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Authenticity and legacy in the reception of the Joffrey Ballet company's reconstructed Stravinsky ballets

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AUTHENTICITY AND LEGACY IN THE RECEPTION OF THE JOFFREY BALLET
COMPANY'S RECONSTRUCTED STRAVINSKY BALLETS

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Master of Arts
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Thesis Supervisor: Professor Marian Wilson Kimber

To my parents, Marie and Somjade Gaetgaeow.

ABSTRACT

When the Joffrey Ballet reconstructed the 1913 production of *Le Sacre du printemps* in 1987 and restaged *Les Noces* in 1989, the reception of these ballets drew upon the prevailing ideals of authenticity that also existed in music. The period's Early Music revival emphasized the historically-informed performance of past music, using period instruments and techniques to approach an assumedly "authentic" performance. Over the course of twenty years in the late twentieth century the repertoire performed and recorded expanded chronologically closer to the present, challenging original conceptions that the nineteenth century was the benchmark for modern music and influencing the critical reception of later artistic works, including those of the Joffrey.

Because the Joffrey's productions took place at Hancher Auditorium at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, this thesis presents a reception history of them that highlights both a national and local, Iowan narrative. This history is informed by archival documents from the University of Iowa's Special Collections on the Iowa Center for the Performing Arts and from Hancher Auditorium. Hancher's collection of press releases, coupled with the newspaper and magazine clippings, contributed to the cultivation of the Joffrey's public image and those of the two ballets. These works—specifically their scores by Igor Stravinsky and their original choreographers Vaslav Nijinsky and Bronislava Nijinska—are seen as pioneers of modernism. Yet, the reception of their reconstructed ballets took place at the height of the Early Music movement's popularity. Reviewers weighed in on *Le Sacre du printemps*' authenticity and their discussion of *Les Noces* also emphasizes legacy—be it that of the Joffrey Company itself, the legacy of the sibling choreographers, or that of the two works within the ballet repertoire. A comparison of the reception of these two productions also reveals the distinctions between reconstruction and revival.

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

When the Joffrey Ballet reconstructed the 1913 production of *Le Sacre du printemps* in 1987 and restaged *Les Noces* in 1989, the reception of these ballets drew upon prevailing notions of authenticity that also existed in music. Previously, the period's Early Music revival had emphasized the historically-informed performance of past music, using period instruments and techniques to approach a supposedly "authentic" performance. Over the course of twenty years in the late twentieth century the repertoire performed and recorded expanded chronologically closer to the present, challenging original conceptions that the nineteenth century was the benchmark for modern music and influencing the critical reception of later artistic works, including those of the Joffrey.

Because the Joffrey's productions took place at Hancher Auditorium at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, this thesis presents a reception history that highlights both a national and local, Iowan narrative. This history is informed by archival documents from the University of Iowa's Special Collections on the Iowa Center for the Performing Arts and from Hancher Auditorium. Hancher's collection of press releases, coupled with the newspaper and magazine clippings, contributed to the cultivation of the Joffrey's public image and those of the two ballets. These works—specifically their scores by Igor Stravinsky and their original choreographers Vaslav Nijinsky and Bronislava Nijinska—are seen as pioneers of modernism. Yet, the reception of their reconstructed ballets took place at the height of the Early Music movement's popularity. Therefore, these ballets, their reception, and their connection to the Early Music movement are demonstrative of the cultural climate as it responded to the burgeoning enthusiasm for examining the cultural output from the twentieth century.

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CHAPTER ONE: JOFFREY'S STRAVINSKY BALLETS AND THE EARLY MUSIC MOVEMENT

Situating Institutional Collaborations

As a self-proclaimed “American Classic” with headquarters in both New York City and Los Angeles in the 1980s, the Joffrey Ballet Company also frequently performed and premiered works in Iowa City, Iowa, creating a remarkable collaboration between the nationally-renowned company and Iowa’s Hancher Auditorium. Their relationship began in 1974 when, with the assistance of funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, Hancher Auditorium presented the Joffrey Ballet for the first time. The Joffrey was well-received by Iowa audiences, who took to their “distinctively American approach to ballet.”¹ Two years later in 1976, the Iowa Friends of the Joffrey was founded to provide financial support to ensure the company’s return to the University, and the organization attempted to expand upon Hancher’s dance program by pushing for Joffrey residencies in Iowa. Hancher Auditorium and the University of Iowa’s Department of Dance hosted extensive residencies with the Joffrey II Dancers, a subset of the Joffrey Company, in 1982, 1983, and 1985.² These dancers were sent to communities across Iowa to present performances and educational programs, activities which were in line with Hancher’s goals of promoting the “strong cultural base” that was already present in Iowa City and strengthening the “emerging” local arts industry.³

¹ Winston Barclay, “Hancher Auditorium, the UI Division of Performing Arts and the Joffrey Ballet—A History.” University of Iowa News Release, 19 March 2009.

² Ibid.

³ Wally Chappell and Sara Brown, *Hancher Auditorium Annual Report 1987-1988*, The University of Iowa Libraries (Iowa City, Iowa), 13. In their April 1984 *Report of the Committee to Review Hancher Auditorium and the Office of Cultural Affairs*, Chappell and Brown also observed that Hancher Auditorium’s programming had a positive effect on the University’s ability to recruit new faculty, noting

Although the Joffrey II Dancers were only supported for three years,⁴ the use of University and Hancher spaces as headquarters helped establish a long-term working partnership between the two cultural organizations that was beneficial for both. For Joffrey co-founder Gerald Arpino, his “Iowa friends” have been loyal to the company’s vision since “the early days.”⁵ The Joffrey’s cultural capital helped Hancher Auditorium gain national recognition when they hosted rehearsals, showcased premieres, and commissioned works for the company. As “America’s third national ballet company” with an anti-elitist public image, the Joffrey took root not only in major cities such as New York City and Los Angeles, but also in the Midwest. The Joffrey’s professional investment in the region highlights their commitment to representing their brand of American ballet, demonstrating that an American and anti-elitist spirit emanates from the Midwest. Today, the company and its academy reside in Joffrey Tower in Chicago, Illinois, their permanent home since 1995.

The strength of the partnership between the Joffrey Ballet Company and Iowa’s Hancher Auditorium was most clearly on display in the summer of 1987, when the Joffrey rehearsed not only their reconstruction of *Le Sacre du printemps* but also their Hancher-commissioned *Nutcracker* on the Hancher stage. While national newspapers rarely made mention of Joffrey’s Iowa connection,⁶ the local press certainly helped

that “when sought-after candidates are made aware of the Hancher phenomenon they are easier to recruit.” Chappell and Brown, *Report of the Committee*, 8.

⁴ Chappell and Brown reported in the programming section of their 1987–1988 annual report that, while the “audience development potential [was] enormous,” the box office return of these residencies was “minimal.” Chappell and Brown, *Hancher Auditorium Annual Report*, 5.

⁵ Gerald Arpino quoted in Dee Ann Rexroat, “Joffrey Ballet is Getting its Footing,” *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 19 April 1991.

⁶ Lewis Segal’s article, “Re-Rite of Spring,” printed on 5 July 1987 in the *Los Angeles Times*, does, however, mention the rehearsals that took place in Hancher Auditorium. Anna Kisselgoff’s *New York Times* article, “New Yorkers are Seldom the First to See New Ballets,” examines the economic necessity of dance companies seeking sponsors outside of New York City. Recent collaborations between Hancher

establish a Joffrey-Hancher narrative. Following the Joffrey's performance of *Le Sacre du printemps* at Hancher in 1988, the Iowa newspapers dedicated space to elaborating upon (or at least re-telling) the Joffrey-Hancher story, and their discussion of the ballet and the Joffrey's performance shared overlapping concerns and expressed similar aesthetic values as those in the national press. Three years later, the Joffrey presented a second ballet from partnership between Stravinsky and the Nijinsky family at Hancher: *Les Noces* by Bronislava Nijinska.

Although the two ballets were linked through the familial relationship of their original choreographers, they were even more clearly linked due to their scores, both by Igor Stravinsky. Stravinsky's historical position is that of a modernist composer, though his scores were not the primary consideration of ballet critics. Instead, the reception of the Joffrey's *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces* can be situated within the ideals of authenticity and the contemporary context of the Early Music movement in the late 1980s as the approaches to the reconstruction and the reception of these ballets took place at the height of the movement's popularity.

Like the composer of their scores, the two works, *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces*, and by extension their original choreographers, are seen as pioneers of modernism. These two ballets are milestones in the Joffrey Ballet Company's history and their performances converge at a critical era in the dance and musicological fields. The Early Music movement and questions regarding historical authenticity that arose in the 1960s continued to be of interest to musicians and music critics. This rising interest,

Auditorium and the Joffrey are used as examples, though the upcoming *Le Sacre du printemps* project is not mentioned in "Dance View: New Yorkers are Seldom the First to See New Ballets," *New York Times*, 4 April 1986.

particularly in the 1980s, coincided with both dance and music scholars' burgeoning enthusiasm for examining the cultural output from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. My analysis considers the reception of Joffrey's reconstruction of Nijinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* as a case study within the broader interests in authenticity's relationship to modernism in dance and musicology in the 1980s. Discussions of *Les Noces* in both newspaper reviews and in scholarly journals reveal a similar fascination with authenticity and modernism, while also drawing attention to the notion of a lasting legacy in the reception of the ballet's scenario and choreography.

My project sheds light on the perceptions of these ballet's authenticity in their reception. I examine commentary from the local and national press in relation to the performances of two ballets at Hancher Auditorium by the Joffrey Ballet Company: *Le Sacre du printemps* on March 14th and 15th, 1988 and *Les Noces* on April 23rd and 24th, 1991. Certainly, the opening performances of *Le Sacre* at the Dorothy Chandler Pavillion in Los Angeles and of *Les Noces* at the City Ballet Theatre in New York were significant to the dance and music worlds. However, for a company that ultimately sought headquarters in Chicago, their performances in the Midwest are especially salient to not only the narrative found in the national reception but also to the establishment of the company's public image.

Additionally, my thesis explores the ways in which these two ballets were constructed as "authentic" and the relationship of this construction to similar ideals in music. It is informed by contemporaneous scholarship from the fields of musicology and dance history as well as archival documents from the University of Iowa's Special Collections on the Iowa Center for the Performing Arts and from Hancher Auditorium.

Additionally, reviews and interviews published in local and national newspapers are critical to understanding the reception of these performances on both a local and a national level. While a selection of these materials were obtained via the University of Iowa's microfilm collection of *The Iowa City Press Citizen*, other articles from the local Iowa presses can be found in the Hancher Auditorium's archive. The files from Hancher's archive are a collection of press releases from the Joffrey Ballet Company and newspaper and magazine clippings that mention either the Joffrey or Hancher Auditorium. The press releases provide insight into the administrative correspondence between Hancher Auditorium and the Joffrey Ballet Company and therefore help document the longstanding working relationship between the two institutions, which made these performances possible. The press releases, coupled with the newspaper and magazine clippings, contributed to the cultivation of the Joffrey's public image and those of the two ballets. When taken together, these documents allow me to present a facet of the Joffrey Company's history that has remained underexplored.

Literature Review

The Joffrey Ballet Company

There is limited scholarship on the history of the Joffrey ballet company and its spirited yet enigmatic founder Robert Joffrey (1928-1988)⁷. As a dance company with an active touring schedule and rigorous training school, Joffrey's archives are not easily accessible, making it a difficult subject to approach from an historical perspective. With

⁷ Joffrey biographer Sasha Anawalt observes that Robert Joffrey was often evasive about his age. Joffrey himself claimed to have been born in 1930, while official documents suggest his year of birth was actually two years earlier, in 1928. Anawalt concludes that Joffrey was "most *probably*" born on December 24, 1928. *The Joffrey Ballet: Robert Joffrey and the Making of an American Dance Company* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 17.

the exception of period reviews, the Joffrey's performances have not received attention as historical events in recent scholarship. Although Robert Joffrey was gay, scholarship that explores the relationship between sexuality, sexual expression, and dance has neglected him as a potential topic for exploration.⁸ In his article "Writing an Obituary for AIDS," David Gere addresses the AIDS epidemic's impact on the dance world by highlighting the obituaries written by dance critic Deborah Jowitt in *The Village Voice*. Robert Joffrey is mentioned once, as part of a table of excerpts from obituaries written by Jowitt.⁹ Although it was a source of suspicion and speculation amongst those in his innermost circle, Jowitt did not indicate AIDS as the cause of Joffrey's death in her obituary for him.

One notable contribution to dance history is George Dorris's two-part chronology of Robert Joffrey's choreographic output, published in 1989 in *Dance Chronicle*. Spanning 1948 to 1968, Dorris's chronology includes the details such as the names of dancers, scene and costume designers, the date and location of the performances, the music and musicians as well as other notes regarding aspects of the production and revised versions. Although his work is incredibly detailed and comprehensive, Dorris provides little analysis and interpretation of the works and their performances.

As Dorris consulted dancers and associates who worked with Robert Joffrey to compile his lists, he noted the liveliness of their personal anecdotes and the affection they expressed towards the choreographer. Acknowledging that it was outside of the limitations of his project, Dorris made a plea in his introduction to "The Choreography of

⁸ Theatre and dance scholar Bertram E. Coleman observes that neglecting to include Robert Joffrey, amongst other twentieth-century American figures, is a "serious omission," in his review of Jane C. Desmond's anthology, *Dancing Desires: Choreographing Sexualities on and off the Stage*, in *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11 (October 2002): 668.

⁹ David Gere, "Writing an Obituary for AIDS," *Dance Research* 34 (Summer 2002): 67.

Robert Joffrey: A Preliminary Checklist” for “a biographical project preserving their recollections.”¹⁰ While arts journalist and critic Sasha Anawalt’s 1996 book, *The Joffrey Ballet: Robert Joffrey and the Making of an American Dance Company*, does not delve into the stories of every piece’s creation, her biography artfully weaves together the narratives of Joffrey’s life with that of his company’s inception. Established in 1956 by Joffrey and Gerald Arpino, the Joffrey Ballet Company sought to create a dance company that reflected their interpretation of American values, which Anawalt attributes in part to Joffrey and Arpino’s upbringing as first-generation Americans. One of the underlying themes in Anawalt’s biography is the “nurturing” and inclusive atmosphere that Joffrey and Arpino fostered amongst their fellow dancers, offering them a place to spend the holidays or to retreat from their problems.¹¹ Although Joffrey’s rehearsals of *The Nutcracker* and *Le Sacre du printemps* at Hancher Auditorium are mentioned in Anawalt’s book, the brief “relocation”¹² to Iowa is framed within the context of Robert Joffrey’s failing health as he secretly suffered from AIDS. The Hancher archival folders from 1986 to 1991 help supplement Anawalt’s narrative beyond Joffrey’s illness and provide insights into one of the most important professional relationships for both the Hancher Auditorium and the Joffrey Ballet Company.

