Dear Teachers and Homeschool Parents,

The following materials are designed to assist in your preparation for the Minnesota Orchestra Young People’s Concert you are attending April 22 – 28, 2014, The Rite of Spring. This program begins with the story When Stravinsky Met Nijinsky by author/illustrator Lauren Stringer. Ms. Stringer will read the story while illustrations from her book are projected on a large screen above the stage. A full performance of Igor Stravinsky’s The Rite of Spring performed by the Minnesota Orchestra will follow with live footage of the orchestra performing as well as historical images from the premiere of The Rite of Spring.

Conductor Courtney Lewis will explain the story depicted in The Rite of Spring prior to the Orchestra’s performance. Due to the serious nature of Part Two (The Sacrifice), Mr. Lewis will refer to the character simply as a dancer dancing a passionate and energetic dance until she falls to the ground and her life-force flows into the earth, calling forth the new life of spring for her people.

The writers of these materials, Joanna Cortright and Lauren Stringer, offer many ideas for extending your exploration of this music and story in age-appropriate ways for your students.

We hope you and your students enjoy these performances; we look forward to welcoming you to Orchestra Hall in April.

Warmly,

Mele Willis
Manager of Outreach & Educational Partnerships
Minnesota Orchestra
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   • Background Information for Educators and Older Students
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   • Images Related to the Creation and Context of the Music (.pdf)

II. A Personal Note from Lauren Stringer, author / illustrator of When Stravinsky Met Nijinsky

III. When Stravinsky Met Nijinsky Activity Guide Lauren Stringer
     More resources at laurenstringer.com
Introduction
You and your students will soon attend a Minnesota Orchestra Young Peoples Concert: The Rite of Spring. The following Listening Notes and Resources provide background information for Stravinsky’s music, an annotated list of resources, and some suggestions for activities to engage students in listening and connecting to the music. Though not a step by step curriculum with lesson plans, these materials are offered to assist teachers who are preparing students for their upcoming Minnesota Orchestra experience.

Big Ideas and Questions
- The Rite of Spring was a landmark composition. Stravinsky’s music changed the way composers would create music in the future.

- Nijinsky’s experimental choreography was poles apart from what audiences expected in classical ballet. How was it different?

- The Rite of Spring ballet was the result of a collaboration. Who were the collaborators and what roles did they have?

- Why did audiences respond so vigorously – both for and against the new work?
What do you think of Stravinsky’s music?

“At the performance, mild protests against the music could be heard, from the beginning. Then when the curtain opened ... the storm broke...I was unprepared for the explosion...I left the hall in a rage...I have never again been that angry. (Stravinsky, writing in

New York Times report nine days after the opening performance
**The Rite of Spring by Igor Stravinsky**

Information for Educators and Older Students

“...the violent Russian spring that seemed to begin in an hour and was like the whole Earth cracking.”

-Igor Stravinsky on his childhood memories of the arrival of spring

“It’s terrifying!” “I don’t understand it!”

-Claude Debussy’s anxious comment at the premiere

Stravinsky wrote *The Rite of Spring* in 1913. He was inspired to create this new work while completing his music for *The Firebird*. He imagined a story about “a solemn pagan rite” and the sacrifice of a young girl to the god of spring. The impresario of the Ballet Russes (Russian Ballet Company), Sergei Diaghilev, liked the idea. He thought it would make an impressive dramatic ballet, one that would draw Paris audiences to the theater. Eventually Stravinsky began work on the piece, collaborating with two other respected artists. One was the famous Russian designer, painter, archeologist, and scholar, Nicolas Roerich. He possessed a deep knowledge of the ancient Slavic people, their customs and rituals. The other was the amazing Vaslav Nijinsky, considered one of the twentieth century’s greatest male dancers. The result was an innovative artistic collaboration combining Stravinsky’s music with Roerich’s costumes and scenery and Nijinsky’s choreography. Those three components were closely integrated throughout the work.

**The Composer**

Russian Composer, Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) was a very influential figure in the music world during the twentieth century. He initially went to law school to satisfy his parents, but eventually turned to music and studied composition with fellow Russian, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov. While still quite a young composer, he began an amazing collaboration with the Ballet Russes (Russian Ballet) in Paris, France. Early works for them, *The Firebird* and *Petrushka*, were very popular with the public. But it was *The Rite of Spring* that brought Stravinsky to the attention of the world. Stravinsky never moved back to Russia. He made his home in France and Switzerland, then moved to the United States during World War II.

**The Choreographer**

Russian Dancer and choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky (1890 – 1950) became a legend for his spectacular leaps and sensitive ballet interpretations. His ability to appear to pause in midair during a leap left audiences gasping in amazement. He was a marvelous actor as well as a brilliant dancer. Young Nijinsky became a soloist at St. Petersburg’s Mariinsky Theatre in 1907, appearing in such classical ballets as *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, and *The Sleeping Beauty*. In 1909 he left Russia, moved to Paris, and joined Serge Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes. Choreographer Michel Fokine created a series of
spectacular ballets just for Nijinsky including *Petrushka* and *Scheherazade*. Nijinsky eventually turned to choreography. Two of his most famous works are *L’Après-midi d’un faune* (Afternoon of a Faun) and *Le Sacre du printemps* (The Rite of Spring).

