The Origins of *Daphnis et Chloé* (1912)

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Besides Maurice Ravel’s score, the remnants of the original production of *Daphnis et Chloé*—one known stage photograph, an assortment of studio photographs, seven known costumes, brief reviews, anecdotal memoirs, and a bundle of pencil and pastel drawings—constitute choreographer Mikhail Fokine’s draft and revised scenarios. There also exist proof pages for a shorter version of the 1910 piano score, musical evidence to suggest that Fokine conceived the ballet in 1907 for another composer, and reproductions of Léon Bakst’s stage décor. Though interrelated, these materials are scattered across the globe, preserved in libraries and museums in Russia, Sweden, France, England, and the United States. Their contents detail the conception and realization of *Daphnis et Chloé* while also offering insight into Ravel’s creative methods, specifically his approach, in his first ballet, to writing for dance.

No systematic comparison between the music and choreography of the original *Daphnis et Chloé* can, however, be made, for that choreography was neither notated nor filmed—a fact that has enabled musicologists to imagine that the music, popular in concert performance, bears little relation to its own stage conception. Commentary on the interaction of the two media, including that which follows in this article, is ineluctably provisional. Matters are further complicated by the fact that, for the 8 June 1912 Paris premiere, the choreography was rehearsed in haste, leaving some sections looking unrefined. Though reviewers of both the Paris premiere and the 9 June 1914 London premiere mentioned the stylistic and technical infelicities, their assessments of the choreography were positive.1 So, too, was the assessment

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1Robert Brussel, “Les Théâtres,” *Le Figaro*, 9 June 1912: “Fokine, the author and director, offers new evidence of his extraordinary talent in *Daphnis et Chloé*. Though he has perhaps conceived more spectacular tableaux, he has never realized any more delicate or expressive. The dances he designed for Daphnis, Chloe, and the grotesque Darkon are of a prodigious sort: Daphnis is light, Chloe is tender and affected, Darkon is clumsy. And all of this is expressed in the most diverse, appropriate and sympathetic manner”; Gustave Samazeuilh, “Les Ballets Russes,” *Le
by the prima ballerina of the Ballets Russes, Tamara Karsavina, who took the part of Chloe at the Théâtre du Châtelet (with Vaslav Nijinsky as Daphnis), opined that the ballet, “in spite of a certain sketchiness in the last Act, due to the pressure under which Fokine worked [he only half finished Nijinsky’s and my final dance on the morning of the performance], was to my mind his masterpiece.”

Irrespective of the accolades, Fokine (1880–1942) looked back on Daphnis et Chloé with a heavy heart, recalling that the project suffered owing to his creative and personal disputes with Sergey Diaghilev (1872–1929), the impresario of the Ballets Russes, the troupe that had performed the ballet. Ravel, too, was disappointed with the project, especially its London incarnation, which omitted an essential feature of the score: the offstage, wordless mixed chorus.

Even before the production, Ravel began to recast his score, by far the longest in his œuvre, as a pair of orchestral suites; afterwards, Fokine reworked and then abandoned his dances. Diaghilev (1866–1924), meantime, authorized the sale of his sample images for the ballet—those consulted by the costume makers and backdrop painters.

Though longevity is the exception rather than the rule in ballet history, Daphnis et Chloé did not fade away after 1914. There have been several restagings, all involving Ravel’s score (with or without the chorus) and at least part of Fokine’s scenario. Two of these—the first created by Frederick Ashton in 1951, the second by Graeme Murphy in 1982—will be discussed at the conclusion of this article. My main focus, however, will be on the origins of Daphnis et Chloé and the differences between Ravel’s and Fokine’s approach to the ballet’s Hellenic subject matter. Loosely tracing the chronology of the ballet’s creation, my discussion will begin with the first and second versions of the scenario, progress to the first and second versions of the score, and conclude with the dance.

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**Courrier musical**, 12:15 (15 June 1912), 364–65: “It may be that in other circumstances M. Fokine had conceived more frenetic whirls, and movements with more forceful impact. However, if in this case he was seeking a more reserved feel and one better suited to the natures of his subjects, he managed to tap his powers of precision and apply restraint in creating dances of such varied effect as those of Chloe, Daphnis, and the cowherd, Darkon”;

**Emile Vuillermoz**, “Les Théâtres: La Grande Saison de Paris,” *Le Mercure musical* 8:6 (15 June 1912), 68; “Thanks to Daphnis et Chloé, the Russian season ended in an apotheosis, and what remained of the adorable vision of this veritable masterpiece—a vision so quickly evaporated, a too-fleeting apparition—was a sort of dreamlike transparen-

cy that will enchant our memories for a long time to come.”

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2 Tamara Karsavina, Elsa Brunelleschi, Tony Mayer, and Alexander Bland, “Four Opinions on ‘Daphnis and Chloe’,” *Ballet* 2:5 (June 1951), 5. The article compiles four assessments of Frederick Ashton’s 1951 choreography, which Karsavina compares favorably to Fokine’s original.


4 As Arthur Ostring summarizes, “When it was disclosed that the London production would take place without the chorus, Ravel was incensed, and protested in an open letter to four London newspapers. . . . In his reply, Diaghilev stated that he had recently produced Daphnis et Chloé at Monte Carlo without chorus and was unaware of any protest from the composer. Furthermore, he denied that the alternate orchestral version was intended solely for small theaters. When the chorus had been included in Paris, he continued, its participation was found to be detrimental. Therefore, he concluded, M. Ravel was asked to write a second version. In a long statement to the editor of *Comoedia*, Ravel convincingly exposed Diaghilev’s misrepresentations point by point, and observed that henceforth the impresario would be bound by written agreement to include the chorus in all major productions” (*Ravel: Man and Musician* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1975], pp. 69–70). Diaghilev had previously angered Ravel by voicing dissatisfaction with the music. See Jacques Durand, *Quelques souvenirs d’un éditeur de musique* (Paris: A. Durand et fils, 1924), p. 16.

5 *Orchestral Suite No. 1* (“Nocturne,” “Interlude,” “Danse guerrièr”) and *Orchestral Suite No. 2* (“Lever du jour,” “Pantomime,” “Danse générale”) date from 1911 and 1913 respectively.

6 These watercolor images, which include a sketch of the décor of scenes 1 and 3, a detail thereof, a study of an alternate version of the décor of scene 2, and costume designs for Chloe, the brigands, and the shepherds, are itemized on p. 36 of *Maurice Ravel* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1975), the catalogue of an exhibit curated by François Lesure and Jean-Michel Nectoux. The list of buyers includes the Bibliothèque Nationale, Musée National d’Art Moderne, London Theatre Museum, and private collectors. The notebook of Bakst’s early images is housed in the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library.
Long before Ravel’s and Bakst’s Hellenic visions, there was Fokine’s. The choreographer conceived Daphnis et Chloé while he was still a member of the Imperial Ballet in St. Petersburg, a company he joined in 1898. In 1907 he submitted a detailed two-act scenario to Vladimir Telyakovsky [1861–1924], the Director of the Imperial Theatres, in hopes that a suitable composer would be commissioned to write the music, and that the completed ballet would be included in the Imperial Theatre repertoire. As evidenced by the absence of paperwork in the official archive, Telyakovsky neither critiqued nor even considered the scenario for possible development. Besides the scenario, Fokine forwarded to Telyakovsky a bulletin-point list of general proposals for ballet reform, the precursor to a manifesto he published in the London Times on 6 July 1914. These proposals centered on enhancing the emotional and expressive content of ballet through the abolition of the number format, suppression of athletic display from the solo variations, and increased verisimilitude in the choice of décor and dress. Like the scenario, the proposals were not adopted by Telyakovsky, who, despite being innovative in his selection of designers and scenarists and interested in updating familiar ballets, was obligated in his programming to take account of conservative tastes, especially those of the Imperial family. In his memoirs, Fokine declared that both the scenario and the proposals dated from 1904, three years before they were actually written. The change in dating was first observed by the eminent dance historian Vera Krasovskaya, who pointed out that Fokine’s 1905 ballet Acis et Galatea, a work for graduating student dancers that received at best neutral reviews, bore no signs of his plans for choreographic reform. The change in dating, Krasovskaya reasoned, reflected Fokine’s desire to conceal the strong influence (and strong anxiety of influence) that the pioneering American choreographer Isadora Duncan [1877–1927] had on his creative activities.

In his monograph on Fokine, written with the choreographer’s permission and involvement, the balletomane Cyril Beaumont notes that Telyakovsky adopted only one of the reforms and applied it not to ballet but opera: “In view of the necessity for preserving the illusion and theatrical impression, artists were forbidden to bow during the performance” [Michel Fokine and His Ballets [1935; rpt. London: Dance Books, 1996], p. 24].

