RAMBERT

A-Level Resource Pack // Rooster
April 2023

ROOSTER

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

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Preface

As a company, we are delighted that Rambert continues to be at the heart of secondary dance education through the study of GCSE and A-level Dance. As one of the most diverse companies in the world, we aim to inspire, challenge and engage audiences from all backgrounds. As a radically inclusive company, we encourage students to be brave, speak up and show curiosity to challenge and appreciate the work within different contexts and lenses.

For many students, studying GCSE and A-level dance may be the first time that they have been introduced to Rambert. We recognise our responsibility in providing teachers and students with a broad and detailed understanding of our works to ensure that students can thrive and achieve their full potential. We have created this guide to reflect the demands of the AQA A-level specification, although it could be used to support the study of BTEC / CTEC Performing Arts.

The pack aims to provide a deeper exploration of the social, cultural and historical contexts and their relevance to the subject matter, themes and production features. We are committed to including a range of perspectives and voices and actively encourage students to engage in their own critical and reflective practice.

For teachers, there are a range of suggested activities that you may wish to include in your lesson or set for homework. Some may cross over into other areas of the curriculum, including Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) and citizenship.

These aim to deepen your students' understanding of complex contextual factors and may help to facilitate meaningful and purposeful discussions on the subject matter.

We are very grateful to the academics, practitioners and dancers who helped us create this resource:

- Miguel Altunaga, former Rambert dancer
- Dr Katia Chornik, Impact Development Manager, Kingston University / Research Associate, Cambridge University
- Patricia Okenwa, former Rambert dancer
- Hilary Seaton, Head of Dance at Ryde Academy & winner of One Dance UK's award for Outstanding Secondary Dance Teaching
- Sunny Singh, Professor of Creative Writing and Inclusion in the Arts, London Metropolitan University.
- Dr Ben Walters, critic and researcher

We also felt it was important to have student voices in the creation of this resource and we consulted with Louis Harris and Ben Thompson, A-level students from Ryde Academy.

At Rambert, we believe our work can always be better. We accept that it will take time to dismantle biased systems but we are committed to this journey for the long term. As teachers use the pack, we anticipate further thoughts on engaging students with the work will come to light. We invite you to join the conversation on improving this pack by emailing learning@rambert.org.uk

How to use this resource pack

The information and guidance provided in this pack is designed to supplement your teaching, open up discussion and provide additional context to the work. Not all the information is essential for A-level examinations, please refer to the relevant examination criteria for further information.

In order to help teachers use this resource pack to best suit the needs of their students, we've highlighted the different elements in the guide:

Perspective from Chrisopher Bruce

Quotes from the choreographer about the work in 2023.

Classroom activities are indexed

Activities using online resources such as YouTube videos

Writing and research activities

Practical activities

Discussion activities

Talking points – questions designed to encourage classroom discussion of some of the complex themes explored in the piece

Talking points that could cross over to curriculum areas such as PSHE and citizenship.

ABOUT ROOSTER

Title
Rooster

Choreographer
Christopher Bruce

Duration
27 minutes

Cast
10 dancers: 5 men, 5 women

Première
10 October 1991, Ballet de Grand Théâtre de Genève

Rambert première
8 December 1994, Newcastle-upon-Tyne Theatre Royal

Set and costume design
Marian Bruce

Lighting design
Tina McHugh

Miguel Altunaga
Photo by Hugo Glendinning

CHRISTOPHER BRUCE

2.1 EARLY CAREER IN DANCE

Born in 1945, Christopher Bruce suffered from polio as a child and enrolled in dance classes with the aim of strengthening his legs. His original goal was to improve his performance on the football field but by the age of 11, he was taking classes in tap, ballet and acrobatics at the Benson Stage Academy and enrolled in the Rambert School at the age of 13. He was directly under the tuition of Marie Rambert and says that her technical teaching methods were influenced by her time spent with the Ballets Russes, the company that premiered Claude Debussy's L'Après-midi d'un faune, Erik Satie's Parade and – most famously – Igor Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring. As such, his early dance career had a strong technical and balletic movement vocabulary.

By 1963, aged 18, he joined Walter Gore's London Ballet for the last four weeks of their tour before joining Ballet Rambert later that year, where he quickly became a leading performer within the company.

Both Norman Morrice (who was then co-directing the company alongside Marie Rambert) and the Glen Tetley (who choreographed several works for the company in the 1960s) encouraged Bruce to create his own work. He premiered George Frideric, the first of 30 works he would create for the company, in 1969.

He worked as Associate Director between 1975 and 1979, before becoming Associate Choreographer in 1980. From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, Bruce built a successful international career as a freelance dance artist that included long-term relationships with English National Ballet and Houston Ballet. Freelancing enabled him to have more professional flexibility and freedom when creating work, as he could create by commission or choice.

2.2 ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF RAMBERT

Robert North, Artistic Director of Ballet Rambert between 1981 and 1986, created highly narrative work that showcased the technical, dramatic, physical and emotional abilities of the dancers. His successor Richard Alston (1986-1992), concentrated on work that championed post-modern dance techniques (Cunningham and release) and multidisciplinary / collaborative performances.

The future of the company was looking very uncertain when Alston stepped down in 1992. Box office income had fallen during his tenure, when many boundary-pushing works had struggled to find an audience, creating significant financial difficulties for a company with a large payroll.The Board asked Bruce to take on the role of Artistic Director, but at first he was reluctant at first to accept. “I never wanted to direct ... I’ve always enjoyed the freedom of being able to just be creative artist ... I was reluctant to direct but because it was Rambert, I felt there was no option because I knew from what I was hearing that it was very much on the cards that LCDT [London Contemporary Dance Theatre] and Rambert might close.” (Rambert Archive, 2015)

Rooster
Photo by Tristram Kenton

The genuine peril the company was in at the time was proved when LCDT did indeed close in 1994. Bruce believed he could continue to push the company forward artistically and creatively and still attract the bigger audiences that would be required to sustain it. “The climate was no longer amenable to the smaller, middle range companies ... You had to start making more money ... You could not just produce good work and not get the audiences,” he said. “I had the opportunity to see a lot of other companies on my travels so I had an idea of how I thought it could work – how the contemporary dance repertory system could still manage to function ...

“I said it would have to be bigger; it would have to be a greater variety of dancers in the company so that the range of repertoire could be enormous and that you could begin to fill bigger theatres and get the box office income ... the idea was not to go smaller but to go large.” (Rambert Archive, 2015)

However, his international commitments meant that he could not take over as Artistic Director until 1994, when he relaunched the company as Rambert Dance Company and organised a Relaunch Tour for 1994-95. Throughout his tenure, Bruce programmed revivals of popular works such as Antony Tudor’s *Dark Elegies* (premiered in 1937) and his own works such as *Ghost Dances* (1981) alongside new works by upcoming choreographers from inside and outside the company and their international counterparts.

2.3 CHOREOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES

Walter Gore

Walter Gore was a principal male performer for Ballet Rambert in the 1930s before founding his own companies, The Walter Gore Ballet and The London Ballet. It was Gore who suggested to Marie Rambert that she invite Bruce to join the company (after Bruce toured with Gore's compony in 1963).
Bruce says he learned a lot from working with Gore, describing him as a "genius choreographer and dancer" (Rambert Voices, 2015). Gore's dance works are acutely technical, narrative and theatrical, with an ability to charm and transport audiences into the story.
Bruce says that both Walter Gore and Anthony Tudor had the biggest influence on his early choreographic work.

Marie Rambert

During his earlier years at Rambert School, Bruce was aiming for a career in classical technique, never knowing that he would find his success in the realm of contemporary dance.
Marie Rambert would stress the importance of having classical technique as the foundation of the school and the company, largely in part due to her experiences with Sergei Diaghilev and his Ballets Russes.
Bruce believes that Marie Rambert was not the best teacher – her greatest strength was her ability to create performances and mould talented dancers into artists, he says.
He remembers how she would work dancers vigorously and harshly, holding them to incredibly high standards for both their technique and choreographic detail. Her persistence and belief in Bruce shaped him into the performer he became, which often exceeded his own expectations.

