



WHEN STRAVINSKY MET NIJINSKY



Two Artists, Their Ballet, and One Extraordinary Riot

Written and Illustrated by
Lauren Stringer

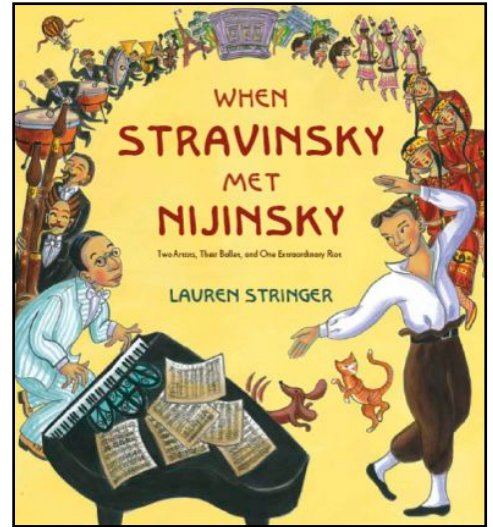
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Activity Guide

Igor Stravinsky composed wildly popular music.
Vaslav Nijinsky's dance was celebrated far and wide.
But both dreamed of creating art that was different and new. When they met, their dream came true.

The Rite of Spring was so original it inspired an unforgettable response. The audience at the premiere couldn't agree: the performance was either brilliant or a disaster. But did it really cause them to fight in the aisles? Could a ballet provoke a riot?

Stravinsky and Nijinsky's did.



About the Author:

Lauren Stringer has always been in awe of the explosive change in the arts at the turn of the twentieth century. Researching Stravinsky and Nijinsky's collaboration and their connection to the modern art of their time became a passion that lasted more than eight years and eventually resulted in this book. Lauren's many acclaimed picture books include *Winter is the Warmest Season*; *Snow* by Cynthia Rylant; and *Fold Me a Poem* by Kristine O'Connell George. Lauren lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota, with her composer husband, choreographer daughter and circus performer son. Visit her at www.laurenstringer.com

Questions You Might Ask

Pre-reading:

Place four signs around the corners of the classroom that read: ***Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree***. Then, read the statements at the top of the next page aloud to students and allow them to move into the area which most closely mirrors their opinion. Then discuss student responses before reading the story. You may want to revisit these statements after reading the story and see if any children change their opinion.

Questions continued

- ✿ Ballet dancing is always with girls in fancy dresses that tiptoe around a stage.
- ✿ Folk music is what your great grandparents listen to on old record players.
- ✿ Composers write music that usually puts people to sleep.
- ✿ I would never want to go see a ballet called *The Rite of Spring*; it sounds so boring.
- ✿ A riot is when people protest something that is important to them.
- ✿ It would be fun to design costumes for a stage production.
- ✿ It is best when artists work alone.
- ✿ I think it's important to try something new.

Post-reading:

- ✿ Describe what it was like when Stravinsky composed music on his own.
- ✿ What animals does the author compare Nijinsky's dancing to? Why do you think so?
- ✿ How did Stravinsky's music change after the two met? How did Nijinsky's dancing?
- ✿ What does it mean to be inspired by someone? Who inspires you?
- ✿ What would you like to make new and different? How do you go about making something new? Why do you think these two artists wanted to do something new?
- ✿ Where did the pair look for a new idea and how did they begin? What do you think is the hardest part of a new project? Do you think they would agree?
- ✿ Explain what happened at the early rehearsals for the ballet. How would you have felt as one of the creators?
- ✿ Describe their new ballet, *The Rite of Spring*. How was it new? What elements did it have in it?
- ✿ What was the reaction to the new ballet during the performance?
- ✿ After it was over, what happened? Were you surprised that a ballet could cause such a reaction? Why do you think people took it so seriously?

Activities Continued

Reading:

Fill out the following chart based on the words found in the story. See if you can figure out what they mean just by reading the sentences surrounding the new words (called *context clues*).

New Word:	What I think it means based on the context:	What the Dictionary says it means:	A picture to help me remember the meaning:
Composed			
Pirouette			
Melody			
Timpani			
Rumble			
Folk			
Rehearsal			
Rollicking			
Bassoon			
Orchestra			
Nettled			
Hairpins			
Bravo			
Rioting			
Bellowing			
Hurdling			
Ruckus			
Uproar			
Delight			
Remarkable			

Activities

Word Magic:

Take these words from the story and make new ones by changing their endings.