The most detailed review of Acis et Galatea comes from Valeryan Svetlov, who provided an assessment of each performer’s mastery of classical technique. See “General’naya repetitsiya baletnogo eksamenatsionnogo spektaklya,” Bizhnevye vedomosti, 12 April 1905, p. 5. The music was composed by Fokine’s colleague Kadletz [see n. 8] for another version of the ballet in 1896. At that time, N. L. O-skiy complained that the music “was extremely long-winded, dry, unceasingly dull and sometimes wholly unrelated to the plot. It is truly strange, for example, to encounter piano music in those passages [the ogre] Polypheme’s fury and, likewise, fortissimo music for [the shepherd] Acis and [sea-nymph] Galatea’s loving embraces, when it should be expressing the lovers’ tender feelings” (“Teatral’nyi kur’yer,” Peterburgskiy listok, 23 January 1896, p. 3).

In Krasovskaya’s words: “Fokine backdated his scenario to 1904 in order to show his independence [from] Duncan. In addition, recalling his first ballet Acis and Galatea, given at the graduation performance on 20 April 1905, Fokine openly admitted: ‘Until then it hadn’t occurred to me that I might have some ability in this area.’ The entire account of Acis and Galatea corroborates Fokine’s admitted lack of preparation for a ballet master’s work and proves...
Fokine stubbornly dismissed the assertion, first made by Diaghilev, that Duncan cast an irresistible spell on him when he saw her perform, the outcome being the fundamental transformation in his technique. He insisted that his interest in ancient designs, and the prospect of fabricating movements from them, stemmed from independent research. In early 1905, according to his memoirs, he approached the director of the Imperial Public Library, Vladimir Stasov (1824–1906), for sources on sculptural art. Studies of such sources, he believed, would provide him with creative fodder and enable him to create an edifying ballet on a par with the tragedies of Euripides and Sophocles, which were being staged at the time in the Russian capital. Stasov agreed to assist Fokine and brought several illustrated volumes to his attention, in particular George Perrot and Charles Chipiez’s Histoire de l’art dans l’Antiquité. This multivolume set was issued between 1882 and 1914. The five volumes about Greek art, however, all date from after 1905. Those published earlier concern only Egyptian and Chaldean art and would thus have been of little use for Daphnis et Chloé.

Taking into account the factual detours in his memoirs, it seems clear that Fokine’s drama derived as much or more from the fanciful Hellenic illusions in Duncan’s dancing than from his own imagination. Duncan was, as Lynn Garafola puts it, “the shining star of his youth.” Though too proud to acknowledge her influence, he heaped praise on her in inter-

views. The earliest of these, “Barefoot Dancers” [Bosonogiye tantsovshchitsi, 1909], at once lauds her “response to the one-dimensionality of ballet” and iterates that “costume and dance reform” were crucial to the revitalization of the art. Enraptured by Duncan, Fokine achieved this revitalization in Daphnis et Chloé.

Fokine devised the scenario of the ballet from an 1895 Russian-language translation of a pastoral romance by Longus, an obscure second- or third-century writer who is thought to have lived on the Eastern Aegean Island of Lesbos, the idyllic setting of Daphnis et Chloé. The translation was made by the first-generation Symbolist poet Dmitriy Merezhkovsky (1865–1941), who prefaced it with an elaborate article, “On the Symbolism of Daphnis and Chloe” (O simvolizme “Dafnisa i Khloi”), the possible influence of which on Fokine has not yet been explored. This article revolves around Merezhkovsky’s belief that Longus’s tale provided the basis for centuries of writing on the theme of rustic love, including that of the French and Russian Symbolists. Merezhkovsky bases this claim not on specific plot details, but on a nuance, a first suggestion, a first gleam of that peculiar morning-twilight duality that is especially endemic and precious to us, the contemporaries of the common European Symbolist movement, which some call a decline (Décadence) and others a Renaissance, but in which there is actually both of these things: decay and rebirth, the end of the old and beginning of the new, descent and ascent, decline and resurrection, decadence and symbolism. These qualities are found, however, in all comparable artistic movements, as I have tried to corroborate by using the example of the early, pre-Raphaelite, Florentine Rinascimento.

Merezhkovsky supplements his description with quotations from Goethe, whose enthusiasm for the pastoral romance further evinced its semantic and stylistic novelties. The translator also repeatedly underscores that the text

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16Ibid., p. 18.
is not “Hellenic” but “Hellenistic,” a copy of a pastoral romance rather than the thing itself.\footnote{Ibid., p. 7 [emphasis in the original].} Recognizing that the ideals and mores of the pre-Christian era had perished, its author (whether Longus or a predecessor) conceived a meta-narrative, an Arcadian fable about Arcadian fables, one that eulogized a deceased culture while also heralding a new one. Supplanted by the austere morality of the early Biblical epoch, “The pagan spirit no longer existed; it was a ghost, unreal, and more or less part of the far distant past.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 7 (emphasis in the original).}

To ascertain what Fokine may have absorbed from these remarks, we can turn to his draft scenario for Daphnis et Chloé, copies of which are preserved in two St. Petersburg archives\footnote{RNB fond 820, no. 2, pp. 4–9 (cast members}, together with his list of ballet reforms. The structure of this text highlights Longus’s dualities of “decay and rebirth, the end of the old and beginning of the new.” Fokine cast the draft scenario in two acts of equal length [act I is partitioned into six scenes; act II is not partitioned], with certain events in the first half reprised in the second. The draft scenario is almost twice the length of the final scenario, which consists of just one act of three scenes, and which was published by Durand just prior to the ballet’s Parisian premiere.\footnote{Daphnis et Chloé: Ballet de Michel Fokine [Paris: Durand et Cie, 1912]. The same text was published in 1910 in the piano version of Ravel’s score, and in 1913 in the orchestral version. The 1989 reprint of the orchestral version by Dover Publications includes an English-language translation of the text.} Fokine likely shortened the text after he had left St. Petersburg for Paris in the late spring or early summer of 1909, the period when he met Ravel. To the best of my knowledge, no substantive descriptions of his and the composer’s discussions exist, but a letter from Ravel to one of his benefactors, Madame René de Saint-Marceaux, suggests that they were something less than cordial: “I have to tell you that the last week has been insane: preparing a ballet libretto for the next Russian season. [I’ve been] working up to 3 a.m. almost every night. To confuse matters, Fokine does not know a word of French, and I can only curse in Russian. Irrespective of the translators, you can imagine the timbre of these conversations.”\footnote{Maurice Ravel: Lettres, écrits, entretiens, ed. Orenstein [Paris: Flammarion, 1989], p. 105. The letter is dated 27 June 1909. Diaghilev was somewhat more positive about the meetings. In a 25 June 1909 letter to the artist Alexandre Benois, he wrote: “Through the shared efforts of Bakst, Fokine and Ravel we have worked out a detailed program—so things are well under way” [Sergey Dyaghilev i russkoye iskusstvo: Stat’i, otkritiye pis’ma, interv’yu, perepiska, Sovremeniki o Dyaghileve, ed. I. S. Zil’bershteyn and V. A. Samkov, 2 vols. [Moscow: “Izobrazitel’noye iskusstvo,” 1982], II, 108].}

Act I of the draft scenario furnishes all of the plot events of the final product, albeit with a greatly expanded cast and some lines of spoken dialogue. (Fokine may have planned to include these in the printed program and have them mimed onstage, though the effect would have been somewhat old-fashioned, since the use of spoken dialogue had dwindled in the late nineteenth century.) Excluding the corps de ballet, the draft scenario identifies sixteen characters: Lamon, an old goatherd; Mirtala, his wife; Daphnis, their adopted son; Drias, a sage and shepherd; Nape, his wife; Chloe, their adopted daughter; Dionisofan, a magnanimous lord; Klearista, his wife; Gnafon, a buffoon; Filetas, an old herdsman; Darkon, a young herdsman; First Nymph; Second Nymph; Third Nymph; the God Pan; and Blioks, leader of the brig-
The final, published scenario of the ballet omits Mirtala, Drias, Nape, Dionisofan, Klearista, Gnafon, and Filetas. One secondary character, a fieldworker who flirts with Daphnis in a brief opening episode, is unnamed in the draft scenario but identified as Lycenion in the revision. Pan maintains his presence in the revision, but does not physically appear onstage. Instead, his awesome, oversized profile is projected against the rocks and cliffs in the décor of the middle scene.

Act I, scenes 1 to 6 of the draft scenario furnish a well-proportioned tale of amorous rustics in an Edenic grove. Nymphs lay gifts at the altar of Pan, the ruler of their enclosed world; the goatherd Daphnis and shepherdess Chloe appear, devoted to one another but soon tempted by others. A fieldworker plays a guessing game with Daphnis, inciting Chloe’s jealousy. Meanwhile, the oafish herdsman Darkon, hoping to make Chloe his wife, challenges Daphnis for her hand. There ensues a dance contest between the two suitors, which Daphnis wins, his reward being a kiss on the cheek. Clouds appear, lightning flashes, and the valley is overrun by brigands who abduct the shepherdess despite tearful protests from the gathered nymphs and pledges of divine retribution. Having lost his beloved, Daphnis collapses in despair and falls into a fitful sleep. The brigands load their ship with booty and prepare to set sail, but the storm intensifies, preventing their departure. Bound, Chloe prays for her rescue. Her pleas, echoed by the nymphs, compel Pan, the rustic god of fertility, to appear; he signals his intent to protect her by placing a wreath on her head. The brigands are commanded to free her, and they in turn plead for her mercy.

