



BRILL

EXPERIMENT 20 (2014) 17-30

EXPERIMENT  
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## Preface

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### Abstract

This current volume of *Experiment*, Volume 20, entitled “Kinetic Los Angeles: Russian Émigrés in the City of Self-Transformation” (Guest Editor, Lorin Johnson) is dedicated to the contributions of Russian artists who lived and worked in Los Angeles in the fields of dance performance, visual arts, and film, exploring how the city was influenced by their presence as well as the reasons that drew them to Southern California. While many of the essays focus on the émigré community that gathered in Los Angeles during the 1930s-1940s, the investigation of “Russianness” in the city is not confined to those decades. Each essay in this volume is accompanied by photographs and illustrations which help to tell this story, many of which are previously unpublished and recently discovered in private collections and archives in the U.S. and abroad. Contributors include: Kenneth Archer, John Bowlt, Donald Bradburn, Elizabeth Durst, Lynn Garafola, Karen Goodman, Millicent Hodson, Lorin Johnson (Guest Editor), Mark Konecny, Debra Levine and Oleg Minin.

### Keywords

Igor Stravinsky – Lester Horton – Adolph Bolm – George Balanchine – Theodore Kosloff – Bronislava Nijinska – Benjamin Zemach – Leon Bakst – Cecil B. DeMille – Nicholas Remisoff – Rudolf Nureyev – Mikhail Baryshnikov – Natalia Makarova – Alexander Godunov

In 2013 the centennial of *The Rite of Spring* (1913) was celebrated with festivals and performances throughout the world. The Music Center<sup>1</sup> in Los Angeles hosted a festival entitled “LA’s Rite: Stravinsky, Innovation and Dance,” which paid tribute to the creative legacy of Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) as well as to the spirit of dance innovation in the city. *The Rite of Spring*, a collaborative venture between composer Stravinsky, choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky and scenic and costume designer Nicholas Roerich, was commemorated through a symposium<sup>2</sup> and photographic exhibition, examining the original 1913 ballet alongside the Joffrey Ballet’s 1987 reconstruction by Millicent Hodson and Kenneth Archer. In many ways, research for the early planning of the festival was the catalyst for this present volume’s focus on Russian émigré artists in Los Angeles, as within the archives of the Music Center and the Los Angeles Philharmonic a vibrant community of Russian dancers and choreographers in the 1930s and 1940s was revealed through surviving photographs and programs. Aligned with the modernist endeavors of Serge Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, yet decidedly “LA” in style with their proximity to Hollywood, Russian artists changed the landscape of choreography, performance and design for both the concert stage and the silver screen. This current volume of *Experiment*, “Kinetic Los Angeles: Russian Émigrés in the City of Self-Transformation,” is dedicated to the contributions of Russian artists who lived and worked in Los Angeles in the fields of dance performance, visual arts, and film, exploring how the city was influenced by their presence as well as the reasons that drew them to Southern California. While many of the essays herein focus on the émigré community that gathered in Los Angeles during the 1930s-1940s, the investigation of “Russianness” in the city is not confined to those decades. *The Rite of Spring* serves to provide context for the transference of Russian modernism to the cultural arts climate of Los Angeles, and appropriately the journal begins with an essay by Archer and Hodson on their reconstruction of the ballet.

The Joffrey Ballet was in dual residence in New York and Los Angeles from 1983-1991 when the reconstruction of the 1913 Stravinsky, Nijinsky and Roerich *Rite* premiered at the Music Center in 1987. The founder and director of the company, Robert Joffrey has been compared to the impresario Diaghilev in his aspirations to create a dance company that would present both the old and

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1 The Music Center, a performing arts complex in downtown Los Angeles, consists of the Ahmanson Theatre, the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, the Mark Taper Forum, and Walt Disney Concert Hall: [www.musiccenter.org](http://www.musiccenter.org)

2 The speakers at the symposium of “LA’s Rite: Stravinsky, Innovation and Dance” were Kenneth Archer, John Bowlt, Lynn Garafola, Millicent Hodson, and Nicoletta Misler, with Sasha Anawalt as moderator.

