

特 集

——シンポジウム「Ballets Russes——ロマン主義からモダニズムへの変革」

Modern Ballet in Early Democracy: Quests and Achievements of Sergei Diaghilev, George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein

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1. Introduction

Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929) was a legendary Ballet Impresario who founded and directed a ballet company called the Ballets Russes in the early twentieth century. Diaghilev himself was neither a dancer nor a choreographer, and yet gave many up-and-coming artists artistic direction and opportunities to choreograph, compose and design. His Ballets Russes contributed to a radical aesthetic transformation of ballet from a romantic style to a modern one. Diaghilev helped to revive ballet as a composite art form in European countries including the U.K., while he struggled to find a suitable support system for ballet in early European democracy (Kirstein, 1935, pp.279-283; Buckle, 1971, 1979; Kaye & O'Toole, 1980). His legacy can be seen in the performances of Royal Ballet, which was founded by several dancers and choreographers who worked for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes (Haga, 2014, p.164).

I originally became familiar with Diaghilev's name and his achievements through Lincoln Kirstein's writings (Kirstein, 1991, 1994). Lincoln Kirstein was an American producer who founded the New York City Ballet together with George Balanchine, one of the last protégés of Diaghilev and the last generation choreographers from the Ballets Russes. Balanchine inherited some of Diaghilev's significant artistic achievements, while Kirstein invited Balanchine to New York to create a ballet school and a company, succeeding Diaghilev's role. In twentieth-century America, Balanchine became one of

the most prolific and talented ballet choreographers (Kirstein, 1978, 1991; Taper, 1984). I had the privilege of working with the New York City Ballet dancers and later carried out research on Kirstein and Balanchine's work between 1988 and 2000 (Sakamoto, 2000). As I am a performing arts producer myself, some parts of this paper are written based on my experiences.

In the business of performing arts, whether it is a straight play, a concert, a musical, or a ballet production, "success" usually means both artistic and financial. Otherwise, it is not quite sustainable to keep on producing. Thanks to producers such as Diaghilev and Kirstein, ballet has proliferated rapidly in many parts of the world in the last one hundred years. Still our capitalistic democracy's social values and ballet as a traditional art form have not been quite a perfect match; ballet was an art form for and supported by absolute monarchy and aristocracy for a long period of time. Many of us who live in democratic society today appreciate ballet, because it has become capable of offering diverse cultural values that could enhance our democracy. Sergei Diaghilev was one of the first pioneering producers in ballet who struggled to finance artistically challenging ballets independently from aristocratic environments.

In this paper I argue that one of Diaghilev's significant achievements was his experimentation of materializing modernism in the twentieth-century art world. Diaghilev's Ballets Russes was one of the most active entities of the modern art movement. I also argue that Diaghilev was the first ballet producer who struggled to produce international ballet productions under capitalistic democracy. However, the way he produced ballet depended heavily on his passion for the arts, his charismatic personality, his unique inter-cultural background and the era he lived in. Diaghilev's way of life and aesthetic philosophy strongly reflected the idea of avant-garde art.

2. On Modernism in Ballet: Avant-Garde Aesthetics, Political Revolutions and Dance

2.1. The Arts and Patronage: From Autocracy to Democracy

The arts often have much to do with the political environments of the place and the era in which they are produced. So-called *high art*, especially before the age of democracy, was mainly commissioned and produced by and for the rulers. Artists, often the gifted ones, served powerful kings, lords and the riches throughout the pre-democratic periods. Leonardo da Vinci painted for the Medici Family in Florence, Italy, during the Renaissance period. In medieval Japan, Zeami danced for the Muromachi shogun's events. Mozart composed his music for regional rulers, aristocrats and high-ranking priests, and received money from them.

