

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE INFANTA: AN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY
CHICAGO BALLET CONTEXTUALIZED

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Title: *The Birthday of the Infanta*: An Early Twentieth-Century Chicago Ballet Contextualized

The Birthday of the Infanta, a ballet that was created by John Alden Carpenter, Adolph Bolm, and Robert Edmond Jones, was performed at the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago on December 23, 1919 and the Lexington Theatre in New York on February 23, 1920. Despite the positive reviews from daily papers and music journals alike the ballet was only revived once and is not a part of a known ballet repertoire. Although musicologist Howard Pollack discusses *The Birthday of the Infanta* briefly in his biography of John Alden Carpenter my analysis serves, through its exploration of both primary and secondary sources, to create a more complete and thorough dialogue through the examination of the social, economic, political and artistic factors surrounding the ballet. This analysis also helps to create a better understanding of ballet's place in America in the early twentieth century.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is my guess that the historian of the year 2000 will conclude that our era has been a significantly sterile one for the production of truly great art in any field. It may be that materialism has so dominated the life of our day that an atmosphere has been created in which only the soldier or the scientist can draw a full breath. It may appear to an observer of a later age that even the best work of our best men seems little more than a desperate attempt to escape, like Van Gogh, from a prison with walls too high to scale. – John Alden Carpenter¹

As World War I raged on in Europe, the United States became an artistic outlet for the Ballets Russes, and in touring and presenting their repertoire the group introduced their style of ballet to a new continent. Although overshadowed by the great Nijinsky, the talented and creative Adolph Bolm was among the personnel of the group and would later become an important figure in the development and dissemination of ballet throughout America. When Adolph Bolm decided to stay in Chicago at the end of the Ballets Russes's second tour in America (1917) this would guarantee a future collaboration with composer John Alden Carpenter. This collaboration is the subject of this study.

The Birthday of the Infanta, a ballet that was created by John Alden Carpenter, Adolph Bolm, and Robert Edmond Jones, was performed at the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago on December 23, 1919 and the Lexington Theatre in New York on February 23, 1920. These performances received positive reviews from daily papers and music journals alike.² *The Birthday of the Infanta*, unlike some other ballets that were received positively at the time of their premiers, has not withstood the test of time. The reasons for

¹ Carleton Smith, "A Note on Carpenter" *Coronet*, (February, 1940), 100. Newberry Library, Roger and Julie Baskes Department of Special Collections "John Alden Carpenter Papers, 1890-1964"

² *The Chicago Daily Tribune* and *New York Tribune*, *Musical America* and *Music Quarterly* for example all had had reviews of the ballet.

the near disappearance of this work from ballet history today, although devastating, is not within the scope of this project. Instead, I hope to discuss the many elements and factors that were working with and upon the ballet within the first few months of its premiere, allowing for its positive reception in Chicago. In this investigation I hope to illuminate the internal and external factors that contributed to the opinions and reception of the ballet. This study will contextualize *The Birthday of the Infanta* by discussing it with regard to environmental factors (people and places) as well as examining the individual elements, such as; music, choreography, and stage, costume and lighting designs in an attempt to better understand ballet in America in the early twentieth century.

Howard Pollack, musicologist and scholar of American music, has written the most extensive discussion of *The Birthday of the Infanta* in his book “Skyscraper Lullaby”. This book discusses not only the works of John Alden Carpenter, but also provides biographical details integral to understanding the composer’s development and artistic influences. This book includes two chapters about *Birthday* which provide Pollack’s basic analysis of the score and discussion of reviews.³ Pollack’s scholarship is the most in-depth discussion of the ballet and thus will serve as a guide as I investigate specific aspects of the ballet’s historical position in more depth. Lynn Garafola, prominent dance historian and critic, has provided some foundational information about the Ballets Russes and twentieth-century dance in general. Additionally Garafola, and some other dance scholars, have written chapters and small articles about Adolph Bolm in particular.⁴ Other sources, including the International Encyclopedia of Dance, mention

³ Howard Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby: the Life and Music of John Alden Carpenter*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995) 164-189.

The Birthday of the Infanta in passing as it relates to the biographies of John Alden Carpenter, Adolph Bolm, and Ruth Page—the *Infanta* herself.⁵

In addition to the scholarship of Pollack and Garafola, I have also explored the collections of John Alden Carpenter (Newberry Library, Library of Congress), Adolph Bolm (Library of Congress), Ruth Page (Newberry Library, Chicago Film Archive), and dance critic Ann Barzel’s dance research collection (Newberry Library) to obtain primary source materials.⁶ These primary sources found in newspapers, magazines and manuscript collections coupled with secondary sources, will greatly assist the process of contextualizing *The Birthday of the Infanta*.

Pollack’s discussion of *Birthday of the Infanta* aside, much of the scholarship consulted for this project is relevant by association. Examining America at the turn of the century is also extremely important to my project. As a result of the lack of analytical scholarship about *The Birthday of the Infanta*, biographies of those involved have become informative as well. In addition to the scholarship of musicologists and dance historians, the findings of historians that have focused on the cultural, social, and political history of Chicago and America at the turn of the century have also been enlightening. For instance Lawrence W. Levine’s book *Highbrow/lowbrow: The Emergence of*

⁴ Garafola has also discussed Adolph Bolm specifically in small chapters, such as: the *International Encyclopedia of Dance* “Adolph Bolm” and Suzanne Carbonneau chapter in *The Ballets Russes and Its World*, “Adolph Bolm in America” 219-24

⁵ Adolph Bolm’s entry describes *The Birthday of the Infanta* as “the first of Bolm’s undertakings in Chicago which became his base for most of the 1920s, and the first of his numerous collaborations with American artists.” Ruth Page’s entry explains that “in December 1919, she [Page] danced the title role in Bolm’s *The Birthday of the Infanta* at the Chicago Opera.” Lastly, the entry for John Alden Carpenter in New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians states that “his first work for dance, *The Birthday of the Infanta* (1917–18), was compared by contemporaneous critics with Russian ballet.”

⁶ These collections have provided musical scores, correspondence, articles from newspapers and magazines, stage, set, and costume designs, and insight into dance aesthetics. Furthermore these collections provide writings by Carpenter, Bolm and Page themselves.

Cultural Hierarchy in America was extremely informative because of his argument about the development of “highbrow” culture with regard to opera, symphonies, theater, etc. in the United States at the turn of the century, and the historical elements that contributed to this development.

My approach to *The Birthday of the Infanta* will provide a more comprehensive discussion of the ballet and will help to shed light upon ballet production in Chicago at the beginning of the twentieth century. I will begin by exploring each of the main people involved in the creation of *Birthday* and their subsequent contributions to the ballet—John Alden Carpenter, music; Adolph Bolm and Ruth Page, choreography and characterization; and Robert Edmond Jones, set and costume design. I will use biographical information, autobiographical information, personal writings, and secondary sources to discuss the approaches of these artists. In addition to examining the biographies of the people involved in the creation of *The Birthday of the Infanta* I will also consult primary sources directly related to the ballet. Scores, reviews, costume and set designs, correspondence, and articles, all help to create a more complete context for the ballet. After discussing the artists behind the production I will further contextualize the ballet by looking at Chicago and the United States in general at the turn of the century politically, economically, musically, etc. through newspaper articles, and scholarly works. By looking closely at primary and secondary scholarly sources as they relate to *The Birthday of the Infanta* the ballet will emerge as an important artistic element of its time and place.

CHAPTER II

MUSIC

John Alden Carpenter and Text

The musical education and background of John Alden Carpenter are integral to a better understanding of reception of *The Birthday of the Infanta*. John Alden Carpenter was a truly American composer; he was born and raised in Illinois and was the offspring of an Industrialist father and a trained but amateur singing mother. The aspects of Carpenter's life that are of most interest to this project are those that influenced and cultivated his love for music with programmatic qualities. Throughout his career as a composer, Carpenter was drawn to poetic texts and even wrote elaborate programs and librettos himself.⁷ Although every aspect of Carpenter's biography is richly informative, I wish to focus on Carpenter's history with programmatic works, both his songs and orchestral pieces. Additionally, I will examine Carpenter's comedic approaches to composition, because these will resurface, if not overtly, in *The Birthday of the Infanta*.

The discussion of Carpenter's affinity for music with textual meaning begins with his very first exposures to music. Carpenter's relationship with music began through his mother's singing and her tutelage of him in piano. Although Carpenter rarely spoke of his mother he did explain that she sang all the time and that she enjoyed both popular and classical songs.⁸ Considering that Carpenter would have been continually surrounded by

⁷ His program for *Adventures in a Perambulator*, his first symphonic work, includes six movements which document the sensory experiences of a baby in a perambulator going through Chicago. Carpenter would also later modify Oscar Wilde's short story *The Birthday of the Infanta* to make it work for his ballet.

⁸ Howard Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby: the Life and Music of John Alden Carpenter*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 6-7.

⁹ Felix Borowski, "John Alden Carpenter," *Musical Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (October, 1930), 455.

song, it is fitting that his first endeavors in composition were with songs. Felix Borowski wrote in the *Music Quarterly* in October of 1930 that “probably it is by his [Carpenter’s] vocal music that the Chicago composer is best known to people who take their pleasures in the concert-rooms. Carpenter has labored industriously in the field of song and his harvest is rich and full.”⁹ Carpenter began composing songs during his time at Harvard, including pieces for the Harvard Glee Club, of which he *was* President. The Hasty Pudding Club at Harvard University was already established by the time Carpenter attended and thus he had the opportunity to compose scores for their shows.¹⁰ Undoubtedly Carpenter’s involvement with composing music for these hilarious burlesque musicals with males playing female roles—*Branglebrink* (1896) and *The Flying Dutchmen* (1897)—exposed him to comedic programmatic writing. It is also not too far-fetched to assume that this compositional “rite of passage,” as Pollack explains it, would have afforded Carpenter an opportunity to explore *leitmotifs* and comic effects through instrumental writing.¹¹ In addition to Carpenter’s foundations with composition at Harvard his later song cycles and collections of songs suggest a thematic and textual approach to writing that could have also informed his future stage works.

The Songs of John Alden Carpenter

To illustrate John Alden Carpenter’s inclination toward programmatic writing further I will discuss the text and some important musical elements which he uses to

¹⁰ Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 24.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

enhance and elevate the texts of his songs. Before delving into specific isolated examples I would like to discuss briefly Carpenter's affinity for words; beautiful, emotionally laden, and sometimes pithy. Prior to Carpenter's endeavors with ballet he illustrated the stories of poets through his song compositions. Shakespeare, William Blake, and Robert Louis Stevenson were merely a few of the literary geniuses utilized by Carpenter.¹² As a Harvard educated man who excelled in English, French, and music Carpenter would certainly have had a respect and fondness for well written texts and the famous purveyors of those romances, tragedies, satires and, in general, striking prose.¹³ Carpenter rarely wrote his own texts—save *Perambulator*, which will be discussed later—unless reinterpreting a pre-existing text it is obvious that his compositions were inspired by the work of poets and writers.

This inspiration can first be seen in his song cycles *Gitanjali* (1913) and *Water-Colors* (1916) which were created from poems by Indian and Chinese poets respectively. Although the continuity of pieces in song cycles demonstrates the development of a story, I will instead focus on three exemplary songs from different years to show the techniques which Carpenter uses when illustrating texts. The collection of songs written by Rue and John called *Improving Songs for Anxious Children* was a project in which wife created sketches and poems and husband composed music about the follies and joys of children. These pieces, having been written in between 1901 and 1902, predate the children's pieces that Satie would write in 1913 and Debussy's *Children's Corner* piano pieces published in 1908. Carpenter's published project reads like a children's book with

¹² See Index 1 for information about songs composed by Carpenter prior to 1919 with the source/author of the texts provided.

¹³ Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 14.

compositions interspersed between illustrations and easily read poems in bold-faced type. The accompaniment to these poems is basic and undoubtedly functioned as either a teaching tool or at the very least as a cooperative music for children, much like Satie's pieces. Regardless of the educational intention of the songs, they definitely tell a story with music about what it is like to be a child.¹⁴

Overall the vocal lines of the pieces generally span an octave or less.¹⁵ The accompaniments sometimes function as interludes in between a cappella solos or as chordal backing for poetic lines. In looking more closely at the very first song in this collection one can immediately recognize Carpenter's ability to bring a light and sensory feeling to poetry. "Stout," is a song about a fat child that wants to run and jump, but if he does his buttons will pop and his clothes will be undone and thus he must sit about.¹⁶ Carpenter illustrates this galumphing child in the text by placing the song in a compound duple of 6/8 time with a reoccurring rhythmic and melodic pattern in the left hand of the piano accompaniment. The "long, short" pattern—quarter note, eighth note—adds weight on the downbeat. Carpenter's choice to place longer notes on primary beats makes the song "heavy." It cannot be denied that Carpenter succeeded at his attempt at making the song weighted. He indicates at the beginning of his piece that it is to be performed "Heavily" with a dotted quarter equaling sixty-nine beats per minute. The pervading

¹⁴ Many of the pieces are sung from the perspective of a child. Composing from the perspective of a child will resurface in *Adventures of a Perambulator*. Also note that *The Birthday of the Infanta* is centered on the birthday celebration of a young girl.

¹⁵ These songs span a range greater than an octave: IV "Red Hair" (an octave and a fifth above), V "Liar" (an octave and a third above) VI "A Wicked Child" (an octave and a step above), VII "Spring" (an octave and a step above", VIII "Maria,-Glutton" (an octave and a step above), XI "Vanity" (octave and a third below), XIV "Brother (an octave and a fifth below), XV "Making Calls" (an octave and a step).

¹⁶ "Alas, I am a heavy child, A very heavy one; I cannot do the fearful things that other boys have done. I try to caper on the green, I try to skip and run, But all my buttons they burst off, and leave my clothes undone. It is a very wretched thing to be so fat a child, to have to merely sit about, and yet to feel so wild." - I. "Stout" *Improving Songs for Anxious Children*, Masters Music Publications, Inc., 11.

pattern in the bass—which is mimicked to a certain extent in the melody of the singer—creates a trudging feeling as the contour rises and falls. Carpenter infuses this piece with humor and lightens the mood by placing the piece in G Major and giving it an almost uncanny recurring pattern, melodically and rhythmically. Furthermore Carpenter emphasizes the clumsiness of the child by adding *acciaccatura* in the accompaniment. By looking closely at the first song in Carpenter’s collection of *Improving Songs for Anxious Children* Carpenter’s ability to portray stories and the comedy in those stories becomes clear.

Later on in Carpenter’s compositional career he composed a song on the poetry of William Blake called “Little Fly.” Perhaps Carpenter was drawn to this particular poem because it was part of a collection of poems entitled *Songs of Experience* (1794). The poems from *Songs of Experience* are often paired with poems from *Songs of Innocence* (1789) to emphasize the destruction of youthful bliss in ignorance with the harsh realities of adult life. Carpenter possibly became familiar with Blake’s poetry during his time at Harvard, where he excelled in English and undoubtedly gained skills with poetic analysis. The depth of Blake’s poem comes from the irony that Blake creates through the speaker’s dialogue. Carpenter enhances the irony in the poem through his manipulation of melodic content.

Literary scholar Warren Stevenson discusses William Blake’s poem in depth in his article “Artful Irony in Blake’s ‘The Fly.’” Stevenson explains that the irony of the speaker’s abstract reasoning is demonstrated, ultimately, in the speaker’s reductive analysis which leads to his death in the final moments of the poem.¹⁷ The speaker’s

¹⁷ Warren Stevenson, “Artful Irony in Blake’s ‘The Fly,’” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 10, no. 1 (April 1, 1968): 81.

abstract reasoning comes from analogies between the fly and himself.¹⁸ The hand of the speaker kills the fly just as the hand of God may come down at any minute and eradicate the speaker.¹⁹ The conclusion of the poem is more obviously ironic because the speaker's musings have circled back to inadvertently dispatch the speaker through a shift from simile to metaphor. The man is a fly and the fly is a man.

Carpenter's setting of William Blake's poem demonstrates Carpenter's sensitivity to text and enhances some of Blake's literary devices. Carpenter shifts the time signature and texture of the song to signal to the listener that something has changed textually. The piece begins by evoking the fly's wings with a very light and whimsical cascading figure without involving the lower notes of the bass clef. These cascading figures, of four sixteenth notes, step down in half steps and the notes are tied together to further emphasize the undulating motion.²⁰ The mood of the piece shifts drastically in measure eighteen—with measures sixteen and seventeen leading in. Carpenter times this musical shift in accordance with a shift in text, when the speaker/singer stops contemplating how much "like" a fly he is, and begins to realize what the result of the comparison might be. Even though Carpenter maintains the sixteenth note pattern of rapid repetition, he alters the mood through a change in register and texture. The sixteenth note figure becomes more scalar and a second "voice" is added above the once singular figure to create parallel sixths. The shift in text is further emphasized by the change in time-signature

¹⁸ "Little Fly, Thy summer's play My thoughtless hand Has brushed away. Am not I A fly like thee? Or art not thou A man like me? For I dance And drink, and sing, Till some blind hand Shall brush my wing. If thought is life And strength and breath And the want Of thought is death; Then am I A happy fly, If I live, Or if I die." - "The Fly" *Songs of Experience* William Blake

¹⁹ Stevenson, "Artful Irony", 79.

²⁰ Pollack, in *Skyscraper Lullaby*, discusses the sonorities that occur in this opening phrase as the accompaniment moves from I-V. Pollack calls the sonorities A ♭ , B ♭ ♭ , B, and E ♭ "fearless". 72.

from a waltzing 3/4 to a plodding 2/4. As the speaker realizes that “If thought is life And strength and breath, and the want of thought is Death;” the musical texture thickens, the register lowers, the meter becomes duple, and the singer slowly crescendos and accelerates.²¹ Additionally, whereas the previous section of accompaniment was a cascading figure that gradually stepped down, the shift at measure sixteen sees a chromatic incline in half notes in the right hand and a “rocking figure” in the left hand. The figures oscillate back and forth by half step with C2 functioning as a pedal as the first sixteenth note of each figure. Carpenter used the acceleration and gradual increase in volume by the singer, coupled with the steady chromatic increase in the right hand of the accompaniment from G5 to E4 to establish the speaker’s moment of epiphany.

Carpenter’s musical irony accompanies the poetic irony that comes at the end of the piece. Just as Blake switched from simile to metaphor, but continued his comparison of man and fly—“Then am I a happy fly, If I live, Or if I die.”—so too did Carpenter return to his opening thematic ideas but with alterations. Both the speaker and the composer circle back to the beginning, but with a new understanding or approach. The ending note that the singer sings sounds somewhat optimistic as it evades the yearned for tonic and ascends to the fifth above A ♭ 4. Even though the tonic, D ♭ , is present in the bass of the left hand, the tonic is obscured by the right hand which plays four octaves of a B ♭ chord cascading down in sextuplets to rest on an open fifth tonic chord in the bass. Even though there are striking similarities between the opening of “The Little Fly” and its closing, creating a ternary form, there are some musical aspects that add to the ironic

²¹ The score indicates *poco a poco cresc. ed accel.* In addition the mood switches from the established *Allegreti grazioso* (quarter note equaling 144 beats per minute) to *Molto più lento* (quarter note equaling 80 beats per minute.)

nature of the poetry. It is ironic that the piece technically ends on a tonic chord, with omitted third F[♯], because the chord that cascades down to it also has F[♯] in it. Although the piece is coming to a close Carpenter emphasizes the complexity of the poetry by having a vi7 chord cascade down to, and over the top of, a tonic chord in the bass.

The last example of John Alden Carpenter's songs that I would like to discuss is the third piece in his *Four Poems* by Paul Verlaine, "*Le Ciel*" (1910). Although Oscar Wilde, the author of *Birthday of the Infanta*, was not considered a symbolist like Verlaine, he was influenced by symbolism and both were considered "decadent" writers. Paul Verlaine was a French poet during the *fin de siècle* France and often wrote poetry about the lurid, unknown forces, fatality, dreams, and the phenomenal.²² "*Le Ciel*" is particularly interesting in the context of Carpenter's history with composing music with programmatic qualities because of the way that he approaches the poetry. Unlike the continuous sixteenth note pattern that is heard throughout "The Little Fly", Carpenter uses an extremely transparent texture in the opening of the piece with ascending quarter notes to create chords. As the song progresses Carpenter creates density by adding notes and slowly moving into lower registers of the piano. Although Carpenter's chords and textures are much more transparent than Debussy's, you can hear the influence of French song. It is fitting that Carpenter would call upon French musical mannerisms to accompany a French text by a French symbolist poet whose works probably directly influenced Debussy's music. It is important to note that Carpenter was very fond of French composers and Debussy in particular. In fact, Debussy's opening of *L'après-midi d'un faune* was practically quoted in the "Lake" movement of *Adventures in a*

²² Edmond Lepeletier and E. M. Lang. *Paul Verlaine: His Life, His Work*. (Kessinger Publishing, 2006).

Perambulator.²³ In “*Le Ciel*” the most aurally obvious French mannerisms are the occasional instances of planing and emphasized perfect fourths which are reminiscent of a pentatonic scale.

The poetry for this song begins by expressing sonic elements in nature and then, much like William Blake’s “The Fly”, ends by questioning the loss of something, and in this case youth.²⁴ The poetic translation of the text by Henry G. Chapman is as follows:

The sky hangs far above the roof,
So blue and calm;
A tree sways far above the roof,
Rocking her palm.

A bell in the sky, one hears,
Gently ringing,
A bird in the tree one hears,
Sadly singing.

Ah God! [Ah God!] the whole of life is there,
simple and tranquil;
That murmur of voices
Comes from the town.

Idle dream! Oh, what hast thou done,
Weeping in ruth?
Say, does thou know; what thou hast done
with all thy Youth?²⁵

In examining the text in isolation one can see that it is replete with references to sensory experiences, both aural and visual. The piece itself is uncomplicated, especially in the

²³ Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 115.

²⁴ “Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit, Si beau, si calme! Un arbre, par-dessus le toit, Berce sa palme. La cloche, dans le ciel qu'on voit Doucement tinte, Un oiseau sur l'arbre qu'on voit, Chante sa plainte. Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, la vie est là, Simple et tranquille. Cette paisible rumeur-là Vient de la ville. -Qu'as-tu fait, ô toi que voilà Pleurant sans cesse, Dis, qu'as-tu fait, toi que voilà, De ta jeunesse?” – “*Le Ciel*” Paul Verlaine *Four Poems* by Paul Veraliane, 4-7.

²⁵ John Alden Carpenter, “Le Ciel” trans. Henry G. Chapman, *Four Poems by Paul Verlaine: for Voice and Piano*. (Boca Raton, Fla: Masters Music, 1992), 4-7.

beginning. Carpenter composes the piece in 4/4 and rarely employs a rhythmic value smaller than an eighth note. The first section of text is accompanied by a sparse chordal structure which is created by rhythmically stacking notes. This technique of “stacking” occurs throughout the first eighteen measures of the song. Both the right and left hands of the accompaniment are scored in treble clef. When the text shifts to discuss more penetrating sounds such as a “bell in the sky” or a “bird sadly singing” Carpenter’s “stacking” technique begins to break-down. There is no longer a clear stair-step effect and the texture in the accompaniment becomes denser and lower. Just like “The Little Fly” Carpenter uses a ternary form and sets the “B” section apart by shifting into a 3/4 time signature and adding eighth note runs in both the left and right hands. Carpenter placed these eighth note runs underneath longer notes in the vocal line, thus making sure that the text was not lost or obscured. The “B” section signals a shift textually, into a more reality based world as the text mentions human features; “voices” and “town”.

The increased density and lowering of register in the accompaniment begins to ground the poetry and add weight to something that was originally light, airy, and reminiscent of the sky itself. Unlike “The Little Fly”, Carpenter does not return to material that is drawn from the opening accompaniment and melodic line. This decision in itself shows Carpenter’s sensitivity to text in that the poetry has definitely descended from a place that is dream-like and ideal to something that is very reality based. Two measures before the beginning of the final section of poetry, and the return of a 4/4 time signature, Carpenter introduces C#1 and C#2 in octaves. These dark bass notes are pushed to their extreme in the last few measures as the left hand plays B0 and B1 in octaves. The music could not simply return to thematic material that was present in the

“dream world” once reality had already been experienced. As the speaker in the text becomes saddened by the reality of the situation and the loss of idle youth, the singer becomes excited and swells in dynamics. In the final section of “*Le Ciel*” the singer begins on B \flat 4 and then, with step-wise motion, moves up to F#5 and back down to B \natural . To further emphasize the sadness of the text, and the loss of youthful idleness, Carpenter, in the concluding measures of the song, inverts the chordal stacking from the opening and has the right hand of the accompaniment step down to the tonic in the final measure.

It could be argued that Carpenter was creating songs with contrasting sections simply because songs are most interesting when they have unique and climactic moments. I would assert that, although songs have always been sectionalized or constructed in strophes, Carpenter used specific compositional techniques to emphasize and enhance the text. Carpenter’s relationship with, and passion for, the written word can be seen in the types of poetry that he set and the ways in which he expressed those texts with music. In the case of “Stout”, Carpenter used simple harmonies, rhythmic techniques, and repetition to highlight the comedic aspects of the poetry as well as the physical weight of the child in the poem. The simple and repetitive nature of the music not only makes it child-like, but also makes it geared toward and perhaps educational for children. In the examples of “The Little Fly” and “*Le Ciel*”, Carpenter used more complex compositional techniques, but ultimately illustrated the poetry in a similar fashion. Carpenter often used, not only processes of “word-painting”, but also created specific moods through harmonies and density of song texture. John Alden Carpenter’s attraction toward programmatic works and pieces inspired by texts are not limited to

songs, but can be exemplified most unmistakably in his symphonic work *Adventures in a Perambulator*.

Adventures in a Perambulator

The musical literature of childhood is small, and most of it is insipid and then. Mr. Carpenter has enriched it. We can think of no music dealing with the psychological stuff of childhood that we would so gladly hear again as this winsome and subjugating suite. It is conceived and accomplished with unfailing tact. How easily, in the hands of a less scrupulous and reticent artist,--above all, in the hands of a sentimentalist with a defective sense of humor,--it might have turned into something merely saccharine and absurd. But Mr. Carpenter has a mellow and delicate humor, fine taste, a right and sure instinct in these treacherous matters. Moreover, he is witty, poetic, imaginative. We should be less than just to Mr. Carpenter if we forebore to say that we wish he would steel himself against the Debussyeen wizardry and go more sturdily his own way. He does not need Debussy, when he can give us such pages as the opening, as most of the "Hurdy-Gurdy" section, as the close of "The Lake": here are beauty, charm, whimsical and contagious humor, at moments an enchanting tenderness. Looking back upon that dim and miraculous world, which is at once so near and personal yet so strange and incredible and remote,--which is even sometimes wholly shut away by forests and cities or by clouds and mists.—he has contrived to share with us the memory of his vision; so that, if only for a moment, we, too, remember those enchanted heights. — Lawrence Gilman, 1915²⁶

The most obviously programmatic work that Carpenter created before *The Birthday of the Infanta* was *Adventures in a Perambulator* in 1914. Carpenter wrote an orchestral work that was inspired by the sights and sounds of Chicago, where he was living, from the perspective of a small child in a perambulator (baby carriage). This piece, in addition to having an interesting program from the perspective of a baby written by the composer himself, also uses subtle and more overt humor as a compositional

²⁶ Lawrence Gilman, "Drama and Music: Significant Happenings of the Month," *The North American Review* 202, no. 721 (December 1, 1915): 914.

technique. The review of the recorded symphony in the July 1952 issue of *Musical Quarterly*, written by Irving Fine, negates the importance of the program. Irving writes that:

Adventures in a Perambulator leans heavily on Strauss for its style and subject matter (it is a kind of American *Sonfonia Domestica* [1903]). But it also pays its respects to Elgar and Debussy. The characteristic orchestral sound is one of opulent *Gemütlichkeit*. The harmonies and melodic material are in the same vein. What connection the music has with the composer's own program is a moot point. The listener had best ignore the program as well as the other notes accompanying the recording. In the latter occurs the observation that *Adventures in a Perambulator* is one of Carpenter's lighter works and is 'tremendously funny.' It is neither light nor funny. Nor is it even cute. But it is skillfully made orchestral music and pleasant if somewhat specific listening.²⁷

Fine is asking the listener to enjoy a "skillfully made orchestral music" without getting bogged down in the program, but Carpenter explicitly wrote the program to go with the music. Looking at the orchestral work from a twenty-first century perspective makes it even more unsuitable to dissociate the text from the music when we have in Carpenter's correspondence evidence of the influence of his program on the music. Carpenter wrote that he was "just finishing up the 'Lake.' It [had] taken longer than the others [movements] because the waves [got] so big."²⁸ Carpenter could have been referring to literal waves, as he was vacationing at Lake Geneva in Wisconsin when he wrote this letter, but most likely he was referring to the "Lake" in his music. This bit of correspondence helps to solidify that Carpenter had the program in his mind as he was composing his music.