**The Riot**

The first performance of *The Rite of Spring* ended in a riot. Word had spread about this new production. People came to the Theatre des Champs-Élysées ready to react to something. Noise from the audience began even before conductor, Pierre Monteux, stepped up to the podium. Not a note had been played. On one hand, some people were excited because they were ready to hear something new and modern. But others were sure they would not like it. When the overture began with a single bassoon playing in a high range, people couldn’t identify the instrument. It sounded so strange. Then all kinds of odd sounds came tumbling out from the rest of the orchestra in a relentless barrage of music. And that was before the curtain even came up on the dancers.

It was then that the storm broke – for there on stage was a group of young dancers who looked very different from the way the audience thought ballerinas should look. Their costumes went down below their knees and their hair was bound in headbands. Their legs jutted out at odd angles as they jumped up and down, matching Stravinsky’s angular music. The audiences howled with a mix of catcalls, jeers, and cheers. A barrage of items were thrown by the audience onto the stage. Through it all, Pierre Monteux and the orchestra never stopped. It was so noisy at one point that Nijinsky went backstage, climbed on a chair in the wings, leaned forward, and started counting loudly for his dancers because they could no longer hear the orchestra. The performance continued without a stop to the very end. There were even curtain calls and ovations (during which jeers and catcalls continued). But it was a scene that people never forgot. It is said that about 40 people were arrested by the police that night.

**The Storyline**

The ballet is a series of scenes interpreting the emerging spring of long ago and the actions of the people who welcomed it. It is set in Ancient Russia. Here is an outline of the actions and events within the ballet.

**PART ONE: Adoration of the Earth** (synonyms for adoration: love, esteem, respect, worship; synonyms for earth: world, planet). In our century we celebrate and respect the earth with Earth Day in April.
Earth awakens after a long winter. Buds and branches stir and humans prepare a celebration to welcome spring. Pipers play happily and an old women tells the fortunes of the young people. The excitement for springtime mounts. The mood changes quite quickly when the young men stage a mock abduction of the young women. It is a traditional part of the ancient marriage rite.

The scene shifts and the mood changes as young girls come in from the river and dance a slow, solemn ceremonial dance. Spring is also the time for outdoor games between rival teams. Teams of competitors re-enact ancient games that were played between opponents from the past. The competition ends when a sage, a wise elder woman, accompanied by a group of young women. After ending the games, she blesses the earth. Then all erupt into an enthusiastic festival with dancing and loud music. The people dance happily and wildly, close to the earth, to celebrate the return of spring.

**PART TWO: The Sacrifice** (the more serious part)

Before sunrise, a mysterious group of mysterious figures assemble. They move in circles, but the men soon fall away and the maidens dance alone. One falls twice to the ground and is caught in the middle of the circle. She is The Chosen One.

Suddenly eleven loud chords pound out. It is a terrifying sound that freezes the girl in her tracks. She knows she is The Chosen One. She stands very still while the other girls praise her with an enchanted dance. They stop dancing as the Elders chant a prayer for blessings from the god of spring. They move with solemn steps as they call upon their ancestors. Then The Chosen One cautiously begins her ritual dance. She is the maiden who makes the appeal to the god of spring for his blessing on the earth. The Chosen One’s movements grow wild and frenzied. All her energies are thrown into a feverish finale as the dance grows more and more passionate. Finally she falls to the ground. Her life-force flows into the earth, calling forth the new life of spring for her people. She is sacrificed so that the rest of her people can again live and prosper.
## A Timeline of Musical Events in *The Rite of Spring*

### PART ONE: Adoration of the Earth

The setting: A European landscape out in nature from ancient times in what is now Russia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Musical Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong> 0:00</td>
<td><em>The earth awakens and anticipates spring.</em> A solo bassoon playing in a high register curls and spirals with a slow, rhythmically free melody.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| "Augurs of Spring" 1:00      | *Buds and branches stir; birds tweet and twitter; humans start preparations for a celebration to welcome the emerging springtime; an old woman enters and tells the fortunes of the young people. The scene is a twitters and pulses.*  
Music slips into "Augers of Spring." Oboe and clarinet play a descending melody; other woodwinds enter and the music grows more active. Solo bassoon continues to weave in and out. The music curls and circles as the solo bassoon returns. Violins pluck a pattern that leads to "The Dance." |
| "Dance of the Adolescents" 3:27 | *The young people, the adolescents, begin a celebration dance, moving to an ancient folk melody. Their excitement for springtime mounts.*  
- The orchestra first settles into a persistent bold series of eight notes with accents that organize it into irregular meters. It sounds like drumbeats from another culture.  
- Trumpet plays a short descending melody in half steps.  
- Long notes in the brass.  
- French horn plays a short melody, picked up by the flutes.  
- Trumpets play another melody. Music grows more active.  
- Piccolo, then other instruments play the original French horn melody; the eight note pattern continues—sometimes softly and sometimes more pronounced. |
| "Dance of Abduction" 6:38    | *The mood changes quite quickly when the boys stage a mock abduction of the girls as part of the ancient marriage rite. Sounds like a movie chase scene.* Brasses play a long tone, then the orchestra plays wildly. A scampering tune in the woodwinds is answered by a French horn call. Meter changes and polyrhythms add interest. A long flute trill (7:53) leads to the “Round Dances of Spring.” |
| "Round Dances of Spring" 8:26 | *Young girls circle in a slow, solemn ceremonial dance.* The tempo is calm; flutes and other winds play a simple melody. This is the slow movement of Part One. The music grows louder and more intense, and the tam tam (large hanging cymbal) shatters the quiet mood as it towers over the music and the melody is played by the full forces of the orchestra. The slow measured pace is interrupted by a fast, frantic section, then returns to the calm pace of the beginning. |
| "Ritual Games of Rival Tribes" 11:29 | *Spring is the time for outdoor games between rival teams. Teams of competitors re-enacting ancient games between opponents.* The music returns to exciting, blood rushing spring celebrations, bold and fast. Trilling winds play, then loud tubas, and hammering tympani play for the competitions. The idea of competing teams is expressed as sections of the orchestra play against each other. Two ideas alternate: a flowing melody first played by oboe and clarinet - repeated many times, and the scampering fast music of the opening. |
**“Entrance of the Sage”**  
13:54  
*The wise one, attended by the young women, appears.* Tuba in slow tempo.  
*Then the games continue.* Main themes return, sound majestic. The music piles up in thick textured, layers, each with a different rhythm. Things build until the orchestra is immersed in a bubbling vortex of sound. A sudden stop!