Ballet became popular during the age of absolutism. Some rulers used ballet to show their autocratic power. For example, Louis XIV of France founded the first ballet school (1661) and created performances to express his regime's superiority. He even danced himself: by placing him in the center, an orderly, beautiful world would appear on stage (Kirstein, 1935). The aesthetics of ballet in such an aristocratic regime shows that even nature can be controlled by the powerful humans. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Imperial Russia also tried to show how civilized and powerful the country was by producing even more sophisticated ballets than Western European countries, where the art form had originated (Murayama, 2022; Haga, 2014).

A couple of decades before the Russian Revolution of 1917, there was a sign of a new movement in the arts called the Russian Avant-Garde (it actually developed mainly in today's Ukraine). Some artists might have felt that a big political change was coming. They wanted the arts to portray the world differently and tried to add more diverse socio-cultural dimensions and values to a romantic expression, a kind of fantasy world that the powerful rulers and their obedient followers preferred. Classical ballet stories such as

Giselle (1841), *Swan Lake* (1895) or *Sleeping Beauty* (1890) were romantically celebrated (Balanchine & Mason, 1978) in aristocracy, and yet the original stories had become socially irrelevant. In democratic society, everyone should be equal: any village girl can marry a prince if they love each other, and people should not be governed by a handful of rulers. In many forms of arts, including ballet, citizens were looking for opportunities to tell their own stories and show more unique and diverse expressions by placing ordinary citizens in the center.

2.2. Diaghilev and Modern Ballet: Aesthetic Searches in Tzarist Russia and Early European Democracy

Diaghilev started producing theatrical exhibitions and ballet performances before the Russian Revolution. He brought talented Russian artists to Europe, representing his country. Even the Russian Tzar (Emperor) Nicholas II and his family thought Diaghilev was good at producing art events and performances (Buckle, 1979). Even before the revolution, he started transforming this aristocratic art form into something different; after the revolution, he was committed to creating something new, in European countries that had a struggling, young, and yet exciting democratic atmosphere. With the birth of democracy, or rather, with the shift from aristocracy to democracy, modern art was born. The French Revolution (1789-1795) and the Russian Revolution (1917) greatly influenced the nature of modern art. Robert Hughes (1980) asks:

How has art created images of dissent, propaganda, and political coercion? How has it defined the world of pleasure, of sensuous communion with worldly delights? How has it tried to bring about Utopia? What has been its relation to the irrational and the unconscious? How has it dealt with the great inherited themes of Romanticism, the sense of the world as a theatre of despair or religious exaltation? And what changes were forced on art by the example of pressure of mass media, which displaced painting and sculpture from their

old centrality as public speech? Obviously, these are only some of the themes of modern art. (p.7)

It is not easy to define modernism in the arts or modern art, yet there are several notable characteristics such as freedom of expression and cultural diversity. The art works of Picasso were extraordinary and unique, while he was aware that his aesthetics and philosophy were part of the social transformation of his era. His *Guernica* (1937) gives us insight into human nature every time there is a war on the earth (Hughes, 1980, pp.108-111). Picasso saw the world from a citizen's point of view in which common people have never benefited from their egotistical ruler's wars and systematic mass destructions. Matisse, as well as Picasso, borrowed images, ideas and ways to see from the colonized world. They both learned from the "pre-civilized world" (Hughes, 1980, p.135) and created something new, possibly recognizing how civilized the people from the other cultures were, an idea which did not necessarily exist during the initial era of colonization (Hughes, 1980, pp.135-141). Gradually recognizing the cultural values outside the Western countries, people started to approve and respect the peoples from other cultures and civilizations, although we still do not live in a completely post-colonial era.

Let us discuss dance here before we move on. There is a difference between modern dance and modern ballet. Ballet is a genre of dance. Ballet has a history of more than four hundred years, while dance existed all throughout human history possibly in every culture, and in every part of the world where human beings lived. It is said that ballet originated in the Renaissance period in Northern Italy and was brought to France, when Catherine de' Medici (1519-1589) married Henri, duc d'Orléan (1822-1897), who later became King of France. As I mentioned earlier, Louis XIV (1638-1715) patronized ballet and brought the art form to the level that symbolized the power of his monarchy (Kirstein, 1935; Haga, 2014).

