



LABORATORY

A Laboratory of Spring. Introduction

It sometimes happens that when we go to a concert and the first sounds of music fill the air we are forced to discreetly silence our light-heartedly chattering companions.

But at times, we also have to put the music on hold and give the words their due. An occasion such as the 100th anniversary of the premiere of "The Rite of Spring" by Igor Stravinsky – celebrated in 2013 – is one of those moments when somebody ought to speak up out of necessity, with authority, and the usual pomp and circumstance. Stravinsky's work certainly deserves the highest accolades, and has received plenty. But not all commentators have been equally kind. Each Stravinsky has his own Adorno.

This volume is not quite an instance of the latter. It is not so much a tribute to the work or to the composer but to a certain epoch. "The Rite of Spring" – brought into existence by the creative strokes of Stravinsky, Vaslav Nijinsky as well as Sergei Diaghilev, painted against the social and cultural backdrop of their era – shines brightly in its own right but has also led the path for many others. It is not an isolated, unchanging creation which passes through many decades and generations without being transformed itself. Of course, source analyses, attempts at reconstruction or elimination of later influences are incredibly tempting and enrich our musical culture. However, there is also another temptation: Is it possible to reconstruct the sensitivity of the original spectators? This is why asking what really happened on May 29, 1913 at the Paris Théâtre des Champs Élysées is a bit like asking what happened on February 14, 1900 at the Hanging Rock. It is hard to say if what we have in mind are either the historical events that took place on that day, or how they were experienced by the people who took part in this performance. Will any laboratories of the future be able to "recreate" their sensibility – whatever that means – and who should we expect to work there? Musicologists? Neuroscientists? Psychologists of music? And perhaps also poets?

Therefore, the heroes of "A Laboratory of Spring" are first and foremost our authors, some already famous and accomplished, others no less worthy of our attention for their wits and talents. Surely they do not speak with one voice and not about the same issues. But they comprise the age after "The Rite".

We start our issue with a kind of diary that was kept by Millicent Hodson and Kenneth Archer (*Ballets Old & New*, London) during their staging of "The Rite of Spring". It is followed by a series of papers in which Stravinsky's work is analyzed from multiple perspectives, and examining a great variety of questions. Featured in our special issue are contributions by Pieter van den Toorn (University of California, Santa Barbara), Hanna Järvinen (The University of the Arts, Helsinki), Lucy Weir (University of Glasgow), Helen Sills (International Society for the Study of Time), Piotr Przybysz (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan), Howard Gardner (Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge), Timothy D. Taylor (University of California, Los Angeles), and Richard Taruskin (University of California, Berkeley). The issue concludes with an interview that we conducted with painter Róża Puzynowska (who graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, and created the paintings displayed on our cover page).

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December 2013