**“Dance of the Earth”**  
15:53  
*The Sage blesses the earth. Then all erupt into a wild celebration with dancing and loud music. An ecstatic dance celebrates the return of spring to the earth.* Drums, trumpets, horns, and strings ripple loudly and happily! It sounds wild and frenzied.

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### PART TWO: The Sacrifice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction 0:00</td>
<td><em>Just before dawn as a group of mysterious figures assemble.</em> The young men and women begin to dance in circular formation, but the men soon fall away and the women dance alone.* Music is legato, in an even, measured rhythm, pianissimo to mezzo-piano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Mystical Circles of the Young Girls” 4:56</td>
<td><em>The girls dance in slow, mystical circles. One girl falls twice.</em> Slow tempo, with short legato melodies passed between primarily wind instruments and eventually strings. Trumpet accent (7:26) and French horn ‘call’ move music to the next fiery section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Honoring the Chosen One” 7:26</td>
<td>Trumpet accent, French horn ‘call’ – then an accelerando and eleven thundering chords are played by timpani and strings. <em>The terrifying sound holds the girl who fell – frozen in her tracks. She is The Chosen One. She holds very still while the other young women praise her with an enchanted dance.</em> Sharply accented music returns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Evocation of the Ancestors” 9:16</td>
<td><em>The women stop their dance as the Elders chant prayers asking for blessings from the god of spring.</em> Woodwinds and brass play a syncopated chant rhythm punctuated by drum-rolls. Repeated several times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Ritual of the Ancestors” 9:54</td>
<td><em>The elders prepare for a ritual. They move with solemn steps as they call upon the ancestors of the people.</em> Percussion plays an even measured beat; tambourine plays the off-beat. Mysterious sounding English horn plays the melody first. Flute follows, and beat moves to plucked strings. Muted brass adds to the mystery. Then horns blare out loudly and tension builds. Cymbals crash the off-beat. Sounds like a procession in a horror movie. Ends softly in low winds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Sacrificial Dance” 13:31</td>
<td><em>The Chosen One cautiously begins her ritual dance. She is fearful but her soul is touched to be the one chosen to make this appeal to the god of spring.</em> Over the irregular meter of the rhythmic accompaniment, instruments play many short fragments of melody. The sound is edgy and out of control. <em>The Chosen One’s movements grow wild and frenzied. All her energies are thrown into a feverish finale as the dance grows more and more passionate. Finally she falls to the ground. Her life-force flowing into the earth, calling forth the new birth of spring for her people.</em></td>
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</tbody>
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The timings for these two sections were taken from four YouTube videos of a 2009 performance by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra (see resource section). Timings will differ from other recordings due to various interpretations of the music.
Listening Activities

First Impressions - Describe One Movement Using an Inquiry Process

Focus: A musical work becomes familiar and “known” through LISTENING, THINKING, and DESCRIBING it using a collaborative process.

Materials: recording of selected movement; chart paper or board space with 3 questions

Select one movement (for example, “Ritual Games of Rival Tribes” or “Honoring the Chosen One”) or a part of a movement from The Rite of Spring for this activity. Students will use a collaborative inquiry process called Descriptive Review to listen closely and describe what they hear in the music. They will listen without knowing the title or context of the music and respond to the questions. This process encourages critical listening and original, independent thinking as students connect prior knowledge and experiences to the music, then develop a group description of the piece. The drama in The Rite of Spring will likely provoke interesting descriptions and thoughts; it is a great piece for exploring via this protocol.

1. **Do not reveal the title** or details about the music before you listen!
   
   Introduce the process and remind students of appropriate brainstorming practices: all responses have equal worth and all voices should be heard. As they talk about the music, students will describe what they hear without making judgmental statements. 

   Tell students that together they will be able to describe many details about this music! It is a collaborative process.

2. Write the inquiry questions on chart paper at the top of 3 columns. (Using paper allows you to save responses for a later activity.)
   