Aesthetic Contexts: *Les Noces* and *Le Sacre du printemps*

Various sources in the dance and music scholarship focus on the historical treatment of *Les Noces* and *Le Sacre du printemps*, providing historical background for the works in question. These sources are significant for developing an understanding of

¹⁰ George Dorris, “The Choreography of Robert Joffrey: A Preliminary Checklist,” *Dance Chronicle* 12, no. 1 (1989): 106.

¹¹ Anawalt, 63.

¹² *Ibid.*, 344.

the variety of aesthetic values of the early twentieth century that the Joffrey productions attempted to replicate. While these sources do not address late twentieth-century reception of these works, they are useful in grounding my understanding of these pieces and the existing scholarship from multiple fields.

Davinia Caddy's book, *The Ballets Russes and Beyond: Music and Dance in Belle-Époque Paris* confronts the "rupture narrative" surrounding the success of the Ballets Russes, the company which first produced the two ballets treated in this thesis.¹³ She criticizes the "overblown adjectives and tabloid-like histrionics" of the extant literature for overstating the revolutionary in the Ballets Russes.¹⁴ This oversimplification not only limits our understanding of the company's history and impact, but also severs the history of dance in half into a period "before Diaghilev" and "after Diaghilev." These trends in reception are still evident in the newspaper reviews following Joffrey's performance of their reconstructed *Sacre du Printemps*. By drawing these issues to our attention, Caddy seeks to revise the reception history of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, offering an alternative approach to the construction of its historical identity that minimizes the explosiveness of its popularity in favor of presenting it as the result of a culmination of various social factors.

Like Caddy, Tamara Levitz also aims to combat "blatantly flawed historical narratives" that have become incorporated into mainstream accounts of the notorious 1913 premiere of *Le Sacre du printemps*.¹⁵ In "Racism at *The Rite*," Levitz challenges the myth of the riot, frequently treated in Joffrey publicity, to highlight the race and class

¹³ Davinia Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 14.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Tamara Levitz, "Racism at *The Rite*" in *The Rite of Spring at 100*, ed. Severine Neff, Maureen Carr, and Gretchen Horlacher (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 146.

divides that not only motivated the discord at the premiere but also influenced the ballet's critical reception. Levitz's essay is a highly compelling and thoughtful examination of the foundations of the ballet's reception. She uses firsthand accounts from the premiere to provide a brief examination of the soundscape of the theatre. These accounts reveal a diverse audience demographic set apart by class, gender, nationality, and even aesthetic taste,¹⁶ as members of the audience hurled insults and heckled each other before the curtain had risen.¹⁷ The cacophony and chaos of the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées soundscape was also exacerbated by cramming Stravinsky's "enormous" orchestra into the "resonant hall."¹⁸ The sounds generated by dancers stamping and jumping on the stage also contributed to a raucous atmosphere. Despite this complex soundscape, Levitz remains unconvinced that the audience disrupted the music or the dance, as the written evidence to support this is lacking. Perhaps the most damning account against the myth of the riot is that after "a few boos...the audience calmed down enough for the show to continue, uninterrupted, with a highly acclaimed performance of *Le spectre de la rose*."¹⁹

In analyzing the soundscape, Levitz convincingly dispels the myth of the riot and argues that the ballet's unfamiliar movements or music were not the cause of the riot and discord at the premiere. Instead, Levitz alleges that the audience was shocked by the "strangeness" of the ballet.²⁰ Levitz aligns "strangeness" with audiences' "racially exclusionary aesthetics."²¹ Critics were unfamiliar with the cultural references to a pagan and pre-historic Russia. As a result, they described the ballet as primitive and compared it

¹⁶ Ibid., 148.

¹⁷ Ibid., 150.

¹⁸ Ibid., 149.

¹⁹ Ibid., 152.

²⁰ Ibid., 152.

²¹ Ibid., 152.

to other colonial models that their audiences would be familiar with, such as “Native Americans,” “the Kanuks from Caledonia,” and “Mongolian virgins.”²² While the reception of the Joffrey-Hodson-Archer reconstruction is not as racially essentialist, the primitive overtones of the 1913 riot is nevertheless incorporated into summaries of the ballet’s history.

Margarita Mazo’s article, “Stravinsky’s ‘Les Noces’ and Russian Village Wedding Ritual” has two goals. First, Mazo uses primary source materials to establish Stravinsky’s familiarity with Russian and Ukrainian rural life to demonstrate the composer’s “contacts with primary sources on folk music.”²³ In the latter portion of her article, Mazo examines the relationship between the Stravinsky’s conceptualization of the “musical and dramatic ideas”²⁴ of *Les Noces* and his conceptualization of the Russian village wedding as a ritual. Mazo’s analysis focuses on the role of laments in these wedding rituals and examines lament-like iterations in the music for *Les Noces*. She compares these laments to musical material that she collected from 1963-1978 in North-European and West-European parts of the Soviet Union to argue that, while Stravinsky suggested otherwise, the music of *Les Noces* shares close affinities to Russian folk music. Although Mazo’s article was published in 1990, she does not consider themes of authenticity in relation to her research.

Dance scholar Lynn Garafola has made significant contributions to the scholarship about Bronislava Nijinska, though her articles published in *Dance Research*

²² Ibid., 154.

²³ Margarita Mazo, “Stravinsky’s ‘Les Noces’ and Russian Village Wedding Ritual,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 43 (Spring 1990): 100.

²⁴ Ibid., 101.

in 2011, “Crafted by Many Hands: Re-Reading Bronislava Nijinska’s *Early Memoirs*,”²⁵ and “An Amazon of the Avant-Garde: Bronislava Nijinska in Revolutionary Russia”²⁶ delve further into her life and artistic vision than this project will allow. Garafola’s “The Making of Ballet Modernism” considers Diaghilev’s reconception of a modernist—as opposed to exotic—Ballets Russes in 1915-1921 and elaborates on the impact of particular figures at the “experimental nucleus” of Diaghilev’s inner circle: painters Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Goncharova, composer Igor Stravinsky, and choreographer Leonide Massine.²⁷

Robert Johnson’s article, “Ritual and Abstraction in Nijinska’s *Les Noces*” analyzes the movements and visual components of *Les Noces*, to argue that, while *Les Noces* was a collaboration between Igor Stravinsky, Natalia Goncharova, and Bronislava Nijinska, “it was Nijinska who determined the character of the original *mise en scène*.”²⁸ Johnson analyses the symbolism of repeated, abstracted gestures and common tableaux found in Nijinska’s choreography. In his striking conclusion, Johnson asserts: “Nijinska’s *Les Noces* has an authenticity and a power that other versions cannot match. [*Les Noces*] is a unique, highly personal statement of modernist values that places its choreographer in the first rank of twentieth-century artists.”²⁹ Johnson’s article is a testament to the scholarly output in the late 1980s that sought to fill the gap in women’s history by

²⁵ Garafola examines Irina Nijinska and Jean Rawlinson’s editorial choices and treatment of Bronislava’s drafted material for the publication of her memoirs, reminding us that written memoirs are a composite text and are often not bound under a single author’s vision. See Lynn Garafola, “Crafted by Many Hands: Re-Reading Bronislava Nijinska’s *Early Memoirs*,” *Dance Research* 29 (2011): 1-18.

²⁶ Garafola sheds light on Nijinska’s years in Kiev, and argues that the six years between 1915 and 1921 were highly influential in Nijinska’s establishment as a modernist artist. For more see Lynn Garafola “An Amazon of the Avant-Garde: Bronislava Nijinska in Revolutionary Russia,” *Dance Research* 29 (Summer 2011): 23-32.

²⁷ Lynn Garafola, “The Making of Ballet Modernism,” *Dance Research Journal* 20 (Winter 1989): 30.

²⁸ Robert Johnson, “Ritual and Abstraction in Nijinska’s *Les Noces*,” *Dance Chronicle* 10 (1987): 147.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 166.

drawing attention to, and legitimizing the work of, previously marginalized women in the artistic disciplines. Although dance scholarship has explored these works with regard to their creators and their early performance history and reception, the reconstructed versions of *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces* from the 1980s and 1990s have not been examined in a scholarly fashion to this degree.

Authenticity

The revival of early music emphasized the performance of music of the medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, and eventually Classical and Romantic eras. As musicological scholarship in the 1960s saw an increase in producing critical editions and analyzing performance practices of the past, so too was there a surge in pursuits of recording and performing repertoire, specifically of the medieval and Renaissance, in what was considered to be an historically-informed manner.³⁰ Over the course of twenty years, the early music repertoire expanded chronologically closer and closer to the present, challenging original conceptions that the nineteenth century was the benchmark for modern music.³¹

The enduring presence of the Early Music movement has prompted scholars to reflect upon its history. Kate Bowan outlines how the movement grew out of the Early Music revival in the late nineteenth century and drawing attention to Arnold Dolmetsch's

³⁰ Paul C. Echols and Maria V. Coldwell, "Early-music revival," in *Grove Music Online*, oxfordmusiconline.com, accessed 20 April 2018.

³¹ Nicholas Kenyon observes that the excitement found in "breaking the next chronological barrier" has shattered the notion of a "chronological limit to the process of rediscovery" (Kenyon, 11). He specifically points to projects applying an historically-informed approach to Beethoven's symphonies and Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Symphonie Fantastique*. For a breakdown of the trajectory of the Early Music movement's effect on modern-day performance practice, as well as an introduction to issues scholars and performers grappled with in the 1980s, see Nicholas Kenyon, "Introduction: Some Issues and Questions," in *Authenticity and Early Music*, ed. Nicholas Kenyon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 1-18.

performance of medieval and Renaissance music that became a lifelong pursuit of an immersive embodiment of the past.³² Dolmetsch found his calling in “the restoration and recreation of past music and its instruments”³³ and in 1915, his research of early performing styles culminated in the publication of his monograph *The Interpretation of the Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Following Dolmetsch’s example, early music enthusiasts (both performers and scholars³⁴) aimed to “produce work that recreated as faithfully as possible the author’s intentions and the time from which it came.”³⁵

Originally an amateur enterprise, the performance of early music gradually gained traction in the musical mainstream as the performers became professionalized, period instrument specialists acquired a higher profile, and the repertoire expanded to include more canonical music from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ensembles specifically geared towards Early Music performance—many originally supported at the university or college level—became increasingly popular in the 1970s. Kenyon has provided a useful outline of this trajectory in his introduction to *Authenticity and Early Music*. Many ensembles, such as the Andrew Parrott’s Taverner Choir and Players and Sir John Eliot Gardiner’s English Baroque Soloists, achieved commercial success through live concerts and recordings. Christopher Hogwood was also incredibly successful in garnering support from recording companies for historically-informed

³² Kate Bowan provides a glimpse into Dolmetsch’s life as an eccentric yet highly influential figure who not only was passionate about the music and instruments of the past, but also pre-Raphaelite fashion and decor. Bowan uses this as an example of the similarities between historical reenactors and the Early Music revivalists in her chapter, “R.G. Collingwood, Historical Reenactment and the Early Music Revival” in *Historical Reenactment: From Realism to the Affective Turn*, ed. by Iain McCalman and Paul A. Pickering (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 134-158.

³³ *Ibid.*, 139.

³⁴ It should be acknowledged that many Early Music enthusiasts were actively involved as both performers and scholars, and would identify as both.

³⁵ Bowan, 145.

performances. Hogwood's recording of the complete Mozart symphony cycle, which was performed by the Academy of Ancient Music in 1979, harnessed mainstream interests in late eighteenth century and early Romantic music considered to be canonic and regularly heard on modern instruments, which helped ease the recording industry's reservations about historically-informed performance.³⁶

However, as the once-niche field of Early Music performance reached its "commercial high-point,"³⁷ it became the site of heated debate in the 1980s. The main issue was the conflation of historical accuracy with authenticity. This was primarily at the hands of the commercial recording industry and the advertising for period instruments, though performers and music critics also perpetuated these ideals. Some of the staunch defenders of Early Music insisted that historical accuracy was key to an authentic performance of the work, stressing the importance of using instruments, ornamentation, and other practices as described in period treatises. However, others bristled at the implication that if one performance can be authentic, then another can be inauthentic and took to the presses to voice their criticism. In 1984, for example, an entire issue of the journal *Early Music*, subtitled "The Limits of Authenticity: A Discussion" was dedicated to critical responses to these very concerns.³⁸ The publications that came out of the 1980s regarding authenticity demonstrated that the Early Music community was highly self-reflective.

The idea of authenticity, of being authentic, is a highly personal one. As the Early Music movement was revisited in the publications of the 1990s and 2000s, it is clear that

³⁶ For more examples of successful Early Music ensembles, see Kenyon, "Introduction: Some Issues and Questions," in *Authenticity and Early Music*, 10.

³⁷ Nick Wilson, *The Art of Re-Enchantment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 44.

³⁸ *Early Music* 12 (February 1984).

scholars became increasingly comfortable with acknowledging this. For example, Nick Wilson expressed the desire to cast a new and more positive light on the relationship between “doing art” and “being authentic” in *The Art of Re-Enchantment*.³⁹ In defense of the Early Music movement’s continued relevance more than twenty years later, Wilson’s monograph advocates reinvigorating historically-informed practices. Even Bowan’s examination of the parallels between the Early Music Revivalists and historical reenactors reveals that an authentic performance is a lived experience. The emphasis is still on what is authentic, though authenticity has shifted from being primarily evidence-based to also being realized from an internal and embodied sense of knowing.

Multiple musicological sources contextualize the state of the Early Music movement in the 1980s and are demonstrative of the prevailing thoughts regarding the questions surrounding authenticity. Nicholas Kenyon’s 1988 published symposium *Authenticity and Early Music* features significant essays by Will Crutchfield, Howard Mayer Brown, Robert P. Morgan, Philip Brett, Gary Tomlinson, Richard Taruskin, and Kenyon himself. Numerous reviews commented upon Kenyon’s symposium as a whole; the immediate critical reception of *Authenticity and Early Music* continued its debates, and many specifically responded to Taruskin’s contribution, “The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past.” Reviews immediately following *Authenticity and Early Music*’s publication provide a glimpse into the spirited and intense discussions about authenticity and the Early Music movement, while a selection of more recent publications post-2010 reveal the enduring impact of these debates.

³⁹ Wilson, *The Art of Re-Enchantment*, 6.

