



Dalí and the Ballet

Set and Costumes for
The Three-Cornered Hat

Dalí and the Ballet: Set and Costumes for *The Three-Cornered Hat*

February 24 - May 28, 2000

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Dalí and the Ballet
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The Three-Cornered Hat

Curtis L. Carter

with essays by
Robert Descharnes
Lynn Garafola
and
George Dunkel

Haggerty Museum of Art

Marquette University ~ Milwaukee, Wisconsin

PREFACE

The Haggerty Museum of Art is naturally concerned with the art of Salvador Dalí. Its premiere modern painting happens to be Dalí's *Madonna of Port Lligat* (1949), which is one of the artist's most appreciated works. The loan of the *Madonna of Port Lligat* to an exhibition in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1998 was the initial step leading to the current exhibition of *Dalí and the Ballet: Set and Costumes for The Three-Cornered Hat*. While attending the opening in Rio, I viewed the set and costumes which were part of the exhibition, *Dalí Monumental* organized by Robert Descharnes and Texoart Company for the Museu Nacional de Bellas Artes in Rio de Janeiro and the Museu de Arte de Sao Paulo in Sao Paulo. With the encouragement of Robert Descharnes, I approached the lenders of the backdrop and costumes who both were willing to consider an exhibition of Dalí's stage decor and costumes at the Haggerty Museum. With the participation of Mr. Descharnes and the lenders, subsequent meetings in Geneva and Paris were held to work out the details of the exhibition.

A meeting in Miami, Florida with the Spanish dancer-choreographer Ana María was the beginning of my research into the project. Dalí had been engaged to design the decor and costumes for the 1949 production of *The Three-Cornered Hat* at the Zeigfeld Theater in New York choreographed by Ana María. She and her Cuban-American husband Alfredo Munar (a ballet conductor-composer) very kindly provided important background information concerning the project and its history. Subsequent meetings in New York with George Dunkel, who with his father Eugene, worked with Dalí to execute the stage decor for several of his ballets, proved to be the source of invaluable information. Dunkel and his father ran the Dunkel Design Studios in New York. Leonardo Patterson of Munich, Germany and Geneva, Switzerland who purchased the decor and costumes for *The Three-Cornered Hat* from Ana María Munar some twenty years ago, also provided valuable information concerning the history of the works.

The project has resulted in a catalogue that highlights Dalí's important contributions to the ballet, and to the theater in general. He is well known for the products of his endless imagination as a painter, sculptor, and graphic artist. The essays of Robert Descharnes who worked with Salvador Dalí and is a noted author and archivist of Dalí, dance critic and historian Lynn Garafola, and scenic designer George Dunkel, together with the curator's essay, offer a beginning to the study of Dalí's art for the theater. Up to this time his contributions to the ballet theater, including libretti, decor, and costumes have received little or no serious scholarly attention. It is our hope that this modest beginning will encourage others to explore this topic in greater depth.

Curtis L. Carter

Director, Haggerty Museum of Art
Curator of the Exhibition

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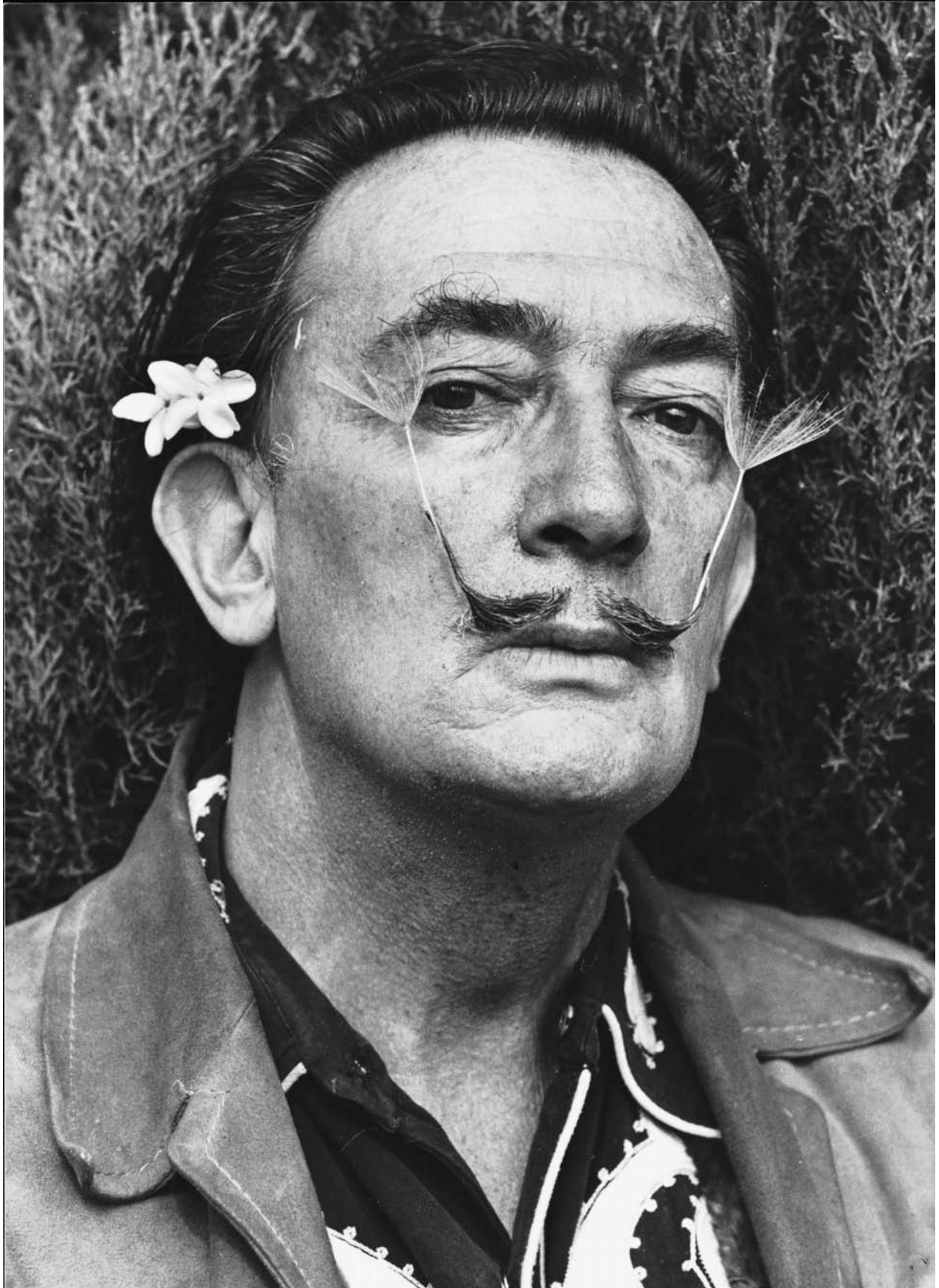
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The planning and execution of this exhibition has involved the cooperation of many individuals. First, I thank Mr. and Mrs. Max Lahyani of Geneva, Switzerland, Mr. Jean Pierre GRIVORY, President of COFINLUXE, Mr. Robert Descharnes and Mr. Nicholas Descharnes SARL and Demart Pro Arte BV without whose cooperation the exhibition would have not been possible. Thanks also to the Boston Store and the Wisconsin Arts Board for their support. Artistic director Phyllis Ravel and the staff of the Helfaer theater at Marquette University provided technical advice and support in planning for the installation. Tina Campbell of the costume department provided assistance with the presentation of the costumes, and John Devlin of the theater's technical staff assisted with the installation. Playwright David Ravel wrote an original piece, *Cooking With Dali*, for presentation in conjunction with the exhibition.

The preparation and installation of the exhibition and educational programs was orchestrated by the staff of the Haggerty Museum. Lee Coppernoll coordinated public programming and arranged docent-led tours; Annemarie Sawkins assisted in curating the exhibition; James Kieselburg acted as registrar; Steven Anderson, assisted by Tim Dykes installed the exhibition; Jerome Fortier designed the catalogue; Paul Amitai coordinated publicity; Joyce Ashley and Nicole Hauser provided administrative support; and Clayton Montez coordinated security.

Curtis L. Carter
Director



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Dalí at Port Lligat, 11/10/59
Reproduced courtesy of Salvador Dalí © Demart Pro Arte BV 1999

Salvador Dalí: Design for the Theater

Curtis L. Carter

It is often overlooked that the theater offers a unique environment for visual artists as well as for actors, dancers, and musicians. Cyril Beaumont's comments on art for ballet express succinctly the fertile opportunities and challenges for artists working in the theater.

The growth of the ballet ... affords a whole new field for artistic endeavor. But designing for ballet differs from designing for the theater. The actor rarely moves quicker than at a rapid walk; the dancer is in constant movement, leaping, bounding, turning—and the costume must be conceived in relation to those movements ... A costume at rest appears quite different from a costume in movement. And perhaps that is why design for the ballet makes such a strong appeal to the serious artist of the theater who can combine practical knowledge with fantasy and imagination.¹

In a successful theatrical performance, whether ballet, opera, or drama, painters and sculptors whose contributions consist of decor and design for costumes work closely with representatives of all of the other arts. For instance, creating a successful ballet is a complex affair requiring the most exacting collaboration among the different arts even though the outcome appears to flow seamlessly to its audience. "Not one of the several fused arts essential to complete effectiveness can be treated as if it were of trifling importance or trivial. Each has its place and must be made to fit harmoniously into the rich mosaic," as the critic Edward Alden Jewell once remarked.² The design of painted sets, sculptures to enrich the performing spaces, as well as costumes for the performers has required the services of artists throughout the centuries. From the Renaissance to the present, stage scenery consisting of painted backdrops required the services of artists. The painters Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael, as well as the renowned Baroque sculptor Lorenzo Bernini, are among those artists of the past who were especially interested in scenic design and stage decor. Similarly a number of major artists of the twentieth century such as Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, and Isamu Noguchi, to mention a few, have found the theater an attractive venue. Picasso was engaged in Paris by Diaghilev from 1917 to 1924 to design scenery and costumes for his Ballets Russes, most notably for the ballets *Parade* (1917) and *The Three-Cornered Hat* (1919) both choreographed by Léonide Massine.³ Noguchi's legendary work with Martha Graham in her full evening dance *Clytemnestra* (1958) and some 20 works in total, beginning in 1929 attest to the important contributions of artists to stage decor. (Dalí's extensive involvement with the ballet is also discussed in the accompanying essays by Robert Descharnes, Lynn Garafola, and George Dunkel.)

