned (Theme 8a - Desire)

The repetition of theme 8a in its altered form 8b (Ex. 3.27), is one of the most important within the ballet, as it is the only theme in which a melodic alteration reflects a change in character or story.

Example 3.27: Tcherepnin, Narcisse, Enter Narcisse (Theme 8b - Desire)

Alongside the melodic change, the rhythm and orchestration of theme 8b differ from 8a. Theme 8b (part of ‘Enter Narcisse’) is first heard at bar 894, which is in a different scene from theme 8a. During ‘Echo is Abandoned’, Narcisse is exhausted and alone, so he descends to the lake for nourishment. However, he is distracted by his reflection whilst dancing before the mirrored surface, becoming transfixed in a trance-like state. It is at this point, when the stage directions indicate that ‘he [Narcisse] wants to dance
before his reflection and seduce it’, that the variant 8b is heard. At this moment the
‘Desire Theme’ has been transformed. Originally intended as Narcisse’s desire for
Echo, it now represents Narcisse’s desire for himself. Accompanied by Echo’s spell -
‘may love inflame your heart and may it never possess the object of its desire’, it is clear
that the Desire theme has evolved from an innocent longing to something more sinister.
In this instance, therefore, Tcherepnin can be seen to go against his usual style of non-
leitmotiv writing: he was not shy of adopting leitmotivic principles when the drama
suggested them.

Theme 9, (Ex. 3.28) first heard at bar 960, is from the section ‘The Arrival of Echo’.
Echo returns to look for Narcisse and finds him in a daze. In this section Echo tries to
extract Narcisse from his trance, where he is staring into the reflective lake. A gentle
oboe melody creates a soothing effect, as though she is trying to wake him from a deep
sleep. However, as Echo realises her efforts are in vain, the calm feel of the music is
replaced with rising scales and interruptive percussion. This all descends into calm once
again, as Echo resigns herself to her loss of Narcisse.

Example 3.28: Tcherepnin, Narcisse, The Arrival of Echo (Theme 9 - Desperation)
Fundamentally, the score for *Narcisse* is unsophisticated in its construction. The orchestration varies little throughout, and the on-stage plot developments are faithfully reflected in the melodies Tcherepnin creates. The complexity embodied in the scores of Stravinsky and others in this same 1911 season would suggest that Tcherepnin’s has been forgotten because it was simply not innovative enough to gain significant interest from fellow composers and musicologists (there was no real academic discussion about the music’s construction), and not exciting enough to capture the attention of the audiences. If this is so, *Narcisse* must be considered a prime example of a work overshadowed by Stravinskian creations. However, if any positive value is to be found in this score, it is surely by virtue of its ability to supply unobtrusively supportive music for the visual attributes of the ballet. For example, a strong dance-like beat is obvious throughout the work, and key moments of the story such as the conversation between Narcisse and Echo are mimicked precisely with a wordless chorus. Furthermore, Tcherepnin’s ability to compose for both group dances and solo movements with similar ease further reflects his capabilities as a balletic composer. Although less compositionally exotic than the other works within this season, the conspicuous orchestration skills displayed in this score are clear links to his Russian heritage, and his tutelage with Rimsky-Korsakov, who had quite literally written the textbook on orchestration.\(^{219}\)

Marlisa Ross discusses the contemporary reaction to the music for *Narcisse* in detail in her thesis focused on the ballets of Tcherepnin, summarising the overall response as split between positive and dismissive. However, the positive comments, coming from some of Tcherepnin’s musical contemporaries, often appeared hand-in-hand with a note

\(^{219}\) Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov wrote the *Principles of Orchestration*, which was first published in 1912. Since this date, the book has been translated into every major language, starting with French in 1922.
of scepticism, suggesting that the ballet as a whole was not as convincing as some of its individual parts. This was certainly the opinion of Prokofiev, for example, who upon hearing *Narcisse* as one of a selection of works by the *Ballets Russes*, stated that ‘its realism and lyricism are so engrossing that they make you forgive many sins’ - these sins being his strong dislike of the bacchanal section and the general flow of the ballet.\(^\text{220}\) However, opinions such as this seem to have been reserved for those already familiar with Tcherepnin’s work, with the European public who were new to the composer’s creations remaining irreverent towards the score.\(^\text{221}\)

### 3.8: Overshadowed by the Spectacle

The Parisian public did take to *Narcisse* a little more enthusiastically than they had to *Pavillon*, and yet the work was still not as popular as other ballets of this period.

Significantly, *Narcisse* was not premièred in the capital, being performed first in Monte Carlo (where the *Ballets Russes* was temporarily based), before passing through Rome and arriving in Paris a few months later (see Fig. 3.16 below). This removed the ballet from the immediate scepticism of the Parisian public, and it was rather well received in the other European cities.

Figure 3.16 - Performance history of *Narcisse et Echo*

1911 - Théâtre de Monte-Carlo, Monte Carlo - April
1911 - Teatro Costanza, Rome - May
1911 - Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris - June

That *Narcisse* was performed only a handful of times speaks of its apparent lack of success for Diaghilev and his company, especially when compared *Pavillon*. However, if one were to compare the long-time life of the two ballets, both Tcherepnin ballets

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\(^\text{221}\) Ross, ‘The Ballets and Operas of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945)’, PhD Dissertation, University of Manchester, 2006, 246.
have suffered a similar fate: neither was performed with any frequency after the end of the Ballets Russes.

The overall consensus at the time of its first performance in Paris (and an opinion still echoed in Ballets Russes literature today) is that the ballet consisted of insignificant music but a visually glorious setting. One review, appearing after the performance in Paris, had high praise for Narcisse but only commented on this ballet for a few sentences, in the course of providing each of the works from this season with brief appraisals:

On n’a certainement pas exagéré en célébrant la virtuosité, l’homogénéité exceptionnelle de la troupe de ballet russe que M. Serge de Diaghilev amène chaque année à Paris… un ballet mythologique qui met en scène les métamorphoses du beau Narcisse en fleur, le tout brodé sur une partition exquise de M. Tcherepnine.222

(One has certainly not exaggerated the famous virtuosity, the exceptional homogeneity of the Russian ballet troupe that Mr Serge Diaghilev brings to Paris each year… a mythological ballet that features the metamorphosis of the beautiful Narcissus into a flower, the whole thing embroidered on an exquisite score by Mr Tcherepnin.)

This particular review has high praise for Tcherepnin’s score, however, there is no explanation to the reviewer’s comment or justification for the opinion. Indeed, as this critique shows, although the music was largely dismissed by critics, it was not by any stretch of the imagination a disaster. Instead, Tcherepnin’s score was simply overshadowed by the visual attributes of the ballet, before going on to be overshadowed by other works altogether. It was performed alongside some truly celebrated ballets, such as Spectre de la Rose and Pétrouchka, and as a result it paled by comparison. Furthermore, the all-too-similar Daphnis et Chloé totally outshone Narcisse in the following season, cementing the ballet’s fate as a largely forgotten enterprise, at least so

222 Paul Ranson, ‘Le Ballet Russes an Châtelet’, Le Gaulois, 6 June 1911.
far as the music was concerned: as with *Pavillon*, the designs and the libretto evidently stole the show.

Bakst’s ability to create breath-taking staging and costumes, which transformed the Parisian stage into a mythological dreamland in a manner previously infrequently seen (see Figs 3.17 and 3.18), created a unique place for this ballet in the history of the *Ballets Russes*, as one of the company’s most sumptuous visual achievements. Bakst’s artwork for *Narcisse* created a legacy from which the *Ballets Russes* grew - an idea discussed by Mary Davis: ‘haphazard as its development was, however, *Narcisse* established a template for the interpretations of ancient Greece in Ballets Russes’ productions’.223 This template was one in which the visual and auditory attributes of a production collided, bringing to life exotic landscapes. This template would reach its full potential with *Daphnis* and *Faune* in the following season.

Figure 3.17 - Léon Bakst’s costume sketch for the ‘Lead Bacchante’ (Narcisse et Echo)

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223 Davis, *Ballets Russes Style*, 159.
Whilst these designs are undoubtedly worthy of the acclaim they have received, it is unnerving from a Tcherepnin scholar’s point of view that the redeeming feature of the work was happened upon by pure luck. If Ravel had managed to complete his score on time, Tcherepnin would not have been incorporated in this season at all, and the most celebrated aspect of the work - its designs - would also have been obtained instead by the Frenchman.

At this point it is possible to look at the music for both of Tcherepnin’s 1909 and 1911 Ballets Russes compositions side by side. The most noticeable similarity is Tcherepnin’s use of thematic writing in a non-leitmotivic sense. However, the way in which Tcherepnin explores this style of thematic writing changed between the two compositions. His earlier ballet is constructed using independent themes, with no reference to previous or future developments. However, in Narcisse et Echo Tcherepnin adopts a straightforward style of thematic development to reflect character growth, albeit only for the lead role and even then in a fleeting manner. This could be viewed as either a deliberate ploy to reinforce the strong moral centre to the myth of Narcisse, or

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225 ‘Scene from the Ballet Narcisse’, Comœdia illustré, 15 June 1911.
simply as a cyclical ploy designed to book-end the ballet with one melodic idea. Either way, it is not a trait evident in *Pavillon*. Furthermore, the orchestration of the two ballets is similar. Both rely heavily on emotive string passages, supported by percussive interspersals of rhythmic detail, as well as passing conversations between the various sections, most notably the woodwind and upper strings. However, the wordless chorus incorporated into Tcherepnin’s second ballet again represents a new compositional departure.

With the two works having been created less than five years apart, it would be unrealistic to expect a dramatic shift in style for Tcherepnin. Despite this, based on the above analyses it is possible to see a modest transformation in the composer’s approach to composing for the ballet. Hence, to claim that his compositional style was ‘anti-Wagnerian’, as Castro suggests, is perhaps an over-simplification. The above analyses show that in *Narcisse* at least, Tcherepnin did use some very basic leitmotivic elements with his opening theme 1a and its reappearance with theme 1b, as well as with themes 8a and 8b. Nevertheless, there is no indication that his adoption of separate themes throughout is anything other than a straightforward means to construct a rapidly moving, exciting background to Fokine’s choreography, faithful to the straightforward style of the stories. Significantly, the only two themes that are reinterpreted or repeated in more than one place, act as the most important indicators of development within the plot.

In summary, both of Tcherepnin’s scores for the *Ballets Russes* live in the memory as style over substance. This Rimsky-Korsakov-approved pupil, initially heralded as the next great exponent of Russian music, may have failed to create exciting, autonomous

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scores, but he did succeed in supplying effective, unobtrusive backing for Fokine’s creations. Whilst Castro is right to assert that Pavillon was a work of ‘seminal historical significance’, the reasons for this can be contested; in reality the work is of importance for being the first in a line of truly ground-breaking ballets for Diaghilev’s company, rather than for its tenuous place in musical history as such.\textsuperscript{227} If for no other reason, Tcherepnin and his ballets should be remembered for clearing a path of solid, dependable routine, along which the likes of Stravinsky could not only progress, but also explore deviations in spectacular fashion.

3.9: Reynaldo Hahn - A Fashionable Asset

Similarly to Tcherepnin, Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947) provides an example of an early Diaghilev collaborator whose Ballets Russes composition has been largely forgotten by musicologists and dance historians alike. However, Hahn was not a lesser-known composer during his lifetime, and he has been extensively researched in French musicology ever since he first appeared as a composer and performer. In actuality, he was a highly celebrated musician and composer, with a vast catalogue of music to his name. Despite this, Hahn’s ballet is included here as it represents an unexamined work in the Ballets Russes’s directory, despite the well-known name associated with its music. This raises the question as to why his only Ballets Russes composition has fallen from memory.

First performed at the Théâtre du Châtelet on 13 May 1912, Le Dieu bleu has a double role within this thesis: first, to continue the discussion surrounding the lesser-known works within the company’s repertoire, and secondly as an example of Diaghilev’s use of atavistic exoticism on stage, prior to Le Sacre du Printemps. The ballet was

\textsuperscript{227} Ibid.
choreographed by Michel Fokine and featured set designs and costumes once again provided by Léon Bakst. The final piece of the balletic puzzle, the scenario, was a collaboration between Jean Cocteau and Frédéric de Madrazo, a celebrated Spanish painter. Cocteau’s first appearance as a Ballets Russes collaborator is known with hindsight to be the beginning of a highly influential relationship between him and the company. In the following decade, he would become fundamental to the company’s evolving aesthetic, with his work on Parade being acknowledged as a watershed moment for the company, (discussed in greater detail in chapter 4). Moreover, whilst his involvement with Le Dieu was as librettist, his influence on a group of composers known as Les Six throughout the 1920s, would have huge consequences on Diaghilev’s later productions, as discussed in chapter 5.

Hahn was born in Venezuela on 9 August 1874. His mother, Elena Maria Echenagucia, came from a well-established Spanish family, whilst his father, Carlos Hahn, was a German-born émigré to Latin America.\(^\text{228}\) Reynaldo Hahn was part of a large family and at only four years of age he and his eleven older siblings moved with their parents to Paris. Hahn soon saw himself as a naturalised Frenchman, and many years later, in 1909, he took French citizenship. Such was his pride in France that he volunteered for the army at the outbreak of war in 1914 even seeing active duty, despite being above the age for conscription. Hahn’s adoration for French life had largely devolved from his education in the capital. Prior to his family’s relocation, and despite his young age, Hahn had already shown promise as a pianist. However, it was not until his arrival in Paris that his talents were cultivated in a much more precise manner. Such was Hahn’s skill as a young prodigy that at the age of just six he performed for Princess Mathilde, Napoleon’s niece. Four years later, in 1885, his remarkable talent earned him a place at

\(^{228}\) Information for the following biographical sketch is taken from Patrick O’Connor’s ‘Reynaldo Hahn’, Grove Music Online, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 29 October 2011).
the Paris Conservatoire. Hahn’s enrolment brought him into contact with a number of prominent musicians teaching at the Conservatoire who had particular expertise in piano composition and performance, such as Jules Massenet. Eventually, Hahn himself would become one of the most prolific composers of his generation, and there was rarely a passage of time in which Hahn did not compose (he even created vocal works whilst serving as a private in the war, as well as in exile during the Nazis’ occupation of France). On his return to Paris at the end of the Second World War, he was reinstated as one of France’s most celebrated sons, holding some of the most prominent positions in the capital, including director of the Opéra until his death in 1947.

Adored by the public and held in high esteem within compositional and academic circles, it was Hahn’s role at the forefront of French music that would prove decisive in his eventual involvement with the Ballets Russes.

3.10: Showcasing the Exotic

Hahn’s association with the Ballets Russes was short-lived, comprising only his composition for Le Dieu bleu. The concept for this ballet stemmed from Diaghilev’s fascination with orientalism, combined with Cocteau’s desire to create a libretto for the company he so admired. This ballet, in which a Hindu-like God descends onto the stage in a flamboyant display of colour and lavishly intricate sets, provides a fine example of how exoticism and the Other were represented on Diaghilev’s stage. Mary Davis argues that Diaghilev used his entire 1912 season to exploit the trend of exoticism, describing the works for this year as ‘sumptuous and overly erotic, playing to French fascinations with the East that can be traced back in works ranging from Montesquieu’s Persian Letters to the paintings of Ingres, Delacroix and Moreau’.²²⁹ Arguably, such

²²⁹ Davis, Ballets Russes Style, 108.
fascinations were taken to a new level of public visibility following the Paris Exhibition in 1889, as discussed in section 2.1. This ability to showcase the exotic became an integral part of the company’s appeal in the opening years of its existence.

As Barbara Kelly explains, exoticism has often been thought of as a phenomenon particularly cultivated in fin-de-siècle France, and as such, it slightly pre-dates the arrival of the Ballets Russes in Paris. Moreover, both exoticism and Orientalism are referenced within reviews and contemporary writings about Le Dieu bleu, and the overlapping connotations of each term need to be identified.

As Claire Mabilat has stated, ‘the establishment of a theoretical framework is essential to orientalist studies, as the theoretical considerations in the area are intricate, and (at times) even contradictory’. The benchmark for such a framework was developed by Edward Said, who defined Orientalism as a multi-faceted idea, which arose out of Europe’s guilt-laden association with its colonial past:

Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient - dealing with it by making statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.

Although born from a politically charged state, Orientalism was - in Said’s view - more than just a political vehicle: ‘it is rather a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an elaboration’ of all of these ideas. Whilst ground-breaking at the time of its

233 Ibid., 13.
publication, the ideas outlined in Said’s book have been revisited and contested in the decades since their first publication, not least by Said himself, who revised the book intermittently up until 2003.

Following on from Said’s definitions, Mabilat offers an explanation of the differences between Orientalism and exoticism, with reference to Ralph P. Locke’s article ‘Exoticism’.234 Mabilat explains that exoticism is the ‘evocation of a place, people or social milieu’ that is perceived as different from ‘the people making and receiving the exotic cultural product’, which creates something suggestive of another culture’.235 Therefore, Mabilat underlines the fundamental difference between exoticism and Orientalism as being that the former is an artistic device, and the latter is a politically or culturally embedded idea.236 In this regard, exoticism is a celebration of the broadening of artistic horizons that arise out of an understanding of cultural diversity, whilst Orientalism is a device that’s heavy history means it is used for disparaging such differences.237

Applying this useful distinction to Le Dieu, it is therefore possible to understand that the term exoticism can assuredly be applied to the ballet, arising from the inspiration it takes from the ‘Other’. The ballet creates an imagined reality which, although based on the ideas of a Hindu culture, is a highly fantasised and exaggerated depiction of the East. Indeed, as Europe faced an increasingly troubled economic and political situation, the desire to explore other cultures as a form of escapism became ever greater. Diaghilev was only too happy to oblige the public’s desires in this regard. After his

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236 Ibid.
237 Ibid., 7.
company’s arrival in the capital, as Patricia Faivre states, ‘Parisian society developed a
passion for Russia... [and] the [Ballets Russes] settled in Paris like a company of
gypsies, and their origins and folklore aroused people’s fascination and created an
element of mystery’.238 This reference to the troupe as one made up of quasi-‘gypsies’ is
interesting. Gypsies could be seen as a type of European Other: a marginalised cultural
group, not geographically located in any way other than through its own traditions. At
this time, Russia itself was somewhat marginalised too - the great divide, both
geographically and culturally, between Russia and Europe meant that Diaghilev’s
appearance as a representative of Russia in Paris, could be seen as him actively
Orientalising himself, and in turn, giving a new dimension to the role of the Ballets
Russes as an embodiment of exoticism.

Charles Batson develops this point, stating that the appearance of Hindu ideas in Le
Dieu can be seen to exemplify Diaghilev’s ability to appeal to ‘pre-war France’s
fantasies of a sensuous and colourful India’.239 The relevance of India as the chosen
exotic land does, however, bring the work into focus as Orientalist ballet by perception
if not conception. Although, as Mabilat stated, the Orient was not a fixed geographical
state, France and Britain were ‘the most prolific colonisers, and were, therefore, the two
main exponents of Orientalism’.240 In this regard, the political history of India as part of
Europe’s colonised territories draws comparisons with the politically referenced term
Orientalism. However, the distinction between exoticism and Orientalism can be seen
from several different vantage points: after all, both terms refer to inherently political
representations - a foreign culture is being characterised by a European one, thus being
in effect denied its own voice. Following this line, it may be more accurate to say that

239 Charles Batson, Dance, Desire, and Anxiety in Early Twentieth-Century French Theater (Aldershot:
Ashgate, 2005,) 119.
exoticism is an artistic rendering of Orientalism. This is an opinion more in keeping with the views of Timothy D. Taylor, who, in writing about the forms of fantasies and desire for the Other by artists during the ‘age of empire’, states that: ‘the well-established ideology of the aesthetic, the notion of art for art’s sake, found a new valence as a way to appropriate and represent Others while still keeping them at bay’.\textsuperscript{241} In this sense, art was seen as an instrument that perpetuated the ideas of a representative Other, and in the case of \textit{Le Dieu}, one which relied on the use of exoticism as the politically-neutral, artistic symbol of an exaggerated idea of a foreign culture.

This artistic exploration of a foreign culture was paramount to the success of the \textit{Ballets Russes}, and as Charles Batson describes, ‘India had become the site of renewed fantasmatic projections and a powerfully reconfigured Other for \textit{le tout-Paris}’.\textsuperscript{242} It was this prospect of creating ‘fantasmic projections’ that appealed to Bakst, who was the perfect choice to bring the subcontinent to Paris, with Diaghilev compelling the artist to ‘excel himself, to produce his most fantastic, his most Oriental, his most sadistic designs’.\textsuperscript{243} Bakst had already proved he could be successful at presenting exotic ideas in Paris, creating designs for both \textit{Cléopâtre} (1909) and \textit{Schéherézade} (1910). Through these works, as Batson continues, Bakst had ‘solidified a reputation for skilfully evoking an alluring Orient through costume and setting’, and as such he was the ideal candidate to replicate this for the 1912 season.\textsuperscript{244} In actuality, \textit{Cléopâtre} was the first in a long list of ballets created by Diaghilev around either eastern or Russian themes.\textsuperscript{245} As shown in Fig. 3.19, Diaghilev and his company would continue to create ballets under this heading throughout the first period of the company’s life.

\textsuperscript{242} Batson, \textit{Dance, Desire, and Anxiety in Early Twentieth-Century French Theater}, 119.
\textsuperscript{243} Buckle, \textit{Diaghilev}, 222.
\textsuperscript{244} Batson, \textit{Dance, Desire, and Anxiety in Early Twentieth-Century French Theater}, 121.
\textsuperscript{245} Garafola, \textit{Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes}, 43.
Of all of these ballets, Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre du Printemps* is the best-known example of Russian-influenced work in arguably any artistic discipline. The ballet’s designer and librettist Nicholas Roerich’s unparalleled knowledge of folkloric traditions added a new dimension, providing historically accurate material for inclusion within the ballet.

Instead of the Other being interpreted as unusual and mystical, as with Hahn’s *Le Dieu bleu*, Roerich created a gritty and unnerving version of Pagan Russia. In Hahn’s work, the Hindu-based scenario did not constitute a historically informed scenario, but merely a mystical story inspired by an exotic theme. Therefore, the ‘Russianness’ of *Le Sacre*, and the comparatively explicit way in which the ballet presented its topic, inaugurated an entirely new type of subject matter for Diaghilev, and one which maximalised the ideas tested in works such as *Le Dieu*.

In order to reimagine the Orient in Paris, *Le Dieu* was dependent on not only Bakst’s designs, but also Fokine’s choreography, which Garafola believes to be a continuation of the style he had originally adopted for *Cléopâtre*. In preparation for *Cléopâtre*, he had made frequent visits to the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, immersing
himself in books on Egypt and the exotic. Garafola notes that the ‘angular poses of the limbs, the upturned palms and the curved fingers’ in Le Dieu are therefore indebted to Fokine’s studious attitude towards choreographing Cléopâtre, with the basic positions of the dancers replicating the forms of the Hindu sculptures he had seen in the museum (see Fig. 3.20).246 Lydia Nelidova’s portrayal of the Lotus Goddess with ‘crossed legs’ and ‘articulated fingers’ worked alongside Nijinsky’s actions as the Blue God to create a ballet saturated with the angular influences of the oriental dances that were so in vogue at this time.247 However, whilst using Eastern-inspired movements, Fokine also incorporated popular styles of dance from around Paris. For example, in the opening procession of dancers at the religious feast, the choreography is a rather traditional affair, with bird feathers and high leg-kicks recreating the images of contemporary Parisian dancers.248 The inclusion of a dance style from the Parisian salons and music halls, which is eventually replaced by the exotic movements of the Blue God, creates a hybrid form of choreography, allowing Fokine to represent the East without alienating or disappointing his Parisian audience: surely a combination that appealed to Diaghilev and his desire to always remain stylistically up to date.

246 Ibid., 13.
247 Batson, Dance, Desire, and Anxiety in Early Twentieth-Century French Theater, 125.
248 Ibid., 127.
3.11: ‘Reasons of Policy’

*Le Dieu bleu* provides a fine example of Diaghilev’s pragmatism, as it was created for both financial and artistic reasons. ‘With an eye to the box office’, Diaghilev had already achieved success with other exotic works, and he knew that a similar topic had the ability to generate vast profits. However, it simultaneously afforded Diaghilev the opportunity to create a hybrid Franco-Russian ballet. Hahn was selected to create the music for this new ballet regardless of Diaghilev’s perceived lack of confidence in the project: as such, the decision to place Hahn alongside his finest choreographer and

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251 Garafola, *Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes*, 43.
artist, raises questions around the reasoning behind such a decision.\textsuperscript{252} At the time of \textit{Le Dieu}, Diaghilev was in a close professional and personal friendship with Jean Cocteau. Cocteau was a fundamental figure in shaping the company’s future, providing a proud French voice in the early years of the predominantly Russian entourage.\textsuperscript{253} \textit{Le Dieu} was the first ballet as a result of the partnership between the two men, spearheading Diaghilev’s increased involvement in French music. Despite many collaborations between these two, it was not until \textit{Parade} in the 1917 season (discussed further in section 4.4) that a Cocteau creation provided the company with a conspicuous success.\textsuperscript{254} Nonetheless, his involvement with \textit{Le Dieu} epitomises the \textit{Ballets Russes}’s work as a French/Russian company.

\textit{Le Dieu} was the \textit{Ballets Russes}’s first work with a French composer; however, the timing of this should perhaps not be considered an indication of Hahn’s credentials, but rather as accidental, but not an inconsequential one. The idea to stage French works in the 1912 season had already been on Diaghilev’s mind for a couple of years, with \textit{Le Dieu} and \textit{L’Après-midi d’un faune} both commissioned in 1910.\textsuperscript{255} Furthermore, the original plans for this 1912 season were to feature Ravel’s \textit{Daphnis et Chloé} as the opening work (having already been moved from the season before), with \textit{Le Dieu} added at the end of the year. However, Fokine could still not complete the choreography \textit{Daphnis} in time, and as a result the première was pushed to the end of the season (much to the further annoyance of Ravel).\textsuperscript{256} The placement of \textit{Le Dieu} as the opening work of the 1912 season can therefore be regarded as inconsequential. Nevertheless, perhaps more significant to my research concerning how the \textit{Ballets Russes} created works in its

\textsuperscript{252} Grigoriev, \textit{The Diaghilev Ballet, 1909-1929}, 66.
\textsuperscript{253} Charles Spencer, \textit{The World of Serge Diaghilev} (London: Paul Elek, 1974), 93.
\textsuperscript{254} Davis, \textit{Ballets Russes Style}, 191.
\textsuperscript{255} Garafola, \textit{Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes}, 80.
\textsuperscript{256} Grigoriev, \textit{The Diaghilev Ballet, 1909-1929}, 69.
opening years, is the process by which Diaghilev commissioned *Le Dieu*, despite being uncertain of the composer’s credentials.

Serge Grigoriev attributes this decision to ‘reasons of policy’, though precisely what is actually meant by this phrase is unclear.\textsuperscript{257} It seems likely that some external influence, be it financial gain or social persuasion, is the implied reason. Indeed, it is possible to suggest that the impresario’s commissioning of Hahn can be understood as a purely pragmatic decision, based on social obligation and the courting of public approval. Hahn was a highly respected and influential member of the Parisian artistic elite. His social circles read like a *Who’s Who* of Parisian chic: he was a former lover of Marcel Proust, was related to the artist Frédéric de Madrazo, and was often lionised by wealthy investors such as the Grand Duke Paul and Princess Paley.\textsuperscript{258} As a result, any social association with Hahn was likely to open doors into the circles of educated, influential and affluent individuals - Diaghilev’s demographic - and to create opportunities that were all but impossible to unlock unaided. Diaghilev’s ability to network was legendary, with his own acquaintances being the most in vogue of the twentieth-century: as Garafola explains, he had an extraordinary ability to ‘pluck his collaborators from the Proustian world of the 1890s’.\textsuperscript{259} However, surely the opportunity to access even wider social circles, made possible through Hahn, appealed to the impresario’s sensibilities.

As well as being socially connected, Hahn had been a much-hyped child prodigy, portrayed as the poster-boy for French music, and was widely accepted as the greatest French chanson writer of his generation. Because of this popularity, he had a lifetime in

\textsuperscript{257} Ibid., 66.
\textsuperscript{258} Scheijen, *Diaghilev, A Life*, 245.
\textsuperscript{259} Garafola, *Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes*, 289.
the French limelight, resulting in un摇vering and vocal collection of followers within both academic and public circles.260 This idea is summarised by George Painter, who explains that Hahn’s numerous conservative followers championed the ‘delicate, traditional refinement of his compositions [and] his indifference towards innovators such as Fauré and Debussy, and his antipathy towards Wagner’.261 Diaghilev had not commissioned any French composers in the first years of his company, and his perceived refusal to do so led to an increasing divide between himself and the Parisian critics, many of whom advocated the traditional salon approach of Hahn over the modernist philosophies and techniques of Diaghilev’s Russian collaborators. Therefore, regardless (perhaps even dismissive) of any artistic vision, Diaghilev viewed the engagement of Hahn pragmatically, as an opportunity to strengthen his ties with wealthy Parisian investors, whilst also appeasing the French public and their desire for more French music. Stravinsky himself summarises this point well, stating that ‘Diaghilev needed Hahn’s favourable notices and therefore staged his ballet Dieu bleu. After that, and to a lesser extent before, Hahn was a salon idol, and salon support was necessary to Diaghilev at the time.’262 The idea of Diaghilev bridging the gap between his company and the French critics would certainly be supported by the knowledge that the 1912 season became the first point at which he primarily used French nationals as his artistic and musical collaborators: a clear message from Diaghilev that France had earned its place in the Ballets Russes’s repertoire. As discussed in my opening chapters, this French season in 1912 is compared retrospectively with another nationally dominated season in 1924, again with involvement from Cocteau. Because of this, both the 1912 and 1924 seasons can be used as comparative periods for a discussion about

262 Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, Memories and Commentaries (London: Faber and Faber, 2002), 152.
the evolution of the *Ballets Russes*.

