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‘LE PAS D’ACIER’ (1927):

**A STUDY IN THE HISTORIOGRAPHY AND RECONSTRUCTION
OF GEORGES JAKULOV’S SET DESIGN
FOR DIAGHILEV’S ‘SOVIET’ BALLET.**

VOL. II

**by
Lesley-Anne Sayers.**

**A thesis submitted to the University of Bristol, through Cheltenham &
Gloucester College of Higher Education, Faculty of Arts and Humanities,
School of Fine Art. April 1999.**

VOLUME II

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APPENDIX 1

GEORGE JAKULOV: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

George Jakulov: A Brief Introductory Biography¹

Georgii Bogdanovich Yakoulian (Jakulov) was born in Tiflis on January 2nd 1884 and died in Erevan on December 28th 1928. A painter, graphic artist and set designer, he lived in Moscow from 1893. He exhibited at the Moscow Art Association 'Venok'; with 'The Union of Russian Artists'; 'The World of Art' group, 'The Society of Moscow Artists' and MAO – Moscow Architectural Society, among others and was a prizewinner at the Paris International Exhibition of stage designs in 1925.

In 1900-02 he studied at the Moscow Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture where his teacher was the artist and set designer, Konstantin Yuon. He was dismissed from the College in 1903 due to his rebellious nature and was immediately called up for military service. In 1904 he was sent to the Russo-Japanese front. He spent time in Manchuria where he was deeply drawn to the light effects of the area and began to develop his theory of light.

He had his first professional exhibition in April 1907 at the Moscow Association of Artists² and was then represented at numerous exhibitions internationally as well as in Russia. In 1907-09 he was involved as a scenic artist for private balls and amateur theatricals. He visited Italy in 1910 spending time in Florence, Rome, Sienna and Venice. Between 1910 and 1913 he exhibited work at several exhibitions in St.Petersburg and Moscow. In 1913 he visited Paris where he spent the summer with artists Robert and Sonia Delaunays whose theory of Simultanism had much in common with his own ideas on light. In 1914 he signed a Futurist manifesto. From 1914-1917 he was involved in military service but also exhibited in Moscow and Petrograd.

In 1917 he designed the interior of the Cafe Pittoresque³ in Moscow assisted by Alexander Rodchenko and Vladimir Tatlin. According to art historian Christina Lodder, the Café Pittoresque was:

*"... the first instance when the methods of working in three dimensions evolved in the non-utilitarian constructions were applied to a practical situation to create a total environment."*⁴

Lodder quotes K.Umanskij describing the Café's designs in 1920:

"The Kafe Pittoresk, Yakulov's masterpiece, presents an unusual picture. Counter-reliefs whose effects are heightened by schematic colouring are cleverly hung from the walls. They seem to expand the space with their angular interpenetrating planes, without violating the café's architectonic unity. Avoiding undue aestheticisation, the podium (the place of countless debates on the various questions concerning the new artistic life), the tables, and the benches are also elevated to the status of art objects. Splendid sculptural creations are suspended from the large domed ceiling, the vitreous facets of which are decoratively (but not ornamentally) painted in an appropriate style. Are they aeroplanes? Or dynamos? Or dreadnoughts? The observer's ability to recognise objects becomes numbed. However, he feels a presentiment of restless dynamism in these semi-

¹ This biography has been compiled from various sources listed at the end of this appendix.

² This exhibition was possibly the first to reveal tendencies towards a neoprimitivist style in Russian art and also featured the work of Goncharova, Larionov, Malevich and others. Jakulov exhibited a series of work described as "decorative and symbolic, asiatic and oriental" Notes et Documents (May 1967) p. 20 quoting Jakulov.

³ The Café Pittoresque was owned by the Moscow baker, Nikolai Filippov who gave Jakulov the responsibility for decorating it in 1917. See Lodder (1983) p. 258.

⁴ Lodder (1983) p.276 n.87.

machine, semi-decorative shapes, the construction of which emphasizes the enigma of modern machines and is the source of a peculiar disquiet."⁵

In 1918-19 Jakulov was a teacher at the Moscow studio of stage design and from 1918 was regularly employed as a set designer particularly associated with Alexander Tairov's influential Chamber Theatre. For example, Tairov used Jakulov's designs for productions of: A. Schnitzler's Green Parrot (1918); Claudel's L'Otage (1918); The Princess Brambilla (1920, after E.T.A. Hoffmann); Vladimir Sokolov's Signor Formica (1922) based on the story by E.T.A. Hoffmann; Lecocq's Girofle-Girofla (1922), and A. Golba's Rosita (1926). In other Moscow theatres Jakulov designed productions of, for example: Shakespeare's Measure for Measure (The Model Theatre 1919), Sophocles's Oedipus Rex (1922) and G. Kaiser's The Jewish Widow (1923), Wagner's Rienzi (the Theatre of the Soviet of Worker's Deputies, 1923); Pinsky's The Wandering Jew (The Habima Jewish Theatre Moscow 1923), Shakespeare's King Lear (prepared for the National Armenian Theatre, Erevan, in 1925, but not realised), and Lecocq's The Green Island (The Theatre of Musical Comedy, 1926).

In February 1919 Jakulov co-signed the Imagist manifesto, was close to the writers Sergei Esenin and Anatolii Mariengof⁶ and became a professor at Svomas (Free State Art Studios) in Moscow where the Stenberg brothers were amongst his pupils. In the early 1920s he was also active as a fashion designer, although he was known principally for his stage designs. In 1922 he exhibited work at the Van Diemen gallery in Berlin. In 1925 Jakulov exhibited the model of his Monument to the Twenty-Six Commissars of Bakou (designed in 1923) and his model set design for Girofle-Girofla at the International Exhibition in Paris.

He returned to Paris in May 1927 for the opening of Le Pas d'Acier. After completing his work on the ballet he abruptly returned to Moscow following the arrest of his wife, leaving some of his works in Paris. These works formed the collection of the Société des amis de Georges Yakoulov who later gave it to the National Gallery of Armenia in Erevan in the 1970s. The Society also published several of Jakulov's manuscripts⁷. never returned to the West and died of pneumonia in Erevan in December 1928.

Jakulov was an active force in the transformation of Russian theatre post 1917. He embraced the new notion of theatre as an active educational force for change that sought to reach and involve the Soviet peoples through involving forms from popular entertainment, such as circus, vaudeville and cabaret, to break down the notion of theatre as an elitist pass time. John Bowlt has pointed out that Jakulov was a pioneer in the transfer of artistic devices from other media to the theatre:

*"A pioneer in this process was Yakulov, one of the most bohemian and histrionic characters of early Soviet culture, whose designs for Tairov's productions of 'Princess Brambilla' (1920), 'Signor Formica' (1922), 'Girofle-Girofla' (1922) and for Diaghilev's 'Le Pas D'Acier' (1927) rely substantially on his interpretation of the cabaret and the circus."*⁸

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ A book of drawings by Jakulov illustrate a love poem by Mariengof. See Mariengof A. (1920). A copy is held in the rare book collection of the British Library.

⁷ Published in three volumes as Notes et Documents, 1967, 1969, 1972, held by the British Library.

⁸ Bowlt, J. (ed.), Russian Stage Design, exhibition catalogue, Mississippi Museum of Art, (1982).

Jakulov's work draws on several artistic movements, principally Futurism, Cubism and Constructivism. His art cannot, argues John Bowl,⁹ be contained within any one artistic category and he gave his artistic allegiance to no one school.

A Selection of Jakulov's Writings located during the Study:

'La Definition de Soi' (an undated manuscript). Reproduced in Notes et Documents, la Société des amis de Georges Yakoulov ed.s, May 1967.

'Ex Oriente Lux: Le Juif Éternel ou le Second Exode des Juifs en Palestine' (1923). Reproduced in Notes et Documents July 1972.

'Journal d'un Peintre: L'homme dans la Foule', (1924). Reproduced in Notes et Documents, March 1969.

'Journal d'un peintre: Le Soleil bleu', (1914). Reproduced in Notes et Documents, July 1972.

'Niko Piroshmanichvili' (1927). Reproduced in Notes et Documents, July 1972.

'Pensees a Haute Voix', (1918). Reproduced in Notes et Documents, July 1972.

Teatr i zhivopis, manuscript held by the archives of the National Gallery in Armenia (GKG Erevan n.d) Reproduced in Aladzhakov (1971).

N.B. Jakulov's autobiographical and other writings were collected together after his death and eventually published (Erevan:1979) as Moia biografiia i khudozhestvennaia deiatel'nost'. The original manuscripts are held in Moscow: TSGALI f2030 op1. The study was unable to locate this published work other than at the archives of the National Gallery of Armenia in Erevan.

Sources for this brief biography:

Aladzhakov, S. Georgii Iakulov (Erevan: 1971)

Bowl, J. (ed.), Russian Stage Design: Scenic Innovation 1900-1930. Exhibition catalogue from the collection of Mr & Mrs Nikita Lobanov-Rostovsky. (Mississippi Museum of Art: 1982)

Kostina, E. Georgii Iakulov (Moscow: Sovetskii Khudozhnik, 1979).

Pozharskaya, M. & Volodina, T. The Russian Seasons in Paris 1908-1929, trans. by V.S.Friedman. (London: Aurum Press, 1990).

Societe des Amis de Georges Yakoulov, (ed.s,) Notes et Documents (Paris: Societe des Amis de Georges Yakoulov, 1967-72).

⁹ Ibid. p. 317.

APPENDIX 2A

THE SCENARIO FOR ‘URSIGNOL’¹ BY JAKULOV AND PROKOFIEV 1925

The following pages are copies of unpublished material found at the Prokofiev Archive, London. The originals were enclosures in a letter to Diaghilev from Prokofiev dated 11th August 1925 (See Appendix 4). The typed pages were presumably put together by Prokofiev and the hand written manuscripts are in Jakulov’s handwriting.

Source: Prokofiev Archive, London.

¹ Ursignol was the original working title of the ballet.

/Музыкальный планъ/

Прологъ.	Iъ Прохождение силуэтовъ. I минута съ половиной.
Первый а к т ъ, вокзалъ и площадь.	II. Приходъ поѣзда и мѣновая торговля. 2 минуты.
	III. Входъ комиссаровъ и разгонъ толпы. I мин.
	IV. Появление жуликовъ, пограбъ и погоня. 2 мин.
	V. Танецъ оратора. I мин.
	VI. Выходъ матросовъ и танецъ матроса съ работницей. 3 мин.
	VII. Комиссары, пожарные, разгонъ толпы. I мин.
Антрактъ.	VIII. Перестроение декораций. 2 съ половиной мин.

Дѣйствующія Лица, /для пролога и I Акта/

Мужчины.

Женщины.

4-5 матросовъ	I хорошенькая работница
2 комиссара	I комиссарша
2 жулика	I папиросникъ /травести/
1 Ораторъ	I папиросница
6 пожарныхъ	I ирисникъ /травести/
	I ирисница
3 мешечника	6 мешечницъ
3 голодныхъ горожанина	6 горожанокъ
-----	----
21 /если 2 мешечника и 2	18
горожанина, выгнанныхъ комис-	
сарами въ концѣ третьяго но-	
мера, переодѣнутся въ четырехъ	
пожарныхъ, то не 21, а 17/	

Въ прологѣ участвуютъ: 3 матроса, папиросникъ, папиросница, ирис-
 никъ, ирисница, ораторъ, испуганная дама /горожанка/, два комисса-
 ра, комиссарша, два бандита, два мешечника и мешечница.

/Пастораль/

Прологъ. Дефилированіе силуэтовъ слѣва направо: 1/ матросы, въ воинственномъ бѣгѣ, заломивъ шапки, держа ружья внизъ и беря ихъ на изготовку, въ курткахъ, надѣтыхъ на одну плечо; 2/ ирисники, ирисницы, папиросники, папиросницы - галопируютъ и кружатся съ коробками "ирисова" и папиросъ; 3/ ораторъ - рѣшительный шагъ впередъ и два маленькихъ назадъ, вертясь винтомъ и тыча пальцемъ въ книгу; 4/ испуганная дама пробѣгаетъ нервной походкой, манипулируя съ зонтикомъ, открывая и закрывая его; 5/ комиссары - съ сознаниемъ собственного достоинства, затѣмъ внезапно прислушиваются, дѣлаютъ прыжки въ разные стороны, и снова переходятъ въ важную походку; исчезаютъ на прыжкѣ; 6/ бандиты-жулики прыгаютъ на носкахъ, ползутъ и снова прыгаютъ; 7/ мечечники, спотыкаясь подъ грузомъ своихъ мѣшковъ, падаютъ, перекидывая мѣшки черезъ головы, а затѣмъ сами перекувыркиваясь черезъ мѣшки.

Актъ первый. Свѣтъ на сцену. Подходитъ поѣзд /справа/, высыпаетъ мечечники; съ противоположной стороны, навстрѣчу имъ голодные горожане съ вещами для мѣновой торговли.) Танецъ мѣновой торговли: баба съ мѣшкомъ и господинъ съ кресломъ, чужина съ поросенкомъ и дама, держащая на палкѣ визитку, какъ флагъ, — на фонѣ общей сутолки. Папиросникъ, папиросница, ирисникъ и ирисница вьются мелкимъ бѣсомъ со своими лотками. Появляются 3 комиссара* въ разноцвѣтныхъ френчахъ и начинаютъ тѣснить толпу. Толпа на три четверти разсѣивается. Два жулика, подкравшись, обираютъ комиссара. Три комиссара гонятся за двумя жуликами. Жулики, спасаясь, лѣзутъ по лѣстницамъ и на канатѣ перебрасываются на среднюю площадку, скользятъ по доскѣ внизъ и исчезаютъ въ кулиссахъ. Комиссары слѣдуютъ за ними тѣмъ же путемъ и тоже исчезаютъ. Заставшая на сценѣ часть торговцевъ въ ужасѣ жметса. Изъ ихъ среди выделяется ораторъ, произносящій негодующую рѣчь /танецъ/. Нѣсколько человѣкъ слушаютъ, среди нихъ хорошенькая работница, на которую особенно насѣдаетъ ораторъ въ своей рѣчи. Входятъ 5 матросовъ, нарядныхъ, развязныхъ. Четверо разсѣиваются по сценѣ, покупая товары и широко бросая деньгами. Пятый, главный, заинтересовывается сценой работницы съ ораторомъ и, желая защитить ее, становится между ними. Ораторъ продолжаетъ рѣчь, но затѣмъ въ гнѣвѣ бросаетъ книгу. Книга на резинкѣ возвращается къ нему. Ораторъ возмущенно ретируется. Первое жеманное знакомство матроса съ работницей: танцуютъ вмѣстѣ, но не соприкасаясь. Матросъ, котораго зовутъ товарищи, раскланивается съ нею и удаляется. Работница исчезаетъ въ противоположную сторону. Возвращаются комиссары съ пожарными и очищаютъ базаръ.

Антрактъ: пожарные /балетные артисты/ пластическими движеніями переставляютъ подъ музыку декорации, мѣняя на фабрику.

*) Среди нихъ 2 дансы в абитурахъ.

xx) 2 комиссара и 1 комиссарша.

Содержаніе второго акта.

Къ окончанію музыкальнаго антракта предыдущая сцена вокзала превращена пожарными въ фабрику. Пожарные плясавито удаляются, одновременно съ этимъ появляется на сценѣ главный матросъ, который рѣшилъ одѣлаться рабочимъ. Короткій сольный танецъ съ переодѣваніемъ въ костюмъ рабочаго. Входятъ четверо рабочихъ и выѣстъ съ переодѣвшимся матросомъ начинаютъ работу на первой машинѣ, находящейся около лѣвой кулисы /см. чертежъ № 1/. Нѣсколько позднѣе на самой дальней и высокой площадкѣ начинаютъ работать 5 рабочихъ, среди нихъ героиня. Эта работа на прокатной машинѣ, находясь за сѣткой, видна силуэтно /см. чертежъ 2/. Герой /экс-матросъ/, увидя свою возлюбленную, устремляется къ ней и по дорогѣ попадаетъ на большую площадку, находящуюся посреди сцены, между машинкой, у которой онъ работалъ, и площадкой, на которой работаютъ женщины. Такимъ образомъ его отдѣляютъ отъ возлюбленной пустое пространство и сѣтка. Герой въ отчаяніи, что не можетъ къ ней попасть. На его площадку поднимаются 5 новыхъ рабочихъ съ молотками, малыми и большими, и, начавъ на этой площадкѣ работу, вытягиваютъ въ нее также и героя. Работа молотками - исключительно балетная, безъ шума. Между тѣмъ свѣтовыми эффектами ликвидируются работы у первой машины и на дальней площадкѣ съ женщинами. Но зато группа рабочихъ, среди нихъ и героиня, начинаютъ работу у новой машины у правой кулисы /см. чертежъ № 3/. Героиня съ высоты небольшой площадки у послѣдней машины замѣчаетъ героя, работающаго молотомъ на средней площадкѣ: ихъ мимическая сцена съ разныхъ площадокъ. Оба сбѣгаютъ внизъ, на первый планъ - этимъ знаменуется начало финала.

- Ф и н а л ъ. -

Главные герои танцуютъ вдвоемъ внизу на pedalныхъ аппаратахъ, одновременно съ этимъ вся фабрика приходитъ въ движеніе. Pedальные аппараты построены по принципу станка точильщика или ножной швейной машины. Балетный прыжокъ завершается ударомъ по педали, которая приводитъ въ движеніе небольшую систему колесъ. Первый ударъ по педали является отправнымъ пунктомъ движенія всей фабрики: начинается снова работа на первой машинѣ у лѣвой кулисы, а также на верхней дальней площадкѣ /прокатная работа/ и продолжается работа на машинѣ у правой кулисы. Со средней площадки, на которой была беззвучная работа молотками, опускаются два рабочихъ съ огромными молотами, деревянными, пустыми внутри, и начинаютъ громко ударять ими сообразно съ указаніями въ партитурѣ; другіе рабочіе съ меньшими молотками остаются на средней площадкѣ и тоже ударяютъ ими ритмически. Сверху опускается сложный блокъ, приходящій въ движеніе. На протяженіи всего финала, который длится отъ 3 до 4 минутъ, на декорацияхъ въ разныхъ мѣстахъ играютъ свѣтовые рекламны.

-Prokofiev's Musical Outline-

Translation from Russian¹ – typed page 1

**“URSIGNOL”
Musical outline**

Prologue	I.	Passing of silhouettes. One and a half minutes.
First	II.	The arrival of the train, and bartering. 2 minutes.
act, the	III.	The entry of the commissars and dispersal of the crowd. 1 minute.
Station	IV.	The appearance of the swindlers, theft and pursuit. 2 minutes.
and the	V.	The dance of the orator. 1 minute.
Square	VI.	The entry of the sailor and the dance of the sailor with the worker girl. 3 minutes.
	VII.	The commissars, firemen, dispersal of the crowd. 1 minute.
Interval.	VIII.	Rearranging the set. 2 and a half minutes.

Characters (for the prologue and Act I).

Men	Women
4-5 sailors 2 commissars 2 swindlers 1 orator 6 firemen 3 speculators 3 hungry citizens 21 (if 2 of the speculators and two of the citizens driven away by the commissars at the end of the third item return dressed as 4 of the firemen, then the total is not 21 but 17.)	1 pretty worker girl 1 female commissar 1 male cigarette seller (en travesti) 1 female cigarette seller 1 male sweet seller (en travesti) 1 female sweet seller 6 female speculators 6 female citizens 18

The following take part in the prologue: 3 sailors, the male cigarette seller, female cigarette seller, male sweet seller, female sweet seller, orator, the frightened lady (citizen), two commissars, the female commissar, two bandits, two male and one female speculator.

¹ All translations from Russian were undertaken for the study by Margaret Jones MA (Oxon).

“URSIGNOL”
Pastorale

Prologue. Passage of silhouettes from left to right: 1) sailors, at a running, warlike pace, their caps off, holding their rifles down and at the ready, wearing jackets slung over one shoulder; 2) male and female sweet sellers and cigarette sellers gallop and spin with their boxes of sweets and cigarettes; 3) the orator, taking one decisive step forward and two small steps back, turning like a propeller and pointing at a book; 4) a frightened lady runs past with a nervous gait, opening and closing an umbrella; 5) the commissars, conscious of their own importance, then suddenly attentive, execute jumps in various directions, then adopt their self-important gait again and disappear with a leap; 6) the bandits-cheats jump on their toes, crawl along, then jump again; 7) the speculators, stumbling under the weight of their sacks, fall down, throwing their sacks over their heads, then themselves falling head first over the sacks.

Act I. Light shining onto the stage. The train approaches (from the right), the speculators spill out; from the opposite side, to meet them, come the hungry women of the city with their items for bartering.² The bartering dance: a woman with a sack and a man with an armchair, a man in a caftan with a piglet, and a woman holding a short coat up on a stick like a flag – against a background of general hustle and bustle. The male and female cigarette and sweet sellers twirl about with small steps carrying their trays. Three commissars³ appear wearing multicoloured “French” jackets and begin to push back the crowd. Three quarters of the crowd disperses. Two swindlers creep up and rob a commissar. The three commissars chase after the two swindlers. The swindlers, escaping, climb up the ladders and swing across on a rope to the central platform, crawl down along the board and disappear in the wings. The commissars follow them using the same route and also disappear. The traders who remain stuck on the stage huddle together in fear. From amongst them the orator emerges, making an indignant speech (dance). A few people listen, among them the pretty worker girl, to whom the orator in his speech pays particular attention. 5 sailors enter, well-dressed and over familiar. Four of them scatter across the stage, buying goods and throwing their money around. The fifth, the principal one, is interested in the scene between the worker girl and the orator, and, wishing to protect her, places himself between them. The orator continues with his speech, but then throws down his book in anger. The book bounces back to him on a piece of elastic. The orator withdraws indignantly. The first stylized acquaintance of the sailor and the worker girl: they dance together but without coming into contact with each other. The sailor, whose comrades are calling him, bows to her and withdraws. The worker girl disappears in the opposite direction. The commissars return with the firemen and clear the market.

Interval: the firemen (ballet dancers), with plastic movements, rearrange the set, to music, turning it into a factory.

² Handwritten footnote – presumably by Prokoviev – reads: “Among them are two women in lampshades”

³ Handwritten footnote – presumably by Prokoviev – reads: “2 male and one female commissars”

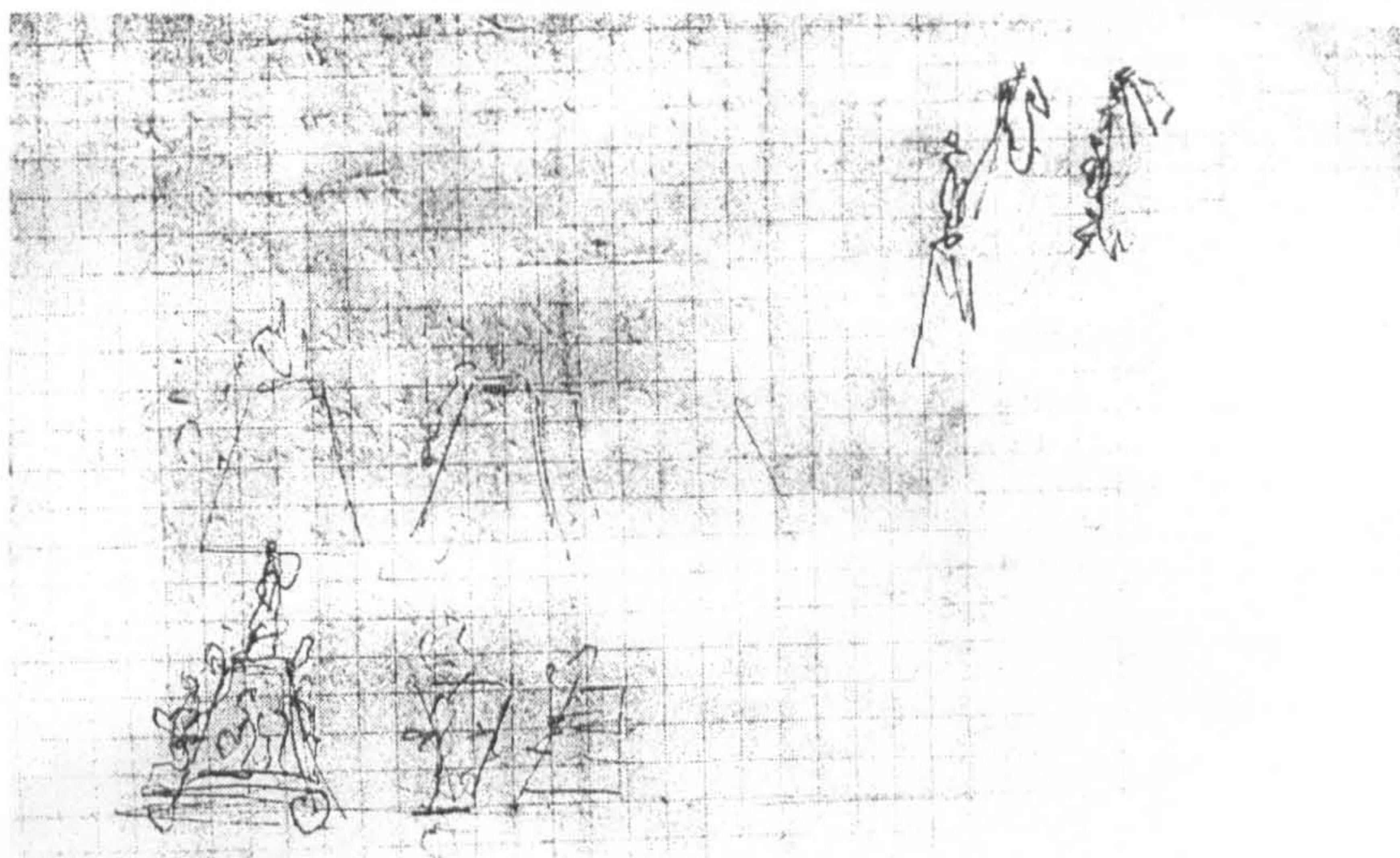
“URSIGNOL”

Contents of the second act

By the end of the musical interval the previous stage of the station has been transformed by the firemen into a factory. The firemen exit, dancing, while at the same time the principal sailor appears on the stage. He has decided to become a worker. There is a short solo dance where he changes his costume into that of a worker. Four workers enter, and together with the transformed sailor they begin work on the first machine, situated near the left wings (see drawing no. 1). A short while later 5 worker women, the heroine among them, begin to work on the most distant and highest platform. This work, on a milling machine situated behind a gauze, is visible in silhouette (see drawing no. 2). The hero (the ex-sailor), seeing his beloved, tries to get to her, and along the way ends up on the large platform situated in the middle of the stage, between the machine on which he was working and the platform on which the women are working. Thus he is separated from his beloved by empty space and the gauze. The hero is in despair because he cannot reach her. Onto his platform climb 5 new workers with hammers, big and small. They begin work on this platform, and drag the hero into their work. The work with the hammers is exclusively balletic, without any noise. Meanwhile, by means of lighting effects, the work on the first machine and on the distant platform with the women fades away. But then the group of women workers, the heroine among them, begins work on a new machine by the right wings (see drawing no. 3). The heroine, from the height of the small platform by the last machine, notices the hero working with a hammer on the middle platform: theirs is a “mime” scene from different platforms. They both run down to the foreground – this marks the beginning of the finale.

Finale

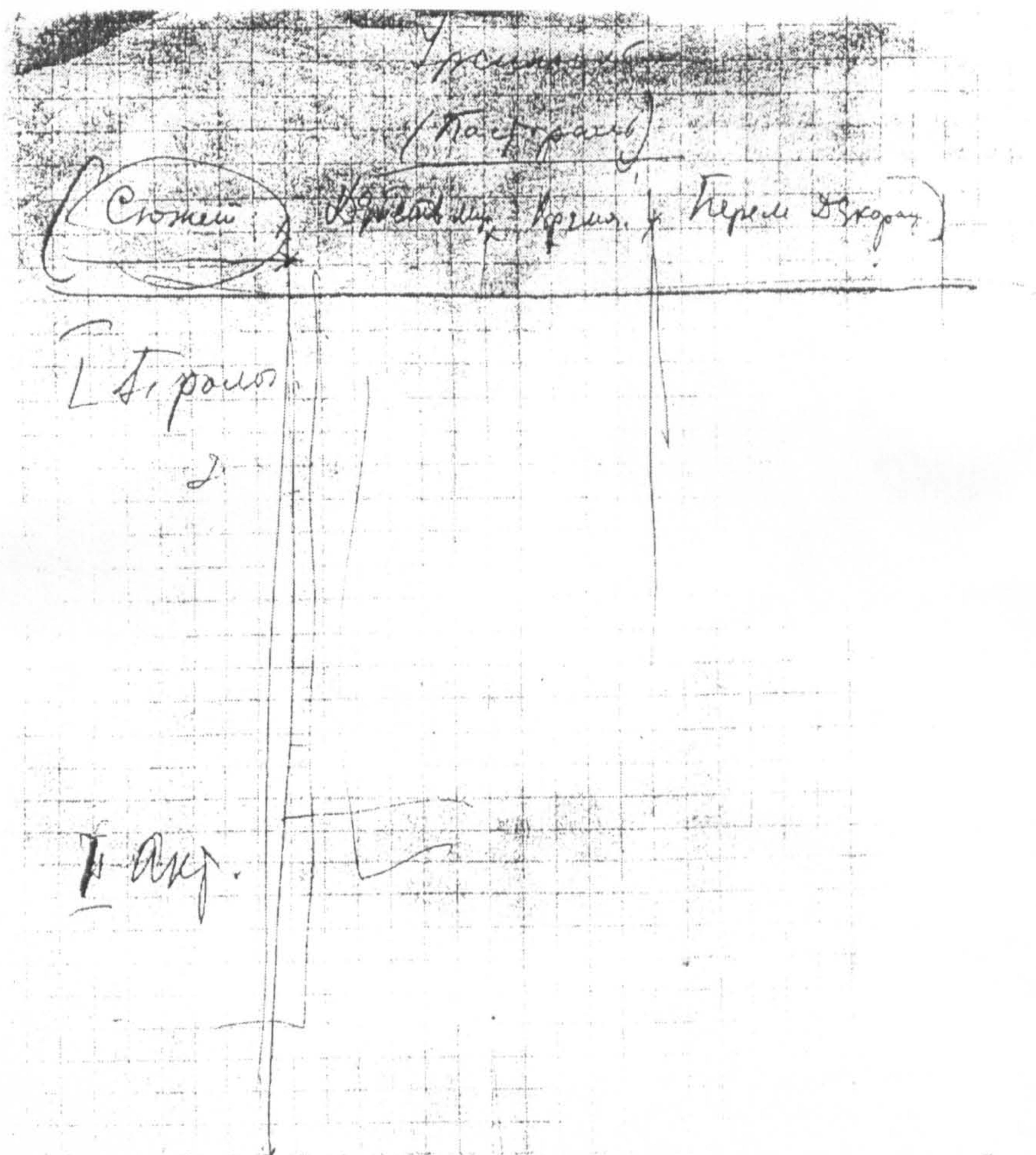
The hero and heroine dance together on pedal apparatus, while at the same time the whole factory is set in motion. The pedal machines are constructed along the lines of a grinding machine or treadle sewing machine. A ballet leap is executed with a blow to the pedal, which sets in motion a small system of wheels. The first blow on the pedal is the starting point for the movement for the whole factory: work begins again on the first machine by the left wings, and also on the upper, distant platform (the milling work), and work continues on the machine by the right wings. From the central platform on which the silent work with the hammers had been performed, two of the workers get down with their huge hammers, made of wood, hollow inside, and begin to beat with them loudly in time with the indications in the score; the other workers with the smaller hammers remain on the central platform and also beat rhythmically with these hammers. Hoisting tackle is lowered from above and sets in motion. Throughout the whole finale, which lasts between 3 and 4 minutes, the lights of advertisements play in various places on the set.



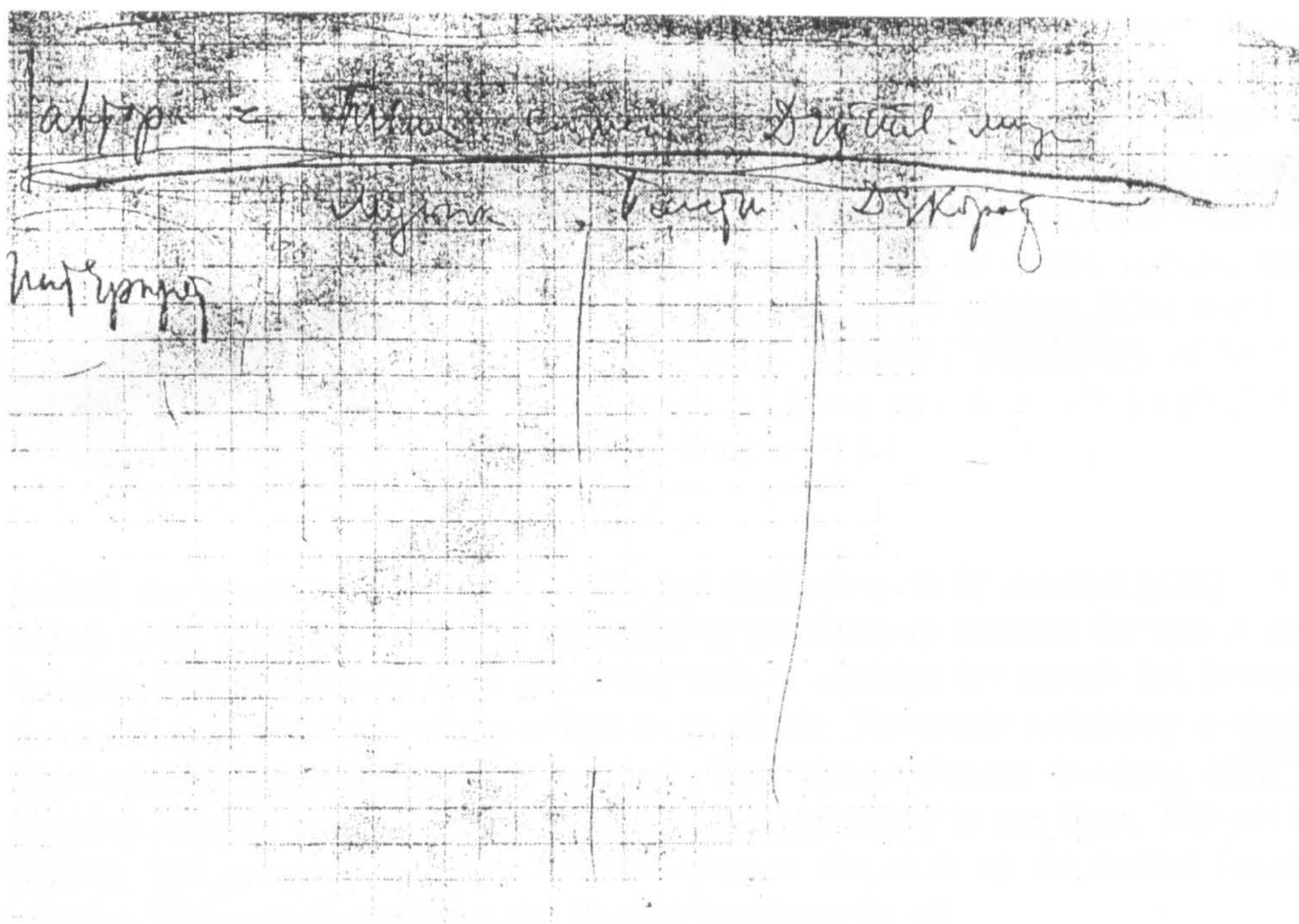
Henry H. Perine

Вспомогательный текст, содержащий описание местности и событий, связанных с крепостью. Текст начинается с фразы: "Вспомогательный текст, содержащий описание местности и событий, связанных с крепостью." и продолжается: "Вспомогательный текст, содержащий описание местности и событий, связанных с крепостью." и заканчивается: "Вспомогательный текст, содержащий описание местности и событий, связанных с крепостью."

Prokofiev's enclosures: letter to Diaghilev 11th August 1925 (See Appendix 4).
Jakulov's manuscript page 3.



Prokofiev's enclosures: letter to Diaghilev 11th August 1925 (See Appendix 4).
Jakulov's manuscript page 4.



[1 – 2 M] II Market

1) Arrival of the train, speculators spill out, to meet them come the hungry women citizens (women in lampshades. a woman in [1M], a man with an armchair, a woman with [1M]). Bartering dance. woman with sack and man with armchair. 2) Woman with [1M] and man in caftan with piglet. [3M] two male sweet sellers and two male cigarette sellers ([2M]). Three commissars appear with peculiar grace, and begin to push back the crowd, the crowd begins to disperse (three quarters). Two swindlers appear, the rob the commissars, a chase begins. The crowd (reduced to a quarter) [1M] and [1M] in the wings. The crowd once again fills the stage. Trading [1M] the joy of the buyers and sellers, the orator appears. dance of the indignant speech, a few people listen, among them the pretty worker girl. The orator attacks [?] her.

[1-2M] the sailors enter. 5 people who feel themselves to be masters [2M] , 4 go about, widely [1M] their money. one is interested in the dialogue between the orator and the girl, and puts himself between them. the orator tries to continue his speech but throws his book down in anger. The book returns to him on an elastic. The orator withdraws in anger. First stylised acquaintance with the girl. They dance without touching each other, the separate, bowing. He rejoins the sailors who are calling him to join them. The girl disappears [1-2M]. The commissars return with the firemen, the clear up the bazaar (located behind gauzes). The commissars leave, the firemen rearrange the set.

Men	Women
4 sailors (5)	1 worker girl
1 orator	2 cigarette sellers
2 commissars	2 sweet sellers
2 swindlers	1 female commissar
6 firemen	1 old woman
3 speculators	6 female speculators
3 citizens	[fig. Illegible] women and citizens
<hr/> 21 people (23)	

¹ Translation note: where the text is illegible, the number of words missed is indicated thus: [1M], [2-3M] etc. Where a word is suggested as a possibility, it is followed by [?]

**Translation from Russian - Jakulov’
manuscript page 3**

Ursignol
Pastorale

Subject [2M]
Changing the set

I Prologue

Act I

**Translation from Russian – Jakulov’s
manuscript page 4**

Author [?] Plan
Subject [2M]

[1M] Music
Dance Sct

APPENDIX 2B

THE SECTION TITLES FOR 'LE PAS D'ACIER' SUPPLIED BY PROKOFIEV 29/07/1927

Source: Prokofiev Archive, London.

This typed page on Le Pas d'Acier is in Russian and dated 29/07/1927, ie. it dates from after the Paris and London performances and the titles differ from both the original 'Ursignol' titles (see Appendix 2A) and from those given to the scenes on the Paris programme. Apart from the second section, all the titles are consistent with the USSR Ministry of Culture Symphony Orchestra recording of 1987.¹

¹ Recorded in the USSR by Olympia, 1987. On the compact disk version available in the UK the second scene has become 'Procession of the Burghers'.

СТАЛЬНОЙ СКОКЪ, оп. 41.

4

Весь балетъ состоитъ изъ одиннадцати номеровъ, носящихъ слѣдующіе подзаголовки:

1. Явленіе участниковъ.
2. Поѣздъ съ мѣлочниками.
3. Комисары.
4. Ирисники и папиросники.
5. Ораторъ.
6. Матросъ въ браслетѣ и работница.
7. Перестройка декорацій.
8. Обращеніе матроса въ рабочаго.
9. Фабрика.
10. Молоты.
11. Заключительная сцена.

Объяснительная замѣтка.

Балетъ Стальной Сокъ былъ написанъ Прокофьевымъ по заказу Дягилева въ 1925 году и оркестрованъ въ 1926 году во время концертнаго турнѣ по Соединеннымъ Штатамъ. Дѣлая этотъ заказъ, Дягилевъ говорилъ: "Намъ надоѣли вѣчные сказочные или боярскіе костюмы въ русскихъ сюжетахъ; я нахожу, что переживаемый Россіей моментъ достаточно красоченъ по своимъ новымъ костюмамъ, фигурамъ и событіямъ, чтобы можно было съ гораздо большимъ успѣхомъ найти сюжетъ именно въ этой области". Въ связи съ этою директивою, Прокофьевъ избралъ обстановкой для своего дѣйствія, Совѣтскую Россію 1920 года и, не касаясь политической жизни, далъ въ Стальномъ Сокѣ рядъ сценъ этнографическаго характера, какъ жизни въ городѣ, такъ жизни въ деревнѣ. Сюжетъ былъ разработанъ совместно съ художникомъ Якуловымъ (George Iacoulov), проживавшимъ въ Россіи безвыѣздно въ теченіи періода революціи. Этотъ художникъ — одинъ изъ главныхъ представителей конструктивизма на сценѣ, въ которомъ декораціи замѣняются геометрическими построеніями. По его же рисункамъ были выполнены костюмы и конструктивистскія декораціи для постановки Стального Сокъ у Дягилева. Премьера балета состоялась въ Парижѣ 7 Іюня 1927 года и въ Лондонѣ 4 Іюля 1927 года. (=было)

Translation from Russian

LE PAS D'ACIER, op. 41.

