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Dance and Lyric Reunited. Fauré's *Pénélope* and the Changing Role of Ballet in French Opera[1]

The presence of ballet in French opera goes back to the seventeenth century, when dance, declamation, and singing had equal rights on the French stage. Indeed, the ballet de cour preceded the development of tragédie en musique and was, so to speak, waiting on the boards when Cardinal Mazarin and Jean-Baptiste Lully imported opera from Italy. Throughout the eighteenth century, ballet and opera were mixed together on French stages, but gradually they began to separate. With the advent of opéra comique, a theatrical form took root in which formal dance had a subsidiary or even nugatory role. At the time of Gaspare Spontini and Gioachino Rossini, the destinies of ballet and opera remained tightly intertwined, but ballet was more closely allied to serious opera than comic opera. Such "grand" or serious works were given at Paris's first lyrical theater, the Opéra, an institution which had not only the obligation but also the exclusive privilege of producing sumptuous multi-act ballets, and where every opera, too, included by legal charge and public demand, a danced segment, more or less blended into the story and usually placed toward the beginning of an inner act. This dance sequence within an opera is what we may call a ballet-divertissement. Let us take Camille Saint-Saëns's opera in four acts *Étienne Marcel* (Lyon, Grand-Théâtre, 1879) as a mature example of the genre. The sequence of dances constituting the ballet-divertissement is positioned as the first scene of Act III and consists of six distinct dance numbers (see Figure 1, page 53). Musicians and theater people of the time often called these sequences simply "ballets" rather than "ballet-divertissements", but the latter term is helpful to modern writers because it allows us to distinguish embedded dance sequences like the one in *Étienne Marcel* from full-length, independent ballets, like *Giselle* or *Sylvia*.

Now, in a typical ballet-divertissement, the starting and ending points of an embedded dance scene are as clear as the double bars that mark its boundaries. Such clearly framed examples may be found in works as different as Hector Berlioz's *Troyens* and

1 I am grateful to Stephanie Schroedter and the research group of the SNSF project "Moving Meyerbeer", whose invitation to a conference in Biel, Switzerland (April 2015), inspired this paper, as well as to the Swiss National Science Foundation for funding the conference and my travel. I gave a revised version of the paper at the University of Colorado (September 2015) and at the international conference "Effable and Ineffable. Gabriel Fauré and the Limits of Criticism" (Seattle, October 2015). Lively discussion of the paper ensued at all three venues, and I sincerely thank all the colleagues and students whose insights and questions improved this essay. I also thank Jessie Fillerup for reading an early version and suggesting a re-ordering of ideas.

Charles Gounod's *Tribut de Zamora*. The formula for introducing the divertissement in Act III or Act IV was long established by the time Berlioz, Gounod, and Saint-Saëns came along. The ballet is presented diegetically – that is, as an event the singers on stage explicitly witness and experience. A ballet-divertissement has two audiences: one on stage, and one in the hall. In *Le Tribut de Zamora*, for example, the baritone Ben-Saïd exclaims to the woman he wishes to woo, Xaïma, "Chasse au loin ta tristesse inquiète / Ma Xaïma! … par mon ordre une fête / Se prépare pour toi dans cet heureux séjour", and a ballet-divertissement instantly follows under his command.[2] Such ballets, curiously, often fail to satisfy the woman they are intended to amuse. Ben-Saïd's first words after the end of the ballet are typical in their expression of disappointment: "Je m'efforce en vain de te plaire / Jamais ton beau front ne s'éclaire."[3] Berlioz's restless Queen Dido likewise waves away the dancers with scant appreciation: "Assez, ma sœur, je ne souffre qu'à peine / Cette fête importune …".[4] This framing of feminine disappointment might be worth further investigation. Does it signify, obliquely, that women took less pleasure in ballet than male spectators in an era when ballet was dominated by female dancers?[5] Or is it merely a rote dramatic device to turn the audience's attention away from the dance and back to the sung drama? Even within the almost ritual traditions of the ballet-divertissement, many such interesting questions remain to be studied.[6]

The consistent habits of the genre are overwhelmingly obvious, but we may also notice signs of invention and integration in ballet-divertissements when we look at them closely, as examples of a type and as a set of scenic and dramatic opportunities, even if one operating under closely guarded conventions. Furthermore, French audiences apparently loved ballet so much that opera composers and librettists frequently inserted additional dance numbers outside of the central divertissement. While such "extra" dances often bear headings according to their specific dance type (cachucha or gavotte, for