Here something unexpected occurs: Daphnis wakes in the woods and realizes that the deus ex machina was a dream. The preceding stage events are reinterpreted, or re-envisioned, as fantasy. The dream, however, proves to be a prophetic vision of Pan’s actual imminent rescue of Chloe. She reappears, and Daphnis joyfully embraces her. Filetas, a grizzled herdsman who does not figure in the final, published version of the scenario, brings the act to a close by pantomiming the tale of Pan, who had once loved a maiden who found him repugnant and rejected him. Unable to accept the rejection, he kept up his pursuit, causing the maiden to flee into a reed-bed that Pan cut down and fashioned into a flute. “The maiden was transformed into Syrinx,” the draft scenario concludes, “Pan’s sweet-sounding pipe.”

These are the essential plot details of the ballet as it is known today. The final, published version of the scenario ends here. The differences between the draft version and its revision are relatively modest. Pan, as mentioned, appears only in ominous silhouette and thus does not offer Chloe a wreath. The tale of Pan is pantomimed not by Filetas, but by the title characters.

Act II of the draft scenario provides the background detail that act I lacks, but owing to its repetitiveness, it had little likely chance of being staged. The curtain rises to reveal a garden brimming with a superabundance of exotic fruits and flowers, reverently tended by Daphnis. His adopted father, the goatherd Lamon, resolves to petition his master, Dionisofan, to bless Daphnis and Chloe’s marriage. Receipt of his approval, however, is contingent on his being satisfied by the state of affairs in his land. Daphnis’s rival Darkon reappears and, seeking to prevent the marriage, vandalizes Daphnis’s garden, breaking stems and trampling on petals. Seeing the carnage, Daphnis wails “Woe is me! What will the master think, seeing such neglect? He will hang my poor old man from a pine tree, and will also hang me.” There occurs a second deus ex machina. The First Nymph arrives and, with a wave of her hand, restores the garden to life. Dionisofan arrives to bestow his blessing on the nuptial couple, but is interrupted by the sage Drias, who reveals that Chloe (his adopted daughter) is actually of noble birth and thus cannot marry

24 RNB fond 820, no. 2, p. 4.
25 Upon reading the final, published version of the scenario, which retains the waking episode, Jean Cocteau asked: “Do the brigands truly exist, or are they the manifestations of a nightmare? And the metal-clad goddesses? And the great god Pan? Might not the whole thing in fact be a figment of Daphnis’s fantasy?” [Beaumont Scrapbooks, London Theatre Museum, vol. 4, pt. 1, p. 12].
26 RNB fond 820, no. 2, pp. 10–11.
27 RNB fond 820, no. 2, p. 12.
Sylvia, ou La Nymphé de Diane (1876), a ballet choreographed by Louis Mériante to music by Léo Delibes, was perhaps the strongest influence on Fokine. Its scenario concerns the abduction of a nymph (Sylvia) by a sinister huntsman (Orion), her rescue by a goddess (Diana), and her return to her beloved (Amnytas), a young shepherd. Lamon at this point intercedes with the disclosure that Daphnis is likewise of noble birth, and none other than Dionysofan’s lost son. Dionysofan, humbled by the news, blesses the wedding and orders a celebration. His minions dance.

Act II provides the biographies of the hero and heroine, describing how one pagan deity, Mother Nature, saw them through childhood when their parents abandoned them in the woods, and how another, the God of Love, escorted them to the altar. If one were to look for Symbolist traits in the scenario, traits of Merezhkovsky’s poetics, one might focus on the collusion of dream and reality in act I and the stress on scent, touch, color, and sound in act II. One would also, however, have to look at the cluster of references in the scenario to other Anacreontic and mythological ballets, which serve, in typical Symbolist fashion, to enhance the impression of timelessness. The works in question involve woodland and grotto scenes, benevolent deities, malevolent forces, nymphs, hunters, peasants, and shepherds. To enrich the scenario further, Fokine likewise referred to the “ballet blanc” episodes in such mystical, nocturnal ballets as Filippo Tagliomi’s La Sylphide (1832) and Jean Coralli and Jules Perrot’s Giselle (1841). Daphnis and Chloe’s magical helpers also call to mind the “Lilac Fairy” of Marius Petipa’s Sleeping Beauty (1889) and the “White Lady” in his Raymonda (1898); these figures set everything to rights in their respective plots by dispatching villains and resuming interrupted wedding celebrations. From this litany, it becomes clear that Fokine drafted a two-act scenario that is indeed less “Hellenic” than “Hellenistic,” a multivalent text, in short, that documented the use and reuse of transcendental characters throughout ballet history. Though his choreographic approach need not have matched his literary approach, it seems that he conceived his dances as tributes to ever-lasting ideals of human beauty, natural wonder, and the sublime. The “sculptural groups and processions” of the opening and closing scenes of Daphnis et Chloé were retrospective only insofar as the performers donned white tunics and sandals and recalled, in their held positions, Greek-style bas-reliefs.

Bakst, who created the décor for several Fokine ballets, brought a similar timelessness to Daphnis et Chloé. One critic noted that the backdrop for the outer scenes evoked “a hypothetical Greece, but not a false one—that Greece which was created in the imaginations of artists and writers of the last century, but which we love all the same, like the fruits of our own spiritual creativity.”

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28Sylvia, ou La Nymphé de Diane (1876), a ballet choreographed by Louis Mériante to music by Léo Delibes, was perhaps the strongest influence on Fokine. Its scenario concerns the abduction of a nymph (Sylvia) by a sinister huntsman (Orion), her rescue by a goddess (Diana), and her return to her beloved (Amnytas), a young shepherd whose happiness is guaranteed by a god (Eros). When he rewrote the scenario for Daphnis et Chloé, Fokine removed period details, redundant situations, and incidental characters; the result was a story line closely following that of Sylvia, ou La Nymphé de Diane. To give one example: in book 1 of Longus’s text, Daphnis is taken prisoner by a “Tyrian pyrats, in a Carian vessel”; in book 2, Chloe is captured [and her lover beaten] by the “Methymnaeans,” a group of merchants exacting revenge for the loss of their provisions. (Longus, Daphnis & Chloé, trans. George Thornley [New York: Rarity Press, 1931], pp. 53 and 80.) Fokine conflated the two abductions, making Chloe, like Sylvia, the sole victim.
moved in plain white tunics, a direct expression of their sexual innocence; the corps de ballet, in contrast, wore childlike prints. The surviving cloaks and smocks, acquired in 1969 by the Stockholm Dansmuseet, feature large circles, small ovals, checker- and zigzag-patterns in fanciful colors: chocolate brown, steel grey, periwinkle blue, saffron yellow, mustard yellow, crimson, and scarlet. Though Bakst and Fokine subscribed to conceptions of original Hellenic purity, these garments did not bear a retrograde look. Their neoclassicism was abstracted and estranged, a reimagining of the creative mindset, rather than the creative method, of the ancients.

II

Ravel's conception of Daphnis et Chloé, however, clashed with that of his collaborators. The result was a ballet of contrasting neoclassicisms, its visual layer composed of flowing lines and bright colors, its aural layer of floating motives and blended timbres. The composer's imagination was fired neither by the sensuous dancing of Duncan, whom he accompanied at a salon recital, nor by the pre-

side house in Montfort l'Amaury. The backdrop for scene 2, in contrast, shows a barren, rocky canyon, the domain not of the nymphs, but of the brigands. The browns, greens, and yellows that govern the backdrop for scenes 1 and 3 give way to orange and red.

23 The costumes are shown in Överdådets konst: Kostymer från Diaghilews Ryska Baletten i Paris (Stockholm: Dansmuseet, 1996), pp. 64–69, of an exhibit curated by Erik Näsland. Svetlov ("Russkij sezon v Parizhe: 'Dafnis i Khloya' [Korrespondentsiya iz Parizha," p. 11) considered the costumes inappropriate, but blamed Diaghilev rather than Bakst for the problem: "It is rather strange that all these antique shepherds were dressed in highly varied costumes with bright coloring that at times actually affected the design of the dance. Modest costumes of simple colors and patterns were required. It is very disconcerting that within this purely artistic enterprise—and what has always been Diaghilev's enterprise—qualities of carelessness, of haphazardness, have become manifest this season. I regard this as a very serious condition and would sincerely like to draw the attention of the troupe's administration to these defects."

24 Bakst documented his impressions of Greek art, both ancient and contemporary, following his visit to Greece in 1907. See L[eon] Bakst, Serov i ya v Gretsii: Dorozhnyye zapisi [Berliin: Knigoizdatel'stvo "slovo," 1923].


27 Lifar, Serge Diaghilev, p. 192.

28 Maurice Ravel: Lettres, écrits, entretiens, p. 490, n. 22.
mentioned the encounter in his 1938 essay “Maurice Ravel et le ballet” and in his 1940 Diaghilev biography. In the second source, Lifar added that plans for the ballet evolved between 1907, the year Fokine drafted the scenario, and 1909. Diaghilev, hoping at first to stage *Daphnis et Chloé* in 1910, “ventured to include a clause in his contract with Karsavina, stipulating her appearance as Chloë in alternation with Pavlova.”