The whole ballet consists of 11 items with the following subheadings:

1. Entry of the characters
2. The train and the speculators
3. The commissars
4. The sweet sellers and cigarette sellers
5. The orator
6. The sailor in the bracelet and the worker girl
7. Rearranging the set
8. The transformation of the sailor into a worker
9. The factory
10. Hammers
11. Final scene

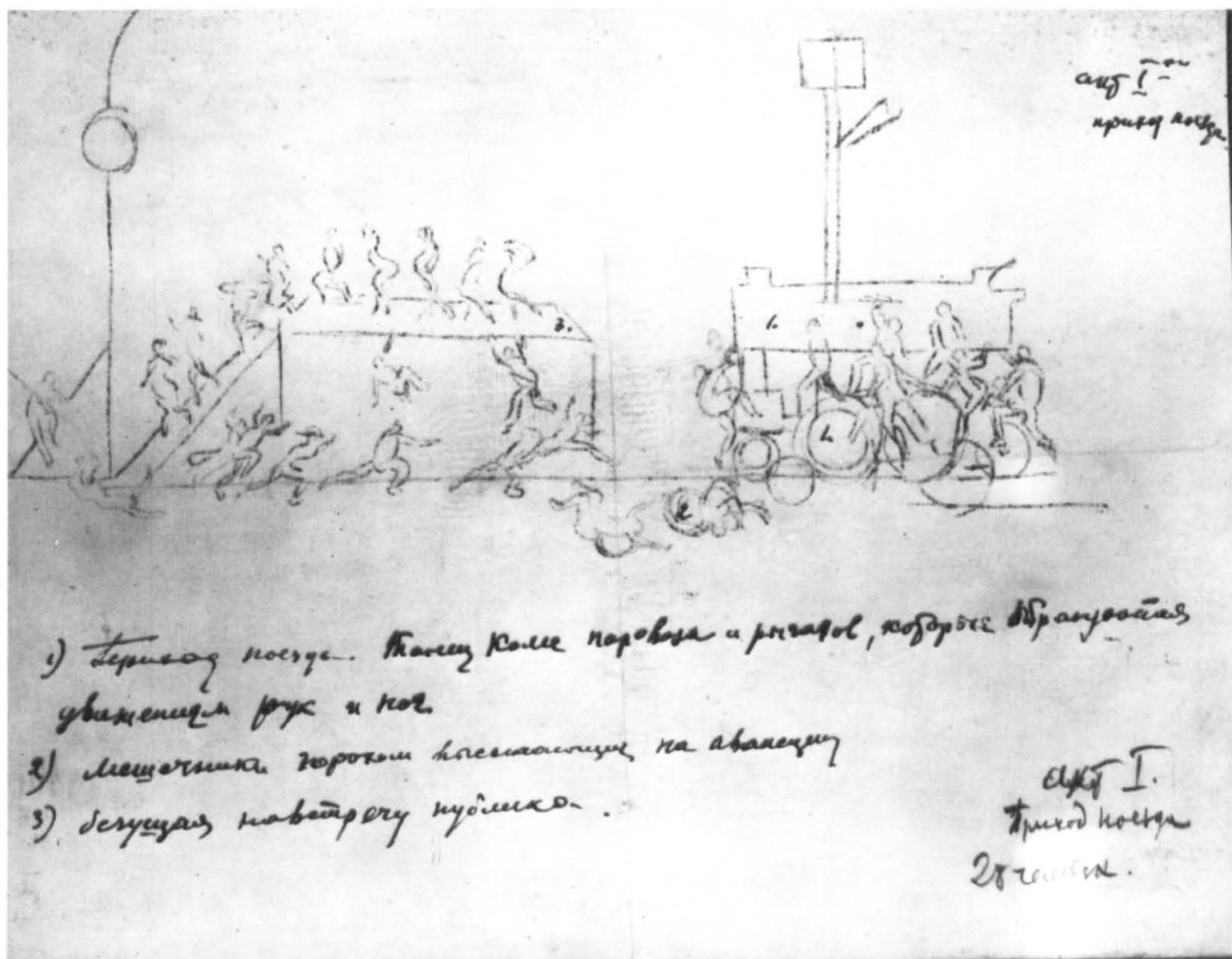
Explanatory note

The ballet "Le Pas d'Acier" was written by Prokofiev at the request of Diaghilev in 1925 and was orchestrated in 1926 during a concert tour in the United States. In giving this commission Diaghilev said: "We are tired of always having the costumes of fairy tales and noblemen in Russian subjects; to me the period Russia is going through at the moment is sufficiently colourful with all its new costumes, characters and events for it to be possible to find a far more successful subject right here in this domain." In accordance with this instruction Prokofiev chose as the setting for his action Soviet Russia in 1920 and, without touching on political life, presented in "Le Pas d'Acier" a series of scenes of an everyday nature, showing both town and country life. The subject was developed jointly with the artist Jakulov who had lived in Russia continuously throughout the period of the revolution. This artist is one of the principal exponents of Constructivism on the stage, in which sets are replaced by geometric constructions. From his drawings the costumes and Constructivist set for Diaghilev's production of "Le Pas d'Acier" were produced. The premiere of the ballet took place in Paris on June 7th 1927 and in London on July 4th 1927.

APPENDIX 3

JAKULOV'S DRAWINGS AND TRANSLATED ANNOTATIONS

DRAWING A(1). Pencil.
Source: Fonds Kochno, Bibliotheque-Musée de l'Opera de Paris.



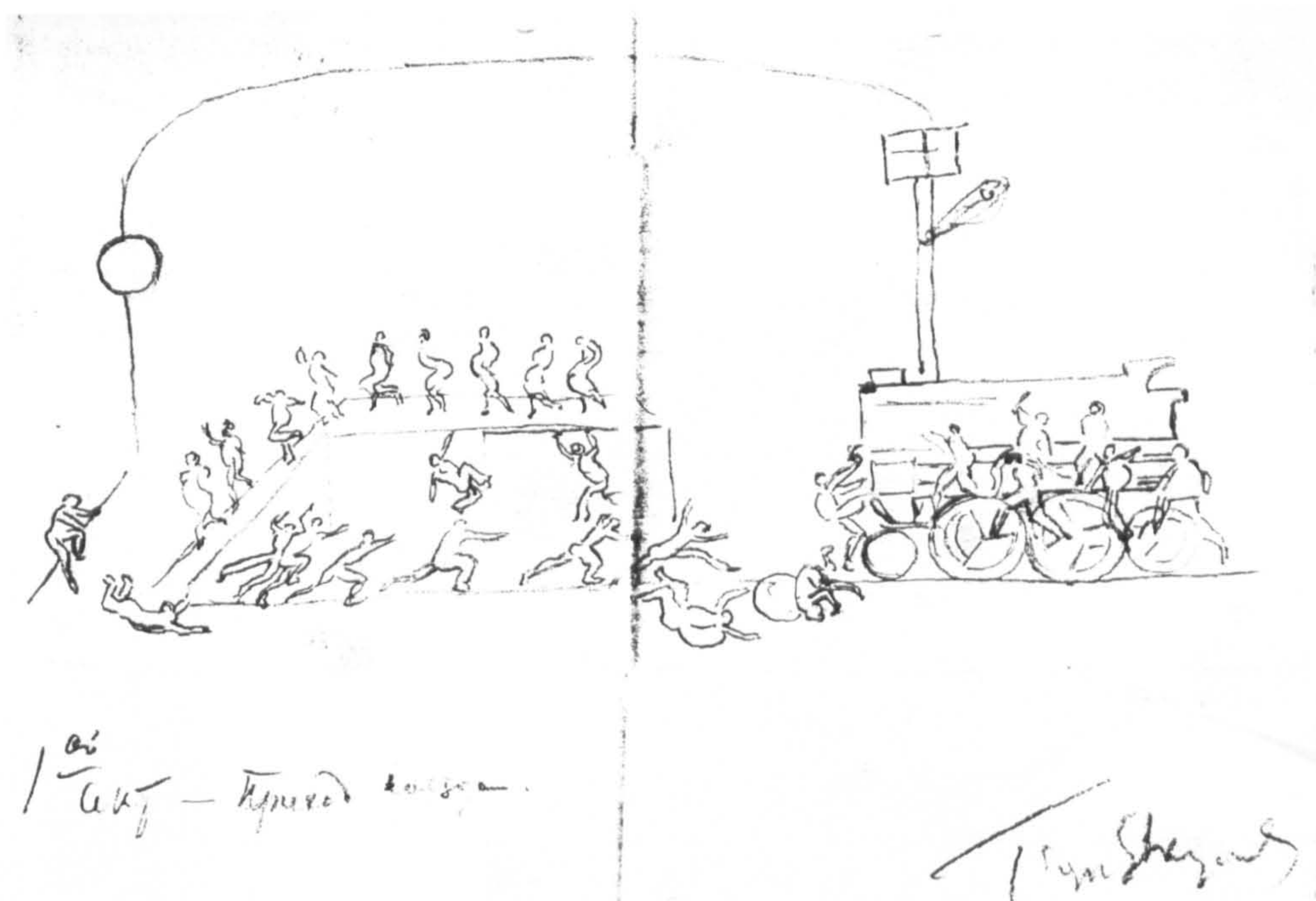
Translated Annotations: Drawing A(1):

Act 1
The Arrival of the Train

- 1) The arrival of the train. Dance of the wheels and levers, depicted by the movements of arms and legs.
- 2) Speculators scattering out towards the front of the stage.
- 3) Public running to meet the train.

Act 1
The arrival of the train.
28 people.

DRAWING A(2). Pencil.
Source: Prokofiev Archive, London.

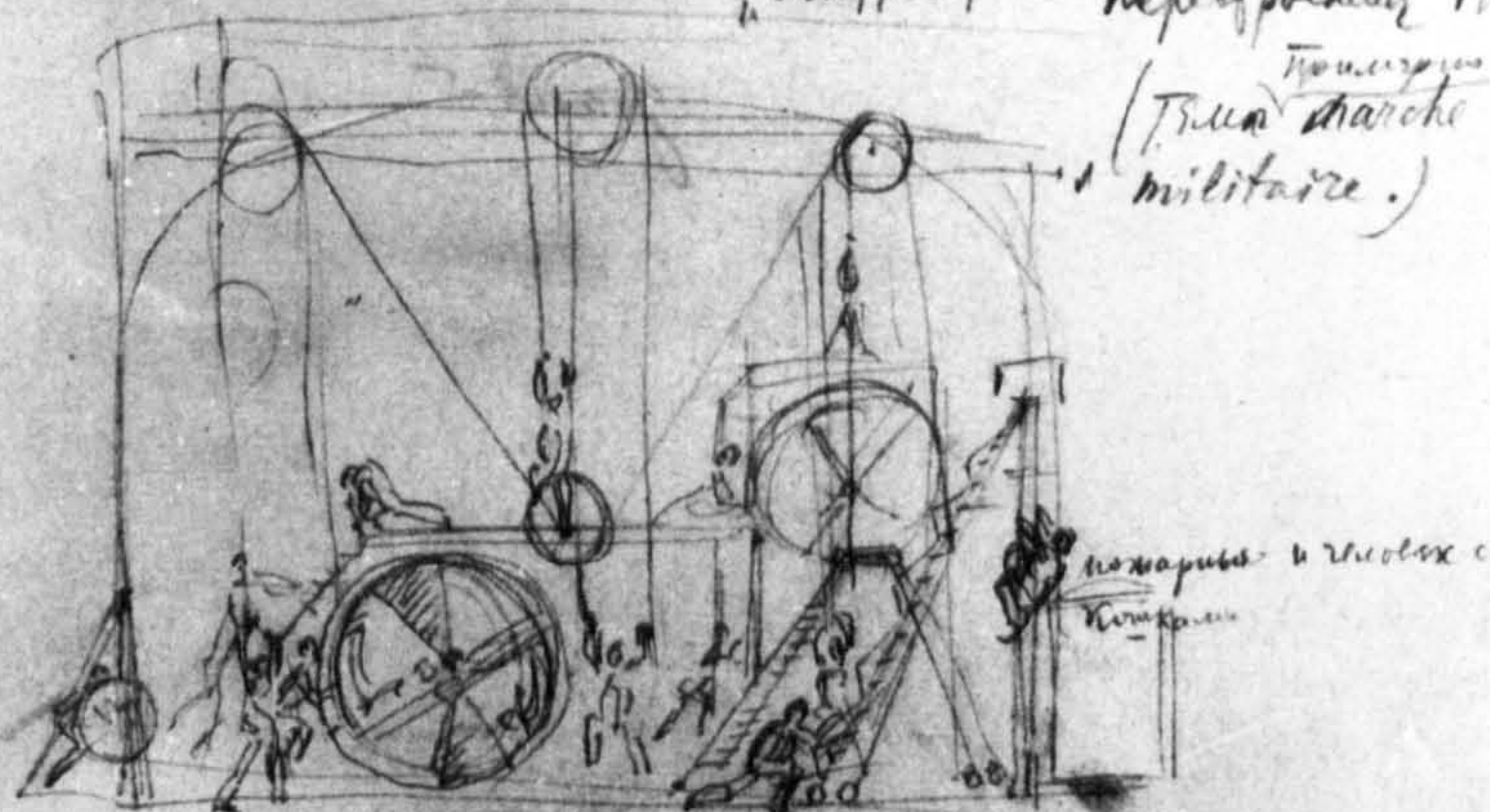


DRAWING B. Pencil.

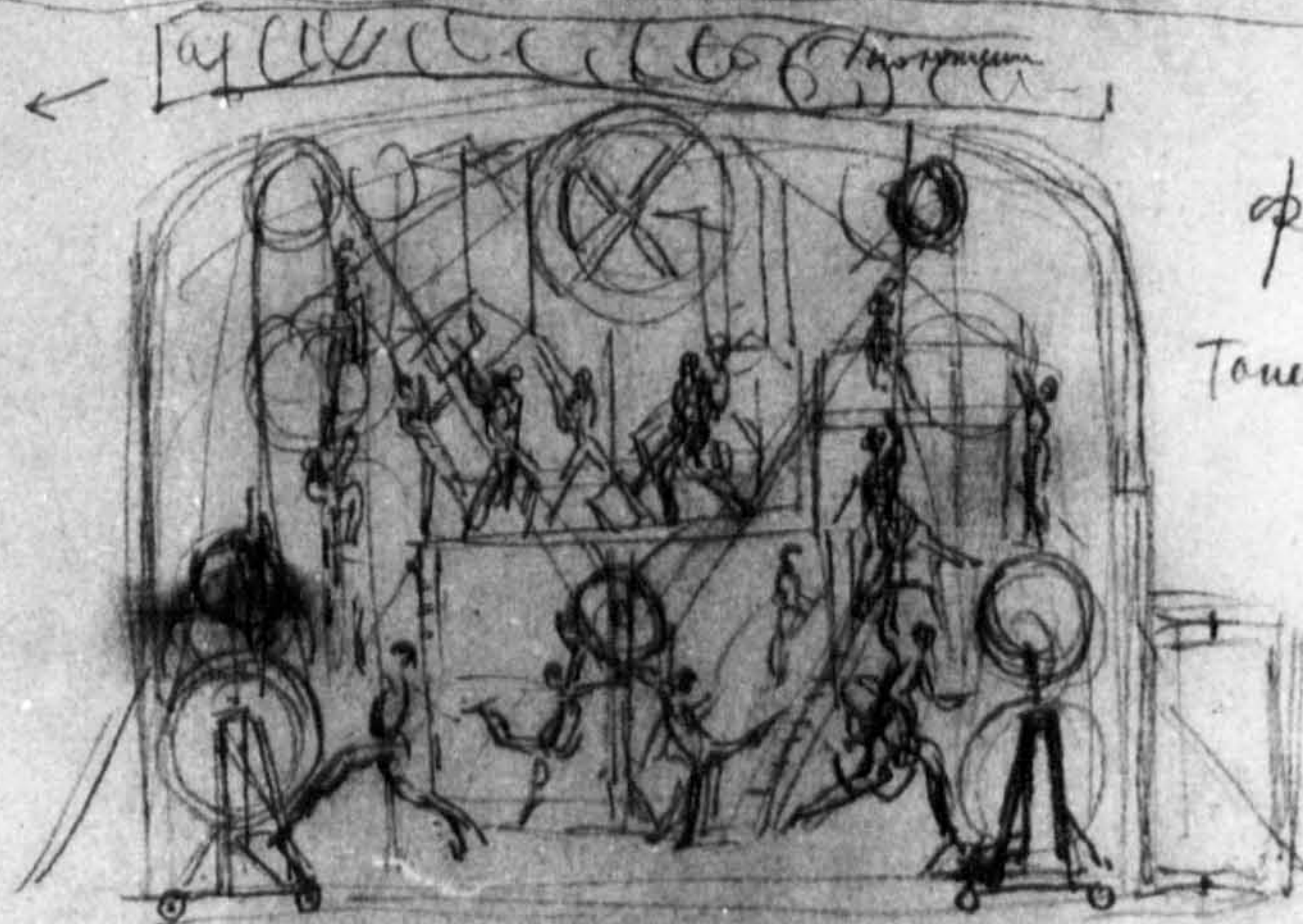
Source: Fonds Kochno, Bibliotheque-Musée de l'Opera de Paris.

Конструкция механизма состоит из 4 частей. 1) неподвижная полка над
самой работой, в которой с помощью на полу. 2) бурагорская
(сфера с педалью) легкая сфера на колесах - подвижная
3) спускающаяся сфера на валах колеса 4) спускающаяся
сфера бурагорски-осветительные приборы. Внизу в колонне
предварительные приборы (схемы) будут размещены на обмундированной
группе. Колеса будут вращаться к движению.

Антракт - Перестроение хора
(Три ^{поисков} ~~марше~~
militaire.)



Засоряется
вращающиеся
колеса



Финал.

Танец с педалью.

Translated Annotations: Drawing B.

N.B. writing in italics = alternative translation suggested by the translator.

Gaps in the text marked by = places where writing was found to be illegible.

The design of the set consists of four parts: 1) static area available for ballet work, with an installation at floor level, 2) mock small ladder/staircase on wheels - mobile (machine-tool with pedals); 3) wheels coming down from above on shafts; 4) mock lighting devices coming down from above. For the purposes of economy, the moving devices will be designed to support a series of movements (*to serve a range of actions*), the number will be kept to a minimum.

Entre-act - Reconstruction of the set
(Tempo approximately a 'marche militaire').

Fireman and person
with grappling tool.

Rotating (*revolving*)
wheels light up.

Finale.
Dance with pedals.

Translated Annotations: Drawing C.

Drawing No.1

Drawing No.2

Foreground

Women

1st moment
men near the left wings

2nd moment

3rd layer back
behind the gauze

3rd moment

The general principle of the construction of the set is a system of moving crankshafts. The movements of the dancers are accompanied by the movements of parts of the set, to give an impression not of abstract ballet movements but of useful “work”.

Source: Fonds Kochno, Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra de Paris.

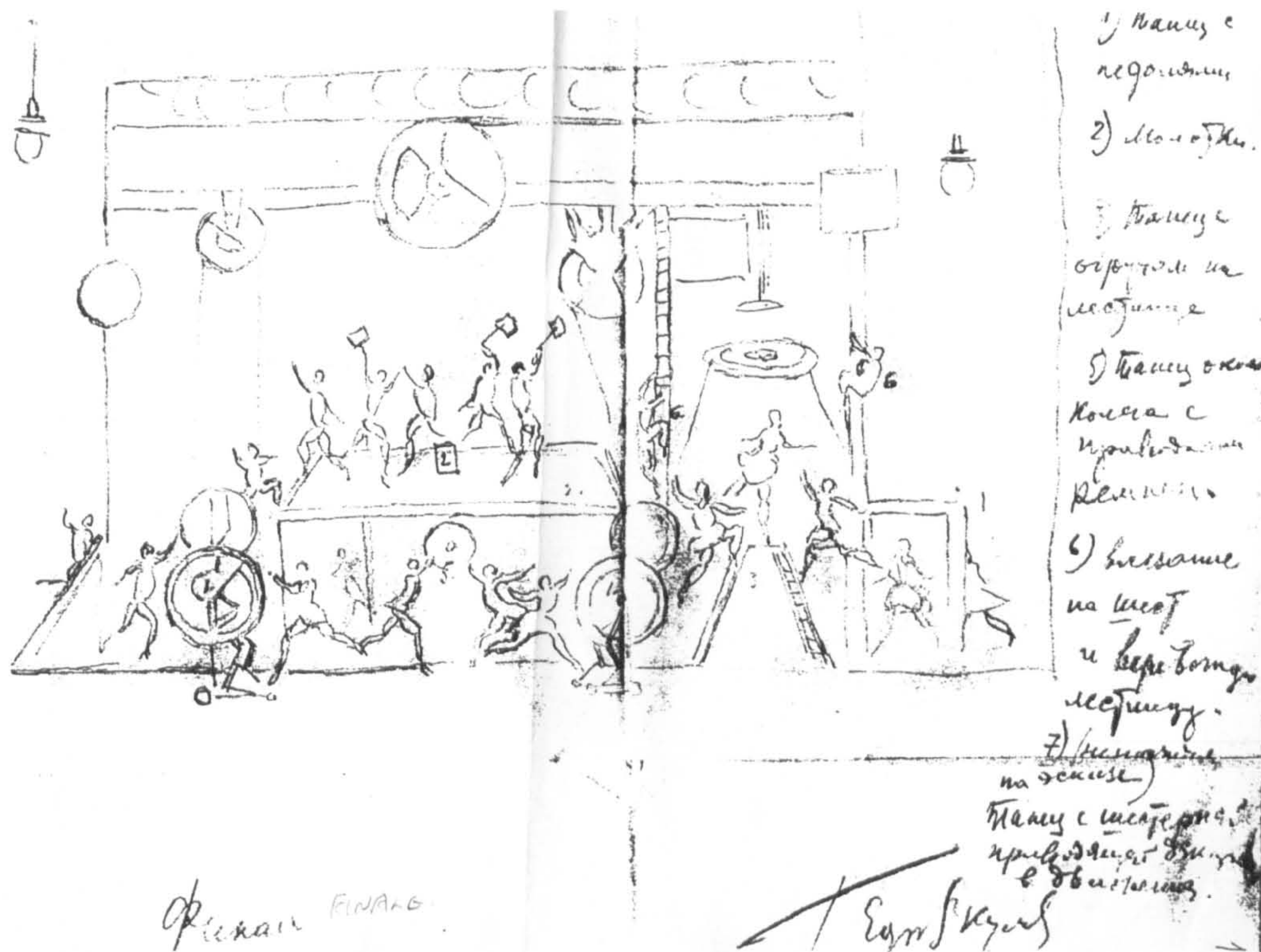


Working in the factory.

- 1) dance with pedals.
- 2) dance with the wheel which puts the set into operation.
- 3) dance on mobile stairs with a wheel.
- 4) climbing on a ladder.
- 5) beating hammers.
- 6) not necessary on the sketch since it will be on the second landing, a dance with a turning gear-wheel setting the set in motion.

DRAWING D(2).

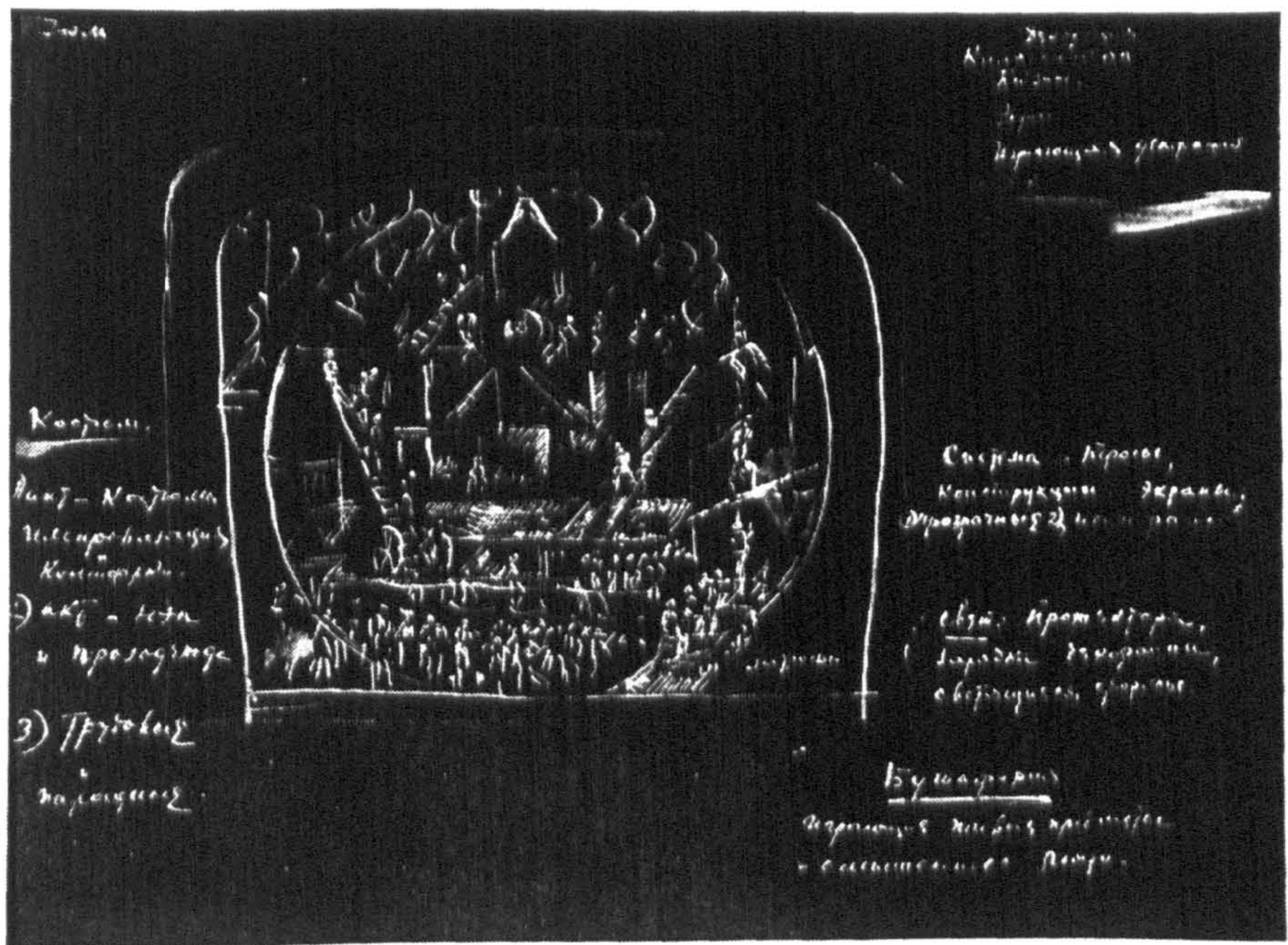
Source: Prokofiev Archive, London.



Translated Annotations: Drawing D(2).

- 1) Dance with pedals.
- 2) Hammers
- 3) Dance with hoop on the ladder
- 5) Dance around a wheel with drive-belt
- 6) Climbing on a pole and rope ladder.
- 7) (Not shown on the sketch). Dance with gear setting the set in motion.

DRAWING E. White goache on black paper.
Source: Lobanov-Rostovsky Collection. Reproduced in ‘Russian Stage Design’
Mississippi Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue, 1982, p.320.



Translated Annotations: Drawing E.

Attempted translation of annotations where handwriting is decipherable. Text in brackets with a question mark indicates uncertain translation – suggestion only.

?

Decor
(Kaleidoscope?)
?
screen
A set in action/motion/play
?

Costumes

- 1) Act - Costumes
Improvisation
and
?
- 2) Act – NEP
and working clothes (*prozodezhda*)
- 3) Labour/working clothes and
'Sunday Bests'.

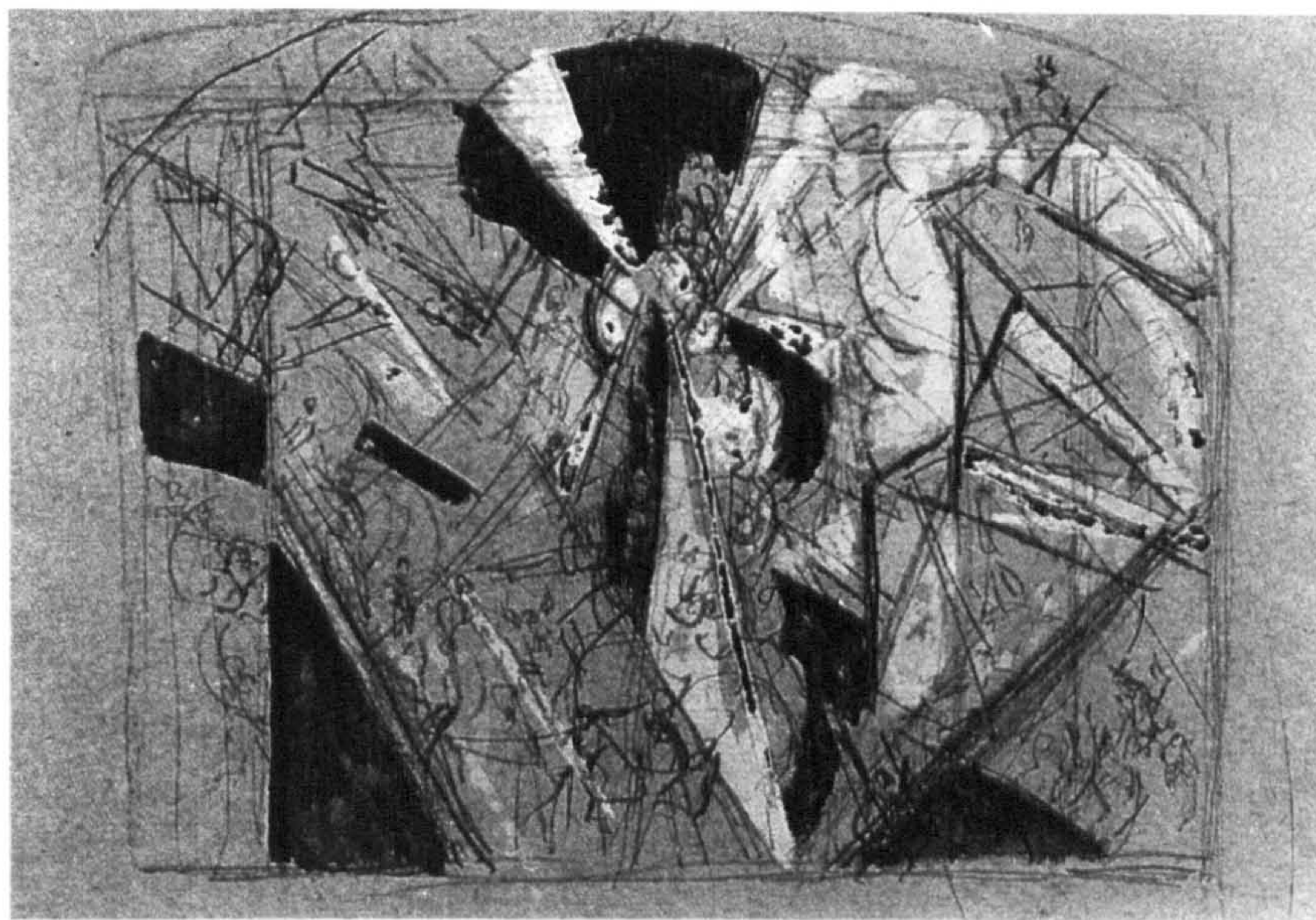
System - cables
Constructions. Screens:
1) transparent
2) (non transparent?)

Light: flood lighting,
enlivening the set,
shining forms that give off light

Props
Animated objects and ? people

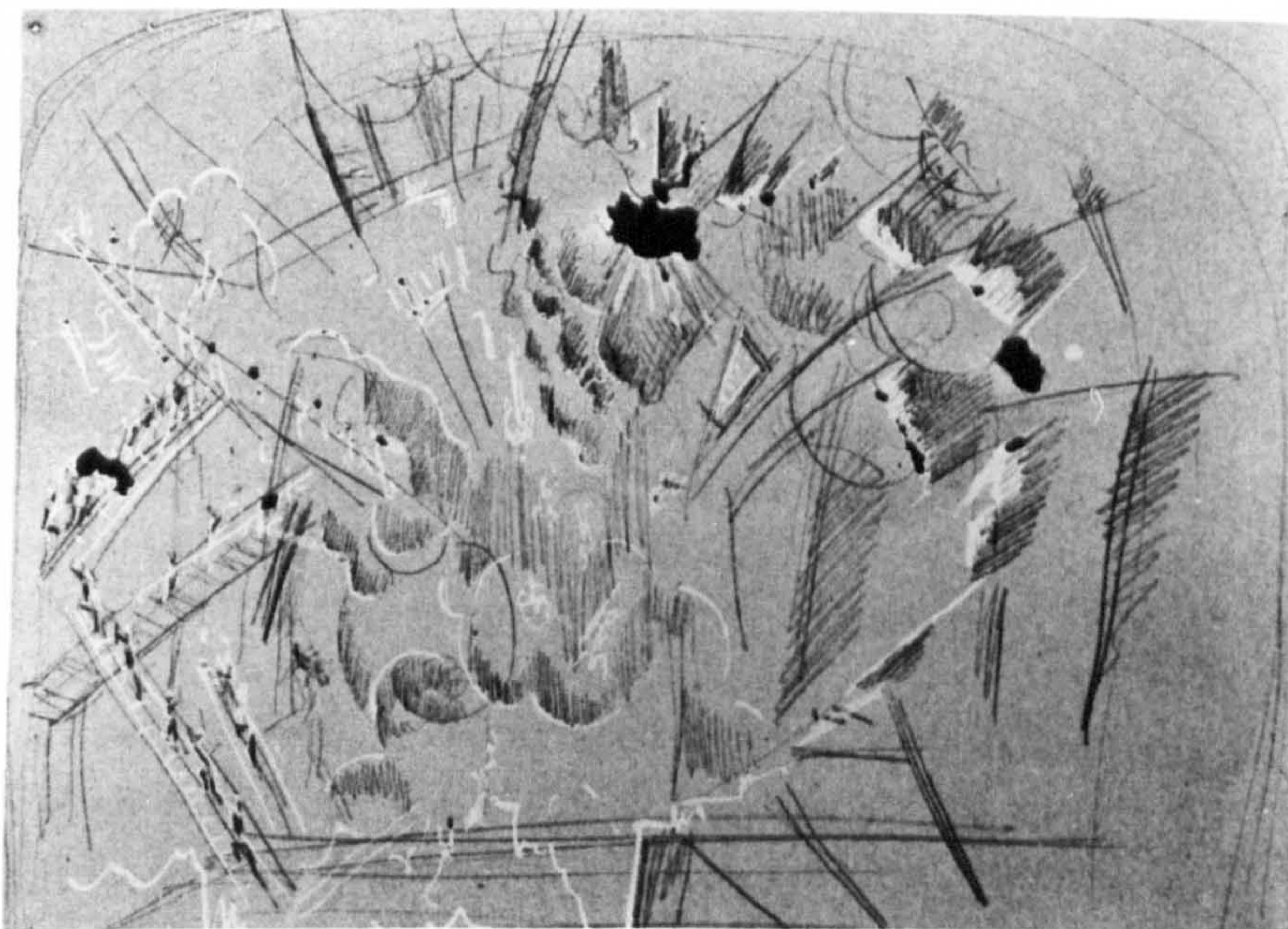
DRAWING F(1). Pencil, gouache.

Source: Fonds Kochno, Bibliotheque-Musée de l'Opera de Paris.



DRAWING F(2). Pencil, gouache and black ink.

Source: Lobanov-Rostovsky Collection. Reproduced in 'Russian Stage Design'
Mississippi Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue, 1982, p.321.



DRAWING G(1) Pencil and watercolour.

Costumes for the Three Dancers of the Clockwork Snuffboxes, 1927.

(On the reverse is a design for a lady in a large hat). Trans. Annotation: Clockwork Snuffboxes.

Source: Lobanov-Rostovsky Collection. Reproduced in 'Russian Stage Design'

Mississippi Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue, 1982, p.321.



DRAWING G (2) costume designs

Source: Archives of the Dancing Times, London.



DRAWING H.
Source: Fonds Kochno, Bibliotheque-Musée de l'Opera de Paris.



Translated Annotations:

Cap

Deerskin.
Short ?

?

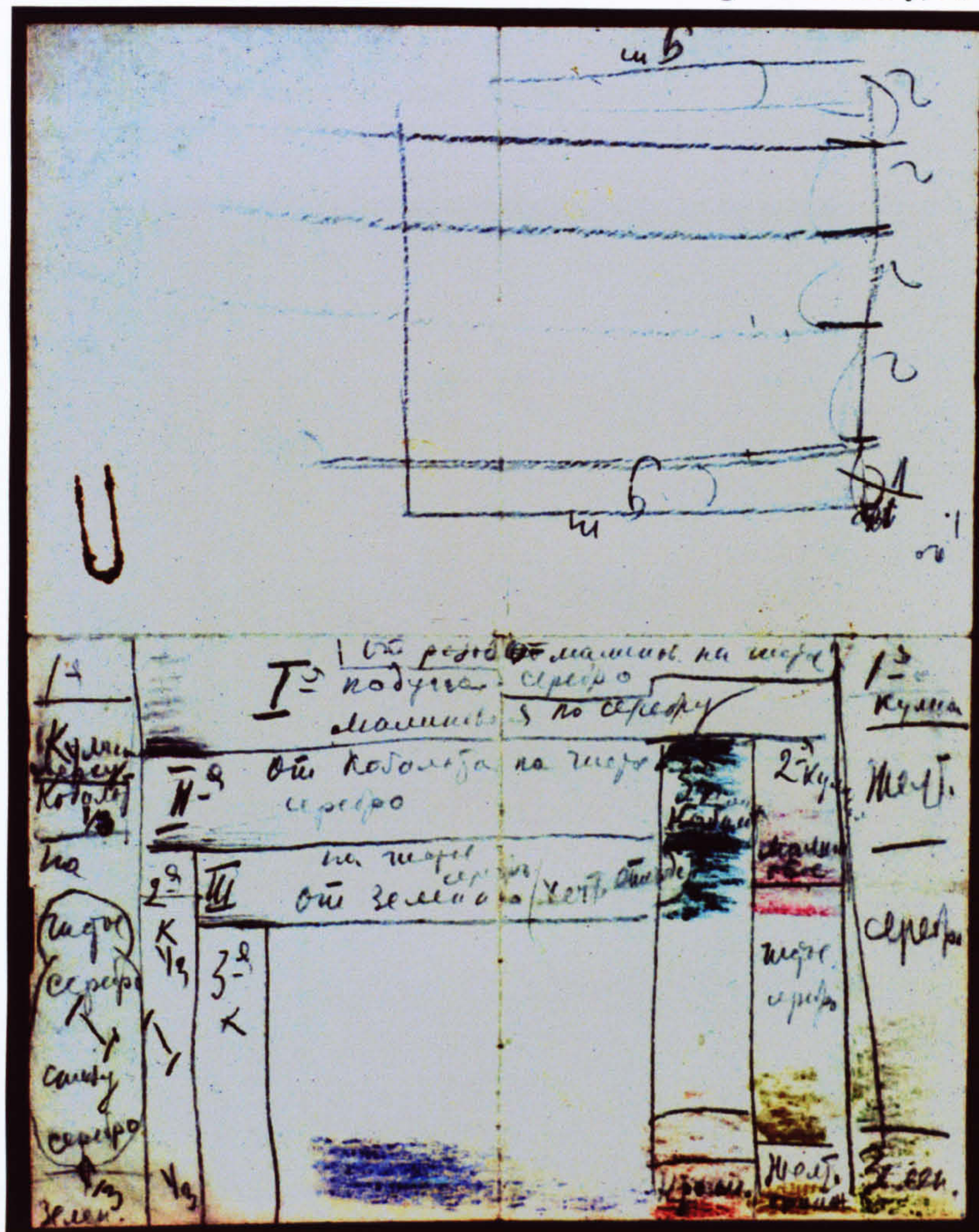
Grey

Yellow

Grey

DRAWING I. Pencil and coloured crayon.

Source: The Dance Collection of the Lincoln Centre Performing Arts Library, New York.

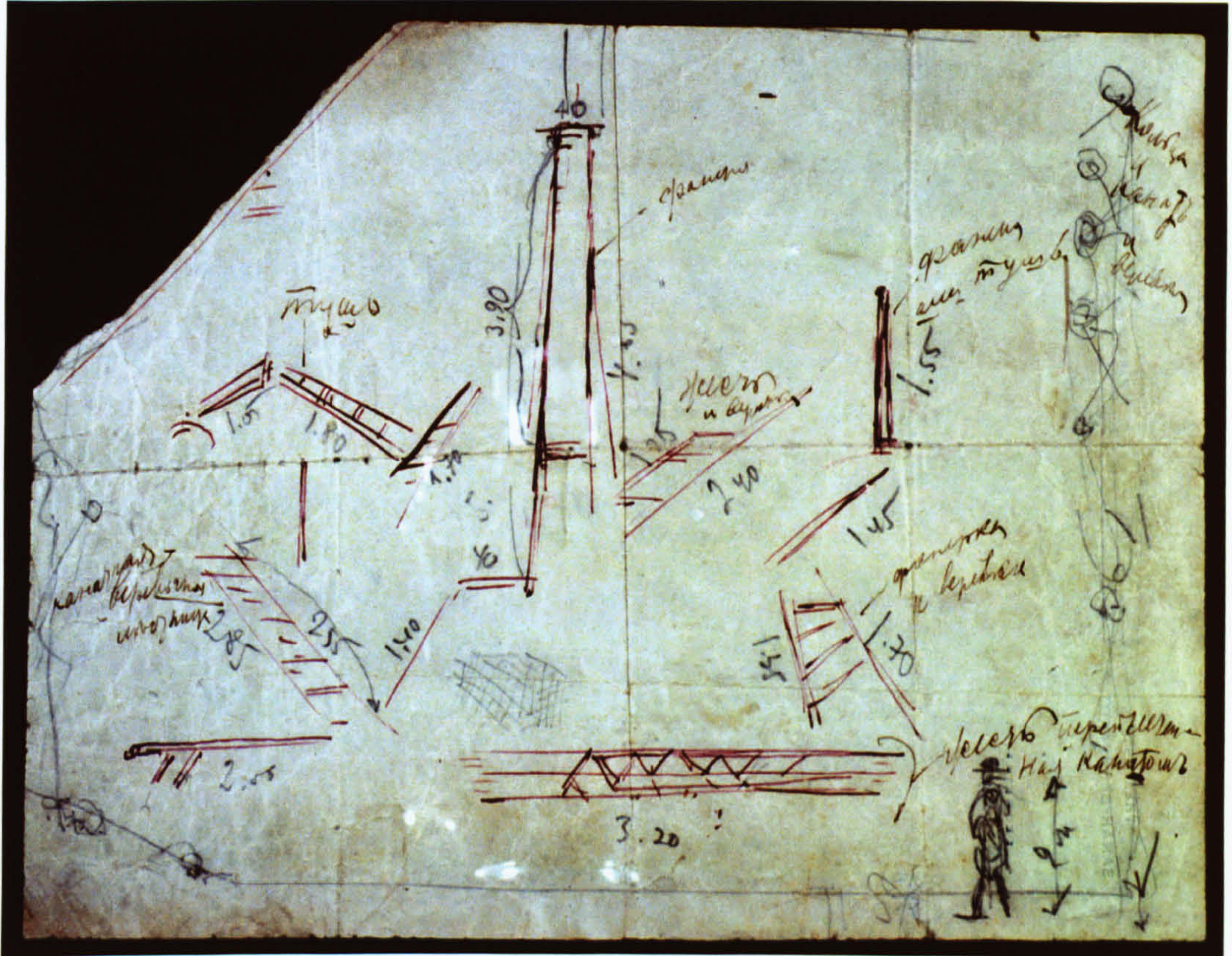


Translated Annotations

The following text translates full words that were decipherable. The 3 layer organisation for each side of the stage can be seen on the above. As on the above, the translation uses numerals 1,2,3 for the sides, and I, II, III for the centre diagram which appears to show the three layers going back through the height of the stage space (ie. presumably showing overhead lighting). It can be seen on the diagram that the side lighting is further divided into thirds within individual sections.