²⁷ Irving Fine, "Record Review: Carpenter: *Adventures in a Perambulator*; McBride: *Aria and Toccata in Swing*; Still: *Blues; Here's One*; Copland: *Ukulele Serenade; Hoe Down* by Orch. of Vienna State Opera; Henry Swoboda; Louis Kaufman; Anette Kaufman; John Alden Carpenter; McBride; Still; Copland." *The Musical Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (July 1, 1952): 483.

²⁸ Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 103.

Now let us turn to the program that accompanies Carpenter's music. This piece has five movements, each with its own subject matter, and as Howard Pollack points out, is told from the perspective of a baby.²⁹ Both Strauss's *Sinfonia Domestica* and Carpenter's *Adventures in a Perambulator* are orchestral works which focus on the everyday occurrences. Unlike the symphonies of Strauss or Carpenter, Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* (1830) has a program that is based in more of a dream-like state. The program of *Adventures in a Perambulator* describes sights and sounds that are accessible, and in their familiarity become comical. Carpenter's program progresses through five movements and details the visual and aural experiences of an infant as she strolls along on an afternoon walk with her Nurse.³⁰ As mentioned previously Carpenter wrote the entire program and was most likely inspired by his young daughter Ginny to compose such a work.³¹

I would like to begin analyzing this piece by looking closely at the text in the program itself. Carpenter's appreciation for text, and music influenced by text, can be illustrated through this investigation into *Perambulator*. Unlike Carpenter's *Symphony No. 1 "Sermons in Stones"* where the movements are labeled with the Italian musical markings indicating mood or artistic approach toward the music, *Adventures in a Perambulator* has labels that indicate different places, objects, and people.³² Before even

²⁹ Pollack explains that the fact that the program is written from the perspective of an infant is what primarily differentiates his orchestral work from Strauss's *Sinfonia Domestica*, which is written from the perspective of the artist. Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 111.

³⁰ There is no gender specified for the baby, but I will continue to refer to the infant in the feminine for the rest of the discussion of the piece because of the supposed connection with Carpenter's daughter Ginny.

³¹ Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 111.

³² The different movements for *Symphony No. 1* are as follows: 1. Moderato-sostenuto, 2. Moderato grazioso, 3. Moderato, 4. Moderato, and 5. Largo

beginning to read the prose that Carpenter wrote for each individual movement, the titles give some insight into what the different movements are trying to convey. The opening movement entitled “En Voiture” (In the Carriage) is very introductory in its text.

Carpenter is very literal and matter-of-fact with his prose as the child explains that her Nurse buckles her into the perambulator after being wrapped tightly in a wool blanket and then they—the Nurse and the baby—begin their early afternoon adventure.

In the subsequent movements Carpenter captures not only the inquisitive nature of the child but also her untested senses. Carpenter’s prose is confusing at times because the child wavers back and forth between naivety and being very much informed.

Table 1.1: Moments of the speaker being naive and informed in *Adventures in a Perambulator*

Naivety	Informed
“Probably there is nothing more in the world. If there is, it is superfluous. <i>There IS</i> . It is Dogs!” – “Dogs”	“The land comes to an end, and there at my feet is the Lake. All my other sensations are joined in one. I see, I hear, I feel the quiver of the little waves as they escape from the big ones and come rushing up over the sand.” – “The Lake”
“Those dogs have gone! It is confusing, but it is Life! My mind grows numb.” – “Dreams”	“How very large the world is! How many things there are!” – “Dreams”

The small chart above shows some of the ways in which Carpenter establishes the confusion of the child and almost simultaneously interjects a “worldly” perspective and understanding into her naïve character. There are some aspects of her world that Carpenter chose to have her be more cognizant of. For example, there seems to be no confusion when the child approaches the Lake. Perhaps the lack of confusion comes from the frequency of these late morning strolls with her Nurse.

Carpenter reiterates the fact that the perspective of the story teller is a child. Whenever the child is unsure of something that she has experienced Carpenter clarifies or adds depth to the description by having the child make a comparison with something that

she can relate to. When the child sees the hurdy-gurdy for the first time she explains that it is “something like my music-box, only much larger, and on wheels.”³³ Additionally, when the end of “Dogs” is almost reached and the child is explaining the interaction between the dogs she explains that, “the very littlest brigand starts a game of ‘Follow the Leader,’ followed by all the others.”³⁴ As a way of classifying the movements of the dogs the child equates their interaction to a child’s game that she would have been familiar with, perhaps indicating that the dogs looked playful. Carpenter definitely captured the spirit of the child by creating these comparisons throughout the program.

The music that was composed for this program is very cinematic. There are moments of lush and sweeping strings that are contrasted by soloistic sections on woodwinds, celesta, or harp. The most striking aspect of *Perambulator* is the instrumentation and how Carpenter orchestrated it. Different sections have thematic ideas, such as the Policeman being represented with low strings in a square march rhythm, reminiscent of a sauntering man in uniform with small embellishments in the form of grace notes to evoke an image of a swinging nightstick. “His [the Policeman’s] march is [also] slightly pompous and stern, but its syncopated grace notes and stressed second beats lend a certain whimsy as well, somewhat recalling the toyland marches of Elgar and Herbert, but with a droll, exaggerated, almost cartoonlike humor of its own.”³⁵ In addition to the Policeman’s theme there are also evocations of melodies that would have been heard on the streets of Chicago coming from organ-grinders. Howard Pollack identifies “Miserere” from *Il Trovatore*, “Alexandra’s Ragtime Band” by Irving Berlin,

³³ “Hurdy-Gurdy”, *Adventures in a Perambulator*, see Appendix C for full text.

³⁴ “Dogs”, *Adventures in a Perambulator*, see Appendix C for full text.

³⁵ Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 112.

an unidentified waltz that could have been by Reginald de Koven or Victor Herbert and “Oh, Marie” by Eduardo Di Capua.³⁶ But perhaps the melodies themselves are not the most remarkable aspect of the hurdy-gurdy, rather Carpenter’s orchestration of the hurdy-gurdy itself is very striking. He chose instruments that were higher in timbre—two xylophones, piano, harp, and sometimes celesta and glockenspiel. It was not just the tone of the instruments that evoked a hurdy-gurdy, instead it was the almost continual rolling action on the xylophones and glockenspiels as well as the triple time that brought in an almost diegetic sound to the piece. The listener can tell that these melodies do not fit into the previous orchestral environment and thus serve a specific purpose.

Another very important aspect of this programmatic work, which cannot be removed from the creation of the text and the music, is the fact that Carpenter had really attempted to aurally capture Chicago at the turn of the century. What does an Irish Policeman sound like as he walks down the sidewalk? How does one capture the waves of Lake Michigan with orchestral color? When walking down the street, what are the tunes that are cranked from organ-grinders? Carpenter’s attempt at capturing this soundscape through the perspective of a child, was not only ambitious but was also another way for him to explore programmatic writing with comedic opportunities. The movement “Dogs” is perhaps the most comedic of them all as the child becomes fabulously surprised by these furry animals. Carpenter scores this with *tremolo* strings moving into sporadic rhythmic groupings of *pizzicato* and added *staccato* woodwinds. These abrupt groupings of notes undoubtedly represent the different dogs (singles, pairs, sisters, parents, societies, etc.) There are definitely humorous aspects in the text and

³⁶ Also Both Reginald de Koven and Victor Herbert were American composers of operettas, with de Koven being more influenced by Gilbert and Sullivan and Victor Herbert being more influenced by continental composers. Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 114.

music of this programmatic work, but the comedic nature of this piece was furthered through publications of associated cartoons. There was “a large cartoon by Carpenter’s friend John McCutcheon that depicted Stock conducting a Policeman, a governess, and other characters from the work. This cartoon tribute helped underscore the music’s cartoonish wit . . .”³⁷ Besides the humor of the piece being seen visually through cartoon representations like that of John McCutcheon, reviewers of the piece also heard its comedic moments. The review written by Karleton Hackett in the *Evening Post* stated that “there was wit, humor and tenderness, and through it all the feeling that Mr. Carpenter had something to say, something that he had actually felt and wished to express.”³⁸ This observation by Hackett is also enlightening because he inadvertently validates the programmatic quality of the piece. Hackett explains that “Mr. Carpenter had something to *say* [emphasis added]” and expressed that through music.

Oscar Wilde and *The Birthday of the Infanta*

Perhaps we lose that sense of reality because, as we get older and become bogged in the petty details of everyday living, we forget how to read significant meanings in the ordinary happenings of our ordinary lives, or we forget how, and it is essentially the same thing, to use our imaginations.

*That ability of the child to see in the same block of wood a knight arrayed in armored panoply or a sheik from the burning Arabian desert, a towered castle or a dirty, salt-encrusted freighter is childhood’s greatest gift. To read these stories of Oscar Wilde is to regain some of that ability.*³⁹ –
Everett Shinn

³⁷ Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 117.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Oscar Wilde, *The Happy Prince, and Other Tales*, (New York: Literary Guild, 1940) ix-x. Everett Shinn was the illustrator of the 1940 edition of *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. This was a selection from his Preface.

What was it about Oscar Wilde's short story *The Birthday of the Infanta* that appealed to John Alden Carpenter and made it a good candidate for a ballet libretto? There are, of course, many factors involved with the selection of a particular story, but I would like to discuss some of the aspects of Oscar Wilde's story that made it a wise choice and more importantly a successful one. To fully understand *The Birthday of the Infanta* in America I would like to discuss Oscar Wilde's almost year-long tour of America in 1882.

Having only published his first volume of poetry in London in 1881, Oscar Wilde was not a well-known writer, but was an international celebrity when he arrived in New York. His fame undoubtedly came because of his controversial personality which was repeatedly satirized through caricatures and even Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience or Bunthorne's Bride* (1881).⁴⁰ Wilde's tour, beginning in New York, not only went throughout the major cities of the United States but also visited some more western and mid-western cities such as Ogden, Utah; Leadville, Colorado; Topeka, Kansas; and Dubuque, Iowa.⁴¹ The extensiveness of Wilde's tour suggests that many Americans in varying environments would have been exposed to his poetic and decadent style. Oscar Wilde was a proponent of the movement in aestheticism, and he described it as "a search after the signs of the beautiful. It is the science through which men look after the correlation which exists in the arts. It is, to speak more exactly, the search after the secret of life."⁴² Throughout his tour of the United States newspapers continued to critique

⁴⁰ Oscar Wilde, ed. Matthew Hofer and Gary Scharnhorst, *Oscar Wilde in America: the Interviews*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 3.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² "Oscar Wilde's Arrival," *New York World*, January 3, 1882, in *Wilde in America: the Interviews*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010) 1.

Wilde for his flamboyant dress and personality. The reporter of “Utterly Utter” in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* on February 25, 1882 asked Wilde if he ever read what was written about him in papers. Wilde replied

Oh, yes, every line. When I come in at night, tired and weary, the reading of a good vigorous attack acts like a dish of caviar. Of course, some of it is not what I have been used to, as the English papers still have a sort of old-fashioned regard for truth. They are not so much given to imagination as the journals here.

Wilde continued about critics:

What do I care about the expressions of a man who does not know anything in regard to my writings? It does not affect me any more than if the writers should say I had written a good sonnet or a bad sonnet. He does not know and I do not care.⁴³

In Wilde’s American interviews the papers seemed most interested in finding out Wilde’s impressions and preferences for American theater and poets, and America in general.

Additionally, interviewers sought definitions for Wilde’s artistic philosophies and reactions to his reception. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Wilde’s interviews was his preference for the American West over the East.⁴⁴

To begin with, America is not a country; it is a world. Every city has different types and there is no permanent type at all as regards her men and women. I think the society delightful. I find New York brilliant and cosmopolitan; Philadelphia, literary; Baltimore, pleasant; Washington, intellectual; Boston, more like Oxford than any city you have. The people in Chicago I found simple and strong, and without any foolish prejudices that have influenced East America. I found the audiences in Chicago very sympathetic, and it gives me a sense of power to sway such large multitudes. It is grand. In fact, the side of your American civilization those of us in Europe who are watching your young republic are most interested in is not the East but the West. We want to see what civilization you are making for yourself and by yourselves.⁴⁵

⁴³ Oscar Wilde, ed. Matthew Hofer and Gary Scharnhorst, *Oscar Wilde in America: the Interviews*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 77.

⁴⁴ Oscar Wilde mentions in several interviews that the English preferred the West to the East because it was more individual. The English believed that the East was a version of England.

⁴⁵ “Wilde,” *Cleveland Leader*, February 20, 1882, in *Wilde in America: the Interviews*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 67.

This quotation is particularly revealing, not only because we can see that Wilde was very interested in the progress of the West, but that the West was very receptive of Wilde. Wilde believed that the West had “no architecture, no scenery, but individuals [that were] doing beautiful work, and [they had] great art possibilities.”⁴⁶ Although John Alden Carpenter was decidedly too young to see Oscar Wilde’s lectures, the lectures and the extensive newspaper coverage undoubtedly familiarized Americans with the writer and laid the foundations for familiarity with his works.

In addition to Oscar Wilde’s established prominence in America, there were other factors that possibly contributed to John Alden Carpenter’s selection of “The Birthday of the Infanta” as a ballet libretto. Not only were Americans familiar with Oscar Wilde in general, but it is likely that they were aware of “The Birthday of the Infanta” specifically. In examining some United States newspapers at the turn-of-the-century there were multiple mentions of “The Birthday of the Infanta.”⁴⁷ Wilde’s short story had been adapted to a play version and this play was being performed in New York and elsewhere on the East coast. There was also a mention of “The Birthday of the Infanta” for children’s books. Furthermore, there were drawings for fairytales in the *New-York Tribune* on December 30, 1917. The paper included three drawings for three Oscar Wilde stories: “The Star Child,” “The Fisherman’s Daughter” and “The Birthday of the Infanta.” The fact that Oscar Wilde’s “The Birthday of the Infanta” repeatedly appears in daily newspapers suggests that the story was not only known but enjoyed an audience.

⁴⁶ “With Mr. Oscar Wilde,” *Cincinnati Gazette*, 21 February 1882, in *Wilde in America: the Interviews*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 68.

⁴⁷ See Appendix D for examples of “The Birthday of the Infanta” references.

John Alden Carpenter, keeping in mind the infamous nature of Oscar Wilde, made a good decision choosing a story that well-read audiences would have been familiar with. However, Carpenter certainly had other reasons for the selection of this particular libretto. Howard Pollack, along with other scholars, has suggested that the plot was special to Carpenter because his daughter Ginny had just had her twelfth birthday in 1916, just like the Infanta. Carpenter even had Ginny photographed “in the fantastic costume [of the Infanta] designed for the premiere.”⁴⁸ Ultimately the ballet was dedicated to Ginny as well.⁴⁹ It should also be mentioned that Oscar Wilde’s works had already been proven successful on the stage. Richard Strauss had composed the opera *Salome* in 1905 after Wilde’s play and both Franz Schrecker, Austrian born composer, and Bernhard Sekles, German born composer, had composed a dance pantomime (1908-10) and a ballet (1913) respectively after the story *The Birthday of the Infanta*. Furthermore, Oscar Wilde’s poems had been used by many composers as texts for songs. Although there may be many factors for why Carpenter selected the libretto that he did, I would like to examine the qualities of the text itself that may have interested Carpenter. Considering that Carpenter has shown himself to be a very text conscious composer it is not surprising that he selected a story from a well-known literary figure for his first ballet.

Before delving into any of the text of Oscar Wilde’s short story, the title already conjures images from the seventeenth-century paintings of Diego Velázquez. The fanciful and imposing baroque courts of Spanish Kings and Queens are images that would have had intrigue and interest for an audience in America in the early twentieth

⁴⁸ This photograph can be seen in the “John Alden Carpenter 1891-1961” Music Division, Library of Congress.

⁴⁹ Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 170.

century. However, the story of “The Birthday of the Infanta” is also fabulously visual. There are not only evocations of a great and wealthy palace with decadent fabrics and textures, but the story in its entirety is focused around a birthday celebration with divertissements, vibrant guests, and princely gifts.

There are two elements in the story that must have been the most intriguing to Carpenter for a ballet. Firstly, the character of Pedro reaches his demise through dancing which fits nicely with a danced work. Secondly, the tragic death of a protagonist either from unrequited love or from being a cast-off outsider, are common tropes throughout literature and, more importantly staged dramas in the form of ballet and opera. Howard Pollack explains that “the plot itself resembles such romantic ballets as *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, and other shattered idylls. . . The setting further recalls the world of the Ballets Russes.⁵⁰ Not only another Velázquez-inspired work, *Las Meninas* (1916, to music by Fauré), but *Petrushka*, with its own pathetic antihero posed against a carnival atmosphere.⁵¹ *The Birthday of the Infanta* also shares similarities with Verdi’s *Rigoletto*. This opera boasts a deformed protagonist named *Rigoletto*, although less self-loathing than Pedro at the end of the story, he eventually constructs his own emotional demise.⁵² A comparison to *Rigoletto* is enlightening, not only because Italian opera was extremely

⁵⁰ The death of Pedro at the end *The Birthday of the Infanta*, although for different reasons, is also reminiscent of the Ballets Russes’s *Rite of Spring* which was not performed in the United States on either tour. Nonetheless, some wealthy more traveled Americans would have seen the production or at least read about its premiere in 1913.

⁵¹ Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 169.

⁵² *Rigoletto* ultimately, in trying to protect his daughter Gilda, has her murdered in an instance of mis-identity.

popular in America, but also because *Rigoletto* was being performed throughout the United States beginning in the mid-nineteenth century.⁵³

Oscar Wilde's story could have also appealed to Carpenter as a ballet libretto because of the birthday entertainments that could easily function as divertissements. Much like the famous divertissements that are seen in the Nutcracker's Palace, the birthday entertainments represent different ethnicities and personalities. One of the divertissements was a staged bull-fight that easily could have been transferred to a stage production. There were

noble boys, fantastically dressed as *toreadors* . . . Some of [them] pranced about on richly- caparisoned hobby-horses brandishing long javelins with gay streamers of bright ribands attached to them; others went on foot waving their scarlet cloaks before the bull, and vaulting lightly over the barrier when he charged them; and as for the bull himself, he was just like a live bull, though he was only made of wicker-work and stretched hide, and sometimes insisted on running round the arena on his hind legs, which no live bull ever dreams of doing.⁵⁴

After the conclusion of the playful bullfight an interlude occurred where Italian puppets acted out *Sophonisha*. Then an African juggler appeared and charmed snakes and performed other magical illusions. The last few divertissements before Pedro were a group of dancing boys and "a troop of handsome Egyptians—as the gipsies were termed in those days".⁵⁵ Although all of the moments described in Wilde's story did not appear

⁵³ Some examples of when and where *Rigoletto* was being performed:

1. Salt Lake City, Utah. Sat. Matinee February 3, 1906, Salt Lake Theater Grand Opera Season. *Truth*, (Salt Lake City, Utah) 1901-1908, January 20, 1906, no. (January 20, 1906): 7.
2. Honolulu, Hawaii. Monday evening 8:15 March 3, 1913. *Honolulu Star-bulletin*. (Honolulu [Oahu, Hawaii] 1912-current, March 03, 1913, 2:30 Edition, no. (March 3, 1913): 1, 8.
3. San Francisco, California. 1883 (2 times), 1884, 1885 (2 times), 1896 (2 times), 1900 (2 times), 1902, 1903, Tivoli Opera House. *The San Francisco Call*. (San Francisco [Calif.]) 1895-1913, November 29, 1903, Image 18, November 29, 1903.
4. New York, New York. Yesterday afternoon, March 15, 1919. Metropolitan Opera House. *New-York Tribune*. (New York [N.Y.]) 1866-1924, March 16, 1919, 15.

⁵⁴ Oscar Wilde, *The Happy Prince, and Other Tales*, (New York: Literary Guild, 1940), 68-70.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 72

in Carpenter’s ballet, it is safe to assume that these fun diverting moments were a positive element for the creation of a ballet. Moreover, the “Oriental” elements would have provided novelty in a ballet that was not relying on mythological or magical plot elements.

In *the Birthday of the Infanta* Oscar Wilde pays great attention to detail and tells the story from the perspective of an omniscient narrator giving the reader a window into the world of a different place and time. One aspect of the story that becomes apparent almost immediately is Wilde’s attention to color. Throughout the story descriptions of color become integral, which undoubtedly ties to ideas of aestheticism and synesthesia.

Table 1.2: Use of color in Oscar Wilde’s “Birthday of the Infanta”

The purple butterflies fluttered about with gold dust on their wings, visiting each flower in turn; the little lizards crept out of the crevices of the wall and lay basking in the white glare; and the pomegranates split and cracked in the heat, and showed their bleeding red hearts. ⁵⁶
The boys wore old-fashioned court dresses of white velvet, and their curious three-cornered hats were fringed with silver and surmounted with huge plumes of ostrich feathers, the dazzling whiteness of their costumes, as they moved about in the sunlight, being still more accentuated by their swarthy faces and long black hair. ⁵⁷
An African juggler followed, who brought in a large flat basket covered with red cloth . . . he took from his turban a curious reed pipe, and blew through it. In a few moments the cloth began to move, and as the pipe grew shriller and shriller two green and gold snakes put out their strange wedge-shaped heads and rose slowly up. ⁵⁸
The monks went in front singing sweetly, and carrying bright banners and crosses of gold , and then in silver armour, with match-locks and pikes came the soldiers, and in their midst walked three barefooted men, in strange yellow dresses painted all over with wonderful figures . . .” ⁵⁹
There were flowers, too, in the forest, not so splendid, perhaps, as the flowers in the garden, but more sweetly scented for all that; hyacinths in the early spring that flooded with waving purple the cool glens, and the grassy knolls; yellow primroses that nestled in little clumps round the gnarled roots of the oak-trees; bright celandine, and blue speedwell, and irises lilac and gold . ⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Ibid, 63-64.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 72.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 71.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 80.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 83.

In these few excerpts it is obvious that Wilde places an emphasis on description of objects and pays close attention to color. Additionally, the colors that are described most frequently are bright: yellow, gold, silver, and white.

One of the ways that Oscar Wilde adds depth to his story is by creating parallels between natural objects in the story and the characters themselves. It is obvious that the Infanta is much like the flowers whereas Pedro is compared to the birds and lizards. After seeing the lizards moving about

the flowers were excessively annoyed at their behavior, and at the behavior of the birds. 'It only shows,' they said, 'what a vulgarizing effect this incessant rushing and flying about has. Well-bred people always stay exactly in the same place, as we do. No one ever saw us hopping up and down the walks, or galloping madly through the grass after dragon-flies. When we do want change of air, we send for the gardener, and he carries us to another bed. This is dignified, and as it should be. But birds have not even a permanent address. They are mere vagrants like the gipsies, and should be treated in exactly the same manner.' So they put their noses in the air, and looked very haughty. . .⁶¹

In examining the conversation of the flowers a bit more carefully the parallels become unavoidably obvious. The Infanta, although entertained by the Dwarf, found his movements silly and laughed repeatedly at his dance.

Oscar Wilde's short story is replete with elements that make it appealing for a ballet libretto and staged work. Wilde's approach to text was a very decadent and colorful one, which provided John Alden Carpenter, Adolph Bolm, and Robert Edmond Jones a road map from which they could follow and diverge. The extremely visual nature of the story and the ability of the story to carry both surface and deeper meanings make it accessible to many, and undoubtedly appealing to the educated and literary Carpenter. The textual aspects of Oscar Wilde's story, in addition to the successes that his works had

⁶¹Ibid, 78.

already had on the stage, are only a few explanations for why Carpenter may have been drawn to this story. It is certain, however, in looking at Carpenter's relationship with text and music that *The Birthday of the Infanta* offered another opportunity for his programmatic approach to composition.

The Music of *The Birthday of the Infanta*

*All this innocent and grotesque, somber, ornate gaiety Mr. Carpenter expressed, so austere is his music at times, so macabre, so hauntingly elaborated, so wistful, and so finely withdrawn. This music of the Infanta has none of the fury of sex in it, for the lives that it reveals have an ironical innocence and formality; but in them and in their music as well there is the shadow of what will mature into passion. The imagination of the music constantly appears; it sustains a modern quality throughout; it has the excitement of poetic sincerity, and it carries the whole piece toward something that is unescapably drama.*⁶² - Stark Young (1923)

Just as costumes, set designs, and choreography are all important aspects of portraying the plot of a ballet, the score is also integral in creating character, mood, and the overall environment of a ballet. It is difficult to analyze what the ballet may have sounded like at its premiere because there are many different versions of the score. The full orchestral score is very difficult to read and differs from the more easily interpreted revised score from 1940.⁶³ Howard Pollack recognized, in his musical biography of John Alden Carpenter, that there is no authoritative version of the original score from 1919, but he provides an informative analysis of the piece based on the condensed 45-page

⁶² Stark Young, "Translations," *The Flower in Drama: a Book of Papers on the Theatre*, (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1923) 149.

⁶³ These are the scores that exist in the "John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961," Music Division, Library of Congress: Original sketches, full orchestral score (probably the original from 1919), four hand piano score, two hand piano score, suite from the ballet, and changes made by the composer. The difficulty comes in the fact that not all of the scores are dated, and because they are microfilmed are often difficult to read. Additionally, the two hand and four hand piano scores seem to be condensed versions of the full score and the "corrections" are for the orchestral suite as opposed to the ballet itself.

score and the full 182-page orchestral score.⁶⁴ Pollack's analysis is a starting point from which to delve more deeply into some very specific aspects of Carpenter's compositional approach and how these compositional decisions relate to stage directions. In analyzing *The Birthday of the Infanta* I will refer to some of Pollack's observations but will mainly focus on some very specific musical aspects that serve to develop the characters, plot, and dramatic intent of the ballet. Because *The Birthday of the Infanta* is a ballet and the music cannot be separated from the movement of the dancers, changes in time signature and rhythmic motifs will be a huge focus of my analysis. Carpenter also chooses to use a somewhat sectionalized style of composition but connects elements of the ballet together through reoccurring melodic and harmonic motifs which I will also discuss.⁶⁵ In my analysis I refer to the condensed four-hand piano score most frequently because of its inclusion of stage direction and the legibility of the notation; however, I also consult all of the scores for thoroughness.⁶⁶ As has been discussed previously, John Alden Carpenter was influenced and intrigued by literature and was very much a programmatic composer which is the main reason for my analyzing the score with clear stage directions. The

⁶⁴ Carpenter, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 170-176.