The contributions of Dalí to stage design for the ballet have occurred in the context of international collaboration among the artists of many nations. Modernism in the early twentieth century, with its spirit of experimentation brought many artists from across the world to Paris, London, Barcelona, and New York, allowing for unprecedented opportunities for artists to work together irrespective of their national origins. Dalí

was one of a number of prominent artists working for companies such as the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and other ballet companies throughout the world. With the opportunities for experimental design provided by Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, Russian artists as well as others were marshaled into the service of the ballet. Leon Bakst and Picasso were among those who pioneered in experimental design for the ballet, offering an alternative to the tradition of specialists who had previously been responsible for stage design. Bakst's designs for Diaghilev's *Firebird* (1909) and his *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* (1912) along with Picasso's designs for *Parade*, appeared early in the twentieth

century. Later came Gontcharova's *Le Coq d'Or* (1937) and her *Cinderella* (1938) just before Dalí's *Bacchanale*. Others who contributed to the new directions for theater dance were: Alexandre Benois, Nikolay Roerich, José Mariá Sert, Marie Laurencin, Georges Braque, Juan Gris, André Bauchant, Georges Rouault, and Georges de



Salvador Dalí, Stage Decor for *Bacchanale*, 1939

Chirico. During the era of Colonel de Basil's Ballet Russe, the artists who participated included Cecil Beaton, Raoul Dufy, André Derain, and Oliver Messel. After 1940, there were numerous others such as the Surrealist Dorothea Tanning and Eugene Berman.

Dalí's poignant concern for the theater is evident in his redesign of the Theater-Museum in Figueras, which functions as a metaphor of his profound interest and contributions to the theater and to all aspects of the arts including painting, sculpture, film, literature, and advertising, as well as scenic design for the stage. Originally, the structure had been an Italian style theater designed by the architect José Roca Bros. Dalí referred to his reconstructed theater as a Ready-Made which would enable him to place his works among the ruins of the former theater in recognition of their theatrical aspects.⁴ Various of his creations are shown in rooms throughout the reconfigured theater which stands as a monument to Dalí. Indeed, the entire Theater-Museum is an artistic extravaganza in itself and can be seen as a fantastic stage design in which to mount the on-going "performance" of Dalí's life and art. It includes works by artists who influenced or inspired Dalí, as well as his own creations. After his death in 1989, Dalí's remains were buried in the crypt of the Theater-Museum.

Apart from this metaphorical expression of his passion for theater in the Theater-Museum, Dalí's entire career is dotted intermittently with designs for theater decor. As early as 1927, Dalí was designing for theater productions. His early stage designs, for example for Adria Gual's *La Familia d'Arlequi* (*The Family of the Harlequin*) at the Teatre Intim and Federico Garcia Lorca's *Mariana Piñeda* performed by the company of Margarita Xirgu at the Theatra Goya, both in Barcelona, were influenced by Le Corbusier's stark modernist architecture. Intent on recreating in his design the lively environment of a modern city street, Dalí created scenery for *La Familia* that showed functionalist buildings and a mixture of signs and advertisements. For Lorca's *Mariana Piñeda* he chose streets and squares with white houses intended to create an aura of "absolute calm and naturalness."⁵ During the thirties and forties, his sympathies shifted away from the "coldness and asceticism" of Le Corbusier's machinisms toward the "softer" modern style reflected in the designs of the Catalan architect Antonio Gaudi.⁶ This shift is reflected in Dalí's essay, *De la beauté terrifiante et comestible de l'architecture Modern Style* (*On the Terrifying and Edible Beauty of Modern Style Architecture*.)⁷ In Gaudi, Dalí found a more sympathetic artistic climate for his own style of "decorative exaggeration" that invokes a mix of classical preferences for order and the free explorations of a mind attuned to unlimited Surrealist possibilities. Hence, he uses a plurality of methods drawing on the rational and the irrational unconscious to feed his creative imagination. Indeed, he uses both surrealist and anti-surrealist elements to create his artistic designs.



Salvador Dalí, Stage Decor for *Labyrinth*, 1941

Dalí's interest in theater extended beyond stage decor and costuming to the narrative -- he provided the libretto for two ballets, *Bacchanale* and *Labyrinth*. However, in the opinion of scenic artist George Dunkel, who worked closely with him on the set of *The Three-Cornered Hat* and several other ballets, Dalí was "not theatrically well versed."⁸ In contrast, Picasso is reported to have immersed himself in all aspects of the ballet, seeing his design as but one part of a whole, especially in the productions of *Parade* and *The Three-Cornered Hat*. In preparation for his designs, it is said, Picasso observed the dancers in rehearsal, and "lived and breathed the dance" even to the point of marrying the ballerina Olga Kokhlova who danced in *Parade*.⁹ This difference in approach did not hamper Dalí's success in producing some of the most spectacular stage designs of the twentieth century.

Between the late thirties and early sixties, Dalí undertook a series of collabora-

tions for the ballet, beginning with Léonide Massine's *Bacchanale* (1939) in New York and ending with the Maurice Béjart's *Gala* (1961) in Venice. The decor for the Surrealist ballet *Bacchanale*, which Dalí described in the program notes as "The First Paranoid Performance," includes a broken white swan (Leda, the symbol of love) with wings spread across the canvas, a temple seen through a break in the mountains behind the swan, and a sky filled with fiery figures. The landscape is endowed with Surrealist images including the skeleton of a dinosaur, a "live" umbrella, and a corps of umbrellas which pop open at the finale.¹⁰ Encasing the interior of the backdrop is a series of boxes containing skeletal remains. Although executed in 1939, these enigmatic boxes might well be part of a conceptual art piece at the end of the twentieth century. As it is provided in Dalí's libretto, the story of *Bacchanale* is based on the hallucinations of the mad King Ludwig of Bavaria. The "characters" include a masochist and his wife as well as Venus, Lola Montez, and a corps of women on crutches. Perhaps the most spectacular of all of Dalí's designs for the ballet was the decor for Massine's *Labyrinth* (1941), for which Dalí also provided the libretto based on the classic myth of Theseus and Ariadne.¹¹ A colossal bust, with an opening extending from the navel to the upper chest, occupies the foreground. Behind is a line of cypress trees casting an ominous mood, and a view of the seacoast with threatening skies. A second design for *Labyrinth* features a grove of cypress trees with bones strewn about on the earth around an altar.¹²

Early in his development as an artist, Dalí showed strong interest in the architectural structure of painting. The composition of his decor for Manuel da Falla's *The Three-Cornered Hat* reflects Dalí's on-going concern with classical order, proportion and structure in art. Here the cube-like shape of the Miller's house and the rectangular windows and door contribute to the architectural order of the scene. Dark vertical cypresses in the background which form an irregular line above the horizon are also a part of the architectural structure, as are the guitar shape and the air-filled canvas bags covered with burlap.

With such images incorporating elements of classical order and Surrealistic fantasy, the painted surface provides a visual context for the Spanish dances choreographed by Ana María. The Miller's white stucco house on the left, possibly inspired by coastal Mediterranean architecture of Dalí's Catalan homeland, is reminiscent of Dalí's own house in Port Lligat. Its sunlit door and the windows give the illusion of depth, and are turned on the diagonal for visual effect. Toward the right center of the backdrop is a well, made of brick in the shape of a cut-off tower and covered with white stucco. Now in ruins, the sides of the well are cracked open to reveal the underlying bricks. The greater planes of the overall backdrop are divided into a flat, illusionist landscape which extends into deep space and meets an expansive sky. Cypress trees positioned above the horizon extend the landscape into the sky.

On the surface, Dalí's backdrop appears rather straight-forward, when compared to the more elaborate designs for *Labyrinth* and *Bacchanale*. Yet a closer look reveals that this master of illusion has something more subtle in mind. There appears to be a cosmic interchange underway were the earth is both giving and receiving elements. The moon is seen landing on the earth, and earthly elements including sections of the Miller's house are in the process of being transformed and sent flying off into

space. An orange tree which has lifted out of the ground is suspended in space, perhaps ready to follow the levitating doors and windows of the house that are also headed into space. In the midst of all of this, a mysterious, slender flowering tree emerges from the ruins of the well.

Elsewhere on the backdrop, a guitar shape functions as a mountain landscape. Through special lighting effects, the guitar-mountain painted on scrim and mounted on the backdrop, is transformed through a magical scene change. On cue, the scrim was lit from behind, and the lights in the foreground near the backdrop were lowered. Altered with special lighting effects, the guitar forms an opening in the canvas through which dancers can be seen moving, thus adding a dream-like Surrealist aura to the stage. This device enables a scene change that largely depends on lighting, thus enhancing the aesthetic interest of the audience in the design as well as contributing to the economy of the staging.

The actual fabrication of the decor for *The Three-Cornered Hat* took place in the E. B. Dunkel Scenic Design Studios located on 41st Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenue in New York. Eugene Dunkel had been an artist of the Russian avant garde who emigrated to New York by way of Greece. Eugene, the father, and his son George, born in 1917, ran a prominent theater design studio from 1931 to 1980 where many ballet sets were executed for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, the Metropolitan Opera, and various Broadway productions.¹³ The Dunkels had worked with Dalí on the decor for *Bacchanale* in 1939 and also *Labyrinth* in 1941, as well as *The Three-Cornered Hat* in 1949. George Dunkel recalls that Dalí visited the studio each day to participate in the painting of the decor and to oversee the work, which took about two weeks.