1st Flats	2nd	3rd	I From crimson to pure silver crimson on silver	3rd cobalt	2nd crimson	1st yellow
cobalt 1/3	K 1/3	K	II from cobalt to pure silver			
on pure silver			III to pure silver from green to...?			silver
silver 1/3 green	1/3				pure silver	
				red	yellow	green

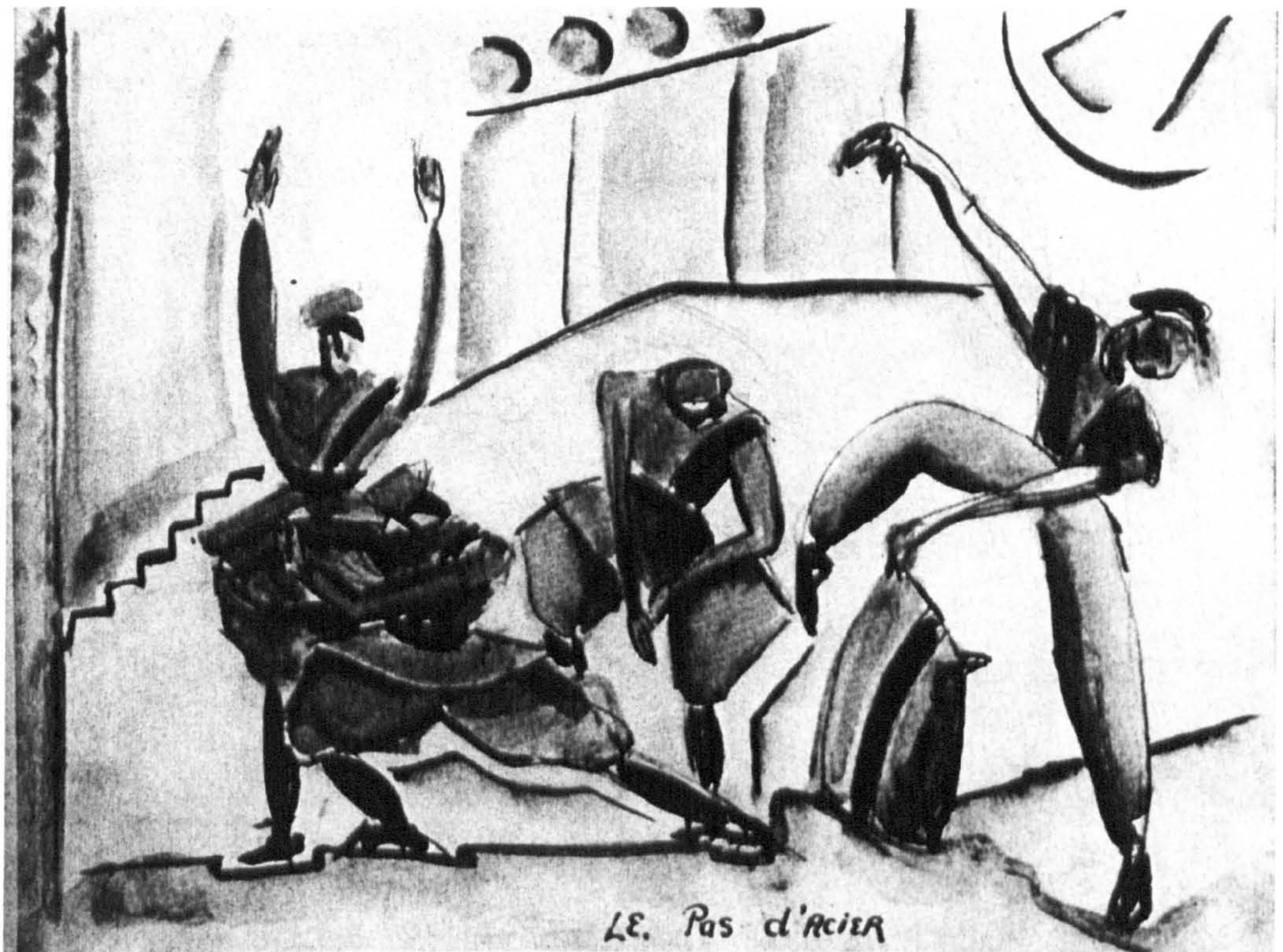
Source: The Dance Collection of the Lincoln Centre Performing Arts Library, New York.



tin plate over a cable?

DRAWING K.

Source: Catalogue: Ville de Strasbourg Deuxième Exposition Européenne Les Ballets Russes De Serge Diaghilev 1909-1929, 15 Mai-15 Septembre 1969



APPENDIX 4

**CONTEMPORARY LETTERS RELATING TO
THE PROCESS OF CREATION**

AND

THE BULLETIN DE DECLARATION OF DECEMBER 1927.

A. Unpublished Letter from Prokofiev to Diaghilev, II August 1925.

Source: Prokofiev Archive, London.

Villa Soyer,
Bourron - Marlotte,
Seine et Marne,
France.

II Августа 1925.

Дорогой Сергей Павлович,

Посылаемъ Вамъ подробно разработанный сценарій I акта.
Второй актъ размѣченъ, но еще не окончательно детализиро-
ванъ, т.к. надо еще выяснить нѣсколько моментовъ, относя-
щихся къ конструкціи декораціи. Черезъ 4 дня мы расчи-
тываемъ закончить и второй актъ. Тогда немедленно вышлемъ
его Вамъ.

Если можно, то просимъ не рѣшать вопроса ^{касательно} ~~о~~ режиссе-
ре^а до нашей встрѣчи въ концѣ Сентября.

Шлемъ Вамъ нашъ сердечный привѣтъ. Оба много работаемъ.

Съ искренной преданностью!

Къ письму приложены:

- I/ Либретто I акта,
- 2/ Музыкальный планъ, дѣйствующія лица и краткое опи-
саніе декорацій I акта,
- 3/ Схема балетныхъ движеній /рисунки Якулова/.

A. -Prokofiev's Letter to Diaghilev II August 1925 –

Translation from Russian

*Villa Soyer
Bourron – Marlotte
Seine et Marne
Francia*

II August 1925

Dear Sergei Pavlovich

We are sending you the scenario of Act I, which has been developed in detail. The second act has been sketched out but the final details have not yet been worked out, because it is still necessary to clarify a few points relating to the design of the set. We estimate that we will finish the second act in 4 days. Then we will send it to you immediately.

If possible, we would ask you not to settle the issue of the director before our meeting at the end of September.

We send you our very best wishes. We are both working a great deal.

With our sincere devotion:

Please find enclosed:

- 1) The libretto for Act I*
- 2) The musical outline, characters and a short description of the set for Act I*
- 3) A diagram of the ballet movements/Jakulov's sketches.*

(For the enclosures please see appendix 2A).

B. Letter from Jakulov to Koussikov¹ (Summer 1925?)

Source: Published in an exhibition catalogue: Les Ballets Russes de Serge Diaghilev, L'Ancienne Douane, 15th May-15th September 1969, p.231. The date of the letter is not given. It's source is given as the President of the Society of Friends of George Jakulov².

...Personnellement j'ai conclu l'affaire pour 10 000 F (et 2 500 F si je viens de Russie). Prokofiev écrit la musique. Ehrenburg est écarté et pense, peut-être avec raison, que c'est de ma faute, car Prokofiev et moi (lui surtout) étions d'avis qu'il fallait d'abord donner les matériaux nécessaires au ballet, à la musique et aux décors, pour ensuite composer le livret, et qu'Ehrenburg ne connaissait pas le théâtre, et le ballet en particulier, n'ayant jamais travaillé dans ce domaine, et que de toute façon il nous faudrait refaire son travail; lui prétendait que l'on ne devait rien changer, parlant de son nom dans les lettres, de sa terrible responsabilité et autres choses 'terribles' pour la Rotonde. En développant le sujet pour Diaghilev, en lui donnant une série de scènes et en construisant déjà le spectacle dans des croquis (costumes et décors), j'ai créé tous les matériaux lors de conversations avec Prokofiev et Diaghilev.

Prokofiev qui a évincé Kochno et Ehrenburg, en quoi je le soutiens, ne sachant pas de quoi il s'agissait, a refusé aussi de te faire participer à ce travail quand je t'ai eu dit, après l'avoir dit à Diaghilev, qu'au fond mon livret était parfaitement suffisant... et il m'a proposé de venir chez lui dans sa maison de campagne, pour élaborer le livret avec lui. Ce voyage a eu lieu, après quoi Diaghilev a accepté le scénario avec quelques corrections peu importantes et a refusé la participation d'Ehrenburg qui avait réclamé pour la commande une forte somme. Après ses deux rencontres avec Ehrenburg, Diaghilev était prêt à écarter même l'idée de monter ce ballet, mais après avoir vu mes esquisses, il s'est enflammé à nouveau. J'ai eu la bêtise de donner toutes mes notes à Diaghilev, pour qu'il puisse s'en servir dans sa conversation avec Ehrenburg. Maintenant Ehrenburg dit que c'est lui qui a 'imaginé' la scène de la Gare, à la place de celle qui portait chez moi l'appellation générale de Soukharevka (marché aux puces de Moscou), ce qui devait désigner la vie quotidienne de la première période de la Révolution; c'est de cela que lui avait parlé Diaghilev en lui racontant mon projet. La Rotonde est en émoi...

¹ An Imagist poet, and friend of Jakulov's.

² Preliminary research enquiries at the Jakulov archive in Erevan (where the Society sent its collection of material on Jakulov in the 1970s) did not locate this letter; it may therefore, have remained in private ownership.

B. - Jakulov's letter to Koussikov -

Translation from French:

Personally I concluded the business for 10 000 francs (plus 2 500 francs if I come from Russia). Prokofiev writes the music. Ehrenburg is set aside and thinks, perhaps with reason, that it is my fault, because Prokofiev and I (him especially) were of the opinion that we must first provide the necessary material for the ballet, the music and designs, and to compose the scenario afterwards, and that Ehrenburg didn't know the theatre, particularly ballet, not having ever worked in this domain, so that in anycase we would need to redo his work; he claimed that nothing should be changed, talking of his name in letters³, of the awesome responsibility and other 'terrifying' things for Le Rotunde⁴. While developing the topic for Diaghilev, while giving him a set of scenes and already constructing the spectacle in sketches (costumes and decors), I created all materials at the time of conversations with Prokofiev and Diaghilev.

Prokofiev who ousted Kochno and Ehrenburg, supported by me, also prevented this work from including you, without knowing that I had already told you, by telling Diaghilev that my scenario was perfectly sufficient...and he asked me to come to his house in the country to work out the scenario with him. This journey took place, after which Diaghilev accepted the scenario with a few unimportant corrections, and rejected the participation of Ehrenburg who had demanded a large sum for the commission. After his two meetings with Ehrenburg, Diaghilev was ready to even give up the idea of mounting this ballet, but after having seen my sketches, he ignited all over again. I was stupid enough to give all my notes to Diaghilev who was then able to use them in his conversation with Ehrenburg. Now Ehrenburg says that it is he that dreamt up the railway station scene in place of the one that in my version had the overall title of the Soukharevka (Moscow flea market), which was meant to portray the daily life of the first period of the Revolution; that was what Diaghilev told him about when he explained my ideas. Le Rotunde is in uproar....

³ It is difficult to be sure what Jakulov means by 'his name in letters' (*son nom dans les lettres*). He perhaps means that Ehrenburg was referring to his standing in the literary world – the fact that his name would be put down as an author of the ballet.

⁴ *Le Rotonde* was a fashionable Parisian café where artists congregated. It is referred to in Ehrenburg's autobiography (Ehrenburg, 1963, vol.3 p. 90ff) as a place where he and Jakulov and many other Russian and non-Russian artists, including L  g  r who designed the 1948 version of the ballet, met during the 1920s.

C. Letter from Jakulov to Prokofiev, 1st September 1925.

Translation from Russian.

Dear Sergei Sergeyevich,

I accept (?) your finale and the arrival of the train, so we have:

- 1) Silhouettes
- 2) The arrival of the train (a locomotive which will be moved by people. Dance of locomotive wheels and levers, speculators the public running to meet it.
- 3) Pursuit of the swindler.
- 4) Finale
 - a) dance with pedals
 - b) hammers
 - c) climbing on the ladders
 - d) dance of three women on the stepladder (on the left-hand side of the sketch)
 - e) dance with the gear bringing the set into motion.

That only leaves the entracte, which will finally become clear after the construction of the model, on which I have started.

The other day I saw Nouvel who is still in Paris, as I learnt from "the beard".

All is going well just now. I expect to finish all the preliminary work (the sketches, the model, the production plan) in the next 2 weeks.

Give my regards to your dear wife.

Bon appetit for work!

Georges Jakulov

Paris 1st September 1925.

P.S. Will you be in Paris and when? Write.
Diaghilev is pressurizing me.

D. Letter from Jakulov to Prokofiev, 12th October (1925)

Translation from Russian

Oct. 12

Dear Sergei Sergeyevich,

I was very pleased to receive your postcard. I did not “miss” Diaghilev, but it was “the beard’s” job to follow and keep me informed. I learnt about it indirectly, thinking that Diaghilev could at least have tracked me down by means of a telegram.

I knew about the arrival on the actual day of the arrival, from Lukomsky, and on the next day from Larionov. I waited a day, then sent Diaghilev a telegram, and in the morning following your visit I had a telephone conversation with him, initiated by S.P. I was at his place at 3.00 in the afternoon and took him to show him the model.

It seems to me that it was “the beard” which (confused?) things, and it would be better shaved.

To make the model with people who do not know the first thing about art or the theatre, and who know even less about my work and such an exotic thing as our ballet, is unthinkable. It would be like winning the Derby on a cow. This is a pity (remember my conversation about the “idiots”).

Now it’s a question of the production. Firstly, it is very sad that I have not heard your music, and secondly, we are approaching a very dangerous point – the production.

Therefore, it seems to me that our actions are not entirely sensible – the production could spoil everything. I have some friendly complaints to you – that we have not listened to your music together, and that we have not roughly worked out the model and the sketches, although I am sure that in general you and I have not diverged from one another. But in acting separately we provide an opportunity for us to be “controlled”, and this is damaging for the ballet, and, I’d say, slightly “clouds” our reputation. (Remember Ehrenburg with his complaints). Any impression that we are being “controlled” must be dispelled completely. Our imminent meeting with S.P. will clearly have a second round of the “dog’s wedding”, and I see a whole string of idle lechers just waiting for a chance to cohabit with the tail or the leg of the ballet, but since the attitude towards the “gender” is indifferent, hence all the quality....

My putting off my meeting with S.P. was intended to force the enemy to “reveal his (hand?)” and this he has done to a sufficient extent.

I agreed the following with Diaghilev: he will come on the 13th in the evening, and we will meet on the afternoon of the 14th.

Regards to your (wife?)

Georges Jakulov.

E. Two Letters from Jean Cocteau to Boris Kochno, June 1927

Source: Boris Kochno, Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes, 1970, p.265

E. (i) 7th/8th June 1927⁵

My dear Boris:

I very much regret having caused a disturbance on Serge's stage, but, given Dima's⁶ mug, his rose, his top hat and his Louis XV cane, his denunciation of Parisian frivolity was hard to take⁷.

I did give him a good smack. His only response was a rather odd "That's all right" and a shameful flight via the nearest exit. He shielded himself at the stage door by offering his arm to a "lady". He escaped under a hail of jibes and laughter from a small crowd of musicians and dancers.

Do tell Serge how much I regret this incident. It was inevitable. My affectionate greetings,

Jean.

P.S. My views were of an aesthetic and also of a moral order. I do reproach Massine for having turned something as great as the Russian Revolution into a cotillion-like spectacle within the intellectual grasp of ladies who pay six thousand francs for a box. I was not attacking the composer or the stage designer.

⁵ Boris Kochno reproduces this letter undated. However, he notes that the incident took place the night of the premiere (7th June) and that he received this letter the next day. See Kochno, (1970) p.265.

⁶ Dima was the familiar name of Vladimir Dukelsky, a Russian composer who composed the ballet 'Zephyre et Flore' for Diaghilev in 1925. He went on to become very well known in America as the jazz composer Vernon Duke. He was a great admirer of Prokofiev and they became long term friends. Some of Prokofiev's letters to Dukelsky are reproduced in Robinson, (1998), p.151-159.

⁷ According to Kochno (1970) p.264-5, Dukelsky overheard Cocteau criticising the choreography and mistook the target of his attack. He interrupted and apparently insulted Cocteau who then responded by slapping him.

E. (ii) 13th June 1927

June 13, 1926⁸

10 Rue d'Anjou⁹

My dear Boris:

Dukelsky came to see me day before yesterday before the performance, and he swore to me that never had he uttered the words I heard him utter.

In view of this position, I withdrew the slap (to whatever extent one can withdraw a slap). There are differences of class, differences in the skies in which this one lives or that one lives, watertight compartments. I grow more and more indulgent. That slap was a reflex, nothing more – the thousandth of a second in which the Angel Heartbreak hovers in the air. The Soviet Embassy has invited me to a Garden-Party [sic]. The .G.P. postponed a fort-night following the murder of Woikoff. Dima's rose, his cane, and Le Pas d'Acier have now received their official apologies. Poor Lenin!

*Affectionate greetings,
Jean*

⁸ The letter as reproduced in Kochno (1970), p.265, gives the year as 1926. However, this must be an error, either by Cocteau or on publication, as the ballet was not performed until 1927.

⁹ Prokofiev appears to have been staying very close by as the address given on this note to Alfred Bloch of 21st June 1927 (see section F) gives the address as 22 Rue d'Anjou.

F. Unpublished Letter from Prokofiev to Alfred Bloch, 21st June 1927

F. -Prokofiev's letter to Alfred Bloch, 21st June 1927-

Translation from French

Attached to the notice declaring "Le Pas d'Acier"¹⁰

Paris, 21st June 1927

M. Alfred Bloch, Paris

Monsieur,

Please find enclosed the declaration notice for our ballet in 2 acts, "Le Pas d'Acier".

It is agreed that you will retain from the share of M. Prok. (which is 75%) fifteen % for M. Massine, the choreographer, and from the share of M. Jak. (which is 25%) five % for the same person. This percentage is only to be deducted for the performances [?] which will be given with M. Massine's choreography.

Yours faithfully

S. Prok Jakulov

22, rue d'Anjou

¹⁰ This line is written in Russian. This letter accompanied the first declaration of the ballet; see the second declaration of 27th December 1927 in this appendix.

G. Unpublished Letter from Prokofiev to Massine, 2nd July 1927

Source: Prokofiev Archive, London.

Serge Prokofieff,
Villa "Les Phares",
Saint Palais sur Mer,
Charente Inférieure,
France.

2. VII. 1927.

Mr. L. Massine,
Prince's Theatre,
Shattosbury Avenue,
London W.C.1.

Многоуважаемый Леонидъ Федоровичъ,

Въ отвѣтъ на Ваше письмо отъ неизвѣстной даты, поспѣшу Вамъ напомнить, что всѣ мои переговоры съ Вами носили характеръ лишь предварительный и освѣдомительный, причемъ каждый разъ я оговаривался, что нѣ считал себя въ правѣ предпринимать какія-либо рѣшенія безъ предварительнаго согласія Якулова.

По Вашему отъѣздѣ изъ Парижа, Ваши проекты подверглись энергичной критикѣ со стороны Якулова, доводы котораго показались мнѣ основательными. Вслѣдствіи этого, а также ввиду того, что истечение сроковъ грозило намъ всѣмъ остаться безъ тантьемн, я счелъ необходимымъ присоединиться къ Якулову.

Уважаюцїи Васъ

G. - Prokofiev's letter to Massine, 2nd July 1927 -

Translation from Russian

*Serge Prokofieff
Villa "Les Phares"
Saint Palais sur Mer
Charente Inferieure
France*

2.vii.1927

*Mr. L. Massine
Prince's Theatre
Shaftesbury Avenue
London WC1*

Dear Leonid Fyodorovich

In reply to your letter of unknown date, I hasten to remind you that all my talks with you were of a purely preliminary and informative nature, and that moreover I pointed out each time that I did not consider myself to have the right to take any decisions without the prior agreement of Jakulov.

On your departure from Paris your plans were subjected to rigorous criticism on the part of Jakulov, whose arguments seemed to me to be well-founded. As a consequence of this, and also in view of the fact that with time running out we were all in danger of not receiving our percentage, I considered it necessary to align myself with Jakulov.

Sincerely yours

H. -Prokofiev's letter to Jakulov, 29 July 1927-

Translation from Russian¹¹

*St Palais
29 July 1927*

Jakulov, Paris.

Dear GB,

I enclose some extracts from the English press concerning "Le Pas d'Acier".

Tairov's proposal is very interesting, but I cannot give him a reply at the moment. Ask him to let me know his address. Do not forget that Dia¹² will only agree to restore to me the right to put on "Le Pas" in the USSR only if he is asked to do so by Lunacharsky.

Best wishes to you and Nat. Yul. from my wife and myself.

Yours

¹¹ In this letter Prokofiev omits many or all of the vowels from the words. According to Noelle Mann, archivist at the Prokofiev archive in London, it was not unusual for him to write in this way and he frequently used abbreviation, particularly for names.

¹² See above note. 'Dia' refers to Diaghilev, confirmed by a letter from Prokofiev to Asafiev of April 1927 when Prokofiev writes that Diaghilev had agreed to performances in the USSR "providing Lunacharsky himself made the request, see Robinson, (1998) p.112.

I. Unpublished Letter from Prokofiev to Massine, 1st November 1927

Source: Prokofiev Archive, London.

Serge Prokofieff,
5, Avenue Frémiet,
Paris, XVI.

I Ноября 1927 г.

Monsieur L. Massine,
Hotel Normandie,
7, rue de l'Echelle,
Paris, I.

Многоуважаемый Леонидъ Федоровичъ,

Вѣжливая форма Вашего письма, которую Вы наконецъ нашли нужнымъ избрать, явилась для меня пріятной новостью. Спѣшу потому отвѣтить на него.

Вамъ вѣроятно угодно видѣть меня на предметъ авторскихъ гонораровъ Стального Скока. Къ сожалѣнію, я долженъ напомнить Вамъ, что въ этомъ дѣлѣ замѣнено третье лицо, а именно Г. Б. Якуловъ, находящійся въ настоящее время въ Тифлисѣ. Вести какіе-либо переговоры въ его отсутствіи совершенно бесполезно: мой гонораръ тѣсно связанъ съ его гонораромъ отношеніемъ трехъ частей къ одной /я имѣю музыкальную долю и половину сюжетной противъ половины сюжетной доли, которую имѣетъ Г. Б. Якуловъ/, а потому всякое измѣненіе въ моей долѣ повлечетъ соответствующее измѣненіе въ его долѣ. Ввиду же того, что долю Г. Б. Якулова въ его отсутствіи трогать нельзя, то и мою долю нельзя подвергать измѣненіямъ, а вслѣдствіе этого какіе-либо переговоры въ отсутствіи Г. Б. Якулова совершенно бесполезны, не говоря уже о томъ, что онъ, очень недовольный переменами въ задуманномъ имъ сюжетѣ, передъ отъѣздомъ категорически заявилъ, что своей позиціи ни въ коемъ случаѣ не измѣнитъ.

Разрѣшите посоветовать Вамъ принять въ данномъ случаѣ положеніе въ томъ видѣ, въ какомъ оно создается, а впредь заранѣе и въ точной формѣ выговаривать Ваши условія.

Уважаній Васъ

I. -Prokofiev's letter to Massine November 1st 1927

Translation from Russian

Serge Prokofieff
5 Avenue Frémiet
Paris XVI
November 1st 1927

Monsieur L. Massine
Hotel Normandie
7 rue del'Echelle
Paris I

Dear Leonid Fyodorovich

The polite tone of your letter which you have at last found it necessary to adopt came as a pleasant surprise to me. For this reason I am hastening to reply.

It is probably very pleasant for you to see me concerning the royalties for "Le Pas d'Acier". Unfortunately I must remind you that there is a third party involved in this, namely G. B. Jakulov, who is currently in Tbilisi. It is quite useless to have any talks in his absence: my royalties are closely tied to his royalties in a ratio of three parts to one (I have the musical share and half of the subject share, as against the half of the subject share which G. B. Jakulov has), and therefore any change in my share will incur a corresponding change in his share. In view of the fact that in his absence we cannot touch G. B. Jakulov's share, my share cannot be subjected to any change either, and so consequently any talks in the absence of G. B. Jakulov are quite useless, not to mention the fact that, being very unhappy with the changes made to the subject which he devised, he declared categorically before his departure that he would not change his position under any circumstances.

Allow me to advise you to accept the situation as it is in this case, and in future to stipulate your conditions clearly in advance.

Yours sincerely

J. Two Unpublished Letters from Prokofiev to Derzhanovsky,¹³ 1928

Source: Prokofiev Archive, London.

J. (i) April 22nd 1928

В.В. Держановскому,
Москва.

М.П. 11.

22 Апреля 1928 года.

Дорогой Владимир Владимирович,

Если Персимфано окончательно отказался от исполнения Стального Скока в этом сезоне, то я буду очень рад, если его сыграют в Ассоциации 27 Мая. Но не думаете ли Вы, что это будет слишком поздно? Пожалуйста постарайтесь на момент отделить себя, музыканта, от администратора Ассоциации и с полной откровенностью установите, не будет ли конец Мат окончательно вне сезона для подписанной ловинки. Если да, то лучше не играть. Если же Вы, музыкант, найдете, что все-таки лучше его сыграть в этом сезоне, то вот Вам подзаголовки одиннадцати номеров балета /кто, если я не ошибаюсь, эти подзаголовки не внесены в партитуру/:

1. Явление участников
2. Поезд с метельниками
3. Комиссары
4. Иронии и папиросники
5. Оратор
6. Матрос в бражете и работница
7. Перестройка декораций
8. Обращение матроса в рабочего
9. Фабрика
10. Молоты
11. Заключительная сцена

Я полагаю, что при первом исполнении в концерте, лучше играть не все номера, а только семь, выкинув третий, четвертый, пятый и восьмой, ибо то, что хорошо со сцены, может показаться слишком длинным при концертном исполнении, особенно при первом слушании. В программе полезно подчеркнуть, что это балет из советской жизни 1920 года, что он был исполнен в Париже и Лондоне прошлой весной и что, несмотря на совпадение с разрывом англо-советских отношений, он имел огромный успех, в подтверждение чего можно процитировать несколько выдержек из английских газет, .

¹³ Vladimir Vladimirovich Derzhanovsky was a Moscow music critic, supporter and friend of Prokofiev. He is mentioned many times in Prokofiev's writings.

J. (i) April 22nd 1928 continued

22nd Апрель 1928 г.

наковне прилагав. Можно также пустить слезу о том, что в СССР, где так тесно идут советскую пьесу, до сих пор ни один театр не догадался заинтересоваться постановкой этого балета. Словом, это веки для Вашего красноречья.

Вторую симфонию надо будет оставить за Персимфансом. Я надеюсь попасть в Москву в Ноябре - пусть они тогда и сыграют. Уж и так Цейтлин верно рассердится на меня за передачу Стального Скока Ассоциации Современной Музыки. Поэтому прошу Вас быть очень дипломатичным, и, смахнув с лица Вашу хроническую ухмылочку, объяснить Цейтлину, что я не хотел оставаться целый сезон не дав новинки и, после отказа Персимфанса исполнить Скок в этом сезоне, должен был передать его Ассоциации. Заметьте: после отказа.

Арим из Игрока не сделан - захлусь ты лотом. Сюита из Огненного Ангела еще пребывает в туманах. Если хватит пороку, главным образом времени, то надо будет сделать симфоническую парافразу на манер тех фортепианных парافраз, которые Лист делал например из Риголетто.

Я перетелефонировал Паичадзе содержание Вашей приписки. Он сказал, что в перестановке сроков готов пойти Вам навстречу и что ждет от Вас письма.

Обнимаю Вас. Сердечный привет семейству от нас обоих.

Ваш

Очень прошу Вас прислать мне /на мой домашний адрес/ партитуру Второй симфонии, которая нужна мне для того, чтобы делать с нее корректуру. Голоса симфонии пусть пока остаются у Вас.

J. (i). Prokofiev's letter to Derzhanovsky April 22nd 1928.

Translation from Russian.

April 22nd 1928

Dear Vladimir Vladimirovich,

If Persimfans¹⁴ has refused once and for all to put on 'Le Pas d'Acier' in the course of this season, I shall be perfectly happy for it to be played in the Association on May 27th. But don't you think that this will be too late? Please try just for a moment to separate yourself as a musician from your role as the Manager of the Association, and tell me honestly whether the end of May isn't really outside the season for putting on something new. If you agree, then it's better not to put it on at all. If you, as a musician, feel that nevertheless it would be better to perform it this season, then here are the sub-headings for the 11 items of the ballet, for, if I'm not mistaken, these are not included in the score:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. The appearance of the participants | |
| 2. The train and the speculators | |
| 3. The commissars | } |
| 4. The sweet-sellers and cigarette-sellers | } without |
| 5. The orator | } a break |
| 6. The sailor in the bracelet, and the worker girl | } |
| 7. Rearranging the set | |
| 8. Transformation of the sailor into a worker | |
| 9. The factory | } |
| 10. Hammers | } without |
| 11. Final scene | } a break |

I suggest that when it is performed in a concert for the first time it would be better not to perform all the items, just seven of them, leaving out nos. 3, 4, 5 and 8, because something which is good on the stage might seem too long-winded in a concert performance, especially when it is being heard for the first time. It would be useful to stress in the program that this is a ballet about soviet life in 1920, that it was performed in Paris and London last spring, and that, in spite of its coinciding with the severing of anglo-soviet relations, it enjoyed huge success, in support of which you could quote some excerpts from the English press, which I enclose. You could also play on the heart strings by saying how in the USSR, where vain attempts are being made to find a soviet play, up till now not a single theatre has had the sense to show any interest in staging this ballet. In a word, here's a chance for you to give full rein to your eloquence.

I'll have to leave the second symphony to Persimfans. I hope to get to Moscow in November – let them perform it then. Tseitlin is really angry with me for giving 'Le Pas d'Acier' to the Association of Contemporary Music. I'd therefore ask you to be diplomatic, and wiping that grin off your face, explain to Tseitlin that I didn't want to wait a whole season without putting on anything new, and that after Persimfans had refused to perform 'Le Pas' this season, I had to give it to the Association. N.B. – after his refusal.

¹⁴ Persimfans was a group of musicians who had experimented in 1922 with a conductor-less orchestra.

J. (i). Prokofiev's letter to Derzhanovsky April 22nd 1928, translation continued

The arias from 'The Gambler' are not finished – I'll tackle them in the summer. The suite from 'The Flaming Angel' is still hazy. If I feel up to it, and if I have the time, I'll have to make a symphonic transcription in the style of those piano transcriptions which Liszt wrote, for example, from 'Rigoletto'.

I passed the contents of your postscript on to Paichadze. He said that he is prepared to reach an agreement with you regarding moving the dates, and he will wait to hear from you.

Best wishes and regards to your family from both of us.

Yours,

Please will you send the score of the Second Symphony to my home address – I need it for proof-reading. You can keep the parts of the symphony for the time being.

J. (ii). May 12th 1928.

Дерзгановскому,
Москва

5, Avenue Frémiet,
Paris, XVI.

12 Мая 1928 года.

Дорогой Владимир Владимирович,

Получил телеграмму от Бухиниги с просьбой о высылке литературного материала, касающегося Стального Снока. Но я против обильных расглагольствований в программах, тем более что в дягилевской постановке было много несоответствовавшего моим желаниям. Я считаю, что вполне достаточно дать подзаголовки отдельных частей, сообщенные мною Вам в письме от 22 Апреля. Эти подзаголовки смогут направить воображение слушателей в нужном направлении - и этого достаточно.

Крепко жму Вашу руку.

Ваш

J(ii). -Prokofiev's letter to Derzhanovsky, May 12th 1928-

Translation from Russian

*5 Avenue Fremiet
Paris XVI
May 12th 1928*

To Derzhanovsky, Moscow

Dear Vladimir Vladimirovich

I have received a telegram from Bukhkniga asking me to send some literary material concerning "Le Pas d'Acier". But I am against excessive verbiage in programmes, especially since in Diaghilev's production there was a lot which did not comply with my wishes. I consider it quite sufficient to give the subheadings of the individual parts which I sent to you in my letter of April 22nd. These subheadings can point the imagination of the audience in the right direction – and that is quite enough.

I shake you by the hand.

Yours

K. Bulletin de Déclaration – 27th December 1927.

Source: Prokofiev Archive, London.

Note: This is the second déclaration regarding the share of the ballet's percentages and has a note, handwritten in French, in Prokofiev's handwriting on the back (reproduced and translated overleaf). This represents an increase in Massine's share of the rights to the ballet.

The original share had been 75% to Prokofiev (representing all the musical share and half of the subject share) and 25% to Jakulov. After the ballet was performed in Paris in June 1927 the first déclaration was presented to Alfred Bloch on 21st June 1927 (this has not been traced but is referred to and described in Prokofiev's letter to Alfred Bloch in section C of this appendix.) This first déclaration took 15% of Prokofiev's share, and 5% of Jakulov's share for Massine (ie now it was divided as: 60% to Prokofiev, 20% to Jakulov and 20% to Massine). This second declaration of December 1927 coincides with the opening of the ballet at the Paris Opera (27th December 1927), and is described by Prokofiev as a second version of the ballet (see overleaf). The percentages are now divided as: Prokofiev: 55%, Massine 30%, Jakulov 15%.

SOCIÉTÉ DES AUTEURS & COMPOSITEURS DRAMATIQUES
12, Rue Henner, PARIS

Déposé, le _____

N° _____

BULLETIN DE DÉCLARATION

Je, soussigné, certifie être le seul _____ de l'ouvrage ci-dessous désigné et
qu'il n'a pas été déclaré à la Société des Auteurs, Compositeurs et Éditeurs de musique.

Imp. HENRI PICARD.

TITRE	GENRE	NOMBRE		THÉÂTRE OU CAFÉ-CONCERT OU LA PREMIÈRE REPRÉSENTATION A EU LIEU ET DATE DE CETTE PREMIÈRE REPRÉSENTATION	AUTEUR	COMPOSITEUR
		D'ACTES	DE TABLEAU			
Le Pas d'acier	Ballet	2	—	Opéra National, Paris	pour livret: G. Iacoulov L. Massine S. Prokofieff pour chorégraphie Massine	Prokofieff
Voire note au dos						

Le présent ouvrage doit être annoncé ainsi qu'il suit:
« Le Pas d'acier en 2 actes de MM. Iacoulov, Massine et Prokofieff »
Musique: Prokofieff

(1) _____
Le 27 Décembre 1927

Répartition des droits entre les Auteurs:

Prokofieff	55%
Massine	30%
Iacoulov	15%

Ce partage ne pourra être modifié et le titre ne pourra être changé dans le bulletin de déclaration, d'une nouvelle version qu'avec le consentement écrit des signataires du présent bulletin.

Ce bulletin doit être signé par tous les auteurs et compositeurs de l'ouvrage, les agents directeurs n'étant autorisés à comprendre dans la répartition des droits perçus que les signataires du présent bulletin et déposé au Siège Social quinze jours avant la répétition générale.

NOTA BENE. — Il est rappelé à MM. les auteurs et compositeurs qu'ils ne doivent jamais consentir des taux inférieurs à ceux prévus au traité général de l'Etablissement où ils sont représentés.

(1) Mettre « Je certifie véritables les déclarations de ce bulletin. »

K. Prokofiev's Handwritten Note on the Reverse of the Bulletin de Déclaration – 27th December 1927.

Source: Prokofiev Archive, London.

Remarque:

Le ballet existe en deux versions: la ~~première~~ ^{première} ~~version~~ ^{version} fut déclarée le 7^{juin} 1927 par M.M. Jacoulov et Prokofieff, les auteurs ~~de cette~~ ^{de cette} version sont M.M. Jac et Prok (et c'est ainsi que le clavier du ballet est publié); cette version fut déclarée par M.M. Jac et Prok le 7^{juin} 1927;

Les auteurs du livret de la seconde version sont M.M. Jac, Mass et Prok. Le présent bulletin est fait ^{pour} déclarer cette seconde version.

Prière de faire la répartition conformément au présent bulletin (du 7^{juin} 1927) quand M.M. Jac et Prok sont mentionnés ~~par~~ ^{en} auteurs du livret;

préciser de faire la répartition conformément au présent bulletin quand M.M. Jac, Mass et Prok sont mentionnés sur l'affiche en qualité d'auteurs du livret.

K. Prokofiev's Note on the Reverse of the Bulletin de Déclaration – 27th December 1927.

Translation from French.

N.B. Text in brackets has been struck through on the original. (?) = indecipherable word.

Note:

This ballet exists in two versions: (the first was declared in June 1927 by Messrs Jakulov and Prokofiev,) the originators of the book of the first version are Messrs Jak and Prok (and it is as well that the (?) of the ballet is public); this version was declared by Messrs Jak and Prok in June 1927.

Authors of the book of the second version are Messrs. Jak, Mass and Prok. The present bulletin is only made to declare this second version.

Please make distribution conform to the first bulletin (of June 1927) when Messrs Jak and Prok are mentioned on the published notice as authors of the book;

Please make distribution conform to the present bulletin when Messrs Jak, Mass and Prok are mentioned on the published notice as authors of the book.

APPENDIX 5

SURVIVING COSTUMES
HELD BY THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL GALLERY

**LABELLED AS:
COSTUME FOR A WORKER:**

Item:	Material:	Ref:
x2 Caps	Cotton	73.270.184 73.270.190
x3 Caps	Wool	73.270.217 73.270.218 73.270.219
x2 Aprons	Resin Coated Cotton	74.270.189 73.270.204
x3 Aprons	Cotton, Resin Coated Cotton Brass Studs, Metal Rings	73.270.193 73.270.194 73.270.223
Trousers and Bib	Cotton, Resin Coated Cotton	73.270.191 73.270.192
Jacket, Trousers, Bib	Resin Coated Cotton, Cotton, Metal Rings	73.270.195 73.270.196 73.270.197
Bib, Apron, Belt	Resin Coated Cotton, Metal Rings	73.270.199.A-C
x7 Trousers	Cotton	73.270.202 73.270.203 73.270.209-13
x2 Bibs	Resin Coated Cotton	73.270.205 73.270.206
Apron, Trousers	Cotton, Resin Coated Cotton	73.270.207 73.270.208
x4 Trousers, Hat	Cotton, Leather	73.270.200.3A-B 73.270.200.4A-B 73.270.200.2A-B 73.270.200.1A-B

**LABELLED AS:
COSTUME FOR A FEMALE WORKER:**

Item:	Material:	Ref:
Dress, Apron	Cotton, Resin Coated Cotton, Brass Studs, Metal Rings	73.270.185 73.270.186

**LABELLED AS:
COSTUME FOR A RUSSIAN WORKER:**

Item:	Material:	Ref:
Jacket, Breeches	Cotton, Resin Coated Cotton	73.270.187.A-B

**LABELLED AS:
COSTUME FOR A PEASANT:**

Item:	Material:	Ref:
Dress, Apron	Cotton, Resin Coated Cotton Brass Studs, Metal Rings	73.270.188.A-B

APPENDIX 6
PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS

PHOTOGRAPH 1

Leonide Massine and Alexandra Danilova as the Sailor and the Worker Girl.

Source: Fonds Kochno, Bibliotheque-Musee de l'Opera de Paris.



PHOTOGRAPH 2

Leonide Massine and Alexandra Danilova as the Sailor and the Worker Girl.

Source: Danilova (1986)



PHOTOGRAPH 3

Leonide Massine and Alexandra Danilova as the Sailor and the Worker Girl.

Source: Hulton Getty Picture Library.



PHOTOGRAPH 4

Leonide Massine and Alexandra Danilova as the Sailor and the Worker Girl.
Source: Hulton Getty Picture Library.



PHOTOGRAPH 5

Konstantin Tcherkass, Leon Woizikovsky and Nicholas Efimov.

Source: Fonds Kochno, Bibliotheque-Musee de l'Opera de Paris.



PHOTOGRAPH 6

Luibov Tchernicheva, Serge Lifar, Alexandra Danilova and Leonide Massine.
Source: Hulton Getty Picture Library.



PHOTOGRAPH 7

Luibov Tchernicheva, and Serge Lifar in costumes from the scene 'Le Beguin'.

Source: Fonds Kochno, Bibliotheque-Musee de l'Opera de Paris.



PHOTOGRAPH 8

Luibov Tchernicheva, and Serge Lifar in costumes from the scene 'Le Beguin'.

Source: Fonds Kochno, Bibliotheque-Musee de l'Opera de Paris.



PHOTOGRAPH 9

Luibov Tchernicheva, and Serge Lifar in costumes from the scene 'Le Beguin'.

Source: Fonds Kochno, Bibliotheque-Musee de l'Opera de Paris.



PHOTOGRAPH 10

Leonide Massine and Alexandra Danilova .