The word "modern dance" usually refers to a genre of dance that became

popular at the beginning of the twentieth century in Europe and America, and afterwards throughout the world. An American woman, Isadora Duncan (1877-1927), who studied and yet hated ballet, started free style, a non-schooled, somewhat improvisational form of dancing, and she was well-received in Europe. She is considered one of the most significant pioneers of modern dance. Her charismatic dance performance represented “freedom” and anti-ballet-technique. Duncan’s dance demonstrated especially women’s freedom and reminded people of how dance could materialize the images of free citizens and thinkers in Ancient Greek society. There are many other modern dance pioneers and they looked for freedom in bodily movements and thoughts: Ted Shawn, Ruth St. Dennis, Émile Jacques-Dalcroze, Hanya Holm, Rudolf Laban, Doris Humphrey, then later, Michio Ito, Martha Graham, Charles Weidman, Mary Wigman and others (Maynard, 1965; Kurth, 2001; Anderson, 1992).

The themes of modern dance shared ideas and values of democracy: freedom, human rights, equality, aesthetic relativity, cultural diversity, and often peace. With these modern dance movements thriving, ballet also had to transform. Yet what could be done with ballet, this very aristocratic, baroque form of dance, with its rich and powerful patrons ruined through radical political regime changes, such as the French and Russian Revolutions? What kinds of ballet productions were desired when modern dance started becoming popular among the public, and who would be the new ballet audience in democratic societies? Diaghilev told his choreographers, such as Mikhail Fokine and Vaslav Nijinsky, to watch Isadora Duncan’s performance, and his company would start experimenting new ballet pieces that might have a strong appeal to the public, to free citizens, in a democratic society (Buckle, 1979).

Going back and forth between changing Russia and Europe, Diaghilev’s aesthetic experimentation flourished in the environment of early bourgeois democracy in France and other European countries. Diaghilev was busy producing artistically stimulating productions and was also busy looking for

sponsors and patrons to cover the cost. He was charming and good at attracting the wealthy. Additionally, as an immigrated foreigner and cultural outsider in Western Europe, Diaghilev's aesthetics and his way of life fit rather well with the theory of modernism and the avant-garde arts. Lincoln Kirstein (1991) writes:

Serge Diaghilev, more than any other single person, was responsible for the growth and maintenance of a tradition in contemporary painting, music, and dancing. Picasso is not the gold mine of Fifty-seventh Street and the rue de la Boétie wholly because he invented Cubism, but in a great measure because Diaghilev commissioned him to decorate Satie's *Parade* and de Falla's *Three-Cornered Hat*, and in a succession of ballets furnished this great decorator with the chance to display himself on a grand scale. Stravinsky Diaghilev found in a class in harmony, and, irritated because his old master Liadov was slow in scoring some Russian fairy tales, ordered *The Firebird*. Then followed *The Rite of Spring*, *Petrouchka*, *Pulcinella*, *Les Noces*, *Renard*, *King Oedipus*, and *Apollo, Leader of the Muses*: the works by which composer is known. Without Diaghilev, the great tradition of classical ballet dancing might have died of dry rot, or disuse. Instead, first with Fokine, Nijinsky, Pavlova, later with Massine, Dolin, and Lifar, he made it greater and more popular than ever before. Diaghilev was a synthesizer, a catalyst, who could image in three dimensions the perfect combination of the right dances, for the right music, in the right décor; and by right we must read inevitable. (p.104)

Consciously or unconsciously, Diaghilev loved scandals, both in the realm of aesthetics and the way he lived. Fokine's *Le Spectacle de la Rose* (1911) shocked the audience, because Nijinsky danced in a very magical and erotic way. The production broke the image of the male dancer in ballet. When Nijinsky's *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* (1912) was first performed at Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, the theatre became a mad house: half the audience shouted, booed, and threw things at the performers on stage, because they found the

ballet terribly obscene and annoying. In his personal life, Diaghilev was a gay man who slept with young male dancers, and the company members were aware of that (Buckle, 1971, 1979). This of course was long before the LGBTQ people gained the rights to come out.