Glen Tetley

American dancer and choreographer Glen Tetley had danced with some of the most famous ballet companies and choreographers in America and was also a member of the Martha Graham Company (1957–1959).
He said Martha Graham “taught me to re-examine everything – not intellectually but emotionally. She incredibly enriched the way I feel about movement, about theatre” (The Guardian, 30 January 2007).
A few years later, Marie Rambert invited Tetley to work with Ballet Rambert. Christopher Bruce was the first British dancer to perform the lead role in Tetley’s Pierrot Lunaire in 1967 and he pinpoints this experience as a real turning point in his life.
Tetley seamlessly blended his challenging technical and balletic choreography with the lyrical and emotional intensity of Graham technique. This fusion of styles aligned perfectly with Ballet Rambert’s principles; pushed the boundaries of dance in Britain; and proved highly popular with audiences.

Like Norman Morrice, Tetley encouraged Bruce to choreograph. Bruce says: “I had to curb my instinct when I started making dances to be too influenced by him. Glen gave me the confidence to find my own voice.” (Rambert Voices, 2015).

Norman Morrice

In 1966, Marie Rambert decided to make some fundamental changes to the identity of Ballet Rambert that would prove to have a profound effect on Bruce's development as a dance artist.
At her request, Norman Morrice travelled to America to train under Martha Graham and to gain greater insights into the development of American modern dance. This was how Graham technique became an integral part of Bruce's training during his time as a student and dancer at Rambert.
Graham technique is stylised by floorwork, contraction, flexion, high release and twisting of the spine. It aims to help dancers create a more dramatic and expressive performance through initiating movement from the 'seat of emotion' (the torso and spine).
Created as an act of rebellion against ballet, Graham technique was designed to help dancers embody a more authentic portrayal of human emotion in place of the mimetic or exaggerated expressions seen in ballet. Subsequently, themes often explored more social, political and human issues in place of classical ballet stories.

Anna Sokolow

Anna Sokolow was another American choreographer who was invited to work with Ballet Rambert.
Like Tetley, she had also danced with Martha Graham's company and she was also the assistant and protégée of Louis Horst, who worked as musical director and dance composition teacher for Martha Graham's school and dance company between 1926 and 1948.
As a choreographer, her influence within the modern dance community was predominantly in Mexico and Israel, where she is considered a pioneer. Her works were well known for being socially and politically aware, addressing themes such as loneliness, the subconscious, alienation and the horrors of Nazism.

2.4 PERSONAL AND POLITICAL INFLUENCES

Autobiographical experiences

Personal experience often serves as a starting point for Bruce's work – such as the memories of his experiences as a teenager that are behind the creation of Rooster. He also incorporates elements from his early dance training as a child, such as tap and acrobatic lifts.

Bruce draws influence from a range of sources including art, literature, music, films and images. Although his works may not be driven by obvious narrative, he explores his key choreographic intentions by fusing dramatic and emotive elements with recognisable themes and movements.

Human rights

Bruce's social and political conscience led him to work closely with the leading human rights organisation Amnesty International, which made him an Honorary Life Member in 2002. Many of his works are feature human rights themes, including Cruel Garden (1977), Ghost Dances (1981) and Swansong (1987).

Antonette Dayrit
Photo by Hugo Glendinning

2.5 STYLISTIC FEATURES OF BRUCE'S CHOREOGRAPHY

Movement style

- A fusion of classical ballet and Graham techniques, mostly developed through his time with Ballet Rambert.
- Graham technique: use of contractions, spiralling, flexed feet, high release and authentic display of human emotion.
- Ballet: Extensive use of recognisable balletic vocabulary as well as open chest and back, extended lines and lyrical use of energy.
- Social and folk dance: Social dance elements blended into works to reflect era / theme / music. Folk dance elements often integrated – linking arms, leading / following, heel-toe steps etc.

Choreographic Style

- Motif development and strong / symbolic repeating images that highlight emotional intensity.
- Episodic or rondo structure, with links to the theme and / or musical accompaniment. Semi-narrative aspects to most works.
- A wide range of musical sources, often enhanced through the use of music visualisation.
- Dancers selected for their physical or artistic strengths and who would fit the choreography and character the best, not necessarily on their position in the hierarchy of the company.
- Visual, aural and physical aspects of the dance are integrated to present universal themes / subjects.
- Minimal set design: a bare stage is preferred to allow themes and ideas to be conveyed clearly through the movements.
- Serious themes based on a wide range of stimuli, often involving social and political commentary. Some works use abstract contexts.
- Literal movement: literal, often animalistic, movements frequently appear in Rooster, as detailed in the full analysis of each section below.
- Universal gestures: facial expressions, recognisable hand gestures or body movements that help to create mood, character or intentions – create a shared human language between the dancers and the audience.

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

ACTIVITY

Compare the difference between English and Russian ballet techniques.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfLi0apW1j0&t=3203s
https://www.rambert.org.uk/explore/rambert-archive/rambert-voices/

Christopher Bruce states that Marie Rambert was highly influenced by the Russian ballet techniques of the Ballets Russes and performances from the Bolshoi Ballet. Using your knowledge from the previous task, discuss how these techniques may have influenced her teaching / choreographic style and Christopher Bruce's dance education.

ACTIVITY

- Watch the videos from the YouTube channel Rambert Archive and videos from Rambert Voices (on the Rambert website) to compare your conclusions with his personal recollections and conclusions.

- Watch two to three other works by Christopher Bruce. Can you detect Russian and English ballet techniques in his works?

2.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF ROOSTER IN BRUCE'S DEVELOPMENT

Bruce originally created Rooster for the Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève in 1991, during his successful international freelance career as a dance artist, before he returned to Rambert as artistic director in 1994. More than 20 dance companies in Britain, Europe and America have staged the piece since then.

When he returned to Rambert as artistic director in 1994, he included Rooster on the bill of the 1994/5 Relaunch Tour, which represented an artistic statement of intent of how he would lead the company in the future. For the tour, Bruce also revived and Land, which he had originally created for London Festival Ballet in 1985, alongside new work by Mark Baldwin (Banter Banter) and Sara Matthews (Close My Eyes) plus a revival of Jirí Kylián's Petite Mort (created for Nederlands Dans Theater in 1991).

"I'm not interested in demarcations between contemporary, postmodern, classical, and dramatic," he told Dance Magazine at the time. "I'm interested in dance and theatre of quality. Basically, I want to give the audience a good night out at the theatre and stimulate them to come back, time and again." (Dance Magazine, May 1995)

The work has drawn positive reviews in this country since its UK première by London Contemporary Dance Theatre:

"What Fokine did for the swan and Ashton for white doves, Bruce does for the barnyard rooster, but not in terms of the classical vocabulary so much as being breathtakingly innovative in jazz / disco / contemporary techniques. His 10 dancers strut, tantalise and switch moods as the songs change, but the dance dominates throughout." (Nicholas Dromgoole, The Sunday Telegraph, 29 November 1992)

"A joyous, witty piece requiring dancers with 'rubber legs and elastic bodies' to represent the familiar cocky strutting of the early Mick Jagger." (Sally Whyte, Dance and Dancers, April 1992)

"London Contemporary Dance Theatre ... goes out with a bang; the cracker being Christopher Bruce's Rooster. Seeing it again, I am convinced it is a popular classic. Set to early Rolling Stones, it has moved from literal interpretation of the songs to social comment through stylish dance." Anne Sacks, The Independent On Sunday, 5 December 1993)

2.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF ROOSTER IN RAMBERT'S DEVELOPMENT

Rooster was part of the repertoire in Bruce's first season as Artistic Director. It was during Bruce's directorship that Rambert Dance Company returned to its original style of performance and away from the purely Cunningham-based works performed under Alston's directorship.