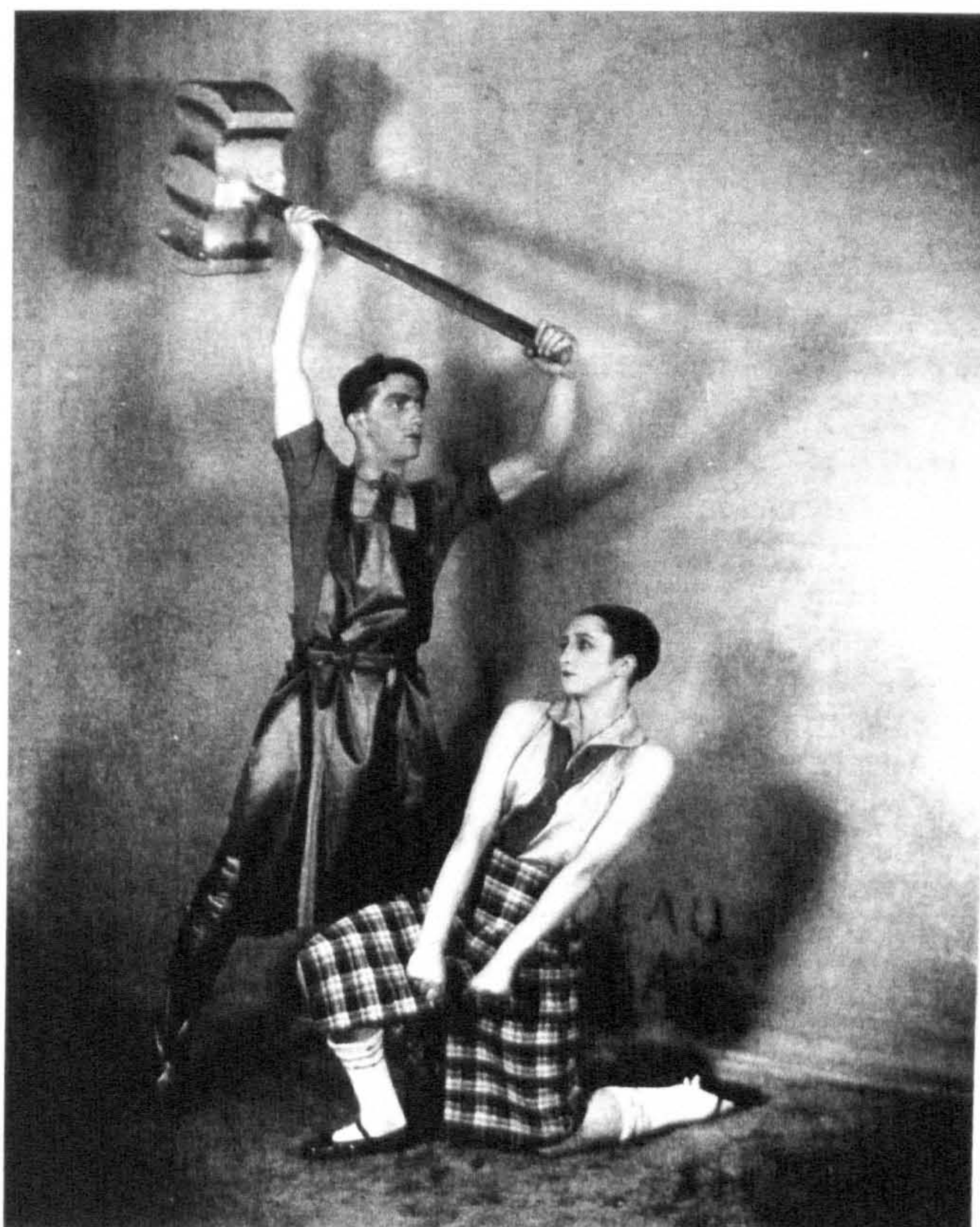
Source: Fonds Kochno, Bibliotheque-Musee de l'Opera de Paris.



PHOTOGRAPH 11

Leonide Massine and Alexandra Danilova.

Source: Hulton Getty Picture Library



PHOTOGRAPH 12

Luibov Tchernicheva and Serge Lifar.

Source: Hulton Getty Picture Library.



APPENDIX 7

CONTEMPORARY REVIEWS

- **Reviews of the Paris Performances – June 1927**
- **Reviews of the London Performances – July 1927**

Comoedia, Paris, Juin 9 1927

Les Ballets Russes au Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt

LE PAS D'ACIER; 1920

Ballet en deux tableaux de Serge Prokoffief et Georges Iakoulof

Musique de Serge Prokofief

Par Pierre Lalo

1920. Prenez garde, je vous prie, à ce '1920'. Il n'a pas moins d'importance que le 'quoi qu'on die' de Molière. C'est la date de l'action, qui se passe en Russie. Dans la plupart des pays du monde, l'an 1920 ressembla à beaucoup d'autres années d'après guerre; ce fut une année de difficultés, de mécomptes et de déceptions. En Russie, ce fut l'année où le bolchevisme vainqueur n'était pas encore organisé (il paraît qu'il l'est aujourd'hui), l'année où chacun se vêtait de haillons et se nourrissait de restes, l'année de la grande anarchie et de la grande misère. Le Pas d'Acier nous en montre des signes dans un tableau où l'on voit danser quatre comtesses habillées de loques multicolores, et coiffées de vieux abat-jour en guise de chapeaux. Mais pourquoi Le Pas d'Acier? Que signifie ce titre mystérieux? Le mystère garde son obscurité pendant presque toute la durée de l'ouvrage: c'est la fin seulement que les ténèbres se dissipent, dans les dernières scènes qui représentent le peuple russe travaillant à l'usine, et soumis à la loi du machinisme. Exprimer par la chorégraphie et la musique à la fois ce labeur mécanique et ce despotisme de la machine, il semble bien que tel soit le sujet du ballet nouveau. Mais il semble seulement; je ne veux point du tout jurer que mon explication soit la véritable; et c'est peut-être tout autre chose.

Les Ballets russes ne nous ont encore jamais présenté un spectacle aussi singulier, et dans lequel ils aient de propos délibéré aussi complètement dédaigné tout ce qui peut charmer les yeux. Les splendeurs colorées du Shérizade ou du Rossignol sont loin; il n'y a rien ici pour la volupté des regards. Au fond de la scène nue, deux estrades étagées; ça et là, des profils de machines, des roues et des disques tournants. C'est tout. Les costumes s'accordent à cette austérité, en même temps qu'ils répondent, par leur air d'indigence et leur aspect dépareillé, à la fameuse date de 1920. Un homme porte deux chaussures qui ne sont pas de la même paire. Une veste a deux manches de couleurs différentes. Et partout des accrocs et de déchirures. Certains personnages sont vêtus de la façon la plus surprenante. Dans un tableau qui s'intitule Le Matelot et les trois diables, ces êtres infernaux nous apparaissent en habits et casques de pompiers; les démons eux-mêmes, dans la Russie de 1920, étaient-ils réduits à s'habiller au 'décrochez-moi ça'? Les ouvriers de l'usine, par leurs tabliers de cuir, donnent quelque impression d'ordre et de correction. Mais les seuls qui atteignent à l'élégance sont un apache et sa compagne: ils portent des vêtements du bon faiseur, et leurs vestes, si je ne m'abuse, sont en veau mort-né. Ce n'est plus de l'élégance c'est de la richesse. Faut-il en conclure que, dans cette même Russie de 1920, les uniques riches étaient les apaches? C'est bien possible.

M. Prokofief, qui est le dernier venu des musiciens de son pays, nous a été révélé, voilà cinq ou six ans, lorsque les Ballets russes représentaient Chout. Depuis lors, divers ouvrages exécutés au concert ont confirmé, en la modifiant sur certains points, l'opinion favorable qu'on avait de prime abord conçu de lui. Il appartient à la bonne lignée de musiciens de Russie, à celle dont sont issues Moussorgsky, Rimsky Korsakof, et M. Stravinsky; et il n'est pas pour eux un héritier indigne. Il est plein de vie et de force; au

contraire de la plupart des jeunes compositeurs de ce temps, qui, n'ayant rien à dire, ne sont occupés que la manière dont ils le disent.

M. Prokofief déborde et surabonde de vitalité musicale. Violente, turbulente et hardiment dissonante le plus souvent, ce n'est pourtant pas par des singularités de vocabulaire que sa musique mérite le mieux d'intéresser. C'est par son énergie naturelle et son abondance spontanée; elle jaillit de source, avec un élan et une impulsion par quoi l'on est vite emporté. Moins sûr de lui, moins maître de ses moyens que M. Stravinsky, il a pour trait particulier une sorte d'effervescence, de bouillonnement dans le rythme et l'orchestre, dont l'effet est souvent très vit. Et par endroits, parmi le tumulte divertissant que mène son ardeur juvénile, apparaissent des coins de musique simples et charmants, des passages de fraîcheur presque populaire. Les mêmes signes se manifestent dans les ouvrages qu'il a écrits pour le concert, avec cette différence cependant qu'au concert M. Prokofief se montre plus sage et plus modéré qu'à la scène; c'est pour le théâtre qu'il garde ses plus vives hardiesses. A tant de raisons d'intérêt, M. Prokofief ajoute encore celle-ci: on le sent capable de faire autre chose qu'il n'a fait; il n'est pas fixé dans une forme ni dans une formule. Il est une des espérances de l'avenir musical. Elles ne sont pas nombreuses.

English Translation:

1920. Take note, I pray you, of this '1920'. It has no less importance than the 'quoi qu'on die' of Molière. It is the date of the action, that takes place in Russia. In most countries of the world, the year 1920 looked like a lot of other post-war years; it was a year of difficulties, miscalculations and disappointments. In Russia, it was the year where the victorious bolshevism was not yet organized (unlike it seems to be now), the year where each clothed himself in rags and fed himself on left-overs, the year of the big anarchy and the big misery. *Le Pas d'Acier* shows this to us in a scene where we see four countesses dance dressed in multicoloured rags with old lampshades for hats. But why *Le Pas d'Acier*? What does this mysterious title mean? The mystery keeps its obscurity during nearly all the length of the work: it is only at the end that darkness vanishes, in the last stages that represent the Russian people working at the factory, in submission to the law of mechanisation. It seems that to express, simultaneously, through choreography and music, the mechanical labour, and the despotism of the machine, is the subject of this new ballet. But it is only how it seems; I don't want to swear that my explanation is the real one; it may all be about something else.

The Russian Ballets have never presented such a singular spectacle, and one in which they have deliberately and completely disdained everything that can charm the eyes. The splendid colours of '*Shéhérazade*' or '*The Nightingale*' are distant; there is nothing here that is pleasurable to look at. At the bottom of a bare stage, are two platforms one above the other, profiles of machines, wheels and rotating disks. That is all. The costumes comply with this austerity, at the same time as they answer, by their air of poverty and their incompleteness, to the famous date 1920. A man wears two shoes that are not of the same pair. A jacket has two different coloured sleeves. And everywhere there are tears and rips. Some characters are dressed in the most surprising way. In a scene entitled '*The Sailor and the Three Devils*', these infernal beings appear in the dress and helmets of firemen; these demons, in Russia of 1920, were reduced to dress in cast offs. The factory workers with their leather aprons give some impression of order and accuracy. But the only ones who are elegant are a ruffian and his companion: they wear well made clothes, and

their jackets, if I am not mistaken, are of calf skin. This is not only elegance, it is wealth! Are we to conclude that in this same Russia of 1920, the only rich were ruffians? It is certainly possible.

M. Prokofiev, is the latest musician of his country to have been revealed to us, five or six years ago, when the Russian Ballets represented 'Chout'. Since that time various works performed in the concert hall have confirmed, while modifying some points, the favourable opinion that had originally been bestowed upon him. He belongs to the good lineage of Russian musicians, from which is descended Moussorgsky, Rimsky Korsakov, and M. Stravinsky; and he is not an unworthy heir. He is full of life and vitality; the opposite of most of the young composers of this time, who not having anything to say, are occupied only with the manner in which they say it.

Mr. Prokofiev overflows with an abundance of musical zest. Assaulting, turbulent and most often boldly dissonant, it is not by the strangeness of its vocabulary that his music deserves to best interest us. It is by its natural energy and its abundant spontaneity; it springs from a source, with an impetus and an impulse that quickly carries one away. Less sure of himself, less master of his medium than M. Stravinsky, he has a very particular feature of effervescence, a seething orchestral rhythm, the effect is often very lively. And in places, amongst the amusing tumult that leads on his juvenile ardour, appear corners of simple and charming music, of a freshness that is almost 'popular'. The same signs appear in his concert works, with this difference that in his concert music M. Prokofiev appears more wise and more moderate than he does in his music for the stage; it is for the theatre that he keeps his vital boldness. To these many sources of interest M. Prokofiev adds one more: one senses that he is capable of producing something other than that which has produced; he is not fixed in a mould or in a formula. He is one of our expectations for the musical future. They are not numerous.

Comoedia, Juin 9 1927.

La Chorégraphie

Persévérant dans leur recherche d'une actualité inédite et piquant, les Ballets Russes de M. de Diaghilev procèdent, dans *Le Pas d'Acier* au lancement d'un exotisme nouveau. C'est là un ballet 'soviétique' dans cette double acception qu'il s'inspire du pittoresque des mœurs révolutionnaires et qu'il est mis en scène selon les procédés en vogue dans l'U.R.R.S. Le scénario, fruit d'une collaboration entre le musicien et le décorateur, se divise en deux parties inégales. La première, suite d'entrées alignées sans transitions, emprunte la forme de la revue de fin d'année (l'ouvrage, daté, a pour sous-titre, la mention '1920'); la deuxième, plus cohérente est une apothéose du travail industriel.

Le décor applique la méthode dite 'constuctiviste', mise en vigueur par Meyerhold et le Théâtre Kamerny, mais don't les excès ont préparé la chute. Un échafaudage à claire-voie porte une plate-forme superposée au plateau; la figuration peut être, comme au music hall, répartie sur deux niveaux différents. Ce praticable est censé agir non par sa masse, mais par la structure seule de sa charpente rectiligne. Rien n'est purement décoratif; chaque accessoire est 'fonctionnel', comme l'appareil de l'acrobate. Tel, du moins, est le principe dont la mise en œuvre apparut; en majeure partie, timide et primaire.

Dans ce décor 'spatial' s'agit une action indigente, indécise entre l'enthousiasme bolcheviste et la sanglante ironie. Seul le musicien s'est emballé à fond sur la donnée, pour le reste, faut-il y voir un hommage ou une parodie. Un acte de loi ou quelque cynique dérision? Faut-il pleurer ou rire? Ni l'un, ni l'autre, il me semble, l'excentricité de la surface dissimulant mal le vide du fond et la duplicité de la conception. Un ballet tout à fait analogue a été donné, il y a quelque deux ans, à Petrograd. Cela s'appellit, je crois *La Vague rouge*; on y trouvait la plupart des motifs qui alimentent *Le Pas d'Acier*; l'entre des va-nu-pieds, la reproduction, par le corps de ballet, du mouvement mécanique des machines. Cette tentative de doter le régime d'un art officiel, exaltant la dictature prolétarienne, tomba à plat; elle récolta, paraît-il, avec le dégoût du public, le mépris des dirigeants. Il est vrai que ce ouvrage ne bénéficiait pas du prestigieux appoint d'une partition comme celle du *Pas d'Acier*.

Les entrées de la première partie, d'un burlesque morne et brutal, se déroulent, accompagnées de la trépidation grimaçante du corps de ballet, basse continue articulant chaque note du texte musical. Des numeros tels que celui du colporteur, marchand clandestin de vivres, qui échange son sac de farine contre les hardes de ci-devant comtesses, cajaolant ce rustre pour un moreceau de pain, sont incompréhensibles sans un commentaire approprié. On a omis dans cette idylle soviétique de faire executer une danse macabre aux anthropophages de le grande famine. 'Ca chatouille', comme dit le clown Pichel. Par contre, la stylisation du viol de la jeune fille par plusieurs ouvriers est tout à fait réussie. Le maitre de ballet lui-même exécute avec la protagoniste des groupes à portées; la danseuse se tient en équilibre, les jambes vilainement écartées, sur le bras tendu du matelot. La rigolade se colore de grossiers sous-entendus erotiques. Combien je compatis à l'humiliation d'un sujet de la valeur de Mlle Danilova, qui, après une enfance studieuse et une lente formation de tout l'être dans le sens de cette noblesse que confere la danse d'école, se trouve reduire à des expériences aussi dégradantes! Que peut tirer un chorégraphe de ces thèmes, offerts par le livret, et qui sont d'une entere bassesse?

Aussi se redresse-t-il dans le deuxième tableau, celui du triomphe des machines. L'abomine la donnée symbolique de cette scène qui astreint des hommes vivants à imiter en idolâtres

le dynamisme des moteurs, des pistons et des roues. Mais la réalisation en est vigoureuse, plusieurs groupes de danseurs exécutant simultanément ou en un contrepoint de mouvements alternés les gestes réguliers et grandioses du travail. Par contre il est puéril de faire accompagner les jeux de ces 'robots' par la giration mécanique de quelques disques suspendus au cintre.

Dans l'ensemble, tout ce qui est vision dans ce spectacle a le tort de se greffer sur l'audition d'une œuvre qui, se suffisant à elle-même, ne sera à véritable place qu'au concert.

On donnait, le même soir, la nouvelle version chorégraphique, par M. Leonide Massine, des *Fâcheux* de Georges Auric. La première rédaction donnait à partition, don't la verdeur ne se dément pas, une interprétation trop discrète, presque blafarde. Au Contraire, l'entrain continu du nouveau ballet, littéralement bourré de gestes violemment accentués, risque d'exagérer le caractère facile et placide de la musique et de la dépouiller de sa bonhomie. Aucune allusion, même lointaine, à l'esprit de Molière. Mais les détails ingénieux abondent et l'entrée des joueurs de boules, vêtus de bleu, avec leurs grands pas lancés, l'envolée des perruques et des basques, est d'une charmante vivacité. Massine ne se renouvelle pas; il est monotone; mais il y a en lui une vitalité débordante qui, ne s'use pas à la répétition.

André Levinson.

English Translation:

Persevering in their search for a new and fashionable identity, Mr Diaghilev's Ballets Russes proceed, in *Le Pas d'Acier* with the launching of a new novelty. It is the 'soviet ballet' with the double meaning that it is inspired by its vivid revolutionary ethos and is staged according to methods in vogue in the U.S.S.R. The script, fruit of a collaboration between the musician and the designer, divides in two unequal parts. The first, a series of entrances aligned without transitions, borrows the style of an end of year revue; (the work mentions a date in its subtitle of 1920); the second, more coherent part, is an apotheosis of industrial labour.

The decor applies the approach known as "constructivist", established by Meyerhold and the Kamerny Theatre, but whose very excesses sowed the seeds of its downfall. A lattice-work scaffolding carries a platform placed above the ground; a design perhaps supposed to be, as the music hall, distributed on two different levels. This platform is supposed to act not by its mass, but by the structure of its framework alone. Nothing is merely decorative; every accessory is as functional as an acrobat's apparatus. Such, more or less, is the principle behind the work's appearance; but it is for the most part, weak and elementary.

In this 'architectural decor' agitates a poor drama, undecided between enthusiasm for Bolshevism and bitter irony. Only the musician was carried away in depth by the material, for the rest, is it a homage or a parody? Is it for real or cynical derision? Must one laugh or cry? Neither one nor the other, it seems to me, the superficial eccentricity conceals the pain of a fundamental emptiness and a dishonest conception. A ballet similar to this, nearly two years ago, in Petrograd, was called I believe 'La Vague Rouge'; one found in it most of the motifs that nourish *Le Pas d'Acier*; the entry of beggars, the representation by the corps de ballet of the mechanical movement of machines. This tentative endowment by the regime of an official art exalting the proletarian dictatorship, fell flat; it received along with the

disgust of the public, the contempt of the powers that be. It is true that this work didn't benefit from a prestigious score as did 'Le Pas d'Acier'.

The entrances of the first part, of a gloomy and brutal burlesque, takes place, accompanied by the nervous, grimacing corps de ballet, with a continuous bass articulating every note of the musical text. Scenes such as the one of the peddler, a black-marketeer who exchanges his sack of flour for the garments of former countesses, who beg this boor for a piece of bread, are incomprehensible without a suitable commentary. They omitted in this soviet idyll to make the cannibalism of the big famine execute a macabre dance. 'Ca chatouille', as the clown Pichel said. On the other hand, the stylisation of the rape of the girl by several workers quite succeeded. The Ballet Master performs with the leading dancer a series of lifts; the dancer is held in balance, legs villainously spread apart, on the sailor's tense arm. The whole episode is coloured with coarse erotic insinuations. How much I sympathise with the humiliation of such a topic to one of the standing of Miss Danilova, who, after studying from infancy, and through slow formation acquiring the nobility that the classical dance confers, is reduced to such degrading experiences! What can a choreographer gain from such base themes?

Likewise, in the second act, concerned with the triumph of machines, we have the abomination on this symbolic stage of living men compelled to imitate, as idolaters, the dynamism of motors, pistons and wheels. But the realisation is vigorous, several groups of dancers executing simultaneously, or in a counterpoint of alternating movements, the mundane and noble aspects of labour. But it is puerile to accompany the games of these 'robots' with the mechanical gyration of some disks suspended from the hanger.

On the whole, the visual element of the spectacle makes the mistake of grafting itself onto the recital of a work which being self-sufficient, is only really at home in the concert hall.

The company presented the same evening, Leonide Massine's new choreographic version of 'Les Fâcheux', by Georges Auric. The first version, where the sharpness did not exactly deny itself, was a too discreet interpretation, pallid. At the opposite extreme, the continuous liveliness of this new ballet, literally stuffed with violently accentuated gestures, risks exaggerating the easy, placid character of the music and stripping it of its simple good-heartedness. There is not even a remote allusion the spirit of Molière. But ingenious details abound and the entrance of ball players, clothed in blue, with their big *pas de lances*, taking off wigs and skirts, has a charming vivacity. Massine is unique; he is monotonous; but he has an overflowing zeal that makes him not repetitive.

L'Europe Nouvelle, Paris, Juin 18 1927.

La Musique.

La 20 saison des Ballets Russes de M. Serge de Diaghilev, au théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt.

J'aurai moins de place pour du Pas d'Acier de Prokofieff, ballet 'bolsheviste', qui, pensait-on, ferait scandale. Tout alla pour le mieux, au contraire, et la vue d'un intérieur d'usine – (stylisé, bien entendu) et d'ouvriers tapant avec d'immense marteaux sur la tête d'un de leurs 'camarades-danseurs' sembla ravir l'auditoire. 'C'est New York', criait une illustre coquette, au premier rang d'une loge. La musique est d'ailleurs belle, puissante, d'une syntaxe inédite, bien que rendu, à mon avis, par un orchestre insuffisant en nombre. Une chorégraphie variée, 'trépidant', comme on dit depuis No, No, Nanette; très 'ballets suédois', suivant les uns, très 'Moscow 1927', suivant les autres. L'avis unanime était que ce serait un gros succès à Berlin; mais, sans attendre davantage, la salle opta pour un grand succès à Paris, et fit une ovation à l'auteur, tandis que, dans le couloir, quelques dames très décolletées et des éphèbes en smoking déclaraient que 'cela donnait envie de visiter des usines'.

Sans doute est-il permis de se demander si une telle esthétique ne rejoint pas, en fin de compte, le pire des dilettantismes. Mais je sens que je m'écarte insensiblement de la musique.

Je ne voudrais pas finir sans mentionner M. Roger Désormière, qui dirigea l'orchestre avec une précision et une autorité magnifiques. Je connais peu de musiciens en France qui aient à ce point la passion et la science de leur métier. Je suis certain que l'avenir réserve à Désormière une carrière très brillante, et que nous aurons en lui, sous peu, un chef capable de rivaliser avec les chefs étranges les plus applaudis. On rendra hommage, alors, à sa conscience, à sa sensibilité. Qu'impose si d'ici là quelques critiques l'accusent d'être jeune, et semblent même lui en tenir quelque rigueur? L'on disait cela aussi de Mozart, qui avait l'esprit de répondre que c'était le seul défaut dont on se guérissait chaque jour.

Jacques Benoist-Méchin.

English Translation:

I will have less space for Prokofiev's Le Pas d'Acier, the 'bolshevic' ballet that we expected to create a scandal. It turned out, happily, to be the opposite and the view of the inside of a factory (stylised, of course) and workers hitting with immense hammers the head of one of their co-dancers, seemed to delight the auditorium. 'It's New York', shouted a famous coquette, from the first row of the stalls. The music is, moreover, beautiful, powerful, of a new syntax, that was well given by an orchestra that, in my opinion, was insufficient in number. A varied choreography, 'vibrating', as one says since 'No, No, Nanette'; very 'Ballets Suedois' according to some, and very 'Moscow 1927', according to others. The unanimous opinion was that it would be a great success in Berlin; but, without waiting further, the auditorium opted for a big success in Paris, and gave an ovation to the

author, while, in the passageway, some ladies in low cut dresses, and some young men in tuxedos declared that they would like to visit some factories.

Without doubt one might ask if such an aesthetic is not ultimately the worst of amateurishness. But I feel that I am imperceptibly departing from the music.

I would not want to finish without mentioning M. Roger Désormière, who conducted the orchestra with a precision and a magnificent authority. I know few musicians in France that have both his degree of passion and the required exactitude of the profession. I am certain that the future holds for Désormière a very brilliant career....¹

¹ Editing marks end of review relevant to Le Pas d'Acier.

Le Figaro. 9 Juin 1927.

COURRIER DES THEATRES

DEUX REPRESENTATIONS SUPPLEMENTAIRES DES BALLETS RUSSES.

Le succès sans précédent, même pour les Ballets russes, de cette saison a décidé M. Serge de Diaghilev à donner deux représentations supplémentaires qui auront lieu au théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt vendredi et samedi. Vendredi nous verdront, un fois encore, le délicieux ballet de M. Sauguet, *la Chatte*, dans le décor harmonieux de Gabo et Pevsner, et samedi, *le Pas d'acier*, de MM. Prokofieff pour la musique et Iakoulof pour le décor et les costumes, dont le spectacle puissant et magnifique vient d'être accueilli par de longues ovations. Ces deux ouvrages qui comptent parmi les plus remarquables créations des Ballets russes, seront accompagnés, le premier par les ballets de *Roméo* et des *Matelots*, le second par *l'Oiseau de feu* et *Mercure*. L'une et l'autre représentation de terminera par les admirables danses du Prince Igor. Ce seront irrévocablement les derniers, et samedi nous dirons adieu, jusqu'à l'année prochaine, à l'illustre compagnie qui fête avec tant d'éclat son vingtième anniversaire.

English Translation:

TWO EXTRA PERFORMANCES BY THE RUSSIAN BALLET.

This season's success, unprecedented even for the Russian Ballet, has led M. Serge Diaghilev to present two additional performances that will take place at the theater Sarah-Bernhardt on Friday and Saturday. On Friday we will be able to see for one more time M. Sauguet's delicious ballet 'La Chatte' in the harmonious décor of Gabo of Pevsner and on Saturday, 'Le Pas d'Acier', with music by M. Prokofiev and décor and costumes by M. Jakulov, a powerful and magnificent spectacle that has just been welcomed by long ovations. These two works count among the most remarkable creations of the Russian Ballet. The first of them will be accompanied by 'Romeo' and 'Les Matelots', the second by the 'Firebird' and 'Mercure'. Both programmes will finish with the admirable 'Dances of Prince Igor'. These will be irrevocably the last performances and on Saturday we will say farewell, until next year, to the illustrious company that celebrates its twentieth birthday with such brilliance.

LA MUSIQUE

Theatre Sarah-Bernhardt: Ballets Russes: 'Pas d'Acier', ballet de M. Iakouloff, musique de Serge Prokofieff, chorégraphie de Leonide Massine.

'Pas d'Acier' commence, si j'en crois le program, par une série de scenes de village. On y voit bonidir une baba-yaya, c'est-à-dire une sorcière, et se rouler part terre une bande de jeunes hommes en gris chargés de représenter un crocodile, comme les soldats de Sparte la tortue. Un camelot se livre à des gambades forcenées devant des dames en falbalas qui cabriolent et se déhanchent aussi frénétiquement que lui. Viennent ensuite: la danse d'un copule de chats amoureux, autour de qui s'amusent une demi-douzaine de souris ironiques: un duo comique entre un robuste matelot de la mer Noire ou Blanche, et un jeune ouvrier, incarnés, l'un par Massine, et l'autre par Mme Danilova: la force et la grâce. Toutes ces folles ne sont pas d'un intérêt extrême, et elles se déroulent devant un triste décor gris, encombré d'un escalier que les danseurs montent et descendent et d'une plateforme où ils se trémoussent à perdre haleine.

Mais la deuxième partie, les Scènes de l'Usine, est extrêmement curieuse. Dans un bruit terrible de forge quie ronfle, de poulies qui tournent, de pistons qui halètent, de marteaux qui s'abattent, les danseurs et les danseuses accomplissent d'abord les gestes du travail: ils soulèvent, ils arrachent, ils transportent, ils martèlent...² Et puis, peu à peu, ils deviennent machines eux-mêmes; leurs groupes avancent et reculent, pareils à des pistons et à des bielles, tournent en ronds concentriques et excentriques, s'engrènent comme des roues dentées. Les femmes se lèvent et s'abaissent, paires et impaires, on les dirait commandées par un arbre à cames. Il y a des lignes de danseurs qui sont des soupapes et des clapets; il y en a qui sont des bobines, et qui sont des dents de peigne. Quelques silhouettes de forgerons apparaissent derriere un transparent comme si l'usine était pleine de vapeurs et de fumées... Les mouvements deviennent de plus en plus violents et rapides, Crescendo, agitato ... Des roues de carton tournent: sous les coups de marteau la plateforme craque..

Cette chorégraphie et cette mise en scène, pleines de trouvailles ingénieuses, font le plus grand honneur à M. Massine.

En même temps. On écoute la musique terrible de M. Prokofieff.

Et grondant et râlant comme un boeuf q'on égorge. Le demon se remet à battre dans sa forge: Il frappait du ciseau, du pilon, du maillet. Et toute la vaverne horrible tressaillait; Les éclairs des marteaux faisaient une tempête; Ses yeux ardents semblaient deux braises dans sa tête...

M. Prokofieff est un formidable remueur de sons! Son orchestre rugit. Il semble que, dans leur fosse, les instrumentistes boursouflent et jettent des luers rouges, commes des fragment de métal fondu. Et ce métal tourne, remué par un cuiller géante... Les rythmes simples, monotones comme ceux que l'oreille isole, dans le bourdonnement d'une usine en travail, ou d'un express. Se répètent, infatigablement. Ils ne secouent pas beaucoup de notes; deux ou trois, qui vont et viennent comme un ' tiroir ' de machine. Ils ne sont pas très variés. Le

² N.B. These are not editing marks, they are part of the original text.

'binaire ' qui est le rythme de la locomotive et du moteur à explosions, y règne en tyran. On se sent petit, sous cette tempête sonore, sous l'effort de ce 'dynamisme' tout-puis-sant...

M.Prokofieff, musicien 'élémentaire' par l'inspiration, est extraordinairement savant dans son orchestration, et génial comme inventeur de sonorités. C'est Titan. Mais ce n'est pas Apollon... Ces accumulations de sons, ces empilements de rythmes, ces crescendi formidables sont faciles à réaliser, quand on s'y applique. Il est moins aisé de découvrir un dessin musical nouveau, et expressif, de dérouler une longue phrase à manière de Bach ou de Mozart... Sans doute, l'impression qu'on éprouve en écoutant 'Pas d'Acier' est irrésistible. On est secoué, maîtrisé, emporté... Mais il faut se ressaisir. Toute cette matière sonore en effervescence, ce n'est pas de très grande musique. La grande musique est celle du cœur et de l'esprit.

Du reste, 'Pas d'Acier' a été écrit en 1920. Et M. Prokofieff, depuis ce temps, nous a donné des œuvres plus variées, et moins rudes.

Toute la troupe des ballets russes, M. Massine, M. Woizikowsky, M. Lifar, Mmes Danilova, Tchernicheva, Vera Petrovna... en tête, se dépense. Cela mérite bien d'être vu.

Robert Dézarnaux.

English Translation:

Theater Sarah-Bernhardt: The Russian Ballet: 'Le Pas d'Acier', ballet by M., Jakulov, music by Serge Prokofiev, choreography by Leonide Massine.

'Le Pas d'Acier' begins, if one believes the program, with a set of village scenes. One sees bound a baba-yaya, that is to say a witch, and rolling on the ground a band of young men in grey representing a crocodile, as the soldiers of Sparta represented a tortoise. A street vendor does wild gambols in front of women in their finery who leap and sway as wildly as he does. Then we see the dance of a couple of amorous cats, around whom half a dozen ironical mice play: a comic duet between a robust sailor of the Black or White sea, and a young worker, played by Massine and Danilova: strength and grace. All this foolishness is not of great interest, and they take place before a sad grey decor, encumbered by a staircase that the dancers mount and descend and a platform where they jig up and down and lose their breath.

But the second section 'Scenes in the Factory', is extremely interesting. In a terrifying noise of a roaring forge, pistons puff, pulleys turn, hammers fall, male and female dancers at first perform gestures of work: they raise, they pull, they transport, they hammer... And then, little by little, they become machines themselves; their groups advance and move back, like pistons and rods, turn in concentric and non-concentric circles, engage with each other like the teeth in gear wheels. Women rise up and descend, in even and odd numbers, as if they were controlled by a camshaft. There are lines of dancers who are valves; there are some that are spools, and others that are the teeth of a comb. Some silhouettes of blacksmiths appear behind a gauze as if the factory were full of steam and smoke... movements become more and more violent and rapid, Crescendo, agitato ... The cardboard wheels turn: under the blows of the hammer the platform cracks...

This choreography and arrangement of the scenes, which are full of ingenuity, owe the biggest honours to M. Massine.

At the same time. One listens to the terrifying music of M. Prokofiev.

And snarling and grousing like a great slaughtered animal, the demon beats in its forge: It hits with the chisel, the pestle, the mallet. And all in the terrible cave are thrilled; steam-hammers of lightning make a storm; the ardent eyes resemble two embers in its head...

Mr. Prokofiev is a great disturber of sounds! His orchestra roars. It seems that, in the pit, instruments swell and gleam red, like fragments of melted metal. And this metal turns, moved by one gigantic spoon... The ear identifies the simple, monotonous rhythms of the hum of a factory at work, or of an express train. He repeats himself, indefatigably. There are not a lot of notes; two or three, that come and go like the movement of a machine. They are not very varied. The 'binary', that is the rhythm of the locomotive and the internal combustion engine, rules like a tyrant. One feels small, under this resonant storm, everything is subservient to this all-powerful 'dynamism'.

Mr Prokofiev, basically an inspirational musician, is extraordinarily skilful in his orchestration, and brilliantly inventive with sonority. It is Titan. But it is not Apollonian... These accumulations of sounds, these stackings of rhythms, these great crescendoes are easy to achieve, when one applies oneself to it. It is less easy to discover a new and expressive musical design, to develop a long sentence in the manner of Bach or Mozart... Without doubt, the impression one feels on listening to 'Pas d'Acier' is irresistible. One is shaken, mastered, transported... But it is necessary to pull oneself together. All this resonant matter is effervescence, not great classical music. Classical music is that of the heart and mind.

However, 'Le Pas d'Acier' was written in 1920. And Mr. Prokofiev, since that time, has given us a variety of less coarse works.

All the Russian ballet troop, Mr. Massine, Mr. Woizikowsky, Mr. Lifar, Mmes Danilova, Tchernicheva, Vera Petrovna... have personally put much into this. It deserves to be seen.

La Musique

Aux Ballets Russes: Le Pas D'Acier, 1920.

Le Pas d'Acier, 1920 est un ballet en deux tableaux de Serge Prokofieff et d'Iakoulouff, mis en musique par Prokofieff, mis en chorégraphie par Léonide Massine. Pourquoi: Le Pas d'Acier? Je n'en sais rien d'une manière précise, mais on sent très bien comment ces deux mots pas et acier, nous fournissent, à l'état brut l'idée de danse et celle de machine. Quant à : 1920, la date se réfère à la Russie de l'Epoque, sous le doux régime de l'U.R.S.S. Les scènes font allusion aux histoires de village et à la vie d'usine: paysans, ouvriers. Le program, pour le premier tableaux, est bourré d'anecdotes dont il serait cruel d'examiner le goût. On en perd, d'ailleurs, presque tout si l'on ne suit pas constamment et parallèlement l'explication et l'action. Le second tableau, au contraire, ne cherche qu'à nous donner, ou plutôt nous imposer une vision de l'usine. Une usine en plein rendement, qu'il s'agisse de la dictature du prolétariat ou d'une autre, c'est toujours la dictature de la machine. Il n'y a plus que des rouages, matériels ou humains. Dans ce vaste mécanisme l'homme n'est qu'une pièce, à peine plus détachée. Tout se fond dans le mouvement total: les machines ont l'air d'être vivantes, les hommes ont des gestes automatiques. Mais tous ceux qui ont assisté à ce spectacle, savent bien qu'il a sa grandeur, une étrange beauté que l'art peut transposer. Le Pas d'Acier tente une de ces transpositions, le second tableau la réussit presque toujours. L'impérieuse évocation de Massine, cette grandiose, hallucinante traduction du mouvement métallique en mouvement humain, est véritablement une grande chose, peut-être une révélation esthétique. Je considère comme neuves et inoubliables ces figures d'ensemble où toutes les danseuses ne forment plus, bras engrenés les uns dans les autres qu'un immense vilebrequin stylisé... où tous ces corps évoquent des comes vivantes, avec, sur cette implacable précision sidérurgique, quelque chose de beau comme un sourire humain... Ici, les étoiles – Lifar, Massine, Mmes Tchernichene, Danilowa, - ne sont plus que les lettres d'une constellation, soumise à la plus aveugle des gravitations. Ce n'est plus de la danse, soit mais c'est de l'art puissant et neuf – peu me chaut que vous discutiez son nom.

Le décor n'a d'autre mission que de servir de cadre impersonnel à ce mécanisme, puis, vers la fin, d'en accroître la grisaille en accompagnant le mouvement des danseurs, du mouvement de quelques disques ou roues. J'ai hâte d'ajouter que la musique prend elle-même tous ces éléments, si je puis dire, pour les porter à la tension maxima. Dès les premières mesures, on sent bien que le courant passe. Mais il faut admirer surtout l'extraordinaire puissance lyrique de la seconde partie où, véritablement, tout cède d'un maître. La joie sonore, la force rythmique, la course de cet orchestre magnifique, ne pourraient se traduire que dans le langage de l'énergétique ou l'électricité dynamique. J'ai souvent marqué telle réserve sur l'art de M. Prokofieff; je sais parfaitement tout ce qu'on peut lui dénier et, personnellement, je ne m'en suis pas fait faute, à propos de sa Symphonie. Aussi bien, je considère comme une erreur étrange de penser que la partition du 'Pas d'Acier' serait à sa place au concert. Je n'ai que trop dit, naguère, combien les défauts de l'auteur – son manque de tête – s'y accusent. Je suis d'autant plus libre pour le saluer aujourd'hui de ma profonde admiration. Je sais quelles résistances le nouveau ballet a rencontrées: trop souvent, notre goût, notre raffinement à la française ne s'aperçoivent pas que nos qualités de finesse se payent parfois cher et qu'il peut en coûter l'abandon de la grandeur ou même de la vie. L'incident Prokofieff est-il nouveau? Ceux qui se rappellent l'arrivée de Salomé ou d'Elektra – ces bolides d'Outre-Rhin – dans notre art d'avant-guerre, estimeront sans doute que non.

Andre George.

English Translation:

'Le Pas d'Acier', 1920, is a ballet in two scenes by Serge Prokofiev and Jakulov, music by Prokofiev, choreography by Léonide Massine. Why: 'Le Pas d'Acier'? I don't understand the precise intention, but one feels very well how these two words, step and steel, provide us with ideas of dance and the machine in their raw state. As for 1920, the date refers to Russia of the époque, under the soft regime of the U.S.S.R. The scenes make allusion to village stories and life in the factory: peasants, workers. The program, for the first act, is stuffed with anecdotes of which it would be cruel to examine the taste. Moreover, one loses nearly everything if one doesn't constantly compare the explanation and the action. The second act, on the other hand, aims simply to give us, or rather to impose upon us, a vision of a factory. A factory at full output; whether it be the dictatorship of the proletariat or some other force, it is always the dictatorship of the machine. There are only cogs, mechanical or human. In this vast mechanism Man is only a piece, scarcely more detached. All melts into the total movement: machines seem to be living, men have automatic gestures. But all those who attended this spectacle, know well that it has its grandeur, a strange beauty that art can transpose. 'Le Pas d'Acier' attempts one of these transpositions, the second picture succeeds almost always. The imperious evocation of Massine, this grandiose, hallucinatory translation of metallic movement into human movement, is truly a great thing, maybe an aesthetic revelation. I consider as new and unforgettable the ensemble figures where the dancers, their arms engaged one with another, come to represent simply an immense stylised crankshaft.... where all these bodies evoke living cams, with, on this implacable steel-making precision, something beautiful like a human smile... Here, the stars – Lifar, Massine, Tchernicheva, Danilova, - are only part of a constellation, subjected to the blindest of gravitational pulls. This is no longer dance, that's as maybe, but it is powerful and new art – it matters little to me whether you want to argue about what it is called.

The set has no purpose other than to provide the impersonal framework for this mechanism, and then, towards the end, to increase the intoxication of it while accompanying the movement of dancers with that of some disks or wheels. I hurry to add that the music takes on all these elements, carrying them to maximum tension. From the first measures, one feels well the passing current. But it is necessary to admire especially the extraordinary lyric strength of the second part where, truly, all is masterly. The resonant joy, the rhythmic strength, the race of this magnificent orchestra, could only be translated using the language of energetics or dynamic electricity. I have often noted such reserve in respect of Prokofiev's art; I know perfectly well just what he can be denied, and for my part I have not denied myself anything, in respect of his Symphony. As a matter of fact, I regard it as a rather strange and erroneous notion to think that the score of 'Le Pas d'Acier' would be at home in the concert hall. In the past I have already said too much about how the composer's faults - his lack of judgement - show up there. Which makes me all the more at liberty to greet him today with my deep admiration. I know what resistance the new ballet encountered: all too often our taste, our French refinement, do not realise that our love of delicacy costs us dear, and may even cost us the loss of grandeur or even of life itself. Is the Prokofiev incident new? Those who remember the arrival of Salome or Elektra – those meteors from beyond the Rhine – in our pre-war art, will not doubt think not.

SAISON DES BALLETS RUSSES

LE PAS D'ACIER

**Ballet en deux tableaux de MM. Serge Prokofieff et Georges Tacouloff (sic)
Musique de M.Serge Prokofieff.**

Le Pas d'acier est la dernière nouveauté que nous auront offerte les danseurs de M. de Diaghileff en cette saison.

C'est une œuvre étrange, de toutes les manières, depuis son titre jusqu'à sa réalisation chorégraphique et musicale. Le program nous informe qu'on a voulu évoquer, en deux parties, des légendes de la vie populaire, au village d'abord, puis à l'usine, bref la faucille et le marteau. Peut-être cet ouvrage est-il destiné à remplacer, dans les cérémonies soviétiques, l'antique 'Vie pour le Tsar', qui n'est évidemment plus de saison. Le public, - cosmopolite, comme toujours, - s'est partagé entre admirateurs forcenés du musicien, dont la valeur personnelle est indiscutable, et en spectateurs ahuris, persuadés d'une mystification ou d'une provocation. Les scènes supposées être situées au village se passent dans une vaste chambre grise, meublée, au centre, d'une plateforme accessible par un escalier, d'un disque de chemin de fer à gauche et d'un reverbère à droite. Ceci doit évoquer la campagne russe. Des danseurs et des danseuses, par troupes successives, s'y livrent à des figures rythmiques bizarres, dont le sens nous échappe complètement.

Cela veut dire - toujours d'après le program -: 1. Bataille de Baba-Yaga avec le crocodile (invisible ici, et d'ailleurs même dans la campagne russe); 2. Le camelot et les comtesses; 3. Le matelot et les trois diables; 4. Le chat, la chatte et les souris; 5. La légende des buveurs; 6. L'ouvrier et le matelot. Le même décor, agrémenté de roues tournantes accrochées au platond, et peuplé de danseurs munis de marteaux énormes, voit dérouler ensuite: 1. Le béguin; 2. Le passage des ouvriers; 3. L'usine en action. Peut-être les Russes nombreux dans la salle, ont-ils compris? Est-ce pour leur donner le goût de se rapatrier? Beaucoup, chez nous, n'y verraient aucun inconvénient.