If, despite all of the reasons listed above, Diaghilev still had concerns over commissioning Hahn, these were finally dispelled by some of his most trusted advisors. Indeed, as with any discussion surrounding Diaghilev and his socially driven ideas, one must understand not only his personal opinions on the matter, but also the seemingly endless and ever-changing thoughts of those individuals with whom he was encircled. Diaghilev was known for falling in and out of friendships with various members of the Parisian glitterati, as well as for allowing the opinions of those around him to influence his decisions. However, few were as constant and as persuasive as one particular individual: Misia Sert. Sert was a Franco-Polish pianist and socialite who became a very powerful figure within the Parisian art scene, thanks largely to her marriages to three influential figures, Thadée Natanson, Alfred Edwards and José-Maria Sert. Misia Sert owned a famous salon in the city where many of Diaghilev’s supporters and compatriots were frequent guests, and as such she was a permanent figure on the social scene with Paris’s most exclusive residents. After the death of Diaghilev’s step-mother, Misia Sert became a maternal figure, acting in the role of confidante and conscience. Scheijen suggests that it was Sert’s enthusiasm for the project that encouraged Diaghilev to hire Hahn. However, this opinion may be questioned in light of Jarvinn’s criticism of Scheijen’s book as lacking in accurate, original research. It is likely that Sert was an acquaintance of Hahn, and therefore possible that she would have promoted him to Diaghilev. However, the more obvious influence came from Cocteau, who worked to quieten any uncertainties in Diaghilev’s mind and to reassure him of the potential success of the work.

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263 Scheijen, *Diaghilev, A Life*, 168.
264 Ibid.
265 Ibid., 246.
All this notwithstanding, there remains the question of the composer’s credentials for creating a stage-work worthy of the Ballets Russes. Hahn’s cultural popularity lay in his cultivation of French-soaked traditionalism, as exemplified by his other compositions that received their premières around the time of Le Dieu: such as Two Pieces for Flute and Piano (1913) and En sourdine (1914). However, Hahn did have one balletic creation under his belt: his 1910 composition for l’Opéra, La fête chez Thérêse. Choreographed by Mlle. Stichel (real name Louise Manzini) and based on a libretto by Catulle Mendès, La fête chez Thérêse was created specifically for performance at the Opéra.\textsuperscript{266} The basis for my ideas on this ballet are borrowed from Caddy, who discusses the history of l’Opéra, with significant interest in the period from 1909-1914. Within this, she focuses on the reasons why this phase was the least successful in the theatre’s history. She uses La fête chez Thérêse as a means of exploring ‘pre-war ballet at the Opéra’, describing it as a ‘literal ballet-pantomime’, exemplifying the Opéra’s signature style.\textsuperscript{267} Ivor Guest goes a step further, considering La fête chez Thérêse a more traditional work in the Opéra’s repertoire, and describing it as ‘a charming evocation of the Romantic period’, cementing the opinion that Hahn had an ability to champion his predecessors rather than to inspire a shift in musical technique.\textsuperscript{268} Nonetheless, in Guest’s book, entirely dedicated to the history of the Opéra, in which many ballets are studied in great detail, only the shortest of paragraphs is reserved for La fête chez Thérêse, a fate so similar to that of Le Dieu that one may begin to question Hahn’s place within the ballet history of Paris’s Belle-époque.

One of the ways in which Le Dieu did achieve a positive critical response success, was

\textsuperscript{266} Davinia Caddy, The Ballets Russes and Beyond (Cambridge: The University of Cambridge, 2012), 19.
\textsuperscript{267} Ibid., 28.
through Nijinsky’s assumption of the title role. This inclusion of Nijinsky as a solo dancer is important, as one could argue that above all else, *Le Dieu* was created to provide a leading part for the young dancer. Nijinsky and Diaghilev had become lovers in the months previous to *Le Dieu*, and it is therefore understandable that Diaghilev would act so vehemently to create a work that placed his latest conquest at centre stage. Richard Buckle believes that it was during the rehearsals for *L’Oiseau du feu* (in which Nijinsky would not play a key role), that Diaghilev first decided to create a ballet solely with the purpose of championing his lover:

He [Diaghilev] pinned his hopes on *Le Dieu bleu*, which Cocteau and Hahn were planning together …. and Nijinsky must have a role, like that of Karsavina in *The Firebird*, which isolated him from other characters, a supernatural subsidiary to no ballerina.269

As if to further accentuate Nijinsky when he was on stage, he was covered head to toe in a particularly vivid shade of blue body-paint, as part of his costume. Fig. 3.21 shows Nijinsky in full costume for his role as the Blue God; however, frustratingly no original depiction of the colour has survived. As well as a means of emphasising Nijinsky, this choice of colour once again illustrates Diaghilev’s understanding of the artistic trends of the time. The inclusion of such a vivid blue as a focal aspect of the work was a nod not only to the religious traditions of the Hindu God, Krishna (and therefore to those who sought the exotic), but also to the artistic trends of the time. Picasso used the colour blue in his ‘monochromatism phase’, which came into existence from 1901, with many people believing his colour choice to have been inspired by El Greco, who famously used this particular shade frequently.270 One of the most important artistic figures of this generation (and future frequent Diaghilev collaborator), Picasso also used blue to reflect the ‘melancholy, suffering, and poverty’ of this time.271 By adopting such a specific

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271 Ibid.
colour palette, it is possible once again to see Diaghilev as both pragmatic, in his ability to emphasise Nijinsky’s presence on the stage, and fashionable, in his ability to exploit the trends of the time.

Figure 3.21 - Nijinsky as ‘The Blue God’

With Diaghilev’s relationship with Nijinsky in mind, the final possible influence on this ballet’s eventual creation is presented: the shared sexual orientation of Diaghilev and Hahn. Buckle places great importance on Diaghilev’s homosexual relationship with Nijinsky, believing that the open affair placed the impresario in yet another new role as ‘The Leader of the Paris homosexual set’.273 This set included ‘Reynaldo Hahn, Lucien Daudet, Marcel Proust and … Jean Cocteau’.274 If this was the case, it is possible that Cocteau and Hahn’s involvement with the Ballets Russes through Le Dieu could also be seen as Diaghilev continuing to place importance on creating roles for those who fell

273 Buckle, Diaghilev, 146.
274 Ibid.
into his circle of close-knit associates. No work epitomises this better than *Le Dieu*, which, with its specially imported blue body-paint and long periods of solo dance, acted as the perfect platform for Diaghilev to exhibit his latest lover, also allowing him to employ his close friends, whilst simultaneously appeasing the French critics. In these aspects, the ballet certainly succeeded.

3.12: ‘Essentially Picturesque’

The scenario for *Le Dieu bleu* is an artless mythological story based on Hindu ideas - for a full translation of the stage directions from the original French score, see Appendix 4. The ballet opens on a scene of a temple carved from a rock face high in the Indian mountains, with lotus flowers strewn around the stage. The action is centred on one young man’s final steps in his ritualistic journey into priesthood. His lover (the heroine of the ballet) interrupts the ceremonies to demand that he renounce his vows and choose a life with her instead. The older members of the priesthood are appalled by this act of defiance and imprison the young woman in the foundations of the temple, to be killed by monsters that evening. As the young girl reaches what she believes to be her dying moments, the ground opens and she is encircled by demons that taunt her and prepare to take her with them to the unknown regions below. In desperation she prays to the Blue God to rescue her. Her prayers are answered, and a large lotus flower in the grounds of the temple opens to reveal a goddess who calls for the Blue God to appear. The Blue God arrives, and removes a stamen from the lotus flower. This stamen then becomes a flute, and the Blue God begins to play it. This music lulls the monsters into a trance, at which point the Blue God demands the girl be immediately freed. She runs back towards the temple to find her lover, barging through the temple gates in a dramatic fashion. Both the priests and the young man are shocked at her return and begin to

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275 Batson, *Dance, Desire, and Anxiety in Early Twentieth-Century French Theater*, 128.
panic. Whilst the priests are in a state of frenzy, the young girl reproaches her lover for leaving her alone. She then explains the miracle of her escape, following which the lovers embrace and leave together. The final image of the ballet is of the goddess blessing the couple from her lotus before becoming enclosed within the plant from which she arose, whilst the Blue God ascends a giant staircase into the sky.

Cocteau’s use of a Hindu story, coupled with Fokine’s Hindu-inspired choreography, continues the long-standing custom of religion acting as inspiration for Diaghilev and his company: be it Hinduism in Le Dieu, Christianity in Cléopâtre or Paganism in Le Sacre. However, Cocteau’s representation of Hinduism in Le Dieu is symbolic, and appears as part of a wider story. Moreover, the well-established sexual symbolism of the lotus flower (an important part of this libretto) made this topic a subliminally explicit one. This ballet can therefore be seen as a stepping-stone from the mild-mannered exotic borrowings of Cocteau, towards the explosive Russian Paganism that would be seen with Le Sacre in the following year, when Nicolas Roerich would present a far more realistic and notably darker version of an ‘exotic’ religion.

The music for Le Dieu bleu is very straightforward in its construction, offering little in the way of complex harmonic or melodic development. The score is comprised of several elements that combine to create effective and easily danceable music, which successfully evokes the Eastern setting. These features include exotic modes, contrasts of religious exotic and religious quasi-indigenous music, alternations between pantomimic and danced sections, and shifting modes and tonalities. Furthermore, Hahn cleverly references well-known works, such as compositions by Claude Debussy, to infer a musical grounding for his Western audience. Therefore, before passing judgment, it is worth outlining the nature of Hahn’s composition, in a comparable
manner to the Tcherepnin ballets discussed above. However, Hahn’s score requires a less detailed description than Tcherepnin’s ballets did, as the themes are fewer in number, and the focus is transferred onto the tonal flavours of the music.

Several of the scenes use similar harmonies to reflect related aspects of the scenario, with little deviation from a few primary harmonic motifs, the main tonal centres being shown in Ex. 3.29.

Example 3.29: Hahn, *Le Dieu bleu*, a harmonic map of the ballet (Copping) (See Appendix 5 for an index of the scenes)

Although there is no monocentric tonal plan, Hahn chooses Eb as his principal reference-point. Within this, the Eb mixolydian mode is the basis for the opening scenes of the ballet, and serves to represent the Indian setting. An Eb drone returns at several important moments, such as *Clair de lune*, where the young girl is imprisoned after her capture, and the scene is changed to a backdrop of the monastery’s mountains: the drone represents both the loneliness of the girl’s situation and the setting of her incarceration.

The Eb minor tonality evident in *La Déesse paraît* represents the monastery backdrop. The immediate transition to Eb major in this scene from Eb minor in *Le Miracle* underpins the fear that the young girl feels before the goddess appears and saves her from the demons. This primordial relationship between major and minor is a recurrent element within Hahn’s score. The major tonality represents the light (or ‘good’) within the score, while minor tonalities represent the dark (or ‘bad’). An example of this occurs
at bar 1280, where within a B major section, modes that have previously included a flattened 6\textsuperscript{th} or 7\textsuperscript{th} (such as when the young girl is incarcerated) are altered, and where ‘the lovers are reunited’ a sharpened 4\textsuperscript{th} is present instead. Modal alterations such as this occur frequently throughout the ballet, in addition to the several deviations to other keys within the overall E\textsubscript{b} tonal framework. However, some of these deviations recur within the ballet, in conjunction with various motifs.\textsuperscript{276} The \textit{Danse des Souvenirs} and \textit{L’Escalier d’or et le montée du Dieu}, for example, both represent freedom. \textit{Souvenirs}, in A\textsubscript{b} major, signifies the point at which the young girl is reunited with her fiancée. The enharmonically altered section of the concluding \textit{L’Escalier} - in G\# minor - again represents freedom, with the Blue God climbing the golden stairs to return to the Heavens having completed his task of freeing the girl.

Although the tonality of the ballet is a main point of interest within this score, with specific reference to the exotic imagery it supports, a few melodic motifs are also worthy of discussion at this point. In a manner similar to Tcherepnin’s ballets, Hahn’s motifs can be understood to be expressive of ideas, rather than specific characters, although in Hahn’s ballet these motifs do reappear throughout. The list of themes from within the ballet, and the titles I have assigned them, is shown below in Fig. 3.22, and each of these themes is transcribed in (Ex. 3.30) below.

\textsuperscript{276} The quotes in this passage are taken from my translated stage directions for \textit{Le Dieu bleu}, provided in Appendix 4.
Figure 3.22 - Dramatic associations of motifs within _Le Dieu bleu_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motif</th>
<th>Represents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motif 1</td>
<td>Oriental Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motif 2</td>
<td>Oriental/Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motif 3</td>
<td>Feast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motif 4</td>
<td>Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motif 5</td>
<td>_Le Dieu bleu/_transition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 3.30: Hahn, _Le Dieu bleu_, Principal motifs used in the ballet (Copping)

Instances marked ‘+’ represent a point at which the motif appears in a more complex version. The three cases marked ‘++’ indicate a chorale-like reinterpretation, as explained in Ex. 3.31 below.

Motif 1 represents the oriental setting and is only used in the opening scene. A rhythmically altered and slightly extended variant of the end of the motif becomes Motif 2. This then assumes the role of oriental/religion motif as the ballet unfolds, with the accompanying harmonies and rhythms becoming more developed. The altering of this simple oriental motif is illustrated in Ex. 3.31, shown as a harmonic reduction of the
Example 3.31: Hahn, *Le Dieu bleu*, quasi-chorale motif

The motif is expanded to reflect the two moments in which religiously symbolic acts take place on stage: first the young man’s rituals on entry into priesthood, and secondly the Blue God appearing to save the victim of the ballet. When this altered theme is first heard at bar 484, the annotations to the score state that ‘before the young man is fully introduced to the priesthood, his elders are engaged in a final prayer’. Hahn’s score reflects this setting, by adapting the original oriental/religion motif into a chorale-like passage. This chorale is based on simple, pastoral chords that evoke associations with religious rituals in the Western world. The motif represents both indigenous (European) and exotic religion. This association with religion is cemented with the similarities that are heard at this point between Hahn’s music and Debussy’s prelude *La Cathédrale engloutie* (1910). Debussy’s European music relies on measured chordal passages, whilst in Hahn’s composition slow-moving pentatonic chords are representative of the mystical setting of the work. This altered passage, first heard at bar 484 to signify the monastery’s rituals, is raised a semitone when accompanying the appearance of the Hindu God, creating an intensified version of the same motif. Here, religious representation has been adapted to show both the monastic and Hindu aspects of the ballet.

Motif 3 is the least prevalent within the ballet, being heard only in *Danse des Porteuses.*
This motif is labelled ‘feast’, as it appears when the young man is partaking in a great meal before beginning his religious rituals. Motif 4, ‘dance’, first appears at the beginning of *Danse des bayadères*, and continues throughout this scene as the main melodic component. Motif 5 is the most pervasive in the ballet, appearing within the opening bars of the score and being repeated at various points throughout the work. Its first complete use occurs at bar 159, at which point the priests are placing the religious robes on the young man. Its next occurrence is at the beginning of the *Danse des Yoghis*, and the final appearance is at bar 1125 when the Blue God begins to dance before the monsters. This particular motif is therefore the least exact in terms of functional representation. However, its use at pivotal moments of the ballet qualifies it as the principal motif for *Le Dieu*. In effect, Hahn uses this particular motif to book-end transitional phases in the ballet, such as the young man’s journey into priesthood and the Blue God’s transition to protector.

Certain key moments within the plot are flagged by an inclusion of intertextual ideas, as discussed with regard to Debussy’s work above. For example, there are similarities in characterisation between the coronation scene in Modest Musorgsky’s *Boris Godunov* (1874) and the final ascension of the Blue God in Hahn’s work. However, the most obvious link to an existing piece occurs in his use of the flute as the instrument on which the Blue God transfixes the beasts to save the young girl. The way in which Hahn’s flute melody (beginning at bar 1156) effortlessly skips over exotic modes is reminiscent of Debussy’s *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* (1894), and as such the mystical basis for both Debussy’s music and Hahn’s ballet further consolidates this aspect of *Le Dieu bleu*. Another example occurs in the opening melismatic phrase of the work, with the rhythmically-free melody reminding Parisian audiences of Rimsky-
Korsakov’s equally exotic opening lines from *Schéherézade* (1888). Indeed, this opening pentatonic melody is a conventional marker for exoticism, and as such it distances the ballet in both geography and time. However, within Hahn’s score the melody is supported by diatonic harmony within the E♭ mixolydian mode. Therefore, although a pentatonic melody is a generic way of representing the exotic, its presence here as part of a more complex harmonic structure means that its use is not too predictable. Instead, the shifts from diatonic to modal, coupled with the chromatic interjections, ensure that although the opening section is firmly grounded in the E♭ mixolydian mode, its harmonic colour remains fresh and interesting, in a way that will prove to be typical of the entire score.

*Le Dieu bleu* is structured in a very straightforward way: each scene has its own defined dance music, with pantomime sections creating bridges between the various scenes. In the pantomime passages no dance takes place, instead, a conversation or action is inferred. Unlike the dance music, the pantomime sections often recycle material from the opening prelude (for example bars 161 and 401). The dance sections are unrelated motivically and are diverse in their musical language. Whilst the use of contrasting harmonies dictates the overall style of Hahn’s music, his deployment of melodic motifs and pantomime music combines to create a score that, while uncomplicated upon first hearing, is sufficiently cleverly constructed for its purpose. The end result might not be viable for the concert hall, but as dance music it successfully contributes to the exotic feel of the ballet, not least by its marshalling of harmonic and melodic motifs with associations to pre-existing works.

277 The *Ballets Russes* performed their own highly successful version of *Schéherézade* in 1910, in Paris. For a list of relevant contributors, see Appendix 1.
3.13: ‘A Giant of the Salon but a Failure of the Stage’

The overall reception of Le Dieu bleu can be summarised as focused on the visual attributes of the ballet, but dismissive of the music - an appraisal reminiscent of Tcherepnin’s ballets in the years previously. Contemporary reviews describe the detailed choreography and spectacular scenery by Bakst, rather than Hahn’s score. Indeed, critics seemed to cite the visual art of Le Dieu and the solo dancing by Nijinsky by way of apology for an otherwise forgettable ballet. Grigoriev summarises this point, with reference to only the visual aspects of the ballet: ‘these all had their merits. Yet, as a whole, the ballet was dull and ineffective, and not even the dancing of Nijinsky and Karasavina, Neliyova and Frohman could endow it with much life’. It appears as though even the full ‘Nijinsky-effect’ of an enticing solo performance, and the fashionably exotic designs by Bakst, could not satisfy an audience who were simply expecting more from Diaghilev. Arnold Haskell, the well-established dance critic reaffirms this point: ‘in spite of Nijinsky’s Indian-inspired gestures, [Le Dieu] failed to interest the Paris public, who had been so impressed by the Siamese dancers at the great exhibition’.

Whilst Hahn’s score is largely ignored in modern commentaries, one dissertation focusing on Hahn’s song output does provide a succinct, if no more than basic, appraisal: ‘the music was impressionistic, with monophonic solos, chromatic and whole-tone scales, ostinati and open fifth accompaniments’. Some scholars even believed the simplicity and apparent lack of excitement within Hahn’s score to be a relatively positive feature, describing the ballet as inoffensive and perhaps even ‘sweet’.

278 Garafola, Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, 195.
Peter Lieven, for example, writing in 1973, interprets the simplicity of *Le Dieu* as charming:

The French composer, Reynaldo Hahn, to whose music the ballet was set, arrived in Russia, and completely charmed all the friends by his delightful manner of playing and singing his own music. When he played it, the music seemed very fine, though actually it was a little flat, charming enough but lacking in interest and importance - India seen through the eyes of Massenet, sweet and insipid.\(^{283}\)

In reality, Hahn received comparatively little criticism for his work, general indifference towards the score perhaps shielding him from sharper scrutiny.

In short, as Lieven states, ‘*Le Dieu* cannot be considered one of the highest ballet achievements [as it] had no great success in spite of Bakst’s wonderful scenery and costumes’.\(^{284}\) The lavish setting of *Le Dieu* (illustrated below, Fig. 3.23) continued Diaghilev’s trend of providing visually lush ballets, as previously seen in *Narcisse*.

Moreover, the variety of techniques used when creating the costumes for this ballet was staggering, showing how important the detail of the costumes was to Bakst - a concept discussed by Jane Pritchard. Pritchard uses ‘The Bayadère’ costumes from *Le Dieu* as examples of this range of techniques: ‘appliquéd, painting and dyeing, embroidery using flossing, flocking, beading and metal studs’ all appeared, creating truly breath-taking costumes, and adding to sensory impact of *Le Dieu*.\(^{285}\) This use of extravagant scenery, vibrant colours and detailed costumery can therefore be justly described as a hallmark of early *Ballets Russes* productions. This is not a trait that would survive the years, and Diaghilev’s later change in aesthetic direction (as discussed in chapter 5) was reflected in the altered approach to scenery that his company adopted, with more minimal

backdrops becoming the company’s preferred style.

Figure 3.23 - Original scenery for *Le Dieu bleu*, Léon Bakst

![Image of original scenery for *Le Dieu bleu*]

*Le Dieu bleu* as a ballet has been almost entirely forgotten in the near century since its last performance for the *Ballets Russes*, despite the interest it initially generated for Nijinsky’s dancing and its artwork. However, in 2005 Andris Liepa restaged the ballet for the first time, having painstakingly recreated the sets and costumes with the help of Anna Neznaya. Andris Liepa’s interpretation even took centre stage as part of the London Coliseum’s *Diaghilev Festival* in 2011, being performed alongside some of the most sumptuous and exotic ballets from the company’s glory days. Significantly, this revived version did not include the original music by Hahn, instead favouring a score by Alexander Scriabin. Therefore, although a version of *Le Dieu* has been resurrected,

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the dismissal of Hahn’s score serves only to reaffirm the opinion that the visual
attributes of the ballet were the most celebrated, whilst the music seems destined once
again to remain a part of the Ballets Russes’s very distant past. Writing before this 2011
adaptation, Vera Liber has gone so far as to describe the original ballet as ‘hokum’:

Fokine’s staging was more dance theatre than ballet. Spectacle, which
Bakst’s lush designs provided, personalities, and expression were what
mattered to carry this piece of hokum. Karsavina and Nijinsky had that in
abundance.289

Also in 2011, an exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London showed many
of the costumes and designs for Le Dieu. The literature accompanying this exhibition
talked of the ballet’s modest success, explaining that the productions that were relative
failures are those from which most original materials exist: no one was interested in
keeping hold of the physical memories of a ballet with no success, so they were placed
in storage rather than being sold or toured. The irony is that Le Dieu’s failings in its day,
make it one of the most frequently represented ballets in modern visual art collections:
the lack of interest then makes for a greater availability now.290

Some commentators see the apparent lack of success for Le Dieu as a positive thing,
citing Le Dieu and other works in this season as necessary defeats for Diaghilev and his
company. As Grigoriev suggests, ‘the failure of Le Dieu bleu; Diaghilev’s neglect of
Daphnis et Chloé, the scandal over L’Après-Midi; each in its way was perturbing. The
Ballets Russes’s earlier triumphs had spoilt us.’291 Therefore, Le Dieu can be included in
a new category of works that saw Diaghilev fall from the dizzying heights of the
previous season - a salutary setback that reinvigorated him to reproduce the company’s

(accessed 7 July 2012).
July 2012).
ground-breaking style in the following years. However, although the scandal of 
*L’Après-midi* and the disorganisation of *Daphnis* caused hostility within the *Ballets Russes*, it is unfair to suggest that these works could be considered any less successful than the ballets that went before or after them. Instead, a more balanced assessment would note that the relative lack of interest in *Le Dieu* and *Naricsse*, combined with the confusion over *Daphnis* and *L’Après-midi* served to refocus Diaghilev and his company, prompting them to evolve their techniques and ideas in the following seasons.

As well as influencing the course of future seasons for the *Ballets Russes*, the reception of *Le Dieu* also affected the careers of those involved in a more direct manner. Cocteau, for one, viewed the disastrous reception of his ‘Orientalist-infected ballet’ as a turning point from which his future works could only improve. Following this period, the artist decided to change his approach to writing for Diaghilev, in light of the impresario’s retort that Cocteau should ‘étonne-moi’ when the librettist had made fun of him for his absurdities with *Le Dieu*. It is implausible that *Le Dieu* was the only catalyst for change in Cocteau’s ideologies, although it perhaps encouraged him to be more daring. Certainly, when he reappeared as a *Ballets Russes* collaborator in 1917, and as a key influence in 1924, his artistic outlook was very different. The significance of Cocteau’s altered ideas is discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

*Le Dieu* was performed as part of only five seasons following its opening 1912 season (see Fig. 3.24). This number is not atypical of the *Ballets Russes*’s frequency of performances in one season, with the rapidity of new ballets being created often going hand-in-hand with a shortened life-span for each one. However, it did not appear in the

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293 Ibid.
company’s much more prestigious tour of Vienna, with greater focus being placed on *Thamar*, which was, conversely, ever increasing in popularity.\(^{295}\) Moreover, *Le Dieu* was never performed after 1914, reinforcing the short lifespan this ballet was destined to have.

Figure 3.24 - Performance history of *Le Dieu bleu*\(^{296}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Performances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paris: Théâtre du Châtelet</td>
<td>6 performances:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13, 15, 17, 18 May; 5, 7 June 1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London: Royal Opera House</td>
<td>3 performances:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27 February; 1, 6 March 1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monte Carlo: Opera House</td>
<td>3 performances:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22, 26 April; 2 May 1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buenos Aires: Teatro Colón</td>
<td>3 performances:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20, 24, 28 September 1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio de Janeiro: Teatro Municipal</td>
<td>1 performance:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29 October 1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin: Teater am Nollendorfplatz</td>
<td>2 performances:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11, 13 March 1914</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, *Le Dieu bleu* was clearly far from a success for the *Ballets Russes*, with the comparatively unassuming music provided by Hahn ensuring that the première did not generate any feverish response from the audience. Instead, the work’s greatest attributes were the artistic offerings of Bakst and the ethereal dancing of Nijinsky. However, if *Le Dieu* was intended primarily to promote Diaghilev’s lover and appease French critics, the venture has to be deemed a success, of a kind. Furthermore, if the ballet was designed to provide an interlude in the weeks before *Faune* appeared in Paris, it undoubtedly served its purpose. Nonetheless, as with Tcherepnin’s earlier ballets, Hahn’s contribution to the *Ballets Russes* failed to make an impact with the European audience.

\(^{295}\) Ibid., 193.

\(^{296}\) All the dates listed here come from a document entitled *Chronologie des Ballets Russes*, accessed at the Opéra site of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.
public, and became an all too easily forgotten moment in the company’s history.

3.14: A Platform of Normality

Neither Tcherepnin nor Hahn’s dalliances with the Ballets Russes were career-defining. Despite creating two full-scale balletic works for the most famous troupe in the world, and conducting some of the most celebrated premières in the company’s history, Tcherepnin’s contributions were not an enduring success, either for the Ballets Russes or his own career. Instead, he seems destined to be remembered primarily for his contributions as a teacher and conductor. As far as his place in the history of the Ballets Russes goes, this second-rate Stravinsky was one of a crowd. Likewise, Hahn’s only involvement with the company left many disappointed, and he himself returned to his career as a creator of idealistic French chansons. Moreover, his time at the Ballets Russes did not change his style of composition in any way, and with hindsight Le Dieu bleu was no more than a bump on the otherwise smooth road of his career.

Nevertheless, these seemingly forgettable ballets were vital in forming the Ballets Russes as it is remembered today. These early Diaghilev ventures helped to create the formula according to which the company would shape its style, powered by ‘the joint creation of [Diaghilev’s] organising powers and of the ideas and work of his collaborators’: otherwise known as creation by means of unified collaboration, as outlined in my opening chapters.  

The ballets analysed in this chapter were not exceptional in their mediocrity. Rather they belonged to a small number of Diaghilev ‘failures’ that would set the bar that was

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297 Michel Dmitri Calvocoressi, ‘The Russian Ballet and After’, The Musical Times, 64 (1923), 775-776; here, 775.
simply waiting to be raised. However, these works were among the stylistic calling-cards that attracted thousands of members of the public to Diaghilev’s shows, helping to create a new genre of European-Russian art that would grow as the company did. Because of this, they are important moments within the evolution of the company, creating a set of conventions that would be replicated in the following years. Regardless of the intrinsic merits of the scores themselves, without them the foundations for the *Ballets Russes* would not have been laid, and the convention of works based on unified collaboration would not have existed in the same way. Put simply, the early *Ballets Russes* scores composed by Tcherepnin and Hahn helped to create a platform of normality, from which Stravinsky, and his *Sacre* in particular, could leap into the unknown.
Le Sacre, Parade and Prokofiev: reconfiguring collaboration

In 1913, the twentieth-century bade farewell to the era retrospectively known as the Belle Époque.²⁹⁸ As described by Roger Shattuck, this period had marked the ‘thirty years of peace, prosperity, and internal dissensions which [lay] across 1900. During this time, Paris became the cultural capital of the world, setting fashions in dress, the arts, and the pleasures of life’.²⁹⁹ However, as this phase drew to a close, the new ideas of avant-gardism and futurism dominated the artistic agenda, and unaware of the horrors about to arrive in Europe in the following years, cities such as Paris were enjoying an unparalleled freedom of expression. It was within this framework that Le Sacre du Printemps was born.

Up to this point Diaghilev and his company had worked during a time of peace and relatively generous funding, and their ideas were still new, exciting, and unique. Between then and the second French season of 1924, discussed in Chapter 5, the company strove to balance the image it had acquired through the succès de scandale of Le Sacre with newly challenging economic and intellectual conditions, to ensure that the needs of survival and the urge for continual evolution were jointly met.

4.1: Stravinsky: Le Sacre de Printemps and Sensationalism

If Tcherepnin and Hahn’s ballets had helped to create the mould within which Diaghilev would create his ballets, with Le Sacre du Printemps, each constituent element was pushed to the extreme. With this single work, the Ballets Russes redirected its own trajectory, and in the process changed the course of European music forever. Le Sacre is

one of the most celebrated, closely examined, and well-known of all ballets, combining controversial subject matter with a radical score and revolutionary choreography, and launching Stravinsky into worldwide celebrity. As a result, *Le Sacre* has remained at the centre of musical discussions for a century, whilst also being widely known outside the academic community for its riotous première.