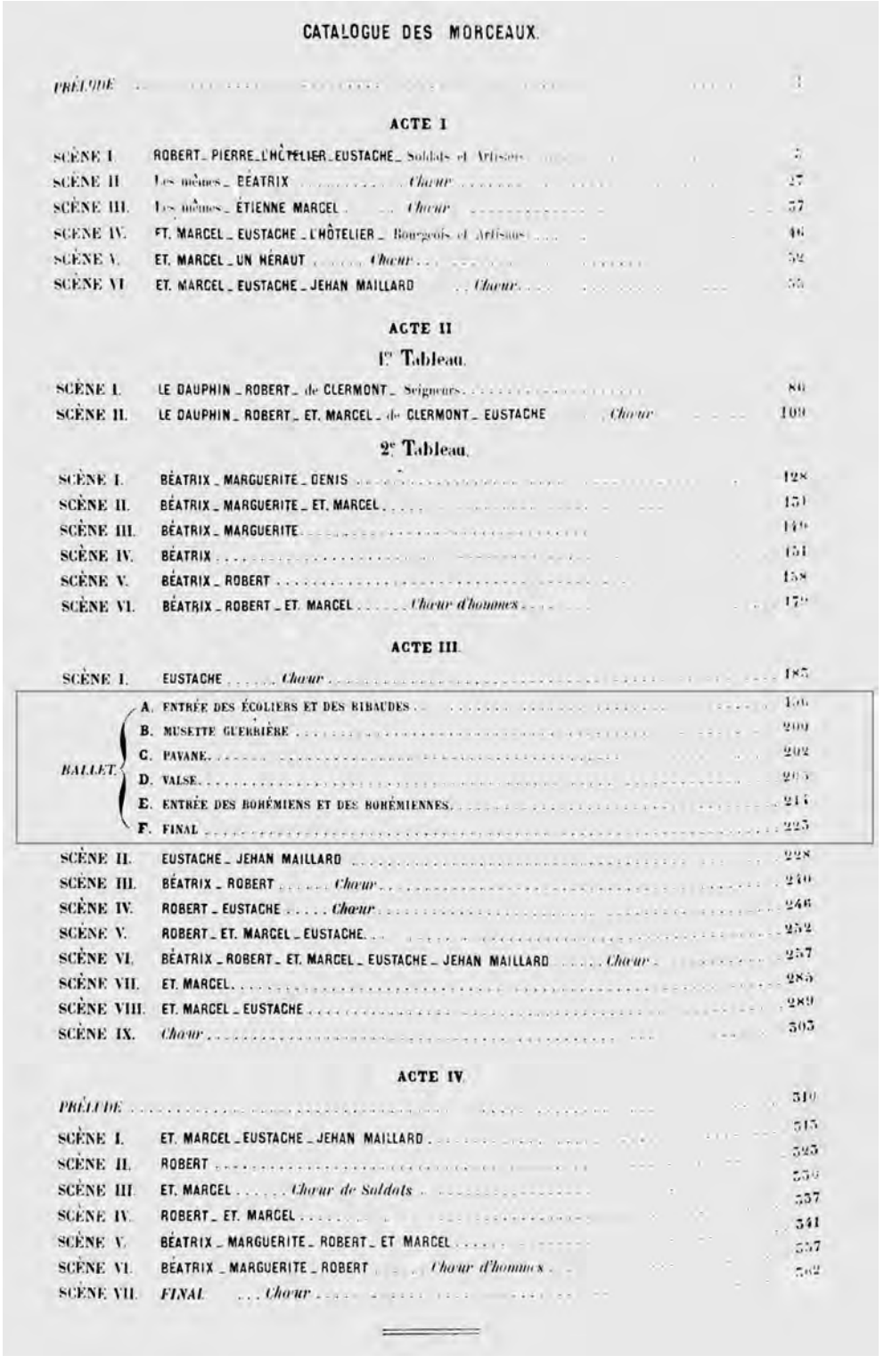
2 "Banish your restless sorrow far from here, my Xaima! … By my command a celebration is set before you on this happy day". (All translations from the French are by the author).

3 "In vain I strive to please you! Not once has your fair brow brightened."

4 "Enough, my sister; this untimely celebration is barely tolerable …".

5 An exception to this pattern, "proving the rule", may be found in Massenet's *Cendrillon* (Opéra-Comique, 1899). Here, significantly, the most interested spectator of the ballet, Prince Charming, is male. He begins in a state of ennui but ends in ecstasy, thanks to the entrance of Cinderella. The Prince's moping before the beginning of the ballet ("Allez, laissez-moi seul, seul avec mes ennuis … Cœur sans amour, printemps sans roses!") and his joy at the end, with Cinderella's appearance on stage ("Toi qui m'es apparue, O beau rêve enchanteur, beauté du Ciel venue") inverts the responses of his royal female counterparts in Berlioz and Gounod.

6 Although I find a gendered reading of dramatic redirection after the ballet-divertissement an attractive possibility, study of many of these works has led me to think that the more mundane explanation (a routine turn of the action in the spirit of the "well-made play") is far more likely.



CATALOGUE DES MORCEAUX.

Figure 1 Camille Saint-Saëns: *Étienne Marcel*, Lyon 1879. "Catalogue des morceaux" with a box added around the ballet-divertissement

example), an all-purpose title for such isolated numbers is *air de danse* ("dance tune"), a term I will use generically in this essay. These more isolated dances, less hedged in than the closed sequence of a divertissement, sometimes prompted novelty and new forms of integration. In *Vasco de Gama* (1865, also known as L'*Africaine*), for example, Giacomo Meyerbeer and Eugène Scribe end Act IV with a chœur dansé (No. 18) that places two main characters and a group of dancers on stage at the same time. The scene is accompanied by chorus as well as orchestra. To unite choral singing and dance was nothing new. The innovation lies in the fact that Meyerbeer and Scribe have the dancers interact with Vasco and Sélika, to the point where the dancers direct Vasco toward Sélika, and away from Inès's offstage voice.[7] In this complex scene, Meyerbeer uses the corps de ballet to heighten the audience's awareness of a dynamic, multi-dimensional space, with on-stage and off-stage vectors.