La musique est toute en rythme et en 'dynamisme sonore' comme on dit aujourd'hui. Mais est-ce vraiment de la musique? M.Prokofieff, avec ses symphonies charmantes, sa Suite scythique, Chout, les Sept, l'Amour de trois oranges, nous en semblait beaucoup plus près. Cela fait penser au Sacre du Printemps (danses de la Russie primitive et barbare), transposé dans les milieux russes modernes et tout aussi barbares.

La chorégraphie de M.Massine doit être pleine de sous-entendus magnifiques: pour les profanes, elle évoque les mouvements collectifs de bandes d'aliénés des la cour d'un hôpital. M. Serge Lifar, M.Woizikowsky, M. Massine, M. Slavinsky, Milles Vera Petrova, Savina, Tchernicheva, Danilova, et une troupe nombreuse, s'y démenent comme des beaux diables...

Raoul Brunel.

English Translation:

Le Pas D'Acier is the last novelty that M. Diaghilev's dancers will offer us this season.

It is a strange work, of all manners, since its title until has choreographic and musical realization. The program informs us that its intention was to evoke, in two parts, stories of popular life, firstly in the village, then in the factory with the hammer and sickle. Maybe this work is intended to replace, in the soviet ceremonies, the ancient 'Life of the Czar', that is evidently more dated. The public, -cosmopolitan, as ever, - was divided between frantic admirers of the musician, whose personal value is indisputable, and dazed spectators, persuaded of a mystification or a provocation. Scenes supposed to be situated in the village happen on the left in a vast grey room, furnished, in the centre, by a platform accessible by a staircase, a railroad disk and a lamp post on the right. It must evoke the Russian countryside. Male and female dancers, in successive troops, deliver the bizarre rhythmic forms, whose sense escapes us completely.

According to the program it is intended to be as follows:- 1. Battle of Baba-Yaga with the crocodile (invisible, and set in the same Russian countryside); 2. The hawker and the countesses; 3. The sailor and the three devils; 4. The cat, the pussy and mice; 5. The legend of the drunkards; 6. The worker girl and the sailor. The same decor, ornamented with rotating wheels hung to the *platond* (gridiron?), and populated with dancers with enormous hammers, gives us: 1. The fleeting Romance; 2. The passage of workers; 3. The factory in action. Did the numerous Russians present, understand? Is this meant to give them the taste for repatriation? A lot, at home, would not see this as an inconvenience.

The music is all rhythm and 'resonant dynamism' as one said today. But is this indeed music? Mr Prokofiev, with his charming symphonies, his Scythian Suite, Chout, Les Sept, The Love of Three Oranges, seemed to us a lot nearer. It brings to mind the Rite of Spring (dances of primitive and barbaric Russia), transposed into modern Russian surroundings and just as barbaric.

The choreography of M. Massine is surely full of magnificent intentions: for laymen, it evokes the collective movements of lines of madmen in a hospital. Mr. Serge Lifar, Mr. Woizikowsky, Mr. Massine, Mr. Slavinsky, Mlle Vera Petrova, Savina, Tchernicheva, Danilova, and a numerous troop, labour as beautiful devils...

Chronique et Notes: Les Ballets Russes

Heureusement pour les musiciens, Diaghilev se plaît au contraste. Il nous a présenté avec deux ballets, une oeuvre moderne pleine de force et de vie, une partition abondante et qui, elle, se suffit pleinement à elle-même: 'Le Pas d'Acier'. C'est à mon avis ce que ce jeune musicien russe si doué a écrit de mieux jusqu'à ce jour. Il semble revenir à la route où il s'était hardiment aventuré avec la Suite Scythe et qu'il avait abandonnée pour pratiquer un style plus nourri d'humanités classiques.

Nous ne trouvons plus dans cette oeuvre ce frais jaillissement de mélodies qui nous charmait dans 'Chout'. Tout y est tendu, tout y est soumis à des rythmes impérieux et réguliers. Depuis certaines oeuvres de Paul Hindemith, rien n'a jamais exprimé avec plus de puissance l'idée du machinisme.

La partition comprend deux parties. Le musicien ne s'est proposé aucun scénario compliqué, il seulement tenté d'évoquer dans le premier tableau l'atmosphère d'une gare russe pendant la révolution et la famine de 1920 et dans le second celle d'une usine métallurgique en plein travail. Il règne dans toute cette oeuvre une étrange rigueur mécanique, impression d'engrenages irrésistibles, obtenue par des rythmes implacables se superposant parfois, par des procédés de répétition obstinée et tout à coup dans ce royaume de la machine l'homme apparaît, une tendre mélodie vient un instant s'épanouir à l'orchestre avant d'être absorbée par le déroulement régulier, par la marche inflexible des machines. Oeuvre étrange, bouillonnante de forces et qui rend un son nouveau, offrant le plus curieux contraste avec les deux ballets dont il a été question plus haut.

Au point de vue chorégraphique, Le Pas d'Acier ne peut être admiré sans de sérieuses réserves. Toute la première partie est franchement détestable. On sent fort bien que le maître du ballet ne savait comment remplir ce tableau de la gare, il y a mis n'importe quoi: une sorcière combattant un crocodile (figuré par six danseurs en pardessus gris et casquettes), un camelot vendant de vivres à des comtesses en haillons, des ouvriers violant une jeune fille, que sais-je encore? Au reste, sans le livret, il serait impossible de deviner ce que signifient ces diverses scènes de pantomime et de danses. Avec le tableau de l'usine, tout change. Il débute assez mal. L'entrée des forgerons est grotesque, mais bientôt le chaos s'organise. Des groupes de femmes et d'hommes évoluent simultanément sur le plateau et sur les plates-formes élevées au-dessus de la scène, simulant les gestes du travail ou de formidables machines. Ils se déroulent inlassablement comme des courroies de transmission, se déforment comme des blocs d'acier sous le choc des marteaux-pilons. Chaque groupe est indépendant des autres. Il en résulte des contrepoints de gestes et d'attitudes de la plus grande originalité.

Dans un ensemble ce tableau final laissait une impression de force et de grandeur tout à fait extraordinaires. Le succès a été considérable et il serait à souhaiter que Massine se donnât la peine d'inventer pour l'an prochain une chorégraphie nouvelle de la première partie. Avec de sérieuses retouches, Pas d'Acier doit apparaître l'oeuvre la plus intéressante chorégraphiquement et musicalement que les Ballets Russes nous aient révélée depuis nombre d'années. La décor 'constructiviste' de Jakovlev rend bien l'impression de l'usine et l'emploi d'un vaste écran transparent séparant la scène en profondeur permet des effets de lointain fort curieux. Dans le Pas d'Acier, musique, chorégraphie, mise en scène forment un bloc. Au contraire dans La Chatte.... *(Review continues with a discussion of La Chatte).*

English Translation:

Fortunately for musicians, Diaghilev finds contrast pleasing. He presented us with two ballets, a modern work, full of force and life, a rich score which is sufficient in its own right: 'Le Pas d'Acier'.

It is in my opinion this is the best thing which this gifted young Russian musician has written to date. He seems to come back to the road where he had ventured boldly with the 'Sythian Suite' and that he had abandoned to exercise a style nourished more by the classics.

We don't find in this work the lively abundance of melodies that charmed us in 'Chout'. Here everything is taut, everything is submitted to imperious rhythm. Since certain works of Paul Hindemith, nothing has more forcefully expressed the idea of mechanization.

The score is in two parts. The musician did not intend a complicated script, he only aims to evoke in the first scene the atmosphere of a Russian station during the revolution and the famine of 1920 and in the second a metallurgical factory in full work. Their reigns in all this work a strange mechanical rigour, an impression of irresistible gear mechanisms, obtained by the implacable rhythms sometimes superimposing themselves, by processes of obstinate repetition, and suddenly in this kingdom of the machine Man appears, a tender melody comes into bloom for an instant in the orchestra before being absorbed by the regular unfolding of the inflexible march of machines. A strange work, bubbling with energy and giving a new sound, providing the most curious contrast with the two ballets discussed above.

From the choreographic point of view, 'Le Pas d'Acier' cannot be admired without serious reservations. All of the first part is honestly awful. One strongly senses that the ballet master did not know how to fill these scenes in the station, he has just put in anything, no matter what: a witch fighting a crocodile (consisting of six dancers in gray overcoats and caps), a hawker selling supplies to countesses in rags, workers raping a girl. As for the rest, without the book, it would be impossible to guess the meaning of these dances and pantomimes. The factory act is a different matter. It starts rather badly. The entrance of the blacksmiths in grotesque, but soon the chaos organizes itself. Groups of women and men evolve simultaneously on the floor and on the elevated platforms above of the stage, simulating gestures of work or great machines. They unwind tirelessly like transmission belts, distort themselves as of blocks of steel under the blows of hammers. Every group is independent of the others. The result is a most original counterpoint of movement and posture.

As a whole this final scene leaves an extraordinarily forceful impression. It was a considerable success and it is to be hoped that Massine will take the trouble to devise for next year a new choreography for the first part of the ballet. With serious retouchings, Le Pas d'Acier must appear choreographically and musically the most interesting work that Les Ballets Russes has revealed to us for a number of years. The 'constructivist' decor of Jakulov creates the impression of the factory and the use of a vast transparent screen dividing the stage's depth creates very interesting effects of distance.

In Le Pas d'Acier music, choreography, and scenario forms a unity. The opposite is the case with La Chatte...

LES BEAUX-ARTS

BALLETS RUSSES

Avec le Pas d'acier de Prokofiev, il n'y a plus à sourire: il faut admirer la maîtrise du musicien, mais frémir devant la vision, en deux tableaux fort inégaux, de la Russie soviétique, paysanne et usinière. Les légendes de la campagne russe sont d'abord transposées dans la vie d'aujourd'hui: des cavaliers verts, des soldats gris, des ouvrières caoutchoutées coudoient des paysannes endimanchées et des comtesses en défroques. En d'autres saisons, nous admirions les Contes russes de Liadov et nous avons noté, ici même, combien vive y était l'efflorescence du sentiment populaire qui ne fait pont le départ entre le rêve et le réveil. Ici les visions grimaçantes sont brouillées par les mouvements et par les formes de la vie russe en 1920. La vieille légende populaire des Trois Diables et du Matelot abandonne les costumes fantastiques du conte pour se vêtir aux décrochez-moi ça de Lénine: ces diables apparaissent sous la tunique burlesque des pompiers bolcheviks, avec les gestes anguleux et inhumains que Miassine impose toujours et partout aux personnages qu'il anime. C'est une Russie incohérente, hallucinée, si férue de 'construction' industrielle, au milieu des ruines, qu'elle dresse à gauche un disque rond de chemin de fer, à droite un signal d'arrêt carré, et au milieu un échafaudage à claire-voie sur lequel viennent se déhancher tour à tour, avec des gestes hermétiques, les comtesses coiffées d'abatjour, les cavaliers verts, les soldats gris, les diables pompiers et les ouvrières caoutchoutées.

Au second tableau, cette incohérence harassante disparaît devant la vision harmonieusement sauvage d'une usine en travail. Le mécanisme chorégraphique trouve alors en soi-même une raison d'être, qu'il cherchait vainement jusque-là. Les danseurs sont rouages, comes, leviers et poulies. Ces femmes qui tordent leurs coudes, font tourner leurs mains et ployer leurs jambes, ce ne sont plus que des vilebrequins en délire. Ces hommes demi-nus sous leurs tabliers de cuir, agrippés par les bras en cercles onduleux, ce ne sont plus que des engrenages. La densité de leurs mouvements empêche parfois d'écouter avec toute l'attention qu'elle mérite la musique abondante de Prokofiev. Trompés par la brutalité du spectacle, beaucoup d'auditeurs ont cru y surprendre l'écho du Sacre du Printemps: preuve nouvelle que trop souvent les yeux commandent l'oreille. S'il fallait rattacher Prokofiev à Stravinski, on ne le pourrait que par Petrouchka. Mais, par l'esprit, la musique de Prokofiev n'a rien de celle de son aîné. On comprend, à l'entendre, ce que signifie le mot allégresse: jaillissement naturel, vivacité joyeuse, non pas raffinée, mais très saine.

Rien n'est plus instinctif que l'inspiration de Prokofiev. Au lieu que l'art d'un Stravinski est lourd d'une culture extrême. Il n'exista jamais peut-être de musicien qui sût combiner avec autant de volontaire complexité que Stravinski, les moyens qu'il requiert pour une expérience nouvelle. Et cette expérience, nous l'avons eue, à ces mêmes ballets, avec un 'opera-oratorio': Oedipus-Rex.

André Coeuroy.

English Translation:

With Prokofiev's *Pas d'Acier*, there are no more smiles: it is necessary to admire the musician's restraint, but to quiver before the vision, in two very unequal pictures, of Soviet Russia, peasant and factory worker. In the first part legends of the Russian countryside are transposed onto the life of today: green cavalry men, grey soldiers, workers in rubber rub shoulders with peasants in their Sunday bests and countesses in rags. In other seasons, we admired Liadov's 'Les Contes Russes' and noted how quickly the efflorescence of popular feeling neglects the difference between the dream and reality. Here its grimacing visions are interwoven with the movements and shapes of Russian life in 1920. The old popular legend of the Three Devils and the Sailor abandons the fantastical costumes of the tale in order to clothe itself in the 'hand me downs' of Leningrad: these devils appear under the burlesque tunics of Bolshevik firemen, with angular and inhuman movements that Miassine always imposes on the characters he brings to life. It is a disjointed Russia, hallucinated, so keen on 'industrial construction', that in the middle of ruins, it raises a round disk of a railroad on the left, on the right a square stop signal, and in the middle where the action takes place on a lattice-work scaffold onto which swagger, turn after turn, with esoteric gestures, Countesses with lampshades for hats, the green cavalry men, the grey soldiers, devils as firemen and workers in rubbers.

In the second act, this exhausting incoherence disappears giving way to the harmonious wild vision of a factory at work. The mechanical choreography now finds its *raison d'être*, it lacked before. Dancers are cogs, cams, levers and pulleys. These women who twist their elbows, turn their hands and bend their legs, are only crankshafts moving in delirium. These half-naked men under their leather aprons, clutched by arms in sinuous circles, are only gears. The density of their movements sometimes prevents us from listening as attentively as Prokofiev's music deserves. Deceived by the brutality of the spectacle, a lot of listeners thought they heard an echo of the Rite of Spring: new proof that too often the eyes control the ear. If it was necessary to link Prokofiev to Stravinsky, one would only be able to do it through *Petrouchka*. But in fact the music of Prokofiev doesn't have anything in it of his elder. One understands, to hear him, what the word rejoicing means: natural spur, happy vivacity, no not refined, but very wholesome.

Nothing is more instinctive than the inspiration of Prokofiev. By contrast the art of a Stravinsky is heavy with extreme culture.....³

³ Editing marks. This is the end of the reviewer's attention to *Le Pas d'Acier*.

CHRONIQUE MUSICALE

Le public qui cherche l'inédit, l'inattendu, aura trouvé cette semaine deux raisons d'être stimulé. M. Serge Prokofiev, qui jusqu'à présent ne s'était inspiré que de légendes exotiques, a brusquement changé de direction. Il a masqué son naturel pour se mettre plus à la mode. Il a inventé un nouvel orientalisme musical: l'orientalisme soviétique, l'exotisme mécanique. D'autre part, M. Vincent d'Indy, dont on connaît le talent dogmatique et élève, est, par un heureux rajeunissement, venu à l'opérette. Les deux compositeurs ont surpris notre croyance en se soumettant à l'empire des faits nouveaux. Ils nous disent leurs avis avec un déguisement malicieux. En tout autre temps, ces brusque changement de conduite eussent provoqué une sorte de scandale. Aujourd'hui, tout cela nous semble la continuation du train ordinaire d'une vie que n'animent plus que le contraste et le caprice.

M. Serge Prokofieff a une façon de conter musicalement l'histoire contemporaine qu'il croit singulière. En écrivant le *Pas d'Acier* en 1920, il a eu dessein d'introduire dans la chorégraphie la nouveauté sociale et mécanique qu'ont apportée au monde les Soviets. Le monde s'en serait bien passé. Les organisations ouvrières, les paysages mathématiques des usines sont-ils susceptibles de fournir une expression dramatique neuve? Se substitueront-ils aux anciennes fictions poétiques. On nous fait là une grande question. Nous sommes dispensés de la résoudre à fond. L'essentiel est, par desharmonies, de distraire notre âme. Il s'agit, tout en consultant la nature, de conserver le plaisir dans l'art dans le plaisir. Les auteurs du *Pas d'Acier* sont attachés au caractère de notre époque. Ils veulent désormais que le théâtre et la chorégraphie rendent de leur usage la métallurgie et le prolétariat. Aèdes des temps nouveaux ils célèbrent les faits et gestes de leurs concitoyens présents. Ils accomplissent en quelque sorte une tâche de témoins historiques.

Le *Pas d'Acier* n'est pas d'une composition déterminée, liée. Il est fait de quelques esquisses successives, quelque chose comme des instantanés lyriques. Le premier tableau est intitulé, sur le program: 'Bataille de Baba-Yaga avec le crocodile' Réclement on ne voit sure scène qu'une jeune femme du peuple provocante. Elle est poursuivie par une dizaine de garnements qui se jettent sure elle et la submergent. Il n'y a point là, comme vous le voyez, ni crocodile, ni Baba-Yaga. Les jeunes ouvriers coiffés d'énormes casquettes figurent-ils le crocodile? La coquette Vera Petrova représente-t-elle Baba-Yaga? Ce n'est pas impossible. L'interprétation est un peu trop artificieuse. La raillerie nous confond.

Le second tableau, 'le Camelot et les comtesses,' semble plus lisible. Une cohorte de femmes de l'aristocratie russe, habillées de bouts de soie multicolores et de hardes, coiffées d'abat-jour bosselés, entourent un camelot qui porte un sac de farine. Toutes s'empressent auprès du commis voyageur. L'homme les caresse non sans brutalité. Il arrache leurs défroques polychromes. Elles prennent son sac de farine. Voilà une évocation assez gênante de la vie soviétique à ses débuts. Elle n'a rien de particulièrement régalant. Je ne crois pas que l'art chorégraphique y trouve son compte.

Trois diables affublés de casques de pompier, tourmentent un matelot, au cours du troisième tableau. Des ouvriers délivrent le marin qui, d'ailleurs, se défend fort bien lui-même. Il y a certainement là encore des intentions de moquerie. Les démons pompiers symbolisent-ils les castes arriérées, les fonctionnaires traditionnistes? On peut se livrer à toutes les suppositions.

Le chat, la chatte et les souris du quatrième tableau posent les mêmes énigmes drolatiques. Dans la légende des buveurs, un jeune ivrogne est ramassé par deux compagnons en toile cirée grise. Nous voyons ensuite un matelot filer la séduction avec une ouvrière. L'intrigue est agréablement menée. La jeune fille résiste d'abord. Peu à peu elle se laisse tenter. Le matelot la hisse enfin à cheval sur son épaule. Il l'enlève à la façon d'un travailleur qui transporte un fardeau pesant et précieux.

La première partie du Pas d'Acier se termine sur un ensemble frénétique et peu réjouissant. Un rideau où, à la manière de M. Picabia, sont incrustés des cordes, un bout de fer-blanc, se lève sur la seconde partie. Dans 'Le Béguin', M. Serge Lifar joue le rôle d'un rôdeur culotté de sois grise, richement accoutré. Il aborde une jeune évaporée qui, à en juger par sa mise élégante, n'a pas moins réussi dans ses affaires. Le couple se livre à des contorsions brutales et qui veulent être voluptueuses.

Les disques se mettent à tourner, les poulies grincent. Un cortège d'ouvriers de l'usine passe un frise devant la rampe. C'est enfin toute la vie de l'usine en marche. Au premier plan, une équipe de salariés manoeuvre. Ils miment avec des saccades nerveuses les mouvements tournoyants des machines. Au second plan, sur un praticable, quatre artisans martèlent, tournent et retournent un aide qui représente un lingot. Au troisième plan, sur un autre praticable, derrière un rideau transparent, des tâcherons frappent de marteaux retentissants le plancher sonore. Tout est en travail autour d'eux. Le bruit devient infernal. Les acteurs sont pris véritablement cette fois dans l'engrenage. Ils oscillent, vibrent, pivotent alternativement comme les appareils mécaniques eux-mêmes. L'effet est si hallucinant que, pour un peu, les spectateurs agacés tressailliraient, reculeraient et reviendraient selon le même mouvement automatique.

M. Serge Prokofieff, qui a déjà écrit pour le théâtre Chout et l'Amour des trois oranges, d'une incontestable supériorité de technique et d'inspiration, a composé pour Le Pas d'Acier une partition ample et puissante. Son modernisme n'est pas saisissant. Il a gardé toutes les conceptions de l'ancien orchestre. Son oeuvre, nourrie et développée avec force, est presque toujours accommodée à justesse de règles. Le Pas d'Acier débute et finit sur un air populaire largement traité. Tout le sixième tableau, l'Ouvrière et le matelot, délicatement interprété aux bois, plaira fort aux auditeurs modérés. Ce tableau, qui commente les phases d'une pauvre intrigue amoureuse avec une tendre fidélité, dégage une étrange tristesse. Jamais, au cours de cette évocation du machinisme soviétique, la musique ne perd ses droits. Elle n'est pas toujours d'accord avec le scénario. Malgré ses aspirations, M. Prokofieff reste un musicien romantique. Il fait songer à Emile Verhaeren qui, lui aussi, avec l'abondance et l'éclat du romantisme, s'attacha à chanter les usines et leurs équipes d'artisans. La transposition musicale du soviétisme mécanique par M. Prokofieff ne frappe pas l'imagination par son exactitude rigoureuse.

M. Léonide Massine, qui s'est chargé de la chorégraphie, s'est plus scrupuleusement conformé aux aspects du thème qui lui était confié. Il a pour ainsi dire célébré en dansant la messe moderne de la métallurgie et du prolétariat. Ses groupes se meuvent avec la régularité du travail moteur. L'harmonisation ni le style de ce spectacle ne sont encore bien précisés. Tel qu'il est, il heurte notre sentiment. Il n'intéresse que la curiosité.

Mlles Danilova, Tchernicheva, Gevergeva, (*sic*) Petrova, qui ont de fines natures de danseuses, tiennent sans trop de vraisemblance ni de conviction leurs rôles d'ouvrières affranchies. Elles n'offrent pas, là, une idée favorable de leurs talents. MM. Léonide Massine, Serge Lifar, Slavinsky, Woizikovsky, qui possèdent, à un degré supérieur, leur art, se transforment habilement selon les circonstances de l'ouvrage. Ils triomphent avec

vivacité des difficultés et des erreurs. A l'orchestre, M. Roger Désormière donne une impression prompte et juste de l'oeuvre de M. Prokofieff.

Mais les artistes slaves ont surtout songé à nous étonner par le décor 'spatial' et le 'constructivisme' de la mise en scène. Ces formules théâtrales d'une puérilité qui veut être savante, ne nous étaient pas inconnus. Le théâtre Kamerny avait joué, à Paris, avec ces singularités, l'opérette 'Giroflé-Girofla'. Et des procédés 'constructivistes' de M. Meyerhold. M. de Diaghilev arrive trop tard pour nous enseigner les doctrines dramatiques des Soviets. Il n'a pas conquis par là un point essentiel dans notre considération. Sachons-lui davantage gré de nous avoir révélé une partition bien tournée, bien frappée de M. Serge Prokofieff.

Dans notre siècle de machinisme et de vitesse, le musicien du Pas d'Acier s'est efforcé d'élargir le point de vue étroit de notre art contemporain. Il a cherché à dégager le rythme neuf et rapide qui emporte nos jours. Autre fois, les artistes glorifiaient les guerriers et les moissonneurs. M. Prokofieff magnifie le type de l'ouvrier d'usine. M. Vincent d'Indy préféré engager son talent majestueux dans une aventure plus distrayante. Il nous donne une opérette héroïque inspirée à la fois de *l'Illiade* et des événements actuels. Les deux ouvrages peuvent servir à régler notre sensibilité et notre esthétique. Pour quelle manière (*Review continues with description of a work by Vincent d'Indy*).

Henri Malherbe.

English Translation:

The public that looks for the new work, the unexpected, will have found this week two grounds to be stimulated. Mr. Serge Prokofiev, who until now was only inspired by exotic legends, has suddenly changed direction. He has concealed his natural style in order to be more fashionable. He has invented a new musical orientalism: the soviet orientalism, the exoticism of the mechanical. Then there is Mr. Vincent d'Indy, who one knows as a rising talent, is, by a happy rejuvenation, come to the operetta. The two composers surprised us by submitting themselves to the empire of the new. They tell us their opinions with a mischievous disguise. In other times, this abrupt change of conduct would provoke a scandal. Today, all it seems part of the continuing pattern of a life that is enlivened only by difference and caprice.

Mr. Serge Prokofiev has found a way to relate musically to contemporary history. While writing 'Le Pas d'Acier' in 1920, he intended to introduce in the choreography the social novelty and 'mécanique' which the Soviets have given to the world. It would have been as well if the world had missed it. Working environments, mathematical landscapes of factories, can they provide a new dramatic expression? Can they be a substitute for the old poetic fictions. We have here a big question. We have a deep issue to resolve. The essential thing is to distract our soul with disharmonies. It is about, while consulting reality, preserving the pleasure in art and the art in pleasure. Authors of Le Pas d'Acier are attached to the character of our time. They want henceforth that the theater and choreography represent metallurgy and the proletariat. Heralds of the new times they celebrate the facts and gestures of their present fellow citizens. In a way they accomplish a historic act of witness.

Le Pas d'Acier is not a single, coherently bound together composition. It is made up of successive sketches, something like lyric snapshots. The first picture is titled on the program: 'The Battle of Baba-Yaga and the Crocodile'. In reality all we see on the stage is a provocative young proletarian woman. She is pursued by about ten rascals who throw themselves upon her and submerge her. One does not see in this a crocodile or a witch. Do the young workers with their enormous caps represent a crocodile? Does the flirtatious Vera Petrova represent a witch? It is not impossible. The interpretation is a little too unclear. The jesting is confusing.

The second picture, 'The Street Vendor and the Countesses,' seems more legible. A cohort of aristocratic Russian women, dressed from head to toe in multicolored silk with hats of embossed lampshades, surround a street vendor who carries a sack of flour. All dance attendance on the traveler. He caresses them not without brutality. He pulls at their multi-coloured rags. They take his sack of flour. There is a troublesome evocation here of the beginnings of Soviet life. It is not particularly entertaining. I don't believe that the choreographic art is well served here.

In the third scene, three devils, dressed in firemen's helmets, torment a sailor. Workers rescue the sailor who is though strong enough to defend himself. There is certainly here again an intention to mock. The demon-firemen, do they symbolize, those that look back to the old regime, civil servants, traditionalists? It is open to interpretation.

The fourth scene of 'The Cats and Mice' presents the same droll enigmas. In 'The Legend of the Drunkards' a young drunk is collected by two mates in gray oilcloth. We then see a sailor begin his seduction of a worker. The intrigue is pleasantly presented. The girl first resists. Little by little she is tempted. The sailor finally hoists her up astride his shoulders. He then exits like a worker transporting a heavy and precious burden.

The first part of 'Le Pas d'Acier' ends with a not very cheerful, frantic ensemble. A curtain in the style of M. Picabia, encrusted with ropes, and with an edge of tin, rises on the second act. In 'Le Beguin', M. Serge Lifar plays the role of a prowler, richly dressed in gray breeches. He approaches a young flighty girl, who to judge from her elegant dress, is no less successful. The couple enters into brutal contortions that lack voluptuousness.

Disks begin to turn, pulleys creak. A cortege of factory workers passes in a curl in front of the ramp. It is finally all the life of the factory in a march. On the first level, a team of salaried employees manouever. They mimic with nervous twitching the turning movements of machines. On the second level, on a platform, four craftsmen hammer, turn and return an assistant who represents an ingot. On the third level, on another platform, behind a transparent curtain, they hit with resounding hammers the resonant flooring. All is in work around them. The noise becomes infernal. Actors take the parts of gears. They oscillate, vibrate, revolve alternately as if they were mechanical devices. The effect is transporting so that for a while the irritated spectators shuddering in their seats seemed to move back and forward with the same automatic movement.

Mr. Serge Prokofiev, who has already given to the theatre, 'Chout' and 'The Love of Three oranges', and who has an incontestable superiority of technique and inspiration, has composed for 'Le Pas d'Acier' a substantial and powerful score. Its modernism is not striking. He has kept all the basics of the old orchestra. His work, fed and developed with strength, almost always follows the rules exactly. Le Pas d'Acier starts and finishes in a largely popular form. The sixth scene especially, of the worker girl and the sailor, finely

interpreted by the woodwind section, will very much please a wide range of listeners. This scene sketches a poor couple's love intrigue with tender fidelity, has a strange sadness. Never, during this evocation of the soviet machine, does the music lose its basic nature. It is not always in keeping with the scenario. In spite of his leanings, Mr. Prokofiev remains a romantic musician. He makes one think of Emile Verhaeren who also with an abundance of romanticism, tried to sing of factories and their teams of craftsmen. The musical transposition of the Soviet 'mécanique' by M. Prokofiev doesn't strike the imagination by its rigorous realism.

Mr. Léonide Massine, who was in charge of the choreography, has conformed scrupulously to the themes ascribed to him. He has, so to speak, celebrated in dance the modern mass of industrialism and the proletariat. His groups move with the regularity of the clock-work motor. Neither the harmony or the style of this spectacle are well drawn. In the end he batters our feelings. He interests only our curiosity.

Mlles Danilova, Tchernicheva, Gevergevas, Petrova, who have the refined nature of dancers, carry off their roles as liberated workers without too much verisimilitude or conviction. They are not offered a favourable use of their talents. Messrs. Léonide Massine, Serge Lifar, Slavinsky, Woizikovsky, who possesses, to a degree a superior talent, cleverly adapt to the circumstances of the work. They triumph with vivacity over difficulties and mistakes. As to the orchestra, Mr. Roger Désormière gives an expeditious and just impression of the work of M. Prokofiev.

But the Slavic artists were especially concerned to astonish us with the 'spatial' décor and with the production's 'constructivism'. These theatrical formulas, a childishness with scholarly pretensions, are not unknown to us. The Kamerny Theater has played, in Paris, with oddities such as the operetta 'Giroflè-Girofla' and with the constructivist approaches of M. Meyerhold. Mr. Diaghilev arrives too late to teach us the dramatic doctrines of the Soviets. He didn't conquer us with one essential point for our consideration. But let us be grateful to him for revealing to us a well-crafted score by M. Serge Prokofiev.

In our century of mechanization and speed, the musician of *Le Pas d'Acier* endeavored to widen the point of the view of our contemporary art. He tried to present the new and fast rhythm that carries away our days. In other times, artists glorified warriors and harvesters. Mr Prokofiev magnifies the type of the factory worker. Mr. Vincent d' Indy prefers to put his majestic talent to a more diverting adventure. He gives us an heroic operetta inspired by the *Iliad* and the actual events of the time. The two works can serve to adjust our sensitivity and our aesthetics....⁴

⁴ Editing marks. This is the end of the reviewer's attention to *Le Pas d'Acier*.

*Vozrozhdenie (Paris) June 10th 1927.*⁵

The Ballet of Diaghilev

The latest new production from Diaghilev's ballet, performed on Tuesday at the "Theatre Sarah-Bernhardt" is entitled "Le Pas d'Acier 1920". We have no idea to what extent the authors of this ballet have personally experienced the action of this period, the most terrible time ever endured by Russia. What is not in doubt is that this is a clear reflection of both that and the author's "creativity", in which today's Bolshevik directors take such pride, as they mimic and glorify machines and mechanical culture: something similar was put on in Moscow a couple of years ago by the Meyerhold school as part of a strange exhibition staged by all the red capital's theatrical schools.

Diaghilev's ballet has good reason to celebrate the 20th anniversary of its existence. Whatever its artistic achievements might have been, and whatever victories and defeats it might have had, the hard truth has long been known here, and that is that in order to survive in the theatrical world one has to be novel. And not just novel, but different too. And so as with one hand he⁶ from the gloom the English pantomime of the 40's, with the other hand Diaghilev is trying to keep up with the sharp and thorny flower of the servants of the proletarian cult, hitherto unknown in the west: who knows, perhaps the modern audience, their palate sated with the sweet delicacies of the music hall, will find the strong, powerful shock which is clearly the intention of this "Pas d'Acier" immediately to their liking.

The ballet is divided into two acts, each consisting of six scenes. The programme states that the "set", a structure roughly put together from wooden planks (this arose due to the lack of canvas in the USSR in 1920 and after much delay has been brought in to replace the painted sets much in vogue in Paris at the present time), was devised by Jakulov, and that the costumes were sewn by his wife. In equally bold type the programme even names the studio (a carpenter's workshop, obviously) where Jakulov's set was built. This is followed by an explanation: the two acts of this ballet represent, in a series of scenes, two aspects of Russian life: tales of the countryside (les legendes du village), and the mechanics of the factory. The countryside tales include, among others, "The Battle of Baba-Yaga and the Crocodile", "The Hawker and the Countesses", "The Worker Girl and the Sailor". This list itself is an indication of what the author understands by tales of the countryside. Dancers in either very dull or outrageously bright clothes dash about the stage, run after one another, fall on the floor, run up onto the "set" and roll about on it, rush back down and fall on the floor again. We see a group of red army soldiers in helmets and with three tabs on their uniform, a sailor with a huge anchor on his chest, a few more heroes wearing a high boot on one foot and on the other leg their trousers hanging out, etc. But neither in these tales nor in the final scene of the act, where M. Prokofiev has really developed the national dance themes, do we see any real dancing. The ballet master, Massine, who has returned to Diaghilev's troupe, has a particular talent for inventing a mass of stunts, developing the maximum effort of his dancers, and often achieving complete harmony in their actions, while at the same time although achieving great energy and power of movement, still being able to avoid one thing – the free play of the dancer with the weight of his own body. But

⁵ Translated from Russian for the study by Margaret Jones.

⁶ Original text indecipherable.

surely it is this very play which constitutes for us the sheer uplifting joy of the dance? In such a production it is difficult to speak of the choreographic achievements of individual performers, although many pieces, for example, those with Lifar and Danilova, were, undoubtedly, performed with great "purity". It is with some reluctance that we resort to a term associated with the circus. We recall in this connection how at the height of Diaghilev's triumphs his literary defenders said that the new ballet owed much to its "liberation" from the circus effects of the old technical ballet. Times are changing: in one of the first scenes of the second act, Diaghilev has allowed (surely for the first time!) an amazing sortie: the dancers get together in pairs, each one grasping the feet of their partner in their hands, and, forming a living and flexible hoop, they roll off into the wings on their backs, using the strength of their combined efforts. This is quite unheard of for me in the tradition of ballet (I don't even know a term to describe it), but it is absolutely essential for any troupe of clowns. In the circus such a living machine would be a solo performance; Diaghilev uses this technique to get the whole company off the stage, quite suddenly and unexpectedly. At this point even the audience, hungry for something new, could not restrain itself: attempts at applauding were suppressed by friendly hushing.

However, I cannot say that the ballet enjoyed no success whatsoever. Its second act, in which there is absolutely no choreographic interest, nevertheless makes a strong impression – if not to say depressing and unpleasant. The mechanics of the factory, the evolution of dead matter – these may be the most suitable subjects for Massine's creativity. Let us at least give him credit for his inventiveness. The dancers portray not only workers armed with huge hammers, but also the actual pieces of metal being worked on and the parts of the machines which other worker-dancers operate with their feet. Steel is melted, heated, shaped, crushed – and all this is only the living material of the actors. The ballet master, and the composer, and the producer and the designer, by introducing a series of rotating wheels and devices, have handled the development of their theme brilliantly, gradually bringing the work of the factory to its maximum intensity. There is no doubt that the audience too suffers the tense and growing depression, and the curtain falls as a symbol of longed-for release.

A. Bundikov

The Boston Evening Transcript, Boston, USA, July 23rd 1927.

THE PLAY, THE WORK; MUSIC AND MIMING; BALLET OUT OF LIFE

Prokofiev's 'Pas D'Acier' in London

New Matter for the Russian Dancers – Constructivist Setting and Costumes of a Soviet Day – The Proletariat in Pastime and the Proletariat at Labor – Graphic Action, Violent Music, Satire and Scourge.

Toward sunset, a few evenings ago, four or five women, more remarkable for earnestness than comeliness, were trailing the curb of main streets in London. Breastplate-like, after the manner of sandwich-men, they carried placards. In large type and ink of black or red, those placards gave warning against the teaching and intrigues of Soviet Moscow. By them were British youth to be corrupted and British institutions undermined? Not if these forbidding women could avert such peril.

Along those same streets at the same hour rolled taxi-cabs and motor-cars bearing the audience to the evening performance of Monsieur Diaghilev's Russian ballet. A glance around the Prince's Theatre disclosed it as a socially high-placed and variously distinguished audience. It had even assembled promptly, since the first item of the program was Prokofiev's new ballet, 'Le Pas d'Acier', first revealed in Paris with excitement a month ago; now, after a single performance, making like stir in London. Contrary to custom, the program proffered no synopsis. A single sentence replaced it. 'The two acts of this ballet present a series of scenes in which are summarized two aspects of Russian life – the stories and legends of the countryside and the mechanism of the factories'. (The English of Monsieur Diaghilev often leaves something to be desired.)

The action had not proceeded far before it was plain that the pastimes of the proletariat had engaged Prokofiev and Iakoulov, his collaborator in scenario and setting. When work succeeded play, this same proletariat was manifestly dancing and miming the labor of an industrial, massed, and possibly, Soviet Russia. At the least, the broad red screen that for a time hid the 'constructivist' platforms, was of the Soviet color. Nor was it easy to believe that 'Le Pas D'Acier' will be denied access to the Soviet stage. For thirty-odd minutes the new ballet continued. Like the Parisians before them, the Londoners looked and listened engrossed; while at every pause the house rang with clapping. Apparently in the theater Bolshevy is tolerable and to be enjoyed.

Prokofiev's ballet was written and produced to mark the twentieth anniversary of the coming of monsieur Diaghilev's troupe into western Europe. Like Stravinsky's 'Oedipus', which by inadvertence proved to be a dramatic oratorio in pseudo-eighteenth century style, 'Le Pas d'Acier' is also an effort to depart, as far as may be, from the usual matter and manner in ballets of Russia. It unfolds no semi-poeticized folk-tale out of old legend, like 'The Fire Bird'. It delves into no pagan, savage or primitive Russia, like 'The Rite of Spring' or 'Noces'. It does not retell with serio-comic gusto a rude fable of the folk, as the clown's adventures in 'Chout'. No more does it return to a more recent but vanished time – say the eighteen-forties in Petersburg – as do the backgrounds in 'Petrushka'. Least of all does it resemble the academic contraptions, for the meticulous dances of Pctipa, civilly provided by Chaikovsky. To the contrary, Prokofiev and Iakoulov are enamored of the idea that possesses the younger composers and scene-designers in Europe and two at least in America: the ballet must be related to the life of our immediate time.

Sundry Parisians, say Poulenc and Auric, have dabbled in the new notion triflingly, flippantly, with their 'Blue Train' for Deauville and their 'House Party', which is any week-end rout. The two Americans – Mr Carpenter and Mr Robert Jones in 'Skyscrapers'

show the Manhattanese at work, riveting and rearing the edifices of the title. The second part discloses them at play upon their cherished 'Coney'. (To any other American metropolis the scenario would fit as well). In the abstractions of miming and the dance, in the suggestion of the music, Mr Carpenter and Mr Jones would symbolise this two-fold life of the folk around them, concentrate its spirit, maybe pass comment upon it. Like-minded are Prokofiev and Iakoulov about their proletariat Russia. They happen to reverse the succession, beginning with play, ending with work. They are, besides, of more satirical temper. It is discoverable also that 'Le Pas D'Acier' may be readily translated into the terms of any current society, industrial, massed and standardized, even though no Soviet of Socialist Republics shapes and rules it.

The curtain rises upon a stage stripped to bare walls, save for two platforms, spacious and substantial, in the center. One, at the rear, is higher than the other; to it at one side a winding stairway ascends. Around and above are belting, wheels, discs, pinions, but for the while all three are still. Red and white fences seem also to shut off the front platform, as though we spectators were to understand that the work-place is closed for the day. This 'construction' (as the program names it) designed by Iakoulov, recalls in degree the 'constructivist' settings proffered to American eyes, in 'Carmencita' and 'Lysistrata', by Nemirovitch Dantchenko and his Moscow Studio. Iakoulov, however, is simpler, ruder, sparer – less architectural, merely running up a useful wooden fabric. The cynical Diaghilev will have it that these Russian 'constructions', from Tairov onward, are no works of imagination liberating and concentrating the stage. Rather, he affirms, glancing down his cigarette, they were works of necessity. In the days in which they began to be in Moscow there were no paint and canvas. Of wood there was plenty.

For Russians the first seven scenes of play may embody 'stories and legends of the countryside'; but it is a pity that the compiler of the program, and Prokofiev or Iakoulov behind him, were not more specific. To the merely European, or the merely American onlooker, they signify, on that score, nothing at all. At first sight, as the dancers come up on the stage, ascending or descending the platforms, outspreading before them, the costumes hold the eye. They date, says Monsieur Diaghilev, from the Russia of the early nineteen-twenties. In themselves they are a grotesque, poverty-stricken miscellany – time-worn jackets that do not fit at all or fit much too tightly; trousers of like shape and condition; bodices akin to the jackets, skirts that go sisterly with the trousers; head-gear seemingly contrived of whatever was handiest, even to lampshades; only garish colors to relieve the sordid mass of the whole. As the action advances, uniforms brighten and diversify the scene – sparingly. A few soldiers, a few firemen, intersperse the assembled proletariat; a sailor or two, coarsely tattooed, is added to the ensemble.

Soon this swift sense of the costumes gives way to the cumulating sense of the choreography, as the technicians have it. Monsieur Massine, who has lately rejoined the troupe, devised it. Throughout 'Le Pas d'Acier' in accord with Prokofiev's and Iakoulov's plain purpose, he employs the dancers only in groups or in ensemble; while rarely and for no more than a passing moment is a couple or a single figure isolated or individualised. Again to meet the scheme of the ballet, the dancing and the miming is automatic, rigid, monotonous. (The seven scenes fill barely twenty minutes). The faces are inflexible; the motions of the bodies angular, nervous, jerky or constricted. Dry and mechanical precision becomes dry and mechanical reiteration – not through fault but by design. Across them flares a brusque and rough-edged grotesquerie. There are momentary whirls of wide fantasy; embracings and strainings that good ladies with one voice would pronounce 'unrefined'. A sailor and his lass contort themselves amorously. Neurotic tension, like a driving lever, whips it all. In such wise, if we are to believe Prokofiev, Iakoulov and Massine, does a standardized proletariat take its pleasures and call them relaxation.