*Le Sacre* was first performed on 29 May 1913 at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and was the third of Stravinsky’s ballets for Diaghilev, following *L’Oiseau de feu* (25 June 1910, Grand Opéra) and *Pétrouchka* (13 June 1911, Théâtre du Châtelet). The first two Stravinsky-Diaghilev collaborations had been great triumphs for the *Ballets Russes*, receiving both critical acclaim and an enthusiastic public response. Roger Nichols describes *L’Oiseau du feu* as Stravinsky’s ‘permis de conduire’ on the musical/theatrical road’, from which the composer deviated to create new musical styles, as seen in *Le Sacre*. Indeed, *L’Oiseau du feu* was an important work for both composer and impresario, marking the beginning of their highly fruitful (albeit tumultuous) partnership, as well as Stravinsky’s first production for the stage and his introductory visit to Paris. This first Stravinsky-centred collaborative ballet has remained one of his most immediately popular works, as it established his much celebrated Russian style, without unduly challenging the Parisian audience, familiar as it was with the example of Rimsky-Korsakov’s orchestral works. However, despite many compositional and stylistic differences, *Pétrouchka* also received a similar response from both critics and the public. As Eric Walter White explains, these early ballets

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303 Ibid., 36.
were fundamental to the creation of *Le Sacre*, as they showcased two different sides to Stravinsky, and yet were both equally well received.

*The Firebird* had merely been an attempt - and a very successful one at that - to outshine Rimsky-Korsakov at his own game of colourful instrumentation, *Pétrouchka* was the first score to reveal Stravinsky’s idiosyncratic way of handling an orchestra. As [Stravinsky] said in *Expositions*, the success of the ballet ‘was good for me in that it gave me absolute conviction of my ear just as I was about to begin *The Rite of Spring*’.  

The influence of the early *Ballets Russes* catalogue was also felt in *Le Sacre*. For example, in *Le Dieu bleu*, Jean Cocteau and Frédéric de Madrazo had created a scenario that demonstrated the company’s willingness to embody characters from all cultural heritages, whilst also appealing to a European audience’s fascination with the exotic. However, the Hindu-based scenario did not constitute a historically informed libretto, but merely a mystical story inspired by an exotic theme. The ‘Russianness’ of *Le Sacre*, and the comparatively explicit way in which the ballet presented its topic, inaugurated an entirely new type of subject matter for Diaghilev. As Richard Taruskin describes, ‘it was the great thrust of the nineteenth-century science of anthropology to demystify mythology’, and it could be said that with *Le Sacre*, Diaghilev made his first attempt to demystify the topics within his ballets.

As White elaborates, the experience of Stravinsky’s work on *L’Oiseau de feu* and *Pétrouchka* meant that by the time of the *Le Sacre*, he ‘knew exactly how to get the effects he wanted, which he would measure to the nearest millimetre’. Following on from *L’Oiseau de feu* and *Pétrouchka* in relatively quick succession, *Le Sacre* is often viewed as the closing instalment within Stravinsky’s early balletic trilogy. However, it

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304 White (also quoting Stravinsky), *Stravinsky, The Composer and His Works*, 37.
arguably also signified the beginning of the next musical phase for both composer and company. After *Le Sacre*, Stravinsky contributed seven highly important and widely celebrated works to the *Ballets Russes*’s repertoire: *Le Rossignol* (1914), *Pulcinella* (1920), *Mavra* (1922), *Renard* (1922), *Les Noces* (1923), *Oedipus Rex* (1927), and *Apollon Musagète* (1928). This extensive catalogue of productions, alongside the critical acclaim each received, makes Stravinsky the most genre-defining composer within the *Ballets Russes*. However, the Stravinsky-*Ballets Russes* relationship was a symbiotic one, and without the seemingly endless financial and artistic backing from Diaghilev and his entourage, it is unlikely that Stravinsky would have ever come to realise his full potential as a composer for the stage. Beginning with *L’Oiseau de feu*, an homage to the young Russian’s musical training and heritage, through to the neoclassical experimentation in *Les Noces*, Diaghilev and his troupe are woven into the fabric of Stravinsky’s biography. Indeed, such was his stylistic journey throughout his time with Diaghilev that ‘Stravinsky the composer’ should not be viewed as a single idea within the *Ballets Russes*, but rather as an ever-changing, fluid concept.

Nonetheless, despite Stravinsky’s numerous compositions and ever-changing style for the *Ballets Russes*, *Le Sacre* remains the work for which he is most known today, as well as the one that would have the greatest resonance on the rest of the company’s history.

The vast reach of *Le Sacre* makes it impossible to pinpoint or quantify the number of individuals who were influenced both in its immediate aftermath and in the century that has passed since. It should also be acknowledged that the influence this work had on the *Ballets Russes* was immense, with the ballet becoming a watershed moment for the company’s creativity. The distinctive blend of Stravinsky’s score with Roerich’s pagan
ideas, accompanying Nijinsky’s adaptation of the Dalcroze technique, undoubtedly created a unique event in twentieth-century cultural history. As Cross explains, many subsequent compositions owe their musical language to Stravinsky’s score, and likewise many choreographers and dancers owe their techniques to Nijinsky’s creation. However, no matter how radical, Le Sacre itself was to some degree arguably indebted to a pre-existing work, namely Florent Schmitt’s La Tragédie de Salomé.

4.2: La Tragédie de Salomé: A Precursor to Le Sacre?

La Tragédie de Salomé was one of four ballets presented by Diaghilev in his 1913 season, alongside L’Oiseau d’Or (composed by Tchaikovsky and choreographed by Petipa), Debussy’s Jeux and Le Sacre du Printemps. Of these, L’Oiseau d’Or was the only one that was not part of the Paris season, appearing in Vienna in January of the same year. Debussy’s Jeux (15 May) and Schmitt’s Salomé (12 June) book-ended the première of Le Sacre in Paris, all three ballets appearing in the same season at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. Schmitt’s Salomé offers points of comparison with Le Sacre, from which it is possible to some extent to determine the degree to which Stravinsky’s creation conformed to, or reconfigured, the Ballets Russes’s style. In addition, Schmitt’s work is less well known (though perhaps not to the same extent as Hahn and Tcherepnin), and provides an opportunity to re-examine this ballet within the context of a marginalised work.

Alongside Schmitt’s score, the production consisted of choreography by Boris Romanov and designs by Serge Soudeikine (1882-1946). Soudeikine, like so many of

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307 For more information about the Dalcroze technique, and its use in Le Sacre du Printemps, see Claudia Jeschke, “…retrouver la source variété…”: Nijinsky’s Choreographic Textures’, in Danuser and Zimmerman (eds.), Avatar of Modernity: The Rite of Spring Reconsidered, 130-152.

308 Cross, The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky, 249 and passim.

309 Ibid.
the Ballets Russes’s collaborators, had moved in the artistic circles associated with the
Mir Iskusstva movement, and first encountered Diaghilev in a professional sense in
1906, when the impresario invited the artist to be part of his exhibition of Russian art.310
Soudeikine specialised in stage-design, and throughout his life he worked with a vast
array of companies, including the Kamerny Theatre in Moscow and the Metropolitan
Opera in New York, as well as for renowned individuals such as the impresario Nikita
Balieff, before creating works for musicals, winning particular praise for his designs for
the first performance of Porgy and Bess (1935).311 Notwithstanding this imposing
résumé, Salomé was the artist’s only balletic collaboration with Diaghilev. Incidentally,
Soudeikine was also involved with a Stravinsky ballet during his career, but not as a
Ballets Russes collaborator. Instead Soudeikine’s most direct professional connection to
Stravinsky came a decade later, when he created scenery for The League of Composers,
who restaged Les Noces in America, in 1929.312 Soudeikine’s other link to Stravinsky is
a personal one, as the composer had an affair with the artist’s wife Vera, beginning in
1921, and she eventually left Soudeikine to marry Stravinsky in 1940.313

Although the 1913 performance of Salomé was a new production, the ballet did not
include any new music. Rather it reused Schmitt’s score from 1907, which had been
performed several times in public as a concert piece (first on 8 January 1911).314 In the
six years that passed between the completion of Le Sacre and that of Salomé, the Ballets
Russes saw its zenith in terms of impact and sensationalism, which came to a head with
Stravinsky’s work. Significantly, though, Schmitt’s original score for Salomé played an

310 Garafola, Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, 20.
2014).
313 Joseph, Stravinsky Inside Out, 73.
(accessed 8 November 2014). The biographical information for Schmitt in this section is taken from
Pasler and Rife’s article.
important part within the creation of *Le Sacre*. Therefore, the role of Schmitt finds a
double significance within this thesis. Not only was *Salomé* performed in the same
season as *Le Sacre*, but the latter was also indebted to it for some aspects of its musical
language.

Florent Schmitt (1870-1958) and Stravinsky shared a close friendship throughout the
gestation of *Le Sacre*, and the many letters the two exchanged during this time are
important parts of the historical understanding of Stravinsky’s compositional process.
At several points, Stravinsky confided in Schmitt about the progress and ideas for his
work:

> I’m swamped by my work. Proofreading, orchestrations, compositions (for I
> am finishing the “Sacre” only now - not much remains to be done),
correspondence, and all of it in incessant haste - all of which is taking up a
lot of time. - 17 September 1912

> I’m working like a man accursed, finishing “Sacre” [and] its orchestration,
and scoring the “chorus” [Zvezdoliky]. - 26 September 1912

Schmitt was a highly-respected and renowned composer, as evident early in his career
when he won the *Prix de Rome* in 1900. Moreover, his broad expertise ensured that
he was also well-known within European musical and academic circles. Inevitably,
therefore, Schmitt was a known quantity to Stravinsky, and both composers admired
one another immensely. Indeed, the 1911 version of *Salomé* is dedicated to
Stravinsky. Following the work’s concert première on 8 January, Stravinsky wrote to
Schmitt saying, ‘I am only playing French music - yours, Debussy, Ravel … I confess
that [Salomé] has given me greater joy than any work I have heard in a long time’.

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Press, 1996), 800-801. Randel explains that Schmitt was also a noted music critic and academic, directing
the Lyons Conservatory between 1922-1924, and writing for *Le Temps* for a decade from 1929 onwards.
318 Igor Stravinsky, quoted in Stephen Walsh, *Stravinsky, A Creative Spring: Russia and France 1882-
These comments coincide with Stravinsky’s composition of *Le Sacre*, and point to the role Schmitt was playing as one of Stravinsky’s main creative inspirations at the time. As Jann Pasler writes, the influence of *Salomé* can be easily seen within the pages of *Le Sacre*, since ‘the rhythmic syncopations, polyrhythms, percussively treated chords, bitonality, and scoring anticipate those of Stravinsky’s “Danse sacrale”’ from *Le Sacre*. The two most obvious examples of Schmitt’s influence on *Le Sacre* can be seen in ‘Danse des Éclairs’, and ‘Danse de l’Effroi’, the two closing numbers within *Salomé*.

In the opening four bars of the ‘Danse des Éclairs’, a forceful syncopated rhythm, written as 3½/4, underpins a fast paced and harmonically complex melody. This passage is shown below in Ex. 4.1. The phrase is repeated throughout the scene, the orchestration of each phrase becoming increasingly complex, until a full percussive section can be heard to emphasise the melodic line.

Example 4.1: Schmitt, *La Tragédie de Salomé* - opening bars of ‘Danse Les Éclairs’

319 Pasler and Rife, ‘Florent Schmitt’.
The final scene, the ‘Danse de l’effroi’ in which Salomé is dancing amidst a violent storm, provides another example of the similarities between this work and *Le Sacre*. Shown below in Ex. 4.2, a three-bar long passage based around a syncopated rhythm is repeated throughout the scene. This extract bears a close resemblance to the rhythms present in ‘Danse Sacrale’ from Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre*, shown below in Ex. 4.3. The overriding character of both passages is determined by the emphasised off-beats, which create non-traditional metres. Clair Rowden points to Schmitt’s use of exploited rhythmic syncopations, polyrhythms, bitonality, and percussively treated chords’ to create an erotic frenzy in the ballet’s final two dances. She too observes that all these techniques are prophetic of *Le Sacre*.

Example 4.2: Schmitt, *La Tragédie de Salomé* - extract from ‘Danse de l’effroi’ (texture simplified in order to emphasise rhythmical elements)

Example 4.3: Stravinsky, ‘Danse Sacrale’, *Le Sacre du Printemps* (rehearsal mark 159)

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322 Ibid., 124.
As well as being a composer, Schmitt was also a well-respected reviewer. Therefore, along with his rhythmical language, his credentials as a critic would also impact on Le Sacre. Given that he was a respected commentator with the Revue de France and Le Temps, both Diaghilev and Stravinsky knew the value of an endorsement from Schmitt.324 Because of this, Stravinsky assiduously wooed Schmitt, fully aware of the need to cultivate friendly critics when planning to première a work which he knew would most likely face a divided response.325 With this in mind, it is possible to pinpoint moments within the compositional history of Le Sacre, at which Stravinsky tried to win favour from Schmitt. For example, in November 1912, Stravinsky played Le Sacre for small a gathering of musicians, including Schmitt, who subsequently wrote enthusiastically about it, describing the piece as ‘telling of freedom, newness and the richness of life’.326 Certainly, whatever political games Diaghilev and Stravinsky were playing, critical backing from Schmitt was definitely acquired, and he became a staunch supporter of the ballet throughout his life:

By seeking the most paradoxical sonorities, daring combinations of timbres, systematic use of extreme instrumental ranges; by its tropical, iridescent and unbelievably sumptuous orchestration [...] Mr. Stravinsky’s music achieves the unexpected - but intentional - result, that it gives us the impression of the darkest barbarity.327

324 Schmitt’s opinion was highly respected by his peers, and as such his support for any particular composer or work was a sought-after commodity. Such was his influence, that in 1936, he was granted a place in the Institut de France, beating Stravinsky in the process. See Richard Taruskin, Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions, 846.
325 Hill, Stravinsky, The Rite of Spring, 112.
326 Ibid., 28.
Significantly, despite the similarities between *Le Sacre* and *Salomé*, the reception for the ballets could not have been more different. Whilst *Le Sacre* was immediately regarded as ground-breaking, *Salomé* had gone through a variation of critical responses. Originally, the 1907 score had received little attention, although it did generate positive comments from a few key individuals, such as critic and writer Henry Gauthier-Villars who ‘found it both imposing and impressive’.  

328 However, as Rowden suggests, the *Ballets Russes’s* own *Salomé* in 1913 was overlooked, with other events in Paris piquing the public’s attention, such as Ida Rubinstein’s premiere of *Le Pisanelle ou la Mort parfumée* which took place the following day.  

329 This limited interest in Schmitt’s ballet at the time of its 1913 performance could be viewed as inversely proportionate to the intense interest surrounding *Le Sacre*. Performed only two weeks later, the impact of Schmitt’s ballet was entirely muffled by the deafening clamour following the ‘Riot of Spring’.

Schmitt’s composition, and Stravinsky’s expansion of *Salomé*’s musical language in *Le Sacre*, spanned a period of rapid evolution for the *Ballets Russes*. However, the trends initiated in this period were cut short by the war. This era of comparative creative freedom had determined the ways in which Diaghilev and his company conducted their affairs, providing a platform for them to experiment with all forms of media, whilst also ensuring the financial backing and political stability to do so, as discussed in section 3.3. However, this epoch of relative calm was not to last, and as Europe became embroiled in World War, the *Ballets Russes* as known in 1909-1913 ceased to exist, to be replaced by a company struggling to survive.

328 Rowden, *Performing Salome*, 89.  
329 Ibid., 95.
4.3: Paris at War

Prior to the outbreak of war, the Ballets Russes had become a staple of the artistic calendar in Paris, performing thirteen nights in Paris in 1912, followed by 30 in 1913. However, during the conflict the number of performances dropped significantly: only one in 1915, which took place in Geneva, three in 1916 (in New York and Spain), and eight in 1917, two of which were in Paris with the others occurring in Rome. This dramatic reduction in performances was the result of many factors, two of which are most salient: the company’s nomadic style throughout the war period, and the global shift in priorities and funding. Both of these are discussed at length in section 5.1, predominantly as part of a dialogue around the challenges faced by the 1920s Ballets Russes. However, many of the later troubles faced by Diaghilev’s company began with the advent of war in France, with the frontline being only sixty miles from the capital in 1916. As a way of escaping, the Ballets Russes toured throughout Europe, finding comparative safety in countries such as Spain, an episode of the company’s history discussed as part of section 5.2 below. At this time the world was struggling with the huge costs of the war, and as a result money for the arts was diminishing. In addition, a census in September 1914 showed only 1.8 million people currently residing in Paris, a decrease of more than a million from the previous year: 300,00 had been mobilised, and 700,000 civilians had fled the capital - thus the potential audience for productions had halved. Up until 1913 Diaghilev’s company had ridden a tidal wave of success, with each new ballet capitalising on and contributing to its momentum. Following the 1913 season this changed, and the company was now one with only a single item on its agenda: survival.

331 Franck, The Bohemians, 288.
During this time of turmoil the artistic scene underwent a revolution, and various factions began to challenge the preconceived ideas of academic art. Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918) embodied this time of change, and was an important figure within the creation of Parade, discussed in greater detail in section 4.4. First and foremost, he wrote the programme notes for the ballet, and as such he has become entwined in the history of the work. More importantly, however, his many essays on art were highly influential for those involved with the ballet. In his short life, he was a prolific essayist for Paris’s art scene, a celebrated artist, and close friend to many of the most influential artists of the decade, such as Max Jacob and Picasso.  

Born in Rome, Wilhelm Apollinaire de Kostrowitzky (he took Guillaume Apollinaire as his French alias) was an illegitimate child of Angélique Alexandrine Kostrowitzka, a wealthy Polish woman whose childhood was spent moving between Belgium and various cities in France. Apollinaire served in the French military (where he was wounded in active duty), wrote poetry and criticism, painted, and became the cultural centre of Paris’s new art movements. Between 1910 and 1918, his place in the world of Parisian art was central, as he was an active literary publicist for cubism, as well as an enthusiastic proponent of symbolism. Apollinaire was well-known to artists, musicians and the Parisian public alike, working in various forms of journalism to create his extensive collection of essays. Significantly, his review Les Soirées de Paris, published between 1912 and 1913, was, as Jerrold Siegel states, ‘a major organ of pre-war modernism’. Apollinaire had become a leading voice in the art scene prior to the war; however, he also gained a reputation as an important figure in French music, thanks in part to his involvement with Parade, as well as his close friendship with Erik Satie, events which took place during the conflict. Apollinaire exerted a notable creative influence over the

334 Roger Shattuck, The Banquet Years (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 197.
335 Siegel, Bohemian Paris, 348.
latter, in particular by sharing in his interest in cubism, as can be seen with the ideas embodied in *Parade*. In the years leading up to this extraordinary piece, Apollinaire had called for a rejuvenation in how music was created:

> We know of a few painters and a small number of poets who in our time deserve to be called new; but we had gradually become used to considering music as an outmoded, practically stagnating art.

Diaghilev’s first collaboration with Picasso and Satie certainly seems to have responded to this idea. As outlined by Mary Davis, *Parade* reflects Diaghilev’s ‘eagerness to engage with artists further on the fringe of the avant-garde and underscored commitment to maintain his troupe’s relevance, even if this required radical aesthetic adjustments.’

4.4: *Parade - The Child of Le Sacre*  

Daniel Albright describes *Parade* as ‘a profound response not only to the Great War, but also to avant-garde art’. Albright’s statement comes from an in-depth study into how this ballet responded to the turmoil of war, offering the deliberate absence of emotional language and the use of an uncomplicated cubist design as ways of ‘displacing the pain’ of the nation. Certainly, *Parade* has become synonymous with the changes occurring in Paris after years at war.

In relation to *Le Sacre*, *Parade* is one of the most obvious examples of a ballet indebted

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For more information on Apollinaire and his history in Paris, see Dan Franck’s *The Bohemians*, 50-62.
341 Ibid.
to Stravinsky’s creation, and is probably the next most important moment in the evolution of the *Ballets Russes*. Similarly to *Le Sacre*, *Parade* would have an impact on future Diaghilev creations. In the following discussion, it is once again not necessary to offer an examination of the score, as this is readily available elsewhere.³⁴²

Lynn Garafola nominates *Parade* (1917) as the great turning point within the *Ballets Russes*’s definitive march towards modernism, and as such, equally significant as *Le Sacre* within the company’s history.³⁴³ Indeed, it must be acknowledged that the appointment of Erik Satie as composer, Pablo Picasso as designer and Jean Cocteau as librettist made for a rather impressive roll call of the modernists, and was a clear statement from Diaghilev about his intentions for the future of his company. Garafola further describes *Parade* as the culmination of three years experimentation for Diaghilev, who had begun his foray into the emerging trends of futurism in 1914. In Garafola’s opinion it was from 1914 onwards that the *Ballets Russes*’s ‘new aesthetic’ came into focus, as Diaghilev parted ways with Fokine and his erstwhile colleagues from the *Mir Iskusstva*, taking his inspiration instead from modernist artists such as Picasso.³⁴⁴ Throughout this period Léonide Massine was under the direct tutelage of Diaghilev, and the impresario was shaping his new protégé as the leader of this futurist, soon to become modernist, revolution on the stage.

*Parade* was first performed as part of Diaghilev’s single wartime season, on 18 May 1917 at the Théâtre du Châtelet.³⁴⁵ Cocteau’s reputation as an avant-garde poet and writer was most likely the reason that Diaghilev chose him not only to write the

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 76.
³⁴⁵ Davis, *Ballets Russes Style*, 189.
scenario but also to oversee the production’s completion. Cocteau encouraged his team to push the boundaries of balletic conception and, in the words of Mary Davis, to create a work that was ‘simultaneously whimsical and radical … a coarse mix of popular culture and contemporary art’. 346 His entourage certainly seems to have succeeded, as *Parade* has been heralded as a truly ground-breaking work within Diaghilev’s repertoire, and has attracted interest from scholars from an array of disciplines. 347

*Parade* had a very simple scenario, and because of its brevity, the entire libretto can be given below, in a version translated by Jerrold Siegel:

The scene represents houses at Paris on a Sunday. Travelling Theater.
Three music-hall numbers serve as *parade*.

Chinese Musician
Acrobats
Little American Girl

Three managers organize the publicity. They communicate to each other in their terrible language that the crows are taking the *parade* for the show inside [*le spectacle intérieur*] and grossly try to make them understand. No one goes in.

After the last number of the *parade* the worn-out managers collapse on top of each other.

The Chinese, the acrobats, and the little girl come out of the empty theatre. Seeing the managers’ extreme effort and their fall, they try in turn to explain that the show takes place inside [*que le spectacle se donne à l’intérieur*]. 348

Parade came at the time of a creative crossroads for Diaghilev, with the company moving away from the ‘Russian and Oriental spectacle’ that had dominated pre-war Ballets Russes seasons, and towards the burgeoning aesthetics of cubism and surrealism.  

Whilst Paris was at war, composers faced the new reality that the musical landscape had been irrevocably changed; where once Wagner had been their self-appointed leader, composers now moved to deliberately reject his techniques, in favour of developing their own national style - an act of patriotism as much as it was pragmatism. This is not to suggest that the musical shift was all because of the devastating political climate. Debussy, for example, had long been campaigning for Wagner’s influence on French music to be muted, and the war provided a catalyst for others to join him in his protestations. Parade serves as an example of the new style of ballet, and indeed music, which was being created in Paris at this time. Furthermore, it illustrates the Ballets Russes’s evolution from a Russian enterprise valuing unity in art, to its beginnings as a French-inspired company that promoted the newest Parisian aesthetics.

Parade was the focus of Cocteau’s small book entitled Le Coq et l’Arlequin, completed on 19 March 1918. The book was written as a means of defending the author’s beloved ballet from what he deemed harsh criticism. However, in the process of writing it, he created his own ‘manifesto’ on music and art, which would be adopted by the new musical collective that became known as Les Six. This group (whose members were Georges Auric, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, Arthur Honegger, Germaine

349 Nichols, The Harlequin Years, 136.
350 Ibid., 21.
351 The main topics within Le Coq et l’Arlequin are discussed in section 5.3 below. The book is divided into seven focal elements, with a defence of Parade being number five.
Tailleferre and Louis Durey) is discussed in greater detail in section 5.3.  

However, it is worth noting at this juncture that Cocteau’s defence of Parade in Le Coq et l’Arlequin, and Les Six’s adoption of the book’s core statements, became a key moment in the foundation of one of France’s most important musical communities. Cocteau had intended Parade to be his first major project expressing his newly formed modernist ideas. Therefore, when some critics responded negatively, the librettist took it upon himself to defend his artistic decisions. Satie shared his frustration, and in response to one critic earned himself an eight-day prison sentence for insult and slander. The punishment was meted out following a particularly damning one-line retort directed toward Jean Poueigh, a writer for Carnet de la Semaine, who had criticised the score: ‘Monsieur et cher ami, vous n’êtes qu’un cul, mais un cul sans musique’ (Sir and dear friend, you are not only an arsehole, but an unmusical arsehole at that). This anecdote is probably the main reason why the ballet is discussed primarily outside the musicological field. Following his book, Satie became a father-like-figure within Les Six, and his compositions (including Parade) were considered the pinnacle of what new French music should be.

The overall reception for Parade, at least at the time of its première, was largely negative. However, it is hard to argue that the ballet was entirely unsuccessful, as the reception was split between the general public’s strong dislike and the recognition on the part of the progressive educated elite that it represented an important shift towards the avant-garde. The negative comments seem to have been directed predominantly at Satie’s score and the comedic elements of the work. As Susan Calkins explains, the first

353 Ornella Volta, Michael Bullock (tr.), Satie Seen Through His Letters (London: Marion Boyars, 1989), 132.
354 Ibid.
hearing of the fully orchestrated *Parade* ‘set off a wave of criticism and, “to no one’s great surprise, the premiere was highlighted by boos, cat-calls and a near riot”’. In fact, it is likely that the ‘uproar that greeted *Parade* has been greatly exaggerated’, and in a manner similar to *Le Sacre*, the true extent of the immediate dislike of *Parade* has been to a degree mythologised. Nonetheless, there was undoubtedly a negative response to *Parade* at the time of its première: Satie’s score (discussed below) divided critics, being relatively well received by young composers such as Auric, but disliked by the mainstream audience. However, the former of these two groups, the young progressively-minded individuals, were vocal in their praise, with Apollinaire declaring Satie an ‘innovative musician’ who used *Parade* to invoke the ‘contemporary political phrase esprit nouveau as a motto for the work’: although as a collaborator (he wrote the programme notes for the première) on the project, Apollinaire’s opinion should be taken with a pinch of salt.

The humouristic element in *Parade* was a particular point of contention for the contemporary audience, as Cocteau had intentionally incorporated elements of slapstick to bring Hollywood and its comedy heroes to the stage. The unusual juxtaposition of high art and slapstick comedy, with classical dancers in pantomime-horse outfits, evidently caused confusion amongst the Parisian audience. Irrespective of this, the confusion did not put Cocteau off, who in his 1924 ballet *Le Train bleu* (discussed in detail below in section 5.6) once again included such a routine, writing stage directions for a duo of dancers to complete a slapstick routine in the style of Charlie Chaplin. Still, in the wake of the confusion caused by *Parade*, Cocteau wrote an article soon after the

356 Calkins, ‘Modernism in Music and Erik Satie’s *Parade*’, 12.
358 Calkins, ‘Modernism in Music and Erik Satie’s *Parade*’, 12.
ballet’s première, explaining his vision behind the ballet:

Our wish is that the public may consider Parade as a work which conceals poetry beneath the coarse outer skin of slapstick...Laughter is natural to Frenchmen: it is important to keep this in mind and not be afraid to laugh even at the most difficult time. 360

This is a poignant statement considering Parade’s first appearance in the middle of the First World War. Even so, there is no denying that Cocteau’s use of comedy left many in the Parisian audience unsure of how to react, and ultimately created a negative response from the average viewer.

Another reason for Cocteau’s staunch defence of Parade was his total control within the production, in a manner similar to Diaghilev and his role as ‘producer-autocrat’ in earlier works. 361 That is to say that although Parade was a collaborative affair, it was steered carefully by Cocteau and with absolute faith in the vision that the work delivered. The creative team he employed for this work was, as described by Susan Calkins, an ‘inordinately colourful group of artists, whom he believed would best bring his vision to fruition’. 362 This team reads like a roll-call of modernist masters: Satie, Picasso and Massine were headed in a very practical sense by Cocteau himself, who maintained a close working relationship with Satie in particular, and oversaw all decision-making related to his work. Calkins has explored the collaborative nature of Parade in great detail, explaining how the artistic opinions of the leading creative duo, Cocteau and Satie, were very much aligned with one other. 363 Indeed the names of Cocteau and Satie have become almost inextricably entwined in history, and as

360 Jean Cocteau, quoted in Nichols, The Harlequin Years, 38.
361 It should be noted that, although Cocteau was in overall control of Parade, there has been some debate around the extent to which Satie was also a key contributor. Satie and Cocteau both claimed autonomy over the production, and their different perspectives on the creation of the ballet can be very insightful. For information on Satie’s perceived control, see Orledge, Satie the Composer, 133-141.
363 Ibid., 10.
explained by William Austin, ‘nearly everyone who knows the name of Erik Satie…

think[s] of him in close association with…Jean Cocteau’.\(^{364}\) Calkins suggests that this united team of artists was what made *Parade* so unique at the time of its première, with the symbiotic nature of the work’s creation pushing the ‘creative limits and abilities’ of all involved.\(^{365}\) This idea fits just as neatly with the Stravinsky/Roerich idea of a unified collaborative approach to composition as with the earlier model adopted by Diaghilev, in which the ballet was collaborative but under the directorship of himself alone. Whereas with earlier ballets Diaghilev had placed himself as the director for the collaboration of mediums, Roerich and Stravinsky, and now Satie and Cocteau, developed this idea further. Diaghilev still retained his role as overall director, but figures such as Satie and Cocteau had now become the producer-autocrats of a production. This was an updated version of the unified collaborative approach: the duo oversaw the entire vision, whilst also contributing music and designs to the ballet, all the while working closely with one another to ensure that each element was relevant to the other.

