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## The Impact Of The Rite Of Spring On Contemporary Dance

In 1913 The Rite of Spring caused a riot, it was a performance no one had ever seen before. It all began where Stravinsky created a piece of music in 1910 called the Firebird for Diaghilev and the Ballet Russes. Nikolai Roerich was a Russian Painter who designed the set and costume for Stravinsky. Stravinsky finished the composition Adoration of the Earth and the Sacrifice by 1912 and completed the instrumentation by late spring. Vaslav Nijinsky was the choreographer. The premiere of the performance was on the 29th of May 1913 at the Theatre de champs.

In 1913 The Rite of Spring shocked the audience as they were used to seeing classical Ballet performances. In Ballet the dancers have turned out feet and good posture. However in The Rite of Spring the dancers have sickled feet and are slumped over. This might make the audience angry as it doesn't look appealing and it is not traditional. Watching SwanLake the dancers movements are elongated and the moves flow into each other. The movement in the Rite Of Spring is very repetitive and the counts are strange. This makes the dance look frantic.

The costumes in the Rite of spring are quite unusual. The dancers are wearing long dresses. The colour of the dress is very colourful with red, green, pink and orange patterns on them. They are wearing wigs, shoes and a head band which matches the dress. They have putty coloured make up, with a thickened nose, waxy eyebrows and button eyes.(2)The costumes represent different spirits and both female and male dancers wear the same.

In comparison to SwanLake the clothing is not gender neutral. The female dancers are wearing a tight fitted top with tutus whereas the men are wearing black tights with a top. In the rite of spring the costumes are quite baggy where as in SwanLake the costumes are tight fitting to show the movement clearly. The women are wearing pointe shoes where as in Rite of Spring they are wearing flat shoes. The set is of a field with hills and clouds. In the second section you cannot see the background as it is too dark. The set was designed by Nicolas Roerich who was a Russian painter. He called the painting kiss to the earth as he wanted people to appreciate and love the Earth.

The dance begins with the Augurs of spring where an old woman enters the stage and tells the future. The woman is stood still with a clawed hand. A group of dancers are in a circle and start stomping towards each other. They all perform different movements with their fists clenched. This makes it look messy and chaotic. They are looking down when they do this. The women start to jump up and down and runs towards the other dancers who start to move. She is carrying sticks and has her arm up with tension in her hand. She puts her leg up with is bent

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and sickled. The other group of dancers repeat the same movements facing towards each other. The dancers continue to use lots of repetitions and jumpy fast movements. In contrast to this they slowly walk back to their starting positions when the young girls enter.

In comparison to SwanLake the dancers are elegant and have good technique. Their eye line is always lifted and they have no tension in their hands like the old women has. Their feet are not sickled and their legs are straight. A similarity is they both have to perform quick movements but the ballet dancers do it in a more controlled way. They make it look effortless. The ballet dancers have energy in their eyes where as in Rite of Spring the dancers have a blank expression.

Five girls enter the stage and begin the dance of the abduction. They enter in a line with their arms linked and are kicking their leg. In the Rite of Spring the young girls dance the Khorovod which is an old Russian dance performed in circles. As they are doing this their posture is not upright and their body slumps towards their leg making it look unpleasant. They lean their heads towards one side in a clumped group. The movement of the head is exaggerated as they slightly arch back. The other three girls join them in a line. All of the girls' heads are facing different directions. The end two dancers are facing the same way which doesn't look right. There are a variety of formations, some dancers are in a line and some are in circles. Each group performs different moves which gives them an opportunity to show off. They repeat a lot of jumpy movements and they face different directions, including the back.

In Swanlake the dancers all perform the same movement. Instead of having lots of things going on they have a duet while the other dancers stand still at the side. This is to make the audience focus on only them and to make the dance look clean. The dancers rarely face their back towards the audience. Their jumps are more elevated and accurate. The formations are symmetrical and in the duet the dancers mirror each other. They both have to perform the moves exactly the same which might make them feel restricted. The other dancers standing in a line will get to dance less.