the new through the vehicle of a touring company. Research on the Hodson/Archer reconstruction began in the late 1970s through conversations between Hodson and Joffrey, when Hodson was working on her dissertation at Berkeley. With fragments of information, Hodson and Archer (an English art historian who specializes in the research of Nicholas Roerich) worked for over seven years on the choreography, sets and costumes, gathering materials in five countries and meticulously organizing their research into the reconstruction. Their present essay, "SACRE 1913: Shamanic Sources & Ultramodern Forms," revisits the ballet in order to chart in exquisite detail how Nijinsky's choreography for *Rite* referenced the two-dimensional designs of designer Roerich. Archer and Hodson provide additional layers of evidence that ancient ideas regarding shamanism and archaic ritual are actually deeply embedded within the form of the choreography, underscoring the process of collaboration that existed on a nearly spiritual level between Nijinsky and Roerich. Carefully guiding the reader through *The Rite of Spring* as if on an archeological dig, Archer and Hodson unearth the puzzle of visual symbolism piece by piece, marrying the two-dimensional with the movement of bodies.

Archer and Hodson's essay is followed by "Degrees of Separation: Lester Horton's *Le Sacre du printemps* at The Hollywood Bowl," an essay written by the editor of this volume about a *Rite* created specifically in Los Angeles. Choreographed in 1937 by American modern dance choreographer Lester Horton (1906-1953), *Le Sacre* was the seventh production created to Stravinsky's score internationally and the first complete version ever on the West Coast. This essay closely examines Horton's possible sources of inspiration as well as available conduits for the transmission of Russian modernism in Hollywood of the 1930s, paying attention to Horton's professional relationships with choreographers Adolph Bolm and Michio Ito in particular. During the 1920s-1940s a great influx of émigré artists connected to Russian modernist art and dance infused the cultural atmosphere of Los Angeles, blending ideas with American and European influences into a vibrant dance tapestry. As a frontier land wherein the exoticism of Russian dance attracted curious onlookers, Los Angeles was altered and shaped by aspects of Russian modernism that found their way into the public sphere.

Between 1890 and 1930 the arrival of immigrants increased the population of Los Angeles from 50,000 to 1.2 million in the city and 2.2 million in Los Angeles County.<sup>3</sup> The arrival of European immigrants throughout the 1930s was accelerated by European Fascism and war, resulting in some of the most renowned

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3 Robert M Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pg. 77.

European artists flocking to Los Angeles, including Stravinsky, Ingrid Bergman, Aldous Huxley, Thomas Mann, and Bertolt Brecht, contributing to Los Angeles' aura as an international cultural melting-pot. High profile Russian émigré dancers and choreographers included George Balanchine, Bolm, Michel and Vera Fokine, Bronislava Nijinska, Theodore Kosloff and Serge Oukrainsky. All were nurtured under the glow of the Ballets Russes, either working directly with Diaghilev's company in Europe or indirectly under influence of the artistic product through their close proximity (Oukrainsky, for example, was a dancer with Anna Pavlova's company in Paris during the 1910s.) And lest we forget, these 'exiles in paradise' were attracted to Los Angeles by not only the Mediterranean-like climate and movie industry, but also by the émigré community itself.<sup>4</sup> Many enjoyed productive periods of creativity, contributing to LA's artistic landscape and in many ways "internationalizing" the city (This attraction to the city has not waned over the years, and during the 1980s Los Angeles attracted more immigrants than any other city in the United States—more than twice the amount than settled in New York.)<sup>5</sup>

Ever since Anna Pavlova and Mikhail Mordkin's appearance in Los Angeles at Philharmonic Auditorium in 1910, Russian dancers have garnered great attention from the local press.<sup>6</sup> Yet cultural exchanges had existed between the United States and Russia much earlier, since the late 1880s, when Russian writers and artists began to arrive through programs intended to promote social or economic liberation (The composer Piotr Tchaikovsky toured the U.S. in 1891 after appearing as a conductor at Carnegie Hall.) By the 1920s, Russian dance, along with theatre and drama, had inundated the cultural consciousness of Americans, exemplified by the 1928 Soviet government promotion of Russian avant-garde theatre in New York during the Russian Exposition of Handicrafts, Theatre, Science and Industry, which showcased "futuristic developments" in the Soviet arts.<sup>7</sup> One could make the argument that cultural programs designed to bring Russians to America were not so very different than the diplomatic efforts to disseminate Russian culture in France following the Russo-Japanese

4 Kenneth H. Marcus, *Musical Metropolis: Los Angeles and the Creation of a Music Culture, 1880-1940* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), pg. 83.