The interregnum between 1907 and 1912 fueled the nascent disputes between the artists involved in the work. Fokine’s “literal archaism,” which, in Lifar’s view, to “recall, and dynamically express, the form and image of the ancient dancing depicted in red and black on Attic vases,” struck a loose parallel with Bakst’s primordial stylizations, which aligned the past with the unbridled sensuality, “nervous dynamic,” and malaise of the fin de siècle. Their methods, however, departed from Ravel’s: the fabrication of an amorphous score from a shape-shifting assemblage of tonal, modal, and whole-tone syntax. With Ravel, representation yields to an elucidation of the creative fantasy behind the representation.

Doubtless the principal expression of the dream state, with its indeterminate and intelligible character, is the vocal music of the score. It emanates from an invisible (offstage) mixed chorus, whose buzzing and humming sounds are sometimes articulated *fortissimo* with mouths open, sometimes *pianissimo* with mouths closed, thus negotiating the boundary between the audible and inaudible, the inner self and outer world. The chorus is heard during the ballet’s opening ritual scene, in which adolescents present gifts to the nymphs; the love scene between the title characters; the dawn episode; and the concluding Bacchanale. Jean-David Jumeau-Lafond defines the sometimes distant, sometimes intimate vocal ululations in these passages as “an oneiric halo that envelops the work and confers upon it a pantheistic dimension.” It embodies, he adds, “a collective force that unites human beings, gods, and the embodiment of nature” and transcends the orchestral music in its “aspiration to exalt a life-giving flux without limit.”

Jumeau-Lafond’s provocative reading places the chorus within the extensive European tradition of wordless mystic singing. It overlooks, however, the *affect* of the music: the impression of dreamlike innocence that Ravel paradoxically creates by complex means.

The chorus’s entrance in scene 1 is preceded by the instrumental presentation of a ladderlike arrangement of perfect fifths, A, E, B, F♯, C♯, G♯—six of the seven pitches of the A-major scale. These pitches are distributed in the opening measures over several instrumental registers; their synchronous overlay supplants their diachronic unfolding. Through an exquisite manipulation of orchestral color, Ravel preserves each pitch at the very moment of its dissolution, the very moment it turns into remembered, as opposed to real, sound. The listener is drawn into the ambiguous interspace different experiential domains. The substance of the pianissimo tremolo A, its material incarnation as struck and bowed pitch in the timpani and string basses, gives way to its embellishment in the altos, second violins, and harps. Repeated and overlaid, the array of perfect fifths assumes the attributes of a harmonic series.

In m. 8, the “muted” and “almost imperceptible” first violins introduce real harmonics: the interval of a perfect fourth, played high on the bridge. The upper pitch of this interval, D, rounding out the A-major scale, would appear to confirm A major as the governing tonality.

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This pitch, however, is preceded by a D♯ in the flute and harp, a modal [Lydian] inflection.

One measure after rehearsal number 1, the chorus enters with doubled perfect fourths: B–F♯, C♯–F♯. The vocal texture derives from the doubled perfect fourths in the French horns one measure before rehearsal number 1. This syntactical relationship, which involves the metamorphosis of an instrumental sound (associated with the nymphs) into a vocal sound (associated with the spirit world), is subsequently paralleled by another. Right at rehearsal number 1, a solo flute introduces the tune aligned with Syrinx, the nymph that the covetous, amorous Pan changed into a reed pipe. In the ensuing measures, the flute and the chorus merge. Jointly, they “sing out the rapture of spirit and senses.”

The tonal-modal hybrid is thereafter dissolved, the tonic pedal being replaced at rehearsal number 2 with G and then, four measures later, with F. At rehearsal number 3, the point at which the corps de ballet begins to assemble onstage, the chorus and orchestra introduce the five pitches of the chromatic collection—F, G, C, E♭, B♭—missing from the passage preceding rehearsal number 1. Had the opening ladder of perfect fifths not ended at G♯—had it extended, in other words, beyond the boundaries of A major—these five pitches would have been intoned by m. 12.

The effect of the entire passage is to present the orchestral music, marked by changes in timbre and syntax, as the domain of shadow states, and the vocal music as the essential spiritual realm behind these states. Similar relationships are evident in the ballet’s scenario, which changes one mode of being into another. At the start of scene 3, for example, Chloe’s rescue by Pan is presented first as reality, then again as dream, then once more as prophecy. At the conclusion of scene 3, Daphnis and Chloe express thanks to Pan for his kindness by acting out the events of his love affair with Syrinx. Their pantomime, however, becomes a grand pas de deux; it metamorphoses into a celebration of their own love affair. Both on an aural and a visual level, the ballet swaps metaphors for the metaphorical, objects for the objective. The score in particular embraces this technique, approximating, through the intermingling of syntaxes, what the French Symbolist poet Charles Baudelaire called the “universal correspondence.”

The conclusion of scene 1, where the chorus marks a shift in the drama between what Merezhkovsky called “morning” and “twilight” states, clarifies these points. The singers here perform for thirty-two measures a cappella, translating the preceding orchestral passages into desemanticized vocal exhalations. The wordless (but not vowel-less) utterances conjure a noncognitive state: the prelinguistic, presubjective envelope of utterances that psychoanalytic theorist Julia Kristeva terms “the chora.” Kristeva adopts the term from Plato, who used it to identify the “eternal, unchanging Forms” of the cosmos “and their unstable reflections” in the physical, perceptible world of “becoming.” In the Timaeus, a dialogue about the advent of the world, Plato describes the chora as a “receptacle” whose spatial element affords “a location for all things that come to be.” Though invisible to our eyes and inaudible to our ears, the chora makes itself known in dream states, the nocturnal vistas where shapes and sounds arise before us as though from a dark void, an alien ocean. Kristeva redefines the chora by using it as a metaphor for the “receptacle” of the primal forces (or drive energies) that precede the formation of subjectivity. She describes it as “an essentially mobile and extremely provisional articulation constituted by movements and their ephemeral stases.” The chora, Kristeva explains, antedates cognitive perceptions of space and time. It “can be designated and regulated,” but “it can never be definitely posited.”

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47Ibid., pp. 1254 (51a) and 1255 (52b).

For this reason, “one can situate the chora and, if necessary, lend it a topology, but one can never give it axiomatic form.” Lawrence Kramer offers the following insight: “The chorus reduces the human voice from a vehicle of agency and signification to a pure and mobile materiality. Voice in this form is meant to give the impression of ‘speaking’ the semiotic from outside the symbolic. It mirrors a kind of subjectivity, sometimes called ‘ideodynamism,’ that preoccupied the nouvelle psychologie of late-nineteenth-century France: an unconsciously determined flight of ideas (nervous excitations) associated variously with hypnotism, suggestion, and dreams” (Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995], p. 208).


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ished fourths and fifths—as “a poignant extemporisation” of the “legato waltz-theme associated with Chloe” four measures after rehearsal number 29.\textsuperscript{52} This point underscores one likely reason why Ravel berated Diaghilev for eliminating the chorus from the London production: the invisible singing recoded the music assigned to the visible dancing.

There is, however, a third, much less ambiguous source for Ravel’s offstage chorus: the wordless singing in those French and Russian fin-de-siècle compositions with fantastic and spiritual subject matter, an extensive repertoire that Jumeau-Lafond has plumbed to great depths. Ravel’s chorus has an attitudinal kinship to Hector Berlioz’s Le Ballet des ombres:

\textsuperscript{52}Mawer, “Ballet and the Apotheosis of the Dance,” pp. 146 and 148.
Formez vos rangs [1829], a “nocturnal round” for chorus and piano that was included in the dramatic symphony Romeo et Juliet [1839], and the same composer’s La Mort d’Ophélie [1842], a ballade arranged in 1848 for female voices. Other wordless choruses heard—and in some instances written about—by Ravel come from Vincent D’Indy’s Fervaal, 1895], Paul Dukas’ Ariane et Barbe-bleue, 1907], Florent Schmitt’s La Tragédie de Salomé, 1907], and Claude Debussy, whose work list would have been intimately familiar to Ravel. [Ravel would also have known that in 1895 Debussy considered setting Pierre Louÿs’s Daphnis et Chloë libretto. In “Sirènes,” the third of Debussy’s Nocturnes [1899], soprano and contralto voices interweave, furnishing, through an eerie manipulation of “ahs” and “ohs,” distorted translations of orchestral sounds. The voices represent the nocturnal incantations of Neptune’s

Example 1 (continued)


Marcel Marnat, Maurice Ravel [Paris: Fayard, 1986], p. 338, n. 44.
daughters, the orchestra the agitated ocean. In act I, scene 3 of *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902), Debussy likewise uses wordless male singing to suggest the advance of a mist-shrouded ship.55

On the Russian side, Ravel likely also found inspiration in Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov’s opera-ballet *Mlada* (1892), a score that Jumeau-Lafond does not mention, but that includes both a wordless “ghost” chorus and a hummed “infernal” chorus. This work, like Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Capriccio espagnol* (1887) and *Shéhérazade* (1888), served as a creative model for Ravel, notably in the realm of orchestration.56 Finally, Alexander Scriabin’s tone poem *Prometheus* (1911), composed at approximately the same time as *Daphnis et Chloé*, merits citation. The thick score reaches a sensual zenith with a mixed chorus intoning a citation. The thick score reaches a sensual zenith with a mixed chorus intoning “ah,” “é,” and “oh,” a pattern that increases in intensity and that symbolizes the rapturous utterances of a collectivized reborn humanity. The piano symbolizes Prometheus—a shining star in the firmament—and the orchestra the four elements of matter.