In the Rite of Spring the dancers divide into two groups and perform the Ritual of the Rival Tribes. They move towards each other and then away using repeated arm throws. All the other groups break away going back into their circle formations on the floor. One tribe is standing with their arms up and are jumping. This looks like they have power over the other tribes as they are on a higher level. They perform in duets using contact work while one dancer stands still, staring into the audience.

In SwanLake the partner work is typically done with a female and a male. Unlike in the Rite of Spring where they are the same gender. The dancers stand still in different positions at the back of the stage as the duet begins. These positions complement each other and do not look

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random as they do in the Rite. The dancers exit the stage when the duet happens where they all look identical as they perform the same moves. One similarity is they both perform in a circle formation.

In the next section, the wise elders enter the stage and the sage blesses the Earth. The dancers are crossing their arms over and holding each other's hands like they do in dance of the little swans. They are all looking in the same direction which contrasts to earlier on in the dance when they had different focus points. They are on demi pointe and their palms are facing the audience where as in Ballet the palms are hidden. The dancers do a move where they hit the floor. This is the opposite of Ballet as the dancers have to be as quiet as possible when on pointe. The dancers fall onto the floor then become manic and the dynamics become faster.

The second section is called the sacrifice and it starts with the mystic circles of the young girls where they are in a circle formation. They are in a tight circle and they keep repeating the same move which was used earlier on in the piece. They rest their head on their arm and turn in the circle. They run in front of each other which looks like they are trying to run away from something. One dancer is selected as the chosen one. She falls on the floor and the other dancers push her around. The music changes and the dancers break into a frantic, quick dance. As this is happening the chosen girl is stood in the middle of the circle staring blankly. They repeat a move where they fall onto the ground landing in a plank position. Similarly in SwanLake the villain pushes the male dancer to the floor. The music becomes more intense in both dances which builds suspense for the final dance section.

The young girls call on the ancestors which are dressed in animal costumes. All of the dancers begin circling her while she is stood shaking. The music is quiet but gradually becomes quicker and louder. She suddenly breaks out with a move and the dancers drop to the floor. This is where she begins the sacrificial dance. She throws her arms and looks up towards them. Most of the solo is filled with jumps which are exhausting. This is to show that she is dancing herself to death. Her legs become wobbly and she repeatedly collapses to the floor as the other dancers surround her. She falls to the ground where she takes a contraction and dies. The dance finishes with lifting her up. In SwanLake the dancers finish on the floor but they finish more gracefully where they look up and then gently bring their arms down.

The music used in the rite of spring is completely different to what would be used in a classical ballet performance. This would of shocked people when it first premiered as it is not what they would have been used to. The music sounds out of tune. There are various instruments used such as: a violin, flute, drums and trumpets. The instruments are played over each other making it sound odd. There are sudden loud noises that are high pitched which makes you want to cover your ears. This contrasts to Swanlake because the instruments played complement each other making nice rhythm's.

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Pina Bausch Rite Of spring is quite different from the original but still has a lot of similarities .The dancers use more technique and perform traditional ballet moves such as plies. Their costumes are nude dresses which is quite minimal compared to the original. There is a clear difference in gender as the males are topless and wear black trousers. Instead of having circle formations they are in a clump. Both dances have quite frantic and fast movement.

The Rite of spring has a massive impact on what dance is like now. It is how contemporary dance evolved. It is where the flexed feet and curved posture came from. Although people say it was Nijinsky's choreography that caused a riot it may have been the strange music. Even though people were unhappy about it at the time it was still getting attention and changing dance. The times found the ballet refreshingly new. The piece is interesting to watch as there is so much going on and has many weird movements. With the sickled feet it is easy to see why it made people angry as it is going against traditional ballet. Nijinsky's courage to do something new meant it broke the barrier and dance was able to evolve.

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