5 Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930*, pg. xvi.

6 In the *Los Angeles Times* (hereafter "LAT") review of Pavlova's and Mordkin's debut performance in Los Angeles, during which they performed *Giselle* as well as an evening of repertory including Mordkin's famous *Arrow Dance*, the critic described Pavlova as "the most remarkable exhibition of dancing which has ever been seen in America." Julian Johnson, "Ballet is Stupendous: Pavlova a Poet's Dream, Mordkin Greek Statue," *LAT*, December 1, 1910.

7 Valleri Hohman, *Russian Culture and Theatrical Performance in America, 1891-1933*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pg. 103.

War of 1905. Taking advantage of such opportunities, Diaghilev's exhibitions and performances forever changed the cultural landscape of France.

Many of the earliest Russian immigrant artists were Jewish, and one of the first touring companies to promote experimental Russian theatre in America was Habima (the Moscow based Hebrew-language theatre) as well as the Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio. An essay by Karen Goodman, "Synthesis in Motion: The Dance Theatre Work of Benjamin Zemach in Los Angeles," explores the Jewish dancer, actor, director and choreographer's two periods in Los Angeles, 1931-1935 and 1946-1971. In Los Angeles, Zemach (1901-1997) experimented with ideas in dance, theatre and film that paid homage to his Jewish heritage as well as his avant-garde roots in Moscow (Zemach studied with dance teachers Nina Alexandrova and Inna Chernetskaia, among others.) As a member of Habima, one of the national studio theatres of Konstantin Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theatre (MKhAT), and an original cast member of the Moscow production of *The Dybbuk* (1922) directed by Evgeni Vakhtangov, Zemach was perfectly situated to carry a unique language of dance expression to Los Angeles, working in such Jewish organizations as YIDTEG (Yiddish Theater Chorus) and venues such as the Pasadena Playhouse, Philharmonic Auditorium and the Hollywood Bowl.

The Ballets Russes American tour of 1916-17, followed by visits of the Fokines, the Pavley-Oukrainsky Ballet, Kosloff and Bolm, brought to life the idea of modern ballet, Russian style, in Los Angeles. The American public was already well-aware of the growing influence of Russians in experimental performing arts, and Valleri Hohman reminds us that by the middle of the 1920s "it was difficult to imagine a modernist theatre company in America without an interest in or connection to Russian theatre."<sup>8</sup> The majority of engagements were due to the relentless sponsorship and advocacy of impresarios Sol Hurok and Morris Gest as well as Otto H. Kahn, a wealthy banker and chairman of the board of the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Appropriately for the Los Angeles public and the democratic values espoused by the early founders of the Hollywood Bowl, Gest and Kahn brought Russian experimental dance to the masses as theatrical commodity rather than political agitprop performance.<sup>9</sup> Modern Russian dance, as it was experienced in Los Angeles in the 1920s and 1930s, was produced to be palatable by the public while also catering to the elite.

In fact, since the 1920s the general public in Los Angeles had easy access to current ideas in dance circulating the globe, as witnessed by articles that appeared in *The American Dancer* magazine (published in Los Angeles from

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8 Ibid., pg. 58.

