

Popular Culture in Australia: The Ballets Russes

From 1936 to 1940, Australia welcomed three Ballets Russes tours to its shores.¹ These tours were a form of popular culture that engaged the public, but especially women, certain influential men and the upper class. The Ballets Russes tours were popular because they entertained and distracted a public who had just lived through the Depression and were facing World War II. Australia's prior exposure to ballet was enough that ballet was not completely unfamiliar, but not enough to stop the company being exciting and different. Furthermore, the exotic Ballets Russes dancers were intriguing to Australians at a time when citizens were almost exclusively of Anglo-Saxon heritage. The variety of works presented, encompassing classical pieces, world premieres and controversial symphonic ballets, combined with elaborate costumes and the dancers' theatricality and technique, made the ballet popular amongst a broader demographic. The tours' popularity show that for the most part, Australians embraced the evolution of ballet as a form of popular culture and were fascinated by an exotic and artistically talented group of people.

The Ballets Russes tours were a form of 'culture' because they brought to Australia innovative works of a scale never seen before, showing that culture is an evolving process across time.² They can be classified as 'popular' because they were widely viewed, heard about and read about.³ Evidence for this assertion comes from the sheer number of performances (650 in total) that the company gave on their three tours, the steady increase in

¹ The generic term 'Ballets Russes' refers to the three tours as a whole and is used in this essay for simplicity. The first tour, from October 1936-July 1937, came as the 'Monte Carlo Russian Ballet', the second tour, from September 1938-April 1939 as the 'Covent Garden Russian Ballet', and the third tour, from December 1939-August 1940, as the 'Original Ballet Russe': Mark Carroll, 'Introduction', in Mark Carroll, ed., *The Ballets Russes in Australia and Beyond* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2011), pp. 12-16.

² Richard Waterhouse, *Private Pleasures, Public Leisure: a History of Australian Popular Culture Since 1788* (South Melbourne: Longman, 1995), p. ix.

³ Lawrence W. Levine, 'The Folklore of Industrial Society: Popular Culture and Its Audiences', *The American Historical Review*, 97, no. 5 (December 1992), p. 1373, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2165941>>, viewed 18 May 2013.

Australian balletomanes since the 1936 tour and the large number of newspaper articles and advertisements featuring the dancers.⁴ Much of this publicity was rediscovered in a four year research project which commenced in 2006, was partnered by the Australian Ballet, the University of Adelaide and the National Library of Australia and received extensive funding from the Australian Research Council.⁵ These secondary sources are extremely valuable because they document the tours' influence on Australian society and culture. However, the specialised topic means a few key authors (notably Mark Carroll and Nicolette Fraillon) wrote most of the secondary sources used in this essay. These authors approach the topic from a similar early twenty-first century perspective and with a potential celebratory motive as a result of funding being given on the Ballets Russes' seventieth anniversary of their first Australian tour. Although this essay also uses secondary sources written in the twentieth century (such as those by Edward Pask and Robin Grove), which are written from a slightly different viewpoint, the publicly funded sources, despite their similar perspective, provide the most detailed and relevant information for this essay.

Newspapers suggest it was the 'general public' who were enthusiastic about the Ballets Russes.⁶ Considering that women were particularly enthusiastic about the ballet and noting that newspaper articles are not always known for their accuracy, one cannot read too much into these words.⁷ Having said this, these newspaper articles do support the view that the

⁴ Carroll, 'Introduction', p. 17: 'Development of the Art of Ballet.' *The Advertiser*, 8 April 1939, p. 9. Trove: National Library of Australia. <<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/printArticlePdf/49803230/3?print=n>>, viewed 11 May 2013.

⁵ National Library of Australia, *Ballets Russes in Australia: Our Cultural Revolution*, <<http://www.nla.gov.au/balletsrussesresearch/>>, viewed 2 April 2013. The sources authored by Jane Albert, Mark Carroll, Lee Christofis, Nicolette Fraillon, Valerie Lawson and Richard Stone were all produced as a result of this funding.

⁶ 'The Russian Ballet.' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 January 1937, p. 16. Trove: National Library of Australia. <<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/printArticlePdf/17294436/3?print=n>>, viewed 11 May 2013: 'The Russian Ballet: Local Season in July.' *The West Australian*, 2 June 1937, p. 12. Trove: National Library of Australia. <<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/printArticlePdf/41309037/3?print=n>>, viewed 11 May 2013.

