The Choreomusical Page-to-Stage Approach:
Visual Representations of Musical Modernism
Through the Works of Igor Stravinsky and George
Balanchine

BY

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Abstract

The musical developments of the Modernist period provided a new understanding and approach to composition. These developments are also seen in ballet, branching into several styles, with many choreographers providing their unique take to staging musical works. In this study, the modernist choreomusical relationship is examined with respect to the possibility of a page-to-stage approach in dance. This thesis examines how this approach is manifested in the complex relationships between the composer, and the choreographer. Drawing on nine examples of modernist era ballets categorised in to three styles (classical, neoclassical, and contemporary ballets), discussion of historical context, analysis of the musical and choreographic relationship, and other ideas surrounding adapting music for a visual medium are explored.

This thesis also examines changing attitudes to music/dance relationships. Two lines of enquiry are followed, the first assesses, through the example of Stravinsky, Balanchine, and several other contemporaries, whether a page-to-stage approach exists for ballet. A supplementary enquiry explores how such an approach is manifested within different methods of choreography. This study finds that there are difficulties in applying the choreomusical page-to-stage approach to analysing changing attitudes to music/dance relationships. At another level, this study points to the benefit of incorporating the concept of diegesis in analysing the changing attitudes to music/dance relationships.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Background

The Modernist era saw sweeping changes in the landscape of the arts, with stark and rapid transformations occurring in musical trends and techniques. During this time, in the early twentieth century, the priorities change from the expressive and sublime, to a search for a new type of classicism. For ballet, this manifested as a focus on the French school of modernism and a reaction to the Wagnerian Romantic ideal (Messing 1988, 1-7). The change in ideology and image is evident in new approaches to ballet as a medium of performing music. Ballet started to move away from the three-act narrative ballet to experiments with shorter one-act pieces with an emphasis on the abstract, sometimes forgoing a plot completely.

With these transformations occurring in ballet, modernism also made way for a new approach to music and musicality through choreography. The monopoly of Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov as major choreographers of the period switches to a vast array of methods, approaches, and interpretations of music from a new generation of choreographers. This switch is combined with the new focus on clean, austere aesthetics and classicism, as opposed to the sublime and fantastical. New associations between the music and movement are formed, that contradict the former emphasis on narrative, ‘classic’ aesthetic, and feminine beauty.

Definition of Page-to-Stage Approach

The subject of this thesis is the so-called ‘page-to-stage’ approach, a philosophy that places great importance on the concept of ‘fidelity’ to the written source material in translating it to a visual theatrical production. The term page-to-stage originated in

theatre studies, but it is appropriate to extend the use of this term to choreomusical analysis. In theatre studies, page-to-stage is an approach to adapting a script to be performed on a stage. The term connotes an approach that attempts to circumvent ‘artistic inspiration’ and create a staging based on what is provided in the script. The objective of this is to create a ‘faithful’ adaptation. Authorial intention is emphasised in such an approach, as it focuses on fidelity to the source material. This study investigates whether the page-to-stage approach exists in ballets and whether there is a particular choreographer that epitomises the approach.

When applying the conversion of the page-to-stage approach from the theatrical realm to a musicological context, Nicholas Cook relates the term to the analytical approach commonly used in music studies:

Since it is precisely the analyst’s business to reach the correct interpretation of the compositional effects, the whole process is unambiguously one in which understanding is derived from the score and applied to the performance. It is to designate this that I borrow the term ‘page-to-stage’ from theatre studies (Cook 2013, 37).

While Cook is responding to the analytical theories of Schenker, the concept can be applied to the process of creating a choreography for a score. The pursuit of finding a true page-to-stage interpretation is difficult, and perhaps impossible, musical and choreomusical analysis can shed much light on this philosophical issue.

In much of the scholarship that surrounds studies of ballet and ballet music during the twentieth century, the choreographer George Balanchine and his partnership with notable composer Igor Stravinsky is identified as emblematic of a tight relationship between dance and music. While this is an apparent feature of Balanchine and Stravinsky’s ballets, many other styles of ballet also came to popularity during this period, which should be assessed for their adherence to, and interpretation of, music for

the sake of contrast and context. This is important in discussing the page-to-stage approach, since each of the choreographers studied has varying levels of musical understanding, and therefore show different types of engagement with the music. It should be noted at this point that while Cook deems Schenker's idea of using analysis to interpret (read: 'provide the correct interpretation of') music is impossible (Cook 2013, 34-35), musical analysis is used in the case of this thesis to evaluate the *nature* of the choreographies, and thus throw light on the page-to-stage model.

The focus on a page-to-stage approach in dance performance is well suited to the philosophies of the Modernist era, where there is a reactionary backlash against the expressivity found in Romantic era performances. New choreographers use new styles of ballet that play on different aspects of the ballet tradition. Three main categories of ballets are performed and choreographed during this time, which are still used in stylistic blueprints for modern choreographies today. The categories are: 'classical', 'neoclassical', and 'contemporary'. It should be noted that, similarly to composers, choreographers do not have to adhere to one style of choreography and are free to choose the style best fitted to their understanding of the music. It should also be noted that since the focus of this thesis is on Balanchine's choreographic method and use of music, his works appear in all categories.

The works studied in this thesis are displayed in the table below:

Classical	Neoclassical	Contemporary
<i>Divertimento</i> from <i>Le baiser de la fée</i> Score: Igor Stravinsky Choreography: George Balanchine (1972)	<i>Agon</i> Score: Igor Stravinsky Choreography: George Balanchine (1957)	<i>The Rite of Spring</i> Score: Igor Stravinsky Choreography: Pina Bausch (1975)
<i>Les Sylphides</i> Score: Frédéric Chopin Choreography: Mikhail Fokine (1909)	<i>Apollo</i> Score: Igor Stravinsky Choreography: George Balanchine (1928)	<i>Prodigal Son</i> Score: Sergei Prokofiev Choreography: George Balanchine (1929)
<i>Scènes de ballet</i> Score: Igor Stravinsky Choreography: Frederick Ashton (1948)	<i>Checkmate</i> Score: Arthur Bliss Choreography: Ninette de Valois (1937)	<i>L'Après-midi d'un Faune</i> Score: Claude Debussy Choreography: Vaslav Nijinsky (1912)

These works are chosen for several reasons: firstly, for their adherence to the style; secondly, for a diversity of applications of each style; and thirdly, for their different approaches to musicality in each style. While only small segments of each ballet are referred to in examples, rather than an in-depth analysis of the music and dance elements, the focus is on the overall way an aesthetic is created for a score through choreography. Special attention is given to those choreographies in which the events in the score are a major influence on the dance steps and combinations chosen for the stage.

In each category, ballets are purposefully chosen to use music by Stravinsky with choreography by several different collaborators. While Balanchine's work is most synonymous with Stravinsky's music, for contrast and context it seems fitting to use several different approaches to one composer's works. Stravinsky is also ideal to look at through the lens of a page-to-stage approach, as Stravinsky's own ideas on performance seem to correspond with the page-to-stage ideal. He is attributed with saying, that "*music should be executed, not interpreted*" (Cook 2003, 204). Historical information surrounding Stravinsky has shown several inconsistencies in his views, often

contradicting himself (Messing 1988, 89). However, there is an apparent effort on his part to uphold popular modernist beliefs that defined neoclassicism as a prominent and identifiable strand of modernism. The vocabulary used to define this include “*abstract, absolute, architectural, pure, concise, direct, and objective*” (Messing 1988, 88).

Scott Messing notes Stravinsky’s big switch with his opinions against objectivity and for expression, later completely changing to a pro-objective and anti-expressionist approach, saying:

If some of Stravinsky’s prose strikes us today as the product of a ‘poseur’, there is little to suggest that what he said was taken with anything other than absolute seriousness by his contemporaries. Where possible, the criteria for judging the degree of genuine feeling in the composer’s public pronouncements rests with the corroborative detail which can be brought to bear by the reappearance of his statements in private correspondence and the consistency of a given statement at other times (Messing 1988, 89).

Historical information shows that Stravinsky was in support of Balanchine’s choreographic style when approaching Stravinsky’s music, and he was very vocal when choreographies did not capture his music in the correct way (according to Stravinsky)

He (Stravinsky) also recounted how much he had disliked Fokine’s choreography. ‘The female dancers in *The Firebird*, the *Princesses*, were insipidly sweet, while the male dancers were the ne plus ultra of brute masculinity (Joseph 2011, 39).

Fokine’s unoriginal ideas compromised the dancers’ ability to match the music, the composer further carped. The convoluted choreography was suffocating in its overbearing ‘plastic detail (Joseph 2011, 39).

Examining several works by such a vocal figure, who was very careful with his image as a modernist, is revealing of what a choreomusical page-to-stage approach could be, and how it is executed.

Key terms used in this study are: style, approach, and method. Style refers to the quality of movement, whether adhering strictly to the classical technique or deliberately defying these conventions. Three styles are discussed and are categorised through

common traits that either uphold or rebel against the classical norm. The Romantic era classical ballet style is referred to throughout as a way of measuring the developments in twentieth century ballet technique. Three developments are focussed on; the classical, neoclassical and contemporary styles. The term approach is used in several contexts, namely as part of a page-to-stage approach, but the term approach is also used to discuss the engagement of the choreographer's creation with the music or the choreographer's engagement with their specific style of ballet. The term method is used to explain the overall application of the choreographer's style and approach.

Literature Review

The study of the choreomusical page-to-stage approach is informed by the work of Stephanie Jordan, whose studies on twentieth-century ballets place emphasis on analysis and history, while also providing frameworks into choreographic method. Unlike composition, which has some elements of formal structure, choreography often relies on the established structures of Western Art Music to set the form and content of the work. Jordan provides several explanations of musical elements that are often mimicked and developed in choreography, which I draw from heavily. Her inclusion of critical response and autobiographical elements from each of the choreographers is also of use to this study. I do, however, expand on some of her less developed philosophical ideas regarding theories from theatre and film composition and the physical role of the music in ballet. Jordan's books *Moving Music: Dialogues with Music in Twentieth-Century Ballet*, and *Stravinsky Dances: Re-Visions across a Century* are both works that have been integral in the research process and in the arguments presented.

Moving Music: Dialogues with Music in Twentieth-Century Ballet proves to be an especially integral text in the research process, as it provides a solid framework and

summary of the styles and developments in ballet techniques during the twentieth century. It also covers several of the choreographers included in this study, with emphasis on George Balanchine and Frederick Ashton (both choreographers being famous and prolific, contributing a vast body of work to modernist ballet). Jordan's inclusion of the extended analysis of works by both choreographers is an interesting comparison to draw upon in the body of this thesis. Jordan's analysis, however, is more of a straightforward examination of what happens in both the music and choreography. While this is a good starting point for further examination, the analysis undertaken in this study integrates more of the philosophical arguments surrounding the synergy of music and movement that Jordan also introduces. *Moving Music: Dialogues with Music in Twentieth-Century Ballet* also discusses the public reception surrounding how critics viewed the relationship between music and movement. This is of use when discussing the ideology of the Modernist era in relation to the changing aesthetic of ballet.

Stravinsky Dances: Re-Visions across a Century provides a more detailed look at the different interpretations and approaches to Stravinsky's music through choreographic adaptation. Like *Moving Music: Dialogues with Music in Twentieth-Century Ballet*, Jordan provides a comprehensive collection of notable choreographers and notable works. However, *Stravinsky Dances: Re-Visions across a Century* focuses on the choreographic settings of Stravinsky over the years. There is also less emphasis on technical analysis, and more focus on the different styles of ballet that have been applied to Stravinsky's music. There is further discussion of Stravinsky's views on the role and purpose of choreographic adaptations of music, and Stravinsky's relationship with ballet in general. Jordan highlights the inconsistencies and changes in his opinion of ballet, as informed by his experiences working with choreographers. As in *Moving Music: Dialogues with Music in Twentieth-Century Ballet*, Jordan discusses and

compares the adaptations of Stravinsky's music by both Balanchine and Ashton, and includes later works such as Pina Bausch's *Rite of Spring*. She comments on how these modern (verging on postmodern) works fit into the discussion and analysis of Stravinsky's music and ballets.

Aside from the works of Jordan, the theories of Scott Messing regarding Stravinsky's attitudes to music and choreography, as well as Stravinsky's own attitudes to the performance of his compositions and his aesthetic ideal, are also a basis for the arguments presented. This is an interesting and important perspective to keep in mind when looking at choreographies of Stravinsky's works as well as Balanchine's own collaboration with Stravinsky. Several works used in this study are the result of Balanchine and Stravinsky actively working together in studio. *Agon* and *Apollo* being notable examples of this collaboration. Another important element of Messing's work is the assessment of the ideals and identity of neoclassicism, which the Balanchine/Stravinsky collaborations came to typify. Messing places emphasis on Stravinsky's neoclassical beginnings during his French period, and his own theories and philosophies regarding the genesis of neoclassicism as a movement reactionary to Romanticism. Messing includes both explanations of the musical changes occurring in France during the early Modernist era, and the history behind these aesthetic and ideological developments.

Finally, Cook's *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* is an important text for this thesis, as it provides a translation of the theatrical page-to-stage approach to a musicological context. This is especially useful when extended further into the choreomusical approach to the page-to-stage method. Cook's work provides theories of musical performance and shows different examples of 'interpreting' a score, which are vital when looking at the different approaches each choreographer provides when

adapting a modernist score to dance. It is important to examine different approaches to a score through performative means, as it assists in finding a framework to analyse the approach and scope of a dance adaptation of a score.

These authors and sources aid in revealing the framework that I use to assess musicality in the context of choreography, and the ways a choreographer can show a keen knowledge of musicianship through movement. When looking at the ideals of the Modernist era and performance, one often sees these elements at odds with each other, the composer's score often being viewed as a definitive text and the performer as a vessel. This is why attempting to find a page-to-stage approach to choreography is vital for twentieth-century compositions. Additionally, I rely on materials by scholars of theatre studies such as Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt and David Ritchie, to fully ascertain what the page-to-stage approach means. The material by scholars of film and media studies also provide a way of looking at adaptation and musical relationships with the moving image. This is source of arguments of diegesis and the location of the music in the world of the ballet scene come into play.

Approach to Study

The body of study is undertaken in six chapters. The methodology used to analyse changing attitudes to music/dance relationships is set out in Chapter 2. That chapter discusses the research questions, how they fit with the issue of the choreomusical page-to-stage approach, and the research method used. This leads on to a discussion of the frame for the analysis, the classification of ballets into three styles, and the selection of the ballets that form the subject of the analysis.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 apply the analytical frame to the ballets in each of the three styles studied. The three styles are Classical, Neoclassical, and Contemporary. Care is taken to

dedicate equal consideration to each ballet. Attention is paid to ensure there is a clear understanding of the ways that different choreographies highlight different elements of the music, and whether any of their musical approaches adhere to or stray from the criteria for a choreomusical page-to-stage approach. These chapters also examine how the music is used, and the extent to which the choreography adheres to the musical structure.

Chapter 6 synthesises the analysis from the three preceding chapters to draw insights on the application of the choreomusical page-to-stage approach, whether the ballets studied reflect this approach, and what this tells us about ways choreographers place their choreography in the music.

Chapter 7 presents the conclusions of the analysis undertaken. At one level, this study finds that there are difficulties in applying the choreomusical page-to-stage approach to analysing changing attitudes to music/dance relationships. At another level, this study points to the benefit of incorporating the concept of diegesis in analysing the changing attitudes to music/dance relationships.

Chapter 2 Analysing Changing Attitudes to Music/Dance Relationships

Introduction

To understand the choreomusical relationships in each of the chosen ballets, a series of questions and criteria is devised to frame the analytical process. Using an analytical frame does two things: it ensures that an equal amount of information is obtained from each ballet; and it sets common standard of analysis. The frame is split into three sections: historical context (establishing the trends in ballet and ballet scores and assessing how each ballet fits into the Modernist model), technical analysis (explanation of the choreomusical events and interactions in the ballet), and philosophical (the arguments surrounding the way in which the choreographer uses the music in their choreomusical style and where the music is placed within the ballet). The aim of this frame is to gain a holistic understanding of each ballet, and each category of ballet, understanding the elements of each choreographic style of classical (in accordance with Romantic era classical ballet technique), neoclassical (a strong basis on classical ballet technique with stylised affectations that deliberately subvert major elements of ballet technique), and contemporary ballet (complete and fundamental departure from Romantic era classical ballet technique). From this, the way that each style interacts with the music, and the diversity of approaches to musical phenomena is looked at. After this, some of the more challenging aspects of understanding the ways that music and movement interact, and what this means for the wider study of choreomusicology, are unpacked.