To listen to Ravel’s offstage chorus is thus to be escorted through a gallery of musical artifacts. To revert back to Merezhkovsky’s terminology, the music is “Decadent” as opposed to “Symbolist”; it provides decorative acoustic background for the ballet, an artifice of the nature worship and religious iconicity endemic to Symbolist art. The high- and low-pitch phonemes are devoid of extramusical meaning. Ravel achieves a nihilistic inversion with his chorus, inscribing the presumed inability of the audience to interpret the sound into the sound itself. The extramusical program is the absence of an extramusical program. By forging the illusion of intertextual complexity, the offstage singing lures us into thinking that it harbors hidden codes, secret conceits, but these prove to be little more than chimeras. Each “oh” and “ah” is a concatenation of metaphor, a mélange of allusions to various compositional genres—French and Russian orientalism, the dithyramb, the Platonic “chora”—that leads our imagination back to an implied but not implicit primal source, as though the singing bore the trace of psychomythical events. Following the trail of musical crumbs, we reach the vanishing point of hermeneutic understanding.

Besides the chorus, Ravel dwelled on the ballet’s heaven-storming finale, composing it twice, first [primarily] in 3/4 time and then [primarily] in 4/4 time, the latter a meter that Fokine struggled with during the rehearsals. There survives intact an engraved piano score of the 4/4 version of the finale—which Ravel recalled for revision from his publisher in October 1910, though not before it had been reproduced and several copies distributed to music dealers—and sufficient anecdotal evidence to suggest a multilayered creative process. The French musicologist Jacques Chailley, the first to comment on the 3/4 version, recalls finding it by accident at a used bookshop in 1964. Puzzled by his acquisition, he approached Ravel’s publisher, Durand, about its provenance. Chailley recollects that the firm’s director, René Dommange, “desired to look into the matter himself and, in a letter of November 24, 1964, confirmed to me that, as I had assumed, this score had been ‘issued from the printed proofs in advance of Maurice Ravel’s corrections’.” Chailley had stumbled across a rare draft, one that predated the composer’s “submission of the final orchestral manuscript to the editor,” and his “inclusion, at the proof stage, of those important alterations that were included in the orchestral manuscript.” “Normally, all trace of this first version would have disappeared,” Chailley adds; “chance alone preserved the evidence.”57

Beyond identifying alterations in barring, rhythm, and phrase length between the first

56Orenstein, introduction to Maurice Ravel: Lettres, écrits, entretiens, p. 38. While familiar with Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Mlada*, Fokine would have been better acquainted with Marius Petipa and Ludwig Minkus’s ballet of the same name, which premiered in 1878 and, after 1896, retained a foothold in the Russian Imperial Ballet repertoire.

and final versions of the “Danse générale,” Chailley also notes changes in the proper names of the characters, changes strongly suggesting that Fokine revised his original scenario only after he met Ravel in 1909. The buffoon “Darkon” was first named “Darion,” the ingénue “Lycenion” “Lyceia,” and the villain “Bryaxis” the “Leader of the Pirates.” Some—but pace another French musicologist, not all—of the original spellings came from the choreographer’s Russian-language draft. Others accord with the French-language translation of Longus’s pastoral romance by Jacques Amyot [Les amours pastorales de Daphnis et Chloé, 1559]. This was the version of the ballet’s source text consulted by Ravel.

Beyond the name changes, Chailley also identifies a change in plot detail. The stage direction for the apparition of Pan at the end of scene 2 first reads “Fearsome, Pan appears in a chariot drawn by savage beasts,” but was subsequently recast as “Fearsome, Pan’s shadow is profiled on the hills in the background, gesturing menacingly.”59 As mentioned earlier, this alteration led to the removal of Pan from the cast list. It also marked a significant departure from Longus’s pastoral romance, one that attests to a dispute between Fokine and Ravel about the ballet’s visceral content. In the draft, Pan lives and breathes onstage. The deity “suddenly appears” amid the brigands and mimes a none-too-subtle warning to them: “I’ll kill you all, if you don’t release Chloé and her flock.”60 In the final scenario, Pan becomes an abstraction, a bas-relief on stone.

Though Chailley does not mention it, there occurred another significant change to the mise en scène. The direction for the flirtatious exchange between Daphnis and Lycenion in scene 1 first reads: “But [Daphnis] recognizes Lyceia and playfully turns away”; it was rewritten as: “But [Daphnis] recognizes Lycenion and tries to pull away.”61 The alteration reduces the emotional content of the drama. The goatherd no longer expresses any feelings for the coquettish fieldworker, but simply removes himself from her physical orbit. In this subtle detail, one glimpses how, as the ballet came into being, Fokine’s literal approach to the subject matter clashed with Ravel’s stylized approach.

It is not certain why Ravel decided to rewrite the finale, causing Fokine headaches with his dancers in the process, but competition from Igor Stravinsky, whose The Firebird and Petrushka were choreographed by Fokine and staged by the Ballets Russes in 1910 and 1911, respectively, is the most likely cause. Arnold Bennett, an acquaintance of Ravel, noted in his diary that the composer, upon completing Daphnis et Chloé, started to worry that it would sound old-fashioned to Parisian connoisseurs of chic and so decided to recalibrate the finale. Louis Aubert, a Ravel disciple, adds that the composer was tinkering with the finale as late as April 1911.62 The example of Stravinsky, specifically his extensive reliance, in his ballet scores, on machinelike ostinati and asymmetrical accent and pulse patterns, probably inspired Ravel to expand and extend his own finale. The musical language of the ¾ version, composed before Ravel had heard The Firebird and Petrushka, includes advanced (chromatic and whole-tone) syntactical relationships but not advanced temporal ones. The exotic braid of effects recalls Alexander Borodin’s Polovtsian Dances and Alexander Glazunov’s Bacchanales. Fokine choreographed these ballets in 1909 and 1910, shortly before the Stravinsky ballets.

Behind the original ¾ version exists an additional work that has not been mentioned in the secondary literature and that, owing to its evident incompleteness, cannot be performed. This work, dating from 1907 or 1908, is the original Daphnis et Chloé. It was written by Andrey Kadletz, Fokine’s former colleague at the Impe-
rial Ballet and the composer with whom he collaborated on his first ballet, Acis et Galatea. To date, all that I have uncovered of the music is a fragment of the ending in triple meter (\( \frac{3}{4} \)), which Kadletz copied out as a gift to two mid-ranking members of the Russian nobility on 9 April 1909.\(^{63}\) The rest of the manuscript may be lost or, as Kadletz’s granddaughter Muza suggested to me,\(^{64}\) may have been left unfinished, since Fokine pulled out of the project in medias res once he received word that the Imperial Theatres had rejected his draft scenario and would not be staging the finished ballet. This was approximately the same time that Diaghilev, according to Ravel, became interested in the scenario.

There are no correlations between Ravel’s score and Kadletz’s fragment; rather, there are explicit departures. Fokine proudly recalled that “it was unnecessary for me to ask Ravel to refrain from the traditional forms of the old ballet music, as I had to do in the case of my first music collaborator, Andrey Kadletz [. . . .] Having seen a series of my productions, Ravel was already well aware that polkas, pizzicatos, waltzes, and gallops—so indispensable in the old ballet—were completely out of place in the new.”\(^{65}\) Fokine glosses over the facts somewhat: his “new” ballets did include set pieces, albeit only where they suited the drama.\(^{66}\) The choreographer does, however, identify a knot of tension between the two Daphnis et Chloës. Kadletz’s finale is nothing if not a waltz, while Ravel’s finale—at least in its revised version—has no precedent in “the old ballet” (ex. 2).

The opening of the \( \frac{3}{4} \) version, bearing the subheadings “A group of young males rushes on stage” and “Joyous tumulte” is brief.\(^{67}\) The passage is a harmonic and melodic microcosm of the more extensive “Danse générale” that follows. Example 3a highlights the structural pitches of the extremely angular bass line: the tonic pitch A, C♯, G, and D♯, the last interpretable as the dominant (E) displaced by semitone. Three sonorities, each articulated in the middle range of the texture, comprise whole-tone clusters: C♯–E♯–G–B (m. 2), B–D–F♯ (m. 6), and B–D♯–F–G (m. 11). The conflict between B and A, the pitches stressed in the upper and lower registers, is audible throughout the finale (ex. 3).