Act Two, which is work, runs clearer. The barriers have been removed; the red screen is stripped away. The wheels and discs begin to turn, faster and faster; belts and pinions do their office; a rim of signal lights flashes and flames. There is no mistaking these young men in leather aprons and opened shirts, plying heavy hammers, swinging great mauls, climbing from one platform to the other. For the while they work on mechanically, as those whose invisible masters are ever 'speeding up', who again and again repeat the same purposeless toil. Then, for an instant, they would turn, as it seems, upon each other, in rough relief fiercely playful. Apart, as in a border upon the ground, the young women are as incessantly and mechanically busy, doing each as does her neighbor. A figure, or paired figures, no sooner fling out than they are caught again into this irresistible stream of mechanised labor. Soon it is torrential. The wheels turn quicker; the lights flash faster and brighter; the hammers and the mauls strike harder; the violence screams and roars. In a flash drops the curtain; at a blow the orchestra is stilled.

In retrospect Prokofiev's music seems almost secondary to this action. Certainly it is so closely mated to the stage that it ought not to be parted from the theater; yet the odds are five to one that Mr. Koussevitzky will risk it in Symphony and Carnegie Halls next winter. It is written for full modern orchestra – a larger orchestra, the listener suspects, than Mr Goossens led in London. No noise-makers (as the 'futurists' used to call them) supplement it. With the usual instruments of the nineteen-twenties, sufficiently multiplied, usually employed en masse, often with forte, plu forte and fortissimo for their whole gamut, Prokofiev can work his will. The obvious means are his pounding, driving, lashing rhythms. The percussions hammer at them; the strings whip them; the wood-winds in the higher registers give them knife-edges. The whole orchestra beats and snaps and swirls with them, as though the walls of the theater must shake also to this motion. Again and again they are reiterated; an automatic monotony, as in mechanised mass, becomes the very life of the music. The proletariat are playing, the proletariat are working standardized – mass diversion, mass production, the salvation of the world.

Near the end, the music is frenzy; before such tumult and violence the furious moments of the 'Scythian Suite' and 'They Are Seven' thin and pale. Yet through the music of play 'the stories and legends of the country side', there are gentler gleams. Prokofiev subdues the orchestra; relaxes the rhythmic tension; lapses into the simple, transparent melody, born unmistakably of Russian soil, to which at will he can return. The wind-choir sings it; the strings warm it; the percussion-corner rests deservedly from its labors. Underneath, the listener hears, or fancies he hears, the sadness, the pity, that only such play shall relieve such work and the folk go day unto day this changeless round. Let tumult smother them, violence stun them. Again Prokofiev lays the scourge upon the raging orchestra. Anew and ceaseless beats the delirious monotony. For bare instants it snaps, only to hammer out again its monstrous might.

Besides these tempests from Bolshevy, the American 'Skyscrapers' did but blow by as a gentle breeze. In 'Le Pas d'Acier' the life of a corner – a wide corner – of this industrial earth is symbolised, concentrated, mirrored, 'abstracted', what you will – the ballet in deed in new function. More; the ballet as means to comment and instrument for satire. Assume that Prokofiev and Iakoulov love their fellow-Russians. Most nationals do when they have taken refuge from their native land. Yet they love not the life these Russians lead in a united society of Soviet republics. Iakoulov, Massine aiding, chastises it in his action; Prokofiev lashes it in his music. Probably, they have doubts and scruples about industrial civilisation elsewhere, standardized, mechanized, the mass and the treadmill. To kick against the pricks has long been an infirmity of artistic temperaments.

H.T.P. London, July.

The Daily Chronicle. July 5th 1927. p.7

KING FUAD TO ATTEND GALA BALLET

Special Performance In his Honour at Princes Theatre

King Fuad has consented to be present at a special gala performance to be given in his honour at the Princes Theatre on Thursday evening. The program presented will be: 'Carneval,' 'The Triumph of Neptune', and 'Aurora's Wedding'.

Sir Thomas Beecham, Mr Eugene Goossens and Dr Malcolm Sargent will conduct the performance.

The feature of the Russian Ballet at Princes Theatre last night was a first performance of 'Le Pas d'Acier', by the young composers Serge Prokofieff and Georges Iakoulouff.

In two tableaux the ballet presents a series of scenes, in which are summarised two aspects of Russian life: the stories and legends of the countryside and the mechanism of the factories.

These contrasting themes provided Prokofieff with an admirable scheme for his ballet, and as in his well-known 'Chout', his music followed broad and melodic lines. The choreography, by Massine, was strikingly original.

The Daily Express : July 5th 1927, p.9.

THE MACHINE DANCE

Modern Russia Interpreted as a Ballet

The new ballet, 'Le Pas D'Acier', freely translated, 'The Steel Way', with music by Serge Prokofieff, produced at Princes Theatre last night, in no way resembles the traditional ballet. It aims at giving an impression of life in modern Russia. The first scene presents a picture of rural life, the second a factory in full blast.

The overture sets one's teeth on edge with its discords, but soon this stridency proves the right accompaniment to the frenzied action on stage.

L. Massine has created new postures and steps, strange contortions and movements that give the impression of powerful, complicated machinery, pistons working, wheels turning, and intense labour. The effect is stimulating, exciting, at times comic, and on the whole interesting to the highest degree.

Many will dislike it, it will be overpraised, but no one will be bored by it, and, judging by the tempestuous reception it received last night, it will become a regular feature of the Russian Ballet programmes."

The Daily Herald. July 5th 1927. p.5

REAL RUSSIAN BALLET

Throwing off their French influence, the ballet last night at the Princes Theatre gave us *Le Pas D'Acier*. This aims at a picture of the Russia of to-day. In a Meierholdt setting of scaffoldings we see the factory workers in their uniforms. They sway as does the machinery. The pace increases. Great hammers swing in the air. The worker lies under the hammer. His colleagues go on and on in a mechanical frenzy, while the music of Mr. Serge Prokofieff shouts louder.

This ballet is one of the most interesting that Mr Massine has devised. It is the ballet's first attempt to get into touch with the vital of to-day. (*sic*)

Yet it cannot be considered a really original piece of work. Factory ballets have for a long time been produced in Russia, though we have never seen anything of the sort over here.

Every worker will be interested to see his daily round expressed in a different medium.

The Daily Mail. July 5th, 1927. p. 9.

W.M.

FACTORY LIFE BALLET Music and Machinery

Higher Russian Ballet, after much wandering about the world of symbolism, has at last found its true home - in the factory.

'Le pas d'acier', last night's new production at Princes Theatre, W.C., definitely settled the question, for nothing more successful has been done since the beauties and humanities of the old ballets were put aside and the modern queer ways took their place.

The new work, which comes to us from Russia with a French title that apparently means 'The Tread of Steel', deals with stories and legends of the countryside and the mechanism of the factories.

The countryside part of it was rather obscure; but who are we to judge a picture of that unknown land and people?

A factory however, is the same the whole world over. Men and women in all stages of hurry and perturbation toiled and moiled, shifted heavy weights about, rained steam-hammer blows on huge bars of imaginary steel, tried to look like pistons, connecting rods, cams, and differentials, grew hot, and never, never smiled. It was all done in a way that only the mind of a Massine could imagine; and it came off hugely, grimly.

Prokofieff's music, conducted by Eugene Goossens, represented the noise.

Some of the mixtures of sound were extremely ingenious. It seemed also to voice the fierce, inexorable spirit of the factory in its driving rhythms and its likeness to a merciless grin.

The puzzle was to discover what they were all making. Anyway, it was a good show.

The Daily Mirror. July 5th 1927. p. 2.

FACTORIES BALLET

Scenes of “Le Pas d’Acier” by Russian Dancers at Princes Theatre.

The first performance of *Le Pas d’Acier* by the Russian Ballet Company at Princes Theatre last night was followed by a dozen curtain calls.

This suffices to show the approval it met with from a packed house.

The metallic music of Serge Prokofieff was remarkably translated into choreography and stage setting, especially during the second tableau, for the first, said to give the stories and legends of the Russian countryside, was difficult to understand. Instead of trees, one saw railway signals, and instead of peasants, firemen in copper helmets and blue smocks.

But the second tableau, showing the mechanism of factories, was admirable.

Leonide Massine and Alexandra Danilova were only the two wonderful leaders of a marvellous ensemble of dancers. Mr Eugene Goossens conducted the orchestra with the necessary vivacity.

That already old favourite, *Les Matelots*, and that new favourite, *The Cat*, were also given, as well as Polovtsian dances from *Prince Igor*.

The Daily News. July 5th 1927. p.7

A.K.

A BOLSHEVIK BALLET

EPILEPTIC DANCING

Prokofieff's new ballet, *Le Pas d'Acier*, which may be translated freely "The Tyranny of Steel", performed for the first time at the Princes Theatre last night, is a weird thing. It is in two tableaux, of which the first is, we are told, symbolical of the legends of Ancient Russia, the second of industrial conditions in Modern Russia.

There ought to be a strong contrast between them - but there is none. Both are horrible - the second, presumably, of malice prepense.

What do they Mean?

The dances, if they ought to be called so, are very much the same in both. They are epileptic to a degree. The second tableau has the advantage of being intelligible, but I do not see what the first can convey to anyone except an expert in Russian folk lore. What do all these twitchings and jerkings, these twistings of the human body into ugly and impossible positions signify?

It is said by some that they mean to show us how the imagination of the Russia of to-day has distorted the old stories.

The second tableau is the last word in ingenuity. The impression it all gives of human beings crushed into nothingness by a relentless machine is remarkable: the final picture really has a strange, ugly beauty of its own.

An Ugly Noise

Of the music it is difficult to speak. As Prokofieff has devised both the scenario and the music, no doubt they fit each other. It is both noisy and ugly. In an interview M. Diaghileff said that the music is *mechante*, which means, I suppose, wicked or evil. I can only say I thank him for teaching me that word, The music caused me a headache.

M.Massine, M.Lifar, M.Woizikowski, Mme Danilova and Mlle. Tcheinicheva did wonders. The curious and esoteric public applauded frantically, but it will surprise me if more ordinary mortals will take the same view of the odd spectacle.

Perhaps it is a tractate against the Russian Revolution. If so, it is very powerful.

THE RUSSIAN BALLET
'Le Pas D'Acier'.

One phase of the modern art of the ballet has been given us by the Russian Ballet this season in *The Cat*, another was presented to us last night in *Le Pas d'Acier*. This is a Labour Ballet; one might not unreasonably call it a Bolshevik Ballet. For it represents in two tableaux and some dozen scenes two aspects of Russian life, "the stories and legends of the countryside and the mechanism of the factories." One puts this statement between inverted commas because it comes from the programme, and therefore must be right. But a good many habitués of the Russian Ballet, who have a keen intelligence for divining the enigmatic style in which M. Diaghileff's choreographers nowadays often express themselves, must have been puzzled last night.

For the curtain rose on "constructions" - the term decor is become outmoded - which from the gates and semaphores appeared to suggest a railway goods yard. A factory chimney that rose at the back and a rather crazy street-lamp heightened the impression that the mechanism of industrialism was indicated. Students, three military men in green, firemen, factory girls who indulged in "physical jerks" by turns, seemed to make it certain that the town life of contemporary Russia was being presented to us in the terms of imaginative and synthesised movement which is the domain of the dance. The second tableaux however, was so unmistakably monopolised by the workers, whilst wheels appeared over the railway signals, which stoutly maintained their places on each side of the stage, that it was evident the abrupt movements of the earlier scenes had to do with the folk-stories of those who till the soil.

"Monopolised" is not perfectly accurate, however, for in the first scene of the second tableau Serge Lifar and Tchernicheva gave us a delicious sketch of just such a courtship as in less sophisticated times employed 'Arry and 'Arriet on bank Holidays on Hampstead-heath. Brilliantly danced, it was the only human moment in the ballet, and Prokofieff made it the more notable by giving it some charmingly simple music. Not that the music elsewhere was complicated or painful to our ears. Prokofieff has always a hard and steely style, but musically *Le Pas d'Acier* is by no means cacophonous. Raucous it may sometimes be, and the percussion does not suffer from reticence. But the feeling one took away was that Prokofieff had succeeded far better than Massine, the choreographer, in conveying the two facets of labour that show us, to put it summarily, physical activity and intellectual passivity. Frankly it seemed that in the dance of the smiths the Russian Ballet had at last definitely strayed over the edge of bathos, and its conclusion was marked by some shy hisses. At the end of the Ballet, however, when everything on the stage, including the railway signals and the lights, were in revolution, there was only rapturous applause.

THEATRE AND HALL.

Serge Prokofieff deserves to be famous. As an apostle of Bolshevism he has no equal. Writers and orators have been telling us all about it for years, but Serge's new ballet expresses more of the soul of modern Russia than all their effort put together. Diaghileff has described to me how this turbulent young Russian first called upon him as a composer of fourteen years of age. When invited to play his music, he did so – and smashed the piano. He has been smashing instruments ever since.

'Step of Steel'

Until last week all we had heard and seen of Prokofieff's work was 'Chout', a ballet that the British public did not like. People may not like his 'Step of Steel', which has just been added to Diaghileff's repertoire at the Princes. Nevertheless it is a masterpiece.

While the music imitates the whir, thuds, bangs, clash and screech of machinery, the dancers imitate the ceaseless motion of electrically propelled wheels, hammers, lathes and pistons.

'Constructivism'

For this ballet a new kind of scenery is used. It was invented by Georges Iakouloff at a time when no canvas or colours could be obtained in Russia. There was plenty of wood. So the scenes were built instead of painted, and "constructivism" became a stage craze.

As Serge's collaborator, Georges can claim his full share of the credit for the brilliance of 'The Step of Steel'. The stage bears scaffoldings, revolving discs, gymnastic appliances, a railway footbridge, and a battered lamp-post.

The costumes are in keeping with the scene. Ladies of society appear with lamp-shades on their heads: this was actually a fashion in Russia during the famine in millinery.

Human Shuttlecocks

Massine's arrangement of the dancers is equally startling. He has borrowed ideas from the knockabout comedians of the music-halls in order to transform human beings into factory gadgets. Dancers grip each other by the ankles in pairs, and roll over and under each other. Towards the end the movements become wilder and wilder. Smiths in leather aprons swing huge steel hammers upon each other's chests, and then beat upon the scaffolding while the corps de ballet twirl and tremble like shuttlecocks in a human loom.

Lifar's Bouquet

When the bouquets were being handed to the principals after the close of the 'Step of Steel', the ballerine were not forgotten.

But Serge Lifar also received an armful of lovely flowers. Massine alone was without a tribute, until Lifar pulled a blossom from his bouquet and handed it to his companion. Some of the 'fairies' in the audience shivered with excitement at witnessing this pretty episode.

The Prompter.

The Manchester Guardian. July 5th 1927. p. 14.

THE RUSSIAN BALLET Prokofieff's New Work.

E.B. London, Monday.

With the new and truly remarkable ballet *Le Pas d'Acier* produced at the Princes Theatre tonight M.Diaghileff is found to have landed in the expressionism towards which he has been heading for some time. There is so much that is impressive in this production that one gladly forgives some of the uncertain experiments that have led to it. *Le Pas d'Acier* is a really successful abstraction of two contrasted aspects of human life in terms of dance, aided to good purpose by decorative symbolism in costume and scenery or, as it is now described, construction. The stage pictures by M.Georges Iakouloff, consisting of stairs and platforms, wheels, beltings, and light signals, are far more directly significant than much of the provokingly enigmatic staging with which M.Diaghileff has lately delighted in puzzling us, and the choreography by Leonide Massine has a cumulative power that is almost overwhelming.

The two phases of life which the ballet summarises are not, so far as one can see, necessarily confined to Russia as the programme tells us. The first part shows the proletariat at play, the second at work. The contrast, to be sure, is not great, for they are nearly as toilsome in their amusements as in their labour. But it is in this curious similarity that the meaning of the scenario lies. When in the second part we watch human beings turned into machinery and executing movements of mechanical precision we come to understand why a moment ago we saw the same people taking their recreation in the same automatic way. The ballet, and especially the magnificent final scene of concerted action, can be enjoyed purely for its decorative interest, but it may also be taken as a terrible indictment of the modern standardisation of human life. It comes near to Toller's *Masse Menshe* in a certain tub-thumping propagandist spirit.

Prokofieff's music keeps the dancing going admirably but adds nothing of importance to the total effect. One caught oneself again and again not listening to it, and whenever one did listen the opinion that it could not possibly stand by itself obtruded itself. Prokofieff is just content with being a good servant, and it is only to the extent of being successful in this respect that he proves himself a master. The music, despite almost continual level fortissimo, is not so much noisy as violent. Commendably enough, the composer uses only purely musical means to produce the clangour of the factory, but it is intellectually rather than dynamically that the music sounds forced. It is not the result of invention, but merely of manipulation. Prokofieff, too, is here a "constructionist".

LE PAS D'ACIER

Music by Serge Prokofiev

Mr Diaghilev not only believes that all play and no work makes ballet a dull toy, but consistently puts precept into practice. *Le Pas d'Acier* is not a ballet that makes love to you, but one that either lifts you up or knocks you down. It might be called 'Hot Steel', for it reproduces – as only pitiless music, galvanised anatomy, frenzied rhythm, and Massine's exacting choreography can – the dream of an overwrought rivetter who sleeps at his post.

It is presented in two tableaux. The first, says the programme, "summarises the legends of the Russian countryside; the second, the mechanism of the factory." And if you think so, why, so they do. The music suggests unfriendly rivalry between massed roundabout organs and a shipyard on full time. Though brilliantly woven, the general pattern of the dancing is difficult for the tyro to disentangle because of its incidental distractions. Chaos, you say at first sight, not cosmos, while appreciating the richness of the detail and the astonishing skill and endurance of the dancers.

You see your favourites, whose art in happier circumstances has long since conquered you, fantastically attired as for a grim but impromptu charade. Some wear the uniform of that fabulous corps, the Horse Marines; others are apaches, hoydens, plain girls, hamadryads – what you will: the rest are overalled, mackintoshed, or stripped to the buff. And all strain nerve and muscle to keep time with purposeful cacophony, pace with mechanised frenzy. Great hammers clang and boilers let off steam; the sound of man is but a variant of the fuel force with oil and gas. The result, though perplexing, is anything but dull.

Perhaps if one saw as much of the ballet as Mr. Diaghilev sees one would be more eager to welcome such departures from gracious orthodoxy. These 'mechante' novelties do set off, by force of contrast, applause-proud favourites. "The Cat", "Les Matelots" and "Prince Igor" which followed, seemed simple treats indeed, save perhaps to some of the dancers into whose souls the iron of innovation appeared to have entered.

Prokofiev's music is good stage music in the first place. It provides an adequate background for stage action; also it must have been one of the factors which inspired the remarkably good steps and figures invented by M. Massine. It is noisy, but the scoring, though very thick, is yet balanced, and the final effect is not so much one of noise as of continual, deep sound. The climax at the end of the second and last act is finely done, so gradually built up that the listener is carried onward with no sense of effort. The stage action helps here, and this moment is one of the best examples of close interplay between dance steps and orchestral sounds. As regards music pure and simple, one is continually reminded of Stravinsky's 'Sacre du Printemps', besides which Prokofiev's work takes a place, though it does not bear close comparison. There is in Prokofiev none of the subtlety of Stravinsky, it is all more obvious. 'Le Sacre' makes good concert-room hearing. It is improbable that 'Le Pas d'Acier' would stand that test.

THE BOLSHEVIST BALLET

It is customary with those fervent admirers who attribute to M. Diaghilev an almost papal degree of infallibility, to dismiss as a reactionary anyone who does not whole-heartedly applaud every product of his inspiration. But, even at the risk of being branded with that terrible word, I venture to say that 'Mercury' is the silliest piece of inane futility which it has ever been my misfortune to witness. Unlike most of the Russian Ballet's productions, which, with all their faults, have never failed to provoke interest or amusement of some kind, it aroused no feeling but regret that clever people should have sunk so low. If I am thought behind the times for holding such an opinion, I will add that this ballet is actually as out of date as the smartest frock of the Paris season of three years ago, when it was first given.

I heard it said in the foyer, with an indignation of which the subject was hardly worthy, that this was yet one more example of 'Bolshevism' in art. The speaker was wrong, for 'Mercury' has nothing to do with Bolshevism. But the week before the company had shown us for the first time a genuine example of Bolshevist art, Prokofieff's *Le Pas d'Acier*. Even this is, I fancy, not the latest thing from Russia, for I believe that the style in which it is produced was at its height in Moscow four or five years ago. However, it is quite sufficiently up to date, and enabled us to judge the artistic ideas encouraged by the present rulers of Soviet Russia.

Their first concern was to do away in their productions with all realistic presentation, such as the methods of which Stanislavsky and Komisarjevsky are two well-known exponents, since these methods were the outcome of bourgeois ideas. The place of scenery was taken by 'constructions' of wood or iron, the ordinary features of the scene, such as doors and windows, or chimneys and lamp-posts, being suggested by symbols. This manner, not to call it mannerism, of production was developed by Mayerhold in his theatre at Moscow, of which a very interesting account, with illustrations, will be found in Rene Fullop-Miller's 'The Mind and Face of Bolshevism' (which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue). I cannot, myself, see what essential point is gained by the use of these constructions, since either the symbols are unintelligible – especially, one would think, to the almost illiterate proletarian of Russia – as when a window is represented by a couple of old strips of wood, or they are sufficiently recognizable, like the factory-chimney and the lamp-post in the first scene of *'Le Pas D'Acier'*, in which case they make the rest of the constructions look rather ridiculous. There is certainly very little beauty in the constructions as such, and their sole advantage, which consists in the possibility of massing groups of dances on different planes, had been exploited in Germany and elsewhere long before Bolshevism had been heard of outside the limits of a small doctrinaire sect.

The good qualities of *'Le Pas d'Acier'* are, indeed, similar to the good qualities in any other ballet – the skilful moving in rhythm with the music, and the invention of solo-dances, which are in this case of small importance compared with the ensemble. M. Massine has never before shown such skill in handling mass movement as he shows here. Some of the ensemble work in *'Les Facheux'*, another recent ballet of his which is otherwise mediocre, showed this improvement in his choreography. But the second scene of *'Le Pas d'Acier'* surpasses anything else he has done with a large corps de ballet. The final dances of *'The Good-humoured Ladies'* are by comparison, mere rough-and-tumble.

This new ballet was exceedingly well done. The movements are unusually exacting for the dancers, and, though absolute uniformity was not attained throughout, the standard of the ensembles was far higher than in most of the ballets given this season. Since the stern hand of M. Cecchetti, the unsurpassed creator of *Kostchei*, of the *Showman* in

'Petrushka', and of the Shopkeeper in 'La Boutique Fantasque', has been removed, the discipline of the corps de ballet seems to have deteriorated. Apart from one or two exceptional and outstanding dancers of the past, I do not believe that the principals are inferior to any we have seen before, although only a few, notably M. Woizikovsky and Mme. Sokolova, have real strength of personality. But the ensembles, especially in the older ballets, sometimes move one to tears. For instance, I have seen 'The Fire Bird' several times this season, yet never once have the Princesses made their bow to the Tsaravitch as one woman – and how beautiful that simple gesture used to be when the whole row of bodies inclined together! Yet I suppose we should be thankful for what we are given, for in this London of ours it is hard to know where to turn for an evening's intelligent amusement when M. Diaghilev and his company are delighting audiences in Paris or Monte Carlo, or are resting on the Lido.

H.

WHEELS AND TOIL TO MUSIC

Ugliness Has Its Night of Power at the Ballet

M.Prokofieff's new ballet – if ballet it should be called – 'Le Pas d'Acier', which we might translate 'The Steel Age', was produced last night at the Princes Theatre.

It is a strange production, which appealed strongly to the audience. The applause was rapturous, but I doubt whether an ordinary audience will be equally pleased.

It shatters all preconceived ideas of what a ballet is. All ideas of charm and beauty go by the board. It is deliberately and designedly hideous, both in the orchestra and on the stage.

Yet it has power. The first tableau represents the legends of Old Russia (in modern dress), or, rather, the distorted views of them which Bolshevism has inculcated. The second represents the ruthless tyranny of the modern workshop.

It is however, hard to see any difference between the two. In both the dancers move convulsively in impossibly ugly attitudes with marvellous skill. In the second men, all but stripped to the waist, wield huge hammers which look as if they would crush everybody within reach.

Large wheels revolve in a seeming purposeless way, and the men and women move almost mechanically. Some are carried out exhausted. Everything, including the dresses, is remorselessly ugly.

The final tableau is curiously impressive, with its suggestion of immense hopeless toil.

It will not make converts to Bolshevism. On the contrary.

The music, with its relentless rhythms and screaming brass accentuated (in the second scene) by the thuds of heavy hammers, adds to the feeling of a world reduced to chaos. If this is the composer's object he has succeeded to perfection.

It does not, as said above, appeal to one's sense of beauty or to one's love of the gracious things of life. Yet the latter half is moving. To what does it appeal? Let mental specialists and psycho-analysts decide.

CRESCENDO.

Herbert Farjeon.

'MAJESTY AND BEAUTY OF LABOUR IN MASSINE'S NEW BALLET'.

'In the Limelight' Longfellow's Theme in Larger Size - Another Run for Aldwych.

The most remarkable Russian ballet of recent years was presented at the Princes Theatre last week, when Diaghileff created a schism in the auditorium by staging for the first time 'Le Pas D'Acier'. This is a mass ballet in which machinery replaces scenery, and in which the individual human being is only more distinguishable than the individual ant because the audience is composed, not of ants, but of human beings. It is a ballet of labour in the factory, where wheels whirl and hammers clang and signals flash and sirens shrill their inexorable commands.

Massine and Longfellow. - 'Le Pas D'Acier' is an amazing and exhilarating achievement. The stage is filled with rising tiers and receding vistas of workmen, heaving and hewing, ascending and descending, and exhibiting a kind of automatic ecstasy in their subjugation to the power of steel. Yet they are mighty and uncrushable in their subjugation, and although the beauty we perceive in them may appear a new beauty, it is really the same beauty that Longfellow perceived in his village blacksmith. The modern apparatus may not be an anvil, but the same sparks fly.

Dancing Euclid. - It is good to find the experiments Diaghileff has been conducting during the past few years bearing fruit at last. Ballet, like all other forms of art, must find new conventions to suit the times. We need not disturb ourselves over such absurdities as a ballet illustrating the Forty-Seventh Proposition of the First Book of Euclid, which is I understand, one of the latest indiscretions. This is an indiscretion because it leaves man completely out of account. 'Le Pas D'Acier', which is a pas de deux between man and machinery, does nothing so foolish.

Go. - This, then, is one of the ballets you must not miss. By the time it had done with me I had found the music of Prokofieff colossal, while the settings designed by Iakouloff are as appropriate as they are complicated. But the greatest credit is due to Massine, who, if his treatment is a little uncertain in the first tableaux, rises to great heights of inspiration in the second.

The Times. July 5th 1927. p.14

THE RUSSIAN BALLET 'Le Pas D'Acier'

Prokofieff's new ballet, *Le Pas d'Acier*, which was given for the first time in London at Princes Theatre last night, is an attempt to make use of the modern factory as a subject for the dance. At least that is half the story. The first scene, we were told, summarized the rural side of Russian life, and the whole is intended to portray the Russian of to-day, as *Petroushka* represents the Russia of 1840 and *Le Sacre du Printemps* that of prehistoric times. Unhappily we could not make out what the first scene had to do with "the stories and legends of the countryside". There were moments when we thought that it might be a representation of agricultural labour, as the second clearly was of labour in the town; and others when we seemed to be witnessing the autumn manoeuvres of the Red Army. But finally we gave up trying to find a meaning and contented ourselves with admiring the inventions of M. Massine, who has designed the choreography, and the skill with which the dancers carried out the exceedingly difficult tasks he has set them.

The second scene is a more brilliant triumph for the choreographer, not only because the meaning of the movements is intelligible, but because it is even more full of original ideas. All kinds of mechanism, from the steam hammer to the most delicate weaving machinery, find a place in this elaborate scene, in which human beings are the cogs and pistons. This scene is extraordinarily impressive, and even terrifying, as a large factory in full swing is terrifying to the layman. Noise plays a part in producing the effect, and Prokofieff certainly gets from the orchestra an extraordinarily vivid impression of the hum and roar of machines. The music of the first scene may be as clever; but, since we could not make out what it was driving at, we are unable to judge. We are certain that none of it was beautiful in the accepted sense.

The ballet employs most of the principals in the company and a large corps de ballet. They all worked hard, and, apart from some uncertainties in the movements of some of the minor cogs, which nevertheless affected the even working of the whole machine, the elaborate motions were very well done. Mr Goosens conducted what appeared to be an excellent performance, and the ballet was applauded with enthusiasm.

After this interesting and, for the spectator, hardly less than the dancers, strenuous experience, it was pleasant to lean back and enjoy the simple humours of Auric's *Les Matelots*.....The programme was completed by *The Cat* and the dances from *Prince Igor*.

The Westminster Gazette. July 5th 1927. Front page.

A BALLET OF IMBECILITY AND UGLINESS

M.DIAGHILEFF'S NEW EFFORT.

ARTISTS' ABSURD ANTICS.

Rumour had not lied concerning Prokofieff's 'Le Pas d'Acier', whose delights were unfolded by the Russian Ballet last night.

For aggressive ugliness and imbecility it will certainly take a lot of beating. It was not surprising to note that of such an orgy of ineptitude even M.Diaghileff's literary expert staff had found it impossible to furnish an intelligible account, so that it was described in the program merely as 'A series of scenes in which are summarised two aspects of Russian life, the stories and legends of the countryside and the mechanism of the factories.'

Which was which, however, it was a task of difficulty to determine, and not less so to decide which was the more grotesquely unbeautiful. Had the production been entitled a Bolshevik nightmare one might perhaps begin to understand it, though this would hardly have made it any more acceptable.

SENSELESS NOISE

The prominent impression left by the whole thing was a sense of pity for clever artists called upon to perform such preposterous antics and generally to make themselves so utterly ridiculous.

And as to Prokofieff's music, it may suffice to say that in its senseless noise and remorseless ugliness it was worthy of the 'Choreography'.

Yet it must be added that the Ballet had quite a boisterously enthusiastic reception, suggesting that clever Mr Diaghileff has certainly got quite an accurate measure of his London following.

H.A.S.

APPENDIX 8

CONTEMPORARY PUBLICATIONS BY THE PRODUCTION TEAM

- Interview with Diaghilev, 03/07/1927**
- Article by Jakulov, 19/06/1928**

THE NEW BALLET. M.Diaghilev and the Music of Prokofiev. How it Broke his Piano.

M. Diaghilev is producing for the first time in England, at the Princes Theatre, at 8.30 tomorrow evening, Serge Prokofiev's new ballet, 'Le Pas d'Acier'. He regards it, next to Stravinsky's 'Les Noces', as the most important he has ever given. "And I am more convinced of it than ever", he said yesterday in an interview with a representative of The Observer, "after the season we have just had in Paris, where it was the greatest triumph, everybody is being absolutely thrilled by it.

Of the composers position he said: "Prokofiev stands at the head of the modern Russian school of music, at the side of Stravinsky. He is ten years younger than his friend, and naturally you can feel that in his music; but it is more *mechant*, shall we say, than Stravinsky's. In pure melody it is, perhaps, richer, but the outline of the melody is always a little more exciting and provocative, and he has not quite the same clarity.

"In a word, while Stravinsky is much more tied to the gods, Prokofiev is friendly with the devils. That is why the public when it hears Prokofiev's music for the first time reminds one of snails retiring quickly into their houses. With the pleasing and the light side not always present, they are apt to get jarred. It is for that reason the British public did not digest 'Chout' ('Bouffon'), the first magnificent ballet of Prokofiev.

"The first time Prokofiev came to see me was when he was fourteen. He was dressed in the blouse of a Russian college boy. This was at Petrograd. He played to me a very tumultuous piece of music and broke my piano. Since that time he has broken many pianos and other instruments of the orchestra by his music.

"But what pleases me is to see that his style follows the evolution of modern music. It has become very much simpler. He does not invent false notes merely for the purpose of inventing them. He is full of melodies, and one part of 'Le Pas d'Acier', might have been composed by Mozart, if Mozart had lived at the present day. A great feature of his music is that its monotonous rhythm is absolutely in opposition to the present-day jazz.

THE RUSSIA OF TO-DAY

"The subject of the ballet has been changed many times. For some years I have been trying to create a ballet, essentially Russian. The task has not been easy. Russian local colour, from the foreigners' point of view, has always been picturesque – either the hats of Boris Godounov and the beards of the Boyards of 'The Fire Bird' or the early Victorian snows and sleighs of St.Petersburg. When I produced 'Le Train Bleu' to show the Deauville of to-day, and when I did 'La Pastorale' with the cinema scenes, I felt that I also wanted to show the decorative side of the Russia of to-day.

"It appears, however, that the decorative evolutions in Russia have been so rapid that the designs of the dresses we are using for the ballet have already in these last few years become historic, and we are really showing the Russia of 1920. At that time, just to give an instance, ladies of well to do families used lampshades for hats because there was nothing else, and the artist very quickly seized that picturesque fact to illustrate the period. But of course today it is out of date. There are many other examples one could give.

"Georges Jakulov, who has designed the 'constructions' and costumes for the ballet, is considered the Russian Picasso, inasmuch as he is the father and inventor of 'constructivism' on the Russian stage, where architecture has taken the place of painting, the curious fact being that this arose from necessity, because there was plenty of wood, but no canvas or colours.

"The choreography is due to Massine, the only one of the three who has not been in Russia for thirteen years, and his presentation of the Russia of to-day is his own imagination, and, of course, without any special tendency.

"There are two scenes the first representing leisure and the second labour. The setting is so very heavy and complicated that, whenever it is given, it must always be the first ballet of the evening. May I, through this Observer interview, ask the public to be kind enough to note this fact and not to be late for it."

- B. Georges Jakulov: 'Stal'noi Skok, Sergeia Prokof'eva'
Rabis (Sovetskii Teatr Organ Uravlen...) 1928, vol.25, June 19th, p.5.

Translated from Russian:¹

Le Pas d'Acier' by Serge Prokofiev.

In all the discussions in the press about the Bolshoi Theatre, the question as to why Prokofiev's ballet "Le Pas d'Acier" has not been included in the theatre's repertoire has been raised more than once. It was a "sensational" success in Paris with Diaghilev. Part of that success was to do with the idea of "what have we come to?": here on the stage of a Parisian theatre was an "industrial" ballet – instead of "dying swans" we suddenly had a factory.

Diaghilev, the head of the artistic movement known as the "World of art", has for twenty years been a tireless champion of Russian opera and ballet abroad.

In basing his theatre on a galaxy of Russian composers (Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov), the artists of the "World of Art" (Bakst, Benois, Rerikh, Golovin, Serov, Korovin, Sudeikin, Amenfeld and others), Diaghilev is moving to the left, towards Stravinsky ("Petrushka") and Prokofiev, towards the artists of the next generation – Larionov and Goncharova ("The Golden Cockerel", "Firebird", "Chout"), and completes the twenty year journey of his theatre with a constructivist ballet, "Le Pas d'Acier", or "1920" (Prokofiev – Jakulov), and "Le Chat", created in the Soviet style by the artists Gabo and Pevsner.

When we examine the evolution of these musical and dramatic forms we can discern three phases: the purely aesthetic phase, with its striving for stylisation: Bakst "Sheherazade" and "Petrushka", the phase searching for a national style: "The Golden Cockerel", "Firebird" and "Chout" (a style based on fairy tales and icons), and, finally, the venture into the urbanised industrial classicism of "Le Pas d'Acier".

An article in the Manchester Guardian on the subject of Diaghilev's ballet writes the following about my sets for "Le Pas d'Acier": "... the set, consisting of ladders, platforms, wheels, transmission gear and flares, is considerably more revealing than the "provocative" sets with which Diaghilev recently liked to bewilder us!"

It is not being too audacious to state that the Russian theatre has had, and continues to have, this advantage over western theatre, in that its performances enjoy a certain unity (Bakst-Rimsky-Korsakov "Sheherazade", Benois-Stravinsky "Petrushka", Rimsky-Korsakov-Goncharova "The Golden Cockerel"), they have an internal constructivism even when they do not use constructivist techniques.

At the time of the revolution this feature of the Russian theatre underwent startling development in the USSR. For the artistic community of Europe who knew of our theatre only through hearsay or reproductions, the appearance in Paris of the Kamerny Theatre was quite an event.

In one of his interviews Igor Stravinsky commented that he did not know of anything which produced a more unified and homogenous impression than the operetta "Girofle-Girofla". Diaghilev decided to subject his theatre to the constructivist experiment, in

¹ Translated from Russian for the study by Margaret Jones.

spite of the many unfavourable conditions, in order to establish a new landmark in Russian artistic culture in the west and to open up new paths for choreography to follow.

In "Le Pas d'Acier" the theatre set itself the goal of creating a ballet which would not only present the formal culture of the USSR but would also demonstrate in a symbolic form, yet as close to reality as possible, the regeneration of everyday life (the period of military communism) and the ideological basis of the new structure.

In accordance with this, the ballet has two acts: the period of the breaking up of the old way of life, its deformation, and the enthusiasm of the revolutionaries against the background of the disintegration of the old and the pathos of organised labour "The factory at work").

The music of Prokofiev (composed at the same time as the libretto, the scenario and the sketches) brilliantly achieves the transition in style from the national melodies permeating the revolutionary slogans (Act 1) to the urbanised theme of "The factory at work", in which the real beating of the hammers on stage blends with the orchestra, and with the rotating gears, flywheels, lights and with the choreography, in which groups of dancers operate machinery while at the same time representing the working of machines choreographically.

APPENDIX 9

LE PAS D'ACIER (1927): LIST OF PARIS PERFORMANCES

Theatre Sarah Bernhardt, Paris 1927.

(20th season: opened 27th May 1927)

7 th June	Les Fâcheux; Le Pas d'Acier; Le Triomphe de Neptune
8 th June	Le Pas d'Acier; Mercure; La Chatte; Les Matelots
9 th June	Le Pas d'Acier; Romeo and Juliet; Le Triomphe de Neptune
11 th June	Le Pas d'Acier; L'Oiseau de feu; Mercure; Danses de Prince Igor

Theatre de l'Opera, Paris 1927.

(27th and 29th December)

27 th December	Le Pas d'Acier; La Chatte; L'Oiseau de Feu
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Theatre Sarah Bernhardt, Paris 1928

(21st season: opened 6th June 1928)

6 th June	Le Pas d'Acier; Ode; Les Noces
7 th June	Le Pas d'Acier; Apres Midi d'un Faune; Ode; Soleil de Nuit
14 th June	Le Pas d'Acier; Apollon; Barabau
21 st June	Le Pas d'Acier; La Chatte; Apollon; Soleil de Nuit

Theatre Sarah Bernhardt, Paris 1929

(22nd season: opened 21st May 1929)

22 nd May	Le Pas d'Acier; Apollon; Les Dieux Mendiants
28 th May	Le Pas d'Acier; La Chatte; Les Dieux Mendiants; Le Bal
30 th May	Le Pas d'Acier; Apres Midi d'une Faune; Renard; Le Bal

Number of performances in Paris compared to other new ballets that had their first Paris performances in the 1927 season. From opening of season to last performances in Paris at the end of the 22nd Paris season - 12th June 1929:

La Chatte:	17 performances
Le Pas d'Acier:	11
Triomphe de Neptune	4
Oedipus Rex	3
Mercure	3

Ballets performed most regularly in Paris during these seasons:

La Chatte	17
Danses de Prince Igor	13
Le Pas d'Acier	11
Oiseau de Feu	11
Apollon	11 (premiered 1928)

Of the 5 ballets that had their first Paris performances in the 1927 season, only La Chatte and Le Pas d'Acier were performed at the Paris Opera and only La Chatte and Le Pas d'Acier were still being performed in the 1929 season (the Triomphe de Neptune, Oedipus Rex and Mecure were not performed after 1927).

APPENDIX 10

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTIONS BY PARTICIPANTS AND EYE-WITNESS COMPANY MEMBERS.

A. FROM THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SERGE PROKOFIEV¹

According to Prokofiev, Diaghilev approached him in the summer of 1925 concerning the possibility of a new ballet.

"'But I cannot write in the style you approve of', I said, hinting at the rather banal stuff Auric and Milhaud were composing for him. 'You must write in your own style', Diaghilev replied and suggested that I write a ballet on a Soviet theme. I could not believe my ears. It was as if a fresh breeze had blown through my window, that fresh breeze of which Lunacharsky had spoken. It was decided to invite Yakulov as the artist; he had recently exhibited in Paris with great success.

Sitting in a tiny café on the banks of a river half an hour outside of Paris, Yakulov and I roughly sketched several draft librettos. We assumed that the important thing at this stage was not to provide mere entertainment but to show the new life that had come to the Soviet Union, and primarily the construction effort. It was to be a ballet of construction, with a wielding of hammers big and small, a revolving of transmission belts and flywheels, a flashing of light signals, all leading to a general creative upsurge with the dance groups operating the machines and at the same time depicting the work of the machines choreographically. The idea was Yakulov's who had spent some years in the Soviet Union and described it all most vividly. It was easy to see that the libretto had been written not by a playwright but a painter guided by his visual impressions. 'The ballet consists of two acts,' he wrote in the magazine 'Zhizn Iskusstva' (Art Life), 'the first showing the breakdown of the old order, its deterioration, and the enthusiasm of the revolutionaries against the background of the decaying old order, and, in contrast, the uplifting influence of organized labour'. My job consisted in putting in order the rather haphazard material Yakulov had given me and arranging it in the form of musical numbers in a harmonious succession leading to a culmination.

As soon as the libretto had been worked out and more or less approved by Diaghilev, I turned my attention to the music, and here I must record some serious changes in my approach as compared with the Quintet and the Second Symphony. The first was a turn toward Russian musical idiom, this time not the idiom of Afanasyev's fairy-tales, but one that could convey the spirit of modern times. The second radical change was from the chromatic to the diatonic: this ballet (which Diaghilev, for some reason, proposed calling 'Le Pas d'Acier') was in a large measure diatonic and many of the themes were composed on white keys only. I worked at good speed, and by the autumn I was already able to play the entire piano score to Diaghilev. The latter as usual made a number of useful suggestions and after a few alterations I started on the orchestral score."

