Making an American Modernist:
Franco-Russian Music Practices and Cold War Aesthetics in the Ballets of George Balanchine

by

Lena Leson

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Doctoral Committee:

Professor Emerita Jane F. Fulcher, Chair
Associate Professor Mark Clague
Professor Emerita Lynn Garafola, Barnard College, Columbia University
Professor Angela Kane
Professor Steven M. Whiting

Lena Leson

lleson@umich.edu

ORCID iD: 0000-0002-8373-8902

Dedication

In memory of my mother.

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Abstract

The work of choreographer George Balanchine (1904–83) played a critical role in disseminating a message of American national identity and cultural values as distinct from those of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Although he was born and raised in Russia and spent a decade working in Europe before immigrating to the United States in 1933, Balanchine was widely embraced as an American choreographer shortly after World War II. The prominence of Balanchine's choreography on Cold War cultural exchange tours reflected efforts to deploy dance as a distinctly American form of cultural expression. Although Balanchine's company, the New York City Ballet (NYCB), toured regularly under the auspices of the US State Department, dance scholars have deemed the choreographer's anti-communism largely irrelevant to NYCB's participation in Cold War cultural diplomacy. Through a wide-ranging examination of Balanchine's Cold War activism, including his creative work and his membership in a leading anti-communist organization, this dissertation presents a new view of this influential choreographer as an active participant in the culture wars between the United States and the USSR.

This study considers three of Balanchine's signature works: *Apollo* (1928), *Serenade* (1934), and *Le Palais de cristal/Symphony in C* (1947/8), each performed on New York City Ballet's landmark 1962 tour of the Soviet Union. I demonstrate how Balanchine, working in service of American cultural politics, revised and reframed these ballets to project an ideal of American innovation and cultural sophistication—what I have termed his "Cold War Formalism." Although these works intimated the superiority of the 'American way of life,' they were not choreographed to music by American composers. Rather, Balanchine selected scores by Bizet, Stravinsky, and Tchaikovsky,

often revising them using techniques he learned during his training at the Imperial Theatre School and the Conservatory in St Petersburg, as well as under the tutelage of Serge Diaghilev (1872–1929) of the Ballets Russes. This dissertation reconstructs the music of these landmark ballets from archival performances, analyzing the impact of Balanchine's alterations on the original score, the choreography, and, subsequently, the work's overall meaning. The contradiction between the choreographer's musical practices, drawn largely from his Franco-Russian training, and his Cold War Formalism complicates Balanchine's enduring legacy as an American modernist.

"Making an American Modernist" argues that Balanchine was aware of and engaged in cultural-political activities intended to engender international cooperation with the United States while undermining the Soviet Union. Exploring the ways in which Balanchine's ballets both serve and defy these Cold War-era objectives, this dissertation examines the tense interplay between national politics and cultural identity in the work of this legendary choreographer. By reexamining Balanchine's contributions to the Cold War conflict, this dissertation suggests new ways to understand twentieth-century dance diplomacy.

Introduction

In October 1962, on the eve of the Cuban Missile Crisis, choreographer George Balanchine (1904–83) and some ninety members of his company, the New York City Ballet (NYCB), began their landmark tour of the Soviet Union in Moscow. A potent propaganda event, the US State Department-sponsored tour exemplified the tensions of the Cold War: both the looming threat of nuclear annihilation and the stark juxtaposition of the American and Soviet systems in all things—including and especially ballet, as the emphasis on reciprocal exchange between the United States and the USSR meant that this art form occupied a central position in the conflict. As representatives of the United States, New York City Ballet had to project the superiority of Western freedom afforded by democracy and the 'American way of life' through its danceworks. The tour had personal significance to Balanchine as well; it represented the first time the Russian émigré and naturalized US citizen had returned to the country of his birth since 1924.

When Balanchine and his American ballet company disembarked at Sheremetyevo Airport in Moscow, a crowd of Soviet dignitaries and reporters were waiting to greet them. "Welcome to Moscow, home of the classic ballet!" an interviewer with Radio Moscow declared. "I beg your pardon," Balanchine replied archly. "Russia is the home of romantic ballet. The home of classic ballet is now America."[1]

[1] This frequently cited exchange seems to have first appeared in Balanchine historiography in Bernard Taper, *Balanchine: A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 278.

With this cultural-political confrontation began one of the most important—and frequently studied—dance exchanges of the twentieth century. Before Russian audiences even had an opportunity to see NYCB perform Balanchine's innovative choreography on the former Imperial stages, the dancemaker challenged Russian ballet's relevance while planting an American flag on the artform's present and future.[2] Despite the inherently political nature of this and other statements made during the Cold War, however, Balanchine's politics have often been dismissed as unsophisticated. Indeed, generations of dance scholars have deemed the choreographer's attitude toward the Soviet Union and his cultural-political agenda irrelevant to New York City Ballet's relationship with the United States government and their involvement in exchange tours, including the 1962 Soviet tour. Through a wide-ranging examination of Balanchine's Cold War activism, including his creative work and membership in a leading anti-communist organization, I present a new view of this prolific and influential choreographer as an active participant in the culture wars between the United States and the USSR.

The Cold War was a decades-long conflict for global supremacy between the Eastern and Western blocs, dominated respectively by the Soviet Union and the United States. Cold War rhetoric pitted the US against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), positioning the nations as diametrically opposed societies locked in a fundamental struggle. The work of choreographer George Balanchine played an important role in disseminating a message of American national identity and cultural values as distinct from those of the USSR.

[2] In this dissertation, I use "America" as a short form of the official name of the United States of America and its territories, and "American" as an adjective to describe US institutions, cultural products, political attitudes, and other attributes. I use these terms to mirror US Cold War-era rhetoric but acknowledge the misnomer and the multiplicity of nations represented by this term.

Although he was born and raised in Russia before spending much of his early professional career in France, Balanchine's athletic choreography, innovative movement vocabulary,[3] and sparse aesthetic reflected a broader effort to deploy abstract dance as a distinctly American form of cultural expression in this period.[4] This dissertation reveals that Balanchine, an acknowledged anti-communist, was active in at least one major organization that guided US foreign policy and shaped the rhetoric around cultural propaganda for decades: the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), best known for its decades of covert funding from the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Hardly an unwitting pawn of the US government, Balanchine was aware of and engaged in cultural-political activities intended to engender international cooperation with the United States while undermining the Soviet Union—and ordered his aesthetic priorities accordingly.

To that end, I have termed Balanchine's revision and reframing of earlier ballets in the service of Western mid-century politics his "Cold War Formalism." A cultural practice rather than a specific style, Balanchine's Cold War Formalism inspired him to create increasing contrast between his American ballets and prevailing ideas about Soviet dance, and work with leading organizations to

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[3] A great deal of this movement vocabulary drew on Black dance practices, gleaned from Balanchine's work with choreographer Katherine Dunham and other artists. While it is essential to acknowledge this foundation, Black dance in Balanchine's work will not be a focus of this dissertation. For a discussion of the Black and Africanist elements in Balanchine's work, see Sally Banes, "Balanchine and Black Dance," in *Writing Dancing in the Age of Postmodernism* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 53–69; and Brenda Dixon Gottschild, *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996).

[4] As S. Elise Archias and Juliet Bellows have noted, "Abstraction in dance can take many forms, among them: plotlessness; the distillation or simplification of codified gestures; stylized movements; repetition, standardization, and other means of de-personalizing the dancer; an exploration of the body's physical properties in and of themselves." My use of the term "abstract" here and throughout the dissertation refers to the stylized gestures and the exploration of the body's physical properties in Balanchine's choreography, as well as the plotless subjects of his ballets. Further, my use of the term also refers to the distillation or simplification of musical and aesthetic elements of these works during the Cold War and the process of elimination that the term implies. See S. Elise Archias and Juliet Bellows, ed., "Dance and Abstraction," Special Issue, *Arts* 9, no. 4 (2020), and in particular Tamara Tomić-Vajagić, "The Balanchine Dilemma: 'So-Called Abstraction' and the Rhetoric of Circumvention in Black-and-White Ballets." See also Tamara Tomić-Vajagić, "The Dancer's Contribution: Performing Plotless Choreography in the Leotard Ballets of George Balanchine and William Forsythe" (PhD diss., University of Roehampton, 2012); and David Michael Levin, "Balanchine's Formalism," *Salmagundi* 33/34, DANCE (Spring-Summer 1976): 216–36. For a discussion on the role of race in abstract dance, see Miguel Gutierrez, "Does Abstraction Belong to White People?" *BOMB*, November 7, 2020, https://bombmagazine.org/articles/miguel-gutierrez-1/.

disseminate cultural-diplomatic propaganda for the West, specifically the United States.[5] Here I draw on Greg Barnhisel's term "Cold War modernism," which refers to the rhetorical reframing of modernism for pro-Western propaganda in the postwar period, carried out through a wide variety of official and unofficial programs.[6] Barnhisel traces the stages of this process, noting that modernism's " more revolutionary or reactionary political associations" were replaced by "a celebration of the virtues of freedom and the assertion that the individual is sovereign."[7] He notes that "What remained of modernism, then, was a set of formal techniques and attitudes unique to each art form but sharing some important commonalities across genres: allusiveness, abstraction…the subsumption of emotion under formal technique, the retreat of the personality of the artist into the background behind different "masks" or narrative voices, and, above all, high seriousness."[8]

Although Barnhisel examines visual art, literature, and music to illustrate how modernism came to serve as American cultural propaganda, his description of modernism quoted above shares deep resonance with the work of Balanchine, illustrated by the choreographer's elimination of narrative and his demands for emotional restraint captured best in his famous directive, "Don't act, just dance."[9] Further, many of the organizations Barnhisel identifies as central to weaponizing modernism during the Cold War conflict—the Congress for Cultural Freedom, the Ford Foundation, the State Department, and the United States Information Agency—also play pivotal roles in Balanchine's career, as this dissertation demonstrates. My term incorporates the classic

[5] Despite the negative connotation of this term, I am referring to propaganda's use by policy experts to mean "the planned dissemination of news, information, special arguments designed to influence the beliefs, thoughts, and actions of a specific group." William E. Daugherty and Morris Janowitz, "Introduction," in *The Psychological Warfare Casebook* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, Operations Research Office, 1958), 2–3.
[6] Greg Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 1–4.
[7] Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Democracy*, 3.
[8] Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists*, 3.
[9] For a reading of this phrase, see Catherine Gunther Kodat, *Don't Act, Just Dance: The Metapolitics of Cold War Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015), 61–2.

Soviet denunciation of 'formalism,' used to indicate that an artist had failed to meet the demands of socialist realism, the official artistic style of the USSR from 1933 to 1988, to reflect the politicized framing of Balanchine's ballets and their intentional contrast to the narrative and political content of Soviet ballet, particularly the genre of *drambalet* dominant in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s.[10] As the chapters examine, Balanchine often removed narrative—by simplifying titles, redesigning costumes, and altering musical scores. But Balanchine's Cold War Formalism extended beyond the proscenium: it informed how his company, the New York City Ballet (and its predecessor, Ballet Society), and co-founder Lincoln Kirstein, publicly framed his work; the choreographer's relationships with organizations like the Congress for Cultural Freedom, the Ford Foundation, and the US State Department pursuing the same or similar goals; and even the reception of Balanchine's work by US critics in the postwar period.

While this dissertation examines how Balanchine's work served Cold War cultural politics both at home and abroad,[11] it also considers the ways in which the choreographer himself complicated these politically expedient narratives through his use of Franco-Russian theatrical techniques and musical scores. Although Balanchine is widely celebrated as the creator of a distinct American dance tradition meant to challenge the supremacy of Soviet ballet, he most often created his Cold War Formalist works with music by composers including Bizet, Tchaikovsky, and Stravinsky. Acknowledging this contradiction, this dissertation explores Balanchine's attitudes

[10] A politicized genre, *drambalet* often depicted clear-cut moral struggles in contemporary Soviet society or the historical past, intended to reinforce state narratives about the virtue of good communists and the danger posed by enemies of Soviet society, namely Westerners.

[11] For related discussions in art history, see Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Democracy*; Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Michael L. Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters for the Human Spirit: American Art and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); and Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, rev. ed. (1999, repr., New York: The New Press, 2013), among others.

toward music and the extent to which his Americanist works reflected his Russian training.[12] This is not an entirely new area of Balanchine scholarship; Lincoln Kirstein first articulated the choreographer's similarities to legendary Russian Imperial balletmaster Marius Petipa in 1947, and Tim Scholl and Clare Croft have since explored the dynamic interplay of Russian cultural heritage in Balanchine's American style. While these scholars have focused almost exclusively on choreographic resemblances, however, this dissertation interrogates Balanchine's attitudes toward and treatment of musical material. As such, this study is the first to explore the similarities between Balanchine's abstract 'American' ballets and the Russian ballet through Balanchine's use of music, examining the tension between rigid concepts of national styles of music and dance in this period.

Accordingly, this study argues that despite their presence in works considered representative of American innovation in the Cold War period (and, as such, exported across Europe and the USSR by the US State Department), Balanchine's musical practices closely resemble those of the Russian ballet. These techniques—which included musical cuts, interpolations, reorchestrations, and reorderings—were transmitted to the choreographer during his tenure as balletmaster of Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in Paris, where Balanchine spent his early career and first years as an émigré, as well as during his training in Saint Petersburg at the Imperial Theatre School and as a young professional at the Mariinsky.[13] Much Balanchine scholarship perpetuates Cold War-era narratives of his Americanist works as distinct from Soviet ballet, reflecting the political urgency of forming a uniquely US dance tradition in this period. But the dancemaker's choreomusical praxis,

[12] Balanchine most often choreographed works to the music of collaborator Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) and fellow Saint Petersburger Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–93). Indeed, despite the emphasis on Balanchine's 'Americanism,' he choreographed very few ballets on American scores: just one, *Ivesiana* (1954), to the music of Charles Ives, a single Morton Gould ballet, *Clarinade* (1964), and a half-dozen arrangements of American compositions and folk tunes by Hershy Kay. One of these, *Western Symphony*, was enormously popular and remains in NYCB's repertory.

[13] The principal theatre in Saint Petersburg underwent five name changes during the Soviet era but was best known as the Kirov, in honor of Sergey Kirov, the head of the Communist Party in Leningrad assassinated in December 1934. Because Balanchine refers to the theatre as the Mariinsky, this dissertation will employ the same language.

including his frequent reliance on Russian techniques, demonstrates a more complicated dynamic between national politics and cultural identity.[14] Analyzing the previously unexamined significance of this inherited practice in Balanchine's Cold War Formalist works for New York City Ballet is this dissertation's second significant contribution.

The three ballets—*Apollon musagète* (1928), *Serenade* (1934), and *Le Palais de cristal/Symphony in C* (1947/8)—considered in this dissertation demonstrate the enormous range of Balanchine's musical practices, from domineering to deferential, gradual to abrupt. On the one hand, *Symphony in C* offers balletgoers a complete performance of its Bizet score. On the other, Balanchine famously cut Stravinsky's *Apollo* score in the late 1970s—an act that critics likened to patricide and decapitation. Even *Serenade*, the beloved Tchaikovsky ballet, initially featured an arrangement of the Serenade for Strings by American composer George Antheil; the choreographer later reversed the order of Tchaikovsky's later movements and incorporated several cuts and insertions. While sometimes distressing to both music lovers and balletomanes, Balanchine's alterations suggest the work of a skillful musician *and* choreographer. Indeed, archival materials at Harvard's Houghton Library evidence Balanchine's musical facility: in addition to musical exercises, piano reductions of ballets, and tunes written for friends,[15] correspondence between New York City Ballet's music director, Irving Brown, and commissioned composers demonstrates Balanchine's engagement with the smallest musical details.

Balanchine's choreomusical vision and his cultural-political agenda are what ultimately united these diverse musical approaches. It was not simply enough to have an inspiring piece of music from which to work; the dancemaker sought to create an effective stage work that combined music and

[14] A portmanteau of choreographic and musical, the term 'choreomusical' will be used throughout this dissertation to indicate the entwined relationship between the two distinct elements in dance works.
[15] Balanchine even composed a torch song titled "The World is Turning Fast" with lyrics by Arthur Schwartz published by G. Schirmer, Inc.

choreography, costumes, décor, lighting, and other elements. Further, Balanchine revised these works until they reflected his ideas about the importance of art to Western culture and cultural politics. Balanchine's ballets and subsequent revisions, examined in this dissertation, reflect the choreographer and creative director's all-encompassing vision. As New York City Ballet principal dancer Jacques d'Amboise declared, "these ballets are total concepts of Balanchine. The scenery, the music, the dances, the costumes, the colors, his scene…I mean, all of them, he had these concepts."[16]

Pushing back against the widespread belief that Balanchine and his ballets lacked a politic, this dissertation demonstrates the political utility of his Cold War Formalist works to anti-communist crusaders—a group that included the choreographer himself. Too often, dance scholarship has avoided discussing the role of politics in ballet, as evidenced by recent dismissals of Balanchine's personal beliefs and political agency in the Cold War era.[17] Resistance to American ballet's political dimensions has resulted in a facile appreciation for George Balanchine's cultural contributions, as a clear understanding of systems of power and political influence is often missing from the literature. This study challenges historical narratives that frame Balanchine as apolitical while purposefully disguising other elements of his identity as a dancemaker, Russian émigré, and naturalized American. Balanchine was a man deeply impacted by the realities of cultural, political, and economic conflict in the twentieth century; historiography must acknowledge his contributions to dance as well as his anti-communist activism in the Cold War period.

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[16] Interview with Jacques d'Amboise, *I, George Balanchine*, directed by Nanuka Kiknadze (NeoStudio Productions, 2018), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7MMqLKkJEA.

[17] The central claim of Andrea Harris's recently published monograph is that Kirstein's financial and institutional motivations, rather than Balanchine's politics, shaped New York City Ballet's involvement in Cold War-era cultural diplomacy. While I do not deny that financial and institutional concerns may have motivated Kirstein, this argument ignores Balanchine's political convictions and oversimplifies the complexity of artists' motivations for participating in government-sponsored exchange tours. Andrea Harris, *Making Ballet American: Modernism Before and After Balanchine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 10, 9, 159.

Russian Émigré, Naturalized American

Although the choreographer was welcomed home as a native son of Russia during the New York City Ballet's 1962 Soviet tour, Balanchine rebuffed attempts to claim him and his cultural accomplishments as Russian. Instead, he insisted intermittently on one of two ethnic-national alternatives. The first was Georgia, the nation of his father's birth and a USSR satellite with a language and cultural tradition distinct from Russia, which Balanchine had not visited until the 1962 tour.[18] Balanchine was raised with an ambiguous relationship to his father's homeland; although he was given a Georgian name and sang Georgian folk songs at home, neither he nor his siblings were taught the language, and he identified as both Georgian and Petersburgian as a child, according to Balanchine biographer Elizabeth Kendall.[19] Kendall theorizes that Balanchine's parents, the Georgian Meliton and the Russian Maria, may have disagreed about this issue, the ramifications of such uncertainty amplified by the choreographer's emigration first to Europe and later to the United States. The second alternative Balanchine proposed was American; he had become a naturalized citizen in 1939,[20] and now led a US ballet company on a State Department-sponsored tour.

Inspired by Balanchine's struggle to articulate a single ethnic-national identity during the 1962 tour, this dissertation explores the political implications of these identities in Balanchine's work and his promotion by anti-communist organizations. As a result of the focus on the choreographer's

[18] Both Balanchine's father, Meliton, and his younger brother, Andria, returned to Georgia after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917—but Balanchine did not visit the country until the 1962 Soviet tour. Interestingly, the first chapter of Richard Buckle and George Taras's 1988 biography of Balanchine is titled "A Georgian in St. Petersburg" and emphasizes this ethnic/cultural heritage rather than his matrilineal Russian heritage or Petersburger cultural identity, examined in more detail in chapters one and three. Richard Buckle and George Taras, *George Balanchine, Ballet Master: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1988).

[19] Elizabeth Kendall, *Balanchine and the Lost Muse: Revolution and the Making of a Choreographer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 34.

[20] Naturalization was particularly common among Russian émigrés in the United States, who, unlike their European counterparts, were encouraged to become US citizens. In 1938, ninety percent of Russian refugees surveyed in New York City and Seattle, two of the largest Russian communities at the time, had become naturalized. James E. Hassell, "Russian Refugees in France and the United States Between the World Wars," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 81, no. 7 (1991): 38.

overlapping and complex national identities, less attention is paid to identity categories including race, gender, class, and disability. This is not meant to diminish significant contributions made concerning these issues in Balanchine's work or to imply that issues of race, gender, class, and disability do not appear in Balanchine's ballets, for indeed they do.[21] Rather, issues of national identity, which have been insufficiently examined in the literature on Balanchine to date, are prominent in these ballets; by focusing on American and Franco-Russian impulses in Balanchine's work, this dissertation fills a critical gap in dance scholarship.

Because the Russian-born Balanchine and his ballets are often framed as quintessentially American,[22] theories of emigration and identity provide a framework for understanding the choreographer's relationship to the United States and the art he produced there over the course of fifty years, in which Franco-Russian music and musical practices often appear. Canadian psychologist John W. Berry's acculturative model, which theorizes various and changing ways immigrants interact with a dominant culture, is foundational to scholarship on the émigré experience.[23] Using Claudia Maurer Zenck's work on acculturation in the work of Schoenberg, Krenek, and Stravinsky as a guide, the dissertation considers both the artistic and prosaic to understand the choreographer's acculturative strategy—namely his integrative approach.[24] The

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[21] *Agon* (1957), for example, offers opportunities to discuss both race and disability in the context of the *pas de deux* made for Arthur Mitchell and Diana Adams.

[22] Indeed, Balanchine even appears in an October 2020 version of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services [USCIS] *Policy Manual and Adjudicator's Field Manual*, as well as in a 2021 whitepaper from the George W. Bush Institute that encourages naturalization. Laura Collins, "Citizenship Matters: Encouraging Immigrants to Become Americans," The George W. Bush Institute (January 2021). Charles Gordon, Stanley Mailman, Stephen Yale-Loehr, and Ronald Y. Wada, *Immigration Law and Procedure: USCIS Policy Manual and Adjudicator's Field Manual*, Vol. 1 (LexisNexis, October 2020).

[23] See Maria Lopez-Class, Felipe González Castro, and Amelie G. Ramirez, "Conceptions of acculturation: A review and statement of critical issues," *Social Science & Medicine*, 72 (2011): 1555–1562; Julie Leininger Pycior, "Acculturation and Pluralism in Recent Studies of American Immigration History," *Ethnic and Immigration Groups: The United States, Canada, and England*, eds. Patricia J.F. Rosof et al. (New York, 1983), 25; and Seth J. Schwartz, Marilyn J. Montgomery, and Ervin Briones, "The Role of Identity in Acculturation among Immigrant People: Theoretical Propositions, Empirical Questions, and Applied Recommendations," *Human Development*, 49 (2006): 1–30.

[24] Claudia Maurer Zenck, "Challenges and Opportunities of Acculturation: Schoenberg, Krenek, and Stravinsky in Exile," in *Driven into Paradise: The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany to the United States*, ed. Reinhold Brinkmann and

concept of integration recognizes that immigrants maintain elements of their heritage culture while making a series of adjustments to suit the dominant society, which is itself changed as a result. Language, for example, is an indicator of acculturative strategies: Balanchine spoke English, but he also spoke Russian with the enclave of émigré dancers and instructors he gathered around him at NYCB and the School of American Ballet (SAB). He enjoyed Westerns and Fred Astaire films, and married Americans ("prima facie evidence of integration") but was also a generous patron of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR), headquartered in New York.[25] Reflecting his tremendous impact on American culture, both NYCB and SAB remain major US arts organizations whose practices and traditions are as deeply rooted in the Russian school of the Mariinsky and Diaghilev's Ballets Russes as the vibrant dance culture of New York City.

Further, integration is a productive way to understand Balanchine's creative work in the United States—as a blend of Franco-Russian music and musical practices with American aesthetics. Although Balanchine's work was regularly used to represent the United States, this dissertation draws on the concept of integration to examine a complex mélange of national impulses in Balanchine's work.[26] As this study seeks to redress Balanchine's (over)Americanization and acknowledge the role of inherited Franco-Russian traditions in his Cold War Formalist work, distinct national strains are identified explicitly, in some cases for the first time. Recognizing the hybridity of

Christoph Wolff (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 172–193. My thanks to Michaela Franzen for directing me to this volume.

[25] Hassell, "Russian Refugees in France and the United States Between the World Wars," 88. For a discussion of the role of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Russian émigré experience, see Hassell and Natalie K. Zelensky, "Russian Church Music, Conundrums of Style, and the Politics of Preservation in the Émigré Diaspora of New York," in *The Oxford Handbook of Music and World Christianities*, ed. Suzel Ana Reily and Jonathan M. Dueck (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 361–383.

[26] Zenck explicitly identifies Russian, German, American, and commercial impulses in the work of the three composers she examines.

Franco-Russian and American impulses in Balanchine's work—a reflection of his émigré experience—is one of the dissertation's primary contributions.[27]

Like emigration, identity has increasingly come to be understood as a flexible cultural construct rather than a fixed or universal practice.[28] Erik Erikson, an influential theorist of identity formation as a psycho-social construct, first hypothesized identity's flexibility or even instability and noted the challenge that war, revolution, and displacement can have on traditional foundations of identity.[29] Expanding on Erikson's work, Charles Tilly and Craig Calhoun have theorized potential pluralism or even contradiction between an individual's identities, particularly for displaced persons. Further, both Tilly and Calhoun have argued that some identity claims—like American, Soviet, or Russian—are politically significant, as they can define inclusion, exclusion, and marginalization.[30] Indeed, while we see Balanchine and his work embraced as American, the dancemaker's Russian identity is downplayed in the postwar period, reflecting the opposition of American and Soviet systems animating the Cold War conflict. To that end, Calhoun's observation that identity is perpetually constructed "amid a flow of contending cultural discourses" can help to explain the identity tensions this dissertation explores in Balanchine's danceworks and his anti-communist activism.[31]

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[27] Lydia Goehr writes, "Composers who imagined their "old world" language transforming into a future "American" language were imagining, in relative terms, a synthetic 'third' language" of émigré artists. Lydia Goehr, "Music and Musicians in Exile: The Romantic Legacy of a Double Life," in *Driven into Paradise: The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany to the United States*, ed. Reinhold Brinkmann and Christoph Wolff (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 84.

[28] Jane F. Fulcher's recent monograph includes several insightful discussions on identity theorization, particularly in her chapter on Honegger. See Jane F. Fulcher, "The Soft or Hard Borders of French Identity: Honegger's iconic role and subjectivity," in *Renegotiating French Identity: Musical Culture and Creativity in France during Vichy and the German Occupation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 178–238.

[29] Erik Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1968), 22–3.

[30] Charles Tilly, *Identities, Boundaries, and Social Ties* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005), 61.

[31] Craig Calhoun, "Social Theory," in *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity,* ed. Craig Calhoun (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1995), 12.

George Balanchine, New York City Ballet, and the Cultural Cold War

Cultural diplomacy played a significant role in the prolonged confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union as it offered the opportunity to advance ideological arguments, critique adversaries, and assert the superiority of one's political-economic system. This inquiry builds upon the scholarship examining cultural exchange in the Cold War, which has expanded dramatically in the years since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. It does not, however, claim that cultural productions, such as jazz bands, national achievement exhibitions, and dance companies, are themselves alone responsible for the fall of the Soviet Union, as some scholars have argued.[32] Instead, the dissertation brings Balanchine's commitment to anti-communism and the choreographer's contradictory use of Franco-Russian techniques to create a distinctive American dance tradition into dialogue with studies of Cold War cultural politics.

I consider Balanchine as a serious intellectual figure with his own cultural-political agenda, rather than an unwitting agent of US policy. This approach reflects recent Cold War scholarship that emphasizes an artist's agency in the pursuit of their own aesthetic or institutional goals when participating in cultural diplomacy and the local reception of foreign efforts, rather than top-down studies of government objectives that characterize earlier work on the conflict.[33] Indeed, presenting an entirely new view of Balanchine that challenges time-worn narratives about the choreographer's

[32] See Richard T. Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the 20th Century* (Washington, DC: Potomac, 2005); David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy During the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); and Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003). For an English-language survey of Russian cultural diplomacy in this period, see Frederick Charles Barghoorn, *The Soviet Cultural Offensive: The Role of Cultural Diplomacy in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976).

[33] Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 1–7. Fosler-Lussier's book suggests the enormous variety of outcomes possible in cultural exchanges, extending far beyond the one-way model of soft power theorized by US State Department officials. See also Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA and Post-War American Hegemony* (New York: Routledge, 2002); and Sarah Miller Harris, *The CIA and the Congress for Cultural Freedom in the Early Cold War: The Limits of Making Common Cause* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

apoliticism,[34] this dissertation examines the personal politics that informed Balanchine and New York City Ballet's participation in government-sponsored cultural exchange.

Most recently, Andrea Harris has argued that New York City Ballet's participation in these cultural exchanges reflects Lincoln Kirstein's commitment to the organization's financial stability rather than George Balanchine's political views.[35] Harris's stated goal, to "push back against conventional assumptions that American ballet either lacked a politics…or that its politics was reactionary," opens up important space for my own contributions to music and dance scholarship in the Cold War. Her claim, however, that "Balanchine resisted politics in ballet" and "never shared his political interests" directly contradicts reports from personal friends, former dancers, and the choreographer himself.[36] My work challenges Harris's claims, demonstrating that despite Kirstein's extensive connections in government and philanthropy, co-founder George Balanchine's politics—as well as his danceworks—proved appealing to leading cultural figures in the fight against communism. To that end, this dissertation draws on documents in the Congress for Cultural Freedom records at the University of Chicago Library and Balanchine's archive at Harvard University to reveal the choreographer's relationships with leading anti-communist organizers and institutions.

While much scholarship has preserved narratives of ballet's apoliticism, a growing body of literature on dance and politics suggests an important shift, reflected in this dissertation. Anne

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[34] Naima Prevots, *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1998). Catherine Gunther Kodat, *Don't Act, Just Dance: The Metapolitics of Cold War Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015). Christina Ezrahi, *Swans of the Kremlin: Ballet and Power in Soviet Russia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

[35] Harris, *Making Ballet American: Modernism Before and After Balanchine*, 157–67.

[36] Harris, *Making Ballet American*, 10, 9, 159. Among those who describe Balanchine as political are his biographer Bernard Taper, who wrote, "Most of the time, he would rather talk about cooking or politics…" and New York City Ballet's first African American principal dancer Arthur Mitchell. The latter discussed Balanchine's political and anti-racist attitudes in a 2002 interview with Anna Kisselgoff and a 2006 coaching for the George Balanchine Foundation.

Searcy's research on Balanchine's reception in the Soviet Union during NYCB's 1962 Soviet tour reshaped my thinking about national styles in this period and affirmed my ideas about the politicization of the choreographer's danceworks in the Cold War conflict.[37] Similarly, Stéphanie Gonçalves's recent French-language monograph examined the diverse objectives and outcomes of tours by the major international ballet companies during this period—namely the Bolshoi and the Kirov, New York City Ballet, the Royal Ballet, and the Paris Opéra Ballet, as well as American Ballet Theatre—that informed my discussion of the 1952 *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* Festival, which is the subject of chapter five.[38] In *Dancers as Diplomats*, Clare Croft considered, along with other examples of cross-cultural dance contact, New York City Ballet's 1962 tour of the Soviet Union and the projection of American versus Soviet identity through dance.[39] Drawing in part on Croft's revelations of the hybrid cultural identity of NYCB's American dancers trained by Russian émigrés, this dissertation demonstrates the complex negotiation of seemingly opposed identities in Balanchine's artistic practices: a central issue that has largely been ignored in the literature to date.

Mark Franko, Lynn Garafola, and Gay Morris have made valuable contributions to the literature on dance and politics beyond Cold War cultural exchange tours. In addition to shaping my understanding of mid-century dance, all three authors have motivated me to write plainly about Balanchine's politics in the Cold War period. Garafola's work on twentieth-century dance was foundational to my understanding of Balanchine, including his training under Diaghilev with the Ballets Russes and the contradiction of his anti-communism with co-founder Lincoln Kirstein's Leftist politics.[40] I draw on Morris's work, which emphasizes the political nature of Balanchine's

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[37] Anne Searcy, *Ballet in the Cold War: A Soviet-American Exchange* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).
[38] Stéphanie Gonçalves, *Danser pendant le guerre froide, 1945–1968* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2018).
[39] Clare Croft, *Dancers as Diplomats: American Choreography in Cultural Exchange* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 61.
[40] Lynn Garafola, *Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005). Lynn Garafola, "Lincoln Kirstein, Modern Dance, and the Left," *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 23, 1 (Summer, 2005): 18-35.

postwar reception in the United States, to understand the institutionalization of New York City Ballet and Balanchine at mid-century.[41] Franko's recent monograph, which examines choreographer Serge Lifar's anti-Semitism and eager collaboration with German occupying forces in France during World War II, helped set the stage for the discussion of Balanchine's tenure as guest ballet master at the Paris Opéra Ballet in the fourth chapter.[42]

While my examination of Balanchine's cultural-political agenda incorporates dance historiography of the twentieth century and archival research, my analysis of Balanchine's musical practices necessarily considers the choreomusical traditions of the Russian ballet. Roland John Wiley's sensitive discussion of Imperial ballet customs and the collaborative expectations for composers has significantly shaped this project and my understanding of musical practices in the Russian ballet.[43] Valuable too are Imperial balletmaster Marius Petipa's (1818–1910) memoirs, Russian studies of the French-born choreographer, and Nadine Meisner's recent monograph.[44] Further, work on Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, where Balanchine developed his craft and completed his artistic education, has been foundational to my understanding of the choreographer's aesthetic attitudes and the importance of Russian musical practices Balanchine draws on in the United States.[45]

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[41] Gay Morris, *A Game for Dancers: Performing Modernism in the Postwar Years (1945–1960)* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2006), 38–63.
[42] Mark Franko, *The Fascist Turn in the Dance of Serge Lifar: Interwar French Ballet and the German Occupation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).
[43] Roland John Wiley, *Tchaikovsky* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); *The Life and Ballets of Lev Ivanov: Choreographer of* The Nutcracker *and* Swan Lake (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); *Tchaikovsky's Ballets:* Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty, Nutcracker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); and "Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*: The First Productions in Moscow and St. Petersburg" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1974).
[44] Vera Krasovskaya, "Marius Petipa and 'The Sleeping Princess,'" trans. Cynthia Read, *Dance Perspectives*, 49 (Spring 1972): 6–56. D. I. Leshkov, *Marius Petipa*, ed. Cyril Beaumont (London: C. W. Beaumont, 1971). Anna Nekhendzi, ed., *Marius Petipa: Materialy, Vospominaniia, Stat'i* (*Documents, Reminiscences, Essays*) (Leningrad: Leningrad State Theatre Museum, 1971). Nadine Meisner, *Marius Petipa: The Emperor's Ballet Master* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). Marius Petipa, *Russian Ballet Master: The Memoirs of Marius Petipa*, ed. Lillian Moore, trans. Helen Whittaker (London: Dance Books, 1958).
[45] Davinia Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and Beyond: Music and Dance in Belle-Époque Paris* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Lynn Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). Lynn Garafola and

In order to explain the dynamic relationship between music and movement in Balanchine's works and various revisions, I draw on Nicholas Cook's theories of musical multimedia analysis, specifically his categories of conformance, complementation, and contestation that form the basis of my choreomusical analyses.[46] On one end of the spectrum, conformance indicates direct congruence between music and other media (like choreography), reaching perhaps to something resembling or even achieving synesthesia. On the other, contestation denotes contradiction between music and visual elements. Complementation, a mid-point between these two extremes, suggests some pleasing combination of similarity and difference, a kind of synonym for music-movement dialogue that often seems to be Balanchine's goal, particularly in the revisions examined in chapter two. Choreomusicologist Stephanie Jordan has been a particular proponent of Cook's theories for analyzing danceworks.[47] Although my analyses draw on Jordan's contributions to music and dance analysis, this dissertation also incorporates more recent approaches.[48] Further, this dissertation considers production design, including costumes and décor, reflecting a holistic view of Balanchine's Cold War work that draws on theories of material and art history to understand the semiotic impact of these ballets.[49]

Nancy Van Norman Baer, *The Ballets Russes and its World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999). Boris Kochno, *Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes*, trans. Adrienne Foulke (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

[46] Nicholas Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

[47] Stephanie Jordan, *Stravinsky Dances: Re-Visions across a Century* (Alton: Hampshire: Dance Books, 2007), 8–10.

[48] These include Maureen A. Carr, *Multiple Masks: Neoclassicism in Stravinsky's Works on Greek Subjects* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002). Charles M. Joseph, *Stravinsky & Balanchine: A Journey of Invention* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) and *Stravinsky's Ballets* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011). Julia Phillips Randel, "Un-Voicing Orpheus: The Powers of Music in Stravinsky and Balanchine's 'Greek' Ballets," *The Opera Quarterly* 29, No. 2 (Spring 2013): 101–145.

[49] For an introduction to material culture, see Jules David Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no. 1 (Spring, 1982): 1-19. For a discussion of material history and its relevance to stage works, see Jane F. Fulcher, *Renegotiating French Identity: Musical Culture and Creativity in France during Vichy and the German Occupation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 8–9, 81–6. See also Donatella Barbieri, "Performativity and the Historical Body: Detecting Performance Through the Archived Costume," *Studies in Theatre & Performance* 33, no. 3 (September 2013): 281–301; Josée Chartrand, "Costumes of the Pavley-Oukrainsky Ballet: A Material Case Study," *Dress* (2020): 1–16; and Sarah Woodcock, "Wardrobe," in *Diaghilev and the Golden Age of the Ballets Russes*, ed. Jane Pritchard (London: V&A Publishing, 2010), 129–63. My emphasis on costumes also reflects my upbringing; my mother was trained as a historical costume designer and worked extensively in dance, so I had first-hand experience of these garments and their importance to the dancework from an early age.

To that end, archival materials, including video recordings, maquettes, and production designs, have been essential to this research. As the largest archive devoted to dance, the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts was an invaluable resource for historical footage of Balanchine ballets. It would have been nearly impossible to describe or analyze the changing versions of Balanchine's ballets without these recordings—but my analysis is also limited by what they have preserved, including discrepancies in performance or post-production editing that disturb the synchronization of music and movement. Reflecting the dissertation's transnational focus, materials from the Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra in Paris were central to discussions of Balanchine's work in Paris throughout the dissertation, particularly chapter four. Finally, documents at the Special Collections Research Center of the University of Chicago Library gave me the evidence to write authoritatively about Balanchine's cultural-political agenda, which informed the dancemaker's Cold War Formalist style.

Scope and Structure of Study

The first chapter offers an introduction to the practices of the Russian ballet through which this dissertation argues Balanchine's hybrid style can be understood. After summarizing the development of the art form in Russia, this chapter examines the Golden Age of Imperial Ballet under French choreographer Marius Petipa, who led the Mariinsky company from 1871 to 1903 and developed a distinctly Russian style of ballet later exported to the West by Ballets Russes impresario Serge Diaghilev. A broad survey of the musical practices Balanchine absorbed from the Saint Petersburg company and the Ballets Russes, including cuts, insertions, reorchestrations, and reorderings, sets the stage for more detailed discussions of these techniques in Balanchine's Cold War-era revisions.

The following three case study chapters then examine a different Balanchine ballet and the changes—musical, choreographic, and aesthetic—made to it over time. The ballets are presented chronologically, but because changes to the ballets made throughout the Cold War are considered, the periods they cover necessarily overlap.[50] These works—*Apollo* (1928), *Serenade* (1934), and Balanchine's "Bizet" ballet (1947/8)—while made in different phases of Balanchine's career and for different companies, share several features. First, the Paris Opéra Ballet performed all three during Balanchine's tenure there as guest ballet master in 1947—a posting examined in detail in chapter four. Second, these ballets initially featured decorative elements (and, in the case of *Apollo* and *Serenade,* narratives implied in part by them) that Balanchine reimagined after World War II, reflecting the choreographer's Cold War Formalism. Third, these were signature company works in the Cold War period and continue to be framed as representative of Balanchine's 'American' style. Finally, the three ballets discussed herein were among the works performed by NYCB during their government-sponsored 1962 tour of the Soviet Union, demonstrating an agreement on the part of the US State Department, dance experts and critics, and Balanchine himself that the ballets embodied the best of American dance.

Chapter two explores the gradual aesthetic and stark choreomusical changes made to the first Balanchine-Stravinsky collaboration, *Apollo*, originally titled *Apollon musagète*, between 1928 and 1980. A longtime repertory staple of the New York City Ballet, the narrative Franco-Russian ballet gradually reemerged as a Cold War Formalist work befitting America's cultural needs when Balanchine gradually abstracted the work. Then, during the "Second Cold War" beginning in the late 1970s, Balanchine made a drastic musical cut to the beginning of the ballet and substantial choreographic changes to the end of the work. This chapter examines the impact of both the

[50] See Appendix 1 for a timeline of these works and revisions, mapped alongside significant events in Balanchine's life.

musical and choreographic changes on the ballet's structure as well as the improved aesthetic coherence of Balanchine's late 1970s *Apollo*, first performed by the celebrated dancer and Soviet defector, Mikhail Baryshnikov. As such, *Apollo* illustrates the central tensions of this dissertation: on the one hand, the choreographer's sparse aesthetic and non-narrative revisions, a response to the anti-figurative ideals of American art in the Cold War period; and on the other, the use of repertoire and musical techniques drawn from Balanchine's training with the Russian Imperial Ballet as well as Diaghilev's Ballets Russes to achieve his cultural-political goals.

Chapter three considers *Serenade*, an enduring example of Balanchine's neoclassical style and the New York City Ballet's signature piece in the Cold War era.[51] His first American ballet, *Serenade* was choreographed in 1934 to Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings in C Major, Op. 48 (1880). Like *Apollo*, *Serenade* underwent a series of visual and narrative erasures in the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s, which helped it to serve as a symbol of American dance ingenuity—and particularly during New York City Ballet's 1962 Soviet tour, as it was the first work performed on each stop. Although it was used to articulate Soviet-American cultural differences during the Cold War, Balanchine constructed the score for his *Serenade* much as an Imperial ballet master might, cutting, adding to, and reorganizing Tchaikovsky's music. In fact, Balanchine rather audaciously reversed the order of Tchaikovsky's symphonic movements, thereby disrupting the music's cyclical form—but the choreographer's musical acuity also shines through in this beloved ballet, as a series of musical

[51] Neoclassical ballet, related to musical neoclassicism, emerged in the 1920s. The style is closely associated with George Balanchine, as *Apollon musagète* is typically identified as the first representative example. Unlike musical neoclassicism's rejection of the Romantic aesthetic and extreme avant-garde in favor of art that revived classicism, this aesthetic designation in dance suggests a modernization of the reigning school of the Russian ballet, blending its traditional vocabulary with vernacular styles, greater speed and athleticism, and an emphasis on structure, particularly from a musical score, rather than narrative. As Lynn Garafola has noted, the choreographers of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes never fully rejected the past, their work deeply rooted in the syntax and steps of classical ballet. For a history of neoclassical ballet, see Mark Franko, *The Fascist Turn in the Dance of Serge Lifar: Interwar French Ballet and the German Occupation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 1–5. For a discussion of neoclassicism and Balanchine, see Andrea Harris, *Making Ballet American: Modernism Before and Beyond Balanchine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 2. For an interrogation of neoclassicism's significance to Balanchine and other members of the Diaghilev enterprise, see Garafola, *Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance*, 407–8.

cuts and insertions are seamlessly incorporated into the ballet score. Examining both the Franco-Russian musical tradition and mid-century American aesthetics of *Serenade* reveals the fascinating dichotomy of this American dance classic, as well as that of its creator.

Chapter four compares productions of Balanchine's "Bizet ballet" choreographed to Georges Bizet's Symphony in C (1855) for the Paris Opéra Ballet and his own US troupe. While the sumptuous *Le Palais de cristal* delighted French audiences in 1947, the costumes were simplified, the sets streamlined, and the work renamed for its American premiere during the New York City Ballet's debut season in 1948. As such, the ballet demonstrates Balanchine's thoughtful engagement with American Cold War aesthetic priorities. But unlike *Apollo* or *Serenade*, which were also set on the Paris Opéra Ballet by Balanchine in 1947, visually simplified in the late 1940s and 1950s, and performed in Russia in 1962, *Symphony in C* does not feature musical revisions or alterations. Indeed, a dissertation that claims to explore Balanchine's musicianship must consider more than simply his penchant for musical additions, erasures, and reorderings. While these practices make up a substantial portion of Balanchine's musical methods, they do not exclusively represent the dancemaker's approach. To that end, examining *Symphony in C* allows this dissertation to draw a complete picture of the choreographer's practices and methods in his construction of an American ballet tradition— his paradoxical preference for French and Russian composers, his respect for musical scores, and his Cold War Formalism.

The last chapter of the dissertation examines a critically important prelude to NYCB's State Department-sponsored tours that has remained largely unexamined in dance literature up to this point—the 1952 *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* festival.[52] The month-long event was organized by

[52] The festival is briefly discussed in Lynn Garafola, "Arc de Triomphe," *Ballet Review* 35, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 77, and Andrea Harris, *Making Ballet American*, 167–76.

the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), an anti-communist group covertly backed by the CIA that shaped US strategy on cultural exchange during the Cold War. The first close examination of the *Masterpieces* festival, this chapter explores NYCB's repertoire and reception at the Paris fête, which established the headlining company as America's representative dance troupe abroad. Further, the chapter reveals Balanchine's membership in the Congress, thereby fundamentally altering how we understand the choreographer and the role that he and his work played in the Cold War's cultural contest. In addition to briefly offering ideas for expansion, the dissertation's conclusion connects Balanchine's membership in the Congress for Cultural Freedom to his Cold War Formalism and the development of a distinctly American dance tradition in a period of heightened tensions between his homeland and his adopted nation.

This dissertation demonstrates the value of Balanchine's danceworks to anti-communist cultural and government organizations while providing new insights on the Franco-Russian traditions that permeate Balanchine's 'American' ballets. Complicating one-dimensional readings of Balanchine as an American modernist choreographer or an apolitical figure, this study reframes him as an active intellectual figure who, inspired by his staunch anti-communism, understood Cold War cultural calculations and created danceworks that reflected this shared cultural-political agenda. Although his immigrant identity, musical practices, and repertoire selection sometimes seem at odds with his contributions to mid-century American dance, Balanchine emerges from this dissertation a far more complex and politically engaged dancemaker than ever before.

Chapter 1

George Balanchine and the Musical Legacy of the Russian Ballet

This dissertation examines George Balanchine's use of Franco-Russian music and musical practices and interrogates the significance of Balanchine's reliance on these techniques in the context of the Cold War-era export of the choreographer's ballets. While Balanchine's increasingly abstract ballets were praised for their innovation and regularly performed abroad to represent American cultural achievements during the Cold War, these works often relied on musical practices of the Russian émigré ballet. In order to explore the echoes of these traditions in Balanchine's 'American' ballets, it is necessary to understand that tradition in some detail. This chapter establishes the context through which Balanchine's practices can be understood in preparation for more detailed discussions in subsequent chapters on the Russian musical approaches that surface in Balanchine's Cold War-era revisions of American ballets.

The chapter begins by summarizing ballet's development in Russia, including an exploration of its close connection to French artists and traditions. This is followed by a brief introduction to the history and practices of the fin-de-siècle Russian Imperial Ballet—the era during which Balanchine trained at the Imperial Ballet School and the Imperial Conservatory of Music in Saint Petersburg.[1] Of particular emphasis is the Golden Age of Imperial Ballet in Saint Petersburg under

[1] As the city's name changed during the early Soviet period, so too did the names of major cultural institutions. The conservatory was duly renamed the Petrograd and Leningrad Conservatory, and is now the N.A. Rimsky-Korsakov Saint Petersburg State Conservatory. The Imperial Ballet School was quickly renamed the Leningrad State Choreographic Institute in the early Soviet period, and in 1957 changed its name to the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet in honor of renowned pedagogue and dancer Agrippina Vaganova. As this chapter deals primarily with the history of the Russian ballet during the Imperial period, I will generally refer to these two institutions as the Imperial Ballet School and the Saint Petersburg Conservatory but may employ the chronologically accurate institutional names when appropriate.

choreographer and ballet master Marius Petipa and Ivan Vsevolozhsky, Director of the Imperial Theatres from 1881–99. The chapter compares Petipa's work with "specialist" ballet composers (Roland John Wiley's term for composers who specialized in writing music to meet the needs of choreographers) to his collaboration with Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, the first so-called "serious" Russian composer to write music for ballet.[2] Exploring the treatment of commissioned and pre-existing music in the Imperial Theatres illustrates the attitudes instilled in Ballets Russes impresario Serge Diaghilev and other early-twentieth-century ballet innovators from Russia, including a young George Balanchine. Trained in the traditions and techniques of the Russian Ballet both within and outside of Russia, Balanchine employed these methods in ballets exported around the world to represent the best of American art during the Cold War conflict.

Western Culture in the Russian Capital: Ballet Arrives in Saint Petersburg

Although contemporary audiences often associate "ballet" almost exclusively with "Russia"—an enduring consequence of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes and the Soviet export of the Bolshoi and Kirov companies during the Cold War conflict—the art form arrived in Russia much later than other European nations. It is typically Empress Anna Ioannovna's establishment of a dancing school in 1738 that marks ballet's arrival in Russia; compare this to the 1669 founding of the Académie d'Opéra, the forerunner to France's École de danse de l'Opéra national de Paris.[3] The Imperial Ballet School was established in Peter the Great's Western-style capital of Saint Petersburg,

[2] For a discussion of so-called "serious" composers—as opposed to "specialists"—writing for the ballet, see Roland John Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets:* Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty, Nutcracker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 8–10. Wiley notes that among Russian composers of this period, particularly the nationalist composers called the "Mighty Handful" or the "Mighty Five," ballet music was not a valued genre.

[3] Anna's administration (1730–1740) was largely defined by the Westernizing influence of her uncle, Peter the Great. The empresses took a particular interest in music and theatre; the first performances of Italian *commedia dell'arte* and *opera seria* were also organized under her reign. See Alexander Lipski, "Some Aspects of Westernization during the Reign of Anna Ioannovna, 1730–1740," *The American Slavic and Eastern European Review* 18, no. 1 (February 1959): 1–11.

nicknamed Russia's "Window to the West" for its strategic position on the Neva River and its emulation of European architecture and cultural institutions.[4] Ballet came later still to Moscow, Russia's medieval capital, then considered the nation's cultural backwater.[5]

The first Director of the Imperial Ballet School was Jean-Baptiste Landé, the first in a series of foreign ballet masters employed throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The importance of French dance instructors in particular reflects broader cultural attitudes in Russia at the time. Before the Napoleonic invasion, known in Russia as the Patriotic War of 1812, aristocratic families eschewed speaking Russian in favor of French, which was believed to be the superior language and a mark of civilization. Although the Napoleonic invasion ushered in a Russian-language revival, the preference for French ballet masters endured until the end of the nineteenth century.

Despite its late start, Russian ballet developed quickly with the support of Catherine II, who built a well-organized theatrical monopoly in the capital city by the end of the eighteenth century. The Imperial court spared no expense to attract a succession of international stars and foreign ballet masters, who imported Western innovations in dance to Russia. Among the most important early ballet masters was Charles-Louis Didelot, who had his first major success with the one-act ballet-divertissement, *Flore et Zéphire*, which premiered in London in 1796.[6] In this production, the

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[4] Dmitri Shvidkovsky, *St. Petersburg: Architecture of the Tsars*, trans. John Goodman (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996), 20. Arthur L. George with Elena George, *St. Petersburg: Russia's Window to the Future, The First Three Centuries* (Lanham, MD: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2003), 19–20, 29.

[5] Although the Moscow-based Bolshoi Ballet is now arguably the more famous of Russia's two major dance companies, it was decidedly second-string during the Imperial period when the Saint Petersburg company served as an emblem of Russian power (as well as a favorite court entertainment). The two companies had distinct styles; Moscow's preferences for strong narrative, mime, folk dance, and comic elements contrasted with Petersburg's spectacular stage machinery, elaborate formations, and lavish productions. For a discussion of the Saint Petersburg and Moscow companies in this period, Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets:* Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty, Nutcracker, 25–28. For a history of the Moscow company, see Simon Morrison, *Bolshoi Confidential: Secrets of the Russian Ballet from the Rule of the Tsars to Today* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016).

[6] Didelot studied with Jean Dauberval and Jean-Georges Noverre; the latter was an important collaborator of composer Christoph Willibald Gluck.

choreographer was able to achieve the illusion of weightlessness for the first time; wires allowed dancers to move through the air and pose on the tips of the toes, thereby introducing the concept of dancing *en pointe* to the stage.[7] Didelot spent a large portion of his career in Russia, and his pedagogical reforms, which blended French ballet technique with an insistence on expressive acting, formed essential elements of the Saint Petersburg style.[8] Moreover, ballet began to develop a uniquely Russian identity under Didelot: he nurtured native talent, slowed the import of foreign dancers, and staged new ballets on Russian subjects.[9]

The Patriotic War of 1812 heralded decades of increasing authoritarianism in Russia.[10] Repression and reaction notably characterized Nicholas I's reign (1825–55), whose ascension to the throne was challenged by the failed military coup known as the Decembrist Revolt.[11] Ballet was not immune to these political crises: Prince Alexander Shakhovskoy, the Director of the Imperial Theatres, was fired in the administrative shakeup that followed the Decembrist Revolt. His replacement, Prince Pavel Gagarin, soon cut Didelot's salary—hardly the way to begin a productive working relationship. Didelot was later arrested on Gagarin's orders, and he resigned his position in 1829.[12] The development of the Saint Petersburg company soon stagnated, its stages dominated by foreign-born stars of the Romantic ballet.[13]

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[7] Lincoln Kirstein, *Four Centuries of Ballet: Fifty Masterworks* (New York: Dover Publications, 1984), 131.
[8] Yuri Slonimsky, *Mastera baleta* [*Ballet Masters*] (Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1937), 30.
[9] These included *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* (1823) after a poem by Alexander Pushin. Roland John Wiley, comp. and trans., *A Century of Russian Ballet: Documents and Accounts, 1810–1910* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990), 81–2.
[10] Irby C. Nichols, Jr., "Tsar Alexander I: Pacifist, Aggressor, or Vacillator?" *East European Quarterly* XVI, no. 1 (March 1982): 40–41.
[11] Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825–1855* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), 186–188.
[12] Jennifer Homans, *Apollo's Angels: A History of Ballet* (New York: Random House, 2010), 259. Samuel H. Cross, "The Russian Ballet Before Dyagilev," *Slavonic and East European Review* 22, no. 4 (January 1, 1944): 30–31.
[13] For a wide-ranging discussion of the Romantic ballet, see Lynn Garafola, ed. *Rethinking the Sylph: New Perspectives on the Romantic Ballet* (Hanover: NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1997).

Perhaps confusingly, ballet's major style periods do not conform to similarly named periods in Western classical music. Romantic ballet dominated Paris in the 1830s and 1840s, and—in a reverse of musical style periods—was followed by the Classical ballet, also referred to as Imperial ballet.[14] Like "classical music," however, classical ballet can also refer to a codified technical approach to performance. Only a few years after the first Romantic ballet appeared in Paris, the new style, with its supernatural plots and *sur les pointes* technique, arrived in Saint Petersburg. Ballet master Antoine Titus, who introduced Russian audiences to the latest French Romantic ballets, invited acclaimed Italian dancer Marie Taglioni to Saint Petersburg in 1837. Her performances were a sensation, and her continuing guest appearances rekindled enthusiasm for dance, which had declined in the years following Didelot's departure.[15] Fanny Elssler and Carlotta Grisi, who were among the most famous ballerinas of the Romantic ballet era, also appeared in Russia in the 1840s and 1850s. But it was a collection of imported dancing masters—Jules Perrot, Arthur Saint-Léon, and finally Marius Petipa—rather than prima ballerinas who would usher Russian ballet into its Golden Age.