Nicholas Kenyon's introduction to *Authenticity and Early Music* provides a detailed overview of the rise of the Early Music movement, though the significant figures and ensembles he features are primarily from the British Early Music circle. Will Crutchfield's essay, "Fashion, Conviction, and Performance Style in an Age of Revivals" places the fascination with early music within the context of seeking novelty, a trend reflected in the age of revivals in the second half of the twentieth century.⁴⁰ In "Pedantry or Liberation? A Sketch of the Historical Performance Movement," Howard Mayer Brown provides a succinct overview of the movement, directing attention to Wanda Landowska and Dolmetsch's early contributions to the movement's inception. Robert P. Morgan is primarily concerned with the ways in which the authenticity movement "reflects our current way of thinking about music and musical history"⁴¹ in his contribution, "Tradition, Anxiety, and the Current Musical Scene." In "The Historian, The Performer, and Authentic Meaning in Music," Gary Tomlinson advocates for a pluralistic understanding of a work's meaning by examining its historical contexts. For Tomlinson, the historian is crucial in imparting the "authentic meaning" of a work, as it is the historian's "interpretative historical acts" that help formulate these meanings.⁴²

Richard Taruskin's arguments regarding Stravinsky and modernism from his chapter and its relation to the Early Music movement are a critical connection between the aesthetic assumptions of the movement and the reception of Joffrey's reconstructed ballets. One of Taruskin's heavily discussed arguments in "The Pastness of the Present

⁴⁰ Will Crutchfield, "Fashion, Conviction, and Performance Style in an Age of Revivals," in *Authenticity and Early Music*, 22.

⁴¹ Robert P. Morgan, "Tradition, Anxiety, and the Current Musical Scene," in *Authenticity and Early Music*, 57.

⁴² Gary Tomlinson, "The Historian, The Performer, and Authentic Meaning in Music," in *Authenticity and Early Music*, 115.

and the Presence of the Past” centers on the music of Stravinsky. First, Taruskin boldly asserts that historically-informed performances belong to a modern tradition that “essentially treats the music performed as if it were composed—or at least performed—by Stravinsky.”⁴³ He observes that historically-informed performances of J. S. Bach bear the hallmark of Stravinsky’s neoclassicism. Rigidly mechanical metrical structures typified Stravinsky’s compositional output from the mid-1920s and his abilities both as performer and publicist enabled him to promote the execution of this mechanical style to the next generation of “progressive musicians.”⁴⁴ With this in mind and citing Edward T. Cone’s 1968 monograph, *Musical Form and Musical Performance*, which posits a “geometrical” Bach style⁴⁵ and encourages early music performers to conceive of “the equalized beat,”⁴⁶ Taruskin instead attributes this mechanical, “sewing-machine style” in “reconstructed” Baroque performance practices to Stravinsky.⁴⁷ He locates this connection, for example, between the first movement of Bach’s Concerto for Harpsichord and Strings in D Minor and the first movement of Stravinsky’s Concerto for Piano and Winds.

Thus, Taruskin, referencing Stravinsky, provocatively asserts that the historically-informed performances of the Early Music movement are “the most modern style around.”⁴⁸ As Garafola and Johnson demonstrate, the evocation of the mechanical is a

⁴³ Richard Taruskin, “The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past,” in *Authenticity and Early Music*, 166.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 152.

cornerstone of modernist aesthetics.⁴⁹ For Robert Fink, Taruskin's approach is "the most useful" for reexamining the performance practices of *Le Sacre du printemps* because it presents a contrast between "two equally authentic performing traditions": the nineteenth-century vitalist tradition and the modern geometric tradition.⁵⁰ Interviews with Robert Joffrey and Millicent Hodson reveal the convergence of these two performing traditions as their motivations for taking on the reconstruction project. Meanwhile, reviewers and scholars alike highlight the mechanical movements made to Stravinsky's music in both *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces*, demonstrating the modernism in both music and dance that Taruskin observes in performances that were hailed in various ways as "authentic."

Stephen Meyer's article in Timothy D. Watkins' collection of essays, *Performance Practice: Issues and Approaches*, can be used to demonstrate that the authenticity debates of the late 1980s and early 1990s were contemporary and cutting-edge for their era. Meyer uses the slow rise and rapid decline in the popularity of the compact disc to examine the similar trajectory of performance practice topics in music scholarship from the 1980s to 1990s. Meyer admits that the use of terms such as "historically informed performance practice" or "period instruments" was a "deliberately unfashionable"⁵¹ choice by the time he wrote his essay, as by 2009 the field was

⁴⁹ For a detailed discussion of modernist and mechanistic influences in ballet, see Lynn Garafola, "The Making of Ballet Modernism," *Dance Research Journal* 20 (Winter 1988): 23-32.

⁵⁰ Robert Fink, "Rigorous (♩= 126): 'The Rite of Spring' and the Forging of a Modernist Performing Style," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 52 (Summer 1999): 308.

⁵¹ Stephen Meyer, "Technology and Aesthetics: Historically Informed Performance Practice and the Compact Disc," in *Performance Practice: Issues and Approaches*, ed. Timothy D. Watkins (Ann Arbor: Steglein, 2009), 245.

attempting to distance itself from the debates that arose out of the misuse of the word “authenticity.”⁵²

Ellen Harris’ 2016 editorial in *Eighteenth-Century Music* is not a straight-forward review of *Authenticity and Early Music*, however, it demonstrates that Taruskin’s thesis in his contribution to Kenyon’s symposium has become more widely accepted by the field. As Harris begins, “*As is now generally agreed*, so-called ‘authentic’ performances of baroque music are modern in conception and sound.”⁵³ Additionally, she argues that early music performance “remains a modern interpretation for a modern audience.”⁵⁴ Recognizing that “we have neither the will nor the way to recreate the context of performances from an earlier era,” Harris concludes that “there is no way authenticity can be anything other than a construction.”⁵⁵

Writing with an audience of historians in mind, Kate Bowan’s objective in her chapter for *Historical Reenactment: From Realism to Affective Turn* is to highlight parallels between the Early Music Revival in England—specifically the experiences of Dolmetsch—and historical reenacting. Her definition of historical performance evokes authenticity and emphasizes faithfulness to the composer’s intent:

[Historically-informed performance,] a style of performance that strives for authenticity; that tries to faithfully adhere to the composer’s intentions and reproduce the work as it would have sounded in the composer’s own time on period instruments using historically-correct techniques⁵⁶

⁵² Dorottya Fabian traces the development of the debates as a reaction to “indiscriminate use of the term” in popular and commercial publications. Fabian also highlights the contributions in Continental European scholarship to historically-informed performance in “The Meaning of Authenticity and the Early Music Movement: A Historical Review,” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 32 (December 2001): 153-167.

⁵³ Ellen T. Harris, “Editorial,” *Eighteenth-Century Music* 13 (March 2016): 5. Italicization mine.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Bowan, 134.

Bowan's discussion of the similarities between the Early Music Revival and historical reenacting offers a perspective that is useful to my examination of music and dance—that of embodied experience. Bowan argues that “performance brought the past into the present as lived experience”⁵⁷ and historical performance and historical reenactment alike provide an “immersive and affective experience” for participants.⁵⁸

When Nick Wilson revisits the early music movement in *The Art of Re-Enchantment* he frames his book around what he deems to be the “pivotal relationship between ‘doing art’ and ‘being authentic’ ” in an attempt to counter the disenfranchisement and disenchantment of the current artistic and cultural climate.⁵⁹ In doing so, Wilson offers “an altogether more positive and emancipatory take on the value of both authenticity and art.”⁶⁰ As musicians struggle to “overcome separation”—between conflicting expectations to not only perform musical works in line with their canonic heritage but also to offer something distinctive and new to each performance—Wilson argues that it is through “the constant wrestle between being and becoming, the possibility of re-enchantment” with a musical work emerges.⁶¹

Wilson finds that, save for “some initial rhetorical posturing” there has been little critical response to Taruskin's essays on early music and authenticity.⁶² He acknowledges that Taruskin's core arguments—that it is impossible to know the composer's intent and that modern performers imposed their modern values upon early music—have enabled the early music movement to develop its own sense of self-awareness and reflexivity as a

⁵⁷ Ibid., 137.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 147.

⁵⁹ Wilson, 6.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 7.

⁶¹ Ibid., 5.

⁶² Ibid., 42.

cultural movement.⁶³ True to the movement's reflexive spirit, Wilson continues the discussion, re-enchanting these earlier debates by isolating areas of "unfinished business" to attend to.⁶⁴ What is at stake for Wilson is "our understanding of 'doing art' and 'being authentic' in all walks of life, not just in the performance of 'old' music."⁶⁵ Despite the fact that the height of the Early Music movement has passed, Wilson's monograph demonstrates that the ideal of authenticity still endures.

In his 1999 essay, "Rigorous (♩= 126): 'The Rite of Spring' and the Forging of a Modernist Performing Style," Robert Fink attempts to clarify "how the *Rite* as compositional breakthrough interacts with an independently evolving history of performance,"⁶⁶ asking the provocative yet "inevitable" question: "Are we ready to treat the *Rite*, still the great masterpiece of *modern* music, as if it were *early* music?"⁶⁷ Fink calls into question just how comfortable the field is with applying historically-informed performance practices to repertoire that we take for granted as modern and canonical. Fink reexamines a selection of Stravinsky's personal scores: conductor's scores from 1922 and 1948, a four-hand piano score from 1913, two copies of the 1922 pocket scores. When taken into consideration alongside the autograph full score that Pierre Monteux used for the premiere, the 1922, 1948, and 1967 printed editions of the score and the 1921 Pleyela piano rolls, the annotations from Stravinsky's scores outline a "contested" and "fundamentally unresolved" performance practice history for the music of *Le Sacre du printemps*.⁶⁸ Fink focuses on annotations suggesting drastic tempo modifications that

⁶³ Ibid., 42.

⁶⁴ Ibid. 43.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Fink, 304.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 305.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 315.

alter the temporal relationships between sections. He concludes that these non-notated but planned tempo changes are at odds with the “metronomic, unyielding tempos” of geometric, modernist performance practice, and instead display the underlying remnants of Romanticism.

Drawing upon Stravinsky’s executor-interpreter model, Fink argues that the nineteenth-century interpreter “stressed an imagined communion with the composer, refusing to reduce the scope of creative intention to material issues of ‘pure’ sound.”⁶⁹ Thus, what mattered most in this performance practice was the transmission of “the sense of a living, feeling consciousness”⁷⁰ within the work, a sentiment that is echoed by Robert Joffrey, who insisted that one had to “breathe new life” into the work.⁷¹ The notion of sustaining the vitality of the work was also shared by musicologist Paul Henry Lang, who argued that “performance based mainly on archival evidence risks the danger of becoming independent of reality and ending by living for its own sake, seemingly to freeze and encapsulate the archival findings rather than to transcend them.”⁷² This notion, Romanticist at heart, reemerges throughout the reception and publicity surrounding the reconstructed *Le Sacre du printemps*. These Romantic sensibilities create an even deeper rift between the work’s place in music history as the harbinger of modernism and its treatment as “early music.” In spite of this underlying conflict, the main influence behind the reception of these works is the ideal of authenticity.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 309

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Joffrey declared in an interview with Gillian Reese that “there is no such thing as a ‘recreation.’ It has to look new” in “The Joffrey’s New ‘Sacre du Printemps’ Will Recreate Nijinsky’s Dream Ballet,” *The Music Center News*, January 1986. Joffrey also praised the many people who helped “make these ballets [early twentieth-century works from Diaghilev’s *Ballets Russes*] live again” in “Producing a Ballet Season,” program note for 30 September 1987 performance of *Parade*, *L’Après-Midi d’une faune*, and *Le Sacre du printemps* at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, The Music Center of Los Angeles County, Los Angeles, California.

⁷² Paul Henry Lang, *Musicology and Performance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 178.

Theories of Adaptation, Reception Studies, and the Concept of Historical Presence

Although it is not the sole purpose of my project, it could be argued that reconstructions and adaptations share similar goals. Due to their constructions as “authentic” or part of a “legacy,” the Joffrey’s stagings of *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces* were not branded as “adaptations” by the company, nor were they considered as such by the press. As Linda Hutcheon posits in *A Theory of Adaptation*, an adaptation is not merely a formal product that broadcasts its transpositional relationship to the adapted work; an adaptation can also be theorized as both a process of creation and a process of reception.⁷³ As a process of creation, an adaptation “always includes both (re-) interpretation and then (re-) creation” and, depending on the perspective, can be either an act of appropriation or salvaging.⁷⁴ Adaptation can also be “an extended intertextual engagement” with the adapted work, which Hutcheon suggests demonstrates a process of reception.⁷⁵ However, based on the press reception of *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces*, the audience did not experience or interpret the works as adaptations. The parallels between the values of both reconstruction and adaptation are nevertheless compelling. With these similarities in mind, adaptation theory provides an additional avenue for exploration and is helpful in considering authenticity or “fidelity criticism” in relation to the original works.⁷⁶

Christopher Gibb’s 1992 dissertation, “The Presence of *Erlkönig*: Reception and Reworkings of a Schubert Lied” examines how reworkings function as “musical, aesthetic, and cultural objects” and how they themselves are “a significant form of

⁷³ Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 8.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 7

reception.”⁷⁷ For Gibbs, all kinds of transformations of musical works can be considered reworkings; examples such as transcription, piano reduction, parody, printed editions from the composer,⁷⁸ and different musical settings of the same text demonstrate Gibbs’ diverse and all-encompassing working definition.⁷⁹ Gibbs argues that the least successful reworkings “trivialize” Schubert’s “Erlkönig;” however, at their best, reworkings “constitute a musical hermeneutics, a sort of musical criticism.”⁸⁰

Unlike Gibb’s dissertation which treats only nineteenth-century reworkings, Harris’ 2016 editorial specifically addresses adaptations in relation to the Early Music movement. She argues that musical adaptations should be considered as works apart from the original; they merit attention because they can be used to uncover new insights into not only the original work, but also into the period in which the adaptation was made. She argues in favor of pursuing the types of adaptations and reorchestrations “that brought music from earlier periods into line with contemporary practice,”⁸¹ such as late eighteenth-century adaptations of the music of seventeenth-century composer Henry Purcell, or nineteenth-century reorchestrations of arias by Georg Frideric Handel and Christoph Willibald Gluck.⁸² Harris observes that her enthusiasm for mounting these adapted works “was not widely shared” by her colleagues,⁸³ demonstrating that while the field has moved on from debating the veracity of Taruskin’s once-polemical argument, it still struggles to let go of its fascination with the novelty of performing on period

⁷⁷ Christopher Gibbs, “The Presence of *Erlkönig*: Reception and Reworkings of a Schubert Lied” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1992), 4.

⁷⁸ For example, Robert Fink relies upon multiple Stravinsky editions of *Le Sacre du printemps* for his article “Rigorous.”

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 257.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 254.

⁸¹ Harris, 5.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 6.

instruments and their role in promoting the performance of works as they were “originally intended.”

