

**Laguna Dance Festival and Laguna Art Museum
collaborate to present “Our Rite” on March 7**

Free dance performances at Art Walk are based on a painting from the LAM collection and Stravinsky’s groundbreaking “Rite of Spring”

LAGUNA BEACH, Calif., Feb. 26, 2013 –Laguna Dance Festival celebrates the centenary of Stravinsky's groundbreaking ballet “The Rite of Spring” with free dance performances at Laguna Art Museum during the March 7 First Thursdays Art Walk. This event marks the premiere of the “Primitive Mother” pieces, which were jointly commissioned by Laguna Dance Festival and the Laguna Art Museum. The choreography was inspired by a painting in the museum's collection, “Primitive Mother (Primordial Days in Palm Springs),” by early 20th-century painter Elanor Colburn (1866–1939).

Shows will be performed at 6:30 and 8 p.m. at Laguna Art Museum, 307 Cliff Drive. Admission is free. Three pieces will be danced in all, two of them world premiere commissions curated by UCI dance professor Jodie Gates, who founded and directs the Laguna Dance Festival. At the 6:30 performance only, dancers will perform the two world premieres plus an excerpt from UC Irvine’s Claire Trevor School of the Arts Dance Department’s “The Sacre Project,” choreographed by Gates. Depicting the final minutes of a sacrificial figure referred to as The Chosen One, it is danced to Igor Stravinsky’s thundering, iconic score, “The Rite of Spring.”

The two world premiere commissions include “The Moment Before,” choreographed by Melanie K. Hawkes and Stephanie R. Maughan. In this piece, as The Chosen One accepts her role as the sacrifice for the arrival of Spring, her mind is flooded with memories that give her the courage to die willingly for the earth and the people she loves. The second commission, “Ceremonious,” is an observation of a community in its devotion. It was choreographed by Nia-Amina Minor and Mlondolozzi Zondi.



Russian composer Igor Stravinsky wrote “Le Sacre du Printemps” (“The Rite of Spring”) for the 1913 Paris season of Sergei Diaghiliv’s Ballets Russes company, with choreography by Vaslav Nijinsky. The avant-garde ballet’s premiere at on May 29, 1913 caused a near-riot among the performance’s well-heeled patrons for its jarring rhythms, discordant music, and jerking motions of the dancers on stage. The shock, however, wore off – “The Rite of Spring” has since been embraced as a classic masterwork that forever changed modern music and dance.

The Laguna Dance Festival is regarded as one of Orange County's major annual cultural events and continues to be an important showcase for new and established dance companies and artists. *Smithsonian Magazine* named Laguna Beach one of the "The 20 Best Small Towns in America" in its May 2012 issue, singling out the Laguna Dance Festival as a reason for the selection.

The Laguna Dance Festival's September season will be announced in the coming weeks. Check the website for details: www.lagunadancefestival.org or call 949-715-5578.