Method

When asking the question “what is the choreomusical page-to-stage approach?” within the context of the works of Balanchine and Stravinsky (being exemplified for their particular type of aural and visual synergy), Charles Joseph comments:

The success of their partnership stemmed from a melding of several ingredients, perhaps chief among them Balanchine’s well- developed and exceptionally sensitive musicianship. Although Stravinsky had worked productively (if often fractiously) with all of Diaghilev’s choreographers during his years with the Ballets Russes, none of them, he asserted, fully understood the intimate contrapuntal interplay of dance and music as much as Balanchine. It was the dialogue of the eye and ear that formed the basis of their approach (Joseph 2011, 234).

It is important to provide a contrast with other styles and choreographers that co-existed, created, and even influenced both Balanchine and Stravinsky in their aesthetic. Because of this, several of Balanchine’s contemporaries’ approaches to Stravinsky’s music are chosen, the most famous being Ashton who is equally remembered in canon as Balanchine. Ashton is the notable figure of English ballet in the twentieth century whereas Balanchine is synonymous with twentieth-century American ballet. Different works, styles, and approaches of the choreographers in this study show varying levels of musical knowledge. Balanchine is on one end of the spectrum, being formally trained in music, and choreographers such as Ashton are on the other end, being unable to read music. Consider the choreographers’ musical knowledge assists in determining the analytical process of adapting a piece of music to movement. It also sheds light on the choreographer’s engagement with, and understanding of, musical details to varying levels. The questions asked of each work in the study sets the foundation of what the choreomusical page-to-stage approach is, and who exemplifies this approach, whether it be Balanchine or another choreographer, and what the choreographer(s) in question does/do to epitomise this approach.

Historical Enquiry

The first approach that becomes apparent when studying this collection of works is to assess the level of musical understanding and training the choreographer has. This is a step in determining the level of musical analysis or expressivity involved in the choreography of a piece of music. It is also a way of establishing whether imitation of musical events and freer approaches to the score (i.e. less constrained by the rhythmic patterns, melodic line, and metre) are stylistic choices, or ones of necessity. After this, consideration of the history of the piece, how the choreographer became involved in the work, how they found the piece of music, and whether it was a commissioned work, is assessed. Is the ballet a re-choreography of another choreographer's work (or a re-doing of their own choreography)? Or does the choreography simply take a pre-existing piece of music and choreograph to this (taking into account arrangements of scores for this purpose)? Some of the reception of the work's performances at the time - what critics thought of the choreographer's use of music, and how the music and choreography rank against each other - is considered. Do critics identify one element as better than the other, or do they comment on the synergy between both elements? Many of these elements are covered in Jordan's *Moving Music: Dialogues with Music in Twentieth-Century Ballet*. However, she does not cover every choreographer and every work in this study, for which my own insights and resources is provided. Finally, where possible, the composer of the score's thoughts of the translation to a visual medium is added. This establishes whether some of the works were successful in capturing the ideas of the composer (in cases where the composer was still alive to see choreography of their music).

Strategy of Analysis

From these initial questions on the background of each ballet and choreographer, excerpts of each ballet, highlighting several specific traits, are selected for analysis. The goal is to obtain an understanding of the intricacies involved in music-dance relationships. An understanding of the parts of the music the choreographer tries to highlight, and the method used for this, is examined. Methods such as rhythmic imitation, assigning a choreographic motif in tandem with a musical motif, and the tactical use of virtuosity, are explored. For an understanding of these elements, a list of several musical traits that Jordan outlines in *Moving Music: Dialogues with Music in Twentieth-Century Ballet* show equivalencies between musical and choreographic elements. This provides a basic set of musical traits and indicates how they are identifiable in a choreographic work, as lifted from Jaques Dalcroze's eurhythmics. These are as follows:

Musical element	Choreographic correlation
Pitch	Position and direction of gestures in space
Intensity of sound	Muscular dynamics
Timbre	Diversity in corporal forms (the sexes)
Duration	Duration
Time	Time
Rhythm	Rhythm
Rests	Pauses
Melody	Continuous succession of isolated movements
Counterpoint	Opposition of movements
Chords	Arresting of associated gestures (or gestures in groups)
Harmonic successions	Succession of associated movements (or of gestures in groups)
Phrasing	Phrasing
Construction (form)	Distribution of movements in space and time
Orchestration (vide timbre)	Opposition and combination of diverse corporal forms (the sexes)

Source: Jordan 2000a, 15.

While some elements are more relevant than others, this is a good starting point when looking at how the choreographic and musical elements combine in the setting of ballet. The movement equivalents to pitch, melody, counterpoint, chords, and harmonic successions being especially useful translations into a choreographic understanding.

Ballet is an excellent translation framework for concepts of western art music, as it has been specifically designed and developed with these musical conventions in mind.

There is a significant basis of the language used in ballet terminology based on musical terms. The types of step combinations commonly found in ballet are developed to match the phrasing and flow of western art music, making ballet an ideal framework for aural music forms applied to a visual medium. It is because of this close relationship that it is meaningful to explore the application of the page-to-stage approach in ballet music.

With this central criterion, addressing the musical analysis through choreography, the structure of the choreography in the excerpts used is assessed for its contribution and response to the musical content. Within this, it is important to note the difference between different ballet steps and their purposes, noting travelling steps, rhythmic steps, and virtuosic steps. From this, assessing the way these steps are used, whether typically or atypically, provides insights into the aesthetic and musicality of the choreography. Another aspect that is crucial to the analysis of Modernist choreographic works, is the role that classical technique plays. Concepts that are explored include: ‘Are basic elements of classical technique adhered to?’; ‘To what extent is the *port de bras* considered classical?’ (*port de bras* or ‘carriage of the arms’ being an important classical cornerstone); ‘to what extent is *pointe-work* used?’; and ‘what is the approach to *pointe-work*? Is it aesthetic or functional?’. These are addressed where appropriate for the choreography.

Key indicators of classical technique focussed on are: *port de bras*, and *pointe-work* (for variations and excerpts pertaining to female dancers). These two indicators are crucial in the adherence to or divergence from classical technique and choreography. In ballet, the *port de bras* is a key factor in balletic form, having a definitive repertoire of correct classical arm positions. This is expanded upon in the discussion of *pointe-work*. *Pointe-work* originated as a way to connote the supernatural, stemming from *La Sylphide*, the first full-length ballet performed *en pointe*. One explanation for this association of *pointe-work* is summarised:

Seeing human qualities grafted so seamlessly onto a fantastic being of the ballet creates the sense of marvel. *La Sylphide* exploits basic tensions: the *pointe-work* and the unnatural techniques of the body create the sense of the unhuman, the unfamiliar, while the recognisable conventions of womanhood, the emotions and familiar displays, the naturalistic style, and the dancer's very body subvert these devices and restore the sense of human identity (Meglin 2004, 81).

With Romantic era ballet roles revolving around royalty, supernatural beings such as fairies and sylphs, and animals (most notably, birds), these larger-than-life characters are a significant part of the ballet tradition. The consideration of the role the dancer is playing, in combination with how the *pointe-work* is choreographed, leads to several different approaches to technique. These range from a functional approach (the *pointe-work* highlighting a certain element of the character), to an aesthetic approach (*pointe-work* being a visual device, elongating the leg, and providing a clean line from the body down to the floor). This can provide a sense of precariousness and danger when performing difficult steps on the tips of the toes. Another possible approach that can also be used is the *pointe shoe* as a rhythmic device, the rising on and off *pointe* marking certain rhythms, and even hitting the hard block and box of the shoe on the ground to audibly mark a rhythm.

Philosophical Inquiry

Within the field of possible philosophical inquiries, the first addressed is where the music lies in the ballet work, that is to say, the diegesis (a term found in film studies to describe the location of the music within the world of the film i.e. when the characters can hear the music in the film) (Chion 1994, 66-67). This is explored further from the idea posed by Jordan, who essentialises this concept to diegetic music in ballet being represented by a dancer 'playing' an instrument onstage. She outlines non-diegetic music as the score and dance being unaddressed by the dancers onstage. (Naturally, all the dancers can hear this in reality). What is ascertained from taking these concepts further, is the location of the music within the world of each ballet: the form of the ballet has broken down from a narrative work with a clearer idea of what is diegetic, and non-diegetic, to plotless musical aesthetics. It is understandable to conclude that this relationship between the music and the dance 'work' is rendered more complex. What is assessed though this is where the choreographer has positioned the music within the dance work. Is it diegetic, non-diegetic, or is it somewhere in between? Such questions play a vital role in determining the overt level and nature of the page-to-stage approach.

From this concept of the position of the music within the ballet, the style and use of music in the choreographic 'work' is assessed, and to what extent the choreography uses the music. Examples of this include whether the choreography adheres to the structures of the music, or whether this relationship is more relaxed. Other elements include whether the choreography strives for an expressive effect, or whether there is a more restrained approach to expressivity for more of an austere effect. To this extent, the way that the choreography adheres to the musical blueprint could show an interesting insight into the priorities of each of the categories of twentieth-century

ballets. Assessing the different approaches to the music within the categories of each of these styles should indicate whether there is a priority of expressivity over musical structure within the classical, neoclassical, and contemporary categories, and how this affects the structure of choreography within a musical form.

Concepts for Post Application Discussion

After ascertaining the relationship between the choreography and the score, and the degree to which they interact, the degree to which the term page-to-stage adheres to the ballets analysed is assessed, and where each of these works fall on the scale of freedom to interpret the score to whatever means, and using the score as a straightjacket (Zuber-Skerritt 1984, 6). Stephanie Jordan's *Moving Music: Dialogues with Music in Twentieth-Century Ballet* provides the terms 'Visualisation' and 'Parallelism' to describe different engagements with the score. Visualisation is akin to what is referred to as 'mickey-mousing' in film studies, an imitative approach, focussed on directly copying the patterns and flow of the score. The closely related term parallelism suggests an approach that is more complementary to the score. Jordan even extends the term 'counterpoint' to the effect of the music and dance counteracting each other, which feeds into the idea of 'parallelism', the two terms could be considered at odds with each other. However, Jordan relaxes this polarity between the two terms to a more fluid and less conflicting interpretation (Jordan 2000a, 7). The concern here that these two terms do not quite cover here is whether page-to-stage connotes a surface level adaptation, or whether it connotes a deeper analysis and translation. This seems to be what Jordan is alluding to in her distinction between visualisation and parallelism. In her words, she notes:

I am being careful here to draw the distinction between the term ‘visualisation,’ which refers to a choreographer’s musical technique, and ‘parallelism,’ which is the resulting relationship within a ballet text (Jordan 2000a, 74).

Jordan goes on to say on ‘parallelism’:

Parallelism between music and dance usually stands out as such from the surrounding context, most of all when the relationships between music and dance are especially close (when several musical features are visualised, and especially when details of rhythm pattern and pitch are imitated). It creates a kind of meaning, drawing attention to itself as special, as music and dance seem to clarify each other (Jordan 2000a, 75).

I would suggest that this description of ‘parallelism,’ while seeming to connote a deeper engagement with the music than ‘visualisation,’ is not a strong enough basis to distinguish an imitative choreography from an analytical choreography.

The concept of a page-to-stage approach is difficult to define. As is made clear by musicological and theatre scholarship, we never know the true authorial intention of any work (Cook 2013, 27). Combine this with the ephemeral nature of music, and with the fact that choreographies are never the product of the composer (rather, the choreographer acts as a translator, interpreter, or sometimes a collaborator). Page-to-stage, in the truest sense of using an approach to staging a theatrical work that prioritises the material in the script, aims not to deviate from what is established on the page. With the gaps in information provided in only referring to a score as the basis for a choreographic work, difficulties in a ‘true’ page-to-stage approach arise. David Ritchie comments on the complexity of this in theatre saying:

The difficulties encountered in this relationship, both practical and theoretical, arise out of the fact that we are dealing with two quite distinct modes of discourse – the oral and the literate. Each of these functions with different mental horizons, conceptual categories, perceptual proclivities, and expectations. It is difficult, however, not to approach the stage (oral discourse) in terms appropriate to the page (literate discourse). On the page a play is fixed, permanent, spatially arranged, and access to it is conceptual. On the stage a play is fluid, ephemeral, primarily temporally arranged, and access to it is physical (Ritchie 1984, 65).

Several layers must be added to this, to fully apply this to dance adaptations. First, there are now three ‘layers of discourse’ in the choreographic page-to-stage approach: aural, visual, and literate. This further complicates an already complex relationship as the ‘work’ as a whole is one that now has two creators, the composer and choreographer. And, as shown by some of the works studied, the two creators don’t always agree.

What is apparent in much of the scholarship surrounding twentieth-century music studies, is that what is written is often given precedence; text is king (Cook 2013, 3). This is why in several instances, modernist composers (Stravinsky and Schoenberg in particular) criticise the need for performance over simply reading the music off the score directly. For this reason, attempting to find a page-to-stage approach may be a necessity for choreographers to please the composer. With this concept of the text being the keystone of a Modernist musical work, the power dynamic is often unbalanced, with the composer holding much of the power. Joseph notes this especially in Balanchine and Stravinsky’s collaborations stating: “*Balanchine learned from Stravinsky’s physically demonstrative, kinaesthetic approach to working with dancers. It was not in Stravinsky’s nature to remain uninvolved*” (Joseph 2011, 110). There is a somewhat unbalanced dynamic here, with Stravinsky relaying his ideas on the visual form of his work onto Balanchine.

Furthermore, there are complexities of approaches to interdisciplinary forms of music (regarding the placement of the music, involvement of the choreographer and composer, and the possibility for a page-to-stage approach in choreographic works). This demands close attention to historical records and concepts from other artistic mediums. Another issue that may interfere with the clarity of the research is the inconsistencies of Igor Stravinsky’s opinions on performance. His ideas on choreography and how it should interact with his scores, his conflicting opinions on the approaches to twentieth-century

music, and his misrepresentations of himself and events in his autobiographical writing, make him a source that must be treated with caution. Because of this, it is necessary to draw from several resources surrounding Stravinsky, especially ones that acknowledge his inconsistencies (thankfully, a common acknowledgement in many academic texts).

It should also be noted that in cases of analysis, the approach to this needs to be more holistic in scope. While examples of effective choreomusical relationships (or ineffective choreomusical relationships) are highlighted, the larger concern is with the overall effects and implications of different choreographic styles, musical styles, aesthetics, and musical understandings. It is the choreomusical narratives and how they intersect which is the main objective. Most of the analytical content is therefore qualitative observations of the available resources.

Classical Ballets

The selection process for each of these ballets has its roots in displaying different characteristics for each style while still upholding its status in modernist ballet canon. The first category, classical, includes the ballet *Les Sylphides*. This was choreographed by Mikhail Fokine to a selection of Chopin's piano works adapted for orchestra, for Sergei Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*. This ballet draws heavily on the imagery and ideology of the Romantic era, revisiting the character of the 'Sylph', as seen in one of the first full-length ballets *La Sylphide*. This imagery is also evoked in *Giselle* in the second act. *Les Sylphides* (also referred to as *Chopiniana*, and still performed under this name), was choreographed in 1909. *Les Sylphides* is also characteristic of twentieth-century ballet, being a plotless ballet. This is an example of a contribution to the establishment of twentieth-century ballet conventions, letting the music be the driving force of the work. The reasoning behind the inclusion of this ballet since it embraces

tropes of the Romantic classical ballet, while still adopting new conventions of the twentieth century.

The second ballet, Ashton's *Scènes de ballet* (1948) shows a different perspective. It is choreographed to a score by Stravinsky. This score fits well in the classical style for the Modernist period. The choreography is clearly based in the vocabulary of classical ballet, unaffected by obvious stylistic affectations that are characteristic of neoclassical ballets. Ashton being one of Balanchine's contemporaries in terms of popularity and critical reception, Ashton's ballets are useful to examine when finding different approaches to Stravinsky's music on a similar scale to Balanchine's works. Ashton's choreography is classically based, being choreographed for Margot Fonteyn, a figure who epitomised popular classical ballet during this time. The costuming, sets, and staging, as well as the way the *corps de ballet* is used (the shapes they make onstage, and the interplay between groups of dancers) is nonetheless modern. The clean use of movements from classical vocabulary, the clearly modernist score, and the contrasting sets and costumes show a novel approach to classicism well within the twentieth century.

