

Death by Dancing in Nijinsky's *Rite*

by Millicent Hodson



B/W: Newspaper collage of Nijinsky in *Spectre de la Rose* with photo from World War I (Dance Collection Clipping File, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts), printed in the mid 1930's Nijinsky's *Diary* was first published.

Jean Cocteau and other contemporaries of Nijinsky claimed that *The Rite of Spring* prefigured the sacrifice of their generation in what they called The Great War. Whether Nicholas Roerich as scenarist or Igor Stravinsky as composer shared this idea is unknown. Nijinsky, while planning *Jeux* in London during summer 1912, evidently had premonitions about the war, picked up perhaps from pacifist contacts in Bloomsbury. (1) World War I became an obsession later in his drawings, his *Diary* and his final performance, all created between 1917 and 1919. The final performance closed with an elegy for the men of his generation who had died in the trenches, a solo of constant falling. (2) Yet there is no record that he associated the war with *The Rite*. The sacrifice in this ballet is not an act of physical violence. The Chosen One performs her dance untouched, until the end when she collapses and the Ancestors lift her to the sun. The community is involved throughout, engaged in games and ceremonies that prepare the ground and that enable them to identify the one whose death will assure the continuity of life. The scenario and score, that is to say, Roerich and Stravinsky, determined these ritual facts, but not how they were to be realized. So the ethics of the sacrifice were Nijinsky's decision: how the tribe relates to the Chosen One and what her ordeal entails.

Twenty five years ago Kenneth Archer and I premiered our reconstruction of the 1913 *Rite of Spring* with choreography after Nijinsky and designs after Roerich. Our purpose was to turn the legend of the ballet back into an artifact. We had two goals: the first was to recreate and stage the work, which we have done in more than a dozen countries worldwide. In 2013 Moscow saw the Finnish National Ballet perform the reconstructed *Rite* at the Bolshoi Festival; the Mariinsky Ballet danced it in Salzburg and Paris as well as Saint Petersburg; the Teatro Municipal welcomed it back to Rio de Janeiro and throughout the United States it was performed during the centenary year by the Joffrey Ballet, the company on which we first staged the recreated work.

When the reconstruction premiered in 1987, about 100 versions of the ballet had been done. The figure has doubled since then. Some 200 versions are now known to exist. So our second goal—to inspire other artists and scholars to reconsider *The Rite*—is continuously fulfilled. A special hope on my part was for Nijinsky to be regarded concretely as the master of modernism in choreography. He is the Picasso of dance, and I hope my work has revealed why. I based the reconstruction on a myriad of visual, verbal and musical clues, including annotations on piano scores by Igor Stravinsky and by Nijinsky's assistant, Marie Rambert, who also danced in the ballet. (3) I put the clues together like a vast puzzle, letting it make sense gradually, not seeking the larger picture until it revealed itself. My purpose in this article, however, is not to present proof for the choreography, which I have published widely. (4) Instead I consider the resulting artifact, the reconstructed *Rite*, and ask what it means

The first thing Nijinsky created for *The Rite* was the climactic solo. He made it on his sister Bronislava, also an imperial dancer from the Mariinsky, whose body was a different gender version of his own: slim in the waist and torso, powerful in the hips and legs—perfect for the ordeal of 123 jumps in the “Sacrificial Dance.” For the ensemble Nijinsky multiplied the concepts and movements of the Chosen One, distributing them throughout the half-hour of Stravinsky's music on the tribe he had formed from 46 dancers of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. During their early rehearsals the dancers were as shocked by *The Rite* as the Paris public would prove to be at the premiere. One of them later wrote:

The tempo drove us to distraction, with its sharp and unexpected accents. We worked until we, too, were as ready to drop as was Nijinsky, and our heads spun with the interminable repetition of mathematical counts. (5)

In *The Rite* Nijinsky established the practice of counterpoint in choreography. Sometimes, as in the opening measures of the ballet, he made the dancers perform two rhythms on the body simultaneously, the feet dancing one set of accents while the arms did another, a task requiring total concentration. When the curtain rises a group of five Young People are hunched over in a partly open circle. At [13] in the orchestra score they start “bobbing” up and down, as the annotations on the piano scores indicate, counting four measures of eight counts, accenting the first and fifth beat with a strong stamp. They continue this rhythm with their feet but then add gestures of their arms with Stravinsky's shifting accents on the next three measures, making sudden isometric moves on beats two-four, two-five and one-six of the those measures. This rhythmic shift is tricky enough but truly difficult to do while keeping up the beats of one and five with the feet. To complicate matters further, each man has a different set of gestures so that no one can follow anyone else. The visual effect is an explosion of diversity within the unity of the shared repetitive footwork.

Thus, from the opening of the curtain, Nijinsky's manifesto is clear: every dancer in *The Rite* is a soloist, with responsibilities of self-determination, perfection of the part and concern for the whole. In the context of the scenario and score, every member of the tribe goes through the ordeal which is subsumed at the end by the Chosen One. The rigors of counting are one aspect of this ordeal, requiring the kind of concentration characteristic of shamanistic ritual—an example of how Nijinsky conflated his revolution in choreography with the underlying idea of the ballet.

The ordeal of dancing two rhythms on the body simultaneously returns at [18] when the other men join the fray and they all advance on diagonals to have a gestural conversation with the Old Woman of 300 years whose quick shuffles counterpoint their footfalls. According to accounts from 1913, Nijinsky applied his technique of counterpoint not only to the individual body but the “body politic” of the ritual community. He juxtaposed the rhythm of one group to the rhythm of another. As the Parisian critic M. Casalonga recalls, “The masses execute diversely controlled movements as a group”. (6) Diversity within unity. Casalonga implies that within the ensemble movement a variety of rhythmic variations occur. Jacques Rivière in his seminal essay on *The Rite* seizes the paradox:

There is a profound asymmetry in the entire choreography....Each group begins by itself, none of its gestures is dictated by the need to respond, to balance or re-establish an equilibrium....There is no lack of composition here; on the contrary it is there, very subtly, in the encounters, meetings, mixtures and combats of these strange batallions. But (composition) does take precedence over detail; it does not overrule it; it falls into place within its diversity. (7)

12 ACT I: THE RITE OF THE EARTH

Act I Scene 1 [18] 3-8

Have to change from... (KLEIN) ON THE ACCENT. THE YOUNG PEOPLE, YOUNG MEN, YOUNG WOMEN, BOTH FEET, NOTHING ON



REDF: Valentin Goss Higashikuchi. OLD WOMAN— Spindling. THE SOUND PEOPLE. BOTTOM. OLD WOMAN—Spindling for spells. All men repeat the accent.

pattern of the Young People's opening line as they follow the Old Woman, who gestures on their accented beats, calling them to her.




2. B/W: Millicent Hodson, *Sacred Dance Score at [18] Augurs of Spring, accents for “The Conversation” (Nijinsky's Crime Against Grace, Pendragon, Hillsdale, New York, 1996, p. 12), choreographic counterpoint at the beginning of the ballet, annotated by Igor Stravinsky and Marie Rambert, Nijinsky's assistant, on 1913 piano scores.*

Rivière's conclusion to this passage conjures how the Ballets Russes on stage at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées must have looked to its astonished audience in 1913:

The impression of unity which we never cease to sense is like that which one feels as he watches the inhabitants of the same sphere circulate, interact, come together and separate, each following its own intensions which are, at the same time, well-known and forgotten. (8)

Cyril Beaumont puts all this in historical perspective. Listing the benchmarks of the 1913 *Rite*, he declares that “another innovation, which has been erroneously attributed to the later Massine, was Nijinsky's attempt to imitate the orchestral pattern in his choreography, so that when a theme was given to a certain instrument, certain dancers would detach themselves from the mass and dance apart, the main body being used as a static or quietly moving background”. (9) Beaumont explains that “there was also a kind of counterpoint in mass movement, in that now and again one group of dancers danced heavily in opposition to another group which danced lightly.” (10)

Nijinsky transformed the concept of counterpoint from music to movement on the body and in space. With his acute visual sense, he also deployed the vivid primaries of Roerich's costume groups to maximize the rhythmic contrast of color. When critics in 1913, struggling to describe what they saw on stage, used the word “counterpoint,” they were referring to Nijinsky's choreographic orchestration of movement, color and sound, the overall relationships he developed. A critic for *The Times* in London, for example, recalled:

What is really of chief interest in the dancing is the employment of rhythmical counterpoint in the choral movements. There are many instances, from the curious mouse-like shufflings of the old woman against the rapid steps of the men in the first scene, to the intricate rhythms of the joyful maidens in the last. But the most remarkable of all is to be found at the close of the (the first act) where figures in scarlet run wildly around the stage in a great circle, while the shifting masses within are ceaselessly splitting up into tiny groups revolving on eccentric axes. (11)

The image preserved by this London critic is visual and spatial, temporal even, but not *per se* musical. He is talking about how Nijinsky used the music to configure different groups of dancers: their relationships to each other in the stage picture more than their relationship to the score. A month earlier, after the French premiere, Casalonga had reported on the same scene at the end of Act I, mentioning specifically, however, the way Nijinsky's movement matched the “polyphony” in the orchestra:

The elements are unleashed, the orchestral polyphony breaks forth, and the women dash one after the other in a large circle as if carried along by the wind, while, following the unbridled rhythm, the men surround the old man. It is a universal panic in which clamors of the orchestra accompany this general fury of primitive rhythms through the storm. (12)

It is interesting that in Casalonga's account, the dancers are the rhythmic force which the orchestra accompanies. Emile Vuillermoz, on the other hand, declares music the motivator and evokes the way Nijinsky's dancers embodied this sonic power:

You watch the centrifugal force throw terrified women out of the seething mob which is spun around by the lash of the orchestra....This music mows the dancers down in files, passes over their shoulders like a storm over a field of wheat; it throws them in the air, burns their soles. The interpreters of Stravinsky are not simply electrified by these rhythmic discharges; they are electrocuted. (13)

Certainly Vuillermoz preserves the impression of what we call in the reconstruction the “mandala” at [75] in the score, with the Maidens in Red running clockwise in 5/4 time on the outer rim, as Young Women in Blue and Tall Women in Mauve run counterclockwise in 3/4 time inside the circle, together with six groups of men running in 2/4 time. It is a swirling mass of color and motion as the tribe tries to organize the chaotic energy unleashed by the Sage's kiss of the earth at [71] and their 44 simultaneous solos at [72]. On occasion Nijinsky created rhythms for the body that differed from the music, hence counterpoint in the traditional musical sense. But his extraordinary gift to choreography was the development of a whole new range of dynamics: visual, kinaesthetic and chromatic. The impact of his discovery derives, I believe, from his intuitive grasp of what these complex formal relations signify within *The Rite*.

The first scene of the first act reveals Nijinsky working out his choreographic methods. The counterpoint of the opening measures is soon complicated. In the rhythmic conversation between the Old Woman and the men, their opening counterpoint phrase is repeated, but instead of jumping in place they all travel forward to centre to meet her. Then they all dance a complication of the accents, as you can see transcribed here. (Foot accents are underlined; arm accents are in CAPITALS. Notice that movement for the upper and lower body can coincide on a single accent, as with the **FIVE** in the third line and **ONE** in the fourth):

This is the pattern from [13] that recurs exactly at [18]:

12345678
1TWO3FOUR5678
1TWO34FIVE678
ONE2345**SIX**78

And this is the complication of the pattern at [19] through [20]:

12345678
12345**SIX**7**EIGHT**
1234
12345678
1TWO34FIVE 678
12345678
1234567**EIGHT**
1TWO3FOUR5678
ONE2345**SIX**78

So the choreographer followed the composer's further manipulations, thereby intensifying the ordeal for everyone. Just when the body has learned one order, another supplants it. A look at these passages on any video of the reconstruction shows the repetitive yet

disjunctive effect, the blinkered focus demanded of each dancer and, at the same time, the collective will they must exert. (14)

Fundamentally, the shapes of Nijinsky's dance derive from the inverted position that he used as the foundation of this ballet. He extended the closed posture to the shape of groups, crouched together in clusters or huddled shoulder to shoulder, and extended it further to the spatial patterns of the choreography: the circles and concentric circles that signify nature and the tight lines and squares that represent what is manmade. So despite the closure of the postures, groupings and configurations, there is a sense of expansion outwards from the individual to the full ensemble. (15) The contrast and multiplication of such shapes is another kind of counterpoint Nijinsky discovered in *The Rite*, something far more complex than the nascent ideas in *Afternoon of a Faun*. In *Jeux*, presented two weeks before *The Rite* but actually finished after it, Nijinsky tried some of his contrapuntal techniques on the trio of amorous athletes. After the premiere he recalled in an interview the beauty of tennis movements he had seen at Deauville and how he had the idea of "treating them symphonically." (16) Compared to the shifting masses of *The Rite*, Nijinsky's counterpoint on the skeleton crew of *Jeux* looks quite stark, and for that very reason it underscores the emotional tension of the triangle.



3. COLOR: Rome Opera dancers forming the diagonal lines that converge at center in *Augurs of Spring* at [33] "The Cell" (Photo by Shira Klasmer, 2007).

Roerich painted the costumes with shamanic motifs which Nijinsky used in the choreography. (17) Circles within circles are the key pattern of *The Rite*. In Act I the configuration of five circles, as seen on the smocks for the Maidens in Red, is the basis of choreographic counterpoint for the groups. (18) Rivière mentions in his essay on *The Rite* that he witnessed "caryokinesis" in the choreography—cells splitting and multiplying, as in

nature. (19) At this point the clusters of dancers from the four corners meet at the center, forming diagonals like another of Roerich's costume motifs, the crossbones. (20) Rambert's annotations for these measures and her comments in interviews with me refer to this passage in terms of fertility rites, the groups moving in and out from centre in ever shorter intervals, a sort of sexual metaphor. Stravinsky's interview in *Montjoie!* on the day

SCENE 3: SPRING ROUNDS 71

Act I Scene 3 [52] 6 and [53] 1-4

BELOW LEFT: Valentine Cross-Hugo/Sketches. THREE TALL YOUNG WOMEN—Return to upstage center. BELOW RIGHT: TALL YOUNG WOMEN and MAIDEN—Their line (in front of other Women's lines) turns into circle at [52] 6. BOTTOM LEFT: Three Maidens unwind

from circle of TALL YOUNG WOMEN to form circle of TEN MAIDENS. The rhythm is now divided for five groups. BOTTOM RIGHT: Men—Circles turn into YOUNG PEOPLE and YOUNG MEN—Enormous step toward each other.

of the premiere likewise mentions the genders mixing here. (21)

4. B/W: Millicent Hodson *Sacre Dance Score at [53] Spring Rounds*, the “Five Part Counterpoint” (*Nijinsky's Crime*, p. 71).

Stravinsky in his *Rite of Spring Sketches* describes the five part counterpoint at [53] in *Spring Rounds*, but he adds that what Nijinsky was doing was too complicated for words. (22) Up until now, in this scene, the groups moved in their own way, as if they were all trying to have their say. However, at this point, they begin to take turns. A new level of collective action is achieved. For this scene Rambert clearly indicates not only the rhythmic separation of the groups, and how they alternate, but also something of their relationships. The men tend to be confrontational—facing each other in lines and taking an enormous step toward each other as a challenge. The women tend to work together in tightly unified circles or triangles. The Youths arch or bend on the ONE of each 4/4 measure. Also the Young Women in Blue bow or drop on that ONE. The Maidens in Red bow or drop on the TWO. The lines of men syncopate certain 4/4 measures and confront each other on the only bar of 5/4 time. The three Young Women in Mauve at the centre, in a triangle, are given just the bars in 3/4. The five-part counterpoint at [53] culminates in the first moment of real unison in the piece. They have been bowing to the earth in a variety of ways, group by group, over and over. Now they all fall, in slow motion, to the ground. It is thus apparent how isolation and collective action are organizing principles—both for the individual bodies of each dancer and for the groups within the larger ensemble.



After the opening scenes, during which the five groups of dancers mostly address each other—often with backs to the audience—the women suddenly, toward the end of *Spring Rounds*, charge forward aggressively toward the spectators. The men meanwhile spread out across the stage. Then they all stop abruptly, facing in partners, to slap arms, making pacts. From the pacts—a kind of communal oath in gesture—the tribes break into the second instance of unison. As a single body, all the dancers address the public. The dancers cross their bodies with their arms in a series of puppet-like gestures. Rambert recorded this unison movement phrase as “oy dee lah do,” apparently suggesting a folk song, when everyone joins together in the chorus.

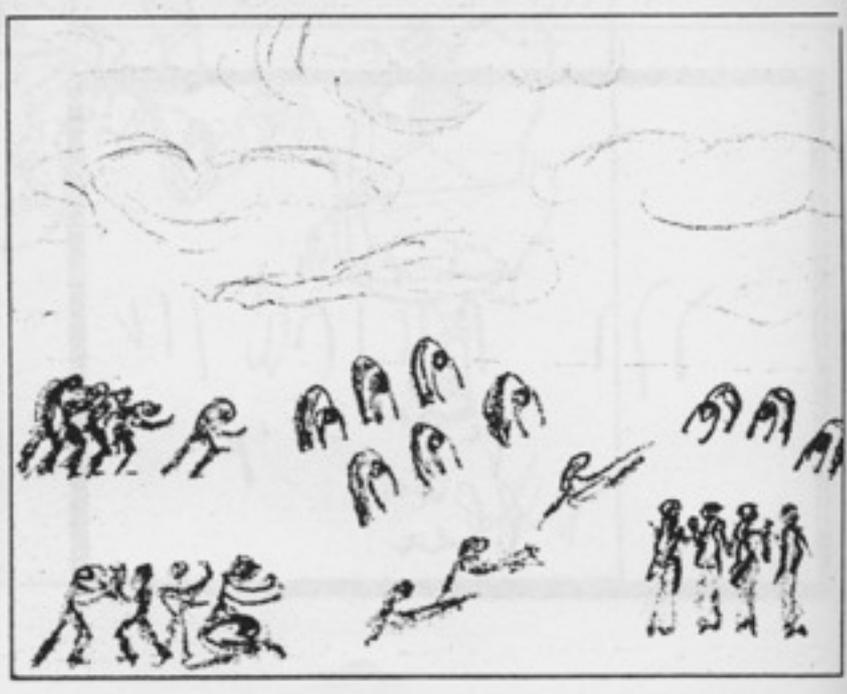
5. COLOR: Millicent Hodson (2006), Drawing of “Three Maidens Advancing” at [54] (Collection of Estelle Jorgensen,

Boston).



6. COLOR: Valentine Gross, (1913), Pastel of *Spring Rounds*, the full stage “Folk Song” at [55] (Collection of Victoria & Albert Museum, London).

In one of the five extant pastels by Valentine Gross, the effect of the folk song chorus is approximated, everybody doing the same arm and foot movements. The circles and clusters of the earlier scenes turn into a monumental configuration of lines. This climax of collective action then dissolves into the “Coda” of *Spring Rounds*, when the five groups resume their separate identities, remaining in lines and following the same melody, but in totally different ways.



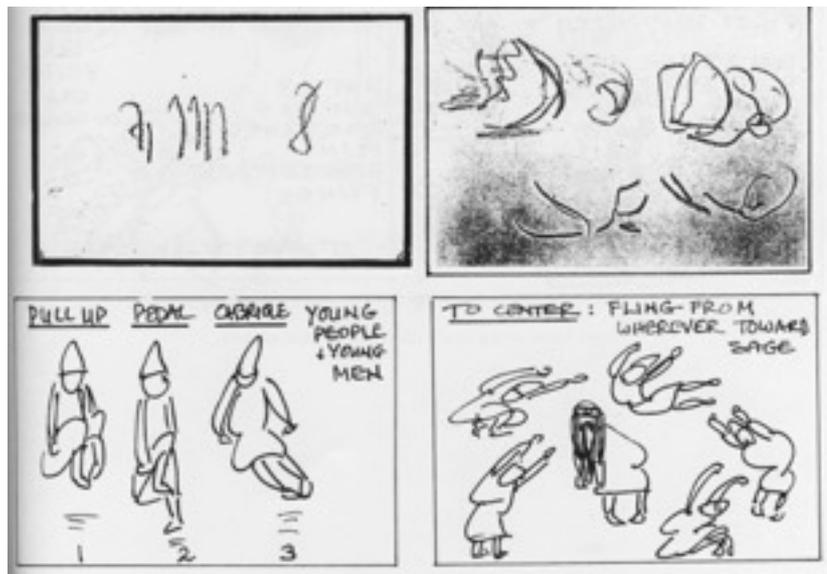
7. B/W: Bronislava Nijinska Drawing (1913), reproduced in Millicent Hodson, *Sacred Dance Score at [59] Ritual of the Rival Tribes, “Fights” (Nijinsky's Crime, p. 84).*



8. COLOR: Millicent Hodson rehearsing *Rival Tribes* at the Mariinsky Theatre with dancer Dmitri Solovei (Photo by Kenneth Archer, 2012).

When Nijinska became pregnant and could not dance, she sometimes attended her brother’s rehearsals, a witness and even a documenter. She made several drawings of *The Rite*, among them one from the *Ritual of the Rival Tribes*, with the men fighting and the women flirting to distract them. (23) Her distribution of groups shows how much Nijinsky’s use of space had evolved in the year since *Afternoon of a Faun*.

9. B/W: Quick sketches by Valentine Gross (1913) and Millicent Hodson in *Sacre Dance Score for Dance of the Earth* at [72] (*Nijinsky's Crime*, p. 109).



Nijinsky's linear design of the groups works a bit like deep focus footage in film, giving great detail at a distance. The men's fights in the background are highly diversified while the women in the foreground are more simplified. This is an example of spatial counterpoint in the choreography.

In an interview from the period Nijinsky spoke about how he wanted to use stasis as a way to help the audience see movement. This idea first appeared with his single leap in *Afternoon of a Faun*, a short work with a small cast on a shallow stage. Then in *The Rite* he orchestrated almost fifty dancers for half an hour in a vast panorama of motion and stillness. After the unison fall in slow motion, the dancers regroup in separate units for the end of *Spring Rounds* and beginning of the *Ritual of the Rival Tribes*. Although there are still essentially five groups, as at the outset, the linear design seems to enlarge the stage and magnify movement. In ritual geometry, as already noted, circles represent nature or cosmos while squares and linear forms represent what is manmade. At the end of *Rival Tribes*, the tribal square forms, which Stravinsky annotated in *The Rite of Spring Sketches*. (24)



10. COLOR: Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo, solos around the Sage in *Dance of the Earth* at [72] (Photo by Marie- Laure Briane, 2009).



12. COLOR: Serge Soudeikine painting, example of faceting, *Le Sacre du Printemps*, 1913 (Paget-Fredericks Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley).

A rare photograph of Serge Soudeikine's painted impression of *The Rite* in 1913 speaks volumes: hand gestures for the Sage, head and arm positions for the Maidens, skulls of beasts and other elements of the decor—all faceted by the Russian Futurist technique of splintering space, emphasized here, significantly, with beams of light, like shafts of early spring sun. The painter captures the transition in the ballet from Act I to Act II, day into night, chaos into order, ritual celebrations into sacrificial dance.

13. COLOR: Millicent Hodson, *Sacre Staging Chart for Dance of the Earth at [75], the movement "Mandala."*

The solos give way to the mandala, when the tribes realize they have to get organized or the spring energy will be lost. The *London Times* in July 1913 reported this counterpoint and Rambert's notes give hints about who does what. (28) The Maidens in Red run clockwise in 5/4 time in an outer ring. Inside the women in Blue and Mauve run anti-clockwise in 3/4 time. Men, too, run anti-clockwise inside, but in 2/4 time. My staging chart



also notes the variations for a man and a small group of Maidens that Rambert annotated. Once the mandala brings the groups back to themselves, which is the second step of organizing the energy, everyone inside the circle shifts to the 5/4 time of the Maidens' outer ring. Now one person from each group runs to the next to link the units of the mandala in what are called "spirals," the third step of organization. Finally, all the dancers close in around the Sage, making the centre ready for the sacrifice.

The Joffrey film made with WNET in 1989, because it abbreviates the Entr'Acte, shows the two acts back to back and thus underscores how the counterpoint at the end of Act I reconfigures at the beginning of Act II. The Entr'Acte was not danced in 1913, as has been done in most versions ever since. Instead the audience contemplates the forthcoming action in Roerich's painting of an isolated Maiden with the approach of ancestors in animal skins. Act I ended with everyone facing the Sage at centre. Act II begins with 13 Maidens facing outward, the centre noticeably empty. The "Labyrinth" presents again the choreographic counterpoint from the "Mandala" with the multiple time signatures: 5/4, 3/4 and 2/4. Both Rambert and the dancer Lydia Sokolova documented details of the *Mystic Circles of the Maidens* that open Act I. (29) Sokolova gave the particulars of the opening round, which drawings by Gross and other artists confirmed. (30) The question is: who came up with the idea of showing how fate chooses the Maiden through falling on stage—what every dancer fears—probably Nijinsky, as he would understand. Stravinsky's piano score gives the exact measures for her first fall and the second one that confirms her as the choice. Rambert's annotations not only give movement clues but emotive details. For the *chassez* step she says they charge at the Chosen One "as though they would hack her to death." (31) Stravinsky calls the Maidens "Amazons," and they strengthen the Chosen One through martial moves. It is the task of the tribe to prepare her for the ordeal of the final solo.



Once the Chosen One is identified, the Maidens work as a tight group, taking her through six degrees of separation: glorifying, strengthening, isolating, even doing her initiatory jumps in mirror image, and lamenting her as the men do a laughing game to maximize her loneliness. When Kenneth Archer and I were asked to form a company in Kobe to present *The Rite* at the opening of the new theatre, ten years after the city had been devastated by a massive earth quake, it was a real ritual. (32)

14. COLOR: Hyogo Performing Arts, Kobe, Glorification: "Mirror Jumps" toward the Chosen One, Motoko Hirayama. (Photo by Takashi Iijima, 2005).

18. COLOR: Finnish National Ballet in “Sacrificial Dance” at [160] with the Chosen One, Maki Nakagawa in “prehistoric bird movements’ (Photo by Sakari Vika, 2003).

Rambert’s annotations mark exactly where the Chosen One “runs across” to the edge of the chalk circles that entrap her. Over and over she pushes the margin, seeking a way out. It is not a “pathetic fallacy” as musicologist Richard Taruskin maintains, to see the Chosen One’s actions as a conscious response to her situation. (37) The transcript of the solo, as written out by Nijinska. was first published in Russian in a book on choreography by Vera Krasovskaya. (38) In *Nijinsky’s Crime Against Grace*, I give supporting detail in texts and graphics from 1913 for what Nijinska later wrote. Nijinsky’s *Rite* is a work of theatre.

Quite early in my research I went to what was then Leningrad to meet with Krasovskaya, to see if she had any notes she had yet to publish—she did not—and to hear how she had taken Nijinska’s notes to the aging Maria Piltz, who had danced the role in 1913, and got her confirmation of the movements. The Chosen One was created on Bronislava Nijinska. Then Nijinsky had to teach it to Piltz, and Rambert declared in her autobiography that when he did the role, it was the “most tragic dance” she ever saw. (39) Piltz came through the ordeal of the solo, under riot conditions, with great reviews.

The Ancestors at the end of the Chosen One’s solo swoop her up off the ground, another fragment of shamanic ritual which Stravinsky refers to in his *Montjoie!* interview. She is offered to the sun god as his bride, in order, as Nijinska quoted her brother in rehearsal, “to save the earth,” a comment taken to heart by dancers of the reconstruction worldwide. (40) Most of them are committed ecologists and they take original *Rite* into the 21st century with a new passion.



19. COLOR: Kenneth Archer at Rome Opera with Mariinsky guest, Alexandra Iosifidi, as Chosen One (Photo by Shira Klasmer, 2007).

Drawings were an essential part of my reconstruction process, enabling me to think about the accumulated clues without even the presence of friends who sometimes, in the early stages, came to the studio and danced with me to make sense of what I was gathering. Drawing is an act akin to dancing, as Nijinsky himself proved in the series he made in St Moritz once he had withdrawn from the theatre.

It is difficult to believe that a quarter of a century has passed since we first premiered the reconstructed *Rite* with the Joffrey. The reality hit us when we had to lay out some posters for a film shoot. And suddenly there was the proof. Kenneth and I continue to stage what he calls a “reasonable facsimile” of the 1913 *Rite*. We find that dancers everywhere identify with the Chosen One as an image of Nijinsky’s dedication to his art. I consider it his true autobiography.



20. Color: Collage by Millicent Hodson of Nijinsky's *Dancer* (1917-1918) and the Chosen One by Valentine Gross (1913), (Collection of the late Parmenia Migel Ekstrom, Stravinsky-Diaghilev Foundation, much of which is now housed at the Harvard Theatre Collection, Boston).