

“CONSTANT THOUGHT” BRAHMS
Waltz Op 39 N°15 A flat major

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

“A waltz” by Brahms, danced by Malkovsky, appeared on the programme of the Theatre Femina on May 12, 1923. During the “23rd Dance Friday” on March 28, 1924, Malkovsky performed “waltzes” by Brahms and on March 8, 1928, “a waltz” was performed by two female dancers at the Maison Gaveau. The opus numbers were never indicated; only guesses can be made in line with the waltzes taught from 1949 onwards. The waltz for two female dancers certainly must have been op.39 n°2. It was always taught as a duo, whereas n°15 was always a solo.

COSTUME

The garment is a long, white tunic in hand-woven silk.

MESSAGE OF THE DANCE

Waltz op.39 n°.15 entitled “Constant thought” by Malkovsky is a tribute to Isadora Duncan. Isadora performed this waltz with rose petals that she would let fall from her hands, following the musical phrases. This is shown by José Clara's sketches. Malkovsky must have been inspired by this vision. He is known to have seen Isadora dancing and he never concealed his admiration for her.

Although the movements he imagined recall the scattering of petals, the choreography is by no means a replication of Isadora's dance.

It is the expression of a spiritual filiation. Malkovsky said of Isadora:

“She made me understand what I had to seek”.

MUSIC

Malkovsky did not choreograph to the first musical phrase, (bars 1 to 8)
Bar 8 of the notation corresponds to bar 16 of the musical score.

PHOTOS

Lydia around 1932 by an anonymous photographer.
Malkovsky in 1960 by Jean Hermann.
Suzanne Bodak in 1998 by Bernard Muller.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

The dance is the calling up of a vision.
Right from the outset, the left hand is placed at the level of the solar plexus, the centre of emotion.

Bars

1 to 2: the right hand joins the left with a long inward breath, as if it were filling itself.

3 to 8: the arms rise and open in a gesture of plenitude.

9 to 11: let the petals fall. The end of the opening of the arms corresponds to the first beat. (see the exercises: “petals”)

13 to 14: the held petals are dispersed by the right hand.

The body becomes a huge spiral from which petals escape.

15 to 23: breathing initiates the arm movements, which signify the reminiscence of an elusive image.

29 to 33: the same movement becomes more and more ethereal, flowing very lightly.

35 to 36: the lifting hands are the remembrance of an esthetic and spiritual emotion that was of supreme importance to Malkovsky.

Arms extend, tensionless, “slightly tensed”; the body seems suspended as if held by the strings of a puppeteer.