Employing reworkings, adaptations, or reconstructions as criticism is a common thread that connects my project with the fields of reception history and adaptation theory. Gibb’s consideration of reworkings appeared fourteen years before the first edition of Linda Hutcheon’s *A Theory of Adaptation*, published in 2006, and twenty years before the second edition’s release in 2012. Thus, understandably, Gibbs noted in 1992 that there was a lack of scholarly attention to developing musical theories of reworkings, an omission that Harris continued to emphasize in 2016. He instead draws a parallel to translation studies in literature as a useful model. In spite of its comprehensive scope, Hutcheon’s *A Theory of Adaptation* is not specific to music. It is also surprising that the majority of her examples draw upon film and literature and not dance, despite the ubiquity of dance adaptations.

In order to highlight the emphasis on authenticity as it intersects with the dance and musicological worlds, this thesis presents a reception history of the Joffrey’s reconstruction of *Le Sacre du printemps* and their restaging of *Les Noces* that highlights both a national and local, Iowan narrative. At its core, my project is interdisciplinary as it contributes to dance history while engaging in a musicological perspective. The reception of the Joffrey’s *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces* can be situated within the context of authenticity and the Early Music movement in the late 1980s, as the approaches to the reconstruction of and the reception of these ballets took place at the height of the Early Music movement’s popularity; therefore, these ballets, their reception, and their connection to the Early Music movement merit closer examination.

CHAPTER TWO: *LE SACRE DU PRINTEMPS* AND THE RECEPTION OF THE HODSON-JOFFREY-ARCHER RECONSTRUCTION

It is difficult to discuss *Le Sacre du printemps* without also invoking the legendary riot at its May 29, 1913 premiere at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, France. In fact, the riot has become engrained in our modern conception of the work. As the story goes, the spectacle of the ballet—the music, costumes, and dancing—struck the 1913 audience in such a way that they protested the work by jeering and yelling at the performers on stage. Tamara Levitz confronts this narrative and argues that the riot is a construction of the first-hand reception of the work rather than an actual historical event. However, at the time of the Joffrey-Hodson-Archer reconstruction, critics at both the national and local level struggled to separate the riot as origin myth from the riot as reception.

The Reconstruction Narrative

The narrative surrounding the Joffrey's reconstruction of *Le Sacre du printemps* is not without flaws in its own mythologizing, however it positions the Hodson-Joffrey-Archer production as an extension of the 1913 production's history and legacy. The reconstruction narrative recounts Robert Joffrey meeting Millicent Hodson, then a "bright and eager young graduate student"⁸⁴ at University of California-Berkley and highlights their shared love for Vaslav Nijinsky as a dancer and choreographer. It also emphasizes the painstaking and arduous research process into *Le Sacre du printemps* that spanned

⁸⁴ Robert Joffrey, "Producing a Ballet Season," Program note for 30 September 1987 performance of *Parade*, *L'Après-Midi d'une faune* and *Le Sacre du printemps* at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, The Music Center of Los Angeles County, Los Angeles, California.

sixteen years and two continents, including pinning down such minute details as the exact shade of red used in the costumes.⁸⁵

Examining Hodson and Robert Joffrey's publications reveal ideas about empiricism and authenticity that are similar to those expressed by proponents of the Early Music Movement. These ideas are woven into the narrative about their reconstruction process, which has been passed down through the Joffrey's press releases to the national presses and filtered down to the local Iowa press. The process involved in the reconstruction of *Le Sacre du printemps* is recounted in Hodson's publications and Joffrey's program notes for the premiere, as well as in the Joffrey's press releases and administrative correspondence with Hancher Auditorium. Additionally, Hodson and Kenneth Archer's interview in the *Los Angeles Times* as a part of Lewis Segal's preview of *Le Sacre du printemps*' 1987 premiere at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles highlighted their research. In emphasizing their process, Joffrey and Hodson promoted Nijinsky's brilliance as a choreographer; they also combatted a reception history that painted Nijinsky in a negative light, deflecting the discussions of Nijinsky's mental illness and the reception of his other ballets as primitive and crude.⁸⁶

In his program notes to the 1987 premiere of *Le Sacre du printemps*, Joffrey recalls "dreaming about reconstructing the ballets of Diahilev's Ballets Russes" even before the founding of his company, as the dance "heroes" of his youth included

⁸⁵ Robert Joffrey explained to Gillian Reese, "Also, when you say the color is red, how many shades does that give you? Sometimes we have to open the seams of these costumes to find the real color, because they fade," in "The Joffrey's New 'Sacre du Printemps' Will Recreate Nijinsky's Dream Ballet," *The Music Center News* (January 1986).

⁸⁶ For example, the premiere of *L'Après-Midi d'une faune*, which featured Nijinsky as the faun, was widely criticized for Nijinsky's final and "supposedly masturbatory gesture" (Caddy, 67). Caddy re-examines the reception of the ballet within the context of the cultural and intellectual dynamics at the turning point of early twentieth-century modernism in *The Ballets Russes and Beyond* (Cambridge University Press: 2012), 67-114.

Nijinsky.⁸⁷ As he revealed in his program notes, working with Dame Marie Rambert in 1955 convinced him that *Le Sacre du printemps* “had to live again.”⁸⁸ Rambert was Nijinsky’s assistant during the creation of *Le Sacre du printemps*, and she had performed in the 1913 premiere.⁸⁹ The significance of Joffrey’s work with Rambert is echoed in a background sheet that the Joffrey provided to Hancher in 1988. The document asserts that the reconstruction process was in the making well before Hodson and Robert Joffrey met in 1971, noting that “the history of the Joffrey Ballet’s production of Nijinsky’s SACRE really begins in 1955 with Marie Rambert’s invitation to Robert Joffrey to come to London to choreograph for her company.”⁹⁰ Indeed, biographer Sasha Anawalt portrays Joffrey’s time with Rambert as pivotal for him, especially as an artistic director who grew to see himself as the “protector of twentieth-century repertoire.”⁹¹

Thus, Robert Joffrey’s interest in Nijinsky is well-documented.⁹² Knowing that Rambert had been Nijinsky’s assistant at the time of *Le Sacre du printemps*, Joffrey had seized the opportunity to work for her in 1955. Joffrey described Rambert showing him steps from the ballet and her notated score. By recalling his experiences with Rambert Joffrey was able to align himself within Nijinsky’s dance lineage. Studying with Rambert, who had firsthand experience of Nijinsky, enabled Joffrey to claim a tenable connection to the dancer and his choreographic heritage. Furthermore, this lent Joffrey

⁸⁷ Joffrey.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Anawalt, 81.

⁹⁰ Joffrey Ballet Company correspondence to Hancher Auditorium, Hancher Archive File, 1988.

⁹¹ Anawalt, 84.

⁹² In a 1987 interview with Richard Philp, Joffrey admitted that he felt a close kinship with Nijinsky because of their similarly slight stature, as described in Anawalt, 29. Lynda Leidiger also briefly pointed to Joffrey’s studies with Alexandra Fedorova, a former member of the Russian Imperial Ballet and Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, as another key influence for his fascination with Nijinsky in “Joffrey Ballet Brings ‘Le Sacre’ to Midwest,” *The Press Citizen*, 12 March 1988. Anawalt offers a more detailed look into Fedorova’s teaching influence on Joffrey in *The Joffrey Ballet*, 58.

some authority as he and the reconstruction team were, in his words, “going back to the source.”⁹³

The reconstruction project provided an avenue for Robert Joffrey to promote Nijinsky’s major contributions to dance, which he characterized as having been “neglected” by the public.⁹⁴ Segal observes that, like Hodson and Archer, Joffrey also saw the reconstruction as a means of “repudiating the popular image of Nijinsky as an unsophisticated, crudely instinctive choreographer.”⁹⁵ Joffrey also connects these negative perceptions of Nijinsky to the challenges of funding the project, as he expressed dismay towards the budgetary constraints to Segal, explaining that “it’s been hard to get money for *Sacre*. So many people don’t know about it and its importance.”⁹⁶

Examining the Reconstruction Process

Millicent Hodson sought to reconstruct *Le Sacre du printemps*, approaching it as a “puzzle,” in the hopes of being able to piece together an image as close to the original as possible. The culmination of her research, *Nijinsky’s Crime Against Grace: Reconstruction Score of the Original Choreography for LE SACRE DU PRINTEMPS*, recounts her process and presents her reconstructed score—an interrogation of anecdotal and visual evidence and artifacts with choreographic notes and sketches.

In *Nijinsky’s Crime Against Grace*, Hodson discloses her personal fascination with the Ballets Russes and her inspiration for the reconstruction project. As a graduate student at the University of California, Berkley in 1970, Hodson was drawn to three photographs taken backstage at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées of the dancers for *Le*

⁹³ Robert Joffrey, quoted in Reese.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Segal.

⁹⁶ Robert Joffrey, quoted in Segal.

Sacre du printemps. Hodson was intrigued by how “contemporary” the dancers, including a young Dame Marie Rambert, looked in these photographs.⁹⁷ This aura of contemporaneity emanated from Roerich’s “folkloric clothes that were then, and perennially are, so stylish,” as well as the stance and posture of the dancers’ bodies, which reminded Hodson of the models in the glossy fashion magazines in the 1970s.⁹⁸ In particular, Hodson highlighted the dancers’ knock-kneed and pigeon-toed posture, suggesting a nexus between vulnerability and autonomy.

The goal of Hodson’s choreographic score was to present the sources upon which she relied for piecing together Nijinsky’s lost steps to *Le Sacre du printemps*. The most significant sources for her choreography were annotated promptbook scores from Rambert and Igor Stravinsky,⁹⁹ and Valentine Gross’ sketches from the 1913 premiere at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. Rambert’s annotations were made on a copy of a four-hand score soon after leaving the Ballet Russes. Gross’s drawings, sketched in the darkness of the theatre, serve as a “hieroglyphic record of the ballet.”¹⁰⁰ For each page, Hodson’s illustrations elaborate upon Rambert’s score and Gross’s sketches, and are interpolated with translations of Rambert’s commentary. As Jane Pritchard, curator and archivist for Rambert Dance Company, notes in her review of *Nijinsky’s Crime Against Grace*, Hodson’s storyboard-like sketches are so useful that even those new to traditional

⁹⁷ Millicent Hodson, *Nijinsky’s Crime Against Grace* (Stuveysant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1996), xix.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ As Susan Manning notes in her review of October 1987 performance of the Joffrey’s reconstructed *Le Sacre du printemps* at New York City’s City Center, the attribution of these notes to Stravinsky incited intense debate between Stravinsky scholar Robert Craft and Millicent Hodson: “*Le Sacre du printemps* by Vaslav Nijinsky and Millicent Hodson,” *Theatre Journal* 40 (October 1988): 404.

¹⁰⁰ Hodson, xxii.

dance notation are able to “read” the dance,¹⁰¹ especially if they follow the choreographic text as they watch the televised performance by the Joffrey in the 1989 documentary, *The Search for Nijinsky’s Rite of Spring*.¹⁰²

Although Hodson’s book describing her project to reconstruct an authentic work was published almost ten years after the reconstruction’s premiere, the reception of the Joffrey in Iowa and beyond demonstrates that the notion of authenticity had previously garnered attention. Just as historically-informed performers believed they could perform from musical scores in a style intended to imitate that of an earlier historical period to realize the composer’s intentions, Hodson’s sketches and notations are a “score” allowing performers a means of enacting the dance, with the implication that these are the steps that Nijinsky would have wanted. Thus, the pursuit of the original choreography is to the dance world what period instruments and “historical” performance styles are to the Early Music movement, as both reinforce the fascination with authenticity. Nonetheless, period instruments do not guarantee a performance that replicates that of the time period in which a composition was created. Likewise, the Joffrey-Hodson-Archer approach to *Le Sacre du printemps* is not completely reflective of the performance as audience members from 1913 would have experienced it; like interpretations for early music, although it may draw on historical information, it instead demonstrates a performance practice that is true to the late-1980s.

¹⁰¹ Jane Pritchard, “Reviewed Works: Nijinsky’s Crime against Grace: Reconstruction Score of the Original Choreography for ‘Le Sacre du printemps’ by Millicent Hodson,” *Dance Research* 16 (1998): 77.

¹⁰² Judy Kinberg, dir. *The Search for Nijinsky’s Rite of Spring* (New York City: WNET 13, 1989).

Reception: National and Iowan

On March 13, 1988, the day before the Joffrey Ballet Company's performance of *Le Sacre du printemps* at Hancher Auditorium in Iowa City, Iowa, Joan Bunke of the *Des Moines Sunday Register* opened her preview of the upcoming performance with a 1986 quote from *The Washington Post's* dance critic Alan Kriegsman: "With this revival of 'Le Sacre du printemps,' the Joffrey Ballet has not only recovered a crucial part of our cultural past, but has also given us a living treasure for the present and future."¹⁰³ Bunke was not the only writer with an Iowan newspaper to quote Kriegsman; on March 11, just a few days earlier, the *Prairie Sun* closed their article, "Joffrey Returns to Iowa for 'Rites of Spring' with this exact statement. The Joffrey Ballet Company had premiered *Le Sacre du printemps* a year earlier in September 1987 at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles. However, by quoting Kriegsman, Bunke has inserted Joffrey's performance at Hancher Auditorium in the spring of 1988 into the narrative of their national premiere from the fall of 1987—the "living treasure" could thrive in the West Coast metropolis and bask in the small-town charm of the Midwest.

The majority of Iowan newspapers were quick to point out the relationship between Joffrey and Hancher. Bunke reported that, during the summer of 1987, the company "extensively rehearsed" on the University of Iowa campus, which, she notes, "has become a kind of third home to the 'bicoastal,' New York-Los Angeles Company."¹⁰⁴ Earlier that month, on March 3, a news brief in *Journal Muscatine* also mentioned Joffrey's Iowa connection: "the Joffrey will bring 'Sacre' back to Iowa City,

¹⁰³ Alan M. Kriegsman, "Joffrey's Stupendous 'Sacre': In LA, a Revival That Makes History," *The Washington Post*, 2 October 1987.

¹⁰⁴ Bunke.

where it was extensively rehearsed last summer.”¹⁰⁵ B. Gordon of *The Daily Iowan* provided more detail in their article from March 15. This article illuminated some of the reconstruction process and reported that Millicent Hodson worked with Joffrey dancers over the summer of 1987 at the Halsey Gym, a building used by the University’s dance department.¹⁰⁶

A day earlier, on March 12, *The Press Citizen* also published a preview of Joffrey’s performance. Although Lynda Leidiger’s preview primarily rehashes the legendary riot and controversy of the 1913 premiere, she does reference the University of Iowa and Hancher’s professional relationship: “when the Joffrey ballet took up residency here last June to fine-tune *Nutcracker*, they simultaneously rehearsed one of the most traditional ballets and one of the most ground-breaking.”¹⁰⁷ Indeed, the Joffrey Ballet company chose Hancher Auditorium to host the world premiere of the quintessential holiday ballet on December 10 before opening at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. on December 16, 1987.¹⁰⁸ The significance of hosting this world premiere was not lost on then-executive director of Hancher Wallace Chappell and assistant Sara Brown, who prepared the 1987–1988 Hancher Auditorium Annual Report; two pages of the programming section in the report were dedicated to *The Nutcracker*. *The Nutcracker* provided “excellent public relations for the University and for the state,” continuing the

¹⁰⁵ “Joffrey Reprises Appearance,” *Journal Muscatine*, 3 March 1988.

