

I SAKHAROV SU «THE THEOSOPHIST»

Scheda 1

(di Samantha Marenzi)

La Società Teosofica e le organizzazioni nate nel suo seno animano in tutto il mondo numerosi periodici. Sulle riviste, che pubblicano e traducono in diverse lingue i discorsi dei maestri, le descrizioni dei grandi eventi collettivi, le trascrizioni dei discorsi tenuti nei congressi e nelle conferenze, si sviluppa il continuo dibattito sui temi di interesse di questa grande comunità internazionale. Sono riviste su cui si produce pensiero, si fa ricerca, si pubblicano i contributi di studi legati ai temi delle religioni, delle dottrine, delle scienze e delle filosofie delle diverse civiltà, indagini storiche e culturali, che spaziano nei più diversi campi del sapere, e dell'arte come manifestazione dello spirito dell'umanità. Non sono molti gli articoli sulla danza. Questo che appare su «The Theosophist» nel luglio del 1925 è firmato da Irma de Manziarly, referente dell'Ordine della Stella d'Oriente in Francia, per cui svolge una intensa attività sia pratica e organizzativa che intellettuale e divulgativa. Le sue tre figlie, e in parte il suo unico figlio maschio, sono tutte coinvolte nelle attività dell'Ordine e fin da piccole crescono secondo i valori della teosofia. Avranno anche loro dei ruoli importanti nell'organizzazione. Tutte svolgono anche attività artistiche, in particolare Marcelle, l'amica di Cesarina Gualino, nota pianista e compositrice. Tutte, come anche la madre, praticano la ritmica di Jaques-Dalcroze accanto alla loro educazione musicale. L'articolo di Irma de Manziarly radica il nome dei Sakharoff nel terreno della teosofia. Li conosce, e li riconosce come i portatori di un valore poetico e spirituale, di una verità e di una bellezza di cui il corpo si fa tramite, come era nell'idea dei teosofi. Il corpo come veicolo di presenze, come sede di diverse vite, come strumento di manifestazione di qualcosa di universale e invisibile. Il corpo come luogo attraversato da forze divine che la danza traduce in forma, rendendole vive e visibili.

Irma de Manziarly, *Danced Poetry: Clotilde and Alexandre Sakharoff*, «The Theosophist», n. 10, July 1925, pp. 511-516.

ART is one of the symptoms of a given epoch.

Through art the subconscious, the subliminal, finds its expression. If there is a transcendence which *can* be defined as supreme Beauty, Good and Truth, the roads to it appear as Art, Religion and Science. The Art, Religion and Science of a Nation indicate its cultural level, one being as important as the two others.

Very few minds are capable of a synthetic representation and therefore our ideas about the state of the world are defective. It is not enough just to know these three

fields, one must recognize their most characteristic and representative expressions in order to be able to form a right judgment. New expressions are those which possess the most far-reaching effects, being revelations of new possibilities, new realms. Often eccentricities, which are only the last exaggerated consequences of old demonstrations and, as such, deprived of truth, are taken for new discoveries and hide the new conquest. Is there not more new art in the sovereign painting of a Roerich, for example, than in some crazy Cubist productions? Proust probably discovered a more novel path than the Dadaists or Surrealists. And does not Schönberg possess more original possibilities than Eric Satie? But the public is not able generally to establish such differences and does not at once assign the right place to the creators.

In a time of transition and preparation of the future, as is our time, it is difficult to possess a right evaluation, the old measures being no longer good. How can one ask the public to show enough intuition, to possess already a new measure, for example, for such artists as the Sakharoffs?

Much has been said about Dance in our days strongly influenced by Terpsichore. One knows about its antiquity, its religious aspect in Egypt, India, Persia; among savage tribes; or in the Christian worlds, where it slowly evolved into "Mysteries" and sacred drama. Gradually Dance became secularised and the romantic ballet appeared in Italy; but after a comparatively short success in Europe a certain deterioration, degradation, took place, until lately when the modern revival in Russia proved to what height the artistic standard of the ballet can reach. At the same time we witness a renaissance of individual classic Dance, for example, Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis. In all these achievements much talent is to be found, but the whole significance of Dance is not yet revealed. It has not yet gained its rightful place among the other arts as an equally sacred representation of the higher Inner World. There is a certain depreciation attached to it, the degraded forms of it hiding its true meaning. The special condition of this art, its close association with the human body, may be one of the reasons for this state of things.

For a long period, under the influence of materialistic thought, everything related to the body seemed to be opposed to Spirit and to be relegated to the exclusive display of sensuousness. The appearance of Dalcroze's Eurythmic was already a correction of this erring conception; a new freedom, a new ideal, was revealed to the world. Eurythmic may create a new school, a new tradition, unfettered by the old prejudice; but we still possess very few highly cultured dancers, capable of proving that the aim of Dance is not only to be an expression of emotions but a transfiguration of the body. Dance is truly the most human art; but man must not be regarded as a higher animal, but as a God in the making, for it to find perfect expression.

The dancer possesses as his medium, as his instrument, his own body; he lives the duality of creator and creation; he is complete in himself and even music is accessory to him. Without denying the link between music and dance, dance is not *dependent* on the former.