Bruce developed a repertoire that drew audiences in to celebrate and entertain, which Rooster certainly does with pop music, 1960s fashion and a witty sense of humour. However, the impact of Alston was not lost. Experimental, abstract or untested works sat alongside popular and successful repertoire, which meant that Rambert performances became increasingly versatile under Bruce's leadership.

The themes and aural accompaniment of Rooster also connect back to the transition times for the company (the 1960s). This nostalgic exploration of past attitudes could be compared to the changing attitudes towards dance that Rambert faced in the late '60s.

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Hannah Rudd
Photo by Hugo Glendinning

Reviews of Rambert revivals of the work have often alluded to its significance in the company's repertoire.

"You should have heard the cheers that greeted Christopher Bruce's Rolling Stones ballet Rooster at last night's opening, with its comic but spot-on evocation of the Sixties in all its swaggering macho arrogance and occasionally devastating feminist response ... Bruce has more than once tried to retire Rooster, leaving room to move on to other things, but the public just will not let him. They love its sheer entertainment value, the liveliness of its characters, the energy of the dances, the witty effrontery of its comedy. Not to mention the music, eight of the Stones' most popular songs. And who's to say the public is wrong in this?" (John Percival, The Independent, 13 June 2001)

"Christopher Bruce's 1991 Rooster ... brings the house down. It brought the house down thirteen years ago. Why it's been absent for so long I can't imagine. Nostalgic for the now oft maligned sixties and seventies, charged with infectious rhythmic expression, taking the lyrics literally, Christopher Bruce, Rambert's former artistic director, in a single cockerel movement defines not only Mick Jagger's swagger but also an era – that chauvinistic cock of the walk strut and parade in front of the cool chicks on the floor ... Satirized with tender affection, Bruce brings out the wry humour more than the dark soul at Rooster's centre, the best time of his / your / my life." (Vera Liber, British Theatre Guide, May 2014)

"Christopher Bruce's Rooster has been in Rambert's rep since 1994, and at times I've wondered if this Rolling Stones tribute has had its day. But the dancers on Tuesday night made it new again, with Miguel Altunaga the cockiest Red Rooster ever and Dane Hurst dicing with danger in Paint It Black." (Judith Mackrell, The Guardian, 4 November 2015)

SOCIAL, HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Rooster is a nostalgic reflection on Christopher Bruce's personal memories of growing up in the '60s – a time of great historical change that is often referred to as the 'swinging '60s' (after the US magazine Time published a feature in 1966 headlined 'London: The Swinging City').

In order to fully appreciate and understand the piece for your A-level examinations, it's essential to understand the social, historical and cultural context of the work. There are themes and imagery in the piece that are considered problematic today.

It's important to discuss these issues and we encourage you to do so with the help of the suggested activities in this pack.

“ Perspective from Chrisopher Bruce, 2023

“In terms human rights, there is an obvious theme of women challenging the conventions of the times where the male of the species tended to dominate a relationship. On a social level, the Lady Jane and Play with Fire tracks hint at the breaking down of class barriers amongst the younger generation. Successful artists from modest backgrounds suddenly found themselves being feted by the well to do (nothing new of course as, throughout history, the patronage of the wealthy has supported the careers of many artists). The popularity of The Rolling Stones and other groups enabled them to develop relationships with partners from the “upper classes”. Art does provide the possibility of crossing social barriers. Personally, I found my dancing career allowed me to form lifetime friendships that my early working-class life would never have suggested could happen.”

3.1 CIVIL RIGHTS

The civil rights movement in the USA, which was launched in the 1950s, aimed to abolish the structural racism that underpinned segregation, discrimination in housing, education, employment, policing, the judicial system and voter disenfranchisement.

The movement used the full range of social justice tools to achieve its goals, including:

• lawsuits against educational segregation (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954);

• protests against segregation of public transport (the most famous being Rosa Parks during the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955);

• lunch counter sit-ins at segregated restaurants;

• Freedom Rides by civil rights activists to desegregate bus terminal restrooms and water fountains and interstate bus journeys;

• voter registration drives in the southern states;

• mass demonstrations such as the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, where Dr Martin Luther King called for civil and economic rights and an end to racism in his most celebrated speech, I Have a Dream, delivered to 250,000 supporters from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

In Britain, the Caribbean migrants who travelled to the Mother Country to help reconstruction after the Second World War faced racism in housing, employment, education and policing. They were excluded from better quality housing and usually offered only unskilled jobs, regardless of their skills and qualification levels. Like their American counterparts, they set about organising.

• When white youths attacked young Black men in Notting Hill in 1958, the journalist and activist Claudia Jones organised an indoor carnival event a year later, which later led to the launch of the Notting Hill Carnival in the 1960s.

• In 1963, the West Indian Development Council in Bristol launched a community boycott of the Bristol Omnibus Company for its undeclared policy of only employing white workers. Led by Paul Stephenson, Roy Hackett, Owen Henry, Audley Evans and Prince Brown, the campaign took four months to force the bus firm to back down and begin recruiting global majority workers for the first time.

3.2 WOMEN'S RIGHTS

In the Britain of the early 1960s, patriarchy remained the dominant model of social relations with a gender-based division of labour:

• men went out to work with the aim of earning enough money to cover all the household's expenses,

• women stayed at home to undertake all the domestic and family labour unpaid (although many working-class women were expected to work as well, often part-time).

This social model elevated men into a dominant position over women, encouraging sexist or macho attitudes that underpinned abusive behaviours such as domestic and sexual violence, misogyny and homophobia.

The contraceptive pill, which suppresses the fertility of the women who take it, was launched in Britain in December 1961. Although it was initially only available to married women (through the National Health Service), it became legally available to all women in 1967.

The pill enabled women greater sexual freedom and also allowed them to control when and if they had children. However, this sexual revolution did not necessarily lead to women's liberation, as the patriarchal sexual double standard meant that men would be generally celebrated for having many sexual partners while women were almost always shamed for the same thing.

With laws outlawing abortion dating back to the Victorian era still on the statute books, women led the campaign to break the silence on the issue. The activist Diane Munday, who was a member of the Abortion Law Reform Association (ALRA), was one of many women who began speaking about their own experience of abortion at public meetings campaigning for legal reform.

"One by one, as I gave more talks, women from all walks of life would come up to me and say that they, too, had had an abortion," she told the media platform Refinery29 in 2019. "I realised then what a powerful weapon telling your story was – it made it clear that abortion was not about some nebulous woman in some nebulous place. It was me, them, here and now."

In the mid-1960s, ALRA started asking prospective MPs if they would consider introducing a private member's bill to support abortion if elected. The Liberal David Steel said he would, and with his help, the Abortion Act was passed in 1967.

From the late 1950s, more women began entering the workforce.

• In 1951, 22 per cent of married women had jobs.

• In 1961, 30 per cent of married women had jobs.

• By 1971, 47 per cent of married women had jobs.

However, women were still highly concentrated in lower status, lower-paid jobs and 80 per cent all factory, shop and secretarial work was done by women in the 1960s.

In 1968, 187 women workers at the Ford Dagenham plant went on strike when the company downgraded their jobs making seat covers for the cars, meaning they would be paid 15 per cent less than men doing similar work at the factory. They secured victory after just four weeks, and their success led to the 1970 Equal Pay Act.

By the end of the decade, British feminists were organising the launch conference of the British Women's Liberation Movement, which would take place in Ruskin College, Oxford in early 1970.

Many of them had been inspired by The Feminine Mystique, the 1963 book by American activist Betty Friedan that helped launch what would become known as the second wave of American feminism.

However, it is important to note that second wave feminism has been criticised for generalising the plight of white, middle-class women and failing to acknowledge the struggles of women from poorer economic backgrounds or women of colour.