Root word:	Add an -s	Add an -ed	Add an -ing
Compose			
Dance			
Dream			
Leap			
Inspire			
Remember			
Rehearse			

Sing-Along:

Sing this song about these two famous artists to the tune of "Frere Jacques"

When Stravinsky

Met Nijinsky

His music changed

No, not the same!

Melodies went wild and free

All new sounds for you and me

Bing, bang, bong!

Bing, bang, bong!

When Nijinsky

Met Stravinsky

His dancing changed

No, not the same!

Movements went mud-wild and free

Whole new dance for you and me-

Leap, skip, jump!

Leap, skip, jump!

Activities Continued

Music:

Teach these two terms:

Dissonance is the combination of sounds that feel harsh or surprising to most listeners. It is the opposite of **Consonance** which tries to please the listener with chords and tones that sound pleasing to the ear.

Now, as a class, brainstorm a list of sounds which are pleasant, or consonant, and a list of sounds that would be considered dissonant.

Consonant sounds:	Dissonant sounds:
Example: <i>birds singing in the spring</i>	Example: <i>Construction noises and traffic on a busy city street</i>

Next: Listen to excerpts from *The Rite of Spring*:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=88490677>

DISCUSS: Would you consider most of these excerpts consonant or dissonant? Why? Would you like to hear an entire evening of dissonant music or not? Why?

Activities Continued

Dancing and Drawing:

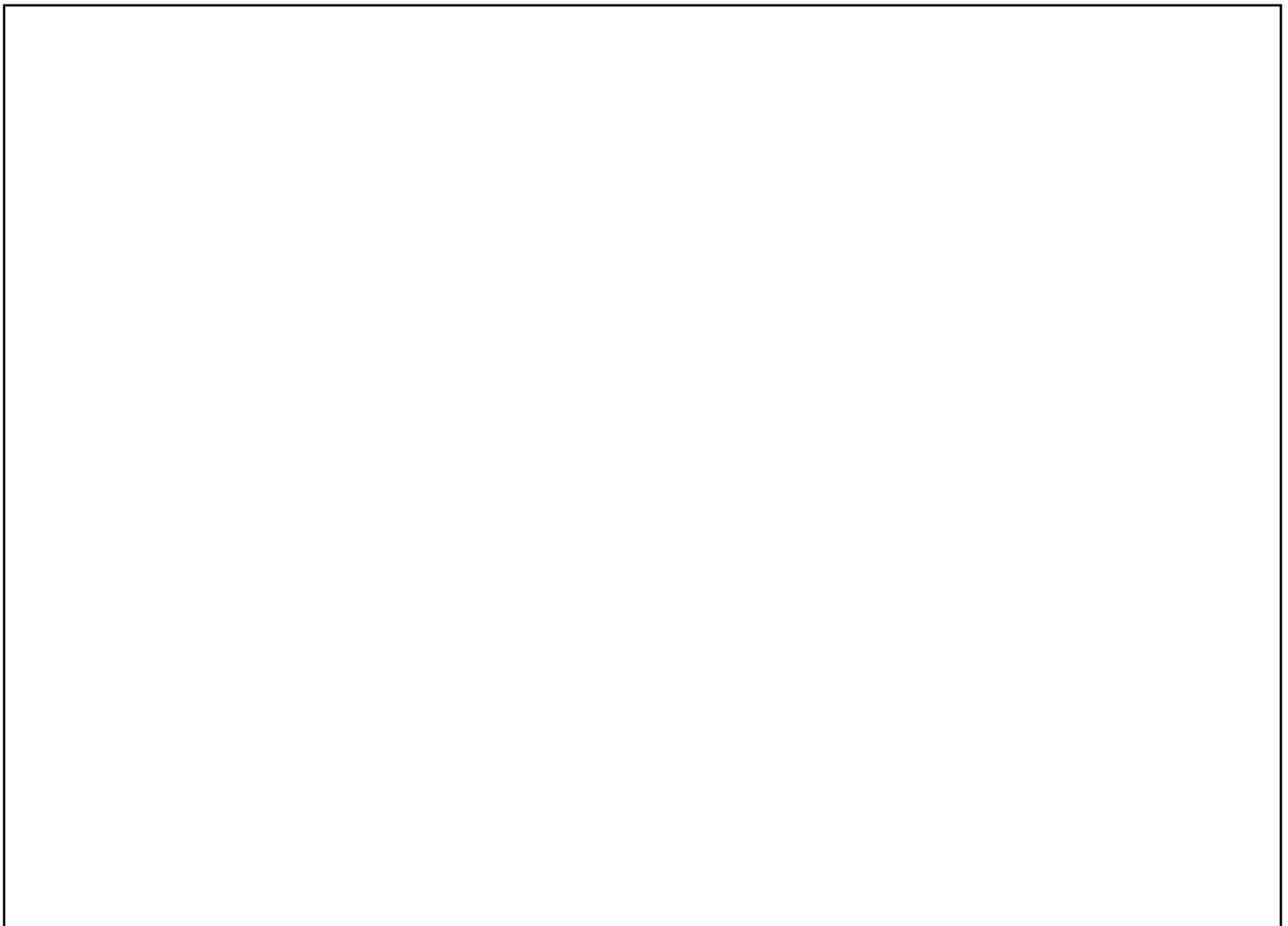
Listen to the one minute excerpt from Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* here:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/classical/tchaikovsky/audio/tchaikovsky_index.shtml