The final classical work addressed is Balanchine's *Divertimento* from *Le baiser de la fée* (1972). This is set to selections from the full length *Le baiser de la fée*, a score notable for Stravinsky's writing in the style of a Tchaikovsky ballet score. After the original Balanchine choreography was lost, Balanchine re-choreographed a selection of the score for the plotless *Divertimento*. While access to the choreography is only video footage of the male variation of this work, it is a clear indicator of Balanchine's ability to choreograph in a style that adheres to classical conventions, especially those of a classical variation. It is clear from the segment of this ballet that through the classical structure and vocabulary of ballet movements, interesting musical approaches of

Balanchine's style become apparent. Through the flow of choreography, and the approach to virtuosity (variations in a ballet being an opportunity to showcase virtuosic turns and leaps, especially in male variations), Balanchine's approach looks as if virtuosic movement is more subtly included within the choreography. This, combined with Balanchine's keen understanding of Stravinsky's music, provides a good example of another approach to Modernist classicism.

Neoclassical Ballets

In the discussion of the neoclassical period, the contributions of Balanchine and Stravinsky are at the forefront of discussion. Balanchine and Stravinsky's *Apollo* (1928) is one of the two Balanchine/Stravinsky collaborations looked at. *Apollo* is a significant work for neoclassical ballets, as it marks the first collaboration between Balanchine and Stravinsky on an original work. *Apollo* is notable for its emphasis on re-contextualising classicism for modernism. There is an interest in Greek and Renaissance naturalism in the subject matter, and the emphasis on the movements of the body using costuming, essentially putting the dancers onstage in practice clothes. This shows a new approach to choreography that begins to deviate from classical technique, with more movement in the hips, unconventional use of line, and quirks such as walking on the backs on the heels, rather than the conventional pointed foot that is a vital element of ballet technique. This is also a unique ballet for its new approach to music, which appears to have a synergy that had previously never been seen, especially in the context of these unconventional, and at times naturalistic, choreographies. The version of *Apollo* studied is the choreography that dates from before Stravinsky's death, with the unchanged finale and prologue sections.

The second ballet in the neoclassical category assessed, is *Checkmate*, a 1937 piece choreographed by Ninette de Valois, with a score by Arthur Bliss. The abstract plot and stylised approach to classical technique is indicative of a neoclassical classification. In particular, the approach to *pointe-work*, which is used for an aesthetic effect, displays angular movements that deviate from the classical norm. The attitude of the composer, however, is certainly interesting to consider. Jordan remarks that in the opinion of Arthur Bliss “*The most desirable music for ballet is music which can have no complete or logical life apart from its association with dancing*” (Jordan 2000a, 18). These ideas clearly reflect those held in the earlier Romantic period, that music should accompany the dance rather than be on the foreground, which yield some interesting findings when compared to the contrasting attitudes of other composers, especially Stravinsky.

The final neoclassical ballet discussed, and the second Balanchine/Stravinsky collaboration is *Agon* (1957), often regarded as the standout of Balanchine and Stravinsky’s direct collaboration. This ballet forgoes many conventions of classical ballet in its concept that *Apollo* retains, the most obvious of these being the exclusion of a plot entirely. The rise of the plotless ballet was a major contribution of the Modernist era. However, *Agon*, which loosely translates to ‘contest’, has no sets, and is a Balanchine work with simple practice clothes as costumes. Balanchine continues with his neoclassical style of affirming some elements of classical technique, and deviating from others, as is seen in *Apollo*. However, *Agon* is a ballet that displays athleticism overtly, which is not often seen in ballet up to this point. There has been much analysis provided in the musical and choreographic elements of this work, given its prominence in modernist ballet, and this is taken into account. The central focus continues to be on the overall structure and choreographic interaction with the phenomena supplied by the musical content.

Contemporary Ballets

The contemporary category of ballets is selected to show a variety of approaches to choreography that focuses on completely deviating from the foundations of classical technique. These are works that are consciously deviating from the strictures of classical ballet to create a new approach to dance. Vaslav Nijinsky's *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* (1912) broke down these basic elements of classical ballet, while also showing a stark contrast in the music and dance relationship, being only loosely tied to the musical form, more so than any other of the ballets studied. Apparent through Nijinsky's choreography is its basis in modernist art forms, taking influence from visual art as a foundation for its choreography and using the music as a scenery rather than an active interaction with the movement.

While there are no collaborations between Stravinsky and Balanchine that are suitable for this category, Balanchine's *Prodigal Son* (1929) to music by Sergei Prokofiev is an intriguing case regarding Balanchine's style and use of music. Unlike Balanchine's synergy and approval of his choreographies by Stravinsky, Balanchine's approach to the music in this ballet is far looser than that seen anywhere else in his surviving repertoire. In terms of the choreography and how this applies to the contemporary category, there is a greater emphasis on expression, with extremely naturalized movements, to the extent of elements not looking balletic at all. There are few women dancing *en pointe*, in fact, the only instance of a character performed *en pointe* is for the effect of looking taller and more powerful. Uncharacteristic of many Balanchine productions, there is also a much larger story element to this ballet which is a further reason for classifying *Prodigal Son* as being in a contemporary style.

The final ballet looked at is Bausch's version of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, choreographed in 1975. This production is one that resembles and has influenced modern contemporary dance the most. It is also one of the most experimental, through its choreography, and even with the staging. The stage is covered with soil, and during the process of the performance the dancers and their costumes are shown to progressively get covered in dirt. Still capturing the original story of a ritual wherein a dancer (the chosen one) dances herself to death as a sacrifice, the choreography benefits from and highlights the repetitive, yet unpredictable score to stress the compulsive nature of the ritual. The return to ballet as a mode of storytelling is an interesting element that the contemporary ballets bring to twentieth-century ballet narratives, as they deviate from the technical side of ballet.

Summary

Within these categories of ballet, and the contrast in their conformity to certain balletic values and deviation from others, the approach of historical context, analysis, and philosophical inquiry provides a well-rounded look at the intricacies of choreographic adaptation, and how dance can engage with a musical score. The idea of looking at the history surrounding the work and technique provides insight into the general attitudes towards choreography, the development of the work, and the reception of the work. The technical analysis is simply a method to understand the technical developments in ballet, the stylistic attitudes, and the aesthetic of the ballets compared to what is understood as 'general classical technique.' Other lines of inquiry surround the idea of the 'world' of the dance work, how the dance work engages with its musical material, and to what means the score is used. From here, comes the discussion of the page-to-stage approach, specifically, what a page-to-stage approach would appear to be in the

context of dance works and how a choreomusical page-to-stage approach could be achieved, if it can be achieved at all.

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Chapter 3 Classical Ballets

Introduction

Ballet in the twentieth century embraced development of technique and style, both musically and choreographically. Adhering to a more classical vocabulary of ballet technique can still render results that show an in-depth understanding and connection with musical phenomena. In the examples referred to, there is an instance of retrospectively using Romantic era music (Chopin) combined with classical choreography (*Les Sylphides*), an example of using a modernist score with classical choreography (*Scènes de ballet*), and an example of a modernist score adopting the style of a Romantic score (Stravinsky imitating Tchaikovsky) with classical choreography (*Divertimento* from *Le baiser de la fée*).

Les Sylphides – Mikhail Fokine

Historical Analysis

Fokine is well known for his extensive collaboration with Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, choreographing works such as Stravinsky's Firebird and Petroushka, alongside several others. *Les Sylphides* is an earlier work for the Ballets Russes, and one of the most recognised works from Fokine's output. It was first performed in 1909 to a selection of Chopin pieces set for orchestra. The 1909 version of *Les Sylphides* is noted as an early modernist ballet work because it is a plotless ballet that deliberately imitates and includes tropes of Romantic era ballets, both visually and musically. Jordan notes that Fokine has a solid training in music, stating:

Fokine had a background in music. He had studied the violin and piano and played in a balalaika orchestra, an experience that involved copying out musical

parts for the different players and thus developing his knowledge of rhythm and musical scoring (Jordan 2000a, 32).

She goes on to say:

His autobiography reveals both knowledge of, and a sensitivity to, musical matters, as a general approach and in response to the details of phasing and structure (Jordan 2000a, 32).

This is apparent in *Les Sylphides*. Being a plotless ballet, there is no story to adhere to, meaning that the relationship and integration of the music and dance elements are the main focus of the work. This is further shown through the obvious allusions to the music choreographically, and through mimicry of rhythms, repetition of choreographic phrases to match those found in the score, and other types of gestural references. It should be noted that the 1909 version of *Les Sylphides* was not the first version of the ballet which originally premiered in 1907; the 1907 version featured choreography with a more prominent sense of narrative, having a loose plotline (Jordan 2000a, 33).

The transition of *Les Sylphides* into being a plotless ballet is a clear example of both the classical sides and the modernist sides at work. The imagery and aesthetic evoked by the choreography, music, and costuming of the ballet also support this combination of the classical and modernist, all upholding tropes such as the '*ballet blanc*', a Romantic era ballet scene that capitalises on the image of the ghostly 'sylph'. Typically, a *ballet blanc* invites a morbid reading (Smith 2007, 45), as seen in the Romantic era ballets *La Sylphide*, act II of *Giselle*, and even referenced visually in the more modern *Serenade*. It should be noted that the modernist perspective of this ballet is apparent in the fact that *Les Sylphides* is a *ballet blanc* in its entirety, rather than just a scene or interlude.

The idea of creating ballets that are white in their entirety did not emerge until the early twentieth century. Famous examples include 'Les Sylphides' (1907) and 'La Mort du cygne' (1907), both of which pointedly recall famous nineteenth-century ballets without making reference to the 'ballets de couleur' therein (Smith 2007, 45).

As seen here, there is a deliberate referral to the classical. However, *Les Sylphides* is a decidedly modernist work.

The reception of *Les Sylphides* and Fokine's choreographic style have often pointed to the surface level of musical analysis. (Some critics are more accepting of this than others). Fokine's choreography is even described as if it were "*pointing to this or that feature of the music*" (Jordan 2000a, 31).

Jordan refers to *Les Sylphides* as an example of visualisation. I support this observation, given the surface level analysis and the direct translation of pitch, rhythm, and form into identifiable classical ballet steps.

Technical Analysis

When addressing the music, the use of Romantic era pieces by Chopin is a key element in the overall style of *Les Sylphides*. While the visual references to Romanticism are important to the work, having the Romantic era sound is crucial in shaping the choreography. Keeping Fokine's imitative methods in mind, the score (while retrospectively orchestrated from piano pieces) shapes the entirety of the choreography. In imitating the flow of the music through classical technique, the Romantic imagery is highlighted. There is an element of the choreography that echoes the clearly Romantic elements of the music into the corresponding Romantic style of ballet technique. A clear example of this at work is during the *Valse*, a short solo (or variation) for a female dancer. It is set to Chopin's Waltz Op.70 No.1 in G, in a procession of *grand jetés* followed by a *balancé* and an *arabesque*. This sets the format for the variation, as this progression repeats four times with a slight variation on the fourth set to finish the phrase, substituting the *balancé* and *arabesque* for *petit jetés*. The music does the same, peaking as the dancer performs a *grand jeté* and descending as the dancer lands from

the jump, repeating the whole passage four times. The choreography is clear in its imitation of the musical events, the steps being performed in a similar rhythmic pattern to the music, and as the passage with the *grand jeté* shows, in a similar contour to the melody. The steps of this first segment of the *Valse* also show the consideration of the movement's quality and its suitability for the music. For example, the *balancé* and *arabesque* are a combination of steps that match the rhythm of the phrase. The *balancé*, being a waltz step, highlights the strong triple metre beats of the bar, and the *arabesque*, being a step that requires a balance to be held (while also connoting a reaching movement due to the step upwards to the position, and the positions of the limbs showing a precarious balance), looks as if it is punctuating the end of the musical phrase with a static pose. This pattern of repetition and development is rife throughout the choreography in *Les Sylphides* and seems to form the basis of the structure of the choreography, following the trend established musically through Chopin's score.

Philosophical Analysis

Regarding how the ballet technique looks, *Les Sylphides* strongly adheres to classical technique and aesthetic. Some elements of the choreography feature a more unconventional use of line, placing the body in atypical positions considering where the dancer stands in the room. An example of this is an odd *arabesque* line, where the downstage arm is placed in an arabesque alignment that reveals the dancer's back to the audience. A more classically conventional line would be to use the upstage arm in the *arabesque* position for a more open and flattering line. This aside, the technique does not stray too far from the Romantic era aesthetic found in the works of Petipa. The arms are used in a highly florid way which looks to be a Romantic stylization to match the overall concept for *Les Sylphides*. The variations are more absorbed into the ballet than in Romantic ballets which are often separated slightly to acknowledge virtuosity –

analogous to an aria in opera. The *pointe-work* used here is also typical of the Romantic variation, being challenging, yet more ethereal and graceful in-keeping with the typical ‘sylph’ imagery relying heavily on precariously held *arabesques*, *attitudes*, and *penchés*. These are all steps that require skilful balance and long, extended, lines held by the limbs. Any use of allegro, as seen in the *Valse*, is more buoyant in quality rather than broad. The quality of a *grand jeté* is an upwards motion and does not reach a full split like a broader *grand jeté* would.

Les Sylphides, while adhering closely to the music, and being plotless, shows an interesting relationship in the work’s diegesis. Naturally, the dancers onstage can hear the music as an accompaniment. However, there is no onstage character acknowledging the fact that there is music playing, or anyone onstage pretending to play the accompaniment for the person dancing. Looking past the fact that the dancers can physically hear the music in the ‘real world’, in the work *Les Sylphides*, the concept of diegesis is difficult to grasp. While there is no acknowledgment of the music in a conventional sense (e.g. placing musicians onstage or miming an accompaniment onstage) there is a clear referencing of the music in the choreography, which leaves the question to be explored: does a direct reference to the music prove its existence in the work’s ‘world’? This is a question that is explored further through the application and study of the selection of ballets, and then answered fully in the discussion.

What is clear through the analysis of this work, is that Fokine relies on tropes and identifiers of Romantic era classical ballet. This is in keeping with the Romantic era full length ballets and their fascination with the delicate and supernatural elements that ballet affords through various technical elements (e.g. the effortlessness portrayed by dancers, the flow of the *port de bras*, and the feats of flexibility and strength in holding balance, high extensions with the legs, and *pointe-work*).

Scènes de Ballet – Frederick Ashton

Historical Analysis

Scènes de Ballet is a plotless ballet choreographed by Ashton to a pre-existing score by Igor Stravinsky. It is noted for its modernist inspired set and emphasis on geometric lines—both performed by the dancers and through the placement of the dancers onstage. It draws heavily from the ideas of Euclid for the geometric laws of the ballet's aesthetic (Jordan 2000b, 36). It was Ashton's intention that the ballet could be viewed from all angles, not just from that of the audience. While this was a different approach to the setting of a ballet, it is a unique work of Ashton's repertoire, as it is his take on this austere, academic approach to ballet that Balanchine was known for (Jordan 2000b, 64). It is worth noting that, while Ashton draws inspiration from the Balanchine/Stravinsky style (one known for an intricate choreomusical relationship) Ashton himself could not read music. Jordan writes on this:

Yet, unlike Balanchine, Ashton could neither play a musical instrument nor read a score, despite having had a mother who was musical, who, he tells us, 'played the piano very well'. Balanchine was always disparaging about this gap in Ashton's education, and de Valois too once remarked 'It was a terrible nuisance that Fred couldn't read music' – affectionately, not to suggest any lack of musicality, and rather regretting that she could not use him as a role model for student dancers and choreographers (Jordan 2000a, 87).

While Ashton still was not able to read music as *Scènes* was being choreographed, Jordan suggests that there was nonetheless more engagement with the source material than was usual for Ashton:

Ashton's contact with the score prompted a ballet that is rich in its reference and a major step forward for him in terms of construction techniques and expression. In these respects, the ballet alludes to Ashton's model Stravinsky choreographers Balanchine and Nijinska, whilst it extends in directions that are Ashton's own. The music made Ashton examine the technical interior of the score in detail, much more than he was used to as someone who did not read music; he employed

counts for the sake of rhythmic precision, which was a rare procedure for him. Thus he approached various aspects of structure in a new way (Jordan 2000b, 47).