¹⁰⁶ Gordon.

¹⁰⁷ Leidiger.

¹⁰⁸ “Historic Highlights: A Brief Chronology of the Joffrey Ballet 1956-1987,” undated press release by The Joffrey Ballet, Hancher Auditorium Papers, Iowa City, Iowa.

longstanding professional relationship between the Joffrey Ballet Company and Hancher Auditorium.¹⁰⁹

The rehearsals for *The Nutcracker* and *Le Sacre du printemps* received little attention from the newspapers of the Joffrey's bicoastal home-bases of New York City and Los Angeles. However, the Joffrey's tendency to premiere works outside of its original East Coast base caught the attention of Anna Kisselgoff of *The New York Times*. Published on April 6, 1986, Kisselgoff's "New Yorkers are Seldom First to See New Ballets" points out that "it is rare nowadays for New York to be the site of a world premiere in ballet."¹¹⁰ The increase in commissions from outside of New York, coupled with the intense touring demands of dance companies, were among the reasons for their reliance on performing arts centers outside of New York City. Although her article was published following the Joffrey's announcement of their reconstruction of *Le Sacre du printemps*, which was to be premiered in Los Angeles, Kisselgoff does not mention the upcoming ballet. Kisselgoff does, however, describe Hancher Auditorium's role as "a creative center, not merely a booking house," adding that seeking commissions and residencies outside a company's official home base has developed into a system that enables "creative and economic decentralization."¹¹¹ Thus, the use of Hancher Auditorium as a rehearsal space is evidence of the Auditoriums' substantial and direct, albeit underappreciated, contribution to the reconstruction of *Le Sacre du printemps*.

On July 5, 1987, three months before the Los Angeles premiere of *Le Sacre du printemps*, the *Los Angeles Times* published an article by Lewis Segal, who was reporting

¹⁰⁹ Chappell and Brown, 2.

¹¹⁰ Anna Kisselgoff, "New Yorkers are Seldom the First to See New Ballets," *The New York Times*, 6 April 1986.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

from Iowa City about the reconstruction process. The article included interviews with the three members of the reconstruction team (Kenneth Archer, Millicent Hodson, and Robert Joffrey), though greater emphasis was given to Hodson's perspective. The article's opening line presents the University of Iowa as the site of "an historic event": the rehearsal of Nijinsky's "legendary, long-lost choreography."¹¹² Embedded in Segal's reporting on the rehearsals at Hancher is a rhetoric that can be framed by the modernist values of empiricism and authenticity. For example, Hodson's research with art historian Kenneth Archer is the result of a "systematic accretion" of evidence.¹¹³ Segal describes Hodson and Archer's process as "a scientific methodology that...will yield an accurate reconstruction."¹¹⁴ Segal also enumerates Hodson's sources, from reviews to photographs to production dossiers, one of which included a chart with two hundred hues for color-checking costumes and backdrops.¹¹⁵ In doing so, Segal helped quantify the amount of detail involved in the reconstruction process and insinuated that it is indeed accurate (i.e. authentic) to the 1913 production.

Segal's word choice also demonstrates a push to validate not only the results of Hodson's research, but also its rigorousness. He describes Hodson's research as a "tortuous process" that was "virtually unprecedented in professional dance." Similarly, Alan Kriegsman characterizes Hodson and Archer's approach to be "as close to exhaustive as the pragmatic needs of the ballet stage allow."¹¹⁶ Like Segal, Kriegsman emphasizes the detailed costumes and "spatial patterns" of the dancers' posture, steps,

¹¹² Lewis Segal, "Re-Rite of Spring," *Los Angeles Times*, 5 July 1987.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Kriegsman, "Joffrey's Stupendous 'Sacre'."

and staging. However, this empiricism is balanced by the aura of “mystical power” surrounding the performance on *Sacre*’s opening night.

The dance critics of the time acknowledged that one could only speculate as to the faithfulness and accuracy of the production. Part of the mythology surrounding *Le Sacre du printemps* is that Nijinsky’s choreographic notes were no longer extant. Kisselgoff of the *New York Times* concluded, “whatever the degree of authenticity, the result is, at the very least, an outline of the original.”¹¹⁷ Echoing Kisselgoff, albeit less forgiving, Arlene Croce of *The New Yorker* asserts that Hodson’s research provides “a ground plan or an architectural group...but is only an outline.”¹¹⁸ Croce also dismissed the question of the whether Joffrey’s production did justice to Nijinsky’s original production as “moot.” She argued that, “in order to revive any work, with or without notation, one must recreate its original dynamic, and that involves a certain superimposition of personalities, the present upon the past.”¹¹⁹ Croce’s review for *The New Yorker* brings to mind Richard Taruskin’s arguments in “The Pastness of the Present and the Presentness of the Past,” published a year later in 1988, in its discussion of the interplay of the past and present. In his contribution to Nicholas Kenyon’s symposium *Authenticity and Early Music*, Taruskin argued that historical performance practice is actually a “modern performance” with a “thin veneer of historicism.”¹²⁰ Likewise, despite the rigorous research process and grounding in artifacts and firsthand accounts, the Hodson-Archer approach to the reconstructed *Le Sacre du printemps* is a conception of the ballet grounded in the 1970s and 1980s.

¹¹⁷ Kisselgoff, “Roerich’s ‘Sacre’ Shines in the Joffrey’s Light.”

¹¹⁸ Arlene Croce, “Footnotes in the Sands of Time,” *The New Yorker*, 23 November 1987.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹²⁰ Taruskin, 152.

Dance critics for the national papers also weighed in on perceptions of authenticity and authorship. In *Authenticity and Early Music*, both Howard Mayer Brown and Taruskin criticized using authenticity as the sole criteria for measuring a performance's success. Nevertheless, critics latched onto authenticity in their reviews. On October 2, 1987, Kriegsman posed the question: "Was this how the ballet looked in 1913? Has Nijinsky's choreography been faithfully resurrected, or even reasonably approximated?"¹²¹ According to Segal's interview, Hodson insisted that the Joffrey production was neither *her* version nor "a *re-creation* of the ballet."¹²² Hodson argues that her research is reproducible: "It is *not* my version because I think there is material that is inescapable in it, a logic, a way of putting things together...I don't believe that something all that different would be arrived at by someone else."¹²³

From a musicological perspective, the authentic reproducibility of a Nijinsky version by way of Hodson's work seems questionable. Richard Taruskin argues against the assumption that re-creating the conditions of the original performance will "re-create the composer's inner experience of the piece" and allow for the their original vision to be transmitted to the audience.¹²⁴ Along a similar vein, in his contribution to *Authenticity and Early Music*, Brown contrasts the performances of French viol music of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Wieland Kujiken and John Hsu, concluding that "musical results can differ widely even when two people base their performing style on the same assumptions, and even on the same treatises for their information."¹²⁵

¹²¹ Kriegsman, "Joffrey's Stupendous 'Sacre'."

¹²² Segal.

¹²³ Hodson, quoted in Segal.

¹²⁴ Taruskin, 140.

¹²⁵ Brown, "Pedantry of Liberation? A Sketch of the Historical Performance Movement," 51.

Hodson's "reproducible" and so-called authentic reconstruction came under similar criticism following the publication of her choreographic score. In her review of Hodson's *Nijinsky's Crime Against Grace*, Jane Pritchard took a stance on the score's perceived authenticity, observing that Hodson's research certainly incorporates evidence that can be traced to Nijinsky, however, "it is not the documentation of the 1913 production."¹²⁶ While Pritchard praised Hodson for publishing "such an honest statement about her process of reconstruction,"¹²⁷ she critiques the "imbalance" between sections of the choreography that are undocumented by original source material and steps that are well-documented. Hodson openly admits that she had to fill in the gaps with new choreography by using existing evidence and "making links" between the movements.¹²⁸ Furthermore, considering that Nijinsky's choreographic notes to *Le Sacre du printemps* remain lost, critiquing the inconsistency in documentation demonstrates an obsession with authenticity that finds credibility only in original choreographic steps. Pritchard's orientation towards the original choreographic steps is a direct parallel to Early Music enthusiasts, such as scholar Robert Donington, who strongly advocated, for example, the use of period-correct Baroque instruments to guarantee a Baroque sound.¹²⁹

Rather than unequivocally claim authenticity, Kriegsman and Kisselgoff's reviews invoke the sensibility of authenticity. The title of Kisselgoff's article immediately following the Joffrey's premiere of *Le Sacre du printemps*, "The Original 'Sacre' is Danced by Joffrey," suggests that the audience is experiencing Nijinsky's ballet, as Nijinsky would have wanted it to be performed. However, a month later, critics'

¹²⁶ Pritchard, 78.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 77.

¹²⁸ Hodson, quoted in Segal.

¹²⁹ Robert Donington, "Reviewed Works: *Authenticity and Early Music: A Symposium* by Nicholas Kenyon" *Music & Letters* 70 (August 1989): 387.

notions of authenticity became more nuanced. Kriegsman wrote that the performance “has a *feeling* of authenticity about it”¹³⁰ and Kisselgoff agreed: “we sense the spirit of the work.”¹³¹ For Kisselgoff, the spirit of the work seems to emanate from bringing Roerich’s visual designs to the forefront of the production. After all, she asserted in two separate reviews that the Joffrey reconstruction sees a larger influence from Roerich than Nijinsky or Stravinsky; Roerich was “the idea man” and the title of her November 1987 review refers to the piece as “Roerich’s *Sacre*.”¹³² For Kriegsman, the “exquisitely detailed costumes and sets” lent the performance its credibility, leading him to proclaim he *felt* authenticity in the “strangeness, intensity and mystical power” of the ballet.¹³³

With all this emphasis on the visual spectacle of the ballet, the performance of Stravinsky’s score was taken for granted. Conductor Allen Lewis’ interpretation of the music for *Le Sacre du printemps* was not up for debate in this way. However, as Robert Fink explains, the score to *Le Sacre du printemps* had an extensive performance history since its 1913 premiere and the music has since become canonized as a concert piece—taken as absolute music—thus leading the reconstruction team and dance critics to assume that “Stravinsky’s music, unlike the scenery and choreography of his unfortunate collaborators, had been unproblematically preserved.”¹³⁴

One point of contention stems from the dance critics’ expectations for a more perceivably folkloric influence in the dancers’ movements, demonstrating a new standard

¹³⁰ Kriegsman, “Joffrey’s Stupendous ‘Sacre’.”

¹³¹ Anna Kisselgoff, “Roerich’s ‘Sacre’ Shines in the Joffrey’s Light,” *The New York Times*, 22 November 1987.

¹³² Anna Kisselgoff, “The Original ‘Sacre’ is Danced by Joffrey,” *The New York Times*, 30 October 1987, 22.

¹³³ Kriegsman, “Joffrey’s Stupendous ‘Sacre’.”

¹³⁴ Fink, 300.

of authenticity with which critics had begun to measure *Le Sacre du printemps*.

Kriegsman observed one “concrete reservation” about the dancing: a lack of “Slavic schmaltz.”¹³⁵ It is not exactly clear how this would have manifested in movement. It is possible that Kriegsman was recalling the exoticism and “soft eroticism” of Diaghilev’s earlier Ballet Russes productions,¹³⁶ though it is doubtful that Stravinsky would agree, given his contradictory opinions on the use of Russian folkloric elements in art.¹³⁷

Nevertheless, to Kriegsman, the dancing in the reconstructed *Le Sacre du printemps* seemed to be a “palpable degree less distinctively Russian in character, texture, and atmosphere than one might surmise the original to have been.”¹³⁸ Overall, this moment of criticism was relatively mild-mannered and was overshadowed by Kriegsman’s otherwise glowing praise. Croce, on the other hand, did not mince her words. For Croce, the lack of Russian folk dance was the aspect “most in need of attention” from the reconstruction team.¹³⁹ Croce observed that “there is scarcely a sign of Russian folk dance on the stage” and instead, the leap with raised knee and raised arm in the “Glorification of the Chosen One” section is reminiscent of “a kind of American Indian war dance” and “looks like *Rodeo*,” Agnes de Mille’s 1942 ballet set to Aaron Copland’s score.¹⁴⁰

Although Croce and Kriegsman’s criticism is aimed at the reconstruction team, the lack of Russian folk-dance idioms in the choreography for *Le Sacre du printemps* was in actuality a critique of Nijinsky and his choices. However, by critiquing the lack of

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Charles M. Joseph, *Stravinsky’s Ballets* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 78

¹³⁷ As is well documented, Stravinsky’s opinions on his music changed over the years. Margarita Mazo observes that the Stravinsky-Craft conversation books reveal inconsistencies with regard to the influence of Russian music on Stravinsky’s own compositional output and points to Richard Taruskin’s research. His analysis demonstrates a critical reading of these inconsistencies, as described in “Stravinsky and the Traditions: Why the Memory Hole,” *Opus 3*, no. 4 (June 1987): 10-17.

¹³⁸ Segal.

¹³⁹ Croce, 144.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

Russian folk idioms in the choreography and pointing the blame at Hodson and the Joffrey's performance, Hodson is granted ownership over the ballet as a work. In making room for Hodson to absorb ownership of Nijinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps*, critics blur the line between who can claim authority over it. Furthermore, by isolating the lack of folk-dance idioms, Croce and Kriegsman fall into the trap of assuming that a closer proximity to folk art would have lent more credibility and authenticity to the work.

Another criticism of the Joffrey's reconstructed *Le Sacre du printemps* addressed the balance between scholarship and performance, a tension that also clearly exists within the Early Music circle. As noted in Nick Wilson's *The Art of Re-enchantment*, the early music movement as a whole has been criticized for its dogmatism and over-emphasis on rules. These sentiments are echoed in Kisselgoff's critiques of Hodson's role in the reconstruction. For Kisselgoff, the "astoundingly detailed designs [of the costumes and backdrops] create a relatively tame effect," leading to her speculation in an article published October 30, 1987, that perhaps "Ms. Hodson may have been too careful in her choreographic staging."¹⁴¹ A month later, Kisselgoff's criticism became bolder, suggesting that Hodson was "too scrupulously academic."¹⁴² As a result of Hodson's scruples, the dancers moved with a "carefulness...that [was] excessive," and in Kisselgoff's opinion the "potential power" of the rhythms and dissonances in Stravinsky's score was lost.¹⁴³ Kisselgoff's distrust in Hodson's academic approach is an embodiment of the "dogmatic rhetoric" following Nick Wilson's seven rhetorics, or

¹⁴¹ Kisselgoff, "The Original 'Sacre' is Dance by Joffrey."