   - **Describe.** What you notice? What’s going on in the music? (Describe without judgment.)
   - **Question.** What questions do you have about the music? (I wonder…?)
   - **Speculate.** What is the meaning of the music? (Speculate (guess) what the composer wants you to feel, know, or understand. What is s/he expressing?)

3. Read the FIRST question, and then play the whole piece as students reflect and jot down their responses. After listening, repeat the question and ask for responses.
   
   - Write their comments on the board or charts. **Do not explain the music or add your own words and ideas,** but prompt further responses by asking clarifying questions. (“Tell me more about that. What else did you notice?”) 
   
   Note that the role of facilitator is often a difficult task for teachers! Your role is also to help students stay in the describe mode. If they offer opinion such as “It sounds like…” steer them back to a descriptive stance. “What did you hear that made you say that?”
   
   - When you edit as you write to shorten a response, check with the responder for their okay.
   
   - If a thought is repeated, just add a √ to the prior response.

4. Read the SECOND question, listen again, then ask students what questions they might have; what might they be curious about knowing or what would they ask Stravinsky if he were sitting in the room. Add questions to the chart.

5. Read the THIRD question in the Descriptive Review process and clarify the meaning of the word ‘speculate.’ For example, if they heard this music while watching a movie, can they speculate on what might be happening on the screen? Ask for comments in response to the question.

6. **Congratulate students** on their ability to describe the music with so much detail. Keep the descriptive word banks on display as they listen to more of Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring.
The Context of the Work

Focus: Information about the context of the work helps students understand its role in music history.

Materials: picture book, *When Stravinsky Met Nijinsky* (Stringer), resources for teachers included with these notes, other writings about the music

Before introducing students to more of the music, read the Information Resource for Teachers included with these notes, and the information at the end of the picture book, *When Stravinsky Met Nijinsky.*

1. Read the picture book and share the images from *When Stravinsky Met Nijinsky.* The author, Lauren Stringer, successfully tells the story about the creation of the piece in a way that students can understand. Most local libraries have copies on their active shelves because the 2013 publication date coincided with the centennial celebration of the first performance. Used copies can be found via Amazon and other web stores from $8.43 plus shipping.

2. Focus student attention on some of these big ideas in the book:
   - Who created the work?
     Russian composer, Igor Stravinsky, wrote the music as a ballet for the Ballet Russes (Russian Ballet). He collaborated with the famous dancer, Nijinsky. These are the two main characters in Stringer’s book. There was a third key collaborator who created the sets and costumes, Nickolas Roerich. You will find a picture of Roerich drawing costumes on the page depicting early rehearsals of the piece. He was a specialist in ancient Russia and its cultural history.
   - Why did Stravinsky and Nijinsky create *The Rite of Spring*? What inspired them?
     In addition to Stringer’s explanation, go to the Teacher Resource reading for more on this question.
   - How did they do it?
     Stress the collaboration that led to *The Rite of Spring.* Stringer’s book highlights the power of collaboration. She makes it clear that both composer and choreographer had their own ideas, but they worked together to create the piece. They actually did inspire each other.
   - How did the audience respond to the new ballet?
     What people in the audience saw and heard on May 29, 1913, was something brand new. It was not ballets they had seen before, or the style of music with which they were familiar. Some people loved it but others did not. People expressed these opposing opinions at the first performance and caused a riot.

3. In addition to the picture book, look for actual images of Stravinsky, Nijinsky, Roerich, ballet costumes, and the Paris Opera House on the web and display them in class.

The ‘Story’

Focus: Develop a strategy for navigating the narrative of Stravinsky’s music, one that is mindful of prehistory and early beliefs and also fits your school community.

Materials: Information for Teachers included with these notes; other web resources about the creation of *The Rite of Spring*

1. Before revealing the ballet’s story line, think about some of the ideas below. Reflecting on how ancient practices of religion and worship might have occurred will help you provide a context for your students when sharing the narrative of Stravinsky’s music.
   - Evidence of prehistoric worship and rituals has been found throughout the world. Some of the oldest may be the 30,000 year old paintings of the Chauvet Caves in France.
Without written records before 2,500 B.C.E. it is difficult to know much about religions and worship. But archeological research provides evidence of prehistoric faith. Traces of ancestor worship and devotion, shamanism, veneration of the natural world, and spiritual connection to the land all have been found. In what is now Europe, 30,000 year old female figurines seem to also indicate a veneration for the feminine. Standing stones and ring circles are other hints of past religious practices.

Since ancient times on up through today, people give purpose and meaning to life and make sense of life events through faith.

In different ways, several religions teach followers that the Spiritual or the Divine is found in the natural world, and that all of the plants, animals, and humans are evidence of the Divine.

2. Use this broader scope of ancient religion and worship as the backdrop for telling students about Stravinsky’s inspiration for The Rite of Spring.

Stravinsky was inspired to create the piece when he had a flash of inspiration while creating an earlier ballet, The Firebird. In his imagination, he saw a scene from long ago, a religious ritual where a young woman (The Chosen One) danced to her death as a sacrifice to the earth.

There is no historical evidence for such a ritual. But against the backdrop of the oldest Russian religions, the idea of worshiping nature and giving back to Mother Earth may not have been impossible.

