

## THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

## Authenticity and legacy in the reception of the Joffrey Ballet company's reconstructed Stravinsky ballets

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**Abstract**

When the Joffrey Ballet reconstructed the 1913 production of *Le Sacre du printemps* in 1987 and restaged *Les Noces* in 1989, the reception of these ballets drew upon the prevailing ideals of authenticity that also existed in music. The period's Early Music revival emphasized the historically-informed performance of past music, using period instruments and techniques to approach an assumedly "authentic" performance. Over the course of twenty years in the late twentieth century the repertoire performed and recorded expanded chronologically closer to the present, challenging original conceptions that the nineteenth century was the benchmark for modern music and influencing the critical reception of later artistic works, including those of the Joffrey.

Because the Joffrey's productions took place at Hancher Auditorium at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, this thesis presents a reception history of them that highlights both a national and local, Iowan narrative. This history is informed by archival documents from the University of Iowa's Special Collections on the Iowa Center for the Performing Arts and from Hancher Auditorium. Hancher's collection of press releases, coupled with the newspaper and magazine clippings, contributed to the cultivation of the Joffrey's public image and those of the two ballets. These works—specifically their scores by Igor Stravinsky and their original choreographers Vaslav Nijinsky and Bronislava Nijinska—are seen as pioneers of modernism. Yet, the reception of their reconstructed ballets took place at the height of the Early Music movement's popularity. Reviewers weighed in on *Le Sacre du printemps'* authenticity and their discussion of *Les Noces* also emphasizes legacy—be it that of the Joffrey Company itself, the legacy of the sibling choreographers, or that of the two works within the ballet repertoire. A comparison of the reception of these two productions also reveals the distinctions between reconstruction and revival.

**Keywords**

Authenticity, Historically informed performance, Joffrey Ballet Company, Reception history, Reconstruction, Revival

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