Dalí's scenic design for Ana María's *Three-Cornered Hat* ballet follows in the tradition of illusionist, painted flat scenery and is intended for a stage framed by a proscenium arch. In its entirety, the set consisted of the scenic backdrop approximately 30 by 40 feet represented in this exhibition, plus four tabs approximately 28 by 10 feet each and two borders approximately 9 feet by 6 feet. The painted tab for stage left featured the Miller's house (also painted on the backdrop), while the tab for stage right contained painted landscape and sky with bags painted at random, according to Dunkel. The borders had flying bags positioned at random with additional cypresses. Approximately ten sculptural helium filled bags each 3 to 4 feet high and thirty inches in circumference, simulating flour bags from the mill, added sculptural decor to the stage.¹⁴

For this production, Dalí made at least one working sketch from which a model was made.¹⁵ There are three signed and dated (1949) sketches pertaining to the backdrop reproduced in the Stuttgart Staatsgalerie catalogue, *Salvador Dalí 1904-1989*.¹⁶ The first image shows the backdrop with two figures dancing in the foreground. A second is a drawing with the floating bags against a wall, again with two dancers on stage. In the third sketch, the guitar floats above a rounded doorway in a space that also includes the well with a tree growing out of it, a section of the Miller's house, and a couple of flour bags. In this third sketch, dancers can be seen in motion behind the scrim that forms the silhouette of the guitar.

Characters and Costumes for *The Three-Cornered Hat*

For the narrative, Ana María returns to the text of Pedro Antonio de Alarcón's version of *The Three-Cornered Hat*, published in 1874, which varies slightly from the libretto used for Massine's 1919 version of the ballet with stage designs by Picasso. Otherwise known as *The Corregidor and the Miller's Wife* or *The Miller's Wife and the Corregidor*, this witty Spanish folk tale, known to rustics as well as to learned Spaniards alike, may have originated from a clownish goat herder named Repela. It would have been recited at a festival at the manor, along with other romances and ballads.¹⁷ According to Alarcón, the setting for the story is located in Andalusia -- Dalí seems to have in mind a setting in Catalan -- at the beginning of the nineteenth century between 1804 and 1808. Based on this information, the story takes place during the reign of the Bourbon King Don Carlos IV, concurrent with the Napoleonic era in Europe.

The main characters of Ana María's ballet are developed from those found in Alarcón's tale. The Corregidor Don Eugenio, a Spanish magistrate is dressed resplendently in a green waist coat trimmed in red, featuring cream colored ruffled cuffs and vest, with purple trousers. His tri-cornered hat is light purple in color. Also colorfully dressed in a purple hat and pants with black-bow shoes is the Corregidor manikin, who acts as a surrogate in his namesake's absence during parts of the performance. The Miller's Wife, Mistress Fasquita, for whom Dalí designed two different costumes, wears a Spanish head dress with flowers and black lace extending to the shoulders. One of her multi-tiered dresses is red with yellow, green, and black trim; another is pink with a blue sash, trimmed in black criss-cross stripes and accessories. The Miller (Uncle Lucas) is dressed as a Pierrot-like figure in black and white pants with jagged pattern, a sleeveless black jacket with small hanging tassels, blue sash, and open collar shirt. The Corregidor's wife Doña Mercedes is adorned in an elegant black dress detailed with lace. Other costumes for minor characters such as the priest, guards, and the performers in the Spanish Sevillanas and Jota dances of the ballet complete the 36 costumes of *The Three-Cornered Hat*. Female dancers in the Sevillanas wore peasant-style black dresses with pink fringe on the neck-line and flower patterned skirts. The men's costumes for the Sevillanas consisted of purple jackets and turquoise colored pants, both with black trim. In the Jota, the women wore blue and yellow floor length dresses with black crisscross designs and accessories. There are additional special costumes belonging to the Jota, for instance a green and a red dress each with cream frill, and a male dancer's costume with a blue shirt, green pants, and a yellow sash.

Dalí's costumes for these characters are intended to create the ambience necessary for Ana María's Spanish style dances. They fall into the category of costumes based on "character, situation, and folklore." The costumes are beautifully designed and sewn to augment the character of the individual dancers and to advance the ballet's narrative component. Yet their often multi-layered structures and weightiness would seem not to allow for maximum freedom for the human figure in motion. The cut of the dresses is high waisted, extending to between the calf and the ankle. They reflect the nineteenth-century International style of the period in which the tale is set,

and individual costumes mirror the social standing of the different character roles. Dalí's use of vibrant colors throughout, and his effort to suit the costumes to the individuality of the characters provide an overall strong visual presentation.

The artistic tenor of avant garde modernism, which invited experimental collaborations among the various arts, and the convergences of visual artists, musicians, and dancer-choreographers from around the world in New York during the forties provided unusual opportunities for theatrical collaboration. Dalí's stage decor for the ballet places him among the more important twentieth-century contributors to such collaborations.

¹ Cyril Beaumont, "Design for Ballet," in H. Tatlock Miller, *Art for Theatre & Ballet*, Exhibition Catalogue, (Australia: The British Council, 1940), 6.

² Edward Alden Jewell, art critic of *The New York Times*, "Ballet and the Arts," Souvenir Program, *Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo*, 1945-46 season.

³ George Balanchine choreographed *The Three-Cornered Hat* for the Royal Danish Ballet during his six months as guest ballet master. It premiered October 12, 1930 at the Royal Theater, Copenhagen. Scenery and costumes were by Kjeld Abell. *Choreography of George Balanchine: A Catalogue of Works* (New York: The Eakins Press, 1983), 97.

⁴ Enrique Granell Triás, "In the Center of a World," *Dalí Architecture* (Barcelona: Fundacio Caixa De Catalunya and Fundacio Caixa De Catalunya, 1996), 166.

⁵ Montse Aguer and Juan José Lahuerta, "Dalí and the Architecture, Chronology," *Dalí Architecture*, 194, 195.

⁶ Juan José Lahuerta, "Preface," *Dalí Architecture*, 16.

⁷ Salvador Dalí, "De la beauté terrifiante et comestible de l'architecture modern style," *Minotaure* No. 3-4, December, 1933. Cited in *Dalí Architecture*, 198.

⁸ Interview with George Dunkel who worked with Salvador Dalí on the fabrication of the set, December 23, 1999.

⁹ Ellen Breitman, "Pablo Picasso," *International Encyclopedia of Dance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 5:191.

¹⁰ *Dalí Monumental* (Rio de Janeiro: Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, March 25-May 27, 1998 and Sao Paulo: Museu de Arte de Sao Paulo (MASP), June 9-August 9, 1998), 20, 21. Also Karin von Maur, *Salvador Dalí 1904-1989* (Stuttgart: Staatsgalerie and Kunsthhaus Zurich, 1989), 276-277. Three sketches are reproduced by von Maur. See also Walter Terry, *Walter Terry's Ballet Guide* (New York Popular Library, 1977), 44.

¹¹ Souvenir Program, *Original Ballet Russe*, 1941-42 season.

¹² Sketches of Dalí's decor for *Labyrinth* are reproduced in Maur, *Salvador Dalí 1904-1989*, 282, 283.

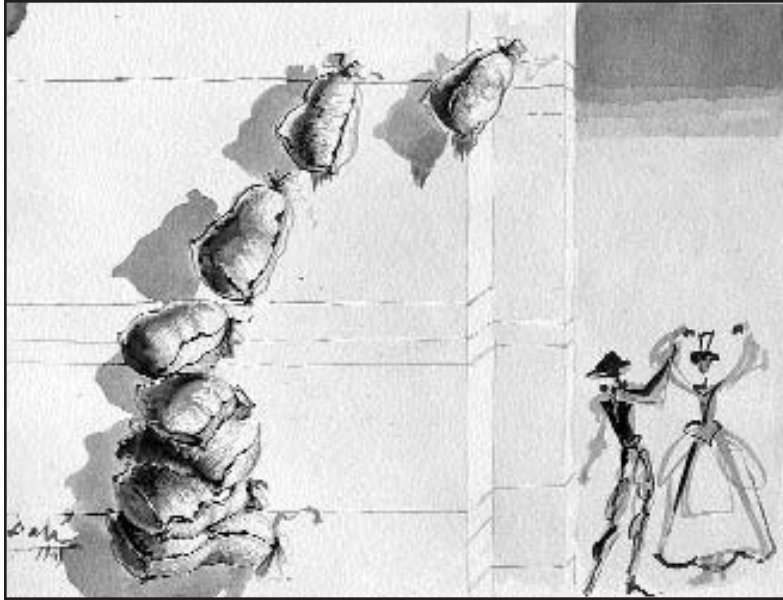
¹³ Eugene and George Dunkel are credited as designers for various ballets in the programs of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Eugene Dunkel, *Magic Swan*, Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, 1944-45 Souvenir Program. George Dunkel, *Swan Lake* and *Les Sylphides*, Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, 1951-52 Souvenir Program.

¹⁴ Interview, Dunkel, December 23, 1999.

¹⁵ Interview, Dunkel. December 23, 1999. Dunkel recalls that Dalí made one sketch for *The Three-Cornered Hat*, from which a model was made.

¹⁶ There are three studies for *The Three-Cornered Hat* set reproduced in Maur, *Salvador Dalí 1904-1989*, 310.

¹⁷ Pedro Antonio de Alarcón, *The Three-Cornered Hat*, translated from the Spanish by Lawrence M. Levin, (New York: H. Bittner and Co., 1944), 5. The text is illustrated with woodcuts by Fritz Kredel. For some of its audiences, this tale of infidelity might have seemed off color. But the author notes that its central message, that, "Married people sleep together and that no husband likes to have someone else lie in bed with his wife," p. 6. is hardly news.



Salvador Dalí, *Preliminary design for Stage Balloons*
Watercolor
10 1/2 x 13 3/4 in.

The Three-Cornered Hat and Other Ballets

Robert P. Descharnes (Translator: Annemarie Sawkins)

When Salvador Dalí decided to collaborate with Ana María's dance company, the Ballet Español, in producing *The Three-Cornered Hat* ballet, he was motivated by a long standing desire to embark on this adventure. It was during the winter of 1949 in New York. The previous summer, Dalí had returned to his native Spain after twelve years of exile, the last eight of which he had not left the United States.