⁶⁵ The revised score is more sectional than the earlier scores. Carpenter obviously felt, after revisiting the score, that more frequent and stark contrasts musically would more fully serve the drama of the ballet.

⁶⁶ Howard Pollack explains that the four-hand condensed piano score is a revised version of the ballet that was created in 1938 for the revised 1940 orchestral score. This version of the score cut the ballet almost in half. Although the score postdates the premier I have decided to use moments from the four-hand condensed score for my analysis because of its extremely clear stage directions and the textural information that you do not always get from the two-hand score. Pollack explains that from the original score, the four-hand piano score had alterations in the form of emendations and musical additions, but the basic structure of the ballet is virtually untouched. *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 188. I consulted the four-hand piano score, the two-hand piano score, and the full orchestral score for the moments that I have chosen to analyze for a more accurate analysis. When I am analyzing only one source I indicate that in my prose. The transcribed four-hand piano score is Appendix A.

insertions of plot details into the score and seeing how those details correspond to musical elements is hugely important to understanding the ballet as a whole.⁶⁷

It was written in an article in *Musical America* about the New York performance of the ballet that

the music, though it [was] never very far from operetta and verg[ed] on an even more popular note in its suggestion of jazz, is pieced together with much skill. It cleverly follows and sometimes aptly delineates the stage episodes, creates the desired atmosphere of fantasy, and is scored with an engaging transparency and fluidity.⁶⁸

While other articles that were written directly after the premiere praised the subtle humor, the creation of character through theme and measure, and the sometimes spicy and piquant mood.⁶⁹ How did Carpenter create a score that was sectional yet fluid and popular yet high art?

I will begin exploring these ideas through the shifting time signatures and rhythmic motifs that occur throughout the ballet. These rhythmic changes can be building blocks for a dancer's conveyance of particular emotions, plot, or dramatic intent, because the movement of dancers is dictated by the rhythmic structure of the music. John Alden Carpenter does not veil the meter as much as Stravinsky did in *Le sacre du printemps* for example, but instead creates shifts either frequently or infrequently to achieve a particular feeling of stability, instability or to emphasize the sectional nature of his composition. For the most part Carpenter employs simple meters throughout *The Birthday of the*

⁶⁷ If stage directions seem to differ between scores with regard to the music that is associated with the direction, I indicate the discrepancy.

⁶⁸ O.T. "Chicagoans give 'Salome,' stage Grovilez Ballet, Show New Stars: 'Pagliacci' and Carpenter Ballet", *Musical America*, vol. XXXV, no. 16, (February 11, 1922) 47, 53.

⁶⁹ Maurice Rosenfeld, "Chicago Stirred to Enthusiasm by World Premiere of Carpenter's Ballet Pantomime" *Musical America* (January 3, 1920), 36.

Infanta in three and four; however, it is Carpenter’s shifting through these meters, sometimes without the audience even realizing, that makes these shifts meaningful. Carpenter manipulates meter and audience expectations in different places depending on what score is being looked at. In the two-hand piano score he uses his most complex time signatures to portray different children birthday guests; however, in the four-hand revised piano score Pedro’s dances have the most complex time signature.

On the third system of page five of the two-hand piano score, as “one by one the children enter into the garden,” Carpenter decides to use complex shifting meters.⁷⁰ Undoubtedly Carpenter decided to use this sectional process to more easily illustrate the different children. The chart below indicates the time-signatures and for how many measures that time-signature occurs.

Table 1.3: Shifting Time-Signatures in both the two-hand piano score and full orchestral scores of *The Birthday of the Infanta* as “one by one the children enter the garden”

Time Signature	Measures
4/4	2 measures
7/8	2 measures
5/8	3 measures
4/4	4 measures
7/8	6 measures
3/4	6 measures
4/4	10 measures, (4 measures after functioning as a musical transition to the Infanta’s solo dance)

These shifts occur again at the conclusion of the *Infanta*’s solo as the children dance together (first system of page 9). It becomes apparent that the distinct meters are functioning much like the abrupt changes in orchestration that Carpenter used in *Adventures in a Perambulator* to musically illustrate the different “dogs.” The changes in time-signature, coupled with the changes in melodic material, created distinct sections in

⁷⁰ This section also appears at the fifth measure on page twenty of the full orchestral score. This moment was cut from the revised four-hand piano score in 1938. This emendation could be another reason why the complex meters were added to Pedro’s dances. All scores are part of the “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961,” Music Division, Library of Congress.

the music functioning as representations of different children. Perhaps Carpenter decided to portray the different children through shifts in meter because of the movement that would have accompanied it in the form of dancing children. Shifts in meter may not have been as effective when portraying “dogs”, in *Adventures in a Perambulator*, because there was no accompanying dance or movement.

It appears that Carpenter, after twenty years of thinking about the ballet, decided that the complex meter 5/8 was better suited to the grotesque character Pedro. In comparing the two scores, the score that post-dates the premiere has Pedro’s dances with the most complex and most frequent shifts in and out of meters—often times only having one measure of a particular time signature. These shifts, while playing with audience expectations, also serve the greater plot of the story.⁷¹ However, knowing Carpenter’s background in programmatic writing I would assume that the complexity and instability that comes from that complexity is one way of characterizing Pedro. The grotesque dwarf would undoubtedly be somewhat awkward in his movements to emphasize his “difference”. The shifting meters would help to highlight the physical differences between Pedro and the rest of the birthday party.⁷²

In the four-hand condensed piano score the first time we see the use of 5/8 meter is when Pedro’s first dance comes to an end in measure 785. This time-signature switches back and forth between 2/4 in one measure increments and then finally settles on 2/4 as Pedro “appeals to the Infanta”. Right before the Infanta throws her handkerchief down to

⁷¹ Howard Pollack suggests that the four-hand piano score may have been revised for Massine as Carpenter was revising *Krazy Kat* for him at the same time, 1940. Undoubtedly Massine would have utilized the shifts in time signature through choreography for characterization of Pedro. *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 188.

⁷² Appendix G shows the different time-signatures that are used throughout *The Birthday of the Infanta* (condensed four-hand piano score) and how many measures each of those time-signatures last in Pedro’s dances.

Pedro there is one final measure of 5/8 meter. The interplay between the more unstable 5/8 and the more stable 2/4 helps to emphasize the difference between the Infanta and Pedro. The second time that this meter appears is at the beginning of Pedro's "fatal dance" in measure 914 of the condensed score. This second occurrence of 5/8 is less disorienting because it is established as a prominent section of Pedro's dance as opposed to the few measures of alternation in the first section. The first 21 measures of Pedro's dance are in this time-signature and then the piece moves to compound duple, compound triple and back to compound duple before returning to common time. Pedro's "fatal dance", although short, moves through multiple time-signatures which ultimately become less and less complex ending with Pedro's death in common time.⁷³ Instead of ending his final dance with a "conversation" between two time signatures, as in the first dance, Pedro's death ends indisputably in common time. Perhaps in death Pedro is like every other character in the story as everyone is equal in death. These changes in meter could also function as a literal slowing down of the cogs and wheels that were Pedro's frenzy.

Undoubtedly the four-hand piano score differs from the score that was used at the premiere of *The Birthday of the Infanta*, but it is enlightening to see where Carpenter decided to create rhythmic complexity after revisiting the ballet. In both scores Carpenter uses rhythmic complexity and shifts in meter to establish character, but in two distinct ways. At the premiere, a disjointed shift between complex meters would have indicated different characters, whereas the shifting between different meters in his revised score may have acted as a way of establishing Pedro's difference. Both scores illuminate Carpenter's ability to establish character musically to further the plot of the ballet.


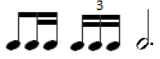


⁷³ It should be emphasized that this quintuple meter is probably one of the more simple meters that could be used, unlike some of the extremely complex meters chosen by Stravinsky for the *Rite of Spring*.

Overall, the predominant use of simple duple and triple time-signatures with the occasional insertion of complex meters could have contributed to positive audience reception. The audience would have easily followed a simple triple or quadruple meter and the occasional shifting meter would have helped the audience understand the shifts in character or dramatic action on stage.

The dramatic structure of *The Birthday of the Infanta* is grounded in more than time-signatures. John Alden Carpenter also used an arsenal of rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic motifs that appear in different manifestations throughout the ballet. These motifs help to unify the different sections of the ballet even amongst shifting moods and introductions of different characters. The most obvious rhythmic idea that appears throughout the ballet is the use of triplet, quintuplets, and sextuplets. The use of tuplets throughout *The Birthday of the Infanta* helps provide rhythmic interest to more square rhythms. In addition, the movement that is implied through triplets is beneficial for dance. In other words, the reoccurring “snaking” and vacillating rhythmic ideas can easily transfer to movements in the body. Additionally, the continual use of tuplets establishes an environment that is exotic and “other”.

Triplets appear, not only in isolation but as triplet and quintuplet runs that lead to notes with elongated rhythmic values. The table below gives a few examples of where these rhythmic ideas occur in the four-hand condensed piano score.

Table 1.4: The use of tuplet rhythms in the four-hand condensed piano score

Measure	Time signature	Rhythmic figure
Measure 483	2/4	
Measure 527	6/8	
Measure 725	4/4	
Measure 984	3/4	

These rhythmic ideas appear throughout the ballet in different time signatures and in different manifestations. Simply put, many of the occurrences the triplets and quintuplets are functioning as a pick-up to the elongated downbeat. This rhythmic figure is leading to the downbeat and conversely pushing the ballet forward musically.

The use of tuplet rhythms can also be seen throughout Manuel de Falla's score for *Le Tricorne*.⁷⁴ De Falla's use of triplets and even more extremely tredecuplets (13) shows the connection between this rhythmic vocabulary and portrayals of Spain.⁷⁵ Carpenter uses these rhythmic motifs a bit more sparingly than de Falla and mostly in the form of triplets, but perhaps the more rural and bohemian setting of *Le Tricorne* combined with the prominent theme of Flamenco, contributed to the increased usage by de Falla.⁷⁶ It is therefore fitting that the "gypsy dances" in *The Birthday of the Infanta* employ the most triplets. The gypsy dancers in *Birthday* and the characters in *Le Tricorne*'s are supposedly from the same musical regions and are portrayed with similar rhythmic ideas. Even though Carpenter uses triplets heavily during the "gypsy dances" he still uses this rhythmic idea throughout the ballet.⁷⁷ The continued use of this rhythmic

⁷⁴ *Le Tricorne* premiered in London's Alhambra Theatre on July 22, 1919, five months before *The Birthday of the Infanta*.

⁷⁵ The tredecuplet occurs for the first time during "Part One: Afternoon", two measures after rehearsal 12 played by the flute and clarinet. Manuel de Falla, *The three-cornered hat: in full score* (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover) 1997, 24.

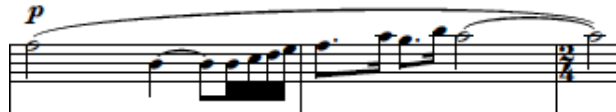
⁷⁶ Pollack also makes a connection between Carpenter's gypsy dance and Manuel de Falla's *Le Tricorne*. However, it is important to remember that Manuel de Falla had a very ethnographic approach to the composition of his pantomime (later altered for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes). (Carol Hess, *Sacred Passions: the Life and Music of Manuel De Falla*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 104-112). In other words, Carpenter was more concerned with creating something that was an "idea" of Spain as opposed to actual Spanish dance forms or songs which was more the focus of de Falla's nationalistic approach.

⁷⁷ Triplets are also used pretty heavily during the mock bull fight. This could also be attributed to the exotic nature of the bull fight as it functions as an entertainment for the elite.

motif helps to create unity and familiarity for the audience as they create an aural memory. However, by altering the melodic contour and the time signature the motif does not become redundant or uninteresting.

One particular melodic motif that stands out is what Howard Pollack identifies as “Pedro’s theme.” This theme appears almost from the outset of the ballet in the four-hand condensed score. Pedro’s theme is played in parallel octaves and appears in both 4/4 and 2/4 time within the first few measures of the ballet. However, the theme does not occur in the earlier scores until Pedro is lead in as entertainment. This small melodic gesture is somewhat fanciful and playful. Its first manifestation is in a major key and yet the strangeness of Pedro can be heard in the ascending thirds as the fluidity of the line seems to be compromised.

Ex. 1.1: Measures 3-5 showing Pedro’s theme at the opening of the ballet (four-hand condensed piano score)



Nonetheless, the theme is originally introduced in a lighthearted manner. When the theme reappears during the beginning of the second act when Pedro enters the dark interior of the palace, the theme has changed. The second manifestation of Pedro’s melodic theme is even more disjunct with much larger leaps in between the notes of the melodic figure.⁷⁸ The contour of the melody is the same, but the character of the figure has changed. The key signature suggests A minor, but at the top of the figure Carpenter uses C#.

⁷⁸ The second occurrence of Pedro’s theme occurs: two-hand piano score (page 39, measure 4 of the fifth system), and the orchestral score (page 168, the first measure of the first system).

Ex. 1.2: Measure 902-904 showing Pedro’s theme during the “fatal dance” (four-hand condensed piano score)



Without ever hearing a raised 7th or the 5th scale degree Carpenter has created some tonal ambiguity, suggesting the Phrygian mode, which is fitting for this scene. The audience does not know what is going to happen to Pedro because his melodic theme has recurred, in an altered state. By avoiding certain scale degrees this melodic figure is in a tonal limbo that the listener can sense. The use of a reoccurring melodic theme such as Pedro’s, but in an altered fashion, allows Carpenter to continue to build on characterizations and create alterations in mood.

In addition to the reoccurrence of Pedro’s theme, Carpenter also uses the tritone throughout the ballet as a kind of foreshadowing in association with Pedro’s death. The first time the listener hears this tense sonority is within the first few measures of the ballet. The tritone E \natural and B \flat is placed in the left hand in a very low range and flows beneath Pedro’s theme.⁷⁹ This exact sonority will reappear at the very end of the ballet as the lights go down on the expired Pedro.⁸⁰ This extremely obvious connection between the first and last sounding of the tritone foreshadows the unhappy ending that the ballet will present. What is unique about the last utterance of the tritone is that although it sounds for eight beats it ultimately resolves to a perfect fifth as the B \flat becomes B \natural . This resolution undoubtedly corresponds to the Infanta’s remorse over the situation. In Oscar Wilde’s original story the Infanta does not feel sorry for Pedro but rather is sad that

⁷⁹ The sonorities that are found in the two-hand score at the end are E \natural and A \sharp , as opposed to B \flat .

⁸⁰ At the premiere the Infanta would have exited behind her friends from the dark interior leaving Pedro alone. In the revised 1938 score Carpenter indicates that the Infanta would have knelt down and stayed with Pedro until the curtain fell.

he will no longer be able to dance for her a second time. Carpenter's interpretation of the Infanta is a bit more human and understanding as she expresses shock and sadness.

The tritone also appears in the "mock bullfight" section of the ballet. Again, this is a very fitting area in which to use this sonority to further solidify the foreshadowing of Pedro's death. The use of the tritone during the bullfight scene is not as elongated and, unlike the other two iterations, is not functioning as a form of pedal and is not as obvious. The tritone appears in descending, eighth-note values: A \flat to E \natural and B \flat to D \natural .⁸¹ This tritone figure repeats a few times. As mentioned previously, the second occurrence of the tritone is more subtle and is, yet again, functioning as a bad omen and to create an aural connection between the death of the bull and the eventual death of Pedro. The comparison between the bull and Pedro is undoubtedly a literary device that is enhanced musically by Carpenter. This comparison is made more interesting because the bull is clearly an externally tortured animal while Pedro is an internally tortured human. The line between Pedro and the bull is blurred further by the fact that both Pedro and the bull are both masked humans. Pedro is deformed by his costume and the bull is played by Vincenzo Ioucelli, a human in a papier-mâché bull costume.

In addition to recurring motifs—rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic—Carpenter creates distinct sections of sonic environments throughout the ballet to emphasize specific moments in the ballet's plot.⁸² There are three moments in the ballet that are distinct that I would like to discuss in more detail. These moments, although definitely not the only "sections" in the ballet, are a few examples of how Carpenter created

⁸¹ The tritone appears on page 29 of the two-hand piano score and page 133 in the full orchestral score.

⁸² The ballet became even more sectionalized with the revisions that Carpenter made in 1938. Perhaps these distinct sections were the way that Carpenter had originally envisioned the ballet.

contrasting and yet complimentary musical moments as he illustrated the plot. The moment when the Infanta comes on stage and begins to “wander about the garden” is the first section of the ballet that I would like to analyze.⁸³ Up until the Infanta’s entrance the music has been fast-paced, loud, and dense in texture. As the Infanta begins to wander at measure 98 of the four-hand condensed score, all complex rhythms are removed—such as triplets—and the tempo has slowed to a *più lento legato* at a *piano* dynamic. This section of music that is inhabited by the Infanta is not convoluted or complex and the subdivisions of the beat rarely go smaller than eighth notes. The slowing down of the tempo both literally and also through the subdivision of the beat, contrasts with the two sections that book-end the Infanta’s entrance and dance. The subtlety that is found in the music that accompanies the Infanta helps to highlight her sweet and naïve character. The lack of complexity in the rhythm of the music is almost juxtaposed by the melodic content however. Howard Pollack explains that the Infanta’s solo dance is “a simple but haunting tune in F minor, put forth by a solo oboe and accompanied by harps and strings.”⁸⁴ It is difficult to assume why Carpenter would choose to introduce the Infanta with such a maniacal tune, but perhaps the tune is prophetic. Regardless of the Infanta’s intentions, her indifference would lead to Pedro’s death.

⁸³ This section of the ballet begins at the second measure of the fifth system of page 7 in the two-hand piano score “The Infanta dances for the children.” Subsequently this section appears on page 25 in the second measure of the full orchestral score. This moment is also interesting because in the orchestral score Carpenter had originally notated the oboe’s melody an octave lower, starting on E4. This original notation was scratched out and moved up the octave.

⁸⁴ Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 171.

The “procession of the birthday guests” at measure 194 is another section of *The Birthday of the Infanta* that is unique because of Carpenter’s compositional approach.⁸⁵ This section of the ballet stands out because it is the first time in the whole ballet that there is a real sense of musical form and repetitive melodic material. The two sections that precede the “procession of the birthday guests” are both almost recitative like as “the Infanta speaks with her young friends” and “the major domos announce the guest.” These sections were in 3/4 and were rhythmically and melodically somewhat sporadic.⁸⁶ As the procession begins all rhythmic and tonal ambiguity is completely removed. In the four hand condensed score the time signature changes to common time in D \flat Major with one of the left hands playing insistent chords composed of the first, fifth, and octave scale degrees alternating between I and V. These chordal alternations provide a “march” feel and also give this particular section of the ballet a specific tonal and rhythmic identity.

Ex. 1.3: Measures 194-197: The beginning of the “A” section of the march, I-V alternation in the bass (four-hand condensed piano score)

The “procession” is also noteworthy because of the American marching band influences that can be heard. The alternation between tonic and dominant chords and the melody

⁸⁵ This section occurs at the last measure on the fourth system of page 10 of the two-hand piano score when the time signature changes to 4/4. This moment can also be found starting on page 36 at rehearsal 17 of the full orchestral score.

⁸⁶ When the “Infanta speaks with her young friends” this moment only occurs in the four-hand condensed piano score.

being played predominantly on flute and piccolo are characteristics that could be seen in Sousa marches.⁸⁷ Not only is there a “march” like left hand present, there is also an overall form of ABA’ with the A sections in D \flat Major and the B section in the dominant or A \flat Major. Composing this section of the ballet in a “march” idiom was intelligent because it creates a lively and energetic soundscape perfect for parading guests. Additionally, American audiences would have been familiar with marches and their context.

The final section of the ballet that I would like to analyze is the “gypsy dance”. Carpenter creates a very danceable and distinct melodic motif for the gypsy dance which delineates this particular moment of the ballet.⁸⁸ This motif appears in all three scores and its combination of triplets and square eighth notes creates rhythmic interest that would be expected of Flamenco inspired gypsy dancers. The melodic motif is played in parallel octaves and in the orchestral score is being executed by two oboes. Even though the oboe is used for the Infanta’s theme in the beginning of the ballet, it could serve as a marker of exoticism in this moment.

Ex. 1.4: Measures 309-315 demonstrating the melodic motif of the gypsy dancers (four-hand condensed piano score)



In addition to the eighth note figure that twists and swirls through many notes there is also a rocking eighth note figure in the left hand of the four-hand piano score that drives

⁸⁷ Jon Finson, *Nineteenth-century Music: the Western Classical Tradition* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2002), 277.

⁸⁸ The first time the melodic motif appears in each score: four-hand piano score (measure 301), two-hand piano score (page 13, sixth system, two measures after rehearsal 24), full orchestral score (page 52, three measures after rehearsal 24).

the rhythm of the section. The winding of the melody is reminiscent of a Flamenco dancer's expressive hand and arm gestures with the rocking left hand supports the idea of his or her percussive footwork. Carpenter also contrasts the gypsy dance from the rest of the ballet orchestrally. At this moment in the ballet Carpenter introduces castanets and also indicates "that paper be placed on the strings of the piano in order 'to produce a quasi-guitarre effect,' certainly an early, if not the earliest, example of a prepared piano."⁸⁹ The use of distinct melodic motifs can also be a technique for creating sections within a ballet. Carpenter's use of specific melodic material and instrumentation also assist in furthering the idea of a ballet with distinct sections.

Another reason why the condensed four-hand piano score is particularly intriguing is because of the cuts that were made to the entertainment section of the ballet. In the original production there would have been gypsy dancers, tight-rope walkers, jugglers, a mock bull-fight, and the dwarf. When emendations were made to the piano score the tight-rope walkers and the jugglers were removed from the ballet. It is difficult to know exactly where these "cuts" were taken in the original performance, but all three scores have cuts in the sections of the tightrope walkers and jugglers.⁹⁰ These cuts assist in enhancing a pre-existing parallel between the untimely deaths of both the bull and Pedro. By removing the sections of music that accompany the two divertissements, the bull fight becomes an even more prominent aspect of the first act of the ballet. Pollack

⁸⁹ Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 172.

⁹⁰ These cuts appear on pages 20-22 of the two-hand piano score, and pages 139-141 of the full orchestral score (the melodic content seems to come after the mock-bullfight in the full orchestral score. There is possibly a discrepancy between the two-hand piano score and the full orchestral score as to the order of the divertissements). These cuts were probably not made in their entirety at the premiere because these characters (juggler and tightrope walker) are listed in the program of the ballet. There was supposed to be an exchange between two tightrope walkers but with only one tightrope walker listed it is possible that this section of music was shortened.

insists that Carpenter's resistance to cutting any of the bull-fight was a result of its "dramatic and symbolic function: the mock goading of the bull by the children presages the Infanta's fatal mockery of the disfigured Dwarf."⁹¹ Pollack's assertion further confirms Carpenter's sensitivity to literary devices. Undoubtedly the other entertainments did not serve as dramatic a function as the bull-fight in the overall trajectory of the ballet. Even though the bullfight consumes about 155 measures of the condensed piano score and the gypsy dancers take up 160 measures the bullfight directly precedes both of Pedro's dances and the gypsy dances are divided into two distinct sections—group dance and solo dance. As mentioned previously, the tritone is also being used in this section of the ballet to further associate the bull's death with Pedro's.⁹² Pollack explains the mock bullfight as follows:

The bullfighters enter and march around the arena to a solemn 2/2 processional in A minor (rehearsal 50); the Infanta hands down the key to the bullpen, as the flute and celesta put forth the processional theme (rehearsal 51); the trumpet states the traditional signal for bullfights (twelve before rehearsal 52); the attendant fumbles in the lock, and the mock bull charges out, depicted by a low and threatening 6/8 theme in D ♭ minor (rehearsal 52); and the picadors enter (shortly after rehearsal 53), accompanied by snare drum, tambourine, and strong quintal harmonies.⁹³

Even though Pollack's analysis is interesting with regard to the instrumentation and key areas that were used in the mock bullfight, focusing in on a few specific motifs that Carpenter created to portray the bullfight makes the mood and the parallel between the bull and Pedro more tangible. Carpenter uses a couple of small motifs throughout each

⁹¹ Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 173.

⁹² Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 175.

⁹³ Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 173. Rehearsal numbers refer to the full-score.

section of the bullfight that both delineate the sections and illuminate what is happening in the story.

Carpenter portrays the loping bull and/or the mocking children with a rhythmic figure that interlocks between the right and left hands of one of the pianists. This figure appears during the “procession of the bullfight” starting in measure 492 of the condensed score and again when “the picadors engage him [the bull]” at measure 530, but slightly more dense in texture.⁹⁴

Ex. 1.5: Measure 530 showing the “loping” rhythm (the bottom two hands from the four-hand score)



44 *Procession of the bullfight*
RH *simili* 126
f LH

This rhythmic figure, in combination with the disjointed melodic and harmonic content, adds to the unsteadiness of the bull, the precarious situation that he is in, and the amusement of the onlookers. It is interesting to compare the rhythmic figure to the process that Carpenter had used to illustrate “Stout.” Carpenter emphasizes each down-beat in the measure and portrays the weight of the bull further with the plodding, descent of paired eighth notes directly following each beat. The harmonies that Carpenter decides to use in this figure also create some ambiguity and make the listener uncomfortable because of the lack of a pull toward a tonic or tonal center. The bull fight is not the only moment of tonal ambiguity throughout the ballet, and in fact it is interesting to see the moments where Carpenter creates the most tonally ambiguous moments. In addition to moments that are associated with tension Carpenter also uses tonal ambiguity as a way of literally moving from one section of the ballet to another. Even though this obscurity

⁹⁴ This theme appears in: the two-hand piano score (page 23, measure 4, system 3) and the orchestral score (page 106, 2 measures after rehearsal 49).

does not seem to always serve a dramatic purpose it does create forward momentum to accompany the movement that is happening onstage as characters exit, enter, and begin new aspects of the plot.

When Carpenter revisited the ballet after twenty years he added, during the “preparation for the bullfight,” an almost mocking theme in the right hand of one of the four-hands of the piano score. The theme has a lilting quality because of its dotted rhythm and is additionally derisive because of its extremely high range

Ex. 1.6: Measures 468-479 show the mocking melodic motif (four-hand condensed piano score)

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system shows measures 468-471. The right hand (RH) has a melodic line with a dotted rhythm, starting at measure 471. The left hand (LH) has a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system shows measures 472-475. The right hand continues the melodic motif, and the left hand has a more complex accompaniment. The third system shows measures 476-479. The right hand has a melodic line with a dotted rhythm, and the left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *f*, *p*, and *ff*, and performance instructions like *Preparation for the bullfight*, *rall.*, and *The herald*.

The tune is reminiscent of the folk/child nursery rhyme “Here we go Round the Mulberry Bush.” Because the tune is so childish—like something you would hear when cranking the wheel of a jack-in-the-box—the tune becomes even more sardonic. The introduction of this tune during the preparation of the bullfight suggests that the slow torture of the bull is a “child’s game” and purely for the entertainment of the Infanta, much like Pedro’s

dancing. This theme undoubtedly adds to the overall ballet, it is unfortunate that it would not have been present in the premiere.