ACTIVITY

Research the criticisms of second wave feminism. How justified are Black women, working class women and LGBTQ+ women in their assessments of its shortcomings?

3.3 LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

The increasing visibility of LGBTQ+ people throughout the 1960s represented a further blow to patriarchal power.

After a string of widely-reported trials of high-profile men who were convicted and imprisoned for having homosexual relationships (including the Conservative politician Lord Montagu of Beaulieu and the celebrated actor John Gielgud), the Wolfenden Report of 1957 recommended reform of the laws that discriminated against gay men.

When no reform proved forthcoming, the Homosexual Law Reform Society was launched in 1960, attracting more than 1,000 to its first meeting in central London. The North-Western Homosexual Law Reform Committee followed in 1964 (it later evolved into the Campaign for Homosexual Equality).

The efforts of all these campaigns led to the partial decriminalisation of gay sexual relationship ushered in by the 1967 Sexual Offences Act.

3.4 PEACE AND ANTI-WAR PROTEST

In the autumn of 1962, the Cuban missile crisis brought the world to the brink of a full-scale nuclear war. The crisis was sparked by the Soviet Union deploying ballistic missiles in Cuba in response to us deployments of similar missiles in Italy and Turkey.

In Britain, the peace movement had been steadily growing since the late 1950s, after the UK established itself as the third nuclear power (after the US and the USSR) by testing atomic and hydrogen bombs in the Pacific Ocean. More than 5,000 took part in the first public meeting of the new Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) in February 1958. Over Easter that same year, 8,000 people marched the 52 miles from Trafalgar Square in London to the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston – the first expression of mass protest in the country since the end of the Second World War.

From 1959, the route was reversed and participation grew rapidly, with 20,000 attending the final rally in Trafalgar Square, while the following year, 40,000 marchers arrived in London and up to 100,000 joined the rally in Trafalgar Square.

While the 1963 Test Ban Treaty (for which CND had campaigned) allayed many people's concerns about nuclear proliferation, the US government's increasing involvement in the war in Vietnam from 1964 onwards created a new focus for the anti-war movement in Britain.

After the Viet Minh national independence coalition defeated the French colonial regime in 1954, an international conference divided the country into the socialist-controlled North and the Western-oriented South. Six years later, the North Vietnam-backed Viet Cong launched an armed campaign to re-unite the country.

Looking at the conflict through the perspective of the Cold War, the US feared collapse of the regime in the South would open up all of south-east Asia to communism. After initially supplying the South with thousands of military advisers, the US began a ground war in 1965 with the deployment of 3,500 Marines.

The number of US troops on Vietnamese soil spiralled rapidly upwards, reaching:

- 385,000 in 1966
- 486,000 in 1967
- 536,000 in 1968

Throughout this period, British Prime Minister Harold Wilson refused to commit British troops to the war.
In March 1968, at the end of a large demonstration against the war called by the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign in central London, hundreds of protestors tried to break through the police lines protecting the American Embassy, which was sited at the time on Grosvenor Square.

The battle between the two sides became one of the most iconic British political events of the 1960s. Images of the confrontation were seen not only on newspaper front pages but also by many more millions on television.

Because of advances in technology that made TV manufacture less expensive, more than 90 per cent of British households owned a TV by 1968, up from 52 per cent 10 years before. In addition to news coverage on both channels in operation at the time (BBC and ITV), the ITV current affairs programme World In Action broadcast an episode two days after the demonstration.

ACTIVITY

Watch The Demonstration episode of World In Action, originally broadcast 18 March 1968, on You Tube:
https://youtu.be/hgbAsiW9Q3Y

3.5 THE HIPPIE MOVEMENT AND THE COUNTER-CULTURE

During the 1960s, a generation gap opened up as many younger people started to question, challenge or reject the social values, ambitions, morals and political beliefs of their parents and major institutions like the church and the government.

This led to a flourishing counter-culture in many urban centres, which took many different expressions.

• There were the early youth movements, such as the Mods (short for ‘Modernists’), young people who were equally dedicated to Italian fashion and scooters as they were to Black American music like jazz and rhythm and blues (R&B).

• There were the new generation of social and political activists who joined protest organisations like CND or the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign.

• Later in the 1960s, some young people adopted a hippie lifestyle, rejecting materialism, conventional mores and organised religion to embrace communal life, free love and a nature-inspired spirituality. As part of this hippie revolution, they also experimented with drugs like marijuana and LSD (acid). Hippies identified with popular slogans such as ‘Make love, not war’ and ‘peace and love’, both of which reflected their opposition to the war in Vietnam.

Music was central to the counterculture. While the 1969 Woodstock festival in upstate New York became a byword for hippie culture, Britain also held its own countercultural music festivals at the Isle of Wight between 1968 and 1970. The hippie ethos also gave birth in 1970 to what has become one of the most important music festivals in the world – Glastonbury.

3.6 PROTEST MUSIC

Musicians in the US and in Britain made work throughout the 1960s that addressed the most urgent political and social issues of the era.

In the US, African-American singer-songwriter Sam Cooke wrote what became one of the great civil rights movement anthems, A Change Is Gonna Come, in 1963, after he and his wife were turned away from a whites-only hotel in Shreveport, Louisiana. African-American pianist, singer and composer Nina Simone was driven to write her most famous civil rights song, Mississippi Goddam, by two white supremacist attacks in the early 1960s: the murder of civil rights leader Medgar Evers in June 1963 and the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama that killed four young Black girls.

White American musicians with roots in the folk scene also wrote protest songs that also became countercultural anthems. Bob Dylan adapted the 19th century spiritual No More Auction Block for Me for his 1962 anti-racist and anti-war anthem, Blowin' In The Wind, which he sang at the 1963 March on Washington. Joan Baez also performed at the 1963 March, when her set included the traditional gospel song We Shall Overcome, which she continued to sing throughout the '60s.

In Britain, too, musicians were writing for the countercultural youth. R&B band the Animals scored a major hit in 1965 with their version of We Gotta Get Out Of This Place, in which a young working class couple dream of finding something better than relentless work and an early death.

The chorus ("We gotta get out of this place / If it's the last thing we ever do") made the song a favourite with American troops in Vietnam: "We had absolute unanimity in this song being the touchstone – this was the Vietnam anthem," commented Doug Bradley and Craig Werner, authors of We Gotta Get Out Of This Place: The Soundtrack of the Vietnam War (University of Massachusetts Press, 2015). In the same year, The Who's My Generation became the band's biggest hit with its stuttered vocals, call-and-response structure and inflammatory lyrics: "I hope I die before I get old".

3.7 DANCE IN POPULAR CULTURE

Throughout the ’60s, social dance styles evolved in time with developments in popular movements.

Even in the 1950s, when rock’n’roll became the music of rebellious youth, many of its dance styles adhered to couples-based form, including the jive (which evolved from swing dance, a style created by African-Americans) and jitterbug (which evolved from lindy hop, another African-American style).

But in the ’60s, social dance became steadily more concerned with individual expression rather than couple-based technical mastery. This led to new forms like the twist, the mashed potato, the watusi and the locomotion (which was a line dance), often associated with particular songs celebrating particular dance crazes.

The evolution of social dance in the 1950s and ’60s also impacted on professional musical theatre. The renowned Broadway choreographer Jerome Robbins blended ballet and jazz to create demonstrations of explosive athleticism in West Side Story, the adaptation of Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet that he directed and choreographed in 1957 (so successful that it ran for 732 performances). Robbins also co-directed and choreographed the film adaptation in 1961, which was the biggest box office success in the US that year.

Influenced by Jerome Robbins, Bob Fosse created his own signature style in the 1960s that was seductive and sensual, created through angular postures, sultry hip and shoulder rolls, broken wrists and explosive bursts of musicality. Fosse won Tony Awards for Best Choreography for many works he directed and choreographed, including Little Me in 1963 and Sweet Charity in 1966 (he also directed the film adaptation in 1969).