"Like all Diaghilev productions it was magnificently staged and was a great success. 'A queer production', the French press commented, 'beginning with the title and ending with the music and the choreography. Can it possibly be intended to replace 'A Life for the Tsar'? The whiteguard press scoffed at this 'prickly flower of proletarian culture'. Stravinsky was disgusted by the hammering on the stage. But the youth were in ecstasies. On July 4 the ballet opened in London. The theatre was full of lords and ladies and a dazzling display of diamonds. 'The packed hall rocked with applause', wrote the newspapers. 'Sergei Prokofiev deserves to be famous. As an apostle of Bolshevism he has no peer'. 'Prokofiev travels through our countries but refuses to think as we do'.²

¹ Prokofiev (1960) p.65-66.

² *ibid*, p.71-72.

B. FROM THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LEONID MASSINE³

"One afternoon Diaghilev told me that Prokofiev had recently sent him the score for a new ballet, and that he would like me to do the choreography. I had met Prokofiev some years before in Rome, and had found his unique blend of boyish high spirits and Russian intensity very appealing. A fluent and persuasive talker, he had a great sense of humour, and much enjoyed playing practical jokes. He arrived in Monte Carlo a few days later, full of ideas for his new ballet, which he expounded after he had played the score through to us on the piano in the rehearsal room at the Theatre de L'Opera. Although the music, with its Russian depth of feeling and its rich variety of phrasing, had been suggested to him, he said, by the tales of the legendary Bogatyri, the heroic founders of Old Russia, he wanted the ballet to distil the essence of current social conditions in the new Russia; to show how the Revolution had been the culmination of centuries of oppression; how the new regime was now encouraging ideals of equality, discipline and work which would lead to national progress and knowledge. Fired by Prokofiev's vision, Diaghilev commissioned from Georges Yakulov a structure composed of two large rostrums with wheels and pistons, and told us he wanted this constructivist set to be an integral part of our composition. Together Prokofiev and I went through the music again and again until the ballet began to take shape. With his intimate knowledge of the Russian people he helped me to create the two contrasting scenes, the first set in the countryside and based on old legends and peasant types, the second demonstrating the force and virility of Communist youth. The wheels and pistons on the rostrums moved in time to the hammering movements of the young factory workers, and by strengthening the tableau with a large ensemble group in front of the rostrums, so evolving a multi-level composition which welded together the scenic and the bodily movements, I was able to create a climax of overwhelming power. In my own role as the Young Worker I used strenuous character movements to suggest the Slav temperament and the conflict in the mind of a young man torn between his personal life and his national loyalty. Danilova and Nikitina as the two young women workers were quick to grasp the rhythmic movements I wanted and the essentially Russian theme suggested by Prokofiev's music. We were a long time before we could decide on a title for the ballet, but at last we settled on 'Le Pas d'Acier', hoping it would suggest the metallic atmosphere of modern industrial progress."

³ Massine (1968) p.171-172.

C: FROM THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SERGE LIFAR⁴

"The year 1927 was marked by the creation of Pas D'Acier with music by Prokofiev. Now, although Diaghilev might have been a revolutionary in the field of art, he was certainly not one in other directions. He might well have had within him an anarchical, even a nihilistic streak, quite in the Slav tradition, but that manifested itself only in one, quite personal, facet of his character and was confined to words as when he would curse 'the rotten civilisation of a pretentious bourgeoisie which takes things easily in art as in the other good things of this world'. Those around him professed an invincible contempt for everything that was Sovietic. He, on the other hand, forced himself to remain neutral in politics and he always paid attention to what might be happening in Russia.

In 1926 and later Diaghilev resumed contact with his own country. This was under the influence of Ehrenburg, Lunacharsky and Krassin, who knew well enough how to attract his attention by informing him about the researches then being made regarding a new form of theatre in the USSR. He asked Prokofiev to write a ballet. Massine was to be the choreographer, and Jakoulov was to come from Moscow to do the scenery. Although there was a certain amount of opposition inside our troupe itself, the ballet was put on and provoked a political scandal and quarrels about the new theory of 'theatrical constructivism' applied for the first time to a ballet – and in Paris before Moscow."

⁴ Lifar, (1965) p.54-55.

D. FROM SERGE LIFAR'S BIOGRAPHY OF DIAGHILEV⁵:

Writing of the third and final period of the company's history, which Lifar classifies as the period when Diaghilev was searching out new forms of scenic art to the exclusion of other concerns ⁶, Lifar states:

"No longer was there the least effective collaboration with painters and musicians, and their names follow each other in endless succession: Utrillo, Pruna, Derain, Miro, Ernst, Yakoulov, Gabo, Pevsner, Tchelishchev, Charbonnier, Bauchant Gris, Rouault, Chirico, Sauget, Nabokov... they received their orders and carried them out, without taking any real part in the life of the ballet, while Soviet producers like Meyerhold and Tairov began to assume an ever greater importance in Diaghilev's eyes and to exert an ever strengthening influence, clearly discernible in Balanchine's work." ⁷

"Though we had given a matinee performance in the Scala on January 16th, we were back in Monte Carlo on the seventeenth. All February and March were taken up with the opera season, during the last days of which we appeared both in Marseilles and Cannes. Meanwhile we were exceedingly busy preparing our Monte Carlo, Paris and London season, rehearsing our new ballet 'La Chatte' to music by Sauget, and working on 'Le Pas d'Acier', the outline of which we already had. Though 'La Chatte' was one of Balanchine's best and most perfect creations, 'Le Pas d'Acier' assumed enormously greater importance in Diaghilev's life. Through it, and Prokofiev, Ehrenburg and Yakulov, certain threads were spun, which began to lead Diaghilev towards Soviet Russia. Nevertheless, that grand seigneur and aristocrat by birth, education and nature, could never have been a revolutionary, or feel anything but contempt and hatred for Marxism with its clumsy, utilitarian approach to aesthetics." ⁸

"But in 1926 his attitude to the 'Soviets began to change and a new interest to awake in its developments. The chief responsibility for this change no doubt lies with his friend Seriozha Prokofiev – who had finally deserted Mme Zeitlin's Paris salon for Moscow – and Ehrenburg: though earlier he had been able to meet, and talk with, his old friends Lunacharsky and Krassin. Now, what he heard of the new Russia, its search for new ways of living, new forms of art, interested him deeply, and its 'seeking' spoke to his soul.

Thereupon Diaghilev entered into correspondence with Prokofiev, with the idea of producing a new Soviet ballet for which Prokofiev promised to write the music, while suggesting that Yakulov might come to Paris and help with the production. The new ballet was to be called 'Le Pas d'Acier', and would illustrate the concepts of the 'constructivist' school. The Moscow ballet-master Galizovsky, it was hoped would collaborate in the production.

Far greater than his difficulties with Moscow were those of Diaghilev in overcoming the inertia of his own 'Art Committee'. A special meeting was convened to discuss the matter, at which both Pavel Georgievitch and Valetchka energetically attacked the idea, arguing that Diaghilev would alienate not only the emigrants, but their aristocratic patrons, and that the production of anything even faintly resembling a Soviet ballet, would provoke fearful opposition and lead to the worst repercussions on Diaghilev's own Ballet. For the first time, at a meeting of the Committee, Diaghilev asked my opinion, whereupon I

⁵ Lifar (1940)

⁶ *ibid* p.330

⁷ *ibid.* p.340.

⁸ *ibid.* p.445

expressed my disagreement with that of his friends, gave him my warmest support, and emphasised that we had no right to shut our eyes to anything constructive in the way of artistic achievement in Russia, whatever the source of its inspiration. I also said that since constructivism was the outstanding artistic phenomenon of the '20's, and marked an epoch, it could not be ignored; and that I, personally, had not only no fear that it would prejudice our existence, but was ready to welcome it even.

Now we began to work concurrently on both *'La Chatte'* and *'Le Pas d'Acier'*, Massine being entrusted with the choreography of the latter. By April *'La Chatte'* was ready, and the first performance took place on the thirtieth of that month, the other ballets in the programme being *'Le Mariage d'Aurore'* and *'Le Lac des Cygnes'*. On May 5th our Monte Carlo season ended, and next day we left for Barcelona, before returning to Paris. Here we arrived on the twenty-fourth, three days before we were due to open at the Theatre Sarah Bernhardt.⁹

"But now the 8th of June was approaching, the date for our premiere of Le Pas d'Acier, and we were all in a state of extreme nervous tension.

The 'Soviet people' had arrived in May, and we now began to receive such unusual visitors as Ehrenburg and Yakulov, whereat P.G. Koribut-Kubitovitch and V.F. Nouvel would ostentatiously refuse to carry out their secretarial duties, or have anything to do with them. This, however, only made Diaghilev, if anything, kinder and more polite. Every moment he could spare was spent with them, not only because of the new ballet, but because anything and everything in connection with the new Russia, to which Diaghilev was now longing to go, most keenly interested him. He even took steps, at the Soviet Embassy in Berlin, to make the necessary arrangements for a visit, and was granted both passport and visa. However, he finally found that he lacked the courage to go without myself and Kochno. True, the Soviet ambassador did his best to persuade him, and gave every guarantee that whenever he like he would be free to return to Paris, but he also added, sotto voce: "You must take this as a personal guarantee, that of an ambassador: but what I cannot be absolutely sure of, is that Moscow may not change its mind, and withdraw all it has promised."

*There was still a great deal to do in connection with the new ballet, the theme of which was the story of a steel flea, taken from Leskov¹⁰. Though Diaghilev, Massine, Yakulov, and Ehrenburg in turn went to considerable trouble to adapt it for the stage, nothing much came of it, and finally it was decided that the new production should be staged under the title '1920'. This, however, pleased nobody, because it already sounded antiquated, and was likely to go on sounding more so with every year that passed. Only at the last moment was the title *'Le Pas d'Acier'* invented, and that by Diaghilev himself. He it was, too, who at the dress rehearsal introduced a feature whose origin was purely accidental. We had come to the end of one of the rehearsals when a few dancers in the corps de ballet, as a joke, began to tap out the rhythm with their hammers as they sat about the platform. Sergei Pavlovitch was delighted with this happy invention, and ordered it to be incorporated in the ballet, and indeed it made a striking and most unusual finale.*

Finally June 8th arrived, heralding the premiere of 'Le Pas d'Acier'. It was an anxious day for Diaghilev, since he felt certain that there would be a terrific uproar, and that the Russian émigrés would stage a mass protest. Nevertheless, he awaited the event calmly.

⁹ *ibid.* p447

¹⁰ Presumably Nikolay Semyonovich Leskov, (1831-1895), Russian short-story writer and novelist, who wrote vivid tales of Russian life based on his own travels. He wrote mainly the *skaz* style, picturesque stories, told from the viewpoint of characters from the lower middle class. His early novels were attacked by Russian radicals as being hostile to the revolutionary movement. The study has found no other mention of this as a source for the ballet.

and even with a sense of pleasurable expectation. What he feared, what really made him uneasy, was a feeling that the white Russians might begin shooting and so kill me. However, the performance was received calmly, even tepidly. There was some applause, some cat-calls, but there were no bursts of enthusiasm, nor indignation either. The new ballet simply did not appeal to Paris audiences, unaccustomed as they were to ballets in which the dancing took second place. The house therefore preferred to manifest its perplexity and displeasure by shrugging its shoulders rather than by creating a riot. All in all, Diaghilev was deeply disappointed, and assured us that our audience "had no backbone" and that it was pure cowardice which made them afraid to protest. Nor did the Press pay much attention to our venturesome new ballet. For the most part they coldly praised it, as though it lacked all trace of originality. And though they mentioned its "splendide revelation", no one took the least trouble to explain in what that "revelation" lay.

On June 11th we gave our last performance in Paris, and on June 13th, our London season started. Sergei Pavlovitch was in no haste to put on 'Le Pas d'Acier' again, and it was July 4th before the first English premiere took place. Indeed, he had already several times postponed its performance, and was even beginning to doubt whether he should stage it all, being well aware how risky it was to produce such a ballet in London, since it might easily prejudice the whole fate of the Ballet. Eventually the first night was announced, and we danced to a packed house, with the Duke of Connaught in the audience. Anxious moments passed as the curtain went down on the finale, and, for the first time in our experience, we listened to an absolute dead silence. Meanwhile, all eyes were turned on the Duke's box for no one seemed courageous enough to express an opinion. Diaghilev had gone pale with nervousness and anxiety. Could the ballet have proved a failure? At last, however, the spare, small old gentleman rose, approached the ledge of his box, leant over and began to applaud; whereupon, as though obeying a signal, the whole house immediately did likewise, to loud cries of "Bravo. Bravo". The Duke of Connaught had saved out honour, and thenceforth 'Le Pas d'Acier' enjoyed an incomparable success whenever we gave it. In all we presented it eight times more... ..¹¹.

¹¹ Op.cit. p.451.

E. FROM THE MEMOIRS OF SERGE GRIGORIEV¹²

*"...Diaghilev had not yet decided who was to undertake the Prokofiev. I gathered from his description that the staging of the latter was to be unusual: it was to be in the so-called 'Constructivist' style then fashionable in Russia; and Diaghilev wished the choreography to be in keeping. He at first had hopes of bringing over the choreographer Golizovsky, about whom he had heard from Balanchine; but these gradually faded; and after some further deliberation, considering that of the available talent Massine's was the most suitable, he finally entrusted the ballet to him."*¹³

*"...I was shown a photograph of the Constructivist set we were to use for the Prokofiev ballet, which was to be given the somewhat obscure title of 'Le Pas d'Acier'. It had been designed in Russia by the painter Yakoulov as long before as 1920, and seemed to me dreadfully depressing."*¹⁴

*"Meanwhile Massine had continued his composition of Le Pas d'Acier; and the ballet was now all but ready. He had been considerably helped, while we were still at Monte Carlo, by various suggestions made by Prokofiev, who had visited us on several occasions and played the music through himself."*¹⁵

"Then, last of all, came Le Pas d'Acier'. Diaghilev had been warned that on the first night there might be a demonstration of protest on the part of Russian émigrés in Paris against out production of a 'Bolshevik' ballet; but nothing in fact happened. 'Le Pas d'Acier' had no plot. It had two tableaux representing scenes of contemporary Russian life, the life of the peasants in the countryside on the one hand, and that of the workmen in the factories on the other. The scenery remained unchanged. It consisted of a very high rostrum set in the centre of the stage, with steps leading up to it on either side. On the front and sides of the rostrum were placed a number of wheels, levers and pistons, all built in plain unpainted wood. The whole stage also was crammed with objects of various kinds so that it was almost impossible to move. The back cloth was grey; and the general effect, though ugly, was yet forceful and exciting. Prokofiev's music, particularly the finale, was extraordinarily powerful. The choreography, on the other hand, seemed to be out of key with this very 'modern' score: it was in the nature of a divertissement, in the composition of which Massine seemed to have been hampered both by the music and by the lack of free space on the stage. The second tableau was better than the first; and Massine's arrangement of the finale was decidedly impressive. For this, as the movements of the dancers became more and more energetic, the wheels were set revolving and the levers and pistons moved backwards and forward; the lights went on and off with perpetual changes of colour; and the curtain came down to a tremendous crescendo from the orchestra. Le Pas d'Acier produced quite a stirring impression on the opening night, but was by no means so well thought of as Diaghilev had expected. It had neither unity nor meaning, and was purely mechanical except for the finale, which alone exhibited some life. I was astonished to observe that Diaghilev did not very much mind its comparative failure. Perhaps he had already understood what it lacked. Otherwise the polite silence maintained by the critics over Le Pas d'Acier would have roused him to storms of indignation."

"Almost immediately after closing in Paris we paid another visit to London. Diaghilev had accepted Lord Rothermere's offer of further assistance on the same terms as before."

¹² Grigoriev, (1953)

¹³ *ibid* p.237.

¹⁴ *ibid*. p.238

¹⁵ *ibid*. p.240

Unfortunately His Majesty's was not this time available; and so we had to content ourselves with the Prince's, a theatre I always disliked on account of its shallow stage and general lack of space. The season was once again under the patronage of the Duke of Connaught. We opened with La Chatte, which was no less well received than in Paris. Neither of our other new ballets, Mercure and Le Pas d'Acier, both of which we gave in the latter part of the season, were, however, at all liked. Nevertheless we continued to give Le Pas d'Acier on account of Prokofiev's music. As in Paris, there were no protests, but neither was there any enthusiasm."

F. FROM THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF EUGENE GOOSENS ¹⁶

Le Pas d'Acier ... "...an exciting affair in Prokofiev's best manner, with a scenario of machines and workers, threatened at first to create a scandal. That is, anyway, as Diaghilev would have wished. Rumour had circulated that, as the ballet was Bolshevik propaganda and London was extremely anti-Bolshevik, the audience would certainly put up a hostile demonstration on the first night. I entered the orchestra for the premiere, receiving the usual applause from the audience – unusually cordial, I thought, under the circumstances – followed by Diaghilev, who took a seat next to the first flautist. He had previously told me of his intention to do this. 'I'm carrying my revolver', he said, 'and at the first signs of any demonstration I shall fire it in the air'. What he hoped to accomplish by this I never discovered, but my theory is that a well-timed pistol shot would have really brought about the disturbance Diaghilev was secretly hoping for. Needless to add, no interruption whatsoever marred the exciting performance, and as the curtain fell the audience burst into a stupendous ovation. Diaghilev made his way out of the orchestra, more than ever perplexed by the unpredictable British public".

G. FROM THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LYDIA SOKOLOVA. ¹⁷

"At his Majesty's in the summer of 1928, I was able to see for the first time some of Diaghilev's recent ballets. 'Le Pas D'Acier', dating from the previous year, was his only flirtation with Soviet Russia – at least since the red flag had been carried on in L'Oiseau de Feu', in 1917. The first scene in a railway station contained a regrettable episode in which fun was made of a starving aristocrat, but the second, which took place in a factory and which seemed to glorify the Communist ideal of labour, gave a chance to the designer Jakulov to indulge a real orgy of 'constructivism'. One could not help being impressed by the closing moments when the whole décor came to life: wheels spun round, pistons thumped and the dancers wielded huge hammers in time to the noisiest music that ever Prokofiev wrote."

¹⁶ Goosens, (1951), p.246-247.

¹⁷ Sokolova, (1960) p.267.

APPENDIX 11

DESCRIPTIONS BY EYEWITNESS HISTORIANS

A. THE ACCOUNTS OF BORIS KOCHNO

1. From: Le Ballet (1954) p.271-274.

“Le ballet soviétique – une création – prenait appui sur une partition purement musicale: Le Pas d’Acier de Prokofieff, qui devait d’abord s’appeler Ursignol. La musique ne jaillissait pas comme dans Chout, elle était serrée, tendu, tout entière soumise au rythme régulier des machines. Le ballet était divisé en deux parties d’inégale valeur. Le premier tableau se passait dans une gare vers 1920 pendant la révolution et la famine, le deuxième dans une usine métallurgique en plein travail. Il y avait de tout dans la première partie: une sorcière combattait un crocodile (six danseurs en pardessus et en casquettes), un camelot vendait des victuailles à une comtesse en haillons. Mais dans le deuxième tableau le chorégraphe prenait une belle revanche. Les groupes évoluaient sur le plateau et, simultanément, sur des plates-formes élevées au-dessus de la scène; ils se déroulaient comme une courroie de transmission. Le décor de Jakoulov obtenait de curieux effets de lointain à l’aide d’un vaste écran transparent qui séparait la scène en profondeur. Ainsi le ballet était doublement soviétique: il s’inspirait du pittoresque révolutionnaire et mettait en oeuvre les procédés en vogue en URSS, la méthode constructiviste que Meyerhold avait appliquée dans son théâtre, et Tairov au théâtre Kamerny à Moscou. La chorégraphie du Pas d’Acier, très originale, était due à Massine et celle, poétique, de La Chatte à Balanchine.

Diaghilev, pendant cette saison, monta une oeuvre nouvelle autre que le Pas d’Acier, et celle-là lui avait infligé une déception profonde.”

English Translation:

The Soviet ballet – a creation – was based on a purely musical score: Prokofiev’s ‘Le Pas d’Acier’, that was at first to be called Ursignol.

The music did not spring out at you as in Chout, it was taught, restrained, totally subjugated to the regular rhythm of machines. The ballet was divided into two unequal parts. The first scene took place in a railway station around 1920, during the revolution and the famine, the second in a metallurgical factory in full operation. There was a bit of everything in the first part: a witch doing battle with a crocodile (six dancers wearing overcoats and in caps), a street-vendor selling food to a countess dressed in rags. But in the second scene the choreographer certainly took his revenge. Groups of dancers moved around on the floor of the stage and at the same time on platforms raised above the stage; they spread out like a drive-belt. Jakulov’s set achieved curious effects from a distance, thanks to a huge transparent screen which divided the stage depth wise. In this way the ballet was doubly soviet: it drew its inspiration from the revolutionary picturesque while bringing into play the processes fashionable in the USSR, the constructivist method which Meyerhold had applied in his theatre and which Tairov had used at the Kamerny Theatre in Moscow. The highly original Choreography of ‘Le Pas d’Acier’ was by Massine, while the poetic choreography of ‘La Chatte’ was by Balanchine.

That season Diaghilev put on another new work in addition to ‘Le Pas d’Acier’, but this other work was the source of bitter disappointment to him.

2. From: Diaghilev and Les Ballets Russes, (1970):

"LE PAS D'ACIER

Ballet in two scenes by Serge Prokofiev, Georges Yakoulov, and Leonide Massine. Music by Prokofiev. Choreography by Massine. Constructions and costumes after designs by Yakoulov. First performance: Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, Paris, June 7, 1927.

After his last visit to Moscow and St. Petersburg in 1914, Diaghilev had lost all direct touch with Russia, and he was passionately interested in news of his country's artistic life and in Soviet theatre production. In 1922, when he met Vladimir Mayakovsky in Berlin, the Russian poet had just arrived from Moscow. Diaghilev questioned him endlessly about the development of Russian art since the Revolution and about the young revolutionary theatre. He did the same when they met later in Paris. (Diaghilev had intervened to help Mayakovsky obtain a visa to visit France).

On his arrival, Mayakovsky had talked euphorically of the new Russia's cultural progress and its artistic achievements, but then he discovered contemporary Western art. Back in Moscow, he wrote me a letter signed, "Your poor provincial, Mayakovsky."

The Paris season of Tairov's Kamerny Theatre, which came from Moscow in 1923, gave Diaghilev his first glimpse of theatrical trends in the U.S.S.R. and of the Constructivist stage sets of Exter and Yakoulov. He was most enthusiastic about these productions, decided that he would create a 'Soviet ballet', and commissioned Prokofiev to write the score.

Diaghilev hoped to entrust the staging of this new ballet to a Soviet artist and choreographer; and also to complete the usual staff of collaborators in a dance production by bringing a theatrical director from Russia.

In 1925, when Yakoulov was in Paris on a visit, Diaghilev asked him to design the sets and costumes for the new ballet, and to collaborate with Prokofiev on his scenario. Initially, Prokofiev called the ballet 'Ursignol' – a title derived from the abbreviation 'U.R.S.S' and parodying the title of Stravinsky's 'Rossignol' – but Diaghilev disliked this derisive note and, in the end, the ballet was called 'Le Pas d'Acier'.

Yakoulov recommended that Larionov be appointed stage manager for Le Pas d'Acier, but Diaghilev instructed him to enter into negotiations with Tairov and Meyerhold. On his return to Moscow in the autumn of 1925, Yakoulov got in touch with Tairov, who declined Diaghilev's offer, claiming urgent commitments in the U.S.S.R. As for Meyerhold, he answered Yakoulov with a laconic letter in which he said that "for several reasons" he could not accept Diaghilev's proposal. Diaghilev's efforts to secure the collaboration of Kasian Goleizovsky or other young Soviet choreographers also came to nothing. When all these attempts failed, Yakoulov's help notwithstanding, Diaghilev realised he would have to give up his hope of obtaining Soviet talent and approach his old collaborators. He abandoned the idea of having a special director and turned over to Massine the entire work of choreographer and director for the new ballet.

Parisians awaited Le Pas d'Acier with considerable curiosity, anticipating a Bolshevik propaganda ballet. However, it gave rise to no protests at the première or at later performances at the Sarah Bernhardt and was a unanimous success. The only incident this ballet provoked took place in the wings the evening of the première, and it was due to a misunderstanding.

Vladimir Dukelsky overheard Cocteau criticizing the choreography; mistaking the target of his attacks, Dukelsky interrupted with some impertinence and insulted Cocteau, who lost his habitual restraint and slapped him. This scene took place in semidarkness backstage, and for the moment passed unnoticed, but the next day I received the following letter from Cocteau”:

(This letter is reproduced as ‘documentary’ source material in Appendix 4 section C, and discussed in chapter 1.)

“On June 13, I received another letter from Cocteau, which put an end to this incident.”

(This letter is reproduced as ‘documentary’ source material in Appendix 4 section D, and discussed in chapter 1)

B. THE ACCOUNT OF W.A PROPERT¹

"If 'La Chatte' was to this extent (talking of Sauguet's music) reactionary, it certainly didn't indicate any general retreat. For Diaghileff's next step was to hurl us into the whirlpool of Prokofieff's 'Pas D'Acier'. In this we were drenched and beaten into submission. There could be no mere acquiescence in such a hurly-burly; you either shut your ears and waited as patiently as might be for the end of it, or you sat spellbound, unable to think or to protest, stunned by the mere accumulation of heavy sound and only released when the last crash of the tremendous climax had died away. There is no parallel to that final scene, with the revolving lights, green, red, and white, flashing down on the triple tier of shining, half-naked bodies, as the young workmen answered with the swing of their great hammers the thundering rhythms of the orchestra. If only the first half of the ballet had been as clear and purposeful as the last, what a wonderful invention the whole would have been! The first part professed to 'summarise the stories and legends of the countryside', while the other dealt with 'the mechanism of the factories'. What the stories and legends may have been no one could guess from either the clothes or the action, and the programme explained nothing. Among the first things we saw were a number of young men in long green coats and helmets, who hopped up and down the different platforms, alternately pursuing and being pursued by an equal number of young men in khaki. Cossacks, possibly, and the Red Army; but what Cossacks ever tottered and shook as these did? And if the others were the Red Army why were they always being laid flat? Perhaps these last were the White Army, and the others not Cossacks at all, but merely legends. Lifar and Tchernicheva wore Apace clothes, and danced as these legendary creatures always do in foreign capitals. Danilova, in a tartan skirt, was thrown about by Massine, while a dozen proletarian ladies romped solemnly with the soldiers in the background.² Possibly it was meant to demonstrate the abounding vitality of young Communists at play, but there was as little mirth in their frolic as there is said to be among the crowds in Soviet Moscow.

Directly the author got in touch with the 'mechanism' he was a changed man. The song of the machines was in his blood, as it was apparently in Prokofieff's, and together, passing from pretence to reality, they transformed the whole ballet. The laborious fooling stopped dead and the spectacle began to pulsate with new life. This was communism 'in excelsis', a whole community inflamed by the whirr of the wheels and the clang of the forging hammers. The uproar increased and the movement quickened, and just at the breaking-point the curtain came down and it was over.

The master spirit of this ballet and the inventor of its whole mise-en-scene was a brilliant young Russian, Georges Jakouloff, who, unhappily for his art, was to die in the following year. He had worked with Meyerhold in Moscow and had recognised, if he hadn't also suggested, the psychological value of bare walls as a background for the display of the finest acting. In 'Le Pas D'Acier' the bare walls and the heavy timbers had had to be modified to suit the needs of a travelling company, and a most efficient compromise had been arrived at. His model for the setting shows how much more he relied on balance of form than on surface decoration. In this he was at one with his later compatriots. The four-square simplicity that had marked 'Renard' and 'Les Noces' and the geometrical intricacy of 'La Chatte' find in 'Le Pas D'Acier' their full and final expression. In the ballet that followed, the painters came into their own again, and the reign of the architects was ended.

Prokofieff's music was an exercise in rhythm. At times a recognisable melody could be heard, though always as it began to develop it was caught in the swirl of the returning

¹ Propert, (1931), p.56-59.

² According to the programme Danilova's first scene with Massine, as the Sailor and the Worker Girl, was a duet. The program does not list any other dancers in the scene. It is probable therefore, that Propert is describing a moment from the ensemble section, the only other time when Danilova was onstage and would still have been in her tartan skirt as opposed to her factory act costume.

flood and submerged. But if ever there was a ballet in which melody was superfluous and rhythm all-important, it was this. I think one is justified in blaming Massine for much that was irritating in the earlier scenes. He had never before indulged so freely his proclivity for turning dancers into marionettes. Physical jerks, as he understands them, are only too true to their name. That the ballet was wholly successful one can hardly say, but that its last section has never been surpassed is beyond any doubt. It stands alone in its defiant audacity; and when Prokofiev reappears in 1929 we shall find him chastened to orthodoxy and content to serve the dancers rather than to master them."

C. THE ACCOUNT OF C.W. BEAUMONT³

"The next new production was 'Le Pas d'Acier', which had its London premiere on July 4. This was a ballet in two scenes by Sergey Prokofiev and George Jakulov, with music by S. Prokofiev, constructions and scenes by G. Jakulov, and choreography by Leonide Massine.

The ballet seemed to be intended to express the spirit of Soviet Russia in its two main aspects: life in the fields, and life in the factory. Here again the setting was inspired by constructivist theories, the main features being a series of platforms of varying heights over which the dancers moved. In the second scene, signal discs, wheels, and pulleys were introduced.

Unfamiliar with the rest period diversions of the local workers on a communal farm, I could make little of the dances of the first part. There were men, presumably soldiers, in long coats coloured brown or a dull greyish green. There were women in equally drab and utilitarian costumes. There were quasi-military movements and gestures, and much hearty fraternizing between the soldiers and the women-folk. Towards the end Danilova and Massine danced a character pas de deux and the first part ended with an ensemble. There was a great deal of activity accompanied by considerable noise, but it all appeared rather meaningless.

The second part, however, gave a masterly impression of the rhythmic power and beauty of machines. There was hardly any melody, for no sooner did the suggestion of one appear than it was engulfed in the mighty whirlpool of rhythm. The music hummed and throbbed and hammered with ever-increasing intensity to which the dancers gave visual form and emphasis.

There were isolated movements which gradually built up into one huge machine, now of this type, now of that. Arms weaved, swung, and revolved; feet pounded the floor; even bodies took part in the movement, swinging from the waist in different arcs and at varying angles. The dancers massed, divided, strung out into line, and, with arms outstretched sideways, sharply turned their hands up and down, flat to the audience, which action ingeniously suggested a flashing lamp; this flashing, arranged in changing patterns, was most effective. So the rhythmic force ceaselessly grew in intensity until they appeared on a central platform two figures bearing giant hammers, which they swung and wielded more and more strongly until, at the height of the tumult, the climax was reached with the constructivist elements adding their quota – signal discs snapping on and off, and wheels spinning faster and faster. At this point the curtain fell to the accompaniment of a frenzied outburst of applause.

The second part of this ballet made a considerable impression on me and renewed my admiration for Massine's rare ability to contrive movements appropriate both to the theme of the piece and to the rhythm of the music, and then to combine the component parts into one vast orchestration of sound and expressive action, increasing in intensity until the conclusion was attained.

³ Beaumont, (1940), p.278-280. Also reproduced in Beaumont (1975) p.370-371.

It is rather extraordinary that the second part of 'Le Pas d'Acier' has never been revived, for not only is it complete in itself, but it is certainly the best example of what might be termed the 'machine ballet that I have so far seen.'

APPENDIX 12

**NON-CONTEMPORARY PUBLICATIONS OF OTHER EYE-WITNESS
DESCRIPTIONS**

A. THE ACCOUNT OF NATALIA GONCHAROVA AND MICHAEL LARIONOV¹

“Entretemps, en 1927, dans ‘Le Pas d’Acier’ Iacouloff avait porté à la scène, d’une part l’ancienne Société en voie de disparition et qui s’accroche désespérément aux possibilités de maintenir son existence, d’autre part la nouvelle Société, laborieuse et ouvrière. Les personnages évoquant la première évoluaient sur la surface même du plateau tandis que la Société nouvelle, celle des travailleurs, était représentée sous la forme d’une fabrique en activité: des machines, des instruments de travail (en particulier des marteaux de toutes dimensions), tous en action, s’étagaient autour et au dessus d’un second plateau, plus petit, surélevé, posé sur des poteaux au centre de la scène. A travers ces machines et ces instruments, des appareils de signalisation et d’éclairages, oscillant, clignotant, éclatant de feux et de couleurs en un mouvement ininterrompu symbolisaient la pensée et la civilisation industrielle contemporaines.”

English Translation

Meanwhile in 1927, in ‘Le Pas d’Acier’ Jakulov put onto the stage on the one hand the old society, which was already disappearing and which clung desperately to any opportunity to continue its existence, and on the other hand – the new society, industrious, belonging to the workers. The characters from the old society moved about the actual stage, whereas the new society, that of the workers, was depicted in the form of a factory at work; machine-tools and equipment (in particular all types of hammers), all engaged in production, towered above the second stage and around it; it was smaller, raised slightly, and rested on two uprights in the centre of the main stage. And around these tools and equipment, signalling installations and lighting devices, flaring, oscillating and flashing with colours and fire, in some kind of maelstrom of uninterrupted movement – symbolised thought and contemporary industrial civilisation.”

¹ Goncharova, N. and Larionov M. (1955) p.33

B. THE ACCOUNT OF ALEXANDER BENOIS²

"Diaghilev's other ultra-modern and ultra-snobbish ballets, Le Renard, Les Matelots, Le Train Bleu, etc.; were equally senseless in their ugliness. But they were all surpassed by 'Le Pas d'Acier', which had, apart from its stupidity and affectation, something repulsive in it. The search for novelty and the wish to keep pace with the century had led Seriozha, our 'aristocrat' Seriozha, so far as to present on the stage of the Opera an apotheosis of the Soviet regime. 'Le Pas d'Acier' could easily be taken for one of those official glorifications of industrialism and of the proletariat in which the U.S.S.R excels, The cynical zeal of the authors and producers of 'Le Pas d'Acier' had actually gone so far as to offset the triumph of the workers by sneers at the defeat of the bourgeoisie. On the stage, among the representatives of the 'class that was vanquished', there tramped about unfortunate ladies of society, who, in the days of famine and need, endeavoured to sell at the market those remnants of their belongings that had not yet been stolen by the Bolsheviki! Prokofiev was the author of the imitative music that hissed and whistled like a foundry. After creating this masterpiece, he acted with perfect consistency by returning to the U.S.S.R, where he has continued to prosper to the present day."

² Benois, (1941) p.381-382.

C. FROM THE DIARIES OF K.A. SOMOV³

English Translation from Russian⁴

"June 7th 1927

<...>⁵ In the evening to the ballet. Seat in the first row, next to Bushen and Ernst⁶. Dreadful noise from the orchestra, but a quite beautiful scene in terms of a painting – in the foreground the heads of the violinists, then the footlights, with the floor of the stage invisible. Couldn't see the feet of the dancers at all – that's how you must picture it <...> 'Pas d'Acier' – a collaboration between Prokofiev, Jakulov, Mayakovsky and Massine <...> Was it really worth Jakulov coming from Moscow to put together such an abomination! Prokofiev's din – not music. The choreography – God knows what! Commissars, sailors – the main character among them was Massine, then a young man in panther-skin jacket and wide silk trousers – Lifar, Danilova as a young girl – La Comtesse, selling old rags at the market; half-naked workers in leather aprons with hammers which made a thundering din, even drowning out Prokofiev's noisy music <...> Huge success – and, oddly enough, no protests, whistles or boos <...> "

³ Somov (1979) p.198-207.

⁴ The Russian text was translated for the study by Margaret Jones. The gaps in the text indicated reproduce those marked on the original.

⁵ These editing marks are not the study's; they are as given in the published text.

⁶ Dimitri Dmitrievich Bushen (1893-1993) – theatre artist and painter. Lived in France from 1925. Sergei Rostislavovich Ernst (1894-1980) – art historian and critic who lived in St Petersburg and then France. Ernst may perhaps have written about the ballet himself – this was not explored by the study.

APPENDIX 13

**INTERVIEW WITH DAME ALICIA MARKOVA
and
CORRESPONDENCE AND DISCUSSIONS WITH JOAN LAWSON**

1. Account of interview with Dame Alicia Markova: 2nd February 1996.

Lesley-Anne Sayers asked Dame Alicia Markova for her memories of Massine's 'Le Pas D'Acier' (1927) as part of her doctoral research and specifically for an article on the ballet in 'Experiment' magazine ed. Prof. J. Bowl USA.

The conversation began by confirming that Dame Alicia's roles in 'Le Pas d'Acier' were as indicated on the programmes: i.e. that of a 'Mouse' in part one and of a 'Worker Girl' in part two. LAS commented that very little was known about this first section of the ballet and that there were no known photographs of the scene of the Cats and the Mice.

In her role as a Mouse Dame Alicia recalled a big entrance with Vera Petrovna consisting of large leaps. Dame Alicia confirmed that their costumes did not represent 'Cats' or 'Mice' and that they were dressed as peasants. Dame Alicia described the Costumes as consisting of thick grey cotton stockings, tweed skirts, shawls and kerchiefs on their heads. She recalled in particular the big lace up boots on their feet and that the cast in general loathed the drab and unattractive costumes.

LAS asked about a photograph (a copy of which was sent earlier to Dame Alicia) showing Woizikovskv and two other dancers. Dame Alicia confirmed that the photograph was of the scene of 'The Drunkards' from part one of the ballet and featured Tcherkas on the left and Efimov on the right. LAS asked about Massine's choreography. Dame Alicia recalled that the movement was very mechanical, showing no emotion. She commented that while her leaps with Vera Petrovna were basically classical, in general Massine rejected the classical technique entirely in this ballet. Dame Alicia described the hands as very unclassical, as mechanical. She said the delicately fingered hands of classical ballet were replaced by the fist, that everything had to be mechanical and that pointe shoes were not worn at any time in the ballet.

LAS asked if dancing in the ballet was very different from dancing in other Massine works. Dame Alicia replied that it certainly was, that the movement was in complete opposition to the classical technique. LAS asked if Massine gave them visual imagery to think of while performing, or if he spoke to the dancers of his ideas or sources. Dame Alicia replied that Massine was mostly silent, that he demonstrated what he wanted and rarely discussed anything.

Dame Alicia confirmed that there was a great emphasis on rhythm, as in the music, and that while she did not think the work resembled any other, she felt that it had some elements that could be said to be the early stages of his symphonic ballets. LAS suggested that in thinking of earlier ballets it might relate in some ways to Nijinska's 'Les Noces', but Dame Alicia said no, stressing again that 'Le Pas D'Acier' was in complete opposition to the classical technique. Considering its relationship to earlier ballets however, Dame Alicia thought of Massine's 'Rite of Spring', recalling what it was like to dance the 'Chosen Maiden' when she replaced Sokolova in the role.

LAS asked about the 'machine dance' described by critics in the second part of the ballet where Dame Alicia was a 'Worker Girl'. Dame Alicia replied that the dancers thought of the movement as steps, as complicated, interwoven steps, that they did not think of it as a 'machine dance' as such. Dame Alicia recalled that the corps were in groups, moving mechanically at the end. Dame Alicia did not recall being aware of 'machine dances' at the time, only that they thought of performing the steps in a very mechanical way.

LAS asked if the dancers operated parts of the set, setting it in motion, or performed on separate parts of the set as apparatus. Dame Alicia did not recall this taking place and thought that in general the set was far simpler than in the photograph of Jakulov's model. Dame Alicia pointed out that it was not unusual for Diaghilev to simplify designs, not least because of the practicalities of touring.

LAS asked if Dame Alicia remembered a train, on stage or the clock shown on the model. Dame Alicia did not and was almost certain that they were not parts of the set. Dame Alicia also did not recall the gauze or any props on wheels or the rope ladder that hangs down in the model. Dame Alicia did remember the large platforms and the dancers having to go up and down the fixed stairs. She recalled that the overall colour of the set was grey and that it was drab and depressing. Dame Alicia described the set as coming to life at the end of the ballet through the use of flashing lights. LAS asked if Dame Alicia recalled the hammers, and if all corps had them. Dame Alicia thought that no, the hammers were few and that she herself did not have one.

LAS asked if dancing in 'Le Pas D'Acier' bore any resemblance at all to dancing in Diaghilev's other constructivist ballet of 1927. Balanchine's 'La Chatte'. Dame Alicia pointed out that she did not take over the role of La Chatte until later but that no, the choreography of the two ballets was completely un-alike. The music was so very different.

LAS asked about the attitude in the company towards the Soviet team and towards the ballet in general. Dame Alicia recalled Prokofiev at some of the rehearsals but she could not remember Jakulov being present, except perhaps in Monte Carlo. Dame Alicia pointed out that there was a myth that the ballet had very few performances, that this was not the case, that it was performed quite often during its seasons. LAS said that one critic mentions the ballet went to Berlin and asked if this was possible. Dame Alicia was quite sure that this was not the case and that the company did not go to Berlin again until 1929.

The conversation became more general about the problems of source material for the ballet. LAS asked if Dame Alicia had any photographs of herself in the work and Dame Alicia replied that she did not and did not believe any had been taken. Dame Alicia also did not know of sources for Massine's notebooks or if he notated this ballet. Dame Alicia recommended studying Grigoriev's description of the set as that which would be most authoritative.

The conversation ended with a general discussion about dance history and the importance of understanding the past in today's training of the young dancer. LAS expressed the hope that Dame Alicia would impart more of her memories to today's artists and scholars, and thanked Dame Alicia for her time and help.

2. Correspondence And Discussion With Joan Lawson

(See chapter 2 for an explanation of this material)

November 20th 1995. A letter to the author from Joan Lawson reads:

"Yes I was there at the first night of Pas d'Acier and well remember my dear friend and colleague whom I had known since four years old, no less than Edwin Evans: - "Aren't you glad we are going home by underground." A remark echoed by several other critics.

Synopsis of Pas d'Acier

1. *The Building of the Line. Possibly inside a railway station I remember only a large expanse of sandy dunes. Enter Overseer followed by workmen (male corps de ballet) carrying sleepers (Female corps wrapped in what looked like sacks.)*
2. *Workmen place Sleepers in an orderly row at back of stage, feet or heads to audience and open their arms outstretched to side and meeting next girl. This formed the Sleepers and Rails.*
3. *Foreman dismisses workers who form the train off-stage by linking to the next man with elbows bent and hand placed on next Man's elbow. This forms the Piston.*
4. *Train slowly begins to move forwards as arms move to and fro along a straight line with tiny shuffling steps, the knee hardly bent and steps very close together.*
5. *Overseer jumps on last man as the train is slowly moving and waves his flag.*

Lighting

All the above is done in full lights but the moment the train starts to move, go into Double=Flash i.e. off-on at a very quick pace to signify the lights flashing past any train as it rushes past.