The last aspect of the score that I would like to discuss is the “fatal dance” itself. Stark Young explained in his review of the ballet that there were three high points dramatically in the show. While the first two were created by stage design, “the third, and last of them is at the death of the dwarf, the very end of the play; and here the scene subordinates itself; it only envelops the action in a towering, rich, shadow, and leaves the moment to the music, whose language best suits its poignant necessity.”⁹⁵ How did Carpenter go about portraying the mental deterioration of Pedro with a musical vocabulary? The “fatal dance” is initiated by Pedro’s seeing himself in the grand mirror in the dark interior of a palace room. As mentioned previously, the final act of the ballet is replete with references to Pedro’s theme.⁹⁶ These iterations of Pedro’s theme take many different forms as it is truncated, modulated, and, in general, manipulated to fit the drama of the moment. Much like the compositional techniques that Carpenter used in “Little Fly,” musical material returns but is altered to suggest changes in the psychology of a character. In addition to Pedro’s theme other rhythmic ideas come back as well, such as the triplet figure that previously lead into a longer note, but became paired with additional triplets with a shortened final note. In the revised four-hand piano score Carpenter also uses a similar ending to Pedro’s “fatal dance” as the audience would have heard in the mock bullfight. There is an *accelerando* with snaking thirty-second notes

⁹⁵ Young, “Translations,” *The Flower in Drama: a Book of Papers on the Theatre* 153.

⁹⁶ The first time we see Pedro’s theme for the second time in the scores: full orchestral score (page 176, first measure) and two-hand piano score (page 39, measure 4 of the fifth system).

which move to an increasingly higher note to end.⁹⁷ In the premiere, because the melodic figure is not repeated, the audience would not have been able to make this connection as easily. Nonetheless, at the premiere Carpenter's return to an altered version of Pedro's theme in Pedro's "fatal dance" not only created continuity for the ballet, but also created a dramatic shift for the audience. Furthermore, the alteration of some of these previous melodic and rhythmic ideas helped to create a chaotic and frenzied sonic environment that undoubtedly Bolm enhanced through his character dancing.

Even if the premiere did not have the exact same notes and musical information as the revised score from 1938 it is still enlightening to compare and look at all of the scores. As stated previously, cuts, emendations, and additions were made to all of the scores making it difficult to know exactly what the ballet may have sounded like at its premiere. Nonetheless, in looking at all of the musical information that is available Carpenter's vision becomes clearer. The 1938 score may very well be closest to what John Alden Carpenter originally envisioned for his first ballet, but was not able to fully realize it until revisions were made. Regardless of what musical moments are authoritative it is clear that John Alden Carpenter had a good grasp on rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic motifs which helped to establish character, mood, and propel the plot of the ballet.

⁹⁷ Pedro's climatic moment occurs at measure 946 and the bull's parallel moment occurs in measure 608. These are not identical musical moments, but they are very similar.

CHAPTER III

CHOREOGRAPHY

The art of ballet was just beginning to be cultivated in America at the start of the twentieth century. Experimental dance styles from American female dancers like Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis, were combined with not only the Orientalist and primitivist flavor of the Ballets Russes and popular American dance, but also the classical repertoire and techniques found in Imperial Russian Classical ballet. This melting-pot of artistic approaches to dance and movement created the environment in which ballet dancers Adolph Bolm and Ruth Page flourished. In an attempt to understand the types of movement that would have been used in *The Birthday of the Infanta*, despite the fact that no choreographic notation exists and few primary source documents discuss the movement itself, the relevant dance histories of Bolm and Page will be explored. Although Bolm and Page came from different continents and countries, they did have something in common: Anna Pavlova.

Anna Pavlova: Common Thread

[Pavlova's] repertoire was conventional and her music old-fashioned; her settings and costumes were commonplace and her company served the exclusive purpose of supporting her. Under the circumstances this was quite enough, for she was a superb dancer with a magic effect on an audience. Certainly she did not startle them with technical virtuosity; indeed she never mastered the rabble-rousing series of thirty-two fouettés en tournant. Her power lay in the exquisite movement of a beautiful body, always informed by dramatic feeling and poetic impulsion. Creative she was not; persuasive she was.⁹⁸—Ruth Page

⁹⁸ John Joseph Martin, *Ruth Page: An Intimate Biography*. (New York: M. Dekker, 1977), 30-31.

Adolph Bolm began his training in ballet at the age of ten when he was admitted to the Imperial Ballet School. He began dancing with the corps de ballet of the Maryinsky Theatre after graduating in 1903, and would become a soloist two years later.⁹⁹ After gaining a very strong foundation in classical technique Bolm began to tire of the Maryinsky and decided to travel to the west in the pursuit of art. In 1908 Bolm started making a name for himself by creating a touring group of Russian dancers, this was a novel idea for the time. He took the troupe to Stockholm, Helsingfors, Copenhagen, and Prague.¹⁰⁰ This tour was an attempt to break away from the confines of the Imperial Ballet.¹⁰¹ Not only did Bolm partner Pavlova on this tour the two were also romantically involved. Although Bolm was a male dancer it is safe to assume that Pavlova and Bolm had similar training at the Imperial Ballet and were also well matched for *pas de deux*. Even though Bolm was known for his successes with character dancing, and not necessarily the fluidity and flexibility of Pavlova, both dancers definitely placed expression of character above all else. This expressivity can be seen not only in the film

⁹⁹ Lynn Garafola, "Bolm, Adolph" *The International Encyclopedia of Dance*, Selma Jean Cohen and Dance Perspectives Foundation, *The International Encyclopedia of Dance: (e-reference edition)*: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2005.

¹⁰⁰ N. Prevots, *Dancing in the Sun: Hollywood Choreographers, 1915-1937*, (Theater and Dramatic Studies. UMI Research Press, 1987) 153.

¹⁰¹ Suzane Carbonneau, "Adolph Bolm in America," *The Ballets Russes and Its World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 221.

¹⁰² *Anna Pavlova - "The Dying Swan" (1925)*, 2011.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxewIq7DG3A&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

that exists of Pavlova dancing her famous “Dying Swan” but can also be seen in the photographs of Bolm as Pedro in *The Birthday of the Infanta*.¹⁰²

Ruth Page’s connection with Anna Pavlova began at a very young age when she was studying dance in Indianapolis. Page, at the age of eleven (although she had not seen Pavlova dance yet) begged her dance teacher to allow her to dance on her toes just as Pavlova was. Page’s enthusiasm for Pavlova was felt even more after seeing her dance in Indianapolis two years later. Page reported that after the performance she was “walking on air for days and days . . . [She] went out on [her] balcony at night and danced in the moonlight. [She] danced with the rising sun, and every time [her] mother would play the piano, which was most of the day, [she] would try to dance like Pavlova.”¹⁰³ When World War I began in 1914, Pavlova gathered remnants of her company and several English girl dancers and began a five year tour across the Atlantic in the Western Hemisphere. This tour is particularly important to the dance education of Ruth Page because it was during this tour that it was arranged for Page to meet and dance for Pavlova. After Page had danced for Pavlova “she invited Ruth to go to Chicago for the coming summer to study there with her [Pavlova’s] company.”¹⁰⁴ Although Page was not a company member, this invitation afforded her the opportunity to study and prove herself to Pavlova and her company. Then later, after completing high school, Page went to New York for “finishing school” where she was exposed to the performances of Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes on

¹⁰³ Martin, *Ruth Page: An Intimate Biography*, 25.

¹⁰⁴ Pavlova’s company was engaged in Chicago for the 1915 season of summer concerts at the Midway Gardens. This venue was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright on the site of the Midway from the World’s Fair of 1893. ¹⁰⁴ Martin, *Ruth Page: An Intimate Biography*, 27.

both of their United States Tours.¹⁰⁵ After Bolm sustained an injury during the Ballets Russes's second tour, Pavlova and Bolm renewed the friendship that had been established during their time with the Imperial Ballet, and Pavlova subsequently introduced Page to Bolm. This introduction would prove extremely influential as Bolm would teach, choreograph, and work with Page for many years.¹⁰⁶ This introduction was undoubtedly the catalyst that formed the bond between Bolm and Page that influenced Bolm's casting of Page in *The Birthday of the Infanta*.

Ruth Page was first exposed to Pavlova while she was touring with her company. Pavlova's company would perform eight to ten divertissements that would follow either a two-act ballet or two one-act ballets. These divertissements were usually danced in small groups and ensembles that were pulled from the *corps de ballet*. Ruth Page would write retrospectively in 1970 that

Earth, air, fire, water –these were the elements of Pavlova's dancing. Underneath her delicate, fragile-looking body and her air of ethereality lurked such muscles of steel and such sensuous passion that no other dancer has rivaled her before or since. She cast her magic spell on one and all, and none who had ever seen her remained untouched. Her poetry and the deep melancholy of her Russian soul brought her audience invariably to tears. I weep myself even at the thought of her.¹⁰⁷

Ruth Page's observations about Pavlova's dance style illuminate the poetic and emotional qualities of her movement. Furthermore, Page probably, as a result of her admiration of Pavlova's ability to illicit emotional responses from audiences, would have strove for the

¹⁰⁵ Ruth Page's parents wanted her to go to finishing school in New York after completing high school. Page was willing to go because of the opportunities that were available in New York for furthering her dancing career.

¹⁰⁶ Martin, *Ruth Page: An Intimate Biography*, 29.

¹⁰⁷ Ruth Page, *Page by Page* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Dance Horizons, 1978), 10.

same level of clarity in movement and a gestural vocabulary that was emotionally laden. Undoubtedly, in touring and spending large amounts of time with Pavlova, Page inherited some of these skills in expressivity in her dance.¹⁰⁸

Pavlova's reliance on flexibility, ephemerality, and grace on stage was what made her famous. Additionally, Pavlova's slender figure and flexible feet, although not the vogue for nineteenth-century ballerinas, became a body type that was valued among dancers in the twentieth century. Page, because of her training and close contact with Pavlova and her training with Bolm who had grown as a dancer with Pavlova, could not deny the influence that this famous ballerina had upon her. Additionally, it does not seem far-fetched to suggest that Pavlova's approach to movement and expressivity in dance would have influenced Bolm, the character dancer and choreographer. Bolm's history as a partner to Pavlova could have created an image for him of how a prima ballerina should execute choreography. It is apparent that there is a web of interconnectivity between all of these great dancers: Pavlova, Bolm, and Page.

Bolm's Character Dance and Choreographic Approach

Although Bolm was trained at the Imperial Ballet and had a strong foundation in classical technique, like other dancers that were recruited by Serge Diaghilev, Bolm would never be one of the favorite male figures of the Ballets Russes in the eyes of Diaghilev. Bolm was asked to join the Ballets Russes in 1909 and would continue to

¹⁰⁸ An interview with Dolores Lipinski Long, dancer of Ruth Page's dance company 1954-1973 and co-founder of Ruth Page Center for the Arts, on April 9, 2012, confirmed Pavlova's influence and inspiration on Ruth Page as a dancer and choreographer.

dance with the company until 1917.¹⁰⁹ Although Bolm was appreciated by audiences and was seen as a great dancer, he was a character dancer and would never be as sought after as Fokine, Nijinsky, or Massine within the Ballets Russes as a lead male dancer or choreographer.¹¹⁰ Even though Bolm had strong choreographic aspirations Diaghilev restricted his assignments to opera. Suzanne Carbonneau has suggested that Bolm's career may have been significantly different if he was not overshadowed by Diaghilev's favorites; Nijinsky and Fokine. Diaghilev's fascination with Nijinsky and Fokine left little room for Bolm to explore his choreographic creativity.¹¹¹ Regardless of the lack of choreographic experience that Bolm had during his time with the Ballets Russes, he was able to refine his skills as a character dancer. Some of the roles that Bolm danced were: Pierrot in *Carnaval*, the Prince in *Thamar*, the Moor in *Petrouchka*, the slave lover of Zobeide in *Schéhérazade*, the Egyptian youth Amoun in *Cléopâtre*, and Prince Ivan in *The Firebird*. Bolm's skill at dancing character roles can be seen in a review on March 2nd in the *Minneapolis Journal* during the Ballets Russes's American Tour. They "called Bolm a 'pantomimic marvel as well as a dancer of extraordinary rhythm . . . 'Le Prince Igor'" gave Adolf Bolm an opportunity for virile dancing of a type that seems to need the steps for its frenzy."¹¹² There was also an unsigned article on the 13th of November 1916 in *Musical America* that "reported on Bolm as performer and choreographer: 'At

¹⁰⁹ Anna Pavlova was another star Russian dancer that was asked to launch the Ballets Russes with Bolm. Furthermore, Bolm did not dance with the Ballets Russes without hiatus. He only quit the Maryinsky permanently after the Ballets Russes became a permanent organization in 1911.

¹¹⁰ Carbonneau, "Adolph Bolm in America," *The Ballets Russes and Its World*, 222.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 223.

¹¹² Review of Bolm's dancing, *Minneapolis Journal* (March 2, 1916). Cited in Prevots, *Dancing in the Sun: Hollywood Choreographers, 1915-1937*, 157.

present Boston likes Bolm better than it likes Nijinsky . . . he is as Egyptian as Verdi's "Aida"; he burns with Puccini passion; his feet are robust tenor. His *Sadko* exquisitely conceived and exquisitely mimed, was one of the notable ballets of the week."¹¹³ These reviews in American publications attest to the powerfully expressive characters that Bolm skillfully danced. Bolm's history with creating convincing and compelling characters on stage would allow him to produce the emotional depth of the protagonist Pedro in *The Birthday of the Infanta*.

After the Ballets Russes's one year hiatus at the beginning of the war Diaghilev had Bolm reconstruct the entire Ballet Russes repertoire (mostly Fokine's creations) with dancers that could be brought to Switzerland.¹¹⁴ Diaghilev desperately wanted to tour the United States but the group was in disarray and scattered and many dancers were unable to travel because of the war. Bolm became the ballet master and had to reconstruct a twenty-ballet repertoire with virtually new dancers. Bolm would also be responsible for dancing many of Nijinsky's roles on the first American tour. R.C. Brownell wrote from Geneva, Switzerland on November 29, 1915 about Bolm's efforts with the company.

The work is enormous, as not only the traditions of the Classical (Italian) School are required, but also the intense expression of the entire corps de ballet in pantomime, characteristic of the Russian School. To obtain this end each dancer has to be encouraged and imbued with an individual temperament, followed by plastic grouping, moulding the whole into one mass of palpitating beauty. Bolm's is a master mind. His memory, patience and physical endurance are without limit, I have seen him repeat a step or gesture time and again for a weary dancer always with the same enthusiasm and gentleness causing him to be idolized by all his troops. . . . We have to pay homage to such energy and congratulate Bolm this

¹¹³ Observations about Bolm as choreographer and performer, *Musical America* (November 13, 1916). Cited in Prevots, *Dancing in the Sun: Hollywood Choreographers, 1915-1937*, 158.

¹¹⁴ Diaghilev probably gave the job to Bolm because the male dancers that he would have preferred were unable to participate in the tour because of World War I. Fokine had left the Ballets Russes in 1912 because of Diaghilev's preference for Nijinsky. Nijinsky was interned in Hungary and was only released towards the end of the Ballets Russes's first American tour in 1916. Nijinsky would only be able to dance at some of the final performances in New York.

artist; so remarkably talented, who directed with knowledge, tact and kindness, thus obtaining perfect authority over his entire troops.¹¹⁵

Before the second American tour while the company was in Spain, Bolm also choreographed a new version of *Sadko* because no one could remember the Fokine original.¹¹⁶ Bolm's *Sadko* would have its premiere in America during the company's second tour.¹¹⁷ Bolm's cooperation in the American tours gave him the opportunity to gain contacts in the artistic community that would allow him to create new, what he called, "American ballets". The back injury that Bolm sustained during the second tour of the Ballets Russes in America, lead to a need for recovery time and his taking up permanent residence in the United States. Bolm, unlike Diaghilev, "believed that the country [America] would be a potent medium in which to cultivate artistic change. Precisely because it was unencumbered by centuries-old cultural traditions of which it would have to divest itself in order to accept the 'new,' this audience was, for all intents and purposes, a tabula rasa on which to inscribe forward-looking art." Although Bolm was creative and saw the future of ballet in the naiveté and youth of American culture, every ballet that he created in the United States was reminiscent of the Ballets Russes's repertoire in "style, subject matter, music, and décor."¹¹⁸

Before discussing the beginning of Bolm's career in America, and the involvement of Ruth Page in that development, I will briefly discuss the dance aesthetics

¹¹⁵ R.C. Brownell writing from Geneva, Switzerland on November 29, 1915. Cited in Prevots, *Dancing in the Sun: Hollywood Choreographers, 1915-1937*, 157

¹¹⁶ Keep in mind that Bolm was in Spain with the Ballets Russes and could have easily learned some Spanish dance just as Massine had for *Le Tricorne*.

¹¹⁷ Carbonneau, "Adolph Bolm in America," *The Ballets Russes and Its World*, 223.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 220.

of Fokine. It is acceptable to assume that Fokine's style would have informed Bolm's original choreography not only because Bolm danced with the Ballets Russes while Fokine was choreographer but Bolm also recreated all of Fokine's choreography for the American tours.¹¹⁹ Fokine's approach to ballet was post-romantic realism which definitely could have affected Bolm's character dancing as well.¹²⁰ The shift to realism created dualities within ballet: "narrative structure (mime scene vs. pure dance ones); in the dance idiom ('character' or folk-derived vs. academic); in the gestural style (pantomimic vs. symbolic); in the costuming (historically accurate vs. tutus); even in the footwear (boots and soft slippers vs. pointe shoes)."¹²¹ Dance historian Lynn Garafola explains that Fokine, because of these dualities, could either do away with realism or do away with classicism. Often Fokine chose to dispense classicism and would set older romantic works in a historical framework.¹²² Fokine's new approach to character dancing, what Garafola calls *genre nouveau*, can be seen in contrast with what Petipa was creating previously. "No matter how externally brilliant and effective the character dances of Petipa may have been, it would be more correct to consider them classical variations on some national theme than actual national dances, even in a purely theatrical

¹¹⁹ Also note that Fokine choreographed the famous solo *The Dying Swan* (1905) for Anna Pavlova. This solo captures the psychological aspects of the dance and continues to show the interconnection between Pavlova, Fokine, Bolm, and Page.

¹²⁰ Howard Pollack states that "Bolm choreographed the ballet somewhat in the style of Fokine and danced the part of Pedro himself"; however, he does not provide a footnote for where this information comes from. Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 178.

¹²¹ Lynn Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 10.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 11.

sense.” Whereas Petipa’s character dances often shared characteristics with each other, Fokine drew upon living sources for his choreography.¹²³

The genre nouveau differed from character dance both in its fidelity to historical sources and in its overt emotionalism. But it also departed from its predecessor in another way. Implicit in Fokine’s ethnographic method was a respect for human diversity and the multiplicity of cultural expression—the belief that in the best of all possible worlds pluralism would reign. Nineteenth-century Russian ballet, by contrast, exalted a vision that was both Imperial and imperialist.¹²⁴

In addition to the realism that Fokine was using in his choreographing character dances, he applied realism to the entirety of his ballets through individualization. Fokine eliminated “what Osip Mandelstam called ‘the currant smiles of the ballerinas’ and ‘vegetable obedience of the corps de ballet.’ He humanized and individualized his dancers, transforming them into actors and assigning to each a motivated role in the larger drama.”¹²⁵ Unlike those that came before Fokine he believed that ballets needed more than movement and steps to portray the story in its entirety. These Stanislavsky ideals, although not one hundred percent original, were important for the evolution of a realism in ballet.¹²⁶ The idea of having dramatically motivated dance and gesture would create poignant and believable ballets which very likely were adopted by Bolm in his own choreographic endeavors.

The relationship between Ruth Page and Adolph Bolm developed as a result of their mutual connection with Pavlova and because the two were residing in New York at the same time. Bolm began casting Page in some of his works, including a staged ballet

¹²⁴ Ibid, 13.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 24.

¹²⁶ Osip Mandelstam (1891-1938) was a Russian poet who was part of the Aceism movement which favored a modernism through world cultures and direct expression. Constantin Stanislavski (1863-1938) was a Russian actor and theater director that helped to pioneer the movement of naturalism in the theatre which included self-analysis and reflection.

called *Falling Leaves*, which involved a series of tableaux. Bolm would eventually recommend Page to Pavlova for her impending tour of South America and later Pavlova would refer to Page ‘as her “gift from Bolm.”’¹²⁷ Before Page and Bolm were introduced and began working with each other, Page saw him perform with the Ballets Russes on their United States tour. Page wrote in 1916 that “many Americans [had] been disappointed in the Diaghileff Ballet. . . . [because] the Russian Ballet [was] a thing that [had] to be studied, a thing that grows with knowledge of it.” In addition to her evaluations of the Ballets Russes in general, Ruth Page specifically discusses Adolph Bolm. She explained that “Adolf Bolm show[ed] true genius. In the interpretations of his numerous roles he show[ed] himself a really great actor. His remarkable vitality and vigor [were] shown to best advantage in *Prince Igor*”.¹²⁸ Although she does not discuss the specific elements of his performance that made him a good actor, it is apparent that his approach to characterization left an indelible mark on her dancer mind.

Upon Ruth Page’s return to New York after her tour of South America with Pavlova’s company she wanted to resume work with Bolm. She found the environment around Bolm extremely exciting. There were “streams of distinguished artists from various parts of the world flow[ing] through the studio and the Bolms’ apartment which adjoined it—Sergei Prokofieff, Carlos Salzedo, George Barrere, John Alden Carpenter, Robert Edmond Jones, Michio Ito, Roshanara, Ratan Devi . . .”¹²⁹ Not only were these people exciting, but they were all tied to the artistic community that would ensure Page’s

¹²⁷ John Joseph Martin, *Ruth Page: An Intimate Biography*, 30.

¹²⁸ Page, *Page by Page*, 7-8.

¹²⁹ Martin, *Ruth Page: an intimate biography*, 33.

continued career in dance. For example; Michio Ito, Roshanara, and Ratan Devi were all members of Bolm's ballet company Ballet-Intime. Furthermore, John Alden Carpenter and Robert Edmond Jones were two of the three main figures, Bolm being the third, who were responsible for the creation of *The Birthday of the Infanta*. Page would become involved in all of Bolm's productions from the stage presentations that were performed before films in "movie palaces" to the productions that were put on with Ballet-Intime. It was most likely Bolm's involvement as a choreographer for opera houses and his work with the Ballets Russes that contributed to his being considered as choreographer by Carpenter for the new ballet for the Chicago Grand Opera Company in the winter of 1919; *The Birthday of the Infanta*.

Choreography and Characterization *The Birthday of the Infanta*

*Bolm was certainly instrumental in my career, early on giving me starring roles in his ballets, which were not innovative like Fokine's but staged so well.*¹³⁰—Ruth Page on Adolph Bolm (ca. 1983)

The most challenging aspect of *The Birthday of the Infanta* to analyze is the movement. There is no choreographic notation for this ballet and as a result inferences have to be made based on other primary sources that may not be directly related to *The Birthday of the Infanta*. In an attempt to better understand what the dance vocabulary may have been used in *Birthday* I will discuss some visual materials, both photographs and films, of Ruth Page and Adolph Bolm. These visual materials can also be

¹³⁰ Ruth Page, *Class: Notes on Dance Classes Around the World, 1915-1980* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton Book Co., 1984) 15.

supplemented by reviews of the dancers and ballet and personal writings, to further our understanding of what the ballet might have looked like.

Two extremely enlightening primary source documents that exist are two films from the 1920s and 1930s. These films are informative because they show both Adolph Bolm dancing and working with dancers and a performance where Ruth Page and Bolm are dancing together. I will begin by discussing the silent black and white film that was made in the 1930s called “Adolph Bolm: The International Dancer.”¹³¹ Although this film was made much later than *The Birthday of the Infanta* it does provide insight into Bolm’s dance vocabulary. The film is divided into nine segments that included respectively a montage of pictures of Bolm in different character roles, female dancers performing his choreography, Bolm’s interjection and direction of dancers, Bolm dancing with two female dancers, and concludes with a photograph of Bolm on a rooftop staring pensively out at the city.¹³² It is unfortunate that the film is silent because viewers cannot hear what directions Bolm is giving dancers. Some aspects of the film that are not open to interpretation are the overwhelming use of soft and bent knees and sweeping arm gestures by Bolm’s dancers. One section of the film with three female dancers, entitled “‘Graceful—rhythmical’, interrupts the master, as Vera Mirova enters,” showed the entrance of and interruption by Bolm of his female dancers. Bolm then demonstrates his preferred sweeping arm gestures. This fairly short scene is informative because one could

¹³¹ Page 938 - The Ruth Page Film Collection, Chicago Film Archive.

¹³² Here are the titles that appear before each short section of the film: 1. “Adolph Bolm, formerly of the Russian Imperial Theatre, Diaghilev’s Metropolitan, and Chicago Civic Opera Ballets, in some of his most famous interpretations”; 2. “Wearing one of the masks executed by Helmut Schmidt”; 3. “A member of the Bolm Ballet performing the ‘Sunlight Dance’”; 4. “‘Voices of Spring’ inspired by Boticelli”; 5. “‘Graceful—rhythmical’, interrupts the master, as Vera Mirova enters”; 6. “Preparing for the ‘Javanese Court Dance’”; 7. “A modern number now in preparation danced to Serge Prokofieff’s music”; 8. “After the rehearsal a moment of repose”; 9. “Gazing at the grounds of the next World’s Fair, as he visualizes some of the productions to come”

see that the ephemeral quality of Bolm's gestures was very similar to Pavlova's arm movements.

The second film that I had the opportunity to view was "Danse Macabre" which was probably filmed in 1922.¹³³ This film is the most pertinent to this project because it was created only a couple of years after *The Birthday of the Infanta*, and Adolph Bolm and Ruth Page both dance in it. This particular piece was choreographed by Bolm not for the stage, but for film. The date of the piece, the dancers and choreographers in it, and the fact that it takes place in Spain are all factors for why this film can inform the analysis of Bolm's choreography for *The Birthday of the Infanta*. "Danse Macabre" had three dancers in it; Adolph Bolm was "Youth", Ruth Page was "Love", and a third dancer Olin Howland was "Death". Page and Bolm have a *pas de deu* showing a romantic connection between the two characters, which they do not do in *The Birthday of the Infanta*. Nonetheless, there are certain movements and gestures that are used by all three characters that could easily translate to a young courtly Infanta and a grotesque dwarf. The plot of the dance is introduced in typed letters: "Midnight in plague ridden Spain— Youth and Love flee from Death who follows their path—[new frame] Love feels his uncanny breath and swoons—Youth despairs and prays-when lo!-the cock of dawn crows and Death fades away into the shadow of his tomb."¹³⁴ Death is portrayed as a menacing skeleton that is seen only once in the same dance space as Page and Bolm; otherwise his character is faded in and out and made to seem like an omnipresent fear. In addition to

¹³³ Page 938 – The Ruth Page Film Collection, Chicago Film Archive.

¹³⁴ This written description comes after the opening titles and the photograph montage of Adolph Bolm, right before the dancing begins. This section of the film is silent, but could have had Charles-Camille Saint-Saëns "Danse Macabre" playing over the top of it. Note that Saint-Saëns's piece was originally written based on the old French superstition of the dead coming alive on Halloween and dancing at the summoning of "Death's" fiddle until the rooster crows at dawn. This poetic idea is very similar to the danced action in the film; however, in the film the dance is set in plague ridden Spain.

Death's costume, he also has a violin that he plays in a threatening fashion. What becomes apparent immediately in this film is that facial expression and exaggerated and animated arm, leg, head, and hand movements, and genuflections and/or less structured *port-de-corps* are the most important elements of depicting plot.¹³⁵ One moment in the dance that I feel is very revealing is the moment when Love swoons and Youth is praying. At this particular moment in the dance Bolm has a lunging stance with his hands clasped together imploring the Virgin Mary for help. I am assuming that Bolm's expressions of worry and despair may be similar to how he acted Pedro's "fatal dance." Bolm's facial expression is one of sadness and defeat but at the same time hope for salvation.

