

A LEVEL DANCE SUMMER PREP WORK

ROOSTER 1991 CHOREOGRAPHED BY CHRISTOPHER BRUCE



Read the following

Christopher Bruce on Rooster

I was listening to some Rolling Stones' tracks when I suddenly found myself wondering if I could use them to make a dance piece. When I finally came to choreograph Rooster, nearly two years later, I had to be very careful to avoid falling into a trap. The music was so well so known and I had to make sure that the dance itself was strong enough and the overall structure sound. There had to be a link between the eight tracks and themes that carried through. The whole had to add up to more than the individual parts. I looked for a choreographic language that was individual to the piece, but I try to do that with every dance I make.

Rooster is a celebratory work in that it celebrates the sixties and, of course, my youth. Some of the tracks, such as Ruby Tuesday or As Tears Go By, are more reflective but even in these sections I have tried to find humour and a sense of fun. One of the main themes I explore is the male chauvinism that comes through in the

lyrics of some of the tracks and it is also interesting to see these behavioural patterns beginning in the playground where children can be so cruel to each other.

What I love about dance as an art form is that it doesn't use words to nail down exactly what the piece is about. For me, dance is a collage of ideas which the audience can read on several levels. Every time they come to a performance they see something completely different, depending on their mood, and the performance on that particular occasion. Every viewing should be able to take you to another place. With my works I always like to transport people to another world; to engage them. If I can succeed in this, I feel the process has been worthwhile.

It's been great to return to it. The piece is basically the same wherever I stage it, but I'm always affected by the dancers I work with, therefore the way one dancer performs a role will always be slightly different to another dancing the same part. The dancers seem to really enjoy dancing it – but the piece is much harder than it looks. On stage it appears as if they are just having a lot of fun but the discipline that is required is exacting. I always say to the dancers that the choreography has to be as accurate as a Balanchine ballet.

The positive thing about Rooster is that it doesn't seem to date. Like the Rolling Stones' music, it seems to affect and engage a whole range of generations from youngsters to 80-year-olds, which is wonderful. I think the themes in the piece are universal even if I am treating them quite lightly. The piece is an ironic look at the sixties and the attitudes of the times. The chauvinism may have declined a little in the West, but, the world over, attitudes haven't always changed that much, I have to say!

Now go to the following YOUTUBE link and watch all 8 sections of Rooster

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bTW8tPL6qY&list=PL4F3B261E734B7D9>

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The whole piece is 30mins long and the names of the sections are below

- Little Red Rooster
- Lady Jane
 - Not Fade Away
 - As Tears Go By
 - Paint It Black
 - Ruby Tuesday
 - Play With Fire
 - Sympathy for the Devil

Watch the entire piece before answering the questions.

Describe both male and female dancers' costumes in Little Red Rooster

Describe the females' costumes in Paint it Black and Ruby Tuesday

Identify and describe a Key Motif used in this Little Red Rooster and explain what you think it might be communicating in relation to the dance idea.

Describe two ways in which the space is being used in Lady Jane.

How would you describe the relationship between the dancers in Paint it Black?

Describe two ways in which the music supports the choreography at specific moments in the piece?

Wider Reading – to gain a better understanding of the work please look at the following

<https://www.rambert.org.uk/whats-on/rooster/>

Bring this work with you to your first dance lesson