I had a long talk with Massine about all his ballets and his only comment about Pas was: It was Diaghilev's idea and we had to be in Fashion with the Constructivist movement."

There is nothing further I can add, quite frankly I was not at all interested. I was dancing with Tchernicheva and Astafieva in class and they hated it..."

In further discussions with Joan Lawson on November 23rd 1995, she recollected that the train only comes on at the end after the last dancer has entered the stage space. She thought it was probably pushed from behind by stage hands and was not moved by the dancers. She said you hardly saw it because of all the commotion and flashing lights. (After further research it became clear to the author that Joan Lawson was describing Massine's Union Pacific (1934) and not Le Pas d'Acier.)

In January 1996 Joan Lawson was given photographs of Le Pas D'Acier to try and elicit memories of the correct work. She replied later by letter and with annotations on a photocopy of the set photograph in response to specific questions.

In the letter to the author of January 24th 1996 Joan Lawson wrote:

"I do not remember any parts of the machinery moving at all until the end when the Limes went mad and spun their wheels at varying speeds and the whole gamut of colours from white, through straw yellow, orange and up to the deepest red to purple or blue. You should remember there were TEN limes. One in each of three wings each side of the stage and 2 on each side of the proscenium arch with LIMES from centre stalls circle.

Nor do I remember any but TWO dancers looking as if they moved scenery. In any case this would only have been moved with the consent of the Stage Hands Union! Rules were very strict and the only time a dancer might have helped was if a certain activity had to be done to music cues. I once officiated at such an event – when Lohengrin had to set off for the Holy Grail!

I also do not remember anyone using the step ladders although once when talking to Grigoriev and Tchernicheva they remembered how Massine and Woizikovsky swooped down into the pas de deux."

Her responses to specific telephone questions about the set in January 1996 were as follows:

Question 1: Did the production set differ from this model?

Answer: *"As far as I remember, this was the set"*

Question 2: Was the clock a part of the set?

Answer: *"Yes".*

Question 3: There is a train on the higher platform. No reviews mention this. Was it part of the actual set?

Answer: *"Yes".*

Question 4: It looks as if there is a cloud of some kind painted on the gauze. Do you have any recollections of this?

Answer: *"I remember the laugh when the cloud moved way from the train".*

Question 5: Were parts of the set moved by the dancers?

Answer: *"Yes but very few"*

APPENDIX 14

OUTLINE RECONSTRUCTION OF SETS AND SCENARIOS **1925 and 1927**

N.B. The explorations of this appendix are discussed in Chapter 4. Section A is intended as a very basic interpretation of Jakulov's working intentions when producing the model in 1925 for the set and action. It also notes where the model suggests a departure from the action plan of the 1925 scenario, produced prior to the model. The nature of the set/action that emerges can then be compared with what is known of the set and action in the 1927 production shown in section B. This compilation of information from source materials has helped identify the nature and extent of the 'gaps in knowledge'. Section B also indicates the areas of action and set that received the most descriptive attention and interest. The study has attempted to make suggestions regarding some of the 'gaps in knowledge' drawing on the overall source materials.

A. The Set and Scenario as Indicated by Jakulov's Model in Relation to the 1925 Materials.

N.B. *itals* = quotations from the 1925 scenario. "*itals*" = quotations from Jakulov's manuscripts. Other material has been put together by the study from the scenario, manuscripts, drawings and model.

[] = supposition based on overall source materials.

The attachment of the action from the 1925 scenario to the precise sections of the music is not clearly specified in the 1925 materials. As discussed in the thesis, the scenario and musical outline predate both the music and the model. The study has arranged the action to be in accordance with the musical sections of the final score. (The musical outline has 8 scenes in act 1, with the arrival of the commissars, firemen and dispersal of the crowd as a separate 1 minute scene, the final score has only 7, but the final titles and themes follow the musical outline closely). The timings given are for approximate reference, they are taken from a current recording of the full score.¹

The Drawings referred to below are reproduced in Appendix 3 and discussed in Chapters 1 and 4.

See fig. 4.1 for an explanation of the named set parts.

ACT 1

Music: Passing of the Silhouettes², 2'32"

Scenario: *Prologue*

Set: [Gauze at the front of the stage, lit to be opaque, hiding the set from view]

Action:

Passage of silhouettes from left to right.

- 1) *Sailors, at a running, warlike pace, their caps off, holding their rifles down at the ready, wearing jackets slung over one shoulder;*
- 2) *Male and female sweet sellers and cigarette sellers gallop and spin with their boxes of sweets and cigarettes;*
- 3) *The Orator, taking one decisive step forward and two small steps back, turning like a propeller and pointing at a book;*
- 4) *A Frightened Lady runs past with a nervous gait, opening and closing an umbrella;*
- 5) *The Commissars, conscious of their own importance, then suddenly attentive, execute jumps in various directions, then adopt their self-important gait again and disappear with a leap;*
- 6) *The Bandits-Cheats jump on their toes, crawl along, then jump again;*
- 7) *The Speculators, stumbling under the weight of their sacks, fall down, throwing their sacks over their heads, then themselves falling head first over the sacks.*

¹ Olympia, USSR Ministry of Culture Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Gennadi Rozhdestvensky, 1987.

² This title changes to 'Entry of the Characters' on Prokofiev's 1927 section titles. See Appendix 2B, but at the time of writing the score and creating the model, in September 1925, the scene of the silhouettes was still envisaged. See Jakulov's letter to Prokofiev, Sept. 1st 1925.

Music: The Arrival of the Train and Bartering³ 2'34"

Scenario: *Act 1.*

Set: [Gauze is made transparent and raised to reveal a central platform without central wheel. A higher platform directly behind this front platform is hidden by a gauze that runs down between the two platforms. The 'Street Lamp' is on the left, the 'Railway Signal' on the right. The 'mobile staircase' with its top ladder up against the 'Railway Signal', giving access to the revolving top 'signal'. Steps going up to the platform. A rope ladder hangs down near the 'Railway Signal' and hooped ropes hang down in between the rope ladder and the platform. There is another gauze hanging from the middle legs across the underneath of the front platform, and at least one other gauze that extends out from the middle of this platform to the steps at its side. These gauzes form the bazaar.⁴ There is another gauze with painted scaffolding and steam cloud behind the train.

Props: Sacks of flour, trays of sweets and cigarettes, a piglet, a table and 2 stools, a short coat on a stick like a flag.

Dancers: 6 female and 3 male speculators; 6 hungry female citizens and 3 hungry male citizens; 2 male cigarette/sweet sellers en travesti; 2 female cigarette/sweet sellers. (= 22 traders)

Action:

[The hungry citizens enter and gather on and around the front platform. With light effects the train is gradually revealed, with light playing on the painted steam effect giving the impression of a steam train arriving in the station behind the characters. (It would be difficult for the speculators to still be on the train for their dance of wheels and levers, as originally envisaged. The model indicates a clear departure from the original scenario⁵). Some speculators could still be on the front bar with others behind who could then climb down steps from the platform running off into the wings and coming on to the forestage to join the hungry citizens coming down to meet them (as in the original scenario). It is not clear if or how the scenario's dance of wheels and levers, also shown in Drawing A, around the locomotive was to take place.

Some play with the 'Railway Signal' is indicated by the nature of the set part, presumably a dancer or dancers was to climb up and flip the top around indicating the train had come into the station. After the arrival of the train at the start of this section, the model gives no further indication of any move away from the nature of the scene in the scenario].

Coming to meet the speculators are... *the hungry women of the city with their items for bartering. Among them are two women in lampshades*).

³ This title changes to 'The Train and the Speculators' on Prokofiev's 1927 section titles. See Appendix 2B. On current recordings this section has various titles, for example 'Procession of the Burghers' on the Olympia CD used by the study.

⁴ Jakulov's handwritten manuscripts note that when the commissars return with the firemen at the end of act 1 "they clear up the bazaar (located behind gauzes)". See Appendix 2A manuscript page 1-2.

⁵ As discussed in chapter 4, the model appears to have positioned the train on the back platform, moving away from Drawing A and the scenario which envisage the train coming onto the forestage from the right.

The Bartering Dance. A woman with a sack and a man with an armchair, a man in a caftan with a piglet, and a woman holding a short coat on a stick like a flag⁶ – against a background of general hustle and bustle. The male and female cigarette and sweet sellers twirl about with small steps carrying their trays.

[The train could be faded from view, perhaps as the bazaar is established behind the gauzes around and under the front platform].

Music: Commissars 1.52”

Dancers: All from the above scene joined by 3 commissars and two swindlers.

Action:

Three commissars, 2 male and 1 female, appear “with peculiar grace” wearing multicoloured ‘French’ jackets and begin to push back the crowd. Three quarters of the crowd disperses⁷.

Music: The Appearance of The Swindlers Theft and Pursuit⁸ 2’.14”

Dancers: The remaining traders (approx. 6), 3 commissars, 2 swindlers

Action:

Two swindlers creep up and rob a commissar. The three commissars chase after the two swindlers. The swindlers, escaping, climb up the ladders [rope ladder] and swing across on a rope [hooped ropes] to the central platform, crawl down along the board and disappear in the wings⁹. The commissars follow them using the same route and also disappear.

Music: Dance of the Orator 2’31”

Dancers: Traders joined by the Orator, the Worker Girl and 5 Sailors including the hero.

Props: Money for the Sailors to scatter over the stage. The Orator’s book on elastic.

⁶ This character perhaps evolves into the woman in a lampshade hat carrying fabric on a stick in the centre of Drawing G(2)

⁷ This appears to have meant ‘exit the stage’ as Prokofiev’s musical outline envisages 4 of them coming back as the firemen later in the act.

⁸ The title of this section changes to ‘Sweetsellers and Cigarette Vendors’ on Prokofiev’s titles of July 1927, see Appendix 2B. This complete change of title is unexplained. The musical theme of the sweetsellers and cigarette vendors that emerges from listening to the music in conjunction with the 1925 scenario does not appear in this section of the music. However, with this section title Prokofiev establishes their presence as an important element, so that overall, with the exception of *The Arrival of the Train*, section 1’s titles stress the characters involved in the act.

⁹ It is not clear from the black and white photograph of Jakulov’s model whether this board remained part of the set at the model stage.

Action:

The traders who remain stuck on the stage huddle together in fear. They begin to once again fill the stage, [perhaps rejoined by some of the others], trading, [with an emphasis on] “the joy of the buyers and sellers”. From amongst them the orator emerges, making an indignant speech (dance). A few people listen, among them the pretty worker girl, to whom the orator in his speech pays particular attention. 5 Sailors enter, well-dressed and over familiar. “Five people who feel themselves to be masters”. Four of them scatter across the stage, buying goods and throwing their money around. The fifth, the principal one, is interested in the scene between the worker girl and the orator, and, wishing to protect her, places himself between them. The orator continues with his speech, but then throws down his book in anger. The book bounces back to him on a piece of elastic. The orator withdraws indignantly.

Music: The Dance of the Sailor and the Worker Girl¹⁰. 3’19”

Dancers: The hero and heroine, 4 other Sailors, traders.

Action:

The first stylised acquaintance of the sailor and the worker girl: they dance together but without coming into contact with each other. The sailor, whose comrades are calling him, bows to her and withdraws. The worker girl disappears in the opposite direction.

Music: Reconstruction of Decorations 3’ 05”

Dancers: Traders joined by the 3 Commissars and 6 Firemen.

Action:

The commissars return with the firemen and clear the market. “The commissars leave”. The firemen (ballet dancers), with plastic movements, rearrange the set, to music, turning it into a factory.

[The model does not appear to allow for the elaborate conception of this scene shown in Drawing B. It would be necessary to remove the train from the stage, unless the train was to remain on the back platform for act 2. If so it would restrict platform space for the hammering scenes specified in the scenario. The raising of the train in this entr’act would be out of keeping with the idea of ‘construction’ indicated by Drawing B, but it could of course take place out of view behind the gauze. Jakulov may have abandoned this scene at the model stage, in which case we have no source materials for his revised intentions. Prokofiev’s score was written at the same time as the model was built, and orchestrated afterwards; as Prokofiev keeps to the original section title, perhaps Jakulov kept to the original idea too, but possibly in a simplified form.]

¹⁰ The full title on the musical outline is ‘The Entry of the Sailor and the dance of the Sailor with the Worker Girl. The study has placed the entry of the sailors earlier in keeping with the longer musical section for the Orator than was planned on the musical outline. This title changes to ‘The Sailor in the Bracelet and the Worker Girl’ on Prokofiev’s 1927 section titles. See Appendix 2B

Drawing B indicates that Jakulov was considering removing the tops of the 'Street Lamp' and the 'Railway Signal' for act 2. A wheel would need to be placed on the centre front platform (possibly the wheel from the top of the 'Street Lamp'). The 'Machine Tools with Pedals' would need to be moved into position, and would need to be on wheels as is indicated in Drawing B and D. (They are not on wheels in the model, a further indication perhaps that this scene was abandoned). They would need to be on either side of the platform but further down stage than indicated on the model if fulfilling the intentions of the scenario. A 'Milling Machine' (possibly the white construction shown downstage on the model) would have to be placed on the higher back platform. The overhead wheels and belting and the rim of signal lights could be lowered down from above. The mobile stairs could be moved to underneath the hooped ropes and the top part folded down to make the 'small platform' specified in the scenario, and as indicated in Drawings B and D. The rope ladder could be moved across the stage to the left side of the platform enabling workers to climb up on that side of the stage, as indicated in Drawing C

ACT 2¹¹

Music: Sailor's Conversion Into A Worker. 1'56"

Dancers: The hero (Sailor)

Set: [The factory as arranged in the previous scene. The back platform is initially concealed by a gauze.]

Action:

As the stage clears, the hero enters dressed as the Sailor. He has decided to become a worker. There is a short solo dance where he changes his costume into that of a worker.

Music: The Factory. 3'04"

Dancers: The hero, 4 male workers, the heroine and 4 other female workers,

Action:

Four workers enter, and together with the transformed sailor they begin work [mounting the rope ladder on the left hand side of the stage up to the left over head wheel¹²]. A short while later 5 worker women, the heroine among them, begin to work on the most distant and highest platform. This work, on a milling machine¹³ situated behind a gauze, is visible in silhouette... The hero (the ex-sailor), seeing his beloved, tries to get to her, and along the way ends up on the large platform situated in the middle of the stage, between the machine on which he was working and the platform on which the women are working. Thus he is separated from his beloved by empty space and the gauze. The hero is in despair because he cannot reach her.

Music: Hammers. 4'28"

Dancers: All 10 workers from above scene, joined by 5 new workers.

Props: Large and small hammers for 5 workers. [2 large and 3 small hammers]

Action:

On to his platform climb 5 new workers with hammers, big and small. They begin work on this platform, and drag the hero into their work. The work with the hammers is exclusively

¹¹ It is clear that the detailed action for act 2 had not been worked out on the scenario. Prokofiev admits this to Diaghilev in his letter of 11th August 1925, enclosing the scenario. Like the entr'acte above it was to be finalised by the working out of the model. The study has therefore, used the model parts as an indication of modifications to the scenario.

¹² The scenario specifies that they work "on the first machine, situated near the left wings (see drawing no. 1)" on Drawing C. In Drawing D this machine appears to be behind the 'Pedal Apparatus'. However, the model has simplified the scenario's need for 2 machines as well as pedal apparatus in this scene creating two 'Machine Tools with Pedals' as on Drawing B. This is fully discussed in Chapter 4.

¹³ The study has concluded this is the white construction located at the front of the model.

balletic, without any noise. Meanwhile, by means of lighting effects, the work on the first machine and on the distant platform with the women fades away. [The heroine climbs down from the back platform with the other women and exits. She comes immediately back round to the front to mount the mobile stairs, with two of the women. She stands on the top with the two other women on the sides. They utilise the hooped ropes in keeping with the 3rd moment of Drawing C]¹⁴. The heroine, from the height of the small platform [the mobile stairs with top folded down] ... notices the hero working with a hammer on the middle platform; theirs is a 'mime' scene from different platforms.

Music: Closing Scene 2'26"

Scenario: *Finale*

Dancers: 15 workers as above [joined by another 6 workers¹⁵].

Set: The factory as Above.

Action:

They both (the hero and heroine) run down to the foreground – this marks the beginning of the finale. The hero and heroine dance together on pedal apparatus. "Dance with Pedals".¹⁶ ...while at the same time the whole factory is set in motion.... The first blow on the pedal is the starting point for the movement for the whole factory. [Presumably this was to entail the moving of the 'Overhead Wheels and the flaring of the 'Signal Lights' – starting gradually and building up to a fast speed, while the hero and heroine operated the 'Machine Tools with Pedals', dancers were perhaps to mount ladders, and perhaps perform on the mobile stairs with the rings. The centre wheel on the front platform also invites a spinning motion (shown as a dance setting it in motion on Drawings D and B). If the 'Street Lamp' was to be present in act 2 with its top, it may perhaps have been intended to spin via use of a motor, as could the Railway Signal's top.]

While the hero and heroine are operating the 'Machine Tools with Pedals', there is a dance turning the wheel on the centre of the front platform and a dance with a gear wheel on the higher platform [presumably by the model stage just involving the Milling Machine] appears to put the set into motion¹⁷. *From the central platform on which the silent work with the hammers had been performed, hoisting tackle lowers a weight down onto the platform and the two workers with their huge hammers, made of wood, hollow inside... begin to beat with them loudly in time with the indications in the score. The gauze is lit to reveal workers hammering in the background [as in Drawing D]. Throughout the whole finale... the lights of advertisements play in various places on the set.*¹⁸

¹⁴ The scenario has them first working a machine by the right wings, but then suddenly the heroine is on the small platform. In accordance with the interpretation that the 'machines' in this act were removed by the working through on the model, the women have been placed directly on the mobile stairs/small platform.)

¹⁵ The scenario does not specify any more than the 15 mentioned, but Jakulov's drawings indicate he envisaged more than this. Another 6 would mean that the entire cast of act 1 would be present on stage for the finale which would seem to be thematically consistent.

¹⁶ Jakulov lists this as the first part of the finale in his letter to Prokofiev of 1st September 1925.

¹⁷ As discussed in chapter 4, Jakulov's drawings and annotations suggest that he conceived of an elaborate mechanism of crankshafts, pulleys and wheels literally operating the set as an integrated mechanism. The study has concluded that this was most probably abandoned as it can find no evidence of it on the model.

¹⁸ The study has concluded that Jakulov meant advertisements projected onto the set.

B. The Set and Scenario in the 1927 Production as Indicated by Descriptions and the Paris Programme.

N.B. *itals* = taken from descriptions. [] = supposition based on evidence across all source materials.

The interpretation of descriptions is necessarily informed by the model and the 1925 materials as there are no visual records of the performance set.

The quoted descriptions used have been selected as representative of substantiated description or are unique in describing a particular moment or item.

Photographs referred to below are reproduced in Appendix 6.

ACT 1 SCENES OF RUSSIAN RURAL LIFE

General Descriptions of Act 1:

*"...a series of entrances aligned without transitions, borrows the style of an end of year revue...a gloomy and brutal burlesque...accompanied by the nervous, grimacing corps de ballet..."*¹⁹ Massine *"employs the dancers only in groups or in ensemble; while rarely and for no more than a passing moment is a couple or a single figure isolated or individualised. ...The dancing and the miming is automatic, rigid, monotonous.... The faces are inflexible the motions of the bodies angular, nervous, jerky or constricted. Dry and mechanical precision becomes dry and mechanical reiteration – not through fault but by design. Across them flares a brusque and rough-edged grotesquerie. There are momentary whirls of wide fantasy; embracings and strainings that good ladies with one voice would pronounce 'unrefined'."*²⁰

*"Among the first things we saw were a number of young men in long green coats and helmets, who hopped up and down the different platforms, alternately pursuing and being pursued by an equal number of young men in khaki. Cossacks possibly, and the Red Army; but what Cossacks ever tottered and shook as these did? And if the others were the Red Army why were they always being laid flat?"*²¹ It *"was difficult to understand. Instead of trees, one saw railway signals, and instead of peasants, firemen in copper helmets and blue smocks."*²²

*"...as the dancers come up on the stage, ascending or descending the platforms, outspreading before them, the costumes hold the eye... a grotesque, poverty-stricken miscellany – time worn jackets that do not fit at all or fit much too tightly; trousers of like shape and condition; bodices akin to the jackets, skirts that go sisterly with the trousers; head-gear seemingly contrived of whatever was handiest, even to lampshades; only garish colours to relieve the sordid mass of the whole. As the action advances, uniforms brighten and diversify the scene – sparingly. A few soldiers, a few firemen, intersperse the assembled proletariat; a sailor or two, coarsely tattooed, is added to the ensemble."*²³ "A

¹⁹ Comoedia, Juin 9 1927.

²⁰ The Boston Evening Standard, July 23rd 1927

²¹ Propert, (1931) p.56-59

²² The Daily Mirror, July 5th 1927, p.2

²³ The Boston Evening Standard, July 23rd 1927

man wears two shoes that are not of the same pair. A jacket has two different coloured sleeves. And everywhere there are tears and rips."²⁴

*"Dancers... dash about the stage, run after one another, fall on the floor, run up onto 'the set' and roll about on it, rush back down and fall on the floor again. ... a group of red army soldiers in helmets and with three tabs on their uniform, a sailor with a huge anchor on his chest, a few more heroes wearing a high boot on one foot and on the other leg their trousers hanging out.... a mass of stunts, developing the maximum effort of his dancers...."*²⁵

*"There were quasi military movements and gestures, and much hearty fraternizing between the soldiers and the women-folk."*²⁶

ACT 1

Music: **Entry of the Participants**

Scene: *Battle of Baba-Yaga and the Crocodile*

Set:

"The curtain"²⁷ rises on a stage stripped to bare walls²⁸, save for two spacious and substantial platforms in the centre. One, higher than the other²⁹. To it at one side a winding stair way. Around and above are beltings³⁰, wheels, discs, pinions,³¹ but for the

²⁴ Comeodia, Juin 9 1927.

²⁵ Vozrozhedeni, Paris, June 10th 1927.

²⁶ Beaumont, (1940), p.278-280

²⁷ The use of a curtain in the Soviet productions of Meyerhold had become an anachronism. See for example, Huntley Carter's (1924) description of Meyerhold's production of The Earth in Turmoil, p.77, it is clear there is no curtain. The audience sees the set amidst the bare walls of the theatre, and even the actors walking about before the play begins. It is clear from review descriptions that a curtain rose at the beginning of the performance in 1927 but the intentions of the 1925 materials are not clear in this respect.

²⁸ This is probably meant to infer plain walls; there is no evidence of the set as a free standing construction amidst the theatre walls.

²⁹ This indicates that the audience could see both platforms in act 1. The study has been unable to substantiate this or clearly rule it out. The context of the writing indicates that the critic (H.T.Parker) is carefully describing act 1 but he maybe taking a partly general view of the set here.

³⁰ The study has concluded that beltings may have hung down over the action in act 1 as other descriptions imply that the overhead wheels did not come down until act 2.

³¹ It is difficult to find all these items using only the objects specified by the 1925 materials for act 1. It is possible that the production set used items not shown on the model. Alternatively, 'wheels, discs, and pinions' could refer to the Street Lamp top, the Railway Signal top, and the pinion like structure of the Machine Tools with Pedals if they were now on stage from the beginning. Or of course, the critic may be confusing items from act 2 with an apparent description of act 1. It is possible that the over head wheels were in place which would mean reading the Daily Telegraph's note of "whilst wheels appeared over the railway signals" in act 2 as perhaps indicating they were lowered down further over the action, and Beaumont's note that "in the second scene signal disks wheels and pulleys were introduced", as perhaps meaning they were brought into the action rather than placed on stage. However, the study has not been able to substantiate his particular description

while all three are still. Red and white fences seem also to shut off the front platform as though the work place is closed for the day."³²

"The curtain rose on 'constructions'...which from the gates and semaphores³³ appeared to suggest a railway goods yard. A factory chimney that rose at the back³⁴ and a rather crazy street-lamp heightened the impression that the mechanism of industrialism was indicated."³⁵

"Scenes supposed to be situated in a village take place in a vast grey room, furnished, in the centre by a platform³⁶ accessible by a staircase, a railroad disk on the left and a lamp post on the right."³⁷ "A sad grey décor, encumbered by a staircase."³⁸

"Instead of trees, one saw railway signals³⁹"

"The stage bears scaffoldings, revolving discs, gymnastic appliances, a railway footbridge, and a battered lamp-post."⁴⁰

Dancers: 1 female dancer, 7 male corps dressed as soldiers.

Action:

"One sees a baba-yaya, that is to say a witch, and rolling on the ground a band of young men in grey representing a crocodile, as the soldiers of Sparta represented a tortoise."⁴¹
"... all we see on the stage is a provocative young proletarian woman. She is pursued by about ten rascals who throw themselves upon her and submerge her. One does not see in this a crocodile or a witch. Do the young workers with their enormous caps represent a crocodile? Does the flirtatious Vera Petrova represent a witch? It is not impossible. The interpretation is a little too unclear. The jesting is confusing."⁴²

in terms that certainly apply only to act 1. It has concluded therefore, that this description may be unreliable in terms of relating purely to act 1.

³² Boston Evening Standard, July 23rd 1925.

³³ The study has concluded this could refer either to Jakulov's 'Machine Tools' if on stage for act 1, (the red and white one in particular would be easy to associate with the international code of signals which had been established since 1857) or to the top of the Railway Signal.

³⁴ This is not present in the 1925 materials. It is difficult to see what the critic may be referring to if not an addition to the set. The Saturday Review also refers to a factory chimney.

³⁵ The Daily Telegraph, July 5th 1927 p.12

³⁶ This would appear to contradict The Boston Evening Standard's description of two platforms.

³⁷ L'Oeuvre, Juin 10 1927, p.5. This could substantiate the presence of the 'Railway Signal' on the performance set and the critic may be referring to 'stage left/right' which would put the two objects in the positions shown on the model, or he could just have made a mistake as to the sides or be referring to a different object.

³⁸ La Liberte, 9 Juin 1927.

³⁹ The Daily Mirror, July 5th 1927. p. 2. This perhaps suggests the Street Lamp and the Railway Signal.

⁴⁰ Empire News, July 10th 1927 p.3. The context suggests this is a general description and not necessarily specific to act 1. The study has interpreted 'scaffoldings' as 'platforms', 'revolving discs', as 'Machine Tools', and the 'railway foot bridge' as the steps leading up to the centre platform. This is the only description found that locates 'gymnastic appliances', presumably the rope ladder and the hooped ropes, on the performance set.

⁴¹ La Liberte, 9 Juin 1927.

⁴² Le Temps, Juin 15. 1927.

Music: **The Train and the Speculators**

Scene: *The Hawker and the Countesses*

Dancers: 1 Male Hawker; 4 female Countesses; 8 male corps.

Action:

"we see four countesses dance dressed in multicoloured rags and old lampshades for hats"⁴³ "A street vendor does wild gambols in front of women in their finery who leap and sway as wildly as he does."⁴⁴ "A cohort of aristocratic Russian women, dressed from head to toe in multicoloured silk with hats of embossed lampshades, surround a street vendor who carries a sack of flour. All dance attendance on the traveller. He caresses them not without brutality. He pulls at their multi-coloured rags. They take his sack of flour....It is not particularly entertaining."⁴⁵ "...a black-marketeer..exchanges his sack of flour for the garments of former countesses, who beg this boor for a piece of bread.."⁴⁶

Music: **The Commissars**

Scene: *The Sailor and the Three Devils*

Dancers: The Sailor; 3 male devils; 7 other male corps⁴⁷.

Action:

"three devils, dressed in firemens' helmets"⁴⁸, torment a sailor. Workers rescue the sailor who is though strong enough to defend himself."⁴⁹

"these devils appear under the burlesque tunics of Bolshevik firemen, with angular and inhuman movements..."⁵⁰

Music: **The Sweet Sellers and Cigarette Sellers**

Scene: *The Tom-Cat, the Female Cat and the Mice*

Dancers: 2 female soloists; 6 female corps, 8 male corps⁵¹.

⁴³ *Comoedia*, Juin 9 1927.

⁴⁴ *La Liberte*, 9 Juin 1927.

⁴⁵ *Le Temps*, Juin 15. 1927.

⁴⁶ *Comeodia*, Juin 9 1927.

⁴⁷ Massines revisions in late 1927 reduced the corps to 3.

⁴⁸ Other descriptions put them also in blue smocks.

⁴⁹ *Le Temps*, Juin 15. 1927.

⁵⁰ *La Revue Universelle*, August 15th 1927, p.487-490.

⁵¹ Massines revisions in late 1927 reduced the men to 6.

Action:

*"We see the dance of a couple of amorous cats, around whom half a dozen ironical mice play."*⁵²

They were dressed as peasants. The females in thick grey cotton stockings, tweed skirts, shawls and kerchiefs on their heads with big lace up boots. There was a 'big' entrance with large basically classical leaps.⁵³

Music: The Orator

Scene: *The Legend of the Drunkards* (See Photograph 4)

Dancers: 3 male soloists & 5 male corps⁵⁴.

Action:

*"a young drunk is collected by two mates in gray oilcloth."*⁵⁵

Music: The Sailor in the Bracelet and the Worker Girl

Scene: *The Sailor and the Worker Girl*

Dancers: 1 Sailor, 1 Worker Girl. (See Photographs 1,2)

Action:

*"A sailor and his lass contort themselves amorously."*⁵⁶ *"A comic duet between a robust sailor and a young worker."*⁵⁷

*"The Ballet Master performs with the leading dancer a series of lifts; the dancer is held in balance, legs villainously spread apart, on the sailor's tense arm. The whole episode is coloured with coarse erotic insinuations."*⁵⁸

"We then see a sailor begin his seduction of a worker. The intrigue is pleasantly presented. The girl first resists. Little by little she is tempted. The sailor finally hoists her

⁵² La Liberté, 9 Juin 1927.

⁵³ From the study's interview with Dame Alicia Markova who danced one of the 'mice' in this scene. See Appendix 13.

⁵⁴ Massines revisions in late 1927 increased the men to 7.

⁵⁵ Le Temps, Juin 15. 1927.

⁵⁶ The Boston Evening Standard, July 23rd 1927

⁵⁷ La Liberté, 9 Juin 1927.

⁵⁸ Comeodia, Juin 9 1927. Levinson does not specifically situate this moment but he is dealing with act one when it arises and this places it most probably in the duet; the only other time Massine and Danilova (specifically mentioned here by Levinson) are on stage together would be in the ensemble section that follows. Musically it is easier to situate in the duet where a basis for the series of lifts is easily located. Malherbe's description, in Le Temps, below substantiates the association with the duet.

up astride his shoulders. He then exits like a worker transporting a heavy and precious burden."⁵⁹

"Danilova in a tartan skirt, was thrown about by Massine, while a dozen proletarian ladies romped solemnly with the soldiers in the background."⁶⁰

Music: Reconstruction of the Decorations

Scene: *Ensemble*

Dancers: 23 male dancers, 22 female dancers

Action: "a not very cheerful, frantic ensemble."⁶¹

No other descriptions have been found of this scene but Massine had all 45 dancers on stage.

INTERVAL Prokofiev's divertissement was played. The interval curtain was described as resembling Picabia "encrusted with ropes and with an edge of tin"⁶²

ACT TWO: THE FACTORY

Music: The Sailor's Conversion Into a Worker

Scene: *The Fleeting Romance* (See Photographs 6,7,)

Set: [Duet performed in front of a bright red gauze⁶³ which hides the factory setting.]

Dancers: 1 male dancer, 1 female dancer.

Action:

⁵⁹ Le Temps, Juin 15. 1927.

⁶⁰ Propert, (1931) p.56-59. The program and other descriptions do not substantiate the presence of other dancers in the scene but some descriptions indicate that in fact the focus of scenes was amidst the generality of the act. Alternatively, Propert could perhaps be describing a moment from the ensemble scene that follows, but this seems unlikely.

⁶¹ Le Temps, Juin 15. 1927.

⁶² *ibid.* Unfortunately, no source materials have been found for this, but it could possibly be re-invented in a reconstruction using Jakulov's Drawing F, (see Appendix 3) as a colour reproduction of this exists, inlaid with rope and edged with tin plate.

⁶³ This interpretation is based on H.T.Parker's note of a "broad red screen that for a time hid the 'constructivist platforms, was of the Soviet color.'" Boston Evening Transcript July 23rd 1927. It is not clear from his review at which point in the action it occurs but the study has deduced that the beginning of act two is the most likely as this would enable the duet to be independent of the factory setting, like a music hall entr'act. This would enable the next scene, 'The Passage of the Workers', to be in silhouette behind the gauze before introducing the factory setting in the following scenes. However, there is insufficient evidence to substantiate this use of a gauze.

*"...a delicious sketch of just such a courtship as in less sophisticated times employed 'Arry and 'Arriet on Bank Holidays on Hampstead-Heath. Brilliantly danced, it was the only human moment in the ballet."*⁶⁴

*"a prowler, richly dressed in gray breeches..approaches a young flighty girl, who to judge from her elegant dress, is no less successful. The couple enter into brutal contortions that lack voluptuousness."*⁶⁵

Music: Factory, X Hammers, XI Closing Scene

Set: [Red Gauze lifted to reveal the factory setting]
Opaque Gauze in place between the platforms concealing the back platform]

*"The same décor ornamented with rotating wheels hung to the platond."*⁶⁶

*"The barriers have been removed; the red screen is stripped away. The wheels and discs begin to turn, faster and faster; belts and pinions do their office; a rim of signal lights flashes and flames."*⁶⁷

*"..wheels appeared over the railway signals"⁶⁸, which stoutly maintained their places on each side of the stage."*⁶⁹

*"In the second scene, signal discs, wheels, and pulleys were introduced".*⁷⁰

*"The scenery remained unchanged. It consisted of a very high rostrum set in the centre of the stage, with steps leading up to it on either side. On the front and sides of the rostrum were placed a number of wheels, levers and pistons, all built in plain unpainted wood. The whole stage also was crammed with objects of various kinds. So that it was almost impossible to move. The back cloth was grey."*⁷¹

"...profiles of machines, wheels and rotating disks"⁷².

Scene: *Passage Of The Workers*⁷³

⁶⁴ The Daily Telegraph, July 5th 1927 p.12

⁶⁵ Le Temps, Juin 15. 1927.

⁶⁶ L'Oeuvre, Juin 10, 1927, p.5

⁶⁷ The Boston Evening Standard, July 23rd 1927. The review does not clearly situate this specifically where the study has placed it, it simply connects it to Act 2.

⁶⁸ This critic has already referred to a "rather crazy street lamp" and so he is not necessarily referring here to 'The Railway Signal' and 'Street Lamp'. He may be referring to the two large 'Machine Tools' either side of the front platform in Jakulov's model.

⁶⁹ The Daily Telegraph, July 5th 1927, p.12

⁷⁰ Beaumont. (1940) p.278-280

⁷¹ Grigoriev, (1953), p.240. Grigoriev is referring here to the set in general not specifically act 2. He mentions only one platform, and the study has concluded that he may be describing apparatus on the back platform.

⁷² Comoedia, Juin 9 1927. It is not clear at which specific point in the action he is describing the set. It is difficult to know exactly which objects, the critic, Pierre Lalo, is referring to here.

Dancers: 6 male workers

Action:

"Disks begin to turn, pulleys creak. A cortege of factory workers passes in a curl in front of the ramp"⁷⁴. "⁷⁵ "The entrance of the blacksmiths is ludicrous"⁷⁶

Scene: *X, XI, XII The Factory.* (See Photographs, 3, 8,9)

Dancers: 7 soloists (including the principals); 20 female workers; 19 male workers.

Action:

"On the first level, a team of salaried employees manoeuvre. They mimic with nervous twitching the turning movements of machines. On the second level, on a platform, four craftsmen hammer, turn and return an assistant who represents an ingot. On the third level, on another platform, behind a transparent curtain, they hit with resounding hammers the resonant flooring."⁷⁷

"..in one of the first scenes of the second act... an amazing sortie: the dancers get together in pairs, each one grasping the feet of their partner in their hands, and, forming a living and flexible hoop, they roll off into the wings on their backs..."⁷⁸

"The stage is filled with rising tiers and receding vistas of workmen, heaving and hewing, ascending and descending, and exhibiting a kind of automatic ecstasy in their subjugation to the power of steel"⁷⁹ "Men and women in all stages of hurry and perturbation toiled and moiled, shifted heavy weights about, rained steam-hammer blows on huge bars of imaginary steel, tried to look like pistons, connecting rods, cams, and differentials, grew hot, and never, never smiled... it came off hugely, grimly."⁸⁰

"The dancers portray not only workers armed with huge hammers, but also the actual pieces of metal being worked on and the parts of the machines which other worker-dancers operate with their feet. Steel is melted, heated, shaped, crushed – and all this is only the living material of the actors...."⁸¹

"The dancers imitate the ceaseless motion of electrically propelled wheels, hammers, lathes, and pistons."⁸²

⁷³ This scene was abolished by Massine as part of his revisions in late 1927.

⁷⁴ Presumably the front platform.

⁷⁵ *Le Temps*, Juin 15 1927.

⁷⁶ *La Revue Musicale*, 1st July 1927, p.50.

⁷⁷ *Le Temps*, Juin 15 1927.

⁷⁸ *Vozrozhdeni*, Paris, June 10th 1927.

⁷⁹ *The Sunday Pictorial*, July 10th 1927 p.9

⁸⁰ *The Daily Mail*, July 5th 1927, p.9

⁸¹ *Vozrozhdenie*, Paris, June 10th 1927.

⁸² *Empire News* July 10th 1927 p.3

*"All kinds of mechanism, from the steam hammer to the most delicate weaving machinery, find a place in this elaborate scene, in which human beings are the cogs and pistons. This scene is extraordinarily impressive... even terrifying."*⁸³

*"The wheels and pistons on the rostrums moved in time to the hammering movements... with a large ensemble group in front of the rostrums... evolving a multi-level composition which welded together the scenic and the bodily movements."*⁸⁴

*"..men, all but stripped to the waist, wield huge hammers... the thuds of heavy hammers..."*⁸⁵

*"..young men in leather aprons and opened shirts, plying heavy hammers, swinging great mauls⁸⁶, climbing from one platform to the other... purposeless toil. Then, for an instant, they would turn, as it seems, upon each other, in rough relief fiercely playful. Apart, as in a border upon the ground, the young women are as incessantly and mechanically busy, doing each as does her neighbor. A figure, or paired figures, no sooner fling out than they are caught again into this irresistible stream of mechanised labor. Soon it is torrential. The wheels turn quicker; the lights flash faster and brighter; the hammers and the mauls strike harder... In a flash drops the curtain; at a blow the orchestra is stilled."*⁸⁷

*"Great hammers swing in the air. The workers lies under the hammer. His colleagues go on and on in a mechanical frenzy.."*⁸⁸

*"Great hammers clang and boilers let off steam;"*⁸⁹

*"Smiths in leather aprons swing huge steel hammers upon each other's chests, and then beat upon the scaffolding..."*⁹⁰

*"..pistons puff, pulleys turn, hammers fall, male and female dancers at first perform gestures of work: they raise, they pull, they transport, they hammer... And then, little by little, they become machines themselves; their groups advance and move back, like pistons and rods, turn in concentric and non-concentric circles, engage with each other like the teeth in gear wheels. Women rise up and descend, in even and odd numbers, as if they were controlled by a camshaft. There are lines of dancers who are valves; there are some that are spools, and others that are the teeth of a comb. Some silhouettes of blacksmiths appear behind a gauze as if the factory were full of steam and smoke... movements become more and more violent and rapid. Crescendo, agitato..The cardboard wheels turn: under the blows of the hammer the platform cracks."*⁹¹

"There were isolated movements which gradually built up into one huge machine, now of this type, now of that. Arms weaved, swing, and revolved; feet pounded the floor; even bodies took part in the movement, swinging from the waist in different arcs and at varying angle. The dancers massed, divided, strung out into line, and, with arms outstretched sideways, sharply turned their hands up and down, flat to the audience, which action

⁸³ *The Times*, July 5th 1927, p.14

⁸⁴ Massine, (1968) p.171-2

⁸⁵ *The Star*, July 5th 1927 p.6

⁸⁶ The critic is most probably referring here to the large hammers, distinguishing them from the smaller ones used by the corps.

⁸⁷ *The Boston Evening Standard*, July 23rd 1927

⁸⁸ *The Daily Herald*, July 5th 1927. p.5

⁸⁹ *The Observer*, July 10th 1927 p.15

⁹⁰ *Empire News*, July 10th 1927, p.3

⁹¹ *La Liberte*, 9 Juin 1927.

ingeniously suggested a flashing lamp; this flashing, arranged in changing patterns, was most effective. So the rhythmic force ceaselessly grew in intensity until their appeared on a central platform two figures bearing giant hammers, which they swung and wielded more and more strongly until, at the height of the tumult, the climax was reached with the constructivist elements adding their quota – signal discs snapping on and off,⁹² and wheels spinning faster and faster.⁹³

“wheels whir & hammers clang & signals flash”⁹⁴

“..it is puerile to accompany the games of these robots with the mechanical gyration of some disks suspended from the hanger.”⁹⁵

“At the end of the Ballet... everything on the stage, including the railway signals and the lights, were in revolution.”⁹⁶

“Large wheels revolve... the men and women move almost mechanically. Some are carried out exhausted.”⁹⁷

“Groups of dancers moved around on the floor of the stage and at the same time on platforms raised above the stage; they spread out like a drive belt. Yakoulov's set achieved curious effects from a distance, thanks to a huge transparent screen which divided the stage depthwise.”⁹⁸

“There is no parallel to that final scene, with the revolving lights, green, red and white, flashing down on the triple tier of shining, half-naked bodies..”⁹⁹

“... the movements of the dancers became more and more energetic, the wheels were set revolving and the levers and pistons moved backwards and forward; the lights went on and off with perpetual changes of colour; and the curtain came down to a tremendous crescendo from the orchestra.”¹⁰⁰

⁹² The study has concluded that Beaumont is most likely to be referring here to the ‘rim of signal lights’ that may have pulsed from off to on (using dimmers) while the factory was beginning to be set in motion, and been ‘snapping’ on and off at the end in keeping with the fast pace of the action. On Jakulov's model these ‘lights’ are clearly discs in appearance.

⁹³ Beaumont, (1940) p.278-280

⁹⁴ *The Sunday Pictorial*, July 10th 1927 p.9

⁹⁵ *Comoedia*, Juin 9 1927.

⁹⁶ *The Daily Telegraph*, July 5th 1927 p.12

⁹⁷ *The Star*, July 5th 1927, p.6

⁹⁸ Kochno, (1954), p.271-4

⁹⁹ Propert, (1931) p.56-59

¹⁰⁰ Grigoriev, (1953) p.240