Diaghilev's dissent, conflicting and rebellious way of production, and his way of life against social norms were on the same philosophical line as modern art and the avant-garde. This reminds us of an aspect of political arguments in democracy: there is a difficulty in accepting dissent, minority and oppositional views, and therefore the public often has a hard time celebrating progressive ideas and attitudes that may challenge traditional social norms. However, Diaghilev was at least successful in art-making, because his talents fitted and flourished in a particular community, which was modern and culturally foreign (exotic and Russian) ballet. The ballet audience at that time mainly consisted of people who were basically wealthy, well-educated, and liberal citizens, if not aristocratic.

Through my experience as a producer, I must mention with some hesitation that there is a tendency that the more intellectual and radical, the less popular arts would become. The more sophisticated and complicated, the less arts may sell to mass audiences. In this context, traditional (baroque and romantic) ballet is more easily accepted by the public, while modern ballet is still on its way to being globally accepted and celebrated by broader mass audiences. Diaghilev revitalized classical ballet by creating and presenting modern ballet. As a result, Diaghilev produced all types of ballet to be enjoyed, redefined and recognized as a civic art form, if not every citizen's, in the democratic public sphere.

3. My Encounter with Modern Ballet in America

3.1. New York City Ballet and George Balanchine

I first encountered modern ballet through a Japanese dancer, Gen Horiuchi (堀内元), then a soloist at New York City Ballet. I worked for NHK as a drama director for several years in Japan and left for New York in 1988,

hoping to produce my own theatrical works. A few months after I moved to the city, I was introduced to Gen. He was soon promoted to a principal, the highest rank as a ballet dancer. Gen and I decided to found a production company together, because Gen was often asked to give a guest performance in Japan with his colleagues from City Ballet and we thought I could be of some help to him as a producing partner. My knowledge of modern ballet was rather poor at that time, although I had studied classical ballet a little in the past.

To discuss repertoires suitable to Japan, and to become familiar with the ballets Gen wanted to introduce to the Japanese audience, I started watching performances at New York City Ballet intensively. Gen gave me lectures on their artistic style, on how the ordinary Japanese ballet-goers were accustomed to watching ballets from nineteenth-century Russia. Gen thought it was important for the Japanese audience to become more familiar with modern ballet, especially the ones created by Balanchine. Gen was very proud of being part of New York City Ballet, and he respected his company's founding choreographer, George Balanchine, immensely. Gen was one of the last generation dancers of the City Ballet who had worked directly with Balanchine before the Ballet Master's passing in 1983.

The more I watched the ballets by Balanchine, the more I fell in love with them. New York City Ballet has been the home of Balanchine ballets where the choreographer experimented, explored, and exhibited his genius and his modernism in ballet. In the early days, his "neo-classical" ballets caused debates (Kirstein, 1991, p.122; 1982, p.178). Some called his ballets "abstract," while Balanchine himself refuted this by explaining that some were just "plotless," and that it was not appropriate to use the word "abstract" (Anderson, 1992, pp.160-161; Kirstein, 1991, pp.184-185). Others marveled that Balanchine ballets were like "visualized music," although Kirstein had much to say about that (Kirstein, 1982, p.178). Having been a prolific choreographer, Balanchine created more than one hundred ballets in his life. During my sixteen years of living in New York City, I probably saw most of

his famous pieces. I also worked with more than twenty excellent dancers, including Kyra Nichols, Wendy Whelan, Benjamin Millepied, Lindsay Fischer, Jeffrey Edwards and others from City Ballet, with and without Gen Horiuchi.