So the main event of the story line was invented by Stravinsky. But it was a very provocative idea to pursue both through music and dance. It got his creative juices flowing.

3. Clarify the word ‘rite.’ A formal rite is a ceremony, or ritual such as a Bar Mitzvah, a wedding or baptism, an inauguration of a president, or the lighting of the Olympic Torch. Informally it is a custom or practice or tradition. Ask students to brainstorm some Minnesota informal “rites of spring.” What do we do when spring stirs and snow is melting away? (Put on our shorts, play softball, dig in the earth and plant, get out the grill, tune up our bikes, etc.)

4. Tell students the synopsis of the story line on which the music and ballet are based. It is not a folktale nor does it unfold as a traditional story. It is a framework in which a series of scenes support the music and the dance, allowing them to express “images” of awakening and new birth in spring. The music and the dance might remind us of the excitement and joy we feel when spring finally arrives in Minnesota.

Listen to More of the Music
Focus: Select sections of the piece for closer listening

1. Select additional sections of the music for closer listening. The “Outline of Musical Events” provides information and location on the CD. Please note that the cues numbers taken from the 2009 performance by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra may not align precisely with your recording due to variations of interpretations and tempi.

2. Stravinsky used many newer compositional techniques and non-traditional sounds to create his music. These were the sounds that stirred up the audience. Some loved what they heard; others were confused and angry because it did not sound like music to them. Use section or excerpts of the music to highlight Stravinsky’s use of:
   - Irregular meter: also known as an asymmetrical meter; pulses or beats that naturally divide into two and three equal and even subdivisions are mixed into different groupings
   - Absence of a strong underlying beat
- Polyrhythms: layered rhythm patterns that are not necessarily in sync
- Rhythmic ostinato: persistently repeating patterns
- Short, fragmented melodies (melodic modules) and limited legato articulation
- The hammering pounding rhythm at the core of the piece – like the drumbeats antiquity
- Bi-tonality: two keys or tonal centers occurring at the same time
- Dissonance: sound groups that seem tense or unpleasant to a listener

**Stravinsky or NOT Stravinsky**

**Focus:** After listening to *The Rite of Spring* can students identify the “Stravinsky Sound?”

**Materials:** selected excerpts from *The Rite of Spring* or *Petrushka*, selected excerpts from works by other composers

1. How do we know when we are hearing music composed by Stravinsky? After students have listened to and learned about *The Rite of Spring*, set up an exercise using excerpts from Stravinsky’s music and from other composers.

2. Pose the question: Can you tell when you are hearing Stravinsky’s music or music by someone else?
   - Before playing excerpts, ask students to agree on Stravinsky signal and a Not Stravinsky signal; for example, thumbs up and thumbs down. Thumb side-ways might signal, “I’m not sure.” Or they can make a single flash card with the words STRAVINSKY on one side and NOT STRAVINSKY on the other.
   - Depending on your assessment of your students’ level of prior listening experience and knowledge, make the examples more or less obvious. Begin with obvious choices. As they get more skilled, add other Twentieth Century composers (Bartok, Bernstein, and Ives) and Russians (Prokofiev or Shostakovich) to the examples.
   - Engage them in analyzing their responses by asking them “How did you know it was/was not Stravinsky? What musical elements and characteristics did you hear?” Jot down their responses to create a list of Stravinsky Characteristics.

3. Use readily available recordings, particularly others you have used for Listening Lessons.

**View and Compare Ballet Performances**

**Focus:** It was not only the music that caused a riot. The choreographic style, sets, and costumes also seemed strange to some audience members.

**Materials:** video excerpts as listed below, copies of the graphic organizer for similarities and differences

1. Compare a traditional Russian ballet to *The Rite of Spring*.
   - Watch a film of a portion of Tchaikovsky’s *Swan Lake* performed at the Kirov Ballet in St. Petersburg, Russia. Start at 50:14 for the “Dance of the Cygnets” (young swans). YouTube files at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rJoB7y6Ncs
   - Ask students to describe what they noticed; what did they see and hear?

2. Then view an excerpt of a recent recreation of Nijinsky’s choreography for *The Rite of Spring* performed by the Joffrey Ballet. Part One of Three is at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF1OQkHybEQ. Ask the same questions.

3. Ask students summarize their comparisons of ballet styles by completing a visual organizer included with these notes. Work can happen as a class or in small groups. Discuss group responses as a class.

4. Watch the full Joffrey Ballet performance of *The Rite of Spring*, then discuss what students saw and heard.
Similarities
Ballet Styles of *Rite of Spring* and *Swan Lake*

Names: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________
An Amazing Interactive Resource

Keeping Score Documentaries is a series of nine - one hour interactive programs created by Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco. The Stravinsky Rite of Spring program traces the composer’s life and explores the motivations and influences behind this major work. Here is what makes them unique:

- The design is series of interactive frames that shift as the music and narration continue.
- The biography segment provides stories, data, photos, and contextual video for the four key artists involved in the creation of The Rite of Spring.
- The Explore the Score segment features a rolling score in sync with the recording, text cues that summarize the story, a ballet button with video excerpts of that portion of the dance, video of orchestra musicians playing the music, and a “meter reader” that flashes metrical groups as they vary.