The middle section, featuring solo variations by Daphnis, Chloe, and Darkon, inaugurates a steady chromatic descent in the bass from F♯ to E♭, each pitch functioning as the root of a ninth chord with a missing interval: F♯–C–E–G, F–A–E♭–G, E♭–D–F, and E♭–E♭–D–F. The ending of Darkon’s solo inaugurates a further extension of the chromatic descent, first to D and then to C♯, at which point the corps de ballet combines with the soloists for the apotheosis. Eventu-
a. The first two pages of the original \(\frac{3}{4}\) finale, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Un groupe de jeunes hommes envahit la scène. Joyeux tumulte.

Animé

N.B.

Example 3
ally, Ravel establishes E, the dominant, in the bass, but cadential closure is postponed when an augmented-sixth chord on B fails to resolve to A major. This chord subsequently recurs (enharmonically respelled), but resolves one measure afterward with the fortissimo final appearance of the chorus. In the second to last measure, the contraltos push B, the pitch emphasized in the upper register throughout the finale, to C♯, the third degree of the tonic chord.

In terms of texture, the principal difference between the first and second versions of the finale concerns the chorus, whose role is expanded from a mere six measures in the former to over eleven pages in the latter. The 2/4 finale occupies eleven pages of the piano score, the 3/4 finale twenty-two pages. The combined male and female voices most often enter on the second beat of the measure, thus blurring the meter, and rise and fall in contrary motion with the instrumental lines. Only at the very end, in the brief duple meter coda, do the voices enter on the first beat. In terms of syntax, there are no manifest differences between the first and second versions, though the expansion of the score enhances the psychological effect of the chromatic runs. Certain chords, among them the unresolved augmented sixth, become more prominent, but the changes are rhythmic rather than syntactic.

In the second version, the Stravinskian 5/4 episodes—which, in Karsavina’s recollection, Ravel told the dancers to count “1 2 3–1 2 3 4 5–1 2” are interrupted by duple and (less frequently) triple meter passages, most notably at the outset prior to the “Danse générale” (ex. 3b). The accordion-like augmentation and diminution of meter, together with the displacement of tonal regions, produce the impression of narcosis and delirium. In Daphnis et Chloé, “Bacchante” existence differs from “Shepherd” and “Brigand” existence; it inhabits an altered state in which “time images,” segmented, suspended, and interlocked durations identified with altered consciousness, supplant “movement images,” cognitive and empirical measures of time.  

In its place, Daphnis et Chloé, the premiere, claimed that the meter was danced in a 2 + 3 pattern: “Rehearsals were conducted with difficulty, and in an atmosphere charged with ill-feeling, the finale, in particular, giving endless trouble to the corps de ballet, written, as it was, in five-four time. However, by omitting actual counting, and substituting the syllables ‘Ser-ge[ǐ]-Dia-ghi-lev’ in its place, the corps de ballet, after humming it over an infinity of times, finally succeeded in getting it right” [Lifar, Sergei Diaghilev, p. 193].

The terms “time image” and “movement image” come from the philosopher Gilles Deleuze. For detailed definitions, see D. N. Rodowick, Gilles Deleuze’s Time Machine [Durham: Duke University Press, 1997], pp. 8–14.
b. The first two pages of the revised (3) finale.

Daphnis et Chloé s'enlacent tendrement. Un groupe de jeunes hommes envalit la scène. Joyeux tumulte.

Example 3 (continued)
ing to different pulse patterns. Moving in and out of phase with each other and with the accompaniment, the dancers would express collective abandon, suffusing the finale with a dreamlike or oneiric ambiance.

In reality, Fokine devised a “unique method” for staging the finale, one that, like Ravel’s music, had a Stravinskian quality. In his resplendent, kaleidoscopic choreography for the ostinato-driven crowd sequences in the first and fourth scenes of Petrushka, Fokine scripted the steps in such a manner as to convey the illusion of disorder. In Daphnis et Chloé, he offered his seasoned dancers interpretive license, thus creating the impression that the choreographic “text” had somehow escaped his control. The result was a simulacrum of Dionysian ecstasy, a hallucinatory flux. In the final dress rehearsal, which found Fokine still constructing the finale, he sent one bacchante across the stage, then another, then two at a time, then three together, then an entire group with interwoven arms reminiscent of Greek bas-reliefs. They rushed across the stage again, singly and in groups. I gave each a short but different combination of steps. Each dancer was required to learn only her own brief passage.

Having thus led everyone upstage from one wing to the other, I then had the remaining mass emerge from the downstage wing. The entire ensemble lurched together in a whirlpool of a general dance, and—the biggest part of the most difficult finale was ready! It only remained to stage a small passage for Daphnis and Chloé, a solo for Darkon, and the general end.

Fokine’s ensemble technique integrated his own kinesthetic thought with that of his experienced dancers while also allowing for the inclusion of chance elements, those unplanned features of physical expression that derive from the circumstances of actual performance. In his 1914 manifesto, Fokine described his ensemble technique as a commingling of “the expressiveness of the individual body [with] the expressiveness of a group of bodies and the expressiveness of the combined dancing of a crowd.” This fusion of affects found its equivalent not only in the accelerating orchestral music of the finale, but also in the wordless chorus, the primordial wellspring of the score. Ravel’s decision to recompose the finale and

71 See the discussion of Fokine’s ensemble technique in Garafola, Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, pp. 21–25.

72 Fokine, Memoirs of a Ballet Master, p. 210. On p. 213, Fokine adds that for the scene 2 episode in which “the god Pan, to save Chloé from the pirates, puts terror into them” he also “permitted a somewhat collective creation.”
his insistence on tinkering with it after its completion may have frustrated Fokine, but the finale became the one section of the ballet where the difference between his and the composer’s conception of antiquity was erased.

The only other hint of parallel thinking concerns the brigands. The eclectic poet Jean Cocteau observed that at the start of scene 2 Parisian audiences were offered “a fearsome glimpse [between two mossy glades straight out of the eclogues] of the rugged creek where the pirates chain up poor Chloe while they indulge in their rough horse-play.” “Nothing,” Cocteau added, “could provide a more delightful contrast to [the pirates’] gruesome gambols than Daphnis’s dance, tinkling and twinkling like dew, or the ever-breaking garland of the most Latin of farandoles.”

This remark is cryptic, to say the least, but it offers some insight into the relationship between décor, dance, and music in the ballet. Against the rock-strewn backdrop of scene 2, the brigands lumbered to and fro, while against the verdant backdrop of scene 3 the positive characters performed a farandole, a chain dance dating from the fourteenth century. Assuming that one of the London critics was correct when he remarked that Fokine’s corps de ballet tended to move in sync with Ravel’s score, one could further deduce that the brigands struggled to follow the rhythms of the music, while the positive characters—tracing the curved, arched figures typical of the farandole—adhered to the melodic phrasing. The basic difference between the “Danse légère et gracieuse de Daphnis” (sc. 1, rehearsal numbers 43 to 51) and the brigands’ “Danse guerrière” (sc. 2, rehearsal numbers 92 to 104) is, in fact, one of melody and its absence.

The preceding quotation from Fokine’s memoirs is his only substantive description of the choreography of the original Daphnis et Chloë. This choreography is, by all standards of measurement, lost. It was recorded in neither written nor visual form and cannot be significantly reconstructed. Like Daphnis after Chloë’s capture, the traces of the choreography are entities in repose.

Of the preserved visuals, the palm-sized images by the artist Valentine Hugo [né Gross, 1887–1968] of Nijinsky, Karsavina, Adolm Bohm [who danced the part of Darkon], and Ludmila Schollar [who danced the part of Lyceon] provide the most information about the Paris premiere. Sketched with Diaghilev’s knowledge and agreement in the darkened Théâtre du Châtelet, the images offer both dramatic detail and an imprint of striking poses and gestures. Richard Buckle, who analyzed twenty of the images, hypothesized that “as the artist’s eyes follow[ed] the figure of Nijinsky on stage, she [did] not know whether her hand [was] drawing head, neck, arm or costume.” Usually it etched “none of these, but invent[ed]—with the speed born of necessity—a symbol for movement.” Each pencil and pastel flourish, in effect, preserved a fleeting physical reaction, the physical production of emotional or psychological effects. As in all ballets, the choreography was “allographic,” scripted and shaped by Fokine for his dancers, but also “autographic,” bearing the dancers’ own creative signatures. Hugo, accordingly, sought to represent both stage events and the particularities of the individual performers’ styles.

Buckle identifies grand jetés and épaulesments in some of Hugo’s pastels; in others, those not published in his monograph on the
artist, the curves, lines, and squiggles are more ambiguous, like Rorschach tests for Terpischore. Ballet audiences of the early twentieth century were accustomed to reading stories into physical gestures, however, and would have been able to extract plot details from Hugo’s images. Seen in this light, her work is valuable not only as a technical glossary, a guide to the formal elements of Fokine’s dances, but also as a storybook. In one image [see plate 1a], a male figure leans on a missing staff; in a second, another male is seen moving ungracefully, right arm stretched skyward, right hand fingers splayed, left arm and hand dangling, knees bent, and torso twisted, breaking the natural line of the spine. In four other images, the profile of a female figure gradually comes into view, first in a fetal position, then in the general shape of a boulder [see plate 1b]. The first image can be interpreted as

Daphnis tending his flock in isolation in scene 1 or 3, the second as Darkon performing his grotesque duple meter variation in the scene 1 dance contest, and the four others as Chloe crumpled in abject despair in scene 2 following her molestation by the brigands.