It is such integrative theatrical moments that interest me in this essay. I choose an example from nearly fifty years later: Gabriel Fauré's opera *Pénélope*, set to a poème lyrique in three acts by René Fauchois. Begun in 1907 and premiered in 1913, Fauré's work offered a unique solution to the role of dance in opera.[8] By focusing on an early twentieth-century work immediately after citing a mid-nineteenth-century example, I deliberately invite reflection on the fate of ballet in French opera in the half century in between. The history of the position of dance in French opera between the 1860s and the breakdown of generic systems in the early twentieth century has, I believe, received less attention than it deserves. The received historiography of a Parisian decline between two golden ages – the ages of Carlotta Grisi and Romantic ballet at the early end of this range and the explosive advent of Anna Pavlova, Vaslav Nijinsky, and the Ballets Russes at the opposite end – has deflected attention from a period in between that saw a wide variety of creative activity worthy of historical and artistic attention. In particular, I contend that ballet was on the rise in Paris after the 1890s, not in decline, and recent work by scholars on both sides of the Atlantic is starting to build the case for an alternative historiography. However, this

7 The stage directions read, "Vasco s'élance à la recherche de la voix; dans ce moment les danseuses lui montrent Sélica, qui l'attend", and a few bars later, "D'autres danseuses entraînent Vasco vers Sélica, qui, en ce moment, se dirige vers l'appartement à gauche, sous les voûtes de gaze, fermées par les voiles des bayadères". L'*Africaine*, opéra en 5 actes, paroles de E. Scribe, musique de G. Meyerbeer, partition chant & piano, Paris: G. Brandus & S. Dufour, [n. d.] (plate B. et D. 10,909), pp. 360 f. I have supplied missing accent marks in the second stage direction.

8 *Pénélope* had its premiere at the Monte Carlo opera house in two performances on 4 March and 11 March 1913. Fauré did not even stay for the second performance. Already back in Paris on 8 March he was immersing himself in planning the Paris premiere, on which he staked greater hopes. The latter took place under the direction of Gabriel Astruc on 10 May 1913 at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and included seventeen performances.

short essay is not the place to construct this alternative history. I should like only to sketch the historical context in which Fauré would have acted as a composer of a full-scale serious opera in the first decade of the twentieth century.

By the time Fauré began work on *Pénélope* in 1907, the recent operas of his closest peers – Claude Debussy, Ernest Chausson, Vincent d'Indy, Paul Dukas and Albéric Magnard – had all made their peace with the role of ballet in opera, and they did it in the same way: by eliminating it! This exclusion of ballet marks a seldom observed sense in which operas such as Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Dukas's *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* are not just chronologically post-Wagnerian but following or obeying Richard Wagner. Recall that the debacle of *Tannhäuser* in Paris in 1861 sealed Wagner's aversion to dance and his hostility to French ballet in particular. In the Gesamtkunstwerk, only an abstract idea of "gesture" subsisted, a placeholder for dance, a ghost beside the more vividly realized art forms of Wagnerian musical drama. No one expected Wagner to cultivate dance in his late theater works. Debussy, Dukas and their peers, despite their openly asserted allegiances to French traditions and desire to get beyond Wagner, all eliminate the element of ballet and thus show their complicit allegiance to Wagner.

There is a certain irony to the absence of ballet in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* in particular, as they premiered in the Opéra-Comique, where ballet had become an exciting new option. As director of that theater, Albert Carré had inaugurated a permanent corps de ballet in 1898, led by Madame Mariquita. Given the less than secondary role dance had occupied at the Opéra-Comique before the 1890s, Carré's bold decision to form a ballet troupe there can be seen as a response to public demand and a challenge to the Opéra, always its big brother in musical Paris. The late 1890s were a complex historical moment with opposing valences. The public was increasingly attracted to dance spectacles, and the new company of 24 dancers at the Opéra-Comique stood ready to rival the corps de ballet at the Opéra and other theaters.[9] But composers committed to Wagnerian dramaturgy were not yet ready to seize this trend: thus the absence of dance from Debussy's and Dukas's operas. Artists less under the influence of the master of Bayreuth were more keen to move with the times. Among composers who premiered new choreographic works at the Opéra-Comique between 1898 and 1907 were Jules Massenet, André Messager, Francis Thomé, Camille Saint-Saëns, and Charles Lecoq. In the first years of the century, Paris offered more and more opportunities to see ballet as an independent spectacle and in operas, and the French public welcomed

9 An important, richly illustrated article anticipating the tenth anniversary of the formation of the troupe at the Opéra-Comique is Georges Pioch: Le corps de ballet de l'Opéra-Comique, in: *Musica* 6/55 (April 1907), pp. 59 f.

these opportunities enthusiastically.[10] It seems that composers under Wagner's spell, like so many Sleeping Beauties, needed the exotic kiss of the Ballets Russes in 1909 to wake them from their anti-balletic slumber. But the French public was already wide awake.