3.8 CULTURAL APPROPRIATION IN MUSIC

Segregation in the USA of the 1950s meant that most Black musicians were confined to Black music stations. Since this structurally restricted their audience, they were generally prevented from securing the levels of commercial success open to their white counterparts.

For example, Black blues singer Big Mama Thornton scored a major hit in the R&B charts with Hound Dog (written for her by the songwriters Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller) in 1953. The song stayed at Number One for seven weeks, which translated into 500,000 sales.

But when white singer Elvis Presley covered the song three years later, he was able to reach number one in the pop, country and R&B charts, which helped his version become one of the biggest selling singles of all time, achieving global sales of 10 million. ('The whitewashing of Black music', Arun Starkey, Far Out, https://faroutmagazine.co.uk/the-whitewashing-of-black-music-five-singles-made-popular-by-white-artists/)

Like Elvis Presley and many others, The Rolling Stones established themselves by adopting African-American musical styles like blues and rhythm'n'blues (R&B).

The band were always careful to credit their musical heroes. "We have always favoured the music of what we consider the R&B greats – Muddy Waters, Jimmy Reed, and so on – and we would like to think that we are helping to give the fans of these artists what they want," Mick Jagger told Melody Maker In early 1964. In a feature accompanying the interview, the band listed their favourite artists as Waters, Reed, Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Ray Charles and John Lee Hooker.

But the band were able to achieve incomparably greater success (including in the USA) by connecting with the white audiences that were unreachable to their heroes, which led to a significant transition in the 1970s, when the Stones stopped "being heard as a white band authenticated by their reverence for and fluency within black music" to become a band who were "simply being heard as a new sort of authentic themselves". ('How rock and roll became white', Jack Hamilton, Slate, 6 October 2016, https://slate.com/culture/2016/10/race-rock-and-the-rolling-stones-how-the-rock-and-roll-became-white.html)

ACTIVITY

Watch the HBO documentary The Searcher (2018) to learn more about the impact and significance of Black music in the development of rock’n’roll.

3.9 FASHION

With many young people in the early 1960s beginning to gain greater economic freedom, and the evolution of youth cultures sustaining identities markedly different from their parents' generation, London in particular became a major fashion centre.

Designers like John Stephen and Mary Quant pioneered new retail forms that would challenge the power of the great European fashion houses.

"Boutiques were small, self-service shops set up in London by designers who wanted to offer affordable fashions to ordinary young people, offering a very different experience from the often rather formal 'outfitters' and old-style department stores," according to the V&A, London's museum of art and design. The boutiques themselves became destinations, not merely retailers, as more young people spent their time and their money in Carnaby Street in the West End and the King's Road in Chelsea, where most of the new boutiques were based.

"These now-iconic shops sold affordable separates suited to a busy, urban lifestyle, allowing their customers to combine items in creative ways. The slim-fitting, brightly coloured outfits produced by London designers became hugely influential throughout the UK, as well as in Europe and America – helping to create the seductive image of 'Swinging London'." (An introduction to 1960s fashion, https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/an-introduction-to-1960s-fashion)

The boutiques helped popularise Mod fashion – geometric dresses with close-fitting waistlines and oversized buttons; colourful tights; go-go boots; and the iconic mini skirt, made famous by Mary Quant.

“As a designer she enjoyed adapting minimal styles which subverted traditional social and gender roles – short hemlines suited her simple shift dresses, which were often modelled on schoolgirl pinafore dresses. With a growing presence in the media, Quant played a central role in the adoption of the miniskirt by contemporary women.” (The miniskirt myth, https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/the-miniskirt-myth)

Men’s fashions were evolving just as fast. Setting aside the pale, conservative styles of the 1950s, many young men began wearing bright, colourful or patterned suits, often embellished with oversized ties or cravats, with frilled shirts and collarless jackets.

This peacocking style was fostered by queer pioneers such as the designer John Stephen, who became known as The King of Carnaby Street and The Modfather for his success selling fashions originally adopted by gay men to the incomparably bigger heterosexual market.
In 1964, the year The Rolling Stones recorded Little Red Rooster, Mick Jagger was photographed while shopping at the John Stephen’s Carnaby Street boutique.

Revision tip

Make sure your revision for the exam includes material on all these themes:

- the ‘swinging 60s’
- social views and the generation gap
- the sexual revolution
- the hippie revolution
- the Vietnam war / peace and love
- advances in technology
- changes in popular culture, including music, dance and fashion.

There are more tips for exam preparation in section 6.

INTRODUCTION TO ROOSTER

4.1 SIMILARITIES TO OTHER WORKS BY BRUCE

Rooster is one of several works inspired by music and musicians that have inspired Bruce since he was young.

The Dream Is Over (1986) is a biographical piece about the musician John Lennon featuring many of his songs. Moonshine (1993) uses the music of Bob Dylan as a social commentary. Three Songs – Two Voices (2005) is an ensemble piece that features work by the Black guitarist and composer Jimi Hendrix, as performed by violinist Nigel Kennedy.

There are many formal and thematic connections to his other works. References to children's behaviour in Rooster echo some of his other pieces, especially work he made when his own children were younger. "You will see things about children in many of my works," he said in an interview in The Times (6 March 1981).

He frequently draws on social and folk dance: some passages of Rooster echo movement material from his Symphony in Three Movements (1989) and the stylised movement in Lady Jane link to the formal dances of the opening and close of another of his works for Rambert, Ceremonies (1986), which was in part inspired by the discoveries of the Elizabethan alchemist and court astrologer Dr. John Dee.

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

4.2 FORM AND STRUCTURE

Rooster is based around a sequence of songs by The Rolling Stones. It is not a narrative piece – it does not tell a single story through a sequence of scenes with identifiable individual characters trying to achieve a particular goal.

It is instead an episodic piece, where the scenes or sections are linked together more loosely by theme, feel, time or place. But that does not mean there are no narrative elements to the piece: each song is an individual sketch in miniature that allows for a considerable variety of mood and style within the complete ballet.

Bruce had been choreographing to cycles of songs, usually in compilations he had chosen himself, since the early 1980s.

In 1981, he created three works in this form: Dancing Day for students at the Rambert School to songs by English composer Gustav Holst; Ghost Dances for Ballet Rambert to arrangements of Andean folk music; and Holiday Sketches to songs by Black jazz singer Billie Holiday for students at the London Contemporary Dance School.

In 1984, he choreographed Sergeant Early's Dream for Ballet Rambert, which looked at the experience of displaced people through Irish and American folk songs.

In 1986, he created The Dream Is Over to music by John Lennon, a commission for a television documentary that was performed by the leading Swedish contemporary dance company, Cullberg Ballet.

4.3 THEMES IN ROOSTER

1) Rooster explores the relationships between men and women through the metaphor of the heterosexual courting ritual.

2) Created in the early 1990s, the piece looks back at the early 1960s, when Christopher Bruce was a teenager.

3) The choreographer wanted to explore the evolution of gender roles during the 1960s, when women challenged patriarchal systems and attitudes to achieve greater equality.

4) Rooster celebrates eight songs by British rock group The Rolling Stones (six originals and two covers), taking its title from one of the covers, Little Red Rooster.

The following themes can also be discussed and explored when analysing the work:

- attitudes to women / misogyny
- heterosexual courtship and sexual attitudes
- narcissism
- adolescent anxieties.

4.4 CONNOTATIONS OF THE TITLE

The rooster has many different symbolic or linguistic meanings across the world. The most common connotations associated with being described as a rooster include: masculinity, virility, fearlessness and aggression.

The word ‘rooster’ is mainly used in North America. Its British English equivalent is ‘cock’ (meaning any male bird), from which derives the word ‘cocky’, meaning conceited or cheekily confident.