The studio photographs of the ballet are sometimes more, sometimes less provocative than Hugo’s stage drawings. Many of these were published in the French and British illustrated press—Comœdia illustré, Le Théâtre, Illustrated London News, the Sketch, and the Tatler—between 1912 and 1914; others are housed in the Mikhail Fokine Archive at the State Theatre Library in St. Petersburg. With one exception, these images complete the choreographic record of the original Daphnis et Chloé. The exception is a stage photograph, dating from 1914, that shows the corps de ballet reaching skyward in praise of Pan in scene 1. It is “a rare example in this period of a photograph taken from the stage.”

Valentine Hugo Archive, London Theatre Museum. The first and second images, tagged 159 and 160 respectively in the archive, are reproduced in Nijinsky on Stage, pp. 109–10. Three of the four other images are tagged 6, while the fourth is tagged 175 and reproduced in Nijinsky on Stage, p. 129.

Souritz, “Isadora Duncan and Prewar Russian Dancemakers,” p. 115. The photograph is reproduced on this page.
Made in different locations and perhaps at different times, the sepia photographs in the Fokine archive are the least familiar objects in the *Daphnis et Chloé* curio cabinet. Unlike the lone stage photograph, these stills offer an external rather than an internal perspective on the ballet. File 13/6 of the archive contains thirteen photographs (with one duplicate) of the choreographer and his wife, the ballerina Vera Fokina, in Greek-style garb. The plainness of their outfits forms a radical contrast to the colorful, childlike prints fashioned by Bakst for the corps de ballet. File 13/7 contains eleven additional photographs of Mikhail and Vera in the roles (for the London staging) of Daphnis and Chloe. Of these, three are gathered in a letter-sized envelope dated 1914, the year of the chorus-less London version, and inscribed “M[ikhail] M[ikhailovich] in the role of Daphnis in 1914.” File 13/8, finally, contains two photographs of Mikhail and Vera in “antique ballet costumes.”

The images in files 13/7 and 13/8 resemble, but do not duplicate, those published in the 15 June 1912 issue of *Comoedia illustré*, which featured a photo essay on the 1912 season of the Ballet Russes. The images in 13/6 are, to the best of my knowledge, unknown. Three of them were made in a professional London studio by Saul Bransburg, who took many photographs of Diaghilev’s troupe in 1914, several of which were published in *The Sketch*; the remainder are amateur stills made in the courtyard of a Paris apartment building. In one of the latter, Fokine is shown balancing a crossbow at a forty-five degree angle over his shoulders. He stands on his right leg, with his right foot on *demi-pointe*; his left leg is raised and bent at the knee, with the left foot pointed straight down. The choreographer’s costume consists of sandals, white tunic, headband, and sash. The décor includes French patio doors, a Russian floor carpet, and an Indian silk sari—true cosmopolitanism. Two other images depict Fokine, flat-footed, holding a staff. In the first of these, he holds the staff with his outstretched right hand; in the second, he holds the staff with both hands across the back of his neck. The prop takes on two distinct functions, one narrative (it informs us that Daphnis is a goatherd) and the other practical (it provides a horizontal axis for his sculptural poses).

In a fourth image, Vera lies atop the carpet, torso raised and turned, gazing serenely skyward. She has become two-dimensional, much like the coterie of nymphs in Nijinsky’s *L’Après-midi d’un faune*, the ballet that stole *Daphnis et Chloé*’s Anacreontic and mythological thunder during the 1912 season of the Ballets Russes. Fokine complained in his memoirs that Nijinsky borrowed from his technique without acknowledgment, but critics were divided as to the significance of the overlap, and many believed that Nijinsky was a much more radical innovator than Fokine. In *L’Après-midi d’un faune*, as in *Daphnis et Chloé*, the corps de ballet took on the guise of bas-reliefs, raised figures in white against dark backdrops. The
dance critic for the *Pall Mall Gazette* enthused that “M. Fokine’s choreography strikes a new note. While rejecting M. Nijinsky’s revolutionary aesthetic he has not disdained to profit by his *plastique.***83 The dance critic for the *Daily Mail* appended that the chief pleasure of *Daphnis et Chloé* was “the shepherds’ and shepherdesses’ final dance of jubilation when the lovers are reunited, thanks to the intervention of Pan—a dance that seemed a miraculous vivification of the garlanded figures of some Greek urn.”82 The flattened perspectives in the ballet furnished a view of reality—our humdrum, quotidian reality—from the richer, multidimensional realm of the Greek and Roman deities, of sprites and fairies, and (according to the idealist philosophers) of music. If we could look at our world from the vantage point of this other realm, the place that the French Symbolists called the *au delà* and the Russian Symbolists *realiora,* it would appear colorless, depthless, and uniform.83

A fifth, much more beguiling image from the St. Petersburg archive likewise offers a flattened perspective [see plate 2]. It shows Vera on *demi-pointe* with her torso arched precariously back, arms stretching outward and upward, and hands cupped. Fokine grasps her forehead and chin, gently pressing them down even as she tries to reach up to break the frame of the image. Her spouse, jutting his right leg outward and back and rotating his hips, seems to stand two-dimensionally. The image beguiles insofar as it appears to express the individual will of the dancer struggling against physical constraints, an idealized Romantic perception of movement that posits dance as wayward, semiotic force and choreography as the symbolic script that binds it. Though antithetical to neoclassicism, the pose would have been suitable for the episodes in the ballet where Chloe submits to the gathered brigands or animates the accents of the reed pipe Syrinx.

Though these photographs can be related to the scenario, they cannot be related to the music with much precision. The difficulty is not just one of insufficient information. Except for their heated 1909 discussions about the scenario, Fokine and Ravel seldom consulted during the creative process. Diaghilev’s mean-spirited time pressures and Ravel’s last-minute decision to recompose the finale of the ballet meant that Fokine did not in fact hear the orchestral score until the night of the premiere. He developed the choreography using the piano score alone. For this reason, Daphnis’s and Chloe’s solo variations, Darkon’s and Lycenion’s respectively comical and seductive character dances, and the nymph and brigand ensembles all evolved with reference to the meter and rhythm of the music but not to its texture. The omission is unfortunate, since Ravel paid special attention to texture in all of his music for dance.

Beginning with this point, the musicologist Danielle Cohen-Levinas argues that Ravel sublimated physical gestures or “pulsations” into the score of *Daphnis et Chloé,* thereby transforming the music into a simulacrum of a hypothetical choreography.84 The famous anecdote about Ravel deriving musical inspiration from Nijinsky’s breathtaking leaps—in which the dancer either hovered in the air, as though unable to come down, or extended his body sideways through space85—furnishes the subtext.

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83 Nijinsky, as noted, danced the role of Daphnis in the premiere production of *Daphnis et Chloé.* By this time, however, the relationship between Nijinsky and Fokine had deteriorated to the point that the former evidently ignored the latter’s choreographic wishes. In an interview with a pseudonymous Russian theater critic, Fokine griped that, while the billboards showed that he had created the ballet’s choreography, “in actuality, Nijinsky allowed himself to mount a dance that was wholly at odds with the ballet. Nijinsky devised some kind of puppet dance, introducing wholly inappropriate stylization and contradicting the manner of my staging” (Teatral’, “M. M. Fokin obvinяет Nizhinskogo,” *Peterburgskaya gazeta,* 25 August 1913, p. 10).

84 Cohen-Levinas, “*Daphnis et Chloé* ou la danse du simulacra,” p. 90.

85 Michel-Dmitri Calvocoressi recalled: “The very first bars of music which Ravel wrote were inspired by the memory of a wonderful leap sideways which Nijinsky (who was to be Daphnis) used to perform in a *pas seul* in *Le Pavillon d’Armide*” [Ravel Remembered, ed. Nichols [London: Faber, 1987], p. 187; quoted in Mawer, “Ballet and the Apotheosis of the Dance,” p. 143].
for Cohen-Levinas’s assertion that the “Danse légère et gracieuse de Daphnis” (rehearsal number 43) translates physical action into acoustic action:

In a ternary 6/8 rhythm, Ravel integrates an ascending pulsation in the pizzicato strings into two harp glissandi of sixteenth-note sextuplets. The rhythm is concentrated in full on the first beat of the measure. Instead of “naturally” resolving on the second, it pauses “in the air,” suspended at a pedal point, leaving to the silence, the mirror of [acoustic] space, the charge to complete the descent of the instrumental gesture.86

Cohen-Levinas’s claim that a “pedal point”—in fact, a fermata—underscores the rhythmic suspension reflects a central feature of the score: just as Nijinsky’s leaps appeared to defy gravity, landing not on Earth but in another realm of experience, so too does the rhythmic activity in Ravel’s score dash musical logic. The rhythmic “antecedent,” the rising sextuplet pattern, finds its “consequent” not in a descending rhythmic pattern, but in a hollow outline in the orchestration.87

The author touches on additional interchanges between the temporal and spatial dimensions of the score at rehearsal numbers 44, 49, and 50. In these passages, as at number 43, rhythmic gestures are translated into hollow outlines in the instrumentation. Interpreted as expressions of dream logic, the outlines become the paradoxical markings of a hearable rather than a seeable choreography. Much in the same way that dreams revive distant memories, these passages revive those aspects of dance—poetic Hellenic dance—that have been lost to history. They represent the nocturnal, slumbering Greece described by Ravel in his autobiographical sketch.

