

**Title:** Two Worlds in Two Words: *Stal'noi Skok* (1927) on Diaghilev's Stage  
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The paper examines, step by step, the making of *Le Pas d'acier*, aka *Stal'noi Skok* – a bold attempt on the part of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes to espouse what was known in the West as the ethos and pathos of Homo Sovieticus. As documents show, Prokofiev, Yakulov, Diaghilev and Massine were well aware of problems and pitfalls a project like this potentially entailed, and did all they could to both prevent and provoke being accused of aesthetic eclecticism and political promiscuity. I will look at three opposites the ballet had to balance with: a) between Russia's peasant past which Diaghilev's first twenty seasons became associated with and its proletarian present which Diaghilev looked to in hope to revolutionize the company's choreography; b) between two divergent literary traditions Prokofiev wanted *Le Pas d'acier* to integrate: Gastev's metallic utopias on the one hand and Leskov's folksy ones on the other; c) between the ideological metaphor *stal'noi* (made of steel) and the kinetic noun *skok* (hopping) both of which embrace cultural implications, as I am going to show, stretched from the world of dance to Russian insect fiction.