French dancer and choreographer Jules Perrot was the creator of some of the most celebrated Romantic ballets, including *Giselle* (1841), co-choreographed by Jean Coralli, *La Esmeralda* (1844), *Pas de Quatre* (1845), and *Faust* (1848).[16] He imported these fashionable new works from Paris, Milan, and London to the Petersburg stage between 1848 and 1859 during his term as first ballet master, expanding the Saint Petersburg company's repertoire significantly. Many of these works, including his spectacular *Le Corsaire* (1858) for Saint Petersburg, were later revived by Marius

[14] In addition to style periods, the Imperial Ballet can also refer to the Russian company subsidized by the Imperial Court, particularly the company in Saint Petersburg. The ballet company operated under the direction of the Imperial Theatres of the Russian Empire.
[15] Wiley, *A Century of Russian Ballet: Documents and Accounts, 1810–1910*, 82.
[16] Coralli, the *premier maître de ballet* at the Paris Opéra, was responsible for the ensemble choreography for *Giselle*, while Perrot choreographed the title role—though he was not credited for financial reasons. When *Giselle* was staged in London at Her Majesty's Theatre on March 12, 1842, Perrot and André Deshayes were credited with the choreography.

Petipa.[17] Several of these revivals continued to be performed in Russia long after they fell into obscurity in Europe, laying the groundwork for their survival into the twenty-first century.[18]

Perrot was succeeded by another French ballet master, Arthur Saint-Léon, who served the Imperial Theatres from 1859 to 1869.[19] His most famous work for Saint Petersburg was *The Little Humpbacked Horse* (1864), a ballet based on the Russian fairytale that employed numerous folk styles in a spectacular series of national dance *divertissements*. The lavish production, shaped by Saint Petersburg's preference for grand spectacles and sumptuous stagings, also included Oriental scenes and classical sequences designed to represent "the ideal kingdom of the classic dance."[20] Although *The Little Humpbacked Horse* was among the most successful ballets ever created for the Imperial theatres, its significance is dwarfed by the impact of Saint-Léon's enduring masterpiece, *Coppélia* (1870), choreographed for the Paris Opéra Ballet in close collaboration with composer Léo Delibes.[21]

Marius Petipa and the *Ballet à grand spectacle*

Saint-Léon was locked in fierce competition with the company's other resident choreographer, Marius Petipa (1818–1910), during much of the former's tenure with the Saint Petersburg company. His rival was part of a legendary family of French dancers; Marius was often

[17] It is impossible to say how much of Perrot's original choreography actually remains in these ballets, which have withstood not only the inevitable passage of time and changing aesthetic ideals in ballet but also substantial shifts in Russia's national identity and cultural policies. While Petipa's revivals of Perrot's ballets reimagined them for late nineteenth-century audiences, they nevertheless offer precious insight into the Romantic ballet. Ivor Guest, *Jules Perrot: Master of the Romantic Ballet* (New York: Dance Horizons, 1984), 347–348.
[18] Lynn Garafola, Introduction to "The Diaries of Marius Petipa," *Studies in Dance History* III, no. 1 (Spring 1992), xiii. See pp. 80–94 for a complete list of Petipa works, including choreography for opera.
[19] Ivor Guest, introduction to *Letters from a Ballet-Master: The Correspondence of Arthur Saint-Léon,* ed. Ivor Guest (London: Dance Books, 1981), 24.
[20] André Levinson, Introduction to *A History of Ballet in Russia (1613–1881)*, by Cyril W. Beaumont, (London: C.W. Beaumont, 1930), x.
[21] Wiley, *A Century of Russian Ballet*, 218.

overshadowed as a young man by his older brother, Lucien, who originated the leading role of Albrecht in *Giselle* (1841). Ultimately it was in Russia, rather than Western Europe, where the younger Petipa realized his unique talents. The Imperial Ballet of Saint Petersburg proved as instrumental to the development of the choreographer's style as Petipa was to building the world's leading ballet company at the end of the nineteenth century.

Marius Petipa left Paris and arrived in Russia in 1847, where he initially enjoyed a career as *premier danseur* in addition to his work as a choreographer. Petipa served four tsars—Nicholas I, Alexander II, Alexander III, and Nicholas II—in an era when dancers were celebrated as special servants of the Russian Empire. The close relationship between art and Empire was reinforced by funding, as the Imperial Theatre's budget came directly from the court's coffers.[22] Imperial dancers rode to the Mariinsky Theatre in carriages that bore the Empire's double-headed eagle insignia, and greeting the royal family before or after performances was not unusual. Emperors bestowed extravagant gifts and medals on favorite performers, and, as in France, Russian aristocrats often took advantage of the pervasive system of sexual exploitation that existed within ballet to engage in intimate relationships with dancers.[23]

Petipa was named second ballet master in 1863 and assumed the role of *Premier Maître de Ballet*, or first ballet master, of the Imperial Ballet in 1869. Under his leadership, Russian ballet—particularly the Saint Petersburg company—developed a distinct style and repertory that outlived two political systems and continues to thrive in the twenty-first century. Unlike Perrot and Saint-Léon, both of whom arrived in Saint Petersburg with Romantic ballets ready to be restaged or

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[22] Meisner, *Marius Petipa: The Emperor's Ballet Master*, 34.
[23] See Joellen A. Meglin "Feminism or Fetishism? *La Révolte des femmes* and Women's Liberation in France in the 1830s," in *Rethinking the Sylph*, ed. Lynn Garafola, 69–90. The most infamous example of such a relationship in Russia, dramatized in a controversial 2017 Russian-language film, was between future Tsar Nicholas II and prima ballerina Mathilde Kschessinska, who later married the Emperor's first cousin, Grand Duke Andrey Vladimirovich. See Coryne Hall, *Imperial Dancer: Mathilde Kschessinska and the Romanovs* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2005).

revised to suit Russian tastes, most of Petipa's ballets were tailor-made for the Imperial Theatres. While these works strongly reflected the customs and conventions of the Russian Imperial Court, the dancing style Petipa developed in Saint Petersburg was a mélange of various national schools. Built on the *danse d'école* or the pure academic style of classical ballet, the Saint Petersburg company came to be defined by its blend of French elegance, delicate Danish footwork, Italian virtuosity, Russian musicality, and aristocratic restraint.[24]

Petipa is most closely associated with the 'grand' ballet or *ballet à grand spectacle*, which emulated the aesthetic of French grand opera, an operatic genre also popular in Russia in this period.[25] An expansion of the two acts typical of Romantic ballet, the Petipa *ballet à grand spectacle* was a full-evening affair that unfolded leisurely over three acts or more, alternating spectacular dance episodes with pantomime.[26] Like the jeweled Fabergé eggs produced in the same period, Petipa's choreography featured kaleidoscopic ensembles, elaborate pas de deux, and exquisite variations that demanded enormous imagination and constant invention.[27]

Petipa's choreographic style was eclectic but systematic—Nadine Meisner identifies the overarching quality of his ballets as heterogeneity.[28] The ballets included strong narrative and compelling pantomime scenes along with the effective use of the *corps de ballet*.[29] Elaborate processions and court ceremonies, borrowed from French grand opera, were a major feature.[30]

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[24] Tim Scholl, *From Petipa to Balanchine: Classical Revival and the Modernisation of Ballet* (London: Routledge, 2001), 18.
[25] Like ballet, opera came to Russia relatively late but experienced a Golden Age in the nineteenth century, thanks in large part to the work of Mikhail Glinka (*A Life for the Tsar*, 1836 and *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, 1942) as well as Modest Mussorgsky and Tchaikovsky, with whom Russian opera arguably reached its apogee.
[26] Although Petipa's oeuvre also included shorter ballets and *pièces d'occasion*, his surviving works are all evening-length; as a result, these ballets have defined the Petipa style.
[27] Meisner, *Marius Petipa,* 135.
[28] Meisner, *Marius Petipa*, 139.
[29] Slonimsky, *Mastera baleta* [*Ballet Masters*], 248.
[30] For a discussion of the political and symbolic significance of these elements on the French grand opera stage, see Jane F. Fulcher, *The Nation's Image: French Grand Opera as Politics and Politicized Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 129–130.

These scenes served to introduce relevant characters, dazzle the eye with magnificent costumes and sets, and justify large ensemble dances, including national or character dances that had been popular in the works of Perrot and Saint-Léon.[31] Petipa employed props—garlands, fans, scarves—for cumulative visual effect, as well as *practicables*, portable podiums or steps, to add dimension to ensemble scenes. Another favorite Petipa device was the use of children, which produced a play of perspective and gave the students at the Imperial Ballet School, including a young George Balanchine, invaluable performance experience.[32]

Although his ballets included pantomime scenes and elaborate processions, Petipa was also a master of pure dance, hence the frequent comparisons to Balanchine.[33] Sumptuous *pas de deux* and variations, or solo dances, for principal dancers were critical elements of his grand ballets.[34] His *grand pas* often took place during vision or dream scenes—extended sequences suspended in time and place that brought the prima ballerina and the leading male dancer together—referred to as *grand pas d'action*.[35] These vision scenes usually featured elaborately designed ensemble sequences and dances for soloists, climaxing in the *grand pas de deux* for principal dancers. A typical *grand pas de deux* would consist of an *entrée*, or entrance, an adagio with partnering, solo variations for both the male and

[31] These national dances were not ethnographically informed and, like the Orientalist ballets of the Romantic era, often alluded to territories claimed by the Russian Empire, including Finland, Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine.
[32] In her autobiography, George's classmate and prima ballerina Alexandra Danilova recalled their participation in such scenes. Alexandra Danilova, *Choura: The Memoirs of Alexandra Danilova* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 33–34.
[33] Nadine Meisner describes Balanchine as Petipa's "twentieth-century successor" and "spiritual son." She argues that Petipa's ballets, while never devoid of narrative, featured self-sufficient variations and ensembles that "increasingly promoted the route of plotless dance that would lead to Balanchine." Meisner, *Marius Petipa*, 3, 6, 146.
[34] While in music 'variations' refer to a technique in which material is repeated in an altered form, in dance, the term simply refers to a solo dance passage. As the ballets discussed herein do not feature musical variations with the exception of *Theme and Variations*, choreographed to the final movement of Tchaikovsky's Orchestral Suite No. 3, the use of this term should be read as a synonym for solo dance episodes.
[35] Famous examples of Petipa vision scenes include the "Kingdom of the Shades" in Act II of *La Bayadère* (1877) and Act II of *The Sleeping Beauty*. As Tim Scholl has noted, this scene serves two purposes, providing an opportunity for an episode of pure dance while furthering the narrative and anticipating the ballet's dénouement. Scholl, *From Petipa to Balanchine: Classical Revival and the Modernisation of Ballet*, 24–25.

female dancer, and a coda, with music composed to suit Petipa's choreographic plan, which framed the featured dancers in a reflection of ballet's strict hierarchy.[36]

The finale of Petipa's *ballet à grand spectacle* was a celebratory divertissement—often a wedding, coronation, or other court ceremony—followed by the closing tableau. A painted backdrop against which dancers appeared, the tableau was designed to convey the Imperial Ballet's ultimate message of harmony restored.[37] Petipa's magnificent spectacles, highly ordered in their structure but dazzlingly diverse in their settings, delighted the social elite that made up much of the audience in Saint Petersburg. These astounding ballets also featured familiar echoes of Imperial rituals, a mirror for the court's splendor—as well as its absolutism.[38]

Ivan Vsevolozhsky and the Golden Age of the Imperial Ballet

During his sixty-year career in Russia, Petipa worked for eight Imperial Theatre Directors. It was his decades-long partnership with Ivan Vsevolozhsky, however, that produced some of the Russian Imperial Ballet's greatest treasures.[39] Vsevolozhsky was named Director in 1881, and his tenure is generally divided into two periods: the first, from 1881 to 1886, when he was the Director of the Imperial Theatres in both Saint Petersburg and Moscow, and the second, from 1886 to 1899, when a subordinate director was installed in Moscow. Theatrical reforms and sweeping

[36] Meisner, *Marius Petipa*, 144.
[37] If the ballet ended in death, as in the case of *Swan Lake* (1895), the final tableau would be an apotheosis, reassuring the audience of a reunion in eternity or other evidence of supernatural forces at play. Meisner, *Marius Petipa*, 149.
[38] Jane F. Fulcher's monograph on French grand opera, *The Nation's Image: French Grand Opera as Politics and Politicized Art*, similarly explores cultural-political messages communicated on the operatic stage from 1830 to 1870, a period of intense national change and turmoil.
[39] Of the roughly 75 ballets Petipa created for the Imperial court, only six of his evening-length works are still performed—*Le Corsaire* (1863), *Don Quixote* (1869), *La Bayadère* (1877), *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890), *Swan Lake* (1895), and *Raymonda* (1898). Of these, only the three from the last phase of Petipa's career, during which the choreographer worked closely with Vsevolozhsky as well as composers Pyotr Tchaikovsky and Aleksandr Glazunov, have survived more or less intact. The earlier three ballets have been less faithfully preserved, though they are still performed regularly and form a cornerstone of the Petersburg company's repertoire. Scholl, *From Petipa to Balanchine*, 4.

administrative changes dominated his early tenure. Some of these reforms aimed to increase and standardize salaries, bringing those for Russian dancers in line with foreign talent. Others improved the standards of design and stage machinery. Under Vsevolozhsky, the Imperial Theatre built warehouses, established archives, and installed a photography studio to preserve repertoire and production designs, thereby modernizing the theatres and increasing efficiency.[40]

Vsevolozhsky also spearheaded the end of the decades-long ban on private theatres, which Alexander III overturned in 1882.[41] The end of the Imperial theatrical monopoly had a significant impact on ballet in Russia's cultural capital. Touring companies stimulated new interest in the genre, while foreign ballerinas brought novel techniques to Petersburg's stages, which Petipa judiciously incorporated in his own company.[42] No longer sealed off from European innovations, the standard of the Imperial Ballet rose substantially. But it was Vsevolozhsky's final reform, aimed at ballet music, that would irrevocably alter the course of the concert dance in Russia and the West, setting the stage for the innovations of Serge Diaghilev, Igor Stravinsky, and George Balanchine.

When Vsevolozhsky was appointed Director of the Imperial Theatres, the ballet master's complete authority over all other collaborators, including the composer, was sanctioned by law.[43] Ballet music was provided primarily by "specialists"—Roland John Wiley's term for composers including Cesare Pugni, Riccardo Drigo, and Ludwig Minkus, who wrote music to order for the Imperial Ballet. When mounting new productions, the ballet master would dictate to the specialist not only the number of bars needed for each *pas de deux*, *pas d'action*, ensemble dance, and pantomime scene, but time signatures, tempi, tonality, and orchestration as well. Once the music was

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[40] Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets,* 96–97.
[41] Meisner, *Marius Petipa*, 191.
[42] Slonimsky, *Mastera baleta* [*Ballet Masters*], 260. In particular, Petipa combined the technical brilliance of the Italian school, represented first and foremost by the pedagogy of Enrico Cecchetti, with his own French training for the Russian school.
[43] Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets*, 4–5.

written, changes would often be requested—whether because of a miscalculation, an unforeseen change, or simply because the choreographer disliked the commissioned music. Tchaikovsky accurately summarized the situation for nineteenth-century specialist composers: "during the production of a new ballet, ballet masters treat the music very unceremoniously and demand many changes and alterations." Although his ballets, composed under precisely these expectations, would become internationally renowned, Tchaikovsky declared, "To write under such conditions is impossible."[44]

Specialist composers were also responsible for adapting and interpolating existing music for revivals and reworkings of earlier ballets—a practice that makes ballet music of this period particularly difficult to reconstruct. Notions of the "score" remained highly fluid in the Imperial Ballet, resisting the musical integrity that would become more commonplace in the twentieth century with Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.[45] In his memoirs, Petipa explained that it was common practice when reviving earlier works to "create dances in accordance with his own fantasy, his talent and the tastes of the public of his own time."[46] The ballet master went on to note that "in *La fille mal gardée* Mr [Paul] Taglioni changed all the previous dances, and Mr Hertel composed new music, and so too do I, without exception, every time I revive an old ballet." [47]

Following Petipa, the practice of adaptation and interpolation in ballet revivals remained in use among Russian choreographers and impresarios.[48] Among these was Serge Diaghilev, who grew

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[44] Quoted in Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets*, 1.
[45] Garafola, Introduction to "The Diaries of Marius Petipa," xiii-xiv.
[46] is evident in the Sergeyev Collection of late Imperial ballet scores and choreographic notations held in the Harvard Theatre Collection at Harvard's Houghton Library. A bound volume of Sergeyev's dance notations for the Mariinsky's 1895 revival of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* with musical revisions by Drigo demonstrates the substantial additions to the Prologue, while pencil markings in a copy of the piano reduction illustrate a multitude of cuts made to Tchaikovsky's score. Nikolai Sergeev Choreographic and Music Scores for the Ballet Swan Lake, 1905-1924 (MS Thr 186). Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.
[47] Quoted in Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets*, 2.
[48] For a discussion on this "penchant for tinkering" and its impact on the ontological status of ballets in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Garafola, Introduction to "The Diaries of Marius Petipa," xii–v.

up at the height of the specialist tradition of ballet music and served as special assistant to the Director of Imperial Theatres, Prince Serge Volkonsky, from 1899 to 1901 before ultimately founding his own legendary company, the Ballets Russes, which performed between 1909 and 1929.[49] For one of the Ballets Russes's most popular works, Diaghilev eliminated the third movement of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's symphonic suite *Schéhérazade*, Op. 35 (1888) for the company's 1910 ballet.[50] Balanchine too used these practices when revising existing music for his ballets; we see evidence of this in *Apollo* with music by Igor Stravinsky*,* discussed in chapter two, and in Balanchine's use of Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings in C Major, Op. 48, which is the subject of chapter three. Such practices remained in use in the USSR, as well; Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, was substantially altered in advance of the 1940 production at the Mariinsky/Kirov Theatre. Choreographer Leonid Lavrovsky and conductor Isay Sherman insisted that Prokofiev expand the orchestra and incorporate elements of the Imperial ballet, namely a grand *pas de deux* and additional variations for the prima ballerina.[51] Nineteenth-century works including *La Bayadère* (1877), *Le Corsaire* (1856)*,* and *Don Quixote* (1869) continued to be altered during the Soviet era, their scores a bewildering patchwork of insertions and interpolations, the list of composers growing with each passing decade.[52]

Beyond adding or substituting dances in revivals, the Imperial Ballet's specialist composers also created entirely new ballets from pre-existing music. Vizentini's score for Petipa's *L'Ordre du roi*

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[49] Lynn Garafola, "Diaghilev's Musical Legacy," in *Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 46. A dispute between Diaghilev and Volkonsky over a new production of Léo Delibes' ballet *Sylvia* (1876) at the Mariinsky ultimately ended with both men leaving the Imperial Theatres—though Diaghilev was able to cultivate important relationships within the Imperial family during his tenure. For more on his tenure at the Imperial Theatres, see Lynn Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 165–9.
[50] His widow Nadezhda Rimskaya-Korsakova strongly opposed this musical omission and the company's 1914 staging of *Le Coq d'Or* as an opera-ballet. Diaghilev may have felt some lingering resentment toward the composer after, according to the composer's devoted secretary, Rimsky-Korsakov dismissed his compositions as "absurd."
[51] See Simon Morrison, *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 106–10.
[52] Matthew Naughtin, San Francisco Ballet's music librarian, has written a handbook titled *Ballet Music*; it features a helpful guide to ballet repertoire, including an overview of major musical changes to the standard repertoire. Matthew Naughtin, *Ballet Music: A Handbook* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 139–372.

(1877) based on Delibes' operetta *Le roi l'a dit* (1873), for example, combined music by Daniel François Espirit Auber, Jules Massenet, Anton Rubinstein, and Johann Strauss II, as well as Léo Delibes. This practice was used by the Ballets Russes as well. Among the best-known is *Pulcinella* (1920), composed by Igor Stravinsky on works then attributed to the Italian Baroque composer Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, featuring choreography by Léonide Massine and décor by Pablo Picasso.[53] The ballet is often cited as the start of Stravinsky's neoclassical period, which spanned from roughly 1920 to 1954.[54] Other examples include *The Good-Humoured Ladies* (1917), with music from Domenico Scarlatti sonatas arranged by Vincenzo Tommasini featuring choreography by Léonide Massine and designs by Léon Bakst, and *La Boutique fantasque* (1919), with choreography by Massine, designs by André Derain, and music by Ottorino Respighi based on piano works by Gioachino Rossini. Several of Balanchine's ballets were also constructed in this way, including his celebrated three-act abstract ballet *Jewels* (1967). The first act, "Emeralds," is a pastiche of Gabriel Fauré's incidental music for Maurice Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1898) and Edmond Haraucourt's *Shylock* (1889), while the third and final act, "Diamonds," is choreographed to all but the first movement of Tchaikovsky's Third Symphony in D Major, Op. 29 (1875)—the only Tchaikovsky symphony to feature five movements.[55]

While their music has often been dismissed as unambitious and dull (or worse), Wiley has reevaluated specialist composers' ballet scores, noting the efficacy with which they approached

[53] In fact, the music was written by several composers including Pergolesi, Domenico Gallo, Carlo Ignazio Monza, Alessandro Parisotti, and Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer. See Maureen Carr, ed., *Stravinsky's* Pulcinella*: A Facsimile of the Sources and Sketches* (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, Inc., 2010).

[54] Stravinsky later recalled that "*Pulcinella* was my discovery of the past, the epiphany through which the whole of my late work became possible. It was a backward look, of course—the first of many love affairs in that direction—but it was a look in the mirror, too." Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Expositions and Developments* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 113.

[55] "Rubies," typically performed between "Emeralds" and "Diamonds," is choreographed to Stravinsky's Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra (1929).

stringent practical requirements as well as unusual artistic demands.[56] In Petipa's ballets, music was expected to complement rather than compete with the dance, the visual elements enhanced but never overpowered by the aural experience.[57] Rhythmic and timbral shifts, unexpected phrase lengths, unusual motivic material, and other elements that make concert music interesting were actually understood as defects in ballet scores, as they risked shifting the audience's attention away from the lavish production and spectacular dancing to the orchestra pit. As a result, Wiley notes "an inverse relationship between interest in music and interest in dance, whereby music makes its strongest impact when solo dance is the least commanding, and vice versa."[58] Russian composers may have dismissed ballet scores as unworthy of their time and attention, but non-specialists often struggled with the genre's musical demands.[59]

Such was the state of ballet music Vsevolozhsky encountered when he was appointed Director of the Imperial Theatres in 1881. Inspired by the examples of French composers Adolphe Adam, Léo Delibes, and Édouard Lalo, he abolished the post of First Imperial Ballet Composer.[60] The result was an enlivening of the Imperial Theatre's ballet music and the introduction of more distinctly Russian musical voices—chief among them Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and later, Alexander Glazunov.

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[56] Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets*, 5.
[57] Slonimsky, *Mastera baleta* [*Ballet Masters*], 264–65.
[58] Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets*, 6.
[59] Among the composers most contemptuous of ballet music were members of the New Russian School, often called the "Mighty Handful"—Mily Balakirev, Alexander Borodin, César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, and Stravinsky's future mentor Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. See Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets*, 9.
[60] Meisner, *Marius Petipa*, 209.

Tchaikovsky and the Imperial Ballet: Models for Twentieth-Century Dance

Tchaikovsky's first ballet *Swan Lake* has been reconstructed, reprised, and reproduced worldwide, but the work's origins belie its eventual popularity.[61] Tchaikovsky's collaboration with choreographer Julius Reisinger was not entirely positive, nor was critical reception of the work's 1877 premiere with the Moscow company. There was praise for the score, and the staging received 41 performances over six years: more than several other ballets from the repertoire of this theatre. Nevertheless, Tchaikovsky's music was generally deemed unsuitable for dancing, Reisinger's choreography dismissed as unimaginative and uninteresting.[62] Adding insult to injury, when Bolshoi dancer Anna Sobeshchanskaya made her role début as Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake*, she asked Marius Petipa to stage a new Act 3 *pas de deux* for her.[63] The choreographer designed variations to music by Minkus—but Tchaikovsky, unwilling to allow another composer's music to be inserted into his score, wrote new music to match Petipa's completed choreography.[64] Despite the disappointments and challenges of Tchaikovsky's 1877 *Swan Lake*, as one of the first ballets written by a "serious" composer rather than a specialist, the work also suggested an exciting new direction for ballet music.[65]

The composer's next ballet, *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890), went further, summarizing Russia's adaptation and refinement of a foreign art form while demonstrating the possibilities of choreographing ballet to increasingly sophisticated scores. *The Sleeping Beauty* was conceived by the

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[61] All productions of *Swan Lake* derive from the Petipa-Lev Ivanov version staged in 1895 for the Mariinsky and featuring fairly significant musical alterations. For a discussion of the score, see Wiley, "The Music of Swan Lake" in *Tchaikovsky's Ballets*, 63–92.
[62] Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets*, 52–56.
[63] Sobeshchanskaya was initially cast in the role of Odette/Odile but replaced by Pelageya Karpakova for the ballet's premiere on March 4, 1877. After three performances by Karpakova, Sobeshchanskaya was allowed to dance the principal role. Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets*, 58.
[64] Long thought to have been lost, the music was discovered in the Bolshoi Theatre archives in 1953. George Balanchine choreographed the Act 3 pas de deux in 1960, and it remains a popular bravura showpiece for principal dancers around the world.
[65] Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets*, 9.

renowned triumvirate of Petipa, Tchaikovsky, and Vsevolozhsky. Vsevolozhsky oversaw the production, composed the libretto, commissioned the music, and even designed the costumes. His aesthetic preferences have been described as "French in particular and retrospective in general," and *The Sleeping Beauty* may best typify these inclinations.[66] Based on the seventeenth-century French fairy tales of Charles Perrault, the 1890 ballet represents the first Imperial production to attempt to authentically stylize each component of the ballet—a practice that would later characterize the work of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes as well as Balanchine's New York City Ballet.[67]

While Tchaikovsky's two other ballets, *The Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake*, received important stagings at the Mariinsky, *The Sleeping Beauty* was the only work born out of a true collaboration between ballet master and composer.[68] Tchaikovsky's score presented Petipa with his first opportunity to choreograph to music written especially for him by a "serious" Russian composer. While *Sleeping Beauty* charted a new course for ballet music well into the twentieth century in its commission of a non-specialist, its creation required intensive labor on the part of the choreographer. Specialist composers like Minkus and Drigo had an intuitive understanding of ballet music's requirements—and would think nothing of plentiful revisions from the choreographer—which Petipa could not rely on in the case of his collaboration with Tchaikovsky (and later Glazunov).[69] The ballet master not only had to provide the usual breakdowns of each of the ballet's numbers, including length, tempi, style, and context but needed to address the matter of changes more carefully than he would have with specialists.[70]

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[66] Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets*, 94. For related discussions on French opera's turn to the historical past in the 1860s and the 1890s, see Jane F. Fulcher, *The Nation's Image*, 179–180 and Jane F. Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics and Music from the Dreyfus Affair to the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 104.
[67] Scholl, *From Petipa to Balanchine*, 23.
[68] Tim Scholl, *"Sleeping Beauty," a Legend in Progress* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), vii.
[69] Unlike Petipa, Balanchine had extensive musical training and made cuts, interpolations, and other changes to ballet scores without the help of a composer or music director.
[70] Meisner, 165.

Despite the challenges posed by commissioning a non-specialist composer, *The Sleeping Beauty* score ultimately contained all the hallmarks of the Petipa grand ballet—processions and court rituals, long pantomime scenes, colorful ensemble numbers, a *grand pas de deux*, and a wedding celebration replete with divertissements. Tchaikovsky's score may have satisfied Petipa's choreographic requirements, but it was the single most divisive aspect of the first production. On the one hand, accusations of "symphonism" from inveterate ballet fans were a rallying cry against ballet's changing aesthetics. Music critics observed the same features in Tchaikovsky's score—but commended rather than condemned what they perceived to be possible solutions to ballet's musical weaknesses, which they feared were the most serious hindrance to ballet achieving high art status.[71]

Quickly though, Tchaikovsky's sophisticated score became a benchmark for ballet music in Russia. *The Sleeping Beauty* raised the score to the status of choreography's equal and laid the groundwork to challenge its importance, first in the Diaghilev era and later in the works of George Balanchine. In this way, *The Sleeping Beauty* would not only transform ballet music in Russia's Imperial Theatres but would, along with Tchaikovsky's Parisian precedents Adolphe Adam and Léo Delibes, serve as a model for ballet in the twentieth century. Rather than hodge-podge scores assembled by ballet specialists, twentieth-century ballets featured music by some of the era's leading composers, including Claude Debussy, Paul Hindemith, Serge Prokofiev, Maurice Ravel, and Igor Stravinsky, as well as the works of Johann Sebastian Bach, Johannes Brahms, Ludwig van Beethoven, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and countless other composers once thought "off-limits" to balletic interpretation.[72]

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[71] Scholl, *"Sleeping Beauty," a Legend in Progress*, 28. Writing about Adolphe Adam's score for *Giselle*, for example, dance historian Cyril W. Beaumont wrote that, "By no stretch of the imagination can the score of *Giselle* be called great music, but it cannot be denied that it is admirably suited to its purpose. It is danceable, and it has colour and mood attuned to the various dramatic situations." Cyril W. Beaumont, *The Ballet Called Giselle* (London: C.W. Beaumont, 1944), 56.

[72] These include Balanchine's *Concerto Barocco* (1941) to Bach's Concerto in D minor for Two Violins (BWV 1043), Léonide Massine's *Choreartium* (1933) to Brahms's Fourth Symphony, Massine's *Seventh Symphony* (1938) to Beethoven's

The Sleeping Beauty's enormous popularity and the large number of performances it received in Saint Petersburg may in part explain the immense impact the ballet had on subsequent generations of balletic innovators. Stravinsky, who recalled a trip to the Mariinsky as a child to see the ballet, declared it "the most authentic of that period in our Russian life which we call the 'Petersburg Period.'"[73] Diaghilev, who began his ballet career at the Imperial Theatres in 1899, even staged a revival titled *The Sleeping Princess* in 1921, inspired in part by a sense of loss that many émigrés experienced after the Russian Revolution.[74] In addition to cutting or trimming mime and ensemble scenes and trimming ensemble numbers, Diaghilev commissioned Stravinsky to reorchestrate several numbers, including a brief solo variation and an Entr'acte from Act II. The production also featured interpolated music from *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker*, including the latter's popular Chinese and Arabian dances.[75] Diaghilev's *The Sleeping Princess* was so lavish it nearly bankrupted the Ballets Russes, and they were barred from performing in England for several seasons as a result of the debacle.[76]

The Petipa-Tchaikovsky-Vsevolozhsky ballet was also significant to Balanchine, who made his Imperial Theatres debut in *The Sleeping Beauty* as a child.[77] Balanchine was born in 1905, the year after Petipa's forced retirement from the Imperial Theatres, and entered the Imperial Ballet School in 1913, three years after the legendary ballet master's death. He had no direct experience working

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symphonic masterpiece, and Balanchine's *Symphonie Concertante* (1947) to Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat Major for Violin and Viola, K 364.

[73] Igor Stravinsky, Open letter to Serge Diaghilev, "The Sleeping Beauty," *The Times*, October 18, 1921. As Maureen Gupta notes, the goal of this letter was at least partly to defend French resistance to Tchaikovsky's music on the grounds of its perceived similarity to German music. Maureen Anne Gupta, "Diaghilev's *Sleeping Princess* (1921)" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2011), 22–6. Stravinsky would return to *Sleeping Beauty* in 1941 when he re-scored the *Bluebird Pas de Deux* for Lucia Chase, the founding Director of American Ballet Theatre.

[74] Marc Raeff, *Russia Abroad: A Cultural History of the Russian Emigration, 1919–1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 156–7. I am grateful to Lynn Garafola for this observation.

[75] See Gupta, "Diaghilev's *Sleeping Princess* (1921)" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2011).

[76] Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, 57–8. Cyril W. Beaumont, *The Diaghilev Ballet in London: A Personal Record* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1951), 199–200, 215.

[77] Yuri Slonimsky, "Balanchine: The Early Years," trans. John Andrews, ed. Francis Mason, *Ballet Review* 5, no. 3 (1975): 8.

with Petipa; rather, Balanchine learned Petipa's works from teachers and rehearsal masters. Indeed, as dance scholar Elizabeth Kendall has noted, "Balanchine got his Petipa not just from Petipa's ballets, but also from Fokine's conversation with his Petipa."[78] The reformist choreographer Mikhail Fokine made works for both the Mariinsky Theatre in which Balanchine appeared, and he served as the first resident choreographer of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.[79]

Balanchine's training included classes in ballet technique, social dance, mime, partnering, and character dance, as well as violin and piano lessons. Basic musical training was required (and remains part of the Vaganova Academy curriculum), but Balanchine's far exceeded the standard. Part of a musical family—both his father Meliton and his younger brother Andrei were celebrated Georgian composers—Balanchine entered the Petrograd Conservatory of Music in January 1920, where his father had also studied.[80] Although he did not graduate, he studied counterpoint, composition, and harmony in addition to lessons in piano, violin, French horn, percussion, and the trumpet at the legendary Russian institution. He also accompanied three hours of daily ballet classes at what was then the Leningrad State Choreographic Institute,[81] giving him an intimate understanding of music's relationship to dance and a mastery of piano repertoire.

While Cold War rhetoric framed the USSR as oppressive and artistically conservative, the Russian dance scene of Balanchine's early adulthood was dominated by both bold experimentalism

[78] Elizabeth Kendall, *Balanchine and the Lost Muse: Revolution and the Making of a Choreographer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 238. Emphasizing the role that Fokine played in Balanchine's early training, Kendall traces the influence of the former in several of Balanchine's mature works, including *Serenade*, which Balanchine had seen Fokine choreograph as *Eros* in 1915 to the same Tchaikovsky score.
[79] Fokine traveled between France and Russia in the early 1910s but managed to make it back into Russia during World War I. He worked for the Imperial Theatre until 1917, then emigrated to New York in 1919, where he opened a ballet school and organized a company that he called the "American Ballet"—the same name Balanchine and Kirstein gave their first ballet company.
[80] Kendall, *Balanchine and the Lost Muse: Revolution and the Making of a Choreographer*, 138.
[81] Kendall, *Balanchine and the Lost Muse*, 204.

and an effort to restore and maintain ballet's classical heritage.[82] Among the artists who best represents this dualism is ballet master Fedor Lopukhov, the Director of the former Mariinsky from 1922-1931. In 1923, Balanchine appeared in Lopukhov's plotless *TansSymphonia* (*Dance Symphony*), choreographed to Beethoven's Symphony No. 4 in B♭ major, Op. 60. *Dance Symphony* is an important early example of symphonic ballet and proved "seminal to the development of twentieth-century works that were modernist, music based, and grounded in the classical vocabulary."[83] As a budding choreographer, Balanchine found outlets in the city's booming cabaret scene, and began his own dance group with friends, which they called the *Molodoi Balet*, or Young Ballet.[84] The troupe raised Balanchine's public profile, and in 1924 they were invited to perform outside the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Four members of the group—Balanchine, Alexandra Danilova, Nicholas Efimov, and Tamara Geva—traveled through Germany and performed in London before ultimately coming to France. There, the four dancers auditioned for Diaghilev, who welcomed them into the Russian émigré company and appointed Balanchine ballet master.

Despite the statelessness of its leading personnel, Diaghilev's company, made up mainly of dancers and artists from the Mariinsky, was a Petersburg enterprise. Russian émigrés felt a responsibility to preserve, carry on, and create Russian culture in exile; Diaghilev's "Russian Ballet," which grew out of the impresario's interest in promoting Russian art in Western Europe, is among the most successful artistic manifestations of "Russia Abroad."[85] Indeed, the Ballets Russes'

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[82] This period of experimentalism, from roughly 1917 to 1927, coincides broadly with Vladimir Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP), in place from 1921 to 1928, and represents a period of social and cultural pluralism in the Soviet Union. After the experimentalism of the early Soviet period, the tenets of socialist realism were applied to dance aesthetics, beginning tentatively in 1927 and more formally following the Party Resolution '*On the Reformation of Literary and Artistic Organization'* of April 23, 1932. Carolyn Pouncy, "Stumbling Toward Socialist Realism: Ballet in Leningrad, 1927-1937," *Russian History*, 32, No. 2 (Summer 2005), 174.

[83] Stephanie Jordan, Introduction to *Writings on Ballet and Music* by Fedor Lopukhov, ed. Stephanie Jordan (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 3. For a discussion of *Dance Symphony* and its impact on Balanchine's work, see Kendall, *Balanchine and the Lost Muse*, 175–7.

[84] See Kendall, *Balanchine and the Lost Muse*, 180–8.

[85] Raeff, *Russia Abroad: A Cultural History of the Russian Emigration, 1919–1939*, 95, 103.

language "was the language of ballet nurtured by the imperial court. Its *esprit de corps* was the Petersburg intelligentsia's old stock in trade…Balanchine couldn't have dreamed up a better situation for addressing his heritage."[86] In this familiar atmosphere, Diaghilev tutored Balanchine in art, aesthetics, and theatrical history.[87] Balanchine also learned Diaghilev's working process, including his penchant for musical alterations: with the exception of Stravinsky, the composers who wrote for the Ballets Russes were edited by the impresario who, like Balanchine, had spent some time studying at the Conservatory in Saint Petersburg.[88]

Balanchine drew on the rich musical and balletic traditions he had learned, both in Russia and from Diaghilev and other Russian émigrés in Paris, in his early ballets for the Ballets Russes. From 1925 to 1928, the young dancemaker choreographed "nine opera ballets, two fairy tales (*L'Enfant et les Sortileges* and *Le Chant du Rossignol*, both 1925), a comic Italian nursery rhyme (*Barabau*, 1925), a mock-English pantomime (*The Triumph of Neptune*, 1926), and a futuristic Aesop fable (*La Chatte*, 1927)—all with different music by various adventurous modernist composers."[89] Finally, in 1928, Diaghilev entrusted Balanchine with his first staging of a new score by Igor Stravinsky titled *Apollon musagète*. The choreographer's earliest extant ballet, *Apollo* is where we will begin our examination of the tension between Balanchine's Russian musical practices and his Cold War Formalism.

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[86] Kendall, *Balanchine and the Lost Muse*, 231.
[87] In 1926, for example, Balanchine, Diaghilev, Diaghilev's secretary Boris Kochno and the company's star dancer Serge Lifar traveled to Italy to see Renaissance paintings and performances by a *commedia dell'arte* troupe. Kendall, *Balanchine and the Lost Muse*, 231.
[88] See Garafola, "Diaghilev's Musical Legacy," in *Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance*, 45–53.
[89] The 1925 production of *L'Enfant et les Sortileges* was the premiere of Maurice Ravel's opera with a libretto by Colette. *Le Chant du Rossignol* featured music by Stravinsky and was a revival of the Ballets Russes 1920 production with choreography by Massine and designs by Henri Matisse. *Barabau* featured music by Vittorio Rieti and designs by Maurice Utrillo. Lord Berners composed the music for *The Triumph of Neptune*, while *La Chatte* was choreographed to music by Henri Sauger. Kendall, *Balanchine and the Lost Muse*, 231.

Chapter 2

Cold War Abstraction and Choreomusical Changes in *Apollo* (1928–1980)

"Thanks to [George Balanchine's] influence, much American ballet is abstract. Abstraction dominates American dance and our choreographic abstractions are not only distinguished, they have helped revolutionize the art of dance. And let me stoutly proclaim here that I support the revolution."[1] — The *New York Times* dance critic Jack Anderson

Apollo, originally titled *Apollon musagète* (1928), was composer Igor Stravinsky and choreographer George Balanchine's first collaboration on a new work for Diaghilev's famed Ballets Russes.[2] Although the ballet premiered in Paris, *Apollo* became a repertory staple of the New York City Ballet, frequently performed on government-sponsored exchange tours throughout the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, and beyond. During those decades, Balanchine gradually abstracted the work, reflecting his engagement with and response to the changing needs of American cultural politics. A committed anti-communist, Balanchine understood that distinguishing American art from work produced in the Soviet Union could serve to differentiate the two political-economic systems. To transform *Apollo* from a neoclassical artifact of the Diaghilev enterprise into a Cold War Formalist ballet, Balanchine, in addition to slowly redesigning the work, made a substantial musical cut after Stravinsky's death. As such, *Apollo* illustrates the two primary analytical themes and cultural tensions of this dissertation: Balanchine's savvy reframing of ballets to serve US cultural politics, including his elimination of elaborate visual and narrative elements, a response to the anti-figurative and pro-

[1] Jack Anderson, "Critic's Notebook: Two Faces of Dance," *New York Times*, June 15, 1979, C3.
[2] The work also marked Stravinsky's return to composing ballet music after a five-year hiatus following *Les Noces* (1923). The composer, who met his mistress and later second wife Vera Sudeikina (née de Bosset) in 1921, is said to have had a religious crisis during this period related to his marital infidelity and refused to write ballets, the genre in which he had achieved some of his greatest successes up to that point. Stephen Walsh, *Stravinsky: A Creative Spring, Russia and France, 1882–1934* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000), 467.

democratic ideals of American abstract art on the one hand,[3] and, on the other, the choreographer's musical cuts and changes informed by his Russian training in Saint Petersburg as well as in Paris, where he encountered "Russia Abroad."[4]

Following an introduction to the ballet, this chapter will examine the original stage designs for the 1928 premiere of *Apollon musagète* and subsequent early productions, including the 1947 staging for the Paris Opéra Ballet during Balanchine's tenure as guest ballet master.[5] An exploration of the ballet's visual simplification in the 1950s follows, placing the work within a broader cultural-political context. The chapter then analyzes choreomusical changes Balanchine made to *Apollo* in the late 1970s after composer Igor Stravinsky's death. These include a dramatic cut in the Prologue and significant choreographic alterations, which resulted in a loss of narrative content but produced a more cohesive choreographic style. Here, the enormous influence of the Russian traditions of Balanchine's early training and career will be considered, as will the choreographer's increasing penchant for non-narrative ballet and visual abstraction—something this chapter argues was suggested but not fully achieved in the revivals of *Apollo* in the 1950s and early 1960s.[6]

As Balanchine's earliest extant ballet, *Apollo* serves as a foundation for studies of the choreographer's style and musicianship. It has been described as "a work that in purity, classical symmetry, and transcendent invention marked the arrival of a new genius and changed the face of

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[3] Numerous scholars have explored abstract art's role in Cold War-era cultural politics. See Greg Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Michael L. Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters for the Human Spirit: American Art and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); and Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, rev. ed. (1999, repr., New York: The New Press, 2013), among others.

[4] "Russia Abroad" refers to a Russian society in exile after the Bolshevik Revolution and subsequent civil war. See Marc Raeff, *Russia Abroad: A Cultural History of the Russian Emigration, 1919–1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[5] Chapter four analyzes Balanchine's tenure at the Paris Opéra Ballet in 1947, including the institutional challenges and the political climate in France for American artists.

[6] Here I employ Selma Jean Cohen's definition of revival as a new staging of an existing work by the choreographer him/herself. Selma Jean Cohen, "Dance Reconstructed," *Dance Research Journal* 25, No. 2 (Autumn 1993): 54–55.

ballet forever."[7] A close study of both the visual and musical changes Balanchine made to *Apollo*, however, illustrates its remarkable transformation from narrative Franco-Russian ballet to a spare, non-narrative work, a reflection of Balanchine's engagement with the politics of the era. But while the ballet's nonrepresentational aesthetic was a perfect foil for Russia's monumental, narrative *drambalets* and became a potent symbol of American freedom and Western democracy during the Cold War,[8] the choreographer drew on Russian musical practices to accomplish this feat.

The Start of an Enduring Artistic Partnership

Serge Diaghilev first brought composer Igor Stravinsky to the attention of international audiences; the young composer was affiliated with Diaghilev's innovative Ballets Russes from its debut season in 1909.[9] Stravinsky's first ballet, *Firebird* (1910), was an extraordinary success for the company; the popular *Petrushka* (1911) and controversial *The Rite of Spring* (1913) followed, making Stravinsky a household name and Diaghilev's Ballets Russes among the most innovative theatrical companies in the world. Initially formed in Saint Petersburg as a summer touring company, the Ballets Russes transformed ballet by bringing together avant-garde composers like Stravinsky with contemporary painters and innovative choreographers. Some of twentieth-century music's landmark scores were commissioned by Diaghilev, furthering the possibilities of dance music suggested by

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[7] John Gruen, "Mounting Olympus: The Ascent of *Apollo*," *Dance Magazine* (June 1987), 156.

[8] Defining *drambalet*, a Soviet genre that flourished during the 1930s and 40s, is as problematic for contemporary dance historians as it was for Soviet artists of the period. To identify the essential features of the style, many scholars point to coherence with the tenets of socialist realism, but the genre, "meant to fuse [drama and ballet] seamlessly in a marriage of gesture and movement that avoided the nineteenth century's division of pantomime and dancing," became synonymous with ballets that privileged storytelling and mime over purely balletic movement. See Christina Ezrahi, *Swans of the Kremlin: Ballet and Power in Soviet Russia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), 46–8; and Carolyn Pouncy, "Stumbling Toward Socialist Realism: Ballet in Leningrad, 1927-1937," *Russian History* 32, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 175.

[9] Diaghilev first commissioned Stravinsky along with Anatoly Lyadov, Sergei Taneyev, and Nikolai Tcherepnin to orchestrate Chopin's piano works for the Ballets Russes production of *Les Sylphides* choreographed by Mikhail Fokine and presented at the Théâtre du Châtelet on June 2, 1909. Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works Through* Mavra, Volume I (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 546–547.

Petipa's collaboration with Tchaikovsky for the Imperial Theatres.[10] Balanchine joined the Ballets Russes in 1924 at the age of twenty and choreographed his first Stravinsky score, a restaging of *Le Chant du rossignol*, in 1925.[11] Although Stravinsky worked with Balanchine in preparation for the restaging—and often at cross-purposes from Diaghilev—it was not until 1928 that the two men would again collaborate, this time on *Apollon musagète*.[12]

The score was commissioned not by Diaghilev but by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, an American pianist, composer, and patron of the arts. Moreover, the work's premiere was not given by the Ballets Russes, but rather at the 1928 Coolidge Festival of Chamber Music. The performance on April 27, 1928, at the Coolidge Auditorium, a dedicated recital space in the Library of Congress, featured choreography by Adolph Bolm. The composer's first completed American commission and the first Stravinsky composition premiered in the United States, *Apollon musagète* was also the first major ballet work written by a renowned European composer to have its world premiere in America.[13] Despite its significance to the American music scene of the late 1920s, however, the composer did not attend the Washington, DC premiere. Coolidge may have commissioned the music, but it was composed with the Ballets Russes and its star dancer, Serge Lifar, in mind. Stravinsky and Balanchine worked closely together to prepare the Ballets Russes premiere at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, just six weeks after its American debut, cementing an artistic relationship that would come to define twentieth-century ballet, particularly in the United States.

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[10] These include Maurice Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* (1912), Erik Satie's *Parade* (1917), Manuel de Falla's *El sombrero de tres picos* (also known as *The Three-Cornered Hat* or *Le tricorne*) (1919), and Stravinsky's aforementioned scores, as well as the neoclassical masterpieces *Pulcinella* (1920), and *Les Noces* (1923).

[11] After a state-sponsored tour of Germany, Balanchine and his colleagues ignored orders to return to the USSR and remained in Western Europe. They auditioned for Diaghilev in Paris in the fall of 1924, then quickly joined the company in London for the Ballets Russes' appearances at the Coliseum. For a detailed discussion of this episode, see Elizabeth Kattner-Ulrich, "The Early Life and Works of George Balanchine" (PhD diss., Freie Universität Berlin, 2008).

[12] The impresario and the composer disagreed quite famously about the ballet's tempi, putting the choreographer in the awkward position of having to change it to suit whichever man was attending a given rehearsal. Charles M. Joseph, *Stravinsky and Balanchine: A Journey of Invention* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 69.

[13] Charles M. Joseph, *Stravinsky Inside Out* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 39.

Stravinsky later described *Apollon musagète* as a "*ballet blanc*," or "white ballet."[14] This designation refers to the long history of so-called "white acts" in Romantic and post-Romantic ballets, in which all the dancers wore white tutus and pointe shoes to portray spirits, ghosts, or other supernatural creatures. Calling the work a "*ballet blanc*" not only demonstrates Stravinsky's familiarity with ballet styles and traditions but aligns his composition with celebrated Romantic ballets like *Giselle* (1842), featuring a score by Adolphe Adam, and *Les Sylphides*, a twentieth-century ballet blanc choreographed by Mikhail Fokine to music by Frédéric Chopin in homage to the Romantic era.

The ballet depicts the birth, maturation, and ascension to Olympus of Apollo, the god of music, poetry, and art in two tableaux. A subject in keeping with the Parisian vogue for mythological themes in the late 1920s, most sources, including the premiere program, attribute the libretto to Stravinsky.[15] The composer claimed credit for the scenario in his autobiography, writing that the American commission "enabled me to carry out an idea which had long tempted me, to compose a ballet founded on moments or episodes in Greek mythology."[16]

But the issue of authorship is far from settled. Stravinsky scholar Stephen Walsh suggests that Carl Engel, the head of the Music Division of the Library of Congress, or his patron Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge may have requested the Greek subject.[17] Alternatively, dance historian Tim Scholl broadly attributes the inspiration to Diaghilev, identifying a connection between the ballet and a Russian arts journal, *Apollon*, published from 1909 to 1917 in the model of the Russian magazine *Mir*

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[14] Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936), 135.
[15] Other works of this period featuring mythological subjects include Arthur Honegger's *Antigone* (1927) and Stravinsky's *Oedipus rex* (1927), both with French librettos by Jean Cocteau based on the works of Sophocles. For more on *Antigone*, see Jane F. Fulcher's discussion of the opera in chapter four, "The soft or hard borders of French identity: Honegger's iconic role and subjectivity during Vichy," of her most recent monograph, *Renegotiating French Identity: Musical Culture and Creativity in France during Vichy and the German Occupation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 180–238. For a discussion of *Oedipus rex*, see Stephen Walsh, *Stravinsky:* Oedipus rex (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and Maureen Carr, *Multiple Masks: Neoclassicism in Stravinsky's Works on Greek Subjects* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 23–98.
[16] Stravinsky, *An Autobiography,* 134.
[17] Walsh, *Stravinsky: A Creative Spring*, 451.

iskusstva (*World of Art*), which Diaghilev co-founded in 1899.[18] Balanchine identifies yet another author in a 1981 interview with *Dance Magazine,* recalling the involvement of Boris Kochno—the librettist of Stravinsky's opera *Mavra* (1921), Sergei Prokofiev's *Le Fils prodigue* (1929), and numerous other Diaghilev ballets between 1924 and 1929, as well as Balanchine's collaborator in the short-lived Les Ballets 1933—in the creation of the 1928 ballet.[19] Given the timing of this claim—Balanchine identified Kochno's contribution in 1981, more than fifty years after the work's creation but shortly after his dramatic alterations to the ballet—the dancemaker may have been seeking some absolution for his cuts to Stravinsky's score. After all, if the ballet's scenario and structure were not the work of the composer but rather a third party, then perhaps Balanchine's choreomusical changes could not be read as an affront to his longtime collaborator.

While the author of the ballet's scenario remains uncertain, the *argument*, as a ballet scenario is also called, strongly recalls the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*,[20] which begins by recounting Leto's labor on the island of Delos and goes on to describe performances by the Muses and the Graces in honor of Apollo—actions mirrored in the ballet's Prologue and subsequent solo variations and ensemble dances.[21] The scenario printed in the premiere program explains that "The ballet begins with a short

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[18] Tim Scholl, *From Petipa to Balanchine: Classical Revival and the Modernization of Ballet* (London: Routledge, 1994), 79. Founded by Diaghilev and artists Alexandre Benois and Léon Bakst, *Mir iskusstva* inspired and embodied a Russian art movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by the same name. *Miriskusniki*, as members of this group were called, revered folk traditions and sought to preserve historical styles, particularly the eighteenth-century rococo, ultimately advocating for the synthesis of new western European trends and traditional Russian folk themes in their eclectic publication. The magazine explored furniture, pottery, clothing, and embroidery in addition to painting, drawing, and sculpture, thereby expanding not only the geographic, thematic, and historical but also material borders that had previously restricted Russian art. Many *miriskusniki* went on to design productions for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, thereby popularizing the aesthetic in the West. See Anna Winestein, "Quiet Revolutionaries: The 'Mir Iskusstva' Movement and Russian Design," *Journal of Design History* 21, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 315–333.

[19] George Balanchine, interview by John Gruen, "Balanchine and Stravinsky: An Olympian *Apollo*," *Dance Magazine* (April 1981): 85–87.

[20] For a discussion of the hymn's adaptation in the 1928 ballet, see Grace Ledbetter, "Translation into Dance: Adaptation and Transnational Hellenism in Balanchine's *Apollo*," in *Times of Mobility: Transnational Literature and Gender in Translation*, ed. Jasmina Lukić and Sibelan Forrester with Borbála Faragó (Budapest, Hungary: Central European University Press, 2020), 139–54.

[21] I have not found catalogs of Stravinsky's personal library that suggest a specific translation or edition of the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, but the composer wrote several works on classical subjects, indicating his familiarity with and interest in Greek and Roman antiquity. In this chapter, I have referred to Rodney Merrill's translation, "The Homeric Hymn to

prologue representing the birth of Apollo." Although Balanchine's choreography for the Prologue does not entirely conform to the *argument*, the dances in the second scene of the ballet—almost six times the length of the first—correspond quite closely. After Apollo's First Variation:

> appear Calliope, Polyhymnia and Terpsichore: Apollo confers to each of them a gift (*Pas d'action*). Thus, Calliope becomes Muse of Poetry, Polyhymnia, Mimicry and Terpsichore, that of Dance. One by one, the Muses present to him the arts he has bestowed upon them (Variations). Apollo welcomes them with a dance in honor of these arts (Variation). Terpsichore, uniting Poetry with Mimicry, finds the place of honor beside Apollo (*Pas de deux*). The other Muses join Apollo and Terpsichore in a dance, all three gathering around their leader (*Coda*). These allegorical scenes end with an Apotheosis in which Apollo leads the Muses, beginning with Terpsichore, to Parnassus, which will henceforth be their home.[22]

It is valuable to briefly clarify the use of the term "Apotheosis" in the scenario, particularly as the term appears in the scenario and serves as the title of the ballet's final section. Its etymology connotes the glorification or divinity of a subject; in music, apotheoses typically celebrate historical persons. While a musical apotheosis is not always the finale of a major work, in ballet, the term refers to the conclusion of a narrative work wherein a celebration or resolution of the central conflict takes place—for example, the apotheoses of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* (1877) or *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890). In *Apollon musagète*, the Apotheosis suggests both narrative ballet traditions and the glorification of the Greek god of music.