¹⁴² Kisselgoff, "Roerich's 'Sacre' Shines in the Joffrey's Light."

¹⁴³ Ibid.

narratives, of Early Music.¹⁴⁴ Wilson notes that dogmatic rhetoric generated criticisms of Early Music that depict the movement as “prescriptive and rule-bound.” A product of such rhetoric is the parodied image of the scholar-performer whose interests are consumed by the rules “laid down in a dusty old treatise,”¹⁴⁵ which suffocates the life out of the musical work itself. Robert Joffrey may have been aware of—and was attempting to counter—this stereotype as he praised those who helped “make the ballet live again” in his program notes to the 1987 premiere.¹⁴⁶ While Kisselgoff does not say outright that the Joffrey’s performance under Hodson’s supervision was lifeless, it is very strongly implied that she did not strike the right balance between research and performance.

However, Segal exalted the energy on the stage during the rehearsals of the Old Woman’s opening solo: “the stage throbs with energy but it is not the fierce, muscular thrust of tribal dancing. No, here the intricately coordinated interlocking motifs form something like a great chugging engine.”¹⁴⁷ His description of the physicality of “tribal dancing,” although evoking passion, also suggests the primitive, which echoes the xenophobic responses of the critics at the 1913 premiere.¹⁴⁸ The energy of the “tribal dancing” is underscored in favor of the implied structure and complexity of the engine, its mechanical qualities representative of a cornerstone of civilization and modernist aesthetics. Segal’s “chugging engine” is nonetheless reminiscent of what Taruskin

¹⁴⁴ Wilson’s seven rhetorics of Early Music are: revolutionary, amateur, commercial, dogmatic, creative, modernist, authentic. Within each rhetoric is a dualistic opposition, as described in *The Art of Re-Enchantment*, 7-12.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 12.

¹⁴⁶ Joffrey.

¹⁴⁷ Segal.

¹⁴⁸ Levitz, 154.

deemed as the “sewing-machine style” as was ahistorically applied to Bach, and associated with Stravinsky’s neo-classic compositions.¹⁴⁹

Conclusions

The immediate reception of Joffrey’s *Le Sacre du printemps* was shaped by Millicent Hodson and Robert Joffrey’s reconstruction narrative, which recounted their personal and enduring relationships with various primary and secondary sources. Emphasizing proximity to Nijinsky by way of Rambert was arguably their most significant means of validating the reconstructed ballet. For Hodson, the gaps in knowledge, such as the missing pieces to the lost steps, were filled by drawing on as many connections to primary source material as possible. These connections were used by Hodson and Joffrey to not only supplement Hodson and Archer’s research, but also lent the resulting reconstructed ballet its credibility.

The internalized empiricism is reflective of the mentality of the Early Music Movement most scrutinized by scholars such as Taruskin, Kerman, and Fink. With regard to *Le Sacre du printemps*, Fink raises the question: “Is what we are ‘restoring’ a material phenomenon (‘the way it actually sounded’) or an ideal one (‘what the composer actually wanted’)?”¹⁵⁰ Although the reconstruction process undertaken by Hodson and Archer relies on diverse source material to suggest a restoration of a material phenomenon—how the dancers and audience members in 1913 experienced the ballet—it seems their ultimate goal aligns more with the ideal: reconstructing what Nijinsky would have wanted. Ultimately, critics impressed upon their readers the significance of the painstaking reconstruction process as it added to the ballet’s authenticity.

¹⁴⁹ Taruskin, 169.

¹⁵⁰ Fink, 303.

CHAPTER THREE: THE RECEPTION OF *LES NOCES*

On October 6, 1989, the Joffrey Ballet presented their Diaghilev program at the Kennedy Center Opera House. This program featured three revivals of Diaghilev-era Ballets Russes productions: *L'Après-Midi d'un faune*, *Le Sacre du printemps*, and *Les Noces*. This was the premiere of the Joffrey's production of *Les Noces* choreographed by Bronislava Nijinska, which featured visual designs by Natalie Goncharova. Irina Nijinska, Bronislava's daughter, and Howard Sayette of the Oakland Ballet were named as consultants to the Joffrey's production of *Les Noces* as they supervised the choreography and staging. In addition to recreating Goncharova's set and costumes, the program was significant as the Joffrey presented *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces* together.

The idea for a work about a Russian peasant wedding was approached by Igor Stravinsky in 1912, as he was finishing *Le Sacre du printemps*.¹⁵¹ *Les Noces* (*Svadebka* or *The Wedding*) premiered in the Théâtre de la Gaîté in Paris in 1923 by Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. *Les Noces* was the culmination of collaborations between Stravinsky, the artist Natalie Goncharova, and the choreographer Bronislava Nijinska. The scenario for *Les Noces* consists of four scenes, divided into two unequal parts. Part One consists of three scenes (*At the Bride's*, *The Braid*; *At the Groom's*, *The Curls*; and *Seeing Off the Bride*), while Part Two has one scene (*The Wedding Feast*). As Margarita Mazo explains, Part One symbolizes "the separation of the bride and groom from their previous lives" and Part Two displays the celebratory rituals that "assure the family's proper future" such as the wedding feast.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Robert Johnson, "Ritual and Abstraction in Nijinska's *Les Noces*," 147.

¹⁵² Mazo, 119.

The mood and orchestration of the ballet underwent significant transformations throughout the course of *Les Noces*' ten-year inception. The wedding was originally to be presented as masquerade,¹⁵³ though Nijinska steered Stravinsky and Goncharova towards a more austere vision after she heard Stravinsky's music in 1922.¹⁵⁴ The orchestration saw two other versions before the final 1923 version: four pianos, percussion, four vocal soloists, and chorus. The initial sketch for the score was conventional: Stravinsky's 1917 version was for a large orchestra, similar to *Le Sacre du printemps*.¹⁵⁵ Two years later, Stravinsky set the music for an ensemble consisting of two cimbaloms, pianola, harmonium, and percussion, demonstrating his interest using mechanical and non-mechanical instruments as opposing forces.¹⁵⁶

The fact sheet provided to Hancher Auditorium by the Joffrey Ballet Company paired *Les Noces* and *Le Sacre du printemps* specifically because "the idea for *Les Noces* came to Igor Stravinsky while composing *Le Sacre du printemps* in 1912."¹⁵⁷ The framing of the two ballets as "companion pieces" was a goal that had been expressed by Robert Joffrey two years earlier in his program notes for the Los Angeles premiere of *Le Sacre du printemps*, and it was also presented in a press release announcing the Joffrey Ballet Company as a recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts Challenge III Grant. Despite the dedication to reconstructing Goncharova's scenery and costumes using her replica of the 1923 set, reviewers were no longer arguing that this had an effect on the authenticity of the work, as they did with Millicent Hodson's research for Joffrey's

¹⁵³ Johnson points to two other Stravinsky ballets, *Pucinel* and *Renard*, as examples of the carnival-esque genre of masquerade ballets that were contemporaries of *Les Noces* in "Rituals and Abstractions in Nijinska's *Les Noces*," 153.

¹⁵⁴ Johnson, 154.

¹⁵⁵ Mazo 120

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ "Les Noces: Fact Sheet," Hancher Archive Folder, 1990.

production of *Le Sacre du printemps* two years earlier. Instead, Irina Nijinska's name and the legacy of her mother, Bronislava, seem to have borne enough credibility to allow for the "authenticity" of Joffrey's production of *Les Noces* to go largely unquestioned.

Rather than emphasizing an arduous reconstruction process or debating the authenticity of Joffrey's production, both the Joffrey's marketing materials and the subsequent reviews drew upon a variety of connections between *Les Noces* and *Le Sacre du printemps*, for at the heart of the thematic kinship between the two ballets is their depiction of rituals and paganism. Additionally, both Joffrey's marketing and writings by national dance critics emphasized the connections revealed from examining the close professional and personal relationship that Vaslav and Bronislava had as siblings in the dance world. Indeed, dance critic Sally Sommer asserted that "clearly these dances [*Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces*] are siblings as well" in her review of the Joffrey's season at the City Center in the fall of 1989.¹⁵⁸ Reviewers also focused on the parallels between the title female roles of The Chosen One and The Bride, revealing critical questions about female agency and feminine expressivity.

The Reception of *Les Noces*, After *Le Sacre du printemps*

Following the Joffrey's Diaghilev program at the Kennedy Center Opera House in 1989, dance critic Alan Kriesgman observed in *The Washington Post* that "it would be hard to overstate the momentousness of the event."¹⁵⁹ Janice Berman observed in her November 10 review in *Newsday* that there had been a "recent outbreak" of performances

¹⁵⁸ Sommer's review glosses over these two ballets; instead, it serves as an example of the critical scrutiny that Gerald Arpino received during his first year as artistic director of the Joffrey Ballet Company, as described in "The Joffrey Surges Through a Potent *Les Noces*; Not All German Modern Dancers Turn Out to be 'Bauschettes'," *Dance Magazine* (March 1990): 82-86.

¹⁵⁹ Alan M. Kriegsman, "Joffrey's Historic Pairing," *The Washington Post*, 6 October 1989.

of *Les Noces* by other New York City ballet companies such as the Feld Ballet and the Dance Theater of Harlem,¹⁶⁰ however *Les Noces* was far from being a tired ballet cliché. A majority of prominent dance critics had overwhelmingly positive feedback for the Joffrey Ballet's production. As Berman begins her article: "If there were a *Les Noces* Olympics, the Joffrey Ballet's performance would have to win the gold medal."¹⁶¹ In a statement mixed with praise and nostalgia, Anna Kisselgoff declared *Les Noces* to be "a landmark work that has never been a classic."¹⁶²

Published on the same day, Kisselgoff and Charles Jurrist's reviews of the Joffrey's performance at City Center in New York City may not have had shared opinions, but they nonetheless displayed a similar attachment to which aspects of the performance deserved criticism, namely the use of stage space and the lighting design. Unlike the critical responses to *Le Sacre du printemps*, Kisselgoff's and Jurrist's commentary considers elements of the performance of *Les Noces* that do not directly lend themselves as evidence of the performance's authenticity. Recalling Brown's reluctance to criticize a performance "purely on the grounds that it was not authentic,"¹⁶³ Kisselgoff's and Jurrist's reviews demonstrate a move toward critiquing the interpretation rather than questioning the authenticity of Joffrey's *Les Noces*. Jurrist observed that the City Center stage was "too small to allow full articulation of Nijinska's groupings,"¹⁶⁴ while Kisselgoff similarly expressed that the stage "gave the production a cramped look."¹⁶⁵ Their opinions diverged when it came to lighting design. For example, Jurrist

¹⁶⁰ Janice Berman, "Joffrey Delves into the Heart of 'Les Noces'," *Newsday*, 10 November 1989.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Kisselgoff, "The Joffrey Revives 'Les Noces'," *The New York Times*, 30 October 1989.

¹⁶³ Brown, 55.

¹⁶⁴ Jurrist.

¹⁶⁵ Kisselgoff, "The Joffrey Revives 'Les Noces'."

criticized the lighting as being “overly bright” and noted that it “heightened” the stage’s compactness.¹⁶⁶ On the other hand, Kisselgoff praised the lighting design for *Les Noces* as authentic: “Craig Miller’s extraordinarily effective lighting is remarkably faithful to accounts of the first production. Harshness gives way to a glow.”¹⁶⁷ While the ideals of authenticity are implied in their criticism, Kisselgoff and Jurrist are critiquing issues that are specific to a performance’s interpretation for a particular stage; they are no longer overtly grappling with determining the overall authenticity of the reconstruction.

On the surface, the music for the Joffrey’s *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces* received sparse critical attention from the local and national presses. After all, Stravinsky’s scores to both ballets were never lost, so it seems as though the music’s authenticity was never up for debate and was arguably taken for granted as “authentic” by reviewers. However, this is not to say that the music was considered insignificant by the critics. Reviews positioned *Les Noces* in relation to the notoriety of *Le Sacre du printemps*, and relied upon the public’s knowledge of Stravinsky’s musical style—at least, Stravinsky’s score to *Le Sacre du printemps*—to support how groundbreaking the music of *Les Noces* was by association. According to Kriegsman’s *Les Noces* review, Stravinsky’s “epochal” scores solidified the bond between the two ballets. He described the score to *Le Sacre du printemps* as “ferociously neo-primitive,” with “acid, shrieking dissonance and brute rhythms”¹⁶⁸ while the score for *Les Noces* was “a rhapsodic cantillation foreshadowing contemporary minimalist modes.”¹⁶⁹ One of the most noteworthy moments for Kriegsman during *Les Noces* was the “bell-pulling arms of the last

¹⁶⁶ Jurrist.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Kriegsman, “Joffrey’s Stupendous ‘Sacre’.”

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

sequence, as the clangor of Stravinsky's score paves the way for Nijinska's overpowering final, crosslike tableau."¹⁷⁰ This is one of the few comments to demonstrate that a reviewer was attuned to the relationship between the score and dance, as a majority of the dance critics, understandably, did not focus on the music.

Two figures in the dance critic circle stand out for their musical commentary: Sally Sommer and Clive Barnes. Writing for *Dance Magazine*, Sommer argued that it was Stravinsky's music, with its "pounding rhythms laced by poly-meters and cross-pulses that drives the dance."¹⁷¹ Barnes of *The New York Post* wrote with a similar sense of musical authority, describing Stravinsky's score as a "pungent, danced, peasant cantata" and called Stravinsky's initial vision for the ballet as a "character divertissement" in his October 31, 1989, review of Joffrey's performance at City Center.¹⁷² Kisselgoff also referred to *Les Noces* as a "danced cantata" in her review published a day earlier on October 30 in *The New York Times* and observed that the score was "threaded with lamentation."¹⁷³ (Kisselgoff's comment on lamentation will be discussed in greater depth below.) Barnes and Kisselgoff did not explain what "cantata" or "divertissement" meant, and Sommer did not clarify "poly-meters" or "cross-pulses" implying that these critics knew—or at least assumed—their audiences would be familiar with more specialized musical and dance vocabulary.

On the other hand, references to Stravinsky, his score, the instrumentation of the ballet's music, or even the conductor Allan Lewis were entirely absent from Berman's *Newsday* review of *Les Noces*, which instead focuses on the dancers and their

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Sally Sommer, "The Joffrey Surges Through a Potent *Les Noces*," 84.

¹⁷² Clive Barnes, "Expressionist Wedding," *The New York Post*, 31 October 1989.