Technical Analysis

I focus here on the first female variation from this ballet as a self-contained sample of the work. P.J.S. Richardson offers an interesting commentary on Ashton's style in this work stating:

The rhythm allows only one statement, as do classroom exercises ... Stravinsky's music marks only the duration of the step in its academic form and hard as Mr. Ashton may try to make his dance patterns light, gracious, and joyous, the lack of melody holds him back (Jordan 2007, 267).

This comparison to 'classroom exercises' certainly captures much of the aesthetic of this variation, from the reliance on a wide fourth position, the crisp and clean use of line, and the large variety of different steps and categories of steps. At least by modern standards, these steps and combinations connote the types of exercises found in a technique class. The steps used range from bold explosions of *grand allegro* with the female soloist's first step being a dramatic *grand jeté élané*, to the delicate staccato quality of *petit allegro*, and the inclusion of clean unaffected pirouettes, the abrupt stops in the choreography as well as in the music making a technically sound and clean turn imperative. Extending from this idea of a classroom exercise quality to the work, the density of the variation in terms of switching between many different categories of steps is especially emblematic of this. The aim of classroom exercises—to deliberately challenge the dancer and push technique through unconventional combinations of steps—can be seen here. Antoinette Sibley discusses the performance of this variation stating:

The solo is characterized by glitteringly rapid yet precise movements, interspersed and contrasted with moments of serene stillness and occasional fluid port de bras and upper body movements. It illustrates Ashton's expansive use of the stage space by a single dancer in a short solo (Sibley 1994, 140).

Philosophical Analysis

As mentioned in allusions to classwork in the choreography, the technique is very clearly classical in this work. Not only that, but the combinations of steps are also clearly identifiable as classical steps. Compared to the other ballets in this category, apart from some small stylisations to the arms and general sharpness of the movements, while the music of this ballet certainly fits into the category of modernist, the dance is undoubtedly classical. The pointe-work in particular is classical, relying on *relevés*, *sautés en pointe*, and *pirouettes*. The modernisation of the ballet's steps comes simply from the movements chosen. Ashton chooses movements with sharp angles and clean lines, contrasting with the more expressive, flowing Romantic ballets, as captured in *Les Sylphides*.

This work could be considered non-diegetic, as there is no reference to the music appearing physically onstage with the dancers (no instrumentalists real or fake onstage), nor is there any clear choreographic reference to the music that suggests the dancers are aware of the score. The dance just appears to exist in sequence despite the music. That being said, the choreography does still stick closely to the musical phenomena, just more in the form of a background structure than a main feature.

The way in which the musical and choreographic elements interact creates a constant feeling of contrast. The score is undeniably modernist, yet the dancing is still clearly classical with little deviation from classical form and technique, and hardly changing in form from its use in the classroom. Ashton's treatment of Stravinsky's music in dance is unique in its lack of adapting the style of ballet for modern music, yet still trying to display a translation of the sound to the stage.

Divertimento from *Le Baiser de la Fée* – George Balanchine

Historical Analysis

This is based on fragments of the full length *Le baiser de la fée*, originally choreographed by Ida Rubenstein in 1928, and later re-choreographed in 1937 (and lost) by Balanchine. The score is notable in Stravinsky's body of work as being an ode to or imitation of Tchaikovsky's ballet works. While the original full-length version of the ballet was intended for a plot based around Hans Christian Andersen's *The Ice Maiden*, the *Divertimento* was later arranged by Stravinsky as an orchestral suite (Jordan 2007, 226-227). The Balanchine choreography for the *Divertimento* came about after Stravinsky's death for the Stravinsky festival in 1972. The influence of Tchaikovsky on the score and the concept did not go unnoticed, noted as being "*a downright pastiche of The Sleeping Beauty. There is no question of stylisation or disguise; it is a deliberate, calculated imitation*" (Maes 2002, 137). While there is no set way to choreograph Tchaikovsky's works, the choreographies of Marius Petipa of Tchaikovsky's works have come to typify both Tchaikovsky's ballets and Romantic era Russian ballets. It should be noted that second to Stravinsky's music, Balanchine choreographed most often to Tchaikovsky's music, and drew great influence from Petipa's choreographies. It is relevant that while there is Stravinsky's version of the *Divertimento* from *Le baiser de la fée*, the version used for Balanchine's ballet is different (yet still uses the same title). Balanchine had a large hand in the arrangement of the *Divertimento* used for this ballet, even going to the lengths of omitting certain bars and repeats found in the original *Divertimento* (Jordan 2007, 232).

Technical Analysis

The male variation of the *Divertimento* from *Le baiser de la fée*, while re-contextualised into a plotless setting, still employs the style of Petipa's classical choreography, using a similar vocabulary of movements. There are small stylisations in the technique associated with Balanchine's choreography, but the choreography is still largely considered classical. In the archive rehearsal footage of this variation, it is noted that the music used for this variation was used in the full-length version of this ballet as the fortune teller's dance. The music relies heavily on chromaticism and tropes of 'exoticism' in the score, while also employing small choreographic references to this in florid arm and hand movements (more so than in a 'traditional' male choreography). These articulations are also an attempt to capture a sense of the 'exotic' and 'mysterious', another reference to the tradition of 'exoticism' found in Romantic ballets such as *La bayadère* and *Le corsaire*. Typical for a classical type of variation, the music does not push into a particular direction, but rather repeats motifs and develops them. The variation's choreography, however, seems to have a smoother setting of these clear segments in the music than a classical variation, which very clearly marks the form of the piece with choreographic motifs. Also, setting this choreography apart from the classical norm is the use of virtuosity, and how it is integrated into the variation more seamlessly than a traditional variation. A Romantic variation aims to display the dancer's virtuosity with particular types of steps that are known to be very difficult. Female variations take this time to show feats of balance in pointe shoes with high extensions and complicated turning sequences, while male variations are an avenue to highlight very high jumps, and multiple turns and pirouettes (there is also a significant element that combines *grand allegro* and turning traditionally used in variations). In this work, these virtuosic steps are required to be performed in a manner that does not

show a sense of ‘setting up’ for a trick. Rather, they have a stricter adherence to the music’s rhythm, and very little preparation time. This is seen during an *allegro* sequence *en manège*, in which the dancer performs a series of *grand jetés en tournant*, followed by an extra half turn before landing from the *grand jeté en tournant*. The extra half turn of the jump makes the step and each section of the jump difficult to execute as it involves: taking off, doing a half turn in the air switching legs, and performing another half turn bringing the back leg *devant*, and finally landing. This divides the jump into four sections that coincide with four pulses in the music. Male variations are generally more forgiving in terms of musicality and timing, due to the virtuosity involved. However, *Le baiser de la fée* expects the soloist to be both incredibly virtuosic and musically accurate.

Philosophical Analysis

In terms of the adherence to classical technique, *Le baiser de la fée* relies on classical ballet movements, the arms are clearly derived from the classical style, as well as the general vocabulary of steps used. When there are deviations from traditional steps, these are obviously an extension of an established classical step. The use of *port de bras* is very conventional within the standards of the classical convention. There is some room for slight stylisations, the inherent playfulness and effortlessness of the choreography that Balanchine is recognised for. Jordan comments on this saying: “*Indeed, most poignantly, the man’s action is half grace, half stumble*” (Jordan 2007, 232). A quality that helps disguise some of the more virtuosic elements and make the movements seem overall more natural. Jordan further comments on this contrast, stating:

Sometimes he waves his arms curiously, as if under a spell or casting a spell. He begins moving simply on and around a spot upstage centre. The choreography later expands into circles around the stage, each one bigger and longer than the last. We associate some of the movement with virtuoso nineteenth-century male

solos, but with a difference: potential symmetries are disrupted. A striking turn centre stage finishes just as the next musical phrase begins, so there is no stop: the effect is of overlapping seamlessness (Jordan 2007, 230-231).

Divertimento from *Le baiser de la fée* is an interesting example of Balanchine's approach to music, and setting music for ballet. Employing common traits of Balanchine's works such as being plotless, and minimalist in terms of set and costume, *Le baiser de la fée* also highlights Balanchine's unique approach and attentiveness to the music. What becomes apparent from this is that Balanchine's choreographic style relies heavily on the rhythm of the music, and the overall structure. The dance is not designed to deviate from this. This approach shows interesting approaches to diegesis, the music and choreography interacting in a hyper-aware manner. *Le baiser de la fée* seems different to the other classical excerpts examined, as it appears through the choreography that the dancer is very aware of the music. The approach to virtuosity, as mentioned earlier, is also an element that complicates this, as it creates the illusion of the choreography blending into the music. In a more traditional setting, the preparation for a virtuosic step and the anticipation that it creates forges a separation between the music and dance, decreasing the feeling of 'organic' movement and naturalism. The location of the music within this performance sphere is interesting to observe, as it does seem as if the dancer can hear the music as part of the performance, as well as out of necessity. Indeed, it could even be said that the dancer acknowledges the music in a similar way to that in *Les Sylphides*, yet the music is more absorbed into the general flow of the choreography compared to gestures made to musical phenomena in *Les Sylphides*. Due to the complex relationship between music and dance, while there are moments of the music and the dance working closely together, there are also moments where the elements diverge, similar to the way in which instrumental parts are written

into music, both following the flow of the piece and developing and expanding from the theme. Jordan also notices this stating:

The reference points in the music and dance are separate and work against each other. Moments of combined, accented articulation are rare, and when they do occur, they stand out emphatically as moments of power (Jordan 2007, 234).

Summary

In the classical genre, there are several different approaches to modernising the classical ballet form. The most prominent one is the adoption of the one-act ballet, and the development of shorter pieces to be used in mixed bill programmes. There is also a strong basis in clean classical steps and technique. The biggest difference between choreographers is in the way that they use the music. There are examples of the music as a background and music as the focus. A common element between these, however is the prioritisation of the dance, the score being free to alteration without consequence. What the classical twentieth century ballets show us is the simultaneous preservation of classical technique and tradition, and innovation for a new era of dance works. Not only this, but there are several viable methods each choreographer uses to explore and subvert the tropes of classicism.

Chapter 4 Neoclassical Ballets

Introduction

With the neoclassical ballet style comes a clear association of Balanchine's Ballets with Stravinsky's Neoclassical period, coinciding with the fruition of Balanchine and Stravinsky's collaboration that subsequently continued throughout both Balanchine and Stravinsky's lives. The ballets studied for this style of ballet are *Apollo* (score: Igor Stravinsky, choreography: George Balanchine); *Checkmate* (score Arthur Bliss, choreography: Ninette de Valois); and *Agon* (score: Igor Stravinsky, choreography: George Balanchine). While two Balanchine/Stravinsky collaborations have been selected, this has been offset with de Valois's *Checkmate*, as another notable figure in modern ballet. Like Ashton, de Valois was a major contributor to the rise of modern ballet in Britain.

Apollo – George Balanchine

Historical Analysis

The first collaboration between Balanchine and Stravinsky is seen to typify and modernise the idea of the '*ballet blanc*'. It relies heavily on the concept of classicism and aims to both uphold and subvert these conventions. Jennifer Homans summarises the ideas behind the ballets as such:

Apollon Musagete, then, was Balanchine and Stravinsky's homage to both the French seventeenth century and the Russian Imperial traditions. But it was also a radical departure. Like Stravinsky's music, Balanchine's movements are classical but also unmistakably modern, bent and off balance with flexed feet, jutting hips, and concave backs sunk in contraction (Homans 2010, 337).

While another choreography was created and premiered before the Balanchine version, Stravinsky was not involved in this production which never gained recognition.

Balanchine has gained recognition through his partnership with Stravinsky, especially as Stravinsky's experimental approach to music is a challenge to choreograph. Through this, Balanchine has become synonymous with having a keen sense of musicality, especially towards Stravinsky's music. Balanchine's heightened musical awareness was developed through his background in musical training, having studied at the Petrograd Conservatory while dancing with the Maryinsky ballet. Balanchine was proficient in composition, counterpoint, and was an accomplished pianist. There are instances of Balanchine creating piano reductions of pieces for his choreographies when a copy was unavailable. Cyril Beaumont summarises Balanchine's musical background:

Balanchine, the son of a well-known composer and originally intended to become a concert pianist, is a musician first and choreographer second. He is one of the few choreographers who can read a musical score with the same facility that others read a book (Beaumont 1950, 10).

Musically speaking, the score is noted for its selective return to classicism. Stravinsky comments in his autobiography at length about his musical choices:

I had specially in my thoughts what is known as the "white ballet," in which to my mind the very essence of this art reveals itself in all its purity. I found that the absence of many-coloured effects and of all superfluities produced a wonderful freshness. This inspired me to write music of an analogous character. It seemed to me that diatonic composition was the most appropriate for this purpose and the austerity of its style determined what my instrumental ensemble must be. I at once set aside the ordinary orchestra because of its heterogeneity, with its groups of string, wood, brass, and percussion instruments, the effects of which have really been too much exploited of late, and I chose strings (Stravinsky 2012, Chap. 9).

As a way of departing from what Stravinsky saw as a norm at the time, he decided to adopt older ideas to capture this. Like *Les Sylphides*, the 'ballet blanc' or 'white ballet' is referenced heavily in *Apollo*. In the case of *Apollo*, the allusion to the 'ballet blanc' is a point of modernisation, innovating a trope of the previous era, thus showing the difference between the neoclassical and classical categories of ballet.

Technical Analysis

There are several variations to choose from in this ballet, Terpsichore's variation has been selected for discussion, which is significant to the ballet as an allegory of the creation of dance. It also is important to include female variations in the study of Balanchine's works, as *pointe-work* is a crucial element of his choreography. This extends to the point that the ballet dancers trained under Balanchine's system at the School of American Ballet would be expected to dance *en pointe* at all times once the required proficiency to do so was reached. Terpsichore's variation mostly revolves around *allegro* steps, and quick footwork. The variation relies heavily on clearly defined segments where one step or a very short sequence of steps is repeated several times in a segment. These are not repeated again in the variation. This highlights the quality of starting and stopping in the music, employing pauses to great effect, contrasting against the elegant melodic lines of the strings. What also adds to this fragmented feel to the variation is the way the piece develops, with a longer form melody and musical idea unfolding for a period, and then another melody appearing as if interrupting the previous pattern. In the choreography, there are large contrasts between segments where the movements are more elongated (often with the *port de bras* moving in a circular pattern), and movements that are small and delicate. An example of this is a sequence arching around the stage in a *temps levé* in *arabesque*, a step, and a *grand jeté*, bringing the arm over the head in a semi-circular pattern. This sequence is repeated four times, followed immediately by four *relevés* in a very quick, low *arabesque* (again, bringing the arms in a circular motion over and around the head), and shuffling around on the heels in a small circle, before repeating the *relevés* in *arabesque* twice again followed by the quick shuffling on the heels around in a circle. The combination of the elongated *grand allegro* around the stage and the short *relevés*

with the leg held low shows a contrast in the quality of movement while also demonstrating the contrast of the music in this part. It also displays elements of syncopation with the adjusted repetitions of choreography in tandem with the music.

Philosophical Analysis

As with the music, the ballet technique is in a constant state of flux between classical and ‘unconventional’ mannerisms. The most common way of doing this is deliberately defying conventions of ballet technique. Elements such as flexed feet, pushing the body weight to the heels, and ‘broken’ lines are all telling features that display this break from tradition and are all features that are employed in *Apollo*. Another method used to subvert the strictures of classical technique is the degree of movement allowed in the hips and pelvis. The range of movement allowed by Balanchine’s choreography suggests a break from classical technique, as any movement in the hips was more associated with modern and popular dance. On this idea of the development of classical ballet into a more modernist form, Jordan writes:

Along the way, the choreography constantly teases us about the distinctions between the still and mobile, for it is full of pictures that etch themselves upon the memory, photo opportunities, sculptures and friezes. These arrive out of nowhere and are quickly gone. Many of them extraordinary, seen as odd or gauche back in 1928, when they proclaimed a new kind of movement language (Jordan 2007, 169-170).