Make a list of words that describe the music or how the music makes you feel.

Now listen to the excerpt again while standing. Move to the music using your whole body. Arms, fingers, legs, torso, head and neck. Stop when the music stops. Are your movements flowing or quick? Are your movements heavy or light? What kind of animal do you feel like?

In the space below, using colored pencils or markers, choose colors that feel most like the music. Play the one minute excerpt again and draw while you listen. Do not worry about subject matter. Allow your hand to move to the music. Are your lines long and flowing or short and quick? Are your colors cool or warm? Soft or bold?



Activities Continued

Dancing and Drawing continued:

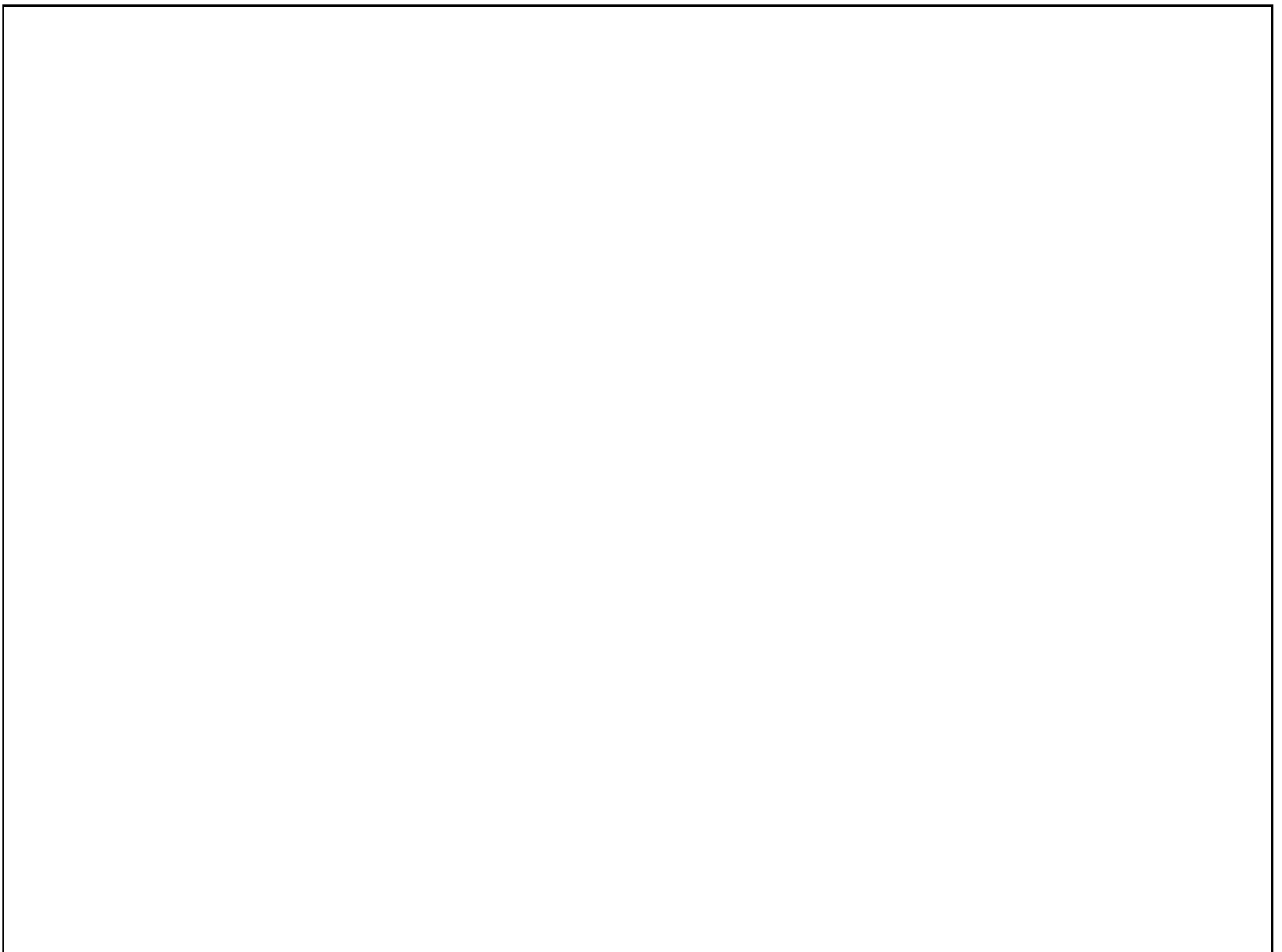
Now, listen to the one minute excerpt from Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* here:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/classical/tchaikovsky/ram/rite_of_spring_ram

