

MSO Classroom

LIVE ONLINE

CREATIVE TASKS | DANCE: FROM PAGE TO STAGE *THE RITE OF SPRING*

SUGGESTED FOR:

Dance students in Years 7–12

RESOURCES:

Pen and notepad, a large clear space, comfortable dance wear, dance shoes or bare feet.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Attend the MSO Classroom Live Online session exploring *The Rite of Spring*

RESEARCH

THE CREATORS:

Note the names of the original creative team below:

- Choreographer

.....

- Composer

.....

- Original orchestra

.....

- Where *The Rite of Spring* was first performed

.....

CONTEXTUAL:

Dance and art are always created within a social, political, and historical context and that context is always something to consider when you watch the work.

1. Outline two reasons that Ballet Russes is one of the most significant companies of the 20th Century and how they played a significant role in the development of ballet in the early 1900s.
2. Discuss why Diaghilev was considered a change maker in the arts during this period.
3. Discuss the social and political context of Russia during that time and why the Ballet Russes never performed there.
4. Why were audiences so outraged and surprised at the first performance of *The Rite of Spring*?

CURRICULUM LINKS

- Victorian 7–12 / Australian 7–10
 - o Space, time, dynamics, and relationships
 - o Choreographic devices
 - o Expression, technique, and dynamics
 - o Context
 - o Choreographic process – improvisation, selection, arrangement, refinement, evaluation
 - o Improvisation – the use of spontaneous movement, sometimes as a response to various stimuli or other movement to create new movement vocabulary
 - o Selection – choosing from a range of alternatives
 - o Arrangement – manipulating, combining, and ordering movements to make phrases and sections.
 - o Safe dance practice

ANALYSIS

DANCE VOCABULARY AND OBSERVATION

ARTICULATION OF INTENTION: The intention is the central theme or concept of the dance composition. The INTENTION for the dance is what the choreographer wants to portray to the audience in order to tell a story, demonstrate an idea or explore a theme. The choreographer does this by making choreography in a form and working with the creative design team to add production values such as set, costumes and props.

WRITE: Outline in 200 words how INTENTION is shown in *The Rite of Spring*.

ARTISTRY: Artistry refers to the skills used to perform choreography for the purpose of communicating the intention of the dance to an audience.

WATCH: this section of *The Rite of Spring* by Joffrey Ballet. www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF1OQkHybEQ

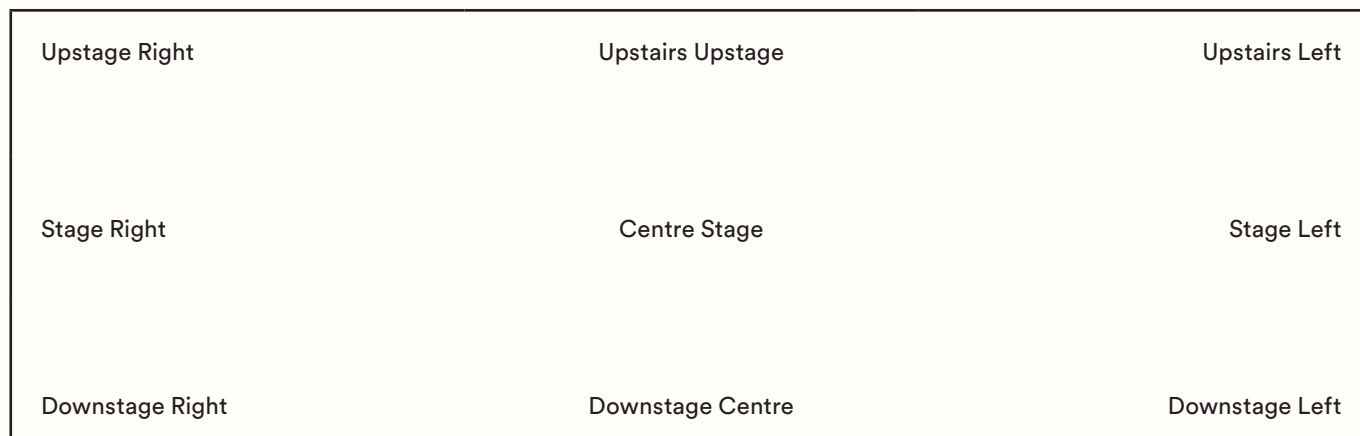
WRITE: How is ARTISTRY demonstrated in this section by the performers?

DANCING ON THE STAGE

Many early theatres were built with stages tilted 4–5 degrees towards the audience — this was known as a raked stage. These enabled the audience to view the performance more easily and were initially popular in Europe, though less so in America. Raked stages created difficulties for dancers and very few still exist today, favouring instead, raked audience seating to overcome viewing issues.

DISCUSS: What technical movements do you think would be affected by dancing on a raked stage?

WRITE: Weigh up the pros and cons of dancing on a raked stage compared to dancing on a level stage. Which is safer for the dancer?



SPACE, PATTERNS, DIRECTIONS AND FORMATIONS

ELEMENTS OF MOVEMENT: The elements of movement are TIME, SPACE AND ENERGY.

TIME – the evidence and manipulation of qualities such as RHYTHM, DURATION, ACCENT, TEMPO, AND STILLNESS.

ENERGY – the evidence or manipulation of qualities of movement to create variations of force and flow within movement.

ANALYSE: Map a 20 second clip of the film on the grid on the next page (Act 1 from 3.20 minutes).

www.youtube.com/watch?v=jo4sf2wT0wU

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TASK

Each box represents one second in time across a 20 second continuous piece of choreography.

1. In the line marked DANCER draw where the dancers are (stick figures), how many there are and in whatever formation they are, on the grid below.
2. In the line marked ENERGY write the word that describes how that movement is performed e.g. *still, sustained, percussive, with force*.

CHOREOGRAPHY – PLANNING, MAKING AND REFINING



IDENTIFYING AND ADAPTING MOTIFS

Movement vocabulary can include MOTIFS, GESTURES, PHRASES, AND SEQUENCES. Motifs can repeat in an original form or be done in a slightly different form to develop similar but different patterns of the same motif.

1. Identify a motif in the dance piece above and draw it below.

2. Now modify that movement by changing the LEVEL.

THINK: In what other ways could you modify your original motif or a gesture (isolated body part) by applying changes to TIMING, SPACE AND ENERGY.

TIP: Think about RHYTHM, DURATION, ACCENT, TEMPO, ELEVATION, FALLING AND PAUSES in the movements and/or phrases.

3. Add 6 more motif variations so you now have a total of 8 movements.
4. Join these 8 movements with linking movements to make a phrase by IMPROVISING.
5. SELECT which direction you might travel.
6. Repeat your phrase to a different facing by ROTATING (turning).
7. REFINE your short dance by making choices about focus, facial expression, pathways, and direction. EDIT, REHEARSE and PERFORM!

WRITE: If you were to make your solo into a group formation, how would you include DIMENSION AND FORMATION?

CHOREOGRAPHIC DEVICES

Note at what point in Act 1 you can see these devices.

- Canon
- Contrast
- Unison
- Asymmetrical
- Symmetrical

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Who choreographed *The Rite of Spring*?

.....

2. What was the intention for the choreography?

.....

.....

3. Is it abstract or narrative?

.....

4. How is the intention shown in the choreography?

.....

.....

5. What is the dance style?

.....

6. What images are made with the forms?

.....

.....

7. How does this create meaning for the audience?

.....

.....

8. What emotions can you identify?

.....

9. How does the choreography correspond to the music to support dynamic intention?

.....

.....

.....

10. Where do you see the application of artistry in the performer's movements?

.....

.....

.....

11. Where do you see the application of artistry in the performance special placements?

.....

.....

.....

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

1. What did you find tricky to analyse?
2. What is new that you think you might use as a choreographic device in your own choreography now?
3. Do you prefer to watch narrative or abstract choreography?
4. What kind of choreographer are you? Do you prefer to make narrative or abstract choreography?

We would love to see your solos, please film and send to MSO at schools@mso.com.au

BIOS



NICHOLAS BOCHNER

After training in Adelaide and London, Nicholas spent 3 years as Artist-in-Residence at the University of Queensland as part of the ensemble *Perihelion*, forging a strong reputation as an exponent of contemporary music. He joined the MSO as Assistant Principal Cello in 1998. Since then he has appeared as a soloist, chamber musician and recitalist. He has also taught cello and improvisation at the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM).

Nicholas has always had a strong commitment to music education and community engagement. In 2010 he was awarded the Dame Roma Mitchell Churchill Fellowship to study the LSO's iconic Discovery program and the use of improvisation in training classical musicians at the Guildhall School of Music.

In 2016, Nicholas' considerable experience as an orchestral musician and his passion for communication led him to undertake a fellowship at ANAM where he developed, conducted and presented educational concerts for primary school children. During the fellowship he was mentored by Paul Rissmann, Graham Abbott and the legendary Richard Gill AO. Since then he has presented educational concerts for children and adults for MSO, ANAM and the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra.

In 2020 he was named the MSO's Cybec Assistant Conductor for Learning and Engagement. He is also the conductor of the Melbourne University Biomedical Students' Orchestra. In support of his work as an education presenter, Nicholas has been studying conducting with Benjamin Northey and won a coveted place at the TSO's 2019 Australian Conducting Academy.



KATY MCKEOWN / DANCE SPECIALIST

Katy is currently the Head of Education and Outreach at The Australian Ballet as well as studying for Doctorate of Philosophy (Dance) at the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne University. She is passionate about dance, choreography education, diversity, and equity.

Katy undertook initial degree studies at the Laban Centre in London before embarking on a performance career. She holds a Masters of Dance Teaching from Surrey University, a Postgraduate in Dance Education and Science from Edinburgh University, a BA Honors from Laban and is a British Ballet Associate.

Katy has had multiple roles across dance performance, choreography, teaching, education and arts management with companies such as Scottish Ballet, YDance, Ausdance Victoria, Creative Scotland, Royal Scottish Conservatoire of Music and Dance and in China with the British Council. Highlights of her career include the large-scale Cultural Olympiad Get Scotland Dancing activity across 6 cities

which involved over 2 million people dancing, working on the Shanghai Expo Scottish choreographer performance-program with British Council, delivering the Ausdance SA Youth Festival and developing the First Nations Education programs at The Australian Ballet. An active supporter of sector and artist development, she currently sits on the Brimbank Arts Advisory Board, New South Wales Curriculum Advisory Board, the City of Melbourne Arts, Australia Council panels and the Ella Foundation (ballet pathways for First Nations children).

Thank you to our content and resource consultants:

James Le Fevre, Head of Music, Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School

Katy McKeown, Head of Education and Outreach at The Australian Ballet

Images sourced from FreePik