The relationship between the music and the choreography reveals interesting things about Balanchine’s choreographic style, particularly the diegetic relationship between the visual element and the music. Firstly, the diegesis becomes muddy when *Apollo* is seen miming playing the lute (with an actual prop lute), which he then discards early in the ballet. This suggests that at least part of the ballet’s music is diegetic. *Apollo* is also the Greek God of music, so does his presence as a character in the ballet also make the score diegetic? Ultimately, the direct reference to the musical material in the score is

also indicator of a diegetic musical relationship, as there is very little that the choreography does that is not in existence in the musical material. In addition to this, choreography is so derivative of the structure formed in the score, that it seems to be aware of the musical material.

In terms of the way in which the music and dance interact, there is a strong imitative effect in place in the choreography. Since the score is somewhat minimalist, using only string instruments and emphasising the melody, there is a clear main narrative, and therefore, a clear line to imitate through movement. Jordan looks at this ballet as an interesting sample from the Stravinsky and Balanchine collaboration stating:

Apollo is not only a particular kind of Stravinsky but also a particular kind of Balanchine – Stravinsky, and the early piece that taught the choreographer so much did not teach him the basics of motor drive as much as other things, about the potential links between the rhythms of dance and speech and large-scale rhythmic structure (Jordan 2007, 172).

Since *Apollo* is the first collaboration between Balanchine and Stravinsky, and one of Balanchine's first official works, there is an explorative quality to how the music is treated. That is to say, the deviations from classical techniques look more like visual quirks, and the constant development of musical ideas in the choreography appear to capitalise on the score. For example, there is passage that uses a sequence of *pas de bourées* in a transitional excerpt of the music. The pulse of the music shifts rapidly at this point, so Balanchine employs pauses and small additions in technique to stylise the simple *pas de bourée* to take advantage of the material. This could also explain why the music takes so much precedence in the work. With the strong thread of musical imitation present in the choreography, Jordan's concept of music visualisation and parallelism of the score is apparent. I would argue that there are moments of parallelism present in this simplistic form of the music because the palette of the timbre is homogenous, as well as the emphasis given to the melody in the score. The episodes of

parallelism are apparent, because they use combinations of steps that follow *logic* in the flow of the choreography due to the simplicity of the score. The effect of this is a choreography that is very closely governed by the structure and phenomena in the music.

Checkmate – Ninette de Valois

Historical Analysis

Checkmate is a 1937 ballet with music by Arthur Bliss and choreography by Dame Ninette de Valois. A one-act ballet written for the Vic-Wells ballet, *Checkmate* has a definite plot and is narratively driven, while also employing more abstract and modern qualities. Arthur Bliss' approach to ballet music is an interesting contrast to Stravinsky's (and by extension, Balanchine's) prioritisation of the score. Jordan notes that Bliss creates an argument associated with Modernist thinking that allows for the score to be considered only in the context of the dance:

There is another point to be made here, about exclusivity, the artwork seen as a watertight object, a notion existing that the separate media elements fused together should at best have no life of their own outside the ballet. Thus, we find extreme statements such as this one by Arthur Bliss... 'The most desirable music for a ballet is music which can have no complete or logical life apart from its association with dancing' (Jordan 2000a, 18).

With consideration for de Valois' approach to music, it is unclear what musical training she received. However, from her comments on Ashton's lack of ability to read music (Jordan 2000a, 187), it can be assumed that she had an understanding of and an ability to read music. De Valois previously danced for Diaghilev's *Ballet Russes* and later founded the Vic-Wells ballet, a company that developed into what is now the Royal Ballet, making her a key figure in the establishment of ballet in England (Anderson 1992, 255).

Checkmate is a contrast to Balanchine's take on the neoclassical ballet category. Having a clear narrative, and often being described as a drama, *Checkmate* has been summarised as:

... depicting a game of chess, de Valois heightened the drama by endowing the pieces with human qualities; the 'senile and pathetically impotent' Red King (Helpmann in an unforgettable performance of 'nervous terror') was defeated by a Black Queen who was both malevolent and seductive in the interpretation of June Brae (Reynolds and McCormick 2003, 198).

Technical Analysis

For this analysis, the dance of the Black Queen is used as an example from the work. Several visual motifs are clear when watching this solo, the most notable being the repeated use of *attitude devant en fondu* (both *en pointe* and on flat), the use of high extension in the form of *grand battements* and *développé*, as well as a walking step which resembles the leg being brought into *retiré* in a parallel position in a stylised walking motion. Other than the visual motifs, the symmetry of the phrasing is especially noticeable, with every combination of steps being repeated either two or four times, which could be attributed to the Chess narrative, having a very square approach to musicality. Musically speaking, there is little development in this piece of the music, serving as an underlying accompaniment with a prominent and constant pulse throughout. Combining the elements of even phrasing in the choreography and the consistency of the background musically, makes for a very simple variation. However, the overall effect of this combines with the plotline of a victory dance for the Black Queen, and creates an illusion of control over the music, while also displaying the Black Queen's control over the Red King.

The red king has been abandoned; he is alone on the board with the black queen. She toys with him like a snake. He cannot escape; wherever he turns, a new black piece appears to block his path. He makes a pathetic figure – but then, from the beginning he has seemed weak and powerless – and the black queen's game with

him becomes a protracted mercenary exhibition of power (Balanchine and Mason 1984, 105).

The comparison to a snake is certainly apparent in this choreography, as the Black Queen zig-zags her way across the stage in these four-bar phrases of choreography, and, uniquely for a ballet, she is also not performing entirely for the audience, often turning her back to the audience and performing segments directly for the king. While the choreographic and musical content is less ambitious and intricate in the details of choreomusical analysis compared to Balanchine's works, de Valois and Bliss use simplicity and play with the conventions of the stage and the audience to push this work into the neoclassical category.

Stylistically, the dance is a variation on classical ballet. However, its use of simplicity and repetition creates an effect of austerity and seriousness – the mathematical use of even, square phrases musically, and the precise repetitions of these phrases choreographically. This is an interesting contrast to the plot, which deals with allegorical themes of love and war. During this variation, the repetition of the same rhythmic pulse combined with the sharp brass-lead instrumentation reinforces the sinister character of the Black Queen, while her path across the stage creates a hypnotic, and somewhat seductive effect. The ballet technique used by the Black queen uses sharp angles and high extensions, most which are classically based with stylistic affectations to emphasise the angular, sinister sounding music.

Philosophical Analysis

Taking Bliss' comments on the function of his ballet music into account, the score of this ballet is shown to be similar to that of non-diegetic film music, deliberately trying to blend into the background and accompany. This also drives the plot, or in this case, acts as a metronome. While the music does add to the perception of the movements

performed (emphasising angular movements), it very clearly supports the choreography. Clearly, the dancers in the ‘real world’ can hear this score. However, the score does not seem like a necessary component to the characters in the ballet, resembling a commentary or narration from outside of the ‘ballet realm’. It seems that the music has a main function to keep the dancers on time, as well as setting a general mood for the scene. While this variation is referred to as a ‘dance’, the score merely provides an aural setting for the scene. The ‘dance’ function less as a performance, than a setting to taunt the Red King.

It becomes clear from this interaction of score and choreography, that there is a viable way to create a neoclassical ballet that is less invested in an ‘absolute music’ approach to setting music to dance (as seen in Balanchine’s neoclassicism). In fact, the plot does take prescience in this ballet, and both the score and the choreography work to support this, their simplicity and directness creating the serious, academic tone that is associated with neoclassicism in ballet.

Agon – George Balanchine

Historical Analysis

This work is often referred to as the strongest collaboration between Balanchine and Stravinsky, and one of their final works together (Balanchine continued to choreograph works to Stravinsky retrospectively). *Agon* is also a significant work in Stravinsky’s Serial period, and shows experimentation with twelve-tone composition techniques. The choreography too shows innovation and experimentation both with ballet technique, and the physical limits of the body, the choreography including more feats of acrobatics and contortion than is usual in ballet. The concept for this ballet is also the most abstract out of all of Balanchine’s collaborations with Stravinsky, being completely plotless and

performed in the basic practice clothes of a leotard and tights. Agon loosely translates to the Greek word for ‘Contest’. This is not a confirmed theme for the ballet. However, with the ambitious and virtuosic quality of the choreography it is possible that all the dancers are in competition with each other.

Technical Analysis

The *Pas de Deux* sequence is chosen, as it clearly shows the style and aesthetic for the ballet. The first few passages that introduce the *pas de deux* use a full orchestra. The dancers (a female and male soloist) first enter the stage to a loud and brash brass-lead passage. The choreography uses energetic steps such as *grand battements* and *pirouettes* (performed on a flat foot) to an elegant serpentine woodwind-lead melody, choreographically revolving around a motif of long gallant walks with *petit battements* marking the pulses in the music. The development of the *pas de deux* is a stark contrast to this entrance, the music pausing with the dancers staying still, and the instrumentation switching exclusively to the strings in a sparse, esoteric, and angular style, employing vast intervals and using silence to great effect. Michiel Schuijjer comments of Stravinsky’s approach to the music in the *pas de deux*, stating: “*Rather than a contrapuntal fabric, they [the opening bars of the pas de deux] present a sonic field*” (Schuijjer 2008, 8). The choreography reflects this, going from classically inspired steps and combinations, to an exploration of unconventional lines and extreme positions. As with the music’s use of classical instruments to make ‘unpleasant’ and ‘unnatural’ sounds, Balanchine uses the body in this way. Using extreme flexibility, the female dancer pushes her *penché* into a full split at several points in the choreography, she is also lifted in the air and placed on the floor in a split. As well as a recurring visual motif of a very high, angled *attitude derrière* which wraps around her partner (this is introduced in the first musical passage and appears again in the body of the piece), there

is a clear emphasis on exaggerated leg movements and positions throughout the work. While these are all classical movements technically, they are all a very extreme and exaggerated form of classical technique, which at times, borders on gymnastics rather than classical dance. Jordan comments on the use of these poses as a device to emphasise moments of the music stating:

The Pas de Deux contains a series of powerful images: the man helping the woman reach her head up and back to meet her foot, he suddenly dropping stretched out at her feet while supporting her risky arabesque, or the woman pitching over the kneeling man to rest her head on his breast. However, just as important to the organisation of this dance are the moments of connection between the choreography and the music. Some staccato, some more sustained, these movements punctuate the Pas de Deux like a series of highlights, structuring it rhythmically without diminishing the sense of continuity. These moments are important in renewing our aural and visual awareness (Jordan 2000a,164).

Since the music is characterised by large clashing intervals, and the string accompaniment for this segment is combining different qualities of sound from the instrument, there is a consistency between what is seen onstage and what is presented aurally. Intervals that clash are often matched by uncomfortable looking positions, and heavy transferences of weight between the dance partners. Another common visual theme is the dancers dropping into a low *fondue* position (especially any walking motion which is kept low on the ground and very elongated) and developing out to a high extension highlighting the constant theme of contrast throughout the piece.

Philosophical Analysis

It should be noted that while the movement vocabulary of the piece is exaggerated and more outwardly virtuosic than the classical 'norm', it still uses classical techniques and steps. The relaxation of certain classical steps and movements being for stylistic purposes and an integral part of relating the music to the movement, the music also challenges the classical classification, making the style of dance and the style of the

music well matched. Elements that are most noticeable in their deviation from ‘classical technique’ are the usual fare for Balanchine’s works, unconventional use of line, looser use of the hips and pelvis, and affectations that deliberately rebel against ‘classical technique’ (flexed feet, turning in, naturalistic blended movements). In the case of *Agon*, overt exaggerated virtuosity is also an element that can be added to this.

Agon, has no outright acknowledgement of the music unlike the acknowledgement in *Apollo*. That is to say, there is no miming of playing an instrument onstage. While the ballet is very abstract, it is closely related to the score. There are moments when it becomes clear that the dancers (inside the ballet realm) can hear the score, with moments where rhythms are directly acknowledged and imitated (less so in the *pas de deux*, but very clear in both *pas de trois* which are more *allegro* based). One of the most complex moments in terms of diegetic sound, is the use of hand claps during the first *pas de trois* performed in a series of *poses* in a straight rhythm on the beat of the music. These acknowledgements of the music, and in this case, the addition to the score onstage complicate the diegesis. However, since the ballet is plotless and minimalist in terms of its presentation, this suggests that this is a work similar to a performance by an instrumental group. This leads to the conclusion that *Agon* uses diegetic sound.

Agon displays several interesting elements of the relationship between music and movement and how to translate a score into a visual. The diverse switches between the music and dance style in this ballet capitalise on the idea of contrast, with parts of the ballet that are musically very busy and strongly emphasise rhythm, and other parts of the work that are sparse, and have less of an obvious pulse underneath. That being said, the choreography aims to capture both sides of this contrast, showing rhythmic *allegro* sequences and controlled *adage*. Since the music in the *pas de deux* is less controlled by a relentless pulse, the movements look as if they are happening spontaneously in

correspondence with the music. However, at a closer glance, this is really an effect of the space and silence in the music, combined with the slower movements and precarious balances in the choreography.

Summary

The historical elements of the three ballets show Balanchine's development as a Stravinsky choreographer, compared to a vastly different approach supplied by de Valois and Bliss. Stylistically, the neoclassical ballet style emphasises athleticism, angular movements, and legwork (specifically, the use of high extensions). These are common between both Balanchine works here and de Valois' alteration of classical technique for a neoclassical effect. The main contrast between these approaches is in the importance of the score in each of these settings, Balanchine prioritising the music, and de Valois relegating the score to the background. The interesting similarity however, is that each of these works adhere to the composer's ideas of the function of their music in a ballet.

Chapter 5 Contemporary Ballets

Introduction

Contemporary ballets generally make a point of completely deviating from and subverting classical ballet technique, and commonly pair the freedom of movement with an emphasis on expressivity. The contemporary ballets studied are: *l'Après-Midi d'un Faune* (1912), score—Claude Debussy, choreography—Vaslav Nijinsky; *Prodigal Son* (1929), score—Sergei Prokofiev, choreography—George Balanchine; and *the Rite of Spring* (1975), score—Igor Stravinsky, choreography—Pina Bausch. Each of these works shows a different approach to a contemporary ballet, and all capitalise on rebelling against different elements of classical technique. Traits of contemporary ballet become apparent across this selection of ballets, the quirks being a reaction to the limitations and structure of the ballet framework. This shows itself in the choreographic structure as well as in the physical affectations of the dancers, as required by the choreography.

L'après-Midi d'un Faune – Vaslav Nijinsky

Historical Analysis

First performed in 1912, *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* is one of the oldest ballets used here, showing that while it may seem that classical developed into neoclassical ballet, and then into contemporary ballet, rather, these categories of ballet all coexisted during the twentieth century. Nijinsky, while a noted choreographer, only choreographed four major works (Jordan 2000a, 37), and is equally (if not more) noted for his contribution to ballet as a performer. Reports from Nijinsky's collaborators suggest that he was not knowledgeable about music, Stravinsky publicly criticising his lack of musical

knowledge (which he later changed his stance on) (Reynolds and McCormick 2003, 57). Jordan clarifies Nijinsky's musical abilities, stating:

Nijinska, his sister, indicates in her memoirs that Nijinsky was musically educated, indeed remarkably able musically. She recounts how they both studied piano at the Imperial Ballet School in Russia, but that as a child 'he could play any instrument that he came across' (Jordan 2000a, 37).

L'Après-Midi d'un Faune is especially controversial as a ballet work being criticised after the premiere for its overt display of sexual themes, and its lack of identifiable ballet technique (Reynolds and McCormick 2003, 55). In discussing the unique movement vocabulary Nijinsky developed, Homans writes:

Rehearsals for the ballet were difficult: the dancers hated the movement, which was angular, two dimensional, and frieze-like, with abrupt and taut movements requiring immense muscular discipline. They resented Nijinsky's stringently anti-bravura style, which forced them to set aside their most flattering tricks and poses in favour of what Nijinsky himself referred to as "goat" leaps, crouches, and short, arrested steps and pivots. To make matters worse, and emphasising the terse rigidity of the steps, the dancers performed in stiff sandals instead of ballet shoes. More offensive still, Nijinsky prohibited acting and facial expressions of any kind (Homans 2010, 308-309).

Comparing this to the discussion of the score, which is clearly associated with impressionism, the clash between the qualities of the music and the choreography is a main focus of the ballet.