Ruth Page, too, dances a similar character in "Danse Macabre" as in *The Birthday of the Infanta*. Both characters are young, soft, and delicate—the kind of creatures you would not want to corrupt or harm. Page's movements remain soft, sweeping, and almost nineteenth-century ephemeral to convey the weakness of her character. Undoubtedly the youthful Infanta would have been just as delicate in her movements as "Love"; however, the Infanta may have been more childish in her physicality.

The gestural vocabulary that exists for the characters in "Danse Macabre" is somewhat enlightening because Bolm does not employ virtuosic movements for the dancers. There are a few moments where Bolm and Page perform small dances with *balancés* to enforce the waltz of the music, but overall the plot of the ballet gets conveyed through the pantomimic interaction between the dancers and the expressivity of movement. The action of the film is portrayed mostly through gestures and facial

¹³⁵ When I say "less structured *port-de-corps*" I mean to elicit the image of a torso in flex, but with arms and torso not necessarily in the accepted lateral and hyperextended positions typical of classical ballet. These movements might be accompanied by articulation of the different vertebrae of the spine etc.

expressions from both Bolm and Page. These bodily movements are very interesting because these expressions also show up in the production photographs of *The Birthday of the Infanta*.

In addition to films there are also some photographs that exist that freeze some of the moments from the ballet, or at least document Page and Bolm in character. There is one particular photograph of Bolm as Pedro (Figure 1) where he seems jovial.¹³⁶ His hips are forward, his left hand is on his hip, his right hand is reaching over his head with fingers spread, and his knees are bent and spread. Pedro's stance elicits a personality of bucolic and rustic amusement. I would assume that Bolm's pose is from the first act of *The Birthday of the Infanta*, because of its good-humored and entertaining nature. In contrast, the image of Bolm as Pedro in the second act of the ballet shows the same bent and stiff body as before, but this time his hand is outstretched toward the mirror. (Figure 2) The mirror represents the object of Pedro's demise as he comes face-to-face with what he really looks like. Bolm leaves his body open toward the audience or camera in this instance, to show his left hand clutching at his chest. This is a very defeated stance that is enhanced by his downturned facial expression.

There is also a photograph of Ruth Page as the Infanta that demonstrates her shock at Pedro's death.¹³⁷ (Figure 3) Even in her large costume her movements read perfectly. Her right arm reaches toward her face in shock while her left arm is outstretched toward the fallen dwarf, almost reaching for him. The rest of Page's expression comes from her stunned and saddened facial expression and her posture. It is

¹³⁶ All images are collected in Appendix H, FIGURES.

¹³⁷ I am assuming that this photograph captures the moment that the Infanta sees the fallen dwarf because there is a pillar candle behind her, which is seen in pictures of the second scene set. Also, her expression is one of shock and awe.

apparent that she is leaning back slightly toward her right shoulder as if she has suddenly reversed forward movement.

There are also two photographs that exist of Bolm and Page in both acts one and two. The interaction in act one is typified by the almost genuflecting Bolm at the gift of Page's handkerchief. (Figure 4) Even though Page hands the handkerchief to Bolm she seems to shy away. The differences between these two characters is intensified by the fact that Bolm is hunched over, crouching, and gazing upward at the elevated and refined Page who looks down upon him. The use of levels and the more angular movements of Pedro contrasted with the softness of the Infanta helps to portray the vastly different characters in the ballet. In the final moments of the ballet, after the Infanta approaches the fallen Pedro, the two characters are the closest that they will ever be. The photograph of this moment shows that Bolm choreographed the Infanta to literally be on the same level as Pedro. (Figure 5) As the Infanta kneels beside Pedro she has an expression of doubt and remorse as she gazes upward with her hands approaching each other, almost clasped. Pedro is lifeless on the ground, but he still visibly grasps the handkerchief of the Infanta that had contributed to his initial infatuation. The photographs, although analyzed briefly and probably staged and not shot from a live performance, are windows into what some of the choreographic elements of the ballet may have been. Bolm's purposeful use of levels, not only to represent stature but probably social status, was a smart choice for characterization. Additionally, the gestures and body language of the characters also comes across in the photographs and helps establish emotions, character intentions, and plot development.

The last and perhaps most important source for insight into the choreography of *Birthday of the Infanta* are the recorded words, comments and observations of Ruth Page herself. In the documentary entitled “Ruth Page: An American Original,” that was produced by Otter Productions, Ruth Page briefly discusses Adolph Bolm and her experiences with him. Ruth Page explained that at the turn-of-the-century audiences either liked the feminine Nijinsky or the masculine character dancer Adolph Bolm.¹³⁸ This observation is interesting because not only does Page explain that there were two different accepted approaches to dance by males, but she also revealed that she preferred Bolm’s style.¹³⁹ Furthermore, there have been connections made between *Petrushka* and *The Birthday of the Infanta* with regard to the two roles of Petrushka and Pedro respectively. Keeping Page’s comment in mind about the different dance aesthetics of Nijinsky and Bolm it is safe to assume that the portrayals of these characters would have been quite different considering that Nijinsky danced the role of Petrushka and Bolm danced Pedro.

One of the most enlightening documents about Bolm’s style can be found in Ruth Page’s *Class: Notes on Dance Classes Around the World 1915-1980*. In this book Page chronicles and introduces her notes from different dance classes that she experienced throughout her life. Bolm was fairly progressive in his approach to choreography according to Page’s descriptions of Bolm’s classes. Page not only explained that Bolm was “a great talker, an avid, reader, and an informed musician—a man of the world, not

¹³⁸ Ann Barzel also mentioned Bolm’s masculine approach to character dancing in his eulogy in 1952. Bolm “left his mark on countless dancers through his ‘wide interest in all the arts and his very manly style, especially in character dances.’” – Ruth Page, *Class: Notes on Dance Classes Around the World, 1915-1980* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Book Co., 1984) 13.

¹³⁸ David Hahn, *Ruth Page: An American Original*, DVD, (Otter Productions, 1978)

¹³⁹ Page, *Class: Notes on Dance Classes Around the World, 1915-1980*, 14.

just a dancer” she also discussed his preference for character dance and center work as opposed to barre.¹⁴⁰ In her descriptions of Bolm’s classes she states that

Bolm took all kinds of liberties and was never strictly classical. He gave marvelous combinations that were always interesting, musical, and different every day. His barre was short and incorrect, but his center work was very creative, sometimes to the point of awkwardness. He often drove the pianist mad by switching tempos in mid-combination. But, in his approach, Bolm was interested above all in movement, in making you dance. Of course, Bolm’s specialty was character dance, and I was lucky to be in that class.¹⁴¹

Page’s descriptions and observations illuminate what some of Bolm’s priorities were as a choreographer. Bolm was obviously not as concerned with classical technique and was more interested in interesting, sometimes awkward, but mostly creative movements.

A full picture of the choreography of *The Birthday of the Infanta* cannot be created, but a pieced-together hypothesis made from multiple sources can be informative. The backgrounds of both Adolph Bolm and Ruth Page help to establish the interconnected dance histories of both dancers through the influences and foundational trainings of Pavlova and Fokine. More concrete visual realizations of Bolm and Page’s dance vocabulary could be seen by watching “Danse Macabre” in combination with the dramatized photographs from the production of *The Birthday of the Infanta* itself. What can be deduced from the visual materials is that Page is often seen as a “wilting” and delicate character with sweeping arms and a sorrowful face. Moreover Bolm’s dancing can be categorized as more “grounded” with bent legs and strong arms which can be seen in both “Dance Macabre” and the production photographs from *Birthday*. In examining all of these primary sources it is apparent that interesting combinations of movements with contrasting tempos were all important to Bolm. However, it is also obvious that

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 14-15.

Bolm had a distinct lexis of movements and gestures for specific characters, whether they were masculine, feminine, or “other.” Furthermore, Bolm’s preferences for expression over perfect technique are also apparent as a result of Ruth Page’s descriptions in the notes from Bolm’s dance classes with the films and photographs from Bolm’s dance productions.

CHAPTER IV

SET AND COSTUME DESIGN

Robert Edmond Jones: Influences, Training, and Background

*The human body, living and moving, will be the medium by means of which we shall rescue the art work from its age-old immobility. And since it is living, the work of the human body—of the incomparable self—will be no longer an art work but a work of art: The Work of Living Art!*¹⁴² – Adolphe Appia “*Man is the Measure of All Things*” (1923)

Robert Edmond Jones began designing costumes and sets even as a child, but began pursuing his passion more directly during his time at Harvard. He graduated in 1910 and continued on as a Masters student in Fine Arts until 1912.¹⁴³ The productions that Jones helped with were theatricals put on as dormitory performances and also at least one play for the Harvard Dramatic Club.¹⁴⁴ Jones’s time in Boston while attending Harvard exposed him to the popular art form of vaudeville, as well as scholarly writing and an academic environment. The vaudeville dancer and wardrobe designer Valeska Suratt had influenced Jones’s designs, as Kathleen Robbins points out in her dissertation. After seeing vaudeville performances Jones would retreat to his dorm room and sketch all of the designs that he had seen that night. Many of Suratt’s costumes had a wash of black with a contrasting “pop” of primary color.¹⁴⁵ Jones would use this technique and approach to color throughout his career. While at Harvard, Jones was also introduced to

¹⁴¹ Adolphe Appia, *The Work of Living Art a Theory of the Theatre*, (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1960), 126.

¹⁴³ Note that both John Alden Carpenter and Robert Edmond Jones attended Harvard and participated in the production of theatrical programs.

¹⁴³ Kathleen Robbins, “The Poetics of Symbolism : Robert Edmond Jones and the Stage Costume”, (Diss. Ph.D., Indiana University, 1980), 3.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 3-4.

the writing of Edward Gordon Craig. Craig's ideas for a new theatre that was about expressing the underlying beauty and truth of a character through the manipulation of line, color, mass, texture, and motif to create an "idea" of something as opposed to strict realism, could be found in *On the Art of Theatre* (1911).¹⁴⁶ Jones was creating designs that were greatly influenced by Craig's theories and approaches as early as 1913. Later on, in a 1924 article called "Notes on the Theatre" in *Theatre Arts Monthly*, Jones spoke about the non-surface aspects of character and how characters were "embodiments, not of character but of passion—moving in movements greater than those of human life, in the light of a strange new dawn."¹⁴⁷ This acknowledgement of the depth of characters also demonstrates the influence of Craig on Jones.

At the beginning of the twentieth century there was a shift in theatre design. The "New Stagecraft" swept through Europe and then the rest of the western hemisphere. The "New Stagecraft" took two separate approaches; one of simplification and one of increased ornamentation and detail. Adolphe Appia and Edward Gordon Craig, whom Jones would go on to idolize and praise, used abstract design through simplification and reduction to essential images. Leon Bakst of the Ballets Russes and V. Egerov at the Moscow Art Theatre conversely created abstraction through embellishment with vibrant color, and complex patterns and shapes.¹⁴⁸ Most practitioners of the "New Stagecraft" were neither solely "minimalist" nor "embellishers"; most practiced both techniques simultaneously. Arthur B. Feinsod, at the University of Indiana, has written about Robert

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 4,8.

¹⁴⁶ Robert Edmond Jones, "Notes on the Theatre," *Theatre Arts Monthly*, (May 1924), 325.

¹⁴⁷ Arthur B. Feinsod, "Stage Designs of a Single Gesture: The Early Work of Robert Edmond Jones," *The Drama Review: TDR* 28, no. 2, International Scenography (Summer 1984), 102.

Edmond Jones's early period of production and asserts that Jones was more interested in simplification than embellishment. Fiensod explains that Jones was "striving to create more with less, Jones methodically limited his stage to a bare minimum of scenic elements."¹⁴⁹ This early period is defined by Fiensod as the first couple of decades of the twentieth century and the examples that he provides are all from dramatic theatre. He mentions that Jones's design for *Til Eulenspiegel* (1916), a ballet that was choreographed by Nijinsky to the music of Richard Strauss for the first American tour of the Ballets Russes, was an exception to his minimalist approach.¹⁵⁰ I will examine this ballet further to see the similarities between it and *The Birthday of the Infanta* to illuminate Jones's method for designing for ballet.

Before looking closely at *Til Eulenspiegel*, the writings of Adolphe Appia and Edward Gordon Craig need further examination. Originally, Jones had read Edward Gordon Craig's work and wanted to travel to Florence to study with him. After being denied the opportunity to study with Craig he instead apprenticed with the Deutsches Theater in Berlin under Max Reinhardt and with his designers Ernst Stern and Emil Orlik.¹⁵¹ Adolphe Appia's writing was extremely influential to Jones. Appia's *The Work of Living Art* (1921) gives his perspective on the formulation of a new art form in theatre aesthetics and the reformation of scenic and lighting conventions. Appia was not only interested in art and theatre but also music. In addition to studying music in Leipzig, Dresden, and Vienna Appia also, because of his growing interest in opera in general and

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 103.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

in Wagnerian music-drama in particular, spent a considerable amount of time in Bayreuth.¹⁵² Appia was disappointed with the Wagnerian staging because it was too realistic and the designs did not fit the expressive nature of the music-dramas. Appia, as he put it, “renounced painting in stage settings, and advocated a system of essentially three-dimensional units and a pattern of controlled and plastic light which he claimed were organically related to the Wagnerian drama and its action.”¹⁵³ Perhaps some of the most important aspects of Appia’s staging philosophies that affected Jones were his ideas that the “New Stagecraft” should be expressed through “first, the actor (through voice and movement); and second, the stage setting (through light, color, line, and mass).” Appia believed in presentational, not representational design and drama.¹⁵⁴ Additionally, Appia was a huge advocate for the importance of lighting. There should be, according to Appia, a simplification in stage settings and the expressivity and unification of scenes and unification between actor and audience can come from light.

Edward Gordon Craig is often perceived as having similar philosophies and practices as Adolphe Appia as far as his approaches to stage design are concerned. Some of the most interesting ideas that Craig possessed were with regards to representation on stage. He has multiple discussions on this subject in his book *On the Art of the Theatre* that was published in 1911. Craig lays out the idea of set design that does not employ realism, because to make all objects truly realistic is to show decay and flaw. Craig explains that “we gaze long at a face. We see it is not beautiful, that it is not strong, that it

¹⁵¹ Appia, *The Work of Living Art a Theory of the Theatre*, xii

¹⁵² *Ibid*, xii.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, xiv.

is not healthy, and that it is everything which art detests.”¹⁵⁵ Craig explains further that what we think is “realism” is really a caricature.¹⁵⁶ As Craig’s book continues he eventually discusses the positive aspects of Symbolism. Unlike a realistic approach Symbolism allows the creator to suggest certain objects, feelings, etc. Craig’s reasoning for why Symbolism is not to be feared and should be accepted by everyone is because it is “at the roots of all art, it is at the roots of all life, [and] it is only by means of symbols that life becomes possible for use; we employ them all the time.”¹⁵⁷ Unlike Appia who is interested in music and the movements of those on stage, Craig focuses more directly on dramatic theatre and how actors execute their characters. Nonetheless, Craig’s discussion about realism and the process of representation on stage through symbols and suggestions definitely fall in-line with Appia and Robert Edmond Jones’s ideals.¹⁵⁸

Max Reinhardt, the director of the Deutsches Theater when Robert Edmond Jones went to Europe to study theatre design, developed ideas that were extremely influential to the work of Jones. In 1901 Max Reinhardt stated that he had

. . . in mind a theatre that return[ed] joy to the people. It should lead them out of their grey everyday life to the bright and pure sphere of beauty. [He could] sense

¹⁵⁴ Edward Gordon Craig, *On the Art of the Theatre* (London: Heinemann, 1957), 108.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 109.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 293-294.

¹⁵⁷ Robert Edmond Jones explains some of these ideas about representation in the transcript of his lecture called “The Art of the Theatre”, found in the Library of Congress, John Alden Carpenter Collection Box 1, folder 11.

¹⁵⁸ Peter W. Marx, “Consuming the Canon: Theatre, Commodification and Social Mobility in Late Nineteenth-Century German Theatre,” *Theatre Research International* 31, no. 02 (2006), 134.

how people [were] fed up with recognizing their own misery on stage again and again. They long[ed] for brighter colours and a heightened life.¹⁵⁹

Reinhardt achieved these goals through the use of light and music in innovative ways.

Additionally, Reinhardt approached his set designs from an eclectic point-of-view where importance was placed upon, much like Appia and Craig, not naturalism but the portrayal of effect or specific text. Erika Fischer-Lichte identified three main principles that were used by Reinhardt to achieve a concept of “festival theatre.” These three main principles are: “discovering new performance spaces that allow various relations of actors and spectators, creating a holistic atmosphere that surrounds the audience, and the presence of the actors as dynamic and energetic bodies.”¹⁶⁰ Reinhardt approached theatre from a sensational perspective where, not only were the sights and sounds integral, but the exploration and boundaries of performance space were also significant.

Jones’s interactions with the philosophies of Appia, Craig, and the Deutsches Theater gave him direction in his creative endeavors. By taking all of their ideas and compiling them into his own productions he began to construct his own designs. Jones’s affinity for lighting probably came from his involvement with the Deutsches Theatre, as a result of their advanced technological methods. Jones would learn “that suggestive lighting on moving bodies and three-dimensional shapes can produce powerful stage effects. Lighting for mood and plasticity would become a key feature of Jones’ stagecraft.”¹⁶¹ Undoubtedly Jones took the ideas from these stage designers and synthesized them into appropriate design concepts for specific productions.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Arthur B. Feinsod, “Stage Designs of a Single Gesture: The Early Work of Robert Edmond Jones,” 104.

Analysis of Designs

Although the scholarship of Arthur Feinsod has suggested that Robert Edmond Jones employed a more simple and “minimalist” approach to his designs during the early period of his career, I would like to look more closely at the exception that he identifies; *Til Eulenspiegel*.¹⁶² This production is particularly pertinent to the discussion of his subsequent designs for *The Birthday of the Infanta* for two reasons. Firstly, *Til Eulenspiegel* and *The Birthday of the Infanta* are both ballet productions unlike dramatic plays that would have had dialogue to develop characters and drama further. Secondly, both ballets had ties to the Ballets Russes, *Til Eulenspiegel* having been performed by the Ballets Russes and *The Birthday of the Infanta* having been choreographed by a former member of the Ballets Russes.¹⁶³

John Alden Carpenter most likely saw the production of *Til Eulenspiegel* when it was performed during the American tour. There are similarities between the two ballets and one can even see striking parallels between the comic sprite Til and Pedro the dwarf, in that both characters are not only small in stature but are clearly outcasts. Robert Edmond Jones wrote that in the spirit of Til “everything in the ballet is to be gay, athletic, coarse, animal. An irresistible comicality breathes through it all, a light deft fresh movement, a ripple of mocking laughter. At times it seems not to be a ballet as an embodied romp.”¹⁶⁴ The playfulness that Jones identifies in the ballet of *Til Eulenspiegel*

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 103.

¹⁶² Robbins, “The Poetics of Symbolism : Robert Edmond Jones and the Stage Costume”, 44. Important to note that both *Til Eulenspiegel* and *The Birthday of the Infanta* were originally conceived with American audiences for the premiers.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

can also be seen in the first act of *The Birthday of the Infanta* before Pedro's cathartic realization.

Til Eulenspiegel is a story about a sprite that goes throughout the town where he lives and mocks other townspeople by disguising himself and pretending to be someone he is not. The townspeople become enraged and try to capture and hang the sprite, but Til springs back to life before the eyes of the townspeople because his spirit will never die similar to the clown Petrushka. The costume designs for *Til Eulenspiegel* are generally oversized, have floating fabrics, and large distorted objects. The strange costuming seems to mock the townspeople much like Til himself.

The ballet opens in the town market-place teeming with merchants and their goods: the apple-woman, in a peasant costume of red and green and russet, walked with an oversize basket of apples and 'fruit piles in a bundle on her head,' while the fat blond baker carried his bread 'in a basket as tall as himself.' A 'scrawny sweetmeat-seller' was bedecked in 'peppermint stripes of red and white, like one of his own candies' and a cobbler was 'carrying his rack of oddly shaped shoes.'¹⁶⁵

Other characters wore costumes that intensified their roles or the stereotypes of their characters.

The Lady courted by Til displayed a peaked hennin six feet high, and her gown like those of her attendants had 'trains streaming away ten feet, twenty feet, thirty feet behind them.' The scholars, in long black robes, walked with 'their black soutanes billowing to their pompous gait.'¹⁶⁶

In contrast to the oversized, overly dramatic costuming of the townspeople "Til wondered among the other overdressed characters wearing a 'ragged Nile-green costume—tights,

¹⁶⁵ Robbins, "The Poetics of Symbolism : Robert Edmond Jones and the Stage Costume", 45.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

shirt and bodice, scarf and sash—and with a mop of unruly hair.”¹⁶⁷ The unkempt nature of Til emphasized his status within society and additionally made him stand apart from the overly-done townspeople with their exaggerated costume items. In addition to costume construction as a way of reinforcing character, Jones was also very careful about the use of color. Vibrant colors were reserved for the “courted Lady” whereas Til wore more earth-tone colors. Furthermore, those that were part of the religious or scholarly community were restricted to black costumes. This approach to characterization through costume will also be seen in *The Birthday of the Infanta*.

The backdrop for this ballet that is set in the medieval period has a complexity of overlapping and staggered buildings that rise like mountains. The buildings are reminiscent of Natalia Goncharova’s design for *Firebird*; however, Jones’s buildings are less orderly and curve menacingly as if trying to obstruct light. The buildings seem to be growing on top of each other like barnacles. The set design, with its ominous buildings curving up and on top of each other also dwarfs the dancers on stage. The complexity and attention to detail that is present in this design while simultaneously being an abstraction of what a medieval town would look like, adds depth to the story and the psychological interplay of Til with the rest of the townspeople.

Set Design and Costumes *The Birthday of the Infanta*

“Mr. Robert Edmond Jones’s contribution to The Birthday of the Infanta if not more significant than his Macbeth was more complete. It was the most distinguished thing that he has done so far, it seems to me. And it is, moreover, a fine case to take as an illustration of a point that is clear to

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

very few people and that concerns the art of the theatre as an art strictly to itself."¹⁶⁸ – Stark Young (1923)

The analysis of the set designs and costumes for the production of *The Birthday of the Infanta* becomes complicated because there are multiple sketches with different colors used. Furthermore, the photographs that exist of the production are in black and white. In my analysis of Robert Edmond Jones's designs I will make assumptions based on similarities between sketches and photographs and written observations to make informed decisions about what the sets and costumes probably looked like. My exploration into Robert Edmond Jones's approach to the costumes and stage design of *The Birthday of the Infanta* will be comprised of looking at the two sets for the two acts of the ballet, and the costumes that were worn by the main characters and some of the more peripheral roles. The artistic approach of Jones with set and costume designs, when coupled with the score of Carpenter and the movements of Bolm help to develop and solidify the characters and moods of the production.

There are multiple designs that exist for the two sets of the first and second acts of the ballet. These designs are rough sketches with some water color. Perhaps it was a bit more difficult to find a design for the opening scene than the second scene, for there are four different versions of the first act's design and only two versions of the second act. Additionally, the two versions that do exist for the second act are very similar whereas the first scene renderings differ greatly from each other.¹⁶⁹ It is apparent, in looking at all of the sketches, that Jones was using a form of abstract realism to invoke Baroque Spain.

¹⁶⁸Stark Young, "Translations," *The Flower in Drama: a Book of Papers on the Theatre*, (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1923), 149-150.

¹⁶⁹ I analyze the first act set design based off of similarities between two sketches and the photograph of the ballet's first act (from the John Alden Carpenter Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress).

The most Baroque aspect of both of the set designs was his “larger than life” construction and some of the details that were in the interior of the palace, such as; ornamentation on the frames of the mirrors and the large ornate pillars that display dripping candles.

The opening act of *The Birthday of the Infanta* takes place outside of the palace in the garden. It is apparent from the sketches that Jones wanted to create, for this act, an exterior that was reminiscent of European palaces. Toward the end of the 17th century in Europe every ruler wanted to have a palace that could rival that of the French Versailles, and thus the major palaces were all designed in a similar fashion. Schönbrunn Palace (Vienna, Austria), The Royal Palace of Berlin (Berlin, Germany) and the Palacio Real de Madrid (Madrid, Spain), were all built to emulate the *Château de Versailles* (Versailles, France) and were most likely the sources of Jones’s inspiration for his *Birthday of the Infanta* designs.¹⁷⁰ Although these palaces were not all built during the time period that has become most associated with *The Birthday of the Infanta*, Diego Velázquez's 17th century Spain, they were undoubtedly what Jones had for inspiration. These palaces are combinations of Classic and Baroque architectural elements for the most part.

One can definitely see similarities between Jones’s designs and the façade of the Palacio Real. One of the elements that stands out almost immediately is the suggestion of wrought iron gates. The Palacio Real has wrought iron gates that close off the interior courtyard, and Jones places fencing behind the Infanta and her guests who stand on an elevated veranda. The sketches indicate flanking stairs (Figure 6) that sweep down from either side of the veranda, but there is no evidence of these stairs in the photograph (Figure 7). It is difficult to know if the photographs were taken during rehearsals and thus

¹⁷⁰ The Palacio Real de Madrid was actually rebuilt in the eighteenth century (1738) because it burnt down in 1734 and was designed by Giovanni Battista Sacchetti.

the set had not received all of the details; however, regardless of the set's level of completion the set in the photograph seems very simple and geometric. The wrought iron gate lacks, what seems to be in the sketch, an intricate coat-of-arms in the middle of it. Nonetheless, the sketch that most closely resembles the photograph, with dancers in it, is the most simple of the four sketches. The set design for the first scene is interesting in that it does not directly reference architectural elements from the Palacio Real; however, the idea of a Baroque palace is definitely achieved by Jones. For example, the sweeping staircases that are present in the sketch and possibly on stage as well are not architectural elements that you can see at the Palacio Real. The sweeping stairs that curve in toward each other are; however, grand and suggest European royalty. Stark Young saw the stage design of the first act when the ballet was performed in New York. Young explained that the audience first saw

the garden courtyard of the palace. On either hand the high walls rise, flat spaces with long heavy mouldings, gray varied to darker and more ashen tones. To the left at the head of flight of steps a door, very high, with an inspired touch of grayish white in the baroque metal awning across the curve of the top; and dark-red curtains showing through the glass at the sides. Across the middle of the scene and between the two walls, a sort of raised terrace and balustrade connecting them, and to the back a high iron screen through which appear the Spanish mountains, a violet silhouette hardening to blue against the cold gray-rose of the sky. It is all grave and austere and cruel and lovely, elegant, and rich, and superb, this place where the child Princess and her court will make their festival.¹⁷¹

There is a geometric quality in the sets which can be seen most clearly in the use of lines throughout. This linear motif can be seen in the vertical bars of the wrought iron gates, the large rectangular figures that flank the wrought iron gate that represent the exterior of the palace. Also the groups of vertical lines that are on the front of the veranda and alternate between dark and light colors continue the geometric motif. These groups of

¹⁷¹ Young, "Translations," *The Flower in Drama: a Book of Papers on the Theatre*, 146-147.

lines seem more decorative than architectural because the lines are not straight and uniform in thickness, nor do they seem to serve a “structural” role. There is also a mountainous figure, described by Young as the Spanish mountains that were a “violet silhouette hardening to blue against the cold gray-rose of the sky” behind the wrought iron gates.¹⁷² These mountains are reminiscent of the backdrop designed by Picasso for the Ballets Russes’s *Le Tricorne*.¹⁷³ Jones’s second act set design (Figure 8 and 9) is darker and consists, according to the sketches and the few photographs that exist, of dark draped fabric, and an opening at the back of the set for the Infanta and her guests to enter through after Pedro’s fatal dance, with two ornate mirrors and large floor pillar-candles flanking the opening. Again, Young gives a detailed description of the second act of the ballet which confirms some of the hypotheses about the sketches and photographs.