9 Ibid., pg. 100.

1927-1933, before moving to New York under the name *Dance Magazine*.) During the early years of the periodical, articles were written discussing European artistic movements and the influence of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, Françoise Delsarte, Yvonne Georgi and Harald Kreutzberg, as well as Russian choreographers that were as diverse as Fokine and Kas'ian Goleizovsky. By the 1930s, thousands of dancers were training and performing in Los Angeles and a headline from the Los Angeles Times in 1929 stated "Los Angeles Takes Lead as Dance Center."<sup>10</sup> The attitude of the city as a "promised land of dance" is reflected in *The American Dancer* articles from the late-1920s in which one can find such statements as: "if in New York, London, Paris or even far away Australia, one sees a marvelous team or dancer and inquires from whence they came—invariably the answer is California."<sup>11</sup>

Diaghilev was anxious to accept the offer of Kahn to have a North American tour for the Ballets Russes, during which the company visited seventeen U.S. cities January-April 1916. During the second American tour, the Ballets Russes appeared in Los Angeles at Clune's Auditorium (renamed Philharmonic Auditorium in 1920) from December 25-30. Traveling by train across country, the journey into Southern California was marked by a change of scenery that brought a sense of the restorative to the company, recorded by Nijinsky's wife, Romola: "Great was our amazement the next morning at breakfast when we looked out of the dining-room car window. Instead of the snow-capped mountains, a sea of orange-groves was all around us, deep green studded with golden fruit."<sup>12</sup> Diaghilev was famously dismissive of American audiences, considering them too ignorant to understand the quality and context of the ballets they were viewing. According to Hanna Järvinen, American dance critics were actually quite well-informed of current artistic trends in dance and chose to view Diaghilev's modern ballets on a level playing field with contemporaries in other styles. In cities such as Los Angeles, upper class audience members did not necessarily determine their social status through patronage of such European dance forms as ballet, further emphasizing a non-hierarchical perception of dance in the city.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps it is precisely in this that Diaghilev's irritation arose. Yet, dancers, choreographers, composers and designers from his

10 "Los Angeles Takes Lead as Dance Center," *LAT*, June 23, 1929. This article remarks on the great influx of new dancers to Los Angeles with the advent of the talking motion pictures, naming the city as the nation's center of dance.

11 Jack Laughlin, "Fame Seeks California Dancers," *The American Dancer* (December, 1927): pp. 16, 30.

12 Romola Nijinsky, *Nijinsky*, (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1933), pg. 346.

13 Järvinen, "Failed Impressions: Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in America, 1916," pg. 86.

company continued to welcome opportunities to live and work in Los Angeles, and a few of them even enjoyed celebrity status and moved in powerful social circles.

An unexpected visitation from the Ballets Russes camp came in the form of Léon Bakst (1866-1924), arguably the most distinguished of Diaghilev's stage designers, who traveled throughout Southern California on a lecture tour in 1924 as part of his extended visit to America. In their essay "The Art of Concealing Imperfection': Leon Bakst and Southern California," John Bowlt and Elizabeth Durst use the backdrop of Bakst's appearances in California (which included the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles and the Bovard Auditorium at the University of Southern California) for a larger discussion on cultural, social and aesthetic values. Connected to the Southern California elite and yet separate as a kind of "exotic species" in Los Angeles, Bakst lectured on modern art and fashion design while enjoying his VIP status among a celebrity community. Bowlt and Durst place Bakst square in the middle of 1920s Hollywood culture, exploring his curiosity of artistic trends and support of cinema as a new form of dramatic art, and one that presented incredible possibilities for designers.

The burgeoning film industry was a natural draw for many Russian artists, and high-profile choreographers including Balanchine, Bolm, Fokine, Kosloff, and Nijinska all tried their hand to various degrees of success. Los Angeles had emerged as the nation's center of cinema production as early as the 1910s, with operations spreading out from the city to the San Fernando Valley and Culver City, and by the 1930s Los Angeles was the fifth leading industrial city in the nation with the movie industry leading the way as the city's breadwinner.<sup>14</sup> By that time, the eight major film powerhouses had established their control over the industry (Paramount, Fox, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Universal, Warner Brothers, Columbia, United Artists, and RKO) and dance artists were sought to add aesthetic appeal and artistic credence to the product.