French composers writing ballets in the years before the arrival of the Russian Ballet fell into at least two categories. On the one hand, composers older than Fauré, such as Saint-Saëns, Massenet, and Émile Paladilhe, had always been more friendly to ballet than the next generation and ably continued the tradition of the embedded ballet-divertissement. Saint-Saëns's *Ascanio*, premiered in 1890 at the Opéra, might be mistaken for the last French opera with a conventional ballet-divertissement. On the contrary, Massenet perpetuated it for much longer; we find a full-length ballet-divertissement in Act III of his forgotten opera *Bacchus*, premiered at the Opéra in 1909, and a similar ballet opens Act III of his posthumously premiered *Cléopâtre* (Monte Carlo, 1914). These works by Massenet may indeed be the last astonishing outliers of a venerable tradition. In contrast, composers in Debussy's generation, such as André Messager and Camille Erlanger, had found inventive new ways of including ballet and airs de danse in their operas between 1885 and 1910 without necessarily following the standard outlines of a ballet-divertissement. In age and orientation, Fauré stood between these two groups. What decision would he take on the question of dance in opera as he began *Pénélope* in 1907?

One does not think of Fauré as a man of the theater, much less an innovator in operatic dramaturgy. We should expect that, like his peers d'Indy, Dukas, and Debussy, he would make the obvious post-Wagnerian choice and exclude dance from his opera. Yet *Pénélope* included choreography, and more than that, Fauré's unusual and seemingly unique approach to ballet in this opera suggests we would be wrong to see him as a complaisant follower of tradition. Unlike Saint-Saëns and Massenet, he did not write another ballet-divertissement (as effective as one might have been), but unlike Debussy and Dukas, he did not turn his back on ballet in opera.

Let us begin by reviewing the relevant portion of the plot in Act I. At her first appearance on stage (Scene 4), Penelope defends her house against the suitors, spurning their entreaties to choose one of their number as her new husband. The suitors remind her of her promise: when she finishes weaving the shroud for her father-in-law, Laertes, she will make a choice among them. When the suitors see how little of Laertes' shroud she has woven, they insist that she shall thenceforth weave under their surveillance. To distract themselves from their disappointment, they call for entertainments, including wine and

10 For one study of such growth in ballet activity in Paris in this period, see Sarah Gutsche-Miller: *Parisian Music-Hall Ballet, 1871–1913*, Rochester 2015.

Figure 2 Gabriel Fauré: *Pénélope*. Scheme of Act I, Scene 4

dancing-girls with flutes.[11] Here, Fauchois and Fauré took their cue from *The Odyssey*. In Book 17 of Homer we find Odysseus and Eumaeus "drawing near the palace, halted just outside / as the lyre's rippling music drifted round them. [...] the ringing lyre, listen, / the lyre that god has made the friend of feasts."[12] And Book 17 ends with the suitors "all indulging now / in the joys of dance and song."[13]

Figure 2 provides a structural precis of the scene. The dance begins with purely orchestral music, as one would expect, and even captures "the lyre's rippling music" ravishingly, but soon the suitors gather around Penelope and give voice to their erotic daydreams. Penelope finally interrupts them in an outburst of disgust. At some point (not indicated in the score) during the preceding scene the dancing ceases, perhaps with the change of meter from 3/4 to 4/4 for Penelope's outrage. Penelope then looks within herself and unfurls three lines of beautiful arioso ("Vous n'avez fait qu'éveiller"), which, over a return to triple meter, blends directly into her aria ("Ulysse, fier époux!").

11 Dancers with flutes had been used before in airs de danse with a Greek or Hellenistic setting. Saint-Saëns's *Les Barbares* (Opéra, 1901) and Erlanger's *Aphrodite* (Opéra-Comique, 1906) provided recent precedents for this topos.

12 Homer: *The Odyssey*, tr. Robert Fagles, Harmondsworth 1996, pp. 362 f., lines 286 f., 296 f.

13 Ibid., p. 374, lines 675 f.; also see Book 18, lines 342 f.

At this return to triple meter, the same accompaniment heard moments before in the air de danse reappears. A few lines into her aria, Fauré indicates "La danse reprend" ("The dance starts again", a stage direction only in his full score and the vocal score, not in Fauchois's libretto).[14] At this moment the melody of the preceding air de danse returns, unchanged but combining in counterpoint with Penelope's ongoing, independent melodic line.