Young observed that the curtain rose

on the palace vestibule, lofty, with a high door looking out on the same fold-rose sky as before, across a terrace promenade. The scene there in the palace is crimson and gray, dull rose, gold, black. Candlesticks with their huge candles stand ten feet high, and there are two mirrors higher still.¹⁷⁴

This scene is less geometric than the first but is symmetrical. Although the photographs taken of this scene suggest that every detail would have been seen clearly I would assume that the lighting was brighter for the purpose of taking quality photographs. If the scene were darker the elements would become more abstracted and the heaviness of the fabrics

¹⁷² Ibid, 147.

¹⁷³ Pablo Picasso, *Designs for The Three-cornered Hat (Le Tricorne)*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1978), 1.

¹⁷⁴ Young, “Translations,” *The Flower in Drama: a Book of Papers on the Theatre*, 148.

and the large stage elements would emphasize Pedro's small stature and insignificance helping to reflect the mood of the scene.¹⁷⁵ Even though *Le Tricorne* takes place in the eighteenth century and *The Birthday of the Infanta* takes place in the seventeenth century there are some similarities between Picasso and Jones's representations of Spain.

Le Tricorne was performed slightly before *The Birthday of the Infanta* at the Alhambra Theater in London on July 22, 1919. The largest differences between the costumes and stage designs of Picasso and Jones come from the differences in time period and also in the class differences between the characters. The characters that most closely resemble Picasso's designs are Jones's "jugglers" (Figure 15), "gypsies" (Figure 18), "Pedro" (Figure 13), "gardeners", and "servants". These similarities undoubtedly come from the fact that *Le Tricorne* takes place in a provincial town and the story is centered on a Miller and his wife. The most striking similarities between Picasso and Jones's costuming come in their approaches to color. Both artists seem to use techniques of "color blocking" where there are strong demarcations of changes in color and fabric. Picasso's "color blocking" is much more obvious and abstract, probably due to his affinity for cubism. Both Picasso and Jones achieve "color blocking" by creating stripes of contrasting color and fabric on many of the costumes. Kathleen Robbins suggests that the stripes used by Jones are indicative of the Moorish influences in Spain.¹⁷⁶ It is possible that Picasso, like Jones used stripes to convey the same idea of cultural influence. The two characters that are costumed most similarly are Picasso's Miller and Jones's male Gypsy dancer. This similarity makes a lot of sense considering that *Le*

¹⁷⁵ Both sketches that exist (from the John Alden Carpenter Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress) of the second act suggest a dark and abstracted scene.

¹⁷⁶ Kathleen Robbins, "The Poetics of Symbolism: Robert Edmond Jones and the Stage Costume", (Diss. Ph.D., Indiana University, 1980), 80.

Tricorne is supposedly set in Andalusia where Flamenco and gypsies come from.¹⁷⁷

Although Jones's designs were similar to what Picasso created as an evocation of Spain, as mentioned previously, Jones's designs for *The Birthday of the Infanta* were most similar to what he had created for *Til Eulenspiegel*.

There are two costuming methods by which Jones imitated ideas that he had used with *Til Eulenspiegel* as well. Firstly, Jones uses exaggerated and oversized costumes to make specific characters seem larger-than-life and others seem more banal. Secondly, specific colors are assigned to specific characters or ideas to reinforce concepts, the plot, or characterization. The large panniers that are worn by all of the upper-class females, including the Infanta, seem to swallow the person within them. These hoop-skirts, in combination with the almost two-dimensional Egyptian wigs, complete the look of a Velázquez Infanta. Although these costumes are less exaggerated and caricatured than *Til Eulenspiegel*, there is a very obvious disconnect between the distortion of a human body for purposes of elevation (the Infanta and her guests) and distortion for isolation (Pedro). The dresses that are worn by the Infanta and her female guests show petite bodies engulfed by large and flowing skirts and puffy sleeves that look rich and excessive. In contrast, Pedro has a costume that is very form fitted which reveals the added padding of a hunched back. The elevated status of the female dancers is also emphasized by their large costumes because they physically take up more space on the stage. One can imagine that even when the female characters moved slightly their skirts would overwhelmingly whirl and sway, demanding attention. Additionally, the confinement of a person's movement as a result of these larger costumes would assist in creating definite

¹⁷⁷ It is also important to reiterate that the musical similarities between Manuel de Falla and Carpenter are most apparent in the "gypsy dance" section of *The Birthday of the Infanta* as well.

differences in the vocabulary of the movements of the upper class and lower class characters.

In doing a survey of the set designs and costumes there is an overwhelming prominence of red. This color can be seen in almost all of the stage design sketches and also on the costumes of the “bull”, “gypsy dancers”, “female guests of the Infanta”, “Pedro”, “guards”, and as highlights on many other costumes. Robbins, in her dissertation on the costumes of Robert Edmond Jones, explains that “the color red was carefully used . . . to support the ‘high spots dramatically.’”¹⁷⁸ In other words, the color red was used as a tool to further comment upon the action of the plot. The use of red, for example, can be seen in the curtains that are used in the windows of the palace and which can be seen in both acts of the ballet. Perhaps the curtains, in the first act, serve as a reminder of the tragedy that is to come as they are at first hidden behind the window. However, in the second act the red curtains become a large and overwhelming part of the scene just like Pedro’s self-loathing and death.

The contrast of size and color in costuming is epitomized by Pedro, the ultimate tragic figure. While the Infanta “shimmered in cloth-of-gold” and her ladies were “in their citron color, their crimson, blurred saffron, rose and white, gold, silver and black” Pedro appeared in “plain ‘pallor and drab and green.’”¹⁷⁹ As Pedro danced in his more dull costume he “reaches up his lean hands toward the dazzling splendor” that is the

¹⁷⁸ Robbins, “The Poetics of Symbolism: Robert Edmond Jones and the Stage Costume”, 80.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 72-80.

female elite on the elevated balustrade.¹⁸⁰ These contrasts in pattern and color further emphasize Pedro's alienation and difference.

Overall, Jones approached the costumes for *The Birthday of the Infanta* much like his first attempt at design for ballet with *Til Eulenspiegel*. Jones's designs for sets and costumes are, much like Picasso's for *Le Tricorne*, informed by cultural norms and historical stereotypes. The designs are also simultaneously an abstraction and tool for creating mood and cultivating characters. The critic Stark Young, when he saw the costumes at the New York performance of the ballet, stated that the costumes were "Spanish fashions [that] had been 'translated into something else.'" The costumes were integral to the ballet as "dramatic evocations of the spirit of an age, a story, and the characters within it . . . and in themselves they [the costumes] are moving and exciting."¹⁸¹ Even Stark Young believed that the "costumes in the *Infanta* were not particularly interesting as reproductions of Spanish fashions toward the end of the seventeenth century. [He had] seen better copies than they were or tried to be . . . [but] these costumes for the *Infanta* were distinguished because they were Spanish seventeenth-century costumes seen superbly in terms of the theatre."¹⁸² The costumes were representations and evocations of a specific time and place, and they were independently affecting. It is probably appropriate to say that in a ballet pantomime where a story needs to be conveyed without spoken words or sung text, that the costumes and the set designs become even more essential to the conveyance of plot. Undoubtedly

¹⁸⁰ Young, 153.

¹⁸¹ Robbins, 80-81.

¹⁸² Young, 152.

Robert Edmond Jones's costumes and set designs, through color, shape, and design, helped to establish relationships between characters and the mood of the plot.

CHAPTER V

CHICAGO AND THE WORLD

As music is the most emotional of all arts it stands to reason that it must be the least neutral. We can no more in these complicated war days expect the Germans to applaud French music or the French to hold German music on the boards, the English to enjoy Hungarian dances, and the Russians to appreciate Austrian opera than we can expect any of the nationalities to meet whole-heartedly to appreciate the accomplishment of the other. . . War itself is no more emotional than music.¹⁸³ – Cleofonte Campanini

Considering that *The Birthday of the Infanta* was created by a Chicagoan and had its premiere at the Chicago Auditorium Theatre it is important to contextualize the ballet within the historical framework of this city in particular and America in general. The place that ballet held and the importance of ballet to a Chicago audience in the first few decades of the twentieth century is also an important aspect of the reception of *The Birthday of the Infanta*. Not only will I explore some of the events that were occurring in America and throughout the world that were affecting society and possibly the arts, but I will also discuss aspects of Chicago's history with regard to opera and ballet.

The Progressive Era

Lawrence Levine, in his book *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*, discusses the changes that were occurring at the turn-of-the-century with regards to the fragmentation of society. He explains that

This multiplication, or fragmentation, was manifest in the rise of professionalization, which left the nation with a bewildering multiplicity of distinctive professional or organizations that gave testimony to the increased specialization, complexity, and atomization of life. It was manifest in residential

¹⁸³ Ronald Davis, *Opera in Chicago*, (New York: Appleton-Century, 1966), 112-113.

patterns, which saw people who had once inhabited common ground—albeit not necessarily common conditions—increasingly separated, as the century progressed, into discrete neighborhoods determined by a combination of economic, social, and ethnic factors. . . Theaters, opera houses, museums, auditoriums that had once housed mixed crowds of people experiencing an eclectic blend of expressive culture were increasingly filtering their clientele and their programs so that less and less could one find audiences that cut across the social and economic spectrum enjoying an expressive culture which blended together mixed elements of what we would today call high, low, and folk culture.¹⁸⁴

As the nineteenth century came to a close, social groups, especially when it came to artistic venues for visual or performing arts, were becoming increasingly stratified. This stratification is important to the development of “high” art in America. With the rise of professionalization in occupations and the creation of distinct divisions between economic groups, also came more obvious partitions in artistic culture.

This fragmentation can be seen very clearly in Chicago’s World’s Fair Columbian Exposition of 1893. According to Levine the city was divided into two separate sections: one that boasted neoclassical monuments with impressive plaster facades, and the second a worldly exhibit full of “popular entertainments” from differing countries. Again, I find it pertinent to quote Levine’s description of the two disparate areas at length. Levine states that the White City as

one critic called [it was] a “reactionary and academic neoclassicism,” [and] was an accurate reflection of the direction in which the high culture of the period was moving. The second and contrasting universe consisted of the Midway Plaisance, a 600-foot-wide, mile long avenue that embodied the spirit of a sideshow lined with popular entertainments from around the world including Oriental theaters, German beer gardens, and a Cairo street with veiled Egyptian dancers; villages from Ireland, Japan, Java, Dahomey, and Austria; George Ferris’s first great

¹⁸⁴ Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988), 207-208.

towering wheel . . . and a multitude of such other popular entertainments as acrobatics, beauty shows, and shopping bazaars.¹⁸⁵

Levine's discussion of the Columbian Exposition as an example of cultural fragmentation is enlightening because of its being located in Chicago and because John Alden Carpenter undoubtedly attended the fair.¹⁸⁶ In many ways *The Birthday of the Infanta* is a reflection of the Columbus Exposition with its elaborate and elevated characters—the White City—who are often contrasted with the exotic and exciting divertissements—the Midway Plaisance—that played out, literally on a lower level than the elite.

In addition to a fragmentation and continued creation of a hierarchical system came discussions about a “genuine American culture.”¹⁸⁷ Many felt that American art “like [its] literature and drama, halt[ed] before foreigners.” The reasoning behind the lack of truly American artists was that the country was too young and that “the soil [was] not yet rich enough” to produce such beautiful works of art.¹⁸⁸ Not everyone in the late nineteenth century was optimistic about the growth of music in the United States naturally. The music critic W. J. Henderson suggested that the music of America could be improved by

abolish[ing] the music halls in which vulgar tunes set to still more vulgar words provid[ing] the musical milk upon which the young of the masses are reared. Abolish the diabolical street pianos and hand organs which disseminate these vile tunes in all directions and which reduce the musical taste of the children in the

¹⁸⁵ Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, 208.

¹⁸⁶ Pollack explains that John Alden Carpenter certainly attended the fair “a number of times before leaving for Harvard in the fall of 1893.” Carpenter was undoubtedly influenced musically by the sights and sounds at the fair. Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 11.

¹⁸⁷ Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*, 214.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

residence to the level of that of the Australian bushman, who thinks noise and rhythm is music.¹⁸⁹

This discussion in the *New York Times* is, in many respects, elevating European canonic classical works, while simultaneously condemning the popular music of America. Why would Henderson denounce the hand organ since, as we have seen in the example of *Adventures in a Perambulator*, these street instruments often grinded out arias from Italian operas?¹⁹⁰ Perhaps Henderson felt that operatic music, placed in the wrong context such as a street performance, was still considered “vile.”

The industrialization that occurred throughout the United States in the late nineteenth century and into the first couple of decades of the twentieth century has been called the Progressive Era. This time period saw the creation and implementation of social and political reforms. Some of these reforms can be seen in the enactment of the sixteenth—income tax, seventeenth—direct election of senators no longer elected by state legislatures, eighteenth—prohibition, and nineteenth amendments—women’s suffrage. The Progressive Era also saw an increase in technological developments and inquiry through the use of the scientific method. The specialization of jobs and the gradual development of an assembly line process of manufacturing and creating sellable products also created a need for social improvements in the form of unions and protection of workers.

Even though, as Levine has stated, there was a fragmentation and stratification that occurred at the end of the nineteenth century with regard to social class and what was

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 216.

¹⁹⁰ Additional insight into the operatic repertoire of organ grinders in Chicago in the nineteenth century was obtained from: Katherine Graber, “From Festivals to Organ Grinders: Race and Opera in Nineteenth-Century Chicago” (paper presented at American Musicological Society Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, November 10, 2011)

considered “highbrow” and “lowbrow” art, Charles D. Isaacson described a shift in this dichotomy directly following World War I.¹⁹¹ Isaacson’s article, that appeared in the first issue of *Musical Quarterly* in 1920, explored the idea that as a result of World War I more people were being exposed to classical music, especially soldiers, and that “people everywhere [were] breaking down old traditions. Instead of being for the clique and the few, music [was] coming into its own, to help, to solace and brighten the lives of many.”¹⁹² Isaacson additionally discusses the positive reception that opera had had when it was changed into the vernacular, English. The “lowbrow” audiences that had previously been more than satisfied with the Vaudeville acts were seeing these stars perform “high class” acts that received just as much, if not more, applause than the “cheap acts.”¹⁹³ Isaacson posited that these shifts in audience appreciation would continue to blossom and grow throughout America as time progressed. America, according to Isaacson, was “entering upon the Era of the People’s Art!”¹⁹⁴ Regardless of whether or not the audiences in opera houses were actually becoming less stratified it is quite possible, according to Isaacson’s observations, that *The Birthday of the Infanta* would have enjoyed an audience with members from different social standings.

¹⁹¹ Charles D. Isaacson, “A New Musical Outlook—and the War”, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. VI, no. 1. (January, 1920), 1-11.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 10.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 11.

Politics and Opera

Chicago, in the first few decades of the twentieth century, saw immigration from many East European countries and also migration of African Americans from the south in search of work in industrialized northern cities. All of this movement and settlement of ethnic groups created an environment that was ripe for racial tensions. Additionally, the overwhelmingly large population of immigrants from Germany was greatly affected by America's eventual involvement in World War I. Even though the United States was involved in World War I for a brief fourteen months, this still created tensions and frustrations with different immigrant communities. German Americans were upset because of the discrimination that they experienced and the harsh post-War settlement that was placed on their countrymen. Furthermore, Italian immigrants were unhappy that Italy was not given the land that it was promised by Woodrow Wilson at the conclusion of the War. Polish and Jewish immigrants fought in the streets of Chicago because of the Pogroms and anti-Jewish sentiments in Poland.¹⁹⁵

Chicago had become a very hostile environment in the segregated and delineated neighborhoods, but also in the arts. Economic turmoil with costs of living rising and salaries remaining stagnant also brought about strikes. Men coming home from war found their jobs taken by African Americans that had migrated looking for financial opportunity. On top of economic and cultural issues there were also societal issues that were brewing as "the younger generation was causing concern among the older ones, for

¹⁹⁵ Robert Spinney, *City of Big Shoulders: a History of Chicago*, (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000), 171.

never had the young people seemed so restless, aggressive, and independent.”¹⁹⁶

Undoubtedly Chicago had become a powder keg that was ready to explode, and explode it did in the Race Riots of the summer of 1919.

The social unrest that was being experienced in Chicago as a result of World War I also greatly affected the arts and more importantly the opera. The Chicago Opera Association, under the direction of Cleofonte Campanini, started their 1915-1916 season by emphasizing an entirely German repertoire. Campanini decided to stage *Tristan und Isolde*, *Parsifal*, *Tannhäuser*, and the first complete *Ring* cycle to be presented in Chicago for over twenty-five years. Although this was a very successful presentation the continuation of World War I began to weigh heavily on audience receptiveness to German art. When Campanini restaged the *Ring* cycle for the following season (1916-1917) it was received much more poorly.¹⁹⁷ One particular critic and writer stated that he “was shocked that anything so immoral as *Die Walküre*, with its incestuous relationship between Siegmund and Sieglinde, would be staged on the Sabbath.” As a result of reviews and anti-German sentiments “Wagner’s music was condemned as barbaric, and attendance fell to practically nothing.”¹⁹⁸ Attendance also, most likely diminished

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 121.

¹⁹⁷ Robert Marsh, also suggests that audiences would not have been familiar with or up for full-length Wagnerian operas as they would not have been used to their length. *150 Years of Opera in Chicago*. (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), 78.

¹⁹⁸ Davis, *Opera in Chicago*, 112.

because loyal German audiences that normally could have been counted on to attend such performances feared being convicted of being un-American.¹⁹⁹

After the signing of the Treaty of Versailles and right before the 1919-1920 opera season, the environment of the opera house began to change. Not only did the wealthy opera-goers arrive in automobiles with shorter skirts in vivid colors, ears no longer completely covered, and flashy jewels being worn, but the young married couples of the city were becoming opera patrons. Additionally, “the foyer was more brilliantly lighted than ever before, for between acts moving-picture cameras filmed the social notables as they promenaded.”²⁰⁰ Although ballet had been performed in the United States before, there were no ballet companies to speak of. Campanini had supported Carpenter’s ballet, most likely, because of Carpenter’s influential position within the art scene in Chicago and also because Campanini was in the process of cultivating ballet as an art of its own for its own sake.²⁰¹ Ballet was, for the most part, inseparable from the operas in which it appeared or the traveling artists that presented it. This new audience of opera-goers mixed with the protests, strikes, and riots that were happening in Chicago formed the stage upon which the ballet-pantomime *The Birthday of the Infanta* would be performed in December of 1919.

The Birthday of the Infanta was produced with the Chicago Opera Association during its 1919-1920 season. Looking at the annals that were recorded by Robert Marsh in his book *150 Years of Opera in Chicago*, it becomes apparent that both the Chicago

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 122.

²⁰¹ Marsh, *150 Years of Opera in Chicago*, 82.

Opera Association and the Ravinia Opera were both by and large producing French and Italian operas (Appendix F). In addition to the large amount of Italian and French operatic repertoire there is an overall lack of ballets being presented independently. The annals rarely indicate if ballets appeared in conjunction with opera performances, except in the case of *The Birthday of the Infanta*.²⁰² As Howard Pollack points out, opera houses “rarely commissioned ballets. [But] Carpenter had the luck to draw upon his considerable artistic stature and social position; most other American composers simply did not write ballets.”²⁰³ Even though Carpenter was an established composer of song and orchestral works he, like other modern composing contemporaries, was drawn to the ballet because of its flexibility in contrast to opera.²⁰⁴ Based on the annals of the opera houses, opera audiences would not necessarily have been accustomed to seeing full ballet pantomimes in conjunction with their operas that were not performed by traveling groups like Pavlova’s. *The Birthday of the Infanta* would have been a bit of a novelty as it was a full length ballet pantomime, written by not only an American but a Chicagoan, and the ballet was not performed by a traveling group of performers like the Pavlova or Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes. Additionally, many productions were premiered in New York before they even reached Chicago. Soprano Frances Ingram stated in 1920 that when she performed

²⁰² In both Ronald Davis, *Opera in Chicago*, (New York: Appleton-Century, 1966), 271-309, and Robert Marsh, *150 Years of Opera in Chicago*, (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), 249-270. There is little to no mention of ballet. Marsh shows the tour of Pavlova’s Ballets Russes, but Davis does not show any ballet except for *The Birthday of the Infanta*.

²⁰³ Howard Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby: the Life and Music of John Alden Carpenter*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 164.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 165.

at the Chicago Opera she was performing for herself instead of for the opera house like the institutionalized Metropolitan Opera.²⁰⁵ Furthermore, Cleofonte Campanini—conductor of the Chicago Opera and artistic director and principle conductor of the Chicago Allied Arts—was a huge advocate of ballet. Cleofonte Campanini died right before the premiere of *The Birthday of the Infanta*, but “a friend of his, when asked what opera he thought Campanini preferred, replied cryptically: ‘The Russian Ballet.’”²⁰⁶ It is interesting to think about what may have happened to ballet in Chicago had Campanini not died before the premiere of *The Birthday of the Infanta*. Campanini would have, most likely, been an advocate for further performances and new productions. Certainly *The Birthday of the Infanta* would have been a novelty for an audience that was used to traveling ballet companies and usually subordinate to New York.

Spain and America

In addition to the countries that were directly involved in World War I, the neutrality of Spain was also a very important topic of discussion in newspapers. The *Day Book*, a publication that ran from 1911-1917 in Chicago, was targeted toward the working class population. Edward Willis Scripps created the newspaper in the hopes of developing multiple advertisement free dailies.²⁰⁷ Upon exploring the contents of this publication it becomes apparent that middle-class America was very much informed

²⁰⁵ Oscar Thompson, “Compares Opera Audiences of New York and Chicago” *Musical America* (January 31, 1920), 11.

²⁰⁶ “Mephisto’s Musings” *Musical America*, December 27, 1919. 7.

²⁰⁷ Library of Congress, Chronicling America, “About *The Day Book*. (Chicago, Ill.) 1911-1917”, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library, Urbana, IL, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045487/>

about Spain and its Royal family. Some of the coverage of the royal family would consist of photographs of royal family members, such as Queen Victoria and all of the prince and princess children.²⁰⁸ Other articles would have political coverage of King Alfonso's German or Allied sympathies.²⁰⁹ Not only were the middle class citizens of Chicago familiar with Spanish royalty in the early twentieth century because of newspaper articles, but they were also familiar in the late nineteenth century. In fact, Infanta Eulalia visited the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.²¹⁰ An article in the Salt Lake Herald, on May 21, 1893, not only discussed the family history of the Spanish royal family from the perspective of Infanta Eulalia, but it also confirmed the intended visit of the Infanta to the Columbian Exposition. The article explained that "Spain's royal representatives at the World's fair are to be the Infanta Eulalia, aunt of the little 7-year old king, and her husband, Prince Antonio of Montpensier."²¹¹

Familiarity with Spain and Spanish royalty on the part of Chicagoans would have made *The Birthday of the Infanta* a plot that was not entirely foreign. The distance from the plot comes from economic and historical factors. Middle class working Chicagoans would not have been able to relate to the grandeur of a Spanish princess's birthday

²⁰⁸ "Queen Victoria of Spain and Children", April 2, 1917.
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045487/1917-04-02/ed-1/seq24/>

²⁰⁹ "Rumors of German Sympathy May Force Alfonso of Spain from Palace", April 2, 1917.
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045487/1917-04-02/ed-1/seq-9/>

²¹⁰ There was an article in *Truth* in 1906 that even explained that a man who had seen the Infanta Eulalia at the Columbian Exposition from a distance named his daughter after her. The Infanta had sent a letter in response thanking the man for the honor. "Giving Him all His Titles: How Spanish Courtesy Heaped Honors on Chicago Man," April 14, 1906, *Truth*, Salt Lake City, Utah, 12.
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85058310/1906-04-14/ed-1/seq-12/>

²¹¹ "The Royal Spaniards. The Infanta Eulalia and Prince Antonio America's Guests. King Alfonso's Favorite Sister and the Match Was His Making--Family History of the Princess", May 21, 1893.
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85058130/1893-05-21/ed-1/seq-14/>

celebration. Additionally, most American citizens in the early twentieth century would have little connection with the fashion and mannerisms of a seventeenth-century Spain. Chicago's familiarity with Spanish royalty, even if from a distance, could have influenced the positive reception of the ballet. At the same time, the historical distance between early twentieth-century Chicago and Baroque Spain could have added an element of exoticism and wonderment to the production.

The Ballets Russes in America

By the time the Ballets Russes was able to tour in the United States in 1916 they were the most well-known ballet company in the Western World.²¹² Many well-to-do and artistic American's had traveled to Europe, especially Paris, and seen the Ballets Russes in their earlier seasons. The founders of the "Neighborhood Playhouse" in New York City in 1915, Irene and Alice Lewinsohn were two women that had seen the Ballets Russes in Europe in 1914. Their settlement house had productions of dramas, dance pantomimes or ballets, and festivals. As a result of the exposure to the Ballets Russes and its approach to performance, the two women "mounted the Playhouse version [of *Petrouchka*] at the same time the touring Ballets Russes represented *Petrouchka* in New York City." In addition to the Lewinsohns, other production companies, including "Gertrude Hoffman pirated Ballets Russes ideas and staged veristic variants of its choreographies before the company ever set foot in the United States."²¹³ These

²¹² Hanna Järvinen, "Failed Impressions: Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in America, 1916," *Dance Research Journal* 42, no. 2 (2010), 79.

²¹³ Linda Tomko, *Dancing Class: Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Divides in American Dance, 1890-1920*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 114.

reproductions of Ballets Russes productions, no matter how altered they may have been, shows that at least some American audiences were familiar with and enjoyed Ballet Russes aesthetics before the group even toured.

The Ballets Russes had been in public negotiations with the Metropolitan Opera starting in 1910. As a result of this prolonged negotiation the American public was in anticipation of the Ballets Russes for six years prior to their arrival.²¹⁴ Many Americans had been exposed to different traveling dance companies and smaller productions before the Ballets Russes came on their tour. Hanna Järvinen, in her “Failed Impressions: Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes in America, 1916,” explains that the Ballets Russes’s performances would not have appeared extremely modern or out-of-the-ordinary because of America’s free-form dance pioneers. The education of American’s about dance can be seen in Montrose J. Moses’s statement in the *Bellman* in January of 1916:

We have had within the past ten or fifteen years all the healthy and unhealthy dancing that it has seemed possible to invent: the naturalistic methods of Isadora Duncan, the oriental methods of Ruth St. Denis, the exceptional beauty of Genée, with the continuous perfection of Pavlowa. Therefore, we know something in regard to the art of the ballet. Yet even if we did not, we would instinctively feel the perfectness of virtuosity, when we saw it on the stage.²¹⁵

In addition to Moses’s observations about dance in America, the *Modern Dance Magazine* was also created in 1913 to inform audiences further about artists, performances, and innovations.²¹⁶ As the Ballets Russes toured the less than desirable reviews that occurred in New York preceded them. Järvinen accounts for the poor

²¹⁴ Järvinen, “Failed Impressions: Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes in America, 1916,” 79.

²¹⁵ *Ibid*, 81.