¹⁷³ Kisselgoff, "The Joffrey Revives 'Les Noces'."

movements. Berman's article is the exception, however, as the majority of critics at least comment upon some aspect of the music.¹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the commentary from critics on the music for both *Les Noces* and *Le Sacre du printemps* is vague, though some attempts are made to acknowledge, at least, that there was live music to accompany the ballets. Instead, critics invoke the legacy of Stravinsky's music through connecting the two ballets together thematically—be it the depiction of pagan rituals or the depiction of the lead female role's demise.

Parallels: Paganism and Ritual in *Les Noces* and *Le Sacre du printemps*

Reviewers most frequently draw upon the use of ritual and the pagan and pre-Christian sources as a commonality between *Les Noces* and *Le Sacre du printemps*. Kriegsman offers a nuanced discussion of the thematic parallels between the ballets, noting that both works are “distilled representations of ancient Slavic rituals”: the human sacrifice for the renewal of spring depicted in *Sacre* was “pagan in source and theme,” while the folk nuptials of *Les Noces* demonstrated “a blending of pagan and primal Christian motifs.”¹⁷⁵

While the local presses in Iowa presented a simplified version of the plot of *Le Sacre du printemps*, they nevertheless fixated on the act of sacrifice to varying degrees. *The Prairie Sun* published a preview of the Joffrey's 1988 performance, offering detailed commentary on the reconstruction process and its connection to Iowa City. The article, “Joffrey Returns to Iowa for ‘Rites of Spring’,” gives a succinct description of the ballet's plot: “They [Nijinsky, Stravinsky and Roerich] depicted a savage ritual of human

¹⁷⁴ Charles Jurrist recalled the “weird and stirring chants” in his review “Joffrey ‘Noces’ a Welcome Work,” *Daily News*, 30 October 1989. Joseph Mazo mentioned the “thrilling score” and gave a perfunctory list of the instrumentation: “voices, pianos, and percussion” in his article “Joffrey Re-Arranges the Wedding,” *The Record*, 2 November 1989.

¹⁷⁵ Kriegsman, “Joffrey's Historic Pairing.”

sacrifice in pagan Russia, not typical fare for a ballet.”¹⁷⁶ Human sacrifice is also the focal point of B. Gordon’s synopsis in *The Daily Iowan*, though the ritual’s ancient origins are accentuated:

The ballet is based on ancient Slavic ritual, which took various forms throughout the prehistoric world, of sacrificing a maiden to ensure that spring would return. Chosen by fate, the young woman had to be consecrated before she danced herself to death for the good of the tribe.¹⁷⁷

While other local reporters chose to keep the plot description and premiere’s famous riot separate, Lynda Leidiger and Joan Bunke wove a narrative arc about the upheaval at the premiere into their synopses. For example, Bunke’s discussion of the plot in *The Des Moines Sunday Register* is seemingly secondary to the story of its 1913 Paris premiere:

On May 29, 1913, in Paris’ Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, impresario Serge Diaghilev’s premiere of ‘Sacre’—a savage rite in which a young girl, the Chosen One, dances herself to death ‘to propitiate the god of spring’ in primitive Russia—drew boos, catcalls, whistles and vocal contempt for its triumvirate of creative collaborators.¹⁷⁸

Leidiger’s description of the plot mirrors that of the *Prairie Sun*’s preview in its brevity, though like Bunke, her article in *The Press Citizen* concentrates on retelling the story of the riot. Drawing upon Rambert’s anecdote about the catcalls and booing at the premiere, Leidiger adds that “the real pandemonium began during the dance of the Chosen Virgin, who dances herself to death as a sacrifice to the fertility of the earth.”¹⁷⁹

Deborah Jowitt begins her review of *Le Sacre du printemps* for the weekly publication, *The Voice* (now *The Village Voice*), with details of the 1913 Paris premiere, such as the oft-repeated anecdotes of audience members shouting and calling for dentists

¹⁷⁶ “Joffrey Returns to Iowa for ‘Rites of Spring,’” *The Prairie Sun*, 11 March 1988.

¹⁷⁷ Gordon, “Iowa City Gets Second Dose of Joffrey Ballet.”

¹⁷⁸ Joan Bunke, “Joffrey’s ‘Sacre’ at Hancher,” *The Des Moines Sunday Register*, 13 March 1988.

¹⁷⁹ Lynda Leidiger, “Joffrey Ballet brings ‘Le Sacre’ to Midwest,” *The Press Citizen*, 12 March 1988.

Tamara Levitz does not address this particular anecdote in “Racism at *The Rite*” though her soundscape reveals that most of the commotion took place before the performance began.

as the maidens rest their cheeks on curled fists. However, Jowitt also includes a vignette of the musicians as they “fought their way through the challenging score” while conductor Pierre Monteux continued to conduct “stoically” through the chaos.¹⁸⁰ Overall, the critical reception of *Le Sacre du printemps* cannot let go of the 1913 riot, and if writers do so, they focus on describing the sacrifice rather than exploring how the music and dance depict it.

Not surprisingly for *Les Noces*, the wedding ritual and its pre-Christian influences are central to descriptions of the story. Yet, unlike diverse interpretations of the plot for *Le Sacre du printemps*, critics writing about *Les Noces* were unified in the description of the ballet’s action. By and large, summaries of the ballet’s plot are succinct, as the topic of a Russian peasant wedding is not as controversial as ritual sacrifice. For example, Dee Ann Rexroat of the *Cedar Rapids Gazette* concisely described the ballet as an “abstract depiction of a Russian peasant wedding.”¹⁸¹ In a letter addressed to friends, then-Hancher director Wallace Chappell also highlighted the abstracted folk nuptials: “A young couple is surrounded by powerful forces within the community drawn together to witness the ritual of their marriage.” Like the reviewers, Chappell emphasizes “the abstraction of the dance” and praises the replica of Natalia Goncharova’s 1923 set.¹⁸²

Parallels: The Bride and The Chosen One

The depiction of innocence followed by sex then death is another undercurrent linking the two ballets in reviewers’ eyes. The Bride is an object of Berman’s sympathy; she is the only dancer that fully faces the audience with her “fully, round and hopeful,

¹⁸⁰ Deborah Jowitt, “Restoring Nijinsky’s ‘Sacre’: The Shock of The Old,” *The Voice* (22 November 1987): 22.

¹⁸¹ Dee Ann Rexroat, “Three Nights with the Joffrey,” *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 19 April 1991.

¹⁸² Wallace Chappell to Friends, 4 April 1991, Hancher Archive File, 1991.

and a little despairing” face.¹⁸³ As The Bride stands, flanked by her bridesmaids, “an image pops into [Berman’s] mind: The Chosen One, an object of sacrifice in Vaslav Nijinsky’s 1913 *Sacre du Printemps*.”¹⁸⁴ While Julie Janus’ Bride in *Les Noces* does not evoke comparisons to Beatriz Rodriguez’s portrayal of The Chosen One from Kriegsman, he nonetheless describes the latter as “a forceful embodiment of terrorized innocence.”¹⁸⁵ Berman’s review focuses on dancer Julie Janus’ interpretation of The Bride’s individuality, although other analyses suggest this character is meant to serve as a symbol¹⁸⁶ rather than elicit an individual, personalized connection from the audience. Joseph Mazo noted that “individual choice is outside the conventions of this rural society,”¹⁸⁷ again accentuating collectivity over individual agency. In his opinion, the Joffrey dancers demonstrated an appropriate amount of restraint, though Mazo questioned whether the “company personality” was “a bit too outgoing for this work.”¹⁸⁸ However, Berman asserted that “it’s the dancers’ faces as much as the unity and the weight” of their movements that set the Joffrey’s performance apart from others.¹⁸⁹

However, according to some critics the sacrifice of The Chosen One in *Le Sacre du printemps* and The Bride’s somber exit with The Groom in *Les Noces* does not necessarily have to mean the destruction of youth and femininity, but is instead reflective

¹⁸³ Berman.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Kriegsman, “Joffrey’s Historic Pairing.”

¹⁸⁶ Margarita Mazo argues that the dramatic action in *Les Noces* is supposed to be met with “impersonal responses to the requirements of a ritualized situation” and instead of being assigned to individual roles, the solo voices “impersonate” characters, as outlined in her article, “Stravinsky’s *Les Noces* and Russian Village Wedding Ritual,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 43 (Spring 1990): 120. Dance critic Sally Sommer also argues that personalizing the roles diminishes the dramatic impact in “The Joffrey Surges Through a Potent *Les Noces*; Not All German Modern Dancers Turn Out to be ‘Bauschettes’,” *Dance Magazine* (March 1990): 85.

¹⁸⁷ Joseph Mazo, “Joffrey Re-Arranges The Wedding,” *The Record*, 2 November 1989.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Berman.

of a rite of passage. In an initiation ceremony, one cannot enter a new stage without undergoing “a symbolic death of their former personalities.”¹⁹⁰ While other critics invoked the musical similarities between *Les Noces* and *Le Sacre du printemps*, Kisselgoff’s astute observation of the lamentations in *Les Noces* demonstrates an aspect of musical criticism that is not connected to its sibling ballet. Although Kisselgoff merely adds that “the score brings out a sense of loss,” the lament plays a significant role in folk rituals.¹⁹¹ Despite the fact that laments in Russian folk wedding rituals were often interpreted in scholarly literature as a reflection of economic decline and a regressive social climate, Margarita Mazo suggests reconsidering this interpretation in favor of viewing wedding laments “within a framework of ancient initiation rituals, namely, as a rite of passage.”¹⁹²

Critics portrayed The Bride’s stillness on stage as a symbol of the stoicism of women resigned to their fate within the context of arranged marriages. Many critics pointed to an interview conducted with Nijinska in 1974 in *Dance Magazine* as an example of the tragedy in *Les Noces*. Nijinska sympathizes with the newlyweds:

I saw a dramatic quality in such wedding ceremonies of those times in the fate of the bride and groom, since the choice is made by parents to whom they owe complete obedience—there is no question of ‘mutuality of feelings.’ The young girl knows nothing at all about her future family nor what lies in store for her. Not only will she be subject to her husband, but also to his parents. It is possible that after being loved and cherished by her own kin, she may be nothing more, in her new, rough family, than a useful extra worker, just another pair of hands. The soul of the innocent is in disarray—she is bidding goodbye to her carefree youth and to her loving mother. For his part, the young groom cannot imagine what life will bring close to this young girl, whom he scarcely knows, if at all. How can such souls rejoice during their wedding ceremonies: they are deep in

¹⁹⁰ Mazo, 121.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

other thoughts. Only the families and guests enjoy themselves. For them, the wedding represents a festivity, a feast, exuberant singing, drinking and dancing. The souls of the newly wed bride and groom are far removed from all this.¹⁹³

In her examination of the function of laments in the Russian folk wedding ritual and their relationship to the laments in the score to *Les Noces*, Mazo argues that a lament is usually performed by a proxy “who knows the tradition and laments for the bride.”¹⁹⁴ Following Mazo, Nijinska laments *for* the bride and groom in this interview; she is the proxy. Nijinska’s perspective humanizes the bride and groom yet situates their internal struggle within the context of the ritual. When critics depart from the ritualistic aspects of *Les Noces*, they discuss the significance of collective identity over individual agency by honing in on the corps de ballet’s blocking and movements.¹⁹⁵

While Julie Janus’s *Bride* was praised by some for her display of stoicism, the female corps de ballet also captured the attention of critics. Violent, stabbing imagery is prevalent throughout reviewers’ descriptions of the ballet dancers’ movements, as multiple critics likened their footwork to daggers. Kriegsman described the bridesmaids as having “toes almost as daggers, stabbing the floor in incisive rhythms.”¹⁹⁶ Similarly, Sommer observed “the ballerinas stabbing their feet into the floor like daggers.”¹⁹⁷ Berman also mentioned the dancers’ “pointe-shoed feet stabbing.”¹⁹⁸ Unlike the stabbing of toe-shoed feet from Kriegsman, Sommer and Berman, Mazo’s review

¹⁹³ *Les Noces*, Hancher Archive folder, 1991.

¹⁹⁴ Mazo, 121.

¹⁹⁵ In his article, “Joffrey Re-Arranges the Wedding,” Joseph Mazo also emphasized collectivity, observing that “individual choice is outside the conventions of this rural society.” Robert Johnson argues in “Ritual and Abstraction in Nijinska’s *Les Noces*,” that the Bride and Groom are frequently still or slow-moving, while the corps de ballet is much more active, signifying the importance of the wedding ritual for the collective.

¹⁹⁶ Kriegsman, “Joffrey’s Historic Pairing.”

¹⁹⁷ Sommer, 84.

¹⁹⁸ Berman.

weaponized the dancers' legs, as the "bridesmaids' legs flash out from their skirts like switchblades snapping open."¹⁹⁹ Although within the context of his review, he was speaking to the deftness of movement from the Joffrey dancers, the snapping open of switchblades is nevertheless a provocative and violent metaphor for female movement.

While the violence depicted in *Le Sacre du printemps* is enacted against The Chosen One, the female corps in *Les Noces* are seen as the ones taking action. Berman, who declared *Les Noces* to be "an expression of feminism," likened the stabbing motions of the pointe shoes to an act of violence against the earth: "the women's pointe-shoed feet [were] stabbing the earth as if to deflower it." Although Berman does not draw upon *Le Sacre du printemps* in her review, the plots do proceed along a similar thread. *Le Sacre du printemps* depicted the sacrifice of a virgin to ensure the Earth's continued fertility; Berman's interpretation of the deflowering gestures from the female corps de ballet hints at retaliation against the ritual sacrifice.

While Kriegsman, Berman, and Mazo do not mention the music's relationship to their interpretation of the female corps de ballets' movements in *Les Noces*, the pointe work to which they refer to is punctuated by percussion (see mm. 24-38),²⁰⁰ similar to the shifting accented eighth notes of the "Augurs of Spring" section of *Le Sacre du printemps* (starting on m. 76).²⁰¹ The musical similarities in this moment, coupled with the thematic similarities may have been enough to prompt comparisons between the two ballets for the

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Igor Stravinsky, *Les Noces/Svadebka: Scènes Chorégraphiques Russes avec Chant et Musique: For four Pianos, Percussion and Voices in a Revised and Corrected Edition Based Upon Relevant Autograph and Printed Sources*, ed. Margarita Mazo (London: Chester Music, 2005), 3.

²⁰¹ Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring: Pictures from Pagan Russian in Two Parts* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1967), 10.

audience, as critics were relying upon the public's memory of Stravinsky's musical style based on *Le Sacre du printemps*.

Legacy

When considered together, the reviews of Joffrey's premieres of *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces* demonstrate critics' consideration of the delicate balance between reconstruction and revival. It is evident from the reviews of *Le Sacre du printemps* that the act of reconstruction from a perceived "original" source was the spark that ignited debates about its authenticity. On the other hand, Joffrey's *Les Noces* did not require the same arduous reconstruction process. The choreography to *Les Noces* was never lost like that of *Le Sacre du printemps*, and Irina Nijinska, Bronislava's daughter, was an active consultant for a variety of ballet companies that had staged *Les Noces*. Thus, the question of authenticity was somewhat abated.

