

LOUISVILLE BALLET



RITE OF SPRING

rite of spring

Directed and Choreographed by Andrea Schermoly,
Louisville Ballet Resident Choreographer

Music Composed by Igor Stravinsky
Performed to a Recording Conducted by Vasily Petrenko
Played by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra

Cinematography & Post Production KERTIS

Scenic Design by Joe Schermoly

Costume Design by Andrea Schermoly

Lighting Design by Jesse AlFord

Louisville Ballet would like to express our deepest appreciation to the anonymous donor and friend who made this world premiere production of *Rite of Spring* possible.

Louisville Ballet would also like to thank The Fund for the Arts for its generous investment in our Organization and support for our fellow arts organizations across the state. We also deeply appreciate the Kentucky Arts Council, the state arts agency, which provides operating support to Louisville Ballet with state tax dollars and federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as significant advocacy on behalf of Louisville Ballet and our fellow arts organizations across The Commonwealth.



CAST

TRIBE LEADER

Leigh Anne Albrechta

CHOSEN ONE

Ryo Suzuki

LEAD RESEARCHER

David Senti

SAGE

Allison Haan

WOMEN

Emmarose Atwood

Kelsey Corder

Elizabeth Abbick

Tyler Ferraro,

Ashley Thursby

Brienne Wiltsie

MEN

Justin Michael Hogan

Sanjay Saverimuttu

Griffin Greene

Owen Bakula

John Brewer

Aleksandr Schroeder

Tristan Hanson

NOTES FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

ROBERT
CURRAN

At the turn of the twentieth century, in 1913, Paris, France, Diaghilev's Ballet Russes premiered the highly anticipated Rite of Spring. Resident composer, Igor Stravinsky's brilliant, yet controversial score ignited an uproar in audiences, some called it a riot, with unfamiliar orchestral sounds. Choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky created this work at a time of great change and challenge in Europe and now, more than 100 years later, we find ourselves in the midst of another time of great change and challenge, premiering a new version of this incredible work. Louisville Ballet Resident Choreographer, Andrea Schermoly, has created to Stravinsky's haunting score, drawn from the world around us today, and used the art of movement to express, cope, and heal through a pandemic.

This digital production completes Louisville Ballet's collection of the three great Stravinsky works created by our Resident Choreographers, including Adam Houglan's Petrouchka (world premiere March 4, 2016) and Lucas Jervies' The Firebird (world premiere November 10, 2017). Both visually arresting productions captured the role of the individual in the context of our current world, and Andrea's new compelling work does the same.

I couldn't be more proud to support bringing these works to life. And to have a Rite of Spring complete during this particular time seems a particularly poignant way to complete this trio.

I also need to credit the incredible artistic vision and steady support of our production partners at KERTIS throughout this process. This film, and this entire digital Season of Illumination, would be impossible without them.

Thank you to our friend and anonymous donor who made this production possible, even in these challenging times. Thank you, also, to our Board of Directors for their continued support and enthusiasm for this production.

And, of course, I must thank you, our Rite of Spring virtual audience member. The art, and the celebration of it, is what makes us who we are. We are so proud to share it with you now.



ABOUT ROBERT CURRAN

Trained at The Australian Ballet School and having enjoyed a thrilling and fulfilling career with The Australian Ballet as a Principal Artist, Robert Curran took the passion and discipline he developed as a dancer and set his sights on diversifying his knowledge, skills and abilities. Education and experience continually expanded his ability to move his own body on stage and through this, move an audience through a wide range of emotions.

For more about Robert and Louisville Ballet's Artistic Staff, visit louisvilleballet.org/the-company

NOTES FROM THE CHOREOGRAPHER

ANDREA
SCHERMOLY

At the beginning of this process, a year ago, it would have been nearly impossible to imagine the world that Covid thrust us into and the seemingly insurmountable challenges we would face. Our lives as we knew them and the theater world came to a halt and all seemed lost. When the prospect of still creating Rite of Spring for film was proposed, a light in the darkness emerged. A beacon of hope in this tunnel of confinement, illness and emotional upheaval.