⁷ Carroll, 'Introduction', p. 23.

tours were popular culture, as they were enjoyed by a variety of people.⁸ The frequent articles about the Ballets Russes appearing in women's magazines and women's supplements demonstrate that women had a particular interest in the tours.⁹ Children, especially girls, were also captivated by the ballet, with many taking up its study and seeking to be like their favourite Ballets Russes stars.¹⁰ In contrast, Annette Gillen's memory was that many men of that time, including her father, did not approve of the ballet.¹¹ This is only one person's recollection, recorded about seventy years after the event, which means it may not be representative of all men's attitudes to the ballet. However, that Gillen remembered this helps historians understand how she connected an individual experience to its broader social context to help make sense of her past, meaning this is a valuable source.¹² Furthermore, the absence of primary sources aimed only at men suggests they were not the target demographic of the tours. Nonetheless, a number of wealthy, influential men, notably Doctors Ewan Murray-Will and J. Ringland Anderson, as well as lawyer Arthur Allen, frequently interacted with and formed strong friendships with the dancers.¹³ Thus whilst Australian society as a whole enjoyed the ballet, it was most popular among women (and a few notable men), showing the gendered nature of ballet as a form of popular culture at this time.

⁸ 'The Russian Ballet.' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 January 1937, p. 16: 'The Russian Ballet: Local Season in July.' *The West Australian*, 2 June 1937, p. 12.

⁹ Nicolette Fraillon, *The Ballets Russes - Part 2*, The Australian Ballet <http://www.australianballet.com.au/watch_listen/audio/the_ballets_russes_part_2>, viewed 2 April 2013, at 6:43: 'Russian Ballet Will Soon Be Here!' *The Australian Women's Weekly*, September 12, 1936, p. 20. Trove: National Library of Australia. <<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/printArticlePdf/57125555/3?print=n>>, viewed 11 May 2013: 'Spirit of Pavlova Watches over Russian Ballet: Influence of Destinies on Present Generation.' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Women's Supplement, November 14, 1938, p. 12. Trove: National Library of Australia. <<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/printArticlePdf/17537074/3?print=n>>, viewed 11 May, 2013.

¹⁰ National Film and Sound Archive and National Library of Australia, *The Ballets Russes in Australia: An Avalanche of Dancing*, [video recording] 1999: Interview with Annette Gillen, conducted by Lee Christofis. Recorded on March 20, 2007, in North Adelaide for the Oral History Collection conducted by the National Library of Australia, <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.oh-v3n959892>> viewed 28 March 2013, Session 1 of 2 at 6:58.

¹¹ Interview with Annette Gillen, Session 1 of 2 at 4:01.

¹² Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds., *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 4.

¹³ Valerie Lawson, 'The Welcome in the Wilderness', in Mark Carroll, ed., *The Ballets Russes in Australia and Beyond* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2011), pp. 192, 199: Jane Albert, 'Cameras and Camaraderie: Life through an Antipodean Lens', in Mark Carroll, ed., *The Ballets Russes in Australia and Beyond* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2011), p. 221.

Different reactions to the ballet show class distinctions were still important in the 1930s, even though the ballet did have broad popular appeal. While the cost of a ticket precluded some from seeing a ballet performance, the dancers were extensively featured in newspapers and magazines, and some (such as Irina Baronova) promoted Australian cigarettes and cosmetics and attended afternoon teas at David Jones.¹⁴ Therefore, the dancers were visible even when not performing, making them familiar to a bigger audience and exposing more people to ballet. For some ‘highbrow’ critics, the ballet was too simple and had little appeal, so some intellectuals did feel ballet was an inferior art form.¹⁵ However, as the influence of certain influential men shows, the people who interacted with the dancers at excursions, parties and on the weekend were from the upper class, probably because they were the only ones who could afford to host the dancers.¹⁶ For example, Ringland Anderson, at whose home the whole company was invited to spend their day off, had ‘the most marvellous mansion you ever saw’, with two tennis courts and a swimming pool, and Murray-Will and Allen hosted dancers at their holiday houses.¹⁷ E. J. Francis’ critique that people’s reaction to the ballet was predetermined and based on their education and geographical location, with those from the North Shore more likely than others to see the ballet as a superior art form, shows Australian society still had clear class distinctions at this time.¹⁸ The Ballets Russes tours were a form of popular culture that was appreciated by the Australian public as a whole, but it was women, influential men and the upper classes of society for whom the tours had the most prestige and enjoyment.