Instead, one of the underlying themes of these reviews is the notion of "legacy"—be it the legacy of the Joffrey Company itself, the legacy of sibling choreographers Vaslav Nijinsky and Bronislava Nijinska, or the legacy of the works' relationship within the ballet repertoire. The Joffrey Ballet Company and its counterparts, such as the San Francisco Ballet and Pacific Northwest Ballet Companies, were characterized as "Balanchine satellites" by dance critic and Joffrey historian Sasha Anawalt.²⁰² Therefore, these companies' lineages could be traced "back to Russia via the [George] Balanchine bloodline," even though what contributed to the Joffrey Ballet Company's success was their American brand of eclecticism.²⁰³ In addition to its connection to Russian ballet masters, the Joffrey built a reputation for itself as a company with a "tradition of

²⁰² Sasha Anawalt, "Dancenotes" *KCRW National Public Radio 89.9FM*, 27 December 1989.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

authenticity in its revivals.”²⁰⁴ Robert Joffrey was a strong advocate for expanding the ballet canon to include twentieth-century works, arguing that these “are as much a part of our legacy as the great 19th-century classics.”²⁰⁵

The myth of the riot notwithstanding, Kriegsman declared *Le Sacre du printemps* to be “a ballet in the class of its own.”²⁰⁶ In his opinion, this honor could only be “shared at most by one other work—Nijinska’s *Les Noces* of 1923, to another great Stravinsky score.” Kriegsman also pointed out, as others have, the familial bond between the two works: Vaslav Nijinsky based the role of The Chosen One in *Le Sacre du printemps* on his sister Bronislava, though she did not perform at the premiere because she became pregnant with Irina, who later supervised productions of *Les Noces* after her mother’s death.²⁰⁷ The ballets, in their production history, have come full circle through these reconstructions. Kriegsman frames Nijinska’s impetus for *Les Noces* within the context of furthering Nijinsky’s legacy, or as a means of finishing what her brother had started: “Nijinska dedicated herself to fostering and extending [Nijinsky’s] drastically innovative choreographic principle, and ‘Noces’ was her crowning attainment of this goal.”²⁰⁸

However, *Les Noces* was also praised as a standalone masterwork within the dance canon. Rachele Palnick Tsachor explained in her article for the 1990-1991 *Hancher Season Brochure* that *Les Noces* was “one of those rare works which remained in the active repertoire for decades.”²⁰⁹ Tsachor also referred to *Le Sacre du printemps*

²⁰⁴ Barnes. Italicization mine.

²⁰⁵ Joffrey, “Producing a Ballet Season.”

²⁰⁶ Kriegsman, “Joffrey’s Historic Pairing.”

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Rachele Palnick Tsachor, “‘Les Noces’ and ‘The Green Table’: Masterworks of the Twentieth Century,” in *Hancher Season Brochure* (Iowa City, Iowa, 1990-1991), 24.

and *Les Noces* as “masterpieces” and “landmark works.” Similarly, Joseph Mazo hailed it as “one of the great dance works of the century.”²¹⁰ Further indicating the longevity of *Les Noces* and taking a stance on the question of authorship, Mazo called it “Nijinska’s masterwork” and asserts that *Les Noces* has retained its “overpowering presence 66 years after its world premiere.”²¹¹ Despite its place within the dance repertoire, it seems as though critics feared *Les Noces* would not capture the public’s attention unless it was tied either to the genius sibling choreographers narrative or to the legacy of *Le Sacre du printemps*.

Even the titles of the reviews reveal an orientation towards something other than “authentic.” Kisselgoff’s caption from her October 30th article reads: “Julie Janus, top, with other members of the Joffrey Ballet in a revival of *Les Noces* at the City Center.”²¹² The word choice in the title of her review— “The Joffrey Revives *Les Noces*”— emphasizes revival, not reconstruction. The title of Joseph Mazo’s review, “Joffrey Re-Arranges the Wedding,” demonstrates another distinction away from reconstruction and towards re-arrangement, similar to Harris’s advocacy for adaptations “that brought music from earlier periods into line with contemporary practice.”²¹³ While the Joffrey’s stagings of *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces* were not branded as “adaptations” by the company, it is clear that the personal motivations of Robert Joffrey and Millicent Hodson aligned simultaneously with what Robert Fink identified as Romantic vitalist values. Their goal to bring “life” back into these ballets is vitalist at heart. Yet these works were staged at the height of the Early Music movement’s fascination with the authentic in

²¹⁰ Mazo, “Joffrey Re-Arranges The Wedding.”

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Kisselgoff, “The Joffrey Revives ‘Les Noces’.”

²¹³ Ibid.

ways that linked it to modernism. However, as Fink explains, the 1913 *Le Sacre du printemps* ballet “never had time to create its own performing tradition” and at its premiere, the ballet “would have to be inserted into an existing tradition, one quite at odds with modernist ideas of the ‘authentic’ performance.”²¹⁴ Just as *Le Sacre du printemps* straddled the line between two disparate performing traditions, Joffrey and Hodson’s Romantic sensibilities also coexisted with the marketing and reception of these ballets, which reinforced the modernist “authentic” ideal.

Conclusion

Although the Joffrey’s production of *Les Noces* featured replicas of artist Natalie Goncharova’s set and costume designs, both the marketing materials and the subsequent reviews did not draw upon a reconstruction narrative or discuss the authenticity of Joffrey’s production. Instead, they highlighted a variety of connections between *Les Noces* and *Le Sacre du printemps*. The marketing decision to include *Les Noces* in Joffrey’s Diaghilev season was a clever tactic to reinforce the work’s position within the dance canon. More importantly, *Les Noces* was presented as a companion piece—even a sibling—to *Le Sacre du printemps*. The majority of the critical responses centered on the shared concepts of ritual and paganism.

Additionally, parallels were drawn between the title roles of The Chosen One and The Bride, revealing critical questions about female agency and feminine expressivity. The Chosen One in *Le Sacre du printemps*, after tripping and falling out of step with her group, sacrifices herself by leaping into the air, dancing herself to exhaustion and ultimately death. Conversely, the character of The Bride in *Les Noces* moves slowly

²¹⁴ Fink, 304.

compared to the corps and is frequently still. She does not exhibit agency in her movements and her stillness captivates critics; they use her stillness as a symbol of the stoicism exuded by women who were resigned to their fate within the context of arranged marriages.

Les Noces did not share the same “lost” choreographic history as *Le Sacre du printemps*; thus, reviewers were no longer weighing in on the authenticity of the work, as they did with Millicent Hodson’s research for Joffrey’s production of *Le Sacre du printemps* two years earlier. Instead, reviewers drew attention to the family connection between the choreographers, scouring the dance steps for clues to a shared artistic vision between brother and sister. Critics also continually reasserted *Les Noces*’s legacy as a modern masterwork, reminding readers of its position within the dance canon. Given the ballet’s extensive performance history and the presence of Irina Nijinska as the production’s consultant—and the implied legacy of her mother, Bronislava—critics and audience members alike were able to assume the Joffrey’s production of *Les Noces* was “authentic.”

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSIONS

Le Sacre du printemps and *Les Noces*—and the artists who collaborated in their choreographic, visual, and musical conceptions—are seen as pioneers of modernism. Dance scholars and music scholars alike have explored these works with regard to their creators and their early performance history and reception. These ballets are significant not only for the Joffrey Ballet Company’s history, but for their public image as well. The successful reconstructions of *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces* posthumously cemented Robert Joffrey’s position as a guardian and “protector” of twentieth-century ballet repertoire.²¹⁵ Despite the significance of these events, the reconstructed versions of *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces* have not received the same degree of scholarly attention as their original premieres.

Although under-represented in dance and music scholarship, the Joffrey’s 1987 and 1989 premieres of *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces*, respectively, certainly caught the attention of critics on a national and local level. The Joffrey’s performances of *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces* also converged at a critical era in both dance and music. The approaches to the reconstruction and the reception of these ballets took place at the pinnacle of the musicological debates regarding authenticity within historically-informed performance circles. Thus, the reception of the Joffrey’s *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces* can be situated within the context of the ideals of authenticity and the Early Music movement in the late 1980s. Also used as a promotional tool by the commercial recording industry, the notion of authenticity sparked heated debate between music scholars, music critics, and performers. Since this was at the forefront of critics

²¹⁵ Anawalt, 84.

and scholars' minds alike, it is not surprising that the reception of the Hodson-Joffrey-Archer *Le Sacre du printemps* revolved around the question of its authenticity.

The reconstructed *Le Sacre du printemps* was an opportunity for dance critics within the national sphere to discuss the ballet's perceived authenticity in a nuanced manner. Iowa critics helped circulate these discussions, but their primary goal was to highlight the Joffrey-Hancher connection, providing anecdotes about the company's rehearsals of *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Nutcracker* on Hancher stage and in the University of Iowa's dance rehearsal space, Halsey Hall. Using these rehearsals as evidence of Hancher's contribution to the reconstruction process, the local presses were able to include Hancher—and by extension Iowa City—in the reconstruction's lineage. Hancher Auditorium, as well as the The University of Iowa and the surrounding community, had much to gain from their partnership with the Joffrey Ballet Company. Yet, this relationship was symbiotic, as the Joffrey also benefited from the connections made in Iowa. In addition to the financial benefits of accepting commissions from Hancher Auditorium and utilizing Hancher and other University buildings as rehearsal spaces, the Joffrey also found an audience that fiercely supported their goal of eclectic programming. Although short-lived, Hancher and the Iowa community benefited from the educational outreach opportunities of the dance residencies while the cultural capital associated with the prestigious company gave Iowa City the chance to put its emerging local arts community on the map as a significant cultural artistic hub.

Two years after undertaking *Le Sacre du printemps*, *Les Noces* raised fewer questions about authenticity, though the issue was still looming behind the criticism. Unlike *Le Sacre du printemps*, *Les Noces* had a successful and longstanding performing

tradition, and had been the subject of revivals staged by other prominent dance companies since the 1960s. While Nijinska assisted with the staging of the British Royal Ballet's 1966 reconstruction of *Les Noces*,²¹⁶ her daughter Irina took on these responsibilities after her mother's death, lending subsequent productions credibility and authenticity. In addition to the family legacy behind these productions, national and local critics took to Robert Joffrey's framing of the two ballets as "companion pieces"²¹⁷ and discussed the significance of the shared pagan themes and ritual sacrifice. In these *Les Noces* reviews, some critics focused on the title roles of The Bride and The Chosen One, while others scrutinized elements related to interpretation (such as the use of stage space and lighting design) rather than questioning the authenticity of Joffrey's production.

Although the reception may indicate the most prominent link between the two works is the familial relationship of their original choreographers, they are even more clearly linked due to their scores, both by Igor Stravinsky. The majority of critics presented the music of *Les Noces* in relation to the notoriety of that of *Le Sacre du printemps*. They relied upon the public's knowledge of Stravinsky's musical style—or at least their familiarity with the score of *Le Sacre du printemps*—to support how groundbreaking the music of *Les Noces* is simply by association. The music was not entirely dismissed by critics; however, the authenticity of the music performed at the 1987 *Le Sacre du printemps* and the 1989 *Les Noces* was not a topic that merited debate. Instead, critics were able to invoke the legacy of Stravinsky's music through connecting the two ballets together thematically while the specific scores for *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces* were overshadowed by the other elements of the productions.

²¹⁶ "Les Noces: Fact Sheet," Hancher Archive Folder, 1990.

²¹⁷ Joffrey, "Producing a Ballet Season."

It is clear that the reception of *Le Sacre du printemps* was informed by the prevailing discussions regarding authenticity at the time, demonstrating the far-reaching influence of the Early Music movement's values. The marketing of the Joffrey Ballet Company's production demonstrates their idealized aims of authenticity, namely that "going back to the source" would be enough to produce an "authentic" work.²¹⁸ Yet, while they strove to provide evidence to support every dance step, Hodson and Joffrey also voiced their desire to bring to life—to revive, not reconstruct—the lost *Le Sacre du printemps*, a profoundly Romantic value. Revival suggests the work is a living entity while reconstruction implies the mechanical and methodical rebuilding of the work. The values of modernist empiricism and Romantic vitalism may seem completely at odds, yet they were able to coexist simultaneously.

What assuages these conflicting values—as the reception of Joffrey's *Les Noces* reveals—are the notions of heritage and legacy. Both ballets, as works, have remarkable histories in inception and performance. Robert Joffrey argued these twentieth century works are a part of a collective dance legacy and are of equal value as works from the nineteenth century.²¹⁹ Critics also reasserted these works' esteemed positions within the music and dance canons. While Joffrey and Hodson "channeled" Vaslav Nijinsky by way of Dame Marie Rambert to support the authenticity of their reconstruction of *Le Sacre du printemps*, with the Joffrey's production of *Les Noces* the question of its authenticity was answered by the presence of the choreographer's daughter, Irina Nijinska.

When critics emphasized the meticulous nature of Hodson and Archer's research for the reconstructed *Le Sacre du printemps*, they demonstrated their empiricist and

²¹⁸ Joffrey quoted in Reese.

²¹⁹ Joffrey, "Producing a Ballet Season."

modernist values that aligned with proponents of the Early Music movement who sought interpretations in historical treatises and period instruments. Hodson's goal with her choreographic score, *Nijinsky's Crime Against Grace*, reveals a further connection between dance and the Early Music Movement. Some historically-informed performers believed they could perform from musical scores in a style intended to imitate that of an earlier historical period to realize the composer's intentions. Hodson's sketches and notations are a "score" allowing performers a means of enacting the dance, with the implication that these are the steps that Nijinsky would have wanted. Therefore, choreography is to the dance world what period instruments and "historical" performance styles are to the Early Music movement: both reinforce the fascination with authenticity. Nonetheless, period instruments do not guarantee a performance that replicates that of the time period in which a composition was created. Likewise, neither the Joffrey-Hodson-Archer approach to *Le Sacre du printemps* nor the Joffrey's production of *Les Noces* are completely reflective of the performance as audience members from their world premieres would have experienced it in the early twentieth century. These productions draw on historical information, like early music performers. However, they both demonstrate a performance practice that is more true to the late-1980s.

When considering the reception history of these works, the efforts surrounding reconstruction and restaging merit close attention. The approaches towards *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces* by the Joffrey Ballet Company can be compared to that of musicologists and performers of early music. Informed by historically-informed performance practices, these two productions should be seen as responses to—and products of—the discussions regarding authenticity that were circulating at the time.

Thus, the dance and music aspects of their reception history are intertwined. The reception history of *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les Noces* is enriched by highlighting the partnership between the Joffrey and Hancher Auditorium, as both institutions had critical roles in the success of these productions.

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