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, 82.

reviews, not necessarily because the audience could not relate to the dance aesthetics of the Ballets Russes, but mostly because audiences did not receive what they were promised for the past six years; Nijinsky was not there. The audiences in Chicago, Boston, and other cities were usually only half full.²¹⁷

Undoubtedly the Ballets Russes was a huge inspirational factor in the creation of dance productions in the United States. Linda J. Tomko notes that the Lewinsohn's playhouse production of *Royal Fandango* "was surely inspired by the Spanish turn that Ballets Russes repertory took with *The Three-Cornered Hat* and *Cuadro Flamenco* in 1919 and 1922."²¹⁸ Carpenter and his collaborative team for *The Birthday of the Infanta* were certainly influenced by the trends of the Ballets Russes as well. *The Birthday of the Infanta*, like other dance productions in the early twentieth-century, was not created without inspiration and influence from the Ballets Russes. All of the collaborators on *The Birthday of the Infanta* had ties to certain aspects of the Ballets Russes; whether musically—Carpenter and his personal relationship with Stravinsky, choreographically—Adolph Bolm having danced with the Ballets Russes, or through set design—Robert Edmond Jones designed *Til Eulenspiegel* for the Ballets Russes's American tour. Additionally, an American audience would have been familiar with the aesthetics of the Ballets Russes because of their two tours and the plagiarized productions that occurred in American theaters prior to and during these tours.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 86.

²¹⁸ Ibid, 115-116.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The success of *The Birthday of the Infanta* at its premiere in Chicago can be attributed to many factors, social, political, economic, and artistic. The score, which was composed by John Alden Carpenter, was sensitive to the literature that it was based upon. As a result of Carpenter's long relationship with prose and experiences with programmatic writing it is fitting that the score for *The Birthday of the Infanta* would be sensitive to the plot that was being portrayed. Just like in Carpenter's songs, *The Birthday of the Infanta* uses compositional techniques to elicit specific ideas, emotions, and characters. Perhaps one of the most interesting ways in which Carpenter creates his programmatic compositions is through the manipulation and repetition of rhythmic ideas. By using meter and rhythm in a very deliberate way Carpenter could suggest a heavy little boy, such as in "Stout", or even a grotesque dwarf as in *Birthday*. Carpenter's understanding and appreciation for literature and for the process of telling stories is evident even from the beginning of his career, but his fondness for Stravinsky and the modern composers brought him to ballet and to *The Birthday of the Infanta*. In addition to characterization and loyalty to the story Carpenter also displays some loyalty to his American audience by inserting a section of music during the "procession of the birthday guests" that is reminiscent of a Sousa march. By creating moments of familiarity in the score either through repetition of melodic, harmonic, or rhythmic figures or through the application of well-known American musical genres, Carpenter could have more easily drawn his audience into *The Birthday of the Infanta's* world.

Americans, having been raised on Vaudeville and not classic ballet, would have been intrigued by Bolm's interesting choreographic approach that emphasized characterization over classical technique. Chicagoans, having been exposed to the Ballets Russes in both American tours and most likely in "copy-cat" productions, choreography that emulated the styles of Anna Pavlova, Nijinsky, or the avant-garde American's Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, etc. would not have thought *The Birthday of the Infanta* outlandish or too experimental. Although there is no dance notation for *The Birthday of the Infanta* a lot of information was gleaned from the 1922 film "Danse Macabre" where Adolph Bolm and Ruth Page portray two characters that were being chased by "Death." This film, in combination with production photographs that were taken from *The Birthday of the Infanta*, demonstrates the possible choreographic vocabulary of Bolm and Page. The entire ballet becomes more accessible by piecing together the ephemeral and feminine sweeping gestures of Page with the masculine and grounded movements of Bolm. Furthermore, the photographs, films, and dance backgrounds of both Bolm and Page, contribute to this illustration of two dancers that were more concerned with expressing a story through facial expression and grand gestures, than through virtuosic movement.

The stage design and costumes for *The Birthday of the Infanta* were essential to furthering the drama and creating characters within the ballet. The characters that were of an elevated rank wore costumes that literally dwarfed some of the lower class players. Robert Edmond Jones, through his use of color and the size of the sets and costumes, continued to build relationships between characters and vital plot details that were perhaps initially established musically or choreographically. By creating levels in the first

act and having the Infanta and her guests literally above the entertainers, the relationship between Pedro and the Infanta can be sensed immediately. The second act stage design served an equally important role, as Pedro emerged into a dark palace room with gigantic mirrors making him appear even less significant. Robert Edmond Jones also, much like *Til Eulenspiegel*, created costumes of differing sizes to enhance the social stratification of the story. The Infanta wore an enormous pannier and a dress with abundant ruffles. Pedro, in contrast and almost exactly like Til, wore a costume that was more muted in color and was closer to his body. These costumes, although a representation of seventeenth-century Spain, were another vehicle by which the plot and the relationships between characters could be more concretely solidified. In ballet, without words like a play or opera, the music, costumes, set designs, and choreography must all work together to further the understanding of the plot.

Politically and socially Chicago was in a very unstable place leading up to the premiere of *The Birthday of the Infanta*. Many of the conflicts that were happening within Chicago between ethnic groups had to do with their ties to countries that were fighting in World War I. *The Birthday of the Infanta* was probably received so positively because of its intentional or unintentional navigation through these tensions. The composer, set designer, and lead female dancer were all truly American having been born and raised in the United States. Unlike Campanini's ultimately unsupported Wagnerian repertoire, *The Birthday of the Infanta* lacked German elements or ties, which may have solidified its success. The plot of the ballet is also something that is not extremely complex or controversial. Stark Young confirmed the lack of questionable content in the ballet *The Birthday of the Infanta* when he observed at the New York revival that "in all

of it there was no sex, no glare. Against the passion, laughter, revenge, and death of those strolling players [in other theatrical productions] it set up the thin and innocent life of a little Princess of twelve and her court in the midst of the rich, hard magnificence of the circumstance about them.”²¹⁹ Furthermore, Carpenter’s choice to alter the end of the ballet from Oscar Wilde’s original story, changes the ballet into something that is moralizing. In a time when countries have been torn and different cultural groups have been in disputes, *The Birthday of the Infanta* is a simple story that shows, from the perspective of a child, the wrong and consequences that come from shunning those that are different. This would have certainly been an appreciated message by an audience that was very much aware of the conflict around them. The ballet’s success at its premiere may have also had something to do with Chicagoan familiarity with Spanish royalty and Oscar Wilde as both had visited the United States and been talked about in newspapers in the late nineteenth century. In addition, Oscar Wilde’s short story *The Birthday of the Infanta* had been adapted into a play version and was experienced in many American cities.

It is difficult to fully contextualize *The Birthday of the Infanta*, but this analysis has served to illustrate not only the importance of the cooperation of the different artistic elements of the ballet, but also the exterior factors that may have contributed to its success at the Chicago premiere. The political and social climate of Chicago and the world possibly contributed to the ballet’s acceptance; however, audience familiarity with the dance aesthetics of the time, possibly the plot because of Oscar Wilde’s popularity in the United States, John Alden Carpenter’s prominence in the arts community of Chicago,

²¹⁹ Stark Young, *The Flower in Drama: a Book of Papers on the Theatre*, (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1923), 146.

and many other social factors also contributed to the success of the ballet. Perhaps we will never know why *The Birthday of the Infanta* did not withstand the test of time and become a part of well-known ballet repertoire. Some scholars might suggest that Carpenter's lack of institutional association may have contributed to the lack of remembrance of his works.²²⁰ I might posit that *The Birthday of the Infanta* acted as the stepping stone for Carpenter's more experimental ballets *Krazy Kat* and *Skyscrapers* that have become associated with more overtly American musical elements.²²¹ Nonetheless, *The Birthday of the Infanta* is an interesting musical work that definitely speaks to the time and place in which it was created and premiered.

²²⁰ Michelle Hakanson, "The Seed Ideas of Dane Rudhyar : Sources, Influence, and Reception", Thesis, PhD, University of Oregon, 2006.

²²¹ Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 190-248. Some of the American musical elements that show up in Carpenter's later ballets would be banjo, jazz, and American themes in the form of librettos based on comic strips and the American work ethic as seen through industrialization.

APPENDIX A

FOUR-HAND PIANO SCORE TRANSCRIPTION WITH CUTS

OBSERVED²²²

Birthday of the Infanta

John Alden Carpenter

Moderato ♩ = 76

Prologue

p

Moderato ♩ = 76

p legato

pp

6

pp

p

f

p

11

p

legato

8^{va}

²²² Transcription from four-hand piano score 1938, from “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961,” Music Division, Library of Congress

1

16 a tempo ♩=76 *mf*

8^{va}

24 *più animato* ♩=96

accel. più animato ♩=96 *ff* *rall.*

8^{va}

2

31 *Andimato* ♩=96 *p*

Gardeners at work in palace garden

f marcato

8^{va}

(S)

36 **2a**

marcato

* 8^{va} *

42 8^{va} 3 f 8^{va} 3

48

53

59 4 4

4

64 **4a**

68 **4a**

69 *f* *8va*

74 *rall.*

80 **5** *a tempo p* *8va*

5 *f solo* *a tempo*

85 (6) 5a

accel e cresc.

89 (8)

poco a poco

ff

92 6 Moderato
♩ = 96

Exit Gardeners

The Infanta enters alone

97 7

rall.

Più Lento

p

espr.

p legato

she wanders about the garden

6

102

106

7a $\text{♩} = 84$

cresc. *f*

7a $\text{♩} = 84$

110

The Infanta dances

p

8^{va}

114

(8)

8^{va}

118 *rall.* *A tempo*

(8).....

123 *rall.* **8** *Animato* ♩=168

rall. **8** *Animato* ♩=168

128 *Her young attendants join her and interrupt her mood*

Her young attendants join her and interrupt her mood

134

140 *ff* *solo* *tr*

ff *solo* *tr*

8

146

8a

152

158

8b

8b

164

5

170

8va

mf

9 Più Lento (?) $\text{♩} = 126$

176 $\text{♩} = 126$ 8^{va} ----- 9

espr. **The Infanta speaks**

182 (8)

with her young friends

188 **10** rall.

The major domos announce the guests rall.

f $\text{♩} = 100$

194 **11** Plus Più Animato $\text{♩} = 100$

Procession of the birthday guests

f marcato *p*

f $\text{♩} = 100$

198

(8)

10 **12** 202

12

(8)

206

12

(8)

13 210

13

(8)

214 **14**

14

(8)

218

The score writes this as bass clef, but I think it should be a treble clef

15 *Con Susto Grazioso*
♩ = 76 (in one)

15 *Con Susto Grazioso*
♩ = 76 (in one)

224

The opening of the birthday gifts

232

16

16

240

ff

12 17

248

8va

17

257 18

8va

18

266 19 ♩ = 69

espr.

19 ♩ = 69 *They all dance*

275 20

20

284 **21** *8^{va}*

21 *marcato e cresc.* *rall.*

292 **22** *♩=66* *8^{va}*

22 *Major Doms announcing the entertainment* *ff*

296 **23** *animato* *♩=126* *8^{va}*

23 *animato* *Enter gypsy dancers* *f* *mf*

303(8) **24**

24 *Their dance begins* *ff*

14

309 *f* 8^{va}-----1

f *p*

25

316

p

25

26

322

f *p*

26

27

328

p

27

There's no Bb
on the score
but i think
that's a mistake
(second) line

334(8)

28

28

339

344

29

29

350

16

356

30

30

362

p

p

368

rall.

31

f

mf

legato

31

rall.

Solo gypsy dance

L.H.

f

8^{va}

375

32

32

(8)

387 17

33 ^{8va}

(8)

388 (8)⁷

34 ^{8va}

p *f* *f*

p *f*

Ped. * Ped. * ^{8va}

394 (8)

(8)

35

399 (8)

35

p *f* *f*

p *f*

p

18

407 *rall.* 36 ♩=132

f 36 ♩=132 *Finale of gypsy dance*

413

417 37

there's one natural sign as key signature for these three bars

422 38

marcato 38

428

433

39

439

40

446

41

453

41

20

460 42

mf

Preparation for the bullfight

f p *f p* *f*

LH RH LH RH

470(8)

LH RH

479(8) 43

f *rall.* *A tempo*

ff *ff*

The herald *rall.* *A tempo*

LH RH

487 44 ♩ = 126

f

Procession of the bullfight

f *simili*

RH LH

494 45 21

501 8^{va}

508 46

515 47 Moderato ♩=104

47 *The bull pen is unlocked*

Moderato ♩=104

662 29

65

The dwarf's dance begins.

p *p* *f* *p*

66

670

f *p* *f*

67

678(8)⁷

f *f* *f* *f* *f* *f* *f*

686

f *f* *f* *f* *f* *f* *f*

545 50 23

mf

mf

50 *The Bandilleros*

p

51

551 51

51

557 52

f

f

52

563 52

f

f

24

568

53 *Vivo* ♩=192

572

ff

marcato

f

579 *rall.* *Moderato* ♩=104

rall. *Moderato* ♩=104

585

tr *accel.* **54** ♩=120

f

accel. **54** ♩=120 *Enter the matador*

p *f*

591

55

25

Musical score for measures 591-595. The top system consists of two staves with rests. The bottom system consists of two staves with a piano accompaniment. Measure 595 is marked with a 'p' dynamic.

Musical score for measures 596-600. The top system has two staves with triplets and rests. The bottom system has two staves with a piano accompaniment.

600

56

Musical score for measures 600-604. The top system has two staves with triplets and rests. The bottom system has two staves with a piano accompaniment. Measure 604 is marked with a 'mf' dynamic.

604

Musical score for measures 604-608. The top system has two staves with triplets and rests. The bottom system has two staves with a piano accompaniment. Measure 608 is marked with a 'mf' dynamic.

26

608

accel.

57

cresc.

8va

A tempo

612(8)

rall.

8va

A tempo

A tempo

rall.

A tempo

espr.

p

58

617(8)

58

621

8va

tr

625 **59** *8va* *ff* *tr* 27

629 *tr* *f* *Exit off* **60**

633 *p* *p* *p* *p*

638(8) *accel.* *8va* *molto rall.*

28 62 $\text{♩} = 63$ rall. poco accel.

The Major Doms

648 *A tempo* 63 *Moderato* $\text{♩} = 80$

A tempo 5 11 tr tr pp p

Entrance of the dwarf

652

656 64 *animato* $\text{♩} = 63$ f LH

64 *animato* $(tr) \text{♩} = 63$

36 **84** *Poco Più Animato*
♩=108

84 *Poco Più Animato*
♩=108

85

86 *Lento*
♩=63

86 *Lento* *The dwarf had tried to follow*
♩=63

867

but is repelled

30
693 (8)

68 Poco Più Lento

p

68 Poco Più Lento

espr.
p

701

69

69

710

rall. . . . A tempo

rall. . . . A tempo

718

70 Lento
♩ = 66

p

f

70 Lento
♩ = 66

pp

723 **71** *accel.* 31

72 *Poco Più Animato* $\text{♩} = 96$ *accel.*

73

737 *mf* *p*

32 **74**
742 8^{va}

748 **75** *accel.*

Più Allegretto
♩ = 116

754 **75** *ff*

Più Allegretto
♩ = 116

76 *tr* **Allegro**
♩ = 132

760 **76** *p* **Allegro**
♩ = 132

768 **molto rall.** **77** **Lento** ♩=69 33

molto rall. **77** **Lento** ♩=69

p

pp

molto rall.

Molto Più Animato

776 **rall.** ♩=116 **rall.**

End of the dwarfs dance

Molto Più Animato

rall. ♩=116 **rall.**

tr

p

molto rall.

78 **Lento** ♩=66

784

78 **Lento** ♩=66

He appeals to the Infanta

p

espr.

legato

79

791

79

She throws him her handkerchief

p

espr.

legato

34

796 *8^{va}*

His joy at her favor

ff

(8)

80 *Animato*

800 *8^{va}*

p legato espr.

The children descend raily from their places and dance

80 *Animato*

p

81

807(8)

f

81

f

3

815

espr.

ff

824 *rall.* **82** Moderato $\text{♩} = 80$ 35

rall. **82** Moderato $\text{♩} = 80$ *The cook has appeared*

830 *p* *legato*

with an enormous cake and leads the procession into the palace

83 *f*

83 *f*

841 *accel.* *p*

accel.

36 **84** Poco Più Animato
♩ = 108

Musical score for measures 84-85. The score is in 2/4 time and features a piano (p) and forte (f) dynamic range. It includes a treble and bass staff with various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes. Measure 84 is marked with a piano (p) dynamic, and measure 85 is marked with a forte (f) dynamic.

Musical score for measures 85-86. The score continues from measure 85 and includes a treble and bass staff. Measure 85 is marked with a forte (f) dynamic, and measure 86 is marked with a piano (p) dynamic. The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes.

Musical score for measures 86-87. The score is in 2/4 time and features a piano (p) and forte (f) dynamic range. It includes a treble and bass staff with various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes. Measure 86 is marked with a piano (p) dynamic, and measure 87 is marked with a forte (f) dynamic.

Musical score for measures 87-88. The score is in 2/4 time and features a piano (p) and forte (f) dynamic range. It includes a treble and bass staff with various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes. Measure 87 is marked with a piano (p) dynamic, and measure 88 is marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The text "but is repelled" is written below the treble staff in measure 87.

874

881

rall. **88** A tempo $\text{♩} = 69$

891

rall. **89**

p espr.

He moves about trying to find some way

rall. **89**

pp

897

accel. A tempo

to enter the palace

accel. A tempo

38

901 **accel.** 90 Più Animato $\text{♩} = 96$

ff 6

accel. 90 Più Animato $\text{♩} = 96$

The scene has changed to a dark interior, the dwarf has

905 **rall.** **Lento** $\text{♩} = 63$ 91

f *p*

tr

jumped down from an open window

rall. **Lento** $\text{♩} = 63$ 91

pp *p* *pp* *p*

909

He suddenly sees his image in a great mirror

RH

LH LH

f *mf*

15

913 **rall.** 92 Moderato $\text{♩} = 120$

The fatal dance

rall. 92 Moderato $\text{♩} = 120$

8^{va}

919 93

mf

(8)

926 8^{va}

f

(8)

933 (8) 94 ♩ = 66

mf

p

f

(8)

939 95 Allegro ♩ = 132

accel.

mf

ff

fff

(8)

40

944

mf

ff *p*

949

accel.

ff

He whirls madly before the mirror, swings a candelabra—smashes the mirror and falls.

ff

954

96 Moderato
♩ = 67

ff *f* *p* *p espr.*

958

p

The Infanta's handkerchief is still clutched in his hand.

p

963 97

968 97

pp *ff*

968 *accel.* *rall.* *A tempo* 98

pp *p*

968 *accel.* *rall.* *A tempo* 98

p *pp*

974

The Infanta dances gaily in—followed by the children—not seeing the fallen dwarf

99

983 *8^{va}*

p *espr.*

99

991 **rall.**

999 **100** **Più Animato** $\text{♩} = 92$

p

100 **Più Animato** $\text{♩} = 92$ *She suddenly sees the fallen figure And timidly approaches*

f

1008 **101**

101

1017 **102** **Moderato** $\text{♩} = 92$ **molto accel.** **rall.**

ff *agitato*

mf

She reaches down **102** **Moderato** $\text{♩} = 92$ **molto accel.** **rall.** *Touches her handkerchief and recoils*

1023 **103** Lento $\text{♩}=40$
p

103 Lento $\text{♩}=40$ *The Infanta and the children begin to back out of the room*
p

1028 **MS show F#** rall. A tempo

rall. A tempo **MS show B#**

104 Poco Più (?) $\text{♩}=44$
pp

1032

104 Poco Più (?) *The Infanta is alone* ----- *still retreating*
pp

1036

44 **105**

1040

rall

sempre pp

105

rall

a tempo

1045

pp

a tempo
pp dolce

but as the scene closes

rall

106 *Andante* $\text{♩} = 66$

1049

rall.

pp

She comes forward and kneels by the prostrate forms as the curtain falls

con affetto

106 *Andante* $\text{♩} = 66$

rall.

pp

pp marcato

f

1055

pp

ppp

APPENDIX B

JOHN ALDEN CARPENTER SONG CHART

Chart is not comprehensive. Song texts composed prior to *The Birthday of the Infanta*

Context	Songs	Text
Collegiate Songs (songs composed while at Harvard)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Love whom I never Have Seen 2. My Sweetheart 3. Alas, How easily Things go Wrong 4. In Spring 5. Memory 6. Norse Lullaby 7. Sicilian Lullaby 8. Little John's Song 9. Mistress Mine 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. John Alden Carpenter 2. Griffith Alexander 3. George MacDonald 4. Shakespeare 5. words from London <i>Atheneum</i> 6. Eugene Field 7. Eugene Field 8. Nora Hopper 9. Shakespeare
<i>Improving Songs for Anxious Children</i> <i>When Little Boys Sing</i> (1901-1902) - titles of anthologies when published later	"About my Garden," "Red Hair," "Aspirations," "The Thunderstorm," "A Plan," "Practicing," "Brother," "Contemplation," "Happy Heathen," "To Cross the Street," "Making Calls," "When the Night Comes," "For Careless Children," "Stout," "The Liar," "A Reproach," "Humility," "A Wicked Child," "Vanity," "Maria-Glutton," "Good Ellen," "War," "Spring," and "Lullaby"	John Alden Carpenter and Rue Winterbotham (wife)
"1912" Songs 1908 (not a cycle)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Cock shall Crow 2. Go, Lovely Rose 3. May, the Maiden 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Robert Louis Stevenson 2. Edmond Waller 3. Sidney Lanier
Songs from 1909 (not a cycle)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Looking Glass River 2. Little Fly 3. The Heart's Country 4. Green River 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Robert Louis Stevenson 2. William Blake 3. Florence Wilkinson** 4. Lord Alfred Douglass
Four Poems by Paul Verlaine (1910) (not a cycle)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Il pleure dans mon cœur 2. Chanson d'automne 3. Le ciel 4. Dansons la gigue 5. En sourdine (When the Misty Shadows glide) 	Paul Verlaine
Songs from 1911 (not a cycle)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bid me to Live 2. Cradle Song 3. Don't Ceäre 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Robert Herrick 2. William Blake 3. William Barnes
Gitanjali (Song Offerings) (1913)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When I bring to you colour'd toys, my child (no. 62) 2. On the day when death will knock at thy door (no. 90) 3. The sleep that flits on baby's eyes – does anybody know from where it comes? (no. 80) 4. I am a remnant of a cloud of autumn 5. On the seashore of endless worlds children meet (no. 60) 6. Light, my light, the world-filling light (no. 57) 	Rabindranath Tagore
Four Chinese Tone Poems (Water-Colors) 1916	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On a screen 2. The odalisque 3. Highwaymen 4. To a young Gentleman 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Herbert Allen Giles after Li-Tai-Po 2. Herbert Allen Giles after Liu Yuxi 3. Herbert Allen Giles after Li-Shê 4. Herbert Allen Giles after Anon.

** Carpenter probably knew Wilkinson, as she was a Chicago poet.²²³

²²³ Pollack, *Skyscraper Lullaby*, 71.

APPENDIX C

PROGRAM FOR *ADVENTURES IN A PERAMBULATOR*

I. En Voiture

Every morning—after my second breakfast—if the wind and the sun are favorable, I go out. I should like to go alone, but my will is overborne. My Nurse is appointed to take me. She is older than I and very powerful. While I wait for her, resigned, I hear her cheerful steps, always the same. I am wrapped in a vacuum of wool, where there are no drafts. A door opens and shuts. I am placed in my perambulator, a strap is buckled over my stomach, my Nurse stands firmly behind—and we are off!

II. The Policeman

Out is wonderful! It is always different, though one seems to have been there before. I cannot fathom it all. Some sounds seem like smells. Some sights have echoes. It is confusing but it is Life! For instance, the Policeman—an Unprecedented Man! Round like a ball; he comes. I see him after he goes. I try to analyze his appeal. It is not buttons alone, not belt, nor baton. I suspect it is his eyes and the way he walks. He walks like Doom. My Nurse feels it too. She becomes less firm, less powerful. My perambulator hurries, hesitates, and stops. They converse. They ask each other questions!—some with answers, some without. I listen, with discretion. When I feel that they have gone far enough, I signal to my Nurse, a private signal, and the Policeman resumes his enormous Blue March. He is gone, but I feel him after he goes.

III. The Hurdy-Gurdy

Then suddenly there is something else. I think it is a sound. We approach it. My ear is tickled to excess. I find that the absorbing noise comes from a box—something like my music-box, only much larger, and on wheels. A dark man is turning the music out of the box with a handle, just as I do with mine. A dark lady, richly dressed, turns when the man gets tired. They both smile. I smile too, with restraint, for I tug at the strap over my stomach. I have a wild thought of dancing with my Nurse and my perambulator—all three of us together. Suddenly, at the climax of our excitement, I feel the approach of a phenomenon that I remember. It is the Policeman. He has stopped the music. He has frightened away the dark man and the lady with their music-box. He seeks the admiration of my Nurse for his act. He walks away, his buttons shine, but far off I hear again the forbidden music. Delightful forbidden music!

IV. The Lake

Sated with adventure, my Nurse firmly pushes me on, and before I recover my balance I am face to face with new excitement. The land comes to an end, and there at my feet is the Lake. All my other sensations are joined in one. I see, I hear, I feel the quiver of the little waves as they escape from the big ones and come rushing up over the sand. Their fear is pretended. They know the big waves are amiable, for they can see a thousand sunbeams dancing with impunity on their very backs. Waves and sunbeams! Waves and sunbeams! Blue water—white clouds—dancing swinging! A white sea-gull floating in the air. That is *My Lake!*

IV. Dogs

We pass on. Probably there is nothing more in the world. If there is, it is superfluous. *There IS.* It is Dogs! We come upon them without warning. Not *one* of

them—all of them. First, one by one; then in pairs; then in societies. Little dogs, with sisters; big dogs, with aged parents. Kind dogs. Brigand dogs, sad dogs, and gay. They laugh, they fight, they run. And at last. In order to hold my interest, the very littlest brigand starts a game of “Follow the Leader,” followed by all the others. It is tremendous!

V. Dreams

Those dogs have gone! It is confusing, but it is Life! My mind grows numb. My cup is too full. I have a sudden conviction that it is well that I am not alone. That firm step behind reassures me. The wheels of my perambulator make a sound that quiets my nerves. I lie very still. I am quite content. In order to think more clearly, I close my eyes. My thoughts are absorbing. I deliberate upon my mother. Most of the time my Mother and my Nurse have but one identity in my mind, but at night or when I close my eyes, I can easily tell them apart, for my Mother has the greater charm. I hear her voice quite plainly now, and feel the touch of her hand. It is pleasant to live over again the adventure of the day—the long blue waves curling in the sun, the Policeman who is bigger than my Father, the music-box and my friends, the Dogs. It is pleasant to lie quite still and close my eyes, and listen to the wheels of the perambulator. How very large the world is! How many things there are!²²⁴

²²⁴ Felix Borowski, “John Alden Carpenter,” *Musical Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (October, 1930) 459-460.