All in all, an amazing way to learn more and provide more for students.

http://www.keepingscore.org/sites/default/files/swf/stravinsky/full

Annotated Resources

1. The Carnegie Hall Rite of Spring Project includes a detailed curriculum for the piece. The 2007 project was sponsored by Weill Institute at Carnegie Hall. It wraps together a Dance Project, and a Music and Composition Project, involving New York City public school students. The curriculum encourages composition and choreography through sets of lesson plans, with The Rite of Spring as inspiration and the concert a key event. The curriculum is available at http://www.carnegiehall.org/berlininlights/files/ros_curriculum_guide.pdf


3. If you are interested in why this music is considered a landmark piece and how it impacted the next 100 years of classical music, read George Benjamin’s article in The Guardian. It was written during the centennial celebration of The Rite of Spring, in 2013. Retrieve from http://www.theguardian.com/music/2013/may/29/stravinsky-rite-of-spring. Also comments at http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20130529-i-predict-a-riot.

4. The San Francisco Symphony Orchestra recorded a vigorous 2009 performance, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. The whole piece is on YouTube in four sections, which might make it useful in a classroom setting. Camera work is excellent; images follow the key instruments play a passage or section. The four links are:
   - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vf0e_n49dcQ (part I)
   - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gphUZlAZn1k (part 2)
   - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ti6pTZ5CtLBE&list=RDqphUZlAZn1k (part 3)
   - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VijjXYQzO7w (part 4)

5. If you are looking for a full version of a video of the work, here is an interesting one from the 2013 BBC Proms. Watch a concert performance by the 2013 BBC Proms with François-Xavier Roth conducting Les Siècles. It is being performed in period instruments, those used 100 years ago. Good close ups of the instruments. Skip the 6m30sec introduction and start the video at 06:15.
   - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rq1q6u3mLSM

6. Nijinsky’s choreography for the work was only performed eight times in 1913. It was nearly lost and forgotten until 1989 when the Joffrey Ballet reconstructed and performed Nijinsky’s version for the first time in over 70 years. Retrieved on 2/18/14 from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rJoB7y6Ncs

7. Tilson Thomas and SFSO are also featured in a 55 minute PBS show, The Rite of Spring. It is a family concert setting, with information about Stravinsky’s, Nijinsky’s, and Diaghilev’s Russian roots and how the piece came to be written for the Ballet Russes. Themes are demonstrated by individual players. Many close up and related images with information delivered in an interesting and entertaining manner. Great for older students; will help any teacher get to the ‘inside’ of the music. http://www.pbs.org/keepingscore/video-stravinsky.html
A Personal Note from Lauren Stringer

In 2003, I thumbed through a program waiting for the Minnesota Symphony to begin to play. There was an article about *Petrushka*, the ballet performed by the Ballets Russes with music by Igor Stravinsky and the lead role of the love-lorn puppet was danced by Vaslav Nijinsky. The photo of Stravinsky and Nijinsky caught my eye and I wondered to myself: What was it like when Stravinsky met Nijinsky? Then I smiled and shared with my husband sitting next to me in Orchestra Hall, that I was going to start a book called: *When Stravinsky Met Nijinsky*, because I loved the title! Nine years later, with many revisions and lots of research, the story was complete!

My journal became the storage receptacle for collected images to inspire the illustrations and notes for the manuscript. Below are the pages for Stravinsky, Nijinsky, and The Rite of Spring. I glued an envelope onto each spread to hold all of the images I collected. I love research!
My first color portrait of Stravinsky and Nijinsky. When I painted this, I decided I might be able to actually illustrate this book!

Since I paint illustrations for my books on a wall, I can pin all of the finished ones all around me for constant reference. This works well for keeping the 17 spreads of a 32 page picture book looking as if they are all part of a whole. Usually it takes me six to eight months to paint a book-- but painting for 15 to 17 hours a day, I finished the illustrations for this book in two months and 8 days and made the deadline!
Stravinsky’s *The Rite Of Spring*

Images related to the creation and context of the music
Russian composer, Igor Stravinsky (1882 - 1971) is one of the most important composers of the twentieth century.

*The Rite of Spring* brought Stravinsky to the attention of the world. And the music has influenced composers ever since.
Stravinsky got his first big break when Sergei Diaghilev, the impresario (manger and producer) for Ballet Russes (Russian Ballet), heard young Stravinsky’s music at a concert in Russia.

Diaghilev took a chance and commissioned Stravinsky to write music for Ballet Russes.
Inspiration!

Stravinsky composed *The Firebird* for Ballet Russes when he was 28 years old.

While writing *The Firebird*, he had a flash of inspiration - a vision for a new ballet. He imagined a story set in ancient Russia at the beginning of spring, when people celebrated solemn rites and rituals dedicated to mother earth. He envisioned one young girl chosen to dance as a sacrifice to the god of spring. It set Stravinsky’s mind to dancing.
Before he could work on this juicy new idea, he wrote a second piece for Ballet Russes, *Petrushka*.

The famous Russian dancer, Nijinsky, danced the star role of Petrushka, the puppet who came to life, but lost the ballerina doll he loved.
Nijinsky, born in Kiev, Ukraine, became a legend for his beautiful dance interpretations and spectacular leaps. When he sailed through the air, he appeared to pause for just split second. Audiences gasped in amazement. He went to Paris in 1909 to dance with Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes.