With *Parade*, the *Ballets Russes* now had two parts to its productions: one (the dance and art) in the foreground, and the other (the music) in the background. Remove the ‘background music’ from the equation, and the distinctly heterogeneous visual attributes of dance, curtain, costume and scenery remain equally important, whilst also supportive of one another. Although the audible now appeared submissive to the visual, Diaghilev’s *Ballets Russes* had not removed the original unified collaboration template from its creations, but instead the company’s styles had gradually diversified, becoming less rigid to complying with its original *modus operandi*.

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\(^{365}\) Calkins, ‘Modernism in Music and Erik Satie’s Parade’, 5.
In relation to its place in the history of the *Ballets Russes*, it is *Parade*’s impact on Cocteau, rather than the librettist’s on the work, that is one of the topics most often discussed by scholars. Robert Bancroft explores this idea, offering that the negative response to *Parade* ‘stimulated Cocteau into another crisis of self-examination’, reminiscent of his actions following the criticism of *Le Dieu bleu* five years previously, although now his response was more extreme.366 This critique changed Cocteau’s fundamental attitudes to art and music, and as a result *Parade* is known as much for being a springboard for Cocteau’s creativity as it is for being a *Ballets Russes* creation. Furthermore, Cocteau’s defensive relationship with critics following the première of *Parade* has been equated to that of Stravinsky, Nijinsky and Diaghilev after the historic première of *Le Sacre du Printemps* in 1913.367

Another of the key debates surrounding *Parade* concerns its resistance to categorisation, which means that a broad spectrum of labels have been applied to it. Whilst the first few Diaghilev ballets are thought of as traditional Russian offerings, or as homages to the exotic, and Stravinsky’s later creations such as *Les Noces* (in spite of its Russian folk roots), are generally filed under the heading of neo-classicism (or alternatively, neonationalism), *Parade* appears to defy any such categorisation. Garafola comments on this point, noting that several ‘isms’ have been applied to the work, such as modernism, surrealism and cubism, but she concludes that these labels are too generic. Instead, she views the ballet as ‘neoprimitive’, and a piece of ‘period modernism’ which had its roots in the ‘futurist revolution’ of the *Ballets Russes* from 1914-1917, but ended up as an ‘authentic modernism’.368 In this instance, ‘authentic modernism’ is used by

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367 Ibid.
368 Garafola, *Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes*, 77.
Garafola to describe Diaghilev’s altered aesthetic in the wake of his encounter with avant-gardism and his forced exile, for which his response was to rethink the artistic purpose and organisation of his company.\textsuperscript{369} This idea will be reviewed again briefly in chapter 5.

In order to combat the non-conformist nature of Parade, Garafola explains the unique nature of the ballet in terms of a hybrid form of ballet, in which one work borrows processes from a pre-existing one. This notion of an evolution of styles is fundamental to the hypothesis outlined in the introduction to this thesis. It is not the case that each ‘phase’ has a clear end point, but rather that each of the periods borrows principles from those of previous years’ and evolves to incorporate them in new ways. With Parade, balletic modernism was created because of a hybrid between futurist ideas and the traditional concepts of existing works,\textsuperscript{370} coupled with the ballet’s association with cubism and Dadaism.\textsuperscript{371} Therefore, Parade can be seen to define this idea of a ‘hybrid-ballet’, as it exploits several artistic trends to appeal to the widest possible audience. However, if one ‘ism’ alone has to be chosen to best describe Parade, it would surely be surrealism. The definition of the word fits well with the overall aesthetic of the ballet (the juxtaposition of everyday objects in a musical setting springs to mind), and the work itself was highly significant for the creation of the movement. As Richard Taruskin discusses at length, surrealism itself is not limited to an exact set of parameters, especially when being discussed in relation to music.\textsuperscript{372} However, the broadest interpretation of the term, as with the above mentioned juxtaposition idea, fits

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{369} Ibid., 96.
\item \textsuperscript{370} Ibid., 76.
\item \textsuperscript{372} See Richard Taruskin’s \textit{Music in the Early Twentieth Century} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 561-599, for information on the French interpretation of surrealism.
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well with Parade. As Calkins summarises, these everyday objects included ‘a typewriter, a siren, tuned bottles, a revolver, and a “wheel of chance”’ as part of the music, scoring them as written lines to interrupt the more traditional sounds of the orchestra. Apollinaire did not believe the work he was describing could be defined by any single artistic movement, past or present; an opinion echoed by Garafola in her recent examinations of the ballet. Because of this, Apollinaire coined ‘surrealism’ to describe what he thought the work was, and to capture the essence of l’esprit nouveau in Parade. The term has since been applied to movements in visual art, music and literature, going far beyond the boundaries of the balletic creation for which it was originally intended. However, within the context of Parade, ‘surrealism’ became a term associated with an artistic revolution, not only for those close to Diaghilev and his troupe but throughout the world.

Apollinaire’s programme notes for Parade’s première, written after he had attended several rehearsals attempted to capture the historical moment:

[Picasso and Massine] achieved the first union of painting and dancing, modelling and mime, which is to herald a fuller art ... for hitherto decoration and choreography have only been linked by superficial means.

Here Apollinaire focuses only on the collaboration over the visual aspects of the ballet. The description of a ‘fuller’ art places great emphasis on the designs and dance, with no reference to musical accompaniment. Where once three elements (visual art, music and dance) were given equal weighting in Ballets Russes creations, the dual force of dance and visual art has here become the main focus of the production. Furthermore, the

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374 Albright, Untwisting the Serpent, 208.
375 Kelly, Music and Ultra-Modernism in France, 55.
reference to a ‘superficial’ link between visual art and dance is an interesting observation. In the opening seasons of the Ballets Russes, Diaghilev believed unquestioningly in his company’s ability to combine all aspects of a ballet so that they would play both a prominent and supportive role. However, at the time of Parade, it appears that the Ballets Russes had moved away from this philosophy, and towards one which places greater importance on the visual side of its productions, despite the experimental score provided by Satie.

Apollinaire believed that Parade succeeded in presenting his desires for a new style of music and art. In his programme notes, he commented on all factors of the ballet as important reflections of the new ideas: Satie’s expressive music, Massine’s lyrical dance, and Picasso’s cubist costumes. Whilst it is unsurprising that Apollinaire should write positively about a work in which he was involved, his reference to each individual attribute of the ballet as helping to push Parade into the realms of new expressive art, is important:

   It is a scenic poem transposed by the innovative musician Erik Satie into astonishingly expressive music, so clear and simple that it seems to reflect the marvellously lucid spirit in France
   
   [Massine] has produced something totally new - a marvellously appealing kind of dance, so true, so lyrical, so human, and so joyful …
   
   Picasso’s cubist costumes and scenery bear witness to the realism of his art. This realism - or this cubism, if you will - is the influence that has most stirred the arts over the past ten years.
   
   The Costumes and scenery in Parade show clearly that its chief aim has been to draw the greatest possible amount of aesthetic emotion from objects.377

There are other ways of viewing the matter, however. Notwithstanding the obvious

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importance of the visual elements of the ballet, Garafola goes so far as to suggest that Satie’s score was the main legacy of the production. Whether this is a fair assessment is a matter for debate. As Calkins continues, Satie was well known for his use of ‘ragtime, Dixieland mass [and] Hollywood cinema’ as inspiration, and therefore it was natural for his work to incorporate many styles previously unheard-of in a Diaghilev production.\textsuperscript{378} Furthermore, his score exploited the emerging trends of jazz and dancehall music, whilst Cocteau added mechanical noises and non-instrumental interruptions on the top of the music. However, to state that the score alone is the work’s greatest legacy seems an exaggeration. It would instead be more appropriate to describe Satie’s music as one part of the overall effect of \textit{Parade}, which was in its entirety, an important moment for twentieth-century culture. Moreover, \textit{Parade} reflected the latest artistic trends, with the mix of ballet and popular entertainment being emulated in all art forms. For example, French theatres were producing works that had, in Richard Drain’s description, ‘a bohemian liaison with variety’, bringing together high art and popular culture in one place, an idea explored by the great Russian actor-director Vsevolod Meyerhold in his essays from 1911 to 1912.\textsuperscript{379} This ballet can, therefore, be seen as an example of the \textit{Ballets Russes}’s ability to embrace the latest trends, not only from the worlds of music and costume, but also from the direction of theatre.

The choice of Satie as composer was not an unusual one. Diaghilev was becoming an ever more constant presence in Paris’s trendiest establishments, and the impresario was by now a central figure in the lives of artists around Paris. \textit{Parade}’s première took place only months before the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia, turning expatriates such as Stravinsky and Diaghilev into émigrés, who in turn became part of the capital’s artistic

\textsuperscript{378} Calkins, ‘Modernism in Music and Erik Satie’s \textit{Parade}’, 11.
social gatherings.\textsuperscript{380} It was therefore almost inevitable that Diaghilev would cross paths with Erik Satie, one of the most experimental composers in Paris at this time. With Cocteau having already drawn up his plans for Parade, it was apparent that a composer who embraced the modernist ideology of the librettist was necessary to complete the project.

The style(s) of Satie’s score is succinctly summarised by William Austin, who draws parallels with both Debussy and Stravinsky’s compositional techniques:

The march of the Chinese Magician makes good use of pentatonic and whole-tone scales. The American Girl dances ragtime, with slide trombones, rather like Debussy’s Golliwog’s Cakewalk. The Acrobats perform to a waltz, with polytonal effects like those in Petrushka. The central Ragtime, and the beginning and end of the whole work, are solidly in C major.\textsuperscript{381}

Caroline Potter, who provides an in depth look at Satie’s music for Parade also summarises the score at one point as ‘a repetitive backdrop, its tunes constantly rotating around a small number of notes’.\textsuperscript{382} This observation is certainly one which fits with Auric’s opinion.

Described in the programme notes by Georges Auric as a musical background, the music was clearly never intended to challenge audiences in a manner similar to that of Le Sacre, but rather to support the dancers in their elaborate costumes. Because of its focus on the visual over the auditory, Parade acts as a prime example of what one might call the new Ballets Russes. The shift away from the ‘Russian Gesamtkunstwerk’ approach to balletic creation was now entirely evident, and Parade completed the

\textsuperscript{380} Garafola, Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance, 50.
\textsuperscript{381} Austin, ‘Satie before and after Cocteau’, 232.
\textsuperscript{382} Caroline Potter, Erik Satie: A Parisian Composer and his World (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016), 76.
Ballets Russes’s transformation into an artistic collective as much as a balletic one, with, as Garafola asserts, ‘design, in fact, now [taking] the place of music as the “centre of gravity” in a production’.

Having stated that Satie’s score was the most important factor in Parade, Garafola goes even further in her discussion about the ballet in general, placing it as the most important moment in the evolution of the Ballets Russes and calling it a ‘public notice of the switch in [Diaghilev’s] allegiance to the avant-garde’. With reference to the latter half of this statement, it is hard to disagree: there is no doubt that Parade can be seen as a definitive declaration from Diaghilev that he was prepared to experiment with newer and more ground-breaking styles. However, placing Parade as the most important moment for the Ballets Russes is bizarre in view of the impact of Le Sacre. It was this work that not only broke the mould but shattered it beyond repair. In doing so, it opened the floodgates for future ballets, encouraging Diaghilev and his compatriots to push the boundaries. Parade, which was arguably the Ballets Russes’s most significant creation in the years after Le Sacre (and perhaps its greatest successor in terms of musical innovation), could only exist because Stravinsky had created a precedent for new works that challenged the audience and their preconceptions. It could even be said that the supposedly riotous response to Parade only occurred because the events of Le Sacre’s première made such a response acceptable, even predictable to a degree. Therefore Parade's creation can be seen as a direct result of the phenomenon of Le Sacre. However, one important distinction remains between the two works. Although Le Sacre’s provocativeness lay in many factors, it was not necessarily designed purely to shock. With Parade, this was not the case. Diaghilev was trying to ‘recapture Le Sacre’, by creating a provocative ballet to once again incite the Parisian audience to riot. In so doing, the artistic integrity of the work, in which the

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384 Ibid., 23.
musical and overall visual effect was the focus and the resultant shock was partially a by-product, was arguably lost.

If Parade’s première in 1917 was the closing chapter in the Ballets Russes’s journey towards becoming an international, artistic collective, then the 1924 French season (discussed in chapter 5) can be viewed as a barometer of change from the first French offering twelve years previously. One could argue that the impact of Le Sacre or Parade was never recreated with Diaghilev’s company. Instead, throughout the following seasons Diaghilev continued his idea of promoting the visual aspect over the musical, as begun with the striking designs and concepts in Parade.

4.5: Prokofiev - Diaghilev’s Second Son

Whilst the significance of the visual elements of a ballet would become pivotal to the Ballets Russes in the years succeeding Le Sacre, so would the involvement of one rising-star composer - Serge Prokofiev. Following in the wake of Stravinsky’s early successes with Diaghilev, Prokofiev became the composer who perhaps most embodied the post-war Ballets Russes in the public’s perception. Indeed, many of his ballets for Diaghilev can be seen as emblematic of the company’s ‘big’ post-war productions, which followed on (in some ways) stylistically from Stravinsky. Moreover, in several of Prokofiev’s ballets for the company, it is possible to see connections to other pre-existing Ballets Russes works, a few of which are discussed below. These interconnected works show some of the ways in which the existing repertoire was evolving in the post-war era, after Le Sacre and Parade, and how the Ballets Russes was building on the work of the early ballets to continually develop its style. Therefore, to contextualise the 1924 season, in which the visual elements so pivotal to Parade were taken up by a lesser-known selection of works, it is valuable to understand the
contribution of Prokofiev.

In a 1919 interview, Prokofiev claimed that when performing a four-handed piano edition of *Le Sacre* with Stravinsky a few years before, he underwent ‘an astonishing experience’ that changed the way in which he understood the ballet, gaining a new appreciation for Stravinsky’s score, having previously been ambivalent towards it.\(^{385}\) This altered opinion can certainly be traced in some of Prokofiev’s future ballets, most notably *Ala et Lolli* (or *Scythian Suite*, 1916). Although the subject matter of this work is well attested, the details of the original scenario are not certain, as the ballet was never performed. However, Prokofiev’s handwritten summary of the scenario does exist, and although heavily edited, the composer’s notes describe four sections: 1- Worship the Sun, 2- Chuzhbog, 3- Night, 4- Folk hero Lolli sets out to free Ala. These parts tell the story of the ‘folk hero’ Lolli as he rescues his love Ala, from the evil Chuzhbog, aided by the blinding rays of the Sun.\(^{386}\) *Ala et Lolli* was commissioned by Diaghilev for performance in the 1916 season. However, upon receiving unfavourable reports from Walter Nouvel and Alfred Nurok about the music, Diaghilev halted further work on the ballet before it was ever completed.\(^{387}\) Stephen Press explains that *Ala et Lolli* was problematic because the ‘novelty and audacity’ of *Le Sacre* were fresh in the mind of Prokofiev, who in turn tried too hard to fashion his own work as ‘an orchestral tour de force of musical primitivism’, in a manner similar to Stravinsky’s work.\(^{388}\) However, the adverse effect materialised, and *Ala et Lolli* struck the Diaghilev circle as inconsequential in relation to *Le Sacre*. This negative response marked the end of *Ala et


\(^{388}\) Ibid.
Lolli as a ballet but the beginning of its life as an orchestral piece, which was entitled Scythian Suite, op. 20. The Scythian Suite was first performed in Petrograd on 16 January 1916, receiving its Parisian debut on 29 April as part of Serge Koussevitzky’s Festival of Russian Music at the Salle Gaveau, to favourable reviews.

Later commentators continue to proffer contrasting opinions on the extent to which the influence of Le Sacre can be traced in the music for the Scythian Suite, with David Nice claiming obvious connections between the two works, and Press stating that they are related in ‘only a superficial way’. Certainly, the two pieces shared a similar subject matter, and they were assuredly comparable in terms of orchestration. Furthermore, following Nice’s argument, it seems incontestable that a rather explicit homage to Le Sacre may be found at least in the ‘ten-part string discord’ that appears in the Scythian Suite, and closely resembles the ‘Augurs of Spring’.

Press has also noted similarities between other Stravinsky ballets and Prokofiev works, such as Chout (1921), which had a ‘tuneful, Russian folk-inspired music [which] along with Larionov’s colourful lubok-inspired designs and some puppet-like antics for the dancers’ has obvious echoes of Pétrouchka. However, as Press continues, Prokofiev did not initially take an active interest in Stravinsky’s music. Therefore, rather than interpreting Chout as directly indebted to Pétrouchka, it is perhaps better to view Chout as a general reaction to it, incorporating the style of Pétrouchka whilst creating an

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390 Ibid., 8.
391 Ibid., 34.
392 Ibid., 47.
393 Ibid., 125.
394 Nice, Prokofiev, From Russia to the West, 112.
395 Press, Prokofiev’s Ballets for Diaghilev, 47.
396 Ibid., 122.
entirely different type of music.\textsuperscript{397} Press believes instead that the many similarities between Prokofiev and Stravinsky’s ballets exist not because of any direct musical influence, but because the pair ‘shared a common heritage’, having had a similar musical education before developing an interest in Russian primitivism.\textsuperscript{398} On the other hand, however, Prokofiev’s disavowals do appear somewhat disingenuous in light of the numerous similarities between his scores and Stravinsky’s.

Russian primitivism of another kind can be detected in \textit{Le Pas d’Acier}, created as a collaboration between with the ballet’s designer, Armenian painter Georgii Yakulov (1882-1928), and Prokofiev.\textsuperscript{399} This duo completed the work in 1925. However, it was not performed until 7 June 1927 at the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt, alongside Auric’s \textit{Les Fâcheux} and Lord Berners’ \textit{The Triumph of Neptune}.\textsuperscript{400} Between 1925 and 1927 Massine joined the creative team as choreographer, and in this respect the work is unusual compared to the other ballets examined in this dissertation: the collaborative nature of the work was initially concerned with only the music and designs, and the later addition of the dance meant that it was altered to fit the choreographer’s vision. Originally, the scenario’s working title was \textit{Ursignol}, a conjoining of words from the French for the USSR and Stravinsky’s opera \textit{Le Rossignol}.\textsuperscript{401} Massine chose the ballet’s final title, \textit{Le Pas d’Acier} on 10 April, only a few weeks before its premiere.\textsuperscript{402} The title, which translates as ‘The Steel Step’, reflects the imagery of Soviet factory life.

Prokofiev and Yakulov’s libretto tells the story of two lovers, The Sailor and The
Working Girl, in post-Revolution Russia, set against the backdrop of industrial life, staged at a train station, and then in a factory.\textsuperscript{403}

The Soviet-themed work marked a return to ‘bankable Russian exoticism’ for Diaghilev and his company.\textsuperscript{404} Indeed, the impresario was an enthusiastic voice behind the decision to showcase the political climate of his homeland, and in doing so he helped to recreate a Russianist approach in Stravinsky’s works, in particular \textit{Le Sacre}.\textsuperscript{405}

However, the most significant connections between \textit{Le Sacre} and \textit{Le Pas d’Acier} lie in the appearance of the mechanical, and the inclusion of traditional Russian material.\textsuperscript{406} In \textit{Le Sacre}, Stravinsky used mechanical processes to power the rhythmical elements of his dance and create the raw energy necessary to depict primitive Russia,\textsuperscript{407} whilst in \textit{Le Pas d’Acier}, the mechanical is literal: the dance movements reflect the industrial setting of the ballet whilst simultaneously stifling human emotion, in keeping with the constructivist style of the work.\textsuperscript{408} In this way, \textit{Le Pas d’Acier}’s connection to the mechanical relates the work directly back to \textit{Le Sacre}. An example of the mechanical within Prokofiev’s score for \textit{Le Pas d’Acier} can be heard in the opening of the factory scene, at which point rhythmic ostinati and repetition of G-G♯-A-G♯-G triplets is heard.\textsuperscript{409} This rhythmically strict, repetitive passage echoes the pounding rhythmical cells from \textit{Le Sacre} the decade previously, and in turn Schmitt’s \textit{Salomé} as well.\textsuperscript{410}

\textsuperscript{403} Ibid., 211-213.
\textsuperscript{404} Ibid., 204.
\textsuperscript{405} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{406} Sayers, ‘Re-Discovering Diaghilev’s “Pas d’Acier”’, 171-172.
\textsuperscript{408} Sayers, ‘Re-Discovering Diaghilev’s “Pas d’Acier”’, 173.
\textsuperscript{409} Press, \textit{Prokofiev’s Ballets for Diaghilev}, 226.
\textsuperscript{410} For more information on Stravinsky’s mechanical approach to rhythmic composition in \textit{Le Sacre}, see Matthew McDonald’s ‘Jeux de Nombres’.
However, this mechanical style was not the only way in which Prokofiev’s ballets were similar to other Ballets Russes creations. For example, in Le Pas D’Acier, the dancers appear like the puppets from Pétrouchka, but updated to reflect the industrial style. Furthermore the biblical story adapted in L’Enfant Prodigue (taken from Luke 15:11-32) echoed the numerous biblical librettos presented by Diaghilev, particularly in the earliest years of the company. An example would be Schmitt’s Salomé, which (despite the stories of these two examples being different) share an origin as passages from the Bible.

Whilst influential on Prokofiev, other composers, and the ever-changing Ballets Russes, Le Sacre would also have an effect on Stravinsky’s own creative output in his post-war creations. For example, the idea for Les Noces (1923, Gaieté-Lyrique) first came to him in 1912 when he was completing the second tableau of Le Sacre. Indeed, Les Noces shares many characteristics with the ballet, most obviously in its topic, which once again showcased Russian folk traditions. Such was the connection between these two ballets that Taruskin has described Les Noces as Le Sacre ‘in black and white - the literal black and white of four keyboards, plus percussion’. Similarly, as suggested by Paul Griffiths, Stravinsky’s Symphony in Three Movements (1946) echoes the ‘sustained instrumental density and clamour, and the fierce harmonic language’ of Le Sacre. Even though this work was composed three decades after Le Sacre, and after the composer had moved to America and conducted performances at every major theatre, Stravinsky still returned to the techniques he had perfected in Le Sacre.

412 Sayers, ‘Re-Discovering Diaghilev’s “Pas d’Acier”’, 172.
413 Taruskin, Defining Russia Musically, 390.
414 Ibid.
The early works of Tcherepnin and Hahn showcased the unity of art forms in a production, a style that reached its apogee with *Le Sacre du Printemps*. The *Ballets Russes* then became a company subject to the struggles of war, becoming an advocate for the newest trends of modernism, surrealism and avant-gardism, as epitomised by *Parade*. Following all this, Prokofiev became a fundamental part of the company’s post-war life and his contribution marked a return to some of the Russian-centric ideas developed by the likes of Stravinsky. However, Prokofiev’s works define only a part of the evolution of the *Ballets Russes*. Whilst Diaghilev was working alongside the composer to create another fruitful partnership, his company was continuing to develop, pushing the visual arts to the forefront of its productions, in the wake of *Parade*. With this in mind it is now possible to discuss the *Ballets Russes* towards the end of its life, with a focus on the second French season of works in 1924.
1924, The Final ‘French’ Season

Paris in the 1920s was, culturally and artistically speaking, almost unrecognisable from the city in which Diaghilev had first shown the Ballets Russes. Politically, the country was no longer at war, but national boundaries elsewhere had shattered, and Europe was facing the immeasurable task of rebuilding in the wake of the atrocities of the previous decade. Moreover, political events in countries such as Russia, meant that a large influx of émigrés was resituating in Europe.

In terms of dance, the 1920s saw new types of choreography. The classical Russian ballets, inspired by fairy tales and nostalgia were associated with Petipa and the Imperial schools, and in the aftermath of the Revolution such styles had gone out of fashion throughout Europe. Furthermore, the advancement in technology meant that lighting and film were becoming part of theatre productions. Less focus was placed on the human element, with dancers imitating objects or having more restrictive clothing, designed to enhance the set rather than draw focus to the physique of a dancer. Two chief representatives of the shift were Kasian Goleizovsky (1892-1970) and Fyodor Lopukhov (1886-1973). This duo of dancers, initially trained by the Imperial Theatre made a name for themselves in the 1920s, combining fashionable dance trends such as jazz, with multi-media productions.

With regard to visual art, the 1920s was a time in which Dadaists began to develop their ideas, and the surrealists began to experiment with the new media opened up by

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417 Ibid.
418 Ibid., 104. For more information on this duo, see 104-106.
technological advancements. Improvements in publishing and advertising made it ever simpler to share artistic ideas, and to take a stand against exhibitions and concert halls that were not embracing progressive styles. Significantly, Picasso was now the established leader of the Parisian art community, and his work had become at once experimental and popular. For the Ballets Russes, new creative horizons were opening up: the boundaries having been widened by works such as Le Sacre and then Parade.

5.1: The 1920s Ballets Russes

Within this new era of Parisian culture, Diaghilev and his company faced two new challenges: financial uncertainty and competition. The former was largely the result of the worldwide economic decline following the war and Diaghilev’s self-imposed exile from his once most lucrative city, London. In 1922 Diaghilev left the English capital rather hastily, after realising he was unable to complete payments promised to Sir Oswald Stoll, the manager of nearly every theatre in London. This breach of contract, and the ensuing falling out with Stoll, meant that Diaghilev did not return to England for the following two seasons. Up to this point, the company had relied on the comparably profitable periods in London to generate the means for investment in new works for the following seasons. Following Diaghilev’s disagreements with Stoll, this much-needed influx of money was lost. However, undoubtedly the most significant impact on Diaghilev’s fortunes was the change in the political horizon since the Ballets Russes’s opening season. Many of the wealthy Russians who had once supported the company’s ventures had disappeared with the Revolution, a phenomenon that would be repeated elsewhere in Europe two decades later, as German touring venues disappeared.

421 The Ballets Russes’s return was only secured after a new repayment agreement was reached between Diaghilev and Stoll (through negotiations initiated by Eric Wolheim, Diaghilev’s London-based agent) in 1924 - see ibid., 199.
with the Axis defeat. Whilst Diaghilev’s ability to coerce or cajole many of his homeland’s wealthiest individuals into supporting his company had paved the way for the birth of the _Ballets Russes_, this type of financial support was simply no longer available. The wealthy Russians who had once bankrolled Diaghilev’s seasons had either suffered financial ruin in the Revolution, or were no longer prepared to deal with the now ‘European’ enterprise, in the wake of the political changes in their homeland.

The economic basis of the _Ballets Russes_ was now secure for only one season at a time, and reliant on an ever enclosing circle of individuals. Coco Chanel, for example, contributed 200,000 francs to bankroll a revival of _Le Sacre_ in 1920. This connection between Chanel and Diaghilev would prove important for both parties: Diaghilev gained another wealthy investor, and as Mary Davis suggests, Chanel ‘gained entrée to the uppermost echelons of Diaghilev’s enterprise’. Furthermore, Chanel would become involved as collaborator with Diaghilev in the 1924 season, providing the costumes for _Le Train bleu_, as discussed in section 5.6. Similarly, the 1924 season was only ensured because of some much-needed financial backing provided by an old friend of Diaghilev’s, Winnaretta Singer. Singer is better known as Princesse Edmond de Polignac, who had once been married to Prince Edmond de Polignac and was heiress to the Singer sewing-machine fortune. Winnaretta financially supported the careers of a vast number of composers, musicians, writers and other artistic individuals, becoming a major patron of Diaghilev and the _Ballets Russes_ throughout the company’s life. In 1922 Diaghilev once again turned to Princesse Edmond for help, and she responded by

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424 Ibid., 199.
funding a season of new works. This season included a revised version of Stravinsky’s *Renard*, which although composed a few years before, had yet to be premièred, and a comedic ballet adaptation of *Le Mariage de la Belle au Bois Dormant* (Tchaikovsky). This season would change Diaghilev’s fortunes, with its profits allowing him to fund his next season and securing the immediate future of the company.

Although financial uncertainty had been a constant cause for concern for Diaghilev at the advent of the 1920s, an equally pressing issue was the growth of new ballet companies. Whereas the *Ballets Russes* had once been celebrated as the pre-eminent dance troupe in Europe, rival ballet companies were beginning to threaten the impresario’s grip on the title. Two of the most noteworthy ‘rivals’ that arose in the 1920s, were *Les ballets Ida Rubinstein* and the *Ballets Suédois*, both of which deserve a brief examination at this point.

The first individual to lead a challenge against Diaghilev’s position as the leading Parisian ballet impresario was Ida Rubinstein: most known for dancing the role of Cleopatra in 1909 for Diaghilev’s first ballet season. However, the model-turned-dancer-turned-socialite soon ventured into ballet production, ensuring that she would always be cast as the prima ballerina in her works. Rubinstein’s first foray into the world of ballet production was with Debussy’s *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien* in 1911, more than a decade before her company was created.\(^4\) This ballet has been studied by Charles Batson, who asserts that *Le Martyre* ‘proves to be a brilliant mirror onto the theatrical model as established by the *Ballets Russes*, in which avant-gardist artistic impulses found expression in the collaborative work of the most sought-after writers,

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musicians, and choreographers. Rubinstein’s first production largely adopted
Diaghilev’s early template for balletic creation, and in doing so reflects the impact the
_Ballets Russes_ was having outside its own confines.

Rubinstein produced ballets intermittently up until the war, however, it was not until
1928 that she formally created her own company. The post-war productions created by
Rubinstein were her most celebrated, returning to Paris with a renewed vigour following
the end of the war. Between 1920 and 1928, she produced twelve ballets for the Paris
Opéra. Fig. 5.1 shows all of Rubinstein’s productions, with Diaghilev ballets (based
on date) provided for comparison. Between 1920 and 1928, every Rubinstein
production included a work by a composer who had either composed a ballet for the
_Ballets Russes_ or had a piece re-orchestrated for the company (with the exceptions of
Paul Paray, Arthur Honegger and Jean Roger-Ducasse). This table shows the small pool
of collaborators from which both impresarios were drawing. Moreover, Rubinstein’s
frequent collaborations with Fokine and Benois towards the end of this period, surely
echo with the earliest years of Diaghilev’s company, and arguably reflect the glory days
of the _Ballets Russes_. Rubinstein’s frequent performances at the _Opéra_ from 1920
onwards show the close proximity in which the two companies were performing, as
well as the ever-increasing reputation she was creating in Paris. These works were in
direct competition with Diaghilev’s, being performed in his adopted hometown, often
involving individuals closely associated with the impresario and his company.