In 1929, another Ballets Russes luminary followed suit and came to Los Angeles. On the heels of a brief appearance at the National Opera in Riga, Michel Fokine (1880-1943) came to Hollywood with his wife, Vera Fokina (1886-1958), lured by the promise of cinema and with an invitation by Gest to perform a mixed bill at the Hollywood Bowl. Though almost fifty years old, Fokine was apparently still in fine form and had just performed lead roles in *Les Sylphides* and *Prince Igor*.<sup>15</sup> In Los Angeles, Fokine recruited his corps de ballet from the

14 Steven J. Ross, "How Hollywood Became Hollywood," *Metropolis in the Making: Los Angeles in the 1920s*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pg. 261.

15 Michel Fokine, *Fokine: Memoirs of a Ballet Master*, translated by Vitale Fokine, edited by Anatole Chujoy, (London: Constable & Company Limited, 1961), pg. 261.

local population of dancers, an approach that won him great praise locally (an advertisement in *The American Dancer* carried the promotion: “Fokine Seeks Dancers for Bowl Appearance” in May, 1929). In good faith for a promised contract from Gest, Fokine and his family moved to California under the pretense of forming a school and ballet company, as well as establishing connections in the movie industry. However, with an absence of financial backing and a growing mistrust on Fokine’s behalf toward producers, Fokine’s time in Hollywood was short lived (it also did not help that Gest suffered both bankruptcy and a nervous breakdown).

The Ballets Russes dancer to most successfully make the leap from concert dance performance to film stardom is inarguably Theodore Kosloff (1881-1956), who first came to America in 1911 to choreograph for *Saison des Ballets Russes*, the brainchild of Gertrude Hoffman and Gest. It was when on tour in Los Angeles that Kosloff met Cecil B. DeMille, who offered him a role in his film, *The Woman God Forgot* (1917), launching a lucrative career in Hollywood that would parallel Kosloff’s life as choreographer and teacher (He opened his school in Los Angeles in 1919, the first to carry the traditions of the Russian Imperial School to the city.) In her essay, “Theodore Kosloff & Cecil B. DeMille Meet *Madam Satan*,” dance critic Debra Levine unveils a “backstage view” of Kosloff’s on-again, off-again relationship with DeMille during the making of the 1930 film *Madam Satan*. Appearing as “Electricity” during a masquerade ball in a Zeppelin, complete with a headpiece of radiating metallic lighting-rods, the charismatic Kosloff is disarmingly deconstructed by Levine in the process of contextualizing the historical and cultural importance of the film, including its critical reception. In her essay, *Madam Satan* is shown to have important links to Italian Futurism and the constructivist zeitgeist of *Le Pas d’Acier* (1927), and even to late-19th century ballet spectacle, creating a ripple-effect of industrial inspired choreography that may have contributed to similar choreographic experiments in Los Angeles (i.e. Adolph Bolm’s *The Spirit of the Factory*).

Adolph Bolm (1884-1951), whose catholic interests in dance included a fascination with American popular dance forms, created a host of modern ballets in Los Angeles that defy categorization and which have largely slipped from collective memory, including his masterpiece, the 1931 *The Spirit of the Factory*. At the conclusion of the second U.S. tour of the Ballets Russes in 1917, Bolm was injured on stage and decided to remain in America, eventually moving to Los Angeles in 1930. Making significant contributions to dance in cities such as Chicago, Washington, D.C. and San Francisco (Bolm choreographed the premiere of Stravinsky’s *Apollon musagète* six weeks before Balanchine’s production for the Ballets Russes), it was in Los Angeles that his *The Spirit of*

*the Factory* premiered, a large-scale American machine dance that became the toast of Hollywood for years to come. Mark Konecny and this editor delve deeply into the varied influences that informed this work in the essay, "Adolph Bolm's Cinematic Ballet: *The Spirit of the Factory*," arguing that Bolm's vision for his staging at the Hollywood Bowl was founded on ideas of light and space emanating from his early interest in cinema (the ballet was originally planned for the 1930 movie, *The Mad Genius*). Created to the avant-garde score of Aleksandr Mosolov, Bolm's *Spirit* unites the two halves of the choreographer's life; his exposure to modernist artistic movements in St. Petersburg and his later life in America, where he absorbed and embodied the frenetic pace of modern America in his creative work. A constant in Bolm's artistic process when working in America and Los Angeles was his creative collaboration with modernist painter and designer, Nicholas Remisoff (Nikolai Remisov), who created the costumes for *Spirit* as well as the designs for Bolm's *The Firebird* (1940) at the Hollywood Bowl.