The classical subject of the scenario informed every element of the collaboration, from the ingenious expansion of the *danse d'école* vocabulary in Balanchine's choreography to the score's lyricism.[23] Reflecting the increasing neoclassicism of interwar French music and the aesthetic of the composer's works beginning with *Mavra* (1922) and the Octet (1923), the ballet's score was free of

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Apollo," in *A Californian Hymn to Homer*, ed. Timothy Pepper (Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2010), 215–219.

[22] Igor Stravinsky, Scenario for *Apollon musagète*, Ballets Russes, Serge Diaghilev, Paris: Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt, June 12, 1928, Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200181867/. For a complete French-language *argument* as it appeared in the premiere program, see appendix B. For Balanchine's more colloquial description of the ballet's action, see Jacques d'Amboise, *I Was a Dancer: A Memoir* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 181–2.

[23] *Danse d'école* is a term that refers to the academic style of classical ballet.

musical quotations and any single ethnic or national style.[24] Instead, the work drew increasingly oblique inspiration from Greek mythology, French overtures, the nineteenth-century *ballet blanc*, and classical poetry.[25] Stravinsky later declared that the thirty-minute score of *Apollon musagète* was "far more important than people realize… something entirely new in my music."[26] Turning away from the static blocks and abrupt shifts that had characterized his earlier works, the composer now began to explore musical cohesion. Constructed for a maximum of motivic and harmonic unity, the score of *Apollon musagète* is notable for its mellifluousness and diatonicism, its use of repeating motives, and its orchestration for string sextet. As Stravinsky observed in *Poetics of Music*, "similarity pose[d] more difficult problems but also offer[ed] results that are more solid and hence more valuable to me."[27] In *Apollon musagète*, the composer believed that "the absence of many-colored hues and of all superfluities produced a wonderful freshness"—language that recalls Cocteau's observations about the composer's neoclassical style in 1926, published in the 1926 *Le rappel à l'ordre*.[28]

Echoing the composer some years later, Balanchine described the ballet as "the crucial turning point in my artistic life."[29] He declared that "In its discipline and restraint, in its sustained

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[24] For a history of musical neoclassicism, see Scott Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music From the Genesis of the Concept through the Schoenberg/Stravinsky Polemic* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1988). For a discussion of Stravinsky's neoclassicism and the evolution of this stylistic tendency, see chapter 6, "Synthesis: *Mavra* and the New Classicism" in Stephen Walsh, *The Music of Stravinsky* (London: Routledge, 1988), 111–133.

[25] Igor Stravinsky, *Themes and Conclusions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 106. Stravinsky's neoclassical ballets of the early 1920s tended to feature musical references from specific times and places—*Pulcinella* (1920), for example, was based on eighteenth-century Italian compositions, while *Les Noces* (1923) employs Russian folk themes.

[26] Stravinsky, *Themes and Conclusions*, 106. "A Conversation with Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft," recorded for the National Broadcasting Company in 1957 and quoted in Joseph, *Stravinsky & Balanchine*, 74.

[27] Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, trans. Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947), 32–33.

[28] Stravinsky, *An Autobiography*, 135. Jean Cocteau, *Le rappel à l'ordre* (Paris: Stock, 1926), 240–242. Cocteau's book of essays, *Le rappel à l'order*, articulated the ideals of the "*retour à l'order*" movement that followed the First World War, which rejected the extreme avant-garde in favor of art that revived classicism and realism. See Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music*, 78–79 and 89–91; Francis Steegmuller, *Cocteau: A Biography* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), 110, 349–63; and Jane F. Fulcher, *Renegotiating French Identity*, 193.

[29] George Balanchine, *Complete Stories of the Great Ballets* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1977), 753.

oneness of tone and feeling, the score was a revelation."[30] Further, Balanchine insisted that the ballet's motivic and structural unity proved instrumental to his lifelong choreographic process:

> I began to see how I could clarify, by limiting, by reducing what seemed to be multiple possibilities to the one that is inevitable. It was in studying *Apollon* that I came first to understand how gestures, like tones in music and shades in painting, have certain family relations. Since this work, I have developed my choreography inside the framework such relations suggest.[31]

When *Apollon musagète* premiered, the two men could not have been more generous in their praise for one another. Notoriously critical of collaborators, Stravinsky was effusive, calling their collaboration "among the most satisfying in my artistic life."[32] Both also acknowledged the importance of *Apollon musagète* to their later collaborations, including *Orpheus* (1948) and *Agon* (1957), the subsequent "Greek" ballets, *Jeu de Cartes* (1937), and *Movements for Piano and Orchestra* (1963).[33] And beyond simply serving as the origin story for one of the great balletic collaborations of the twentieth century, Grace Ledbetter has astutely observed that "The fanciful conceit of this ballet is that the original form of ballet was Balanchine's—it is primary—and it came long before the development of nineteenth-century classical ballet."[34] Indeed, through its use of myth, *Apollon musagète* heralds Balanchine's neoclassical movement vocabulary much as operatic composers have marked sea changes in that medium through references to the myth of Orpheus.[35]

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[30] George Balanchine, "The Dance Element in Stravinsky's Music," (1947) in *Stravinsky in the Theatre*, ed. Minna Lederman (New York: Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1949), 81.
[31] Balanchine, "The Dance Element in Stravinsky's Music," 81–82. As Tamara Tomić-Vajagić has noted, Balanchine's references here to restraint and elimination also suggest a link to the concept of abstraction, which the Oxford English Dictionary defines as the "action of taking something away; the action or process of withdrawing or removing something from." Tamara Tomić-Vajagić, "The Balanchine Dilemma: 'So-Called Abstraction' and the Rhetoric of Circumvention in Black-and-White Ballets," in "Dance and Abstraction," ed. S. Elise Archias and Juliet Bellows, special issue, *Arts* 9, no. 4 (2020): 7–8.
[32] Letter from Stravinsky to Balanchine dated November 22, 1935, and quoted in Vera Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 275.
[33] Although *Apollo*, *Orpheus*, and *Agon* are often termed Stravinsky and Balanchine's "Greek trilogy," the final ballet makes only the faintest reference to Greece with its title, which translates to "contest" or "competition."
[34] Ledbetter, "Translation into Dance: Adaptation and Transnational Hellenism in Balanchine's *Apollo*," 149.
[35] *Apollon musagète* is typically regarded as the first neoclassical ballet. See page 20, footnote 51 for a detailed discussion of neoclassicism in dance and its significance to the Diaghilev enterprise.

Despite Balanchine's praise for the score and the significance of the ballet to the enduring collaborative partnership between the dancemaker and the composer, Balanchine made substantial cuts to the music in the late 1970s after Stravinsky's death in 1971 to create greater choreographic cohesion. These changes do not destroy the score's careful construction altogether, but they do have a substantial effect on the ballet, including its large-scale tonal structure, motivic development, narrative content, and music–movement synthesis. Further, although the choreographer claimed that *Apollon musagète* imbued his style with a new uniformity, striking examples of stylistic pluralism in the Prologue are also excised in the late 1970s revival of the ballet, discussed later in this chapter. But Balanchine's changes to the work were not limited to the musical or choreographic. To understand *Apollo*'s decades-long transformation, we must begin by looking at the original stage designs and subsequent productions in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s.

Neoclassical Design in the Parisian Premiere of *Apollon musagète*

The Ballets Russes premiere of *Apollon musagète* took place on June 12, 1928, at the Théatre Sarah-Bernhardt in Paris and featured the composer himself conducting the small string ensemble.[36] In addition to Serge Lifar in the title role, Alice Nikitina danced Terpsichore, Lubov Tchernicheva appeared as Calliope, and Felia Doubrovska was Polyhymnia.[37] Décors and costumes were designed by the French naïve painter André Bauchant, whose unpretentious canvases, reminiscent of the work of Henri Rousseau as well as Pablo Picasso's neoclassicism of the late 1910s and early 1920s, caught the attention of Paris tastemakers. These included art collector and dealer Jeanne Bucher, the

[36] Also on the program for that evening was Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* (1920), with choreography by Massine and designs by Picasso, and *Barabau* (1925), with music by Vittorio Rieti, choreography by Balanchine, and designs by Maurice Utrillo. These ballets were conducted by the French conductor Roger Désormière, who regularly collaborated with the Ballets Russes as well as the Ballets Suédois.

[37] Appearing only in the Prologue and Apotheosis of the ballet, Sophie Orlova danced the role of Leto, attended to by Dora Vadimova and Henriette Maikerska as goddesses (alternatively termed "handmaidens" in other sources).

architect Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, better known as Le Corbusier, and the French cubist painter and writer Amédée Ozenfant with whom Le Corbusier founded the Purist movement.[38]

Diaghilev first encountered Bauchant's work at the Salon d'Automne in Paris in 1927, where the self-taught painter exhibited three works on classical themes—*Bataille de Marathon, Periclès*, and *Incendie au Temple d'Ephèse*.[39] The impresario purchased some of Bauchant's work and visited his studio before commissioning him to design *Apollon musagète*; Diaghilev feared that more traditional sets and costumes might resemble a classical pastiche, and he was eager to blend the mythological subject and neoclassical score of the ballet with a more contemporary visual style.[40] The large-scale historical canvases that dominated Bauchant's work of the early- to mid-1920s are peopled with mythological characters, while his experience as a nurseryman lent the flowers and landscapes of his late period a vibrant palette and rich textures.[41] The curtain design for the 1928 production was inspired by Bauchant's 1927 painting, *Les Champs-Elysées*, and featured an oversized bouquet of delicate, light-colored flowers. Diaghilev purchased the painting, which was reproduced in the program, while the curtain itself was painted by the scenographer Aleksandr Shervashidze.[42] While the ballet's curtain was based on Bauchant's floral designs, the set drew on another of the painter's favorite subjects: Apollo. Four years before the ballet commission, Bauchant painted two versions of *Apollon apparaissant aux bergers* (1925). Both feature a chariot drawn by four horses resting on a cloud

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[38] Wilhelm Uhde, *Five Primitive Masters*, trans. Ralph Thompson (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 67. Bauchant discovered his artistic prowess when serving as a telemetric draftsman during the First World War. Oto Bihalji-Merin, *Modern Primitives: Masters of Naïve Paintings*, trans. Norbert Guterman (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1959), 66.
[39] Alexander Schouvaloff, *The Art of Ballets Russes: The Serge Lifar Collection of Theater Designs, Costumes, and Paintings at the Wadsworth Atheneum*, *Hartford, Connecticut* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 103. By the time Diaghilev first encountered him, Bauchant had already attracted the attention of Paris's art world.
[40] Schouvaloff, *The Art of Ballets Russes*, 103. For a discussion of a similar aesthetic impulse in the Cocteau-Picasso-Honegger collaboration of *Antigone*, see Jane F. Fulcher, *Renegotiating French Identity*, 204.
[41] Bihalji-Merin, *Modern Primitives: Masters of Naïve Paintings*, 70.
[42] Schouvaloff, *The Art of Ballets Russes*, 105. Shervashidze, a member of the Shervashidze princely dynasty of Abkhazia, now part of Georgia, had previously worked at Saint Petersburg's Mariinsky and Alexandrinsky theatres and collaborated with noted designers Alexandre Benois, Aleksandr Golovin, and Pablo Picasso for Ballets Russes productions in the 1920s.

as well as stylized rock formations—features that appear prominently in the design for the 1928 premiere. Like the curtain, the backdrop, pictured in figure 2.1, was executed by Shervashidze.

Figure 2.1: Set design by André Bauchant, 1928, New York Public Library, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

In addition to contributing designs for the front cloth and backdrop, Bauchant is credited as the costume designer in the premiere program.[43] However, Boris Kochno recalled that "Bauchant confessed he was incapable of designing [the costumes], so Diaghilev copied Apollo's tunic from the costume of a figure in one of Bauchant's mythological compositions, and he dressed the three

[43] My analysis of of Balanchine's productions draws on the work of Donatella Barbieri, "Performativity and the Historical Body: Detecting Performance Through the Archived Costume," *Studies in Theatre & Performance* 33, no. 3 (September 2013): 281–301; Josée Chartrand, "Costumes of the Pavley-Oukrainsky Ballet: A Material Case Study," *Dress* (2020): 1–16; and Sarah Woodcock, "Wardrobe," in *Diaghilev and the Golden Age of the Ballets Russes*, ed. Jane Pritchard (London: V&A Publishing, 2010), 129–63; as well as Jules David Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no. 1 (Spring, 1982): 1-19.

Muses in muslin tutus."[44] The use of muslin, a lightweight cotton cloth typically used to fit garments before more expensive cloth was cut and sewn in the final production stages, reflects a similar emphasis on unpretentious simplicity as Bauchant's naïve style of painting. Famed fashion designer and Ballets Russes collaborator Coco Chanel designed more elaborate costumes in 1929 for *Apollon musagète* featuring draping, delicate pleating, and gold details for a stylized Grecian effect.

American Mid-Century Abstraction in *Apollo* after Diaghilev

When Diaghilev died on August 19, 1929, the ballet company he had built crumbled. Many members of the Diaghilev company later joined the Ballets Russes de Monte-Carlo, including Balanchine, who served as choreographer during their first season in 1932.[45] After the Ballets Russes de Monte-Carlo's first season, Balanchine was replaced by Léonide Massine.[46] The short-lived Les Ballets 1933, co-founded by Boris Kochno, followed.[47]

In this season of professional uncertainty and financial instability, Balanchine met the wealthy American impresario Lincoln Kirstein (1907–96). The son of Louis E. Kirstein, the chairman of Boston-based Filene's Department Store, Kirstein co-founded the Harvard Society for Contemporary Art—a precursor to the Museum of Modern Art—and *Hound & Horn*, a prominent

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[44] Boris Kochno, *Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes*, trans. Adrienne Foulke (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970), 266

[45] The Ballets Russes de Monte-Carlo was founded in 1931 by Colonel Wassily de Basil and René Blum, but artistic differences between the two men led to a split, and each founded a new company. For histories of these successor companies, see Jack Anderson, *The One and Only: The Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo* (New York: Dance Horizons, 1981), Judith Chazin-Bennahum, *René Blum and the Ballets Russes: In Search of a Lost Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), and Katherine Sorley Walker, *De Basil's Ballets Russes* (Alton: Dance Books, 2010).

[46] Sorley Walker, *De Basil's Ballets Russes*, 20–21. In this period, Balanchine also staged dances for London revues and variety shows; served as guest ballet master of the Royal Danish Ballet in Copenhagen; and was invited by Jacques Rouché to choreograph Beethoven's *Les Créatures de Prométhée* for the Paris Opéra Ballet. Balanchine also developed tuberculosis during this period and spent several months in a Swiss sanitarium; he left with only one functioning lung.

[47] The company's patron was the British poet Edward James; he was primarily interested in performing opportunities for his wife, modern dancer Tilly Losch.

literary quarterly financed by his father, while still an undergraduate student at Harvard.[48] While Kirstein would remain immersed in the worlds of art and literature as an adult, his true calling was ballet. In the summer of 1933, the aspiring American impresario traveled to Europe to work on a biography of Vaslav Nijinsky, and he happened to attend the opening night of Les Ballets 1933 at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. The two men met in London in mid-July, and in short order, Kirstein invited Balanchine to create a ballet company in the United States.[49]

As the Russian émigré held a Nansen passport, Balanchine's immigration to America was not without some challenges.[50] A flurry of cables from mid-September indicates that Balanchine and Vladimir Dimitriev, who had organized the Young Ballet tour in 1924 and whom Balanchine insisted join him, encountered difficulties at the US Embassy in Paris regarding the temporary rather than permanent visas arranged for their travel.[51] Hoping to resolve any issues, Kirstein quickly mailed both men one-year contracts. He also paid a calculated visit to longtime friend William Christian Bullitt, Jr., the first US ambassador to the Soviet Union, who offered his help with visa or passport difficulties. Several weeks later, on October 10, Balanchine wrote that he was sailing to the US on the *Olympic*.

On October 17, 1933, the *Olympic* arrived in New York, and Kirstein and Balanchine's decades-long collaboration began in earnest. Together they would establish one of the world's finest ballet companies, the New York City Ballet (NYCB), and America's leading ballet training

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[48] See Martin B. Duberman, *The Worlds of Lincoln Kirstein* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007).
[49] Chapters eight and nine, titled "Ballet (1933)" and "Balanchine (1932–1933)," of Duberman's biography of Kirstein detail his initial preference for the works of Léonide Massine and the conversations and considerations that eventually led him to invite Balanchine to head his ballet company. Duberman, *The Worlds of Lincoln Kirstein*, 149–215.
[50] The Nansen passport was issued to Russians émigrés by the Nansen Committee under the auspices of the League of Nations; the document certified the holder's identity and category of statelessness. The Nansen passport could be used to apply for visas and travel outside the host country. Raeff, *Russia Abroad: A Cultural History of the Russian Emigration, 1919–1939*, 36.
[51] George Balanchine Archive, 1924-1989 (MS Thr 411). Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University. See also Martin B. Duberman, *The Worlds of Lincoln Kirstein* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 198–200.

institution, the School of American Ballet (SAB)—although the early history of their partnership is more fraught than their ultimate triumph would suggest. Balanchine and Kirstein's various American troupes of the 1930s and 1940s have been subsumed under the broad umbrella of NYCB prototypes, but as musicologist James Steichen has demonstrated, the cofounders' American ballet companies "underwent a remarkable set of transformations, setbacks, false starts, and new beginnings."[52]

Without belaboring this point, a brief history of the Balanchine-Kirstein companies here is instructive.[53] Along with Edward Warburg, Balanchine and Kirstein founded the School of American Ballet in 1934 and the American Ballet in 1935, the latter quickly becoming the resident ballet company at the Metropolitan Opera.[54] In 1936, Kirstein independently founded Ballet Caravan, renamed American Ballet Caravan in 1941 for a Latin American tour, discussed later in this chapter. In 1946, Balanchine and Kirstein reunited to form Ballet Society, an innovative arts organization that offered ballets as well as operas, films, and a journal to a subscription-based audience. The troupe was renamed New York City Ballet in 1948 when it became the resident dance company at the City Center of Music and Drama.

Balanchine staged the first American production of his *Apollon musagète* in 1937 for a Stravinsky Festival at the Metropolitan Opera House, where his American Ballet was then the resident dance company.[55] For this revival featuring Lew Christensen in the title role, the large rock formation was carefully reconstructed, a plain backdrop enhanced by the addition of a sculptural tree. Stewart Chaney designed new costumes for the 1937 revival, but the Hellenic style of the

[52] James Steichen, *Balanchine and Kirstein's American Enterprise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 3.
[53] See Appendix I for a chronology of these various US companies.
[54] See Marian Smith, "Balanchine at the Metropolitan Opera," *Ballet Review* 47, no. 1–2 (Summer 2019): 125–40.
[55] Steichen's *Balanchine and Kirstein's American Enterprise* includes a thorough discussion of this residency; see chapters four through seven.

original designs remained. In addition to the American premiere of Balanchine's *Apollon musagète*, audiences at the Metropolitan's Stravinsky Festival also saw the world premiere of *Jeu de cartes* (*The Card Game*, also called *The Card Party*), Balanchine and Kirstein's first commissioned score from Stravinsky, and a new version of *Le Baiser de la fée* (*The Fairy's Kiss*), initially commissioned by Ida Rubinstein and choreographed by Bronislava Nijinska. The festival helped renew the collaborative partnership between Balanchine and Stravinsky—while earning the American Ballet some much-needed positive press.[56]

The company had grown accustomed to mixed reviews, which reflected in part a broader battle being fought in dance circles throughout the 1930s and 1940s. The debate centered on the relative merits of modern dance, framed as a homegrown American form, and ballet, derided as a European import rather than a native style, reflecting US isolationism in this period.[57] When Balanchine first arrived in the United States in 1933, many critics dismissed his work as "part of a decaying fabric of Franco-Russian ballet."[58] Balanchine did have early supporters—notably Edwin Denby and Anatole Chujoy—but his ballets were initially considered old-fashioned. As the Depression wore on, American modern dance, closely aligned with leftist political movements and receiving the bulk of support from the Works Progress Administrations' Federal Dance Project, seemed better attuned to contemporary cultural and political concerns than Balanchine and Stravinsky's mythological ballet.[59]

Among American modern dance's most staunch defenders in this period was John Martin, the influential dance critic at The *New York Times*, who frequently expressed distaste for the "artiness

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[56] Steichen, *Balanchine and Kirstein's American Enterprise*, 148.
[57] Gay Morris, *A Game for Dancers: Performing Modernism in the Postwar Years, 1945–1960* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2006), 36–7.
[58] Morris, *A Game for Dancers*, 43–4.
[59] For a history of modern dance's close association with Leftist politics during the Great Depression, see Ellen Graff, *Stepping Left: Dance and Politics in New York City, 1928–1942* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

and affectation" of Balanchine's early ballets, including *Apollon musagète*.[60] Reviewing the 1937 revival of the ballet at the Metropolitan, Martin criticized what he saw as the work's overreliance on novelty and eccentricity, writing that the newly choreographed *Card Party* and *The Fairy's Kiss* were "infinitely more straightforward and free from strain."[61] Martin was not alone in his assessment of *Apollon musagète*; to many, "the ballet seemed to offer further evidence that Balanchine was too invested in the bizarre and experimental."[62] Despite these early critiques, *Apollon musagète* would be among the works that would define American ballet—and Balanchine's contribution to it—during World War II and the Cold War. Like its choreographer, *Apollon musagète* underwent a process of naturalization as Balanchine converted the Franco-Russian narrative ballet into an abstract American export that reflected his changing aesthetics and cultural-political goals.

The first step in this transformation came in the form of an international tour. In 1941, President Roosevelt formally established the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA); the organization's goal was to undermine the growing Nazi presence and pro-Axis sentiment in Latin America with a series of cultural diplomacy programs.[63] Along with the State Department's Division of Cultural Relations, the Inter-American Affairs' Cultural Relations Division determined which musicians, composers, and dancers "representative of the United States" should receive government funding to tour Latin America.[64] Nelson A. Rockefeller, then the Coordinator of

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[60] John Martin, "Stravinsky Leads Ballet Premiere: Composer Conducts Own 'Card Party' Danced by American Troupe at Metropolitan," *New York Times*, April 28, 1937, 19.
[61] John Martin, "The Dance: New Ballets," *New York Times*, May 2, 1937, X7.
[62] Steichen, *Balanchine and Kirstein's American Enterprise*, 158.
[63] The OCIAA began in 1940 as the Office for Coordination of Commercial and Cultural Relations between the American Republics (OCCCRBAR) and was formally established by President Franklin D Roosevelt's Executive Order 8840 on July 30, 1941. This organization was part of President Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor" foreign policy, which emphasized non-intervention and reciprocal exchange with Latin American nations. Jennifer L. Campbell, "Shaping Solidarity: Music, Diplomacy, and Inter–American Relations, 1936–1946" (PhD diss., University of Connecticut, 2010), 18–19.
[64] J. Manuel Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy, 1936–1948* (Washington, DC: Department of State Publications, 1976), 128. The Division of Cultural Relations' public position was that "only the finest talent representative of the United States should be encouraged to tour the American republics, and that only such talent should receive the attention of the Division."

the OCIAA and Kirstein's Harvard roommate, encouraged him to propose a six-month tour of Latin America for his Ballet Caravan.[65]

As the tour was initially intended to project an explicitly American artistic identity, *Apollon musagète,* then still understood as an expression of European modernism, was not among the works Kirstein first suggested Ballet Caravan present. Instead, Kirstein recommended *Filling Station* (1938) with a score by Virgil Thomson and choreography by Lew Christensen, Paul Bowles' *Yankee Clipper* (1937) and Aaron Copland's *Billy the Kid* (1938), both choreographed by Eugene Loring, and *Alma Mater* (1935) with music by Kay Swift and choreography by Balanchine—works with American themes and scores by American composers that Kirstein had commissioned in the 1930s, and that reflected his strong Leftist commitment, rather than Balanchine's staunch anti-Communist beliefs.[66]

When Kirstein's Ballet Caravan merged with former American Ballet dancers to form American Ballet Caravan with Balanchine as choreographer, *Apollon musagète* and several other Balanchine works were quickly added to the repertoire list, thereby shifting the tour's emphasis away from Americanist ballets and toward a more international repertoire. The final repertoire selections demonstrate a fascinating tension between Kirstein's populist American ballets, commissioned for Ballet Caravan in the 1930s, and Balanchine's reliance on European musical inspiration, including the works of Bach, Rossini, Schubert, and Tchaikovsky.[67] Thanks to its programming alongside *Billy*

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[65] In 1954, Rockefeller was appointed Special Assistant to the President for Foreign Affairs, also referred to as "Special Assistant to the President for Psychological Warfare," and served as President Eisenhower's representative on the Operations Coordinating Board, a committee of the National Security Council that oversaw coordinated execution of security policies and plans including clandestine operations. Cary Reich, *The Life of Nelson A. Rockefeller: Worlds to Conquer, 1908–1958* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 558.

[66] For a discussion of Kirsten's Leftist politics and the ballets he commissioned in the 1930s, see Lynn Garafola, "Lincoln Kirstein, Modern Dance, and the Left: The Genesis of an American Ballet," *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 23, no. 1 (Summer 2005): 18–35. See also chapter four, 149–50, and chapter five, 171–5.

[67] In addition to *Apollon musagète,* the company presented an eclectic collection of Balanchine ballets and Ballet Caravan works, including *The Bat* (1936), based on Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*; *Billy the Kid*; Lew Christensen's *Charade* (1939), featuring songs and social dances by Stephen Foster and Louis Moreau Gottschalk; *Errante* (1933) to a Schubert score; *Filling Station*; Alec Wilder's *Juke Box* (1940) with choreography by William Dollar; and *Serenade* (1933) with music by Tchaikovsky. The troupe also premiered several classics of the Balanchine repertoire including *Ballet Imperial*, since

the Kid and *Filling Station, Apollon musagète*, which had once seemed a stale holdover of the Diaghilev company, was for the first time a "Representative of America."[68] The mythological ballet was a tremendous success, particularly in Brazil and Argentina—nations with cosmopolitan communities that the OCIAA was most eager to impress.[69] The first of the Balanchine–Kirstein company's forays into cultural exchange, this tour was also among the most expensive endeavors of the OCIAA.[70]

Following the ballet's success on American Ballet Caravan's 1941 Latin American tour, the choreographer continued to present *Apollon musagète* to international audiences. During his six-month tenure as guest ballet master of the Paris Opéra Ballet in 1947, Balanchine staged this early work—along with *Serenade* and *Le Baiser de la fée*, and choreographed a new ballet, *Le Palais de cristal*, examined in chapter four—for the French national company. Designs by André Delfau for the 1947 *Apollon musagète* at the Paris Opéra echo the original 1928 Ballets Russes production.[71] The rock formation from Bauchant's mythological backdrop also appears in the 1947 designs, though Delfau's sets are a bit more jagged than the original and, therefore, slightly more modern.[72] The costumes too recall the original Ballets Russes designs. In sketches, Apollo wears a short, loosely draped gold tunic, his flowing blonde hair topped with a gilded laurel crown. The Muses are dressed in delicately

renamed the *Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2*, *Concerto Barocco* with music by Bach, *Divertimento* to music by Rossini selected and orchestrated by Benjamin Britten at the request of Lincoln Kirstein, and the Bowles-Christensen *Pastorela* on the Latin American tour.

[68] Walter Terry, "The Summer's Dance," *New York Herald Tribune*, May 1941.

[69] Campbell, "Shaping Solidarity: Music, Diplomacy, and Inter–American Relations, 1936–1946," 180–5. Campbell notes the political importance of the company's successes in Brazil, a US ally, and Argentina, which had pro-Axis sympathies and was generally viewed as anti-American in this period.

[70] Campbell, "Shaping Solidarity: Music, Diplomacy, and Inter–American Relations, 1936–1946," 123.

[71] In a 1985 interview, Delfau recalled that Balanchine's 1947 productions of *Apollon musagète* and *Serenade* marked the start of his long career as a theatrical designer. André Delfau, interview No. 1 with the Chicago Film Archives, Ruth Page Film Collection, October 24, 1985, http://www.chicagofilmarchives.org/collections/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/8926.

[72] Dossier de coupures de presse, représentation de mai 1947 à l'Opéra. "Apollon musagète" de Georges Balanchine musique de Stravinsky. Document d'archives, Richelieu, Arts du spectacle.

pleated white tunics, gauzy fabric sashes draped across one shoulder with gilded laurel garlands at the neckline and small crowns atop their heads.[73]

Figure 2.2: Maquettes de costume, André Delfau, 1947, Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra, BnF.

After one Parisian performance of *Apollon musagète* in 1947, a UNESCO representative approached Balanchine about the possibility of forming a European-based dance company to embody US ideals abroad. The choreographer, already keenly aware of his political utility, related the incident to Kirstein, boasting that "I could represent America in [an] artistic way better than ice boxes or electric bathtubs can."[74] Indeed, Balanchine and his work would become symbols of American innovation while challenging stereotypes about the United States as a cultural wasteland in

[73] The Muses' costumes also reflect contemporary fashion trends; in its 1947 style forecast, *Women's Wear Daily* notes the use of metallic fabrics, accordion pleats, and the continued popularity of one-shoulder styles. "New Year Fashions, Richer and More Daring: 1947 Style Highlights," *Women's Wear Daily*, January 2, 1947, 3.
[74] Letter from George Balanchine to Lincoln Kirstein, 1947. Kirstein, Lincoln, 1907-Papers, (S)*MGZMD 123, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

this era.[75] New York City Ballet would tour much of the world during the Cold War period, beginning in 1950 with a British tour. In 1952, Balanchine returned to Paris with his company under the auspices of the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), an anti-communist organization of which the choreographer was a member,[76] and later with the support of the US Department of State, which modeled their own exchange programs, including NYCB's landmark 1962 tour of the USSR, after the CCF's program of cultural propaganda.

Productions of *Apollon musagète* through the 1940s had reimagined Bauchant's original set and costumes, but by the early 1950s, Balanchine began to explore an increasingly abstract aesthetic. As Balanchine's company—now called the New York City Ballet—became institutionalized at New York's City Center in the early Cold War period, narratives, costumes, décor, and, in some cases, even titles of earlier works were shed in favor of a sparse style that, because of its regular programming and perceived contrast to Soviet dance, would come to define ballet in America.[77] These revised works, including *Apollo, Leader of the Muses* (retitled in 1951), came to resemble new Balanchine ballets danced against luminous cycloramas in stylized practice clothes, now called "black and white" or "leotard" ballets for their visual austerity and lack of traditional costumes.[78] Echoing American visual art, whose anti-figurative ideals developed close associations with pro-democratic

[75] Greg Barnhisel notes that American modern art was also used to combat this preconception—a frequent Soviet criticism of the US—among European intellectuals. Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Democracy*, 55.
[76] See chapter five for a discussion of the company's 1952 performances at the *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century Festival* and the choreographer's relationship with the Congress.
[77] In her coverage of New York City Ballet's 1962 Soviet tour, *Washington Post* critic Jean Battey creates an intentional contrast between the "abstract ballet" of George Balanchine and the "anti-abstractionist art [of] the Soviet ballet." Jean Battey, "Soviets, Too, Captured By the Storyless Ballet," *The Washington Post*, October 14, 1962, G6.
[78] These leotard ballets became a Balanchine hallmark, but many other works in New York City Ballet's repertory do not fall into this category, including Balanchine's *Firebird* (1949), *La Valse* (1951), *The Nutcracker* (1954), and Jerome Robbins's ballets for the company in this period.

and pro-American objectives in this period, the company's Cold War Formalism was a strong aesthetic *and* political statement.[79]

When *Agon*, the third of Stravinsky and Balanchine's Greek trilogy, premiered in 1957 on a triple bill with *Apollo* and *Orpheus* (1948), Balanchine designed a new production of his earliest Greek ballet to create a cohesive aesthetic for the three works.[80] Practice clothes replaced the Grecian togas. Papier-mâché boulders were traded for a stool. And the craggy rock Apollo ascended at the ballet's conclusion was substituted for a structural staircase, reflecting the black-and-white aesthetic of the Stravinsky and Balanchine's newest serial ballet, the vogue for New York City Ballet's "leotard" works, and the increasing abstraction of American art. As Jacques d'Amboise, who danced the title role in the revival, later wrote, "[Balanchine] wanted a new look, pared down to essentials, black and white. No ornament at all, minimalist. The new *Apollo* seemed thoroughly modern, as if the thirty years since its creation had vanished with the snap of a finger."[81] In figure 2.3, a photograph from the 1928 Ballets Russes production and a still from the 1960 Radio-Canada broadcast demonstrate the ballet's aesthetic transformation in postwar America.

[79] See Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Democracy*; Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*; Michael L. Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters for the Human Spirit: American Art and the Cold War*; and Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, among others.
[80] From 1951–1957, the ballet had been called *Apollo, Leader of the Muses*—a reference to the full French title the American company now eschewed.
[81] d'Amboise, *I Was a Dancer: A Memoir*, 191.

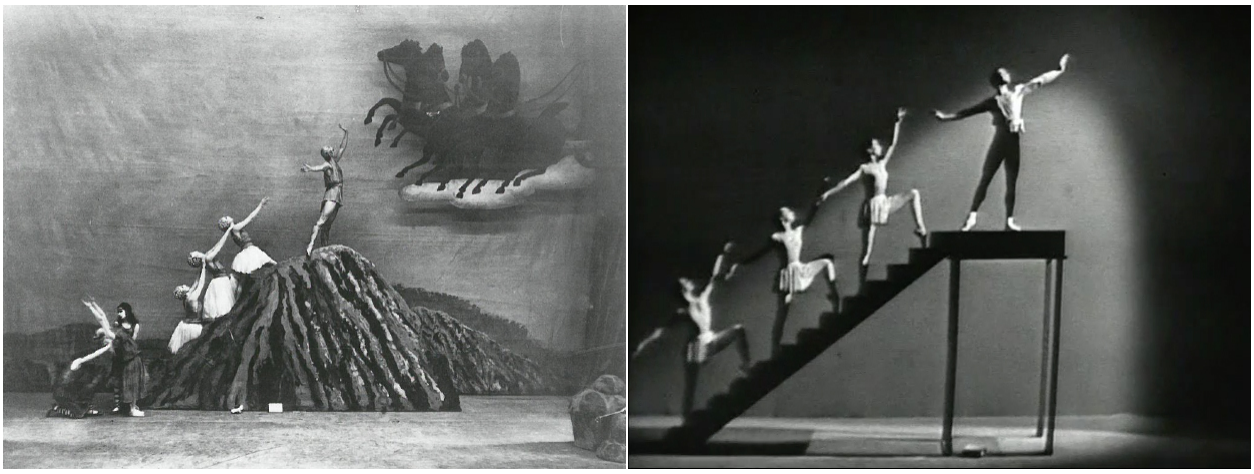

Figure 2.3: Production photograph, 1928, New York Public Library, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Production still, 1960, Radio-Canada's L'heure de concert.

The aesthetic shift illustrated above helped change mid-century attitudes about the choreographer and his role in American dance. No longer derided as a European import, Balanchine and his Cold War Formalist ballets were instead understood by critics and dance writers as representative of American innovation and culture. Indeed, many postwar profiles emphasized Balanchine's American identity rather than his Russian heritage, and specifically referred to his naturalized US citizenship, which he received in 1939.[82] Kirstein, arguably Balanchine's best promoter, also framed the dancemaker as an American beginning in the immediate postwar period. In a 1947 article whose title alludes to *Apollon musagète*, Kirstein boasted that Balanchine had recently created a new work, *Le Palais de cristal*, for the Paris Opéra Ballet, becoming the first person from "his country"—that is, the United States—to do so.[83] As Balanchine aligned his works with American artistic trends, he increasingly found support from critics *and* government agencies. The elimination of decorative elements in Balanchine's *Apollo* represents a significant shift in the

[82] Morris, *A Game for Dancers*, 61. Morris makes special note of Allen Churchill's remarks in *Theatre Arts* in 1949: "Balanchine, in this country sixteen years, has been an aggressively American citizen for nine."
[83] Lincoln Kirstein, "Balanchine Musagète," *Theatre Arts* (November 1947), 37. See chapter four for a discussion of this ballet and *Symphony in C*, its American restaging, as well as a discussion of the cultural-political context of Balanchine's tenure as guest ballet master of the Paris Opéra Ballet.

dancemaker's role in American cultural politics—but it would not be the last time *Apollo* would be transformed.

Between the ballet's aesthetic transformation in the 1950s and the substantive musical revisions of the late 1970s, Balanchine and his company became an increasingly stable American arts institution. International tours sponsored by the US State Department cemented New York City Ballet's reputation as one of the world's leading dance companies. In 1964, the company moved into a new permanent home at the New York State Theater (now the David H. Koch Theater) in New York's Lincoln Center.[84] Financial support flowed into NYCB and the affiliated School of American Ballet; in 1963, the organizations received $5,925,000 in grants from the Ford Foundation's Humanities and the Arts program—the largest sum ever dedicated to dance from a single source.[85]

Philanthropic and government support for the organization continued throughout the 1970s. In 1974, New York City Ballet made its debut at the recently opened John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. The same year, the company was awarded a $2.7 million Ford Foundation challenge grant, and in 1975, NYCB received their first $1 million Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. In celebration of the United States Bicentennial, Balanchine created *Union Jack* (1976), a tribute to America's British heritage set to traditional British tunes, hornpipe melodies, and music-hall songs. City Ballet also participated in the International

[84] The theatre was designed by architects Philip Johnson and John Burgee. Built with funds from the State of New York for the 1964 World's Fair, the theatre's ownership was subsequently transferred from the State to the City of New York in 1965. New York's Governor—and Lincoln Kirstein's longtime friend as well as college roommate—Nelson A. Rockefeller signed Assembly Bill (Introductory Number 4829, Print Number 5383) on April 25, 1961, which stated, in part: "An ACT to authorize and empower the office of general services to contract to purchase a completed building within the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts as part of the state's participation in the 1964-1965 World's Fair and to transfer title of the same to the city of New York at the termination of said world's fair. ... An understanding was reached whereby the State and the City each were to make contributions estimated at approximately $15,000,000."

[85] The Ford Foundation, The Ford Foundation 1964 Annual Report, 121. New York City Ballet and the School of American ballet received a total of $5,925,000, just over two-thirds of the total grant. Six other regional companies—all with ties to Balanchine—received the rest of the funding, while modern dance companies and NYCB's rival, American Ballet Theatre, received no funding from the Ford Foundation.

Festival de Danse in Paris, part of a French salute to the US Bicentennial. And in 1978, Balanchine, joined by contralto Marian Anderson, dancer Fred Astaire, composer Richard Rodgers, and pianist Arthur Rubinstein, was among the first Kennedy Center Honorees for his contribution to American culture, fêted by host Leonard Bernstein and President Jimmy Carter.

President Carter, sworn in on January 20, 1977, had what former US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates described as "the most unrelentingly hostile relationship with the Soviet leadership of any American President in the entire Cold War."[86] The United States' relationship with the USSR became increasingly strained under the Carter administration; the détente reached in the late 1960s officially came to an end after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.[87] Some historians refer to the increasingly militaristic conflict between the longtime rivals from 1979 to 1985 as the "Second Cold War."[88] In this politically and emotionally turbulent environment, Balanchine returned to *Apollo*, which had left New York City Ballet's repertory in 1972.[89] Just as he had simplified the work's designs during the height of the Cold War, Balanchine again abstracted—literally, condensed into its essential form—*Apollo* for his newest star dancer and Soviet defector Mikhail Baryshnikov.[90]

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[86] Edsel Dunford and Jim Thebaut, *The cold war and beyond, Part IV: 1979–present* (Alexandria, VA: Alexander Street Press, 2012).

[87] Peter G. Bourne, *Jimmy Carter: A Comprehensive Biography from Plains to Post-Presidency* (New York: Scribner, 1997), 456-457.

[88] For more information on the Second Cold War, see Simon Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War: The Discourse of Politics* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1990); Fred Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War* (London: Verso, 1987); and Steve Smith, "The Superpowers and Arms Control in the Era of the "Second" Cold War," in *Beyond the Cold War: Superpowers at the Crossroads*, ed. Michael Cox (Lanham, MD: University Press of America with the White Burkett Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 1990), 167–184.

[89] Nancy Reynolds, *Repertory in Review: 40 Years of the New York City Ballet* (New York: The Dial Press, 1977), 50.

[90] Elizabeth Kendall posits that the changes may have been made to remove "materials connected with Lifar, who'd become a professional rival." But, as chapters four and five examine, the two men were locked in the most overt conflict in the late 1940s and early 1950s when Balanchine briefly replaced Lifar as ballet master of the Paris Opéra Ballet. In light of design changes made to the ballet during the 1950s, it seems unlikely that Balanchine would have waited thirty years to purge the work of its associations with Lifar. Elizabeth Kendall, *Balanchine and the Lost Muse: Revolution and the Making of a Choreographer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 232–3.

The Russian Legacy of Choreomusical Cuts

As the New York City Ballet's 1979 spring season approached, balletomanes and dance critics eagerly anticipated the revival of *Apollo*. New York audiences were abuzz to see Mikhail Baryshnikov, the former ABT dancer who had recently made his debut as a member of NYCB, starring in an iconic Balanchine ballet.[91] Even more highly anticipated than Baryshnikov's dancing was Balanchine's changes to *Apollo*, rumored to include a major musical cut and significant choreographic alterations. Histories of the work and speculation about the revival appeared in the arts sections of New York publications in advance of its May 1 premiere, but audiences were nevertheless unprepared for the shock of Balanchine's revisions. [92]

After seeing "the first New York performance of this mutilation," Robert Craft, Stravinsky's longtime assistant, confessed that, "I thought Balanchine had come unglued."[93] With more than 160 measures of Stravinsky's music missing, Craft's response seems restrained in comparison to the composer's likely reaction. After all, his incensed response to Diaghilev's cut of Terpsichore's Variation for the Ballets Russes 1928 London season led to the estrangement of the longtime collaborators, and Stravinsky ended a twenty-five-year friendship with conductor Ernest Ansermet after he dared to make cuts to *Apollo* and *Jeu de cartes* in the late 1930s.[94] Echoing Craft, Anna

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[91] Baryshnikov was a principal dancer with American Ballet Theatre from his Soviet defection in 1974 until April 1978. David Caute's *The Dancer Defects* details his defection and early North American career, while Anna Kisselgoff covered the dancer's surprising announcement that he was joining the New York City Ballet. David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 496. Anna Kisselgoff, "Baryshnikov to Join City Ballet in July," *New York Times,* April 27, 1978, NJ23.

[92] This coverage included Jennifer Dunning, "Amid Guessing, Robbins Creates for Baryshnikov," *New York Times*, April 26, 1979, C16; and Allen Hughes, "The Life and Times of Balanchine's *Apollo*," *New York Times*, April 29, 1979, D8; but reporting on the revival was also featured in fashion and lifestyle publications including *Vogue*. Holly Brubach, "A fresh look at genius: how Balanchine shows us ourselves," *Vogue*, May 1, 1979, 174.

[93] Robert Craft, *The Moment of Existence: Music, Literature and the Arts, 1990–1995* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1996), 290–291. Many Stravinsky devotees and balletomanes shared his perspective.

[94] Diaghilev's reason for cutting Terpsichore's Variation was not aesthetic but financial (and possibly personal, as Stravinsky's *Le Baiser de la fée* for the competing Ballets de Madame Ida Rubinstein premiered in Paris in November of that year). The role of Terpsichore was shared by Balanchine's muse, Alexandra Danilova, and Alice Nikitina, the mistress of Ballets Russes patron Lord Rothermere. Company funding outweighed artistic concerns, and Diaghilev cut the variation to avoid quarreling among his leading ballerinas.

Kisselgoff, then Chief Dance Critic for The *New York Times*, denounced these changes as a "decapitation" in her perceptive review of the work's premiere. Her violent description informs the language of contemporary scholarship on Balanchine's striking choreomusical cuts to *Apollo*.[95]

The choreographer, who created more than 500 dance works in his lifetime, was known to revisit and revise earlier ballets—sometimes redesigning the work to better suit his Cold War Formalism or changing choreography to reflect a new dancer's particular strengths. Notoriously unsentimental about his work, Balanchine once quipped, "Who wants to see last year's butterfly?"[96] But unlike many Balanchine ballets, *Apollo*'s choreography was carefully preserved from 1928 to 1972, even as the work's design was increasingly simplified—until the ballet's revival in the late 1970s.[97]

Balanchine's most shocking change to *Apollo* was his so-called "decapitation" of the work, beginning with a large cut to Stravinsky's thirty-minute score.[98] For Baryshnikov's June 1978 performances of *Apollo* at the International Dance Festival in Chicago, Balanchine omitted the Prologue—127 measures of music, the equivalent of four minutes and thirty seconds under the composer's baton.[99] When the revised *Apollo* was first performed in New York in 1979, Balanchine went further, cutting the Prologue as well as Apollo's First Variation, an additional 37 measures and nearly three minutes of music for a total of nearly seven and a half minutes erased from the relatively

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[95] Anna Kisselgoff, "A Cut 'Apollo,'" *New York Times*, May 3, 1979, C17.
[96] Taper, *Balanchine, a biography*, 145.
[97] My analysis is based primarily on a 1960 performance featuring Jacques d'Amboise for Radio-Canada's *L'heure du concert* and a 1989 PBS *Dance in America* broadcast, "Baryshnikov Dances Balanchine." My analysis also employs more recent promotional videos produced by the New York City Ballet and other ballet companies. Any analysis is simultaneously made possible and limited by what they have preserved—a single performance, with all its errors and idiosyncrasies, as well as a translation of the work in a setting for which it was not originally intended.
[98] As New York City Ballet performances feature live rather than recorded music, Balanchine's cut had a tangible impact on the score as well as its realization by the New York City Ballet Orchestra.
[99] The composer's 1964 recording of the Prologue with the Columbia Symphony Orchestra is exactly four minutes and thirty seconds long, while other audio recordings present the first tableau somewhat slower, between roughly 4:40 and 5:28.

brief score.[100] Lost was Stravinsky's delightfully incongruous cadential figure with which the work begins, as well as statements of the "Olympian" theme and Apollo's birth chord, with significant effects on the music's structure.[101] Naturally, Balanchine's choreography for these two numbers was also jettisoned in his 1979 version.

In 1980, Balanchine restored Apollo's First Variation along with the last thirty-six measures of the Prologue, which henceforth formed a brief overture from the triumphant statement of Stravinsky's "Olympian" theme at rehearsal 15. The 1980 performances codified Balanchine's musical and choreographic changes, and this is the version that New York City Ballet continues to perform today. It is also the version to which this analysis will refer unless otherwise stated. The ballet's cuts, organized by rehearsal number, are represented below in figure 2.4; x's indicate material, either musical or choreographic, that Balanchine cut, while blank boxes denote musical or choreographic material retained in the various versions of *Apollo*.

Rehearsal Number	1978		1979		1980	
	Music	Choreography	Music	Choreography	Music	Choreography
1–14: Prologue, Apollo's Birth	x	x	x	x	x	x
15–19: Prologue, Apollo's Education	x	x	x	x		x
20–23: Apollo's First Variation			x	x		

Figure 2.4: Comparison of Balanchine's Musical and Choreographic Cuts in Apollo.

It is not difficult to imagine the uproar these musical and choreographic changes caused—but Balanchine defended the cuts in 1981, telling interviewer John Gruen that, "Recently I looked at *Apollo*. I looked at the birth scene. I decided it wasn't interesting. I mean, who cares that somebody

[100] Stravinsky's 1964 recording of the First Variation is two minutes and fifty-five seconds long.
[101] Richard Taruskin describes this gesture as a "polemical cadential trill" in his essay, "Back to Whom? Neoclassicism as Ideology," *19th-Century Music* 16, no. 3 (Spring 1993): 286–302.

is born. I wanted to eliminate that, and I did. You see, all of that is unimportant. What is important is the dancing . . . only the dancing!"[102] The choreographer further justified these actions by intimating that the ballet only included a Prologue to increase the royalties due to Stravinsky.[103]

Although many critics found the cuts disturbing, readings of the revival within dance studies have nevertheless sought to justify the choreographer's musical excision. Several prominent dance scholars have agreed that "the music for [the Prologue in Apollo] actually duplicates later parts of the ballet and has no intrinsic reason for being there."[104] Such comments demonstrate a misunderstanding of musical form and the structural value of repetition. The analysis that follows will reveal the extent to which Balanchine's cut disturbs the formal structure of the Prologue as well as the Apotheosis while simultaneously removing any remaining vestige of *Apollo*'s identity as a Franco-Russian mythological ballet, thereby rendering it an increasingly abstract dancework. To achieve this, Balanchine returned to the techniques he learned in Russia and under Diaghilev—to cut and revise existing scores in the service of the ballet. The result of these musical changes is ultimately the erasure of narrative in Balanchine's new *Apollo*, remaking the work to suit the spare aesthetic that had already dominated the ballet's design and American art intended for earlier Cold War export.

Rather than explore the possibility of more practical motivations, this chapter interrogates the choreomusical, aesthetic, and cultural-political impulses that drove Balanchine's revival of *Apollo*. In part, this is because there are no statements that cite financial issues or other programming challenges as the reason for any revisions to Balanchine's ballets, with the possible exception of

[102] Balanchine, "Balanchine and Stravinsky: An Olympian *Apollo*," 86.
[103] Balanchine, "Balanchine and Stravinsky: An Olympian *Apollo*," 85.
[104] Nancy Reynolds quoted in "Staging Balanchine's Ballets: A Symposium," with Reynolds, Rosemary Dunleavy, Francia Russell, Victoria Simon, and John Taras, *Ballet Review* 11, No. 3 (Fall 1983): 91.

Liebeslieder Walzer (1960).[105] As both dancers and orchestra members were paid weekly in 1979, the four-minute cut would not have impacted those costs. Further, while the additional minutes of music might have minimally increased technical and rehearsal costs, Balanchine repeatedly demonstrated his willingness to spend enormous sums to achieve his choreographic goals. For example, the choreographer spent $130,000 (equivalent to roughly $800,000 in 2019) to close the State Theatre for a week of rehearsals in preparation for the 1972 Stravinsky Festival, which included performances of *Apollo*. None of this proves definitively that practical concerns were divorced from Balanchine's 1979 revival of *Apollo*, but rather demonstrates that they were not among the central motivating factors.

While audiences unfamiliar with the original score are unlikely to realize it in a performance of the ballet, significant motivic distortion of Stravinsky's 'Olympian' theme—whose recurrence throughout the Prologue and restatement in the ballet's Apotheosis reflects the tremendous cohesion of the score—is one result of Balanchine's musical cut. The Olympian theme, in a piano reduction by the composer, is pictured below in figure 2.5.

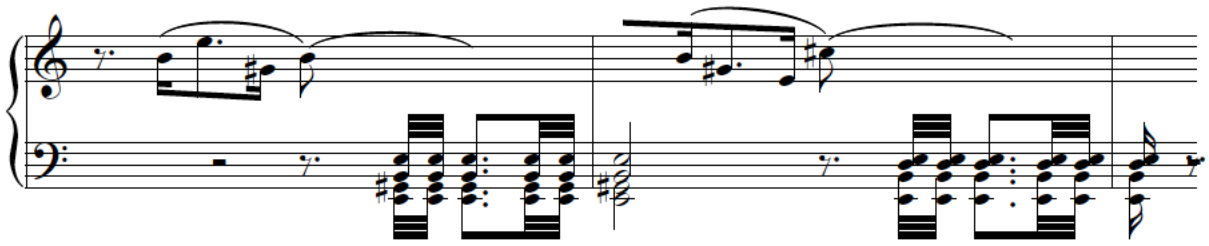

Figure 2.5: Olympian theme in E major; piano reduction by Igor Stravinsky.

[105] Set to the Brahms score by the same name, *Liebeslieder Walzer* requires four singers—but comments regarding the difficulty of hiring those singers were made by Lincoln Kirstein, the company's General Director, and not by Balanchine. Lincoln Kirstein, *Thirty Years: Lincoln Kirstein's The New York City Ballet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 122.

The theme is first heard at rehearsal 4. Beginning in E major, or III, the score quickly moves into A major (VI) before a repeat of the C major cadential gesture and rising scalar figure with which the work begins.[106] In Balanchine's revised *Apollo*, however, the theme's first statement is omitted. When the motive is finally heard—functioning at rehearsal 15 as a brief overture to Apollo's First Variation—its C major proclamation lacks the musical context of its earlier statements, as well as the sense of arrival inherent in a musical recapitulation. Without the minor tonality and harmonic tension that develops between the two statements of the Olympian theme at rehearsals 4 and 15, the statement of the Olympian theme here sounds superficial, almost saccharine. Without the earlier musical context, the overture is nothing more than a short but tuneful introduction to the ballet.

Balanchine's cut disrupts the sense of form created by Stravinsky's recapitulation. Previously a modified ternary—A B A', where A represents developments of the Olympian theme—the four-minute cut effaces the Prologue's structure, removing the musical context for the thematic return. Therefore, this cut denies the listener an essential element of the work's neoclassicism: its conventional form, replete with references to Western concert music's tradition of the overture.[107] Further, the Olympian theme's recapitulation in the Apotheosis, which once suggested triumphant return, is weakened as a result of the loss of motivic development in the Prologue and now recalls its facile first statement at rehearsal 15, rather than the motive's multiple transformations throughout the work.

Balanchine's musical cut undermines the development of the Olympian theme and the overture's classical form, but his attendant choreographic excision serves to achieve greater music–movement *conformance*, to employ Nicholas Cook's theory of musical multimedia analysis as well as

[106] Notably, the Olympian theme was among Stravinsky's earliest sketches for *Apollo*.
[107] Although typically in two rather than three sections, the French overture famously involved two contrasting musical ideas with a return to the opening theme at the conclusion of the work.

Stephanie Jordan's choreomusically-informed reading of these theories.[108] In the 1960 Radio-Canada broadcast, Leto experiences a contraction during the first statement of the Olympian theme.[109] Her tensed torso and flexed wrists, pictured below in figure 2.6, reflect the influence of modern dance trends on Balanchine's choreography. The movement vocabulary of Leto's labor, featuring anti-balletic contractions and contortions, strongly recalls the aesthetics of American modern dance pioneer Martha Graham.[110]

Figure 2.6: Production still of Leto's labor, 1960 Radio-Canada broadcast.

[108] Cook's categories of conformance, complementation, and contestation indicate the kinds of dynamic interaction that music and other media may have. See the Introduction to this dissertation, p. 16, as well as Nicholas Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 98–106; and Stephanie Jordan, *Stravinsky Dances: Re-Visions across a Century* (Alton: Hampshire: Dance Books, 2007), 8–10.
[109] My thanks to Lynn Garafola for noting that this section was rechoreographed in 1937.
[110] Indeed, at the time that this performance was filmed, New York City Ballet had recently collaborated with Martha Graham on the 1959 ballet *Episodes*, featuring Anton von Webern's *Symphony*, Op. 21, *Five Pieces*, Op. 10, *Concerto*, Op. 24, and the *Ricercata in Six Voices* from Bach's *Musical Offering* arranged by Webern. I am grateful to Angela Kane for this observation. For more on Graham technique, see Henrietta Bannerman, "An Overview of the Development of Martha Graham's Movement System (1926–1991)," *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 17, no 2 (1999): 11, 14.

The dotted rhythms and transparent treble texture of the Olympian theme that accompanies Leto's labor during the Prologue, however, are reminiscent of eighteenth-century French overtures.[111] The aesthetic dissonance, or *contest*, between these two styles—American modern dance and the neoclassical theme—creates friction in *Apollo* that is, if not resolved, at least avoided by Balanchine's choreomusical excision.[112] Balanchine more closely aligned the ballet's movement vocabulary with the Olympian theme's neoclassicism by excising Leto's labor and Apollo's birth, thus creating greater choreomusical conformance.