These were eight years of intense activity in the most varied areas of creativity: painting certainly, but also cinema, books, essays, publicity (fashion ads and magazine covers), theater and, especially, ballet.

The passion of the Spanish artist for the ephemeral, but repeated conquest of space crystallized in France at the end of the 1930s when one of his most cherished projects, *Venusberg*, was performed by the Ballets Russe of Monte Carlo as choreographed by Léonide Massine to the music of Richard Wagner. The libretto, set and costumes were designed by Dalí. The costumes were to be made by Mademoiselle Chanel after Dalí's specifications. The ballet was planned for the 1938 -1939 season. The impending war eclipsed the performance, and the ballet only opened two years later on November 9, 1939 at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, at which time it was entitled *Bacchanale*.

In July 1940, Dalí and his wife Gala left Europe for the United States where they lived until July 1948. During this American period in Dalí's life, *Bacchanale* was followed by a number of other ballets. One ought to remember *Labyrinth* in October of 1941, and in 1944, *El Café de Chinitas*, the *Sentimental Colloquy*, and *Mad Tristan*.

The majority of the productions were put on with the same cast of people, several of whom became friends of the painter and extended their collaboration with Dalí to *The Three-Cornered Hat*.

After his success in America, and once peace was restored in Europe, the fascination exerted upon Dalí by the enchanting art of the ballet, mixed with theater and opera, never ceased to grow. In 1949, Dalí was involved in Peter Brook's production in London of Wagner's *Salomé*. In Paris in 1953, a very beautiful project entitled *The Harvesters* based on the poem by Baron Philippe de Rothschild, set to the music of Henri Sauguet and choreographed by Serge Lifar, stimulated Dalí's imagination as can be seen from the numerous extant sketches. Despite Dalí's work on this project, the ballet was, unfortunately, never performed.

It was in Venice at the La Fenice Theater on August 22, 1961 that one could watch the premiere of the Ballet *Gala* (named after Dalí's wife) as choreographed by Maurice Béjart and performed by his company with Ludmila Tchérina as principal dancer. This was the final contribution that Dalí made to the art of dance.

Returning now to *The Three-Cornered Hat*, the theme of Pedro de Alarcón's story, like the music of *El sombrero de tres picos* (*The Three-Cornered Hat*) was familiar to Dalí. His interest in the subject was reinforced by the friendly relations which he maintained since the 1920s with the composer Manuel de Falla whom he had met through Federico García Lorca.

The Ballet Español directed by Ana María had become famous in Spain, in Madrid and Barcelona, and in Paris well before the Second World War. Dalí was not unaware of its success when in May of 1948, he attended a Gala event for Ana María, as a guest of his friend Sol Hurok, who produced the ballet at Carnegie Hall. Meeting with Ana María, also a friend of Manuel de Falla, proved to be so positive for Dalí that the painter immediately proposed to the ballerina that they put on *The Three-Cornered Hat* ballet the following season. Dalí made cardboard models of the stage and then supervised their execution in the father and son studio of E. B. Dunkel. The Dunkels were the preferred stage decorators of his other ballets productions. Sol Hurok produced the show.

In the beginning of 1949, a contract was signed in New York between the dancer and Dalí. For a thousand dollars, the artist started working on sketches for two scenes. Fired by his passion for the subject and without demanding more money, Dalí designed the costumes and the accessories for the performance with Ana María overseeing their production. Since then, the costumes have been carefully preserved to maintain their exceptional brilliance so that we can admire them today, fifty years after they were created. The premiere took place in April of the same year at the Ziegfeld Theater run by Billy Rose, the most famous Broadway producer and a friend of Salvador Dalí. Billy Rose, the inventor of the *Ziegfeld Follies*, offered Dalí the Ziegfeld Theater for the event.

One of the more powerful forces that probably stimulated the creative energy of Dalí throughout his life was an incredible, but hidden drive to compete with Pablo Picasso. One finds proof of this in *The Three-Cornered Hat*. For Dalí, *The Three-Cornered Hat* had to outdo Picasso's staging of the same ballet in 1919. What emulation!

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Dalí, Ana María, and The Three-Cornered Hat

Lynn Garafola

In the twentieth-century rebirth of Spanish dance as a form of modernist theater, no work was more significant than *Le Tricorne*. Inspired by Pedro de Alarcón's nineteenth-century comic classic *El sombrero de tres picos* (or *The Three-Cornered Hat*), it came to the stage in 1919 in an all-star production by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. There were spectacular designs by Picasso, Spain's foremost painter, and a splendid commissioned score by Manuel de Falla, the country's leading composer. The choreography was by Léonide Massine, at twenty-two already a brilliant innovator and a connoisseur of Spanish dance.

The ballet opened in London at the Alhambra Theatre to both popular and critical acclaim. Bloomsbury was in the audience along with Spanish intellectuals of the stature of Salvador de Madariaga, who wrote about the production for the Madrid daily *El Sol*.¹ For the first time in decades a Spanish work, albeit one choreographed by a Russian and produced by an itinerant troupe of Russians, Poles, and various other European nationalities, stood at the epicenter of "Western" cultural consciousness.

Le Tricorne remained in the repertory of the Ballets Russes throughout the 1920s. In 1934, Massine revived it for Colonel de Basil's Ballet Russe, the leading successor to the Diaghilev company. With Massine in his original role as the Miller and "baby ballerina" Tamara Toumanova as the Miller's Wife, the revival, with sets and costumes from the Diaghilev original, elicited bravos from critics and audiences alike. John Martin, writing in *The New York Times*, described Massine's performance as nothing less than an "electrifying" achievement.²

The ballet became a favorite with the American public, and when Massine left de Basil to form a rival company with substantial U.S. backing, he sued the former colonel for legal title to the work; at that time, copyright did not automatically belong to the choreographer. Massine won his case, and in 1938 *Le Tricorne*, along with its scenery and costumes, became his personal property. The following year, he teamed up with the celebrated Spanish dancer Argentinita; the result was *Capriccio Español*, a rousing crowd pleaser the two had choreographed, and several joint appearances in *Le Tricorne*, initially with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and in the early 1940s with Ballet Theatre.

Massine's renewed interest in *Le Tricorne* on the eve of the Second World War coincided with a boom in Spanish dance, especially in the U.S. In part this was the legacy of La Argentina's trailblazing tours of the late 1920s and 1930s, which culminated in an invitation to perform at FDR's White House in 1935 and did for Spanish dance what Anna Pavlova's earlier whistle-stopping tours had done for ballet. The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, followed within weeks by the brutal assassination of the poet Federico García Lorca, prompted an exodus of the liberal intelligentsia and arts community. By 1940, innumerable Spanish dancers and musicians had settled in New

York, beginning with Argentinita, her sister Pilar López, and the guitarist Carlos Montoya. But as news items and reviews in the dance press make clear, there were Spanish dancers galore in the city. Not all of them hailed from Spain. José Fernández, a late spring attraction at the Rainbow Room (and occasional choreographer for Ballet Theatre and American Ballet Caravan), was Mexican; his Rainbow Room partner, Monna Montes (who also doubled as a ballet dancer), was American, as was La Trianita (née Sally MacLean), who married Carlos Montoya amid a flurry of publicity, and Carola Goya (née Weller), a fixture of the Spanish dance scene for decades. As for José Greco, his name notwithstanding, he was actually an Italian raised in Brooklyn.³ Meanwhile, in the strongly left-wing modern dance world, the war in Spain had inspired any number of dances, from José Limón's *Danza de la Muerte* to Sophia Delza's *We Weep for Spain and We March for Spain*, Lily Mehlman's *Spanish Woman*, Martha Graham's *Immediate Tragedy and Deep Song*, all choreographed in 1937.⁴

Among the real Spanish dancers who turned up on American shores in these years was Ana María. Only twenty (it was said) when she made her New York debut at the Guild Theatre in March 1940, she was a native of Madrid, a student of Pauleta Pamiés, Antonio el de Bilbao, El Estampío, and La Coquera, and a veteran of tours that had taken her throughout Spain as well as to France, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, and most recently Cuba. For her first New York concert, she offered a sampling of her repertory -- the Ritual Fire Dance from Falla's *El Amor Brujo*, flamenco and regional dances, and a "Sevilla" to music by Albéniz that she performed with José Fernández, who won plaudits from John Martin for his "aristocratic reserve."⁵ About Ana María herself the critics were less enthusiastic. Although Albertina Vitak found her heel work "splendid," she thought the dancer's striking costumes were "more suitable to cabaret as were most of her numbers."⁶ Walter Terry, for his part, felt that Ana María's "personal charms outbalance[d] her dancing ability ... She's a 'personality girl,' and if you like her personality you'll probably like her show." The audience, which was large and full of Spaniards, apparently did, for it showered her with applause and what Martin described as "enormous quantities of flowers."

After this debut (and a few other performances), Ana María did not dance in New York for eight years. Returning to Havana, she formed the Ballet Español, raised a son, and made several tours of South America. When she reappeared in New York in 1948, it was with an ensemble of twenty-three and under the management of Sol Hurok, who booked the Ballet Español into Carnegie Hall for two performances. As before, the program consisted of several divertissements, but this time it also featured the complete *El Amor Brujo*, which Ana María had choreographed and costumed; she also danced the lead part of *Candelas*. Despite the ambitiousness of the program and the auspicious circumstances, the reviews were discouraging. Wrote Walter Terry: "Since the stage presentation -- including production, staging, lighting, choreography and dancing -- did not give evidence of those standards of performance normally associated with a New York concert event, ... detailed comment on the proceedings seems unnecessary." More positive was Miles Kastendieck, who thought Ana María "had plenty of technique to show off" but that a "dash of personality would have enlivened the whole show."⁷

Undeterred by the tepid reception, Ana María returned the following year to the

Ziegfeld Theatre with her most ambitious production yet, *The Three-Cornered Hat*. Several years had elapsed since Massine's *Le Tricorne* had last been seen in New York, although he had revived the ballet in London for Sadler's Wells in 1947. This had been a coup for Ninette de Valois, the company's director, for Massine not only staged the ballet and performed his old role of the Miller (to Margot Fonteyn's Miller's Wife); he also provided the sets and costumes designed by Picasso for the original Diaghilev production twenty-eight years before. By 1949, Ana María could have had no illusions about the critical reception of her work in New York, but with Salvador Dalí designing her new *Three-Cornered Hat*, she all but announced her intention of turning the premiere into an event. In postwar New York no visual artist was better known or enjoyed greater notoriety than Dalí.