Oleg Minin charts Remisoff's journey from Russia to America and then to California in his essay, "Russian Artists in the United States: The Case of Nicholas Remisoff (1887-1975)." Known early in his career as an illustrator of political satire in revolutionary journals such as *Satirikon* (1908-1913), Remisoff is shown in Minin's essay to be a master of reinvention, contributing enormously to the popular reception of Nikita Balieff's *Chauve-Souris* in Paris before immigrating to the United States and then Los Angeles in 1938, where he continued to work as a designer of opera, ballet and cinema until his death in the 1970s. Minin's research unveils Remisoff's collaborative relationship with Bolm, which began in Chicago and prospered in Los Angeles in the 1930s. The penultimate example of this may be Remisoff's work as designer on Stravinsky's *The Firebird* in 1940, featuring choreography by Bolm, which premiered at the Hollywood Bowl with Stravinsky in his Bowl conducting debut. Establishing himself as both a live stage set designer and an art director in Hollywood (where he contributed to over thirty films, including *Ocean's Eleven*), Remisoff's contributions as a visual artist to the cultural landscape of Los Angeles are discussed as well as the critical reception he received, underscoring the vast reach of Russian modernism in the city.

Of course, one of the primary avenues of influence available to Russian émigré artists was through their teaching, through time spent in the studio sharing their art with their students. Whether in the process of learning new choreography or in their daily classes in ballet technique, local dance pupils in Los Angeles were eager to absorb the stories, wisdom and charisma of their Russian teachers. It may very well be that through their teaching, Russian dancers found the most immediate and lasting way of sharing the secrets of

their craft with future generations, and few were as prolific as Ballets Russes dancer and choreographer Bronislava Nijinska (1891-1972). Nijinska, who first came to Hollywood in 1934 to choreograph the dances in Max Reinhardt's high-profile film, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, settled permanently in Los Angeles in 1940 and spent the next thirty-two years of her life in California. A program of her ballets was performed at the Hollywood Bowl and featured her first generation of American students, including "Sid" Charisse, the future movie star, and Bette (later Maria) Tallchief, the future New York City Ballet ballerina. In captivating detail, Lynn Garafola describes Nijinska's Los Angeles period as a choreographer and teacher in her essay "In Search of Eden: Bronislava Nijinska in California," as well as Nijinska's unrequited passion to create a Los Angeles-based dance company. Nijinska's California was in many ways a godsend, according to Garafola, from financial woes during the Depression and also as an alternative to the free-lance career which often kept her separated from her children. Joining an émigré community that included former Ballets Russes ex-patriots Léonide Massine and Bolm, Nijinska found a talent pool and appreciation for ballet in Los Angeles far beyond her expectations, and Garafola describes her ambitious efforts to produce quality performances at the Hollywood Bowl. First-hand accounts of her rigorous teaching methods in Los Angeles are also brought to life by the author, underscoring the passion which produced such noteworthy students as Charisse, Tallchief and, later, Allegra Kent.

George Balanchine (1904-1983) was also a resident of Hollywood for a time, coming to Southern California in 1938 at the invitation of Sam Goldwyn to choreograph for a new musical-comedy film, *The Goldwyn Follies* (1938). In the interim between the American Ballet's residency at the Metropolitan Opera and before returning to New York to collaborate with Lincoln Kirstein on Ballet Society, Balanchine choreographed several films in Hollywood and met one of his wives, Vera Zorina while (as Buckle describes it) he basked "in the California sunshine."<sup>16</sup> During his Hollywood years Balanchine worked prolifically with Stravinsky on projects that would resound primarily in New York, though there is sparse evidence of Balanchine participating with local Los Angeles dance troupes during the late 1930s or early 1940s.