In this, one of the great arias of the score, the queen evokes her husband, at first in wistful memory and then with the immediacy of a desperate cry, ending: "Viens! Viens! secours ma détresse!" (Come, come rescue me from my plight!) One measure after this vocal climax on high B, a man's voice is suddenly heard from offstage, as if in answer ("Hola! ho!"). This turns out to be the voice of the Beggar who is Ulysses in disguise. Now let us back up a moment. In the course of Penelope's aria ("Ulysse, fier époux!") Fauré had again broadened the meter from 3/4 to 4/4. With this artful metrical expansion, Penelope's voice also gains in power as it moves from a wish to a conjuration: hers is a call that reaches beyond human efficacy, and hearing this change in musical intensity, one would say that it has been expedited by the goddess Athena herself. Once again, Fauré does not indicate where the dancing should stop. The point where Penelope expands her invocation from triple to quadruple meter suggests a possible point before which the dancing would gradually cease, but this is speculation. What is most remarkable about this scene from a kinetic point of view is that Fauré has chosen to blend lyrical delivery not only with music already heard and used for dancing, but with actual dancing seen on stage behind or around the queen. Moreover, the expressive content of Penelope's aria begins in a mood of passionate affection but soon ends (owing to Fauré's drastic compression of the libretto) in a call for help. Penelope's expressive progression from fond memory to present need gradually undoes the dance music and creates a situation in which the dance tune gives way to an orchestra that shimmers with Ulysses' leitmotives against a rising vocal sequence.

For the second air de danse, in Act III, Fauré takes the same unifying approach as he did in Act I: he overlaps singing with dancing, again blending them together seamlessly. The dance begins well before the suitors and Ulysses have finished their dialogue.[15] This consistently "synthetic" construction of dramatic time in Fauré's lyrical-choreographic

14 There is a difference between Fauré's indications in the full score and the vocal score. In the vocal score, the direction "La danse reprend" occurs over the measure with the word "doux" (where the flute solo begins). In the orchestral score, it is placed rather earlier, one measure after the change to 3/4, where the sixteenth-note figuration in the harp begins. One could make a case for either position as an appropriate point for relaunching the choreography.

15 This scene (end of Act III, Scene 4) recognizably corresponds to the end of Book 20 of *The Odyssey* despite some re-ordering of events on Fauchois's part.

thinking is striking, and both scenes make for excellent musical theater. But the passage in Act 1 is the more arresting of the two dance scenes in *Pénélope* for its double articulation: the orchestral flute dance and its choreographic representation on stage occur twice in different forms. These dramaturgical decisions in Act 1 rested with the composer alone. Slashing and revising René Fauchois's libretto with great abandon in October 1907, and aware of his own *furor poeticus*, Fauré wrote to his wife about his satisfaction with these structural interventions. He excitedly announced this portion of Act 1 to her as "ma scène, la scène de mon *invention*!".[16] The composer's deletions to the text of this section of the libretto can only be described as ruthless, and as if to add to his lack of respect for Fauchois's craft, he rewrote several lines of verse to boot. Probably for this very reason, Fauchois's text, exceptionally, was eventually published in its original form, without Fauré's cuts, and thus does not correspond to the libretto *of the opera*, which exists (in print) only as part of the score. Jean-Michel Nectoux suggests, plausibly, that the publisher Heugel, by printing Fauchois's full text as if it were the libretto, salvaged the dignity of the young playwright.[17] This mismatched publication, whatever its psychological motivations, allows anyone with access to both texts to compare Fauré's source with his actual musical setting.

For all his audacity, Fauré eventually needed theater people to realize his integration of dance and lyric. For the Monte Carlo and Paris productions of 1913 (as well as the Paris production of 1919) the danced divertissements of *Pénélope* were choreographed by Jeanne Chasles (1869?–1939), a distinguished dancer of the time, trained by Rosita Mauri and mentored as a choreographer by Mariquita. As Samuel Dorf recently noted, Mariquita was particularly associated with revivals of Greek dancing on the Parisian stage – "revivals" colorfully inflected, of course, by fantasy, exoticism, and eroticism.[18] As a student of Mariquita in the troupe of the Opéra-Comique, Chasles would have had extensive performative experience in attempts to create neo-Grecian dances on the modern stage, including dances for Gluck's operas set in antiquity, for she was involved in those productions repeatedly. She likely intensified and elaborated on this tradition in her own

16 "my scene, a scene I *invented*!" Gabriel Fauré: *Lettres intimes*, ed. by Philippe Fauré-Fremiet, Paris 1951, p. 156 (letter dated 5 October 1907).

17 René Fauchois: *Pénélope. Poème lyrique en trois actes*, Paris 1913. See Jean-Michel Nectoux: *Gabriel Fauré. A Musical Life*, tr. Roger Nichols, Cambridge 1991, p. 330. An important textual distinction should be mentioned here. Fauré's cuts in the third act are explicitly indicated in this publication, which suggests that after the experience of the first act, Fauré and Fauchois came to an agreement about how to represent the differences between the opera and Fauchois's original text in print.