Spanish-born, Dalí had burst on the American art world in 1932 with the first New York appearance of his work at the Julien Levy Gallery's famous -- or infamous -- *Surréalisme* exhibition. Dalí's painting *The Persistence of Memory*, later acquired by the Museum of Modern Art, caused a sensation; an even greater one followed in 1933 with the artist's first solo show; by 1934, when Levy gave him a second solo show, nearly half the paintings sold in three days. Dalí coveted fame, fortune and celebrity; he courted millionaires, and he shamelessly wooed the press, especially the American press. His stunts were outrageous -- landing in New York with an eight-foot-long baguette, costuming his wife as an "exquisite corpse" -- his words -- for a party. By 1936, when *Time* magazine put him on the cover and Bonwit Teller commissioned him to do a surrealist store window, "America," he wrote, "was prey to acute Dalinitis."⁸

Like most surrealists, Dalí did not limit his activities to the easel. With Luis Buñuel he made those classics of French avant-garde film, *Un Chien andalou* and *L'Age d'or*; he designed fashion ads and magazine covers, illustrated numerous books, wrote essays, a bad novel, and an autobiography, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, that was published in New York in 1942. He spent the Second World War in the United States. Here, writes his biographer Meryle Secrest, "his dismembered arms, limp watches, ruined columns, pieces of driftwood, tables with women's legs, crutches and ants were helping to advertise Gunther's furs, Ford cars, Wrigley's chewing gum, Schiaparelli perfume, Gruen watches, the products of the Abbott Laboratories and of the Container Corporation of America. They were being reproduced in shop windows up and down Fifth Avenue. They inspired a Broadway show, *Lady in the Dark*, as well as a Hitchcock film, *Spellbound*, and an experimental collaboration with Walt Disney."⁹ In his American incarnation Dalí certainly lived up to André Breton's disparaging moniker, "Avida Dollars."

Dalí first met choreographer Léonide Massine in Europe in the mid-1930s. But it was in New York, in 1939, just months after the artist had pushed a bathtub full of water through the window of his second Bonwit Teller display (the store had removed one of the spider-covered women without his permission) in his biggest headline-making escapade yet,¹⁰ that *Bacchanale*, their first ballet together, opened at the Metropolitan Opera. Two other collaborations followed: *Labyrinth* (1941), based on the myth of Theseus and Ariadne, and *Mad Tristan* (1944), inspired by Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*. Dalí also worked with George Balanchine (although André Eglevsky was credited with the choreography) on *Sentimental Colloquy* (1944), *Argentinita* on *Café*

de Chinitas (1944), and did the original designs, which the choreographer ultimately rejected, for Antony Tudor's *Romeo and Juliet* (1943).¹¹

In an essay published in the early 1950s, Oliver Smith rued that as a designer Dalí had never found a match for his "tremendous" personality. "Given collaborators with intelligence, and armed with crowbars, he might create poetic magic for the stage instead of creating a tidal wave that engulfs not only the stage production, but the audience as well."¹² His sets were dazzling indeed, fantasies writ so large they overwhelmed the human ants scurrying before them. In *Bacchanale*, the dancers made their entrances through a hole in the breast of a giant swan; in *Labyrinth*, they stepped through an opening in the naked torso of a man with a cracked skull. In *Sentimental Colloquy* bearded, cadaverous cyclists rode across a decor painted in the style of a grid, and a fountain sprouted from a grand piano. In *Mad Tristan*, however, Dalí outdid himself. Here, wrote Edwin Denby, "fantastic backdrops, costumes, stage effects tumble out over the stage for half an hour in frenzied profusion...a proliferation of decoration no one in the world but Dalí can rival." Audiences were riveted by the brilliant rendering of three magnificent horses' heads, which towered over the stage like the Mount Rushmore Memorial (as Oliver Smith thought) and parted at the end of each "act" to reveal a body descending into a grave.¹³

Dalí returned to Spain in 1948. However, before leaving the country that had been his home for eight years, he was invited by his friend Sol Hurok to attend Ana María's concert at Carnegie Hall, her first New York performance in as many years. The artist was impressed. The two met, and Dalí proposed they stage *The Three-Cornered Hat* for the dancer's next season.¹⁴ With its big names and international cachet, the project recalled another Hurok initiative of the time -- the 1945 Ballet Theatre production of *Firebird* designed by Marc Chagall. (In 1949, Hurok would sell these *Firebird* sets and costumes to the New York City Ballet for Balanchine's version of the work.)¹⁵ Dalí's scenery was executed by the E. B. Dunkel Studios, which did sets for many ballet productions. Dalí supervised the scene painting and, like Picasso before him, did some of it himself.

For the critics who attended the premiere at the Ziegfeld Theatre, Dalí's contribution, as expressed by the *New York Journal-American's* Miles Kastendieck, was "surprisingly conservative." In the *New York World-Telegram*, Louis Biancolli breathed a sigh of relief: "For a change, the backdrop was almost strictly conventional in its landscape detail. No bleeding trees or melting watches of the typical Dalí canvases." Instead, there was a frieze depicting sacks of grain, a playful reminder of what the Miller does for a living, the design of a huge guitar, and a backcloth that Walter Terry in the *New York Herald Tribune* pronounced "sheer delight."¹⁶ To the left was a white-walled Andalusian house, its red door and shuttered windows set at funny angles; beyond it stretched a dust-and-ochre landscape where sacks, as light and airy as cotton, puffed from an oversized well. The effect was playful and surprisingly evocative of the ballet's Andalusian setting, with its hot, dusty plains, mirage-like hills, and seemingly endless expanses of blue sky.

Dalí's return to Spain inaugurated what he later took to calling his classical period. But the classicism or, more properly, neoclassicism of his *Three-Cornered Hat* also harks back to Picasso's designs for the original Diaghilev production. Here, too, is the

timeless cerulean sky, simple, sunbaked houses, immaculate draftsmanship, and eighteenth-century costumes inspired by early Goya. This is not to say that Dalí "lifted" his designs from Picasso, "the only Parisian," he once wrote, "who mattered to my eyes," or as he also put it, the artist he "recognized ... alone as among my peers."¹⁷ But he certainly knew Picasso's work for *Le Tricorne*, if not the actual sets and costumes (although he could well have seen the ballet in New York during the 1940s), then the designs, published in a magnificent portfolio by Picasso's art dealer Paul Rosenberg in Paris in 1920.¹⁸ In Dalí's version one finds the same "lavish use of bright colours in opposition to black," as art historian Douglas Cooper has described Picasso's costumes, the same bold stripes, the same very Spanish juxtaposition of gravitas and gaiety.¹⁹ But there are also important differences between the two versions. Dalí's use of lime green with eggplant purple and cherry red; his dramatic expanses of black; his simplification of the decorative detailing; his playful use of constructed elements, including the "tails" of the Corregidor's dress coat -- all set his work apart from Picasso's and stamped it as his own. Far from being a copy or imitation of *Le Tricorne*, Dalí's *Three-Cornered Hat* is a knowing, witty homage to Picasso's ballet.

Ana María, who danced the role of the Miller's Wife, fared less well than Dalí. Walter Terry thought her choreography was "pretty thin"; Harriett Johnson that it lacked "real characterization."²⁰ Still, most critics agreed that Ana María herself was dancing better than she had the previous year at Carnegie Hall and that her company was generally stronger. There was praise for the energy and teamwork of the dancers, although the warmest praise was reserved for the men and guitarist Carlos Montoya, whom she had hired (along with a full orchestra) for the Ziegfeld season.

Amazingly, given the expense and effort to which she had gone, to say nothing of the publicity value of Dalí's name, *The Three-Cornered Hat* was given only once in New York, on opening night. For the remaining two performances, Ana María fell back on tried-and-true works from her repertory, including *El Amor Brujo* (billed now as *Love the Sorcerer*) and *Capriccio Español* (to Rimsky-Korsakov's well-known music). Short numbers completed each program, giving her ample opportunity to display the glamorous costumes she seems to have changed -- if the press is to be believed -- numerous times in a single evening.

The Three-Cornered Hat was also noticeably absent from the ten-week coast-to-coast tour that Hurok arranged the following autumn, when the company, now improbably billed as "The First Spanish Ballet Company To Tour The U.S.," played theaters, high school gyms, and college and civic auditoriums across the country.²¹ In 1951, when she returned to Spain after an absence of twelve years, the work remained in repertory, and it continued to appear in company programs the following year when she toured Latin America. In October 1952, when she set out on her third U.S. tour, the work did reappear, but without the Dalí scenery, which seems to have lessened its impact. In fact, the ballet that generated most of the praise and enthusiasm on this cross-country tour was Ana María's version of *Carmen*, although some critics expressed reservations about the liberties she had taken with the plot and music. And for the first time, there was mention of empty seats, which the *San Francisco News* critic, Marjory M. Fisher, attributed to the recent visit of José Greco, whose excellent company had gained a huge following since making its first U.S. tour

the year before.²² Ana María's made a last appearance in the New York area under Hurok's auspices at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1954. Although Dalí was again listed as one of the company's designers, his ballet was not performed.