In this reading, the music of Daphnis et Chloé becomes a preparatory study for the process of choreographic sublimation that characterizes Ravel’s La Valse (1920), which Diaghilev described as “a masterpiece” before noting that “it is not a ballet. . . . It is the portrait of a ballet. . . . the painting of a ballet.”88 Cohen-Levinas’s elegant and probing reading of Daphnis et Chloé assumes that Ravel privileged music over dance. This assumption is reasonable, but also problematic, for it implies that the composer denied physical gestures historical being. By transforming bodies into symbols of negation, Ravel’s score becomes a meditation on the historical fragility of ballet, specifically the erasure through time of its visual facet. In this conception, paradoxically, the first performance of Daphnis et Chloé was already the performance of a lost work.

Though choreography may not endure in history in the manner that music, at least notated music, does endure, Fokine stressed the permanent rather than the transient attributes of his craft. Placing his dancers in sandals or barefoot on the stage, he rejected the ethereal Romantic ballet tradition in favor of grounded earthiness. He privileged, in short, tactile, material presence. Studio and stage photographs of ballet always exclude the aura or autographic plentitude of performance. The available images of Daphnis et Chloé nonetheless manage to convey something of the substance of Fokine’s choreography because this choreography was in and of itself derived from images: black and white reproductions of sculptures, engravings, and bas-reliefs. The visual traces of the ballet embody, in effect, what the original choreography incarnated. In an essay about Duncan, André Levinson made the obvious point that pictures from a ballet—any ballet—provide little information about the choreography, since they show gestures in isolation, most often from the beginning or end of lengthy sequences.89 Fokine subverted this principle by creating a ballet of pictures. His choreography embraced sculptural principles of balance and harmony. It highlighted the fixed over the fluid, the spatial over the temporal, and relied on

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87 Cohen-Levinas’s remarks bring to mind those of Jean Marnold, who argued that the narrative of Daphnis et Chloé was “transposed completely into the music” (“Daphnis et Chloé,” 1917, rpt. in a special Ravel edition of La Revue musicale 6:5 [1925], 101).
natural laws: the curve of the spine, the alignment of the arms and legs. "Except in the pirate and final scenes" of Daphnis et Chloé, another dance critic related, "there is not a great deal of dancing, elastic poses and postures—happily not of the Après-Midi d’un Faune type—playing a large part in the development of the action."90

IV

The problem with Fokine’s [and Bakst’s] approach to Daphnis et Chloé was, once again, its disconnection from Ravel’s approach, and vice-versa. To various degrees, recent re-creations have addressed the conceptual divide in the ballet and in some instances have managed to bridge it. As noted at the outset of this article, each of these re-creations uses Ravel’s music, with or without the wordless chorus; each of them likewise abridges Fokine’s scenario and what little is known of his choreography.

One such Daphnis et Chloé was performed in 1982 by the Sydney Dance Company with erotic choreography by Graeme Murphy.91 Paraphrases of Fokine’s asymmetrical progressions abound in the staging, as do paraphrases of Nijinsky’s flattened perspectives, with the apparent aim of showing the historical influence of the former on the latter. Murphy allows the magical figures in Fokine’s scenario to travel in and out of the visual frame of reference by fantastic means. Pan descends and ascends by cloud machine; the leather-clad brigands skateboard from stage right to left as though dashing to catch the subway trains whose clatter can be heard in the distance between scenes; the nymphs travel by roller blades and on pointe. The dancing makes reference to dancing throughout the ages. Murphy’s lexicon expands to include elements of ballroom, folk, and jazz. The playful mixture of these genres enhances the ballet’s qualities of unreality.92

The production is thus a stylistic and generic mélange, but in Chloe’s opening variation it does assume an attitudinal relationship to what we know of the 1912 and 1914 choreography. Performed by Victoria Taylor, the variation forms a rapid-fire series of multifaceted interactions between music and gesture. The initial envelopées, the interceding hopping pas de bourrées, and the following steps in attitude are executed at twice the pulse rate of the music. Upon moving into flexed-foot pirouettes, Taylor slows to the pulse of the orchestra, then returns to her envelopées, which begin to flow in—rather than out-of-sync with the music, the pace of which now equals hers. In the subsequent chassés, the dance and music enter into a new dialogue. Taylor moves her legs in lockstep with the accompaniment, but holds her arms firmly above her head in alongée during a series of leaps. These are followed by fouettés, in which the tempo of Taylor’s port de bras differs markedly from that of her steps. The misalignment is somewhat unusual, for the arm and leg actions in this pattern should be closely related; in other words, the incongruence between her upper and lower body movements extends beyond their anatomically natural incongruence. Taylor’s upper body seems to be divorced from her lower body. Her arms and legs move in and out of sync with one another just as the dance and music did a few measures earlier. The sight-sound dialogue involves asyndeton, digression, and rhetorical flourish.

Toward the end of the variation, the tempo of the dance escapes that of the music again as Taylor performs a series of abbreviated jeté développé jumps followed by step-over turns in place. Her arms and legs begin actions of dazzling height and speed, but these are not accomplished, leaving the audience with the impression of a marionette tangled in strings. Crucially, the routine comprises a scripted rather than an improvised marking of another dance, a dance implied by the music but devoid of status beyond the music. The stunted prances, limp arms, and flexed feet suggest a ballerina practicing rather than performing a variation. The half-completed leaps and turns likewise suggest the presence of another set of gestures existing in another time and space. Their domain is neither the island of Lesbos nor the

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90 Unsigned, "Beecham Opera: First Performance of the Ballet," Standard, 10 June 1914, p. 5.
92 For this point, and the technical points in the following two paragraphs, I am very grateful to Emily Abruzzo.
locale of the Delphic oracle. Rather, it is the Greece of Ravel’s “dreams.”

Like Murphy’s, Frederick Ashton’s 1951 recreation of Daphnis et Chloé for the Sadler’s Wells Ballet aimed to give a contemporary feel to the title characters and the gods who regulate their world. His production enhanced the tepid eroticism of Fokine’s scenario through a stronger focus on Daphnis’s entanglement with Lycenion in the first scene and intense physical contact in the scene 3 pas de deux. Julie Kavanagh points out that in the Adagio of the pas de deux, Margot Fonteyn, as Chloe, “slowly bourrée[d]” to her partner “through a frieze of corps”; then, in a repeated, ecstatic cascade, she put her arms around his neck and began to whirl, eventually “flying around him horizontally.”93 A further strength of Ashton’s production was Chloe’s animation, in scene 3, of the accents of the reed pipe Syrinx. Fonteyn performed a poignant variation that had less in common with neoclassicism than with Romanticism in its gestures and that translated Ravel’s music into dance.94 The variation flowed into and out of static poses, the port de bras dissolving into fluttering gestures approximating the flute line’s fleeting, floating ornamentation.95

94Archival footage of her performance is scarce; part of a 1958 rehearsal of this episode, however, is included on Margot Fonteyn, a tribute to the dancer produced and broadcast by the BBC in 1991.
95The same trait is evident in Ashton’s choreography of the “Danse suppliante,” which Antoinette Sibley described as “yearning, begging, longing for what you did have and Fonteyn’s lyrical movements filled the middle ground between the conflicting musical and choreographic conceptions of Daphnis et Chloé.

In effect, to be fully realized, Ravel and Fokine’s ballet had to wait for the dissolution of the Ballets Russes and for different companies with different performers to emerge. Though the ballet was conceived in 1907 and premiered in 1912, it has only recently come into being.

Knowing that it’s impossible [to] get it back. It begins with trying to unwind the hands, [to] unbind yourself, but not with any hope that it will ever happen. It’s just an automatic reaction” (Stephanie Jordan, “Antoinette Sibley and Michael Somes on Daphnis and Chloe,” Ballet Review 27 [1999], 23).

Abstract.
Beyond Maurice Ravel’s 1910 score, the remnants of the original production of Daphnis et Chloé—one known stage photograph, an assortment of studio photographs, seven known costumes, brief reviews, anecdotal memoirs, and a bundle of pastel drawings—constitute choreographer Michel Fokine’s 1907 scenario. These materials are scattered across the globe, preserved in libraries and museums in Russia, Sweden, France, England, and the United States. They compose less a ballet, even the archival detritus of a ballet, than a haunting absence. This article assembles all of these materials in an assessment of the differences between Ravel’s and Fokine’s conceptions of Hellenic antiquity. The discussion focuses on the draft and revised versions of the literary scenario and the draft and revised versions of the finale of the score, cast in ⁴⁄₄ and ⁵⁄₄ meter respectively. The ending of the article offers brief remarks on the music-dance relationship in the original and two subsequent productions of the ballet.