18 See Samuel N. Dorf: Eroticizing Antiquity. Madame Mariquita, Régina Badet and the Dance of the Exotic Greeks from Stage to Popular Press, in: *Opera, Exoticism and Visual Culture*, ed. by Hyunseon Lee and Naomi Segal, Oxford/Bern 2015, pp. 73–92, here pp. 81–84.

choreography for *Pénélope*, and perhaps brought even more "archaeology" into its design. Although Chasles had had one of her greatest successes as a wittily virtuosic, modern dancer in the travesti role of the Young Faun in Lecoq's *Le Cygne* (1899), she also had an interest in history and amassed a significant library of books on dance. In an article from 1912, the dancer Carlotta Zambelli noted that her colleague Jeanne Chasles's "marvelous collections of documents and engravings about the art of dance are unique in the world and elicit the admiration of connoisseurs".[19] During discussions of the upcoming Paris production of *Pénélope* Fauré met Chasles at the home of the impresario Gabriel Astruc on 10 March 1913.[20] He had already encountered her (and her work) in the salons and theaters some years before. For instance, they appeared on the same concert program on 27 January 1910, where Fauré accompanied some of his own songs and played the Ballade op. 19 in its two-piano arrangement with Alfred Cortot. Immediately after the Ballade, Chasles, with four other artists, danced in re-creations of historical dances, choreographic "suites" assembled from contrasting eras which had become one of her mainstays as a public figure.[21] While we have no direct commentary from Fauré about her choreography, their continued collaboration suggests that it was satisfactory: Chasles not only choreographed all the productions of *Pénélope* between 1913 and 1920; she also choreographed a new work by Fauré and Fauchois, *Masques et bergamasques* (Opéra de Monte-Carlo, 1919; Opéra-Comique, 1920).

In the end, however, we know little about the choreography Chasles created for *Pénélope*, since we lack both notations and pictures of the movement. Although the libretto specifies that the dancers are all female, there is no indication as to how many girls should appear on stage. A cast photograph taken on the stage of the Monte Carlo Opera, close

19 "[…] Mlle Chasles, dont les merveilleuses collections de documents et de gravures se rattachant à l'art chorégraphique sont uniques au monde et font l'admiration des connaisseurs …" Carlotta Zambelli: Danseuses d'hier et d'aujourd'hui, in: *Musica-Noël* 11/123 (December 1912), pp. 251 f., here p. 252. Chasles's private collection of books had been exploited six years earlier by the publishers of *Musica* for a special supplement on dance. Under the heading "Du moyen âge au XVIIe siècle", Félicien Grétry thanked Jeanne Chasles for lending the magazine the sources for its iconographic coverage; *Musica* 5/51 (December 1906), pp. 179 f.

20 "J'y ai vu encore Mlle Chasles, la danseuse chargée de régler les petites danses." Gabriel Fauré: *Correspondance, suivie de Lettres à Madame* H., ed. by Jean-Michel Nectoux, Paris 2015, p. 745 (letter to Mme. Hasselmans, 11 March 1913). Fauré's adverb "encore" confirms earlier encounters with Chasles.

21 Raoul Brévannes: Les Festivals Musica, in: *Musica* 9/90 (March 1910), p. 42. This article shows pictures of Fauré and Chasles on the same page. With three other dancers, Chasles presented "Danses Henri IV", "Danses Louis XV", and "Danses 1830" on this occasion. Indeed, from 1908 onward, Chasles and her partner Mlle Meunier had been making the rounds of major Parisian salons with such artfully arranged entrées, including another sequence known as "Danses en crinoline", effectively dosing out a history of French ballet and social dance in a manner that delighted her audiences.

to the time of the premiere on 4 March 1913, shows no fewer than twelve female dancers, a surprisingly lavish corps de ballet for two short patches of music.[22] One critic present at the Paris production in 1919 also left an isolated hint, describing the movements of Jeanne Chasles's dancers in this work as more "gliding" than dancing.[23] Gliding or sliding footwork was probably intended as a specifically Hellenic stylization. The idea may well go back to Mariquita, but perhaps Chasles was influenced by more recent productions. She devised her Greek dances for *Pénélope* less than a year after Nijinsky choreographed *L'Après-midi d'un faune* (Théâtre du Châtelet, 1912) with its frieze-like sideways motion and avoidance of elevation of any kind.[24] The look of Nijinsky's ballet seems, for its part, to have been influenced by the work of Raymond Duncan, whose scenes from Sophocles' *Elektra* were staged in the same theater shortly before the *Faun*.[25] Thus, by the time she tackled the two scenes in *Pénélope*, Chasles was working in a dance world drenched in evocations of ancient Greece. From her tutelage in "Greek" dances under Mariquita, to the innovative work of Raymond and Isadora Duncan, to Nijinsky's extraordinary and controversial *Après-midi d'un faune*, Chasles had a plethora of Grecian imagery and movement concepts at her disposal.

22 This remarkable photograph appears uniquely in Thomas Joseph Walsh: *Monte Carlo Opera, 1910–1951*, Kilkenny 1986, p. 70. The dancers, distinguishable from the rest of the large cast by their gauzy skirts and demonstrative *port de bras*, appear at the rear center of the stage.

23 Charles Tenroc: Courrier lyrique, in: *Courrier musical* 21 (1 February 1919), p. 38. "Un lot de ballerines, de glisseuses plutôt, ajourées aux tons de mousselines" ("A passel of ballerinas, or rather gliders, laced in shades of muslin"). (What "ajourées aux tons de mousselines" really means I am not sure.) One must be careful with Tenroc's testimony, as he was habitually cranky and dismissive in his criticism. His journalistic colleagues were uniformly positive about Albert Carré's 1919 revival but alas left no detailed description of the dancing. Tenroc leaves us a tiny clue despite his disdainful attitude.