By then Ana María seems to have had enough of the U.S. and New York, where she had been living since 1947, married the Cuban composer and pianist Alfredo Munar in 1951, and given birth to their daughter, also named Ana María, in 1952. But the couple's return to Cuba was not to be permanent. By 1960 they were back in New York. The following January, after a stint at the Châteaufort, one of the city's better nightclubs, the *Ballet Español Ana María* (as the company was now billed) gave its last performance at Carnegie Hall. The reviews were devastating. "If this had been the annual recital of Ana María's students in Havana or San Juan," wrote Marcia B. Marks in *Dance Magazine*, "it would have had some validity ... but in Carnegie Hall Ana María's Spanish Ballet turned into a talent show with limited talent and very little show."²³ It wasn't only the amateurism of the program that prompted such dismissive remarks. To American critics of the early 1960s, Spanish dance was a dying art, its practitioners "guilelessly anachronistic," as Marks described Ana María, "in this age of sophisticated svelteness and style." With the New York City Ballet, the Martha Graham company, and so many other ensembles at their creative peak, and a postmodern avant-garde fermenting downtown, Spanish dance was simultaneously a throwback to the character-style ballets of the 1930s, a genre of national dance disparaged by association with the city's growing Latin population, and a form of what used to be called ethnic dance (that is, an art thought to be expressive of a particular race). Things had come full circle since Argentina's thrilling visits of the 1930s.

After returning to Spain, Dalí's interest in ballet waned. He did a few more productions, most notably *Gala* for Maurice Béjart's Ballet of the Twentieth Century in 1961, but not even this ostensible tribute to his wife -- in the title role Ludmila Tcherina, personifying female desire, wore "two enormous flesh coloured breasts over a ... leotard ... so tight as to make her appear nude" ²⁴ -- recaptured the artistic excitement of his collaborations of the 1940s. Ana María and Alfredo Munar eventually settled in Miami, joining the exodus from Castro's Cuba. Meanwhile, in the decades since her *Three-Cornered Hat* disappeared in the blink of a surrealist eye, the ballet was fitfully resurrected by any number of choreographers, among them Pilar López and Antonio in the 1950s, Germinal Casado in the 1980s, José Antonio in the 1990s, to say nothing of Massine, who brought the original back to life for the Joffrey Ballet in 1969. The tale of the Andalusian Miller and his flirtatious wife still exerts a spell over the imagination.

- ¹ Madariaga's article, "El Sombrero de tres picos," appeared in *El Sol* on 30 July 1919. It is reprinted in *España y los Ballets Russe*, ed. Vicente García-Márquez with Lynn Garafola, catalogue of an exhibition at the Auditorio Manuel de Falla in Granada, 17 June - 2 July 1989, 104.
- ² Quoted in Katherine Sorley Walker, *De Basil's Ballets Russes* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), 35.
- ³ For José Fernández, see Anatole Chujoy et al., "The Ballet Theatre Arrives," *Dance*, Feb. 1940, 69; "Tempo," *Dance*, May 1940, 5; Lincoln Kirstein, "The American Ballet in Argentina: Part II of a Travel Diary," *The American Dancer*, Oct. 1941, 13; Nancy Reynolds, *Repertory in Review: Forty Years of the New York City Ballet*, introd. Lincoln Kirstein (New York: Dial, 1977), 69; Anatole Chujoy, *The New York City Ballet* (New York: Knopf, 1953), 125; Charles Payne, *American Ballet Theatre* (New York: Knopf, 1979), 33, 103, 130, 362. Fernández choreographed *Goyescas* for Ballet Theatre's maiden season in 1940, and the following year, with Lew Christensen, *Pastorela* for American Ballet Caravan's South American tour. In 1945 Lucia Chase tried to acquire *Pastorela* for Ballet Theatre but was overruled by Sol Hurok; the work was revived by Lincoln Kirstein for Ballet Society in 1947. For Monna Montes, see "Tamiment Players," *Dance*, Oct. 1939, 13; Mori Fremon, "Latins in Manhattan," *Dance*, May 1940, 18; for her appearance with Fernández in *Goyescas*, Payne, *American Ballet Theatre*, 362; for *Trianita*, see Auricle, "Entr'acte," *Dance*, May 1940, 10; for Carola Goya, see Jack Anderson, "Carola Goya, 88, an Authority on Spanish Dance Forms, Dies," *The New York Times*, 17 May 1994, B8; for José Greco, see the entry by Judy Farrar Burns in the *International Encyclopedia of Dance* (hereafter IED), 1998. Carmen Amaya fled Spain in 1936 and, after touring extensively in South America, made her New York debut in early 1941.
- ⁴ For the response of modern dance choreographers to the Spanish Civil War, see Ellen Graff, *Stepping Left: Dance and Politics in New York City, 1928-1942* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997), 120-121; and José Limón: *An Unfinished Memoir*, ed. Lynn Garafola, introd. Deborah Jowitt (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England/Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 79-83.
- ⁵ John Martin, "The Dance: Ana María in Spanish Dances," *The New York Times*, 12 March 1940, in *MGZB (Ana María Ballet Espagnol), Dance Collection, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts (hereafter DC-NYPL). Unless otherwise noted, all programs and press clippings come from this folder.
- ⁶ Albertina Vitak, "Dance Events Reviewed," *The American Dancer*, May 1940, 36.
- ⁷ W[alter] T[erry], "Ana María's New Ballet," *New York Herald Tribune*, 21 May 1948, 18; Miles Kastendieck, "Ballet Espanol [sic] Not Exciting," *New York Journal-American*, 21 May 1948, 16.
- ⁸ Salvador Dalí, with André Parinaud, *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dalí*, trans. Harold J. Salemsen (New York: Morrow, 1976), 183. For the baguette, see pp.178-179; for a description of the "exquisite corpse" costume, see 180. For Dalí's exhibitions at the Julien Levy Gallery, see the chronology by Lisa Jacobs in Julien Levy: *Portrait of an Art Gallery*, ed. Ingrid Schaffner and Lisa Jacobs (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), as well as Schaffner's essay, "Alchemy of the Gallery," especially pp. 34-42.
- ⁹ Meryle Secrest, *Salvador Dalí: The Surrealist Jester* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), 189.
- ¹⁰ For a description of the display and the escapade, see *Unspeakable Confessions*, 185-187. For another account, see the unsigned "Homage to Dalí," in *Salvador Dalí 1910-1965*, catalogue of an exhibition at the Gallery of Modern Art, New York, 18 Dec. 1965-28 Feb. 1966, VII.
- ¹¹ *Bacchanale* and *Labyrinth* were produced by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo; *Mad Tristan* and *Sentimental Colloquy* by Ballet International; *Café de Chinitas* and *Romeo and Juliet* (which came to the stage in 1943 with sets and costumes by Eugene Berman) by Ballet Theatre. Set designs for *Romeo and Juliet* are reproduced in Ralf Schiebler, *Dalí: Genius, Obsession and Lust* (New York: Prestel, n.d.), 10, and in Juan José Tharrats, *Artistas españoles en el ballet* (Barcelona: Argos, 1950), 25. Additional designs are in the Dance Collection. Tharrats describes *Café de Chinitas* as a "flamenco scene...to a selection of folk dances arranged by Federico García Lorca. The work was premiered by the Ballet Theatre company in Michigan. For this ballet, Salvador Dalí painted two impressive decors, one of which, the backdrop, shows a dancer, her body transformed into a guitar, crucified on a fissured wall; from her hands, castanets riveted like nails make the blood flow, tracing the silhouette of a shawl on the wall" (40-41). Payne's *American Ballet Theatre* makes no mention of this work, although John Martin, in his review of *Mad Tristan*, refers to Dalí's "stirring, if somewhat tasteless, setting for Argentinita's *Cafe de Chinitas*" (John Martin, "Ballet Premiere of *Mad Tristan*," *The New York Times*, 16 Dec. 1944, 19). Finally, Tharrats mentions

a ballet *Mysteria* in whose creation Dalí also took part. An unidentified Spanish-language clipping in the Dalí file at the Dance Collection reproduces three of the artist's designs for the ballet and states that it premiered in 1942. It is possible that the designs for *Mysteria*, like those for *Romeo and Juliet*, were not used. In *Choreography by George Balanchine: A Catalogue of Works* (New York: Eakins Press, 1983), *Sentimental Colloquy* is credited to Balanchine, although the program identified the choreographer as Eglevsky.

¹² Oliver Smith, "Ballet Design," *Dance News Annual* (1953), 96.

¹³ Edwin Denby, "The Ballet: Dalí to the Hilt," *The New York Herald Tribune*, 16 Dec. 1944, 7; Smith, "Ballet Design," 96.

¹⁴ *Dalí Monumental*, exhibition catalogue, Museu Nacional de Rio de Janeiro, 25 Mar.-27 May, 1998; Museu de Arte de Sao Paulo, Assis, Châteaubriand (Masp.), 9 June-9 Aug. 1998 (Buenos Aires, Texoart, 1998), 255.

¹⁵ Payne, *American Ballet Theatre*, 115-116, 139-142; Lincoln Kirstein, *Thirty Years: The New York City Ballet* (New York: Knopf, 1978), 106.

¹⁶ Miles Kastendieck, "Ana María Lacks Artistry," *New York Journal-American*, 25 Apr. 1949, 11; Louis Biancolli, "Ballet Español Returns With Verve," *New York World-Telegram*, 25 Apr. 1949, 11; Walter Terry, "The Ballet," *New York Herald Tribune*, 25 Apr. 1949, 13.

¹⁷ *Unspeakable Confessions*, 75, 189.

¹⁸ In 1978, Dover Publications brought out an inexpensive reprint of the original de luxe portfolio. The introduction to the Dover edition was by Parmenia Migel.

¹⁹ Douglas Cooper, *Picasso Theatre* (New York: Abrams, 1987), 41.

²⁰ Terry, "The Ballet," 13; Harriett Johnson, "'Three-Cornered Hat' Given With Dalí Decor," *New York Post*, 25 April 1949, 27.

²¹ The flyer is in the Ana María Ballet Español clipping file, DC-NYPL. For an announcement of the tour, see "Ballet Ana María Starts U.S. Tour," *Dance News*, Nov. 1950, 3. The information about this and the company's other tours in the 1950s is based on the clippings in the Ana María Ballet Español [sic] scrapbook in the Dance Collection.

²² Burns, "José Greco," *IED*.

²³ M[arcia] B. M[arks], "Ballet Español Ana María," *Dance Magazine*, March 1961, 23.

²⁴ Trudy Goth, "The Dancing World: Venice," *Ballet Today*, Nov. 1961, 16.



Ballet Español Ana María in costume for *The Three-Cornered Hat*, Havana, 1950.
Costumes designed by Salvador Dalí.
Photo: Descharnes and Descharnes SARL. All Rights Reserved.