Technical Analysis

L'Après-Midi d'un Faune is also a notable development in the modernist ballet for its length, a short 11 minute work, adhering to the one act structure widely used in the period. The overall effect of this for *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* is a short, highly stylised scene with the choreography often being referred to as two dimensional. While the choreography and the music are stylistically very different, the narrow range and chromaticism create an illusion of stillness. This is transferred to the choreography in

the long, even steps, and level-ness of the dancers' bodies (there is no upwards motion while walking or performing any of the choreography; the body stays on the same plane). Even though the methods the choreography and score utilise for this effect clash, they both still produce an underlying similarity. This ballet also shows a more relaxed association with musical phenomena. It completely subverts the way in which ballet has traditionally interacted with the music by taking away the ballet vocabulary (certain steps are created for or commonly used with certain time signatures or musical phrases), while also seeming as if the music is merely a guide. The choreography does appear to be organised, but seems to follow the rhythm only marginally, which suggests that the choreography uses the score for the narrative structure. The score is based around a recurring chromatic motif which is replayed at several points in the ballet making a type of structure apparent, as the choreography continues to drift in and out of sync with the music. That being said, there is a staple position adhered to by the faun which continues throughout the entire ballet, which mirrors this motif in the score.

The unique movement quality that is achieved in *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* is based on several points of deliberate deviation from classical ballet technique. The position of the feet in parallel, rather than a turned-out position, and the use of a flexed foot position creating a 'broken' line, are all examples of these decidedly un-balletic qualities.

Choreographically, the stark contrasts between the slow, sustained walking motions, and the sharp turns with the sharp angles of the arms and legs, are also traits of a rebellion against the ballet framework. These moments are startling and abrupt when accompanied by the blurry, 'impressionistic' score. When surrounded by the majority of the choreography, which is based on smooth travelling steps, and static poses, the occasional jerky and un-graceful movements really stand out. Despite all of this, there are still technical elements that are based on principals of ballet.

He produced three ballets in all: *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune*, *Jeux*, and *Sacre du Printemps*. For each of them he established a basic position strictly adhered to all through the ballet. For *Faune* he took inspiration from Greek vases and bas-reliefs. The body was facing the front while the head and feet were always seen in profile. The deportment had to be classical, yet the head had independent movements not connected with the deportment in the classical vocabulary, and so had the arms. It was an orchestration of the body, with each part playing a totally different melody. There was nothing you could do automatically (Balanchine and Mason 1984, 6-7).

Philosophical Analysis

The way in which the music and dance elements interact is a notable indicator of the change in priorities in the transformation from classical ballet to contemporary ballet. There exists a more relaxed relationship, relying on the music as a way of progressing the scene, rather than using the score as a driving force for the steps chosen and the flow of the choreographic phrases. When attempting to ascertain the diegesis of this work, the music seems to be on a different plane to the music which suggests a non-diegetic placement. The choreography makes it seem as if the music is separate from the action onstage by the fact that it is not often addressed directly. The ballet is also referred to by Balanchine and Mason as a 'choreographic tableau'. They note:

In the choreography and in its dancing the work completely rejected traditional forms. It was not a ballet in the accepted sense; it was a 'choreographic tableau,' a moving frieze, a work to be seen only from the front, a two dimensional ballet. In his imitation of Greek paintings, Nijinsky was faithful to the spirit and to the letter; the traditional movements of classical ballet were altogether rejected in favour of an angular rigidity that would make a new expressiveness for the dancer's body (Balanchine and Mason 1984, 6).

Prodigal Son – George Balanchine

Historical Analysis

Balanchine is well-known for his collaborations with composers, and is often praised for his ability to set these scores for stage. Balanchine's *Prodigal Son* shows a different side to this, being an example of an unsuccessful partnership with Sergei Prokofiev.

Balanchine noted Prokofiev was a grumpy and disagreeable character, Nancy Goldner reporting that: “*He is on record as saying that Prokofiev was a nasty, ungenerous man.*” He did not stage a revival of *Prodigal Son* until 1950 (Goldner 2008, Chap. 2). This is not an example of a choreographic partnership with the same famous friendship as Balanchine’s partnership with Stravinsky. *Prodigal Son* is also singled out by Goldner as an interesting example of choreography in Balanchine’s body of work:

Unlike Apollo which pre-dates it by a year, the choreography does not play off and against the classical principals of Petipa. There is no classical dancing in *Prodigal Son*. Imagine Balanchine devising a solo for a woman en pointe without making reference to an arabesque. Well, there are no arabesque-like figures for the Siren (Goldner 2008, Chap. 2).

She goes on to say:

Just as central to the uniqueness of the ballet in the Balanchine canon, is that, although there are fabulous dance moments (The pas de deux and the son’s variations) they are not crucial to the ballet’s impact. Narrative points are as important as dance points (Goldner 2008, Chap. 2).

This is an important distinction to make between *Prodigal Son* and Balanchine’s other works, as this is one of the only cases where Balanchine choreographs something that could be considered a ‘contemporary ballet’ and not a classical or neoclassical work. To fully grasp this, the *pas de deux* between the prodigal son and the siren is assessed, notable for showing several key elements that are decidedly un-Balanchine. This departure is also interesting to consider within the context of Prokofiev’s relationship with ballet, Prokofiev going on later in the century to compose the music for both *Cinderella* and *Romeo and Juliet*, two of the Modernist era’s major full length classical ballet works.

Technical Analysis

Prodigal Son, adopts a movement vocabulary that is derived from classical ballet, but uses few movements that actually reflect this. The *pas de deux*, in particular, signifies this with coaching footage showing allegorical terms being used instead of official names for steps (especially for the Siren being told to move her arm “like a snake” at several points in the choreography)¹. These serpentine analogies are often repeated during this rehearsal footage, and are very visually apparent in the choreography. Musically, this is also a feature. The main motif associated with the Siren also has a serpentine quality to it. The melody that forms the basis for her variation immediately preceding the *pas de deux* carries over into the *pas de deux*, and is played on the oboe. This motif features a constant wavering between the highest and lowest points of the melody often joining them with stepwise or chromatic intervals. The dancer playing the Siren’s stature is also altered to fit the role, the costume including a tall, cylindrical hat like those seen in ancient Egyptian artwork. This aims to create the illusion of a taller, more imposing character combined with the functional use of *pointe-work* to also create the illusion of height. While the *prodigal son* is the main character of the work, and this segment is a *pas de deux*, the male soloist does very little dancing. Rather, the Siren dances on, around, and at him. As this work is more character and story based than any other ballet selected in this study, the assumption is that this is a deliberate symbolic gesture about the *prodigal son* losing control or power. While the focus on the female dancer is common for the traditional Petipa *pas de deux*, the role of male dancer is to assist in the stability of the female soloist and to execute movements such as lifts. The

¹ See Yvonne Mounsey (2010).

male soloist in *Prodigal Son* plays more of a submissive role throughout the work, especially when confronted by the tall and imposing Siren.

The choreography of *Prodigal Son*, while abstract in its use of classical ballet techniques and steps, still adheres somewhat closely to the musical features in the score, mimicking rhythms and following the phrases. The choreography often features a series of stylised walks *en pointe* or sustained poses aided by the *Prodigal son*, referencing the tradition of a *pas de deux*. There is a repeated motion of the Siren where she brings her arm behind her head in a stretched position, just extending past the top of her headdress, and reaffirming the traits of tall stature, and power over the son. This also combines with the choreographic passages and movements meant to connote sexuality. This is commented on by Jack Anderson, who states:

Among the strangest scenes are those concerning the prodigal's dissipation. They include an almost serpentine dance for the siren who attempts to seduce him, and dances for a group of revellers which, far from being merry, look almost mechanical, as if Balanchine were trying to show how compulsive and debilitating debauchery can be (Anderson 1992, 128-129).

The 'serpentine' movement quality of the siren is once again reaffirmed, emphasising the plot driven nature of the choreography that relies on biblical imagery to cast the Siren as a villain since there are few scenes of mime (like in classical ballets) that serve as exposition scenes.

Philosophical Analysis

The music's relationship with the choreography shows that they are clearly related; there is a sense that the dancers are performing steps in time with the music, and this is much stronger than in both of the other contemporary ballets selected. However, the steps chosen are less involved with the music than those used in both Balanchine's neoclassical and classical works, and explore the rhythms on a more surface level,

merely marking out the counts, with the occasional exploration of rhythmic subdivision. Walking steps are often used, performed *en pointe* as well as some sustained poses, turns, and many instances of acrobatics, mostly as partner work. Goldner comments on this:

The desire to bring industry and art, the functional and the decorative under one tent extended to making an amalgam of beautiful and ugly movement and high and low art that is: dance and circus (Goldner, Chap. 2).

Movements such as these are performed with no obvious consideration for the rhythm. Rather, the music is used as a guideline for time. The score seems to play into this idea with less regard for formal structure, acting more as an underlying accompaniment rather than a repetitive, melody driven piece of music typical of a ‘traditional’ *pas de deux*.

In terms of the placement of the choreography within the landscape of the music, the music seems as if it functions as a narration, the ballet being so loose (within Balanchine’s style of choreography) relative to the music, and the clear emphasis being on plot and character. There are some motivic materials that appear in relation to characters, and generally as a way of moving the plot along and providing continuity for the choreography. The way in which the score is an underlying narrative suggests that the score for *Prodigal Son* is non-diegetic.

Rite of Spring – Pina Bausch

Historical Analysis

The original performance of the *Rite of Spring* in 1913 is a pivotal moment for modernist music. A controversial work with its original choreography by Vaslav Nijinsky, it set an example for the style of contemporary dance for the twentieth

century. Bausch's version (also known as *Das Frühlingsopfer*) retains the plot of Stravinsky's original production, but offers a take on the work that has more of a basis in realism than the original, covering the stage in peat soil in view of the audience (Jordan 2007, 448). Bausch's *Rite of Spring* also aims to heighten the stakes of the original story by adding and emphasising issues of gender and assault, combining this with the heightened realism of this work, and represented through the visual image of the dancers continually covered in dirt throughout the performance.

On this Jordan writes:

There is a victim, the moment of choosing her happens at the 'right' place in the score, after which, just as Stravinsky stipulated, she does not dance until her designated final solo. There is also abduction and rape, rival tribes (men and women), and a man who takes responsibility as chief or leader (Jordan 2007, 448).

This neatly summarises the changes that take place in the ballet from Nijinsky's original, and Bausch's version, which retains the original libretto. Yet it is also informed by a more naturalistic vocabulary of movement, including more modern themes brought about by second-wave feminism. Jordan also comments on these extramusical issues that are included in this version of the choreography:

Sacre was Bausch's own idea and originally situated within a Stravinsky evening, after two other Bausch premieres. These were *Wind von West* (to the Cantata, with its references to the 'sacrifice' of Christ) – another work about alienation, here, people struggling to make contact and searching for love and inner peace – and *Der zweite Frühling* (the Second Spring, to a selection of short pieces), about an elderly couple musing on their pasts. Hence both the gender and Stravinskian content of *Sacre* were highlighted during the programme as a whole. This was an important period for discussion of gender with the women's movement a recent development, internationally recognised and unstoppable (Jordan 2007, 449-450).

Technical Analysis

In terms of the choreographic content and how this has been developed across the century, the style of Bausch's *Rite of Spring* is less based on the deliberate rejection of

ballet technique as the aesthetic basis. Unlike Nijinsky's version which capitalises on turned in feet, and deliberate heavy sounding footwork on the floor, Bausch's choreography seems to be more focussed on the ideas of order and chaos. The musical content of the score is consistently switching between organised sections played in unison (despite unconventional use of rhythm, and tonality), and eerie sparse sections that give the illusion of chaotic and uncontrolled sound. This is an idea that forms the framework for the choreography which has moments of clearly balletic influence (held *port de bras*, adapted classical jumps such as *grand jetés*, and pointed feet), and sections of choreography that highlight decidedly un-balletic postures and movements.

It is useful to look at the chosen one's sacrificial dance as a choreographic example, especially in terms of how the ballet until this point has been slowly slackening its grip on ballet principles, and becoming more technically abstract. The sacrificial dance marks a clear peak in this, with this rejection of the controlled balletic traits used to highlight the lack of autonomy that the chosen one has on her body. The dancer often looks as if she is moving despite herself. Since much of ballet technique consists of the basic elements of being 'lifted' and held into position, Bausch's choreography often does the opposite, using the weight of the body to motivate movement. This is especially clear in the sacrificial dance, where the soloist is often seen convulsing in a crouched position, or letting her torso drop towards the ground. Other significant elements include the decision to let the dancer show her energy levels drop to display the effort that is being made on dancing this piece. There are three main choreographic segments that reoccur throughout this section. There is one choreographic motif that involves the dancer crouching in on herself and convulsing (often approached with a large, swooping *port de bras*). There is another where she performs a one-armed *port de bras*, with the movement continuing into a *développé* to second position, and the arms

stretched in the opposite direction. The last choreographic motif is similar to the first, yet instead of the convulsing movement, the body is held upright and the movement looks as if the dancer is elbowing herself in the ribs. These combinations are used in no particular order through the piece, except for the first convulsing movement, which is often used in combination with the main descending musical motif that the sacrificial dance is based around. The score is noted for its constantly shifting pulse, and combining these naturalistic movements with the unpredictable sound of the score has a dramatic effect of a lack of control over the body, making the sacrificial dance seem like a compulsive action rather than one that the dancer has a choice in doing.

Philosophical Analysis

Ultimately, the use of music in Bausch's version of the *Rite of Spring* is non-diegetic, it doesn't seem like the dancers can hear it. However, the shifting between the dancers moving independently and as a group often coincides with moments where the score is also performing in unison. The effect of this highlights that while the 'characters' onstage cannot hear the music, the *Rite of Spring* does feel like a ritual, and therefore, the dancers often look as if they are moving instinctively in unison, especially given the naturalistic movement vocabulary.

The main interaction between the music and choreography given the style of ballet, and the diegesis, often feels accidental because it doesn't seem as if the dancers are aware they are performing. This element highlights the plot as a significant driving force behind the ballet, especially given that the choreography is often motivated by the larger structure of the music rather than individual moments in the score. There is a main choreographic motif displayed throughout, showing the dancers perform in a tight cluster a combination of pulsing *pliés*, and sweeping movements through the arms and

torso. This is at first associated with the first instance of the score coming together in unison in the iconic syncopated motif, yet it appears after this in other parts of the score where this musical motif does not appear. The overall effect of this is a more holistic approach to a choreomusical relationship.

Summary

The three contemporary ballets looked at reveal the priority of the contemporary ballet movement as a reactionary genre, reverting to the more expressive elements of Romantic ballets, yet completely transforming the movement vocabulary. The relationship to the music is loosened considerably, opting to use the score as a backdrop for an aesthetic and character development. This enables a choreographer to rely less on the music for the content of the choreography and create their own narrative with the score functioning as a loose guide. This is the style of ballet that has the most consensus between the choreographers as to how the music operates and how it is used for choreography, all the choreographers using an atmospheric approach to the score.

Chapter 6 Synthesising the Changes in Attitudes to Music/Dance Relationships

Page-to-Stage

The assessment of a variety of modernist ballets, split into styles, shows the changing 'Art music' scene, and a drastic change in the ways choreographers create movements and images. As the categorisation of ballets into classical, neoclassical, and contemporary styles shows, there is not a sequence of styles developing into one-another. Rather, they were differing approaches to the visual setting of music, all stemming from the classical ballet of the nineteenth century, and happening concurrently. Surface level changes to the ballet included shorter one-act ballets for the use in mixed bill programmes, forgoing a plot and creating the abstract 'plotless' ballet - a deliberate deviation from classical ballet technique. This made way for a larger variety of movement vocabulary to accommodate the new musical experimentations, and a general emphasis on 'fidelity' to the music. This facilitated the ideological aspects of the modernist movement imprinted on the role of choreography in dance works. Taking a wide variety of dance works from across the century assists in demonstrating how choreography represents and serves a musical score and how this fits into the development of ballet as a form of musical performance.

As musical ideologies changed in the twentieth century, so did the approach to a visual language for music. The vocabulary displayed through the nineteenth-century ballets became an established form, ballets then being synonymous with expressivity.