¹⁴ Lee Christofis, ‘The Australian Legacy of the Ballets Russes’, in Mark Carroll, ed., *The Ballets Russes in Australia and Beyond* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2011), p. 290: National Film and Sound Archive and National Library of Australia, *The Ballets Russes in Australia*, 1999.

¹⁵ ‘The Russian Ballet.’ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 January 1937, p. 16.

¹⁶ Lawson, ‘The Welcome in the Wilderness’, p. 193.

¹⁷ Letter by Rosemary Deveson on October 11, 1938, in Leland Windreich, ed., *Dancing for de Basil: Letters to her parents from Rosemary Deveson, 1938-1940* (Toronto; Dance Collection Dance Press/es, 1996), p. 124: Albert, ‘Cameras and Camaraderie’, p. 221: National Film and Sound Archive and National Library of Australia, *The Ballets Russes in Australia*, 1999: Lawson, ‘The Welcome in the Wilderness’, p. 192.

¹⁸ E. J. Francis, in Mark Carroll, ‘Tall Tales and True: Ballet Straddles the Great Divide’, in Mark Carroll, ed., *The Ballets Russes in Australia and Beyond* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2011), p. 79.

Global and local events occurring around the Ballets Russes' tours enhanced their popularity. The Ballets Russes arrived in the post-Depression era, when not only could more people afford a trip to the ballet, but they welcomed an escape from difficult times.¹⁹ In fact, attempts to bring the Ballets Russes to Australia in 1933 failed not due to lack of interest, but because a tour was not financially viable. In contrast, the 1936 tour was a huge financial success, with audiences constantly at capacity.²⁰ The bleakness of the Depression meant the arrival of exotic dancers, bringing with them innovative works, colour and new sets, was, according to Gillen's recollections, particularly exciting for Australians.²¹ Moreover, the first performance on the 1936 tour intentionally coincided with Adelaide's centenary celebrations.²² This meant the South Australian Government actively promoted the ballet and even bought 500 tickets, which were given to those who supported and organised centenary events.²³ Centenary celebrations and government support for the tour surely drew the public's attention to the ballet and contributed to its popularity. By the time of the Ballets Russes' last Australian tour in December 1939, World War II meant that many of the dancers from Eastern bloc countries, including some who were stateless refugees, were unable or unwilling to return home.²⁴ Therefore the company extended their tour by five months, giving more Australians an opportunity to see the ballet and providing an important distraction to Australians at a frightening time.²⁵ One newspaper reported in 1939 that 'now, more than any

¹⁹ Interview with Annette Gillen, Session 1 of 2 at 35:22.

²⁰ Richard Stone, 'Ballet Arrived All Serene - Cabling Ballet History', *National Library of Australia News*, 18, no. 1, (October 2007), p. 20, <<http://search.informit.com.au.ezproxy.sl.nsw.gov.au/fullText;dn=200710951;res=APAFT>>, viewed 2 April 2013; Albert, 'Cameras and Camaraderie', p. 221.

²¹ Interview with Annette Gillen, Session 1 of 2 at 11:52.

²² Edward Pask, *Enter the Colonies Dancing: A History of Dance in Australia 1835-1940* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 141.

²³ Carroll, 'Tall Tales and True', pp. 84-85.

²⁴ Fraillon, *The Ballets Russes - Part 2*, at 7:11.

²⁵ National Film and Sound Archive and National Library of Australia, *The Ballets Russes in Australia*, 1999.

other time, the [Ballets Russes] is wanted here'.²⁶ War meant the dancers engaged Australians not only through their performances, but also on a political level, through their fundraising efforts for eastern European refugees.²⁷ The popularity of the ballet at such a time reveals that Australians embraced that which helped them escape an uncertain reality.

Not only did the broader global and local context contribute to Australia's receptiveness to the Ballets Russes, but so did the prior history of ballet in Australia. The Ballets Russes were not an isolated novelty, but rather the pinnacle of an Australian ballet tradition dating back to the 1830s.²⁸ Before 1936, several international superstars had visited Australia, notably Adeline Genée in 1913, Anna Pavlova in 1926 and 1929 and Olga Spessivtseva in 1934. Thus ballet was not unknown in Australia; however Australia's isolation from Europe meant that before the 1930s, ballet was not a big part of Australian life.²⁹ The Ballets Russes arrived in 1936 with sixty-two dancers, making them the largest dance company ever brought to Australia.³⁰ They promoted themselves as a whole company of dancers, which Arnold Haskell wrote 'gives a far greater artistic result than [having a] major personality'.³¹ The Ballets Russes were therefore a sufficiently new and different attraction that they interested the public, but Australia's experience with ballet meant their dancing was not completely

²⁶ *The Argus*, 23 September 1939, p. 2, in Michelle Potter, 'De Basil in Australia: Publicity and Patronage', *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research*, 11, no. 2 (Autumn 1993), p. 17, <<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy2.library.usyd.edu.au/stable/pdfplus/1290681.pdf?acceptTC=true>>, viewed 18 May 2013.

