

# LA SOURCE

Music: Léo Delibes (excerpts from *La Source*, 1866, and *Le pas des fleurs*, 1867, arranged as “Naila Waltz,” 1878?)

Choreography: George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust

Premiere: November 23, 1968; New York City Ballet (New York State Theater)

George Balanchine loved the music of Léo Delibes, considering him one of the three great composers for ballet, along with Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky. Balanchine returned to the music of Delibes throughout his career. *La Source* is a hybrid work, drawn from several earlier Balanchine ballets and first presented in 1968 as an extended *pas de deux* for Violette Verdy and John Prinz. The legendary Verdy was a seasoned artist with piquant technique and theatrical flair, while Prinz was just coming into his own as a dancer. In 1969, Balanchine added dances for a second ballerina and eight women from his 1965 *Pas de Deux and Divertissement* (which itself was an extension of his 1950 *Sylvia: Pas de Deux*) and a revision of his “Naila Waltz,” choreographed in 1951 as part of *Music and Dance*, a presentation by the National Orchestral Society at Carnegie Hall.

Reminiscing about *La Source*, Verdy wrote,

Mr. B’s idea of France in *La Source* was almost a platonic ideal of the French. It was France through the eyes of an educated person from St. Petersburg who remembered how much France and Russia had in common and how much France brought to Russia with Catherine and the tsar and all the artists that came to St. Petersburg—Petipa, Didelot, the builders, and the constructors. The city is built like a beautiful theater, like Paris is a theater. ...For me, dancing *La Source* was being home once more. The movements Mr. B gave me and that music—they are like family, they are in my genes.

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