At this very moment I have come from editing where (days upon days) I've sifted through countless hours of dance footage, and I am truly astonished and grateful it was possible to create. I've marveled at the ingenuity, the perseverance, the bravery, and the passion of the entire creative team, the dancers, and Robert Curran. What a crazy journey this has been.

And, now, we have a film for you and for us that I'm so proud to share.

This story is a rite of passage, a movement to the next realm of possibility, a rescue mission, and, inevitably, a story of abandonment. It is an ode to the fight for humanity, both as a cautionary tale and a parallel to the uncharted, harrowing territories we found ourselves in this year. I've strayed from existing versions of the ballet that I know and strived to create something relatable, beautiful, and immersive. With the help of my brother – set designer, Joe Schermoly – we find ourselves in a post apocalyptic ice age...stranded.

Our tribe has been seeded within an interplanetary experiment to research sustainable life. This community has isolated inside bunkers underground, following their own strict protocol for post-apocalypse survival. The apocalypse brought a terrifying disease, but they have – carefully, ruthlessly – persisted. And now, generations later, a beacon of hope is found.



Photo by Sam English 2021



Photo by Sam English 2021

This ballet was made entirely within strict Covid protocol with weekly and bi weekly testing, masks at all times, and absolutely no touching. It was a giant undertaking to create with dancers, quite literally inside their own 8 ft “boxes” and with no partnering. In addition, we created hours and hours of material via Zoom, in kitchens and living rooms, during times of lockdowns and positive covid cases. A cast of 16 dancing on Zoom, every day, was something to behold. But with every challenge comes opportunity for inspiration. And the dancers kept that torch alight, too.

Creating for film has been very rewarding. Thinking for the camera, and crafting a piece specifically for film that will eventually work in a theater, kept me buzzing with excitement.

Stravinsky’s score was and still is an unsettling roller coaster of giant emotional waves and difficult time signatures. It’s violent, beautiful, and raw. I’ve loved working with it and found myself so moved and left feeling crazy at times too. It seemed par for the course.

I’m extremely thankful to Robert Curran for his vision and steadfast

commitment to the arts and our community during these intensely trying times. It gave us hope and we now have a film to share because of that.

This has been epic and life changing in so many ways.

Thank you to Kertis Creative, our fabulous film partners, Toby for his patience with my obsessive perfectionism, Kim, Bryan and Alex for all the detailed, laborious crafting and management of a complete studio set and on location...unbelievable! Thank you Jesse for his magical lighting. And thank you to my brother, whom I love dearly, for his beautiful mind and heart. Special shout out to my mom who helped me twist the story anew, after Covid hijacked my previous plans.

Thank you to the talented, committed, coolest dancers of Louisville Ballet. I adore you. A big thanks to Studio Company members, who so much of the initial working material was workshopped on.

And thank you to Mikelle Bruzina in particular, who was my right hand, left brain and my rock throughout this winding journey.



ANDREA SCHERMOLY

Choreographer + Director

Andrea Giselle Schermoly was born in South Africa. She trained at the National School of the Arts, on full scholarship at both Rambert Ballet and Contemporary School and The Royal Ballet School, London. She competed internationally as a member of The South African National Rhythmic Gymnastics Team. She danced professionally for Boston Ballet and the Netherlands Dance Theater.

She has choreographed nationally and internationally for companies such as Royal New Zealand Ballet and Kansas City Ballet amongst others and has created for movies, music videos, and commercials in Los Angeles.

Andrea is a Louisville Ballet Resident Choreographer.