²⁷ Fraillon, *The Ballets Russes - Part 2*, at 7:40.

²⁸ Robin Grove, 'Body Politics', in S.L. Goldberg and F.B. Smith, eds., *Australian Cultural History* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 217.

²⁹ Fraillon, *The Ballets Russes - Part 2*, at 1:23.

³⁰ Pask, *Enter the Colonies Dancing*, p. 139.

³¹ Michelle Potter, 'Arnold Haskell in Australia: Did Connoisseurship or Politics Determine his Rôle?', *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research*, 24, no. 1 (June 2006), p. 38, <http://www.swetswise.com.ezproxy2.library.usyd.edu.au/FullTextProxy/swproxy?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.eupjournals.com%2Fdoi%2Fpdfplus%2F10.3366%2Fdard.2006.0008&ts=1368836416642&cs=2902903161&userName=0017213.ipdirect&emCondId=17213&articleID=40876252&yevoID=2492623&titleID=55126&referrer=4&remoteAddr=129.78.139.28&hostType=PRO&swsSessionId=TIoTyYYjP8eo+D2ovfoT2A_.pasc1>, viewed 18 May 2013.

unfamiliar. The Ballets Russes tours marked a ballet 'renaissance' in Australia.³² This was possible because it built on earlier ballet tradition and came at a time when society craved colour, excitement and distraction.

In the 1930s, 98% of Australia's population was of Anglo-Saxon heritage and the White Australia policy was in full force.³³ Therefore, the dancers from the Ballets Russes, who were not only Russian and eastern European, but also Scandinavian, French, Canadian, English and Japanese-American, were extraordinarily exotic to a mostly white Australia.³⁴ The Ballets Russes accentuated their foreignness by deliberately changing the names of non-Russian dancers to make them sound more exotic. For example, Jean Hart became 'Kira Bounina' and Madeline Parker's new name was 'Mira Dimina'.³⁵ Indeed, Australia was fascinated by all aspects of these glamorous people's lives, right down to their unusual superstitions and the different foods they ate.³⁶ Australia's exposure to these people helped break down society's Anglophilia and cultural insularity at this time.³⁷ However, much of the promoting of the Ballets Russes in Australia was done by the British dance writer Arnold Haskell. At a time when Australians still sought guidance from their 'mother country', perhaps another reason why the Ballets Russes were popular was because they were approved by a 'familiar' British person.³⁸ These dancers were still mainly white Europeans, so they were not entirely challenging Australia's racial exclusivity, but they did open Australia's eyes

³² 'Ballets-Russes: The Birth of a New Art.' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, September 26, 1936, p. 13. Trove: National Library of Australia. <<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/printArticlePdf/17286141/3?print=n>>, viewed 11 May 2013.

³³ Carroll, 'Introduction', p. 22.

³⁴ Carroll, 'Introduction', p. 22.

³⁵ Interview with Jean Hart, conducted by Richard Stone. Recorded on June 28, 2007, at Hyde Street Studios in San Francisco. Held by the National Library of Australia, <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.oh-vn4082198>> viewed 2 April 2013, at 2:50: Pask, *Enter the Colonies Dancing*, p. 145.

³⁶ Nicolette Fraillon (with Mark Carroll, Lee Christofis, Robyn Holmes, Richard Stone and John Thomson), *A Meeting With Destiny* (publication included in Australian Ballet's *Revolutions and Destiny* season souvenir programme in 2007), <<http://www.australianballet.com.au/res/pdfs/AMeetingWithDestinyInsert.pdf>>, viewed 2 April 2013.

³⁷ Richard Haese, in Potter, 'De Basil in Australia: Publicity and Patronage', p. 16.