In Hollywood of the late 1930s, Balanchine was reunited with Stravinsky, with whom he had first worked when choreographing the restaging of *Le Chant du Rossignol* in 1925. Stravinsky visited the United States in September 1939 to deliver lectures at Harvard University, when he had traveled on concert

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16 Richard Buckle, *George Balanchine: Ballet Master*, (New York: Random House, 1988), pg. 108.

tours to San Francisco, New York, Boston, Pittsburgh and Chicago, and had also stopped by in Los Angeles to talk to Disney about the progress on the film *Fantasia* (1940). Stravinsky had previously toured Los Angeles in 1935 and 1937, and had a network of friends and many exciting possibilities for new ventures, including prospects to work with Charlie Chaplin and others in the film industry. In 1941, Stravinsky and his wife, Vera moved to their house at 1260 North Wetherly Drive in West Hollywood, a home that was as cozy as it was a grand central meeting ground for Stravinsky's friends and collaborators and which the composer described as "my last, longest, happiest, and I should hope—final home."<sup>17</sup>

Stravinsky and Balanchine visited on an almost daily basis in the late 1930s, with Stravinsky intrigued by Balanchine's work in films and at times attending rehearsals to observe.<sup>18</sup> Balanchine, for his part, went with Stravinsky to the Disney studios in 1939 to a prerelease screening of *Fantasia*. More than one Hollywood producer approached Stravinsky to compose for film, at times offering him substantial sums of money to simply attach his name to music another had written! Ultimately, Stravinsky's "take it or leave it" stance with his music resulted in only a few unfulfilled projects (with the exception of *Fantasia*, which became a bone of contention between Stravinsky and Disney.) And though Stravinsky proclaimed his preference for American movies over European, he also stated in 1937 that he "didn't find Mickey Mouse more than interesting for the same reason that I wouldn't care to write music for the moving pictures. Too much repetition. I have a feeling that Mr. Disney rests too much on his formula."<sup>19</sup>

In Los Angeles, Stravinsky was surrounded by artists, writers and musicians who visited him at home, including Mann, Arthur Rubinstein, Balanchine, Bolm, Huxley, Christopher Isherwood, Nadia Boulanger and many others. During the next twenty-five years Stravinsky appeared many times conducting the LA Philharmonic, the Werner Janssen Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Chamber Symphony Society and at the Los Angeles Music Festival. The Ojai Festival also had a long-standing relationship with Stravinsky, where thirty-one of Stravinsky's works were performed by 1969.<sup>20</sup> However, Stravinsky's most favored concerts were the Monday Evening concerts, which

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17 Lawrence Morton, "Stravinsky in Los Angeles," *Festival of Music Made in Los Angeles Program*, Royce Hall, UCLA, November 28-December 5, 1981, pg. 68.

18 Charles M. Joseph, *Stravinsky and Balanchine: a Journey of Invention*, (London: Yale University Press, 2002), pg. 161.

19 *Ibid.*, pg. 108.

20 Morton, "Stravinsky in Los Angeles," pg. 78.

reminded him of the Evenings of Contemporary Music he had attended in St. Petersburg in the 1910s.<sup>21</sup>

Los Angeles did serve as a meeting ground for the gestation of several high profile creations between Stravinsky and Balanchine, including *Balustrade* (1941) for de Basil's Original Ballet Russe in (later reworked in 1972 as *Stravinsky Violin Concerto*), *Circus Polka* (1941), and *Danses Concertantes* (1944) for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Their bi-coastal relationship was a productive one, with Stravinsky's Hollywood home often serving as a site for informal rehearsals. Balanchine and Stravinsky completed a good deal of their work on *Orpheus* (1948) for Ballet Society during the summer of 1946 in Stravinsky's house and the two also met frequently during the summer of 1954 to discuss *Agon* (1957) while the New York City Ballet was in town. Balanchine travelled especially to California to attend the orchestral premiere of *Agon* at the Los Angeles Music Festival on June 18, 1957, staying on the west coast for a few days to discuss final preparations with Stravinsky for the upcoming fall premiere of the ballet in New York.