24 Nijinsky's ballet premiered at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris on 29 May 1912. Cyril Beaumont, in his *Bookseller at the Ballet. Memoirs 1891 to 1929*, London 1975, pp. 118 f., gives us the best prose description of how *L'Après-midi d'un faune* looked: "It contained practically no elements of academic technique and the floor track consisted of a single straight line bounded by the wings on either side. Faun and nymphs moved backwards and forwards in profile on that line, very like an animated frieze formed of figures inspired by the decoration of antique Greek vases. Contrary, however, to such figures, there were no poses or movements in which one leg was raised. The dancers remained 'attached' to the ground, never rising in the air and always progressing by a series of half walking, half gliding movements, the heel of the rear foot being gradually raised and the foot passed forwards in the same straight line, then the new rear foot was similarly raised and passed forward likewise, and so on; a change of course was achieved by a sudden half-turn of the feet and body to right or left."

25 *Life into Art. Isadora Duncan and Her World*, ed. by Dorée Duncan, Carol Pratl, and Cynthia Splatt, New York 1993, pp. 112 f. Splatt makes the claim that Raymond's staging of *Elektra* influenced Nijinsky. Looking at the illustration of Raymond Duncan and his company in "The Death of Agisthos" on p. 113 of her book persuades me of the case. The resemblances between the poses in this photograph and scenes of the *Faun* captured in photographs by Baron Adolf de Meyer are compelling.

Let us return to the broader context by way of conclusion. In his transformation of Fauchois's libretto in the fall of 1907, Fauré forged a new role for dance in opera, however brief the result was in theatrical duration. It is difficult to judge Fauré's individual decisions historically. With regard to Act I, the year 1907 was too early to consider Diaghilev's Ballets Russes as a factor in Fauré's thinking, even if its productions might have touched Chasles's later work on the opera. There seems to be no precedent for what Fauré conceived in his scenic revision in 1907. One may point, at most, to suggestive moments of similar lyrical-choreographic integration, such as the magic forest scene in Messager's *Isoline* (Théâtre de la Renaissance, 1888), where ballet, chorus, air, and spoken dialogue are concatenated within the overall framework of a ballet-divertissement. Early in the scene, Messager writes a solo for Titania, and brings her melody into counterpoint with the middle section of an air de danse previously heard in the orchestra (a pavane). Whether the corps de ballet continues dancing during Titania's solo is not clear. But, with this one possible exception, we lack an operatic precedent not only for Fauré's union of dance with solo aria, but also his significant overlapping between sung dialogue and dancing.[26] In all other cases known to me, combinations of singing and choreography are presented through the chorus, not the solo voice of a leading character. Moreover, such choruses harmonize with the dancing in mutual support. They do not, as in Fauré's "Ulysse, fier époux", erupt into a second dimension of expression, a note of contrast or dramatic tension.[27]

26 Massenet's *Bacchus*, a kind of theatrical extravaganza that attempts to do everything, has a scene in Act I where Perséphone (a speaking, not a singing role) declaims her text while "Les Roses mortes" dance. With a premiere at the Opéra in 1909, this work could not, of course, have influenced Fauré in 1907. In any case the scene may be most readily related to the conventions of *mélodrame*, and in this respect it is a remarkable adumbration of the Gide-Stravinsky *Perséphone* of 1934. Also intriguing (though again too late to influence Fauré's composition) is a scene in Act IV of Massenet's *Don Quichotte* (Théâtre de Monte-Carlo, 1910) where "des danses lentes et silencieuses continuent au lointain" as Dulcinée sings a short lyrical number in her patio-courtyard. The opera lacks any mention of a choreographer, and one assumes the staging of this scene was informal: social dancing in the background, directed by the régisseur de scène.

27 The contrast is not total between the Suitors' lascivious daydreams (imagining themselves as Penelope's next husband) and Penelope's subsequent evocation of Ulysses. She begins by saying that their words have "only awakened in my breast the ardent memory of hours of delight when I burned with love in Ulysses' arms". Thus, she begins, like the Suitors, in a mood of desire. Sienna Wood suggested to me that this parallelism could have choreographic consequences. Although the Suitors are the ones who first call the palace dancers and flutists out to entertain them, when the latter dance a second time (during the first part of Penelope's air) they need not dance the same way they had for the Suitors. It is conceivable that they could dance quite differently: in sympathy and support of her desires. This could then be another moment in the opera when Penelope regains power in the struggle with the Suitors. Likewise, the moment when the dancers realize that Penelope's thoughts have turned away