In Stravinsky's 1928 score, Leto's labor concludes with a harmonic transition to minor. This modal shift precedes what Robert Craft has termed the "Apollo chord," which marks the god's birth at rehearsal 6. Along with early statements of the Olympian theme, it is among the most important musical gestures lost in Balanchine's cut for its impact on the ballet's large-scale tonal structure. The elimination of this octatonic pitch collection—C, F, B, D, and F#—deprives listeners of a rare chromatic event in the overwhelmingly tonal sounding score of *Apollo*. Also lost is the intensity with which the forceful pizzicato accents and *forte* marking of the Apollo chord energize the Prologue, driving it forward to a more mimetic B section and away from the French eighteenth-century classicism of the previous measures.[113] Most importantly, Balanchine's deletion disrupts long-range harmonic tension and connection that, as Maureen Carr and other scholars have observed, remains

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[111] Although double dotting is not observed in the 1960 film featuring Jacques d'Amboise, the composer insisted on what he described as a "characteristic eighteenth-century rhythm" in his own audio recordings of *Apollo* and his 1963 book, *Dialogues and a Diary*. Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Dialogues and a Diary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1963), 19. Specific references to French rhythms appear elsewhere in *Apollo* as well. For the Muse of Poetry, Stravinsky composed a variation whose rhythmic structure is based on iambic versification in classical French poetry. The Boileau verse, "Que toujours dans vos vers le sens coupant les mots, Suspende l'hemistiche et marque le repos," is taken from Chant I of *L'Art poétique*. Carr, *Multiple Masks: Neoclassicism in Stravinsky's Works on Greek Subjects*, 119.

[112] As Cook notes, elements in contest indicate contradiction, in which each element attempts to impose its own characteristics on the other. Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia*, 103.

[113] Julia Randel suggests the Prologue comprises two sections—"Lullian" and "Tchaikovskian"—separated by the Apollo or birth chord. Julia Phillips Randel, "Un-Voicing Orpheus: The Powers of Music in Stravinsky and Balanchine's 'Greek' Ballets," *The Opera Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 112. Although I agree that the Apollo chord divides the Prologue, what Randel terms the "Tchaikovskian" section broadly suggests to me nineteenth-century mimetic music composed by specialists like Minkus or Drigo. For a discussion of these specialist composers, see chapter one, 33–7.

unresolved until the Apotheosis. It is not until the work's final B-minor triad nearly thirty minutes later that Stravinsky's Apollo chord finally achieves harmonic resolution, illustrated below in figure 2.7.[114] Without it, the work is structurally hobbled. But there is an emotional loss as well. Stravinsky later described the uniquely expressive quality of this chord, noting that "if a truly tragic note is sounded anywhere in my music, that note is in *Apollo*. Apollo's birth is tragic, I think, and so is his ascent to Parnassus."[115] Both of these profoundly moving moments are lost in Balanchine's revival.

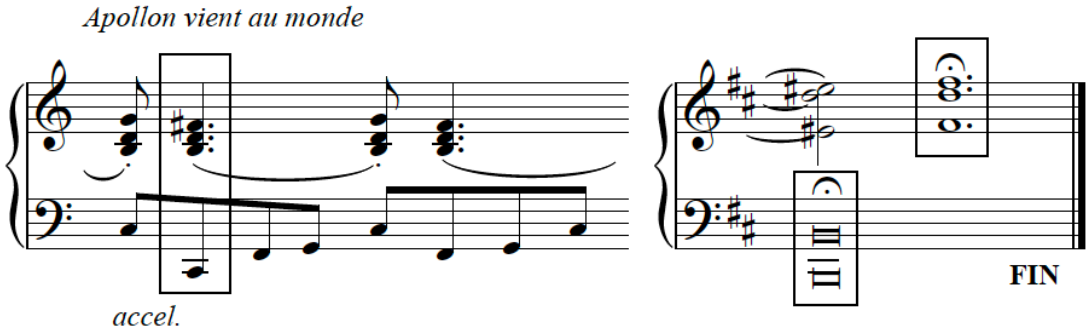

Figure 2.7: Apollo chord at rehearsal 6 and its resolution in the Apotheosis.

Whereas Balanchine's cut omits significant motivic material but resolves stylistic contestation during Leto's labor, perhaps justifying such a significant change, the 1928 choreography closely conformed to the music of the Prologue that followed the statement of the Apollo chord. The young god's rolling neck and spasmodic gestures, for example, are carefully matched to Stravinsky's staccato scalar figures from rehearsal 12 to 14.[116] Apollo gains his balance during the sustained V 6/5 chord that precedes the arrival of his lute—and the return of the Olympian theme at rehearsal 15.

[114] Carr, *Multiple Masks*, 113.
[115] Stravinsky and Craft, *Dialogues and a Diary*, 34.
[116] Certain opportunities for choreomusical accord seem to be lost in Jacques d'Amboise's performance for the 1960 Radio-Canada broadcast, either as a result of post-production editing or in the original filming. Audio-visual clips of contemporaneous productions suggest that Apollo's convulsive gestures were meant to match Stravinsky's staccato scalar figures.

The instrument's appearance illustrates the connection between the C major statement of the Olympian motive and Apollo's musical skill, exemplifying Balanchine's gift for choreomusical correspondence.

When this choreography, and the choreography of the Prologue more broadly, is eliminated, the ballet's narrative, already stripped away during the 1950s with the elimination of costumes and sets, is jettisoned to create an even more abstract work. Although brief, the Prologue contains the bulk of the ballet's pantomime and establishes the work's storyline. Without it, the male lead is rendered an impassive *premier danseur* rather than the god of music, poetry, and art, eliminating mythology in favor of iconography. By cutting the Prologue and its references to modern dance, Balanchine's choreographic pluralism is expunged in favor of a neoclassical *danse d'école* style. The 1928 work is reborn as a purely non-narrative ballet. Ultimately, the loss of music and mimetic movement in the Prologue that results from Balanchine's cut trivializes Stravinsky's main theme and disrupts long-range harmonic tension and musical form—but emphasizes the *danse d'école* quality of the dancers' movement and the classicism of the extant choreography.

The Apotheosis does not suffer the same musical fate as the Prologue—here, Balanchine preserves Stravinsky's score in full—but his 1979 choreographic revisions to the work's conclusion mirror those of the Prologue in their quest for increased choreomusical complementation and anti-narrative abstraction.[117] Instead of heeding Zeus's call to the heavens, Apollo and the three Muses now conclude the ballet in a sunburst pose—what Robert Garis terms the "Apollo-logo" and others call the "fantail arabesque."[118] Beyond simply removing the ballet's final narrative elements, however, this choreographic change also provides an alternative visualization of Stravinsky's score and

[117] Unlike the Prologue and Apollo's First Variation, which underwent several changes in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Apotheosis was only rechoreographed once for the 1979 New York City Ballet revival starring Mikhail Baryshnikov.
[118] Robert Garis, *Following Balanchine* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 78.

suggests the power of physical movement to reveal musical intricacies or suggest new aural experiences. In his 1979 revival, Balanchine eschews the music–visual canon he created in 1928 that drew on the Apotheosis' main theme in favor of a more literal realization of Stravinsky's static conclusion to *Apollo*. The result is choreography that sensitively responds to the complex score from beginning to end.

Choreomusical complementation is not at issue when the Apotheosis begins at rehearsal 96. In both the original and 1979 versions of *Apollo*, the ballet's final section commences with Zeus's call to his son; the first and second violins state a chromatically climbing melody to represent this summons. Apollo, rising from a bent-waist position, grows taller and more upright with each of the violins' ascending half notes until he finally gestures upward to Olympus with his right arm. While Apollo's gestures mirror the violins' upper line, the three Muses sink closer to the ground with each of the low strings' descending chromatic tones, finally kneeling in the third measure before Apollo reaches skyward, pictured in figure 2.8.

Figure 2.8: Production still featuring Jacques d'Amboise, Diana Adams, Jillana, and Francia Russell, 1960 Radio-Canada broadcast.

Apollo and the Muses visualize the upper- and lower-most musical lines in figure 2.9, illuminating the melodic contours of the Apotheosis's first measures, an example of the sensitive choreomusical visualization that repeatedly earned Balanchine the approval of his musical colleagues and critics. As Stravinsky once famously observed,

> To see Balanchine's choreography…is to hear the music with one's eyes; and this visual hearing has been a greater revelation to me, I think, than to anyone else. The choreography emphasized relationships of which I had hardly been aware—in the same way—and the performance was like a tour of a building for which I had drawn the plans but never explored the results.[119]

[119] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Themes and Episodes* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 24. Although the composer was referring here to *Movements for Piano and Orchestra*, Balanchine's 1963 setting of Stravinsky's 1960 serial work, the composer nevertheless observed that Balanchine's coda for *Movements* "had a suggestion of myth that reminded me of the ending of *Apollo*."

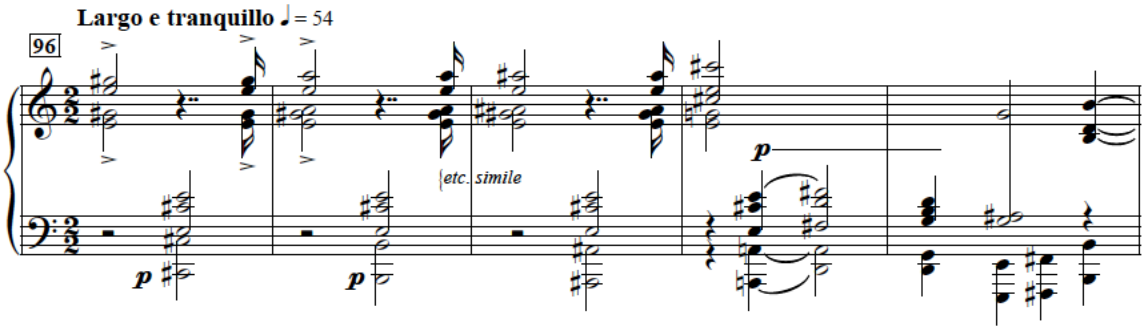

Figure 2.9: First five measures of the Apotheosis.

This music–movement complementation continues at rehearsal 98, where the ascending melody in the first violins and violas, emotionally heightened by rich dissonances in the second violins, is matched by the Muses, who now rise from their reclining positions on the floor. Terpsichore, Polyhymnia, and Calliope, emphasizing the steady half-note beat of the stately 4/2 time signature, ascend one-by-one to bended knee and then to an open and extended fourth position,[120] reflecting Balanchine's imaginative expansion of classical ballet technique. The recapitulation of the Olympian theme that follows at rehearsal 99 further emphasizes a chromatically ascending melodic contour, made all the more effective by this stirring synthesis of rising music and movement.[121]

The close choreomusical cohesion demonstrated in the first measures of the Apotheosis is typical of Balanchine and may in part explain why he ultimately revised the choreography for the final measures. From 1928 to 1978, the four principal dancers ascend the mountain/staircase—previously the site of Leto's labor in the Prologue—as the first figure of the Olympian theme repeats several times. The potential stasis of these musical repetitions is disrupted by Stravinsky's use of

[120] Fourth position is a position of the feet wherein one turned-out foot is placed "one short step" in front of the other. Agrippina Vaganova, *Basic Principals of Classical Ballet: Russian Ballet Technique*, trans. Anatole Chujoy (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969), 17.
[121] Even Prokofiev expressed begrudging admiration for this section in a letter to Myaskovksy on July 9, 1928: "In one place, on the very last page of the work, he has shone and managed to make even his disgusting main theme sound convincing." Quoted in Walsh, *Stravinsky: A Creative Spring*, 454.

rhythmic augmentation, described by Robert Craft in the following way: "the four-note violin figure (doubled two octaves lower by first cellos) is repeated [six] times, each one extending the 4th note by one beat, from three to four to five to six to seven—Apollo's sacred number."[122] This additive process subtly transforms the familiar theme and creates metric uncertainty in addition to a sense of subdued conclusion. Simultaneously, Balanchine's choreographic ascension suggests the rising melodies described above at rehearsals 96, 98, and 99, creating a kind of music–visual canon rather than a strict realization of the work's final measures that draws upon both *Apollo*'s main theme and the quality of ascent—both musical and visual—with which the entire Apotheosis is imbued. In Balanchine's revised Apotheosis, however, earlier choreographic material is repurposed. The result is a close complement, or synthesis, with the additive Olympian theme that concludes the ballet. Further, Balanchine's new choreography banishes the last vestiges of narrative; in this way, it functions much like his cut to the Prologue.

In the original choreography, the return of the Olympian theme shortly before rehearsal 99 coincides with the briefly held Louis XIV-inspired sunburst pose. The combination of this pose, redolent of the Apollo sun mask—the emblem of Versailles and Louis XIV—and the complete statement of the Olympian theme nods briefly to the ballet's aesthetic debt to *le roi soleil* and centuries of French music and dance. Described as one of *Apollo*'s "causal wonders," the pose is held for just two beats, "float[ing] into view and dissolv[ing], leaving its light to irradiate the events that follow."[123]

In his 1979 revival, however, Balanchine excises the "Apollo-logo" from the penultimate page of the score and affixes it to the work's final measures, replacing Apollo's ascent to the heavens

[122] Craft, *The Moment of Existence*, 289.
[123] Arlene Croce, "Enigma Variations," *The New Yorker*, May 21, 1979, 132.

with an extended *tableau vivant* that mirrors the subdued stasis of the Olympian theme with which Stravinsky's score concludes.[124] Apollo's original ascent subtly referred to earlier musical material, while the stillness and constancy suggested by the score's additive repetition of the Olympian theme achieves a closer complement in the equilibrium of the sunburst pose, which is prolonged in its new position at the end of the Apotheosis. The continued pairing of the Apollo-logo and the Olympian theme in the last measures of the ballet continues to acknowledge the French sources of the ballet's musical, choreographic, and visual inspiration. In fact, in its new position just before the blackout, substantially greater emphasis is placed on this coupling. Further, the choreographic stasis of the Apollo-logo creates the same sort of close musical synthesis achieved earlier in the Apotheosis and throughout the late *Apollo*.

But Balanchine does not simply create a closer choreomusical complement in his 1979 Apotheosis. Apollo's original ascent is the last narrative element of the dance work; in replacing it with a static posture, Balanchine supplants the ballet's storyline with a strong visual image modeled after French aristocratic iconography. The striking pose, which represents the fusion of poetry, mime, and dance with music, transcends the myth of Apollo, thereby completing the process of abstraction begun in the ballet's Prologue. The sunburst pose is ultimately the logo not only of *Apollo* but of Balanchine's Cold War Formalist aesthetic, supplanting narrative in favor of the abstract in his American choreographic oeuvre.[125]

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[124] Garis, *Following Balanchine*, 78. Arguably Balanchine's most recognizable *tableau vivant* is formed during Terpsichore and Apollo's *pas de deux*, wherein they recreate Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel fresco, "The Creation of Adam." Many dance scholars believe that these poses, typical of Balanchine ballets, reflect the artistic tutelage the young choreographer received from Diaghilev, who took Balanchine to art museums throughout Europe and encouraged him to study painting and sculpture.

[125] As Barnhisel writes in his work on Cold War modernism, "allusiveness, abstraction…the subsumption of emotion under formal technique, the retreat of the personality of the artist into the background behind different "masks" or narrative voices, and, above all, high seriousness" dominated during the Cold War conflict. Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists*, 3.

Although Balanchine's revised *Apollo* removed narrative elements from the ballet at odds with the formalist aesthetic he cultivated during the Cold War period, the tools the dancemaker used to achieve this result are firmly in the tradition of the Russian Ballet. Balanchine justified his changes to *Apollo* in a 1981 *Dance Magazine* interview with John Gruen, claiming that "What is important is the dancing . . . only the dancing!"[126] Such an assertion indicates that while the removal of narrative content and greater stylistic consistency in the revival were intentional, Balanchine judged that the musical disturbances that resulted from his cuts were necessary to realize his vision for *Apollo*. Balanchine could be a remarkably thoughtful musician—but in this revival of his earliest extant ballet, choreographic coherence was of central importance.

A "Sustained Oneness of Tone and Feeling": The Impact of Balanchine's *Apollo* Revisions

Although Balanchine's musical cut in the Prologue disrupted the carefully wrought continuity of Stravinsky's score, his choreographic changes more closely complemented the Apotheosis. Ultimately, the choreographer's alterations produced a more cohesive work, aligning every element of the ballet with the Apollonian principles of order, restraint, and discipline to which Stravinsky avowed his allegiance again and again.[127] Rather than a Dionysian profusion of dance styles, the 1979 revival featured only the *danse d'école*, a counterpart to the score's "sustained oneness of tone and feeling."[128]

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[126] Balanchine, "Balanchine and Stravinsky: An Olympian *Apollo*," 86.
[127] Stravinsky made a similar observation in his aesthetic manifesto, *Poetics of Music*, writing, "What is important for the lucid ordering of the work—for its crystallization—is that all the Dionysian elements which set the imagination of the artist in motion and make the life-sap rise must be properly subjugated before they intoxicate us, and must finally be made to submit to the law: Apollo demands it." Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, 80–81.
[128] Balanchine, "The Dance Element in Stravinsky's Music," 81.

Indeed, dance critics at the time noticed the choreomusical cohesion of the revised *Apollo*. Although *The New Yorker's* dance critic Arlene Croce thought it was "odd" of Balanchine to have cut Stravinsky's score, she felt that "all the dance values have been refocused, and the dynamics have been heightened so as to bring out even more of their radical intensity."[129] Anna Kisselgoff, while acknowledging the damage done to the score, suggested that "in stripping the ballet down to its essentials . . . [Balanchine] has reached its essence."[130] Kisselgoff's reflections on the "pure-dance" aesthetic of Balanchine's *Apollo* are echoed in a mid-June review of the ballet by her *New York Times* colleague Jack Anderson. Emphasizing the non-narrative qualities of Balanchine's revival, Anderson asserted that, "What was once a dramatic ballet now looked almost abstract."[131] Anderson went on to summarize the state of affairs in American dance, writing,

> Some commentators have speculated that Mr. Balanchine may have made the cuts because audiences today are not used to watching dramatic choreographic movement. Ironically, this situation exists, in part, because of Mr. Balanchine. Thanks to his influence, much American ballet is abstract . . . Abstraction dominates American dance and our choreographic abstractions are not only distinguished, they have helped revolutionize the art of dance.[132]

Many reviews of the 1979 revival *Apollo* make oblique reference to the ballet's simplification or Balanchine's non-narrative aesthetic, but Anderson explicitly identifies choreographic abstraction as a primary goal of Balanchine's new production. Further, Anderson notes that this aesthetic dominates American ballet precisely because of Balanchine's influence in the United States and worldwide. Although the ballet was originally conceived and choreographed for a Franco-Russian audience in Paris, thanks to its Stravinsky score and increasingly sparse style, *Apollo* became an icon

[129] Croce, "Enigma Variations," *The New Yorker*, 132.
[130] Kisselgoff, ""A Cut 'Apollo,'" C17.
[131] Jack Anderson, "Critic's Notebook: Two Faces of Dance," *New York Times*, June 15, 1979, C3.
[132] Anderson, "Two Faces of Dance," C3. Interestingly, Anderson's review is the only critique I have located that explicitly identifies choreographic abstraction as Balanchine's primary goal.

of American dance at the height of the Cold War conflict and fully realized Balanchine's cultural-political goals when he revived the ballet during the Second Cold War.

Chapter 3

Serenade, Balanchine's Russian American Ballet (1934–1965)

Serenade (1934), choreographed to Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings in C Major, Op. 48 (1880), represents Balanchine's first American ballet and a signature work of his company, the New York City Ballet. The much-loved work even became Soviet short-hand for 'American ballet' during the New York City Ballet's 1962 State Department-sponsored tour of the USSR, during which *Serenade* was the first work performed at each stop. While the work's striking designs and non-narrative neoclassicism were used to articulate Soviet-American cultural differences at the height of the Cold War conflict, Balanchine constructed the score for *Serenade* much as a Russian ballet master might, cutting, adding to, and reorganizing Tchaikovsky's music over several decades. *Serenade*, then, reflects the central tensions examined in this dissertation: the use of Balanchine's ballets to represent American dance ingenuity during the Cold War and the Franco-Russian music and techniques he employed in the creation of these ballets.

In many ways, *Serenade* is a product of the complicated experience of immigration that characterizes so much American art created by European émigrés in the twentieth century. Neither wholly one nor the other, *Serenade* is both Russian and American, narrative and abstract—an example of the "third" language of émigré artists.[1] This is also evident in the Tchaikovsky score on which the ballet was made; the Serenade for Strings blends Russian folk materials with European compositional practices, a precursor to *Serenade*'s complex cultural identity. Balanchine's first

[1] Lydia Goehr, "Music and Musicians in Exile: The Romantic Legacy of a Double Life," in *Driven into Paradise: The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany to the United States*, ed. Reinhold Brinkmann and Christoph Wolff (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 84.

American ballet demonstrates the choreographer's deep admiration and musical understanding of Tchaikovsky, a fellow Petersburger, as well as the importance of the Russian musical traditions described in chapter one to the dancemaker's working process. Although *Serenade* became a Cold War symbol of freedom and innovation, the multivalent work represents a complex heritage echoing that of American ballet itself, which drew on and adapted a Franco-Russian movement practice to create its own celebrated aesthetic widely exported by the US State Department during the Cold War. As a result, Balanchine's Franco-Russian American ballet complicates narratives of Soviet-American cultural difference and incompatibility.

After briefly summarizing the music's structure as well as the ballet's development, the chapter analyzes the changing identity of the ballet's score from *Serenade*'s premiere in 1934 until the early-mid 1960s. Balanchine's cuts, additions, reorderings, and even an arrangement of the score he used in early productions could be read as disregard for Tchaikovsky's music. Reconstructing Balanchine's changes to *Serenade*, however, ultimately reveals his intimate understanding of musical structure and compositional practice in Tchaikovsky's work. Following this close reading of Balanchine's repeatedly reconceived *Serenade* score, the chapter examines the ballet's designs and casting practices. Early productions suggest a work quite different from the one that audiences know today, as they emphasize interpersonal relationships eventually tempered by Balanchine's casting and designs by his longtime costumer Karinska, herself a Russian émigré.[2] Archival materials from the Bibliothèque nationale de France reveal a striking alternative to the now-familiar costumes and décors of New York City Ballet's mid-century *Serenade*, a symbol of Balanchine's Cold War

[2] Karinska was born in 1886 in Kharkiv, the second-largest city in Ukraine, then part of the Russian Empire. The daughter of a successful textile manufacturer, she studied law at the University of Kharkiv but was also passionate about embroidery and design. In fact, she opened an embroidery school under Lenin's New Economic Policy (1921–28), which was later nationalized and converted into a Soviet flag factory. Like Balanchine, Karinska escaped Russia in 1924 by organizing a "goodwill" exhibition of embroidery work in the West; she and her family traveled through Germany before settling first in Paris and eventually New York. See Toni Bentley, *Costumes by Karinska* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1995).

Formalism. Finally, the chapter examines the ballet's prominent programming on New York City Ballet's 1962 Soviet tour and considers Soviet responses to the work within the context of the Khrushchev Thaw, a period of relaxed censorship from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s.

Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings, Op. 48

Composed in 1880 while Tchaikovsky was simultaneously at work on *The Year 1812 Solemn Overture*, the Serenade for Strings stands in sharp contrast to the bombastic overture. The four-movement Serenade is a thirty-minute "mini-symphony" that is "very direct in its material, and uncomplicated in its workings, aiming…simply to give delight in the best possible sense of the word."[3] Although the Serenade does not attempt to match the scale or complexity of a full-blown symphony, the work nevertheless demonstrates Tchaikovsky's mastery of European compositional practices and cleverly explores issues of Russian musical nationalism.

The first movement, *Pezzo in forma di Sonatina*, emphasizes symmetry and repetition; each of the sonata's themes is developed after its initial statement, rather than in a central development section, and the recapitulation neatly echoes the exposition.[4] The movement's symmetry is further reinforced by a return of the stately *andante non troppo* introduction in the coda that concludes the first movement.[5] The second movement, titled *Valse,* demonstrates Tchaikovsky's supreme gift for

[3] David Brown, *Tchaikovsky: The Man and His Music* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), 226.
[4] David Brown, *Tchaikovsky: The Years of Wandering (1878–1885)*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1986), 121. *Serenade* and other symphonic ballets pose a unique rhetorical challenge concerning the term "movement," which may refer to principal divisions of symphonic compositions, or to gesture and action. Although I have tried to be as clear as possible in my use of this term, context may be critical to determining meaning and confusion may nonetheless arise.
[5] Tchaikovsky identified Mozart as his inspiration for the introductory movement's charming witticism and sparkling motifs, writing, "this is an intentional imitation of his manner." Quoted in Roland John Wiley, *Tchaikovsky* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 236–7. A kind of proto-*Mozartiana*, the Serenade looks ahead to Tchaikovsky's Orchestral Suite No. 4 (1887), an orchestration of four piano works composed or inspired by Mozart that Balanchine first choreographed for his Paris-based Les Ballets 1933 as *Mozartiana*, shortly before setting the Serenade on his students in the United States.

melody. Its rondeau form produces a tidy palindrome. The third movement *Elégie* begins with the same ascending scale that opened the *Valse*, creating a sense of musical continuity and anticipating the thematic transformation of first-movement themes in the fourth and final movement.

The finale, titled *Tema russo*, or "Russian theme," contains not one but two Russian folk songs. The first, "As through the meadow," no. 28 in Tchaikovsky's collection of Russian folk tunes arranged for piano duet, begins this movement, while no. 42, "Beneath the green apple tree," launches the subsequent *Allegro con spirito* section, the first theme of a sonata form with development.[6] Tchaikovsky's use of Russian folk materials in a sonata—that most erudite and European of forms—is no accident. Rather, it reflects the composer's response to an ongoing debate in Russian musical circles about the use of native folk materials versus traditionally European compositional forms.[7] Unlike the nationalist composers of the Mighty Handful, who advocated for prioritizing native Russian themes and compositional practices, Tchaikovsky believed that folk song could be absorbed into European musical structures and traditions. He demonstrated the possibilities of precisely such musical assimilation in his Serenade for Strings. In this way, Tchaikovsky's composition anticipates the aesthetic dualism of Balanchine's ballet to the same music, representing the possibilities of blending diverse artistic traditions in a single artwork.

The Serenade's finale not only showed how folk song could be assimilated into Western procedures like the sonata form but—through a marvelous transformation—served as a clever

[6] Tchaikovsky's *Fifty Russian Folk Songs* for piano duet was published in Moscow in 1869 by the composer's longtime publisher, P. Jurgenson.

[7] A few weeks before composing his Serenade, Tchaikovsky exchanged correspondence with his former pupil, Sergei Ivanovich Taneyev, that illustrated this debate. Whereas Taneyev argued that Russian music could only progress by emphasizing strictly nationalist elements, Tchaikovsky disagreed, replying, "We, that is those of us who make use of this material, will always process it in forms that have been borrowed from Europe, because, though we are born as Russians, we are at the same time Europeans to a far greater extent, and we have assimilated their forms so deeply and strongly that, in order to tear ourselves away from them, we would have to coerce and strain ourselves, and from such coercion and strain there cannot arise anything artistic." See *P. I. Chaĭkovskiĭ — S. I. Taneev. Perepiska (1874-1893)*, ed. Vladimir Aleksandrovich Zhdanov (Moscow: Goskul′turprosvetizdat, 1951), 53–56 and 56–58.

rebuke of Russian musical nationalism. Just as the recapitulation is coming to an end, the first movement's slow introduction unexpectedly returns. The expansive and formal quality of the introductory material seems worlds away from the cheerful folk tunes of the finale—until Tchaikovsky speeds up this theme, juxtaposing it with "Beneath the green apple tree" to cleverly reveal that the humble folk tune and the work's grand introduction are one and the same.[8] By virtue of this thematic transformation in the final movement, Tchaikovsky's Serenade produces a cyclic form.[9] One of the work's great delights is this cyclic relationship; it is also the element most affected when George Balanchine transforms Tchaikovsky's 'mini-symphony' into music for the ballet stage.

Interpreting Tchaikovsky: "Europeans from Russia"

"I am only an interpreter between Tchaikovsky and those who want to learn more about his music and to understand it better," Balanchine told Soviet émigré and notorious Shostakovich chronicler Solomon Volkov in a series of interviews about the composer. These conversations were compiled into an imaginative book titled *Balanchine's Tchaikovsky: Interviews with George Balanchine* and published after the choreographer's death in 1985.[10] In it, Balanchine expresses his deep love for Tchaikovsky and his commitment to the performance of the composer's music. The dancemaker closely identified with the composer, and Volkov posited that the notoriously private Balanchine

[8] Wiley, *Tchaikovsky*, 239.
[9] In this way, the Serenade resembles both Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36, composed between 1877 and 1878, and his Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64 (1888), which employ similar procedures.
[10] Volkov remains a controversial figure following the 1979 publication of *Testimony*, which he claimed were Dmitri Shostakovich's authorized memoirs. While the details of that debate are irrelevant to the present discussion, it should be acknowledged that Volkov is not an entirely trustworthy source. Further, as Balanchine died before the publication of the book in which the collected interviews were published, the choreographer's comments may not necessarily reflect his personal views.

used Tchaikovsky's experiences to speak about his own life.[11] In fact, Volkov suggests that this way of revealing closely guarded thoughts, opinions, and even doubts was "typically Petersburgian."[12]

Like Balanchine, Tchaikovsky was a Petersburger, a staunch monarchist, and a devout Russian Orthodox. Moreover, as Petersburgers, they both understood that just as the Imperial capital city's architecture and cultural institutions were informed by both Russian and European models,[13] they too had a blended identity, an outlook both European and Russian (as well as American, in Balanchine's case).[14] This sense of blended cultural identity is something Balanchine also shared with Stravinsky, himself a Petersburger who settled in France and later the United States. The choreographer makes frequent references to his close friend and contemporary collaborative partner throughout his discussions of Tchaikovsky, drawing connections between them. As Volkov observed:

> For Balanchine, Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky—one the greatest composer of ballet music of the nineteenth century, the other of the twentieth—were twin symbols of artistic greatness, and Balanchine delighted in finding parallels in their lives and work. And so it happened naturally that Stravinsky, for whom Tchaikovsky always served as an example of a "European from Russia," a cosmopolitan composer, became the third *persona dramatis* of this book.[15]

The choreographer's Russian identity was closely and specifically bound up with Saint Petersburg—a cosmopolitan city with an inherently multivalent identity, in which the physical environment mirrored the complex cultural identities of Petersburgers.[16]

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[11] Solomon Volkov, *Balanchine's Tchaikovsky: Interviews with George Balanchine*, trans. Antonia W. Bouis (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), 15.
[12] The reservation to discuss his personal life Volkov observed in conversation with Balanchine may have also represented broader Russian and/or Georgian cultural traditions; while famously hospitable, both Georgians and Russians tend to distinguish the intimacy of close friendships from more casual acquaintances and can therefore be seen as somewhat reserved.
[13] See chapter one, 24–5.
[14] Chapter 3 of *Balanchine's Tchaikovsky* titled "St. Petersburg" provides rich insights into the psyche of a Petersburger.
[15] Volkov, *Balanchine's Tchaikovsky*, 22.
[16] Defined as "a sense of solidarity with the ideals of a given cultural group and to the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors manifested toward one's own (and other) cultural groups as a result of this solidarity," cultural identity represents the interface between the individual and their cultural context. Balanchine aptly demonstrates that these identities may be

Stravinsky and Tchaikovsky served as Balanchine's greatest musical inspirations, and New York City Ballet performances regularly featured their compositions.[17] This was a point of pride for the dancemaker, who told Volkov that, "Almost every season we perform Tchaikovsky at least twenty-five times. We do it all the time. In our repertory we probably have fifteen ballets to music by Tchaikovsky." Balanchine claimed a measure of credit for Tchaikovsky's increasingly frequent performances in the United States, noting that "After we did *Serenade* it became popular here. That happened with many of Tchaikovsky's compositions. After we did it, everyone started playing it."[18]

Serenade: Balanchine's First American Ballet

Balanchine's *Serenade* was the first triumph in a larger narrative about the choreographer's emigration to the United States in October 1933 and the creation of an American ballet tradition centered in the organizations that he and Lincoln Kirstein founded after his arrival. The first classes at their training institution, the School of American Ballet (SAB), were held just after New Year's Day in 1934. Just six months later, the first students from the school performed *Serenade*, Balanchine's first ballet choreographed in America. The picturesque premiere was held at Woodlands, the family estate of SAB co-founder and early patron Edward Warburg in White Plains, NY. The story of *Serenade* is often used to demonstrate the speed with which Balanchine began to

multiple, whether as a result of a hybrid cultural environment like Saint Petersburg or following the experience of immigration. Seth J. Schwartz, Marilyn J. Montgomery, and Ervin Briones, "The Role of Identity in Acculturation among Immigrant People: Theoretical Propositions, Empirical Questions, and Applied Recommendations," *Human Development*, 49 (2006), 6. For the political importance of identity claims, see Charles Tilly, *Identities, Boundaries, and Social Ties* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005).

[17] Balanchine, in addition to the four new ballets commissioned from Stravinsky during the course of their collaboration—*Jeu de Cartes* (1937), *Orpheus* (1948), *Circus Polka* (composed in 1942 for a Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus act featuring fifty elephants and fifty ballerinas), and *Agon* (1957)—created a total of forty-six ballets to Stravinsky's music. Balanchine created thirty-seven ballets to only seventeen Tchaikovsky compositions, suggesting the number of revisions each work underwent.

[18] Volkov, *Balanchine's Tchaikovsky*, 34.

transform awkward American teenagers into ballerinas and America into the home of neoclassical ballet—using, quite paradoxically, the music of "the greatest Russian composer" in Balanchine's estimation.[19]

Following its first performance by students from the School of American Ballet on June 10, 1934, at Woodlands, the Producing Company of the School of American Ballet performed *Serenade* on December 8, 1934, at the Avery Memorial Theater in Hartford, Connecticut. The ballet's official premiere took place on March 1, 1935, at the Adelphi Theater in New York under the baton of Sandor Harmati, preceded by a preview performance on February 7, 1935, at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. Although these early performances of *Serenade* would come to represent a watershed moment in ballet history, the work received the fewest performances and the least critical attention during Balanchine's first American season.[20] It was overshadowed by other ballets, particularly the Americana-themed *Alma Mater* with a score by Kay Swift, similar in style and content to the ballets Lincoln Kirstein would commission for Ballet Caravan in the late 1930s.[21]

Though its significance was not immediately clear, as Balanchine's first work for American dancers, *Serenade* nevertheless became "a symbolic point of origin for the choreographer's new endeavors in the United States."[22] This makes Balanchine's use of music from the Russian Imperial era and Russian musical procedures in it all the more fascinating. Indeed, while *Serenade* has come to represent American dance, the work strongly reflects the choreographer's Russian training both in Saint Petersburg and in France. Mikhail Fokine's *Eros* (1915), choreographed to Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings and performed regularly during Balanchine's early performing career in Russia,

[19] Volkov, *Balanchine's Tchaikovsky*, 32.
[20] James Steichen, *Balanchine and Kirstein's American Enterprise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 35.
[21] James Steichen, "The Stories of *Serenade*: Nonprofit History and George Balanchine's 'First Ballet in America,'" (Princeton University Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, Working Paper #46, Spring 2012), 19–20.
[22] Steichen, *Balanchine and Kirstein's American Enterprise*, 35.

may well have been the inspiration for Balanchine's choice of accompaniment.[23] Further, as chapter one established, it was typical for the specialist composers of the Imperial Theatres and later Diaghilev to add, substitute, substantially revise, or quilt together musical material to create accompaniment for dancing.[24] Reflecting these practices, Balanchine and American avant-garde composer George Antheil constructed a ballet score from Tchaikovsky's Serenade as he was devising the original choreography in 1934. The choreographer then continued to remake the music himself throughout the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, producing several *Serenade* scores before eventually settling on his definitive version in the early 1970s.[25] Although Balanchine's musical revisions may initially strike the (musical) reader as high-handed, *Serenade*'s score ultimately demonstrates the choreographer's intimate understanding of and respect for Tchaikovsky's musical practices.

Admittedly this may sound like a strange assertion in light of the fact that Balanchine initially used not Tchaikovsky's original orchestration, but rather a score arranged and orchestrated by Antheil, unfortunately no longer extant.[26] Further, he choreographed only the first three of the work's four movements. Balanchine's earliest version of the ballet eschewed the *Tema russo* finale that, as previously discussed, included a surprising return of the introductory material to create a cyclic form. The choreographer later admitted that "I was young, and thought I knew better than Tchaikovsky."[27] Such actions certainly test the familiar refrain that "the music always came first" for

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[23] Elizabeth Kendall, *Balanchine and the Lost Muse: Revolution and the Making of a Choreographer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 235–8.
[24] See chapter one, 33–6.
[25] For a history of *Serenade*, see nos. 141, 193, and 254 in *Choreography by Balanchine: A Catalogue of Works* (New York: The Eakins Press Foundation, 1983). These catalogue numbers correspond to the George Balanchine Foundation's online catalogue of the choreographer's ballets, available at http://www.balanchine.org/balanchine/titles_by_category.jsp.
[26] Antheil is best known for his Dadaist *Ballet Mécanique* (1923–4), initially intended to accompany an art film by Fernand Léger and Dudley Murphy with cinematography by Man Ray. Antheil worked closely with the Balanchine-Kirstein enterprise in 1935, composing a score commissioned by Kirstein for Balanchine's *Dreams* and arranging piano works by Franz Liszt for a ballet titled *Transcendence*, in addition to arranging and orchestrating *Serenade*. See Lynn Garafola, "George Antheil and the Dance," in *Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 256–76 as well as Linda Whitesitt, *The Life and Music of George Antheil, 1900–1959* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1983), 140.
[27] Balanchine quoted in B. H. Haggin, *Discovering Balanchine (*New York: Horizon Press, 1981), 41.

the choreographer.[28] The view that Balanchine was the most musically sensitive choreographer of his generation is now widely accepted, but as chapter two has already demonstrated, he was quite capable of making significant—and disruptive—changes to suit his choreographic needs. Balanchine cut and added musical material in his *Serenade* scores, too. But in so doing, he demonstrated an impressive grasp of form that strongly supports the legend of the choreographer-musician.

Later productions of *Serenade* continued to demonstrate the choreographer's flexible approach to Tchaikovsky's composition. In a 1940 staging for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, the dancemaker adopted Tchaikovsky's original scoring rather than Antheil's orchestration. He also restored the *Tema russo* movement—albeit with substantial cuts to what Balanchine called the "Russian Dance." But the choreographer reversed the order of the work's movements in the ballet so that Tchaikovsky's finale is heard before the third movement *Elégie*, the impact of which will be discussed later in the chapter.[29] This order, featuring the reversal of the third and fourth movements, continues in contemporary performances by New York City Ballet and other companies.

It is difficult to determine when the definitive score for *Serenade* emerged. To date, no scholar has reconstructed Balanchine's versions nor examined the impact of these musical alterations on either Tchaikovsky's score or the landmark ballet. The musical analysis that follows attempts precisely that: to reconstruct early iterations of Balanchine's *Serenade* from audio-visual

[28] This view of Balanchine has been repeated so often that it is difficult to confidently ascertain the origin of such claims—though certainly, comments made by Igor Stravinsky about the choreographer's musical sensitivity, as well as Balanchine's own paeans to music, were central to this legacy. It is common to hear dancers who worked with Balanchine say that "the music always came first" and that the choreographer imagined himself as much a musician as a dancemaker, as longtime Balanchine stager and ballet mistress Francia Russell did in the 1998 documentary film *Balanchine Lives!*

[29] There are other examples of similar musical treatment by Balanchine, including his omission of the first movement of Mendelssohn's *Scotch Symphony* in his ballet by the same name, as well as the first movement of Tchaikovsky's Third Symphony in "Diamonds," the final act of his sumptuous three-act *Jewels* (1967). Robert Garis, *Following Balanchine* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 76.

recordings featuring the New York City Ballet.[30] This work relies primarily on three recordings: a November 5, 1957 broadcast for Canada's *L'Heure du Concert* featuring Diana Adams, Yvonne Mounsey, Patricia Wilde, Herbert Bliss, and Jacques d'Amboise with the Orchestre de Radio-Canada under the baton of Hugo Fiorato; a 1973 film made in West Berlin for Reiner Moritz Productions titled *Three by Balanchine* featuring Karin von Aroldingen, Susan Hendl, Sara Leland, Kay Mazzo, Jean-Pierre Bonnefous, Peter Martins, and the ORF Symphony Orchestra conducted by Robert Irving; and a ca. 1990 production broadcast by PBS for its *Dance in America* series featuring Darci Kistler, Kyra Nichols, Maria Calegari, Adam Luders, and Leonid Kozlov with Hugo Fiorato conducting the New York City Ballet Orchestra. The two earlier recordings were made under Balanchine's direction, while the 1990 PBS broadcast features a New York City Ballet then led by Balanchine's successor, Peter Martins, who appears in the 1973 film—making these among the closest representations of Balanchine's artistic vision presently available. These audio-visual recordings capture two distinct versions of *Serenade*'s score: the 1957 Canadian broadcast features Balanchine's cuts and additions, while the 1973 and ca. 1990 recordings are danced to a restored Tchaikovsky score, albeit with the third and fourth movements reversed. The two versions demonstrate the dancemaker's musical talents and the importance of Russian practices to Balanchine's working process while complicating superficial assessments of the choreographer's musicianship.

[30] Although *Serenade* was first performed—albeit in an altered musical form—in 1934, the earliest recorded audio-visual performance of the ballet that can be compared to Tchaikovsky's score dates from 1957. While the New York Public Library's Dance Division has earlier footage of *Serenade* dating from roughly 1947, 1951, and 1953, these are silent films that cannot be used to determine musical structure. Further, these early films are not complete performances: the 1947 clip features roughly 10 minutes of footage, the 1951 film includes only a one-minute clip of the ballet, and the third is a montage of various camera angles, making it impossible to reconstruct the choreographic movement or musical accompaniment with any confidence.

Balanchine Re-Composes the Serenade for Strings

The 1957 broadcast of *Serenade* for Canada's *L'Heure du Concert* offers a window into the score's changing identity. While this performance features all four movements in Balanchine's order, with the third and fourth movements reversed, the movement's runtimes are the first indication of substantial musical alterations. The *Pezzo in forma di Sonatina* and *Elégie* movements of the ballet, listed as 9:24 and 8:10 respectively, are roughly the same length as orchestral performances of the work, and the musical accompaniment for the ballet does not deviate from Tchaikovsky's score.[31] However, the second movement is extended by about a minute: this waltz clocks in at 4:48 seconds, while most performances hover around or just under four minutes, suggesting some musical additions or insertions. By contrast, the *Tema russo* movement is substantially shortened: 4:39 in the Canadian *L'Heure du Concert* broadcast, when performances are typically between seven and a half to eight minutes long. These musical additions and omissions are detailed in the pages that follow.

The second movement *Valse*, or waltz, takes the form of a rondeau and features a main theme, exactly twenty bars long, pictured below in figure 3.1.

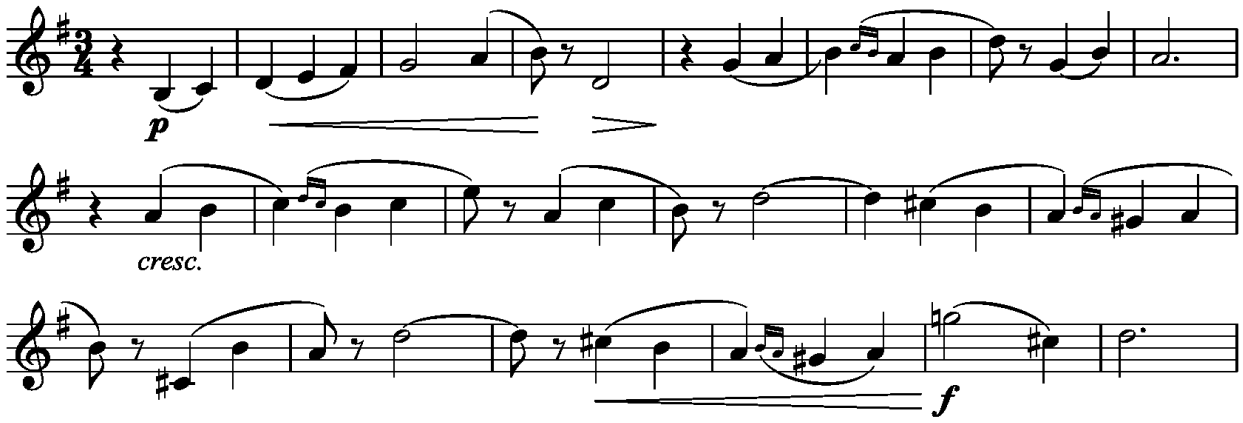


Figure 3.1: Main theme of Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings, Valse.

[31] The *Elégie* is performed quite a bit faster than contemporary audio recordings of Tchaikovsky's third movement, which range from nine to ten-and-a-half minutes long, but it is nevertheless performed in full in this 1957 Canadian broadcast.

This main theme is contrasted with two alternate themes, typical of Tchaikovsky's compositional practice.[32] The structure of the Serenade's *Valse* is illustrated below in figure 3.2.

Measure Nos.	**Rehearsal No.**	**Musical material**	**Theme**
1-20		Primary waltz theme	P
20-53	A	First contrasting theme	C-1
53–73	B	Primary waltz theme	P
73–110	C	Second contrasting theme	C-2
111–113	D	Transition	
114–134	D	Primary waltz theme	P
134–165	E	First contrasting theme	C-1
166–189	E	Primary waltz theme	P
189–223	F	Coda	

Figure 3.2: Rondeau structure in Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings, Valse.

Eschewing an introduction, Tchaikovsky's second movement opens with the primary, or P, theme. Rehearsal A features the first statement of contrasting material, or C-1. This contrasting material is followed by a reorchestrated statement of the P theme at rehearsal B. New contrasting material, C-2, is introduced at rehearsal C and is followed by a three-bar transition, marked by rehearsal D, into a restatement of the P theme beginning at measure 114. The third statement of the primary theme leads to rehearsal E and a repeat of C-1, the initial contrasting episode. A two-bar bridge brings the expected return of Tchaikovsky's primary theme at measure 166, and a small coda based on the waltz's themes brings the second movement to a close. The rondeau forms an orderly palindrome with the second contrasting theme at its center, illustrated below in figure 3.3.

[32] David Brown, *Tchaikovsky: The Final Years (1885–1893)* (London, Victor Gollancz LTC, 1991), 422–23. John Warrack, *Tchaikovsky Symphonies and Concertos* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1974), 8–9.

P	C-1	P	C-2	P	C-1	P

Figure 3.3: Palindromic Structure in Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings, Valse.

Where does Balanchine find the extra minute of music indicated in the liner notes for the 1957 *L'Heure du Concert* broadcast? Balanchine employs the same thematic blocks, expanding the basic structure of the second movement by adding a restatement of the second contrasting and primary themes, C-2 and P. While the movement's structural symmetry is preserved, the waltz's musical center is shifted away from the second contrasting theme and onto the primary theme. The palindrome's new structure, featuring Balanchine's sixty-measure musical extension, is illustrated in figure 3.4.

P	C-1	P	C-2	P	C-2	P	C-1	P

Figure 3.4: Palindromic Structure in Balanchine's 1957 Serenade, "Waltz."

Balanchine's expansion of Tchaikovsky's palindrome through repetition indicates his familiarity with the score. Further, it demonstrates the choreographer's understanding of the music's form and structure, reflecting his many years of musical training in composition, harmony, and counterpoint at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, where Tchaikovsky also studied.[33] Importantly, Balanchine's restatement of the second contrasting and primary themes reveals his grasp of Russian musical practices for the ballet.

Repetition is central to the composition of music for dancing.[34] The device was popular with the ballet's specialist composers for its ability to extend a passage or scene without requiring the

[33] Although Balanchine did not graduate from the conservatory, he studied counterpoint, composition, and harmony in addition to lessons in piano, violin, French horn, percussion, and the trumpet. Yuri Slonimsky, "Balanchine: The Early Years," trans. John Andrews, ed. Francis Mason, *Ballet Review* 5, no. 3 (1975), 8.
[34] Roland John Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets:* Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty, Nutcracker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 6–7.

invention of new melodic material. Repetition also created opportunities for a dancemaker to repeat choreographic passages, either mirroring a previous passage or featuring new dancers. Such choreomusical repeats could also offer important—and much-needed—periods of rest.[35] Drawing on the same device in his *Serenade*, Balanchine used the repeat of the second contrasting theme in the *Valse* to provide a respite for his male dancer, who disappears into the wings in the 1957 broadcast. Diana Adams, dancing the role of the "Waltz Girl" in this recording, is not quite so lucky—but she does move in and out of *corps de ballet* groups during the restatement of C-2, allowing her some time to prepare for the more demanding partnered dancing that begins with Balanchine's added statement of the P theme immediately thereafter.

While the second movement *Valse* features an internal repetition, Balanchine's revisions to the *Tema russo* movement are characterized by the deletion of musical restatements—a kind of inverse of the musical practice examined above. These omissions begin on the very first page of the sonata form finale, heard in the ballet before the third movement of Tchaikovsky's original score. Balanchine excises measures 31–38, a melodic restatement of the previous three bars and an anticipation of mm. 39–43, which lead into the sonata's P theme. Figure 3.5 shows mm. 28–43, with Balanchine's cut from mm. 31–38 indicated in brackets.

[35] The use of leitmotifs, popular in nineteenth-century opera as well as ballet, also rely on repetition to identify characters and objects, or serve as an audible reminder of a previous moment or scene—a technique used with particular effect in Adolphe Adam's 1841 ballet *Giselle*, as well as in Tchaikovsky's first ballet, *Swan Lake* (1877).

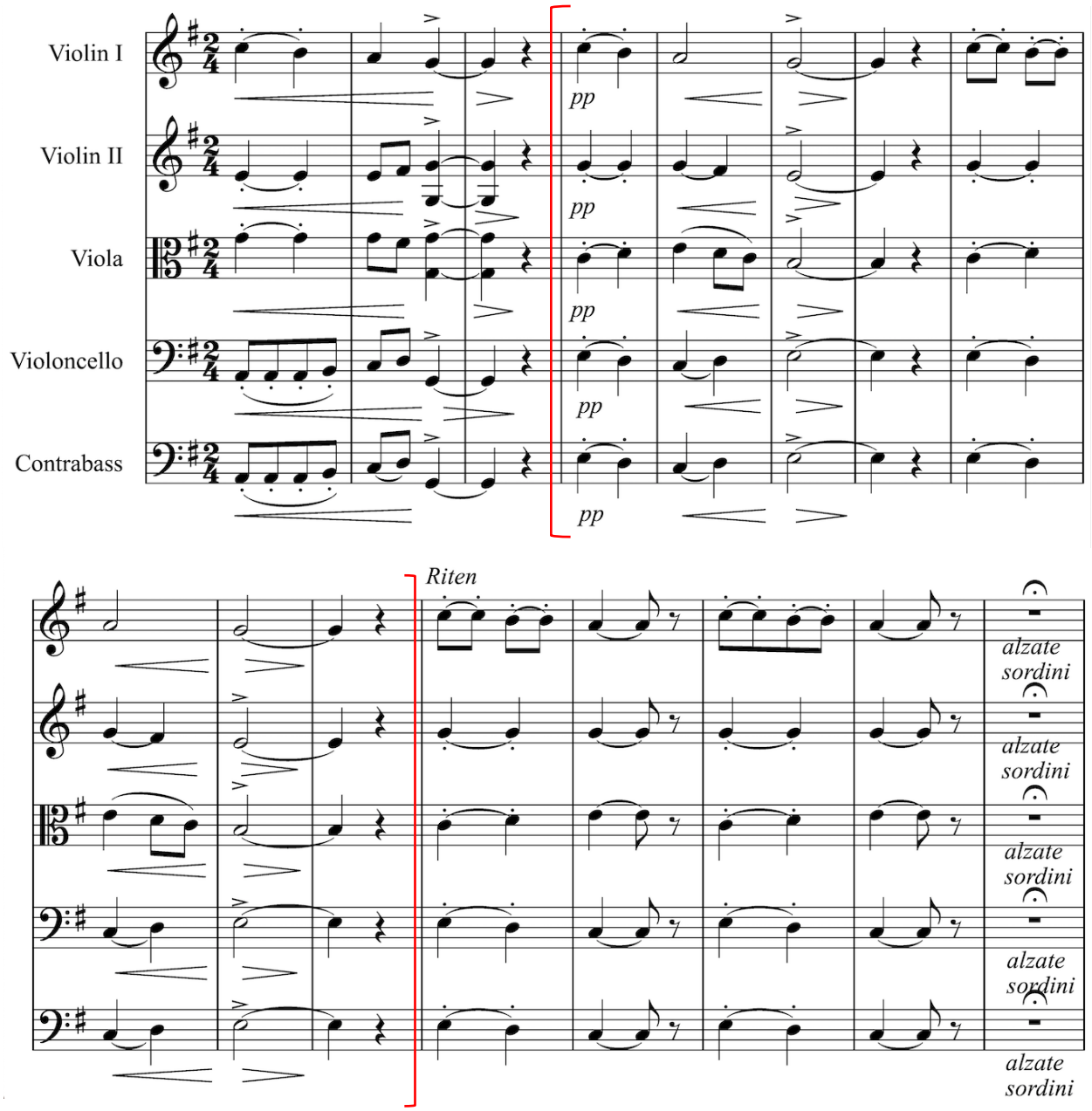


Figure 3.5: Measures 28–43 in Balanchine's 1957 Serenade, "Russian Dance."

