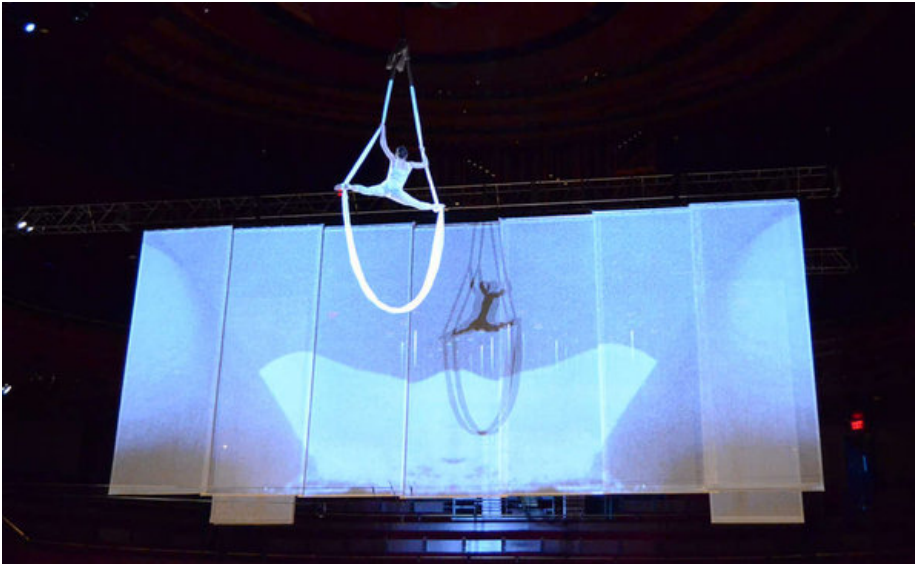
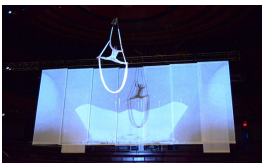


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'The Rite of Spring' danced in the 'spirit of the original'



An aerialist with the Ridge Theater Company of New York rehearses for "The Rite of Spring" at Verizon Hall. It will be performed Thursday, Saturday and Sunday - and on March 2 without the theatrical element. (KATHERINE BLODGETT)



GALLERY: An aerialist with the Ridge Theater Company of New York rehearses for "The Rite of Spring" at Verizon Hall. It will be performed Thursday, Saturday and Sunday - and on March 2 without the theatrical element. (KATHERINE BLODGETT)

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By David Patrick Stearns, Inquirer Music Critic

POSTED: February 22, 2013

Though conceived as a ballet about human sacrifice, Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* is heard in concert more often than it's staged, but in this 100th-anniversary year of the piece, Yannick Nézet-Séguin is out to change that.

The Philadelphia Orchestra's presentation Thursday, Saturday and Sunday includes aerialists, multiple scrims for video opportunities, and onstage dancers in Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center.

"This respects the spirit of the original," says Nézet-Séguin, "but it may be more extreme than usual."

Is there any such thing as "usual" with *The Rite of Spring*? Though Stravinsky's music and Vaslav Nijinsky's choreography had a seismic impact when they were first unveiled in Paris in 1913, today's balletic elements are anything but standardized. Produced in partnership with Philadelphia Live Arts, the staging taps the cutting-edge New York-based Ridge Theater Company, which doesn't typically adhere to preexisting traditions or collaborate with "uptown" arts institutions.

"We did research on the original and what kind of grand gesture it made," said Ridge artistic director Bob McGrath. "Once we put our minds to this, we thought it was perfect for us."

The idea was to portray the change from winter to spring plus the evolution of the century the piece has inhabited. As in Ridge's modern classic film *Decasia*, video artist Bill Morrison uses manipulated archival footage, pairing locomotives with the piece's propulsive rhythms, and playing with images of something disappearing from our century - icebergs.

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A 'Rite of Spring' that's a feast for the senses

February 23, 2013

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In the "spring" section, Ridge's Laurie Hollander has designed flower-infested videos, but with a size and technological definition rarely seen in nature. Her description: "Alive, strange, and scary."

From the dancers performing on Verizon's stage extension (there also is an aerialist dangling overhead) will come a sacrifice. Some will vie for the privilege. Others will shrink from it.

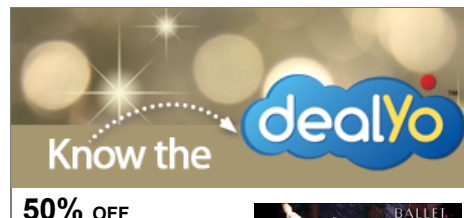
Same thing for audiences: The unstaged March 2 concert is reserved for those who shy away from a staged *Rite*. Friday's Philadelphia Orchestra concert in Carnegie Hall is also unstaged: The orchestra's artistic planning vice president Jeremy Rothman says the feast isn't remotely movable.

Philadelphia Orchestra: The Rite of Spring

At 8 p.m. Thursday, 8 p.m. Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday, and 8 p.m. March 2 (no theatrical element) at Verizon Hall, Broad and Spruce Streets. Information: 215-893-1999 or www.philorch.com

Contact David Patrick Stearns at dstearns@phillynews.com.

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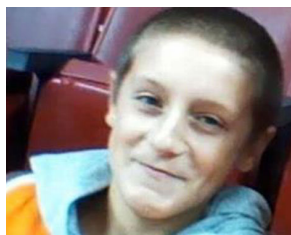
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