

ON SACRE

by Edward Clug

The Rite of Spring is undoubtedly a masterpiece of cult proportions of the 20th century. It does not just represent a turnabout within Stravinsky's music poetics, but also in history of modern dance. Furthermore, the entire evolution of the 20th century dance performativity reflects in *The Rite*, starting with Nijinsky's staged choreography and onwards, especially in Béjart's majestic aestheticism and Pina Bausch's unique creativity and lust for life.

Taking on *Sacre* was a very challenging task and my intention was to contribute with my own vision to the existing legacy. What distinguishes our version from the previous ones is the element of water. It was not planned when I started the process, it arrived sudden and almost unexpected like a rain in the spring, that washes away the winter and pours new life into the ground.

I do believe that anyone who listens for the first time to *Sacre du Printemps* experiences some sort of discomfort that is in the same time attractive. My reaction to the music was instinctive and it felt quite natural adding the choreographic form until a point in the score where I imagine something should happen, something should fall from the sky. The moment in the introduction of the *Dance of the Earth* is one of the most powerful moments in the score and then splash! I said let's throw a bucket of water into the studio and see what we can do or not do with it. The wet surface dictated a different behaviour and soon due to impossibility to dance freely we

discovered solutions that couldn't be achieved otherwise.

The water opened a complete new dimension for experiencing both: the story and the choreography. Think about the Spring, water is the natural force that drives the cycle of nature, it washes away the winter to purify the earth for a new birth. The *Chosen one* follows the same path; the act of sacrificing is understood as something necessary and inevitable in her community, her death is sanctifying the earth for prosperity and brings satisfaction to their gods.

The dancers are very prudent in the beginning and soon they are surprised with their ability to react to the new surface. The annoying thing is the temperature, once you spill the hot water on to the floor is getting cold very quick. In the performance the determination and the ecstatic state of the dancers overcomes this obstacle and in return they reward us with powerful and poetic images.

I'm happy to contribute with my interpretation to the more than 100 years long legacy of this musical masterpiece and I believe I'm not the only one. We expect a similar reaction of the public as elsewhere we perform *Sacre*.