Later in the 1960s, Balanchine returned to Los Angeles (mostly in name) to serve as Artistic Consultant for a new ballet company formed under the umbrella of the Western Ballet Association, Ballet of Los Angeles (later Western Ballet). Though short lived, this venture created an indirect pathway for the creation of the Los Angeles Ballet in 1974 (directed by John Clifford) which performed throughout Southern California for about a decade, including with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, as well as on U.S. national and international tours. When one reflects on all the incarnations of "Los Angeles" and "ballet" in the city's recent history (David Lichine's and Tatiana Riabouchinska's 1953 performing group was called Los Angeles Ballet Theatre, which may be the first), the various off-shoots of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes seems not nearly as confusing! A current Los Angeles Ballet (unrelated to Clifford's company) exists even today, led by two former New York City Ballet principal dancers, who continue to carry the Balanchine torch onward.

Retrospectively, concert dance performance in 1930s Los Angeles retains an allure of a "golden age" of experimentation, when local students and international "stars" found themselves in a close-knit community of shared studios and theatres, often producing artistic work that went far beyond the mainstream (in fact, many dance studios were clustered around the Hollywood Hills, where the sense of community was palpable.) By the late 1930s, the spirit of volunteerism that had allowed so many local dancers to hone their craft in front of major audiences, as well as the idealism that had fostered these programs,

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21 Ibid., pg. 79.

began to disappear.<sup>22</sup> Management of the Hollywood Bowl, for example, succumbed to the more profitable market of bringing in outside troupes—companies who arrived with a set repertory and their own public relations staff (not to mention the star power of such names as Massine, Alexandra Danilova, or Serge Lifar).<sup>23</sup> After 1940, the competition grew more intense with travelling companies the Jooss Ballet, Martha Graham's company, the Littlefield Ballet, the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, and Ballet Theatre stopping in Los Angeles on their tours. Philharmonic Auditorium was eventually replaced by the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, which opened in 1964 and today serves as a major hub for touring dance companies (Philharmonic Auditorium, after serving as a Baptist Church for many years, was torn down in the 1980s—currently a parking lot at the intersection of 5th and Olive streets). Today, if they are willing to battle the traffic, audiences in Los Angeles have access to companies from all over the world, yet local artists have struggled to retain their foothold with the challenges of funding and accessible performance spaces.

Russian dancers continued to visit Los Angeles during the “dance boom” of the 1970s, when audiences saw Soviet defectors Mikhail Baryshnikov, Alexander Godunov, Natalia Makarova, and Rudolf Nureyev in the prime of their careers at the Hollywood Bowl, The Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and the Greek Theater. Dance photographer Donald Dale Bradburn, a local Southern California dancer (and a product of Eugene Loring's American School of Dance in Los Angeles) describes his behind-the-scenes access to these dancers in the interview, “Fleeing the Soviet Union, Dancing on the West Coast.” Perfectly positioned as *Dance Magazine's* Southern California correspondent, Bradburn offers a candid appraisal of the Southern California appeal for such high-powered Russian artists as well as their impact on the arts of Los Angeles. An intimate view of Russian dancers practicing their craft on Los Angeles stages, Bradburn's interview is illustrated by fourteen of his photographs, published for the first time in *Experiment*, which reveal the human connections between performer and audience (or photographer and subject). Perhaps of all artistic disciplines dance is passed down from generation to generation through the immediacy of personal contact—fleeting moments that are carried on by those who were most deeply touched by the experience.

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22 Naima Prevots, *Dancing in the Sun: Hollywood Choreographers 1915-1937* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1987), pp. 249-250. Prevots' book is an authoritative resource on many of the Russian choreographers discussed in this volume of *Experiment*, and the Epilogue of her book offers a detailed discussion on the hopes and challenges of creating a Los Angeles ballet company in the late 1930s.

23 Ibid.

A great deal of the history of arts and dance in Los Angeles remains to be researched; this volume, not comprehensive, hopefully provides additional layers leading to a greater understanding and appreciation of the artistic contributions of the Russian émigré community. Each essay in this volume is accompanied by photographs and illustrations which help to tell this story. Many are previously unpublished and recently discovered in private collections and archives in the U.S. and abroad. It is hoped that this volume, “Kinetic Los Angeles: Russian Émigrés in the City of Self-Transformation” captures some of the energy that has helped shape the arts, culture and character of one of the most iconic cities in America.