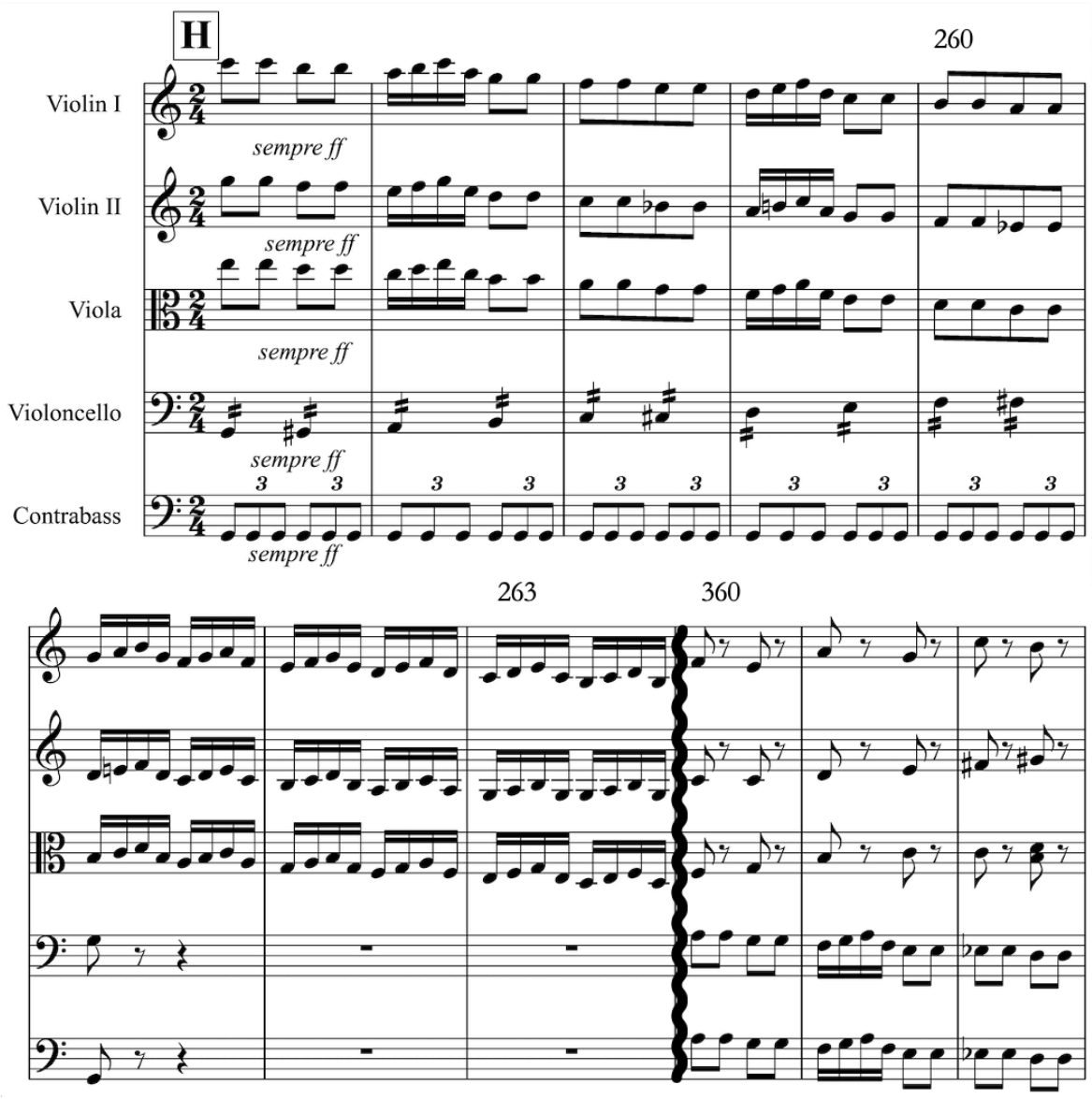
Here, Balanchine's goal seems to be eschewing musical material in Tchaikovsky's Serenade for which he has no choreographic need. A similar cut follows in the development section; the choreographer omits measures 200–215, a restatement of the previous 16 bars that, like measures 31–38, may have seemed redundant. While these cuts to the introduction and development sections of the "Russian Dance" are small and do not impact the work's structure, they indicate how

Balanchine understood this music—as material for creating an ideal artistic work. Further, they anticipate larger cuts to Tchaikovsky's score in the pages to come.

Nearly four minutes into the "Russian Dance," at rehearsal H, a dominant pedal sounds. This pedal marks the start of the retransition, which heralds the recapitulation of the exposition. But Balanchine stymies this musical repetition, using the energy of the retransition not to launch into the expected repeat of the sonata-allegro theme, but rather to leap to measure 360—a cut of nearly one hundred measures of music. Lost is the recapitulation of the sonata's primary and contrasting themes—and with it, a central structural tenant of sonata form, precisely the European compositional practice that Tchaikovsky demonstrates his mastery of in this finale.

While this 95-measure cut admittedly disrupts the sonata's structure, it also reveals the dancemaker's remarkably adept musical mind, as it is virtually inaudible when embedded in the full audio-visual experience of the ballet. Measure 264 marks a shift in musical texture and pattern that is not exactly replicated but suggested by measure 360; pairs of eighth notes enliven quarter notes—or, at measure 360, eighth note pulses with rests—as the low strings reenter. The melodic contours are nearly undisturbed, as the impetus from the upper strings, which are near or close to the bottom of the respective ranges just before this cut, moves smoothly into the lower strings at measure 360. Further, the sonorities at the downbeats of both measures closely resemble one another, albeit with different voicings and moving in different directions.[36] Figure 3.6 illustrates how Balanchine seamlessly stitched together this music, initially separated by many pages. A wavy line and measure numbers indicate Balanchine's cut.

[36] At measure 264, all the parts descend, while at measure 360, the upper and lower strings move away from one another, the top lines ascending while the bass and cello descend.


H
260
Violin I
sempre ff
Violin II
sempre ff
Viola
sempre ff
Violoncello
sempre ff
Contrabass
3
sempre ff
263
360

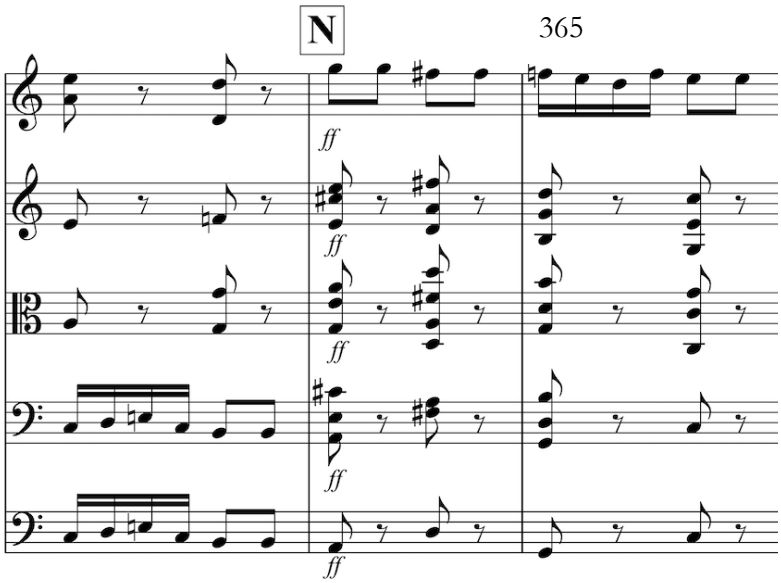


Figure 3.6: Measures 256–364 in Balanchine's 1957 Serenade, "Russian Dance."

Having cut nearly one hundred measures and the restatement of Tchaikovsky's primary and contrasting themes, Balanchine continues at the close of the "Russian Dance" to construct a score for choreographic, rather than strictly musical, purposes. To avoid a drop-off in the music's energy and the stark contrast that the return of the first movement's slow introductory theme creates in the finale at measure 386, Balanchine exchanges the downbeat of measure 380 for the *stringendo* at measure 410, illustrated in figure 3.7. As a result, the return of one of the Serenade's most beautiful themes, the slow introduction to the first movement at measure 386, is lost—and with it, the discovery that this theme and the folk tune, "Beneath the green apple tree," are one and the same. Further, Balanchine's omission eliminates the cyclic form achieved in Tchaikovsky's original composition.

But, as in the earlier example, this cut also demonstrates unexpected musical acuity on the part of Balanchine. There is no awkward or abrupt musical transition. In fact, the melodic line of the Violin I part is unchanged save for the rhythmic duration. There is an unexpected naturalness in this

cut that suggests the work of a supremely sensitive musician. A wavy line and measure numbers indicate Balanchine's cut and the deletion of the slow introduction's return.

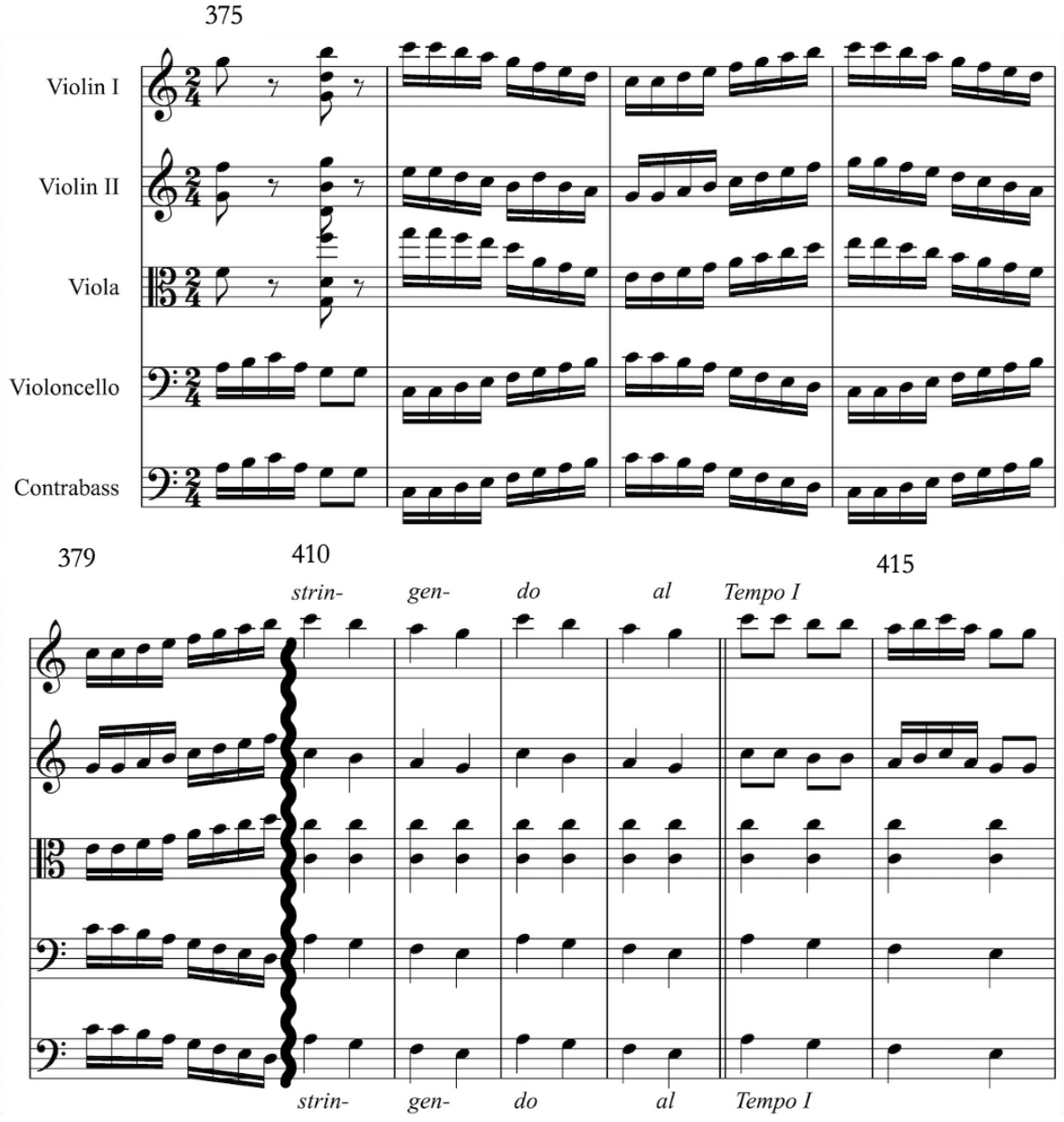


Figure 3.7: Measure 375– 415 in Balanchine's 1957 Serenade, "Russian Dance."

Aurally, this cut works—but it also serves a clear choreographic purpose, as the music's propulsive quality is maintained. Further, it ensures the greatest aural contrast between this and the ballet's final section, staged to Tchaikovsky's slow third movement, *Elégie*. While Balanchine's treatment of the score resembles a Franco-Russian privileging of choreographic needs over musical structure, the choreographer's cuts and repetitions also demonstrate an impressive understanding of Tchaikovsky's compositional practices and forms. Here, Balanchine employs deep musical insight to produce accompaniment beautifully tailored to choreographic movement (not the other way around). Below is a complete list of Balanchine's cuts in the "Russian Dance" from the 1957 broadcast.

Measure Nos.	**Description of musical material and/or function**
1-30	Introduction
~~31-39~~	~~Repeat of m. 28-30 and 39–42~~
44-71	Sonata-allegro, P theme
72–83	Transition
84-124	Contrasting theme
124-167	Codetta
168-199	Development
~~200-215~~	~~Repeat of m. 184-199~~
216-256	Development
256-263	Retransition
~~264-359~~	~~Recapitulation~~
360-380	Recapitulation
~~381-385~~	~~Transition to *Molto meno mosso*, restatement of Serenade's introductory theme~~
~~386-409~~	~~Restatement of Serenade's introductory theme~~
410-449	Coda

Figure 3.8: Cuts in Balanchine's 1957 Serenade, "Russian Dance."

Balanchine admitted that he thought he had known better than Tchaikovsky when he omitted repetitions in the *Tema russo* movement but later acknowledged that "Tchaikovsky was right."[37] Expressing a sensitivity to the role of repetition in Tchaikovsky's finale and the listener's experience of the music, the choreographer noted that "If you hear [the] first phrase only once you don't remember it; so Tchaikovsky repeats it, and you say, 'Aha, that's [the] first phrase again.' Then he repeats it a step higher; and you know it's [the] first phrase a step higher."[38] By the 1960s, Balanchine increasingly came to rely on Tchaikovsky's musical judgment; the 1973 and 1990 recordings feature full performances of the Tchaikovsky score in its original orchestration, albeit with the third and fourth movements reversed. The choreographer did note though that after he restored the cuts he had made to Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings, "none of the critics noticed; nobody said a word!"[39] In stark contrast to the reviews following cuts to *Apollo* in the late 1970s, there was little to no discussion about the musical changes Balanchine made to *Serenade* in contemporary press accounts. This is likely because of how seamlessly Balanchine integrated his cuts and interpolations; it is remarkably difficult to identify Balanchine's changes to Tchaikovsky's music.[40]

(Anti-)Narrative Aesthetics in *Serenade*

When *Serenade* is performed today—and it frequently is, both by New York City Ballet and other international companies—the female dancers all wear pale blue leotards and swirling blue tutus

[37] Balanchine quoted in Haggin, *Discovering Balanchine*, 41.
[38] Haggin, *Discovering Balanchine*, 41.
[39] Haggin, *Discovering Balanchine*, 41.
[40] My deepest thanks to Dr. Andrew S. Kohler, who watched the 1957 recording with me repeatedly, score in hand, to affirm my analysis of Balanchine's cuts and additions.

designed by celebrated costumer Karinska in 1952.[41] This *ballet bleu* seems to demonstrate an egalitarian ideal, as no jewels, crowns, or costumes differentiate the principal dancers from the *corps de ballet*. Only as the groups of women shift and reassemble do these distinctions become clear. But this was not always the case. Early productions not only distinguished principal dancers, but suggested a dramatic narrative of passion, conflict, and disappointment through costuming and casting.

At the ballet's unofficial premiere on June 10, 1934, School of American Ballet students appeared in short white tunics. For the official New York premiere of the ballet the following year, costumes were designed by Jean Lurçat, a French artist best known for his revival of contemporary tapestry. In a black-and-white publicity photo, five dancers appear in two-tone, knee-length dresses with an asymmetrical cap sleeve. The flowing fabric, bias cut, and slight flare of these simple frocks immediately suggest women's fashion of the 1930s, as does the way the dark panels and draping highlight the dancers' natural waists—a more feminine silhouette popularized after the looser fit of drop-waist dresses from the 1920s. Although these costumes draw on ready-to-wear trends of the period, they nevertheless retain some of the simplicity of the white tunics worn in the ballet's first performance.

On the other hand, a sketch by Lurçat suggests how differently some of the cast members were costumed. In figure 3.9 below, a female dancer wears a short sleeveless dress featuring tightly twisted black, white, and salmon-colored trim along the neckline. Coral detailing on the pink and black bodice matches decoration on the skirt, which, open at the front, is made up of pale pink, white, salmon, and black panels. She appears on a pale blue background similar in color and texture to Karinska's 1952 tutus. In the background, a male figure appears wearing a crimson leotard with a

[41] Nancy Reynolds, *Repertory in Review: 40 Years of the New York City Ballet* (New York: The Dial Press, 1977), 36.

low square neck. Gray tights with crimson markings complete the costume. Publicity photographs from the period indicate that these costumes were worn by principal dancers, suggesting that Lurçat's designs pictured below in figure 3.9 and the costumes for the *corps de ballet* described above were meant to distinguish characters in the dance drama.

Figure 3.9: Costume designs by Jean Lurçat, 1934.
Cyril W Beaumont Bequest, Victoria and Albert Museum, Theatre and Performance Collection.

Balanchine revived *Serenade* for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1940; as previously discussed, the choreographer adopted Tchaikovsky's original scoring, restored the *Temo russo* finale, and reversed the order of the Serenade's movements for this staging. Lurçat was again responsible for the production designs, which were simplified versions of the 1935 costumes he designed for the

American Ballet.[42] In publicity photographs, the twisted trim, split skirt, and contrasting color panels of Lurçat's earlier designs remain, but the overall effect is simpler as the embellishments and diagonal seams on the bodice have not been reproduced for the Ballet Russe production.

Although he used the same designer, Balanchine took a new approach to the solo dances of the ballet in this revival for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Previously, these solos were shared amongst a group of nine dancers. In this staging, they were danced by a single ballerina—originally Marie-Jeanne and later Alexandra Danilova, with a second soloist appearing briefly in the *Elégie* movement.[43] A single dancer appearing in all of *Serenade*'s solos naturally enhances the sense of narrative in the work, which has puzzled dance scholars and balletgoers alike for the way the work can "seem to tell different stories from night to night, depending upon the casting."[44] A ballet that with a large cast of soloists might appear a glorification of classical technique might well seem to tell the story of a woman in love when the work's solos are danced by a single ballerina. Indeed, as Jack Anderson notes, "this distribution of roles made the Ballet Russe *Serenade* more overtly dramatic than other productions usually are."[45]

The next major revival of *Serenade* was the Paris Opéra Ballet's 1947 production, when Balanchine was serving as the company's guest ballet master.[46] Maquettes by the French designer André Delfau for this staging offer an altogether different vision of the choreographer's signature 'American' ballet. Delfau's costumes themselves emphasize the ballet's emotional drama to a far greater extent than either the Lurçat designs discussed above or the tutus designed by Karinska in 1952 that now define the look of *Serenade*. In particular, Delfau's costumes create a strong contrast

[42] Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo souvenir program, 1941–1942 season.
[43] Since then, these passages have been danced by three to five soloists.
[44] Jack Anderson, "Balanchine's *Serenade* Still Baffles Balletgoers," *New York Times*, April 5, 1984, C18.
[45] Jack Anderson, *The One and Only: The Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo* (New York: Dance Horizons, 1981), 43.
[46] See chapter four for a detailed discussion of Balanchine's tenure at the Paris Opéra Ballet in 1947.

between the finale's female principals, known as the "Waltz Girl" and the "Dark Angel," while imbuing the role of "Elegy Boy," named for his appearance in the *Elégie* movement, with greater internal conflict and passion.

Delfau's 1947 costumes for the *corps de ballet*, pictured below in figure 3.9, featured a profusion of pastel tones. These mark a shift away from the stark, two-toned designs that dominated Lurçat's 1935 costumes and might have inspired the subtle use of color in Karinska's pale blue tutus for NYCB, first worn in 1952. Multiple names listed below each woman's costume in Delfau's sketches suggest that several *corps* dancers might have appeared in the same color combination.

Figure 3.10: Maquettes de costume, André Delfau, 1947, Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra, BnF.

Alternatively, Delfau's designs for the "Dark Angel" and "Elegy Boy" amplify these dancers' distinctive identities and suggest a narrative in their bold use of color.

Figure 3.11: Maquettes de costume, André Delfau, 1947, Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra, BnF.

In contemporary productions of *Serenade*, the men wear blue tights and long-sleeved leotards that hug the body. These costumes allow the men to blend in with the blue cyclorama to an extent and partner dancers almost invisibly. Delfau's Elegy Boy, by contrast, wears one of the most distinctive costumes in the production. His white blindfold implies innocence, while the red tights intimate extreme emotion—passion, anger, or shame.[47]

The opposing or dissimilar emotions that Elegy Boy's costume suggests amplify the internal conflict implicit in some of Balanchine's gestures for the dancer. In the final moments of the "Russian Dance," a principal dancer nicknamed the "Russian Girl" falls to the floor—a gesture said

[47] See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethe's Theory of Colours*, trans. Charles Lock Eastlake (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1840).

to have drawn from an accidental fall in rehearsal.[48] As the ballet's finale begins, Elegy Boy enters slowly with the Dark Angel. Their limbs are entwined, her right hand covering his eyes as he reaches one arm out, a gesture that implies searching. The couple encounters the fallen dancer, and a passionate *pas de trois* for the three principals follows. At its conclusion, Elegy Boy gently places the Russian Girl back on the floor. Though they seem reticent to be parted, the male dancer is resigned to leaving with the Dark Angel. The pair exit the stage in the same way they entered—the Dark Angel's right hand covering Elegy Boy's eyes, his arm outstretched—as the Russian Girl reaches for him plaintively. When he disappears from view, the Russian Girl collapses to the floor, suggesting heartbreak or death.

The white eye mask and red tights Delfau designed for Elegy Boy indicate deep feeling that would have amplified both his passion for the Russian Girl and a sense of conflict as he is led off by the Dark Angel. Her black tutu and spiked black crown suggest cruelty and imperviousness in contrast to the white costume worn by the Russian Girl. She is dressed in the inverse of the Dark Angel's all-black attire, her white gloves and veil resembling a bridal costume. The black and white costumes worn by the two principal women in the ballet's finale highlight opposition and difference, even conflict—something dance critic Jean Silvant also noted after the 1947 Paris premiere.[49]

While Delfau's costumes for the Paris Opéra Ballet's production of *Serenade* amplify the drama of the ballet, its narrative is ultimately tempered in Karinska's 1952 designs, which have since become standard for performances of the ballet. Rather than distinguishing principal dancers through costuming, Karinska dressed all the women in a simple blue leotard with a gauzy, ankle-

[48] Russian dance scholar Tim Scholl has theorized that this and an earlier fall also serve as allusions to *Giselle* and a Georgian folk dance called *khorumi*, which Scholl notes was incorporated into Vakhtang Chabukiani's choreography for *Heart of the Hills*, the first Georgian ballet on national themes set to music by Balanchine's brother, Andrei Balanchivadze. Tim Scholl, "*Serenade*: From *Giselle* to Georgia," *Ballet Review* 40, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 26–35.
[49] Jean Silvant, "La Danse: Première A L'Opéra," April–May, 1947.

length blue tutu. The tutu's length recalls the Romantic *ballet blanc*,[50] as well as the neoromantic *Les Sylphides*/*Chopiniana*, the Fokine ballet choreographed to arrangements of Chopin compositions that Balanchine greatly admired as a young dancer.[51] The connection to the *ballet blanc* is reinforced by choreographic allusions: on the one hand, the falls discussed earlier in this chapter recall the narrative climax of nineteenth-century ballets, and more specifically *Giselle*, while Balanchine's use of the female ensemble that frames the soloists is "especially indebted to [*Les Sylphides*'s] Romantic groupings."[52] While earlier costumes and casting explored the ballet's implicit conflict and highlighted soloists, the stable version of the work that emerged at New York City Ballet reflected the impact of Balanchine's Russian training through an American lens. The pale blue color of Karinska's designs is a modern update to the white tutu, similar to the uneven arrangement of Balanchine's young dancers on an otherwise empty stage.[53] The choreographer's typical casting of three to five soloists for New York City Ballet also served to lessen the dramatic impulse most evident in his 1940 revival for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

Like many other Balanchine ballets, *Serenade* underwent an aesthetic transformation during New York City Ballet's early years at City Center, at the start of the Cold War.[54] Simplified costumes and casting changes helped to eliminate the narrative content of earlier stagings, reflecting the choreographer's Cold War Formalism. As Balanchine's *first* American ballet, *Serenade* became the company's calling card in this period and was regularly exported abroad during the Cold War. A

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[50] For a discussion of the "white ballet," see chapter two, 49. For a comparative illustration of tutu shapes, see chapter four, 156.

[51] Slonimsky, "Balanchine: The Early Years," 26. For a discussion of the ballet's shifting musical identity from 1907–9, see Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works Through* Mavra, Volume I (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 546–7.

[52] Scholl, "*Serenade*: From *Giselle* to Georgia," 28–30. Alastair Macaulay, "Chopin in the Moonlight, Drenched in History Yet Fresh in the West," *New York Times*, April 7, 2008.

[53] Rather than expected groups of four or eight, Balanchine arranges his seventeen dancers in five diagonal lines—two lines of three, one line of five, then two more lines of three—at the start of the ballet.

[54] For a broader discussion of this aesthetic shift in Balanchine's works, see chapter four, 153–8.

signature work of the New York City Ballet, *Serenade* modernized the Franco-Russian aesthetics and musical practices Balanchine had inherited to create one of the defining American works of twentieth-century dance.

Serenade: A Cold War Symbol on New York City Ballet's 1962 US State Department Tour

There was no more critical showcase for George Balanchine's ballets than New York City Ballet's 1962 State Department-sponsored tour of the USSR. Marking Balanchine's return to Russia for the first time since 1924, the tour also represented the first time his mature ballets, danced by the company he had trained, would be seen by Soviet audiences.[55] It was a fairly common practice for the United States to send Russian émigré artists back to the Soviet Union for propagandistic effect; in fact, Balanchine's longtime collaborator Igor Stravinsky landed in Moscow only weeks before on September 21, 1962.[56] Works like the Stravinsky-Balanchine serial ballet *Agon* (1957) demonstrated what Russian artists who had left the strict Soviet system could accomplish in the United States—a pointed indictment of the USSR's authoritarian cultural policies.[57]

New York City Ballet's 1962 tour is often framed as its outstanding contribution to the culture wars between the United States and the Soviet Union. Indeed, Balanchine was convinced that the tour was his patriotic duty.[58] On the other hand, his co-founder Lincoln Kirstein had

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[55] Balanchine had choreographed some short works for the Young Ballet, an avant-garde dance troupe founded in 1922. Balanchine's *Theme and Variations* (1947) was performed on the American Ballet Theatre's 1960 tour of the USSR, but their three programs represented an enormous spectrum of styles, whereas New York City Ballet's tour focused primarily on the work of Balanchine.

[56] See Stephen Walsh, "A Guest in His Own Country," in *Stravinsky, The Second Exile: France and America, 1934–1971* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 449–471.

[57] A decade earlier, the anti-communist Congress for Cultural Freedom employed similar tactics at the *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century Festival* in Paris, performing Prokofiev and Balanchine's *The Prodigal Son* (1929) originally made for the Ballets Russes, to illustrate the dangerous censorship typical of totalitarian regimes. See chapter five, 169–70; 178–9.

[58] Naima Prevots, *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 74.

actively worked to keep New York City Ballet *out* of the Soviet Union for years.[59] As a member of the American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA) Dance Panel, which advised the State Department about which companies and repertoire to send abroad, Kirstein was intimately involved in the selection process—and had campaigned since the late 1950s against NYCB appearing in the Soviet Union.[60] He feared that his young company could not compete technically or aesthetically with state-funded Soviet troupes, reflecting a more widely-held concern about how American ballet might be received in the USSR. As a result, the first US ballet company to appear in the Soviet Union was not the New York City Ballet, but American Ballet Theatre, a company whose international rooster and blend of Franco-Russian and Americanist repertoire created challenges for the US State Department on their 1960 tour, as they did not demonstrate a distinctive American ballet tradition and could invite unflattering comparisons to the Kirov and the Bolshoi.[61]

On the other hand, the repertoire selected—by Balanchine, the ANTA's Dance Panel, the US State Department, and the Soviet Goskontsert (an abbreviation of State Concert Agency) in lengthy negotiations—sought to exaggerate distinctions between the choreographer's American style and Soviet ballets to support the official differentiation between American and Soviet Cold War culture more broadly. Although Soviet dancemakers had begun to experiment with choreographic symphonism, a style not dissimilar to Balanchine's, sumptuous, evening-length, nineteenth-century narrative works and popular *drambalets* from the 1930s, 40s, and early 50s continued to make up

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[59] New York City Ballet had been approached by the Soviet Ministry of Culture in 1956 and again in 1957. Although dance scholar Andrea Harris has claimed that Kirstein eagerly participated in order to secure his company's long-term financial stability, his biographer Martin Duberman noted that this and earlier state-sponsored tours meant that the New York City Ballet "would be serving as a kind of cultural shill for government cold-war policies that Balanchine vigorously approved and Lincoln—though far removed from the political activism of his youth—impassively disapproved." Martin Duberman, *The Worlds of Lincoln Kirstein* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 517. For a discussion of the co-founders' differing political views, see chapter four, 149–50, and chapter five, 171–5.

[60] Clare Croft, *Dancers as Diplomats: American Choreography in Cultural Exchange* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 43.

[61] One Balanchine ballet was featured— *Theme and Variations* (1947), choreographed to the final movement of Tchaikovsky's Suite No. 3 for Orchestra in G, Op. 55 (1884). For a discussion of these challenges, see Searcy, *Ballet in the Cold War: A Soviet-American Exchange*, 49–53.

much of the repertoire in the USSR.[62] *Dramblaets* in particular often featured folk materials intended "to create the illusion of an exhilarating Communist unity among all the people of the Soviet Union."[63] Indeed, as the only genre deemed compatible with the principles of socialist realism, the official artistic style of the USSR between 1932 and 1988, *drambalet* was informed by political as well as artistic objectives—a frequent Western criticism of Soviet art during the Cold War conflict.

The ANTA's Dance Panel and the State Department's repertoire selections "reflected the belief that to represent American ballet NYCB aesthetics should be easily distinguished from Russian classicism."[64] To that end, they excluded Balanchine's versions of *Swan Lake* (1951) and *Firebird* (1949) from performance. They also eliminated multi-act story ballets like *The Nutcracker* (1954) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1962) on the basis of their logistical complexity and use of child performers. Citing accessibility concerns, the panel rejected *Episodes* (1959), choreographed to music by Anton Webern—but Stravinsky's twelve-tone score to *Agon* did not apparently raise similar concerns. New York City Ballet's offerings on the 1962 tour were largely one-act, plotless ballets including *Agon*, *Allegro Brillante* (1956), *Apollo, Concerto Barocco* (1941), *Symphony in C, Theme and Variations* (1947), and *Serenade*.

Serenade, featuring Tchaikovsky's cherished score and Russian musical practices, served as an introduction to Balanchine's 'American' style. It was the first work NYCB danced in each of the five cities—Moscow, Leningrad, Kyiv, Tbilisi, and Baku—on the 1962 tour. *Serenade* was performed at both the Bolshoi and the Palace of Congresses in the Kremlin, a modern arena intended for Communist Party Meetings where the company danced the majority of its Moscow appearances.[65]

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[62] For a discussion of this aesthetic shift, see Searcy, *Ballet in the Cold War*, 8–10 and Christina Ezrahi, *Swans of the Kremlin: Ballet and Power in Soviet Russia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), 32.
[63] Ezrahi, *Swans of the Kremlin: Ballet and Power in Soviet Russia*, 32.
[64] Croft, *Dancers as Diplomats: American Choreography in Cultural Exchange*, 45.
[65] Manifest of Personnel, New York City Ballet Archives, New York, NY.

New York City Ballet danced the work at the Kirov, formerly and presently known as the Mariinsky Theatre, where Balanchine was trained as a young dancer. Performing *Serenade* in the USSR highlighted a sense of dual identity not only in the ballet itself, but in Balanchine's American-born dancers, who had been trained primarily by Russian émigrés and were now able to appreciate the role that Russian cultural traditions had played in their professional lives.[66] Despite *Serenade*'s potent syncretism, however, its plotless action and one-act format meant that the work quickly became Soviet short-hand for 'American ballet.'

"An Entirely New Style of Ballet": Reactions to *Serenade* in the USSR

Public interest in Balanchine and the reception of New York City Ballet on their Soviet tour was sufficiently high for dance critic John Martin to join the company for the eight-week trip. Of their first performance at the Bolshoi in Moscow, Martin wrote that with *Serenade*, Balanchine "introduced an entirely new style of ballet" to Soviet audiences.[67] Such sweeping statements further entrenched in Americans' consciousness the notion of artistic difference between Balanchine's US-style and the narrative, spectacle-driven ballets of the Soviet Union—this, of course, in spite of Balanchine's reliance on musical procedures and aesthetics of the Russian Ballet.[68] Martin's coverage of the Soviet tour echoes his work on New York City Ballet in the post-war period more broadly; he asserts the superiority of Balanchine's Cold War Formalism over Euro-Russian models to demonstrate the supremacy of US artistic freedoms.

[66] Croft, *Dancers as Diplomats*, 55.
[67] John Martin, "Ballet: Visit to Bolshoi," *New York Times,* October 10, 1962, 59.
[68] See chapter one, 33–6.

But Americans were not content to read Martin's reviews of the tour alone. They wanted to understand how the company's sold-out appearances were received by Soviet audiences and critics, as demonstrated by the remarkable number of Russian-language reviews that appeared in English translation in both specialty dance publications and major US outlets like *Time* magazine and *The Washington Post* in the weeks and months following NYCB's 1962 tour.[69] A collection of reviews by prominent Soviet critics printed in *Dance News* began with the composer Aram Khachaturian's October 10, 1962 review for Moscow's *Izvestia*—the newspaper of record in the Soviet Union and the official outlet of the Soviet government. The powerful Secretary of the Union of Soviet Composers praised *Serenade* as "a beautiful spectacle distinguished by a fresh balletic style and an original choreographic vocabulary."[70] Khachaturian also noted that the company's dancers have "impeccable classic technique"— which he credited to Balanchine's training in "the Russian school of the classic dance and the Leningrad Choreographic School."[71]

Khachaturian's review also featured the expected critiques. The composer admonished Balanchine for adhering to "the principle of plotlessness" in his works and, hewing close to the official ideology of socialist realism, declared that "Without an idea, without a subject, there cannot be true emotional art." This criticism was repeated in Khachaturian's contribution to a report on NYCB's tour published in the October 10 issue of *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Here, the composer stated that "The only shortcoming of the American ballet I consider is the lack of subject matter."[72] However, Khachaturian tempered this

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[69] These include "Balanchine Talks to Russia about His Artistic Credo," *Dance News*, December 1962; Mikhail Chudnovsky, "New York City Ballet As I See It," *Dance Magazine*, January 1963, 36–39; "How Moscow Press Received N.Y.C. Ballet," *Dance News*, November 1962, 12; Boris Lvov-Anokhin, "Balanchine's Ballet in Moscow," trans. Hilda Perham, *Soviet Literature*, 3, 1963, 163–7; and "Shock Waves in Moscow," *Time*, October 19, 1962, 57;
[70] Aram Khachaturian, "Vstrecha s amerikabskim baletom—Pervoe vpechatlenie," *Izvestia*, October 10, 1962, 4. Translated and reprinted in "How Moscow Press Received N.Y.C. Ballet," *Dance News*, November 1962, 12.
[71] Khachaturian, "Vstrecha s amerikabskim baletom—Pervoe vpechatlenie," *Izvestia*, October 10, 1962, 4.
[72] Aram Khachaturian, "Amerikanskii balet v Moskve," *Pravda*, October 10, 1962, 6.

criticism, writing, "this shortcoming is redeemed by the brilliant technique of the artists." Then, echoing Martin's review, the composer announced, "The ballet master Balanchine creates an entirely new choreographic vocabulary, an extraordinary, peculiarly his own, dance design."[73]

Soviet choreographer Rostislav Zakharov similarly criticized Balanchine's formalism in an October 14 review. While complimenting the company's precision and musicality, Zakharov noted that "the ballet master adheres to the principle of purely formal quests unacceptable in Soviet ballet which is based on subject matter, a dance plot, kinship with people and realism."[74] Like Khachaturian, Zakharov also claimed a measure of Russian credit for Balanchine's work. Of *Serenade*, he declared, "one of Balanchine's early works, [it] is clearly influenced by Fokine's *Chopiniana* and Petipa's choreography. It has interesting combinations and dance patterns…But it is impossible to describe the content."[75]

While decorated Soviet composers and choreographers were careful to toe the party line on socialist realist art when reviewing Balanchine's ballets, his works were presented during a broader cultural and social shift under Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev called the "Thaw." Shortly after Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin at the 1956 Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Soviet government initiated a series of liberal reforms, now termed "de-Stalinization."[76] In the arts, these reforms included the rehabilitation of artists who had been banned under Stalin, the import of more foreign art and artists, and ultimately the proliferation of Soviet

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[73] Khachaturian, "Amerikanskii balet v Moskve," *Pravda*, October 10, 1962, 6.
[74] Rostislav Zakharov, "The First Program," October 14, 1962. Translated and reprinted in "How Moscow Press Received N.Y.C. Ballet," *Dance News*, November 1962, 12.
[75] Soviet critic Mikhail Chudnovsky, writing for *Dance* Magazine shortly after the 1962 tour, similarly connected Balanchine to Petipa protégé and early Ballets Russes choreographer Mikhail Fokine when he wrote that "*Serenade*, to the music of Tchaikovsky—the most successful composition of the first program of the New York City Ballet, in my opinion—was a unique reminiscence of *Les Sylphides*." *Les Sylphides* is another name for *Chopiniana*, the short, non-narrative *ballet blanc* Zakharov references in his review. Mikhail Chudnovsky, "New York City Ballet as I See It," *Dance Magazine*, January 1963, 37.
[76] Polly Jones, Introduction to *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era,* (New York: Routledge. 2006), 2–4.

works that drew on Western avant-garde models, including choreographic symphonism in dance.[77] The freedom offered by this brief period was felt long after Khrushchev's resignation, dramatically altering the Soviet cultural landscape for decades.[78]

Reflecting this shift, celebrated prima ballerina Galina Ulanova penned an editorial, published in *Pravda* only a few weeks after New York City Ballet's Moscow performances, that advocated for the creation of an experimental ballet theatre that would include foreign exchange.[79] This was one of several calls to action in the wake of the NYCB tour, including comments made at the 1963 All-Union Choreographic Conference. Although Bolshoi director Mikhail Chulaki praised Soviet dance at the choreographic summit, he also expressed concerns about "a poverty of dance and dance inventiveness in Soviet ballets."[80] Much as performances by the Bolshoi at the Royal Opera House in 1956 had invigorated British ballet—the virtuosity of one-handed lifts was particularly exciting, while the evening-length format and dramatic impetus of Soviet *drambalets* provided an alternative to the one-act Diaghilev preferred[81]—New York City Ballet's tour naturally prompted the Soviet dance community to compare their choreography to Balanchine's. Ulanova, Chulaki, and others avoided making direct reference to Balanchine's innovations when calling for change, but archival notes from the All-Union Conference refer to earlier concerns that "American ballet," here a synonym for the New York City Ballet and Balanchine's innovative style, might overtake Soviet dance.[82] Indeed, a review of the 1962 Soviet tour by dance critic Jean Battey titled "Soviets, Too, Captured By the Storyless Ballet" goes so far as to assert the choreographer's impact

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[77] Peter Schmelz, *Such Freedom, if only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 5–6, 10–13. Searcy, *Ballet in the Cold War*, 8–10 and Ezrahi, *Swans of the Kremlin*, 32.
[78] Schmelz, *Such Freedom, if only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw*, 21. Khrushchev was removed by his colleagues in 1964 and replaced by the more conservative Leonid Brezhnev.
[79] Galina Ulanova, "V Gostiakh i Doma," *Pravda*, January 1, 1963, 6. "Soviet Ballerina Asks Experimental Theatre," *The Washington Post*, January 2, 1963, A8.
[80] Ezrahi, *Swans of the Kremlin: Ballet and Power in Soviet Russia*, 166.
[81] Jonathan Gray, "Sixty Years of the Bolshoi," *Dancing Times,* July 19, 2016. Ezrahi, *Swans of the Kremlin*, 148–59.
[82] Ezrahi, *Swans of the Kremlin*, 166.

on "that stronghold of anti-abstractionist art, the Soviet ballet," as "many cherished beliefs of the Stalin period" including long-held confidence in Soviet ballet's superiority "seem to be evaporating."[83]

American Through and Through?

Serenade, choreographed in 1934, was Balanchine's first ballet made in the United States. While its plotless choreography and striking designs demonstrated what could ostensibly be accomplished under a democratic model of artistic freedom and individual liberty, the ballet also featured music by the celebrated Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, which was revised and reimagined much as it might have been under the direction of Diaghilev or a specialist composer of the Imperial Theatres. As a result, *Serenade* demonstrates a fascinating tension in Balanchine's work—his value to American cultural politics on the one hand and the Franco-Russian techniques he often employed to achieve his choreographic vision on the other. In many ways, the ballet reflects the complicated experience of immigration. Neither wholly one nor the other, *Serenade* is both Russian and American, narrative and abstract, an émigré dancework above all.

[83] Jean Battey, "Soviets, Too, Captured By the Storyless Ballet," *The Washington Post*, October 14, 1962, G6.

Chapter 4

An American Balanchine Emerges: *Le Palais de cristal* at the Palais Garnier Becomes *Symphony in C* at New York City Center (1947–1948)

In 1947, George Balanchine choreographed *Le Palais de cristal* to Georges Bizet's Symphony in C for the Paris Opéra Ballet. He made the work while serving as guest ballet master of the French national company, where he had been invited to replace disgraced choreographer Serge Lifar (1905–86).[1] *Le Palais de cristal* fêted the effervescent music of a celebrated French composer, the brilliance of the national company, and the renewed interest in ballet in the French capital.[2] After a six-month tenure in Paris at the Opéra during the spring and summer of 1947, Balanchine returned to New York where he restaged the Bizet ballet as *Symphony in C* on his own company. Its New York staging featured simplified designs that reflected the choreographer's increasingly spare aesthetic in the postwar period and helped position Balanchine as the creator of a uniquely American dance tradition at the start of the Cold War conflict.[3]

Simultaneously French and American, Old World and New,[4] the Bizet ballet, as the two works are often called, reflects a number of cultural-political concerns of the period.[5] First,

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[1] More specifically, Balanchine was the fifth choreographer hired to temporarily replace Lifar, who had been stripped of his position as ballet master of the Paris Opéra Ballet after being found guilty of collaboration with the Nazis during the Occupation of France (May 1940–late August 1944).

[2] This popularity was in large part the result of reforms instituted by Lifar beginning in 1930.

[3] In this chapter, I employ the terms "staging" or "version" to indicate the intentional differences between *Le Palais de cristal* and *Symphony in C* rather than "revival," which appears in the previous case study chapters on *Apollo* and *Serenade* to demonstrate the gradual development of a single work.

[4] Lynn Garafola describes this and other tutu ballets in Balanchine's oeuvre, including *Theme and Variations* and *Ballet Imperial*, as "neo-imperial works." Lynn Garafola, "Dance in the City," in *Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 243.

[5] The ballet also poses an interesting question with respect to intellectual property. *Le Palais de cristal* belonged to the Paris Opéra Ballet, but Balanchine retained ownership of *Symphony in C* and willed the work to longtime company

Balanchine's tenure at the Paris Opéra Ballet, during which he created *Le Palais de cristal*, forms a parallel with American cultural and political intervention in Europe in the immediate postwar period. This chapter argues that, despite Balanchine's interest in a permanent position within the organization, the choreographer's departure from the Opéra and Lifar's subsequent reinstatement reflect rising anti-American sentiment in France (the result of US economic and political involvement) as well as major administrative change within the Réunion des Théâtres Lyrique Nationaux (RTLN)—both issues that have gone largely unexamined in dance literature up to this point.[6] Second, the ballet's New York aesthetic represents a crystallization of Balanchine's Cold War Formalist practices. Upon his return to the United States, the choreographer's work grew increasingly architectural and allusive. To that end, *Symphony in C* jettisoned the earlier title along with the decorative sets and color schemes that animated the Paris staging, a practice of simplification or erasure that Balanchine would repeat with landmark works including *Apollo, Concerto Barocco* (1941), and *The Four Temperaments* (1946).

Several early performances of the Bizet ballet in New York help chart a critical shift in attitudes toward the choreographer in the United States. Balanchine represented foreign ballet—as opposed to homegrown American dance—to many US critics in the 1930s and early 1940s. But in 1948, as Cold War tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union grew, the Russian émigré's work was widely embraced as an expression of US culture, thanks in part to *Symphony in C*.[7] The ballet's programming on NYCB's landmark 1962 Soviet tour supports this; the US State Department, members of the ANTA Dance Panel, and George Balanchine himself deemed *Symphony*

administrator Betty Cage, who gave it to ballet master John Taras. Upon his death, Taras willed *Symphony in C* to the School of American Ballet, which deposited the work in the Balanchine Trust circa 2004. The ballet is now regarded as a single work—*Symphony in C*—belonging to the choreographer's Trust, and companies including the Paris Opéra Ballet seeking to stage the work must get the Trust's approval.

[6] Established in 1939, the RTLN was a state institution that oversaw the Opéra and the Opéra-Comique until 1978.

[7] This is also roughly a decade after Balanchine became a naturalized US citizen.

in C a potent symbol of American dance, worthy of representing the choreographer's adopted homeland on the great Russian ballet stages of Balanchine's youth.

Symphony in C shares a great deal with the ballets explored in the previous two chapters. *Apollo* and *Serenade* were also set on the Paris Opéra Ballet by Balanchine in 1947, abstracted in the late 1940s and 1950s, and performed in Russia during NYCB's 1962 tour. But unlike the two earlier ballets, *Symphony in C* does not feature major musical revisions or alterations. The changes Balanchine made to the Bizet ballet when he restaged it in the US are aesthetic rather than musical. To that end, examining *Symphony in C* allows this dissertation to draw a complete picture of the choreographer's practices and methods in constructing an American ballet tradition. Rather than the close choreomusical analysis presented in the previous case study chapters, this chapter emphasizes the political and institutional issues that inform the creation of Balanchine's Bizet ballet and its reception in the late 1940s in both France and the United States.

The chapter begins with context related both to Bizet's Symphony in C and the postwar problems Balanchine encountered at the Paris Opéra, where he was invited to replace Lifar temporarily. After establishing the environment in which Balanchine made *Le Palais de cristal*, the French and American aesthetic priorities at work in the ballet—a convergence of aesthetic retrospectivism and Balanchine's distinctive movement vocabulary—are explored. Balanchine's brief tenure at the Opéra is then situated in the French cultural-political landscape of 1947 during what is now known as *l'année terrible*, which marked the start of the Cold War in Western Europe. The chapter then draws on archival documents to demonstrate the complex role that French domestic and international politics, rising anti-American sentiment, and administrative turn-over within the national theatre administration played in Lifar's reinstatement as ballet master at the Paris Opéra in the fall of 1947. Comparing *Le Palais de cristal* to Balanchine's New York adaptation ultimately shows

the shift in the choreographer's aesthetic priorities and the US critical response to the dancemaker in the early Cold War period. Balanchine transformed the Bizet ballet, originally a celebration of French music and dance, into a neoclassical masterpiece that quickly became synonymous with American dance.[8]

Bizet's Symphony in C

In 1933, musicologist Jean Chantavoine made a remarkable discovery: an unpublished work by Georges Bizet composed in 1855 while he was still a student that had been donated to the library at the Paris Conservatoire. News of the "Symphony in C" quickly spread through the musical community, and the work premiered in Basel on February 26, 1935, under the baton of Felix Weingartner. More than eighty years after it was composed, Bizet's youthful symphony finally received its Paris début on May 29, 1936, performed by the Société des Concerts under the baton of Charles Münch.[9]

The four-movement symphony reflects the strong influence of Bizet's teacher, Charles Gounod—whose own Symphony No. 1 in D Major Bizet arranged for piano duet in the months before he began work on his Symphony in C.[10] Many speculate that the symphony, written when Bizet was only seventeen, was a compositional assignment and that the numerous structural similarities between Bizet and Gounod's contemporaneous works may have been part of the

[8] Balanchine and Stravinsky's *Apollon musagète*, examined in chapter two, is typically identified as the first ballet featuring a neoclassical movement vocabulary. Unlike neoclassical music's rejection of Romanticism and the extreme avant-garde of the early twentieth century, neoclassical ballet incorporates elements of the 'classical' Russian ballet with vernacular styles, greater speed and athleticism, and an emphasis on structure, particularly from a musical score, rather than narrative. For a history of the term in dance as well as its role in the work of Serge Lifar, see Mark Franko, *The Fascist Turn in the Dance of Serge Lifar: Interwar French Ballet and the German Occupation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), and particularly pp. 1–5.
[9] Hugh MacDonald, *Bizet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 244.
[10] Winton Dean, *Bizet*, rev. ed. (London: J.M. Dent & Sons LTD, 1975) 7.

exercise Gounod set for his student.[11] The symphony was withheld, likely because Bizet wanted to avoid comparisons to Gounod's own first symphony, then a popular composition upon which Bizet's work had clearly been modeled.[12] Such similarities might have hindered Bizet's chances of publication in 1855, but the Symphony in C was quickly taken into the repertory of major orchestras after its discovery in the early 1930s.

In his 1958 analysis of the score, Howard Shanet notes its striking similarity to dance music—but he was not the first to recognize its choreographic potential.[13] Nor was George Balanchine, who most famously choreographed Bizet's precocious symphony. That distinction belongs to British ballet-maker Andrée Howard, who set the music on the junior company of Sadler's Wells Ballet. Titled *Assembly Ball*, the first choreographic realization of Bizet's score premiered in April 1946.[14] Balanchine's own Bizet setting, *Le Palais de cristal*, debuted at the Palais Garnier a little over one year later on July 28, 1947.

Serge Lifar and the Problems of the Postwar Paris Opéra Ballet

For six months in 1947, George Balanchine was tasked by RTLN Administrator Georges Hirsch with enlivening the Paris Opéra Ballet following the departure of Serge Lifar. Lifar's long association with the Opéra Ballet began in 1929 when displaced Ballets Russes company members scrambled to establish themselves in new organizations following impresario Serge Diaghilev's

[11] Howard Shanet, "Bizet's Suppressed Symphony," *The Musical Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (October 1958): 473.
[12] Shanet, "Bizet's Suppressed Symphony," 474.
[13] Shanet, "Bizet's Suppressed Symphony," 462.
[14] I am very grateful to Jane Pritchard, curator of dance at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in London, who shared some archival materials about *Assembly Ball* with me, including the first page of Howard's detailed choreographic plan. For more on Howard's work, see Kathrine Sorley Walker, "The Choreography of Andrée Howard," *Dance Chronicle* 13, no. 3 (1991): 308–10; and Jane Pritchard, "The Choreography of Andrée Howard: Some Further Information," *Dance Chronicle* 15, no. 1 (1992): 77–87.

death. Although Jacques Rouché, the Opéra's Director, had hired George Balanchine to choreograph a new version of Beethoven's *Les Créatures de Prométhée* with Lifar in the leading role, tuberculosis prevented the choreographer from completing the commission and he recommended his star dancer realize his choreographic plans.[15] Rouché hired Lifar as the ballet master of the Paris Opéra company on the strength of his *Prométhée* triumph, while Balanchine soon headed to the United States to begin his enduring partnership with Lincoln Kirstein.

Lifar's ambition at the Paris Opéra Ballet was "to reestablish the preeminence of French ballet in the European dance world"—and the company's cachet rose significantly as a reflection of Lifar's star power.[16] Indeed, the controversial choreographer is credited with the revitalization and reform of the once-flagging company.[17] Whereas Diaghilev's Ballets Russes had defined the Paris ballet scene of the 1910s and 1920s, Lifar was responsible for remaking the Palais Garnier into the site of France's best dance during the 1930s.[18] The ballet master's success continued throughout the 1940s and particularly during the German Occupation of France (1940–44). Lifar served as the Opéra's nominal head when its Director, Jacques Rouché, temporarily retreated south to Cahors in advance of the German army's arrival in Paris in June 1940.[19] As a privileged interlocutor of the German occupation authorities during negotiations for the Opéra's reopening, Lifar's position at the Opéra was unchallenged, even elevated, during France's painful wartime occupation.[20] Paradoxically,

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[15] Both of Balanchine's lungs were damaged and the left spontaneously collapsed, either during his recovery at a sanitarium in the French Alps or shortly thereafter. Bernard Taper, *Balanchine: a biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 125–6. Balanchine made several ballets for Lifar during their tenure with the Ballets Russes, including *Barabau* (1925), which cemented their choreographic relationship, *La Pastorale* (1926), *La Chatte* (1927), and, most famously, *Apollon Musagète*. There is no indication of tension between the two men until after Diaghilev's death.
[16] Leslie A. Sprout, *The Musical Legacy of Wartime France* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013), 8.
[17] Ivor Guest, *The Paris Opéra Ballet* (Alton, UK: Dance Books, 2006), 82–4.
[18] Clement Crisp, "*ICARE*: Remembering Serge Lifar," *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 20, no. 2 (Winter 2002): 6. In addition to well-received revivals of works from the Golden Age of Imperial Ballet, Lifar choreographed new ballets, instilled much-needed discipline backstage, and, under Rouché's leadership, established regular performing evenings that made Wednesdays a night to be at the Palais Garnier.
[19] Sprout, *The Musical Legacy of Wartime France*, 8.
[20] Jane F. Fulcher, *Renegotiating French Identity: Musical Culture and Creativity in France during Vichy and the German Occupation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 53. Lifar's elevated status was also thanks to his anti-Semitism, which

"the grim, tragic years of the Second World War saw a brilliant flowering of ballet at the Opéra," and Lifar was among the most visible cultural figures both onstage and off during the Occupation.[21]

While Lifar enjoyed special privileges during the German Occupation, he experienced swift retribution for his collaboration in the immediate postwar period.[22] Shortly after the liberation of Paris in August 1944, the choreographer was called to testify before the *Comité National d'Epuration*. The conclusions were damning: in addition to the judgment that he "clearly collaborated with the Germans both from the private and artistic point of view," the committee found Lifar, a Soviet émigré, "guilty of an anti-national point of view unbefitting a foreigner who had been granted asylum in France."[23] Ultimately, Lifar was stripped of his position at the Paris Opéra and banned from the French national stages for one year, beginning October 1, 1945.[24] He spent his suspension working at the Opéra de Monte Carlo. Jacques Rouché was also tried for his wartime collaboration and relieved of his duties as Director.[25] Maurice Lehmann, the newly-appointed Administrator of the RTLN, was soon tasked with the difficult work of rebuilding France's national theatres.[26]

Four lesser-known ballet masters followed quickly in Lifar's footsteps,[27] but with two major stars of the Paris Opéra Ballet absent and the company in disarray, Lehmann required a

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dominates his 1938 book *La Danse: Les grands courants de la danse académique*. See Mark Franko, *The Fascist Turn in the Dance of Serge Lifar: Interwar French Ballet and the German Occupation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 209–13.

[21] Guest, *The Paris Opéra Ballet*, 7.

[22] Sandrine Grandgambe, "La Réunion des Théâtres Lyriques Nationaux" in *La Vie musicale sous Vichy*, ed. Myriam Chimènes (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 2001), 120.

[23] 'Monsieur LIFAR durant l'occupation, a manifestement collaboré avec les Allemands, tant au point de vue privé qu'artistique.' Conclusions to the Interrogatoire of Lifar at the comité d'épuration on 8 December 1944. Dossier Lifar: Z/6/11, Archives Nationales, Paris. Quoted in Franko, *The Fascist Turn in the Dance of Serge Lifar: Interwar French Ballet and the German Occupation*, 201.

[24] Franko, *The Fascist Turn in the Dance of Serge Lifar*, 201–2.

[25] Sandrine Grandgambe, "La Réunion des Théâtres Lyriques Nationaux," 125–6.

[26] Lehmann served as Administrator of the RTLN from June 27, 1945–May 11, 1946, and again from November 17, 1951–September 29, 1955.