The rooster is also used symbolically in Chilean folk dance. In the cueca, the couples dance from Chile that is also found in Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Mexico, the man persistently follows the woman in semi-circular / figure-of-eight pathways, imitating a rooster courting a hen, with both partners using handkerchiefs as the extension of hands. Many of these references can be seen throughout Rooster.

ACTIVITY

Fictional characters in novels and films have also been given the name / nickname ‘Rooster’. Research the character profile of Rooster Cogburn in the 1969 film True Grit (adapted from the 1968 novel by Charles Portis and starring John Wayne) and Rooster Byron in Jez Butterworth’s 2009 play Jerusalem. How are they described? Use this to build a character profile.

ACTIVITY

Watch the American pop-rock band Maroon 5’s music video Moves Like Jagger. How would you describe the dance style? What body parts are used? How might this relate to the movement or connotations of a ‘Rooster’? Does this link to Mick Jagger’s own stage persona?

4.5 KEY MOTIFS

- The ‘Rooster strut’, a stylised walk for the men in which the toes of one foot slide along the floor, the head and neck jut forward, and the rest of the dancer’s body is pulled towards the outstretched extremities. The walk self-evidently mimics the way in which cockerels move.

- Grooming gestures for the men – slicking down their hair; straightening their cuffs and sleeves; and, most frequently, adjusting their ties.

- Characteristic jumps for the men – one of which suggests a chicken trying to fly: the dancer holds onto the bottom of his jacket lapels so that his arms are bent into the triangular shape of a rooster’s compact wing; he lifts his elbows as he jumps so that they appear to flap as he makes fluttering or ‘bicycling’ gestures with his feet.

- Everyday gestures – such as the handshake in Sympathy For The Devil.

- Repeated use of the floor on which both men and women roll and turn.

- Extravagant courtly gestures – bows and flourishes suggestive of the steps of a baroque minuet.

“ Perspective from Chrisopher Bruce, 2023

“I can’t say that I have a favourite key motif but, with all my ballets, I try to find something that is unique to a particular piece. With Rooster I began by inventing a dance formed from everyday conventional actions - straightening a tie, smoothing back hair, adjusting shirt cuffs etc. I then added the strutting cockerel movements for the men and, when put together, these elements form the basis of the choreographic language for the production.”

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

4.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHARACTER OF ROOSTER

Rooster is typical of Bruce's style and highlights the blending of ballet, Graham technique and a broad range of social dances from various historical periods.

Many of Bruce's earlier works had dealt with social themes with seriousness and gravity. But the inclusion of popular music, elements of social dance and the animalistic and anthropomorphic movement of Rooster introduce an element of humour and levity that would also feature in many of his later works, including Hurricane (A Pantomime) (2001), Grinning In Your Face (2001) and Hush (2006).

Bruce was one of the first British choreographers to create work from popular music, although US choreographers had been drawing from this well of inspiration since the turns of the 1960s.

Black gay choreographer Alvin Ailey had used spirituals, gospel and blues music in many works he created after launching Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre in 1958, including his most critically acclaimed work Revelations (1960). Twyla Tharp frequently worked with popular music, choreographing Deuce Coupe (1973) for the Joffrey Ballet to music by the Beach Boys and even commissioning new wave composer David Byrne to create the musical score for her ballet The Catherine Wheel (1981). In Britain, Michael Clark, who had danced with Rambert in 1980 and 1981, created I Am Curious, Orange, about the ascent of William of Orange to the British throne in 1689, with alternative rock band The Fall in 1988.

4.7 CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS

For Bruce, the aural accompaniment often influences the initial developments of movement. He repeatedly listens to the music is listened at the start of the choreographic process, which provides ideas for movement qualities and mood for the dance.

Bruce usually works with dancers he has worked with in the past and uses individuals' strengths within the choreography. This means that there is an element of collaborative practice with his dancers. Throughout the dance, there is a clear use of repetitive choreographic devices and motif developments such as repetition, fragmentation and canon to help structure the dance but also to emphasise key themes and lyrics. In its creation, there was initial experimentation and improvisation with movement material which would be taught to the whole cast. Bruce would then make casting decisions based on these tasks.

It is not uncommon for Bruce to make subtle changes to the choreography when reviving works, due to changing artistic preferences or to highlight themes or intention. For example, in the 2014 revival of Rooster, a woman dancer uses her neckerchief to whip the man at the centre of Paint It Black to enhance the appearance of her dominance.

Bruce also makes changes to the choreography in revival to accommodate particular qualities or abilities of the dancers in certain roles. For example, when Miguel Altunaga performed the role of Rooster for the 2014 revival, his depiction of the character was much more playful and cheeky in comparison to the 1991 original, which was more

arrogant, aggressive and macho. When interviewed for this resource, Altunaga explained that for revivals, dancers learn the choreography by watching videos of previous casts and Bruce rehearses the movement and its qualities with great detail and precision. However, every dancer is different.

Coming from Cuba, Miguel had no first-hand knowledge of 1960s Britain, so he used his own experience to interpret the movements and the character. He further explained that the character evolves from the detail in the dynamics and the use of focus as directed by Bruce. During rehearsals, Bruce provides references or suggestions on how to enhance the character but the movement is the primary focus. Similarly, the portrayal of Lady Jane in the 2014 revival looks more empowered and controlled than the 1991 original, where she is portrayed as aloof, coy and daydreaming. Bruce lets the dance evolve with the times and gives dancers the opportunity to interpret and embody characters under his direction and guidance.

“ Perspective from Chrisopher Bruce, 2023

“Rooster has been danced by over twenty different companies and regularly revived by many of them since it was created in 1991. With each production, while the choreography and basic characters remain the same, every dancer will bring something personal to their roles. I always leave space for the performers to find fresh nuances and this was certainly true of Miguel Altunaga; he was, of course, a natural for the “Rooster Man” role. He understood it completely and brought a wonderful macho flamboyance to the dance as well as the humour which the production requires.

My main focus on any dance I make is the clarity and precision of the movement. If the integrity of the choreography is in place, then any themes or narratives I am aiming to express should become apparent.”

ACTIVITY

Watch this video of Christopher Bruce during rehearsals: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6uSj4OereW8&t=3s

Discuss the role of Christopher Bruce in rehearsals. What does he focus on and prioritise? Compare this to other choreographers you study on the A-level syllabus. Consider how this impacts on the developments of the repertoire.