Alexandre Sakharoff began to dance his own inner silent music – as did others – and only because that was too lofty, too pure, for the public, who could not catch the meaning of it, he added outward explicative instrumental music. But, even now, both Clotilde and Alexandre Sakharoff seem much more to determine the music than follow it. We have to reverse the ordinary position in order to understand the secret

of their art. For them the difficulty is to find appropriate music for their inner Eurythmie. Above all, their creations are revelations of their inner poetical world. To express means to possess, and it is precisely what the Sakharoffs possess which is so precious. Their spiritual life is a reflection of the world of Beauty, and they express it in its whole purity. There is no literary mixture to be found, no eccentricities, no acrobatism, and none of the so-called originality which is so often nothing more than ugliness and poverty of imagination. By them no declaration or manifesto is given out. Simplicity, which means perfection, and synthesis, the synthesis of highest technique and deepest inspiration, are the features of their art.

Technique has to be acquired in order to be master of all difficulties. Inertia is transformed into motion; dullness into a conscious alertness of every part of the body; weight and gravity are counterbalanced by muscular strength acting as a spring. But at the same time all the opposites have to be retained, for all contrasts have to be used – weight and lightness, slowness and alacrity, repose and movement. Was it not Alexandre Sakharoff who revealed to the impatient West the beauty of slow steps and gesture? It is of a higher order to grasp this beauty as seen in its supreme expression in the Japanese NO dances. Absolute rest does not exist; there is only a movement so slow that to our short-living consciousness it appears as inaction. Through the Sakharoffs one becomes aware of the relativity of acceleration, and one wishes to see them as well in a dance of immobility – a stone changing in shape through æons, or in a representation of the unstable curling of incense smoke, immaterial and evanescent – for one is sure their revelations of both would be beautiful.

The mystery of time, space and rhythm is ever present; in Dance the dancer solves it by his sacred function. The Sakharoffs are aware of the sacredness of Dance, and not the slightest detail is overlooked by them or left to chance. They create their costumes and every tint, colour, material, line and fold has to serve the one purpose. Each posture, gesture, movement, is intensified by them. Sound, movement, colour, line, rhythm, all serve the Spirit, becoming the expression of it. And still there is no trace of superficial symbolism or artificial values. There is free creation and an immense richness of imagination. A proof of it lies in the changes made in the costumes of the different dances. Some time ago Clotilde Sakharoff danced her sacred dance in which her slightly bent body looks like an ivory Madonna clad in the traditional blue dress – blue and silver, like an evening star in a summer sky. But later she wore shaded pink and a blue veil; another nuance was made visible and she appeared as the virgin of the dawn. The same dances evolve continually new features, through such slight alterations, which underline a new conception of the same idea. And these details, these nuances, are so perfect that they do not distract from the cardinal thing – the representation of the Inner World of Beauty.

When one looks at the Sakharoff one knows that there exists somewhere a world of perfect Beauty, one almost forgets our own state of chaos, where fragments of beauty are lost in heaps of ugly rubbish. The Sakharoffs' art reasserts the reign of Beauty; shows the perfect man, and makes us believe in him.

The Sakharoffs have discovered their own measure, their own rhythm, as all really creative artists do; and so they create freely, without imitation or fear. Once the inner rhythm, the inner measure, the inner starting-point is discovered, the specific style appears. We may call the Sakharoffs' style poetical, because in their art every-

thing appears in its poetic, transfigured aspect.

They are essentially poets.

Their poetry is deep and big.

Alexandre Sakharoff is able to dance an Epoch, a Country, a Spiritual State. When he appears in the hieratic stiff brocade of his *quattrocento* dance, his gliding steps, the attitudes of his body evoke not only the Italian Primitives but also Dante and Petrarch. We take part in their poetical world and understand something more of it. In the “Serenade” his slim silhouette in dusky velvet does not dance a given Spanish dance, but express Spain, its hot nights when the lover appears as a shadow ready to vanish, and all its wealth of passion, danger, death and love. The sumptuous feathers and silks of the “Grand Siècle”, sweeping, curling, following every undulation of the capricious steps and bows, depict the refinement and complexity of that century.

Everything acquires poetry through them, even the slightly grotesque “Danse Nègre”, which, danced by any other than Clotilde Sakharoff would appear as a witty caricature; in her expression there is just enough humor to make it pathetic. Not to speak of Debussy’s “Petit Berger” or “Ronde Printannière”, which are the very essence of poetry, without the slightest sentimentality or banality.

If only the public possessed more knowledge, if only it were better prepared to appreciate, to gain a new insight into things. Because truly the Sakharoffs are initiators and reveal the soul of things.

Novalis says in his *Fragments*; “There is a special sense for poetry and a poetical state which is in us. Poetry is absolutely personal and therefore indescribable. The one who does not know, who does not feel directly what poetry is – to him no idea of it can be given. Poetry is only poetry”.

To come across dancers who possess this poetry, who are highly evolved and near to the Spirit, who create synthetically and express their inspiration by the nobility of their souls, their trained, cultivated minds and skillful bodies, is a very rare privilege. How fail to recognize in them messengers, bearers of glad news – the triumph of Spirit in perfect beauty; and how not apply to them Isaiah’s words; “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings”...



Fig. 17. Piero Bernardini, «Il dramma». Didascalie a p. 377.