Stravinsky the composer met Nijinsky the dancer in 1911 while working on *Petrushka*.

Nijinsky became the choreographer for *The Rite of Spring*.

Stravinsky & Nijinsky
One more partner

Nicolas Roerich, a famous Russian designer, painter, and scholar, joined Stravinsky and Nijinsky in creating *The Rite of Spring*.

Roerich, born in St. Petersburg, spent years researching the ancient Slavic people, their customs and rituals. His costumes, set designs, and historical knowledge made an important contribution to the ballet.
Some places where details of *The Rite of Spring* occurred:

- **St. Petersburg, Russia** – Stravinsky and Roerich birthplace
- **Kiev, Ukraine** – Nijinsky birthplace
- **Paris, France** – where the Ballet Russes first performed

*The Rite of Spring*
As you view the next images of the theater, Roerich’s costumes and sets, the dancers, and the reviews, think about the opening night performance of the ballet.

Imagine the music as you look at the pictures.
The first performance took place in Paris at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on May 29, 1913 – almost 101 years ago.

The theater had just opened a few weeks before. It was quite a modern building for 1913.
Here is the theater on the inside. As you look at the stage, imagine it is full of Ballet Russes dancers on Opening Night, 1913.
Set Designs for *The Rite of Spring* by Nicholas Roerich
Young Men hunting, and Girls dancing in a sacred circle, also by Roerich
Costumes

Rite of Spring

The elders in bear skins, Roerich design

Roerich designs for girls costumes
Original Valentine Hugo drawing of the “Dance of the Chosen One.” The drawings illustrate the energy of the Chosen One as she moves inside the circle.
Dancers from the Ballet Russes show off some of their moves and costumes at the first performance in 1913.
Young girls circle about The Chosen One in a recent Russian performance of *The Rite of Spring* at the Mariinski Théâtre.
Negative Reviews – But the Observer liked the music.

New York Times nine days after the opening performance

Macon, Georgia Daily Telegraph 8-17-13

The Observer, 13 July 1913, London
The Joffrey Ballet, 2013 Tour
Image credits

http://www.adclassix.com/images/48time_igorstravinsky.jpg #2

https://encrypted-tbn2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTvVvDuXzbu7kBpzcVDbbe7t2Tyi3EF6rlW5n9nmf_g0eQ3zdZ6C #3

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/db/Stravinsky_Igor_Postcard-1910.jpg #4

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/07/Nijinsky_003.jpg #5


http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/22/Stravinsky_Nijiinsky.jpg #6


http://newyorkarts.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/roerich-ritual-circle.jpg #13


http://uploads1.wikipaintings.org/images/nicholas-roerich/girls.jpg!xlMedium.jpg #17, 18

http://www.tutti-magazine.fr/upload/content/pages/img/Sacre-du-printemps-Mariinski.jpg p19


http://northrop.umn.edu/sites/default/files/imagecache/header/images/12-13_seasonhaders_joffreyballet.png #21
Igor Stravinsky composed wildly popular music. Vaslav Nijinsky’s dance was celebrated far and wide. But both dreamed of creating art that was different and new. When they met, their dream came true.

The Rite of Spring was so original it inspired an unforgettable response. The audience at the premiere couldn’t agree: the performance was either brilliant or a disaster. But did it really cause them to fight in the aisles? Could a ballet provoke a riot?

Stravinsky and Nijinsky’s did.

About the Author:
Lauren Stringer has always been in awe of the explosive change in the arts at the turn of the twentieth century. Researching Stravinsky and Nijinsky’s collaboration and their connection to the modern art of their time became a passion that lasted more than eight years and eventually resulted in this book. Lauren’s many acclaimed picture books include Winter is the Warmest Season; Snow by Cynthia Rylant; and Fold Me a Poem by Kristine O’Connell George. Lauren lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota, with her composer husband, choreographer daughter and circus performer son. Visit her at www.laurenstringer.com

Questions You Might Ask

Pre-reading:
Place four signs around the corners of the classroom that read: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. Then, read the statements at the top of the next page aloud to students and allow them to move into the area which most closely mirrors their opinion. Then discuss student responses before reading the story. You may want to revisit these statements after reading the story and see if any children change their opinion.
Questions continued

- Ballet dancing is always with girls in fancy dresses that tiptoe around a stage.
- Folk music is what your great grandparents listen to on old record players.
- Composers write music that usually puts people to sleep.
- I would never want to go see a ballet called *The Rite of Spring*; it sounds so boring.
- A riot is when people protest something that is important to them.
- It would be fun to design costumes for a stage production.
- It is best when artists work alone.
- I think it’s important to try something new.