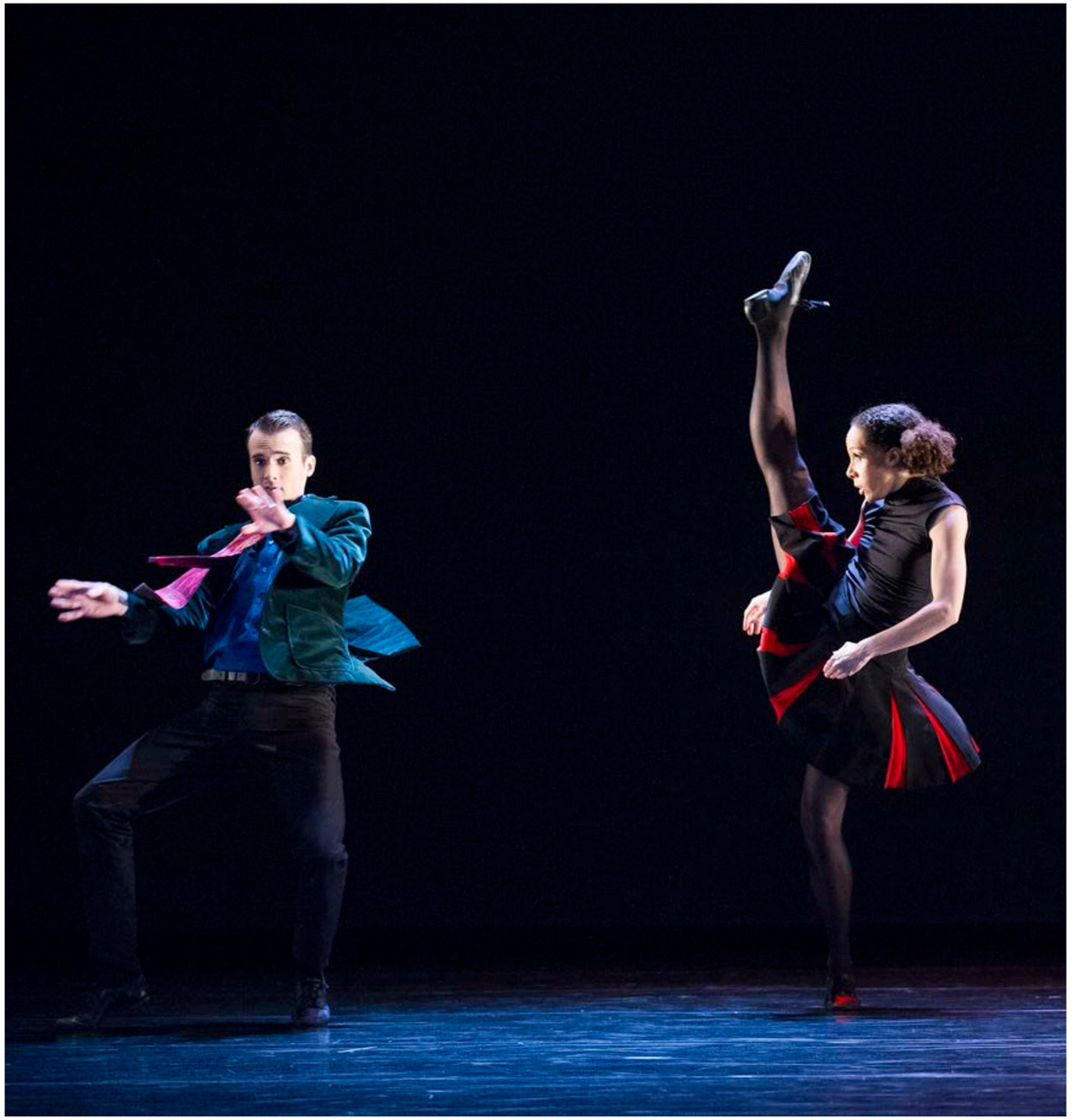
4.7 PRODUCTION ELEMENTS

Set

Rooster is set on a bare stage – often a feature of Bruce's work. He is always aware that dancers need plenty of space in which to perform. Bruce loves to choreograph the whole space and create sequences in solos and group dances that utilise the full footprint with expansive travelling movement or full company choreography. Examples of this can be seen in the finale of Rooster, Lady Jane (group), Paint It Black or Ruby Tuesday (travelling solo) making full use of the dancers' athleticism and virtuosity.

Lighting

The lighting is quite simple throughout the whole piece, with pools of light illuminating centre stage. Lighting is also used to pick out individual dancers. The most complex lighting happens in the final piece (Sympathy for the Devil), with many different cues that match the dancer's entrances, exits and movements.
The lighting is unobtrusive so it doesn't distract from the dance. Side lighting creates structure and sculptural effects and a 3D sense of the dancers. Colour is occasionally used to enhance the atmosphere.



Stage and lighting in Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photos by Tristram Kenton

Costume

The costume reflects the 1960s; the men's costumes are velvet jackets (maroon, brown, black, green, blue) with different coloured shirts and ties. Black trousers are made to look like jeans and are coupled with black jazz shoes. In Ruby Tuesday, the men all have a costume changes and wear black jackets. The men's costume in the first production of Rooster were original 1960s garments bought from second-hand shops. The style of the men's costumes was also reminiscent of clothes worn by Mick Jagger in the 1960s. The fitted nature of the men's costumes gives a slick and fashionable feel; they could also suggest power.

Unlike the men's individual costumes, the women's costumes are all identical, which conveys a kind of non-identity and connects to the theme of attitudes to women. They wear simple dresses with a black and red colour scheme throughout. Initially, they wear sleeveless black dresses which fall just above the knee. The skirt part of the dress has box pleats with red inserts. In Paint It Black and Play With Fire, the women wear sleeveless black mini-dresses, similar to the style of British fashion designer Mary Quant in the 1960s. In Paint It Black, the women wear neckerchiefs and in Play With Fire, the woman soloist has a red feather boa. In Ruby Tuesday, the main woman dancer wears a red long, full-skirted dress with long sleeves.

In Bruce's work, costume, colour and emotion work together to create another building block of the piece, with many of the key colours rooted in the lyrics of the songs (Little Red Rooster, Ruby Tuesday, Paint It Black). Red is the most prevalent colour throughout the whole piece. On an emotional level, red connects to love, anger, hate, passion and lust. On a social and political level, red connects to revolution, the anti-war movement, and the hippie idea of free love (sexual relationships outside the patriarchal norms). In Paint It Black itself, which includes the lyrics "I see a red door and I want it painted black", the male dancer with the central role appears at the front of the stage in a bright red shirt, while the three female dancers all wear black in complete contrast.

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

ACTIVITY

Red and black are symbolic colours. What emotions or interpretations are often associated with the colours black and red? How could you link these meanings to the narrative?

Music

Rooster uses music Bruce grew up with. “I did the piece because I just loved the music – eight songs by The Rolling Stones, mostly numbers that I’ve lived with for 20 years,” he said in an interview in Dance and Dancers (New Year, 1993).

The Rolling Stones were largely inspired by Black musical forms from the US like the blues and rhythm and blues (R&B), especially musicians such as Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley and Jimmy Reed. Little Red Rooster was written by Willie Dixon. Not Fade Away was written by Buddy Holly and Norman Petty but covered by The Stones in the style of Black rhythm and blues (R&B) musician Bo Diddley. The remaining six songs are all originals: Lady Jane, As Tears Go By, Paint It Black, Ruby Tuesday, Play with Fire and Sympathy for the Devil.
“It’s a celebration of the music, and therefore it reflects the qualities of the songs including, I have to say, the rather dreadful attitude towards women that it was natural for young men to have in my teenage years,” Bruce explained while making the piece.

“That’s why I made the comparison between the strutting cockerel with his fine feathers and the man dressed up to go out – you know the ‘blue suede shoes’ kind of image. Things have changed for some of us – not enough, perhaps – over the past 20 to 30 years, but it reflects the time.

“I’m not condoning the attitude, just accepting that it was an attitude of the time. And the women for their part are rather long-suffering, but see through it all with a kind of philosophical humour, so there’s a kind of sexual war going on.” (‘There’s always an idea’, Dance and Dancers, New Year 1993, p18)

Like the themes and motifs explored in Rooster, The Rolling Stones aroused controversy with their risky, aggressive and sometimes misogynistic lyrics.

ACTIVITY

Bruce previously made work to music by Gustav Holst, a drastically different genre to that of The Rolling Stones. Research the musical style of Holst. What do you learn from that about Bruce's choice of music for this piece?

ANALYSIS OF ROOSTER

5.1 LITTLE RED ROOSTER

Willie Dixon
Six dancers: five men, one woman (the full company comes on stage at the end).
Running time: 2’55”

The section starts with a male soloist. He is sunk into his hip and his gaze is intensely fixated on something across the stage. Momentarily his gaze is broken as if someone has called his name and he begins the ‘Rooster strut’ motif. Four other men come into focus who are all holding arrogant or typically masculine poses. The Rooster accentuates his hyper-masculine performance by slicking his hair back, adjusting his tie and abruptly turning his focus aggressively towards the audience. His solo includes several references to the movement style of Elvis Presley such as the ‘rubber knees’ and the locking and twisting of the hips, knees and arms. These movements in the 1950s were considered highly sexual compared to social dance styles of the 1930s and 1940s.