There are many ballets created by Balanchine which I like, yet I would like to mention a few of my favorite ones to discuss his style. *Apollo, Leader of the Muses* (1928) is a piece that Balanchine choreographed when he was with the Ballets Russes, and it was pure, simple, and yet very experimental. The ballet is about one of the Ancient Greek Gods, Apollo, who dances with his three muses. In this piece, I strongly feel the influence of Diaghilev: how Balanchine was inspired by Ancient Greek mythology, how ballet grew out of the soap operatic portrayal of human relationship, and how bodily movements directly dealt with divinity. With *Apollo*, Balanchine showed his own version of modernism. I assume that Diaghilev probably would have preferred a more profane atmosphere, yet Balanchine created a rather sacred and timeless atmosphere on stage, blending it perfectly with Stravinsky's composition which also has this timeless value (Taper, 1984, p.100; Kirstein, 1991, p.125).

Allegro Brillante (1956) was choreographed on the Piano Concerto #3 by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The music is strong enough to make one feel comfortable, and this is an extremely romantic piece of music, and yet it is one of those ballets that brings us to a dramatic, dream-like, highly emotional state. I used to wonder why this is so modern and romantic at the same time. This piece suggests that Balanchine did not distinguish the romantic and the modern, but he would take the best elements from both worlds (Balanchine & Mason, 1978). I have seen *Allegro Brillante* performed many times by Kyra Nichols, and later with Wendy Whelan. They were extraordinary dancers.

Balanchine also choreographed several story ballets. I mention this because many people would categorize him as a creator of "plotless" ballets. However, his story ballets are also excellent and I have seen several of them. For example, Shakespeare's *A Mid-Summer Night's Dream* (1962) is one of the

full-scale story ballets that Balanchine created. It is so well-choreographed that even without having any knowledge of the original play, one can capture the magical world of Shakespeare, and Mendelssohn's music is wonderful as well (Kirstein, 1991, pp.290-300).

At New York City Ballet, Balanchine had the title of Ballet Master. He was genuinely a master of ballet, whether it was baroque, romantic or modern, with or without a plot, small or large scale. Balanchine said Diaghilev taught him how to appreciate art. Young Balanchine was taken to an art museum by Diaghilev and they looked at paintings together. At first, Balanchine did not know how to view these paintings, but with the help of Diaghilev, he suddenly came to appreciate them (Kirstein, 1991, p.210). In New York, Lincoln Kirstein wrote much on Balanchine's ballets, so that Balanchine's genius would be understood and appreciated by the public. Kirstein was a strong supporter of Balanchine and an excellent spokesperson for the Ballet Master's choreography. For example, Kirstein (1991) writes:

Balanchine's ballets can be read as icons for the laity, should we grant dancers attributes of earthy angels. These have sworn to disavow hedonism in a calling which demands transcendence of worldliness and possessiveness, an abjuration and abandonment of elementary self-indulgence. We can even discover in their aura an animal innocence as one aspect of Lamb of God which takes away the sins of this world, for they sacrifice much enjoyment in ordinary fun and games of their fellows. They are schooled to serve paradigms of order – at least for the temporal duration of their performing – which, if well done, seem momentarily to give their audience something approaching “peace of mind.” (p.219)

It did not take long for me to recognize how sacred and divine Balanchine ballets could be. I thought that I was lucky enough to see the works of a genius artist who had choreographed extraordinary pieces in New York, and that I was able to work directly with those who danced under his direction.

3.2. Lincoln Kirstein: Producing Partner to Balanchine and Diaghilev's Successor

After becoming familiar with Balanchine's ballets, my curiosity went beyond each ballet. Why was Balanchine able to create so many ballets in New York? Making a large-scale theatre production requires many talented artists, time, and a space to rehearse. How had Balanchine been able to support one hundred dancers, one hundred orchestra members and one hundred staff members for such a long period of time? Why was New York City Ballet given a permanent base theatre in the middle of New York City? My search led me to the producer of the company, Lincoln Kirstein, the co-founder of New York City Ballet. Kirstein invited Balanchine to the United States from Europe, and he supported Balanchine's creative processes in New York.