JOE SCHERMOLY

Scenic Designer

Joe Schermoly is thrilled to join the Louisville Ballet in this groundbreaking season of new work in a new format. Producing art that engages with eternal themes brought out by our current life has been a great joy in this year. Joe is a scenic designer based in Chicago, having designed for theatres across the city. Chicago credits include: *Yasmina's Necklace* (Goodman Theatre), *Constellations* (Steppenwolf Theatre), *Hand is God, Samsara* (Victory Gardens); *Puff: Believe it or Not*, *Pirandello's Henry IV*, *Travesties* (Remy Bumppo); *Naperville*, *The Watson Intelligence*, *Mr Burns*, *Seven Homeless Mammoths*, *Completeness* (Theatre Wit); *Pomona*, *Red Rex*, *Linda*, *Birdland*, *Wastwater* and *Lela & Co.* (Steep). Joe studied scenic design at Northwestern University, has received two Equity Jeff Awards, two After Dark Awards and five Jeff Nominations.

www.joeschermoly.com

ARTISTIC TEAM



JESSE ALFORD

Lighting Designer

Jesse is a freelance Lighting Designer and Circus Coach based in Louisville. His previous designs with Louisville Ballet include *Force Flux* and ស៊ុនាមីប៊ុរម្ពាណ៍. His work can also be seen with The Big Apple Circus, Theatre [502], Pandora Productions, Stage One, Acting Against Cancer, Circus Flora, Suspend Louisville, The Louisville Orchestra, Va Va Vixens, and more. He is the Head Coach at My Nose Turns Red Youth Circus, and serves as the Board President for the American Youth Circus Organization and the American Circus Educators.



KERTIS

Film Production + Cinematography

KERTIS is a creative agency in Louisville, Kentucky, founded on the belief that human connection inspires action. Our team of strategists, filmmakers, photographers, writers, and designers makes beautiful, honest, and thoughtful work that amplifies ideas worth sharing. We are committed to telling the stories of people, organizations, and brands that make our communities more livable, equitable, and interesting.



IGOR FEODOROVICH STRAVINSKY

Composer

(June 17, 1882 - April 6, 1971)

Igor Feodorovich Stravinsky was born in Oranienbaum (now Lomonosov), a Baltic resort near St Petersburg, on June 5, 1882, the third son of Feodor Stravinsky, one of the principal basses at the Maryinsky (later Kirov) Theatre in St Petersburg. Stravinsky's musical education began with piano lessons at home when he was ten; he later studied law at St Petersburg University and music theory with Fyodor Akimenko and Vassily Kalafati. His most important teacher, though, was Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov, with whom he studied informally from the age of twenty, taking regular lessons from 1905 until 1908.

Although Stravinsky's first substantial composition was a Symphony in E flat, written in 1906 under the tutelage of Rimsky-Korsakov, it was *The Firebird*, a ballet commissioned by Sergei Diaghilev and premiered by his Ballets Russes in Paris in 1910, that brought Stravinsky into sudden international prominence. In the next year he consolidated his reputation with *Petrushka*, like *The Firebird*, a transformation of something essentially Russian into a work of surprising modernity. Stravinsky's next major score – a third ballet commission from Diaghilev – is one of the major landmarks in the history of music: the blend of melodic primitivism and rhythmic complexity in *The Rite of Spring* marked the coming of modernism in music and was met with a mixture of astonishment and hostility. Stravinsky, now a Swiss resident, became established as the most radical composer of the age.

A rapid succession of works – *The Nightingale*, an opera, in 1914, *Renard* in 1915, *The Soldier's Tale* in 1918, the Symphonies of Wind Instruments two years after that – all reinforced his aesthetic dominance. The explicitly Russian flavour of his music – played out in the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1920), the opera buffa *Mavra* (1922) and *Les Noces* (1923), for four solo voices, chorus and an orchestra consisting of four pianos and percussion – now gave way to a more refined neo-classicism, beginning with the ballet *Pulcinella* (1920), for which Stravinsky went back to the music of Pergolesi, reworking it into something completely personal.

1920 was also the year that Stravinsky settled in France, taking French citizenship in 1934. Stravinsky expected to be elected to a vacant seat in the Académie française following Dukas' death in 1935, and felt rebuffed when Florent Schmitt was elected in his stead. His ties to his adopted homeland were further loosened when, in a mere eight months, from November 1938, Stravinsky suffered the deaths of his daughter Lyudmilla, aged only 29, his mother and then his wife (and cousin) Catherine (née Nossenko); faced with an imminent war in Europe, Stravinsky and his second-wife-to-be Vera Sudeikin (née de Bosset) emigrated to the United States. After a year spent on the East Coast, including a stint as a lecturer at Harvard University, he and Vera soon settled in California, which they were to make their home for the rest of their lives.