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Figure 5.1 - Complete list of ballets produced by Ida Rubinstein, (including works performed by Les ballets Ida Rubinstein, from 1928 onwards) collated with major Diaghilev ballets.430 The dates for each Rubinstein première at the Opéra are in brackets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sergei Diaghilev</th>
<th>Ida Rubinstein</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Le Pavillon d’Armide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co:</td>
<td>N. Tcherepnin</td>
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<td>Ch:</td>
<td>M. Fokine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Li:</td>
<td>A. Benois</td>
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<tr>
<td>De:</td>
<td>A. Benois</td>
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<td>1909</td>
<td>Salomé</td>
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<td>Co:</td>
<td>A. Glazunov</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ch:</td>
<td>M. Fokine</td>
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| 1909 | Cléopâtre [danced by Rubinstein] |
| Co: | A. Arensky, S. Taneev, N. Rimsky-Korsakov, M. Glinka, A. Glazunov, M. Musorgsky, N. Tcherepnin |
| Ch: | M. Fokine |
| De: | L. Bakst |

| 1910 | Schéhérazade [danced by Rubinstein] |
| Co: | N. Rimsky-Korsakov |
| Ch: | M. Fokine |
| De: | L. Bakst |
| 1911 | Les Martyre de Saint Sébastien |
| Co: | C. Debussy |
| Ch: | M. Fokine |
| De: | L. Bakst |

| 1913 | La Tragédie de Salomé |
| Co: | F. Schmitt |
| Ch: | B. Romanov |
| De: | N. Soudekin |
| 1913 | La Pisanelle |
| Co: | I. Pizzetti |
| Ch: | M. Fokine |
| De: | L. Bakst |

| 1917 | Parade |
| Co: | E. Satie |
| Ch: | L. Massine |
| De: | P. Picasso |
| 1919 | La Tragédie de Salomé [same score as Diaghilev production] |
| Co: | F. Schmitt |
| Ch: | N. Guerra |
| De: | R. Piot |

| 1922 | Le Renard |
| Co: | I. Stravinsky |
| Ch: | B. Nijinska |
| De: | Goncharova |
| 1920 | Antoine et Cléopâtre (14 June 1920) |
| Co: | F. Schmitt |
| De: | J. Drésa |

| 1923 | Les Noces |
| Co: | I. Stravinsky |
| Ch: | B. Nijinska |
| De: | Goncharova |
| 1922 | Artémis Troublée (1 May 1922) |
| Co: | P. Paray |
| Li: | L. Bakst |
| De: | Bakst |

| 1926 | La Pastorale |
| Co: | G. Auric |
| Ch: | G. Balanchine |
| De: | P. Pruna |
| 1926 | Orphée (11 June 1926) |
| Co: | J. Roger-Ducasse |

| 1928 | Ode |
| Co: | N. Nabokov |
| Ch: | L. Massine |
| 1928 | La Bien Amiée (22 Nov 1928) |
| Ch: | B. Nijinska |
| De: | A. Benois |

| 1928 | Apollon Musagète |
| Co: | I. Stravinsky |
| Ch: | G. Balanchine |
| De: | Bauchant |
| 1928 | Boléro (27 Nov 1928) |
| Co: | M. Ravel |
| Ch: | B. Nijinska |
| De: | A. Benois |

| 1928 | The Gods go a-Begging |
| Co: | Handel (arr. T. Beecham) |
| Ch: | G. Balanchine |
| 1928 | Les Noces de Psyché et de l’Amour (22 Nov 1928) |
| Co: | J. Bach (arr. A. Honegger) |
| Ch: | B. Nijinska |
| De: | A. Benois |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sergei Diaghilev</th>
<th>Ida Rubinstein</th>
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<td>1928</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Le Baiser de la</em></td>
<td>Co: I. Stravinsky</td>
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<td>Ch: B. Nijinska</td>
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<td>(27 Nov 1928)</td>
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<td><em>La Princesse</em></td>
<td>Co: N. Rimsky-Korsakov</td>
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<td><em>Cygne</em></td>
<td>(Adaptation)</td>
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<td>(27 Nov 1928)</td>
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<td>1928</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Nocturne</em></td>
<td>Co: A. Borodin</td>
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<td>(27 Nov 1928)</td>
<td>Arr: N. Tcherepnin</td>
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<td>1928</td>
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<td><em>David</em></td>
<td>Co: L. Massine</td>
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<td>(4 December 1928)</td>
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<td>1929</td>
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<td><em>Le Bal</em></td>
<td>Co: V. Rietti</td>
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<td>Ch: G. Balanchine</td>
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<td>1929</td>
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<td><em>Les Enchantements</em></td>
<td>Co: G. Auric</td>
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<td><em>de la feé</em></td>
<td>Ch: L. Massine</td>
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<tr>
<td>(21 May 1929)</td>
<td>De: A. Benois</td>
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<td>1929</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Les Fils</em></td>
<td>Co: S. Prokofiev</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Prodigue</em></td>
<td>Ch: G. Balanchine</td>
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<td>1929</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>La Valse</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>(23 May 1929)</td>
<td>Ch: M. Fokine</td>
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As Rubinstein created new productions, names that had become synonymous with Diaghilev (such as Stravinsky, Ravel and Auric) were now collaborating with both producers simultaneously, and the two companies became ever harder to distinguish. This created an obvious issue for Diaghilev, as his ability to offer unique productions had been the cornerstone of his company’s heritage. Now Stravinsky’s name on a ballet programme in Paris was no longer unique to Diaghilev and his company. Whilst the *Ballets Russes* had once had a monopoly on new compositions by the most celebrated composers, Rubinstein’s company was now not only following suit, but arguably doing so with more success (at least financially) than Diaghilev.

One area in which Diaghilev could not compete with Rubinstein was money. Rubinstein had been raised by her extremely wealthy aunt in St. Petersburg, with a vast family fortune made in merchant banking.\footnote{De Cossart, ‘Ida Rubinstein and Diaghilev: A One-Sided Rivalry’, 3.} This financial security allowed Rubinstein to pursue all manner of interests when growing up, including ballet, whilst surrounding herself with the most celebrated names in art, music and dance. Similarly to Diaghilev,
Rubinstein had a great knowledge of fashion, and a true ability to handpick talent. However, unlike Diaghilev, Rubinstein had no concerns over financing her productions. Originally supported by her family, and later by a wealthy husband, Rubinstein was notorious for using only the finest materials in her costumes.\footnote{Rubinstein’s family disowned her following the première of Schmitt’s Salomé in 1909, in which she planned to appear naked - see ibid., 4. However, it was this role that would first lead her to Diaghilev, and in turn, ensured her the role of Cleopatra.}

By contrast, Diaghilev by 1922 was confronting the very real possibility that he could no longer afford to produce any works with the \textit{Ballets Russes}. Without the finances to create the lavish productions of yore, Diaghilev’s company could not compete with the high-end production style being staged by these rival companies. Instead, with their ability to produce such extravagant works, both \textit{Les ballets Ida Rubinstein} and the \textit{Ballets Suédois} were being chosen over the \textit{Ballets Russes} to entertain the Parisian audience.

The \textit{Ballets Suédois} was arguably the Russians’ principal rival in the early 1920s.\footnote{Batson, \textit{Dance, Desire, and Anxiety in Early Twentieth-Century French Theater}, 3.} Robert Orledge agrees, stating that the Swedish company challenged ‘Diaghilev’s \textit{Ballets Russes} for the championship of the theatrical avant-garde between 1920 and 1925’, throughout which period both companies were based in Paris.\footnote{Robert Orledge, \textit{Satie the Composer} (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), 178.} The \textit{Ballets Suédois} first appeared at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on 25 October 1920, continuing to perform there until 1924,\footnote{Garafola, \textit{Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance}, 107.} during which time the company gave a total of 2,678 performances of 24 dance spectacles whilst in Paris and on tour around Europe and America.\footnote{David Stevens, ‘Life and Times of the Ballets Suédois’, \textit{The New York Times}, (7 May 1994), http://www.nytimes.com (accessed 2 April 2015).} This troupe would prove a worthy challenger to Diaghilev’s monopoly on...
Parisian ballet, with the company gaining a comparable level of support from the Parisian public, as well as being celebrated in modern academic writing.

Similarly to Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes, the Ballets Suédois was headed by their own impresario, Rolf De Maré, whose life mirrored that of Diaghilev’s in several ways. Primarily, both men were art aficionados who turned their passion for creative experimentation into a business model. Furthermore, Rolf De Maré (1888-1964) was born in Sweden to an aristocratic family, and the lifestyle this entailed shared many similarities with a young Diaghilev. However, unlike the Russian impresario, De Maré is most known today for his impact on dance as an academic subject, having opened Les Archives Internationales de la Danse in Paris in 1932, before founding the world’s first Dance Museum in Stockholm in 1950.\textsuperscript{437} Most of his original Parisian archives were subsequently donated to the Bibliothèque-Musée de l’Opéra, enhancing the catalogue held there greatly: it this regard it can be argued that De Maré is as known amongst academics today for the institutions he founded, as he is for the works he created as director of his own ballet company. In his lifetime, De Maré was a relatively introverted individual, and after 1945 he travelled extensively without returning Paris for any prolonged period of time.\textsuperscript{438} De Maré’s comparatively un-flamboyant existence means that he is a far lesser-known character than Diaghilev, and the two are not often discussed under the same heading. However, Erik Näslund (the Director of Stockholm’s Dance Museum from 1989), who has written the most prolifically on De Maré, believes that the ‘Swedish Diaghilev’ has been unjustly confined to the shadows, with an unfair emphasis being placed on his Russian counterpart.\textsuperscript{439}

\textsuperscript{439} Ibid.
Lynn Garafola describes the *Ballets Suédois* as appearing like a ‘knockoff of the *Ballets Russes,*’ even imitating the national inclination of the company’s name.\(^{440}\) Indeed, there are many similarities between the two collectives, with the visual arts contributors to a ballet being of great importance to both companies. However, whilst Diaghilev was a keen follower of modern art, De Maré was a hands-on collector of various periods, and as a result was in possession of a great knowledge of a huge number of artists. De Maré used this experience to great effect, and as Thomas Persson writes, his *Ballets Suédois* appeared as ‘a spirited extension’ of his vast private art collection.\(^{441}\)

According to Richard Brender, the *Ballets Suédois* is described as having two goals: ‘presenting work derived from ethnic dances of all countries, and creating a *Gesamtkunstwerk,* uniting art of all other media.’\(^{442}\) This artistic credo clearly echoes that of Diaghilev’s company in the decade before. The principal difference here is that Diaghilev’s company had begun by championing works with a Russian theme, before expanding to explore themes from other cultures. However, the idea of an all-encompassing medium of art and dance is one that clearly resonates with Diaghilev’s philosophy at the beginning of his balletic adventure.

With De Maré, Rubinstein and Diaghilev all performing in Paris at the same time, a Parisian ballet-goer could be forgiven for believing all three companies looked very similar. For example, in a manner parallel to Rubinstein, De Maré also collaborated with some of the *Ballets Russes*’s most famous associates, such as Ravel and

\(^{441}\) Persson, ‘Interview with Erik Näslund’, 111.
Cocteau.  

The similarities and distinctions between the Ballets Russes and the Ballets Suédois are addressed in more detail in section 5.7, in a comparison of two of Darius Milhaud’s compositions, La Création du monde and Le Train bleu.

Prior to De Maré’s first season in Paris on 25 October 1920, the Ballets Russes was the leading dance company in Europe, if not the world. Diaghilev’s company had reinvented the business model for staging ballet, and in doing so had reinvigorated the Parisian love-affair with dance, art and music. Because of this, the influence of the Ballets Russes on the Ballets Suédois and Les ballets Ida Rubinstein cannot be over-estimated. Put very simply, and in the words of Erik Näslund - ‘without Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes there wouldn’t have been any Ballets Suédois’. Näslund justifies this statement by describing how Diaghilev’s 1909 season had revived ballet, turning it into a fashionable pastime. In essence, without the Ballets Russes, there simply would not have been the audience to justify De Maré’s (and in turn Rubinstein’s) decision to stage dance seasons of their own.

In this changed climate the Ballets Russes could no longer rely on their existing modes of operation. Artists Diaghilev could no longer afford to hire were working instead for Rubinstein and de Maré, and his company had to evolve in order to survive. The 1924 season shows a change in direction for Diaghilev, and as with the 1912 season, the impresario championed works by French composers, whilst perhaps sacrificing his ability to create more innovative music. It is this ‘second French season’ which is discussed in the following chapter.

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443 Garafola, Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance, 107.
444 Stevens, ‘The Life and Times of the Ballets Suédois’.
446 Ibid., 114.
5.2: The Second French Season

Henry Francis stated that the Ballets Russes’s second French season marked the complete ‘emancipation of Diaghilev from Russia’.\textsuperscript{448} Five works were performed in total: four premièred in Monte Carlo from January to April, and one after the company returned to Paris in June. Of these, two were revisions of existing material (Les Tentations de la Bergère with music by Michel de Montéclair re-orchestrated by Henri Casadesus, and Cimarosiana, with Domenico Cimarosa’s score re-orchestrated by Ottorino Respighi), whilst three were entirely new. The trio of original compositions - Les Biches (Francis Poulenc), Les Fâcheux (George Auric) and Le Train bleu (Darius Milhaud) - will be the focus of the rest of this chapter. These three works will be examined in the context of Diaghilev’s new approach to balletic creation and for the impact such changes had on the future of the company. The two lesser-known works, Le Train bleu and Les Fâcheux, will be examined in greater detail than Les Biches, as very little academic commentary exists on their scores and histories in comparison to Poulenc’s work.

As with the 1912 season discussed earlier, the first point needing consideration is what, if anything, classifies this particular spell as ‘French’. First, following the argument put forward by Barbara Kelly, the two ballets originally performed in Monte Carlo (Les Biches and Les Fâcheux) were commissioned by Diaghilev in the ‘context of a “Festival français”’, and featured alongside ‘revivals of nineteenth-century French opera.’\textsuperscript{449} Secondly, the creative team behind each ballet was predominantly French (see fig. 5.2 for a list of those involved). As with the first French season in 1912 (see 3.10 onwards),

the national identity of each of the ballets’ collaborators ensured that a collective nationality can be assigned to each ballet. The 1924 works are therefore French, in the same way Diaghilev’s 1912 ballets were. However, Diaghilev’s explicit labelling of some of these works as part of a “Festival français”, creates an even firmer categorisation of the 1924 ballets as French, in comparison with the 1912 works.

Figure 5.2 - The Ballets Russes’s 1924 season - all French nationals are marked (F)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co - Composer</th>
<th>Ch - Choreographer</th>
<th>Li - Librettist</th>
<th>De - Designer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Les Tentations de la Bergère, ou l’Amour Vainqueur</em></td>
<td>January 3</td>
<td>Co: Michel Pignolet de Montéclair (F) - reorchestrated by Henri Casadesus (F)</td>
<td>Ch: Bronislava Nijinska De: Juan Gris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monte Carlo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Les Biches</em></td>
<td>January 6</td>
<td>Co: Francis Poulenc (F)</td>
<td>Ch: Bronislava Nijinska De: Marie Laurencin (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monte Carlo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Cimarosiana</em></td>
<td>January 8</td>
<td>Co: Domenico Cimarosa</td>
<td>Ch: Léonide Massine De: Jose-Maria Sert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suite of dances taken from 1920 production <em>Le Astuzie Femminili</em></td>
<td>Monte Carlo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Les Fâcheux</em></td>
<td>January 19</td>
<td>Co: Georges Auric (F)</td>
<td>Ch: Bronislava Nijinska Li: Boris Kochno De: Georges Braque (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(from the comedy-ballet of Molière)</td>
<td>Monte Carlo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Le Train bleu</em></td>
<td>June 20</td>
<td>Co: Darius Milhaud (F)</td>
<td>Ch: Bronislava Nijinska Li: Jean Cocteau (F) De:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td></td>
<td>Curtain: Pablo Picasso Costumes: Coco Chanel (F) Décor: Henri Laurens (F)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bronislava Nijinska, the resident choreographer for the Ballets Russes at this time, was involved in all three new productions. As was the custom of Diaghilev’s company, she was commissioned to construct dances for the various seasons as a whole, rather than for individual works. With this in mind, it is possible to exclude her from the issue of national identity, without belittling any influence she may have had. In fact, only Russians were ever given the honour of choreographing for the Ballets Russes. Whereas
Diaghilev had once hand-picked the finest Russian dancers to showcase his homeland’s dominance of the genre, the vision of the company had changed, and as the impresario moved away from the promotion of Russian art and music, so his association with Russian ballet training diminished, even if his hiring of Russian choreographers did not. As Garafola describes, by June 1918 the dynamic of the troupe had changed considerably. The company now consisted of thirty-nine dancers. Within this, ‘eighteen were Russian … twelve were Polish; there were four Italians, two Spaniards, two Englishwomen, and … a Belgian.’\(^{450}\) The national identity of the company was now a fluid concept. The only constant ‘Russian’ factor was its choreographers, and even they were adopting European styles. The staunchly patriotic Diaghilev had become enamoured with Europe throughout his years there, and the political climate in Russia meant that the homeland he had known no longer existed in the wake of the 1917 Revolution. It is therefore no surprise that his beloved Ballets Russes should follow suit: in effect, the Russian Ballet was by now no longer Russian.\(^{451}\) Therefore, Diaghilev’s second French season was no merely nominal affair. Rather than intended to pacify critics, as with Hahn the decade previously, this season now reflected the evolved identity of the Ballets Russes. In addition, this final French instalment marks another turning-point in the aesthetic of the company, epitomising the start of a new chapter for the now ‘international and émigré’ collective, that had become a fully cosmopolitan company.\(^{452}\)

The influence of France was admittedly not the only component in the company’s changing identity. Spain also featured in a number of its productions, and it is worth considering for a moment the extent of this, in order to appreciate more clearly the

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\(^{451}\) Ibid.

\(^{452}\) Garafola, *Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance*, 56.
uniqueness of the French seasons. The Spanish dimension is largely thanks to Pablo Picasso’s involvement with the company from 1917-1924: during which time he contributed to six original ballets (see fig. 5.3).

Figure 5.3 - Picasso’s collaborations with the Ballets Russes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ballet</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Parade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Le Tricorne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Pulcinella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Cuadro Flamenco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>L’Après-midi d’un faune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Le Train bleu</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Picasso is widely considered to have been one of the greatest contributors to Spanish culture, and there was an inherent association between Diaghilev’s company and the artist’s homeland as soon as the two began working together. Picasso even became part of the Ballets Russes on a personal level as well as professionally, as he married a Russian dancer from the troupe, turning her into a ‘Spanish girl’ in several of his portraits of her.453 However, it is not only Picasso who afforded links between Spain and the Ballets Russes. During the war years a direct connection between Diaghilev and the country emerged, as King Alfonso of Spain invited the troupe to take up a kind of residency in his nation, with Diaghilev and his associates becoming frequent visitors to the country throughout the following years.454 In the words of Sjeng Scheijen, Spain’s ‘neutrality made the country a magnet for all kinds of odd figures’, and as with Paris

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453 Olga Khokhlova was married to Picasso from 1918 until her death in 1955.
nearly a decade previously, Diaghilev found himself (under the influence of Manuel de Falla) at the centre of a new, thriving, bohemian group, now based in Spain.\footnote{Scheijen, Diaghilev: A Life, (2009), 321.}

This period in Spain, which began with the company’s first ballet performed there (Las Meninas) in August 1916, influenced Diaghilev and his compatriots greatly, and two works were created as a direct result of the company’s time in the country. Thus, in total, there are three Spanish-themed ballets within the Ballets Russes’s repertoire: Las Meninas with music by Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), Le Tricorne by Manuel de Falla (1876-1946) and a series of dances entitled Cuadro Flamenco (1921). Le Tricorne (first performed 22 July 1919) is arguably the most overtly Spanish of the ballets, thanks to its score by the country’s leading composer at this time. Furthermore, the choreography embraced traditional Spanish forms, since Massine had studied Andalusian dancing with a local dancer during the company’s 1916 stay in San Sebastian for the première of Las Meninas. Las Meninas was a tribute to the painting by one of Spain’s leading artists, Diego Velázquez (1599-1660), and was premièred in Spain during the Ballets Russes’s first season in San Sebastian, at the Eugenia-Victoria Theatre on 21 August 1916. Such a choice of ballet subject shows a clear intention to represent Spain on the Ballets Russes’s stage.

The Ballets Russes’s attitude to exoticism has already been discussed in section 3.10, in the context of Le Dieu bleu. However, it is a topic that needs to be briefly reviewed when discussing the Spanish ballets. Diaghilev’s time in Spain was a highly successful one, both commercially and creatively, providing his company with a new influx of inspiration. However, although the trio of works listed above presented themes from within Europe, the way in which they were presented places them alongside Le Dieu
bleu as works that explore the Other. The use of Andalusian dancing and traditions from Spain’s most southerly regions was unlike anything being presented in central Europe at this time. As discussed by Lynn Garafola, Diaghilev saw similarities between his native Russia and Spain, with the Spanish folk culture ‘derived from a blending of European and “Eastern” sources’ in a manner similar to that of his homeland.\(^{456}\) Moreover, Russia and France shared a similar fascination with Spanish culture, showing the wide appeal of the subject, as well as emphasising the shared interest between the countries at this point.\(^{457}\) It is possible therefore, to understand Diaghilev’s affinity for Spain as a way for him to re-engage with his lost heritage, following the political unrest in his homeland. Consequently, despite the relatively close geographical relationship between Spain and France, the use of folkloric material presented the Spanish ballets as part of the Other canon, as had the earliest Russian works many years before. It is for this reason that the French seasons can once again be viewed as distinct from the Spanish works, which appealed to the French audience’s desire for the Other on stage: the French season appears to do precisely the opposite. Rather than celebrating anything exotic, the 1924 ballets were designed to hold up a mirror to the new culture of France. Furthermore, unlike the French 1924 season, the three Spanish ballets were performed over a period of six years and were never presented together in a single season. Because of this, the ‘French Seasons’ of 1912 and 1924 remain unique.

5.3: Cocteau and Les Six

Beyond simply choosing collaborators based on their heritage, Diaghilev’s selection of composers reflects his intention to promote French culture and the leading exponents of


a new French music. Francis Poulenc, Georges Auric and Darius Milhaud were members of Les Six, who were representative of the “new music”.458 The Groupe des Six, as they were originally known, were seen as perpetuating the evolving aesthetic of French music. The group’s title was coined in an article published in 1920 by the composer and critic Henri Collet. The name is an obvious acknowledgement of the importance and influence of the Russian ‘Five’ from previous decades, and a way of directly confronting Rimsky-Korsakov and his group’s traditions. However, as Kelly points out, Collet’s naming of this collective was perhaps not as organic as it first seems, with the group working with him to select the title. Therefore, Collet’s actions and the group’s ‘launching’ were more publicity stunt than accident.459 Les Six, as further defined by Francois de Médicis, was a ‘group of composers driven by nationalist ambitions … the instigators of a stylistic revolution.’460 However, the unity and direction of the group, whose other members were Arthur Honegger, Germaine Tailleferre and Louis Durey, has often been questioned, not least in terms of their supposed nationalism. The composers frequently contradicted one another, with self-promotion and arrogance dominating their discussions. Although the Russian Five were also individually very different composers, that group often presented a united front, at least for a brief period in the 1860s, whilst the French Six allowed personal quarrels to interfere with their overall objective.461

Nonetheless, Les Six did collaborate on certain projects, the most obvious example being the journal Le Coq, for which they worked together on four issues between April

458 Orledge, Satie the Composer, 249-250.
459 Kelly, Music and Ultra-Modernism in France, 76.
and November 1920 (as mentioned in section 4.4). The journal was a spin-off from Cocteau’s pamphlet *Le Coq et l’Arlequin*, published in 1918, which, as David Bancroft writes, became acknowledged as a ‘statement of the code of aesthetics’ for *Les Six*, and a defining moment in the history of the group. As Roger Nichols describes it, of *Le Coq et l’Arlequin* was ‘a brilliant collection of aphorisms intended to defend the ballet *Parade* … and appealing for a musical aesthetic that was French, clear and economical’. The scope of the pamphlet can be roughly divided into seven subject areas:

(1) art in general and music in particular; (2) *Le Cas Wagner*; (3) Satie as prophet of a French, French music; (4) Everyday music and the music hall; (5) A defence of *Parade*; (6) An attack on the public; (7) The rejection of Stravinsky (and reinstatement in a footnote).

This book was not just a manifesto for present and future French music, but, as discussed by Vera Rašin, it was also a response to artists in all media who ‘sought to express the everyday world with terseness and clarity’. Bancroft continues that the writing focuses predominantly on clearing the ‘musical murk of the past’ and establishing certain principles that would fix ‘the whole problem of contemporary art’ by addressing simplicity as the ultimate medium for creative freedom. Importantly, these principles place Satie as the epitome of the desired style, and (for a short while) Stravinsky as the antithesis of this, showing the significance the group placed on Satie’s compositions, in particular *Parade*. The articles published by *Les Six* from 1920

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466 Rašin, ‘“Les Six” and Jean Cocteau’, 165.
onwards elaborated on the ideas outlined by Cocteau two years previously, and were well celebrated in Paris. As a result, the members of Les Six became commonly known amongst musicians and the public alike.

It was within the pages of Le Coq et l’Arlequin that Cocteau made a call to arms, stating ‘Je demande une musique française de France.’\textsuperscript{468} This desire for a new form of French music was two-fold. First, the book was written just as France was recovering from the devastation of world war, and therefore national pride and anti-Germanic feelings were more pronounced than ever before. Secondly, France’s most celebrated composer, Debussy, who had been very much admired by Cocteau (and whose death occurred just before the publication of Le Coq et l’Arlequin), was, irrespective of his own convictions, closely associated with the music of Wagner, and in the wake of war there was a longing to create music that did not borrow from his techniques. As Kelly states, it was not so much a rejection of Debussy himself that Les Six sought, rather a distancing from debussysme, an outdated aesthetic in the group’s eyes.\textsuperscript{469} The Ballets Russes’s trio of new ballets in 1924 placed the company at the forefront of France’s post-Wagnerian reaction, both in Diaghilev’s choice of composer and in his rejection of his own Gesamtkunstwerk style of stage production from its earlier years. In order to give a flavour of how audiences were introduced to these works, the three ballets will be discussed in chronological order of performance.

\textsuperscript{468} Jean Cocteau, quoted in ibid.
\textsuperscript{469} Kelly, Music and Ultra-Modernism in France, 10.
5.4: Les Biches - Poulenc’s ‘Adaptation’ of Les Noces

First performed in Monte Carlo on 6 January 1924, Les Biches is a one-act ballet with music by Francis Poulenc, decor by Marie Laurencin and choreography by Bronislava Nijinska.470

Of the three original French ballets, Les Biches was undoubtedly the most successful, at least in terms of public response.471 Christopher Moore, who has written extensively on this ballet, describes the work as a ‘spectacular critical success at its premiere’.472 Moreover, the reviews at the time of the first performance were also highly favourable, with Boris de Schloezer writing in 1924 that:

In Les Biches, the classical style as it was developed and enriched by the masters of the nineteenth century undergoes the influence of modern dances with their characteristic movements, their syncopated rhythms, their off-beat accentuations. The composite style that is the result of this bold synthesis contains a very strong expressive power and a new type of formal beauty.473

The idea of a new ‘type of formal beauty’ was fundamental to the Ballets Russes’s altered style in its 1924 season.

Because of its relative critical success and the subsequent career and reputation of Poulenc, Les Biches has been fairly well documented and examined in the years since it

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470 Of the three ballets discussed in this chapter, only Milhaud’s Le Train bleu was premièred in Paris: both Poulenc’s Les Biches and Auric’s Les Fâcheux first appeared in Monte Carlo. However, all three ballets were performed in Paris in the 1924 season after the company’s return from Monte Carlo (via Barcelona), and as such, the importance of French works being presented in France remains pertinent. Grigoriev, The Diaghilev Ballet, 1909-1929, 195-196.
was first performed. As such, this ballet does not require an in-depth examination of the music, unlike Milhaud and Auric’s works, which are explored in the following sections. However, the favourable critical response to the work, alongside the type of subject it depicted, coupled with the comparisons the score suggests with Stravinsky’s works, offer a unique set of topics for examination within this 1924 season.

Diaghilev first approached Poulenc in November 1921 with the idea to create a ballet entitled Les Demoiselles, based on a libretto by fashion designer Germaine Bongard. However, Bongard withdrew from the project soon after Poulenc agreed to the commission, and Poulenc’s ballet, although similar to Bongard’s original idea, was created without a libretto and instead presented as a suite of ballets all set in one drawing room, with only a sofa as decor. Christopher Moore, who has studied this ballet thoroughly, states that the finished version of Les Biches (also known as The House Party) comprised ‘an overture and a succession of eight tableau [sic] depicting various scenes of coquetry and seduction.’ For a full synopsis of the ballet, translated from a French edition of the score, see Appendix 7. This deliberately unpretentious scenery and sophisticated, yet simply structured work, emulated Cocteau’s desire for an uncomplicated art, and can be seen as emblematic for the ballets created by Les Six for Diaghilev. Tatiana Wood would certainly agree with this sentiment in her MRes thesis on Les Biches, stating that with the ‘work’s value is frequently questioned because of its apparently trivial subject-matter and the banality of the music reflecting it’. The value

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here being the deliberate banality of the score, and the relevance of this in relation to the ideas of Les Six.