³⁸ Potter, 'Arnold Haskell in Australia', p. 49.

to different cultures. The Ballets Russes' popularity in Australia was therefore partly due to their foreign nature and exoticism, which shows that Australians were fascinated with foreigners (albeit those of a predominately European background) in the 1930s.

Remembering that ballet was somewhat unfamiliar, but not unknown, to Australian audiences, the Ballets Russes were popular because they appealed to balletomanes and novices alike. The dancers' portrayal of stories and emotions was 'obvious even to those who have no knowledge of ballet'.³⁹ Likewise, the *Sydney Morning Herald* said the Russian ballet combined artistry and emotion to make a universally understood language.⁴⁰ That these sources, from different years and different states, corroborate each other gives more weight to these individual opinions. The ballets were easy to follow partly because choreographers such as Michel Fokine created 'complete works of art' by giving equal focus to the dancing, music, drama and design.⁴¹ That the company brought fifteen tonnes of scenery and more than two hundred costumes with them in 1936 highlights the sheer scale of and attention to detail in their performances, which contributed to people's overall understanding and subsequent enjoyment of the ballet.⁴² The tour established a profitable 'triple formula' for ballet, consisting of classic pieces, light-hearted crowd-pleasers and epic tragedies, the variety of which made the ballet appeal to a broad audience.⁴³ The press and the public viewed the dancers' ability to vary from expressing grief, to humour, to drama, to fantasy, to romance and to 'abstract loveliness', depending on the piece being performed, as truly

³⁹ *Mail Magazine*, 8 April 1939, p. 5, in Mark Carroll, 'Let's Stage a Fight!': Massine's Symphonic Ballets in Australia', *Brolga: AN Australian Journal About Dance*, 26, (June 2007), p. 24, <<http://search.informit.com.au.ezproxy2.library.usyd.edu.au/documentSummary;dn=651085635698313;res=IELLCC>>, viewed 18 May 2013.

⁴⁰ 'The Russian Ballet.' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 January 1937, p. 16.

⁴¹ Fraillon et al., *A Meeting With Destiny: 'Complete Work of Art.'* *The Advertiser*, April 5, 1939, p. 26. Trove: National Library of Australia. <<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/printArticlePdf/49802167/3?print=n>>, viewed 11 May 2013.

⁴² 'Russian Ballet For Australia.' *The Courier Mail*, July 15, 1936, p. 15. Trove: National Library of Australia. <<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/printArticlePdf/38496426/3?print=n>>, viewed 11 May 2013; Pask, *Enter the Colonies Dancing*, p. 163.

⁴³ Grove, 'Body Politics', p. 223.

remarkable.⁴⁴ These different emotions could either thrill or soothe their audiences, depending on the work shown.⁴⁵ The variety of works presented, as well as the ease in which audiences could understand these works, meant ballet appealed even to those with little previous ballet knowledge. This shows Australians embraced even somewhat unfamiliar forms of popular culture.

For those more familiar with ballet, including the few Australians who had seen the company perform in London, the Ballets Russes were still captivating because of the range of new and internationally renowned works they brought to Australia and the way they pushed the boundaries of ballet.⁴⁶ The dancers' beauty on and off stage shook Melbourne from its view that it was the centre of culture in the Southern Hemisphere, instead exposing Australia to a new group of international stars.⁴⁷ At the time, the Ballets Russes was 'by far the best ballet to be seen in the world', so it was incredible they were in Australia for five years in a row.⁴⁸ Of course, this statement is an author's opinion, but it makes clear the Ballets Russes were a highly acclaimed company. Audiences marvelled at the dancers' intentionally celebrated technique, such as Tamara Tchinurova's 'famous thirty-two fouettés' in 1936.⁴⁹ Out of the forty-six different ballets performed throughout the three tours, seven were world premieres and an astonishing thirty-five were Australian premieres.⁵⁰ Therefore, even those familiar with ballet had never seen such large scale and spectacular performances.⁵¹ It was modernity, which facilitates a global exchange of ideas across borders, that allowed these innovative works and world premieres to come to Australia, showing Australia could keep up with the

⁴⁴ 'The Russian Ballet.' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 January 1937, p. 16.

⁴⁵ 'Russian Ballet Will Soon Be Here!' *The Australian Women's Weekly*, September 12, 1936, p. 20.

⁴⁶ Fraillon, *The Ballets Russes - Part 2*, at 4:10.

⁴⁷ Christofis, 'The Australian Legacy of the Ballets Russes', p. 290.