Thinking of precedents on the broadest scale, one may recall the activity of the chorus singing and dancing in praise of a god or hero in ancient Greek theater.[28] Perhaps Fauré thought back to this truly originary union of dance and lyric, so apt to the Homeric content of *Pénélope*. Within the scope of music-historical models of the more recent past, one may further suggest three converging sources for Fauré's unlikely discovery. The first is not operatic. Fauré's own song "Clair de lune" (1887) resembles "Ulysse, fier époux" in its deliberately distanced relationship between an independent vocal line and an instrumental dance, which forms a kind of backdrop to the singer's independent lyrical delivery. This unique song, with its background minuet (a fancy that Fauré imposed on Verlaine's poem and proudly added as a subtitle) might be viewed as a study for "Ulysse, fier époux" in *Pénélope*, although there is no denying that the addition of fully realized choreography is a drastic expansion of the merely imagined dancing in "Clair de lune".[29] Second, in the world of opera, perhaps the closest precedents to Act 1, Scene 4, lie in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century tragédie en musique, where a dance might be followed by an air or chorus based on the music of the dance. According to research by Rebecca Harris-Warrick, however, dancers in Lullian opera would apparently more often cease dancing than continue when the singers took up the tune.[30] In cases where the text had already been heard by the audience (perhaps with a third iteration of the dance music), dancers might return to activity alongside the singers.[31] In the case of tragédie en musique, however, the relation between song and dance is additive, not contrastive. Penelope's

from memory and into the present (around the change to common meter) could prompt poses of sympathy rather than mere surprise at the loss of danceable music. I am grateful to Sienna Wood for prompting this line of speculation about choreographic design.

28 I thank James Parakilas for reminding me of this basic fact during the discussion following the version of this paper given at the conference "Effable and Ineffable. Gabriel Fauré and the Limits of Criticism" (Seattle, Washington, USA, 23 October 2015).

29 Camille Bellaigue, who reacted very positively to this scene in his review of the Paris premiere of *Pénélope* (Revue musicale, in: *Revue des deux mondes*, 1 July 1913, pp. 217–228), wrote about it at greater length in his review of the 1919 revival at the Opéra-Comique (Revue musicale, in: *Revue des deux mondes*, 15 February 1919, pp. 921–932). In this latter review he even observed the parallel between "Ulysse, fier époux" and "Clair de lune". His praise for the scene was unconditional: "Il y a, dans l'œuvre nouvelle de M. Fauré, des parties de chef-d'œuvre et nous y voilà. Cette scène, celles qui suivent, jusqu'à la fin du premier acte sont d'une pure et profonde beauté." (pp. 924 f.).

30 Rebecca Harris-Warrick: Recovering the Lullian Divertissement, in: *Dance and Music in French Baroque Theatre. Sources and Interpretations*, ed. by Sarah McCleave, London 1998, pp. 55–79, especially pp. 59 f., 64 f.; also see pp. 58, 67.

31 A fairly late example of this threefold repetition may be seen in Act V of Jean-Marie Leclair's *Scylla et Glaucus* (1746). Circe sings an air, "Brillante fille de Latone", then we see a dance based on the same musical structure ("2d air de démons"), and then finally we hear a chorus where Circe's melody and the dance piece are combined in counterpoint ("Chœur").

lyrical flight from sensual desire to stricken afflatus within the course of an aria embodied by dance and its cessation finds no parallel in the Lullian tradition. In short, Fauré infuses this ancient precedent with a dynamism, a sense of tension and breakthrough, that has nothing to do with early opera but a great deal to do with Wagner. Wagner, then, is the third possible precedent, but a deliciously perverse one. Wagner's bitter refusal of dance after *Tannhäuser* means that Fauré used Wagner's dramaturgical principles in a way Wagner himself never did, bringing dance back into the "complete work of art".[32] But formal fluidity, transformation, and ironic contrast are dramatic techniques Wagner would have recognized as his own. The moment when the girls cease to dance, when Penelope's voice reaches the ear of the goddess, and when the premonition of Ulysses's homecoming becomes real: this is an eminently Wagnerian moment, full of intersecting theatrical rays.[33] However its effectiveness depends on a preceding ballet number that Wagner would never have countenanced for his own practice.

32 I do not count the brief staging of a social dance in *Die Meistersinger* as ballet (nor, I think, would Wagner have done). And although some productions of *Parsifal* turn the Flower Maidens into dancers (the music in 3/4 affords such an extension), Wagner's stage directions avoid any mention of dancing: the maidens turn around Parisfal or encircle him ("drehen sich die Mädchen", wrongly translated in many English scores as "the maidens dance").

33 When I presented part of this paper in Biel, Gabriela Cruz astutely remarked the parallels between Penelope's situation in Act I and Elsa's situation in Act I of *Lohengrin*. The dramatic crux in both cases turns on wish and fulfillment. Whereas Elsa's wish for Lohengrin's appearance is fulfilled within the act (in time to save her from Ortrud's claims), Penelope's invocation does not bring the right man to the door. Her wish is not fulfilled – or so she thinks. In "Ulysse Revealed", Steven Huebner noticed another precedent for the moment when Penelope invokes Ulysses and finds her call answered by the voice of Beggar-Ulysses: the hero's arrival "is analogous to the moment in Lalo's *Le Roi d'Ys* where Rozenn practically wills Mylio into existence ('Une voix intérieure / Me dit que tu vas venir … Mylio! Je t'appelle! O Mylio!'" Indeed, I would add, even the language of Rozenn's air is similar to Penelope's. See Steven Huebner: Ulysse Revealed, in: *Regarding Fauré*, ed. by Tom Gordon, Amsterdam 1999, pp. 207–238, here pp. 218–220. In all three operas, *Lohengrin*, *Le Roi d'Ys*, and *Pénélope*, the heroine's invocation of the absent hero occurs in Act I.

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