*Les Biches* is certainly not a lesser-known work. The ballet is often discussed in writings about Diaghilev and his company, as well as appearing frequently in examinations of Poulenc’s music. One of the main reasons there has been such a keen interest in it stems from the ballet’s close resemblances to Stravinsky’s ballets, in particular *Les Noces*, which was first performed on 13 July 1923 at the Théâtre Gâite-Lyrique, only six months before Poulenc began his score for Diaghilev.479 Barbara Kelly discusses the similarities between these two works at length, also including comparisons to two other Stravinsky works: *Pulcinella* (1920) and *Mavra* (1922).480 Moreover, Kelly also describes how both his *Les Noces* and *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* can be traced in Poulenc’s score,481 further commenting that there is also an influence of Tchaikovsky on *Les Biches*, illustrating the ways in which Poulenc was taking inspiration from two of the Ballets Russes’s most celebrated composers.482 However, it is the relationship between *Les Noces* and *Les Biches* that is of most significance here. Poulenc had played one of the four piano parts at the première of *Les Noces* (alongside Georges Auric, Vittorio Rieti and Marcelle Meyer), and as such had inside knowledge of Stravinsky’s newest creation. It was, therefore, perhaps inevitable that Poulenc would be inspired by some of Stravinsky’s musical ideas, and in turn that these would be incorporated into his 1924 work for the company.483

482 Ibid., 219.
Stravinsky’s *Les Noces* and *Apollon Musagète* (1928), alongside *Les Biches*, are often touted as the pinnacles of the Ballets Russes’s period of neoclassicism. However, *Les Biches* brings a new perspective to this idea, acting also on the part of the national affirmations of *Les Six*. Therefore, it is possible to place Poulenc’s ballet as sitting somewhere between the two styles: a transitional stage between the shift from ‘full’ neo-classicism evident in *Les Noces*, to the confident national affirmations made in the other 1924 works.

The discussion surrounding Stravinsky’s influence on *Les Biches* has brought a great deal of academic interest to Poulenc’s ballet. Roger Nichols, for one, describes the work succinctly: ‘where *Les Noces* is hard, *Les Biches* is soft: after the clanging sonorities of four pianos, gentle strings set off limpid woodwind solos; after ritual Russian rhythms, ingratiating French dances: after sex as sacrifice, sex as a game, possibly even sex for sale.’

Indeed, it is possible to say that *Les Biches* was Poulenc’s attempt to continue many of the ideas explored in *Les Noces*, with for example, the comparatively mild sexual theme of Stravinsky’s ballet taking an explicitly erotic turn in Poulenc’s creation.

Not everyone was pleased with Poulenc’s following of Stravinsky. Milhaud in particular thought that *Les Noces* had been a ‘terrible influence’ on Poulenc, as he wrote in a letter to Paul Collaer in 1923. Indeed, in a later article in 1927, Milhaud reflected that there were ‘two paths open to young French composers: the new Stravinsky and Satie’. With this in mind, it is possible to see why in 1923 Milhaud would be against

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484 Nichols, *The Harlequin Years*, 146.
485 Garafola, *Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes*, 129.
487 Ibid., 18.
one of the group’s most prolific contributors, incorporating Stravinsky’s neo-classical techniques into one of his newest pieces. However, Milhaud’s concerns were short-lived, and when *Les Biches* was finally performed in 1924, he was delighted with the ballet, as shown in his letter to Collaer from the 22 January:

> I dream about it. It is a masterpiece. The music is adorable, marvellously orchestrated, always heartfelt and full of emotion. The décor and costumes, adorable, and the choreography adorable, Nijinska’s masterpiece. It is the most beautiful and successful ballet in the Diaghilev repertoire. 488

It is clear that by 1924, and the arrival of *Les Biches*, both Milhaud and Poulenc were once again approving of the style of music each other was creating.

Whatever else it did, *Les Biches* certainly cemented Diaghilev’s reputation for creating ballets in which, as Mary E. Davis says, ‘all of the elements of fashion were in place’, in his 1924 season. 489 *Les Biches*, alongside *Le Train bleu*, was important for the company’s then resident choreographer, who, as Robert Greskovic writes, used these two works to carry forward ‘her choreographic vision for ballet as a highly stylized but contemporary art’. 490 It was Nijinska’s interpretation of this new art that would begin to define the stylistic template of the Ballets Russes’s final phase.

After its first performance in Monte-Carlo, Poulenc’s creation was also performed in Paris on 26 May 1924 alongside *Les Noces* and *Les Tentations de la Bergère*, *Les Biches* being the most successful at this time. 491 In this respect, the positive response to *Les Biches* also shows how European audience’s had developed. As Garafola opines, the

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488 Paul Collaer, Robert Wangermée (ed.), *Correspondance avec des amis musiciens* (Brussels: Mardage, 1997), 164.
ballet was deliberately provocative, as it explored ‘a host of taboo themes - narcissism, voyeurism, female sexual power, castration, sapphism’. As Ilyana Karthas describes, the ballet ‘played on gender stereotypes, androgyny, and homosexuality, and was, essentially, a satire of the 1920s sexual mores’. However, despite these topics, the ballet remained a popular and well-received work. Nijinsky had previously explored themes of sexuality in a much more timid manner, and yet his ballets still raised concerns amongst the public. However, Les Biches, with Nijinska’s bold use of erotic poses to illustrate Poulenc’s controversial subject matters, elicited a positive response from the Parisian public. Where Nijinsky’s faun had once caused outrage with his subtle sexual gestures, here was an audience embracing all manner of seemingly sexualised topics, and apparently doing so with great relish: put simply, Parisian audiences were no longer so easy to offend.

With this change in audience mentality, it is possible to suggest that Les Biches is indebted to Stravinsky in a way that goes far beyond the compositional techniques that Poulenc borrowed from Les Noces: it benefited from the ripple effect cause by Le Sacre du Printemps’s controversy-filled opening night. Following this première (and that of Parade) the threshold for contentious works had been pushed to new limits. This meant that Diaghilev’s company was now free to explore apparently taboo topics without fear of audience disapproval. However, this new open-mindedness was not just a reaction to Diaghilev’s ballets. France had changed in the years since the company first performed, and seemingly offensive subjects once deemed controversial were no longer seen as such. Alongside the Ballets Russes, other theatre producers and writers had long been testing the boundaries of that which was socially acceptable. In the years before

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492 Garafola, Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, 130.
494 See Christopher Moore’s ‘Camp in Francis Poulenc’s Early Ballets’ for examples of contemporary reviews which discuss the erotic nature of Les Biches.
Diaghilev’s company arrived in Paris, Alfred Jarry (1873-1907) had already created deliberately provocative plays intended to shock and disturb the audiences, for example his *Ubu Roi* (1896) which was a grotesque adaptation of *Macbeth*, greatly offended the Parisian public for its use of vulgar language. Jarry and his successors had created a new type of French theatre, which was built on trying to offend the sensibilities of Parisian culture. After the death of Jarry, many tried to follow in his footsteps, and as a result of the more frequent exposure to this shock theatre, Parisian audiences had been significantly desensitised. The change in theatrical tradition, alongside the *Ballets Russes’s* existing provocative creations, meant that the audience facing Diaghilev at the beginning of his 1924 season was vastly different from that which had greeted him nearly two decades previously.

This created a dilemma for Diaghilev’s company: whilst on the one hand they were free to explore new ideas, craving the notoriety that had once defined them, on the other hand such ventures no longer held the promise of shock or scandal. Auric’s *Les Fâcheux* is an example of a ballet that perhaps suffered from this contradiction. The ideas behind the ballet are, on paper, fresh and intriguing, but in reality the work failed to create excitement.

### 5.5: *Les Fâcheux* - Molière Without the Theatre

*Les Fâcheux* (known also as *The Bores*) was premièred on 19 January 1924 in Monte Carlo. The score was provided by Georges Auric, with sets and costumes by Georges Braque. Boris Kochno provided the scenario for the work, which was a revival of Molière’s comedy-ballet of the same name. The original ballet was commissioned by

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Louis XIV’s Minister of Finance, Nicolas Fouquet, as part of a fête to celebrate the King, and was first performed in a private showing at Vaux-le-Vicomte near Paris on 17 August 1661,496 the first public performance following on 4 November that year at the Théâtre du Palais-Royal in Paris.497 Although commonly known as a ballet, the original Les Fâcheux would be better described as a play incorporating music.498 However, the combination of theatre and music at that time was largely a result of practicalities, as the King’s Court had a limited number of dancers, and as a result, each performer enacted several roles. In addition actors took to the stage to perform theatrical interludes, during which time the dancers could complete costume changes.499 However, with Kochno’s tailor-made scenario, no such practicalities had to be considered. In the hands of the Ballets Russes, Les Fâcheux evolved from a piece of seventeenth-century theatre accompanied by music, to a twentieth-century ballet. It should be noted, however, that this music was not entirely new. The ballet score was, as Kelly describes it, a ‘reworking of incidental music [Auric] had written for a production of Molière’s Les Fâcheux at the Odéon theatre in April 1921.’500

Robert McBride, who writes about Molière’s work and ballet in general, discusses the nearly identical storylines of Kochno’s and Molière’s original, in which the ‘underlying theme is that of an uninterrupted and unstoppable succession of bores’ who continually prevent Eraste from conversing with Orphise.501 Kochno’s version keeps the main characters and plot developments, and amends only a few details (a full translation is

500 Kelly, Music and Ultra-Modernism in France, 223.
given in Appendix 7). One significant alteration is the removal of the bores, who appear instead as socialites, whilst the groups of sportsmen are updated as boules players and spectators.

The connection to the classical past and the ‘golden age of Louis XIV’ is an important one.\textsuperscript{502} Indeed, Kelly pinpoints it as a key part of the success of Kochno’s \textit{Les Fâcheux}, which was positively received because of ‘its popular touch, its inescapable association with the classical past of Molière, and its abstraction’.\textsuperscript{503} The close association between Molière and Diaghilev’s \textit{Les Fâcheux} should not be underestimated. As previously discussed, some of the 1924 French season formed part of the Ballets Russes’s neo-classical period, with works such as \textit{Les Biches} and the earlier \textit{Les Noces} becoming the staple diet of Diaghilev’s company. With this in mind, it is possible to view \textit{Les Fâcheux} as a prime example of the company’s transition into a new type of neoclassicism. Auric’s score was not neo-classical in the same way as Stravinsky’s later works were, such as his \textit{Octet for Winds} (1923), in which he adopted the Sonata form and instrumentation imitative of scores created by Bach and his contemporaries. However, the reinvention of Molière’s seventeenth-century theatre/music production by Diaghilev’s company is an example of the new retrospective approach to balletic composition, which would define the final phase of the company’s history.

Similarly to \textit{Le Train bleu} (discussed below in section 5.6), the leading male role in \textit{Les Fâcheux} is a sportsman, with the various ‘bores’ interrupting the couple gathering to play either badminton or boules. However, unlike \textit{Le Train bleu}, the ballet is not focused on sport as a theme, and no dance is based around the poses that such sports

\textsuperscript{502} Kelly, \textit{Music and Ultra-Modernism in France}, 222.  
\textsuperscript{503} Ibid.
suggest. Instead, the references to sport are subtle excuses to introduce groups of dancers all at once.

The idea of presenting sport on the stage was not a new one, and nor was it short-lived. Debussy’s Jeux (1913) was one of the first works to do so, whilst Shostakovich’s The Golden Age (1930) appeared just after Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes had disbanded. These two ballets helped to define the sub-genre and remain among the most famous musical embodiments of sporting topics. Jeux is of particular interest here, as it was another Ballets Russes creation and pre-dates the appearance of both Les Fâcheux and Le Train bleu. First performed on 15 May 1913 at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Jeux was the Ballets Russes’s first experiment in combining sport and ballet.

Jeux has been defined by Garafola as a ‘cubist ballet about a game of tennis in a garden,’ which ‘hinged on sexual ambiguity and desire’. Moreover, it could be described as Nijinsky’s confident sequel to L’Après-midi d’un faune, which was performed just one year previously. As Pierre Boulez notes, the two scenarios are similar: ‘the pursuit of two nymphs by a faun under a hot Sicilian sky and the dalliance of two girls and a young man around a tennis court’ could be summarised by saying that ‘Jeux is Afternoon of a Faun in sports clothes’. As discussed in my opening chapter, Nijinsky’s sexually explicit actions in Faune caused a minor scandal, and with this experience still fresh in the minds of the choreographer and his collaborators, it could be suggested that the use of sport in Jeux allowed the contentious issue of sexuality on stage to be presented again by Nijinsky. The pretext of sport as a wholesome and

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504 Garafola, Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, 58.
505 Pierre Boulez, quoted in, Laurence Berman, “‘Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun’ and “Jeux”: Debussy’s Summer Rites’, 19th-Century Music, 3 (1980), 225-238; here, 225.
healthy pastime acted as a moral neutralising agent, meaning that the unorthodox topic of three lovers pursuing each other could be justified.506

Sport being the focus of a libretto reflects a change in interests in Paris and Europe. At the outset of the Ballets Russes, the main inspiration for ballet subjects had been foreign cultures and distant epochs, as seen with exotic and/or atavistic ballets such as Le Dieu bleu and Le Sacre du Printemps. However, the 1920s represented a shift in audience interests. Previously, alien cultures had provided a form of escapism and bridged the cultural divide between societies about which Parisians knew little. However, the political climate created by the war seemingly reignited people’s passions for their homelands, and advancements in transportation and the comparative ease with which the upper-class could experience inter-continental travel changed public attitudes towards ‘otherness’. In short, the Other was no longer new and exciting, and a form of introspective inspiration became an important part of the arts. Instead, the audience was now being encouraged to explore its own cultural and social identity. Lynn Garafola has labelled this idea ‘lifestyle modernism’.507 This term has subsequently been taken up by several academics, including Wye J. Allanbrook and Richard Taruskin, who define the term with relation to French music as offering ‘a sonorous reflection of their own lives’.508 Therefore, where the inhabitants of the French capital had once used theatres to escape from their own cultural boundaries, they now progressed to a form of inwardly focused stimulus, as exemplified in Le Train bleu’s scenario (see 5.6 below).

506 L’Après-midi d’un faune was first performed at the Théâtre du Châtelet on 29 May 1912, whilst Jeux’s première took place at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on 15 May 1913. Therefore, the same type of audience would have been present at both of the ballet’s premières.
507 Garafola, Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, 98.
If sport was used as a metaphor for romantic affairs in Debussy’s *Jeux*, it served as political commentary two decades later in Shostakovich’s *The Golden Age*. The libretto for *The Golden Age* (1930) was the result of a competition, following which A.V. Ivanovský’s winning entry *Dinamiada* became the basis for the Shostakovich ballet.\(^{509}\) As Manashir Yakubov summarises, *Dinamiada* follows the story of a fictional Soviet soccer team (Dynamo) during a visit to a capitalist country and ‘unfolds against the background of an industrial exhibition, games and sports competitions in a stadium, and finally in a music hall on a public holiday.’\(^{510}\) The ballet was performed ten times in 1930 and a further eight times in 1931, but was largely received negatively by the Soviet press.\(^{511}\) Nonetheless, the use of sport as a veil for Soviet propaganda is intriguing. Described by Amy Nelson as ‘a parody of the capitalist West’, the overtly political subject matter in *The Golden Age* shows another way in which sport may be used as a façade (albeit a deliberately transparent one in this case) behind which a more dominant subject matter is hidden.\(^{512}\) Although *The Golden Age* was completed just after the *Ballets Russes* had disbanded, its appearance following that of *Jeux* nearly two decades before illustrates the longevity of sport as an artistic topic.

Whilst sport had been used as a cover for controversial topics, *Les Fâcheux* and *Le Train bleu* are arguably unusual in that no such hidden agenda is evident: if Shostakovich’s work was political and Debussy’s erotic, Milhaud’s and Auric’s were neither. The use of sport in these two ballets was purely frivolous, acting as a way for Diaghilev to entertain contemporary audiences and appeal to modern sensibilities.

\(^{510}\) Ibid.
As with *Le Train bleu*, *Les Fâcheux* is relatively unsung in recent commentaries, and no full analysis of the music exists. However, Barbara Kelly does discuss the ballet with specific examination of the connection between the music of Molière’s time and Auric’s score, which was adapted from his previous music for a staged version of *Les Fâcheux* for the Odéon Theatre in April 1921.\(^{513}\) This relationship with the theatrical version, and in turn the original Molière work, explains the music’s faux-antique aspect. For example, Kelly discusses the melody heard at the start of the Overture as an attempt to reconnect Auric’s new music with the ballet’s much older history.\(^{514}\) She also notes that the fairground-like style in this ballet is similar to that of *Parade*, and that as in Satie’s work, jazz influences can be heard in the score.\(^{515}\) In fact, it is probably largely thanks to Kelly’s observations that the music to the ballet is better known than that of *Le Train bleu*, and as result a detailed discussion of the whole score is not as justified. However, because it still stands well outside the common repertoire, it is worth providing an overview of the score, which will further complement Kelly’s observations. The table and examples below provide a reference point for analytical discussions and are indeed, to the best of my knowledge, the first place in which such a guide has been fully presented. The score features a number of salient themes, as shown in Fig. 5.4. However, greater musical interest lies in the ways in which Auric creates a dance music that mimics neo-classical styles in keeping with the work’s historical past. Therefore, the following section provides a thematic inventory of the work, followed by a discussion of some salient main points in the score.

\(^{514}\) Ibid., 222.
\(^{515}\) Ibid.
Figure 5.4 - Themes within *Les Fâcheux*\(^{516}\)

**Theme 1:** Eraste and La Montagne enter (at second hearing of theme)  
Bb. 23-30

**Tonality:** D  
**Expression/Tempo:** Vif et décidé \(\text{h} = 138\)

![Musical notation for Theme 1]

**Theme 2:** Lysandre’s entrance  
Bb. 278-285

**Tonality:** A  
**Expression/Tempo:** Modéré

![Musical notation for Theme 2]

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Theme 3: ‘Danse de Lysandre’
Bb. 315-32

Tonality: F
Expression/Tempo: Assez animé

Theme 4: ‘Danse des Joueuses de Volant’
Bb. 400-402

Tonality: a
Expression/Tempo: Vif et décidé

Theme 5: Orphise’s first solo dance
Bb. 486-489

Tonality: Db
Expression/Tempo: Très lent et expressif
**Theme 6a:** Boules players enter the stage, Orphise exits
Bb. 656-663

**Tonality:** g  
**Expression/Tempo:** Vif et très rythmé

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**Theme 6b:** Beginning of the boules players’ group dance
Bb. 693-696

**Tonality:** G  
**Expression/Tempo:** Légèrement retenu

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**Theme 7a:** Card players enter
Bb. 781-786

**Tonality:** C  
**Expression/Tempo:** Très animé
Theme 7b: Boules players and badminton players return.
Bb. 816-819

Tonality: C
Expression/Tempo: Très animé

Theme 8: Orphise’s entrance
Bb. 871-874

Tonality: F
Expression/Tempo: Allegretto

Theme 9: Orphise's dance
Bb. 896-874

Tonality: Bb
Expression/Tempo: Légèrement retenu
Theme 10: A battle scene  
Bb. 999-1002

Tonality: C  
Expression/Tempo: Modéré mais sans lenteur

Only two scenes feature more than one motif, (6a and 6b; and 7a and 7b). Otherwise, each section is represented by a single theme. However, no inter-related material is used, and each theme is independent of the music which precedes or follows it. Instead, the short themes are repeated throughout each scene, creating an energetic, fast-paced work that neatly supports the on-stage dance.

Barbara Kelly writes about the reception of Les Fâcheux in detail, citing, for example, the praise it received from critics such as Émile Vuillermoz and Henry Prunières as a piece of music representative of the new French style. Accordingly, it should suffice here to summarise Kelly’s main observations - primarily, that the ballet was received very well when it was first performed. Indeed, Auric successfully incorporates several dance genres in this work, giving a decidedly modern feel to the ballet by appealing to Parisian trends of the 1920s for a reimagining of ballet’s classical past. The Overture opens with a bourrée-esque music, which although not exact in its representation of this style, is a fast-paced and rigidly timed section, in keeping with the genre. Similarly, the ‘Danse Bavardes’ has a polka feel to it, whilst the ‘Joueurs de Boules’ is a strictly ordered waltz section. Indeed, upon first hearing, Auric’s score resembles the musical

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See Kelly’s book pages 221-223 for various references regarding the reception of Les Fâcheux.
accompaniment for the routine exercises practised in European dance schools. If there is any complexity in this score, it is to be found in Auric’s recreation of an antique setting, as explained by Kelly in her own writing. However, whilst Kelly discusses this connection to the historic in a general sense, it is possible here to identify a few more precise examples of where such techniques occur: for example between bars 656-664 and 347-351. Bars 656-664 comprise an accented accompaniment made up exclusively of parallel fifths, a technique simplified from bars 347-351, in which parallel fourths are also evident. This feature occurs sporadically, with no apparent connection to any actions on stage, and as such, it is likely that it is present for purposes of spicing the harmony rather than for anything representational. Nevertheless, Auric also references the musical styles of one of his Les Six contemporaries and as such shows his ability to appeal to the modern audience. In a couple of the scenes transcribed above, Auric accompanies a simple tonal passage with a more complicated melody, such as 7a in which the melodic line is in pure C major, but the D♯ repeated in the bass ostinato clashes with C melodic line, and 4, in which the A minor tonality is interrupted with sharp inflections. In a few short passages, Auric creates bitonal clashes, a technique widely associated with Milhaud. An example of this occurs at bar 258, in which B♭ major and B major tonalities appear together. A similar technique occurs later in the music, from bar 960 onwards. This fleeting appearance of bitonality shows how easy it is for Auric to slip into a more sophisticated idiom and at the same time highlights the artlessness of the greater part of his music for Les Fâcheux.

Auric’s score can be summarised as a deliberately anti-romantic dance study, which cleverly plays on the connections to its antique past, whilst also tossing in passages of dissonance and bitonality to flavour the otherwise simplistic idiom. Moreover, although the score has clear movement and physicality in it, there is clearly no depth it. The
audience is not drawn into any emotional connection, and to talk even of characterisation would be to stretch an extent. A point of comparison would be the ballets of Prokofiev: *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella* similarly incorporate a variety of dance music styles, such as waltzes and polkas, and yet whilst Prokofiev takes great care over the lyrical line of his music, Auric does not in the same way. In short, Auric’s music is functional dance music rather than expressive performance music. This in itself could be seen as a statement of his commitment to the ideas of *Les Six*: the simplistic score pointedly rejects the styles of Wagner and Debussy, creating harmonically uncomplicated music devoid of the expressivity of the Romantic genre. Moreover, the evocation of an antique style relating to Molière’s original work creates a revised form of neo-classicism, with the historical roots of the ballet anchoring it in a kind of distantly traditional music. In this sense, *Les Fâcheux* and Milhaud’s *Le Train bleu* offer various degrees of conformity to the collective, with the latter being a more obvious advocate of the aesthetics of *Les Six*, and perhaps the work that came closest of all to capturing Cocteau’s ideal theatre art.\(^{518}\)

### 5.6: (Not) The Blue Train.

Within this final French season, *Le Train bleu* is perhaps the most intriguing work, partly because it provides a ballet that is not easy to place within the composer Darius Milhaud’s wider repertoire. Created once again by Jean Cocteau, it acts as a prime example of the modernist style that Diaghilev’s troupe had become known for since *Parade*.\(^{519}\)

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\(^{519}\) Matthew Riley (ed.), *British Music and Modernism* (Burlington: Aldgate, 2010), 84. Photographs of the original scenery, and sketches of Nijinska’s original choreography exist in readily accessible forms, and on this basis the work has been recreated in recent years, most notably by the Paris Opéra in 2013.
Originally intended as a ballet for Anthony Dolin, and referred to as *Le Beau Gosse* (The Good-Looking Fellow), then as *Les Poules* (The Tarts - literally, Hens) the work was set on its definitive track when Darius Milhaud came on board, at which point it finally became *Le Train bleu*. The ballet was created to play on the emerging fascination with sport as the subject of art, and unlike *Les Fâcheux* (in which references to it are part of a larger story) sport here dominates every aspect. Diaghilev’s sport-themed venture was timed to coincide with the Paris Olympics that took place in the summer of 1924 and transformed the capital into a sports-mad city. Posters of bare-chested men displaying toned bodies adorned billboards around the capital, and the games became synonymous with the image of ‘the masculine man’. As Charles Batson explores, *Le Train bleu* exploits this image, with the opening scenes offering ‘an allegory for the celebration of a manly modern body’. Diaghilev used the toned physiques of his highly skilled dancers to mirror on stage the strength and athleticism on display at the Stade Olympique Yves-du-Manoir. Moreover, as Gay Morris discussed, this ballet was ‘full of references to the crazes of the 1920s, from sunbathing and snapshots to movies and maillots’ and was considered the ‘embodiment of the jazz age’. These popular references, coupled with the frivolous subject matter, allowed the audience to return, however fleetingly, to a world that had been eradicated in the war, and as such the ballet appealed effortlessly to the Parisian public.

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521 Batson, *Dance, Desire and Anxiety in Early Twentieth-Century French Theater*, 203.
522 Ibid., 213.
*Le Train bleu* was created as a touring ballet, and after its original performance in Paris it was also presented in London and Monte-Carlo. The entire performance history for *Le Train bleu* is summarised in Fig. 5.5.

Figure 5.5 - Performance history of *Le Train bleu*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Theatre</th>
<th>Accompanying Ballets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 June 1924</td>
<td>Théâtre des Champs-Élysées</td>
<td><em>Une éducation manquée, Pétrouchka</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 June 1924</td>
<td>Théâtre des Champs-Élysées</td>
<td><em>Parade, Les Fâcheux, Les Biches</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 June 1924</td>
<td>Théâtre des Champs-Élysées</td>
<td><em>Cimarosiana, Parade, Les Tentations de la Bergère</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 June 1924</td>
<td>Théâtre des Champs-Élysées</td>
<td><em>Les Tentations de la Bergère, Noces, Danses du prince Igor</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 November 1924</td>
<td>Coliseum, London</td>
<td>‘Aurora’s Wedding’ from <em>Le Belle au Bois Dormant</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 January 1925</td>
<td>Théâtre de Monte-Carlo</td>
<td><em>Contes Russes, Schéherézade</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 June 1925</td>
<td>Théâtre Gaîté-Lyrique</td>
<td><em>Les Fâcheux, Zéphyr et Flore</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 June 1925</td>
<td>Théâtre Gaîté-Lyrique</td>
<td><em>Les Fâcheux, Zéphyr et Flore, Les Matelots</em></td>
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</table>

Milhaud’s score for this visually uncomplicated venture, composed in only one month, appeared alongside dance created by Bronislava Nijinska, to Cocteau’s scenario.

Responsibility for the visual attributes was split between three artists: scenery by Henri Laurens, curtain by Pablo Picasso, and costumes by Gabriel ‘Coco’ Chanel (as shown in an image of the original ballet, Fig. 5.6 below). This larger-than-usual artistic team was a mixed bag of Diaghilev-commissioned seasoned professionals and newcomers to the company. At opposite ends of this spectrum were Chanel and Picasso, since *Le Train bleu* contains the only designs for the stage that Chanel ever made, whilst Picasso was now involved in his sixth and final Diaghilev-led creation. By this point, Picasso had become as much a part of the *Ballets Russes* team as Stravinsky or Benois, with *Parade*...
and *Le Train bleu* acting as his debut and valediction, respectively. However, unlike Benois, whom Diaghilev now deemed old-fashioned, Picasso had been dominant in changing the orientation of the *Ballets Russes* through the 1920s.

Figure 5.6 - Photo of *Le Train bleu* in performance, 1924.

Notwithstanding its obscurity today, many critics at the time described *Le Train bleu* as one of the most aesthetically ground-breaking productions within the *Ballets Russes*’s entire repertoire. Despite the title, the ‘blue train’ is never actually seen on stage. Instead, the reference is to the train that transported the *beau monde*, the trendiest and wealthiest Parisians, to France’s coastal towns, in this instance to the *Côte d’Azur* - the Blue Coast, from the 1880s onwards. The entire ballet relies heavily on subtle inferences to ground its modernist philosophy, with the minimalist stage design being an obvious rejection of the overtly flamboyant and exceedingly lavish sets of the *belle époque*. In essence, the ballet seeks to up-end the audience’s preconceived ideas of what

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a Ballets Russes collaboration might look like. The best ‘explanation’ of this artistic inversion comes from Diaghilev himself, in his programme notes for the première:

The first point about Le Train bleu, is that there is no blue train in it. This being the age of speed, it has already reached its destination and disembarked its passengers. They are to be seen on a beach which does not exist, in front of a casino which exists still less. Overhead passes an aeroplane which you do not see. And the plot represents nothing [...] the music is composed by Darius Milhaud, but it has nothing in common with the music we associate with Darius Milhaud. It is danced by the Russian Ballet, but it has nothing to do with the Russian Ballet. It was invented for Anton Dolin, a classical dancer who does nothing classical. The scenery is painted by a sculptor [...] and the costumes are by a great arbiter of fashion [...] who has never made a costume.528

With this antithetical basis for the ballet described, it is possible to see the ways in which Diaghilev was deliberately trying to push his latest aesthetic idea, of an uncomplicated visual art, to its most extreme limits.

Moreover, it could be said that the decision to stage Le Train bleu was as much an attempt to recreate the success of Parade as it was an artistic one, since it reunited Cocteau and Picasso as a creative team for the first time since 1917. In fact, the only part of the team to have changed since Parade was the composer, with Satie now replaced by the French favourite, Milhaud.

The title page of Milhaud’s score identifies this ballet is an Opérette Dansée, a possibly unique heading which denotes the use of the operetta style (a light opera using spoken words, dance and song), that has replaced singing with dance.529 According to Sarah Gutsche-Miller, the practice of applying a hybrid genre subtitle for a ballet was

528 Riley, British Music and Modernism, 84.
commonplace around 1900.\textsuperscript{530} Gutsche-Miller notes that terms such as \textit{ballet-revue}, \textit{ballet-operette}, \textit{ballet-opéra} and \textit{ballet avec chants} were often used to describe the change in orientation from the strictest balletic traditions to a more populist style, and she references operetta-ballet as a likely precursor to the music-hall revue and the musical.\textsuperscript{531}

Andrew Lamb provides a brief history of the operetta genre, explaining how it developed from the 1850s onwards, initially as an ‘antidote to the increasingly serious and ambitious pretensions’ of the Parisians, combining light-hearted music with classical practices.\textsuperscript{532} In line with this concept, Milhaud created music for the simplest dance forms, by merging the opera buffa (‘often crude and simple’ operas, largely associated with Mozart\textsuperscript{533}) and musical hall styles, as was the convention for the operetta style. This combination creates a tongue-in-cheek score, which although devoid of any complex compositional technique, effectively and unobtrusively supports the on-stage action. The creation of the operetta style was indebted to composers such as Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880), Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894) and Johann Strauss (1825-1899), who between them created the stylistic calling cards of this genre, in works such as \textit{La belle Hélène} (1864), \textit{L’étoile} (1877) and \textit{Die Fledermaus} (1874) respectively.