Post-reading:

- Describe what it was like when Stravinsky composed music on his own.
- What animals does the author compare Nijinsky’s dancing to? Why do you think so?
- How did Stravinsky’s music change after the two met? How did Nijinsky’s dancing?
- What does it mean to be inspired by someone? Who inspires you?
- What would you like to make new and different? How do you go about making something new? Why do you think these two artists wanted to do something new?
- Where did the pair look for a new idea and how did they begin? What do you think is the hardest part of a new project? Do you think they would agree?
- Explain what happened at the early rehearsals for the ballet. How would you have felt as one of the creators?
- Describe their new ballet, *The Rite of Spring*. How as it new? What elements did it have in it?
- What was the reaction to the new ballet during the performance?
- After it was over, what happened? Were you surprised that a ballet could cause such a reaction? Why do you think people took it so seriously?
Reading:

Fill out the following chart based on the words found in the story. See if you can figure out what they mean just by reading the sentences surrounding the new words (called *context clues*).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Word:</th>
<th>What I think it means based on the context:</th>
<th>What the Dictionary says it means:</th>
<th>A picture to help me remember the meaning:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirouette</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Melody</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Timpani</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rumble</td>
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<td>Folk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rehearsal</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rollicking</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bassoon</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Orchestra</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nettled</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hairpins</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bravo</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rioting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bellowing</td>
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<td>Hurdling</td>
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<td>Ruckus</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Uproar</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Delight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Remarkable</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Word Magic:

Take these words from the story and make new ones by changing their endings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root word:</th>
<th>Add an -s</th>
<th>Add an -ed</th>
<th>Add an -ing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dream</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leap</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remember</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehearse</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sing-Along:

*Sing this song about these two famous artists to the tune of “Frere Jacques”*

When Stravinsky  
Met Nijinsky  
His music changed  
No, not the same!  
Melodies went wild and free  
All new sounds for you and me  
Bing, bang, bong!  
Bing, bang, bong!

When Nijinsky  
Met Stravinsky  
His dancing changed  
No, not the same!  
Movements went mud-wild and free  
Whole new dance for you and me-  
Leap, skip, jump!  
Leap, skip, jump!
Music:

Teach these two terms:

**Dissonance** is the combination of sounds that feel harsh or surprising to most listeners. It is the opposite of **Consonance** which tries to please the listener with chords and tones that sound pleasing to the ear.

Now, as a class, brainstorm a list of sounds which are pleasant, or consonant, and a list of sounds that would be considered dissonant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant sounds:</th>
<th>Dissonant sounds:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: <em>birds singing in the spring</em></td>
<td>Example: <em>Construction noises and traffic on a busy city street</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next: Listen to excerpts from *The Rite of Spring*:


**DISCUSS:** Would you consider most of these excerpts consonant or dissonant? Why? Would you like to hear an entire evening of dissonant music or not? Why?
Dancing and Drawing:

Listen to the one minute excerpt from Tchaikovsky’s *Swan Lake* here:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/classical/tchaikovsky/audio/tchaikovsky_index.shtml

Make a list of words that describe the music or how the music makes you feel.

Now listen to the excerpt again while standing. Move to the music using your whole body. Arms, fingers, legs, torso, head and neck. Stop when the music stops. Are your movements flowing or quick? Are your movements heavy or light? What kind of animal do you feel like?

In the space below, using colored pencils or markers, choose colors that feel most like the music. Play the one minute excerpt again and draw while you listen. Are your lines long and flowing or short and quick? Are your colors cool or warm? Soft or bold?
Dancing and Drawing continued:

Now, listen to the one minute excerpt from Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring* here:  

Make a list of words that describe the music and how it makes you feel. How is it different from the list of words after listening to the excerpt from *Swan Lake*?

Now listen to the excerpt of *The Rite of Spring* again. Move to the music using your whole body. Arms, fingers, legs, torso, head and neck. Stop when the music stops. Are your movements flowing or quick? Are your movements heavy or light? What kind of animal do you feel like?

In the space below choose the colors that feel like the music from *The Rite of Spring*. Are they different from the colors you chose after listening to *Swan Lake*? Listen to the excerpt again and allow your hand to move to the music. How is your drawing different from the first drawing? Is it softer or bolder? Brighter or duller?
The creator of this book, Lauren Stringer, was inspired by many different artists who greatly changed the expectations of the art world with their new techniques in color, shape, and design. Look at some of the images created by the artists popular during Stravinsky and Nijinsky’s time. Then, draw a simple figure like a flower in the following frames inspired by each artist.
Art continued:

_Cubism_ is considered the most important and influential art movement of the 20th century. It inspired change not only in painting and sculpture, but also dance, music, architecture and literature. It was created by the artists, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in Paris beginning in 1907. Cubism rejects the idea that art should copy nature. Cubist paintings and sculptures fracture the image into geometric pieces and often show several different views of an object on the same plane. To view some examples of Cubist paintings go here:

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cube/hd_cube.htm#

Now try making your own Cubist drawing using a pencil on a sheet of paper. Choose a simple object like a tea cup or or bottle. Draw the outline shape of the object looking straight at it. Then turn it over and make a drawing of looking at it from the bottom. Then draw it again looking at it from the top- all on the same piece of paper, allowing the drawings to overlap. Try to draw the object you chose from as many different views as possible. Use your pencil to shade from light to dark in each of the different angles or points of view.

History:

The two artists depicted in this book both were born near the end of the 1800’s and lived their lives to the mid 1990’s. Create a timeline of their lives marking important events from their careers. Then, add important events from history that you think may have influenced their art. Add illustrations/pictures to bring the timeline to life and include five personal events and at least five historical ones.

For more curriculum ideas visit The Rite of Spring Project Curriculum Guide: