and the world dances: Pieces by Maurice Ravel
A Music-Theatre Collaboration

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ABSTRACT

AND THE WORLD DANCES: PIECES BY MAURICE RAVEL
A MUSIC-THEATRE COLLABORATION

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This thesis describes the year-long process of research and rehearsal that culminated in the group-created performance and the world dances: Pieces by Maurice Ravel. Created in response to the United States’ military involvement in Iraq and inspired by the anti-war music of early twentieth-century composer Maurice Ravel, this process allowed me to direct a group of seven actors and one production designer through a group collaboration that resulted in an original full-length performance. The performance, which was entirely scripted and staged by the group, used music, theatre, and dance to provide a perspective both on Ravel’s experiences during WWI and on a contemporary retracing of our current political situation.
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In the spring of 2003, I was in a Miami University upper-level music history course taught by Dr. Effie Papanikolaou. On the morning of April 9, she played for us a piece by Maurice Ravel titled *La Valse*. This in itself was ordinary; Dr. Papanikolaou had played many pieces of music for us during this course; but for me that particular day turned out to be the start of an extraordinary journey.

I heard *La Valse* on an April morning in the middle of a very strange spring; it was the spring of “freedom fries;” of “shock and awe;” of weapons of mass destruction that couldn’t seem to be found; of a war that wasn’t a war being fought for causes that were at best unclear; of a president who might not really have been elected making grandiose claims that he was going to defeat evil itself. All of this was going on around us, and it seemed like the majority of people with whom I interacted were barely paying attention. At the least, we were committing ourselves to a life in which we allowed ourselves to accept these strange occurrences as logical and even natural; when Miami dining halls began changing their menus from “French” to “Freedom,” many people laughed but few people considered what such change truly meant. *La Valse* spoke to this strangeness. Its haunting melodies trying to survive in the midst of martial interludes seemed to me to be suddenly cogent and vital.

Dr. Papanikolaou told us that morning that Ravel had composed *La Valse* as a reaction to World War I; he had believed that part of the cause of the war was the European population’s insistence on clinging to a quality of life rooted in the past and their subsequent ignorance of what was going on around them. This I understood; I felt I was living in a country that was committed to an ignorance of what was going on in the
world. I felt I was living in a country where such ignorance was *promoted*; despite the continual war coverage in the newspapers and on television, the general message being put forth was “don’t worry; we know what we’re doing; go on with your everyday lives.” Those who dared to challenge the ideas put forth by our government and by the media were labeled “anti-American;” and we were, surprisingly, silent.

That week, I listened to *La Valse* nearly a hundred times. By the end of the week, I knew I needed to stage a performance. I had the images in my head; a man and a woman continually waltzing even as their world fell down around them. It was to be a statement about ignorance; about apathy; about people who only notice things if they can do so without breaking their dance. It was, at the time, a direct reaction to the world I saw around me.

However, I soon began to broaden my ideas. While it would have been quite fulfilling to create a ten-minute music-theatre piece based on *La Valse* and to have had it performed that spring as part of Miami’s Scripts out of Hand series, I began to consider the possibility of expanding upon this idea to create a larger performance. I had known for quite a while that I wanted to create a senior thesis project around an interdisciplinary, group-theatre based performance; and so I began to focus my energies upon developing an idea for a piece of theatre that would include *La Valse* as well as other related theatrical vignettes or short pieces of music that could be developed as an interdisciplinary collaboration.

As I began to research *La Valse*, I found out that it was not the only piece Ravel had composed in reaction to WWI. He had also written a dance suite titled *Le Tombeau*
de Couperin (The Tomb of Couperin); while the title referenced a once-famous composer of Baroque dance suites, each individual movement was dedicated to a friend who had been killed in WWI. I had actually been familiar with *Le Tombeau de Couperin* for years and had always found the piece fascinating, but had never before understood the significance of the dedications. Once learning that Ravel had written this piece in memory of friends lost in war, I knew that it would be included in my performance, and that each movement would attempt to address an idea surrounding the themes of war, apathy, and ignorance while simultaneously telling the story of the person to whom it was dedicated.

This thesis is to be a description of the process by which I went from the idea of making a piece of theatre based on Ravel’s *La Valse* and *Le Tombeau de Couperin* to the completed, full-length performance that became *and the world dances: Pieces by Maurice Ravel*. It was by no means a solo process; it was a group effort that involved an ensemble of actors, a talented designer, and the help and support of my thesis adviser Dr. Jimmy Bickerstaff as well as numerous other Miami faculty and staff members. To create a performance using traditional methods is challenging enough; the fact that we all were able to create a piece of theatre that took as its foundation a musical composition was somewhat miraculous. It was an extraordinary journey.
Research

My research for and the world dances can be effectively divided into two sections: the work done before the performance went into rehearsal, which I will term “preparatory research;” and the work done after the performance went into rehearsal, or “active research.” The two periods of research were markedly different: the first served as a giant primer to acclimate me to the world of Maurice Ravel and his music as well as to the various methods and theories on improvisation and group theatre methods; the second period was almost entirely problem-based, in that I used my research efforts predominantly to address and solve problems or questions which had come up through our rehearsal process. While the direct results of my research will be discussed in the forthcoming performance analysis and breakdown, I will provide a general overview of how my research and creative processes worked together to fuse a foundation upon which my performing ensemble could create a performance.

Preparatory Research

Beginning in the summer of 2003, after I had firmly decided that I wanted to create a theatre piece around La Valse and Le Tombeau de Couperin, I started my research with the question “why did Ravel compose this music?” I felt that before I could make any directorial or performance judgments on the music, I had to understand – as well as I could – Ravel’s motivation and impetus for composing it. I knew, for example, that La Valse had been a choreographic poem (that is, a piece of music written both to be heard on its own merits and to be performed as a dance) and I wanted to
understand fully the story that Ravel had composed into *La Valse* before considering the story that I wanted to tell with the piece. Likewise, I wanted to learn as much as possible about the men to whom Ravel had dedicated the movements of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*; did each movement, for example, signify a particular element of its dedicatee’s personality? This information, as well as biographical information about Ravel’s life and his world – particularly his experiences during WWI – was very important to me at the start of my process.

I was fortunate to find several interesting and informative biographies of Maurice Ravel, and what I considered to be an absolute treasure: a book of Ravel’s correspondence, edited by Arbie Orenstein. As soon as I found it, I knew that the material in Orenstein’s *A Ravel Reader: Correspondence, Articles, Interviews* would be fundamental to our performance. The letters and interviews within contained not only a wealth of information on Ravel’s life, personality, and thought processes, but also Ravel’s own detailed account of his experiences in WWI and his experiences while composing *La Valse* and *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. At that early stage in the process, I thought that perhaps the entire text of the performance would be taken from Ravel’s letters.

While I was doing this, I was also listening to several different recordings of the chosen compositions. One such time I was listening to a recording of *Le Tombeau de Couperin* as performed by the Lyon National Opera Orchestra under the direction of Kent Nagano. The CD track directly after *Le Tombeau* was Ravel’s very famous *Pavane pour une Infante Defunte*; neglecting to stop the CD player, I found myself listening to
this piece as if hearing it for the first time. Its innocence and poignancy was an interesting counterbalance to the ominous forces present in La Valse; and I decided I wanted to include the Pavane as well in the performance. It was around this point that the performance began to take on a general outline or shape; La Valse would be first, creating the world of the performance and putting forth the idea that ignorance leads to war; Le Tombeau would be next, depicting the lives of the men Ravel knew during WWI; and the Pavane would be last, paired with an innocent story-theatre retelling of Oscar Wilde’s The Birthday of the Infanta to provide a metaphor of what can happen when people in power choose to abuse those with less power or privilege (a direct reference to the United States’ involvement in Iraq).

My summer library research was broken up by a trip I made to Saratoga Springs, NY to take part in the SITI Company’s Summer Intensive workshop as part of a University Summer Scholars project. The SITI Company, as directed by Anne Bogart, is a theatre company dedicated to creating multidisciplinary collaborative performances, often from the ground up without the aid of a pre-written script. While at the workshop, I had the opportunity to study such collaborative composition techniques under the direction of Anne Bogart; and directed a twelve-minute piece based on themes present in Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream which was presented during the workshop.

Returning to Oxford and to Miami’s campus, I continued my research into Ravel, and began to add research into group theatre and improvisation processes, building on what I had learned during the SITI workshop. Two books proved to be extraordinarily helpful: Brian Clark’s Group Theatre, which listed various methods and rehearsal plans
for taking a group from a single, unscripted idea to a complete, cohesive performance; and Viola Spolin’s Improvisation for the Theater, which contained hundreds of improvisation exercises designed to build group unity and sharpen individual awareness and acting skill.

Building upon the work I had done with SITI and the reading I was doing about group-created theatre, in September of 2003 I directed a fifteen-minute music/theatre project titled Alice/Copland for Miami’s Scripts out of Hand series. A group of seven actors and I created a performance which placed Lewis Carroll’s Alice in Wonderland against Aaron Copland’s fantastical Clarinet Concerto. This performance helped me solidify my ideas about the processes that could be applied to the Ravel performance, and taught me a great deal about the special nature of working with both theatre and music simultaneously.

At that point I had begun to create a sort of large-scale outline of the shape of the performance and its throughline. Though I wanted the performance to be largely group-created, I knew that the basic vision and structure of the performance had to come from me as the director. This was reiterated both during the SITI workshop (Anne Bogart would say “get your stupid story down before you start to do anything else”) and in George Black’s text Contemporary Stage Directing, which provided the concept of the “matrix statement:” “the skeleton, armature, framework, model, or mold used to give a production a particular form” (Black 36).

Therefore, when I first submitted my thesis proposal to the Honors Department in the early fall of 2003, my written production outline was as follows:
La Valse: the failures of a population to realize the consequences of their actions; humanity’s blindness to the world around them.

Le Tombeau de Couperin:

Prelude: the excitement of going to war; the story of Jacques Charlot.
Forlane: the destruction caused by war; the story of Gabriel Deluc.
Menuet: the grief that accompanies a war; the story of Jean Dreyfus.
Rigaudon: the difficulty of ending a war; the story of Pierre and Pascal Gaudin.

Pavane pour une Infante Defunte: “The Birthday of the Infanta;” that is, the consequences of what happens to those who treat others as “foreigners” and “outsiders.”

My matrix-as-production-metaphor was still somewhat vague, perhaps because I was still in the “incubation” stage of creative thinking and had not yet emerged from my research with a cohesive, unifying matrix. I did have one conscious impulse: that all of the actors except the one playing Maurice Ravel be costumed as puppets, specifically French marionettes made to look like small children.

That all changed, however, after reading the script of Joan Littlewood’s group-created, improvisation-based WWI piece Oh What a Lovely War. I was devastated to find that the puppet metaphor had already been used, and used in a performance so groundbreaking and seminal to the history of theatre that any attempt to create a piece with a similar metaphor would be a disservice both to the performers and to the audience. It was at that point that my preparatory research period technically ended; although I was still “matrix-less,” I had my basic performance outline and a wealth of background
research already at my disposal. I decided to let the process rest until I met and began working with my designers and performing ensemble, knowing that they would bring their own ideas and creative impulses to the project and would supply the pieces that needed to be added to the performance.

*Active Research*

As the majority of this research is discussed quite thoroughly in my analysis of the rehearsal process, I will discuss it only briefly here. The first major problem that arose among the ensemble was that of our production matrix/metaphor, which was not fully solved until the second week of rehearsal, when we realized quite simply that we were rehearsing a performance founded on dance music (Ravel’s waltz, the Baroque dance forms of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, and the Spanish *Pavane*) and therefore it would make the most sense to make the concept of *dance* itself be our strongest production metaphor. The actors, therefore, would be costumed not as puppets, but as dancers; and I began to read texts on dance and performance, specifically looking for non-traditional methods of dance presentation. Some of my ensemble had dance training, but not all; and so I also began to look at videos and other methods of viewing and understanding dance (specifically the dances used in Ravel’s compositions) so that we could best find a way to work dance into our performance.

The second problem which required a good deal of active research had to do with the fact that during my preparatory research phase, I had completely neglected to research the idea of war from a philosophical, sociological, or political perspective. However, as the performance became less and less about Ravel’s WWI and more and more about the
idea of war itself, this research became necessary. I was fortunate to be recommended John Stoessinger’s *Why Nations Go To War*, which provided much insight both to myself and to the company through its clear-cut analysis of the political and psychological motivations of the leaders of various nations at crucial times in world history, and why those motivations continually led to war.
The Performance Process

Auditions

The audition process was structured to accomplish three goals: first, to determine the ability and potential of the performers to work with one another; second, to determine the ability and potential of the performers to work with theatre and storytelling from an improvisatory basis, and third, to determine the ability and potential of the performers to integrate storytelling, music, and movement.

The structure of the process was as follows:

- Group introductions; brief discussion of and the world dances and the methods by which the performance will be created
- Group warm-up
- Walking through the space; sensory and spatial awareness
- Walking through the space with music; using the music to determine speed, direction, etc.
- Free dance to music; use of the entire body in collaboration with the other performers and with the music
- Clapping rhythms to music; moving through the space while maintaining those rhythms
- Listening to a short piece of music (the fourth movement of Ravel’s Valses nobles et sentimentales) and writing down the answers to three questions:
  - In what world does this piece of music take place?
• Who is there?
• What images do you see while hearing this music?

• Using the answers to the above questions to create an original piece of theatre which, in addition to being choreographed to the chosen music, also contains the following elements:
  • An interrupted embrace
  • Laughter
  • A death
  • A toast
  • A song or a dance (or both)
  • A messenger with good news

• Discussion of callbacks, rehearsals, etc.

This process proved to be both successful and unsuccessful. The framework worked well in that it allowed those participating to become comfortable working with each other from the very beginning; the improvisation and movement exercises were then very profitable both for the participants and for myself. None of those who auditioned seemed turned away by the process; everyone participated fully in the games and challenges set before them.

However, upon reflecting on the auditions I realized that I neglected to include an important element: that of determining whether or not a particular performer can take direction and can incorporate direction into his or her process and performance. My auditions were structured in such a way that what was created was left entirely up to the
group of performers; I did not attempt to direct, control, or change what was being created. While such group-based creativity would be essential to the structure of and the world dances, there would also be a point at which I would have to make directorial choices and request that the performers incorporate my suggestions and changes into their performance; and my auditions had left out that part of the process entirely.

**Casting**

The casting of and the world dances was very different than I had planned. Originally I had set aside time for two nights of auditions and one night of callbacks. However, despite the efforts I had put into publicizing and promoting the auditions, only five people came over the course of the two evenings. This presented an interesting casting challenge. As and the world dances was an unscripted piece, there was no quota of roles I had to fill; but I knew that it could not be created effectively with fewer than four people. The question for me was then whether I would create an ensemble from the five people who had auditioned, or whether I would try to hold more auditions and hope for a larger group of people from whom I could cast the performance.

I ultimately rejected the idea of holding another round of auditions for two reasons: first because it would push the rehearsal process back at least a week, and I knew that the unique structure of this performance would need all of the possible available rehearsal time; and second because I liked the balance of talents and personalities that I had seen within the five people who had auditioned, and I thought that they could make a small, but effective, performing company.

Before we started the rehearsal process, I assigned each of the company members a few key roles that I knew I wanted them to play: those of Maurice Ravel and of his
female counterpart (it was following these auditions that the role of Adelaide was first created), and of the men to whom Ravel dedicated Le Tombeau de Couperin. I also included the role of the “military representative,” a character whom I wanted to appear whenever the military was referenced (which, in an essentially “anti-war” performance, would be quite often).

After this, I expected my company to be complete and rehearsals to begin as scheduled; but there were some unexpected surprises. The person whom I had cast as the “military representative” left the performance due to time commitments; although I found another actor for the role, he too left the performance after one day of rehearsal, citing being overscheduled; the third actor selected for this role also left due to the time commitment involved. The strange nature of this progression of people dropping in and out of this particular role led my advisers to suggest that perhaps the role itself was the problem; that perhaps the performance didn’t need a “military representative.” I held firm, however, and as the remainder of the ensemble began to work together on the sections of the performance for which that role was not needed, I managed to recruit – and retain – Brian John, an actor with whom I had worked previously on the music/theatre piece Alice/Copland. Brian was very happy to be offered the role, and accepted without reservation.

The second unexpected casting surprise was that my performance soon gained two “guest artists.” Brian Zappia, a friend of mine and a non-traditional Miami student, was interested in participating in the performance but only wanted a very small walk-on role. Likewise, Kristi Krueger, who had been one of the many people who passed
through the role of the “military representative,” also wanted to participate if she could
do so at a minimal level. I created two walk-on vignettes for Brian and Kristi: those of
the Concerned Citizen and the News Reporter; and although the two of them did not join
the rehearsal process until the final week, they added a unique and interesting dimension
both to the ensemble and to the performance.

In addition to the performing ensemble, I was very fortunate to have production
assistance in the form of Brian Farkas, who became the designer for the project. It
became established early on that Brian would be responsible for the lighting and set
design, and that I would share much of the responsibility for the costume and prop
design. Like the ensemble, the production team was much smaller than I had planned (it
was, essentially, a production team of one); but I found Brian to be an incredible asset
and a wonderful partner with whom to work.

**Rehearsals**

The most difficult aspect of rehearsal was scheduling; that is, finding times during
which everyone involved in the performance was available to rehearse together. I
realized early in the process that the performance would have to be structured in such a
way as to allow for the fact that the entire ensemble could only rehearse together once
weekly (class and work schedules being so varied). Therefore, even before we worked
together as a group to create our scenes and interludes, I created a chart which divided the
workload among the various performers; Interlude 1, for example, would involve actors
A and B, but Interlude 2 would involve actors B, C, and D so that it could be rehearsed
on Tuesday nights when B, C, and D were available and A had another obligation.
Likewise, Interlude 1 could be rehearsed on Wednesdays when A and B were available
but C and D were not. This method of grouping ultimately saved the performance, as each individual piece needed the collaboration of everyone involved to come together.

George Black, in his text *Contemporary Stage Directing*, divides the rehearsal process up into five parts: read-through and discussion, blocking, development, refinement, and technical/dress (Black xii). While the rehearsal process used for *and the world dances* is similar in macrocosm to Black’s suggested structure, there were a few notable differences (made both due to the unique nature of the performance and to my own personality as a director).

The first of these differences has to do with the early stages of read-through and blocking. Although some of the scenes in *and the world dances* were in fact scripted (particularly those related to *Le Tombeau de Couperin*), the majority of them were created through discussion, creative work, and improvisation. This rendered the concept of a traditional “read-through” and “blocking” procedure inappropriate, as there was no pre-set material to be either read or blocked. Likewise, even the scripted material was given a rather non-traditional preparation and blocking period, as my directing style tends to allow the blocking to be created as much as possible through improvisation. This stems from my philosophy that the events that appear the most natural and appealing on the stage are those that grow out of organic processes built on human interaction (rather than on a strategic system of diagonal lines and counter-crosses).

The second difference relates directly to the structure of *and the world dances*. We began our work on the performance with the idea that it would contain ten short scenes or interludes (the six required of *La Valse, Le Tombeau*, and the *Pavane* as well as
four completely group-created interludes); as we worked together, our ideas expanded
until the final work was made up of seventeen individual pieces. Throughout the course
of our seven-week rehearsal period, these seventeen pieces were rehearsed in such a way
that no two pieces were in quite the same stage of development at the same time. In any
given rehearsal, we might be polishing piece A while discussing piece B while preparing
for our first off-book rehearsal of piece C. Though Black states that a director should
“keep all scenes near the same level of development” (Black 221), I found this method to
be much more effective for tackling the amount of work we had to do within the time
constraints and rehearsal availability of the ensemble while still allowing for the freedom
necessary for the group’s optimum creativity level.

I have included a brief synopsis of the process and development of each
individual scene in the performance. They were developed in many different ways: some
by an individual brainstorm of a person in the group, some by a collaborative effort, some
by a researched and written script. The rehearsal processes for each scene were also very
different: some had to be choreographed and thus focused on the physical, some were
primarily vocal, some were built entirely on improvisation and games. As there was so
much variety within the scenes and within the rehearsals for each scene, I have included a
breakdown so that each of their own processes might be understood on its own merits.
The Performance Breakdown

La Valse (found on page 51 in the script)
I had known from the very beginning that the performance would open with La Valse. I could not have predicted, however, the direction that our group chose to take the piece. I had originally imagined that La Valse would have as its predominant image a man and a woman dancing, and that the only “story” involved would be that of their choosing to ignore the other characters who joined them on the stage. While working with the ensemble, we soon discovered that this idea was too static; that a man and woman solely waltzing for eleven minutes was ultimately uninteresting, both for the actors and for the audience. The idea became both distilled and magnified; the pair of dancers became a solo woman who was born, grew up, and came of age in a world inhabited by many different characters (with whom she chose to interact in many different ways). The basic idea was still the same: it was still a world founded on dance, in which the primary character chose to ignore and fail to help those around her. The consequences, as illustrated by Ravel’s music, were still ultimately catastrophic. However, the fundamental difference between my original idea and the idea developed by the group was that of story. The character of Adelaide in La Valse does not merely dance; she lives, and her journey through the piece has a clear beginning, middle, and end. Likewise, each of the characters which share Adelaide’s world were given a story and a history. This was a very important discovery for all of us: that metaphor and image, in this case, were not enough to make a piece of theatre; we needed a narrative to carry us through.
The other discovery for me, from a directorial perspective, was that the choreography developed as a group enterprise. The character of Adelaide, for example, spends the first four minutes of the piece alone onstage; and I told Amanda Checco at the beginning of the rehearsal process that she had complete freedom to choreograph those first four minutes herself. (This was a choice made in part because of the quality of the dancing that Amanda had spontaneously improvised/created at her audition, and in part because of sheer logistics: I thought that Amanda could work alone in the directing studio while I worked with some of the other actors.) This method of working turned out to be unprofitable, however, and Amanda only found the freedom to dance when she was surrounded by all of us, listening to and incorporating our choreographic suggestions. (When reflecting back on the audition process, this too makes sense; Amanda’s dancing took place not in an isolated room, but within a group setting where we were all working with her.) We continued this method of working throughout the entire piece, and it proved very effective. This group process also yielded what was to be our strongest image: the red balloon with which Adelaide played throughout the piece and which was ultimately popped as a result of her unwillingness to share it with the other characters. The red balloon became one of two leitmotifs (the other being the white rose, which Adelaide also discovers and which passes from character to character throughout the piece) that we elected to use throughout the entire performance.

*Interlude: The Dance Rehearsal (page 60)*
I wrote the script for The Dance Rehearsal on my own, after two days of rehearsal with the cast. I had not originally planned to include an interlude between La Valse and the Prelude, but I felt like one was necessary. I wanted an immediate follow-up to La Valse which used dialogue in a modern setting to encapsulate and re-illustrate what La Valse had just put forward.

My inspiration for the interlude was the work of Pina Bausch (about whom I had learned while at the SITI workshop). Taking my cue from Bausch’s jagged, expressionistic dance pieces, I wanted Marta and Brian Forrester to create a series of short, expressionistic, ballet-style movements over which we could layer the spoken text. As the rehearsals progressed, however, these movements became less formal and stylized and the two actors seemed to find a more natural and human way of working together. Just as La Valse transformed from a metaphor/illustration of a waltzing couple to a more human, intimate story, The Dance Rehearsal transformed from a metaphor of a dance rehearsal to an actual pair of actors rehearsing an actual dance. The group once again helped me breathe humanity and honesty into my intellectualized theatrical vision.

Prelude (page 63)

My first draft of the Prelude (which I had subtitled in my performance outline “the excitement of going to war”) involved puppets leaping out of a puppet theatre and speaking, once again, as stylized hyper-enhanced versions of themselves. “There’s going to be a war on!” “Oh boy! What’s it for?” After studying Oh What A Lovely War and determining that I had to find a different way of creating this performance, I held off even thinking about the Prelude for the remainder of my preparation process. I didn’t know
yet where I wanted it to go; I didn’t know where the group wanted it to go, and I didn’t know where the performance wanted it to go.

I didn’t eventually write the text for the Prelude until February 12, two weeks into rehearsal. By then we were beginning to discover that there would be several worlds running through this play: the world of Adelaide in La Valse (incorporating dance and non-realistic elements), the contemporary world (incorporating current situations and dialogue), and the world of Maurice Ravel during WWI (incorporating the experiences illustrated in his letters and his relationships with the men to whom he dedicated Le Tombeau de Couperin). This established that the world of the Prelude would be that of Ravel and Jacques Charlot during WWI; and then the rest of the scene fell naturally into place.

As I still wanted to work under the theme “the excitement of going to war,” I decided that the Prelude would be about Ravel and Charlot enlisting in the French military. My research yielded only that Charlot was a lieutenant who was a cousin of Ravel’s publisher Jacques Durand and who had possibly transcribed some of Ravel’s works for Durand (Larner 164, Orenstein, Man and Musician 75). At that point, my imagination took over and I created a scene involving a very young Charlot and an older, somewhat wiser Ravel waiting in line to enlist in the military. The dialogue derives almost directly from Ravel’s letters of the period, especially his September 26, 1914 letter to his friend Roland-Manuel where he describes his first failed attempt at enlisting and includes the ironic idea that men enlist in wars with excitement only to find that they aren’t “sent to look for forget-me-nots on the battle fields,” and his letters written in
August of 1914 which illustrate his desire to fight in WWI to hasten the onset of peace (Ravel, in Orenstein, Ravel Reader 154). I was also able to include in this scene a short dialogue between Ravel and the Military Representative which dramatizes the fact that although Ravel originally wanted to join the air force, he was rejected (against his wishes) due to his status as a composer and was given instead the much safer job of driving an ambulance (Ivry 95).

Lastly, I was able to use the Prelude as a way of linking Ravel’s world in WWI to Adelaide’s world in La Valse. Ravel and Adelaide first meet in La Valse, but Ravel opens the Prelude by searching for Adelaide among the crowds of men coming to enlist. This establishes both the separateness and the interconnectedness of Ravel’s and Adelaide’s worlds as well as the duality of Ravel’s mental world; Ravel, who was both mystical and superstitious, believed that “witchcraft was part of human life, around every corner” (Ivry 94). Charlot convinces Ravel that Adelaide was a dream of his, but Ravel, after receiving his ambulance, names it Adelaide and begins to “write waltzes on scraps of paper.” Ravel did in fact name his ambulance Adelaide, after his ballet Adélaïde, ou le langage des fleurs (a series of waltzes also titled Valses nobles et sentimentales); but in this performance those waltzes and La Valse blend together, and Adelaide becomes a dream-character allowed both to inhabit her own space and travel at will through Ravel’s reality.

Interlude: How to Say Nuclear (page 68)
This interlude was the last to be developed and was put together after six weeks of rehearsal. It began as a joke made during one of the early rehearsals; we were discussing things that people fail to pay attention to, and the word “nuclear” (which is frequently mispronounced by everyone from newscasters to our current President of the United States) was suggested as a possible topic. Although we considered allowing the interlude to involve audience participation, we gradually dismissed that idea (while educating the audience on the pronunciation of “nuclear” was amusing and fun, asking them to say the word and then teasing them about their pronunciation seemed cruel). The interlude instead became a group cheer, in which the lead cheerleader discovers mid-cheer that her fellow cheerleaders do not know how to pronounce the word and promptly tells them off. This interlude is another example of how we worked as a group to solidify and strengthen an individual idea.

Interlude: News (page 70)

My first thought was that this interlude would involve actors reading from issues of The New York Times dated March and April 2003 (focusing on the March 20 issue with its giant headline reading “WAR”). However, it soon became obvious that while the inspiration for the piece may have been last year’s preemptive strike against Iraq, a piece that puts forth the idea that people often fail to pay attention to the world around them should include some mention of the current state of the world; and so the interlude became a reading of current newspapers as opposed to dated newspapers.

This interlude also gave me an opportunity to work with Kristi Krueger, who had wanted to be a part of the core company but had unavoidable time constraints. I had
worked with Kristi before when I directed Gertrude Stein’s *Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters*, and knew that she would be a valuable asset to the performance. Therefore, she became a “guest artist” and was given the performance of this interlude.

**Interlude: The Goodbye (page 70)**

One of the most topical events of this spring has been the ongoing debate on gay marriage. It is a topic both widespread and local, as states like Massachusetts and California began taking steps towards recognition of gay marriage (including the judge-approved sanction in San Francisco), while our home state of Ohio swung to the opposite side of the spectrum and passed a Defense of Marriage Act that denied both recognition and medical benefits to homosexual couples.

Therefore, during the early stages of our rehearsal process, as we discussed with each other the things to which people often fail to pay attention, the issue of gay marriage and homosexual rights came up immediately. The company decided nearly unanimously that they wanted to include some reference to the gay marriage debate in the performance.

I had two initial reservations to this idea. First, although I had wanted as much of the performance to be initiated and developed by the group as possible and had therefore left several interludes completely open to their creation, I was a little concerned as to how a single scene about gay marriage would fit into a play that was essentially about war. I was also concerned because not everybody in the company was unified in the idea that homosexual couples should have the right to be married; one company member was opposed to the idea on religious grounds.
However, the idea of including an interlude dealing with homosexuality did make sense within a piece dealing with the music of Maurice Ravel. Biographers differ in their interpretations of Ravel’s sexuality; Arbie Orenstein describes Ravel (who never married, nor had any notable short or long-term lover) as a heterosexual man who believed that his artistic temperament rendered himself unsuitable for marriage (Orenstein, Ravel Reader 16). Gerald Larner states simply that Ravel was uninterested in the erotic (Larner 117). Benjamin Ivry’s research, however, analyzes certain double entendres in Ravel’s letters alongside personal testimony from Ravel’s friends to put forth the theory that Ravel was a “discreet homosexual” who, although he did not make his sexuality public, was a quiet member of the outer circle of Paris’ gay community (Ivry 108, 136). If Ravel was in fact homosexual (which seems probable, given the large amount of Ivry’s evidence in comparison to Orenstein and Larner’s complete glossing over of the subject), it would then be appropriate and fitting to include some kind of piece about homosexuality and/or gay marriage in and the world dances. We had begun by simply including a pair of male dancers in La Valse, but the group still wanted to find some way to directly address the gay marriage issue.

Our solution finally emerged when I set Brian Forrester and Nick Warndorff to explore the topic. Nick, Brian, and I decided that we could create a short scene about a man saying goodbye to his male partner before leaving to go to war. With this scene, we could address both the issue of war and the issue of a gay man choosing to enlist in the military of a country that simultaneously denies him several human rights.
The scene is somewhat imperfect in that it requires Nick to play a character other than Maurice Ravel (whom he plays throughout the rest of the performance). We tried to create thematic unity by calling Nick’s character “Morrie,” as if he were a modern reincarnation of Ravel; this worked well for the performance, although should the piece ever be worked with a different company of performers I would still like the opportunity to rethink the choice.

**Forlane (page 74)**

There is less information written about Gabriel Deluc than there is about any of the other men to whom Ravel dedicated *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. My research was only able to uncover that he was a lieutenant who had lived in St. Jean-de-Luz (Larner 164). Though my information about the other men listed in the dedications was minimal, I had been able to use deduction and poetic license to create stories about each of them (after discovering that Charlot had occupied a minor position with Ravel’s publisher, for example, I made the logical connection that Charlot was probably a young man at the time of his death, which led me to create the character of a youthful enthusiast eager to go off and fight in the great war). With Deluc, I was hesitant to create anything, as the only information I had upon which to build a character was Deluc’s military rank and his hometown.

I decided to take a completely different tactic with the *Forlane* and focus directly on the fact that Deluc as a person has been almost entirely forgotten. I asked the company to compile lists of other items, persons, or issues that have been equally forgotten. Those lists were the foundation of the *Forlane*, which eventually became a poetic lecture about the art of remembrance.
With the Forlane, I also had the opportunity to take the piece directly to its source and to include a performance of the dance for which the piece is named. Excepting the Prelude, each of the movements in Le Tombeau de Couperin is based on a Baroque dance form (François Couperin, as mentioned previously, was a composer of Baroque dance suites). Including the Forlane as a dance into the scene added much emotional and kinetic depth to what might otherwise have been a static performance.

Interlude: How War Begins (page 79)

The inspiration for this interlude came from John Stoessinger’s Why Nations Go to War:

The case material reveals that perhaps the most important single precipitating factor in the outbreak of war is misperception. Such distortion may manifest itself in four different ways: in a leader’s image of himself; a leader’s view of his adversary’s character; a leader’s view of his adversary’s intentions toward himself; and finally, a leader’s view of his adversary’s capabilities and power.[...] Thus, on the eve of each war, at least one nation misperceives another’s power. In that sense, the beginning of each war is a misperception or an accident. (Stoessinger 255, 260)

I created an interlude in which two men (Brian Forrester and Brian John) are playing the childhood game of looking at various objects on a tray and then trying to recall as many of those objects as possible. This is a game in which misperception tends to bring itself to the forefront, as the players find themselves insisting that certain objects were on the tray that were never present, or denying the existence of other objects which were actually there. In our version the stakes are quite high; and as the two men begin to argue about which objects were in fact on the tray, their conflict escalates until they have both declared war. It is, in effect, a direct metaphor for last year’s political conflict; were
there weapons of mass destruction on Iraq’s tray, or were the United States operating under misperception and secondary motives? This short interlude is now one of the strongest in the performance.

**Interlude: Refugees (page 82)**

Refugees returns us to Adelaide’s world; created and developed by Amanda Checco and Brian John, it answers the question “what happens to Adelaide after her world is destroyed in La Valse?” This interlude finds Adelaide chasing a balloon through a barren landscape; when the balloon is popped by another representative of the military, Adelaide falls to her knees and begins to beg the man for help. Unfortunately, Adelaide only speaks French and the soldier only speaks English; and so they have no way of communicating with each other. After several ineffectual attempts, with both sides now angry with each other, Adelaide is forcibly sent on her way. She continues, lost and alone, looking for food, shelter, and her lost friend Maurice Ravel.

This scene was very hard to rehearse and develop. There needed to be an essential tension between the French-speaking Adelaide and the English-speaking Military Representative; but since the actor playing Adelaide could understand what the Military Representative was saying, it took a lot of work to get past that and treat the two characters as people who really couldn’t understand each other. We tried to use improvisation (focusing on Viola Spolin’s gibberish exercises and the idea of miscommunication), but that was only partially useful; what eventually worked for this scene was breaking it down beat by beat and and allowing each actor to realize and focus on his or her own personal objectives and tactics to the point where they were so absorbed with themselves that they couldn’t communicate with each other.
**Interlude: The Pro-War Argument (page 83)**

During the first portion of rehearsal, as the project began to take shape, it occurred to me that the performance ought to include some mention of the opposing viewpoint: to wit, that war was a natural and profitable event in society that had been taking place for thousands of years and that brought its own benefits to civilization. I chose Brian John, who plays the Military Representative, to be the voice of the Pro-War Argument, and the two of us set out to look for some solid resources to present our case.

Surprisingly, solid resources were not to be found. The vast majority of texts that we were able to uncover were all anti-war arguments. After some digging and with the help of a few internet resources, we finally located some pro-war texts, though we had to reach back to Hegel and Nietzsche to find them. After compiling some notes, Brian elected to write a brief pro-war argument based on what we had discovered and on the ideas put forth in Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* which could be turned into a short performance.

**Interlude: 18 (page 84)**

This interlude, like *The Goodbye*, was an interlude whose topic was chosen directly by the company. Marta Targosz and Brian Forrester wanted to create a scene about young people and war. Through brainstorming and discussion, they narrowed it down to the idea that a person eighteen years old is considered too immature to fit into adult society (an eighteen-year-old person cannot drink alcohol, is discouraged from living independently or managing his/her own finances, is ineligible for most jobs that would allow for financial independence, and in many states – due to the influx of new “graduated license” programs – is just now beginning to attain adult automobile driving
privileges) but is perfectly eligible to join the military, operate weaponry, and go to war for his or her country.

From that point, the interlude came very easily. Marta became a waitress from whom Brian tries to buy alcohol; after she turns him down due to the fact that he is only eighteen years old, Brian bemoans his lot and is promptly overheard and picked up by a military recruiter (also played by Marta). Brian leaves the scene no more mature than when he tried to beg the waitress to let him buy alcohol – his last words onstage are “when do I get my gun?” – but he is suddenly transformed from child to soldier.

18 was also unique in that it was created, developed, and polished in a single rehearsal period. Once Marta and Brian chose their topic, the interlude was born almost seamlessly; and at the end of that rehearsal period (which took place at the end of the first week of rehearsal) was deemed essentially “perfect” both by the actors and by those of us watching. Perhaps this was in part due to the immediate, contemporary nature of the piece and its characters, with whom Brian and Marta could both identify. Perhaps it was simply serendipity.

**Menuet (page 87)**

We lead directly from the idea of children going to war to the mothers who are forced to watch them go. Ravel’s *Menuet* reads “dedicated to Jean Dreyfus,” but Ravel and Dreyfus shared no special friendship and the young Dreyfus was merely a piano student of Ravel’s. The true relationship Ravel had to the Dreyfus family was with Jean’s half-brother Roland-Manuel, and with Jean’s mother, Mme. Fernand Dreyfus. Ravel considered Mme. Dreyfus to be a second mother, and throughout WWI wrote her constant, often daily letters in which he called her his “marraine de guerre;” that is, “a
woman who adopts a soldier, sending him packages and letters” (Orenstein Ravel Reader 162).

After reading about Ravel and Mme. Dreyfus’ close friendship, I came to the possible conclusion that Ravel had dedicated the Menuet to Jean Dreyfus not only to honor Jean, but to honor his mother as well. With that in mind, I decided that our Menuet would be a piece about mothers.

The resultant piece that developed is one of two in this performance that emerged identically to the vision that I created more than a year ago (the other being the Pavane). Several characters lead out a woman and crowd around her in a family-like tableau. Then, one by one, they bid their mother goodbye and leave for war. While away, they read her letters written during real wars to real mothers (in this case, letters taken from Andrew Carroll’s compilation book War Letters); Maurice Ravel is there as well, and he reads the letters he wrote to Mme. Dreyfus. At the end, a young soldier steps to the front and begins dancing a minuet. He is now Jean Dreyfus, and the woman, recognizing him as her son, begins to call out to him and to beg for his safety. As the music is concluded, though, Jean Dreyfus is killed; and his mother weeps.

Working the piece with the ensemble, however, provided one significant change that served to both heighten the tension and link the Menuet dramatically to the other sections of the performance. During the final moments of the Menuet, while Jean Dreyfus is dancing, the Military Representative walks slowly across the space holding a red balloon. Mme. Dreyfus sees the balloon, as does the audience, and they both know
exactly what it means. When the balloon is popped, Jean collapses. This major detail provided a new depth to the scene which was not present in my first envisioning.

Interlude: Kids These Days (page 95)

This interlude was written at the request of my friend Brian Zappia, who wanted to be involved in the performance but to take a very small role. When I asked him what role he would like to play, he told me that he would like to play the part of a very old man who came onstage and started complaining about “kids these days” and how they were ruining the world. I wrote a monologue for him to perform based on that idea. Placed right after the Menuet, this monologue built upon the idea that wars are fought by the world’s children to put forth the somewhat daring statement that our current political leaders (including President Bush) are behaving more like children than the young soldiers they send to fight in their wars. While How War Begins presented the idea of war as a game of misperception, Kids These Days offered the idea that wars are also products of games for which the two opposing sides cannot agree on the rules. If they were young children fighting over the rules to a game, the Concerned Citizen suggests, they would get frustrated, throw blocks, and be done with it; but these adult children in political office choose to throw weapons of greater danger, and with larger consequence.

Interlude: The Aria (page 97)

It seemed to me that the melody used in La Valse should make a reappearance near the end of the performance. The music, after all, set the entire performance in motion; and so it seemed thematically and dramatically correct that it should be heard again as the performance neared its close. I developed the idea that the Military Representative should sing the melody at the grave of one of his soldiers, as if he were
playing “Taps” or another memorial piece. Brian John worked with this idea for a while, and then told me that he wanted words to sing; the melody itself was not enough. Together, we decided to use the Latin text “dona eis requiem, dona nobis pacem, dona eis requiem aeternam” (grant them rest, grant us peace, grant them rest eternal). This interlude also allowed us to bring back the white rose, which had disappeared from the stage since How War Begins. Brian placed the rose at the grave, where it would be discovered by Maurice Ravel in the subsequent interlude.

Interlude: The Deserted City (page 97)
The text that inspired this interlude was from a letter that Maurice Ravel wrote to his close friend Jean Marnold on April 4, 1916 while still in the service of the French military. It reads as follows:

I saw a hallucinatory thing: a nightmarish city, horribly deserted and mute. It isn’t the fracas from above, or the small balloons of white smoke which align in the very pure sky; it’s not this formidable and invisible struggle which is anguishing, but rather to feel alone in the center of this city which rests in a sinister sleep, under the brilliant light of a beautiful summer day. Undoubtedly, I will see things which will be more frightful and repugnant; I don’t believe I will ever experience a more profound and stranger emotion than this sort of mute terror. (Ravel, in Orenstein Ravel Reader 162)

The ensemble created physical representations of the jagged edges and broken lines created within a deserted, bombed-out city. Nick Warndorff, playing Ravel, moved through the city, discovering its emptiness and eventually speaking this powerful narrative.

Rigaudon (page 99)

When I was studying Baroque dance as it applied to Le Tombeau de Couperin, I began to consider methods by which such dancing could be employed in the
performance. After reading about and viewing the difficult steps required of the Rigaudon, it became obvious that the average person would not be able to easily execute this dance, even with practice. Thinking about this, I decided to capitalize on that fact and create a scenario in which the steps of the Rigaudon are used as a military drill; and Pierre and Pascal Gaudin, new recruits to the French army, cannot master the steps nor complete the drill properly. Their incompetence as soldiers, while comic during the first moments of the scene, ultimately leads to their both being killed by the same shell on their first day at the front (Larner 164).

The Rigaudon as composed by Ravel has an ABA structure, with the middle section being considerably slower and more lyrical than the outer rhythmic A sections. This musical structure allowed for the outer sections to serve as musical scenery for the hapless Gaudin brothers as they first bumble their way through a practice drill and then through an actual attack, while the middle section provided an opportunity for the brothers to meet up with Ravel, share a quick meal, and hear Ravel’s opinion on how far politically and socially France has traveled in the last two hundred years:

In June 1916, he wrote to Ida Godebska, saying that the soldiers had complained about insufficient food, and the brigadier’s reply was “I don’t give a fuck! Let them eat shit!” Ravel noted, “A great eighteenth-century lady said the same thing, although in not those exact words, and maybe that’s all we gained by the Revolution.” (Ivry 97)

Pavane pour une Infante Defunte (page 106)

The Pavane was the first piece to be rehearsed; I chose to do so because it would allow me the opportunity to rehearse a scene for which I had a very clear vision while simultaneously analyzing the talents, working methods, and idiosyncrasies of the
ensemble with whom I would create the rest of the performance. It and La Valse are the only two pieces or interludes in the performance which involve the entire company, and so it became an ideal choice with which to begin our rehearsal process.

The Pavane itself, as mentioned in the section on “research,” was chosen not for its anti-war musical qualities. Ravel composed the music in 1899, considered the piece itself to be a sort of joke (he liked the assonance present in “infante” and “defunte,” and was somewhat embarrassed that it became so popular) (Ivry 23, Larner 59-60). The Pavane, as mentioned previously, arrived in this performance by a fortunate chance, and I soon decided to set it to Oscar Wilde’s The Birthday of the Infanta. The Oscar Wilde story was very appropriate for this performance because it deals, in a metaphoric way, with the consequences of what happens when we fail to see those who live with us as our equals – and when we assume that we can take power from and control those who are different from us. The character of the Infanta is also very similar to the character of Adelaide at the beginning of La Valse; when those around her are concerned about “state-affairs,” she can only think “how silly of them, when the sun is shining so brightly and everybody is so happy!” (Wilde 101)

The ensemble took quite well to the Pavane, and many of them cite it as their favorite part of the performance; perhaps because it brings everyone back together onstage, and perhaps due to its compelling little story of an Infanta and a dwarf who falls in love with her.
When I began this project, I was uniquely conscious that it would require a large amount of time and effort from those involved. Being the sort of person who is always pressed for time, I was a little anxious about creating a project that seemed to be asking a group of people to devote hours and hours of their time directly to me. Throughout the pre-audition process, as I was publicizing the auditions and the performance, I was careful to mention that there was flexibility in scheduling and time commitment options, as I didn’t want anyone to feel like they were turning over their lives to me by becoming part of the performing ensemble.

Likewise, during the rehearsal period, I was very generous about letting my actors miss a rehearsal or two or letting them leave certain rehearsals early if they had parents visiting, or extra homework, or any of the myriad school/social activities that seem to come up in college students’ lives. At that point I still felt like the members of the performing ensemble were primarily doing me a service and a favor; to wit, helping to create my performance so that I might have a nice thesis. Therefore, I wanted to be as accommodating as possible to them.

It wasn’t until the last two weeks of rehearsal, when things started to come together and the actors started talking about how much fun all of our rehearsals had been and how excited they were about the upcoming performance, that I realized that if there were any favors involved in the creation of and the world dances, they were mutual. Yes, the performing ensemble was in a sense helping me to create my thesis project; but I in
return had provided them with a valuable *opportunity*. With the exception of designer Brian Farkas, these performers were not theatre students. Half of them had never been in any kind of theatrical endeavor before. It wasn’t an issue of them doing work for me; they wanted to create this performance as much as I did.

This changed my entire vantage point on the rehearsal process. Once I realized that we all were sharing in the performance’s ownership, it became much easier for me to become assertive and take the leadership necessary to help the performance achieve its final polish. It became easier for me to remind my cast that they had made a commitment to be at rehearsal on time and to memorize their parts where appropriate. We were all invested in this process, after all; and we all wanted to do our best to create a quality performance.

Reflecting on this, I wonder what would have happened had I been able to approach the entire thesis process with the idea that I was providing an opportunity for Miami students to create a performance, rather than asking Miami students to give generously of their time and talents to help me create a thesis. Though I am very happy with the ensemble with whom I worked to create *and the world dances*, I wonder if I would have been able to get a larger group of people to come to the auditions had I been more enthusiastic about the opportunity that this performance was going to provide. Undoubtedly I will keep this in mind when planning my next performance.

*Making Directorial Choices*
As mentioned throughout this thesis, I wanted and the world dances to be created through a collaborative process. I wanted each member of the ensemble to play an important role in shaping the piece; in creating the lines and the blocking, in determining the characters, and in choosing the various ideas put forward. However, although we spent a great deal of time talking with each other and acting out situations with each other and trying all different ways of creating the various scenes and interludes, I found myself always in the position of essentially saying “well, we’ve talked about this idea and this one; and we’ve worked through this idea; and we’re going to use this one in the performance.” In other words, we all worked together in exploring the various ideas, but I was always the person who made the final choice about what went into the performance and what did not.

This troubled me for a while, primarily because it went directly against what Brian Clark described in his book Group Theatre. Though Clark was the director of his group-created performances, his methods primarily involved facilitating improvisations and activities which eventually enabled his performers to create their own performance. He didn’t seem to be making as many directorial decisions as I was making.

I was able to discuss this with Dr. Bickerstaff, and he suggested that it was perfectly all right for me to make these final decisions about the shape and nature of the performance. I was, after all, the director, the outside eye, the observer. Someone had to make sure that all of the parts fit together and that the actors were visible and present on the stage.
I also had to realize that although I was the director, I was also part of the group. I would feel guilty about impulsively making a suggestion during an improvisation or a group discussion, especially if we ended up using my suggestion. I thought that every suggestion I made canceled out a suggestion that “the group” could have come up with on their own. It took me a few weeks to allow myself to also be part of this group, and to let myself freely share ideas with the performing ensemble.

The Matrix Statement

It also worried me that I had not created a matrix statement or “production concept” until after the group process was underway. Before we arrived at our matrix through rehearsal, I would sit in front of my computer with my research spread around me, trying to intellectualize a matrix into being. After all, George Black seemed to think that the matrix statement ought to come before anything else; and here we were, nearly two weeks into rehearsal, and we didn’t have one!

When thinking about this now, it makes sense that I was unable to create a matrix for and the world dances before we had had the chance to come together and start working as a group. When Black suggested that the matrix come in the very early stages of the production process, before meetings with designers or rehearsals with performers, he was referring to productions in which the script was already written. I had been trying to create a matrix about a performance which at the time didn’t exist; about words that had not yet been spoken; about ideas that had not yet come into being. Looking back, it is only reasonable that we were not able to create a production matrix until after we had begun working together on the performance.
The Audience Response

and the world dances was performed twice; on March 26 and 27, 2004 in Leonard Theatre. The first performance had an audience of approximately 45; the second, approximately 60. The audience was primarily made up of friends and relatives of the performers, Miami faculty members who had assisted in the thesis and performance process, and Western College students interested in seeing what was being performed in their residence hall.

In terms of both energy and proficiency, the ensemble gave the better performance on Friday the 26th. While both performances were quite good, the performance given on Friday had three major advantages in its favor: it was opening night and therefore garnered the requisite opening-night energy (the cast was very ready to present and the world dances to an audience); the audience was not yet made up of parents or other relatives who might be critical (those people came Saturday night); and the ensemble was reasonably well-rested. Saturday’s performance was in no way bad, but I could tell that the cast was a little tired and a little nervous; their dialogue was in occasion rapid and a little blurred, and the choreography in La Valse was less crisp.

However, the audience responded much better to the Saturday performance than they did to the Friday performance. This may have been due to the increased number of people at the Saturday performance, or it may have been in part because all of the friends and parents and relatives who were theoretically intimidating because they were the most likely to be critical were also the most likely to give warm audience support to the
performers. The Miami theatre faculty/staff contingent, who attended on Saturday and sat at the very back of the house, also did much to provide support and bring the audience together.

It did surprise me that the audience was not particularly active or vocal during the performance. There was no applause, for example, after *La Valse* or after any of the scenes or interludes. There was some laughter, though it was limited. This may have stemmed from a few sources; first that both audiences were essentially small, second that the overlying seriousness of the performance created a hesitancy towards laughter and other “enthusiasm,” even where it would have been appropriate; third that the rhythm and balance of the performance itself may not have been conducive to audience response (the continual juxtaposition of the serious and the comic – without pause for breath or reflection – might have jarred the audience into silence).

I received a variety of compliments and comments after the two performances, ranging from “it was the best anti-war piece I’ve seen in years” to “you make me remember how important art is to society” to “I thought it was really nice, but I didn’t understand some of it” to “good job – but come into my office next week so I can give you a full critique.” The audience’s reaction seemed primarily favorable, and I think that the majority of people found the performance to be both entertaining and thought-provoking.

The most important criticism I received about the performance had to do with the transitions between the various scenes and interludes. Though the transitions as performed were clean and well-rehearsed, I learned that they had not been very effective
in providing a bridge for the audience to connect from one segment of the piece to another. As a director, I had chosen to let the transitions be as quick and impersonal as – for example – the transitions between commercials on television. When an interlude was complete, the actors involved exited the stage quietly and neatly and the actors involved in the next interlude made their entrance. This, as it turned out, was a hindrance to the audience, who wanted there to be more of a connection between each piece; wanted the transitions themselves to be as fluid and kinetic and metaphorical as the interludes between them; wanted the transitions to allow the series of scenes to become a whole, complete work of art, rather than a parade of individual parts. Learning this was very important and will help me improve my work on future pieces.

The final performance of and the world dances: Pieces by Maurice Ravel brought a year-long process of research, study, rehearsal, and collaboration to a close. I think that everyone involved learned a great deal from the experience, both at the political and at the performance level. I have already received one request to reprise the piece at a Cincinnati protest festival in the summer; perhaps it could be reworked, updated, and expanded for a second round of performances.

Should it be performed again, it could never take exactly the same shape as it took during our performance process. Our world would undoubtedly be in a different place, and therefore the contemporary references would need to be updated. The cast members might change, and new interludes might be added to showcase those performers’ various talents and political ideas, while other interludes might be dropped. Even the dialogue
and action created for La Valse and Le Tombeau de Couperin and the Pavane would have to be re-examined in the context of the new performance.

However, after directing this piece I feel confident that I could handle the challenges involved in creating it anew in a different time with possibly a different set of performers – or providing the foundation for a new group-created performance, with a different subject and a different set of goals. I am happy, grateful, and proud to have had the opportunity to make and the world dances possible. It was an extraordinary year.
Works Referenced


Winter, Jay and Emmanuel Sivan. *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century.*

Appendix A: The Script

and the world dances: Pieces by Maurice Ravel

Characters (in order of appearance)

Adelaide
Hungry Dog
Military Representative
Old Man
Janitor
Woman
Maurice Ravel
Ravel’s Dance Partner
Jacques Charlot
Cheerleader
Cheer Squad 1
Cheer Squad 2
News Reporter
Morrie
In the premiere production, the roles were grouped as follows:

Adelaide

Maurice Ravel, Morrie

Old Man, Janitor, Ravel’s Dance Partner, Male Dancer, Jacques Charlot, Cheer Squad 1, Sam, Narrator, War Leader 2, Young Man, Chick, Pierre Gaudin, Dwarf

Hungry Dog, Battered Woman, Female Dancer, Cheerleader, Jean Dreyfus, Chorus 2, Woman with Tray, Waitress, Recruiter, Bill, Pascal Gaudin, Infanta

Military Representative, Cheer Squad 2, Chorus 1, War Leader 1, David, Chamberlain

News Reporter

Concerned Citizen

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*La Valse*

These notes will describe the business and blocking as it was during the March 2004 performance of *and the world* dances.

The performance begins with the curtains closed. When they open, ADELAIDE is DC facing R in a position similar to the yoga “child’s pose.” There is a white rose DL slightly upstage of ADELAIDE; there is a long yellow ribbon CR, and a single red balloon UR.

There is a moment of silence, and then Ravel’s *La Valse* is heard. It will play continually throughout this section.

At measure 12, ADELAIDE’S downstage hand begins to move. It flexes, feels around, and then begins to slowly work its way towards ADELAIDE’S head, where it is met by her upstage hand. The two hands feel their environment until they discover ADELAIDE’S head. At measure 40, they lift ADELAIDE’S head up and her eyes are opened.

ADELAIDE begins to explore the space with her eyes and her
outstretched arms. She begins to lean further and further R, reaching out beyond the space her arms and torso can accommodate. Her legs suddenly move to assist; and ADELAIDE discovers she has another element to her body. She begins to play with her legs, kicking them around while still sitting on the stage.

After ADELAIDE has explored the horizontal space around her with her arms, eyes, and legs, she turns her attention to the vertical. Her arms stretch up. Her eyes stretch up. And then, at measure 67, she stretches up so far that her legs push her up to a standing position. ADELAIDE begins to explore this new space around her with her arms and torso and eyes; for a while her legs remain motionless, but in another reach towards the ceiling, ADELAIDE discovers that she can jump. From jumping she soon learns to walk and run, and immediately crosses DL to discover the first object that catches her eye – the white rose.

(There is a woman on the stage. Throughout the piece, we will know her as ADELAIDE. For a brief moment, there is silence and stillness; then a deep heartbeat begins to pulse as a faint waltz is heard. ADELAIDE begins to move; first slowly, as if she were realizing her body and her very existence for the first time, and then more and more quickly. As the music swells, she begins to delight further and further in her own body and in her own miraculous self, and she begins to dance.

At measure 100, ADELAIDE picks up the white rose and
begins to play with it. At measure 107, she begins a dance (which relies primarily on the waltz-like balancé step) which soon takes her upstage to the yellow ribbon. She picks up the ribbon and begins to swirl it around her. She tour jetés DL and ends by triumphantly tying the ribbon around her waist and slipping the white rose under the ribbon. She then turns upstage and for the first time notices the red balloon.

As ADELAIDE dances, she explores her world. She finds in it things she likes. She likes herself. She finds a white rose. She likes the rose. She finds a long yellow ribbon. She likes the ribbon. She finds a red balloon. She loves the balloon.

At measure 148, the HUNGRY DOG enters DR and crawls to center. ADELAIDE is absorbed with her balloon, but turns and crosses downstage to meet the DOG. The two sniff at each other, but then the DOG starts trying to take ADELAIDE’S balloon from her. ADELAIDE eventually kicks the DOG and it exits UR.

ADELAIDE is not alone onstage. Unbeknownst to her, a HUNGRY DOG has entered her world. When she realizes the DOG is there, she is disgusted. The DOG is in her way. The DOG is filthy. The DOG wants her balloon. ADELAIDE cannot stand this.

Measure 196.
When the DOG leaves, ADELAIDE is once again free to explore her space and her world. She is enraptured by her balloon. She caresses it and holds it close to her.

Measure 212. The M. REP enters CR holding a wooden dowel for a gun. ADELAIDE is CL. The M. REP sees the balloon and drops his gun. He and ADELAIDE countercross twice as he lunges for the balloon; on the third one he grabs ADELAIDE and begins to caress her arm. She pushes him away, and he runs back R to grab his gun. He aims at ADELAIDE, who falls to the ground CL, but he cannot shoot. He exits CR.

At measure 244, the OLD MAN enters DL and crosses up to meet ADELAIDE. They play “keep away” with the balloon.

Then her space is interrupted by a REPRESENTATIVE of the MILITARY, who has been commanded to retrieve ADELAIDE’S balloon. When she will not give it to him, he comes very close to shooting her, but his conscience intervenes. He runs away in shame, and ADELAIDE is for the moment relieved; but then her space is interrupted again. A sick OLD MAN has come in search of ADELAIDE’S balloon. He slowly follows ADELAIDE through the space, reaching for her as if the balloon she held could make him well. ADELAIDE realizes that she is much faster and stronger than this man, and so begins to tease him by tossing and dangling the balloon just out of his reach.

The M. REP re-enters CR at measure 292; he crosses CL to
lead the OLD MAN offstage. He returns CL; ADELAIDE is CR; they play their horizontal countercross game three more times before ADELAIDE salutes him and he, confused, salutes in return and exits CR.

Suddenly the MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE returns, this time more commanding and foreboding. Adelaide hides the balloon and indicates that the OLD MAN had something to do with it, and the MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE forces the sick OLD MAN out of the space. ADELAIDE salutes him for a job well done, and he salutes in return and leaves. ADELAIDE is once again alone in her world, and can return all her attention to her balloon.

Measure 332. The JANITOR enters UL and begins to pantomime mopping the floor. He crosses diagonally across the stage. ADELAIDE is dancing with her back to him; she bumps into him and he turns and notices her balloon. He does not attempt to take ADELAIDE’S balloon, but continues his diagonal cross. ADELAIDE dances on the newly-mopped floor UL, and the JANITOR exits CR.

ADELAIDE is so absorbed in herself and her world that she does not even notice the lone exhausted JANITOR who has entered and who is trying to mop the space clean. After she literally bumps into him, she begins to amuse herself by tracing patterns into the newly-mopped floor. The JANITOR sighs, and looks longingly at ADELAIDE’S balloon, but
continues doing his job, mopping his way through the space until he is gone.

At measure 372, the woman enters UL. ADELAIDE meets her and they pantomime looking at her compact. They cross DL as the WOMAN becomes interested in ADELAIDE’S balloon; she wraps her arms around ADELAIDE and ADELAIDE pushes her away. The WOMAN exits DR.

Then a WOMAN enters, as if flung backwards by a sudden blow. She is slightly confused to find herself in such a space, but she picks herself up and begins to put powder on the bruises on her face. ADELAIDE, attracted by the glittering compact, moves closer and closer to the WOMAN; but the WOMAN lunges for ADELAIDE’S balloon, and when that fails, wraps her body around ADELAIDE as if desperate for some kind of human contact. ADELAIDE is frightened and repulsed, and beats the WOMAN away.

Measure 406. The TWO MEN enter UR. They perform a fancy waltz, with dips and spins. At measure 425, RAVEL sees ADELAIDE. He bows to his PARTNER, who returns the bow and exits UR, and then RAVEL crosses CL to meet ADELAIDE. ADELAIDE is now a mature woman. Still holding her balloon, she takes RAVEL’s arm and they begin to promenade slowly DC, talking to each other.
Shortly after, TWO MEN enter, waltzing. ADELAIDE ignores the men, but one of them recognizes her. He is MAURICE RAVEL. He leaves his partner and goes to her.)

RAVEL. Adelaide.

ADELAIDE. Maurice.

(They begin to walk together. They speak in French.)

RAVEL. Tu vas bien? (Are you well?)

ADELAIDE. Oui. Toi? (Yes. You?)

RAVEL. Non. J'ai trop de soucis. (Not well. I worry too much.)

ADELAIDE. Au sujet de quoi? (About what?)

RAVEL. Au sujet du monde. De l'Autriche et l'Allemagne et la France. De cette guerre qui va bientot declencher. Tu ne la vois pas, tout autour de toi? (About the world. About Austria and Germany and France. About this war that is soon to begin. Don't you see it around you?)
ADELAIDE. J’ai décidé de ne pas faire attention. Il est beaucoup plus intéressant de
dancer. Viens; dance avec moi. *(I choose not to pay attention. It is much
more interesting to dance. Come, dance with me.)*

At measure 486, they begin to waltz. The DOG enters DR at measure 522, the M. REP enters
CR at measure 528, and the JANITOR enters UR at measure 532. ADELAIDE and RAVEL
continue to waltz. ADELAIDE sees the other characters and screams at them in French. They
exit R, the way they came in. At measure 566, the balloons begin to enter from the right side of the
stage. We used approximately 25 balloons to fill the stage floor space. The other characters
enter again UR (with safety pins) at measure 580, marching in slow concentric circles around
ADELAIDE and RAVEL which get smaller and smaller until everyone onstage is pressed
together. ADELAIDE’S balloon is popped at measure 646.

*(They begin to waltz together. Some of the characters seen earlier – the
HUNGRY DOG, the JANITOR, and the MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE –
enter and watch them dance. ADELAIDE notices this, and screams at
them to leave.)*

*The characters leave, and the space slowly begins to fill with red balloons.*

*ADELAIDE and RAVEL pay no attention. Then the characters seen
ever earlier enter again, marching slowly around the waltzing couple. They*
close in until they surround ADELAIDE and RAVEL. The mass of bodies begins to sway, and ADELAIDE holds her balloon high above the crush of bodies to protect it. The other characters are suddenly revealed to be holding pins. They raise their arms and pop ADELAIDE’S balloon.

The M. REP takes the upstage area, the DOG takes the SR area, and the JANITOR takes the SL area. ADELAIDE runs around the stage trying to grab balloons, but they are all popped by the various characters. RAVEL has come DC and is sitting, writing a waltz on a piece of paper he took from his pocket. ADELAIDE grabs RAVEL at measure 688 and they tango first DL, then change directions and tango DR. The M. REP and the JANITOR exit UR and return bringing on the large broken piece of brick wall, which they install UR. The DOG exits CR and returns bringing on a black cube. At measure 712, ADELAIDE sees the changes to the stage and screams. She and RAVEL run to center, where the DOG begins to pull ADELAIDE CR while the JANITOR begins to pull RAVEL CL. The M. REP stands upstage watching the action. After three pulls, ADELAIDE and RAVEL are separated. There is a blackout. ADELAIDE and the DOG exit SR, and the M. REP, RAVEL, and the JANITOR exit SL.

ADELAIDE, without her primary balloon, begins to lunge for the other balloons that litter the stage; but the other characters pop them as fast as she can touch them. Meanwhile, RAVEL is so overwhelmed by what is going on that he takes out some staff paper and a pen and begins to write
it down in the form of music. When ADELAIDE realizes that all of the balloons have been popped, she defiantly grabs RAVEL and begins a sharp tango across the stage. The other characters continue to alter the stage space, bringing on pieces of bombed-out brick walls and other debris. ADELAIDE sees what has happened to her world and screams. She and RAVEL hold each other close for safety, but the other characters pull them apart. They break free and run back to each other, but are pulled apart again. They manage to reach each other one last time – RAVEL taking the rose from ADELAIDE’S outstretched hand – but the other characters are holding them tight and ADELAIDE and RAVEL are finally, irrevocably, separated.

Interlude: The Dance Rehearsal

MALE DANCER enters SL, FEMALE DANCER enters SR; they meet slightly right of center. The movements executed by the FEMALE DANCER are dégagé à devant, developpé down to pointe tendu à la seconde, and back together.

(A MALE DANCER and a FEMALE DANCER are rehearsing a dance. They repeat the same short sequence of movements over and over. As they rehearse, they speak.)

F. DANCER. They’re going to declare war any day now, you know.
M. DANCER. I know.

F. DANCER. Have you been following it in the papers?

M. DANCER. No, not exactly.

F. DANCER. Neither have I. Switch sides.

(They switch sides and begin repeating the same movements with their opposite legs.)

F. DANCER. I mean, I suppose it was a matter of time.

M. DANCER. For what?

F. DANCER. Until there was another war.

M. DANCER. Why are we talking about this?

F. DANCER. Why not?

M. DANCER. Because... it’s not here and it’s not now.
F. DANCER. It could be.

M. DANCER. Your form is off.

F. DANCER. What?

M. DANCER. You’re not paying attention.

F. DANCER. I’m sorry, it’s hard.

M. DANCER. Get your leg up.

(There is a pause. They continue rehearsing.)

F. DANCER. They’re going to declare war any day now, you know.

FEMALE DANCER exits SR.

(The FEMALE DANCER leaves. The MALE DANCER remains on stage.)

Prelude

Ravel's Prelude plays throughout. The pacing of the dialogue should be timed so that the scene ends when the music does.

CHARLOT turns upstage slightly so that he looks like he’s standing in a long line of people. RAVEL enters SL and crosses in front of CHARLOT, looking DR for Adelaide.

(The MALE DANCER is now JACQUES CHARLOT. Ravel enters, with the white rose.)

CHARLOT. Ravel!

RAVEL. Charlot?

CHARLOT. Ravel, you've got to hurry!

RAVEL. Adelaide! Adelaide! Have you seen a woman in a white dress? She was just here.

CHARLOT. Maurice, don't be an idiot. There are no women here. Now come on and let's get in line.

RAVEL. I'm sorry; I feel strange. I feel like I've been dreaming.
CHARLOT. Well, you know you'll have to get over those artistic fits when you're on the battlefield.

RAVEL. ...battlefield? My head aches.

RAVEL is R of CHARLOT and faces upstage. They are both “in line.”

CHARLOT. Just stand here in line with me. (Pause) I don't know about you, but I'm excited. I mean, I know it won't be like picking daisies or anything, but I'm still excited. My father used to keep guns, you know, in his house. For hunting. He would never let me touch them. (Pause) And it's for a good cause, too. I mean, I wouldn't be here if it weren't. It's about time someone stuck it to Germany.

RAVEL. ... you're so young.

CHARLOT. You're so funny! Ah, well, you're a genius and I admire it. Years from now I'll be able to say I knew you.

The M. REP enters UL and crosses diagonally to meet CHARLOT and RAVEL.

(The MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE enters to inspect the new recruits.)

M. REP. Name?

M. REP. Age?

CHARLOT. Twenty-one.

M. REP. Step on the scales, please.

CHARLOT steps onto the cube.

(The MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE adjusts the scales until they are balanced, and writes the figure down.)

M. REP. Good. Next station.

CHARLOT exits DL.

(CHARLOT leaves. The MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE turns to RAVEL.)

M. REP. Name?

RAVEL. Maurice Ravel. M-A-U-

M. REP. Maurice Ravel? The composer?

RAVEL. Yes.
M. REP. What are you doing here?

RAVEL. I don't know. Today seems strange. But yesterday, and the day before -- these four days since it all started -- I thought I should enlist because... well, because I long for peace. Strange, that I am here to fight a war because I long for peace. And because I love France, and what she stands for. And because this involves all of us, and it isn't right for me to stay behind.

M. REP. You aren't young.

RAVEL. I'm thirty-nine years old.

M. REP. And you aren't in very good shape. You could stay out of this, you know.

RAVEL. I know. But I want to fight. Perhaps... I could fly a plane. I've always wanted to learn to fly.

M. REP. Uh-uh. You're going... to drive an ambulance. Go to that station there and talk to Chevalier. Tell him I sent you.

M. REP exits L. RAVEL crosses upstage to meet “Chevalier” and
then comes downstage to talk to the audience.

(The MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE exits.)

RAVEL. We went to Chalons-sur-Marne. One hundred miles east of Paris. I missed the lights, the smells; I felt alone here. I named my ambulance Adelaide, after the strange woman in my dream. I began to write waltzes in the dark, on scraps of paper. I found it hard to be alive.

CHARLOT enters DL. The conversation takes place DC.

(CHARLOT enters, singing part of the melody from the Prelude.)

CHARLOT. Ravel! It's been weeks! I had no idea where you were!

RAVEL. Charlot! You look well.

CHARLOT. Comparatively, I suppose. You look... well, you look well too. (Pause) They're sending me up to the front again tomorrow.

RAVEL. You don't want to go.

CHARLOT. No, I do -- I mean, I know I'm going to make it out all right, I'm quick on my feet. I heard... you were driving an ambulance.
RAVEL. Yes.

CHARLOT. Well, good for you, then. I can't really stay now, but maybe we'll see each other! Better here than, um, picking me up off of the mud of France.

Right.

CHARLOT exits DR.

*(CHARLOT begins to exit, singing.)*

RAVEL. What is that melody?

CHARLOT. Don't know; made it up.

*(CHARLOT exits.)*

RAVEL. I did not know Charlot well. He had a position with my publisher at Durand. He was so young... He was killed that night, of course. When I learned of the news, I could only hear his song. The notes fell about me like rain.

*Interlude: How To Say Nuclear*

CHEERLEADER and C. SQUAD 1 enter UR. C. SQUAD 2 enters UL, grabbing the block and taking it DC to meet the other two. The CHEERLEADER stands on the
(A CHEERLEADER and two members of her CHEER SQUAD enter.)

C. LEADER. Ready? Go!

Give me an “N,” N, you’ve got your N, you’ve got your N
Give me a “U,” U, you’ve got your U, yes, I mean U
Give me a “C,” C, you’ve got your C, you’ve got your C
Give me an “L,” L, you’ve got your L, you’ve got your L
Give me an “E,” E, you’ve got your E, you’ve got your E
Give me an “A,” A, you’ve got your A, you’ve got your A
Give me an “R,” R, you’ve got your R, you’ve got your R

What’s that spell?

(Her CHEER SQUAD answers without hesitation.)

C. SQUAD. Nukular!

C. LEADER. Nukular? Did you just say nukular? It’s nuclear. Don’t start it unless you can say it.
Interlude: News

(A NEWS REPORTER enters with copies of that morning’s local and national papers. The REPORTER reads selected articles that deal with both prominent and overlooked issues.)

REPORTER returns to her seat in the house.

Interlude: The Goodbye

MORRIE enters UR, crosses DC to the block, places the rose on the block, takes the rose and the block UL, then begins pantomiming making scrambled eggs UC.
SAM enters CL and crosses up to the block, sitting on it. SAM is carrying a black binder that he stashes behind the block. MORRIE brings SAM his breakfast.

(MORRIE, a contemporary version of Maurice Ravel, enters with the white rose. He places it on a table and then begins to prepare breakfast. SAM, MORRIE’S lover, enters and discovers the white rose.)

MORRIE. Morning, Sam.

SAM. Morning, Morrie.

MORRIE. How’d you sleep?

SAM. Slept well, except for the draft.
MORRIE crosses UC and pantomimes putting away his cooking supplies and washing up. SAM pantomimes eating.

MORRIE. 

(a double meaning) What draft? There’s no draft.

SAM. Let’s not get back into this again, not on my last day with you.

MORRIE. Well, I don’t see why it has to be your last day with me when there isn’t even a draft. I just don’t see why you have to leave me.

SAM. I’m not leaving you, I’m fighting for you. Fighting for us.

MORRIE. But this country doesn’t even accept you. Why would you fight for it?

SAM crosses UC to comfort MORRIE.

SAM. It’s our home. People will learn to accept us in time. We’ve already made so much progress! You can’t just shut yourself out; we have to keep fighting.

MORRIE gives SAM a piece of toast. SAM takes it and crosses DL to the block.

MORRIE. How’s your toast?

SAM turns and immediately crosses UC back to MORRIE – teasing. He tries to embrace MORRIE.

SAM. Fine... but not as fine as you.
MORRIE pushes SAM away.

MORRIE. Oh, don’t you try to sweet-talk me. We shouldn’t have to fight for any rights. Our love is just as true as any of theirs.

SAM. I agree with you, but that’s obviously not how the world works.

MORRIE. You’ll just be lying to yourself and everyone else in the army when you’re out there fighting.

SAM. I’m not lying; I’m just not acknowledging certain parts of me.

MORRIE confronts SAM and forces him L.

MORRIE. You’re not acknowledging me! And I can’t stand that you won’t be able to think about me or talk about me to anyone when you’re all alone out there and scared and I won’t be there to comfort you. It just doesn’t seem right!

SAM: I know it doesn’t, but I’ll still be thinking about you when I’m out there.

MORRIE. I just don’t want to lose you.

They embrace.

SAM. I don’t want to lose you either.
MORRIE. I don’t even know where they’re sending you. I wish you could tell me –

SAM. Don’t ask where I’m going –

MORRIE: (overlapping) Don’t tell me not to ask --

SAM: (overlapping) Don’t ask where –

MORRIE: (overlapping) Don’t tell me –

SAM: Don’t ask!

MORRIE: Don’t tell!

(MORRIE exits UR. SAM sits on the block and picks up his black binder. He puts the white rose in the binder so that its petals are visible at the top. Chorus 1 enters UL, Chorus 2 UR; the three of them form a horizontal line upstage (with SAM/NARRATOR in the center). They all carry black binders, from which they read their text.

(MORRIE exits. SAM takes the white rose and becomes the NARRATOR.

CHORUS 1 and CHORUS 2 enter.)

CHORUS 2. Forlane.
CHORUS 1. Dedicated to Gabriel Deluc.

Forlane

Ravel’s Forlane plays throughout.

As the NARRATOR lists Deluc’s possible qualities, the CHORUS illustrates them in pantomime.

NARR. Who was Gabriel Deluc? (pause) Who was Gabriel Deluc? Was he a printer, a painter, a potter, a publisher, a farmer, a fighter, a fanatic, a crank, a crook, a lover, a lonely man, a left-behind name as he fell down into the grass and was killed on the battlefields of France? (pause) He was a lieutenant. He lived in St. Jean de Luz. And Maurice Ravel dedicated to him a Forlane.

(The CHORUS and the NARRATOR dance a brief figure of the Forlane.)

NARR. Does this piece of music manage to tell us anything at all about who this man was? Does it help to keep his memory alive? Or is he simply a name, marked at the top of a piece of sheet music? Forlane: dedicated to Gabriel Deluc. Who was Gabriel Deluc?

(CHORUS 2 begins reading a list of deceased as the others continue speaking.)


NARR. Who was Gabriel Deluc?

While they are speaking, CHORUS 1 and 2 make curved crosses in front of the NARRATOR so that they switch positions in the horizontal line.

CHORUS 1. When I think of war, I feel confused. I see hypocrisy. I hear media babble; background noise; what is real? I hold those I love close to me for fear of what’s to come.
NARR. Gabriel Deluc had a father and a mother. He grew up – he grew old enough to fight in a war. Maurice Ravel knew him. His life must have touched a thousand others, from the brush of his hand against the hand of the merchant who sold him his bread and cheese, to the kiss placed lightly on the forehead of the person sleeping next to him in bed. Ravel wrote him a Forlane; but there are no letters, no records, no remembrances of who this man was or what he was like, while he lived. He is just another name.

While they are speaking, CHORUS 1 and 2 cross downstage and sit.

(CHORUS 1 continues the list, under CHORUS 2.)


CHORUS 2. When I think of life, I am also confused. I try to see green and hear birds, but I see death and earth and fire and anguish. They are both there, the birds and the fire, the songs and the screams, the sweetness and the bitter, but it is a choice what you see. What you pay attention to.

The NARRATOR crosses downstage and remains standing.
NARR. What do we pay attention to? Do we pay attention to the things that affect us? Do we pay attention only to the things that we can affect? Does the death of a man nearly a hundred years ago in France, a man about whom nothing is known now save that he was a lieutenant and that he lived in St. Jean de Luz and that a composer wrote him a Forlane; does his death require that we pay attention to him? What does it mean to pay attention? Does it mean that you have to act upon what you see?

CHORUS 2 stands.

CHORUS 2. Does it mean that you cannot also have the sweetness? Can you only see the one thing?

CHORUS 1 stands.

CHORUS 1. Does reading a list of the dead make it impossible for you to dance?

After they dance the Forlane, the CHORUS and the NARRATOR return to their positions at the start of the scene. RAVEL enters R, moves through them, and exits L.

(The ENSEMBLE dances the brief steps of the Forlane. RAVEL enters.)

RAVEL. Adelaide! Adelaide! Where are you?

(RAVEL moves through the dancers and exits.)

CHORUS 2. When I think of life, I realize that it is so hard to encompass it all.
NARR. Who was Gabriel Deluc? And does it matter? He was just one name in a long, long list of names of those who died for the cause of war. But if we fail to pay attention to Deluc, then we fail to pay attention to all of the names; and when we lose the names, we lose the lives twice over again. When we think that a man like Deluc lived so long ago that he couldn’t possibly touch our lives today, then it is easier for us to think that wars overseas, or massacres in foreign lands, or diseases raging through distant populations couldn’t possibly have any effect on us over here. And when we forget those who live far away, it becomes so, so easy to forget those close by; those living and working with us, side by side. Our hand brushing against theirs.

CHORUS 2. The sweetness and the bitter. How do we encompass them both?

NARR. We forget the names one by one and we forget to watch, to hear, to pay attention to the world around us. We forget our past and our future.

CHORUS 1. And then we look around and wonder why we are at war; why we are still finding races or populations or creeds of people to abuse; why we are still destroying our world and leaving behind us poverty and distrust and disease; why we have still not yet learned.
CHORUS 2. We want our lives to be beautiful. We don’t want to think about what isn’t beautiful. Life is too much. It’s ours; let them deal with their own problems. The sweetness and the bitter. I choose the sweetness.

CHORUS 2 takes the rose and exits UR.

(CHORUS 2 takes the white rose from the NARRATOR and leaves the stage.)

NARR. It would be easy to forget Gabriel Deluc. But Maurice Ravel remembered.

Just listen – listen – to the music.

At this point we are approximately at measure 197, with about 40 seconds of music left for the audience.

(All lights go out. The audience is left to listen to the music.)

**Interlude: How War Begins**

W. L. 1 sits CL, W. L. 2 sits CR. They face each other.

(The lights are back up. The actor playing CHORUS 1 is now playing WAR LEADER 1. The NARRATOR plays WAR LEADER 2.)

W. L. 1. Why nations go to war.
W. L. 2. As based on the ideas put forth by political scientist and war theorist John Stoessinger.

The WOMAN WITH TRAY enters UR, crosses downstage, and walks around the WAR LEADERS in a figure eight pattern. She exits UR. The WAR LEADERS write in their binders.

(A WOMAN WITH A TRAY enters. The tray contains various small assorted household items, including the white rose. She passes through and around the two WAR LEADERS, and they examine the items. She leaves, and the two WAR LEADERS each take a moment to write down a list of the items they saw on the tray. They compare lists.)

W. L. 1. I saw a button.

W. L. 2. I saw a penny.

W. L. 1. I saw a bracelet.

W. L. 2. I saw a cup.

W. L. 1. Yeah, there was a cup... I saw a ring.

W. L. 2. There wasn’t a ring.
W. L. 1. Yes, there was.

W. L. 2. I didn’t see any ring.

W. L. 1. It was right next to the key.

W. L. 2. No it wasn’t. You might have thought that keychain was a ring.

W. L. 1. It wasn’t a keychain. It was a ring.

W. L. 2. I’m sure it was a keychain.

W. L. 1. It had a little stone. Keychains don’t have stones.

W. L. 2. There wasn’t any stone.

W. L. 1. Are you calling me a liar? Do you think I don’t know what I see?

W. L. 2. I just think you’re mistaken about what you saw.

W. L. 1. How do you know that you’re not mistaken about what you saw?
W. L. 2. Because I know what I saw.

They are now standing.

W. L. 1. Well, I know what I saw! You weren’t paying attention!

W. L. 2. Now that’s an insult.

W. L. 1. Maybe you deserved it.

W. L. 2. Do you want to take this outside?

W. L. 1. Yeah, let’s take this outside!

They exit L.

(The two WAR LEADERS exit, still arguing.)

Interlude: Refugees

The balloon is thrown so that it lands downstage center. The M. REP enters UL, crosses down to pop the balloon, and returns to his position (near the block). The dialogue and conflict takes place in this upstage area. Adelaide exits UL.

(A red balloon makes its way onto the stage. The MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE enters and pops it. ADELAIDE enters, distraught.

She begins to beg the MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE for food and water.

However, she speaks French and the MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE only
speaks English. Their frustration at not being able to understand each other escalates into violence. ADELAIDE, broken, leaves.)

Interlude: The Pro-War Argument

M. REP crosses DC to give his argument. He exits DL.

(The MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE gives an argument supporting war.)

M. REP. The human race thrives on adversity. It brings out the best in us, forces us to develop both our physical and mental facilities. Overcoming an obstacle is one of the most rewarding experiences anyone can have, the only real issue being motivation. Sometimes just the fact that someone says it can’t be done is motivation enough, other times there are emotional or financial rewards waiting for the achiever. War is just another method of achieving a goal, the most extreme test of human facilities. It is the necessary force behind human development.

Think about it. Examine the technological and economical situations before and after any major war, and one finds extreme leaps in both fields. A great deal of our modern technology, such as nuclear power and space flight, was created in the process of trying to create bigger and better weapons. WWII pulled the United States out of the great depression, and nothing is better for bringing a nations economy together than striving toward a common goal, even if it is defeating an enemy.
Now, just for a second, imagine if there was no war. The world would be a utopia, a land of freedom, a perfect place to live, and a land where free thought would be outlawed. All conflicts arise from people having different views. It is the reason we have music, art, dance, theatre, and yes, war.

What is day without night? What is sunshine without rain? What is good without evil? What is peace without war.

**Interlude: 18**

The YOUNG MAN enters UL, takes the block, and moves it DC. He sits on it. The WAITRESS enters DR.

*(A YOUNG MAN is in a bar. A WAITRESS enters.)*

WAITRESS. *(to offstage)* Hey Mustafa, can you get another case ready? It’s crazy tonight!

WAITRESS crosses to the YOUNG MAN.

*(She approaches the YOUNG MAN.)*

WAITRESS. What can I get for you?

MAN. Um... I’ll have... um, a Corona, please.
WAITRESS. Yep, sure. Can I see some ID?

MAN. Um, I think I must have left it at home. Sorry.

WAITRESS. Well, no can do. Can’t serve you without an ID, unless you want to go see if it’s in your car...?

MAN. All right, all right. The thing is, I’m only 18. I’ve just had a really bad day. My girlfriend broke up with me, my car broke down, my...


MAN. Come on, I’ve heard you’ve done it before...

WAITRESS crosses downstage and exits DL.

(The WAITRESS exits.)

MAN. Aw man, being 18 sucks. What is there to do? Sometimes you get kicked out of your house, but you can’t get a good job to live on your own...

there’s school, but that’s not for everyone... I can vote, but who does that?

There’s just nothing good about being eighteen.

The WAITRESS/RECRUITER and the M. REP enter DL and
cross upstage to the YOUNG MAN. The M. REP goes only halfway, and faces ¾ upstage in salute.

(The WAITRESS enters as the MILITARY RECRUITER. She and the MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE approach the YOUNG MAN.)

RECRUIT. So, I hear you’re eighteen.

MAN. Yeah?

RECRUIT. Well, have I got news for you. You can’t drink a beer in this bar, but you can join the army and kill people while fighting for your country. Sound interested?

MAN. Yeah!

RECRUIT. Well, I can get you all signed up. Come with me.

MAN. Great! Wow, man, the army! When do I get my gun?

YOUNG MAN and RECRUITER cross DL and exit, saluting the M. REP as they pass. The M. REP turns to face the audience.

(The YOUNG MAN and the RECRUITER exit. The MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE gives the next dedication.)
M. REP. Menuet: Dedicated to Jean Dreyfus... and, perhaps, to his mother.

M. REP exits DL.

(The MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE exits.)

Menuet

Ravel’s Menuet plays throughout. For this performance, we found it necessary to repeat measures 1-64 twice before continuing on to the B section of the music beginning at measure 65.

ADELAIDE enters CL, led by DAVID on her right and CHICK on her left. BILL follows behind, holding the copy of Andrew Carroll’s War Letters. They sit at center in a tableau; ADELAIDE on the block, CHICK and BILL at her left, and DAVID at her right.

(ADELAIDE enters, led by BILL, DAVID, and CHICK. She is a little unsure as to where she is or why she’s there; but the three boys gather around her and sit at her feet as if she were their mother. As ADELAIDE relaxes into this relationship, BILL stands up and bids her farewell.)

BILL crosses to the front of ADELAIDE and hugs her knees.

BILL. Goodbye, mother.

BILL crosses UR and stands facing the audience. He reads from War Letters.

(BILL leaves the tableau and begins to read a letter.)
Dear Mom,

This is the lousy place in the world. Our clothes they gave us are too big for some of us. I got my shots today and they really do hurt me. The sergeant’s crabby. Just because a boy forgot something when we were moving the man kicked him and made him run all the way over to the other camp and get it. We go to bed at 9:00 and get up at 5:00. Mom, tell them the truth about my age and get me out of here. I am getting so lonely I think I will die. We had to get all of our hair cut off but about half an inch. Hurry as soon as possible if you can. Try to get me out by Sunday at least. We had to polish and wash windows last night until 9 o’clock. I have enclosed the bill. Sorry I did not write sooner. Oh mom, if you only knew how I feel you would not wait to get me out. Send me some clothes when you come get me out. Write me some because I have put some stamps in for airmail. You have to walk on your tiptoes so it will not make too much noise. The sarge made that up. Tell everybody I said hello. How’s Sandy.

Your son,

Bill

Write to me.
DAVID stands and touches ADELAIDE gently on her right shoulder.

(DAVID is next.)

DAVID. Goodbye.

DAVID crosses UR, takes War Letters from BILL, and then crosses DL (passing in front of the tableau). He faces the audience and reads his letter.

(DAVID leaves the tableau.)

DAVID. September 11, 1918

Dear Mother,

Tomorrow the first totally American drive commences, and it gives me inexpressible joy and pride to know that I shall be present to do my share. The plan of attack has been carefully worked out, and every precaution taken to ensure the success of the big undertaking. I have just returned from a visit to some of the troops, who are to make the attack, and I am so proud to be a member of an army such as ours, that I am at a loss to express what I feel.
The rugged and heavily wooded character of the country makes the task which we face extremely difficult, and the losses are almost certain to be considerable. Success, however, will mean so much that almost any price would be cheap to pay for it. Should I go under, therefore, I want you to know that I went without any terror of death, and that my chief worry is the grief my death will bring to those so dear to me. Since having found myself and Mary, there has been much to make life sweet and glorious; but death, while distasteful, is in no way terrible.

I feel wonderfully strong to do my share well, and, for my sake, you must try to drown your sorrow in the pride and satisfaction, the knowledge that I died well in so clean a cause as is ours, should bring you. Remember how proud I have always been of your superb pluck, keep Elizabeth’s future in mind, and don’t permit my death to bow your head.

My personal belongings will all be sent to you. Your good taste will tell you which to send to Mary.

May God bless and keep you, dear heart, and be kind to little Elizabeth, and those others I love so well.

David
The end.

CHICK stands and awkwardly pats his mother on her left shoulder.

(CHICK now says his goodbye.)

CHICK. Bye, mom.

CHICK crosses DL to take War Letters from DAVID, then crosses horizontally R to face the audience and read his letter.

(CHICK leaves the tableau, leaving ADELAIDE alone.)

CHICK. February 3, 1945

Dear Folks,

I’m really ashamed of myself for not writing but it is rather hard to write left-handed.

On January 13, we started out to attack a town before dawn. It was daylight when we reached an open field on the approach to the town. When we got about 600 or 800 yards from there, they opened up with small arms fire on us. We dropped flat on the ground but couldn’t dig in because the ground was frozen and covered with several inches of snow.
Jerry then opened up with mortar and artillery and just started blasting us with everything they had. I was lifted off the ground twice by concussion but not hit. Then, about 0900, a mortar shell landed quite a ways from me, and I got a piece of shrapnel in my left side just above the hip. It wasn’t but a few seconds and another piece got me a couple of inches above the wound. There was hardly any pain and I kept on firing my weapon.

Around 0930, an 88 MM zoomed past me. I looked down and my right hand was gone. Well, it was about 1500 before I got back to a station to get morphine, and my stub bandaged. They gave me blood, fixed me up, and sent me back to an evacuation hospital. They operated about 2000 that night, took the shrapnel out, trimmed my arm up about one-half inch above the waste. So from then on I decided I would be left-handed.

Don’t worry about me because I have the best of medical care, and my morale is very good. After I get to the states, I will be given a pretty good furlough, and then will have to report to a hospital probably in California for three to six months to learn how to use my left hand, and also my artificial right hand before getting my discharge.

The cookies arrived today, and they were surely good. Have a few left yet.
Keep smiling and I’ll do the same.

Love to all,

Chick

RAVEL enters UR, crosses to ADELAIDE, and stands next to her. He holds a letter that he reads directly to her.

(RAVEL enters with a letter of his own.)

RAVEL. My dear marraine,

I am writing to you from my landlady’s kitchen, because it’s really too cold in my room. Physically, I’m still all right, but it may not last for long: my diet isn’t very proper. There’s no way to have vegetables other than potatoes.

Spiritually, it’s dreadful. My captain keeps telling me that “I’ve got to snap out of it.” He’s putting me second in command on a vehicle, and is going to take me for a ride near the front. I know very well that it won’t be enough. More than ever, I am grateful to you for not letting me remain all alone. I am more isolated here than anywhere else, amid kind and
cheerful comrades, who are nevertheless so distant from me at this moment…

Write to me often, and affectionate regards to both of you from your devoted godson,

Maurice Ravel

DAVID exits SL, CHICK exits SR. BILL/JEAN dances UR.

(DAVID and CHICK exit. BILL begins to dance a minuet; he is now JEAN DREYFUS, and ADELAIDE looks at him with a sudden recognition.)

ADELAIDE. Maurice... c’est mon fils. C’est mon fils... il s’appelle Jean. Jean,
regardes-tu? C’est moi; c’est ta mère. Jean...

We are approximately at measure 137 in the music.

The M. REP enters UL and begins a slow horizontal cross to JEAN. He pops the balloon during the sixteenth rest in measure 157, right before the last tremolo is played.

ADELAIDE, RAVEL, and the M. REP exit SL; after the music has died away the actor who played the MALE DANCER enters UR and gracefully carries JEAN off R.

(But Jean does not see, or cannot; he’s away at the front and is no longer with his mother. As ADELAIDE continues to call out to him, the
MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE enters holding a red balloon, with a pin
poised over it. The BALLOON is popped and JEAN falls.)

Interlude: Kids These Days

Like the NEWS REPORTER, the CONCERNED CITIZEN enters from the audience. He sits at center on the block.

(A CONCERNED CITIZEN enters.)

CITIZEN. Kids these days... all they care about is their drugs and their gangs, their Playstation and their X-Box, their Palm Pilots and their Blackberries and their Redberries and their Yellowberries, their suits and their briefcases and their money and their oil, their skateboards – those dang skateboards! – and their raisin’ a ruckus, parking their cars all over the place, driving their big cars all over the place, leaving their car alarms all over the place, sounding the alarm every time they hear a pin drop, changing their colors from red to orange to yellow... I think I already said yellow... did I?.. did I?... Did I ever tell you what it was like back in my day? Back in my day, kids knew how to grow up. They knew better than to keep on takin’ and stealin’ what weren’t theirs, pickin’ fights over every little thing, gettin’ all their faces in the paper, tryin’ to make everyone play the game by their rules. You ever seen two kids playing a game, fighting over the rules? They always put them rules on the box top, but some kid always sits on the box top and it gets all smashed and thrown away and then you’ve got
two or three kids out there, fighting over who gets to be boss of the game. And then one of them starts throwing blocks, and then they all start throwing blocks, and then one of them pulls out a gun, and then they’ve all got guns, and then one of them says they’ve got a nuclear weapon, and then they’ve all got nuclear weapons, and then they go tearing the house apart looking for those nuclear weapons, just when the mom is trying to get some food on the table! And God forbid someone insults one of their daddies. Ain’t never gonna see any peace.

Kids these days! What are they – childish ‘till they’re eighty-five? And then they’re dead, or pissin’ in a metal pan. And folks like us gotta deal with it, watchin’ them on the TV running around like they own the place, or hearin’ them go by every hour of the night on those damn skateboards! Y’know... y’know, y’know, y’know... someone oughta pass a law about them skateboards!

CONCERNED CITIZEN exits to his seat in the audience.

Interlude: The Aria

(The MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE enters, holding the white rose. He sings a capella the melody from La Valse. This melody now has the following text:)

The M. REP enters SL with the white rose. He performs The Aria, laying the white rose next to the cube as if it were a grave.
M. REP. Dona eis requiem
Dona nobis pacem
Dona eis requiem
Aeternem

(When he is finished, he places the rose on the ground as if laying it on a grave. The MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE leaves.)

Interlude: The Deserted City

The M. REP does not leave the stage after The Aria, but instead crosses UL and “freezes” into a jagged, asymmetric position. The actor who played the FEMALE DANCER enters DR and takes her own position DR; the actor who played the MALE DANCER enters UR and takes his position UR. Ravel enters CL. He moves through the “buildings” in silence for a moment, then speaks.

(The ENSEMBLE takes the shape of jagged and broken buildings. RAVEL enters.)

RAVEL. I saw a hallucinatory thing: a nightmarish city, horribly deserted and mute. It isn’t the fracas from above, or the small balloons of white smoke which align in the very pure sky; it’s not this formidable and invisible struggle which is anguishing, but rather to feel alone in the center of this city which
rests in a sinister sleep, under the brilliant light of a beautiful summer day.

Undoubtedly, I will see things which will be more frightful and repugnant;
I don’t believe I will ever experience a more profound and stranger emotion than this sort of mute terror.