[27] They were Marcel Bergé, Victor Gsovsky, Serge Peretti, and Robert Quinault.

choreographer and creative leader of Lifar's standing.[28] Archival materials at the Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra National de Paris show that the administrator contacted none other than George Balanchine.[29] An internationally recognized artist who spent much of his early career in France, Balanchine was familiar to and respected by Parisian audiences. He had an ally in music director Roger Désormière, a longtime friend and colleague, [30] and, importantly, a growing coterie of talented dancers he could bring along to supplement the somewhat-thinned ranks of the Opéra Ballet.[31] Lehmann offered the post of guest ballet master to Balanchine sometime before the spring of 1946 and asked him to hire Tamara Toumanova, one of "Baby Ballerinas" Balanchine discovered in the early 1930s, to appear with the company.[32]

Lehmann's resignation in May of 1946 threw this arrangement into uncertainty, but his successor, Georges Hirsch, ultimately confirmed his predecessor's offer of a six-month post in Paris during the 1947 season for Balanchine as well as roles for Toumanova and for Maria Tallchief, whom Balanchine had recently married.[33] Although COVID travel restrictions have made finding a copy of Balanchine's contract with the Opéra impossible for the time being, other archival materials indicate that Balanchine was hired directly by the Opéra and either contracted Toumanova and

[28] Prima ballerina Yvette Chauviré followed Lifar to Monte Carlo, where he was employed with the Opéra, while Solange Schwarz, like Lifar, was temporarily banned from the national theatres for her association with the German occupying forces.
[29] "Rapport Général Sur La Danse, Saison 1945–1946," May 21, 1946. Opera Archive 20-2051, Roger Désormière Personnel Dossier, 1945–1948.
[30] "Deso," as he was affectionately called, worked with the Ballets Russes from 1925 to 1929 and conducted many Balanchine ballets during his tenure.
[31] The absence of two étoiles was keenly felt, especially where casting was concerned, but the national company was still far larger than Balanchine's New York-based troupe, Ballet Society.
[32] Toumanova was then dancing with the New York-based Ballet Theatre. "Rapport Général Sur La Danse, Saison 1945–1946," May 21, 1946. Opera Archive 20-2051, Roger Désormière Personnel Dossier, 1945–1948.
[33] Now considered America's first major prima ballerina and the first Native American dancer to hold this rank, she was little known in 1947 when she appeared with the Paris Opéra Ballet—the first American to do so since Augusta Maywood in 1839. Jean Gandrey-Rety, "Les Ballets de l'Opéra Débuts de Balanchine," *Franc Tireur,* May 12, 1947.

Tallchief or simply served as an intermediary between the dancers and the Opéra in arranging their contracts.[34] On February 26, 1947, Balanchine sailed for France on the *America*.[35]

A Pseudo Parisian Balanchine: *Le Palais de cristal*

In Paris, Balanchine revived three earlier ballets: *Apollon Musagète,* which originally starred Lifar and is examined in chapter two; *Serenade*, detailed in chapter three; and *Le Baiser de la fée* (1937), set to a Tchaikovsky pastiche score arranged by Igor Stravinsky that had been commissioned by Ida Rubinstein and premiered in Paris on November 27, 1928. Balanchine also created a new work especially for the Paris Opéra Ballet: *Le Palais de cristal*. Set to Bizet's Symphony in C, the ballet premiered at the Théâtre National de l'Opéra on July 28, 1947, under the baton of Roger Désormière, just as the season—and Balanchine's tenure as guest ballet master—was coming to a close.[36]

Although its title alludes to the Crystal Palace, built in London's Hyde Park for the first World's Fair in 1851, *Le Palais de cristal* was a plotless offering, a "pure dance poem" that interprets Bizet's score through Balanchine's neoclassical movement vocabulary.[37] Using the state-sponsored

[34] The financial details of the agreement were relatively well-known at the time; René Miquel reported that Balanchine, who was earning $2,500 a week in New York, would only be paid 30,000 francs a month by the Opéra. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Inflation Calculator and historical exchange rates, these figures are equivalent to a monthly salary of $117,075 vs. $2,948 in May 2020, adjusted for inflation and in US dollars. Although Miquel provides no source for these figures, the $2,500 weekly salary would most likely have been based on Balanchine's contract as the choreographer of the 1947 revival of Oscar Straus's *The Chocolate Soldier* or other short-term projects he choreographed during this period, rather than his annual salary as the artistic director of the newly-formed Ballet Society, whose financial precarity was extreme in this period. This number may indeed strike us as astronomical, but a review of the choreographer's financial statements at his Harvard archive indicate that Balanchine spent lavishly. There is no indication that an organization other than the Opéra hired Balanchine and these dancers. René Miquel, "Pour remplacer Serge Lifar à l'Opéra, BALANCHINE a laissé aux U.S.A. une situation de 2,500 dollars," *France Soir*, March 22, 1947. Opera Archive, George Balanchine Personnel Dossier, 1940–49.

[35] Taper, *Balanchine: a biography*, 216. Tallchief had a contract with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and joined Balanchine in Paris sometime later. Maria Tallchief with Larry Kaplan, *Maria Tallchief: America's Prima Ballerina* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1997), 60–3.

[36] Some, including Maria Tallchief, Balanchine's then-wife, claim that Stravinsky introduced Balanchine to the score.

[37] Maurice Brillant, "*Le Palais de cristal* à l'Opéra," *L'Aube*, August 3, 1947.

house's immense resources, including substantial performing forces, a vast stage, and an army of dedicated personnel, Balanchine choreographed the spectacular thirty-minute work in just two weeks. The ballet was a celebration of French music, dance, and design—but the choreography also showed hints of Balanchine's increasingly experimental movement style, a fusion of classical syntax with an athletic and angular flair that fully flowered in his postwar work with the New York City Ballet and defined America's national dance style during the Cold War.[38]

Le Palais de cristal reflects Balanchine's growing familiarity with the Paris Opéra Ballet's particular customs. The choreographer made enemies early on in his tenure for ignoring the rigid rules that dictated casting—a reflection of the company's origins in the French court.[39] Dancers of differing ranks would not typically perform together at the Opéra, but Balanchine paid no attention to these hierarchies, which closely resembled the "star system" of the Russian tradition in which the choreographer had been brought up. The choreographer even made the unprecedented decision to cast students from the Paris Opéra Ballet School, known colloquially as "les petits rats," in *Serenade*, the first work Balanchine staged on the French company.[40] By the time he was choreographing *Le Palais de cristal*, however, the dancemaker had more understanding of and respect for the company's expectations, and he cast the work accordingly, highlighting star dancers in the leading roles and casting junior members in smaller parts. Lycette Darsonval, one of the company's star ballerinas, and Alexandre Kalioujny, a Russian-born dancer Balanchine recruited that season, danced the first movement. Tamara Toumanova, a guest *étoile*, was partnered by Roger Ritz in the second

[38] For more on the development of this style, see Gay Morris, "Balanchine's Bodies," *Body & Society* 11, no. 4 (2005): 25–7.

[39] The five ranks of the Paris company, from highest to lowest, are *danseur étoile*, *premier danseur*, *sujet*, *coryphée*, and *quadrille*, though historically, there have also been distinctions within these ranks. Claude Bessy, *La danse pour passion* (Paris: JC Lattès, 2004), 33–4. See also "Company – Ballet – Artists," Opéra national de Paris, accessed December 3, 2020, https://www.operadeparis.fr/en/artists/ballet/ballet-company.

[40] The longtime Director of the Paris Opéra Ballet School, Claude Bessy recounts the unique opportunity Balanchine provided to her and several other young dancers in her memoirs. Bessy, *La danse pour passion*, 35–6.

movement, while the third featured Micheline Bardin and Michel Renault. Madeleine Lafon and Max Bozzoni, then both ranked *premiers danseurs*, appeared in the effervescent finale.[41]

The casting of the four principal couples, eight demi-soloist couples, and twenty-four *corps de ballet* members mirrored the mores of the Paris Opéra Ballet—but Balanchine's choreographic vocabulary was more unorthodox. The ballet's choreographic syntax reflected the expansion of classical technique that first appears in early works for the Ballets Russes and that Balanchine had begun to more fully explore in the United States, beginning in 1946 with *The Four Temperaments*, choreographed to a Paul Hindemith score for Ballet Society.[42] "The expanded range of motion and the contrasts in direction and accent" that mark Balanchine's mid-century style are particularly evident in the first and third movements of *Palais de cristal*, where choreographic counterpoint enlivens the aural experience of the symphony.[43] Balanchine's response to Bizet's youthful composition also stressed speed and athleticism—qualities increasingly associated with the choreographer's work, particularly in ballets for his American company.

Le Palais de cristal also features several now-distinctive Balanchine steps, fitted expertly to Bizet's multi-hued symphony. In the sonata-form first movement, shifting groups of dancers matched to orchestral lines help the audience "see the music."[44] Although the swooning second-movement adagio—and particularly the solo woodwind, in this case, an oboe, that winds sensually through the movement—suggests an Imperial *grand pas de deux*, the choreography pushes the boundaries of Russian training epitomized by the Vaganova method.[45] A mid-chest lift that reverses the ballerina's direction emphasizes physicality and languor, rather than weightlessness, while her

[41] Tallchief danced the principal role of Terpsichore in *Apollo* but did not appear in *Palais*.
[42] Morris, "Balanchine's Bodies," 25–7.
[43] Suki Schorer with Russell Lee, *Suki Schorer on Balanchine Technique* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1999), 18.
[44] "See the music, hear the dance" is one of Balanchine's most quoted declarations.
[45] See chapter one, 30–2.

daring backbends and off-balance leans reflect Balanchine's dynamic partnering style as well as the choreographer's increasing use of anti-classical elements beginning in this period.[46] In contrast to the voluptuous *pas de deux*, the third movement calls for unison dancing by the principal couple, thereby ignoring distinctions between traditionally gendered steps of the Franco-Russian school.[47] The constant movement and *ballon* quality—the impression of weightlessness—of the choreography is a charming complement to Bizet's bouncy scherzo, which opens with a Scotch-inflected jig rhythm and later features a pastoral drone. In the ballet's finale, set to the symphony's brief coda, the four starring ballerinas perform the same steps simultaneously. One critic compared this chorus line a bit meanly to "the best traditions of a Folies-Bergère finale."[48] Equally though, this choreography recalls Balanchine's work on Broadway and in Hollywood.[49] Similarly, a subtle scattering of tap-dance referents throughout reveals the choreographer's well-known fondness for Fred Astaire and the uniquely American dance tradition.[50] Indeed, Balanchine's work often evinces the influence of tap and jazz—genres that originated in Black communities, though often popularized by White dancers in Hollywood and musical theatre.[51] Throughout this Bizet ballet, choreographic allusions to Balanchine's adopted homeland appear—stylistic citations that would be magnified when the work was staged on his US company.

If Balanchine's choreography revealed America's impact on his aesthetic, the ballet's original designs reflected a French sensibility befitting the Palais Garnier where *Le Palais de cristal* was

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[46] *Suki Schorer on Balanchine Technique*, 410, 404–6. Morris, "Balanchine's Bodies," 25–7.
[47] *Suki Schorer on Balanchine Technique*, 236, 310.
[48] Vestris le jeune [pseud.], "*Le Palais de Cristal*, à l'Opéra," *La Bataille*, August 13, 1947.
[49] James Steichen has argued that Balanchine's work in the United States in the 1930s is as much defined by his work in so-called popular venues as the ballet, though prevailing narratives have emphasized the latter. See James Steichen, *Balanchine and Kirstein's American Enterprise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).
[50] See Constance Valis Hill, *Tap Dancing America: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
[51] See Brenda Dixon Gottschild, *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996); and Sally Banes, "Balanchine and Black Dance," in *Writing Dancing in the Age of Postmodernism*, rev. ed. (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan. 2011), 53–69. For a discussion of Balanchine's interest in Fred Astaire and screen dance, see Beth Genné, *Dance Me a Song: Astaire, Balanchine, and Kelly, and the American Film Musical* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

premiered.[52] The décor and costumes were the work of Surrealist painter and illustrator Leonor Fini, an Argentine-born artist working in Paris best known for her inversion of gendered tropes in Western painting.[53] Taking inspiration from the ballet's title, Fini's set design featured the façade of a magnificent baroque palace. Balconies with ornate balustrades, gargoyles, and cut-crystal topiaries arranged along the palace's formal staircase amplified the sense of the grandeur and opulence at the Opéra. A critic described Fini's stage design for *Palais* as "half-Louis XIV, half-Universal Exhibition of 1900," giving a sense of the set's magnificent scale and stylistic retrospectivism.[54] The pencil drawing in figure 4.1 illustrates Fini's décor plan.

[52] My discussion in this chapter on production designs and costumes draws on the work of Donatella Barbieri, "Performativity and the Historical Body: Detecting Performance Through the Archived Costume," *Studies in Theatre & Performance* 33, no. 3 (September 2013): 281–301; Josée Chartrand, "Costumes of the Pavley-Oukrainsky Ballet: A Material Case Study," *Dress* (2020): 1–16; and Sarah Woodcock, "Wardrobe," in *Diaghilev and the Golden Age of the Ballets Russes*, ed. Jane Pritchard (London: V&A Publishing, 2010), 129–63; as well as Jules David Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no. 1 (Spring, 1982): 1-19.

[53] Although Fini asserted her independence from the group, she participated in nearly every major exhibition of Surrealist works and enjoyed close friendships with Max Ernst, Salvador Dalí, and Paul Éluard, among others. Peter Webb, *Sphinx: The Life and Art of Leonor Fini* (New York: Vendome Press, 2009), 4, 99. Fini first began designing theatrical sets and costumes in 1944.

[54] Maurice Pourchet, "Enfin une oeuvre bien construite: *La Palais de Cristal*," *Les Arts*, August 8, 1947.

Figure 4.1: Set design by Leonor Fini, 1947, Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra, BnF.

The spectacular production stood in stark contrast to the immense penury then plaguing postwar France. Staged while protests against austerity measures raged, *Palais* must have seemed a nostalgic return to the nation's glorious past, the new ballet an escapist fantasy that emphasized opulence rather than acknowledging the present economic crisis.

To suit the sumptuous setting, Fini designed jeweled tutus for the prima ballerinas, soloists, and *corps de ballet* dancers. She imagined each of the four movements in a distinct color.[55] Ruby dominated the opening *Allegro vivo*, while the second movement, made for "Black Pearl" Tamara Toumanova, was rendered in midnight blue. Dancers in the third movement wore shades of emerald, and the women of the fourth movement were dressed in pearl. The finale incorporated the

[55] As such, Fini's designs anticipate Balanchine's celebrated 1967 ballet *Jewels*, a plotless three-act work set to music by Gabriel Fauré, Igor Stravinsky, and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky whose individual movements are titled *Emeralds*, *Rubies*, and *Diamonds*, respectively.

dancers from all the previous sections, creating a riot of "movement, glitter, and color," in the words of Maria Tallchief.[56] Figure 4.2 is a full-color production still from 1959 showing the four female principals, each in her own sparkling tutu and jeweled crown, during the ballet's finale.

Figure 4.2: Production still by Roger Pic, 1959, Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra, BnF.

As the last work and only new creation by the guest ballet master, Balanchine's sensational *Le Palais de cristal* was the highlight of the Paris Opéra Ballet's 1947 season. The ballet received a standing ovation at its premiere, and Balanchine was praised by RTLN Administrator George Hirsch for "amaz[ing] us with astonishing musicality in the service of an accomplished choreographic talent" at the glamorous post-premiere celebration, which also served as a send-off for Balanchine, Tallchief, and Toumanova.[57] Critics were, on the whole, equally enamored with Balanchine's

[56] Tallchief with Kaplan, *Maria Tallchief: America's Prima Ballerina*, 76.
[57] Prepared speech, Opera Archive, George Balanchine Personnel Dossier, 1940–49.

"ravishing" Bizet ballet.[58] Surveying the whole of the season for *Le Monde* through the lens of this new work, noted critic René Dumesnil exclaimed, "With *Le Palais de cristal*, which Mr. George Balanchine has just created at the Opéra, the ballet season ends in apotheosis. …there is enough here to satisfy the most difficult and to satisfy the most delicate."[59] The work's richness was also a theme of Léandre Vaillat's review:

> Mr. Balanchine's new work is a brilliant ballet—too brilliant even, in the sense that he has put a [choreographic] movement on each note, and it is this very excess of movement that prevents it from being fully appreciated, as no sooner are images perceived than they have disappeared.[60]

The choreographer's choice of the Bizet score was much discussed in the French press. Several critics appreciated the opportunity to hear the recently-discovered symphony, and there was near-universal praise for Roger Désormière's conducting. Maurice Brillant was initially skeptical of Balanchine's selection, declaring rather conservatively that "as a rule, a ballet should be danced to music deliberately written for the dance."[61] He quickly reversed course, however, acknowledging that "this symphony, with such a clear and marked rhythm…with a youthful, joyful, lively allure, wonderfully fulfills the unforeseen function to which it was assigned." Effusive in his praise for Balanchine's choreomusical interpretation of the early Bizet composition, Dumesnil rhapsodized:

> Mr. Balanchine knew how to use [the score] so logically and adequately that we no longer think for a single moment that it would have been possible to set the ballet to something else. It is, it seems to me, the best praise that can be given to his choreography: it springs from the music itself, it is the living translation of it, and one would even say necessary.[62]

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[58] Clarendon [Bernard Gavoty], "Création du *Palais de Cristal*: Chorégraphie de Balanchine sur une musique de Bizet," *Le Figaro*, July 30, 1947.
[59] René Dumesnil, "Le Palais de cristal," *Le Monde*, August 4, 1947. It should be noted that *Le Monde* leaned strongly toward the Christian Democratic Party, or the Catholic Left, in this period and was therefore quite conservative, in opposition to the politics of RTLN director George Hirsch.
[60] Léandre Vaillat, "Le Palais de cristal," *Carrefour*, July 30, 1947.
[61] Maurice Brillant, "Le Palais de cristal," *L'Époque*, August 1, 1947.
[62] Dumesnil, "Le Palais de cristal," *Le Monde*, August 4, 1947.

Some reviews hinted at backstage tensions during Balanchine's tenure at the Opéra. In his assessment of the choreographer's Parisian season for *Le Revue musicale*, Pierre Michaut described *Le Palais de cristal* as "an indisputable success; straight away the ballet went to the skies."[63] But he indicated a change in the attitude of the company toward Balanchine as he reviewed their performance of the work: "The dancers, finally convinced of the importance and the value of what this master offered them, gave their best effort and conviction. All reluctance had finally disappeared."[64] Some of this resistance was of Balanchine's own making; he had insulted senior dancers by ignoring the company's strict hierarchy. Nevertheless, loyalty to Lifar both within the Paris Opéra Ballet and among dance critics likely made the difficult position of *guest* ballet master even more perilous to negotiate. Several reviews of the new work compared Balanchine with his ousted predecessor, and some articulated a strong preference for Lifar. Even these critics, however, acknowledged the well-deserved success of *Le Palais de cristal*.[65]

Balanchine was delighted by the ballet's triumph and thrilled to be back in Paris.[66] According to Maria Tallchief, the choreographer expressed hope for a permanent position with the established French company during his tenure as guest ballet master.[67] Balanchine imagined spending half the year in Paris and the other in New York with Ballet Society, the small troupe he co-founded one year earlier. Such an arrangement would ensure him more opportunities to choreograph on the well-established national institution than his own company offered but would not require him to

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[63] Pierre Michaut, "Quatre Ballets de Georges Balanchine A L'Opéra," *La Revue musicale*, 209 (1949): 56. Michaut's assessment of Balanchine's season was positive but balanced: although not particularly impressed by *Le Baiser de la fée*, the critic expressed tremendous admiration for both *Serenade* and *Apollon Musagète*.
[64] Michaut, "Quatre Ballets de Georges Balanchine A L'Opéra," 56.
[65] These include François Guillot de Rode writing for *Action*, Maurice Pourchet's review, "Enfin une oeuvre bien construite: *La Palais de Cristal*" for *Les Arts*, and "Vestris le jeune," whose review appeared in *La Bataille* on August 13, 1947.
[66] Tallchief with Kaplan, *Maria Tallchief*, 76–7.
[67] Taper, *Balanchine*, 217. Tallchief with Kaplan, *Maria Tallchief*, 76–7.

abandon his American troupe, either.[68] On the eve of his departure, one headline even declared, "Balanchine and Toumanova are leaving, but, no doubt, they will return…"[69]

Administrative Change and Anti-Americanism at the Paris Opéra Ballet

But Balanchine did not return. Shortly after the choreographer left Paris, Lifar was reinstated as ballet master—and all the works that Balanchine staged on the Paris Opéra Ballet, save for the newly-choreographed *Le Palais de cristal*, were dropped from the company's repertoire.[70] Many dance historians have since suggested that these events were a painful reprise of Lifar's earlier double-cross when he successfully realized Balanchine's plans for a revival of *Les Créatures de Prométhée* and was subsequently appointed ballet master at the Paris Opéra in 1930.[71] While scholars have focused on this interpersonal clash when interpreting Balanchine's departure and Lifar's return to the company in 1947, this series of events reflects substantially larger conflicts, both at the Opéra and in contemporary French life. Ultimately, administrative change and institutional politics at the Paris Opéra, the end of Lifar's temporary banishment from the French national theatres, rising anti-American sentiment, and French domestic as well as international political crises all contributed to the brevity of Balanchine's tenure at the Palais Garnier.[72]

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[68] This was not without precedent, especially for Balanchine. Throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s, when he and Kirstein did not have a permanent ballet company, the choreographer found Broadway and Hollywood to be particularly lucrative. He also served as choreographer of Sergei Denham's Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo between 1944 and 1946. Even during the early years of Ballet Society, which subsequently became New York City Ballet, Balanchine was hired by other companies, including rival Ballet Theatre, to choreograph new works.

[69] J.-B. J., "Balanchine et la Toumanova s'en vont, mais, sans doute, reviendront-ils…" *Le Figaro*, July 30, 1947.

[70] Lynn Garafola, "Arc de Triomphe," *Ballet Review* 35, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 77. While there is no evidence that the two men were in conflict during their work together in the Ballets Russes, this indicates a growing rivalry between the choreographers.

[71] Taper, *Balanchine*, 217. Tallchief with Kaplan, *Maria Tallchief*, 76–7.

[72] RTLN Administrator Georges Hirsch's Jewish heritage is another interesting factor to consider here. On the one hand, this may have allowed Hirsch to push back more effectively *against* arguments for a new ballet master; on the other, he may have experienced pressure on the part of Lifar's allies because of his background.

Balanchine's working relationship with the Opéra showed signs of trouble before he was even officially hired. Although Balanchine reported to RTLN Administrator Georges Hirsch, he had first been invited to serve as guest ballet master by Hirsch's predecessor, Maurice Lehmann, who served as Administrator from June 27, 1945 to May 11, 1946 (and again from November 17, 1951 to September 29, 1955). As with any organization, this leadership change posed an awkward problem, if not a genuine challenge, to Balanchine's hiring in 1947—much less an invitation to return to the Opéra permanently. Several articles written in spring 1947 about the dancemaker reference the tricky circumstances posed by this administrative shake-up. Jean Gandrey-Rety explained that:

> The celebrated ballet master Balanchine, to whom the previous director Lehmann along with Désormière had launched an effective appeal so that he would agree to come and give the choreography of the Opera a new impetus and vitality, arrived a few weeks ago from America to fulfill the commitment that George Hirsch, current RTLN administrator, had confirmed with him.[73]

Given that hiring Balanchine was Lehmann's inspiration rather than Hirsch's, it may not come as a surprise that archival materials show Lehmann's replacement did not pursue the possibility of re-engaging Balanchine at the Opéra.[74]

Although Balanchine had expressed a desire for a permanent position with the established French company to his wife, there is no indication in archival materials that an extended contract was ever discussed between Balanchine and Hirsch—or even Balanchine and Hirsch's predecessor Lehmann. In fact, more than a month before Balanchine's first ballet debuted at the Palais Garnier on April 30, 1947, newspaper reports affirmed that "In six months, subsequent engagements will recall him to New York."[75] Balanchine's commitments in the United States, where he was still

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[73] Jean Gandrey-Rety, "Les Ballets de l'Opéra Débuts de Balanchine," *Franc Tireur,* May 11, 1947.
[74] Comité consultatif des TLN, "Procès-Verbal de la séance du 13 octobre 1947," Archives Opéra, "Comité de lecture procès verbaux 1946–1965," *cote*. 20-272, Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra, BnF. See also Franko, *The Fascist Turn in the Dance of Serge Lifar*, 203.
[75] René Miquel, "Pour remplacer Serge Lifar à l'Opéra Balanchine a laissé aux U.S.A. une situation de 2.500 dollars" *France-Soir*, March 22, 1947. In addition to these American commitments, the same article revealed the substantial pay cut Balanchine was taking in exchange for the prestige of working at the Paris Opéra.

Artistic Director of both the School of American Ballet and Ballet Society, would have posed significant hurdles to a permanent posting in Paris.[76] This likely did not concern Mr. Hirsch, though; by the time Balanchine arrived in Paris to serve as guest ballet master, Lifar's one-year suspension, which had begun on October 1, 1945, was already over. Further, there is evidence that in the wake of Balanchine's departure, the dancers, fearful of losing the energy and momentum that the guest choreographer had brought to the company, petitioned Hirsch to reinstate Lifar as ballet master.[77]

The consensus among the RTLN's *comité consultative*, which oversaw the Opéra's activities, was that Lifar should return to his previous post.[78] After a series of unsuccessful attempts to replace the ballet master in the early postwar period, reinstating Lifar likely seemed the simplest and most elegant solution to the problems of continuity and discipline plaguing the Paris Opéra Ballet. There was substantial opposition to this on the part of the union of theatre technicians, but this conflict was more or less resolved with a directive from Hirsch that prohibited Lifar from appearing on stage or speaking with the technical staff. The directive remained in effect until February 1949, as France's political terrain began to shift to the right.[79] Ultimately, Lifar served as *maître de ballet* until 1958, when he was forced into retirement following increasing conflict with Hirsch, who resumed his role as Administrator of the RTLN from 1956–1959.[80]

While administrative change at the Opéra played an important role, it was not the only challenge Balanchine faced during his guest posting in Paris. French historians now refer to 1947 as

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[76] According to Tallchief, Balanchine imagined traveling back and forth between Paris and New York—but in an era before routine transatlantic commercial flights, the time commitment and cost alone would likely have been prohibitive.
[77] Archival materials indicate that the union representing the dancers as well as the orchestra and chorus supported Lifar's reinstatement. Comité consultatif des TLN, "Procès-Verbal de la séance du 13 octobre 1947," Archives Opéra, "Comité de lecture procès verbaux 1946–1965," *cote*. 20-272, Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra, BnF.
[78] Comité consultatif des TLN, "Procès-Verbal de la séance du 13 octobre 1947," Archives Opéra, "Comité de lecture procès verbaux 1946–1965," *cote*. 20-272, Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra, BnF.
[79] For discussion of France's conservative shift in the late 1940s, see Tyler E. Stovall, *France Since the Second World War* (New York: Longman, 2002), 14–16.
[80] Franko, *The Fascist Turn in the Dance of Serge Lifar*, 245. Notably, this was a period during which the Left briefly returned to power in France.

l'année terrible, or the 'terrible year'—the most important but underappreciated context for Balanchine's brief tenure with the French national ballet company.[81] *L'année terrible* featured a series of events—the announcement of American foreign policy to contain Soviet geopolitical expansion known as the Truman Doctrine, looming economic catastrophe in Europe, strikes to protest austerity measures, and political instability—that culminated in the French cabinet crisis and the expulsion of Communist ministers from the national government in May 1947. The French cabinet crisis and a similar marginalization of Communist politicians in Italy marked the start of the Cold War in Western Europe and largely defined Franco-American relations during this period.[82]

France was firmly on the winning side of World War II, "yet in its material poverty and political uncertainty looked more like one of the losers."[83] Caught uncomfortably between the new global superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union,[84] France ultimately tied its hopes for economic relief and geopolitical position to the US in what would take the form of the Marshall Plan's European Recovery Program.[85] The plan's deliberate combination of economic assistance, transatlantic cooperation, and political benefits were intended to undermine the appeal of communism—but France's domestic politics in this period were decidedly left-wing, featuring a coalition government made up of Socialists, Communists, and the *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* (MRP) known as Tripartisme.[86] The political problem this mismatch posed to American policy-

[81] See Irwin M. Wall, chapter 3, "L'année terrible," in *The United States and the Making of Postwar France, 1945–1954* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 63–95.
[82] Wall, *The United States and the Making of Postwar France, 1945–1954*, 63–67. Alessandro Brogi, *Confronting America: The Cold War between the United States and the Communists in France and Italy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 60, 68–70.
[83] Tyler E. Stovall, *France Since the Second World War* (New York: Longman, 2002), 12.
[84] Stovall notes that two outcomes—the rise of the US and the USSR as global superpowers, and the dismantling of Europe's longstanding hegemony—were the result of the First and Second World Wars. Stovall, *France Since the Second World War*, 19.
[85] Serge Berstein and Pierre Milza, *Histoire de la France au XX^e siècle, Tome III: 1945–1958* (Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 1991), 62–3.
[86] Brogi, *Confronting America: The Cold War between the United States and the Communists in France and Italy*, 74.

makers was ultimately resolved before the Marshall Plan was voted into law in 1948—not by overt US intervention but rather by French politicians themselves.[87]

As the US government attempted to cement anti-communist support in Western Europe through economic stimulus, members of France's Communist Party (PCF) were expelled by Prime Minister Paul Ramadier in what is now known as the French cabinet crisis. Concomitantly, Italian Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi excluded Communists from his government; the two events are now widely known as the "exclusion" or "May 1947" crises.[88] Although the United States has sometimes been blamed for the French cabinet crisis, their engagement is now largely agreed to have been "discreet and cautious."[89] Indeed, US Ambassador to France Jefferson Caffery and other key players feared that overt involvement would intensify anti-American backlash and provoke a communist response. These concerns were well-founded; in the wake of their political marginalization, "Western Communists were ready to transform their mixed emotions toward America into a raging, demonizing campaign against the 'invaders.'"[90] As a result of the crises, the Soviet government took swift action. In addition to consolidating its hold over the Eastern Bloc, it established the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties, commonly known as the Cominform or Communist Information Bureau, a supranational alliance that coordinated the efforts of European communist parties.[91] The immovable lines of the Cold War conflict were swiftly drawn in the early summer of 1947 as Balanchine, a recently-naturalized US citizen, rehearsed with France's national ballet company.[92]

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[87] Stovall, *France Since the Second World War*, 22.
[88] For a discussion of the situation in Italy, see Brogi, *Confronting America*, 82–6.
[89] Brogi, *Confronting America*, 82–3.
[90] Brogi, *Confronting America*, 85.
[91] See Heinz Timmermann, "The Cominform Effects on Soviet Foreign Policy," *Studies in Comparative Communism* XVIII, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 3–23.
[92] Balanchine was naturalized in 1940.

Balanchine's invitation to lead the Paris Opéra Ballet was informed by his excellent artistic reputation in France's capital city—but RTLN Administrator Georges Hirsch had concerns about importing a *maître de ballet* from outside France to lead the national company even before the cabinet crisis of May 1947 and subsequent rise in anti-American sentiment.[93] Given the response to the choreographer's posting in some French circles, Hirsch's concerns were not without merit. Much was made of Balanchine's years spent in the United States when the choreographer arrived in Paris to lead the Opéra Ballet—the fifth new ballet master since Lifar's banishment in 1945.[94] While his predecessors included a mix of foreign-born and native French ballet masters, what distinguished Balanchine's perceived national identity from Russian émigré Victor Gsovsky and Venice-born Serge Peretti was that his foreign forerunners had already been working in France for some time.[95] This definition of "foreignness," informed by cultural assimilation rather than nation of origin, typifies French attitudes toward identity and complicated Balanchine's prospects for a lasting relationship with the Opéra.[96] Although in the United States, the naturalized choreographer was still generally seen as a foreigner, Balanchine was decidedly an American in Paris by 1947.[97]

Hirsch's initial concerns about a foreigner—and particularly an American—leading France's national ballet company in the winter of 1947 were exacerbated by the exclusion crisis and the US's

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[93] Léandre Vaillat, *Ballets de l'Opéra de Paris* (Paris, Amiot-Dumont, 1951), 37.
[94] Guest, *The Paris Opéra Ballet*, 89. They were Marcel Bergé, Victor Gsovsky, Serge Peretti, and Robert Quinault.
[95] Gsovsky left Russia in the 1920s and spent roughly a decade working in Germany before settling in Paris in the 1930s. Peretti, though born in Italy, studied at the Paris Opéra Ballet School and joined the company in 1920. In addition to their existing connections to France, these men were primarily dancers and teachers rather than artistic leaders. They had neither the international stature nor the wealth of prepared ballets to stage on the company that Balanchine could offer. As the Opéra was barred at times from performing the repertoire Lifar had created or, alternately, from publicly crediting him with these works, Balanchine's extensive oeuvre was a substantial boon.
[96] On constructed notions of French national identity in this period, see Richard F. Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 4–6. Similarly, Bernard Taper writes that shortly before it was announced that Lifar would serve as ballet master at the Paris Opéra in 1929, he had discouraged Balanchine from pursuing the posting because "They don't like foreigners here." When Balanchine pushed back, noting Lifar's own foreignness, he reportedly replied, "Well, we're here already. But I don't think they want any more." Taper, *Balanchine*, 128.
[97] The contradictory nature of Balanchine's perceived identities in the United States and France demonstrates one of the challenges of identity in the modern era. See Craig Calhoun, "Social Theory," in *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity,* ed. Craig Calhoun (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1995), 14.

perceived involvement that spring. As Tyler E. Stovall writes, "No other nation loomed larger in France's postwar imagination than the United States of America," whose dominance was not only militaristic and economic but, most cuttingly, cultural.[98] While the battle between US-based Coca-Cola and France's highly organized wine industry in the late 1940s served to define this conflict as a clash of consumer and popular cultures, art music performances and ballet exchanges (including the 1952 *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* festival, discussed in chapter five) reflect the much-expanded territory on which France and the United States struggled for cultural hegemony in the postwar period.[99]

Cultural rivalry and anti-American sentiment during *l'année terrible* influenced French public perception of Balanchine as the issue of national identity at the ballet was hotly debated. When Balanchine's guest posting at the Paris Opéra Ballet was announced, French critics began to speculate about the impact living in America for over a decade might have had on his art. Although Léandre Vaillat and several others ultimately judged that the youthful energy of his adopted homeland had enriched Balanchine's work,[100] not everyone was as convinced that his time in the US was a boon—particularly for France's national ballet company. Reflecting the anxious anti-American sentiment of *l'année terrible*, a petition circulated shortly after the choreographer's arrival in Paris demanding that the ballet have a permanent *French* director—and not a visiting foreign one.[101]

According to accounts by Tallchief as well as Balanchine's biographer, the petition demanding a French ballet master at the Paris Opéra was circulated by members of a pro-Lifar

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[98] Stovall, *France Since the Second World War*, 41.
[99] For more on the cultural rivalry between France and the United States in this period, see Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*, 16–20; Jean-Philippe Mathy, *Extrême-Occident: French Intellectuals and America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 137–40; and Philippe Roger, *The American Enemy: The Story of French Anti-Americanism*, trans. Sharon Bowman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 320–24.
[100] Vaillat, *Ballets de l'Opéra de Paris*, 37.
[101] *Maria Tallchief*, 65. Taper, *Balanchine*, 217. Unfortunately, due to COVID travel restrictions, I have not yet been able to locate a copy of this petition.

faction. Reducing the issue to one of preferred ballet masters, however, ignores the way in which this debate was informed by political anxieties of this period. Lifar's own national identity confirms this: as a Soviet émigré born in Kyiv and technically still stateless, Lifar was *also* not a French citizen.[102] During the Second World War, however, French critics had regularly taken the opportunity to enhance the nation's prestige by framing Lifar's achievements at the Opéra in nationalist terms.[103] Reflecting the deep enmeshment of the ballet master's identity with the state on the one hand and growing anti-American sentiment during *l'année terrible* on the other, the convicted wartime collaborator was re-invited to lead the Paris Opéra Ballet while Balanchine returned to New York.[104]

The Americanization of *Le Palais de cristal*: *Symphony in C*

Although in the summer of 1947, Balanchine was an American in Paris (and indeed considered himself an American), the matter of his national identity was not quite so clear to everyone else in the United States. His longtime collaborator Lincoln Kirstein, working to legitimize American ballet, had framed Balanchine as the importer of a Franco-Russian dance tradition since his arrival in 1933, and US critics continued to describe the choreographer this way even after Balanchine became a naturalized citizen in 1940.[105] After his tenure with the Paris Opéra Ballet, however, the rhetoric around Balanchine began to shift; he was embraced as an American and choreographer of the highest caliber upon his return to New York. In fall 1947, Kirstein declared in an article published by *Theatre Arts* that Balanchine, "as an American citizen, was the first of his

[102] Lifar did eventually gain French citizenship but was not yet naturalized during this debate.
[103] Sprout, *The Musical Legacy of Wartime France,* 9.
[104] Lifar's immigration status is discussed in Franko, *The Fascist Turn in the Dance of Serge Lifar*, 201.
[105] See chapter two, 61–2.

country to be called to the Paris Opéra as maître de ballet."[106] This article and a second *Theatre Arts* piece written by Kirstein emphasized the choreographer's naturalized American identity—a critical change that influenced perceptions of Balanchine in the United States.[107]

In the postwar period, Kirstein began to credit Balanchine with creating a specifically American style of ballet in his abstract danceworks—a style that came to symbolize the United States' cultural achievements as postwar jockeying for power solidified into Cold War conflict.[108] Sensing the postwar turn against communism in the United States, Kirstein was finally able to position Balanchine in a way that genuinely reflected the choreographer's anti-Soviet attitudes while also serving the organization the two men were working to build.[109] Among the ballets Kirstein used to illustrate Balanchine's creation of a distinctly American dance tradition were *Concerto Barocco* (1941), *Ballet Imperial* (1941), and *The Four Temperaments* (1946). These works are broadly seen to represent Balanchine's expansion of the classical ballet vocabulary and highlight steps or gestures that reference American vernacular dance.[110] Balanchine's New York staging of the Bizet ballet, stripped of its opulent Parisian set and jewel-toned costumes, would quickly join these works as proof of his distinctive American style. Further, Balanchine's *Symphony in C* created a model for 'Americanizing' future works on which the choreographer regularly relied.

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[106] Lincoln Kirstein, "Balanchine Musagète," *Theatre Arts* (November 1947), 37.
[107] These writings also established Balanchine as a natural heir to Petipa.
[108] Gay Morris, *A Game for Dancers: Performing Modernism in the Postwar Years*, 1945–1960 (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2006), 43. Tim Scholl specifically identifies *Symphony in C* as Balanchine's answer to Petipa's grand ballet. See *From Petipa to Balanchine: Classical revival and the modernization of ballet* (London: Routledge, 1994), 98–99.
[109] Andrea Harris attributes both Kirstein's retreat from his outspoken Leftist modernism and NYCB's involvement with government-sponsored programs to his commitment to improving the company's financial position in the postwar period. While I do not dispute this, it is important to acknowledge Balanchine's genuine belief in anti-communism, as reflected by his ongoing association with the Congress for Cultural Freedom, examined in detail in chapter five. See Andrea Harris, *Making Ballet American: Modernism Before and Beyond Balanchine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 77–9.
[110] While Sally Banes has identified the soft-shoe as a specific referent to Black dance in *The Four Temperaments*, Brenda Dixon Gottschild's *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts* more broadly examines "the black text in Balanchine's Americanization of ballet." See Brenda Dixon Gottschild, *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996); and Sally Banes, "Balanchine and Black Dance," in *Writing Dancing in the Age of Postmodernism*, rev. ed. (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan. 2011), 53–69.

When Balanchine returned to New York in the fall of 1947, the choreographer was in high demand. Ballet Society's second season at New York City Center of Music and Drama was in rehearsals.[111] An innovative and experimental organization led by Balanchine and Kirstein, the subscription-based company presented Balanchine works as well as ballets and operas by a variety of collaborators.[112] In addition to rehearsing his dancers and overseeing the diverse group of choreographers Ballet Society had commissioned for their upcoming City Center season, [113] Balanchine was busy choreographing new works. The most significant and high-profile of these projects was *Orpheus*. A collaboration with longtime friend and collaborator Igor Stravinsky and sculptor Isamu Noguchi, the mythological ballet would premiere in the fourth and final Ballet Society program of the season at New York City Center on April 28, 1948.[114]

To round out a New York season dominated by the premiere of *Orpheus*,[115] Balanchine revived several recent ballets. These included *The Four Temperaments*; the *Haieff Divertimento*, choreographed in January 1947, shortly before Balanchine's departure for Paris; and the new work he had made for the Paris Opéra Ballet.[116] Now titled *Symphony in C*, the Bizet ballet had its US premiere at New York's City Center on March 22, 1948, as part of the third subscription

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111 The company had presented several programs during Balanchine's six-month absence.
112 Ballet Society also planned to coordinate with other cultural and educational organizations to produce documentary and experimental dance films, award fellowships to young choreographers and dancers, and offer records as well as publications to subscribers. Dance scholar Jennifer Dunning called this enterprise "one of the most uncompromising and innovative ventures in the history of the arts in America," and, while recognizing its elite aims, notes that 800 people responded to the first mailing. Jennifer Dunning, *"But First a School": The First Fifty Years of the School of American Ballet* (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1985), 88–9. Perhaps because of the brevity of the organization and its direct transformation into the New York City Ballet, a book-length study of this company has not yet appeared.
113 These guest choreographers included Fred Danieli, William Dollar, Todd Bolender, and Merce Cunningham.
114 Stephen Walsh, *Stravinsky, The Second Exile: France and America, 1934–1971* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 203.
115 A famously prolific choreographer, Balanchine also created *Symphonie Concertante* with music by Mozart and *The Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne* on a Rietti score for the 1947/48 season.
116 Lynn Garafola notes that, with a few exceptions, Balanchine was only able to begin preserving ballets during the "City Center" period, when the company was in residence from 1948 to 1964. Preservation would have been primarily through institutional memory to start; the earlier Balanchine-Kirstein enterprises were often folding or transforming into new organizations with different dancers, but film was another essential medium for preserving ballets. Lynn Garafola, "Dance for a City: Fifty Years of the New York City Ballet" in *Dance for a City: Fifty Years of the New York City Ballet*, ed. Lynn Garafola with Eric Foner (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 7.

performance offered by Ballet Society.[117] Maria Tallchief danced the first movement of *Symphony in C*, which she had watched the choreographer create in Paris, with Nicholas Magallanes. The promising young ballerina (and Balanchine's next wife) Tanaquil LeClercq was partnered with Francisco Monción in the romantic second movement; Beatrice Tompkins and Herbert Bliss appeared in the third movement, with Elise Reiman and Lew Christensen rounding out the leading cast.

The choreography had not changed, but Balanchine's *Symphony in C* nevertheless only somewhat resembled the Bizet ballet mounted at the Palais Garnier less than a year before. Rather than a French-language title evoking a nineteenth-century World's Fair in London, the American version simply paid homage to the ballet's musical score: Bizet's Symphony in C.[118] The practice of renaming ballets after their musical scores became increasingly frequent after the premiere of *Symphony in C*. Reflecting its musical origins, *Ballet Imperial* was retitled *Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2* in 1973. When *Balustrade* (1941), a ballet to Stravinsky's Concerto in D for violin and orchestra (1931), was rechoreographed in 1972, it became known as *Violin Concerto*. This work was renamed *Stravinsky Violin Concerto* in 1973 in an homage to its composer, just as *Suite No. 3* (1970) was renamed *Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3* in 1971. Similarly, Balanchine began to name new ballets after the music on which they were made, rather than evocative titles like *Le Palais de cristal. Robert Schumann's 'Davidsbündlertänze'* (1980), for example, is a memorable if tongue-twisting tribute to the German composer and pianist.

[117] The program also featured the premiere of Todd Bolender's *Capricorn Concerto*, set to Samuel Barber's music of the same name, and a revival of the Cunningham-Cage-Noguchi collaboration*, The Seasons*, which Lincoln Kirstein had commissioned one year prior.

[118] Balanchine cut a musico-choreographic repeat in the fourth movement several times that was permanently restored circa 1971. See *Choreography by George Balanchine: A Catalogue of Works*, 178.

Like the ballet's name, the ornate set of *Le Palais de cristal*—the façade of a baroque palace whose grand staircase was elaborately decorated with balustrades, gargoyles, and spectacular crystal topiaries—was not reproduced in the United States.[119] Nor was any real scenographic alternative imagined. Instead, Balanchine preferred *Symphony in C* be danced in front of a solid blue cyclorama. One could argue that the decision to eliminate scenery for *Symphony in C* was purely motivated by practical concerns. City Center had a cramped stage and significantly smaller proscenium than the Palais Garnier,[120] making a reproduction of Fini's stage designs difficult to realize. The cash-strapped company might have wanted to avoid incurring the costs of hiring a new designer or recreating the Paris set. Ballet Society's financial concerns and limited space at City Center could explain why Balanchine initially staged *Symphony in C* against a plain backdrop. It does not, however, explain why he was not interested in commissioning or constructing "equivalent sets" in the following decades, even after his well-funded company moved into spacious, purpose-built quarters at New York's State Theatre in 1964.[121]

In fact, a 1951 article for *Theatre Arts* that includes interviews with both Balanchine and Kirstein addresses precisely this issue. Art critic Emily Genauer considers the contemporary vogue for dispensing with décor or hiring professional designers rather than artists to create the sets and costumes for new danceworks in the style of the Diaghilev enterprise. She cites financial estimates from George Balanchine—"probably the most important choreographer in the country today"—to acknowledge first and foremost the economic benefit of forgoing complicated décor. Cost alone, however, is not to blame for Balanchine's increasingly spare stages. Genauer's article continues,

> Mr. Balanchine believes that a ringing virtue has been made of economic necessity. Pure dance, he holds, does not need the crutch offered by elaborate scenery and costumes.

[119] Photographs and descriptions of the set and costumes designed by Leonor Fini appeared in French newspapers and US-based dance publications following the Paris premiere of *Le Palais de cristal*, so Ballet Society's insider audience likely had some sense of the earlier production.
[120] Nancy Reynolds, *Repertory in Review: 40 Years of the New York City Ballet* (New York: The Dial Press, 1977), 85.
[121] Reynolds, *Repertory in Review*, 85. See also Garafola, "Dance for a City: Fifty Years of the New York City Ballet," 7–8.

> Certain ballets, which tell a story or project merely a literary idea or mood, may require décor which immediately fixes times and place for the audience. In others even a ballerina's tutu, he insists, can be a distraction destroying the purity of the dancer's body line. Increasingly he feels that…[ballets] may be impeded by décor and costumes.[122]

Instead, the choreographer increasingly relied on the pioneering work of lighting designer Jean Rosenthal to animate his "light-box stage."[123]

Reflecting his belief that design could overwhelm movement, Balanchine repeated the practice of scenographic erasure with many other ballets following the 1948 premiere of a streamlined *Symphony in C*. In 1951, the choreographer eliminated the surrealist designs by Eugene Berman for *Concerto Barocco* and Kurt Seligmann in *The Four Temperaments*—both ballets, it should be recalled, that Kirstein used to advance a view of Balanchine as an American abstract dance innovator in his 1947 articles for *Theatre Arts*. *Apollo,* too, gradually lost its representative scenery during the 1950s, while *Serenade*'s abstract backdrop designed by William Bayard Okie, Jr. in 1934 was replaced with a blue cyclorama.[124] Balanchine's decision to excise décor in *Symphony in C* and subsequent American ballets should be understood as a solution both to a set of practical problems as well as an aesthetic preference for simplicity and abstraction that echoed trends in American Cold War-era art and design—in short, a reflection of Balanchine's Cold War Formalism.

Lynn Garafola notes that such dramatic transformations "removed these works from their original…contexts, relocating them in a timeless, anonymous present."[125] The increasingly spare works emphasized the architectural quality of Balanchine's choreographic patterns and highlighted the distinct movement syntax he began to employ in this period. In addition to his unique

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[122] Emily Genauer, "Modern Art and the Ballet," *Theatre Arts*, October 1951, 17.
[123] Jean Rosenthal and Lael Tucker Wertenbaker, *The Magic of Light: The Craft and Career of Jean Rosenthal, Pioneer in Lighting for the Modern Stage* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 117–27. See also Richard Buckle, *Modern Ballet Design: A Picture-Book with Notes* (London: A. and C. Black, 1955), 91.
[124] For costume and décor analysis of *Apollo* and *Serenade*, see chapter two, 55–68; and chapter three, 109–17.
[125] Lynn Garafola, "Dance for a City: Fifty Years of the New York City Ballet," 8.

choreographic approach, this style distinguished Balanchine's work from the prevailing genre of Soviet dance called *drambalet*, whose lavish sets and narrative plotlines emphasized realism.[126] Balanchine's sparse style was not universally loved, but it did quickly come to dominate international conceptions of contemporary American ballet in the immediate postwar period, thanks in part to his tenure at the Paris Opéra Ballet as well as his participation in the 1952 *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* festival in Paris, the subject of chapter five.

Balanchine's elimination of décor echoed his costuming choices for *Symphony in C*. Whereas Fini's designs for the women of the Paris Opéra Ballet were rendered in ruby, black diamond, emerald, and pearl, the costumes Balanchine commissioned for *Symphony in C* altogether eschewed the color scheme that had dominated the Paris production of *Palais*. Instead, the dancers in *Symphony in C*—principals, soloists, and the *corps de ballet*—wore creamy white tutus designed by legendary costumer and Russian émigré Karinska.[127] Though their ostensible purpose was simply to replace Fini's designs, Karinska's 1950 tutus for *Symphony in C* represent a watershed in the history of theatrical costuming.[128] Rather than the stiff pancake tutu popular at the time, Balanchine wanted a shorter, softer, more flexible tutu that would not move out of sync with the body or the music. Karinska's solution was the "powder-puff" tutu, seen on the right in the figure below.

[126] See Carolyn Pouncy, "Stumbling Toward Socialist Realism: Ballet in Leningrad, 1927-1937," *Russian History* 32, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 175.
[127] For a brief biography of Karinska, see chapter three, 89.
[128] Toni Bentley, *Costumes by Karinska* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1995), 102–4.

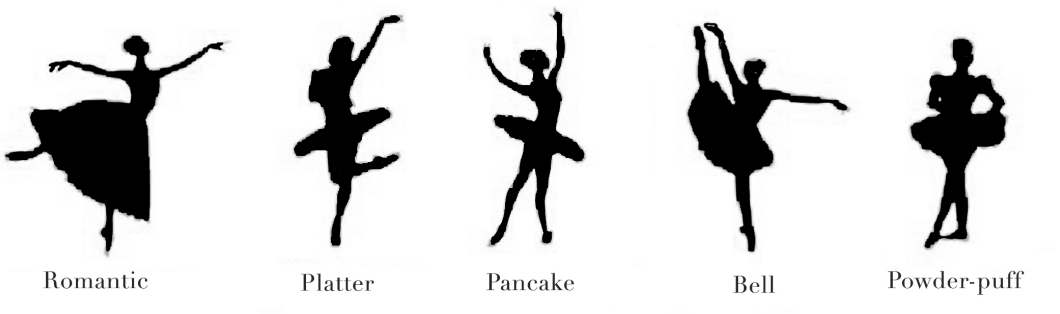

Figure 4.3: Tutu styles.

The costumes for *Symphony in C* featured a prototype of this new "powder-puff" style. Unlike the pancake, platter, or bell tutus illustrated above, the powder-puff Karinska first created for *Symphony in C* featured relatively few layers of short, gathered net loosely tacked together to produce a soft, full skirt. The shorter length of the tutu helped highlight a dancer's extension, while the soft shape facilitated the swift, athletic movement and intimate partnering that became foundations of Balanchine's American style.

Much like Balanchine's neoclassical movement style, Karinska's designs interpret Franco-Russian costuming traditions and construction practices through a distinctly American lens. The company of women dressed in white in *Symphony in C* makes an unmistakable allusion to the "white acts" of the Imperial Ballet—namely *La Bayadère* (1877) by Marius Petipa and Ludwig Minkus, and Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, specifically the 1895 version choreographed by Petipa and Lev Ivanov—which themselves referenced the *ballet blanc* conventions originated in Romantic works including *La Sylphide* (1832) and *Giselle* (1841). As the first theatrical designer to cut bodices on the bias, Karinska employed a dress-making technique developed in French couture houses to impart greater movement and flexibility. On the other hand, the powder-puff tutu is an American innovation designed to accommodate the athleticism, intricate movement patterns, and entwined partnering of Balanchine's choreography. Karinska's *Symphony in C* costumes are the material equivalent of the

dancemaker's "third" language, a synthesis of ballet costuming's past and present to produce its future.[129]

Many dance historians, comparing the state-sponsored budget and enormous performing forces at the Paris Opéra Ballet to Balanchine's scrappy New York troupe, have maintained that the choreographer's decision to costume the company in white was a purely practical choice. Rather than the virtually unlimited supply of *corps de ballet* dancers in Paris, Balanchine's American troupe had to double from movement to movement in *Symphony in C*, making quick changes from one colorful tutu to the next a backstage nightmare, if not a sheer impossibility.[130] While the choice of white rather than jeweled-toned costumes might, at least initially, have posed a practical solution, it was certainly not the most economical choice. Karinska's powder-puff tutu was constructed primarily by hand, making it time-consuming and expensive to produce.[131] What's more, white tutus have remained the standard for stagings of *Symphony in C* since 1948 by both Balanchine's company and others. Like the ballet's scenographic erasure, this indicates a clear and lasting preference for Karinska's pearlescent design over Fini's more colorful scheme for *this* work—particularly as Balanchine later used a plan closely resembling the *Palais* designs in his landmark three-act plotless ballet, *Jewels* (1967).[132]

Although *Symphony in C* was not intended to be the highlight of Ballet Society's City Center season, it was nonetheless a spectacular success with critics and subscribers. In fact, the Bizet ballet created a clamor for tickets to the company's final program, which featured the premiere of *Orpheus*;

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[129] Lydia Goehr, "Music and Musicians in Exile: The Romantic Legacy of a Double Life," in *Driven into Paradise: The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany to the United States*, ed. Reinhold Brinkmann and Christoph Wolff (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 84.
[130] Reynolds, *Repertory in Review*, 85.
[131] A single tutu could take roughly a week to complete.
[132] When New York City Ballet's Director of Costumes Marc Happel redesigned *Symphony in C* for the company's 2012 spring season, he retained Balanchine's all-white color scheme.

additional performances were added to accommodate the demand, thereby shifting Ballet Society's model from a strictly subscription-based offering to a more commercial endeavor.[133] Writing about the Bizet ballet in *Dance News,* critic and company chronicler Anatole Chujoy declared,

> If there was ever any doubt that Balanchine was the greatest choreographer of our time, this doubt was dispelled when the curtain came down on his *Symphony in C*. Here is a classical ballet that will go down in history as the finest example of this thrilling art form. Symphonic ballet at its greatest, it builds with ever-mounting force to a thrilling climax…[that] make all other ballets seem puny and pale.[134]

The Balanchine skeptic to whom Chujoy obliquely referred was no doubt John Martin, the influential *New York Times* critic and modern dance supporter who, as chapter two examined, had found many opportunities since 1934 to criticize Balanchine and the very notion of American ballet.[135] But Martin *did* initially dismiss *Symphony in C* in March 1948 after the premiere:

> Balanchine has once again given us that ballet of his, this time for some inscrutable reason to the Bizet symphony…[and] used virtually all of his familiar tricks, some of them charming, some of them forced, and some of them slightly foolish.[136]

After seeing the Paris Opéra Ballet perform *Le Palais de cristal* mere months later, however, Martin had an altogether different outlook on *Symphony in C*. Lifar's company was invited to participate in the International Dance Festival at City Center celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the 1898 City Charter, which consolidated New York's five boroughs under one municipal government. Among the works the Paris Opéra Ballet performed was *Le Palais de cristal*.[137] Danced in September on the same stage where Balanchine's New York version of the Bizet ballet had premiered in March, it was impossible to avoid comparing the performances. Unfortunately for Lifar, American critics much preferred Balanchine's New York troupe in the simplified adaptation

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[133] Anatole Chujoy, *The New York City Ballet* (New York: Knopf, 1953), 194.
[134] Anatole Chujoy quoted in Reynolds, *Repertory in Review*, 86.
[135] See chapter two, 60–1.
[136] John Martin, "2 New Works Given by Ballet Society: Bolender's 'Capricorn Concerto' and Dance by Balanchine Offered at City Center," *New York Times*, March 23, 1948, 31.
[137] For a discussion of the Paris Opéra Ballet's 1948 US tour, see Stephanie Gonçalves, *Danser pendant la guerre froide, 1945–1968* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2018), 66–94.

of the colorful French production. Even Martin, his longtime adversary, acknowledged that while Balanchine originally made the work for the Paris Opéra's dancers, "it cannot be denied that its performance by the Ballet Society here last season under the title of *Symphony in C* was a very much better one than what we were shown last night."[138]

Nine days after the Paris Opéra company presented the New York premiere of *Le Palais de cristal*, the inaugural season of New York City Ballet—what Martin called "Ballet Society in a new and broader phase of its activity"—opened at City Center, the new permanent home for which the company had been renamed.[139] The program featured three Balanchine works: *Concerto Barocco, Orpheus*, and *Symphony in C*. These ballets were already being positioned as neoclassical American masterpieces, and their syntax and style would epitomize the choreographer's legacy in the United States and abroad.[140] New York City Ballet's debut marked the emergence of a definitively American Balanchine, making distinctly American ballets—including the once Parisian *Symphony in C*.