⁴⁸ John Cargher, *Opera and Ballet in Australia* (Stanmore: Cassell Australia Limited, 1977), p. 217.

⁴⁹ *The Adelaide Advertiser*, in Pask, *Enter the Colonies Dancing*, p. 140.

⁵⁰ 'Appendix A - Ballets Russes in Australia - The Repertoire' in Mark Carroll, ed., *The Ballets Russes in Australia and Beyond* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2011), pp. 320-321.

⁵¹ Fraillon, *The Ballets Russes - Part 2*, at 5:43 and 8:11.

latest overseas developments.⁵² The Ballets Russes appealed to people with varied knowledge of ballet, because their works were expressive and easily understood, whilst the company was also technically proficient and had an extensive repertoire.

These new works featured the classical and the controversial, which led to greater publicity and popularity.⁵³ The most contentious aspect was choreographer Leonide Massine's decision to use music from the symphonic canon to accompany his ballets.⁵⁴ Some musicians felt that ballet detracted from the symphony's beauty and that it was offensive to symphonic composers to set their music to dance.⁵⁵ This reflects Matthew Arnold's view that culture consists only of certain works which possess particular aesthetic qualities.⁵⁶ Despite these criticisms, these ballets that blurred the distinction between high and popular culture were hugely successful, with the company performing the symphonic ballet *Les Presages* 116 times throughout their tours.⁵⁷ Some music critics saw the value of innovation, with Thorold Waters saying 'neither balletomanes nor musician [could] afford to miss' the merging of two art forms.⁵⁸ This shows the evolving nature of culture and that what constitutes popular culture is defined by the people, not an intellectual elite such as the music critics who thought they were too superior to view the ballet.⁵⁹ Symphonic ballets were popular because they were innovative, exciting and contentious works that brought different concepts of art

⁵² Jeanette Delamoir, 'Sweet dreams: Queensland, sugar and the 1927 Royal Commission into the Moving Picture Industry', *Studies in Australasian Cinema*, 5, no. 2 (August 2011), p. 112, <<http://docserver.ingentaconnect.com.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/deliver/connect/intellect/17503175/v5n2/s2.pdf?expires=1368864988&id=74252009&titleid=75007868&accname=FISHER+LIBRARY+-+SERIALS&checksum=3E85856C260B3EB920F3AE8BB9B003A3>>, viewed 18 May 2013; Potter, 'De Basil in Australia: Publicity and Patronage', p. 16.

⁵³ 'Russian Ballet Arrival in Australia.' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, October 7, 1936, p. 9. Trove: National Library of Australia. <<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/printArticlePdf/17277357/3?print=n>>, viewed 11 May 2013.

⁵⁴ Fraillon et al., *A Meeting With Destiny*.

⁵⁵ Carroll, 'Let's Stage a Fight!', pp. 15-16: Fraillon et al., *A Meeting With Destiny*.

⁵⁶ Waterhouse, *Private Pleasures, Public Leisure*, p. x.

⁵⁷ Carroll, 'Let's Stage a Fight!', p.16: National Film and Sound Archive and National Library of Australia, *The Ballets Russes in Australia*, 1999.

⁵⁸ Carroll, 'Let's Stage a Fight!', p. 25: Fraillon et al., *A Meeting With Destiny*.

⁵⁹ Waterhouse, *Private Pleasures, Public Leisure*, p. ix: Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (London: Fontana Books, 1988), p. 237.

together for the first time. While most of Australian society embraced this new venture as part of the continuing development of culture, some were resistant to the idea that culture constantly changes.

The popularity of the Ballets Russes was due to contextual factors and the ballet's broad appeal. The years 1936 to 1940 were an ideal time for the company to perform in Australia, because the strain of the Depression was easing and people craved entertainment, meaning the tour was a financial success. The outbreak of war also meant more Australians were able to enjoy the ballet at a time when they sought distraction from frightening world events. The Ballets Russes tours exposed an Anglo-centric Australia to exotic foreigners, whose seemingly glamorous lives Australians found fascinating. Australia's prior exposure to ballet meant some people were familiar with this art form, which remained interesting because of the many Australian and world premieres and the controversial symphonic ballets, and because even novices could understand the ballet as a total work of art. The tours were enjoyed by a broad sector of society, but it was women and members of the upper class who often formed the strongest bonds with the dancers and a greater connection to the ballet. The popularity of the Ballets Russes in Australia reveals that Australian society actively engaged with an innovative, exciting and at times controversial form of popular culture.

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