Make a list of words that describe the music and how it makes you feel. How is it different from the list of words after listening to the excerpt from *Swan Lake*?

Now listen to the excerpt of *The Rite of Spring* again. Move to the music using your whole body. Arms, fingers, legs, torso, head and neck. Stop when the music stops. Are your movements flowing or quick? Are your movements heavy or light? What kind of animal do you feel like?

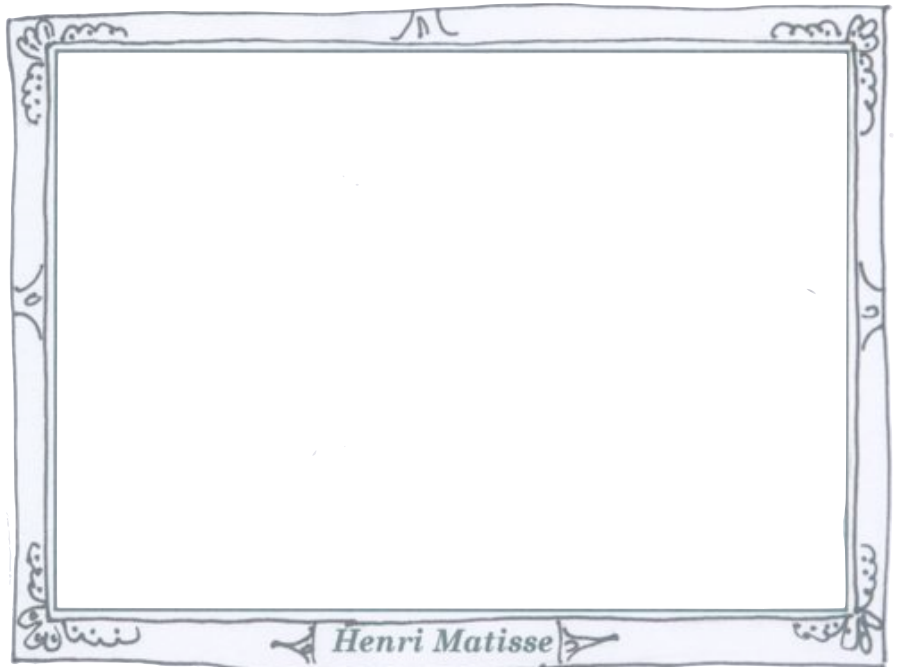
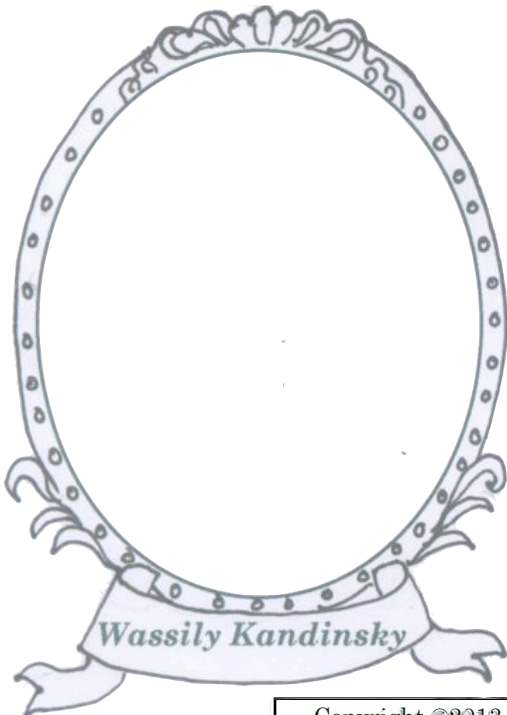
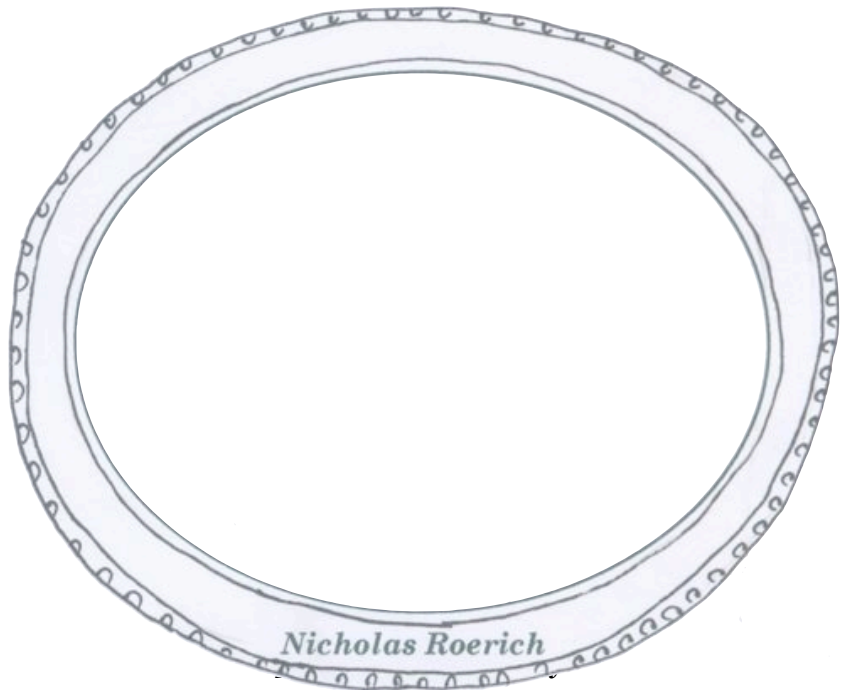
In the space below choose the colors that feel like the music from *The Rite of Spring*. Are they different from the colors you chose after listening to *Swan Lake*? Listen to the excerpt again and allow your hand to move to the music. How is your drawing different from the first drawing? Is it softer or bolder? Brighter or duller?