APPENDIX D

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE INFANTA PLAY ADAPTATIONS AND MENTIONS IN U.S. NEWSPAPERS

Chart is not comprehensive and not ballet related

Name of Production as it Appears	Location/Context	Date	Publication
“two short stories by Oscar Wilde, ‘The Fisherman and His Soul’ and ‘The Birthday of the Infanta.’”	“New Books – Mosher Book”	November 11, 1905	<i>The Sun</i> , page 9
“‘The Birthday of the Infanta’ an adaptation of Wilde’s story”	Princess Theatre (Portmanteau), New York	December 10, 1916	<i>The New-York Tribune</i> , page 3
“Play made from a story attributed to Oscar Wilde called ‘The Birthday of the Infanta’”	Princess Theatre (Portmanteau), New York	December 12, 1916	<i>The Sun</i> , page 4
“The Birthday of the Infanta”	Princess Theatre (Portmanteau), New York	December 10, 1916	<i>The Sun</i> , page 3
“The Birthday of the Infanta”	Used in an article about the “Likeness between 16 th -century, play, players, playwrights and those of Today”	December 31, 1916	<i>The Sun</i> , page 6 SECTION 5, SPECIAL FEATURE SUPPLEMENT
“‘The Birthday of the Infanta’ an adaptation of Oscar Wilde’s story of the same name”	Princess Theatre, New York	December 9, 1916	<i>The Evening World</i> , page 4
“‘The Birthday of the Infanta’ dramatized from the story by Oscar Wilde”	Portmanteau Theatre, New York	November 5, 1916	<i>The Sun</i> , page 4
“The Birthday of the Infanta” ²²⁵	Portmanteau Theatre, New York	November 19, 1916	<i>The Sun</i> , page 4
*“Three Drawings for a Book of Fairy Tales” – <i>Birthday of the Infanta actually pictured</i>		December 30, 1917	<i>The New-York Tribune</i> , page 3

²²⁵ This particular article explains that “‘Our New York bills have been tried out in towns ranging from South Hadley, Mass. To Buffalo and Pittsburg. The audiences have varied from a preponderance of real intellectuals to engineering undergraduates . . .” This quote suggests that these plays were seen outside of New York and by many different types of audience members.

APPENDIX E

PROGRAM NOTES FOR THE *BIRTHDAY OF THE INFANTA*

“The Birthday of the Infanta,” a ballet pantomime based on the story by Oscar Wilde, was first produced by the Chicago Opera Co., Dec. 19, 1919. The original choreography was arranged by Adolph Boh[l]m, who also danced the part of Pedro, the dwarf, with Ruth Page as the youthful Infanta. Robert Edmond Jones was the designer of costumes and scenery.

The story, in brief, recounts the birthday party of the Spanish Infanta, surrounded by her young friends in the garden of the Royal Palace. We see a rich processional of the arriving guests with their servants bearing fantastic gifts.

There follows a fabulous entertainment, including Gypsy Dancers, a mock bull-fight, and finally little Pedro, a strange misshapen dwarf who strives his pathetic best to amuse and attract the fascinating Infanta. At the end of Pedro’s dance, in the moment of thoughtless excitement, the little Infanta throws him her handkerchief and disappears with her friends into the palace.

The dwarf tries impulsively to follow and at last, evading the guards, finds himself in the dimly lighted entrance hall. He is startled by the stealthy approach of a strange presence and slowly becomes aware that it is himself he is seeing in an enormous mirror. Never before has he fully realized his own deformity. He is appalled by the thought of the horrid apparition he must have seemed to the little Princess, and in his bitter realization he repeats, step by step the movements of that fatal dance. In a final frenzy he seizes a candelabra and hurls it at the mirror. His broken heart can no longer support him and he sinks dying to the floor.

At that moment some of the children, followed by the Infanta, come dancing into the room. At first they do not realize the tragedy that has taken place, but at length the Infanta sees the crumpled figure of the dwarf at her feet, her handkerchief tightly clutched in his dead hand. She steals away. The curtain falls.

“The comedy is finished.”²²⁶

The Birthday of the Infanta

A Ballet-Pantomime adapted from the story by Oscar Wilde.

Original choreography by Adolph Bolm.

Scenery and costumes by Robert Edmond Jones.

First produced by the Chicago Opera Co.,

Cleofonte Campanini, the general director, Dec. 19th 1919.

The story of the ballet

The occasion is the birthday of the Royal Infanta of Spain. After a short prelude the curtain rises on a group of aged gardeners who are preparing the garden for the fiesta. When they have finished the gardeners [trundle] off, with their wheelbarrows and garden tools and the stage for a moment is quiet empty.

The little princess then emerges from the palace alone, and wanders slowly about the garden among the friendly trees. She is soon joined by her nurses, who come to prepare her for the Great Surprise. Almost at once the children, her birthday guests begin to arrive. At the climax of their excitement a trumpet signal is heard from behind the scene.

A fantastic procession marches upon the stage. First comes the Major Domo, followed by a file of solemn servants, bearing the birthday gifts. The wrappings are removed and the presents displayed, each more exciting than the last.

²²⁶ “John Alden Carpenter Papers”, box 2 folder 113. Newberry Library, Roger and Julie Baskes Department of Special Collections.

The Major-Domo finally succeeds in quieting the gay little mob, and disposes them on the terrace above, from which they may witness the extraordinary entertainments which is to follow.

The spectacle begins. First there are gypsy dancers. Then comes a Bull Fight, the best kind of all, with boys on hoppy horses, and a wonderful full in [plush]. There are a [thons] and thrills, and the Bull is deftly killed by a prodigious little matador.

Then follows the great climax. Out from the wings comes the pathetic misshapen figure of Pedro, the dwarf, and he begins his clumsy dance. He serves to alternate between the gaiety and sad bravado. But he gains confidence as he proceeds and achieves at the end of his dance a wild and absorbing abandon. The music stops and the Princess leaning far over the balustrade in her excitement, throws to the dwarf her lace handkerchief. He is filled with extraordinary emotion—it must be a sign that she has found him beautiful, perhaps that she loves him.

But immediately there is further diversion. The Cook has appeared in his white cap and apron, bearing aloft an enormous birthday cake with [?] candles. A hungry procession follows the Cook around the garden and up the stairway into the Palace. The little forgotten dwarf tries to follow but the Major –Domo pushes him back and he falls in a heap at the bottom of the stairs. The door closes. He is alone. It is a sad moment. Her handkerchief—he still holds it in his hand. Emotion stirs his heart. He must find her again if he can.

The second scene discloses the gloomy interior of the lofty entrance hall of the Palace. Pedro has just pushed open the great doors, and enters. At first he can see nothing in the semi darkness, but suddenly he is appalled by the stealthy approach of a strange presence. Slowly he realizes that it is himself he is seeing in an enormous mirror. What a fantastic and horrid picture he must have seemed to the little Princess when he danced before her. In his bitter realization he begins to repeat, step by step, that fatal dance. Wilder and wilder grows the pace. At the climax his breaking heart can no longer support him, and in a final frenzy he seizes a candelabra and hurls it against the mirror, his sad little body falls in a heap upon the floor.

At that very moment a group of the children come running and dancing into the room. They do not see him in the darkness. They are followed almost at once by the Infanta. She pauses on the threshold feeling that some terrible thing has happened. She advances with hesitating steps to the little figure on the floor. She kneels down beside him. She touches with her hand the handkerchief which is tightly clutches in his own. She appeals to him to smile and dance for her again. But in final realization that it is too late, she steals away. The curtain falls, “The comedy is finished”.²²⁷

²²⁷ Hand written program notes by John Alden Carpenter from “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961,” Music Division, Library of Congress. These notes must have been for the premiere because the Infanta exits at the end. Not sure why there are two versions of the program in different locations.

APPENDIX F

ANNAL OF OPERA SEASONS 1918-1919 AND 1919-1920 IN

CHICAGO.²²⁸

Opera Season 1918-1919		Opera Season 1919-1920	
Ravinia Opera	Chicago Opera Association	Ravinia Opera	Chicago Opera Association
Verdi: <i>Aida</i> (June 29/July 10/Aug 18)	Verdi: <i>La traviata</i> (Nov 18/Dec 11)	Leoni: <i>L'Oracolo</i> (under the auspice of the Scotti Opera Company) with Leoncavallo: <i>Pagliacci</i> (Act 1) (June 28/July 4/ <i>Pagliacci</i> (Act 2) (Sep 1)	Montemezzi: <i>Le Nave</i> (Nov 18/Dec 1)
Donizetti: <i>Lucia Lammermoor</i> (June 30/July 10)	Puccini: <i>Madame Butterfly</i> (Nov 19/Nov 30/Jan 10/Jan 18 (mat))	Donizetti: <i>Lucia Lammermoor</i> (June 29)	Giordano: <i>Fedora</i> (Nov 20/Jan 3)
Verdi: <i>Il trovatore</i> (July 2/July 13/Aug 31)	Verdi: <i>Il trovatore</i> (Nov 20/Dec 14)	Verdi: <i>Aida</i> (July 1/July 6/Aug 7)	Verdi: <i>Un ballo in maschera</i> (Nov 21/Nov 30/Dec 26)
Offenbach: <i>The Tales of Hoffmann</i> (July 3/July 17)	Massenet: <i>Taïs</i> (Nov 22/Dec 7)	Offenbach: <i>The Tales of Hoffmann</i> (July 2/July 16)	Bellini: <i>Norma</i> (Nov 22 (mat)/Dec 16/Jan 12)
Leoncavallo: <i>Pagliacci</i> (complete) (July 4/Aug 21/Aug 29)	Donizetti: <i>Lucia Lammermoor</i> (Nov 23 (mat)/Dec 27)	Verdi: <i>Il trovatore</i> (July 3/July 8/July 15)	Donizetti: <i>Lucia Lammermoor</i> (Nov 22/Dec 7/Dec 25)
Verdi: <i>Rigoletto</i> (July 6/July 17/Aug 4/Aug 28)	Mascagni: <i>Isabeau</i> (Nov 23/Jan 6)	Rossini: <i>The Barber of Seville</i> (July 5/July 13)	Puccini: <i>La bohème</i> (Nov 25/Dec 3/Dec 13)
Puccini: <i>Tosca</i> (July 7/July 16/Aug 13)	Verdi: <i>Aida</i> (Nov 25/Dec 28 (mat)/Jan 11)	Delibes: <i>Lakmé</i> (July 9/July 20)	Leroux: <i>Le Chemineau</i> (Nov 26/Dec 8)
Gounod: <i>Faust</i> (July 9/July 30/Sep 1)	Bizet: <i>Carmen</i> (Nov 26/Dec 6/Jan 9/Jan 18)	Mascagni: <i>Cavalleria rusticana</i> (July 10/July 22/Aug 6)	Massenet: <i>Cléopâtre</i> (Nov 27)
Mascagni: <i>Cavalleria rusticana</i> (July 11/July 23/Aug 8)	Rossini: <i>William Tell</i> (Nov 27/Dec 2/Dec 13)	Puccini: <i>La bohème</i> (July 12/July 17/Aug 29)	Massenet: <i>Taïs</i> (Nov 29 (mat))
Rossini: <i>The Barber of Seville</i> (July 14/July 24)	Donizetti: <i>Linda de Chamounix</i> (Nov 28/Dec 2(mat))	Puccini: <i>Tosca</i> (July 19/July 24/Aug 5)	Verdi: <i>Aida</i> (Nov 29/Dec 18)
Massenet: <i>Manon</i> (July 18/July 25/Aug 6)	Puccini: <i>Tosca</i> (Nov 29/Dec 10)	Donizetti: <i>L'elisir d'amore</i> (July 26)	Massenet: <i>Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame</i> (Dec 2)
Delibes: <i>Lakmé</i> (July 20/July 28)	Gounod: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Nov 30 (mat)/Dec 9/Dec 21)	Gounod: <i>Faust</i> (July 27)	Verdi: <i>Rigoletto</i> (Dec 4/Dec 15/Jan 10 (mat))
Puccini: <i>La bohème</i> (July 27/Aug 1/Aug 27)	Puccini: <i>La bohème</i> (Dec 1 (mat)) with Thomas: <i>Hamlet</i> (Act 4) (Dec 28)	Puccini: <i>Madame Butterfly</i> (July 29/Aug 2)	Puccini: <i>Il trittico</i> (Dec 6 (mat)/Dec 22/Dec 30)
Verdi: <i>La traviata</i> (July 31/Aug 14)	Saint-Saëns: <i>Samsom and Delilah</i> (Dec 2/Dec 17/Dec 30/Jan 15)	Verdi: <i>La traviata</i> (July 31/Aug 3)	Bizet: <i>Carmen</i> (Dec 6/Jan 11)
Montemezzi: <i>L'amore dei</i>	Rossini: <i>The Barber of</i>	Bizet: <i>Carmen</i> (Aug 9/Aug	Verdi: <i>La traviata</i> (Dec 9)

²²⁸ Reproduced from Robert Marsh, *150 Years of Opera in Chicago*, (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006) 266-267.

<i>tre re</i> (Aug 3/Aug 20)	<i>Seville</i> (Dec 3/Dec 16/Jan 25)	19)	
Gounod: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Aug 7)	Gounod: <i>Faust</i> (Dec 4/Jan 4 (mat)/Jan 21)	Wolf-Ferrari: <i>The Secret of Suzanne</i> (Aug 10/Aug 20/Aug 30)	Puccini: <i>Tosca</i> (Dec 10/Jan 10)
Puccini: <i>Madame Butterfly</i> (Aug 10/Aug 22/Sep 2)	Ponchielli: <i>La Gioconda</i> (Dec 7 (mat)/Dec 20/Jan 1)	Massenet: <i>Taïs</i> (Aug 12/Aug 27)	Massenet: <i>Manon</i> (Dec 11)
Flotow: <i>Martha</i> (Aug 11/Aug 21)	Massenet: <i>Werther</i> (Dec 14 (mat)/Jan 8)	Montemezzi: <i>L'amore dei tre re</i> (Aug 13/Aug 16/Aug 24)	Rossini: <i>The Barber of Seville</i> (Dec 13 (mat)/Jan 24)
Wolf-Ferrari: <i>The Secret of Suzanne</i> (Aug 17/Aug 25)	Mascagni: <i>Cavalleria rusticana</i> with Leoncavallo: <i>Pagliacci</i> (Dec 18/Dec 24/Jan 4)	Leoncavallo: <i>Pagliacci</i> (complete) (Aug 14)	Bellini: <i>La sonnambula</i> (Dec 17) with <i>The Birthday of the Infanta</i> (ballet) (Dec 23/Dec 29)
Bizet: <i>Carmen</i> (Aug 18/Aug 24)	Massenet: <i>Manon</i> (Dec 23/Jan 7)	Massenet: <i>Manon</i> (Aug 17/Aug 21)	Gounod: <i>Faust</i> (Dec 24)
	Ricci: <i>Crispino e la comare</i> (Dec 25)	Gounod: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Aug 23/Aug 26)	Donizetti: <i>Don Paquale</i> (Dec 27 (mat)) with Meyerbeer: <i>Dinorah</i> (Act 2, scene 1) (Dec 31)
	Meyerbeer: <i>Dinorah</i> (Dec 31)	Flotow: <i>Martha</i> (Aug 28/Aug 31)	Debussy: <i>Pelléas et Mélisande</i> (Jan 1)
	Février: <i>Monna Vanna</i> (Jan 3/Jan 11 (mat))		De Koven: <i>Rip Van Winkle</i> (Jan 2 (première)/Jan 8/Jan 17)
	Verdi: <i>Rigoletto</i> (Jan 13/Jan 24)		Massenet: <i>Hérodiade</i> (Jan 3 (mat)/Jan 7/Jan 22)
	Février: <i>Gismonda</i> (Jan 14/Jan 20)		Ravel: <i>L'Heure espagnole</i> with Leoncavallo: <i>Pagliacci</i> (Jan 5)
	Catalani: <i>Loreley</i> (Jan 17/Jan 22)		Février: <i>Monna Vanna</i> (Jan 6)
	Massenet: <i>Cléopâtre</i> (Jan 23)		Montemezzi: <i>L'amore dei tre re</i> (Jan 9/Jan 17 (mat))
	Leroux: <i>Le Chemineau</i> (Jan 25 (mat))		Gunsbourg: <i>Le vieil aigle</i> with Leoncavallo: <i>Pagliacci</i> (Jan 5)
			Charpentier: <i>Louise</i> (Jan 14)
			Thomas: <i>Hamlet</i> (Jan 15)
			Messenger: <i>Madame Chrysanthème</i> (Jan 19/Jan 24 (mat))
			Donizetti: <i>L'elisir d'amore</i> (Jan 20/Jan 21)

APPENDIX G

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE INFANTA CHART SHOWING SHIFTS IN

TIME-SIGNATURES²²⁹

Time Signature	Stage Direction (corresponding with time-signature)	Measures this occurs
2/4	Gardeners at work in palace garden	
4/4	The Infanta enters alone She wanders about the garden The Infanta dances	
3/4	Her young attendants join her and interrupt her mood The Infanta speaks with her young friends The _____ dances among the guests	
4/4	Procession of the birthday guests	
3/8	The opening of the birthday gifts They all dance	
3/4	Major Domos announcing the entertainment Enter gypsy dancers Their dance begins	
2/4	Solo gypsy dance	
3/4	Finale of gypsy dance Major Domos (cut) Entrance of Tightrope walker and juggler (cut) They argue as to who shall begin (cut) The argument continues “Alphonse and Gaston” → referencing an old comic strip The Tightrope walker	
2/2	juggler	
3/4	The juggler finishes his act They argue again as to who is better ____ The tight rope walker begins again He sways desperately He picks himself up (cut) The two still argue (cut)	
2/4	Preparation for the bullfight The herald (triplets)	
6/8	Procession of the bullfight	
4/4	The bull pen is unlocked	
6/8	The bull reaches out The Picadors engage him The banderilla* Carpenter probably meant banderillero	
4/4	Enter the matador Exit of bullfighters	
3/4	The Major Domos	

²²⁹ This analysis is based on the condensed four-hand piano score, not the full orchestral score or two-hand piano score.

4/4	Entrance of the dwarf	
3/4	The dwarf's dance begins End of the dwarfs dance	3/4 (56mm); 4/4 (3mm); 2/4 (1m); 2/4 (1m); 4/4 (3mm); 2/4 (1m); 4/4 (1m); 2/4 (1m); 4/4 (1m); 2/4 (1m); 4/4 (2mm); 2/4 (18mm); 3/8(1m); 2/4 (2mm); 3/8 (1m); 2/4(29mm?)
2/4	He appeals to the Infanta	
3/4	She throws him her handkerchief His joy at her favor The children descend gaily from their places and dance	
3/4	The cook has appeared with an enormous birthday cake and leads the procession into the palace The dwarf has tried to follow but is repelled	
4/4	He moves about trying to find some way to enter the palace The scene has changed to a dark interior, the dwarf has jumped down from an open window He suddenly sees his image in a great mirror	
5/8	The fatal dance He whirls madly before the mirror, swings a candelabra—smashes the mirror and falls (3/4) The Infanta's handkerchief is still clutched in his hand (4/4)	5/8 (22mm); 6/8 (2mm); 9/8 (1m); 6/8 (4mm); 4/4 (5mm); 3/4 (6mm); 4/4 (4mm)
3/4	The Infanta dances gaily in—followed by the children—not seeing the fallen dwarf She suddenly sees the fallen figure And timidly approaches She reaches down	
4/4	Touches her handkerchief and recoils	
2/2	The Infanta and the children begin to back out of the room	
3/2	The Infanta is alone still retreating but as the scene closes	
4/4	She comes forward and kneels by the prostrate forms as the curtain falls	

APPENDIX H

FIGURES



Figure 1: Adolph Bolm as “Pedro” *The Birthday of the Infanta*, 1919. Photo clipping from “Ann Barzel Dance Research Collection, ca. 1830-2010” The Newberry Library Roger and Julie Baskes Department of Special Collections Chicago IL (3a 46 6-14; 3a 47 3-14, Box 76)



Figure 2: Adolph Bolm as “Pedro” in *The Birthday of the Infanta*, 1919. Photograph from “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961,” Music Division, Library of Congress.

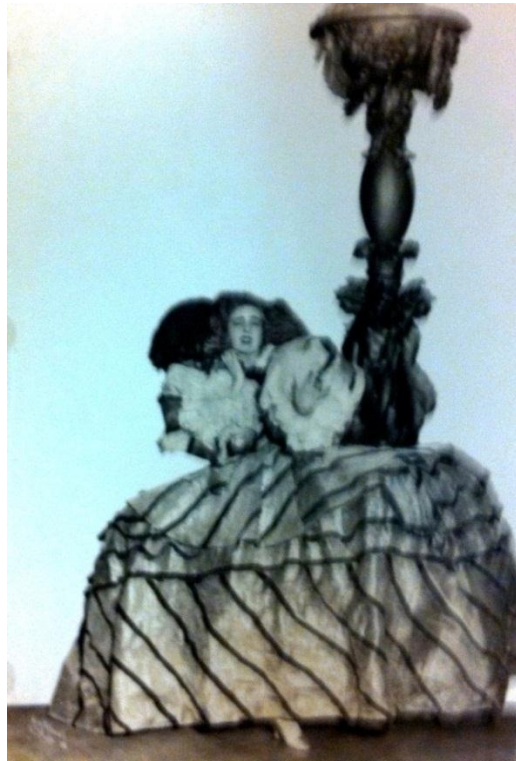


Figure 3: Ruth Page as the “Infanta” in *The Birthday of the Infanta*, 1919. Photograph from “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961,” Music Division, Library of Congress.

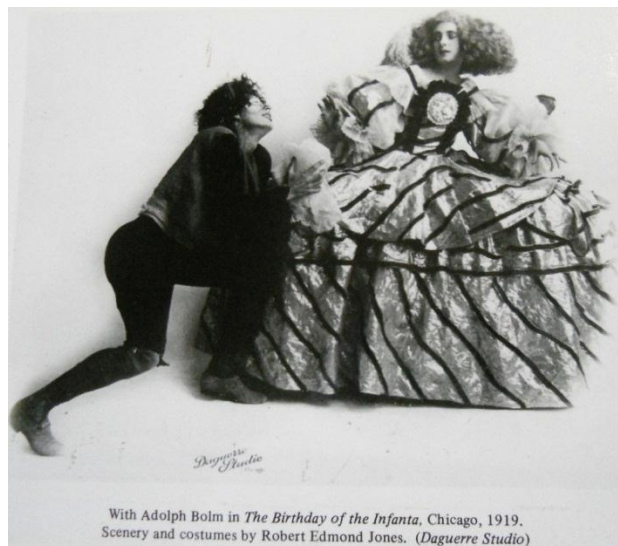


Figure 4: Ruth Page and Adolph Bolm as “Infanta” and “Pedro” in *The Birthday of the Infanta*, 1919. Replicated photograph from “Ann Barzel Dance Research Collection, ca. 1830-2010” The Newberry Library Roger and Julie Baskes Department of Special Collections Chicago IL (3a 46 6-14; 3a 47 3-14, Box 53)



Figure 5: Ruth Page and Adolph Bolm as “Infanta” and “Pedro” in *The Birthday of the Infanta*, 1919. Photograph from “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961,” Music Division, Library of Congress.



Figure 6: Sketch and watercolor design for Act 1 from *The Birthday of the Infanta*, 1919. From “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961,” Music Division, Library of Congress.



Figure 7: Cast and stage design from Act 1 of *The Birthday of the Infanta*, 1919. Black and White photograph from “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961,” Music Division, Library of Congress.



Figure 8: Sketch and watercolor design for Act 2 from *The Birthday of the Infanta*, 1919. From “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961,” Music Division, Library of Congress.



Figure 9: Cast and stage design from Act 2 of *The Birthday of the Infanta*, 1919. Photograph from “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961,” Music Division, Library of Congress.



Figure 10: Female costume sketch water color, Ink and pencil on onion skin paper, *Birthday of the Infanta* from “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961” Music Division, Library of Congress

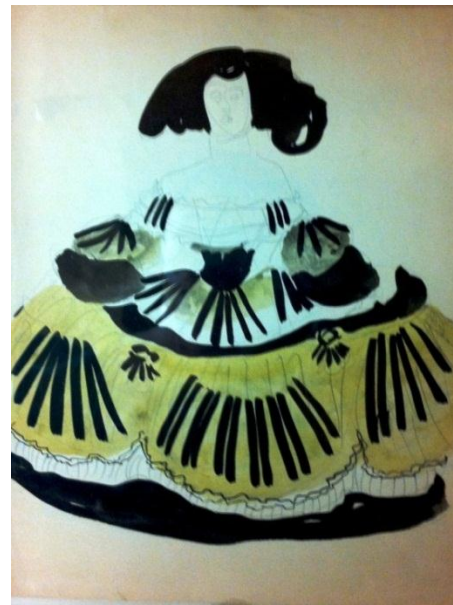


Figure 11: Female costume sketch, (possibly the Infanta) water color, ink and pencil on onion skin paper, *Birthday of the Infanta* from “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961” Music Division, Library of Congress



Figure 12: Female costume sketch, water Color, ink and pencil on onion skin paper, *Birthday of the Infanta* from “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961” Music Division, Library of Congress



Figure 13: Female costume sketch, water color, ink and pencil on onion skin paper, *Birthday of the Infanta* from “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961” Music Division, Library of Congress



Figure 14: Pedro costume sketch, water Color, ink and pencil on onion skin paper, *Birthday of the Infanta* from “John Alden Carpenter, 1891-1961” Music Division, Library of Congress

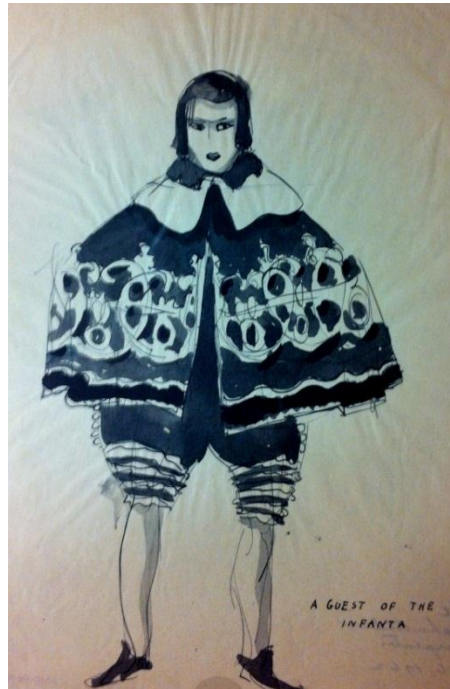


Figure 15: Guest of the Infanta costume sketch, water color, ink and pencil on onion skin paper *Birthday of the Infanta* from “John Alden Carpenter 1890-1961” Music Division, Library of Congress



Figure 16: Juggler sketch, water color, ink and pencil on onion skin paper, *Birthday of the Infanta* from “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961” Music Division, Library of Congress



Figure 17: Guard costume sketch, water color, ink and pencil on onion skin paper *Birthday of the Infanta* from “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961” Music Division, Library of Congress



Figure 18: Tightrope walker costume sketch, Water color, ink and pencil on onion skin Paper, *Birthday of the Infanta* from “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961” Music Division, Library of Congress

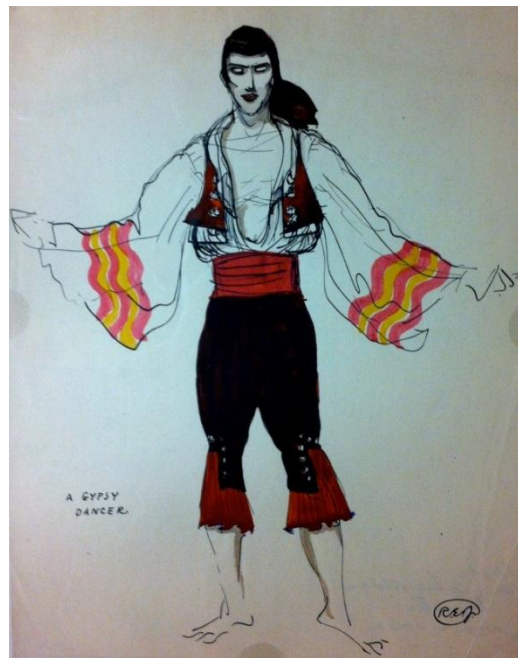


Figure 19: Gypsy costume sketch, water color, ink and pencil on onion skin paper *Birthday of the Infanta* from “John Alden Carpenter Collection, 1891-1961” Music Division, Library of Congress

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