In stark contrast to Martin's initial dismissal of Balanchine's Bizet ballet as forced and foolish only months before, the taste-making critic now wrote:

> The work itself is youthful in the extreme, a regular choreographic Fourth-of-July celebration; the fire-works themselves provide the interest, the choreography is all sky-rockets, Roman candles and pin-wheels which follow each other more or less in straight sequence…The dazzling Maria Tallchief and Nicholas Magallanes, the amazing, long-legged and gifted young Tanaquil LeClercq and Francisco Moncion, the nimble Marie-Jeanne and Herbert Bliss, the charming newcomer, Jocelyn Vollmar and Todd Bolender, dash through the brilliant measures of the principal roles, while veritable hordes of tireless and exuberant youngsters pour onto the stage like a teenage Niagara Falls that is simply not to be resisted. Of course the audience shouts with delight.[141]

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[138] John Martin, "Paris Opera Gives Ballet by Lifar: Offers His 'Chevalier' at City Center Despite Pickets—Balanchine Work on Bill," *New York Times*, September 24, 1948, 30. *New York Herald Tribune* critic Walter Terry agreed that the "inherent sparkle…and sweeping choreographic line were not often in evidence" in the Paris Opéra Ballet's *Le Palais de cristal*. Walter Terry, "The Dance," *New York Herald Tribune,* September 24, 1948.
[139] John Martin, "The Dance: Newcomer, City Ballet Company Makes a Happy Bow," *New York Times*, October 17, 1948, X12.
[140] Today, *Orpheus* no longer enjoys the same masterpiece status it once held.
[141] Martin, "The Dance: Newcomer, City Ballet Company Makes a Happy Bow," X12.

This rave review was an important turning point in the relationship between the choreographer and the critic. (In the same piece, Martin called *Orpheus* "surely one of the most beautiful, the most completely satisfying theatre experiences within memory."[142]) Like Kirstein, who began in the fall of 1947 to promote the choreographer's neoclassical ballets as distinctly American works, Martin repositioned the formerly foreign ballet master as "the creative genius of a native American ballet" during NYCB's inaugural season. Moreover, Martin would be one of Balanchine's strongest supporters during the Cold War—a total reversal of his nationalist dismissals of the choreographer in the 1930s and early 40s.[143]

Balanchine's newly-elevated position within American dance circles "coincided with America's assumption of world leadership and the development of the Cold War, as well as with emerging aesthetic issues within the dance field itself."[144] The Balanchine style Martin described came to be perceived as American in its youthful energy, bold movement style, and seemingly apolitical abstraction—in other words, its Cold War Formalism—at precisely the moment when America itself burst onto the international stage. Although by no means Balanchine's first critical supporter, Martin was nevertheless hugely influential in shaping American attitudes toward Balanchine's work during the Cold War. In his writing, and that of company co-founder Lincoln Kirstein, Balanchine came to define American ballet in 1948 shortly after the choreographer's return from France—much as Balanchine's work represented American ballet around the world as the Cold War raged on.[145]

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[142] Martin, "The Dance: Newcomer, City Ballet Company Makes a Happy Bow," X12.
[143] Morris, *A Game for Dancers: Performing Modernism in the Postwar Period, 1945–1960*, 44.
[144] Morris, "Balanchine's Bodies," 19.
[145] A decade later, in June 1958, the Paris Opéra Ballet toured the Soviet Union. Among the ballets they presented was *Le Palais de cristal*, marking the first time a mature Balanchine ballet made in the West was performed in Russia.

Chapter 5

Dancing Envoys to Paris: George Balanchine, the *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* Festival, and the Congress for Cultural Freedom

After Balanchine's return to the United States in the fall of 1947, the choreographer was celebrated as the creator of an endemic American ballet tradition, his ballets defining a new national style at the start of the Cold War. Before this vision of American dance would be presented in the USSR on New York City Ballet's landmark 1962 tour, the recently formed company would export this distinct style to America's allies in Western Europe. In May of 1952, NYCB dancers appeared as "dancing envoys" at the *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* festival, a month-long arts exposition in Paris.[1] Their French debut at the Palais Garnier helped launch the young company internationally, establishing them as a national ballet company that embodied "American character at its best."[2]

The organization responsible for this festival was the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), one of the leading anti-communist organizations then operating in Western Europe. The festival's goal was to present Western culture as rich and representative of the possibilities offered in a free society—in stark opposition to the sterility of artworks produced under totalitarian regimes, namely the Soviet Union.[3] Among the festival headliners were the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Igor Stravinsky, and the New York City Ballet.[4]

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[1] "Tops in the Dance: New York's brilliant ballet becomes an ambassador of U.S. Culture," *Life*, May 12, 1952, 90.
[2] Deborah Jowitt, *Time and the Dancing Image* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 274.
[3] Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA and post-war American hegemony* (London: Routledge, 2002), 1.
[4] Stravinsky conducted several concerts, including his opera-oratorio *Oedipus rex* and an all-Stravinsky concert on May 22.

The *Masterpieces* festival, organized by the composer Nicolas Nabokov,[5] who also served as General Secretary of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, sponsored the nascent company's critically important Paris debut—yet little is known about these performances. Even less is understood about Balanchine's relationship with the organization. This chapter examines the role the Congress for Cultural Freedom and its 1952 festival played in establishing the New York City Ballet in Europe, thereby shaping cultural exchange in the early Cold War.[6] Further, it articulates New York City Ballet's value to the Congress's anti-communist cause—a strategy also adopted by the United States government in its promotion of NYCB throughout the Cold War.

New archival evidence presented here also reveals Balanchine's membership in the Congress for Cultural Freedom, one of the foremost anti-communist organizations operating in the early Cold War period. As such, this chapter proposes a new framework for understanding New York City Ballet's participation in cultural exchange tours, including those to the Soviet Union: as a decision informed in part by Balanchine's genuine understanding of and commitment to Western Cold War cultural politics, as evidenced by his membership in an organization that would help to shape US foreign policy during the conflict.

After a brief overview of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and its cultural-political objectives, this chapter considers the 1952 *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* festival and New York City Ballet's Paris debut. Although these performances were critical to the company's Cold War success, some within the Congress objected to the company's inclusion. After examining the ineffective challenge to the company's appearance at the festival and their Paris debut, the

[5] Like Balanchine, Nabokov was a Russian émigré whose career was launched by Diaghilev. He lived primarily in Paris before an invitation from a wealthy American—in his case, the pharmaceutical entrepreneur and art collector Albert C. Barnes—allowed Nabokov to emigrate to the United States in 1933. These shared life experiences created a strong bond between the composer and the choreographer, who first collaborated in Paris in 1933.
[6] The company's three-month English tour in the summer of 1950 was also an important opportunity to establish New York City Ballet in Europe.

significance of programming the Balanchine–Prokofiev ballet *The Prodigal Son* (1929), with Jerome Robbins dancing the title role, is explored. So are critical reactions to the festival and NYCB's performances, which illustrate their impact on the company's international reputation as well as the extent of anti-American sentiment in Europe in the early 1950s. The chapter concludes by examining Balanchine's enduring association with the Congress in the years following the *Masterpieces* festival, briefly tracing the organization's history and the fascinating intersection of private philanthropy and government sponsorship that continued to unite the CCF and NYCB.

Although it was not public knowledge in 1952 when the *Masterpieces* festival filled Parisian theatres and galleries for the month of May, the Congress's primary source of financial support was the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). It is the CIA's covert funding of the organization for which the CCF is now best known.[7] The Congress's CIA connections have invariably colored its contributions to mid-century cultural politics, but, as scholars Giles Scott-Smith and Sarah Miller Harris have both argued, the CCF was not simply an agent of American policy or a CIA tool.[8] In fact, the Congress advanced its own agenda while influencing US anti-communist strategy at the CIA and the State Department. This chapter does not pass judgment on the Congress's use of covert funds, nor claim that Balanchine was "ideologically complicit…with the State Department's pro-American, anti-communist agenda"—top-down readings of cultural politics that have dominated scholarship on the conflict, and particularly the Congress for Cultural Freedom.[9] Rather, this chapter explores the choreographer's deeply-held beliefs in anti-communism and his

[7] The Congress has been the subject of multiple Cold War cultural studies, including Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe* (New York: Free Press, 1989); and Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, rev. ed. (1999, repr., New York: The New Press, 2013).
[8] Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA and post-war American hegemony*; and Sarah Miller Harris, *The CIA and the Congress for Cultural Freedom in the Early Cold War: The Limits of Making Common Cause* (New York: Routledge, 2017).
[9] Andrea Harris, *Making Ballet American: Modernism Before and Beyond Balanchine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 157.

participation in one of the leading groups working to that end in Europe, which also helped launch New York City Ballet internationally in the early 1950s.

Culture Warriors: The Origins and Objectives of the Congress for Cultural Freedom

"A cultural formation with a decidedly *political* impact" in the Cold War period, the Congress for Cultural Freedom was an international organization founded in 1950 to solidify and support an Atlanticist anti-communist consensus.[10] The group was made up of members of the Non-Communist Left (NCL), a designation used by the US State Department and intelligence circles to refer to Leftist intellectuals in both the United States and Europe disillusioned by Stalinism.[11] Initially a rebuke of a series of Soviet Peace Campaign events organized by the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties,[12] commonly known as the Cominform or Communist Information Bureau, the Congress's principal success was its ability to attract prominent intellectuals to support the anti-communist cause publicly. Chief organizers had close ties to the US Military Government in postwar Germany as well as the CIA, which provided funding for a conference in Berlin in the summer of 1950 through their Office of Policy Coordination (OPC), the Agency's covert operation entity.[13] This gathering of non-communist intellectuals, called the Berlin Congress,

[10] Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture*, 1. To that end, the Congress published over twenty prestige magazines, including *Encounter, Preuves, Soviet Survey* (later renamed *Survey*), and *The China Quarterly,* which continues to be published by Cambridge University Press. The CCF also organized dozens of international conferences, seminars, and cultural festivals, including the landmark *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* festival in 1952.
[11] Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, 53.
[12] These events included the Cominform World Congress of Intellectuals for Peace in Wroclaw in September 1948, the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York in March 1949, and the World Congress of Peace Partisans in Paris the following month.
[13] Giles Scott-Smith, "The 'Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century' Festival and the Congress for Cultural Freedom: Origins and Consolidation 1947–1952," *Intelligence and National Security* 15, no. 1 (May 2000): 126–30. Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 63.

was hailed "the first major offensive against Soviet propagandists."[14] As Nicolas Nabokov later recalled,

> No one before had tried to mobilize intellectuals and artists on a worldwide scale in order to fight an ideological war against oppressors of the mind, or to defend what one called by the hackneyed term 'our cultural heritage.' This kind of ideological war had so far been the appanage of Stalinists and Nazis…To lead a rational, ice-cold, determinedly intellectual war against Stalinism without falling into the easy Manichean trap of phony righteousness seemed essential to me.[15]

By the end of the Berlin Congress, its delegates approved the formation of a permanent organization committed to the belief that "the theory and practice of the totalitarian state are the greatest challenge which man has been called on to meet in the course of civilized history."[16] Further, the Congress's manifesto declared that "indifference or neutrality in the face of such a challenge amounts to a betrayal of mankind and to the abdication of the free mind." Perhaps most importantly, as Michael Warner, former CIA historian, has noted, the conference "helped to solidify [the] CIA's emerging strategy of promoting the Non-Communist Left—the strategy that would soon become the theoretical foundation of the Agency's political operations over the next two decades."[17] Reflecting the importance of engaging the NCL, the covert organization continued after the initial Berlin conference to provide financial support to the Congress for Cultural Freedom and its national affiliates, to which individual members would belong.[18]

Two dominant figures emerged to guide the burgeoning CCF shortly after the Berlin Congress. The first was Michael Josselson, who had joined the CIA's Office of Policy Coordination (OPC) in 1949 and would serve as the intelligence organization's primary contact within the

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[14] "Peace Rally Plans Plea to the East," *New York Times*, May 3, 1950, 7.
[15] Nicolas Nabokov, *Bagázh: Memoirs of a Russian Composer* (New York: Atheneum, 1975), 242. The title of Nabokov's memoir is a transliteration of the Russian word for "baggage."
[16] For the complete Manifesto of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, see Scott-Smith, Appendix of *The Politics of Apolitical Culture*, 167–168.
[17] Michael Warner, "Origins of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, 1949–50," *Studies in Intelligence* 38 (1998): 89.
[18] For example, an American member of the Congress would belong to the American Committee for Cultural Freedom (ACCF).

Congress.[19] The behind-the-scenes role of Administrative Secretary allowed him to liaise with the CIA on what had been code-named QKOPERA.[20] The second was Nicolas Nabokov, a composer and cousin of the celebrated Russian writer Vladimir Nabokov, who was appointed General Secretary.[21] Although a musician might seem an unlikely choice to head an anti-communist organization, the Russian émigré was uniquely qualified for the role.[22] A self-proclaimed cosmopolitan who had lived in Europe and the United States for many years, Nabokov had no ties with the communist movement, spoke several languages fluently, and had established himself as a public intellectual with expertise on the intersection of art and politics. Further, Nabokov had the support of powerful friends in government, including George Kennan and Charles Bohlen, both of whom served as US Ambassador to the Soviet Union and were prominent members of the Dumbarton Avenue "Russian Circle," which fomented Nabokov's own political consciousness.[23] Nabokov's musical sensibilities *and* his political principles would shape the Congress for Cultural Freedom's agenda and activities throughout the 1950s. His first undertaking as General Secretary: to organize a major arts festival in Paris. The *Masterpieces* festival he presented would propel Balanchine and American ballet into the Cold War conflict and define America's anti-communist cultural strategy for decades to come.[24]

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[19] Miller Harris, *The CIA and the Congress for Cultural Freedom in the Early Cold War*, 60.
[20] Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War,* 72–3.
[21] Scott-Smith, "The 'Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century' Festival and the Congress for Cultural Freedom: Origins and Consolidation 1947–1952," 131.
[22] Best remembered for his association with the Congress for Cultural Freedom, Nicolas Nabokov was an accomplished composer of staged works, namely opera and ballet. His most famous work is the ballet *Union Pacific*, choreographed by Léonide Massine for the Ballets Russes de Monte-Carlo. He also composed the music for Balanchine's three-act *Don Quixote* (1965).
[23] This group was made up primarily of then-junior US diplomats who had been posted to the Soviet Union and would play a significant role in shaping US policy during the Cold War. In addition to Kennan and Bohlen, members of the Russian Circle included Llewellyn E. ("Tommy") Thompson, future US ambassador to the USSR; G. Frederick Reinhardt, future ambassador to Vietnam, Egypt, and Italy; and Elbridge Durbrow, future ambassador to Vietnam. Vincent Giroud, *Nicolas Nabokov: A Life in Freedom and Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 168.
[24] Tom Braden, assistant to CIA director Allen Dulles, had been charged with coordinating OPC's foreign interests, including the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Braden had Nabokov's plan for a festival swiftly approved by the OPC's project review board more than a year in advance, demonstrating the CIA's strong support for the event and Nabokov's cultural—rather than explicitly *political*—goals.

"A Concentrated Expression of Our Culture": The *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* Festival

The *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* festival publicly launched the Congress for Cultural Freedom and defined the organization as a defender of Western cultural values. Its goals, according to a memo authored by Nabokov, were two-fold. First, the festival would be:

> a challenge of the culture of the free world to the un-culture of the totalitarian world and a source of courage and '*redressement moral*,' in particular for the French intellectuals, for it will again give a kind of sense and purposefulness to the dislocated and disintegrated cultural life of France, and most of Europe.[25]

In addition to an artistic confrontation between East and West, Nabokov wrote that the festival would "destroy the pernicious European myth (successfully cultivated by the Stalinists) of American cultural inferiority."[26] Featuring ballet, opera, and orchestral performances, as well as painting and sculpture exhibitions and literary debates, the *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* festival sought to highlight twentieth-century artistic achievements—from both sides of the Atlantic. Eager to showcase both American and European cultural achievements, Nabokov planned to facilitate "the first close collaboration of top-ranking American artistic organizations in Europe with European ones and also of American artistic production on a *footing of complete equality* with European artistic production."[27]

To that end, Nabokov quickly contacted close friends and colleagues, beginning with Igor Stravinsky and George Balanchine. Both agreed to appear, along with Samuel Barber, Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, and Virgil Thomson, whose operatic adaptation of Gertrude Stein's *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1934) with soprano Leontyne Price in the starring role was sponsored by the US

[25] The memo was addressed to Irving Brown, a member of the Congress's Executive Committee who had helped secure the organization's initial CIA funding for the Berlin Congress held in 1950. Nicolas Nabokov to Irving Brown, 1951, quoted in Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War,* 95.
[26] Nicolas Nabokov to Irving Brown, 1951, *The Cultural Cold War,* 95.
[27] Nicolas Nabokov to Irving Brown, 1951, *The Cultural Cold War*, 95.

State Department.[28] Nabokov also secured the participation of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and tapped James Johnson Sweeney, a former director of New York's Museum of Modern Art, to curate an exhibition.[29] Working to dismantle European notions of America as a cultural backwater exacerbated in the early Cold War period by Soviet anti-American propaganda,[30] Nabokov filled the *Masterpieces* festival program with some of the finest US-based artists and organizations.

But, as Nabokov declared, "this is far from an American show."[31] Simply showing off America's top-ranked artistic organizations and artists would have damaged the Congress's credibility as an international organization and likely further stoked anti-American sentiment, particularly in France.[32] Instead, Nabokov also selected performing groups and works by artists from across Europe to articulate a shared tradition of Atlanticist artistic innovation and achievement. France was particularly well represented at the festival, as were Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Some of Europe's finest and most pioneering opera and ballet companies, orchestras, and chamber groups were invited to participate in the Parisian festivities.[33] A series of literary conferences and round table discussions also featured writers and critics from the United States and Europe.[34]

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[28] Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 99. The all-black cast of *Four Saints in Three Acts,* including future NYCB principal dancer Arthur Mitchell, provided the festival an important opportunity to highlight Black performers, but White artists performed most works.
[29] Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture*, 133.
[30] These views had been amplified by Soviet propaganda, which depicted Americans as "gum-chewing, Chevy-driving, DuPont-sheathed philistines." Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 17.
[31] Nicolas Nabokov, "This Is Our Culture," *Counterpoint,* May 1952, 14.
[32] See Miller Harris, *The CIA and the Congress for Cultural Freedom in the Early Cold War*, 95 and Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture*, 55.
[33] *Masterpieces of the XX Century* festival program, International Association for Cultural Freedom, Records, Box 394, Folder 9, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.
[34] They included Allen Tate, Roger Caillois, Eugenio Montale, Guido Piovene, James T. Farrell, Glenway Westcott, William Faulkner, W.H. Auden, Czeslaw Milosz, Ignazio Silone, Denis de Rougemont, André Malraux, Salvador de Madariaga, and Stephen Spender. Several of these figures were also members of the Congress or associated with its various publications.

Pointedly joining the impressive lineup of Western European and American masterworks were Russian and Soviet compositions that had been censored or banned in the USSR. These included Serge Prokofiev's dissonant *Scythian Suite* (1915) extracted from his abandoned ballet *Ala i Lolli*; *The Prodigal Son*, Prokofiev's 1929 Ballets Russes commission based on the Biblical parable; and the concert suite from Dmitri Shostakovich's infamous *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (1935), which had been condemned in an anonymous editorial printed in *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.[35] The programming of these works was designed both to highlight the damage Soviet totalitarianism had wrought on the arts and to depict Western Europe as the defender of the sort of unrestricted expression and cultural achievement "possible only in a climate of intellectual freedom," according to the festival's program.[36] While combating negative European impressions of American culture and anti-American sentiment, the *Masterpieces* festival also sought to "counteract the hold exercised by the Communist Party upon the mind and will of intellectuals of the Western world" and to establish the Congress for Cultural Freedom as "a powerful association of intellectuals united by a broad program to defend our culture against any form of totalitarian control."[37] Rebuffing the indictments of European art by Soviet critics during

[35] The editorial, published on January 28, 1936, was titled "Muddle Instead of Music" and is among the most famous examples of Soviet musical censorship. Shostakovich's opera was an instant critical and commercial success after its premiere at the Maly Theatre in Leningrad on January 22, 1934, and performances outside the USSR cemented the composer's status as an international celebrity. The denunciation came two years after the premiere, following a performance at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre attended by Joseph Stalin, Andrei Zhdanov, and Vyacheslav Molotov. Shortly after the publication of "Muddle Instead of Music," a second unsigned editorial titled "Balletic Falsity" appeared in *Pravda*; its subject was Shostakovich's last ballet, *The Bright Stream*, which premiered at the Maly Theatre in 1935. Both works were quickly pulled from performance in the Soviet Union. These events coincide with the Great Purge or Terror, Stalin's campaign of political repression, whose death toll is estimated at roughly 1 million. Among those killed was Adrian Piotrovsky, the librettist who collaborated with Shostakovich on *The Bright Stream*, and Serge Prokofiev on *Romeo and Juliet*, whose premiere was repeatedly delayed during this period of repression. For a discussion of *Lady Macbeth*, *The Bright Stream*, and the *Pravda* editorials, see Laurel E. Fay, "Tragedy-Satire (1932–1936)" in *Shostakovich: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 67–85. See also Caryl Emerson, "Shostakovich and the Russian Literary Tradition" in *Shostakovich and his World*, ed. Laurel E. Fay (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 183-226. For a discussion of the Purge's impact on artists in this period, see Katerina Clark, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 291–2.

[36] *Masterpieces of the XX Century* festival program, International Association for Cultural Freedom, Records, Box 394, Folder 9, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

[37] Nicolas Nabokov, "Report: *Masterpieces of the 20th Century*," December 17, 1951, International Association for Cultural Freedom, Records, Box 4, Folder 4, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

Stalinism, Nabokov declared the month-long exhibition "the first positive effort by the West to answer the propaganda which seeks to indict our culture as 'decadent,' 'degenerate,' and 'cosmopolitan.'"[38]

The festival's ambitious goals were matched by its enormous expense.[39] The CIA laundered Marshall Plan counterpart funds into a New York-based account through the Farfield Foundation, a front organization that would become the principal conduit for CIA funds to the Congress until the mid-1960s.[40] Its first president was Julius "Junkie" Fleischmann, heir to the Fleischmann's Yeast fortune and an established art patron.[41] On the surface, the Farfield Foundation's sponsorship of the *Masterpieces* festival reflected the dearth of US government support for the arts and the need for private philanthropy in American cultural exchange—something on which many French critics of the festival, accustomed to significant state sponsorship of the arts, commented. This would not have bothered Nabokov and other Congress members, who wanted to avoid the appearance of overt sponsorship by the US government. The reality—that funds were being channeled in secret by the CIA through philanthropic fronts—was perhaps even grimmer, as US Congressional resistance to arts funding in the immediate postwar period was so substantial as to make covert sponsorship of the event the only feasible approach. Unfortunately, this clandestine arrangement would ultimately spell the Congress's downfall in the decade after the *Masterpieces* festival.

[38] Nabokov, "This Is Our Culture," *Counterpoint* (May 1952), 14.
[39] Tom Braden of the CIA's OPC secured a budget of $300,000 for the 1952 festival, equivalent to $2.959 million in 2020. This represented most, but not all, of the *Masterpieces* festival's funding, which included support from the US State Department and other organizations. Miller Harris, *The CIA and the Congress for Cultural Freedom in the Early Cold War*, 101.
[40] For a discussion of Marshall Plan counterpart funds, see Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture*, 71.
[41] Fleischmann had provided the financing to establish the Les Ballets de Monte Carlo in 1937 (subsequently renamed the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo), served as a trustee of the Metropolitan Opera and the Museum of Modern Art, and produced several Broadway shows.

The Debut that Nearly Wasn't: American Objections to NYCB at the *Masterpieces* Festival

Although NYCB's appearance at the *Masterpieces* festival helped to propel American ballet onto the great European—and eventually, Russian—stages during the Cold War conflict, their Paris debut was perilously close to being 'canceled.' An outspoken coalition of American-based Congress members, represented by Pearl Kluger, the Secretary of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom (ACCF, the Congress's US affiliate), were opposed to New York City Ballet's involvement because of concerns about the politics of the company's leading personnel and tried to convince festival organizer Nicolas Nabokov to rescind the invitation on the grounds that NYCB was an inappropriate addition to the program. Archival materials newly explored herein reveal competing views of City Ballet in this period. Moreover, they indicate the depth of Balanchine's commitment to anti-communism and his role in shaping the company's Cold War cultural activities—so often dismissed as jejune or secondary to co-founder Lincoln Kirstein's outspoken politics and personal connections.

In a letter from Nabokov to Kluger dated December 20, 1951, he notes the concerns in her letter of December 7 about "the New York City Ballet and the so-called 'sourness' of its leading personal [*sic*]."[42] From Nabokov's response, analyzed for the first time below, it is clear that the American Committee's concerns were related not, as one might expect, to Jerome Robbins, a former member of the Communist Party—but rather to NYCB co-founder, Lincoln Kirstein. Unlike Balanchine, whose experience of the early Soviet state had made him a staunch anti-communist, both Robbins and Kirstein were committed Leftists. Kirstein was a member of several Communist front organizations, including the League of American Writers and the John Reed Club, and had

[42] Nicolas Nabokov to Pearl Kluger, December 20, 1951, folder 10, box 254, International Association for Cultural Freedom, Records.

even considered joining the Communist Party in the 1930s.[43] Moreover, while his focus shifted away from politics in the postwar period, Kirstein never publicly expressed anti-communist sentiments nor disavowed his membership in these groups, as was typical of members of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and other so-called "fellow travelers" who had sympathized with the Communist experiment before World War II and the start of the Cold War.[44]

While his involvement with far-Left groups had not posed a problem for Kirstein in the 1930s or even early 1940s, his politics made him profoundly unpopular with members of the ACCF.[45] The US faction advocated a bellicose anti-communist political agenda—much stronger than that of the Congress's various European committees or its General Secretary, Nicolas Nabokov, who privileged cultural programming over ideology.[46] The concerns the ACCF raised about Lincoln Kirstein's involvement strongly resemble those related to French poet and artist Jean Cocteau, whom they also demanded be dropped from the program less than a month before the festival began for signing a "Communist-inspired document protesting the execution of the Soviet spies in Greece."[47] (He was not removed from the program.)

In his December 20, 1951 reply to Kluger, Nabokov addressed the complaints of hardliners in the ACCF on several issues, beginning with the tone of the Paris festival. He dismissed the call for "political speeches and propaganda," writing that such overt political content "will put our whole

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[43] Lynn Garafola, "Lincoln Kirstein, Modern Dance, and the Left: The Genesis of an American Ballet," *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 23, no. 1 (Summer 2005): 18–35.
[44] Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 52.
[45] The son of a wealthy family, Kirstein was extraordinarily well-connected; he even roomed with the future 41st Vice President and the 49th governor of New York, Nelson A. Rockefeller, during his studies at Harvard. His wealth and connections largely insulated him from criticism about his Leftist politics, but he could not escape the ACCF's condemnation.
[46] For analysis of the American Committee's politics, see Miller Harris, *The CIA and the Congress for Cultural Freedom in the Early Cold War*, 142–143; and Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold* War, 191–7. See also Giroud, *Nicolas Nabokov,* 204, 254–5, 276; and Ian Wellens, *Music on the Frontline: Nicholas Nabokov's Struggle Against Communism and Middlebrow Culture* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2002), 48–51, 77–78, 88–91.
[47] Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 99.

International Exposition of Arts in jeopardy." Further, Nabokov rejected calls to remove City Ballet from the program by outright dismissing the significance of Kirstein and his strongly Leftist politics to the festival, claiming, "I don't know Mr. Kirstein's political opinions and I don't care about them. No one either knows or cares [about] Mr. Kirstein." He then went on to forcefully defend Balanchine's participation in the *Masterpieces* festival, making it clear that, as far as he and the Paris-based Congress for Cultural Freedom are concerned, the choreographer—and not his co-founder Kirstein—was the company's Cold Warrior of consequence, the New York City Ballet among the most important tools with which to combat communism. "Here in Paris," he wrote, "we are concerned with bringing to France one of the best products of American art, directed by the greatest choreographer of our time, George Balanchine, who is a Russian émigré and a member of our Congress."[48]

The articulation in Nabokov's letter of Balanchine's value to an anti-communist enterprise like the *Masterpieces* festival is not surprising. This rhetoric is familiar from both Kirstein's writings and American critics' appraisals of the choreographer following his 1947 tenure at the Paris Opéra Ballet and his return to the United States at the start of the Cold War conflict.[49] Balanchine's work had already been exported to Latin America in the early 1940s by Nelson A. Rockefeller and the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA) as part of President Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor" policy.[50] During the Cold War, his company would regularly tour as "[American]

[48] Nicolas Nabokov to Pearl Kluger, December 20, 1951, folder 10, box 254, International Association for Cultural Freedom, Records. The irony of Kluger's complaints is that an endeavor to demonstrate the value of intellectual freedom would not be particularly successful if the organization exercised the kind of censorship the American Committee demanded. Indeed, this tension between critique of Soviet censorship on the one hand and abuse of Communist Party members in the United States would prove an unresolvable issue for members of the American Committee, who were split with respect to McCarthyism and the Second Red Scare (1947–57).
[49] See chapter four, 149–60.
[50] See chapter two, 61–3. Admittedly, the Latin American tour reflected the combined cultural significance of Balanchine's work and Kirstein's Americanist Ballet Caravan, a company with a repertoire of Leftist ballets. For a discussion of these works, see Garafola, "Lincoln Kirstein, Modern Dance, and the Left: The Genesis of an American Ballet."

cultural ambassadors abroad"—albeit with varying degrees of state support.[51] What is unexpected is Nabokov's announcement that the dancemaker is a member of the Congress for Cultural Freedom—a fact altogether absent from the existing literature on the choreographer.[52]

One could make the argument that it was impossible to escape Cold War activism in this period—and certainly, Nabokov relied on his friendships to secure performers for the *Masterpieces* festival. But Balanchine's commitment to anti-communism should not be dismissed as mere cronyism. Membership in the Congress for Cultural Freedom was not a prerequisite for inclusion at the festival. Any number of Nabokov's friends and colleagues who were also featured, including Igor Stravinsky and Virgil Thomson, were not Congress members. Cultural historian Frances Stonor Saunders declared that "Whether they liked it or not, whether they knew it or not, there were few writers, poets, artists, historians, scientists, or critics in postwar Europe whose names were not in some way linked to this enterprise."[53] The same should not be said for Balanchine, who was fully aware and in support of the Congress for Cultural Freedom.

Balanchine was not simply using the festival to promote his young company in Europe, which several recent scholars have suggested was the primary motivation for artists participating in Cold War-era cultural exchange. Rather, Balanchine's membership in one of the most prominent anti-communist organizations then operating in Western Europe should indicate his sincere commitment to Cold War cultural politics. Further, it shows that the depth of the choreographer's cultural activism in the Cold War period has yet to be fully understood. As such, Nabokov's letter

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[51] "US Tours Overseas," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 4, 1956, 10. Reflecting US Congressional resistance to arts funding, government funds only partially subsided NYCB tours in the early 1950s; private philanthropic support from organizations like the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and commercial contracts covered the rest of the costs.
[52] While I have yet not found correspondence between the two men concerning Balanchine's decision to join the Congress, it seems likely that this occurred during one of Nabokov's visits to the United States in the spring or summer of 1951, when Nabokov also secured NYCB's commitment to participate in the festival.
[53] Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 2.

challenges readings of New York City Ballet's participation in cultural exchange as reflective wholly or largely of Kirstein's organizational objectives.[54]

The debate over NYCB's appearance at the *Masterpieces* festival highlights the competing politics of the company's co-founders—and the impact these attitudes had on the organization in the early Cold War period. Balanchine was committed to the staunch anti-communism of Cold War-era politics; in contrast, Kirstein, although less politically active by the early 1950s than he had been in the decades prior, continued to hold out hope for the success of the Soviet experiment.[55] Kirstein claimed he was "depoliticized" after World War II, his commitment to NYCB precluding his involvement in political causes,[56] but his politics may have become a liability for the organization into which he had invested significant energy and personal wealth. Indeed, Balanchine's membership in the Congress for Cultural Freedom, as well as the dismissal of Kirstein's significance by a prominent member of the Non-Communist Left, suggest that New York City Ballet's US State Department-sponsored tours in the decades after the *Masterpieces* festival were informed in no small part by Balanchine's genuine understanding of and commitment to Western Cold War cultural politics, as well as his status among European intelligentsia and cultural tastemakers, including Nabokov. Kirstein's government connections landed the company its first state-sponsored tour, but Balanchine's anti-communism helped secure New York City Ballet's starring role in cultural exchanges of the Cold War period.

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[54] Harris, *Making Ballet American: Modernism Before and Beyond Balanchine,* 157–160, 165.
[55] Harris, *Making Ballet American*, 159.
[56] Lincoln Kirstein, *Thirty Years: Lincoln Kirstein's The New York City Ballet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 125. Harris, *Making Ballet American*, 185.

New York City Ballet's Paris Debut at the *Masterpieces* Festival

The *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* festival began on April 30, 1952, with a concert of works by J. S. Bach and Francis Poulenc at the Église Saint-Roch "dedicated to the memory of the victims of tyranny in the XXth century."[57] Concerts, exhibitions, and conferences were held nearly every night throughout May—a calendar so packed that no one individual could have attended all the festival's offerings. Although the Boston Symphony Orchestra is often identified as the event's headliner in the literature that examines the event's musical impact, another American arts organization enjoyed prominent placement at the *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* festival: the New York City Ballet.[58] The company was a major attraction in Paris that spring and an excellent demonstration of the festival's anti-communist cultural objectives, but it has largely been relegated to the footnotes or margins in the numerous studies of the Congress for Cultural Freedom.[59] Despite the lack of previous study, the *Masterpieces* festival—and the five-month European tour New York City Ballet organized around it—was a critically important opportunity to establish the young company internationally and articulated the value of American ballet in the Cold War conflict.

The company's European tour began in Barcelona at the Gran Teatre del Liceu on April 15, 1952, but this first stop was framed as preparation for NYCB's Paris premiere, under the auspices of the Congress's *Masterpieces* festival.[60] Soloist Barbara Milberg Fisher recalled Balanchine's enormous ambitions for their first Paris performances in her memoir:

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[57] *Masterpieces of the XX Century* festival program, International Association for Cultural Freedom, Records, Box 394, Folder 9, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.
[58] NYCB appeared at the festival on six consecutive evenings—three times as many performances as the Boston Symphony Orchestra.
[59] Le Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas also appeared at the festival.
[60] Congress funds only subsidized the company's performances at the *Masterpieces* festival; the rest of the tour was a commercial enterprise. The company left New York on April 7, 1952, and returned exactly five months later on September 7. After their performances in Barcelona, NYCB made their Paris debut on May 10. After Paris, they appeared in Florence at the Maggio Musicale summer festival, spent the first week of June in Lausanne, and then traveled to Zurich. NYCB returned to Paris for a second two-and-a-half-week run at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées before performing in Prague. This was followed by a six-week season in London with an appearance at the Edinburgh

> He wanted his dancers to shine in Paris. More than anywhere else, he was hoping his new company would create the strongest possible impression, perhaps become a *succès fou*, a smash hit, when we opened at the Opéra. Cosmopolitan Paris knew George Balanchine. In the twenties, Parisians had applauded his first stunning modernist works for Diaghilev's Russian Ballet. More recently they had seen the premiere of *Palais de Cristal*, the Bizet symphony Balanchine choreographed for the Paris Opera Ballet before it became our own *Symphony in C*. I think Mr. B was hoping to take the city by storm, deliver a sensational *coup de théâtre*.[61]

Balanchine had not set an easy task for his young company. As *New York Times* dance critic John Martin noted during the company's European tour, "it is the most difficult thing in the world for a foreign ballet—certainly for an American ballet—to break into the Paris scene."[62] Marking Balanchine's return to one of the most important cities in the world for dance—and to the Paris Opéra where he had recently served as guest ballet master—the stakes for the choreographer, his company, and the Congress for Cultural Freedom were sky-high.[63]

The New York City Ballet made its Paris debut on May 10, 1952, at the most prestigious theatre in France: the Palais Garnier, the national theatre then home to both the Paris Opéra and the Opéra Ballet.[64] Like the rest of NYCB's programs on offer in Paris that May, the premiere program emphasized primarily new ballets. After Balanchine's one-act *Swan Lake* (1951), the company performed *La Valse* (1951), set to two of Maurice Ravel's waltz scores—*Valses nobles et sentimentales* (1911) and *La Valse* (1920). Following Jerome Robbins's violent, insect-inspired work, *The Cage*

Festival at the end of August and performances at the Berlin Festival. The company returned to New York in early September. As Andrea Harris notes, the Berlin dates were added as the US State Department and the Allied High Commission received glowing reports of NYCB's European reception, thereby setting into motion a renewed postwar relationship between New York City Ballet and the US government. See Harris, *Making Ballet American: Modernism Before and Beyond Balanchine*, 173–4.

[61] Barbara Milberg Fisher, *In Balanchine's Company: A Dancer's Memoir* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2006), 63. Joel Lobenthal's recent biography of Patricia Wilde affirms Fisher's account, noting, "NYCB's dancers felt that Balanchine was particularly nervous before any Paris appearance of the company." Joel Lobenthal, *Wilde Times: Patricia Wilde, George Balanchine, and the Rise of New York City Ballet* (Lebanon, NH: ForeEdge, 2016), 138–139.

[62] John Martin, "The Dance: Afield: City Ballet and Others Abroad and at Home," May 18, 1952, X2.

[63] For a discussion of Balanchine's tenure as guest ballet master at the Paris Opéra Ballet in 1947, see chapter four.

[64] France's national theatre also hosted the Boston Symphony Orchestra's first performance at the festival on May 6, according to the Opéra's performance ledger. A relatively full production schedule typical for May precluded more regular use of the Palais Garnier by the Congress for Cultural Freedom during the *Masterpieces* festival, which had secured the similarly sized Théâtre des Champs-Élysées as its main venue.

(1951) choreographed to Stravinsky's "Basler" concerto (1946), the evening concluded in "a dizzying apotheosis" with Balanchine's 1949 Chabrier pastiche, *Bourrée Fantasque*.[65] The evening was, by all accounts, a terrific success.[66]

The company spent the next five evenings dancing at the festival's main venue, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, where Stravinsky's infamous *Le Sacre du printemps* and many other Ballets Russes works were premiered in the 1910s and 1920s. Subsequent programs featured some of Balanchine's most important works of the late 1940s, namely the groundbreaking *The Four Temperaments* (1946), with music by Paul Hindemith, and *Orpheus* (1948), the neoclassical collaboration with Stravinsky and designer Isamu Noguchi that had inspired Morton Baum to invite Balanchine and Kirstein's fledgling Ballet Society to become the resident dance company of New York's City Center of Music and Drama.[67] Festival attendees also had the opportunity to see Balanchine's 1949 staging of Stravinsky's early ballet, *L'oiseau de feu*; *Til Eulenspiegel* (1951), with a score by Richard Strauss; Antony Tudor's *Jardin aux lilas* (1936) with music by Ernest Chausson; and Robbins's setting of Aaron Copland's Clarinet Concerto titled *The Pied Piper* (1951).[68]

Perhaps the most potent performance was of Balanchine's early masterpiece, *The Prodigal Son* (1929) for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, whose sensual choreography, modernist designs,[69] Biblical story, and Prokofiev score reflected the festival's twin goals: the celebration of Western artistic achievement and the rebuke of totalitarian censorship, including the irreligious and anti-clerical

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[65] Olivier Merlin, "Le New York City Ballet A Paris: L'art chorégraphique américain se révèle à l'Opéra et s'implante aux Champs-Élysées," *Le Monde*, May 13, 1952.
[66] "City Ballet Bows at Paris Festival: Performs 'Swan Lake,' 'Valse' and 'The Cage' on Opera Stage Before Capacity House," *New York Times,* May 11, 1952, 94. John Martin, "The Dance: Afield, City Ballet and Others Abroad and at Home," *New York Times*, May 18, 1952, X2. Fisher, *In Balanchine's Company: A Dancer's Memoir*, 69.
[67] Kirstein, *Thirty Years: Lincoln Kirstein's The New York City Ballet*, 102–3.
[68] *Masterpieces of the XX Century* festival program, International Association for Cultural Freedom, Records, Box 394, Folder 9, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.
[69] The original production featured décor by French Fauvist painter Georges Rouault and costumes by Vera Sudeikina, with Serge Lifar in the title role.

dimensions of communist ideology.[70] Although *Prodigal Son* did eventually win audiences in the Soviet Union, at the 1952 *Masterpieces* Festival, the programming of the ballet served as a forceful critique of the Soviet system that had, in the view of many Western critics, curbed Prokofiev's celebrated modernist tendencies as well as those of other Soviet composers.[71] Along with symphonic performances of Prokofiev's *Scythian Suite* and the concert suite from Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, programming *The Prodigal Son* positioned the Congress—and, by extension, Western Europe—as the defender of artistic expression and cultural achievement, in contrast to "the inherent dangers which totalitarianism poses to intellectual and cultural development."[72]

Dancing the role of the Prodigal Son was Jerome Robbins, who claimed to have withdrawn from active Communist Party membership by the time he attended the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel organized by the Cominform in New York in 1949.[73] Robbins attributed his political reversal primarily to the criticism and censorship of artists in the Soviet Union—a subject Nabokov had covered extensively in political publications in that period. His disillusionment put the dancer and choreographer in good company among the members of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, many of whom were themselves former Party members or 'fellow travelers' who had come to reject Stalinism or repudiate the Soviet experiment.[74] The modernist *Prodigal Son* with Jerome Robbins in the title role served as a marvelous emblem for the festival's cultural—and political—objectives.

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[70] For a discussion of the role that US works with religious themes played in the Cold War, see Lena Leson, "'I'm on My Way to a Heav'nly Lan': *Porgy and Bess* as American Religious Export to the USSR," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 15, no. 2 (May 2021).
[71] Nicholas Nabokov, "Music in the USSR," *The New Republic* 104, no. 14 (July 4, 1941): 436–8.
[72] Farfield Foundation brochure quoted in Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 105.
[73] According to FBI records, the choreographer claimed he joined the Communist Party in 1943 and left in disillusionment three years later—although his attendance at the Waldorf event puts these claims in some doubt. Deborah Jowitt, *Jerome Robbins: His Life, His Theatre, His Dance* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 176–77.
[74] Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 52.

As a work created more than twenty years earlier, however, *The Prodigal Son* arguably represented the festival's major problem. *Masterpieces* claimed to celebrate avant-garde innovation in contemporary art—but Nabokov's month-long exhibition evoked a strong sense of pre-war nostalgia, underscored by the prominent place accorded to Stravinsky, Balanchine, Cocteau, and other artists associated with the Diaghilev enterprise. The relatively conservative musical selections undermined the Congress's stated commitment to artistic innovation and freedom of expression, as the most experimental and innovative electronic, electroacoustic, and twelve-tone compositional techniques were under-represented.[75] Instead, the festival program highlighted Stravinsky's early ballets, Schönberg's Expressionist monodrama *Erwartung* (1909) performed by American soprano Patricia Neway with the Orchestre National et Chœurs de la Radiodiffusion Française,[76] and, in the closing concert featuring the Orchestre Lamoureux under the baton of Pierre Monteux, several works that fit uncomfortably into the modernist canon, including Prokofiev's retrospective *Classical Symphony* (1917), Serge Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto (1901) and waltzes from Richard Strauss's neo-Mozartian *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911).

The retrospectivism of Nabokov's selections was—and remains—a key criticism of the *Masterpieces* festival. With an emphasis on works composed mainly in the first two decades of the twentieth century, the festival reflected Nabokov's personal tastes rather than a comprehensive survey of early twentieth-century Western art. While the conservative offerings fared well with the general public, European intellectuals were less eager to engage with the older works.[77] Worse still

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[75] For a discussion of Nabokov's musical selections for the *Masterpieces* festival, see Mark Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music Divided: Bartók's Legacy in Cold War Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007).

[76] Neway was a unique performer who enjoyed equal success on the operatic and musical theatre stages. She originated roles in operas by Samuel Barber, Carlisle Floyd, Lee Hoiby, Gian Carlo Menotti, and David Tamkin, including the leading role of Magda Sorel in Menotti's *The Consul* (1950). Neway also won a Tony Award in 1960 for her portrayal of the Mother Abbess in the original production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The Sound of Music*.

[77] Fosler-Lussier, *Music Divided: Bartók's Legacy in Cold War Culture*, 90–92.

was the sense that the Congress, an organization with ties to the United States, had appropriated European achievements in music, dance, art, and design. To many French intellectuals, the Parisian festival seemed "an ill-disguised form of cultural imperialism" and affirmed, rather than quelled, anti-American sentiment rampant in the post-WWII period.[78] Although Nabokov triumphantly proclaimed after the *Masterpieces* festival that "The Congress for Cultural Freedom is known today all over Europe – known as a cultural organization with cultural objectives," critical reactions to the event illustrate that "cette fête américaine" was not an unqualified success.[79]

Unsurprisingly, the French Communist press was among the most outspoken opponents of the Congress for Cultural Freedom's Parisian festival. In late May, as the month-long event drew to a close, *L'Humanité,* the official newspaper of the Parti communiste français (PCF), declared it "a pro-America, anti-Soviet fascist propaganda enterprise aimed directly at French culture."[80] Moreover, the newspaper explicitly connected the arrival of General Matthew B. Ridgway, the new Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, better known as NATO, to the festival, illustrating the Congress's perceived affiliation with the US government in some Parisian quarters.[81]

Moderate French newspapers from across the political spectrum—particularly those with whom Nabokov had cultivated positive relationships—were more circumspect in their assessments of the festival and its political objectives.[82] But their praise for the quality *and* quantity of the concerts, performances, and exhibitions that spring was matched by concerns centered on the issue

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[78] Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe*, 2. See also chapter four, 144–9.
[79] Nicolas Nabokov to James Burnham, May 11, 1952. Quoted in Miller Harris, *The CIA and the Congress for Cultural Freedom*, 105.
[80] "Le colonel Foster, le générale Ridgway et la liberté de la culture," *L'Humanité*, May 25, 1952, 2. English translation by Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe*, 5.
[81] This is a potent link to draw, considering that General Ridgway's arrival in Paris was greeted by riots. Robert Gildea, *France Since 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 9.
[82] See Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 103.

of American cultural imperialism. Such fears reflect far broader French anti-American sentiment, particularly among intellectuals, in the postwar period.[83] Further, some critics saw the festival's explicitly anti-communist agenda as a reflection of aggressive American intervention in postwar European politics.[84] There was much discussion about which French artists, styles, and organizations had been included at the *Masterpieces* festival, and what cultural values the event hoped to celebrate—or tacitly oppose—through such programming choices. Mourning the seeming impossibility of a "Third Way" in this period, Guy Dumur, cultural critic for the French Resistance daily *Combat*, wrote that,

> …the goals pursued [by the *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* festival] seem to us imbued with this spirit of propaganda that makes the world of today more and more unlivable, which forces free spirits to take refuge in a paralyzing loneliness if they do not wish to obey collective slogans that, in any case, do not concern their own disciplines. Whether one is for or against it, totalitarianism triumphs across the board.[85]

Nabokov defended the *Masterpieces* festival, claiming that it was "the only kind of action we could have undertaken here in Paris which would have established the Congress in the minds of the European intellectuals as a positive, and not only a polemical organization."[86] Similarly, the CIA declared that performances by Americans at the festival "won more acclaim for the United States in Paris than John Foster Dulles or Dwight D. Eisenhower could have bought with a hundred speeches."[87] But for the French, "cette fête américaine" symbolized the problem of French-American relations in the wake of Marshall Plan support and post-WWII rebuilding. Although the

[83] Tyler E. Stovall, *France Since the Second World War* (New York: Longman, 2002), 43.
[84] Richard F. Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 28.
[85] Guy Dumur, "L'Œuvre du XXe siècle et le dialogue France-U.S.A.," *Combat*, May 15, 1952.
[86] Nicolas Nabokov to Sidney Hook, July 3, 1952, quoted in Miller Harris, *The CIA and the Congress for Cultural Freedom*, 105.
[87] Tom Braden, "I'm Glad the CIA is 'Immoral,'" *Saturday Evening Post*, May 20, 1967.

events drew large crowds and loud ovations, reaction to the festival amongst French intellectuals, to whom it was specifically intended to appeal, was mixed.[88]

Critical Reactions and Nationalist Sniping

Although the festival and its agenda were far from universally praised by the French press or European intellectuals, there was a much more uniformly positive view of New York City Ballet's performances at the *Masterpieces* festival. As reviews examined below demonstrate, the young company's strong debut showing in Paris won NYCB international acclaim and quickly elevated American ballet to the equal of well-established national traditions. The company's technical brilliance, dynamic choreography, and increasingly modernist style represented mid-century artistic innovation at the *Masterpieces* festival while also challenging Cold War-era stereotypes that portrayed the United States as culturally deficient.

The New Yorker's Paris correspondent, Janet Flanner, provided context for New York City Ballet's Parisian success to American readers in her effusive review:

> One of the major sensations has been Lincoln Kirstein's New York City Ballet, whose youth and freshness, in seemingly odd combination with its astonishingly mature technique and practiced *esprit de corps* (it has danced better here than on many occasions in New York), have earned it appreciation as one of the great troupes of our time.[89]

Describing the impact that the American company was having on the French ballet scene, Flanner wrote, "Even *Le Monde*, hardly a pro-American paper, gloomily declared that the Paris Opéra, which has lately had its eyes glued on the Sadler's Wells group, must now gaze up towards the new heights occupied by the New York boys and girls."[90]

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[88] Fosler-Lussier, *Music Divided*, 92.
[89] Janet Flanner, "Letter from Paris," *The New Yorker,* May 31, 1952, 74.
[90] Flanner, "Letter from Paris," 74. Dame Ninette de Valois's Royal Ballet was then known as the Sadler's Wells Ballet.

Indeed, in his review of the company's early programs for *Le Monde*, dance critic Olivier Merlin mourned that the Paris Opéra Ballet "has seen its supremacy contested" by "a New York company that is singularly clearer, stronger and more alive"—though he hoped that City Ballet's performances would enliven France's own national ballet.[91] Merlin was somewhat reserved in his praise for the Balanchine ballets presented in the first two programs; he was more interested in Robbins's *The Cage* than neo-Romantic Balanchine ballets like *La Valse* or *La Bourrée fantasque*, and felt that only *The Four Temperaments* truly reflected the Balanchine style—an abstract, neoclassical syntax that came to dominate the Balanchine narrative (if not necessarily the Balanchine oeuvre) during the Cold War.[92] Ultimately reflecting the nationalist frame in which the company was presented at the festival, Merlin extolled Balanchine and his co-founder Lincoln Kirstein, as well as dancer-choreographer Jerome Robbins, who, he wrote, "not only formed the best company of New York dance, they created the American style of dance."[93]

Veteran French music critic Émile Vuillermoz reported Parisian reactions to New York City Ballet's debut for American readers of *The Christian Science Monitor*. His unrestrained praise for "the quality of the *corps de ballet*, its exacting discipline, wonderful ensemble, and flawless technique" was juxtaposed with criticism of Balanchine's "contempt for décor, his search for abstract dance, his distaste for emotion, his abandonment of everything that makes for strength."[94] Reflecting a retrospectivism similar to that of festival organizer Nicolas Nabokov, Vuillermoz praised

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[91] Olivier Merlin, "L'art chorégraphique américain se révèle a l'Opéra et s'implante aux Champs-Elysées," *Le Monde*, May 13, 1952.

[92] Increasingly, Balanchine's works are divided into distinct stylistic groups, including neo-Romantic, classical or neo-imperial, narrative, and neoclassical or abstract. New York City Ballet's 2021 digital spring season, for example, featured a series titled "Three Faces of Balanchine": *The Prodigal Son* represented Balanchine's narrative works, while *Theme and Variations* (1947), choreographed to the final movement of Tchaikovsky's Suite No. 3 for orchestra in G major (1884), illustrated the choreographer's classical or neo-imperial style. The final work, *Stravinsky Violin Concerto* (1972), danced in black and white practice clothes, typifies Balanchine's Cold War Formalism.

[93] Merlin, "L'art chorégraphique américain se révèle a l'Opéra et s'implante aux Champs-Elysées."

[94] Émile Vuillermoz, "French View of Balanchine and New York City Ballet," *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 24, 1952, 14.

Balanchine's abbreviated *Swan Lake* as well as *Prodigal Son* but lamented that "considering the grandeur of the aesthetic of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, which made it possible for him to give us the best of his talent, [Balanchine] disappointed his most faithful admirers" with the spare, non-narrative works like *The Four Temperaments*.[95]

Arguably the most contentious *and* complimentary discussions about New York City Ballet's prominent appearance at the *Masterpieces* festival appeared on the pages of *Combat*, the Leftist newspaper that, as discussed earlier, criticized the festival's political and propagandistic objectives. On the one hand, the paper's dance critic, Dinah Maggie, showered Balanchine and NYCB with effusive praise following their debut at the Paris Opéra. On the other hand, vicious open letters authored by the Paris Opéra's controversial ballet master Serge Lifar about New York City Ballet's appearance at the festival and the lack of parity extended to France's national ballet company ranked among the fiercest of the sectarian squabbles swirling around the festival. The juxtaposition of these viewpoints in a single publication—and the criticism that Lifar later received from other French critics for elevating personal rivalry to a defense of French cultural superiority—demonstrates the complex and significant role of ballet in Cold War cultural politics.