Of these, Offenbach is the composer perhaps most associated with the style, and a brief discussion of his compositional techniques at this point allows one to ascertain the ways in which Milhaud conformed to the generic styles of the operetta traditions. Offenbach’s
La belle Hélène (1864) is largely credited with establishing the template for the comic operetta style. The ballet was a thinly disguised comment on the social climate of the Second Empire, comprising ceremonial marches and a waltz. Offenbach’s comic operas were performed widely in Paris throughout the 1860s, and as a result, many regarded him as the creator of the operetta genre.\(^5\) Indeed, as Lamb states, such was Offenbach’s success that following his numerous celebrated works, operetta became ‘an established international genre, producing outstanding national exponents such as Strauss, Sullivan and Lehár.’\(^6\) Moreover, Offenbach’s ability in creating this frivolous music was such that Nietzsche even stated his ‘Genius’ to be greater than Wagner’s, not in terms of compositional capability, but rather for the freedom of style he enjoyed:

If one understands genius in an artist to be the highest freedom under the law, divine lightness, frivolity in the most difficult things, then Offenbach has far more right to the name ‘Genius’ than Wagner.\(^7\)

There is no way of knowing whether Milhaud’s lightness was anything Nietzsche had in mind, but is it undoubtedly a salient quality of the music for Le Train bleu. Milhaud chose not to continue his experimentation with polytonality and counterpoint, which would more closely resemble his other works of this period, but instead created a score that was intentionally frivolous in its harassing of satirical situations to undemanding, fast paced music. Milhaud had become a leading exponent of polytonality at the beginning of the 1920s, following on from the techniques evident in works such as Stravinsky’s Pétrouchka.\(^8\) Therefore, Le Train bleu seems disconnected from Milhaud’s typical compositional style at this point in his life, suggesting that this work was created as a deliberate study in banality.

\(^{7}\) Friedrich Nietzsche, quoted by Laurence Senelick, in, ‘Offenbach and Chekhov; Or, La Belle Yelena’, *Theatre Journal*, 43 (1990), 455–467; here, 456.
\(^{8}\) Ibid., 145.
The overall structure of *Le Train bleu* is simple: it is divided into ten scenes, each of which contains an independent short piece of music, given continuity by the on-stage dancing, rather than by any significant inter-related material (Fig. 5.7). A full translation of the synopsis can be found in Appendix 6.

Figure 5.7 - Scenes within *Le Train bleu.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Synopsis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Chœur des Poules et des Gigolos</td>
<td>The Hens/Tarts strike poses whilst the gigolos do their exercises. Through gestures, the group appears like an operetta choir, and it looks as though the groups are singing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo/Expression/Tonalities</td>
<td>B Modérément animé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Entrée de Beau-Gosse</td>
<td>A male bather appears from a cabin. The Hens appreciate his appearance and seem pleased he is there. The gigolos arrive and carry him off triumphantly, as though a victorious boxer after a winning fight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo/Expression/Tonalities</td>
<td>Eb Très vif</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Entrée de Perlouse</td>
<td>The lead female bather gets out of a bath tub, then the gigolos form a human pyramid. She dries herself off, and shuts herself away in cabin number two.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo/Expression/Tonalities</td>
<td>Ab Très vif</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Rentrée de Beau-Gosse</td>
<td>The lead male bather enters the stage as though drying himself off from swimming. He enters cabin number one and shuts himself in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo/Expression/Tonalities</td>
<td>E Très vif</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Chœur des Poules et des Gigolos</td>
<td>The Hens and gigolos shake the cabins with the two bathers in. An aeroplane is heard overhead and casts shadows over the stage. (Farce des cabines et scène de l’avion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo/Expression/Tonalities</td>
<td>G C G Modéré</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Entrée de la Championne de Tennis Couplets avec Beau-Gosse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The tennis champion enters, strutting as though in a magazine shoot (the same can be said for the golf player). The male bather puts his face to the window of his cabin and calls for help. The tennis champion assists him, and the couple dance together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo/Expression/ Tonalities</td>
<td>F (main theme)  B♭ (refrain)  E♭ (couplet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refrain and couplet appear one after the other, before the scene closes in F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th>Entrée du joueur de golf</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The golf player enters with a sporty gait, as though in a slow dance. He lights his pipe, but is interrupted by shouts from the female bather who is still locked in the cabin. The golf player assists her, and the two flirt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo/Expression/ Tonalities</td>
<td>A♭  F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonchalant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>Introduction et Duo de Beau-Gosse et de Perlouse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Beau-Gosse and Perlouse meet and laugh, calling the Hens and gigolos over to look at the golf player and tennis champion in their cabins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo/Expression/ Tonalities</td>
<td>B  E  B  E  e (briefly)  E  F  E♭ (briefly)  c♯ (briefly)  C  E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Très vif</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9</th>
<th>Chœur des Poules et des Gigolos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A shouting match between the Tennis Champion and Golf Player takes place. The two mimic each other’s gestures before a comedic routine (in the manner of Charlie Chaplin) in which one attempts to hit the other, only to miss and have their momentum make them fall over. The Beau-Gosse and Perlouse try to separate the fighters. A dance of love is combined with a battle dance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo/Expression/ Tonalities</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vif</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fugue de l’engueulade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10</th>
<th>Final du champion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perlouse and Beau-Gosse check that no one is looking. They run to each other in the middle of the stage and begin to embrace. Beau-Gosse’s hat flies off and disappears into the sea. Beau-Gosse jumps behind the scene as though diving into the water, to collect it, followed by Perlouse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo/Expression/ Tonalities</td>
<td>(e)  C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modérément animé</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The broadest markers of the nineteenth-century operetta style, faithfully carried over by Milhaud, are four-square phrasing, clear diatonic harmony and sectional forms (often ABA), enlivened by the rhythmic and textural characteristics of genres such as waltz, galop and polka. To these, Milhaud discreetly adds secondary-dominant harmonies (*Entrée de la Championne de Tennis Couplets avec Beau-Gosse*) and chromatic inner-voice melodies (*Valse avec Perlouse*) to reinforce the classical grounding for his musical language. However, in other scenes (with reference here to *Chœur des poules et des gigolos*) he uses short-lived sections of dance music, as well as open fifth chords supported by non-tonic harmonies (as evident in * Entrée de beau-gosse*), as well as parallel triads (*'Lourd', Duo de beau-gosse et de Perlouse*), to create a faux-naïf atmosphere reminiscent of the group dances taking place in the salons around Paris.

Scene 9 (*Chœur des poules et des gigolos*) is the best example of Milhaud’s use of operetta stereotypes, as it clearly shows his combination of ideas from opera buffa style with popular dance. The scene begins with a tarantella theme, creating a fast-paced, folk-dance-like passage, led by the horns, with interjections from the strings and percussion to accentuate the down-beats of each bar. This brief section is followed by an eight-bar passage marked *Lent*, with a sombre, gentle melody supported by sustained bass chords, which appears just before the entry of the fugue. The fugue itself (see below, Ex.5.1) is Milhaud’s most sustained attempt at recreating the ‘serious’ music element, in keeping with the opera buffa style: it is cleverly constructed pseudo-fugue, in which the counterpoint is simulated through an imitated repeated passage. Indeed, Milhaud’s fugue is reminiscent of one of the buffa genre’s most famous ‘phony’ fugues, from the closing scene in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* (1787), reflecting Milhaud’s ability at capturing the essence of the buffa genre.538

538 Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 323.
Similarly, the waltz section in the second half of scene 7 (see Ex. 5.2), reflects the traditions from which Milhaud borrows his compositional ideas: it is a neatly constructed, melodic waltz. The way in which the waltz is composed (comprising descant and chromatic inner voices) shows Milhaud’s ability at composing for a group dance, whilst maintaining the stylistic markers that are reminiscent of works by the likes of Tchaikovsky. An example of Milhaud’s use of chromatic inner voices is shown below, Ex. 5.2, taken from the opening bars of the waltz. For comparison Ex. 5.3, is an extract taken from the opening bars of the closing scene in act two, from Strauss’s *Die Fledermaus*, which, similarly accompanied by a waltz bass-line, also includes a chromatic inner voice in the upper register (albeit in this instance constituting the theme itself rather than a descant).

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Example 5.1: Milhaud, *Le Train bleu*, Fugue.539

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Example 5.2: Milhaud, use of chromatic inner voices, *Le Train bleu*, *Valse avec Perlouse*

Example 5.3: Strauss, *Die Fledermaus*, act 2, Finale

Milhaud’s application of techniques from the opera buffa genre are grounded by his less complex compositional techniques - for example in the way he structures the various scenes, many of which are presented in either straightforward binary or ternary form.

An example of this occurs in ‘Chœur des Poules et des Gigolos’, in which a light, uncomplicated music in 2/4 metre leads off, before a 5/8 passage interrupts briefly, following which the original 2/4 section returns to end the scene. This elementary procedure, in which one dominant melody book-ends a separate musical passage, is common throughout this ballet, though it may be adapted to accommodate further expansions of the opening melodies.

With reference to Offenbach’s *La belle Hélène*, discussed above, it is also possible to determine several similarities in style between this ballet and Milhaud’s score for *Le*

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*Train bleu.* Exs. 5.4 and 5.5 show Milhaud’s refrain from *Entrée de la Championne de Tennis*, followed by an extract from Offenbach’s operetta, taken from the opening bars of ‘Couplets’ within scene 3. These two passages show the comparable ways in which both composers used repeated phrases of simply constructed melodies, supported by bass movement, to provide a backing for a couple’s dance on stage.

Example 5.4: Milhaud, *Le Train bleu*, Entrée de la Championne de Tennis, 160, (Refrain)

Example 5.5: Offenbach, *La belle Hélène*, Couplets, Scene 3.\(^{541}\)

Milhaud’s music for *Le Train bleu* is undeniably simple in its construction: the only conspicuous musical challenge lay in creating a succession of passages to accompany the lengthy periods of dance on stage. In order to achieve this, he applied standard formulae for composing operettas in a way which fully merits the *Opérette Dansée* title

he ascribed to it. In this sense, *Le Train bleu* should not be taken at face value, but instead as a deliberate study in triviality, irreverent with respect to the high-ballet genre which had been so associated with the *Ballets Russes* in its earlier years. With regard to the *Ballets Russes* project as a whole, it reaffirms the place of *Le Train bleu*, alongside *Les Fâcheux* and *Les Biches*, as comparatively musically uncomplicated, each of these scores being focused on counterpointing the modernist visual acts taking place on the stage.

5.7: Milhaud’s Jazz Ballet, *La Création du monde*

The above discussions surrounding *Le Train bleu* reflects Milhaud’s work for Diaghilev. However, the composer also created a ballet for De Maré, *La Création du monde* (1923), and the comparisons between the two are instructive. *La Création du monde* exists as the original ballet, Op. 81 and the Suite de concert, Op. 81b, extracted from it. It is the original work, first performed on 25 October 1923 at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, which is of interest at this point. Milhaud’s score for *La Création* was complemented by scenery and costumes by Fernand Léger and choreography by Jean Börlin, with a scenario by Blasie Cendrars, who adapted some of the ideas from his own *Anthologie nègre* (1921). Lasting fifteen minutes and consisting of five movements, this work, with an African primitivist setting, was one of the defining jazz-ballets. The jazz influences can be seen in Milhaud’s orchestration, which consists of 17 solo musicians, reminiscent of the orchestras of Harlem. Because of the clash between the choice of scenario and style of music, the ballet has

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542 Brender, ‘Reinventing Africa in Their Own Image’, 120.
543 Mawer, *Darius Milhaud, Modality and Structure in Music of the 1920s*, 146.
544 Ibid., 145.
been described by Kelly as a juxtaposition of ‘modern jazz idioms with the primitivist creation story.’\(^{545}\) Significantly, the ballet was also an important moment in the development of Milhaud’s compositional style, with the Frenchman exploring a type of retrospective creation, in which his compositions borrowed from past musical traditions. As Kelly describes, *La Création* combined fugue with jazz, creating a fusion of styles, which acted as an homage to the past.\(^{546}\) This retrospective element can be seen as similar to the *Ballets Russes*’s style in their 1923 and 1924 seasons. Following this argument, Kelly similarly considers that ‘parallels can be seen between *La Création du monde* and Stravinsky’s *Les Noces*.\(^{547}\) This statement is made partly in relation to the importance of specific instrumentation within the original ballet; for example emphasis is placed on the use of jazz-associated instruments, such as the double bass, wind and percussion instruments.\(^{548}\) It should be noted here that the two versions of *La Création du monde* which exist have different instrumentation: the original ballet score from 1923 (Op. 81) and a *Suite de concert* for piano from 1926 (Op. 81b).\(^{549}\) Milhaud openly accused Poulenc of imitating Stravinsky’s *Les Noces* in his composition for *Les Biches*, and for a short time criticised his *Les Six* colleague for doing so, and yet he appears to have applied a similar style to his 1923 *Ballets Suédois* composition. This therefore raises two points: first, that Milhaud’s comments about Poulenc’s *Les Biches* are unjust, and secondly (and more significantly) that *La Création du monde* is very different from Milhaud’s 1924 *Ballets Russes* creation. At no point is it suggested by anyone in their brief examinations of the score that *Le Train bleu* bears any resemblance to any of Stravinsky’s works. Indeed, the plain orchestration of *Le Train bleu* uses a full


\(^{546}\) Kelly, *Tradition and Style in the Works of Darius Milhaud (1912-1939)*, 171-175.

\(^{547}\) Ibid., 174.

\(^{548}\) Ibid.

orchestra, without any unusual instruments, or indeed any emphasis on a particular sound group.

One aspect of *La Création* that is similar to Milhaud’s *Ballets Russes* composition, was De Maré’s approach to staging the ballet. The realisation of *La Création* on stage was only possible because of a collective of creative inputs, most notably between Jean Börlin (the company’s leading dancer and choreographer) and Fernand Léger, the cubist painter hired to create the backdrops for the ballet.\(^{550}\) Similarly, the visual attributes of *Le Train bleu* were realised by Nijinska and Henri Laurens: Laurens’s seemingly new and radical backdrops, coupled with Nijinska’s inclusion of sporting movements in her choreography, could be seen as akin to Léger and Börlin’s symbiotic offerings the year previously for De Maré.

Another of Milhaud’s ballets for De Maré, *L’Homme et son désir*, was first performed by the Swedish company on 6 June 1921. However, the ballet had originally been offered to Diaghilev, who rejected the work. Instead, as Kelly explains, the ‘arguably more daring’ *Ballets Suédois* took it up.\(^{551}\) What this set of events could imply, is that following Diaghilev’s rejection of this earlier ballet, Milhaud thought a more radical work would again not be chosen by the impresario. If this were the case, it would go some way towards explaining the vast differences between Milhaud’s *La Création du monde* and *Le Train bleu*, with the later score being deliberately banal in comparison with the 1923 work.

Nonetheless, further connections between the two ballets can be detected, with Milhaud’s involvement with both the *Ballets Russes* and the *Ballets Suédois* not being

\(^{550}\) Mawer, *Darius Milhaud, Modality and Structure in Music of the 1920s*, 146.
the only personnel connection. *La Création’s* choreographer, Börlin, also provides a tangible connection to the *Ballets Russes*. As a young choreographer, Börlin had travelled to Denmark in 1918 to study dance under Michel Fokine.\(^{552}\) Fokine’s revolutionary approach to ballet, alongside his ground-breaking rejection of traditional Russian techniques whilst working with Diaghilev from 1909-1912, was a defining characteristic of the early *Ballets Russes*. Works such as *Le Dieu bleu* demonstrated Fokine’s use of exoticism, whilst *Daphnis et Chloé* showed the dancer’s ability to engage audiences with a reinvigorated approach to classical ballet. As a result of his early involvement with Diaghilev, the *Ballets Russes* and Fokine became forever synonymous. As such, the impact of the company’s original resident choreographer on the *Ballets Russes’s* first stylistic markers cannot be overlooked. With Fokine no longer working for Diaghilev, De Maré’s collaboration with a pupil of Fokine, Börlin, is an obvious connection between the two groups. Indeed, it was whilst studying with Fokine that Börlin first created a choreography with an African theme.\(^{553}\) This choreography became the basis of *La Création de monde*, and as such, Diaghilev’s earliest choreographic collaborator had now begun to influence works by De Maré’s company. What these Milhaud ballets illustrate is that although the scores for each work vary a great deal, they share a similar creative team, as well as a comparable style of production. Therefore, as suggested in the introduction to this chapter, a distinction between the *Ballets Russes* and other dance companies had become harder to draw.

These 1924 works have shown the various styles of ballet that were being presented by Diaghilev in the later years of his company, and the impact of Cocteau and *Les Six* on these productions. Cocteau’s demand for an uncomplicated visual art was being replicated on the stage, and the scores by Milhaud, Poulenc and Auric represent the

\(^{552}\) Brender, ‘Reinventing Africa in Their Own Image’, 126.

\(^{553}\) Ibid.
different levels to which each composer took the artist’s challenge to create simple and French music. Furthermore, whilst rival companies were challenging the dominance of the Ballets Russes, it was becomingly increasingly difficult to pinpoint exactly what it was that made the company unique, and Diaghilev and his entourage had to adapt their original modus operandi to focus on simple, impactful works that championed French ideals. Of these three works, Milhaud’s Le Train bleu represented one of the Ballets Russes’s most visually modern productions, whilst Auric’s Les Fâcheux echoed the classical style of the many centuries before, in a type of balletic neo-classicism. Similarly, Les Biches borrowed from the company’s own history, by revisiting the concepts of the highly celebrated Les Noces, as well as Pulcinella and Mavra.\textsuperscript{554}

\textsuperscript{554} Kelly, Music and Ultra-Modernism in France, 220.
Conclusion

The Ballets Russes was originally a unified and collaborative entity, intended to promote the Russian arts in the West. During its initial years, the company established a template on the basis of which future productions could be created, and against which they could push in pioneering directions. The company developed into a modernist movement that prized innovation above all other values, and tested the boundaries of both musical and visual pre-conceptions of European art, as exemplified in ballets such as Le Sacre du Printemps and Parade. It then evolved further, and began to experiment more openly with different artistic movements, becoming fleetingly a ‘French’ entity in the 1924 season, as part of an enterprise that placed greater focus on the visual aspects than the musical. However, at no point did the Ballets Russes fit neatly within any one of these characterisations. Instead, each phase illustrated the overall aesthetic shifts within the company, with individual ballets often deviating from the general style of other works around them. Furthermore, its shift of focus to the visual over the musical in the latter half of the company’s life raised questions about the musical-historical relevance of an establishment that once prided itself on creating ground-breaking scores. Ballet is by definition a multi-disciplinary medium, and it is far from the case that in order for a particular ballet to be critically or commercially successful (as well as worthy of academic scrutiny), it must possess innovative or even first-rate music. On the contrary, this thesis has provided examples of ballets (such as Le Train bleu), which offer a deliberately simplistic score but also new ideas in dance and art, and which are arguably just as significant in ballet history as those that have been studied for their compositional prowess.
The more-or-less forgotten early ballets, such as those by Tcherepnin, did not necessarily directly facilitate *Le Sacre*. But they do highlight how each *Ballets Russes* creation built on the legacy of its predecessors, helping to clear the way for important ballets such as *L’Oiseau de feu, Schéhérazade* and *La Tragédie de Salomé*, which did exert direct compositional influence on Stravinsky and his *Sacre*. For instance, the exoticism displayed on the Parisian stage in works such *Le Dieu bleu* meant that audiences became acclimatised to non-Western quasi-religious topics: a feature that would come to dominate *Le Sacre* in the following year. It would be an exaggeration to suggest that *Le Pavillon d’Armide* or *Le Dieu bleu* had a tangible impact on *Le Sacre*. Instead, these early ballets shaped a style of working in which a creative team collaborated to produce a synergy of the visual and auditory, which became the *modus operandi* of the company.

The focus on the musical importance of the works (at least from a musicological perspective) means that there are other relevant aspects of the *Ballets Russes*’s innovations that are in danger of being forgotten. By the same token, the visual histories of art and design are just as guilty of this type of masterpiece-obsessed study, with subjects such as Picasso’s scenery or Chanel’s costumes dominating the academic discussions of these fields. Furthermore, the same objections could be applied in respect of such epoch-making works such as *L’Après midi-d’un faune*, which, much like *Le Sacre*, have received a great deal of scholarly attention for their influence on dance. This targeted focus on the individual elements of various ballets causes difficulties when trying to describe the *Ballets Russes* and its legacy as a whole. However, by discussing the music of each of the lesser-known works, alongside the history of their production and reasons for their creation, as well as their visual attributes, one can gain a deeper understanding of
any given work as well as a more realistic view of the bigger historical picture. For example, although Tcherepnin and Hahn’s scores were not in themselves exciting for audiences at the time, and are hardly likely to generate interest in the twenty-first century in their own right, the ballets for which they were composed helped to create the male-focused world of Diaghilev’s troupe, and enabled choreographers to reimagine how the human body could be expressed on stage. Therefore, rather than being ignored for their seemingly facile construction, the delicacy of these scores, in which the lack of complex rhythmical elements allowed the dancers to show their expressive poise without concern for difficult choreography, deserves appreciation for its role in the artistic development of Diaghilev’s company. Similarly, the comparatively neglected works by Milhaud and Auric for the 1924 season, although musically uncomplicated, merit examination because of the deliberate way in which the composers went about creating this ‘simple’ idiom, as part of the role they were assigned in presenting the ideologies of Cocteau and his *Les Six* to Paris. These ballets illustrate how Diaghilev’s company had evolved its aesthetic to combat the newest competing trends in music and art. Whereas the principles of the *Mir Iskusstva* had once shaped the impresario’s vision for his company (as in 1909), in his 1924 season the members of *Les Six* had become the most influential contributors to Diaghilev’s creative output. Moreover, the *Ballets Russes*’s first appearance in Europe reacted against the European trepidation towards the East, and helped to alter the Parisian public’s perception of Russia. Furthermore, the physical presence of the predominantly male-centred dancers, challenged the European audiences, who were so used to ballet being a female entity. In this sense, Diaghilev’s company defied the heteronormative Parisian culture, as the athletically impressive, outwardly masculine lead dancers introduced a gentle femininity to their emotive performances.
The first phase in the Ballets Russes’s life allowed Diaghilev to design his company according to his own ideas of how a collaborative artistic collective should function, placing himself as producer-autocrat within each season. The next phase of the company’s history (roughly 1913-1917) saw a swerve into modernism, in which the limits of staged music as known at the time were pushed to their very extremes, and Stravinsky created some of the most celebrated pieces of twentieth-century music. Within this period, Le Sacre du Printemps epitomised the increasingly exploratory attitude of Diaghilev, as well as the impresario’s desire to promote the exotic East in Europe. Le Sacre was exciting, ground-breaking, and eventually a success in a commercial sense, spectacularly marrying transgression with popularity in a manner reminiscent of Strauss’s Salomé on the operatic stage. Indeed, the developments made in Le Sacre can be seen as emblematic of the Ballets Russes’ ability to innovate simultaneously in music, dance, and art. Importantly, modernism was a movement that resurfaced at various in the company’s history, as seen in Le Train bleu. Finally, coinciding with the arrival of the 1924 ‘French Season’, a form of introspective revision took place within the company: the modus operandi of the opening years had evolved, and the company focused instead on the visual attributes of a work rather than the musical. This fostered a kind of bare-bones approach to balletic scores in which (with the exception of a few important works such as Les Noces, 1923 and Le Fils Prodigue, 1929) many of the composers were selected by Diaghilev not because of their compositional prowess, but rather according to their ability to support the aesthetics of the various resident choreographers and collaborative artists.

Whilst it is known that Le Sacre was a milestone in compositional experimentation, through Stravinsky’s use of layered textures, rhythmic cells,
added-value metres and syncopation, as well as octatonicism and dissonance, the ballet remained true to Diaghilev’s earlier ideas of a unified collaboration. However, it evolved the template slightly to create a truly interdependent relationship between Stravinsky and Roerich, while placing Diaghilev as producer more than collaborator. The sense of balletic evolution that had been captured by Le Sacre catapulted the Ballets Russes into stratospheric celebrity, and placed them firmly at the forefront of modernist trends such as neo-primitivism.

Moreover, this ballet, and in particular Stravinsky’s music for it, was to have a great influence on later composers. Prokofiev and Poulenc, among others, are cited as examples of Diaghilev collaborators who incorporated elements of Le Sacre and other Stravinsky compositions in their future works for the company. Furthermore, on the back of the success created by Le Sacre, another of the company’s most radically conceived works, Parade, arguably only came into existence because Diaghilev was trying to recapture the essence of the progress and revolution that had been sparked by Stravinsky’s Le Sacre. In the words of Charles Batson, ‘the revolt of Parade is the child of that of Sacre’.556

As well as re-establishing the significance of compositions that helped to shape the Ballets Russes, it is also necessary to discuss any external forces that impacted on the developments of the company - the struggle to survive throughout the World War being a prime example. Moreover, the final phase of the Ballets Russes witnessed the rise of rival companies, most notably the Ballets Suédois and Les ballets Ida Rubinstein. By the 1920s these companies were staking a claim to the Ballets Russes’s title as the leading troupe in Paris. As Diaghilev’s company

555 For more information on Stravinsky’s compositional techniques in Le Sacre du Printemps see Peter Hill, Stravinsky, The Rite of Spring (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
ceased to be a cutting-edge phenomenon, these alternative companies began to work with the most innovative artists and musicians in the world, also offering the latest in artistic and musical trends. To add insult to injury, these individuals were often one-time Diaghilev collaborators. As a result, it became increasingly difficult to distinguish between Diaghilev’s creations and those of his competitors. This by no means suggests that the Ballets Russes had lost the ability to inspire. On the contrary, works such as Stravinsky’s Les Noces and Prokofiev’s Le Fils Prodigue reaffirmed the impresario’s ability to create truly innovative ballets.

However, whereas this had once been a unique feature of the Ballets Russes, their rivals were now also practised in delivering Diaghilevesque ballets: in the same year that Stravinsky created Apollon Musagète (1928) for Diaghilev, he also composed Le Baiser de la fée for Rubinstein. Similarly, whilst Milhaud created Le Train bleu for Diaghilev in 1924, he had already composed La Création du monde for De Maré’s 1923 season. Whilst these other ballets suggest the rivalry the Ballets Russes was now facing, they also illustrate that the company’s influence stretched far beyond its own remits of creative exploration, inspiring other troupes to perform in Paris. It is likely that without Diaghilev’s company, there would have been no Ballets Suédois or Les ballets Ida Rubinstein, at least not in the same style, as they borrowed their respective working models from the Ballets Russes. These companies were indebted to the Ballets Russes for having created a willing audience for this type of spectacle in Paris, and setting the precedent for how innovative, even shocking, a production could be. With this in mind, a potential area of future research opens up: if one were to apply the same principles from my discussions on the early Ballets Russes’s works, to those that followed from outside the company, it should be possible to create a fuller understanding of the
influence and legacy of the *Ballets Russes* on other early twentieth-century ballet and dance companies.

An example of such companies would be any of those that held a tangible connection to the *Ballets Russes*. After the death of Diaghilev in 1929, several of the company’s key collaborators became either founding members of, or regular collaborators with, new dance enterprises around the world (in particular in America). Because of this, it is possible to extend my research on the influence of the *Ballets Russes* into dance troupes that continued to practise from the 1930s onwards. Some obviously connected companies spring to mind: René Blum’s *Ballets Russes de Monte-Carlo*, which claimed to be the continuation of Diaghilev’s original company and accordingly kept Massine and Balanchine as directors and contributors.557 Similarly, *The American Ballet Theatre* was established in 1940 with Fokine as choreographer, before also working with both Nijinska and Massine.558 *The New York City Ballet* was founded by Balanchine in 1948, and continued to showcase the artistic ideas of the choreographer, who had come to represent the *Ballets Russes* in the final years of its life.559 As a final example, Nijinska formed a short-lived avant-garde ensemble, after leaving the *Ballets Russes* in 1925.560 The Theatre Choréographique, as they were called, were surely informed by Nijinska’s experience with Diaghilev’s company, with the new group being created in the immediate aftermath of her time under the impresario.

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As such, it provides another opportunity for a wider understanding of Diaghilev’s influence outside his own company.

Furthermore, with regard to the music of the Ballets Russes, while many studies have been devoted to important compositional traits within the more celebrated ballets in the company’s catalogue, there has been little comparative reflection on the various scores within the totality of that repertoire. My study of the French Seasons in 1912 and 1924 offers a step towards such a discussion, using the seasons as barometers of stylistic developments for the company in both its musical and visual dimensions. I have done this by examining how each ballet came to the stage and focusing thereafter on the scores and their reception; this provides a model for understanding the broader output of the Ballets Russes. Naturally, a full understanding would have to embrace every one of its productions, and ideally draw comparisons with other contemporary ballets. The selection of works examined here already suggests how such a study might unfold.

A few obvious examples of ballets created by Diaghilev and his company, which would benefit from this kind of examination are Manuel de Falla’s Le Tricorne (1919), Constant Lambert’s Roméo et Juliette (1926), Nikolas Nabokov’s Ode (1926) and Lord Berners’s The Triumph of Neptune (1926).661 In a manner similar to my focal ballets, these works have been largely forgotten as Ballets Russes creations yet provide archetypes of the kind of composition that would enrich our understanding of the Ballets Russes as a whole.

As hinted at in this research, the national appropriation of different ballets, and the nomadic tendencies of the Ballets Russes, is another area of future research. This type of study would reinforce the association of Diaghilev and his company with Paris and Monte Carlo, rather than with Russia, as this affirmation was in actuality, sporadic. Whilst I have discussed the French nature of certain works, a similar investigation could be applied to the three Spanish ballets that appear in the company’s repertoire. Moreover, within the categorisation, Manuel de Falla’s Le Tricorne would also aid my discussion on lesser-known works. Furthermore, Diaghilev created very few English ballets, in the sense of original compositions by English composers that were not part of his recycling of old music. Lord Berners’s The Triumph of Neptune, with its sumptuous score and pantomime based scenario, altered the impresario’s convictions, creating a work that is somewhat solitary in representing twentieth-century English music under the banner of the Ballets Russes. As a final example, my analysis of the three ballets from 1924 has shown the value in studying the individual works as part of a wider discussion on the music of Les Six, as they are straightforwardly Les Six works reflecting Cocteau’s aesthetics in their scenery, dance and music. In addition, the original sketches of the choreography and scenery for this trio of works are readily accessible, and it would be a fascinating task to restage all of Les Six’s ballets, with contributions from the musical, artistic and choreographic worlds.

Originally, my intention with this thesis was to probe the musical legacy of Le Sacre du Printemps, by discussing lesser-known Ballets Russes creations that were either indebted to it, or ignored as a result of its sensational impact. However,

563 A very brief discussion about Diaghilev’s English works (including Constant Lambert and Lord Berners’s ballets, and William Walton’s symphonic interludes) appears in Lynn Garafola’s Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, 368-369.
throughout my research it has become increasingly clear that identifying any such lineage is not possible without first also gathering a fuller understanding of the Ballets Russes’s productions leading up to Le Sacre, as well identifying connections between the new compositions that followed it. Nevertheless, what has been shown in this research is that although Le Sacre du Printemps was exceptional in its vision, it was not wholly outside the norm for the Ballets Russes. On the contrary, it both followed in the wake of the early ballets and cleared a path for the next tranche of Diaghilev’s composers.
Appendices

Appendix 1: Comprehensive chronological list of Ballets Russes productions, 1909-1929

M: Music  C: Choreographer  D: Décor  L: Libretto  O: Orchestration  A: Arrangement  Co: Costumes  

BR: Date of original performance by the Ballets Russes  
All performances took place at theatres in Paris, unless otherwise stated.

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<tr>
<th>Ballet</th>
<th>Contributors</th>
<th>First Performance of the complete ballet</th>
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</thead>
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| Le Pavillon d'Armide          | M: N. Tcherepnin  C: M. Fokine  D: A. Benois  L: A. Benois                   | 25 November 1907  
BR: 19 May 1909, Théâtre du Châtelet |
| The Polovtsian Dances (Prince Igor) | M: A. Borodine  C: M. Fokine  D: N. Roerich                                 | 19 May 1909, Théâtre du Châtelet |
| Les Sylphides                 | M: F: Chopin  C: M. Fokine  D: A. Benois                                     | 6 May 1906, (first performed as Chopiniana)  
BR: 2 June 1909, Théâtre du Châtelet |
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<th>Choreographer(s)</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<td>Le Spectre de la Rose</td>
<td>M: C. Weber, C: M. Fokine, D: L. Bakst, L: J. Vaudoyer</td>
<td>19 April 1911, Monte Carlo</td>
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<td>Narcisse</td>
<td>M: N. Tcherepnin, C: M. Fokine, D: L. Bakst, L: L. Bakst</td>
<td>26 April 1911, Monte Carlo</td>
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<td>Sadkó</td>
<td>M: N. Rimsky-Korsakov, C: M. Fokine, D: B. Anisfeldt</td>
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<td>Pétrouchka</td>
<td>M: I. Stravinsky, C: M. Fokine, D: A. Benois, L: I. Stravinsky, A. Benois</td>
<td>13 June 1911, Théâtre du Châtelet</td>
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<td>Le Dieu bleu</td>
<td>M: R. Hahn, C: M. Fokine, D: L. Bakst, L: J. Cocteau, de Madrazo</td>
<td>13 May 1912, Théâtre du Châtelet</td>
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<td>M. Fokine</td>
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<td><em>L’Après-midi d’un faune</em></td>
<td>C. Debussy</td>
<td>V. Nijinsky</td>
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<td><em>Daphnis et Chloé</em></td>
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<td><em>L’Oiseau d’Or, pas de deux classique</em></td>
<td>P. Tchaikovsky</td>
<td>M. Petipa</td>
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<td>V. Nijinsky</td>
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<td>F. Schmitt</td>
<td>B. Romanov</td>
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<td>C: L. Massine</td>
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<td>D: M. Larionov</td>
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<td>C: V. Nijinsky</td>
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<td>House, New York</td>
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<td>21 August 1916,</td>
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<td>M: E. Satie</td>
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<td>M. Petipa (adapted from Le Belle au Bois Dormant)</td>
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<td><strong>Le Tentations de la Bergère</strong></td>
<td>M. Montéclair</td>
<td>H. Casadesus</td>
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<td>F. Poulenc</td>
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<td>Le Astuzie Femminili)</td>
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<td>8 January 1924,</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Les Fâcheux</strong></td>
<td>G. Auric</td>
<td>B. Nijinska</td>
<td>19 January 1924,</td>
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<td>M. Musorgsky</td>
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<tr>
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<td>D. Milhaud</td>
<td>B. Nijinska</td>
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<td></td>
<td>H. Laurens</td>
<td>M. Sert</td>
<td>(P. Picasso provided curtain)</td>
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<td>Chanel</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Composer (M)</td>
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<td>L. Massine</td>
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<td>Le Bal</td>
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Appendix 2: Synopsis and score translations from Nikolai Tcherepnin’s Le Pavillon d’Armide

Introduction and Opening Scene
In the park of the residence of the ancestors of the Marquis de Fierbois stood a curious old building. The beautiful Marquise de Fierbois, Susanne, had led a solitary life for many years, having shone brilliantly at the court of the Sun King. A tapestry representing Armide dressed in a fine costume sits in a Grand Suite. The tapestry formed the most beautiful ornament of this delightful hermitage. The rumour circulated that even when dying, the Marquise de Fierbois never left her favourite room, and her soul passed through the tapestry. Count de Torcy, fiancé to the young chatelaine resolved to keep the secret of the Armide’s pavillon. The curtain opens as he enters the house, looking round curiously, while the butler and servants are busy trying to make the room comfortable for him to lie down. The tapestry draws the attention of the count. The resemblance between the woven portrait and his fiancée is such that he strikes out. Suddenly the tapestry illuminates in a magical glow. The count believes he sees the tapestry smile, and full of fear he approaches the tapestry to see is anything is hidden behind it. At this moment the butler announces that the room is prepared for him to recline. The valets help him groom himself for the night, he is put to bed and they leave, wishing him a peaceful night.

Dance of the Hours
The pavillon is flooded with moonlight. Saturn, on an old clock’s pendulum swings, as it overturns its hourglass. As the clock strikes twelve, twelve boys in gold and silver clothes come out of it, perform a dance of the hours, then return back into the clock.

The Scene of the Animated Tapestry
A distant and strange music is heard: is appears to be from behind the tapestry. The count rises and rushes to the tapestry. But he discovers nothing and returns to bed - just as the sound of new music begins, near and far, the music gets louder. The dismayed count wants to run away, but the fear of being thought of as a coward prevents him. Meanwhile, the tapestry lights up with a fantastic glow, a seductive music strengthens and the tapestry figures become more distinct and vivid, eventually taking on human forms. The background of the tapestry turns into a magnificent palace, and in front of this there is an enchanted garden in which the princess Armide appears, surrounded by her maids and many courtiers.

Grand and Noble Waltz
The horseman and ladies of the court of Princess Armide.

Armide’s Lament
Princess Armide wakens from her luxurious sleep. Accompanied by harps played by her students, she complains about the absence of Knight René, her beloved.

Dancing Boys (Young Ethiopian Slaves)
Bacchanal Dance (Grotesque Dance).
Surrounded by bacchantes, they all swirl together in a frantic dance.

Entrance of the Magicians and Dance of the Shadows
Dancing shadows. Entrance of King Hydrazo and other magicians. Evocation of the shadows. At the sign of a magic wand the shadows disappear.

Dance of the Jesters
Appendix 3: Synopsis and score annotations from Nikolai Tcherepnin’s Narcisse et Echo

In a woodland setting, full of shadow and mystery, little woodland beings, playing and dancing to the sound of the flute, flee at the arrival of young Boetians who are, they too, giving themselves to dances in honour of the gods of the woods and the fields. A little while later appear bacchantes who offer presents to the goddess Pomone and dance in her honour.

Suddenly, faraway songs are heard. It is the voice of Narcissus who is arriving happy, pursued by two love-struck nymphs. Narcissus dances, alone, and soon all characters present join in. These dances are interrupted by the arrival of Echo, she is also enraptured by Narcissus to whom she declares her love. Narcissus listens to her with an indifferent pleasure, but the other nymphs, jealous, explain to Narcissus that his love for Echo would never know how to be shared, for she can only repeat the last words and gestures of others, without being able to feel anything or express herself. Narcissus tests this, then, abandoning Echo, leaves with the other nymphs. Echo, abandoned cries and asks the gods to revenge the offence which Narcissus had caused her, by condemning him to love, from now on, without any hope of seeing his love shared (returned). Her prayer is answered, Narcissus comes back, suffering from thirst and kneels in front of a spring whose waters reflect his features. He immediately falls in love with his own image and exhausts himself in vain trying to make it share his passion. There is a struggle between Narcissus and Echo. At the end, Narcissus, exhausted, at the end of his strength, leans towards the ground and turns into a flower. In turn, Echo disappears, transformed into a rock. She will only, for eternity, be able to repeat the noises that come to disturb her solitude.

Score Annotations

p.9 A woodland scene
The Faunes and the Woods sleep in the shade of the tree in a mysterious landscape

p.12 A Sylvan wakes up ... he takes his flute
Others wake up and begin to dance accompanied by the joyful flute

p.18 Enter a young couple of Boetians
(Couple in love)

Call to dance, interrupted by a young Boetian who invites his friends to honour the deities of the woods and fields

p.20 Religious Dance

p.22 All sit in the shade of the trees
Laughs and joyous cries break through the mysterious silence of the sacred wood
p.24 Arrival of Bacchantes bearing gifts from Pomona

p.26 Dance of the Bacchantes

p.28 Call for a general dance

p.34 Suddenly there is a sound of distant singing. It is the distant voice of Narcisse being repeated by Echo

p.36 Narcisse enters and begins to dance, pursued by two amorous nymphs

p.40 Amorous nymphs and Boetians, in turn delighted with Narcisse, beg him to continue

p.41 Narcisse’s Dance

p.44 He stops to admire Echo, who arrives,

p.46 A dance poem. Narcisse et Echo

p.49 Narcisse feels defeated by the grace of Echo. He tells her of his admiration

p.50 Then the jealous nymphs tell Narcisse about Echo’s faults

p.51 She can only repeat the words and actions of others

p.52 The triumphant nymphs take leave from the disenchanted Narcisse - he leaves and Echo and her companions flee gaily

p.54 Narcisse’s distant voice

p.55 Echo, abandoned, cries and asks the God to avenge the offence that Narcisse has done to her

p.56 “May love enflame your heart and may it never possess the object of its desire”
His prayer is answered
Thunder
Lightning

p.57 Echo flees
The stage is empty
The day begins to fade
Enter Narcisse, exhausted by fatigue seeking to quench his thirst

p.58 He descends down into the pool, and bows before the water
Dancing in the mirror-like water he sees his own image
He remains in a trance

p.59 He is entranced by what he sees

p.60 He wants to dance before the image and seduce it

p.61 Nothing can extract him from this place

p.62 He caresses it and tells it tender words

p.63 Exhausted by his love, he sees before him an insatiable fantastic image

p.64 Echo arrives
She tries to pull Narcisse out of his daze

p.65 But; in vain …
She doubles her efforts … Alas, nothing can be done to save him
The fires that he has lit up consume him

p.66 The last effort by Echo

p.67 A confrontation [lutte plastique] takes place between Narcisse and Echo

p.68 Desperate and exhausted she leaves Narcisse, prostrate before his image, and moves away slowly in tears
Narcisse is transformed into a flower

p.69 Nightfall. Moonlight passes through the trees… Fireflies appear and create a brilliant light. The pool is transformed into a flower pattern. Woodland beings appear on all sides and look on with astonishment and enchantment

p.72 The curtain is lowered slowly, until at the very last point, at which it is absolutely closed
Appendix 4: Translated stage directions from Reynaldo Hahn’s *Le Dieu bleu*

p.2 A fabulously hot evening in India. There is a temple carved out of the rock-face overlooking a vast lake. Covering the lake there are sacred lotuses. To the left of the temple are two massive golden gates. In the background there is an interweaving grid with connecting columns, behind which flows the Ganges river. All of the set is invaded by wild flowers, sacred snakes hang along the walls and giant tortoises with painted shells sleep around the waters-edge. A young man is about to be ordained into priesthood. A crowd has gathered for the ceremony.

p.4 A woman brings in a peacock held high on her should. Others follow with metal dishes containing unknown fruit and flowers.

p.10 The young man removes his clothes and lays them on the ground and is handed the saffron robes of the priesthood.

p.22 The Yoghis enter to a bell. They have red hair, ash rubbed on their bodies. They look lost.

p.28 Before the young man is fully introduced to the priesthood, his elders are engaged in a final prayer.

p.28 There is a sudden commotion: a young girl pushes past the guards and runs to the young man, drops to her knees and begs him not to leave her for the priesthood.

p.29 He gently pushes her away and remains in a state of religious ecstasy.

p.29 (One can hear) the painful pleas of the young girl.

p.31 The priests taunt in defiance.

p.31 They insult her, and want to chase her away.

p.32 But the girl, indifferent to their threats, begins to dance.

p.33 The priests are indignant at the bold move which has disturbed their rituals.

p.36 The girl, panting on the banks of the Ganges, reminds the young man of the joys they share, after running together and creating clouds of dust and vibrant odours.

p.37 Little by little, as the young man watches the trouble unfolding, the girl notices that his facial expressions become faster and more insular.

p.39 ‘Come on! Come on!’ The girl says.

p.39 His momentum carries him through the Ibis Rose filled countryside.
p.39 The young man rushes to the girl

p.40 The scandal incurs the wrath of the priests who take the young man and carry him off.

p.41 The high priest threatens that he has the girl, and it is made clear that she will suffer.

p.41 The priests ridicule the young man.

p.42 While the crowd disperses the girl is brought on by a long thin golden chain.

p.42 The gates close - the night is complete.

p.43 The girl is all alone.

p.44 Silence. The moon shimmers on the water of the lake, the Milky Way floods the sky.

p.45 (One can hear) the bells from the monasteries.

p.46 The girl creeps and crawls along the walls seeking a way out ... the gates will not open. Hope! A bright light shows a gap in the gates. She pushes the doors, one gives way, she retreats drunk with horror.

p.47 Monsters and demons locked within the temple arise and begin a terrifying procession.

p.47 They surround the girl: some crawling, others jumping or flying.

p.49 They frantically form a circle around her.

p.51 They want to push her into their cave.

p.51 Then the girl remembers the sacred figure, she falls to her knees and opens her arms.

p.52 His heart beats, and the girl continues to beg.

p.53 The light changes. The monsters stop and turn around as though they are worried about something.

p.53 Slowly, the pool begins to light up.

p.54 The Lotus opens.
p.54 The goddess appears. Smiling, serious, motionless, she has lips and nails of gold. She is crouching in the middle of a dazzling burst of stamens.

p.56 The forefinger of his right hand is turned towards the water, almost touching it. Another hand’s index finger is lifted out of the water, then an arm. Both the arm and hand are blue. The God slowly emerges.

p.56. He is completely blue. With silver lips and nails.

p.57 The goddess shows him the young martyr. He walks across the holy water, jumps onto the land and heads for the monsters, looking at them and ready to charm them.

p.57 The actions of the Blue God turn from gentle to frenzied - he athletically jumps from one monster to the next - he slips amongst their group.

p.58 Now we captures them - they try to overthrow him - he triumphs. He quickly changes from jumping to vaulting to crawling. At his command the branches of wild flowers bend, and bind the monsters together.

p.59 Some petals fall onto the pavement.

p.70 The Blue God, who the goddess is yet to stop, shows his dance to the monsters.

p.71 The goddess breaks a Lotus stamen and gives it to the God, who creates a flute and gives it to the young girl to play an enchanting melody.

p.71 He plays the flute and rocks back and forth with delight.

p.74 The monsters are now immersed in an ecstasy keeping them static.

p.74 The God moves between them, to be certain of his power.

p.75 Radiant, he spins with an ever-increasing frenzy and crouches in the middle of the group, triumphant, amongst the now docile monsters he has charmed.

p.75 In the light, the priests return and see the effects of their revenge.

p. 75 Faced with the miracle, they fall with their faces to the ground.

p.77 The goddess orders the priests to release the girl.

p.77 They obey, trembling.

p.77 An atmosphere of Buddhist bliss spreads amongst everything.
p.78 The lovers meet and embrace.

p.79 She reproaches him for his fears, and tells him of the horrible ordeal and divine intervention she has just witnessed.

p.79 But, they are together! That alone is all the matters!

p.79 She dances with joy.

p.85 A final symbol of the goddess’ presence is a gigantic staircase disappearing into the blue haze.

p.86 Standing in the heart of the lotus the goddess extends her arms to bless the couple.

p.87 The god rises to the sky.
### Appendix 5: Scenes within Reynaldo Hahn’s *Le Dieu bleu*

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Appendix 6: Stage Directions from Darius Milhaud’s *Le Train bleu*

Scene 1
The hens. The gigolos.
Sun bathe. Racing (on the spot) after the gigolos’ bath, and fast physical exercise whilst the hens, split into groups, adopt gracious poses from colour postcards. It is imperative to give, through the array of gestures and their ‘ridicule’, the illusion of an operetta choir at curtain up. (Do not be afraid of a certain ‘pomp’ which will make the style). In summary, one guesses that the characters are singing: ‘We are gigolos, etc…’
But we need with this stupidity the relief of the most beautiful statues.
The stupidity of the operetta, of marble, of ‘chic’, of sport can very easily melt and create a whole.

Maybe it would be good to put a man and a woman two by two in line, in front of the ramp, and to obtain, through the gesture of each couple the discord between the voices of the women and the men who sing badly. (Use the absent-minded Tune of the hens who sing, the ‘ensembles’ and the smiles in the room.)
These ‘ensembles’ always have a military side.

Scene 2
The cabin door opens. A bather appears (in a bathing costume). Poses in the cabin. The hens group together on the right with gracious attitudes. (One shows her breasts, another puts a finger on her mouth, another lies down and waves her legs. Think about the groups who finish the quadrille of the Moulin Rouge. The gigolos come to look for the bather and carry him in triumph (see photos of boxers carried in triumph after the match). They put him down in the wings and re-enter. The hens spread out on the first ‘plan’ on the right. The gigolos line up one next to the other facing the audience, in front of the cabins, as far as the trampoline. They turn all their faces towards the wings on the right.

The bather enters, slowly with big steps; once arrived almost in the middle of the scene he runs towards the trampoline, throws himself on top and disappears into the air in the wings on the left. His passage and his jump are followed by the faces of the gigolos; after the jump all their profiles turn to the left.

Before taking up the following music, the orchestra stops and the dancers, keeping the position they had on the final note form a stationary tableau.

(Between each finish and each reprise form the orchestra, the dancers will keep their pose as if in a photograph).

Scene 3
The dancer enters by the first entry on the left (i.e. by the downstage wing). She gets out of the bath. The gigolos mass together and climb on each other’s shoulders. They form a pyramid to follow the feat of the bather. The women wrap the female bather in a robe, dry her, and lead her to the cabin, number two, where she shuts herself in.
Scene 4
Re-entry of the male bather by the first ‘plan’ to the left. Shaking his head to get the water out of his ears, smoothing his hair, putting his two hands on his face etc. The gigolos pass him a robe. He re-enters cabin number one, and shuts himself in.

Scene 5
The hens and the gigolos shake the cabins. They lock them. The bather and the female bather are cross. They show their faces at the skylights. Dance around the cabins. Halt. The whole group stands still and looks in the air. (They wince at the sun). A shadow covers the scene, it’s an aeroplane. The hens and the gigolos, in order to follow it with their eyes, bend backwards and bang against each other (here everyone should put on yellow glasses for a second, during which one would slide a yellow filter onto the projector).

The aeroplane throws prospectuses of all colours. For the first time, very to the right, a second time, right in the middle of the scene, a third time to the left. Hens and gigolos gesticulate and wave multicoloured handkerchiefs and leave back left, running under the machinery.

The two cabins shake, the male bather and the female bather, locked in, are shaking them.

Scene 6
The tennis champion (female) enters by the right (her gait, her attitudes, her dance, her entire role will be inspired by magazine photos. It will be the same for the golf player). People who are walking to the shops are photographed with a foot in the air. In front, people who are talking are photographed with their mouths open. People jump. Tennis: (backhand, picking up balls etc …).

She looks at the time on her wrist watch; this classic gesture must have the importance of the usual gestures on Grecian freezes. The male bather puts his face to the skylight of his cabin, he waves his arms, calls for help. The tennis champion provides this. The duo dance about sport. The dance duo must do this facing the public and take inspiration from the pantomime of the singers who are active, in turn (couplets) and take the chorus together.

(Hand in hand greetings etc …).

The duo must be a sporty duo.

All of a sudden the Champion sees something which scares her:
It is the golf player, her flirt, who is approaching (the audience doesn’t see him yet). The male bather offers to hide her, he closes her in his cabin and conceals himself behind.
Scene 7
Entrance by the second ‘plan’ on the left by the Golf Player. All the twitches and the type of sporty gait which has become a sort of slow dance which the music accompanies without ‘sticking’.

He lights his pipe.

Calls from the female bather who is asking that they release her. She shows her face and waves her arms at the opening of cabin number two: the Golf Player opens the door for her. They flirt.

A danced waltz. Inspired by the waltz of professional dances with kisses, legs in the air etc.

The female bather pretends to fear the arrival of her flirt. She pushes the Golf Player into her cabin, and shuts him in.

Scene 8
Beau-Gosse and Perlouse meet each other, dance together, and laugh at the Champion and the Golfer who show their furious faces at the skylights. They call the hens and the gigolos.

Scene 9
All the group rushes with Kodaks and portable cinemas.

The hens and the gigolos sit down, like at a show, their backs to the public against the ramp. Perlouse opens the door for the Champion, and Beau-Gosse for the Golfer.

Shouting Match Fugue between the Tennis Champion and the Golfer. Gesticulation: When one of the two gesticulates the other folds their arms and listens with their eyes turned upwards. Using near immobility, side by side, whilst the man shakes the end of his foot whilst lifting his eyes heavenwards, and the woman shuts her shoulders etc. Exasperation leads to slapping. The one who should receive them, ducking, and the one who is giving them, misses, with the momentum turning him round (comically) etc. (use the battles of Charlie Chaplin).

Hens and gigolos take films and polaroids, wind the film on, mark points etc…

Beau-Gosse and Perlouse try to separate the combatants and combine a dance of love with the battle dance. Finally, you guess that the Champion has the better of the Golfer. She brushes herself down and turns her back to him, he also turns his back but, as she insists, he begs her, explains etc and he leaves behind her followed by the whole crowd.

Scene 10
Beau-Gosse puts on his wig and his straw hat. Perlouse and Beau-Gosse look to see is anybody has noticed them and approach each other to embrace in the middle of the
scene, (genre, like at the end of adventure films) but at the moment where they are going to join their lips Beau-Gosse’s hat flies off and disappears to the left in the sea. Beau-Gosse throws himself onto the trampoline and jumps behind the scenes.

Perlouse runs after Beau-Gosse.

The curtain falls while she dives behind him.

The End.
Appendix 7: Translated synopsis for *Les Fâcheux* (*The Bores*)

We see a public square. On the left, the house of Damis, Orphise’s tutor. <Full light which must not be changed during the show>

Scene between Erastes and his valet La Montagne. Orphise and an Elegant cross the back of the theatre turning away their heads. (Looking away). Erastes, worried, sends La Montagne to follow and bring back Orphise.

Entrance and bows from Lysander (the dancer). Lysander’s dance. Re-entry of La Montagne announcing the imminent arrival of Orphise. Lysander continues his dance. Lysander’s exit.

Entry of the badminton players. Their dance. La Montagne reminds Erastes of Orphise’s arrival. The players take Erastes to look for a lost shuttlecock in the wings and leave with him and La Montagne.

Orphise’s entrance. Orphise’s dance. Erastes runs and is stopped by the two Chatters who have just entered. Orphise flees into her tutor’s house. Erastes and the two Chatters: dance of three. Orphise sees them through her window.

Entrance of the boules players. Exit of the two Chatters. Boules players’ dance. Their exit.

Entrance of the card player. The badminton players and the boules players cross the scene. Card player’s exit.

Arrival of Orphise. Pas de deux with Orphise and Erastes. Re-entry of La Montagne with the re-found shuttlecock. Orphise and Erastes take up their dance.

Appearance, in the door of his house, of the Tutor and his Valet. Orphise slips away. La Montagne spies the Tutor and calls his companions who run to throw themselves on the Tutor and his Valet and beat them. Erastes comes to the aid of the Tutor and clears him of his attackers.

Entrance of all the bores, terrified by the battle. Orphise, astonished, appears at the window of her Tutor’s house, with a lantern. Intervention of the Sergeants. Arrival of the Masks.

Orphise re-appears on the scene and runs towards Erastes. The Tutor blesses them. The End.
Appendix 8: Timeline of Key Developments in the History of the Ballets Russes

1905
Diaghilev organises a historical exhibition of Russian art - shows at the Autumn Salon in the Grand Palais

1907
Diaghilev organises a series of Russian music concerts

1908
Diaghilev produces Musorgsky’s Boris Godunov at the Paris Opera

1909
May - first season of Opera and Ballet at the Théâtre du Châtelet
  19th, Le Pavillon d’Armide
  19th, The Polovtsian Dances
  19th, Le Festin
June - 2nd, Les Sylphides
  2nd, Cléopâtre

1910
May - Berlin, Theater des Westens
  20th, Le Carnaval
June - second season at the Paris Opéra
  4th, Schéhérazade
  18th, Giselle
  25th, L’Oiseau de feu
  25th, Les Orientales

1911
Official founding of Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes company
Ida Rubinstein leaves the company

April - Monte Carlo
  19th, Le Spectre de la Rose
  26th, Narcisse
June - Paris, Théâtre du Châtelet
  6th, Sadkó
  13th, Pétrouchka
October - London, Theatre Royal
  Le Lac des Cygnes

1912
May - Paris, Théâtre du Châtelet
  13th, Le Dieu bleu
  20th, Thamar
  29th, L’Après-midi d’un faune
June - 8th, Daphnis et Chloé

1913
January - Vienna, Opera House
L’Oiseau d’Or
May - Paris, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées
  15th, Jeux
  29th, La Sacré du Printemps
June - 12th, La Tragédie de Salomé

Bakst leaves company
Nijinsky is dismissed following his marriage
South American tour (under direction of Baron Gunsburg)

1914
April - Monte Carlo,
  16th, Papillons
May - Paris, Grand Opéra
  17th, Le Légende de Joseph
  24th, Le Coq d’Or
  26th, Le Rossignol
June - 2nd, Midas

1915
Larionov and Goncharova leave Russia to join Diaghilev
First USA tour

December - Paris, Grand Théâtre
  20th, Le Soleil de Nuit

1916
October - New York, Manhattan Opera House
  23rd, Till Eulenspiegel
August - San Sebastian, Eugenie-Victoria Theatre
  21st, Las Meninas
  25th, Kikimora

1917
April - Rome, Costanzi Theatre
  12th, Feu d’artifice
  12th, Les Femmes de bonne humeur
May - Paris, Théâtre du Châtelet
  11th, Les Contes Russes
  18th, Parade

1918

1919
July - London, Alhambra Theatre
  5th, La Boutique Fantasque
  22nd, La Tricorne

1920
February - Paris, Grand Opéra
  2nd, Le Chant de Rossignol
May - 15th, *Pulcinella*
27th, *le Astuzie Femminili*

**1921**
May - Paris, Gaiétê-Lyrique Theatre
17th, *Chout*
17th, *Cuadro Flamenco*
November - Alhambra, London
2nd, *Le Belle au Bois Dormant*

**1922**
May - Paris, Grand Opéra
18th, *Aurora’s Wedding*
18th, *Le Renard*

**1923**
July - Paris, Gaiétê-Lyrique Theatre
13th - *Les Noces*

**1924**
January - Monte Carlo
3rd, *Les Tentations de la Bergère*
6th, *Les Biches*
8th, *Cimarosiana*
19th, *Les Fâcheux*
April - 13th, *Le Nuit sur le Mont Chauve*
June - Paris, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées
20th, *Le Train Bleu*

**1925**
April - Monte Carlo
28th, *Zéphyr et Flore*
June - Gaiétê-Lyrique Theatre
17th, *Les Matelots*
December - London, Coliseum Theatre
11th, *Barabau*

**1926**
May - Monte Carlo
4th, *Roméo et Juliette*
Théâtre Sarah Berndhardt, Paris
29th, *La Pastorale*
July - 3rd, *Jack-in-the-box*
December - London, Lyceum Theatre
3rd, *The Triumph of Neptune*

**1927**
April - Monte Carlo
30th, *Le Chatte*
June - Paris, Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt
2nd, *Mercure*
7th, *Le Pas D’Acier*
1928
June - Paris, Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt
   6th, Ode
   12th, Apollon Musagète
July - London, His Majesty’s Theatre
   16th, The Gods Go a-Begging

1929
May - Monte Carlo
   9th, Le Bal
   Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt
   21st, Le Fils Prodigue
August 19th - Diaghilev dies in Venice
Appendix 9: Documents showing a contractual agreement with the *Ballets Russes*, and a list of costs for the 1909 season\textsuperscript{564}

\begin{figure}
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{ballets_russes_agreement.png}
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\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{ballets_russes_costs.png}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{564} Opéra site of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Kochno: Album 2240 (accessed 18 October 2013).
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