

GRANDE VALSE BRILLANTE CHOPIN
Op. 18 E flat major

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This waltz was performed for the first time by Christiane Reynaërt at the Salle Gaveau on June 18, 1948. According to the programmes, this solo seems to be one of the last Malkovsky created. But apparently this composition existed many years before and was interpreted in Paris salons, always by a female dancer.

COSTUME

The dancer wore a short, hand-woven silk tunic.

MESSAGE OF THE DANCE

In the 1948 programme, the waltz was subtitled with a verse by Rabindranath Tagore:

*“Freed from the bonds of the sleeping Earth,
Joy makes her spring into infinity”.*

Chantal, the last student to be taught this dance by Malkovsky, was told in 1948:

“I only teach it to those of a fiery, lively personality. It is not a walk in the park”.

“To perform it, you must be able to “organize” your energy in order to give it out from next to nothing to the utmost, imperceptibly, inevitably. It is a dance leading to a dead end, you are taken into a whirlwind which can only end up in a fall. You can hardly breathe. It is nothing but suspension, suggestion, and leads to extremes. Before performing it, each musical phrase must be ‘sensed’: “*Listen to the music*” Malkovsky told me”. (Quotation by Chantal Sentis).

MUSIC

The repeat of bars 85-100 of the musical score is not played; the bars have been notated without taking this repeat into account.

The repeat of bars 133-147 is not played.

The repeat of bars 181-212 is played.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Chantal Sentis in 1960 photographed in Malkovsky's studio by Jean Hermann.

Suzanne Bodak in 1998 by Bernard Muller.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

This dance is the most complex of Malkovsky's compositions. Notation is limited to the choreographic structure; actually performing it is a challenge for the interpreter.

The choreography is based on the musical phrases and the way they develop; it is structured from three gestural motifs which progress on a large range of tension to take the dancer in a final whirlwind at the centre of which she falls.

The first leitmotif is presented for the first time in bars 5 to 12

Bars 5 to 8: The lightness of this skipping is to be looked for in the bouncing of the hands against the air, as if they were drawn upward by the wrists. This very brief dynamic, in accordance with the staccato on the strong beats, leads to a springing up.

The gesture of laying on the hands relates to the melody, hence its ascending line.

At the beginning, the hands bounce weightlessly against the air, but during the repeats of this leitmotif, especially in the fourth (bars 237-266), the pressure against the air increases, which makes the bouncing more perceptible as well as the *springing up* of the body.

Bars 9 to 12: This movement progresses together with the musical phrases and the crescendo towards more amplitude and volume. At the beginning, it is only sketchy and less determined. Towards the end of the dance, it should be very vast, abundant and determined. Malkovsky named this movement “*Bacchanalia*”.

The 2nd leitmotif (bars 37 to 40)

The first bar of this leitmotif is the most complex one: its meaning is “*gently giving one's hands to someone*”. The interpreter should have the feeling she is *pulling threads* and then being pulled by her own hands.

Repeat of the leitmotifs

Bars 53 to 68: More determined in the jumps and the weight shifting on the left foot in the “*Bacchanalia*”.

Bars 101 to 116: The skipping echoes to the detached chords of the music and the lifting of the leg embodies the lightness of the melody.

Depending upon available space the four “*grands tours*”, may be directed downstage or remain in place. You may also either move forward or backward. The melody should be followed while performing the fourth “*grand tour*” (115-116) in order to slow the movement down.

Bars 117 to 132: Chantal described the feeling you should look for: “You're unwinding”.

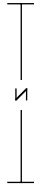
Bars 149 to 164: Bounce lightly like the notes.

Bars 334 to 349: Let yourself be caught by the rapid turns, as if snatched up by the spiral of the whirlwind.

GLOSSARY

Direction of movement

Bars 21 to 34



Bars 53 to 68



Bars 237 to 252



First repeat of the 1st leitmotif:

The transfers of weight become larger.

Second repeat of the 1st leitmotif:

The transfers and the volume of all movements become larger.

Third repeat of the 1st leitmotif:

The interpretation of the 1st leitmotif must reach a maximum amplitude.

The transfers and the volume of all movements become as large as possible. See “Technical Specifications” for the development of this 1st leitmotif.

Rallentando

From bar 212 up to bar 228.

The slowdown depends on the size of the stage.