Of the French critics writing about Balanchine's Parisian debut, Dinah Maggie, *Combat*'s dance critic, might have been the most enthusiastic. As such, she provides some insight into the experience of French theatergoers, who widely applauded the New York City Ballet during the Parisian run of their five-month European tour. Her review of their opening night at the Paris Opéra is practically gushing; she describes Balanchine's one-act *Swan Lake* as a "work that made you want to shout 'thank you.'"[96] Her paeans to Balanchine's work continued: in *La Valse,* the

[95] Vuillermoz, "French View of Balanchine and New York City Ballet," 14.
[96] Dinah Maggie, "Le 'New York City Ballet' pour un soir à l'Opéra," *Combat*, May 12, 1952.

choreographer translated Ravel's musical intentions with "unsurpassed refinement."[97] *La Bourrée Fantasque* "ended the program in a fireworks display where the mind of Georges Balanchine, full of tact, is given free rein."[98] Only Robbins's *The Cage* fell flat in Maggie's view, in contrast to the many French critics who indicated a preference for Robbins's choreography (and the titillating sexual violence of the ballet's man-eating female insects).[99] This might explain how the dance critic managed to score an exclusive interview with New York City Ballet's enigmatic artistic director.[100]

Maggie's fawning coverage of New York City Ballet's performances and subsequent interview with Balanchine for *Combat* are almost absurdly at odds with the open letter and postscript Serge Lifar penned in advance of the company's Paris debut. The tone of his bombastic open letter was set by the quote *Combat* used as a headline: "La France ne reçoit de conseils de personne: Elle en donne! [France takes advice from no one; she gives it!]" Lifar blasted the festival's organizers for the lack of "clarity and truthfulness" in their objectives, and for the inclusion of works by Shostakovich and Prokofiev, whom he dismissed as Soviet sympathizers—altogether missing the point that the works by these composers performed at the *Masterpieces* festival were banned or rarely seen in the USSR, and thereby meant to demonstrate the dire problem of artistic censorship under totalitarian regimes.[101]

Identifying works and artists Lifar felt should have been included in the festival's program brought him to the real issue: the "objectively unjust, incomprehensible, and singularly offensive"

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[97] Maggie, "Le 'New York City Ballet' pour un soir à l'Opéra."
[98] Maggie, "Le 'New York City Ballet' pour un soir à l'Opéra."
[99] Maggie acknowledged that while a great deal of ink would no doubt be spilled on discussions of Robbins's work, it was suffused with "a pagan atmosphere of animal cruelty and human passion, the grandeur of which has not escaped an enthusiastic public, yet little used to the exteriorization of the subconscious in the form of a ballet."
[100] George Balanchine, "A Batons Rompus avec George Balanchine," interview with Dinah Maggie, *Combat*, May 16, 1952.
[101] Serge Lifar, "En marge du 'Congrès pour la liberté de la culture', La France ne reçoit de conseils de personne: Elle en donne!" *Combat*, April 30, 1952.

decision not to feature his own company, the Paris Opéra Ballet, at the *Masterpieces* festival. He juxtaposed his company's exclusion from the festivities with RTLN Director Maurice Lehmann's decision, "driven by the desire to cooperate in your demonstrations of the international vitality of twentieth century art, [to] spontaneously welcome the New York City Ballet."[102] Lifar continued:

> I am revolted that for reasons of rather low politics, you deliberately exclude from your exhibition of the essential creations of Western artistic culture, a troupe of a value and a homogeneity practically unsurpassed in the world, with a strength of achievement that no one disputes and a past punctuated with revelations and triumphs.[103]

Lifar's accusation that his company was excluded from the festival for "reasons of rather low politics" seems to hint at the choreographer's collaboration with occupying Nazi forces in Paris, for which Lifar was stripped of his position at the Paris Opéra and banned from the French national stages for one year.[104] The insinuation that the company was ostracized for Lifar's Nazi sympathies makes his assertion of the Paris Opéra Ballet's unique "homogeneity"—a reflection of Lifar's anti-Semitism that Mark Franko notes also dominates the choreographer's book, *La Danse: Les grands courants de la danse académique* (1938)—particularly repulsive.[105] The irate letter concluded with the jingoistic declaration of France's superiority that *Combat* ran as its headline, an astoundingly shortsighted claim made less than a decade after the Nazi occupation:

> The crusade that you claim to undertake here against a possible and unforeseeable cultural subjugation [by communism] is meaningless: France is the only country where 'spiritual domestication' is unthinkable. If one considers France's long past struggle for freedom of thought and individual independence, one can hardly understand how you dare come here and talk about freedom and criticize our intellectual activities. Dear sirs, you have made a big mistake: from the point of view of spirit, civilization, and culture, France takes advice from no one; she gives it! [106]

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[102] Lifar, "En marge du 'Congrès pour la liberté de la culture', La France ne reçoit de conseils de personne: Elle en donne!"
[103] Lifar, "En marge du 'Congrès pour la liberté de la culture'."
[104] See chapter four for a discussion of Lifar's postwar position at the Paris Opéra Ballet.
[105] For a discussion of anti-Semitism in Lifar's work, see Mark Franko, *The Fascist Turn in the Dance of Serge Lifar: Interwar French Ballet and the German Occupation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 209–13.
[106] Serge Lifar, "En marge du 'Congrès pour la liberté de la culture'."

Several French newspapers, including the Resistance daily *Franc-Tireur*, jumped into the fray to respond to Lifar's screed.[107] Explicitly identifying the ballet master's association with German authorities under Vichy, *Franc-Tireur* disputed Lifar's authority to speak for France and its cultural politics,

> the cause of which he is not well qualified to support, inasmuch as the service of art is not incompatible with the devotion to the cause of freedom and human dignity, especially at a time when these causes were oppressed as they were during the German occupation which did not prevent Mr. Lifar from dancing.[108]

The article instead implored readers:

> Please let us forget about politics or propaganda. That gloomy mystification which puts creative minds in the artistic or scientific fields at the service of the state or the chief, has not been established by the free world [which] allows the spirit to blow anywhere…Freedom's wings have not been clipped yet.[109]

The sentiment is rosy, but it should be noted that the paper's editor, Georges Altman, was a member of the Congress's steering committee. *Franc-Tireur*'s directive to ignore politics and propaganda and instead celebrate the artistic and scientific possibilities of a free society reads like a line from the *Masterpieces* festival program booklet. Further, these comments reflect the paper's wholehearted endorsement of the event—a dramatic reversal of its earlier anti-Americanism.[110]

Lifar's postscript, published five days after portions of his open letter were printed in *Combat* (and five days before Balanchine's company made their Palais Garnier debut), detailed Nabokov's unsuccessful attempts to engage the Paris Opéra Ballet to appear at the *Masterpieces* festival—namely, his suggestion that the company stage two new works with music by Georges Auric and Henri

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[107] These included *Commentary*, a monthly magazine founded by the American Jewish Committee that described the feud as the most violent of the many sectarian quarrels, and a humorous Paris publication that referred to the conflict as the "Slav Family Linen." See Herbert Luethy, "Selling Paris on Western Culture: Report on an American-Sponsored Exhibition," *Commentary* 14 (July 1952): 74.
[108] Quoted in Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 103.
[109] Quoted in Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 103.
[110] Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 103.

Sauguet.[111] Lifar's critique that a festival claiming to celebrate "the most significant masterpieces produced by our civilization for half a century" might be an inappropriate vehicle for the premiere of new works is just. What is more, his suggested program is free of any excessive self-promotion—save, of course, for their performance by his company. He recommends *La Peri* (1912) by Léo Staats and Paul Dukas, Stravinsky's *Le Baiser de la fée* (1928) with choreography by Balanchine,[112] staged on the company during his guest tenure in 1947, *Le Tricorne* (1919) by Léonide Massine and Manuel de Falla, and the Stravinsky-Fokine ballet *Petrushka* (1911) as additions to the festival's dance offerings.[113] Interestingly, Lifar does not identify the lacuna in the representation of modern dance or contemporary ballet on the *Masterpieces* program; while his fury at being excluded from the month-long exhibition provoked a series of strongly-worded critiques, Lifar's twentieth-century masterpieces were defined largely by the Diaghilev tradition, and therefore looked a great deal like Nabokov's.

Reflecting on the Paris Opéra Ballet's omission from the festival decades later, Kirstein claimed that, "None of it was our fault; we had known nothing of the circumstances, which were internecine and local. However, owing to the ancient connection of Balanchine, Nabokov, and Lifar, we were vulnerable to attack. In Parisian fashion there were angry exchanges of letters in the press."[114] All's well that ends well, though; Kirstein acknowledged that Lifar's screeds in *Combat* and the ensuing squabble "blithely contributed to black-market prices for our premiere."[115]

After the *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* festival, Nabokov and his colleagues sent letters of gratitude to dozens of individuals who had contributed to its realization. Among them was

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[111] These negotiations took place between RTLN Director Maurice Lehmann and Nabokov; according to Lifar, the choreographer was not involved in these discussions.
[112] *Le Baiser de la fée* was originally commissioned by Ida Rubinstein and choreographed by Bronislava Nijinska.
[113] Serge Lifar, "Post-scriptum à ma letter à propos de "l'Oeuvre du XXe siècle," *Combat*, May 5, 1952.
[114] Kirstein, *Thirty Years: Lincoln Kirstein's The New York City Ballet*, 127.
[115] Kirstein, *Thirty Years*, 127.

Léonid Léonidoff, who coordinated the New York City Ballet's participation in the festival and the rest of their five-month European tour.[116] Nabokov wrote Léonidoff an unusually detailed thank-you, extolling the company's appearance as "a big contribution to the goals we are pursuing."[117] He continued, "we hope that in addition, the magnificent success of the company, especially at the Opéra, will have served your season well as it has demonstrated that the New York City Ballet is among the greatest ballets in the world today." Indeed, despite Lifar's vociferous protests, the brilliance of the company and Balanchine's contemporary ballets were among the most potent demonstrations of mid-century artistic innovation at the *Masterpieces* festival. Their success challenged stereotypes that depicted the United States as a cultural wasteland, suggesting that America could indeed produce dance artists as talented as those in Europe—or, more provocatively, the Soviet Union. The impact of the festival on New York City Ballet's international reputation cannot be overstated. What had once been a fledgling American troupe was now widely acknowledged as one of the world's best ballet companies. Further, the company's Paris debut demonstrated City Ballet's value to anti-communist organizations including the CIA and the US State Department, whose cultural policies were shaped by the *Masterpieces* festival during the subsequent decades of the Cold War conflict.

[116] After performances in Barcelona and Paris, New York City Ballet traveled to Florence for the Maggio Musicale summer festival, spent the first week of June in Lausanne, and then appeared in Zurich. NYCB returned to Paris for a second two-and-a-half-week run at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées before performing in Prague. This was followed by a six-week season in London with an appearance at the Edinburgh Festival at the end of August and performances at the Berlin Festival before returning to New York in early September.

[117] Nicolas Nabokov to Léonid Léonidoff, June 16, 1952, International Association for Cultural Freedom, Records, Box 393, Folder 1, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

After the *Masterpieces* Festival: George Balanchine and the Congress for Cultural Freedom

It is easy to imagine that, despite Balanchine's enduring friendship and artistic collaborations with Nabokov, the choreographer's affiliation with the Congress for Cultural Freedom ended with the company's successful Paris debut at the *Masterpieces* festival. This was true of some other high-profile pals Nabokov induced to participate—but not for Balanchine. Identified as a member of the Congress when the American Committee for Cultural Freedom (ACCF) raised objections to NYCB's participation in the festival, Balanchine's association with one of the leading anti-communist organizations continued long after the spring of 1952, signifying the dancemaker's commitment to cultural activism in the Cold War period.

After the *Masterpieces* festival, the Congress for Cultural Freedom continued to pursue its model of cultural propaganda, expanding the exclusively Western outlook of the Paris fête by holding similar events throughout the world.[118] This was the project that occupied Nabokov's attention—and might have offered New York City Ballet another opportunity to perform under the Congress's auspices. Following a visit to Japan in the fall of 1955, Nabokov decided to organize a festival that would bring together Eastern and Western artists. Initially planned for April 1959, the event was delayed by the Suez Crisis and the failed Hungarian Revolution, both of which began in late October 1956. The East-West Music Encounter Festival was ultimately held in Tokyo in the spring of 1961 in collaboration with the Tokyo Metropolitan Society for International Cultural Exchange.

A letter to Balanchine dated June 15, 1959, shortly after Nabokov returned from a visit to Japan with Stravinsky in April, indicates the company's planned participation in the Congress's East-West Music Encounter Festival. Nabokov opens his letter by mentioning discussions with Paul

[118] Giroud, *Nicolas Nabokov*, 272.

Szilard—the same impresario who organized New York City Ballet's 1958 tour of Japan, Australia, and the Philippines in cooperation with the President's Special International Program for Cultural Presentations, administered by the American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA).[119] Nabokov then reassures Balanchine of his continued desire for NYCB to appear: "I just wanted you to know that of course the New York City Ballet is on my list for Japan, if the Festival takes place, which I still don't know."[120] Nabokov's letter signals that he had already secured Balanchine's commitment to participate in the CCF's Japanese festival, initially scheduled for April 1959.[121] Indeed, Nabokov and Stravinsky's trip to Japan had been planned to coincide with the event. As with the 1952 festival, it seems that Nabokov quickly recruited Stravinsky and Balanchine to participate. Unfortunately, City Ballet's New York season at City Center concluded on April 9, only days before the East-West Music Encounter Festival began on April 17, and the Royal Ballet performed in their stead.[122]

More prosaic archival evidence also demonstrates Balanchine's continued involvement with the Congress after the *Masterpieces* festival. In a memo to the Farfield Foundation dated May 1953, Walter Alford, a US-based press representative for the Congress, shared samples of the organization's stationery. One of these featured the names of all the ACCF's members, which Alford confirmed was checked with Irving Kristol in February of that year to ensure accuracy.[123] The illustrious list included American-born and émigré philosophers, writers, historians, cultural critics, and artists: Alfred H. Barr, Jr., W. H. Auden, Franz Borkenau, Alexander Calder, Elia Kazan, Arthur O. Lovejoy, Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, J. Salwyn Schapiro, John Steinbeck, Philip Taft,

[119] John Martin, "The Dance: Travel, New York City Ballet Heads for Orient—Eastern Troupes Will Reciprocate," *New York Times*, March 9, 1958, X6.
[120] Nicolas Nabokov to George Balanchine, June 15, 1959, George Balanchine Archive, 1924-1989 (MS Thr 411). Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.
[121] Giroud, *Nicolas Nabokov*, 329.
[122] Giroud, *Nicolas Nabokov*, 330.
[123] Walter Alford to Emily Davis, May 20, 1953, folder 3, box 134, International Association for Cultural Freedom, Records.

Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and Bertram Wolfe. Also on this list of American Committee members was George Balanchine.

Lest this seem like simply a favor to Nabokov or a list of the composer-cum-cultural impresario's close friends and collaborators, it is equally valuable to note who did not appear. Igor Stravinsky, with whom Nabokov had a lasting relationship, was not listed as a member of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom. Nor was Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland, or Virgil Thomson, all of whom agreed early on to participate in the *Masterpieces* festival. Of course, some of these omissions are not entirely surprising: Aaron Copland testified just six days after Alford's letter was written, on May 26, 1953, before the Senate's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Government Operations, chaired by Joseph McCarthy. The subject of his testimony was his political associations, including his participation at the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace at New York's Waldorf Astoria Hotel in 1949.[124] Although he broadly opposed the Bolsheviks, Stravinsky's anti-liberalism, including his anti-Semitism and well-known admiration of Italian Fascist Benito Mussolini, made any long-term association with an organization like the Congress for Cultural Freedom and its American affiliate unlikely.[125] And neither Barber nor Thomson were particularly known for their strong political positions. But Balanchine, who had personally experienced the early years of Bolshevik rule in Russia, was committed to anti-communism—as evidenced not only by his membership in the Congress, but by dancers' recollections.[126] Although Nabokov identified Balanchine as a member of the Congress in 1951

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[124] Testimony of Aaron Copland, *Hearing Before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Government Operations, First Session*, 83rd Congress (May 26, 1953).
[125] Richard F. Taruskin and Robert Craft, "'Jews and Geniuses': An Exchange," *The New York Review of Books*, June 15, 1989, 57.
[126] Former City Ballet principal dancer Arthur Mitchell, who went on to found Dance Theatre of Harlem, the first African American classical ballet company, said that "[Balanchine's] mind was always involved with those things [read: politics]." Arthur Mitchell, "Balanchine Foundation Interview: Arthur Mitchell *AGON*," interview with Anna Kisselgoff, 2002, 11:10, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Asv8DaYoB90&lc=Ugxwh-Md0aibLDUVF8R4AaABAg.

when he defended New York City Ballet's appearance at the *Masterpieces* festival, the dancemaker's inclusion on this list of American Committee members indicates his continued relationship with the organization.

So too does a 1955 letter about membership dues, which suggests Balanchine's active association with the Congress. More than three years after the festival and two years after his membership in the American Committee was confirmed, Balanchine received a letter from Diana Trilling, the Chairman of the Administrative Committee that oversaw the group's activities.[127] She begins,

> Dear Mr. Balanchine:
>
> I am writing to you because several reports have come to us of members of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom who never really understood that the payment of annual dues is a requirement for membership. It is possible that the office's failure to make this explicit has caused some of our members to neglect this obligation.
>
> At any rate, an examination of the Committee's records shows that you are in arrears in the amount of $5.00 ~~$10.00~~ for the period October 1, 1954 to September 30, 1955, ~~October 1, 1953 to September 30, 1955.~~ [128]

As her letter suggests, Trilling sent many such notices in this period—mainly because of the financial precarity in which the American Committee increasingly found itself. Monthly support from the Farfield Foundation evaporated in early 1953, and in October 1954, Michael Josselson withdrew the CCF's annual subsidy of $4,800 to its American affiliate as a result of ongoing disagreements between "the gunslingers in New York and the sophisticates of the Paris operation" including over the issue of McCarthyism in the United States, on which the ACCF itself was split.[129]

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[127] Diana was also the wife of literary critic and essayist Lionel Trilling, also a prominent member of the ACCF.
[128] Diana Trilling to George Balanchine, July 11, 1955, George Balanchine Archive, 1924-1989 (MS Thr 411). Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.
[129] Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 194

The corrections to the accounting in Trilling's letter clarify the nature of Balanchine's continued association with the Congress for Cultural Freedom and its American affiliate. She initially writes that Balanchine owes the Committee $10 for membership dues from October 1, 1953 to September 30, 1955, suggesting that Balanchine's affiliation with the organization continued long after his membership was confirmed in May 1953. But Trilling revises her letter, noting that Balanchine is only in arrears $5, for the period of October 1, 1954 to September 30, 1955—the current financial year. The letter not only affirms Balanchine's ACCF membership after the *Masterpieces* festival; Trilling's correction also indicates that the choreographer was a dues-paying member of that organization. This was not something that could be said for all members: a similar letter was sent to Irving Brown, a member of the Congress's Executive Committee who had helped secure the organization's initial CIA funding in 1950. He was asked for three years of unpaid membership dues—a request he ignored.[130]

Neither Balanchine's nor even Brown's membership dues would be enough to secure the long-term future of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, however. Michael Josselson's decision to cut the purse strings in late 1954 came as relations between the Congress and its more bellicose American affiliate grew increasingly strained.[131] Although Sidney Hook, one of the ACCF's leading figures, did manage to secure grants from the CIA, channeled in part through the Farfield Foundation and totaling $14,000, the financial support did not prevent the organization from gradually imploding amidst complaints to The *New York Times* and censures from the Congress's Executive Committee.[132] On January 31, 1957, Hook wrote to Nabokov that the American Committee had suspended its operations. Shortly thereafter, the US and the USSR signed what is

[130] Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 196.
[131] Miller Harris, *The CIA and the Congress for Cultural Freedom*, 143.
[132] Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 193.

commonly known as the Lacy-Zarubin Agreement, facilitating cultural and artistic exchanges between the two governments—a sign that the Congress's cultural model was gaining traction in the United States.

The shuttering of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom in 1957 was a blow to the CCF, but far greater problems lay ahead. Although the "Eisenhower splurge" on the arts and the Kennedy administration's commitment to "productive relationships" with artists, as well as his push to form the National Endowment for the Arts before his assassination in 1963, seemed to promise a bright future for the Congress,[133] the 1958 Lacy-Zarubin Agreement and increasing support for public arts funding placed Western Cold War cultural exchange and policy initiatives more and more within the purview of the US government.[134] Although private organizations were not excluded from cultural policy by any means, the increasingly public nature—and financing—of exchanges in this period spelled trouble for the covertly-funded CCF. By 1964, the publication of John le Carré's best-selling novel *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold* and the release of Stanley Kubrick's film, *Dr. Strangelove*, began to erode the myths upon which Cold Warriors relied.[135]

That same year, a Congressional investigation into the tax-exempt status of private foundations led by Representative John William Wright Patman (D-TX) discovered eight foundations serving as "passing foundations" for federal funds channeled through the US Central Intelligence Agency.[136] Called the "Patman Eight," financial records from these fronts exposed the CIA's covert funding program.[137] When combined with information available through the Internal

[133] Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 289.
[134] Lauren Erin Brown, "Cold War, Culture Wars, War on Terror: the NEA and the art of public diplomacy," *Cold War History* 20, no. 4 (January 2020): 380–1.
[135] Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 302.
[136] Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 297–8.
[137] The "Patman Eight" comprised the Gotham Foundation, the Michigan Fund, the Price Fund, the Edsel Fund, the Andrew Hamilton Fund, the Borden Trust, the Beacon Fund, and the Kentfield Fund. Interestingly, the Michigan and Edsel funds also point directly to the Ford Motor Company.

Revenue Service, the relationship between the ostensibly non-governmental Congress for Cultural Freedom and the clandestine intelligence agency became reasonably clear. A series of articles published in The *New York Times* in the spring of 1966—against the backdrop of an increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam—revealed that the Congress, along with many other organizations, had received covert CIA funding.[138]

Questions about Nabokov's knowledge of the CIA's support persist. His biographer Vincent Giroud writes that the composer was never officially informed of the sources of the Congress's funding until the early 1960s, at which point he distanced himself from the organization—though he had been suspicious long before then.[139] In a letter written in the early 1970s, Nabokov recalled that the Congress's covert sponsorship was "the 'talk of the town' in many capitals of Europe, Asia, Latin American and Africa."[140] Nabokov suggested that the relationship between the Congress and the CIA was something of an open secret—which implies that Balanchine may have heard rumblings about the source of the organization's funding. But as the emphasis on covert support quickly began to overshadow the organization's accomplishments, Nabokov insisted that "the point is not the funding, but what the Congress has done."[141]

Soon after revelations of the CIA's covert funding, the Congress for Cultural Freedom secured a new and unimpeachable source of ongoing support: The Ford Foundation. In October of 1966, the Ford Foundation announced a $1.5 million grant to the Congress for Cultural Freedom, which finally allowed the Congress to distance itself from the CIA—although it was too late to avoid the damage of their longtime association. Shortly thereafter, the Congress for Cultural Freedom was

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[138] The Congress for Cultural Freedom and its popular UK-based magazine *Encounter* were identified in an article published in the *Times* on April 27, 1966, the third in a series of five articles that exposed CIA activities. "C.I.A. Is Spying From 100 Miles Up; Satellites Probe Secrets of the Soviet Union," *New York Times*, April 27, 1966, 1.
[139] Giroud, *Nicolas Nabokov*, 239.
[140] Nicolas Nabokov to J.E. Slater, August 11, 1971, quoted in Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 333.
[141] Nabokov quoted in Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 333.

officially dissolved.[142] The International Association for Cultural Freedom (IACF), as the reformed Congress was called, continued under the leadership of Shepard Stone. Stone had previously served as the director of the Ford Foundation's International Affairs program—the very same program that provided the Congress with the funding announced in October of 1966.[143]

The triumphant announcement of the CCF's Ford Foundation grant, a copy of which was sent to Balanchine, declared that "Following as it does the allegations published in The *New York Times* about which you were informed in May, this grant represents a solid vote of confidence in both the past integrity and the future program of the Congress."[144] Although it may have briefly served as a vote of confidence, the grant now suggests the complex entwinement of government and private philanthropic foundations—as well as their grantees, including the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the New York City Ballet—by the early 1960s. The Ford Foundation made history three years earlier when it was announced that the School of American Ballet and New York City Ballet would receive the bulk of a $7,806,750 grant from its Humanities and the Arts program, the largest grant made to dance in the United States at that point.[145] Its goal was to develop "a national program to help develop training and performing resources in ballet, a medium that only in the last three decades had become an important American art form."[146] NYCB's relationship with the Ford

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142 Volker R. Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe: Shepard Stone Between Philanthropy, Academy, and Diplomacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 240.
143 The Ford Foundation, The Ford Foundation 1966 Annual Report, 96. The Paris offices were eventually shuttered in 1977 as national groups and magazines gradually closed, and in January 1979, the International Association for Cultural Freedom voted to dissolve itself.
144 Michael Josselson to George Balanchine, October 7, 1966, George Balanchine Archive, 1924-1989 (MS Thr 411). Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.
145 The Ford Foundation 1964 Annual Report, 121. Related grants to the School of American Ballet and San Francisco Ballet School began in 1958. New York City Ballet and the School of American ballet received a total of $5,925,000, just over two-thirds of the total grant. Six other regional companies, all with ties to Balanchine, received the rest of the funding; modern dance companies and rival ballet companies such as American Ballet Theatre and the Joffrey Ballet, on the other hand, received no funding from this Ford Foundation grant.
146 Press release, "News from the Ford Foundation, Monday a.m., December 16, 1963." George Balanchine Archive, 1924-1989 (MS Thr 411). Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Foundation, which would replace the CIA in supporting the Congress for Cultural Freedom, reflects its position in a transatlantic network of power, money, and Cold War efforts.

Balanchine's anti-communist activism has been vastly underappreciated in literature both on Cold War dance and the choreographer himself. He could ensure an uncompromisingly anti-communist perspective on the part of an organization thought to be without its own political agenda—a sign of Cold War cultural politics in action.[147] In addition to Kirstein's connections to moneyed American elites, Balanchine's political commitments ultimately helped earn New York City Ballet support from philanthropic organizations as well as the United States government, which had tracked the success of the 1952 *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* festival and the work of the Congress for Cultural Freedom closely.

While recent scholarship has argued that New York City Ballet's participation in Cold War-era cultural exchange was informed by Lincoln Kirstein's commitment to the organization's financial stability, this chapter has shown that it was George Balanchine's membership in the Congress for Cultural Freedom (and, by extension, his commitment to anti-communism) that secured New York City Ballet its Parisian debut and helped launch American ballet onto the great international stages. While readings of ballet in the Cold War conflict have largely dismissed Balanchine's politics as either insignificant to or manipulated by government entities, his membership in the CCF suggests that new attention must be paid to the choreographer's political beliefs and the impact they had on his company, with particular emphasis on NYCB's Cold War-era tours sponsored by the US Department of State. Balanchine was a creative figure whose life and work exemplified the Congress's conviction that artistic innovation was only possible through democracy. Enduring

[147] Victoria Philips has astutely noted that denial of political engagement is, in fact, an indication of such politics during the Cold War. Victoria Philips, *Martha Graham's Cold War: The Dance of American Diplomacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 16.

narratives about the dancemaker's disinterest in cultural politics—as well as the Cold War rhetoric that demanded his contributions remain apolitical—are due for reappraisal. The time has come to acknowledge the anti-communist legacy of George Balanchine and to consider the impact of his own cultural-political agenda on ballet in the United States and around the world.

Conclusion

"Russia is the home of romantic ballet. The home of classic ballet is now America."
–George Balanchine, Moscow, October 1962

A decade after the *Masterpieces* festival, in the fall of 1962, New York City Ballet embarked on its first tour of the Soviet Union. The company appeared in Moscow, Leningrad, Kyiv, Tbilisi, and Baku, in addition to stops in Germany and Austria. The State Department, using the strategic model of cultural propaganda advanced by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, relied on New York City Ballet and other arts organizations to project a hopeful vision of American innovation, combat negative cultural stereotypes about the US, strengthen diplomatic relations with allies, and undermine enemies—namely the Soviet Union. The selected repertoire exaggerated perceived distinctions between the choreographer's Cold War Formalism and Soviet ballets to bolster the political distinctions between the United States and the USSR more broadly. In contrast to evening-length narrative works popular in the Soviet Union, New York City Ballet's offerings featured Balanchine's signature one-acts, including *Agon* (1957), *Allegro Brillante* (1956), *Apollo* (1928)*, Concerto Barocco* (1941), *Symphony in C* (1947)*, Theme and Variations* (1947), and *Serenade* (1934).

As this dissertation has demonstrated, these ballets, while often framed as American, reflect a mélange of national styles and practices. Drawing the musical traditions of the dancemaker's Franco-Russian past into dialogue with the aesthetics and attitudes of his adopted homeland, Balanchine's oeuvre is a poignant reflection of the "'third' language" of émigré artists.[1] Performing

[1] Lydia Goehr, "Music and Musicians in Exile: The Romantic Legacy of a Double Life," in *Driven into Paradise: The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany to the United States*, ed. Reinhold Brinkmann and Christoph Wolff (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 84. My thanks to Michaela Franzen for directing me to this volume.

his American ballets with scores by Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky on the iconic Russian stages of the Bolshoi and the Mariinsky theatres only underscored their sense of dual identity—even if acknowledging these sympathies could not be permitted in the context of the Cold War. The distinctions between Balanchine's Americanist works and Soviet ballet were ideological above all.

The 1962 Soviet tour came after a decade of purposeful relationship-building with the US government on the part of George Balanchine. In 1953, under the auspices of the State Department's International Exchange program administered by the American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA), NYCB toured Italy, Germany, and Belgium.[2] Two years later, the ANTA sponsored another NYCB tour featuring performances in Monte Carlo, Marseilles, Lyons, Florence, Rome, Bordeaux, Lisbon, Paris, Lausanne, Zurich, Stuttgart, Amsterdam, and The Hague. Reflecting the need to strengthen diplomatic relations beyond Western Europe, the State Department and the ANTA arranged a five-month tour of Japan, Australia, and the Philippines for Balanchine's ballet company in 1958.[3]

After three international tours under the auspices of the State Department, Balanchine was eager to further strengthen his relationship with the US government. On August 21, 1959, the choreographer wrote to C. Douglas Dillon, the Under Secretary of State, with an intriguing proposal: a "cultural lend-lease" program of his ballets.[4] Balanchine began his letter by detailing the

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[2] "Itineraries undertaken by Balanchine's American Companies During His Lifetime," The George Balanchine Foundation, accessed January 19, 2021, http://www.balanchine.org/companyitinearies.jsp. *TIME* magazine reported that the company's visits to Europe in the early 1950s were "leaving such cities as London, Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Rome, Milan and Barcelona with the notion that the gadget-happy Americans might have a culture bump, after all." "Music: Ballet's Fundamentalist," *TIME*, January 25, 1954.

[3] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1958–1960, Volume XVIII, Part 1, Japan, US Policy Towards Japan, eds. Madeline Chi and Louis J. Smith (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1994). *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1958–1960, Volume XV, Part 7, Philippines, eds. Madeline Chi, John P. Glennon, William K. Klingaman, and Robert J. McMahon (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1992).

[4] George Balanchine to C. Douglas Dillon, August 21, 1959, George Balanchine Archive, 1924-1989 (MS Thr 411). Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

invitations he had recently received from several state opera houses in Europe to stage his ballets.[5] He explained:

> I do not ask a fee for staging the ballets or royalties for the performances. I have been considering them as a gift from the New York City Ballet to the various companies. It has now occurred to me, however, that a kind of cultural lend-lease from the United States to the companies might be of greater value.

Balanchine's generous offer demonstrates the choreographer's political savviness. The US had faced criticism, including at the *Masterpieces* festival, for its failure to federally support the arts; recall that the American yeast heir and arts patron Julius "Junkie" Fleischmann was credited as the festival's primary sponsor, although his Farfield Foundation was, in fact, serving as a front for CIA funding.[6] Loaning European dance companies, many of them royal institutions, the most sought-after Balanchine ballets would show not only America's cultural largesse but also the flourishing of great art under its democratic-capitalist model. Emphasizing the way such a program could help to differentiate the United States from its principal rival, Balanchine judged: "It is significant that these companies do not ask for ballets from the repertory of the Bolshoi Ballet."

Secretary Dillon quickly responded to Balanchine's letter, affirming that such a program would be possible through the newly-formed Bureau of International Cultural Relations of the Department of State.[7] The glowing language of Dillon's reply, more effusive than much other correspondence with the Department of State in the Balanchine archive, suggests sincere excitement on his part. Dillon concluded his letter: "I am sure your generous action will reflect favorably not

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[5] In addition to ballets gifted to the Royal Danish Ballet and the Paris Opéra Ballet—Paris received *Gounod Symphony*, *Serenade*, and *Symphony in C*, while the Royal Danish Ballet was gifted the three ballets examined in this dissertation—Balanchine noted requests from the Royal Dutch Ballet, the Royal Swedish Ballet, and La Scala.
[6] See chapter five, 170.
[7] C. Douglas Dillon to George Balanchine, September 3, 1959, George Balanchine Archive, 1924-1989 (MS Thr 411). Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

only on American cultural endeavors but also on you and the great work you have done at the City Center."[8]

As the new program's details were being worked out between Balanchine and Robert H. Thayer, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State leading the Bureau of International Cultural Relations, dance critic John Martin described the lend-lease proposal in The *New York Times*. He began by noting that, "It is, indeed, a cultural development of a remarkable sort for European companies to express a wish for ballets belonging in the repertory of an American company. It has usually worked the other way."[9] Acknowledging Balanchine's keen cultural-political instinct in suggesting such a program, Martin continued:

> It is very easy in our cultural exportations to cater to the oh-so-amusing ideas Europe popularly entertains of our culture as a nation; and dear old Europe falls for every such exportation with chortles, until we in turn begin to believe it ourselves. Here, however, will be, though not the first, at least a most impressive, official indication that we are not actually a country of delinquent youths reveling exclusively in rock 'n' roll, cola beverages and cheeseburgers.[10]

Reading Martin's column, it is evident that New York City Ballet represented US excellence and artistic innovation far beyond State Department-sponsored international tours; Americans encountered messages that bore a striking similarity to pro-US propaganda in Martin's reporting on Balanchine and the New York City Ballet during the Cold War. Unfortunately, a misunderstanding between Balanchine and the Bureau of International Cultural Relations ultimately resulted in embarrassment for both parties after Special Assistant Thayer began spontaneously offering Balanchine's ballets to a number of European companies rather than fulfilling specific requests, as was the choreographer's original intention. While the lend-lease proposal came to naught,

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[8] Dillon to Balanchine, September 3, 1959.
[9] John Martin, "The Dance: Export," *New York Times*, November 8, 1959, X10. While this article provides valuable context for Balanchine's lend-lease ballet program, Martin's racist comments about jazz are deeply offensive.
[10] Martin, "The Dance: Export," *New York Times*, November 8, 1959, X10.

Balanchine's works are nonetheless performed by ballet companies worldwide, including the Bolshoi and Mariinsky companies in Russia.

New York City Ballet's 1962 Soviet tour is often framed as the company's single greatest contribution to the culture wars between the United States and the USSR. Indeed, despite the hybridity of Balanchine's ballets that this dissertation has explored, works like *Serenade* and *Symphony in C* were hailed in this period as "America's—and the Western world's—strongest cultural export."[11] But it was not simply the good fortune of the United States government that such a choreographer presented himself. A staunch anti-communist, Balanchine had been a member of the Congress for Cultural Freedom whose programs served as a model for American propaganda efforts in the Cold War period. In fact, the choreographer had even helped establish that innovative art could serve as pro-American propaganda when his company appeared at the *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* festival a decade earlier. Works like *Apollo, Serenade,* and *Symphony in C* could validate the creative freedoms possible under democracy and demonstrate the importance of the arts to American culture. Further, Balanchine's ballets illustrated what Russian artists who left the strict Soviet system could accomplish—an aesthetic critique of a political ideology to which Balanchine was deeply opposed. With this new understanding of the choreographer's syncretic choreomusical praxis, Balanchine scholarship might reevaluate his landmark Americanist works. Exploring his ballets for other companies, particularly European institutions, with such considerations in mind could also prove productive. Expanding the study of Balanchine's contributions to US cultural diplomacy beyond the US-Soviet binary, research on his company's state-sponsored tours of Western Europe, Asia, and the Middle East in the 1950s and 1960s might be a rich contribution to

[11] Jean Battey, "New York City Ballet Finale Is Tonight," *The Washington Post*, August 4, 1963, G4.

dance studies. Finally, it is my hope that this dissertation continues to expand research on the politics of twentieth-century dance diplomacy.

Appendices

Appendix A: Major events in the life and works of George Balanchine

1904

The choreographer is born Georgi Melitonovich Balanchivadze in St. Petersburg, on January 22.

1913

Begins ballet training at the Imperial Theatre School in St. Petersburg.

1915

Makes Mariinsky debut in Marius Petipa's *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890).

1917

Emperor Nicholas II of Russia abdicates. The Russian Provisional Government is formed. Provisional Government is overthrown by the Bolsheviks. Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) is formed. In the wake of this political upheaval, the Imperial Theatre School and the Mariinsky Theater—both Imperial institutions—are closed.

1918

After more than a year, Balanchine resumes his studies at the renamed Petrograd Theater (Ballet) School.

ca. 1919

Creates first choreography. Embarks on three years of study at the Petrograd Conservatory of Music, directed by Alexander Glazounov, and begins to compose music.

1921

Graduates with honors from Petrograd Theater (Ballet) School and enters ballet company of the former Mariinsky. Marries fellow dancer and classmate Tamara Geva.

1922

Organizes a small experimental dance company called Young Ballet with Petr Gusev, Vladimir Dimitriev, Yuri Slonimsky, and others. The troupe is invited to participate in Fedor Lopukhov production, *Dance Symphony: The Greatness of Creation,* an early example of symphonic ballet set to Beethoven's 4th Symphony.

1924

Tours Germany with Young Ballet dancers Alexandra Danilova, Tamara Geva, and Nicholas Efimov with Vladimir Dimitriev directing. He and the others reject the theater administration's order to return to the Soviet Union at the end of the tour, and instead travel to London. Eventually, the group auditions for Serge Diaghilev and joins his Ballets Russes in London. Georgi Balanchivadze changes his name to Georges Balanchine and becomes the company's ballet master.

1925

Choreographs ballets for Opéra de Monte-Carlo productions, including the world premiere of Maurice Ravel's *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* in Monte Carlo. Choreographs *Barabau* on a Rieti score, his first original ballet for Diaghilev, which premiered in London. Choreographs a revival of *Le Chant du rossignol* (1920) with music by Igor Stravinsky.

1928

Creates *Apollon musagète*, his first original ballet to music by Igor Stravinsky, for the Ballets Russes.

1929

Diaghilev dies in Venice on August 19, and the Ballets Russes ceases to exist. At the invitation of Jacques Rouché, Director of Paris Opéra, Balanchine conceives and begins to choreograph *Les Créatures de Prométhée* on the Beethoven score; due to illness, his choreographic plan is realized by the Opéra's premier danseur, Serge Lifar, who subsequently becomes its ballet master.

1931

René Blum invites Balanchine to become ballet master of a new company, the Ballets Russes de Monte-Carlo.

1932

Choreographs ballets for the Opéra de Monte-Carlo while organizing and rehearsing the first season of the Ballets Russes de Monte-Carlo. Creates four new ballets for the company before an abrupt departure.

1933

In Paris, forms Les Ballets 1933 with Boris Kochno. Creates six works for brief seasons in Paris and London. After seeing a performance, Lincoln Kirstein meets Balanchine in London and invites him to the United States to establish a ballet school and company. Balanchine accepts. Arrives in New York with Vladimir Dimitriev on October 17.

1934

School of American Ballet (SAB) opens at 637 Madison Avenue in New York City on January 2. In March, Balanchine begins choreographing *Serenade* to the first three movements of Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings. The ballet is performed by SAB students at Woodland, the Warburg estate in Hartsdale, New York. Shortly thereafter, Balanchine, Kirstein, and Warburg establish the American Ballet with dancers from the school.

1935

The American Ballet has first professional season with official premieres of *Serenade* and other works. Edward Johnson, general manager of Metropolitan Opera, engages Balanchine as ballet master and the American Ballet (to be called the American Ballet Ensemble) as the Met's resident ballet company. Choreographs ballets for seven operas.

1936

In addition to dances for the Metropolitan, Balanchine begins work on Broadway with *Ziegfeld Follies: 1936 Edition* and the Rodgers and Hart musical *On Your Toes* featuring the "jazz ballet" *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue*. Kirstein founds a small touring company, Ballet Caravan, independent of Balanchine.

1937

Prepares the first Stravinsky Festival presented by the American Ballet at the Metropolitan Opera House. Revives *Apollon musagète* for its first performance in America, creates *The Card Party (Jeu de cartes),* and choreographs the Stravinsky-Tchaikovsky pastiche *Le Baiser de la fée,* originally commissioned by Ida Rubinstein and choreographed by Bronislava Nijinska in 1928. Continues to choreograph on Broadway and is hired by Samuel Goldwyn for his first Hollywood assignment, *Goldwyn Follies*, with music by George Gershwin, released in 1938.

1938

Metropolitan Opera terminates engagement of the American Ballet; the company essentially folds. Choreographs three new productions for Broadway. Marries actress and dancer Vera Zorina.

1939

Becomes a United States citizen. In Hollywood, directs dances for film adaptation of *On Your Toes* and *I Was an Adventuress.* Germany invades Poland on September 1, and World War II begins.

1940

In New York, stages several of his works for Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Among these is *Serenade*, to which Balanchine adds choreography for Tchaikovsky's fourth movement. Choreographs dances for new Broadway musicals and stages Lynn Root and Vernon Duke's *Cabin in the Sky*, in collaboration with Black dancer and choreographer Katherine Dunham. SAB is incorporated as a nonprofit institution with Kirstein as President and Director and Balanchine as Chairman of Faculty.

1941

Choreographs *Balustrade* to Stravinsky's Violin Concerto for the Original Ballet Russe—his first work created in America for a ballet company not his own. With Kirstein, establishes the American Ballet Caravan, formed with dancers from American Ballet, Ballet Caravan, and the School of American Ballet, for five-month goodwill tour of Latin America arranged by Nelson A. Rockefeller, then the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. Among the works performed are *Apollon musagète* and *Serenade.* At the end of the tour, company is disbanded. Balanchine returns to Broadway. The United States enters World War II on December 7 after an American fleet in Pearl Harbor is bombed. Balanchine works in theatre and film throughout World War II.

1943

Stages *Apollo* for Ballet Theatre, founded in 1939. Plans resident ballet company in New York, but project does not materialize. Kirstein enlists in the United States Army.

1944

Begins two-year association with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo as its resident choreographer, reviving several older works including *Concerto Barocco, Serenade*, and *Ballet Imperial*, and choreographing *Danses Concertantes*. Kirstein is transferred to the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives (MFAA) division, and is tasked with the rescue and preservation of European art.

1945

Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo celebrates Balanchine's twenty-fifth year as choreographer with two full evenings of his work. Choreographs new works for Carnegie Hall performance featuring students from the School of American Ballet for *Adventure in Ballet*—Kirstein's first theatrical enterprise following his return from wartime service.

1946

Continues to choreograph for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. With ballerina Alexandra Danilova, choreographs an abbreviated version of Petipa's *Raymonda* (1898). With Kirstein, organizes Ballet Society, Inc., a subscription-supported company to advance lyric theater. For their first performance at Central High School of Needle Trades, Balanchine creates *The Four Temperaments* to a Paul Hindemith score he commissioned in 1940. Balanchine and Kirstein commission *Orpheus* score from Stravinsky. Divorces Zorina; marries Maria Tallchief.

1947

Choreographs new works for Ballet Society performances at Hunter College. Spends six months as guest ballet master of Paris Opéra; restages *Serenade, Le Baiser de la fée,* and *Apollon musagète,* and creates *Le Palais de cristal* to Bizet's Symphony in C. Ballet Society gives its first performances at City Center of Music and Drama in New York. Choreographs *Theme and Variations* to the final movement of Tchaikovsky's Orchestral Suite No. 3 for Ballet Theatre.

1948

Choreographs new works for Ballet Society performances at City Center. Ballet Society gives American premiere of *Symphony in C*. Ballet Society also presents *Orpheus,* with a Stravinsky score and décor by Isamu Noguchi, at City Center of Music and Drama. Following the premiere of *Orpheus,* Morton Baum, Chairman of Executive Committee of City Center, invites Kirstein and Balanchine to form a permanent company to be called New York City Ballet at City Center. For their inaugural performance, New York City Ballet presents *Orpheus, Symphony in C, and Concerto Barocco* (1941) to Johann Sebastian Bach's *Concerto* in D minor for Two Violins, BWV 1043*;* second program consists of *Serenade, The Four Temperaments,* and *Orpheus*. Balanchine continues to stage ballets on other companies and to choreograph dances for Broadway productions.

1949

New York City Ballet presents first independent season at New York City Center of Music and Drama.

1950

Revives Prokofiev's *Prodigal Son* (1929) for New York City Ballet and appears several times in the role of the Father. New York City Ballet presents six-week season at Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London, and makes three-week tour of England, the first of frequent foreign tours.

1951

New York City Ballet presents first American season outside New York at Chicago's Civic Opera House. *Apollon musagète* is retitled *Apollo, Leader of the Muses.*

1952

New York City Ballet undertakes a five-month tour of Western Europe. They appear in Spain before making their Paris début at the Palais Garnier under the auspices of the Congress for Cultural Freedom's *Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century* Festival. The company also performs in Italy, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, England, and Scotland with a second performance run in Paris. Performances at the Berlin Festival in West Germany are added after the US State Department and the Allied High Commission receive glowing reports of NYCB's European reception, thereby setting into motion a postwar relationship between the Balanchine company and the US government. Balanchine's marriage to Tallchief is annulled, and he marries Tanaquil LeClercq.

1953

New York City Ballet performs in Washington, DC, on the eve of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's inauguration. Balanchine directs the US premiere of Stravinsky's opera *The Rake's Progress* (1951) for the Metropolitan Opera. New York City Ballet makes its first Continental US tour.

1954

Appears on the January 25 cover of *Time* magazine. New York City Ballet makes a brief tour of Europe. Choreographs *The Nutcracker* to Tchaikovsky's 1892 score, New York City Ballet's first evening-length ballet, which becomes a US holiday tradition and an important profit center for dance companies.

1956

New York City Ballet mounts a four-month European tour, during which LeClercq contracts polio in Copenhagen. She is paralyzed from the waist down. During her five-month hospitalization, Balanchine stages *Apollon musagète* and *Serenade* for the Royal Danish Ballet.

1957

New York City Ballet travels to Montreal to film ballets with the Canadian Broadcasting Company. Balanchine returns to the United States and, working closely with Stravinsky, creates *Agon*. *Apollo, Leader of the Muses* is renamed *Apollo*, and its décor is simplified to better suit the design of *Agon*. *The Nutcracker* is telecast live on CBS, the first of several Balanchine ballets televised in this period.

1958

New York City Ballet makes five-month tour of Japan, Australia, and Philippines sponsored by United States Department of State and American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA). Balanchine designs a production of *The Nutcracker* for a live CBS Christmas telecast and performs the role of Drosselmeyer. The Paris Opéra Ballet is the second Western ballet company to appear in the Soviet Union; among the works they perform is Balanchine's *Le Palais de cristal*. Its debut in Moscow was the first time one of the choreographer's mature works made in the West was seen in the USSR.

1959

Company performs at the inauguration celebration of Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller in Albany. Choreographs *Episodes,* Part II to music by Webern; at his invitation, Part I is choreographed by Martha Graham. Under W. McNeil Lowry, Director of the Program in Humanities and the Arts, the Ford Foundation awards grant enabling School of American Ballet to survey American ballet instruction and to establish first national audition tour and scholarship fund.

1960

Theme and Variations performed by American Ballet Theatre during first visit by an American ballet company to the Soviet Union. *Symphony in C* and *The Four Temperaments* are performed in People's Republic of China by Royal Swedish Ballet.

1962

Working closely with Stravinsky, choreographs *Noah and the Flood*, composed for television. Balanchine and NYCB dancers participate in celebrations of Stravinsky's eightieth birthday in Hamburg; *Agon, Orpheus* and *Apollo* are performed. Company performs in Germany and Austria, and Balanchine returns to Russia for the first time since leaving in 1924 as Company makes its initial tour of Soviet Union, visiting Moscow, Leningrad, Kyiv, Tbilisi, and Baku. Each tour stop opens with a performance of *Serenade; Apollo* and *Symphony in C* are also regularly performed on the tour.

1963

New York City Ballet dances *Stars and Stripes* (1958) to music by John Philip Sousa, arranged by Hershy Kay, at the Second Anniversary Inaugural Celebration of Kennedy administration. The Ford Foundation awards New York City Ballet the bulk of a $7,806,750 grant from its Humanities and the Arts program to support the development of a national ballet program—the largest grant made to dance at that point.

1964

New York City Ballet participates in gala opening of New York State Theater at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, designed by Philip Johnson in consultation with Balanchine and Kirstein, and make their last appearances at New York's City Center.

1965

Creates evening-length ballet *Don Quixote* with a score by friend and fellow Russian émigré Nicolas Nabokov. Performs title role at preview performance opposite muse Suzanne Farrell.

1966

New York City Ballet has first subscription season; significantly enlarging regular audience attendance. New York City Ballet's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1962) becomes first feature-length film of a ballet made in the United States made under Balanchine's direction and supervision.

1967

Choreographs the evening-length, plotless *Jewels* (Fauré, Stravinsky, Tchaikovsky).

1968

Produces and directs stage movements for Company performance of Stravinsky's *Requiem Canticles* (1966), presented in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

1969

New York City Ballet participates in Diaghilev Festival held in Monte Carlo to commemorate fortieth anniversary of last season of the Ballets Russes and sixtieth anniversary of the founding of that company. Kirstein becomes Chairman of the Board and Balanchine a Vice President of Dance Theatre of Harlem, the predominantly Black classical ballet company and school newly founded by former NYCB principal Arthur Mitchell. National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) makes the first of a series of grants to New York City Ballet.

1970

Receives Handel Medallion, New York City's highest cultural award.

1971

Longtime collaborator Igor Stravinsky dies on April 6.

1972

Conceives and directs eight-day festival to celebrate the music of Stravinsky, honoring ninetieth anniversary of composer's birth. Thirty-one ballets to Stravinsky compositions are presented, twenty-two of which are newly created by seven choreographers. Balanchine creates ten new ballets and stagings of Stravinsky works. Under auspices of New York State Council on the Arts, Governor Rockefeller presents New York State Award to Balanchine honoring his unique contribution to development of dance and dance audiences in New York. In Munich, New York City Ballet represents United States in cultural presentations at Olympic Games. Company makes second tour of Soviet Union, followed by first engagement in Poland. *Apollo* is removed from the repertory of New York City Ballet.

1973

With eighty-one members of New York City Ballet, oversees filming of fifteen ballets in Berlin with RM Productions. Publication of Kirstein's *The New York City Ballet* (Knopf) marks Company's twenty-fifth anniversary year.

1975

Conceives and supervises New York City Ballet's Ravel Festival in honor of the composer and France. During two-week period, twenty ballets are presented to Ravel's music; sixteen are new works by four choreographers, eight by Balanchine. France awards Balanchine L'ordre national de la légion d'honneur

1976

Creates *Union Jack* to British military, music-hall, and folk music arranged by Hershy Kay as New York City Ballet tribute to United States Bicentennial. In Paris, as part of French salute to Bicentennial, New York City Ballet gives series of performances featuring Stravinsky ballets.

1977

Balanchine and members of Company travel to Nashville, TN, to film the first of a five-part series devoted to his ballets for *Dance in America* on public television, under Balanchine's direction.

1978

School of American Ballet becomes the first professional dance academy to receive a major grant from the NEA. In appreciation of his contribution to Royal Danish Ballet, Balanchine is named Knight of the Order of Dannebrog, First Class. First annual Kennedy Center Honors are presented by President Jimmy Carter to Marian Anderson, Fred Astaire, George Balanchine, Richard Rodgers, and Arthur Rubinstein. Balanchine revives *Apollo* for Russian dancer and Soviet defector Mikhail Baryshnikov's performance at the International Dance Festival in Chicago; cuts the Prologue.

1979

Presents the revised *Apollo* in New York with Baryshnikov in the title role; cuts the Prologue and Apollo's First Variation.

1980

Restores Apollo's First Variation along with the last thirty-six measures of the Prologue in *Apollo*. Receives first National Gold Medal Award of National Society of Arts and Letters. New York City Ballet performs in festivals honoring Stravinsky Centennial in Berlin and Paris.

1981

Organizes and presents two-week Tchaikovsky Festival for New York City Ballet. Included are twelve new works by six choreographers, of which Balanchine choreographs two and sections of two others.

1982

To celebrate one-hundredth anniversary of Stravinsky's birth, conceives and supervises Stravinsky Centennial Celebration by New York City Ballet. Between June 10 and June 18, twenty-five ballets and staged choral works set to Stravinsky's music by six choreographers are performed. Of ten new works, Balanchine choreographs two and co-stages two more. Following the official closing of Centennial Celebration, Balanchine rechoreographs Stravinsky's Variations: Aldous Huxley in memoriam (1964) as solo for Suzanne Farrell titled *Variations for Orchestra*—the choreographer's last work. In November, after some years of ill health, he is admitted to Roosevelt Hospital, where he will spend the last five months of his life.

1983

Peter Martins is appointed Co-chairman of Faculty, School of American Ballet; Martins and Jerome Robbins become Ballet Masters-in-Chief. In March, Balanchine is presented with Medal of Freedom by President Ronald Reagan, *in absentia*. Balanchine dies of pneumonia on April 30, New York City. He is posthumously diagnosed with Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease. He is buried May 3 in Sag Harbor, Long Island. His simple tombstone features the Russian Orthodox cross and Noguchi's lyre, originally designed for the 1948 production of *Orpheus*, and reads simply "Ballet Master."

Appendix B: French-language scenario of *Apollon musagète*

Apollon-Musagète est une pièce sans intrigue. C'est un ballet dont l'action choréographique se déroule sur le thème : Apollon-Musagète, c.a.d. chef des muses inspirant à chacune d'elle leur art.

Le ballet commence par un court prologue représentant la naissance d'Apollon. L'enfantement saisit Leto. Elle jette ses bras autour d'un arbre, elle appuie ses genoux sur un tendre gazon et l'enfant bondit à la lumière. Deux déesses accourent pour saluer Apollon, lui donnent pour langes un voile blanc et une ceinture d'or. Elles lui présentent le nectar et l'ambroisie et l'emmènent vers l'Olympe. Fin du prologue ; nouveau décor : Apollon reste seul, il danse (Variation). A la fin de sa danse apparaissent Calliope, Polyhymnie et Terpsichore : Apollon confère à chacune d'elle un don (Pas d'action). Ainsi Calliope devient muse de la Poésie, Polyhymnie, de la Mimique et Terpsichore celle de la Danse. Elles lui présentent tour à tour chacune son art (Variations). Apollon les accueille par une danse en honneur de ces arts nés (Variation). Terpsichore unissant la Poésie à la Mimique trouve la place d'honneur à côté du Musagète (Pas de deux). Les autres muses se joignent à Apollon et Terpsichore en une danse les groupant ainsi toutes trois autour de leur chef (Coda). Ces scènes allégoriques se terminent par une Apothéose où Apollon conduit les muses, Terpsichore en tête, au Parnasse qui sera désormais leur demeure.

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