Narratives were best served via shorter abstract pieces with an exploration of the adaptability of the body alongside the experiments in sound of the time. It is here that discussion of the first key concept for the choreomusical relationship in twentieth-century ballet arises. As mentioned earlier, the page-to-stage approach became a focus

of ideas surrounding performance and music, and lends itself well to the analysis of ballet choreography. For this discussion of the page-to-stage approach, reference is made to Zuber-Skerritt and a scale he provides to illustrate the idea of the page-to-stage approach. He identifies the scale as such: on each end of the scale are the terms “no script”, and “authority of the script as a straight-jacket” and in the middle of the scale is “script *and* freedom to act/react” (Zuber-Skerritt 1984, 6). In the case of analysing ballets, the word ‘script’ is substituted for ‘score’. While works that have ‘no score’ are not referred to, there is little to argue that this area has not been experimented with at least. There is a case to be made that there are works here that do use ‘the authority of the *score* as a straight-jacket’, and ones that merely use the score as a general framework to refer to. The biggest example of the score as straight-jacket is *Les Sylphides*, for it goes to the extent of not only mimicking the content of the score visually, but also being heavily steeped in the imagery of the Romantic era, evoking the *ballet blanc* concept of the Romantic era and imitating the choreographic style of a Romantic ballet to better suit the Romantic score. On the other end of the scale (but not to the extent of having no score) are ballets such as *the Rite of Spring*, and *L’Après-Midi d’un Faune*, that seem to have little relation to the musical material, except as a system to cue the narrative. The movement vocabulary can be adjusted to using choreography to fit the mood set in the music. Another possible application of this is to stylistically have two elements at odds with each other, using this to fuel the aesthetic of the production. On this continuum, Zuber-Skerritt notes:

In the extreme case, no script and no plan is followed. Everything is a co-called ‘happening,’ accidental, creative, spontaneous, a success or a fail. No scheme is necessary. The other extreme is a script as a straightjacket which does not allow for the actors’ spontaneity and reaction to, or interaction with the audience. In this case, a scheme, in which every step is worked out in detail, is carefully followed (Zuber-Skerritt 1984, 6).

What should be noted is that the ability for this to happen in theatre is far greater than in any type of musical performance. However, this is subject to change with the times, as there was greater licence to alter scores to fit the demands of the narrative or the ballet style in the Romantic era (as was the case with *Swan Lake*). The general attitude in the twentieth century is to leave the score as is and adhere to its contents as much or as little as the choreographer wishes, and inevitably accept the opinion of the composer of the work as to how it captures the idea of the music. Cook comments on this emphasis on the music (and score) as a constant in the twentieth century:

Even in the more pluralistic culture of the early twentieth century the moral dimension retains a currency in music for which it is hard to find parallels in other arts. In the theatre, and even in the opera house, it is taken for granted that old works should be reinterpreted for modern audiences and that a director should express his or her vision (Cook 2013, 13).

This similarly comes into play during the twentieth century in ballet, where it is common practice to update the choreography of the ‘classics’. On the other hand, many of the modernist and abstract works (such as Balanchine and Ashton’s works) have definitive versions.

Keeping in mind the added complications that arise in audio to visual adaptations, the ideas surrounding a choreographic page-to-stage approach can now be assessed. From the research, there are two main elements that can constitute a page-to-stage approach. The first is the simple practice of imitating the score in a visual way. Ballets such as *Les Sylphides* provide an excellent example of this, the choreography imitating the music and making this clear to the audience. The problem with this approach is that there is an importance in musicological discussion of the page-to-stage approach primarily concerned with fidelity to the score. *Les Sylphides* alters the musical material by making it an orchestration of a collection of Chopin’s piano works. A possible solution for a choreographic page-to-stage approach could be a model such as *Les Sylphides* where

the choreographic style imitates the score, yet unlike *Les Sylphides*, does not alter the score. For this reason, ballets such as Balanchine's *Divertimento* from *Le baiser de la fée* also cannot be considered a page-to-stage approach, Balanchine creating his own *Divertimento*, rather than using Stravinsky's *Divertimento*.

Second, the ballets created in collaboration with a composer and choreographer could be another way of achieving a page-to-stage approach. Balanchine's collaboration with Stravinsky is a model for this approach, Stravinsky having an active role in the aesthetic of the choreography. Joseph remarks on Stravinsky's involvement in Balanchine's choreography stating:

Balanchine was the first of the composer's collaborators gutsy enough to sidestep the hazards of simple choreographic imitation. He refused to accept this mimicry as the equivalent of genuine musical-choreographic unity. Such ersatz correlations provided too superficial a solution to Stravinsky's music – dynamic music demanding an equally creative counterpoint (Joseph 2008, 6).

Joseph goes on to say on Stravinsky's side of the collaboration:

Often in vain, Stravinsky persistently argued that music and dance were more disconnected than connected. Indeed, it was from the unexploited potential of such disconnectedness that ballet would draw significant strength in becoming an expressive, independent art form. Efforts to synthesise a ballet's score and choreography through undisguised imitation created no true synthesis at all, both men contended. Such tautology only created an illusory reassurance, leading audiences to believe that in immediately seeing how closely the music and movement were coordinated, they had succeeded in perceiving the work's oneness. But nothing could be further from the truth. Using dance to 'interpret' the music was a slippery slope, especially for Stravinsky, whose public views on performers were notoriously chary (Joseph 2008, 6).

When there is such a consensus on the method to translate the score visually, as there is for Balanchine and Stravinsky, especially considering their views on 'undisguised imitation' then, this is an instance where the previously proposed page-to-stage approach is not appropriate. What could also be included in this idea of a collaboration informing a page-to-stage approach, is the ballet *Checkmate*. *Checkmate*'s emphasis on

story and straightforward choreography seems to fulfil Arthur Bliss' expectations for ballet scores, and fulfils the function of Bliss' writing, using the music as a background element.

The problem that arises through these ideas of the page-to-stage approach in choreography is the concept of fidelity to the score, and fidelity to the author. Ritchie comments on this in theatre studies, stating:

To translate any line of a play from a page to the stage involves overcoming numerous inhibitions which usually operate unconsciously, and which derive largely from the 'author function.' In our culture words on the printed page are, quite literally, the property of the author. Their meaning is authoritative (Ritchie 1984, 67).

When transferring this to the discussion of a page-to-stage approach, and considering the ideals around 'fidelity' to the composer's work in the Modernist era, this would involve going further in the adaptation than just visualisation in the choreography. It would require the formulation of an appropriate method of choreography for that composer's music. As commented on earlier, musicological ideas surrounding a page-to-stage approach often use fidelity to the score as a method of showing fidelity to the author, and utilise this idea to a greater extent than in theatre studies.

A wide range of approaches to choreography from across the twentieth century is assessed, including ballets with more of an emphasis on the choreography that use the music as narration and a general guide for the events in the choreography (*Scènes de Ballet*, *Prodigal Son*). Also observed are ballets that are entirely disconnected from the events of the music, instead creating a choreography that creates an image of the sound of the music (*L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, *the Rite of Spring*). On the other end of the spectrum are the ballets that are very involved in the content of the music, yet have done something to change the score, such as using an orchestration of a solo piano

piece, or creating a different *Divertimento* than the one the composer of the piece assembled (*Les Sylphides*, *Divertimento* from *Le baiser de la fée*). And what has been suggested, as a type of page-to-stage approach for choreography, collaborations between a composer and choreographer, where the composer has an opportunity to voice what is an appropriate aesthetic for the music (*Apollo*, *Agon*, *Checkmate*).

Ultimately, what has been found by studying several different approaches to musicality and the translation of a musical score to a visual product, is that a page-to-stage approach is difficult to define and determine for music, as this idea is closely tied to the idea of fidelity to the composer. However, it does seem as if Balanchine and Stravinsky's neoclassical ballets come closest to this, because Stravinsky had a large amount of input in the final product.

Diegesis

Examining the diegesis of ballets is an illuminating part of this study, as the placement of the music within the work is a good indicator of how involved the choreography is with the music. Choreographies that deliberately point out elements of the music or draw attention to a particular musical element (making the music diegetic) are related more closely to the music. While diegesis is often discussed in interdisciplinary collaborations with music, Jordan writes on its relevance to ballet:

This raises the question similar to that already raised by theorists with regard to performers and actors in opera and film, as to whether the dancers onstage always hear the music (metaphorically speaking). When music is built into the actual story of an opera or film (as so-called 'diegetic' music), there seems to be little doubt that the performers are meant to look as if they hear the music, for instance, on the various occasions when Carmen 'acts' singing (in Bizet's *Carmen*, 1875), or when musical instruments appear in a film's visual imagery. Thus too, as ballet examples, Juliet picks up and plays a mandolin on stage in accompaniment to Romeo at the ball where they first meet, horns indicate the arrival of the hunting party in *Giselle*; or the sound of an action, like the knocking on *Giselle*'s door, becomes musicalized as onomatopoeia. But the question as to hearing music

that is not embedded in the story, non-diegetic music, has given rise to debate. This is the case even though, in many instances, within the terms of artistic convention, we have grown accustomed to such use of music and to shifts back and forth between diegetic and non-diegetic music.

Suffice to say here that in the norm in dance is for us to understand that dancers do hear their music, as accompaniment to their dancing or as part of the world in which they dance (Jordan 2000a, 71).

While Jordan provides a comprehensive overview of the issue of diegesis in ballet, there is opportunity to expand upon this in the discussion of imitative choreography and musical references in the choreography. This compliments discussions on more overt displays of diegetic music such as having an instrument being ‘played’ onstage. In the ballets looked at, there are two main ideas in the placement of the music within the work, one being music as a narrative, and the other being music as the feature. The difference in the way that these musical functions work changes the way the choreography interacts with the music. In choreography where a narrative function is used, the choreography looks as if it is more spontaneous and seems to be adopted by more contemporary styles of ballet, possibly due to its more naturalistic effect. Conversely, ballets that make a feature of the music, have a definitiveness to the movements, being timed with the music for emphasis, which could be attributed to neoclassical ballets and to ballets that rely on the framework of classical ballet technique, especially when used as a substitute for a plot in plotless works. The close relation between the music and choreography can be an effective replacement for expressivity, as the emotive context can be established by the music alone. Copying the figurative motions of the music is shown to be an effective method of this in choreography.

Michel Chion’s explanations on how sound works in cinema help unpack some of the more complex ideas that arise when looking at diegesis in ballet. Since the process in adding music to an image is opposite in ballet and in cinema (the former starting with

the score and adding the image, and the latter starting with the image and adding the score), the musical interactions are fundamentally different. However, there are still concepts that work across both mediums. Closely synchronised sound influences the perception of an image. As Chion states:

In opera the frequent synchronising of music and action poses no problem, since it is an integral part of an overall gestural and decorative stylization. In the cinema such synchronization must be handled more discreetly, so as not to be taken as exclusively imitative or slip over into the mode of cartoon gags (Chion 1994, 54).

Noting the difference in the medium, ballet in this case does come under the same category as opera, where close synchronicity and imitation is acceptable. The fact that imitation has a ‘cartoonish’ effect on cinema highlights that such overt references to the score ‘breaks’ the non-diegetic status of the music. Using this technique in ballet, where action is added to sound, proves that an imitated score in choreography must be diegetic, as the music is being deliberately referenced and is now featured as action.

Balanchine’s diegetic relationship with Stravinsky’s music, especially in his collaborative works, shows a close relationship with the material in the score. While the imitative effect is less prominent than the approach in *Les Sylphides*, the music Stravinsky wrote for ballets such as *Apollo* and *Agon* is more challenging to follow melodically than the collection of Chopin pieces used in *Les Sylphides*. That being said, the music is obviously the focus of the choreographic content. Balanchine uses the events of the music and the types of sounds themselves to form the basis of the choreography’s content and the look of the dancers’ movements. *Apollo* does little to stray from the material of the score, repeating choreographic phrases where the score repeats itself and adopting long, open lines of the body, similar to the illusion of temporal freedom that Stravinsky’s constantly shifting phrasing evokes. Adding the closeness to the score, and Balanchine’s alteration of the ballet technique according to

the similar innovations in musical technique that the score includes, the music is clearly present in both the ‘real world’ and the ‘ballet world’. As Chion infers, with his comment on synchronised sound and image, matched movement and sound (especially when that movement quality is also matched) alerts the audience to the existence of the music, and in a performance setting such as ballet, this becomes the action onstage.

Agon applies similar techniques, matching music, movement, and movement quality together. However, the music’s deviation from the melodic emphasis that ‘traditional’ ballet scores rely on make this more difficult to see. Since *Agon*’s *pas de deux* is so slow and static the synchronization between music and movement becomes more apparent with repeated viewing, Balanchine uses walking motions onstage to different effects, using large lunges to highlight the larger intervals musically and smaller steps and *courus* for small intervals. It also relies heavily on balances, static poses, and odd contortions to accentuate the solo violin’s long, sustained notes. As most of the melodic content of *Agon* is designed to ‘clash’, even more exaggerated and decidedly ‘unclassical’ poses are used to match the sounds of the orchestra. Balanchine’s setting of music in this reflective form is also an indicator of diegetic sound, as the choreography is as involved in the music as another instrumental part is. While points of synthesis of Balanchine’s choreographies to Stravinsky are noted, it should be observed that the visual representations are not as exact as the imitation approach. The steps and the music fall in and out of exact synchronization (usually rhythmically), similar to the way that different instrumental parts interact. Jordan comments on Balanchine’s setting of Stravinsky:

the range and brilliance of his Stravinsky techniques are probably unmatched elsewhere in his repertory: the dance motor, whether autonomous and held in the dance or shared with music: the play with motor (as drama, time-filler, undercurrent for elasticity or primary force of momentum): the counterpoint with

music: the embodiment of melody and timbre: and the virtuoso interlocking with large musical structures (Jordan 2007, 255).

As Jordan notes, Balanchine's choreographies of Stravinsky's music are structured with awareness to the music in the foreground, and Balanchine takes the opportunity to push against the music which makes the overall presence of the music in the ballet more obvious. The effect of this on the diegetic relationship between the score and the choreography shows that the music is as important onstage to the dancers (not just as a timekeeping device) *and* in the ballet realm as it is to the audience.

Non-Diegetic Ballets

When ballets use the music as a backdrop for choreography, the reliance on imitation is diminished, and is often used to the effect of emphasising the action. The presence of music as a way of assembling the action does not necessarily mean that it is actually present in the 'ballet realm.' On this Chion notes:

From a horizontal perspective sounds and images are not uniform elements all lined up like fenceboards in a row. They have tendencies, they indicate directions, they follow patterns of change and repetition that create in the spectator a sense of hope, expectation, and plenitude to be broken or emptiness to be filled. This effect is best known in connection with music. Musical form leads the listener to expect cadences; the listener's anticipation of the cadence comes to subtend his/her perception. Likewise, a camera movement, a sound rhythm, or a change in an actor's behavior can put the spectator in a state of anticipation. What follows either confirms or surprises the expectations established— and thus an audiovisual sequence functions according to this dynamic of anticipation and outcome (Chion 1994, 55).

In this case, Chion discusses the narrative function of music and how it can cue how the audience perceives action in the setting of a film. In ballets, since there is no dialogue like in film, this is how the whole narrative is conducted, especially in modernist works, which seek to eliminate sequences of mime. It is interesting that it is the contemporary ballets (with the addition of Ashton's classical *Scènes de Ballet*, and de Valois' neoclassical *Checkmate*) that embrace this placement of the music more than the other

categories that favour the music as part of the onstage action. On the changing relationship with music that contemporary dance styles display, Jordan states:

The styles of modern dance mixed into ballet necessarily bring with them new styles of phrasing, sometimes less of the pulse emphasis that comes naturally from a step vocabulary, instead more of an emphasis on breath-style rhythm, and sometimes a different placement of accents. All this affects relationship with music (Jordan 2000, 60).

This discussion of moving away from a ‘step vocabulary’ could also be used in the changing placement of the music in the ballet, with ballets such as *Prodigal Son*, the *Rite of Spring*, and *L’Après-Midi d’un Faune*, that rely more on the use of the breath (or as Jordan refers to it: “*breath-style rhythm*”). In these situations, a non-diegetic approach is certainly a way to create enough distance between the music and the choreography by placing the music outside of the diegesis to allow freedom in the approach to musicality.

This discussion of diegesis relates back to the choreographic page-to-stage approach by displaying how to create frameworks for choreography. These frameworks can allow for either strict adherence to the music (by treating it as a part of the musical landscape and by making the music the action onstage) or allow space between the music and choreography to develop other methods of communicating musically, facilitating naturalistic movement. By changing the placement of the music in these situations, the relationship the choreography has with musical events can be a fundamental aspect of determining whether a page-to-stage translation is taking place. The diegetic acknowledgment of the score and the implications of this on the choreography are crucial elements in determining whether a ballet is translating the score to a visual medium through choreography.