Activities Continued

Art:

The creator of this book, Lauren Stringer, was inspired by many different artists who greatly changed the expectations of the art world with their new techniques in color, shape, and design. Look at some of the images created by the artists popular during Stravinsky and Nijinsky's time. Then, draw a simple figure like a flower in the following frames inspired by each artist.



Activities Continued

Art continued:

Cubism is considered the most important and influential art movement of the 20th century. It inspired change not only in painting and sculpture, but also dance, music, architecture and literature. It was created by the artists, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in Paris beginning in 1907. Cubism rejects the idea that art should copy nature. Cubist paintings and sculptures fracture the image into geometric pieces and often show several different views of an object on the same plane. To view some examples of Cubist paintings go here:

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cube/hd_cube.htm#

Now try making your own Cubist drawing using a pencil on a sheet of paper. Choose a simple object like a tea cup or bottle. Draw the outline shape of the object looking straight at it. Then turn it over and make a drawing of looking at it from the bottom. Then draw it again looking at it from the top- all on the same piece of paper, allowing the drawings to overlap. Try to draw the object you chose from as many different views as possible. Use your pencil to shade from light to dark in each of the different angles or points of view.

History:



Igor Stravinsky and Vaslav Nijinsky, 1911

The two artists depicted in this book both were born near the end of the 1800's and lived their lives to the mid 1990's. Create a timeline of their lives marking important events from their careers. Then, add important events from history that you think may have influenced their art. Add illustrations/pictures to bring the timeline to life and include five personal events and at least five historical ones.

For more curriculum ideas visit The Rite of Spring Project Curriculum Guide:
http://www.carnegiehall.org/berlininlights/files/ros_curriculum_guide.pdf