Pulcinella turned out to be only the first of many works in which, over the next two decades, Stravinsky subdued the music of the past to his own purposes, among them the 'divertimento' *The Fairy's Kiss*, derived from Tchaikovsky, and the ballet *Apollon Musagète*, both premiered in 1928. Two choral-orchestral works – the oratorio *Oedipus Rex* (1927) and the *Symphony of Psalms* (1930) – showed that he could also work on an epic scale; and it was not long before he tackled a purely orchestral *Symphony in C* (1938), which was followed within four years by the *Symphony in Three Movements*. With *Perséphone* (1934), *Jeu de Cartes* (1936) and *Orpheus* (1946), the series of ballets also continued, generally in collaboration with George Balanchine, a partnership as important to dance in the twentieth century as Tchaikovsky's and Petipa's had been in the nineteenth.



Stravinsky's neoclassical period culminated in 1951 in his three-act opera *The Rake's Progress*, to a libretto by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman.

One of the most unexpected stylistic volte-faces in modern music came in 1957, with the appearance of the ballet *Agon*; Stravinsky himself conducted its premiere at a 75th-birthday concert. Hitherto he had ignored Schoenbergian serialism, but in 1952 he began to study Webern's music intensely and *Agon* was the first work in which he embraced serialism wholeheartedly, though the music that resulted was entirely his own – indeed, it has a formal elegance that he seemed to have been trying to capture in his neoclassical period. The chief works from Stravinsky's late serial flowering are *Threni*, for six solo voices, chorus and orchestra (1958), *The Flood*, a 'musical play for soloists, chorus and orchestra' (1962), the 'sacred ballad' *Abraham and Isaac* (1963), *Variations for Orchestra* (1964) and *Requiem Canticles* (1966).

Stravinsky was also active as a performer of his own music, initially as a pianist but increasingly as a conductor. The first among contemporary composers to do so, he left a near-complete legacy of recordings of his own music, released then on CBS and now to be found on Sony Classical. His conducting career continued until 1967, when advancing age and illness forced him to retire from the concert platform. His tenuous grasp on life finally broke on 6 April 1971, in New York, and his body was flown to Venice for burial on the island of San Michele, near to the grave of Diaghilev.

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For more information
about Louisville Ballet's Company + Staff,
visit louisvilleballet.org/the-company

COMPANY DANCERS

Leigh Anne Albrechta, Natalia Ashikhmina,
Emmarose Atwood, John Aaron Brewer,
Lexa Daniels, Erin Langston Evans,
Tristan Hanson, Justin Michael Hogan,
Mark Krieger, Minh-Tuan Nguyen,
Erica De La O, Brandon Ragland,
Sanjay Saverimuttu, Aleksandr Schroeder,
Kateryna Sellers, Shelby Shenkman,
Ryo Suzuki, Ashley Thursby, Phillip Velinov,
Trevor Williams, Brienne Wiltsie

STUDIO COMPANY

Savanna Airee, Owen Bakula, Teagan Bentley,
Nicholas Bentz, Sarah Bradley, Anthony Cefalu,
Christian Chester, Reece Conrad, Kelsey Corder,
Emma Delaney, Anna Ford, Emma Fridenmaker,
Griffin Greene, Veronica Higgins, Isabelle Hilton,
Caitlin Kowalski, Kinsey Love, Addison Mathes,
Jake Mingus, Natalie Orms, Hannah Pidgeon,
Courtney Ramirez, Sarah Ray, David Senti,
Madison Skaggs, Isabella Sumera, Kayleigh Western, Amber Wickey

GRADUATE INTERNS

Elizabeth Abbick, Tyler Ferraro, Allison Haan

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