As I learned more about Lincoln Kirstein, I also found that he was someone who looked up to Diaghilev. Kirstein thought Diaghilev was a distinguished and indispensable ballet impresario in the history of ballet, and especially of modern ballet. As a student from Harvard University, Kirstein was active in writing poetry and criticisms on modern art. He helped establish the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Kirstein was a big fan of the Ballets Russes, and Balanchine was his favorite choreographer (Taper, 1978; Kirstein, 1978, 1983, 1991, 1994).

When Kirstein was traveling to Venice, Italy, he happened to have encountered Diaghilev's funeral. Kirstein felt a kind of fate. He examined and learned from Diaghilev's achievements and wanted to serve Balanchine by completing Diaghilev's unfinished work and bringing modern ballet to its highest level (Kirstein, 1991, p.103). At first, Kirstein wanted Balanchine to make ballets which reflected American culture and ideals when he moved to New York. Indeed, Balanchine did make some ballets that were culturally very American (e.g. *Slaughter on 10th Avenue*, 1936; *Western Symphony*, 1954; *Who Cares?*, 1970). But Kirstein also realized that Balanchine was a greater artist than just that. Balanchine's work consists of celebration of humanity and divinity, of lives of diverse individuals, and of cultures and countries.

Kirstein quickly recognized the genius of Balanchine and supported his creations in every way possible. Without Kirstein, Balanchine would not have been able to create so many great choreographic pieces. From my point of view, Kirstein turned out to be an even greater producer than Diaghilev.

Kirstein was born into a very wealthy family and inherited much money from his father. Still, ballet was not, and still is not, the kind of art that one wealthy person could support for a long time. Luckily the City of New York was looking for a resident performing arts organization, and Morton Baum, who was one of the City's Board members, happened to have seen some of Balanchine's ballets, and he offered Kirstein financial support of the New York City (Taper, 1984, p.226). Thus, Kirstein did not have to face bankruptcy. New York City Ballet and the City of New York started having a special relationship; this probably was a rare, successful match between art and local government in the history of modern democracy (Kirstein, 1978, 1991, 1994).

3.3. Meanings of Art in Democracy

If democracy has one negative element, it is the tendency that radical and minority views can be suppressed by the majority. In the world of art, no matter how high the artistic quality might be, the general public may not be able to appreciate certain kinds of art. In her discussion on avant-garde art, Caroline Levine (2007) writes:

The three institutions at stake here—mass culture, avant-garde art, and modern democracy—are all intertwined; all three developed out of nineteenth-century struggle over the power of “the people,” and together, these three institutions pose fundamental questions about democracy's workings: how do we know what the will of the people really looks like, and does that will necessarily indicate the wisest, fairest, freest course for societies to take? (p.21)

In ballet, in addition to politics and art, there is an aspect of financing.

When Diaghilev suddenly died, his ballet company had much debt. His legacy as an outstanding ballet impresario is still remembered by many today, while he was not always financially successful as a producer. Lincoln Kirstein carefully observed how difficult it was to keep on producing ballets, especially modern and avant-garde ones. Yet, with Balanchine's choreography and subsidies from New York City at the right time, Kirstein was able to garner support from multiple sources: individuals, corporations, private foundations, and public institutions such as the City, the State, and the Federal Government. This unique art support system of the United States is called a "nonprofit" management system.

Kirstein was probably right in writing that Diaghilev not only saved and revived ballet but also helped identify new directions for ballet to grow. The spirit of modernism in ballet was achieved by Balanchine and Kirstein, and they proliferated performances of modern ballet in New York, which helped people understand that ballet can be an important part of art in democracy. Today we enjoy different styles of ballets with four hundred years' history—baroque, romantic, modern and contemporary, even regional, ballets—and they are seen throughout the world. Thanks to Diaghilev, Kirstein thinks, ballet evaded its possible fate of elimination. It was Diaghilev's talent as a producer that caused the artistic transformation from romantic ballet to exotic yet artistic modern ballet, which helped all kinds of ballets to be appreciated.