The Case Study of Stravinsky

The focus on the translation of Stravinsky's works to the stage for this study is chosen due to Stravinsky's prominence as a composer of twentieth-century ballet music. His collaborations with several influential choreographers, and Stravinsky's own outspokenness on the resulting collaborations and choreographies are informative. While it is known that Stravinsky is an unreliable source for consistent views on modernism (Messing 1988, 89), and his interest in ballet and choreographic translation (Jordan 2007, 48), Stravinsky is a composer who played an active role in the adaptation of his works, collaborating with important European figures of Modernist art movements. He also established himself as a composer interested in experimenting with both how music sounds, and, through his choreographic collaborations, how music looks. Collaborating with several choreographers included in this overview of twentieth-century ballet styles, not only working extensively with Balanchine, Stravinsky has also worked with Nijinsky and Mikhail Fokine, both taking radically different approaches to setting Stravinsky's music. As mentioned earlier, Stravinsky's views varied greatly on the adaptations provided by each choreographer, and the ability of the choreographer to create a 'faithful' adaptation of his work. Several approaches to this have been explored, through the early expressionist story ballets, through to the neoclassical works, and Stravinsky's serial period. With these new creative endeavours comes the development and the establishment of a choreographic vocabulary for Stravinsky's music. Most often, Balanchine's choreographies of Stravinsky's works are seen as the official method of how to choreograph Stravinsky, developing a stark, minimalist and plotless aesthetic that emphasises the choreomusical relationship. On this Jordan writes:

Perhaps we are really talking here about a different balance of power where, in the shift towards a no-plot, no-design, concert based genre, the dramas emerge from choreomusical relations – and are structural and intellectual as well as emotional – rather than the other way around. Perhaps one of Balanchine’s most important contributions as a Stravinsky choreographer was to demonstrate that choreomusical relations can sometimes take on a major burden of responsibility within choreography and, in doing so, surprise and delight those who listen (Jordan 2007, 256).

Joseph expands on a similar idea:

Most relevant, dance and music were not always considered equal partners. Later, in the hands of Stravinsky and George Balanchine, they became so. As a Ballet composer who understood the language of dance better than any other musician of the twentieth century, Stravinsky needed to find an artist – a very sympathetic artist – capable of complementing his own clearly envisaged ideas. Visualising music in terms of correlative physical movement that would, above all else, serve the composer’s score was the crucial issue. And although this was hardly the only way to conceive choreography, for Stravinsky it was an unconditional, nonnegotiable assumption. Balanchine, given his own background and beliefs, perhaps more than any choreographer before or since had no qualms in accepting this *sine qua non*. This mutual understanding formed the crux of their relationship (Joseph 2008, x).

Stravinsky’s work with Balanchine is noted for its unique synthesis and attention to detail. It is often cited as an example of a successful formula to create a ballet where the music and choreographic elements of the work achieve a particularly strong synthesis. As discussion of Balanchine and Stravinsky’s suitability as a choreomusical pairing has expanded, Balanchine’s attention to detail in the score due to his high level of understanding of music is also often reiterated as a contributing factor to such a successful partnership, as well as, (as Joseph contributes,) Stravinsky’s understanding of dance, and his clear vision for the choreography of his music.

Findings

While the research casts doubt on whether a ‘true’ page-to-stage approach does exist, and what qualifies for this concept, it does shed light on the issues surrounding interdisciplinary collaboration and adaptation. The further discussion of the importance of

the location of music in a ballet with the contribution of diegetic and non-diegetic ballet music proves insightful. This finding is supported by examining the breadth of what the twentieth century offers in terms of modern choreography, and how Stravinsky is choreographed at a time where the authority of the composer was an increasingly important issue. Using Stravinsky as a case study for this not only exposes the range of choreographic approaches available to modernist music, but also how these approaches differ in their application of Modernist ideals of musical authority and fidelity. All of these issues are important in the analysis and historical study of the aesthetic experimentations of the use of the body with music, and the ever-changing vocabulary of ballet as a choreomusical framework.

The page-to-stage approach in choreography is difficult to apply as there is no prominent example of a composer who choreographs their own works, streamlining the translation process. However, there are some valid ideas that could inform a choreomusical page-to-stage approach, namely though close collaboration, or outright imitation. This often depends on the composer's attitude towards the involvement of choreography in the music, and which approach is seen as appropriate for the composer. Balanchine and Stravinsky's collaborations (in places where the score is left completely intact), is an excellent example of a composer and choreographer creating a movement vocabulary and an approach best suited for Stravinsky's works. In this case, it is a minimalist presentation in which the bodies of the dancers are used to illustrate the music, and the choreography is formed in a way that seems to interact with the music in a similar way to another instrumental part. This choreography has passages of following the score, and other moments where it remains close to the musical content, but diverges slightly. Within the context of the twentieth-century works discussed,

Balanchine and Stravinsky come the closest to a page-to-stage approach, and this page-to-stage approach is composer-specific to Stravinsky's music.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

Introduction

As ballet developed during the twentieth century, the styles demanded from composers and choreographers expanded the vocabulary of ballet from the fundamental classical techniques. The high demand for ballet as a form of performance (Balanchine and Mason 1984, Preface), and the experimental approaches to music that were the fashion during this time, necessitated these stylistic changes. This study looks at three major styles of ballet during this period: ballets that stay with the classical technique; and the modern forms of neoclassical ballets, and contemporary ballets. Each of these styles shows different priorities for performance and how they use the musical material. This study includes different approaches to choreographing music by a common composer. The composer for this study is Stravinsky who collaborated with several composers and was vocal in his praises and critiques of the different translations of his works. Considering the differing priorities of each style, a selection of ballets from these styles is used to assess how they music is used, and whether there is a version of a page-to-stage approach for ballet.

Question One: Does A Choreomusical Page-to-Stage Approach Exist?

The question of a page-to-stage approach is difficult to answer, as the choreography of a ballet work is both interdisciplinary and has two creators, the composer and choreographer. There are several possible methods that could be understood as a page-to-stage approach, namely, direct imitation or collaboration. That being said, it gives criteria for traits that disqualify a ballet from consideration for a page-to-stage approach. These criteria include alteration of the music, disregard for the ‘authority’ of the score, the composer’s disagreement with the choreographer’s approach to the score, the

choreographer's adherence (or lack of) to the musical events, and disregard for the composer's ideas on how their ballet scores should function with the choreography. The ballets selected show several different perspectives to these traits, some ballets being closer than others to a choreomusical page-to-stage approach.

General observations made during this process of studying ballet styles and their approaches to music include:

- Often in twentieth-century classical ballets, there is a tendency to place the choreography as the focus, altering the musical material to better serve the choreography (seen in all three classical ballets). Modern twentieth-century classical ballets are shown to establish themselves against the Romantic era ballet by being plotless, while also using the existing vocabulary of ballet to mimic the score.
- Neoclassical choreography is prone to altering the features of classical ballet technique to better suit the musical style, upholding some elements of classical technique and deliberately resisting other elements of classical technique. Neoclassical ballets are more likely to consider the composer's wishes in terms of the approach of music (seen in all three neoclassical ballets). Neoclassical ballets tend to be plotless, or have an abstract symbolic plot.
- Contemporary choreography shows a more relaxed approach to the music, using the score as a narrative guide and to establish the mood. The choreography relies on a more naturalistic approach to movement and/or is deliberately pushing against the conventions of ballet technique. Contemporary ballets also resort back to a narrative form, similar to the Romantic era ballet (seen in all three contemporary ballets).
- A common feature of these ballets is that they are all short one-act pieces, better suited to being included in mixed-bill programmes, as with concert music. This is unlike Romantic era ballets, which commonly rely on a three-act narrative, like opera.

- In terms of these categories and how they fit with the idea of a page-to-stage approach, in principle, both classical and neoclassical ballets are more suited to a page-to-stage reading, as they are more concerned with matching the sound of the music in the choreography *and* in the style of the movement. Contemporary ballets are, on the other end of the scale, far more concerned with expressivity and with the choreography's more holistic approach to the score, using the score as a dramatic guide. Both neoclassical and classical ballets are likely to focus on the interplay between the music and the choreography by eliminating the plot entirely or by having a plot that resembles an abstract scenario than an actual story. These common traits make a page-to-stage approach more feasible than the approach shown by the contemporary ballet model.
- An outline for what could constitute a page-to-stage approach is that:
 - It uses the entire score as written.
 - It has a direct relationship with the music, movements directly correlating with the musical material.
 - The choreography is formed either in collaboration with the composer, or in consideration with the musical style.
 - The music is a feature of the choreography, often resulting in a diegetic treatment of the music.

While Fokine's choreography of *Les Sylphides* comes close to this as a classical ballet, it naturally alters the score, and connects pieces that were originally separate works, forming them into a new work together.

Neoclassical Ballets

Importantly, neoclassical ballets are best suited to the concept of a choreomusical page-to-stage approach, especially the three ballets used to exemplify the neoclassical ballet style. Early versions of *Apollo* (birth of Apollo sequence included), *Agon*, and

Checkmate (with regard to the opinions of Arthur Bliss in the treatment of his music as a secondary or background feature in choreographic settings of his scores) qualify for consideration as a page-to-stage approach, setting music to choreography.

Question Two: Does Stravinsky and Balanchine's Collaboration Exemplify A Page-to-Stage Approach?

To answer the question of whether Balanchine and Stravinsky's collaborations exemplify the choreomusical page-to-stage approach, the answer is both yes and no. Balanchine and Stravinsky's neoclassical ballets are good examples of a page-to-stage approach for Stravinsky's music. To support this, Balanchine writes on how the ballet *Agon* was formed through collaboration:

Stravinsky and I met to discuss details of the ballet. In addition to the court dances, we decided to include the traditional classic ballet centrepiece, the *pas de deux*, and other more familiar forms. Neither of us of course imagined that we would be transcribing or duplicating old dances in either musical or dance terms. History was only the takeoff point. We discussed timing and decided that the whole ballet should last about twenty minutes. Stravinsky always breaks things down to essentials. We talked about how many minutes the first part should last, what to allow for the *pas de deux* and the other dances. We narrowed the plan as specifically as possible (Balanchine and Mason 1984, 13).

He goes on to say:

Music like Stravinsky's cannot be illustrated; one must try to find a visual equivalent that is a complement rather than an illustration. And while the score of *Agon* was invented for dancing, it was not simple to devise dances of a comparable density, quality, metrical insistence, variety, formal mastery, or symmetrical asymmetry. Just as a cabinetmaker must select his woods for the particular job in hand – palisander, angelique, rosewood, briar, or pine – so a ballet carpenter must find dominant quality of gesture, a strain or palette of consistent, and active scale of flowing patterns which reveals to the eye what Stravinsky tells the sensitised ear (Balanchine and Mason 1984, 14).

The collaborative approach to the format of the ballet and the score, as well as Balanchine's own words on how he looks at setting Stravinsky's music, easily confirm that Balanchine and Stravinsky's partnership was an example of a page-to-stage

approach. While this collaboration resulted in works considered page-to-stage adaptations, the approach to the music and the role it plays in the choreography will be subject to what the composer considers an appropriate setting of their music. This goes against the original proposition of one particular page-to-stage approach for choreography. Rather, there are several ways of creating a page-to-stage approach, each dependant on the composer in question. This is due to the greater authority that the composer and the score hold in music studies compared to the authority of the text and the author in theatre studies. Plays have the transparency of having stage directions in the text as written by the author. Scores do not have this luxury.

Difficulties With The Concept

The choreomusical page-to-stage approach is a difficult concept to establish, because of the number of channels it is translated through to deliver the finished product.

Collaboration streamlines this process and therefore aids in a more accurate visual representation of a piece of music. While collaboration is one way of securing a work resembling a page-to-stage approach, it is not the only way, but merely an effective method of achieving symbiosis. Balanchine has gone on to set many other pre-existing Stravinsky instrumental works in a similar manner. On the unique qualities Balanchine brought to the partnership as a Stravinsky choreographer, and how this changed even Stravinsky's mind on how music and choreography should interact, Joseph writes:

Years before he found a sympathetic partner in Balanchine, Stravinsky appeared nearly evangelical in preaching that his music would not stoop to abet the choreographer in privileging the dance, even in such an overtly programmatic score as *The Firebird*. "I have never tried, in my stage works to make the music illustrate the action, or the action the music," he asserted. "I have always endeavoured to find an architectural basis of connection." Yet years after he and Balanchine had collaborated on the neoclassical *Apollo*, Stravinsky's frequently espoused homily on the autonomy of music and dance seemed to soften a bit. In a public statement of 1934, he allowed that two arts could co-exist, and maybe even live happily together under the right circumstances (Joseph 2011, 234).

Balanchine and Stravinsky provide an example of a close partnership and collaboration that ultimately formed a page-to-stage approach for choreographic works. However, there is no standard method of determining a page-to-stage approach simply from analysis. Balanchine and Stravinsky's page-to-stage approach does not even apply to all works that Balanchine choreographed to Stravinsky's music as seen by Balanchine's *Divertimento* from *Le baiser de la fée*. Nor is it exemplified in Balanchine's works in collaboration with other composers, as shown through *Prodigal Son*. This is also not unique to Stravinsky's music (as shown through *Scènes de Ballet*, *Divertimento* from *Le baiser de la fée*, and *The Rite of Spring*). There are several ways to choreograph Stravinsky's music, and the suitability of classifying these approaches as page-to-stage approaches should be looked at on a case by case basis. Works by a particular composer/choreographer may not yield a page-to-stage adaptation.

Stravinsky and Balanchine's partnership for *Apollo* and *Agon* is illustrative of a page-to-stage approach that occurs when a duo of choreographer and composer collaborate with an ability to understand each other's disciplines, and create a method that resulted in a "visual equivalent that is a compliment rather than an illustration" (Balanchine and Mason 1984, 14).

Finding an example of a working page-to-stage approach in twentieth-century dance works reveals several things about how dance and music interact, and how different approaches to choreography show different functions for music in a dance work. Looking at choreography as a form of translation rather than as a work by itself is a useful tool for further analysis of dance works. While looking for a page-to-stage approach in choreography, this study looks at elements such as the concept of diegesis in a dance work, which reveals much about the function and the degree to which the score and choreography directly reference each other. The study of diegesis in

choreography is a vital element in how a conclusion for a page-to-stage approach was reached. There are several examples of ballets that are diegetic, yet do not fulfil the requirement for a page-to-stage classification, and an example of a page-to-stage approach that uses the music non-diegetically. Diegetic music is not a crucial element for a page-to-stage approach. However, it does reveal an issue of acknowledgment that is often required for the close musical engagement that a page-to-stage approach requires. Unlike Jordan's argument, I do not see diegesis as simply a question of whether an instrument is present onstage. I argue that it depends on the awareness that the choreography shows for the score, taking opportunities to reference and respond to the score in a visual language.

Summary

This study assesses a selection of ballet works from the twentieth century, considering ideas of how the music is involved and situated in a choreographic work. This ultimately adds to the discussion of the content of choreography, as well as how it integrates with musical ideas and the styles being developed during this time.

Stravinsky is used as a reference point to assess the different ways that choreographers use a composer's music. Stravinsky is a useful case study for this, as he had outspoken ideas on the ways that choreographies use and situate his compositions. Stravinsky's musical works are further well suited to such an assessment because of his popularity as a twentieth-century dance composer, his music being used by many choreographers, and often more than once by the same choreographer. In addition, Stravinsky's has a history of collaborating with several choreographers, many of them now prominent figures in modernist ballet. Using a high-profile composer who has such an influence over the twentieth-century dance scene is important to include in a revision of twentieth-century ballet styles to capture the styles that developed and defined the era's

dance aesthetic. Finding a page-to-stage approach enables a type of analysis that looks at how different choreographers approach a close relationship between music and movement. This study has found there is not one way for establishing a page-to-stage approach through dance, but rather some general criteria that could result in a page-to-stage approach, as shown through the neoclassical works of Balanchine and de Valois. It is important to consider that while the criteria discussed earlier (using the entire score, close relationship with the musical material, direct reference to the musical material, consideration of the authority of the text and the composer) does highlight a collaborative approach to choreography as a way of creating a page-to-stage approach, it is more important to be aware of the composer's ideas surrounding the setting of dance works, and involve these ideas alongside a consideration of the choreography.

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