Photograph of Dalí from souvenir program, *Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo*, 1941-42 season.

Realizing Dalí's Scenic Designs

George Dunkel

I worked with Salvador Dalí, the well-known Spanish surrealist artist during his stay in New York City. Surrealism was then a novelty and Dalí found a very receptive press and public. We met at a rehearsal studio where Léonide Massine, the artistic director of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, was choreographing a new ballet called *Bacchanale*. It was set to the music of Richard Wagner. Dalí was commissioned to devise the libretto, as well as design the scenery and costumes.

My father Eugene and I were familiar with his work, his notoriety, and were pleased that he was designing for the theatre. At that conference, we discussed and set production dates, union affiliations, suggested sizes of various scenic elements, and other technical problems. Our firm was geared to working with avant-garde artists who, as a rule, were not cognizant of decorative painting or theatre techniques.

Dalí was small in stature, thin, and very lively and intelligent. He was polite in an old-fashioned manner, and his picturesque mustache, which he claimed to be an artistic antenna, gave him instant recognition. We communicated in French, as he spoke very little English, and my Spanish was limited. His wife spoke fluent French and Russian, so there was no communication problem. We welcomed his individuality, as it was a symbol of his great talent. Originality is a quality greatly admired in the arts.

A few weeks, later he and Gala showed up at our studio with production designs, done as oil paintings rather than the usual scale renderings. His concept for *Bacchanale* was truly poetic and was rendered magnificently. Among the four of us we soon reached an understanding as to how the painting would be adapted for the stage. We started work on *Bacchanale* immediately, as time was short. A few days before the premiere the management decided that they wanted a front curtain to be displayed during the long musical overture. To render this in time we required additional work space and rented the ballroom of the Russian Orthodox Church at 121st Street and Madison Avenue for that purpose.

Dalí's design for the show curtain was an india ink drawing of a vicious Minotaur about to charge in a surrealist landscape. It was shocking and effective. It took me a whole day to draw it out and Dalí arrived about 6 p.m. to supervise its painting. He enjoyed floor painting so much that he actually painted the whole curtain himself. Around midnight, a Russian priest in full monastic garb passed through on his rounds. After staring at Dalí furiously working away and at the work itself, he started blessing himself and quickly left the premises.

Mme. Karinska, the well known theatrical costumer, got the commission to do the costumes for *Bachannale*. She called us for a consultation, as she could not figure out how some of the dancers would fit into the costumes. Dalí was obviously more interested in visual effect and mood, rather than the dancer being able to dance. The designs were full of amorphic and organic forms, to be made of cellophane, lucite, and other plastic materials, some to be supported by all sorts of surrealist props. We did some tracing paper overlays for her -- showing where and how the figure would fit in,

but as we also had our hands full, we suggested she hire a scenic artist who could also sculpt the many crutches, rocks, sticks, branches, and other paraphernalia typical in a Dalí design. Most of the costumes were built, rather than sewn and hardly any have survived because of their limited appeal. Many dancers are still out of condition because they had to work once in a Dalí costume.

Helena Rubenstein, the celebrated grande-dame of the cosmetic industry, commissioned Dalí to design some decorative panels for her New York apartment. Dalí devised four very attractive surrealist scenes, all very slick and beautifully rendered. We were asked to render them in full size, approximately 4 by 6 feet each. The work was done on muslin canvas with tempera colors or scenic paints. I remember the work well as we had to purchase a special spray gun in order to render the superb blends in the skies and foregrounds. When the paintings were finished, they were mounted “*en place*” by her decorators and plans were made for a *vernissage* party.

All hell broke loose after the party. It seems that a lot of champagne bottles were popped near the murals and some of the wine stained the panels. There were many stains plus some signs of enthusiastic improvements by the guests. We repaired the damage and suggested that the murals be varnished in order to protect them. Varnish technically turns a tempera work into an oil work and increases its value. Needless to say, all concerned were very pleased. Mr. Descharnes, the well-known authority on Surrealism, tells me the panels are well preserved and can be seen in Paris.

During our various encounters, I got to know the Dalís in a variety of surroundings and situations. They seemed to be living a full and elegant life. When in New York, they usually stayed at the St. Regis Hotel, occupying a large suite. On one occasion, the living room was cluttered with room service paraphernalia while Dalí was painting away at an easel in the center of the room. Books and painting equipment were spread out on tables and chairs, etc. Yet he seemed very comfortable and well organized. Gala was nowhere to be seen. Dalí worked fast. I was watching a painting develop, when suddenly I heard the toilet flush. Then Salvador spoke in french “Gala, I have the giraffes running all over the landscape, but something is wrong, it does not look right. What should I do?” A short pause, then the sound of running water again. “Set them afire, Cheri, that should do it.” That theme of giraffes on fire was frequently used by Dalí, and I now understood why he signs his wife’s name to a lot of his canvasses.

One day I found their apartment in absolute chaos. The living room was full of people and all seemed to be arguing, talking on the phone, or typing away. In the midst of this pandemonium, Dalí was dictating a book, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*. One stenographer was taking down a stream of very clear and verbose dictation, while the other one was checking with him the correctness of what she had transcribed. I eventually realized that this was a press conference also, as Dalí was answering all sorts of mundane questions. There were no notes that he referred to, yet erudite and well constructed sentences were spewing forth without effort or hesitation. I was amazed at his total concentration. After all, this was bi-lingual. He turned to me and said, “Eet is nothing. Bonaparte used to keep five secretaries busy.”

Gala was petite, chic, and endowed with a lot of nervous energy. Of Russian Jewish descent, her main job was the master's social and work calendar and his day to day appointments, not to mention the business aspect of things. Life was simplified for Dalí by the following method. She gave him a bunch of cards every morning on which was written the time of day, the name and address and phone number of the person he was supposed to see, what to do there, and for how long. These cards scheduled his day and enabled him to move about the city without the necessity of speaking to people. When he ended one appointment, he simply showed the cab driver where he was due next, and so on. Lunch was usually at some posh restaurant with a client. Dalí did not see anyone or do anything without his wife's permission.

One day on our way to our studio, we were ahead of schedule, and we decided to stop for a drink. We stopped the cab on Broadway and 44th Street, and proceeded to the Astor bar. It was after four, the happy hour, and a goodly crowd of New Yorkers had congregated there. It is difficult to describe the sensation that Dalí, with his flamboyant mustache and aloof attitude created in that calm atmosphere.

With great flair, Dalí ordered a very dry double martini with a Spanish olive. I was very impressed with his savoir-faire and ordered a beer. By this time all heads were turned in our direction. The bartender served the martini in a large cocktail glass. Dalí rolled up his sleeves and plunged his fingers into the glass to fish out the olive. He shook his hand dry, inspected the olive, and ate it. "I am finished," he said, and we left, aware of the silence in the bar. Now you know how surrealists drink their dry martinis.

The Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo decided to do another production with Dalí. This was to be a major effort, with a world premiere scheduled at the Metropolitan Opera House. It was set to the music of Franz Schubert's *Seventh Symphony*. The ballet was *Labyrinth*. Massine was to do the choreography and Dalí was to provide the libretto and design the scenery and costumes. Because of the strong individuality of his style, it was difficult for more than one scenic artist to work on it, as the sketch had to be constantly referred to. That created a problem for us in meeting the deadline. To avoid the impending crises, my father suggested that we cut up the sketch into several pieces thereby allowing more artists to work on the project, a procedure then common in scenic studios. Dalí agreed to it, especially when Eugene told him that he would restore the painting perfectly. I performed the surgery with a Gillette razor blade and the work proceeded at a greater speed.

When Gala saw what we had done, she threw one of her famous fits. We were barbarians. We had committed a crime and would be sued, etc. and etc. Didn't we realize that these were masterpieces and had been already sold, etc. and etc! Salvador calmed her by telling her that it was done with his permission, and that Eugene had promised to reconstitute the painting. There was nothing to worry about. He had full confidence in us.

Hard as we tried we could not restore the painting. The exposed edges had frayed too much and the canvas was too mangled from handling. Rather than face Gala's wrath, Eugene decided to make a copy. When Dalí was handed back his work, he looked at the painting a long time, smiled and said, "Sank you, Eugene, I sink Gala will be very pleased."

Ana María, the famous flamenco dancer, was touring the United States with her Ballet Español. She decided to do her version of *The Three-Cornered Hat* and Salvador Dalí was commissioned to design the scenery and costumes. A perfect choice as the ballet was set in his beloved Catalonia. The ballet takes place outside a Miller's hut, and is set to music by Manuel de Falla. Besides designing superb scenery and costumes, Dalí contributed many surrealist effects: transforming transparencies, prop sacks of flour light enough to dance with, etc.

At the rehearsal, all went well until the dancers started dancing with the sacks of flour. They were light enough, as we had made them out of rubberized burlap and filled them with air, but Dalí wanted them light enough to surrealistically float about. The only way to do that was to fill them with helium gas. We ordered a container of helium to be delivered to the theatre. At the dress rehearsal, the bags, now filled with helium took to the air and flew up into the stage flies, and some actually ended up in the auditorium. Obviously a spectacular fiasco, and we set about searching for a solution. Perhaps the bags could be weighed down with water and sand, perhaps a ratio of air to helium would do it. This was a difficult matter as the sacks were all different sizes. What if the bag was punctured to cause a slow leak? None of these things were acceptable and time was running out.

The show must go on! The orchestra was tuning up. The stage manager was calling places as the solution came to us. We stuck with helium, but attached transparent strings to each bag, thereby controlling the height to which it could rise. Stage magic is not so complicated as it seems and the best solutions are usually simple.

For a long time the scenery and costumes for *El sombrero de tres picos* were believed to be lost, until Mr. Leonardo Patterson, the well-known art dealer, had them lovingly restored.

The art director of *Vogue*, Mr. Max Leiberman, and Gjon Milli, the well-known photographer, had decided that it would be interesting to record a Dalí "happening" -- an artistic novelty of that period. We were approached to participate, and the event was scheduled to take place in our studio.