After “beautiful summer day,” RAVEL sits on the block which is still slightly UL. When the monologue is finished, he takes the white rose and exits L. The MALE and FEMALE DANCERS exit R. The M. REP crosses DC and moves the cube UL.

(RAVEL takes the rose from where the MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE left it and exits. The MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE gives the final dedication.)

M. REP. Rigaudon: Dedicated to Pierre and Pascal Gaudin.

The M. REP exits R.

Rigaudon

Ravel’s Rigaudon is heard throughout.

The M. REP enters UR, leading PIERRE and PASCAL in a quick march into and through the audience space. At measure 33 they ascend the stage; the M. REP stands on the block UL and PIERRE and PASCAL form a diagonal line DR of the block. At measure 43 the M. REP calls out “Company halt! Prepare to dance!” and begins to count off the steps to the music.
(The MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE leads PIERRE and PASCAL GAUDIN in a grand march through the space.)

M. REP. Company halt! Prepare to dance!

(It is a drill session, and the recruits are practicing dancing the Rigaudon. The MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE calls out the steps. PIERRE and PASCAL do their best, but dance very poorly.)

M. REP. Chassé, chassé, pas de rigaudon! Step to the front, pas de rigaudon! Chassé, chassé, pas de rigaudon! Step to the back, pas de rigaudon! Chassé, chassé – Gaudin!

PIERRE AND PASCAL. Yes, sir!

M. REP. You’re behind in the steps! Keep up!

Chassé, chassé... (etc.)
remains on the block for the duration of their conversation with RAVEL.

(The drill ends.)

M. REP. Company dismissed!

(As PIERRE and PASCAL leave the drill, RAVEL enters carrying part of a loaf of stale bread.)

As they talk, RAVEL, PIERRE, and PASCAL move to sit at the apron of the stage.

PASCAL. Say, is that…

PIERRE. Maurice!

RAVEL. Pierre! Pascal! It’s so good to see you!

PASCAL. We were just called up. Tomorrow we’re being sent to the front.

PIERRE. Don’t know how we’ll be; we’ve been awful in training. Can’t get the steps.

RAVEL. Well, talk to someone; maybe they’ll let you drive an ambulance like me.
PIERRE. Right – but our name’s not Maurice Ravel. There’s no need to keep us alive.

PASCAL. Pierre, be quiet. So… who else is out here we would know?

RAVEL. Actually… not many. You two may be the only friends I have left, now. Charlot was killed, no one knows what happened to Deluc... Jean Dreyfus was shot just a week ago.

PIERRE. You wrote his mother?

RAVEL. Yes.

PASCAL. Well, we’ll have to be good friends to each other, then. Watch each other’s backs.

PIERRE. Watch our own backs.

Measure 105.

(RAVEL shares his bread with PIERRE and PASCAL. They eat.)

PIERRE. You know, Maurice, the food’s awful. Is it always like this?
RAVEL. We actually asked. Months ago. Went straight to the brigadier. This food isn’t enough for anyone trying to hold a gun steady or drive an ambulance on no sleep. Four of us went in to talk to the brigadier, and he said

M. REP. I don’t give a fuck! Let them eat shit!

RAVEL. A great eighteenth-century lady said the same thing, although not in those exact words, and maybe that’s all we gained by the Revolution.

Measure 121.

They stand and bid each other farewell. RAVEL gives the rose to PASCAL and exits DR.

(The break is over.)

M. REP. Company! Fall in! Prepare to move out!

PASCAL. Well, then... our first day on the front.

PIERRE. Stay out of harm, Ravel.

RAVEL. You too, Gaudin.

Beginning at measure 129 (the return to the military A section), the M. REP leads a very short march across the front of the stage. At measure 138, they stop
SR and the M. REP says his goodbye, exiting SL.

(RAVEL gives the rose to PASCAL. PIERRE and PASCAL line up behind the MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE, and the MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE leads them on another grand march through the space. While marching, PIERRE and PASCAL ad lib their nervousness about the front; “Do you know where they’re taking us?” “Christ, I still don’t know the steps,” etc.)

M. REP. Company halt! Well men, good luck to all of you, and remember everything I’ve taught you.

(The MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE leaves. PIERRE AND PASCAL are alone.)

PASCAL. Well, what should we do?

PIERRE. We’ve got to do what we practiced in training. That’s what we’re supposed to do.

PASCAL. All right... here we go... ready? Chassé, chassé, pas de rigaudon...

The location of the balloon pop is not fixed; it should occur within the last two measures of music. PIERRE falls DR and PASCAL
falls UR; they remain there until they rise as their characters for the Pavane.

(PIERRE and PASCAL begin to dance the Rigaudon; but they fumble with the steps. A balloon pop is heard, and they both are killed.

ADELAIDE and RAVEL enter DL. ADELAIDE carries an old book.

ADELAIDE enters with RAVEL. They look at the destruction on the stage.)

RAVEL. Is this a dream? Why are you here? Do you know how this happened?

ADELAIDE. Je ne sais plus rien. Mais j’ai une histoire pour tu. Écoutes.

RAVEL and ADELAIDE cross DR and sit on the apron of the stage. ADELAIDE reads from her book.

Pavane: The Birthday of the Infanta

Ravel’s Pavane plays throughout.

ADELAIDE. It was the birthday of the Infanta.

The actor who played PASCAL is now the INFANTA; she rises from the place where she fell, puts the white rose in her hair, and begins to cross diagonally DL.

(Pro PS Infanta enters.)

INFANTA. She was just twelve years of age,
ADELAIDE. and the sun was shining brightly in the gardens of the palace.

INFANTA. Although she was a real Princess and the Infanta of Spain,

ADELAIDE. she had only one birthday every year, just like the children of quite poor people, so it was naturally a matter of great importance to the whole country that she should have a really fine day for the occasion.

INFANTA. And a really fine day it certainly was.

ADELAIDE. The little princess herself walked up and down the terrace, and played at hide and seek round the stone vases and the old moss-grown statues.

From a window in the palace the sad melancholy King watched them. He buried his face in his hands, and when the Infanta looked up again the curtains had been drawn, and the King had retired. Surely he might have stayed with her on her birthday. What did the stupid State-Affairs matter?
INFANTA. How silly of him, when the sun was shining so brightly and everybody was so happy!

Measure 13.

The INFANTA sits on the block. The CHAMBERLAIN enters UL and comes to stand behind her, placing his hand protectively on her shoulder. The actor who played PIERRE is now the DWARF; he rises from where he fell and moves gawkishly to center, where he dances.

(The CHAMBERLAIN and the DWARF enter.)

ADELAIDE. The funniest part of the whole morning’s entertainment was undoubtedly the dancing of the little Dwarf. When he stumbled into the arena, waddling on his crooked legs and wagging his huge misshapen head from side to side, the children went off into a loud shout of delight,

INFANTA. and the Infanta herself laughed so much

CHAM. that the Chamberlain was obliged to remind her that although there were many precedents in Spain for a king’s daughter weeping before her equals, there were none for a princess of the blood royal making so merry before those who were her inferiors in birth.

ADELAIDE,
INFANTA, AND

DWARF.  (whispered)  How silly of him, when the sun was shining so brightly, and everybody was so happy!

The DWARF bows to the audience, and then turns upstage and bows to the INFANTA and CHAMBERLAIN.

ADELAIDE.  The Dwarf, however, was really quite irresistible.  Perhaps the most amusing thing about him was his complete unconsciousness of his own grotesque appearance.  Indeed he seemed quite happy and full of the highest spirits.  When the children laughed, he laughed as freely and as joyously as any of them, and at the close of each dance he made them each the funniest of bows, smiling and nodding at them just as if he was really one of themselves, and not a little misshapen thing that Nature, in some humorous mood, had fashioned for others to mock at.

The INFANTA stands, removes the white rose from her hair, and throws it downstage in front of the DWARF.

INFANTA.  As for the Infanta, she absolutely fascinated him.  At the close of the performance, she took out of her hair a beautiful white rose, and partly for a jest and partly to tease the Chamberlain, threw it to him across the arena with her sweetest smile.

DWARF.  He took the whole matter quite seriously.

Measure 29.
CHAMBERLAIN and INFANTA exit UL. The DWARF takes the rose and stands up, his awkwardness gone (his body is now what he believes it to be, rather than what it appears to the outside world). He starts upstage on a circular cross that will proceed counterclockwise R and will eventually take him UL to the cube.

(The CHAMBERLAIN and the INFANTA exit.)

ADELAIDE. When the little Dwarf heard that he was to dance a second time before the Infanta, and by her own express command, he was so proud that he ran out into the garden, kissing the white rose in an absurd ecstasy of pleasure, and making the most uncouth and clumsy gestures of delight. The flowers were quite indignant at his daring to intrude into their beautiful home.

The DWARF kneels by the cube and shows it the rose.

DWARF. But the little Dwarf was so pleased that he could not help showing them the beautiful white rose, and telling them that the Infanta herself had given it to him because she loved him.

DWARF rises and crosses UR, arching around the periphery of the stage as if walking around the outside of a building. When he reaches DR, he finds the open door and pantomimes going inside.

ADELAIDE. But where was she? He asked the white rose, and it made him no answer. The whole palace seemed asleep. He wandered all round looking for some place through which he might gain an entrance, and at last he caught
sight of a little private door that was lying open. He slipped through, and found himself in a splendid hall.

Measure 41.

As the DWARF sees the “little figure,” the INFANTA enters DL. She and the DWARF slowly move towards each other, mirroring each other’s movement. They meet DC.

DWARF. The little Dwarf looked in wonder all around him, and was half-afraid to go on. Nor was he alone. Standing under the shadow of the doorway, at the extreme end of the room, he saw a little figure watching him. As he moved closer, the little figure moved also, and he saw it plainly.

(The INFANTA enters, as the mirror.)

At “smooth and hard,” their downstage hands meet and touch each other.

INFANTA. It was a monster, the most grotesque monster he had ever beheld. He went towards it, and it came to meet him, copying each step that he made. He tried to press on, but something smooth and hard stopped him. The face of the monster was now close to his own, and seemed full of terror.

At “kissed it,” the DWARF holds the white rose between himself and the INFANTA, and they both bend to kiss it.

ADELAIDE. It was strange, but everything seemed to have its double in this invisible wall of clear water. Taking from his breast the beautiful white rose, he
turned round, and kissed it. The monster had a rose of its own, petal for petal the same.

DWARF. When the truth dawned upon him, he gave a wild cry of despair, and fell sobbing to the ground.

ADELAIDE AND INFANTA. How silly of him, when the sun was shining so brightly, and everybody was so happy!

INFANTA. And at that moment the Infanta herself came in with her companions through the open window, and they saw the ugly little dwarf lying on the ground and beating the floor with his clenched hands.

“His dancing was funny,”

ADELAIDE. said the Infanta,
INFANTA. “but his acting is funnier still. Indeed, he is almost as good as the puppets, only, of course, not quite so natural.”

ADELAIDE. But the little dwarf never looked up, and his sobs grew fainter and fainter, and suddenly he gave a curious gasp, and clutched his side. And then he fell back again, and lay quite still.

CHAMBERLAIN enters UL and crosses horizontally upstage; when the INFANTA calls out to him he turns, and joins her next to the block.

INFANTA. And the Infanta stamped her foot, and called out to her uncle, who was walking on the terrace with the Chamberlain. “My funny little dwarf is sulking,”

ADELAIDE. she cried,

INFANTA. “you must wake him up and tell him to dance for me.”

The CHAMBERLAIN examines the DWARF.

CHAM. “Mi bella Princesa, your funny little dwarf will never dance again.”

INFANTA. “But why will he not dance again?”

ADELAIDE. asked the Princess, laughing.
CHAM. “Because his heart is broken,”

ADELAIDE. answered the Chamberlain.

INFANTA. And the Infanta frowned, and her dainty rose-leaf lips curled in pretty disdain. “For the future let those who come to play with me have no hearts,”

The INFANTA exits UL.

ADELAIDE. she cried, and she ran out into the garden.

ADELAIDE and RAVEL exit hand in hand through the house. The CHAMBERLAIN remains onstage, standing UL next to the block. The DWARF is at center, collapsed. The music ends; there is a beat of silence; and the curtains close.

(The INFANTA exits. ADELAIDE and RAVEL exit. The CHAMBERLAIN is left standing over the body of the DWARF.)

End of play.
Appendix B: Production Photos

La Valse: Ravel (Nick Warndorff) and Adelaide (Amanda Checco) meet.
La Valse: Adelaide’s balloon is popped (Amanda Checco, Brian Forrester, Brian John, Marta Targosz, and Nick Warndorff).
News: The News Reporter (Kristi Krueger) reads from the headlines.
The Goodbye: Morrie (Nick Warndorff) argues with Sam (Brian Forrester).

How War Begins: The War Leaders (Brian Forrester and Brian John) discuss what was on the tray.
Refugees: The Military Representative (Brian John) approaches Adelaide (Amanda Checco).
Refugees: Adelaide (Amanda Checco) holds the popped balloon.
Menuet: Bill (Marta Targosz) says goodbye to his family (Amanda Checco, Brian Forrester, and Brian John).

Menuet: Bill (Marta Targosz) reads a letter to his family (Amanda Checco, Brian Forrester, and Brian John).
The Pro-War Argument: The Military Representative (Brian John) reminds us that we cannot have peace without war.
Kids These Days: The Concerned Citizen (Brian Zappia) expresses his views on nuclear weapons and on skateboards.
The Deserted City: Ravel (Nick Warndorff) wanders through an abandoned city (Brian Forrester and Marta Targosz).
Pavane: Adelaide (Amanda Checco) reads a story to Ravel (Nick Warndorff).
Pavane: The Infanta (Marta Targosz) looks for her father.