On the other hand, because of Balanchine, modern ballet did not just present scandalous and shocking works with dissenting and challenging characters, but also aesthetically divine, orderly and peaceful messages to the public. Balanchine respected diverse cultures and created ballets celebrating uniqueness of them. With Balanchine's choreographic genius, Kirstein was able to help ballet find a way to be financially supported by the public and proliferate in democratic environments. Instead of kings and queens, popes and tzars, each citizen and individuals, local governments, nation-states, corporations, and foundations all support the arts. Today this American

model of art patronage, namely the nonprofit art management system, has become popular among other democratic countries (Connors, 1988).

Still, what is more important is to recognize that through art, we are consciously and constantly able to push the boundaries of democracy. The role of arts in democratic society has become more significant and more important than ever (Levine, 2007; Zuidervaart, 2011). Both arts and democracy are humanity's never-ending experiments and quests for a better alternative life. What Diaghilev, Kirstein, Nijinsky and Balanchine started in ballet still makes us think and inspires us today.

4. In Place of a Conclusion

In 1990, Gen and I brought twelve dancers from New York City Ballet to perform in Tokyo. *Gen Horiuchi & Kyra Nichols in "Ballet Capsule" with 10 Dancers of the New York City Ballet* was one of the main performing arts programs which celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the New York-Tokyo Sister City relationship. We selected Balanchine's *Apollo*, *Allegro Brillante*, *Tarantella*, *Stravinsky Violin Concerto* and other pieces. While there was a producer in Tokyo who was financially responsible for this project, I was a co-producer/production advisor in New York. It was a special experience for me to be mostly responsible for the quality of the production: selecting ballet pieces and dancers with Gen, suggesting managerial and promotional ideas, and writing articles for a brochure.

One of my contributions was to introduce the American nonprofit art management system to the Japanese audience. While the French word *mécénat* was becoming popular, the idea of nonprofit art management was not yet common in Japan in the 1990's. In those days, half of the New York City Ballet's annual sixty-million-dollar budget was fundraised through this system. The producing team sent out press releases to the Japanese media to introduce how Balanchine's ballets were supported, and how the City Ballet operated in the United States. Gen was interviewed by many journalists both as an artist and as a fundraiser for the company.

With hindsight, that week-long event happened in the last decade of the twentieth century. What Sergei Diaghilev started together with great artists such as Fokine, Nijinsky, Stravinsky, Debussy, Bakst, Picasso and Matisse at the beginning of the century, was transplanted and developed by Balanchine and Kirstein in America, and Gen and I were lucky enough to be able to introduce their work to the ballet audience in Japan.

In February 2022, Putin's Russia invaded Ukraine, where the so-called Russian Avant-Garde movement originated and flourished. It is quite unbelievable that nobody can stop this madness. It seems to me that while Putin's Russia barbarically and mercilessly attacks its civilized neighbor, Ukrainians defend democracy and humanity at all cost. Some professional Russian ballet artists left their companies, protesting against the war. Joseph Biden, the current American President, explains that this is a war between "autocracy and democracy." It is appalling that such a tragedy is taking place when the world is still suffering from the Covid-19 pandemic. Excessive human activities on a global scale have caused severe environmental damages to the planet, and some say that the recent pandemic was one of them as well. In my mind, it is not the time for human beings to fight one another, it is a time when we must unite internationally to fight against global issues together.

Unfortunately, human beings can be ugly, egotistical, and destructive. We can cause a pandemic and we can cause war. Yet, we should also be able to end them if we choose to do so. I wonder what the arts and artists can do. I wonder if there is anything I can do as a performing arts producer, and as a professor of performing arts who teaches young people contemporary dance and theatre. With this opportunity of reflecting on the footsteps of Diaghilev, a great impresario from Russia, of Balanchine, a genius from Georgia, of Kirstein from the United States of America, and other great artists and creative individuals who contributed to the beautification of the world and to the enhancement of democracy, I hope to find answers and ways to build a better future with like-minded people.

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