The scenario was to be as follows: Dalí was to stand at the podium and conduct an eight artist orchestra until an instant Dalí painting was realized. A large canvas was hung in front of the artists. This would slowly rise as the "orchestra" painted away under Dalí's direction, until the work was finished. Each artist wore a number on his back and was provided with brushes, a palette of colors, and a rear view mirror so he could watch the maestro. Dalí as the "Art Maestro" would call their number out and give them painting instructions, such as: "Number eight, make large splashes of red. Number two, a three foot circle of yellow. Number five, paint a wide field of green, then splatter it with black." etc.

Gjon Milli and his assistants were busy photographing, the art director was making suggestions as the *Vouge* editors were writing it all up. Two sessions were completed and deemed to be a very successful "Happening." The film, I understand, still exists.

Exhibition Checklist

Scenic Painting

1. Salvador Dalí
Theater Backdrop for *The Three-Cornered Hat*, 1949
Oil on canvas
401 x 551 in.
Private collection, Switzerland

Costumes and Manikin

Designed by Salvador Dalí for *The Three-Cornered Hat*, 1949
Collection of COFINLUXE - President Mr. Jean Pierre GRIVORY, Paris

2. *The Corregidor manikin*
3. *Costume for the Corregidor (2)*
4. *Costume for the Corregidor's Wife*
5. *Costume for the Miller*
6. *Costume for the Miller (2)*
7. *Costume for the Miller's Wife*
8. *Costume for the Miller's Wife*
9. *Costume for a Priest*
10. *Costume for a Guard (2)*
11. *Costume for a female dancer in the Sevillanas (8)*
12. *Costume for a male dancer in the Sevillanas (2)*
13. *Costume for a male dancer in the Sevillanas (6)*
14. *Costume for a female dancer in the Jota (3)*
15. *Costume for a female dancer in the Jota (4)*
16. *Costume for a male dancer in the Jota*
17. *Costume for a female dancer in the Jota*
18. *Costume for a female dancer in the Jota*

Ballet Programs

19. Program for *Ballet Español Ana María*
20. Souvenir program for *Col. W. de Basil's Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo*, 1937-1938 season
21. Souvenir Program for *Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo*, 1941-1942 season
22. Souvenir Program for *Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo*, 1945-1946 season

Illustrations

1. *Dalí at Port Lligat, 11/10/59*

Reproduced courtesy of Salvador Dalí © Demart Pro Arte BV 1999, p. 6.

2. Salvador Dalí, Stage Decor for *Bacchanale*, 1939, p. 8.

3. Salvador Dalí, Stage Decor for *Labyrinth*, 1941, p. 9.

4. Salvador Dalí, *Preliminary design for stage decor (flour sacks) for The Three-Cornered Hat*
Watercolor

10 1/2 x 13 3/4 in.

Reproduced courtesy of Salvador Dalí © Demart Pro Arte BV 1999, p. 14.

5. Program cover for *Ballet Español Ana María*, p. 16.

6. Photograph of *Ballet Español Ana María* in costume for *The Three-Cornered Hat*, Havana, 1950. Costumes designed by Salvador Dalí. Photo: Descharnes and Descharnes SARL. All Rights Reserved, p. 25.

7. Photograph of Dalí from souvenir program *Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo*, 1941-42 season, p.26.

8. Salvador Dalí, *The Corregidor manikin*
Collection of COFINLUXE - President Mr. Jean Pierre GRIVORY, Paris., p. 33.

9. Salvador Dalí, *Costume designs for two dancers*
Watercolor
10 5/8 x 13 3/8 in., p. 34.

10. Salvador Dalí, *Costume design for the Miller*
Watercolor
13 3/4 x 10 1/3 in., p. 34.

11. Salvador Dalí, *Costume design for the Miller's Wife*
Watercolor
13 3/8 x 10 1/2 in., p. 34.

12. Salvador Dalí, *Costume for the Miller's Wife*, p. 35.

13. Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a female dancer in the Jota*, p. 36

14. Salvador Dalí, *Costume for the Miller's Wife*, p. 37.

15. Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a female dancer in the Jota*, p. 38.

16. Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a female dancer in the Sevillanas*, p. 39.

17. Salvador Dalí, Theater Backdrop for *The Three-Cornered Hat*, 1949
Oil on canvas
401 x 551 in.
Private collection, Switzerland, p. 40 and 41.

18. Salvador Dalí, *Costume for the Miller*, p. 42.

19. Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a Guard*, p. 42.

20. Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a male dancer in the Jota*, p. 42.

21. Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a male dancer in the Sevillanas*, p. 42.

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23. Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a male dancer in the Sevillanas*, p. 44.

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25. Salvador Dalí, *Costume for the Corregidor*, p. 46.

26. Salvador Dalí, *Costume for the Corregidor*, p. 47.

27. Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a Priest*, p. 48.



Salvador Dalí, *The Corregidor manikin*, 1949.



Salvador Dalí, *Costume designs for two dancers*, 1949.
Watercolor
10 5/8 x 13 3/8 in.



34 Salvador Dalí, *Costume design for the Miller*, 1949.
Watercolor
13 3/4 x 10 1/3 in.



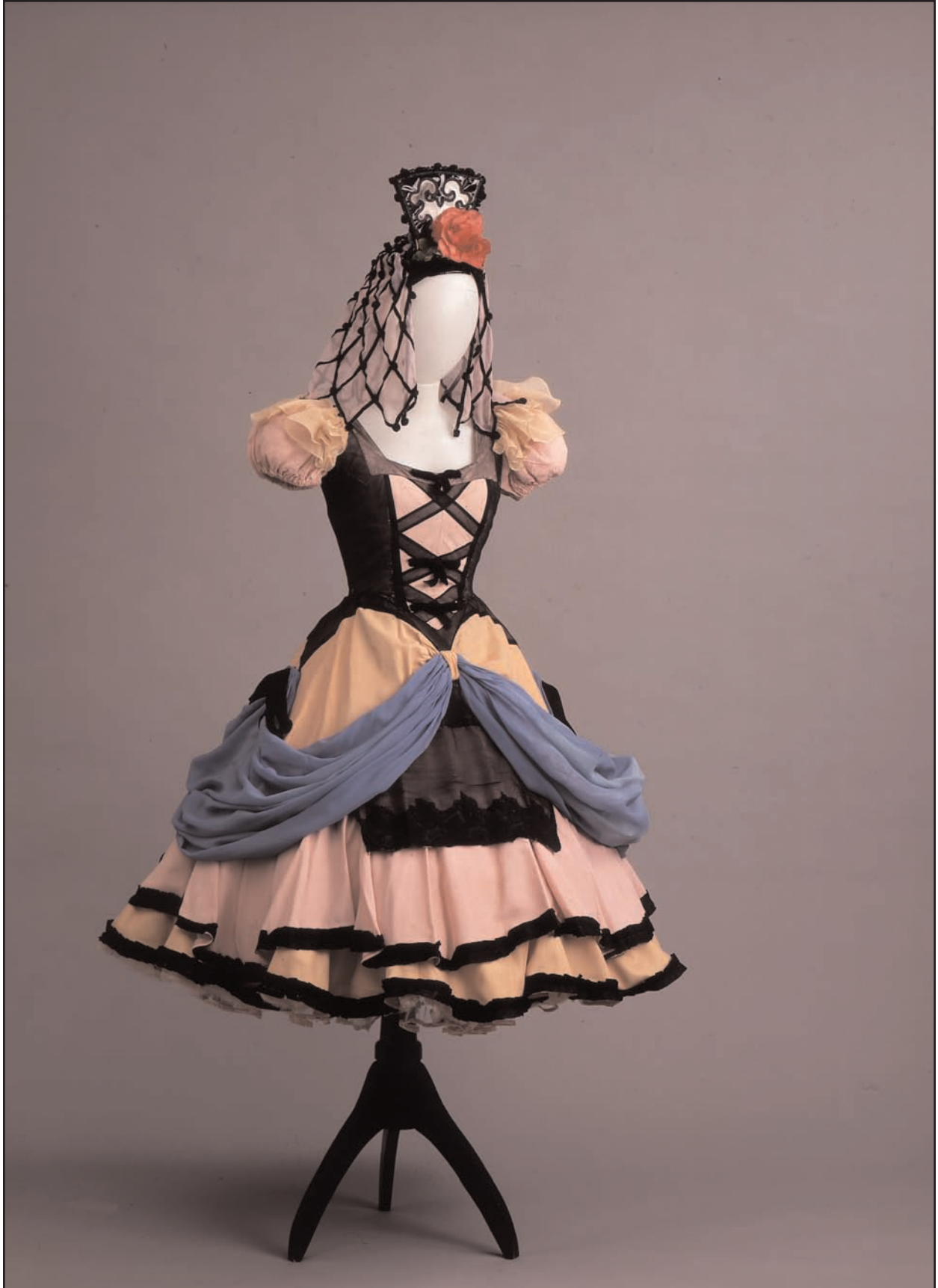
Salvador Dalí, *Costume design for the Miller's Wife*, 1949.
Watercolor
13 3/8 x 10 1/2 in.



Salvador Dalí, *Costume for the Miller's Wife*, 1949.



36 Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a female dancer in the Jota*, 1949.



Salvador Dalí, *Costume for the Miller's Wife*, 1949.



38 Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a female dancer in the Sevillanas*, 1949.



Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a female dancer in the Sevillanas*, 1949.



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Salvador Dalí, Theater Backdrop for *The Three-Cornered Hat*, 1949.
Oil on canvas
401 x 551 in.
Private collection, Switzerland





Salvador Dalí, *Costume for the Miller*, 1949.



Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a Guard*, 1949.



Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a male dancer in the Jota*, 1949.



Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a male dancer in the Sevillanas*, 1949.



Salvador Dalí, *Costume for the Miller*, 1949.



44 Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a male dancer in the Sevillanas*, 1949.



Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a male dancer in the Sevillanas*, 1949.



46 Salvador Dalí, *Costume for the Corregidor*, 1949.



Salvador Dalí, *Costume for the Corregidor*, 1949.



48 Salvador Dalí, *Costume for a Priest*, 1949.