

Stravinsky. Passages

The title of our piece refers to life situations in which human beings experience a shake-ups of the erstwhile order, and begin to feel nothing will be what it used to be, while also fearing the prospective condition of the world. They have landed in a place where none of the former rules apply, and no new norms have yet been established.

We would like to evoke the idea—in particular its accents—which tightly knit stage and social dramas together. We want our piece to tell the story of people on the fringes. Evicted, uprooted, expropriated, deprived of their homes, homelands, and gods. We want to tell the story of those “in transition” of history and amidst the ruins of their world, waiting—as in Cavafy’s famous poem—for the coming of barbarians.

The two ballet works by Igor Stravinsky, around which we built our piece, provide a direct pretext for such an interpretation, directly relating to rites of passage. *The Rite of Spring* fulfils the calendar rite referring to cosmic changes, while *Les noces* brings us back to the transition in the status of an individual. Manifested in the classical scripts and premieres of both ballets is the sacrifice made by the community to preserve its cohesion, ensure its durability, and salvage its existence.

While the power of *The Rite of Spring* is commonly recognized, that of *Les noces* remains largely obscure to the general public. An unusually ecstatic musical tale of a passage of a girl into a woman, it poses the most essential among existential questions: the relations between the individual and society, freedom and compulsion, corporality and spirituality, social order and carnivalesque anarchy, the sacred and the world from the waist down, to put it in Bakhtinian terms. The music in *The Wedding* arouses the explosion of untamed sensuality and the mystical elation in the face of mystery.

Our intention is to liberate the staging of Stravinsky’s ballets from their ethnographic contexts, to root them entirely in the present while retaining the power of their quasi-ritual structures: the power that establishes the community, countering structure with the latent force of the margins, the exceptional power of the weak.

One type of such passages concerns political borders of states. The piece was originally intended as a Polish-Ukrainian undertaking: transnational and firmly anchored in the provincial colour of the borderlands. It is here, in the tiny town of Ustyluh, situated in the middle of the historically battered borderlands, that one may find the core sources for the impetus and energy of both of these musical masterpieces.

We also want our piece to honour three individuals who helped establish *The Rite of Spring* and *The Wedding* in the canon of European ballet, and whose lives were marked by their legacy: Igor Stravinsky, and Bronislava and Vaslav Nijinsky. Their fate and entangled identities constitute an original contribution to the story of borders, passages, and the search for one's place in the world.

The above excerpts come from a text by dr Miroslaw Haponiuk, which is available in full in the programme booklet of *Stravinsky. Passages*.