The Rooster seamlessly transitions through aggressive, abrupt, smooth, sensual, forceful and bouncy dynamics. His presence is so intimidating that two men jump out of the way when he swings his hips in their direction. His continues his alpha male dominance through a short burst of explosive traveling actions in which his movements grow in size and confidence. The frequent changes in the direction of his movement (choreography that tests the dancer’s balance if it is to appear effortless) further demonstrate his control of the scene.

The Rooster’s repertoire of animalistic movement also includes references to dog behaviour, with gestures that weave between mime and metaphor, including movement reminiscent of a dog playfully scratching his back across the floor. Predatory male behaviour is often articulated through negative dog metaphors. The songwriters Leiber and Stoller deployed the connotation of ‘hound’ as sexual predator in their lyrics for Hound Dog, in which a woman kicks a man out of her home for cheating on her: “You can wag your tail / But I ain’t gonna feed you no more.”

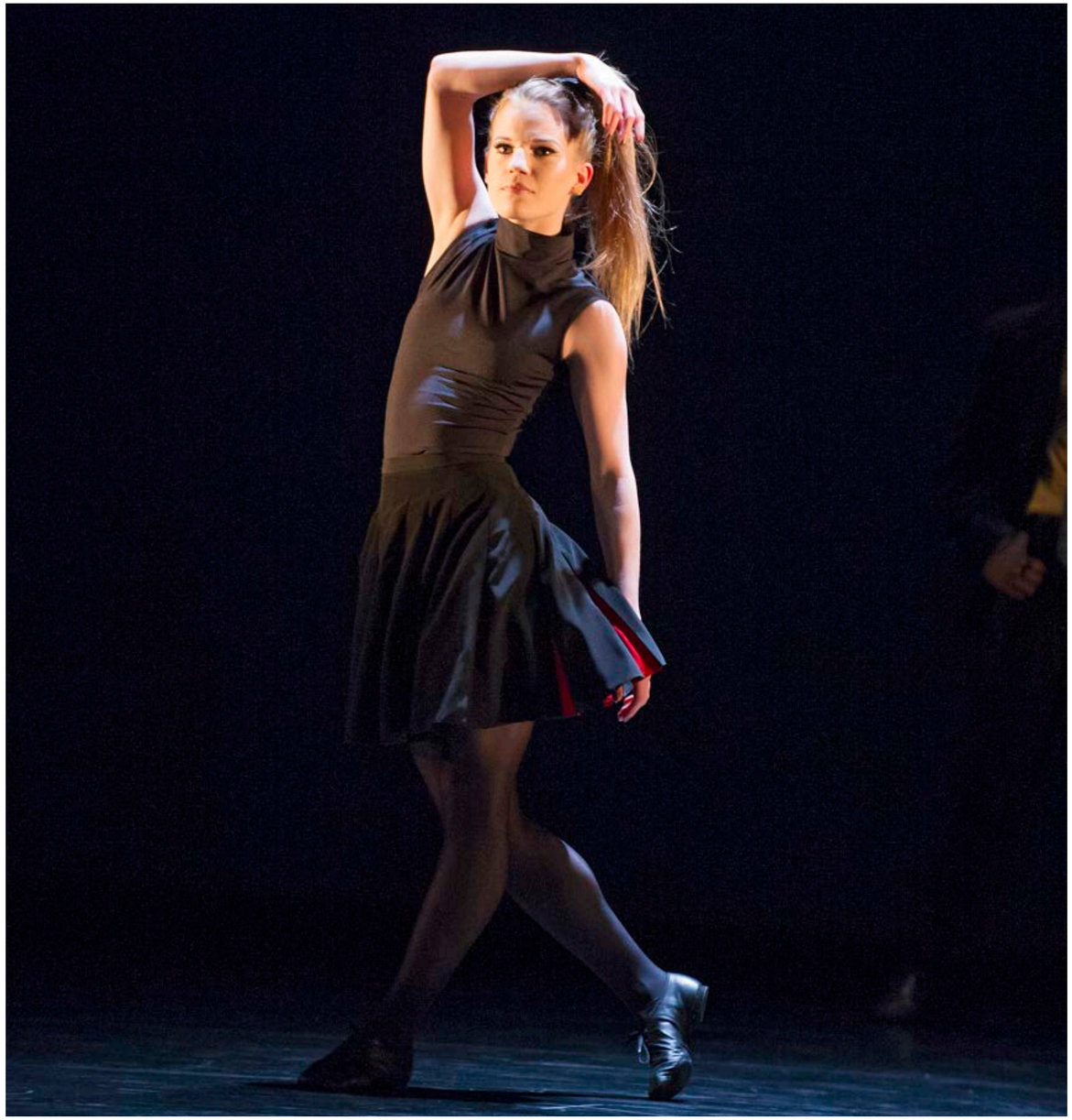
The Rooster continues to hold dominance over the other four dancers, who are watching him as if they are studying his moves. Their body language also includes poses that are coded as typically masculine – crossing their arms defensively, standing with their hands in their pockets or holding their belt buckles in the ‘cowboy pose’ that serves as a display of dominance by drawing attention to the groin.

Upon the Rooster’s exit and the entrance of a lone woman dancer, the men come forward. The woman dangles her forearm over her head as she shakes her hips in a flirtatious manner before stroking her chest to initiate a turn towards the first of four men. But when she approaches each man, one by one they dismiss or attack her – the second man kicks her away, causing a fall to the floor during their interaction.

The woman’s expansive and sensual movements as a solo can be interpreted as expressions of her sexual liberation. But when she repeats the phrase in a trio with the two remaining men that incorporates the constant use of contact, her movement now changes character in response to the way the men take full control of her – at one point she thrashes her body from side to side as if to get away from them as they hold her by the wrists.

All four of the men adjust their collars and cufflinks after interactions with the woman, displaying their lack of remorse over their casual misogyny, which shows how Bruce remembered this commonplace treatment of women throughout the 1960s.

Miguel Altunaga in Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton



Hannah Rudd in Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

ACTIVITY

Character profile: understanding the Rooster character.

a) Extract information from the historical, cultural and social context section, about the connotations of roosters and dogs.

b) Annotate an image of a blank male outline with key movements displayed by the Rooster.

c) Then, in a different colour, annotate contextual and linguistic information to support your findings.

ACTIVITY

- Watch the 2014 version and compare the key differences in the Rooster's 1991 performance. Repeat the first activity and have a discussion to compare the outcomes.

- Discuss the relevance or significance of the lyrics. Consider:
  - the language used and its inferences
  - social attitudes toward alpha males
  - social attitudes toward women
  - the sexual revolution of the 1960s.

ACTIVITY

Changing the narrative by changing the dynamics:
As discussed in the choreographic process, the Rooster in the 2014 revival was much more playful than the 1991 original and subsequently, the character of the Rooster went from one of misogyny and virility to one of confidence and eccentricity. Learn an excerpt of the Rooster's solo and experiment with different dynamics and songs. With your class, discuss how the dynamics and the songs changed the character / performance. Feel free to experiment different genres and musical eras to really explore the extent music can alter a performance.

ACTIVITY

Gender roles:
Learn a small section of Little Red Rooster that is performed by a gender different from your own. Upon performing it back, discuss with the class how it feels to perform that movement and does it change the narrative? Does it shift the meaning or interpretation for the audience? Which body parts are you relying on to convey your character and does this differ from your own body language in everyday life?

ACTIVITY

- Analyse the movement and identify where Christopher Bruce's stylistic features can be seen.

- Research the following keywords and write your definitions:
  - machismo
  - misogyny
  - chauvinism
  - virility
  - heteropatriarchal.

5.2 LADY JANE

Mick Jagger/Keith Richards
Full company: 10 dancers.
Running time: 3’5”

In the lyrics of Lady Jane, the protagonist imagines himself committing to a high status lover, using language that is archaic both in its construction and in its register (“Your servant am I / And will humbly remain ... Just heed this plea, my love / On bended knees, my love ... I’ve pledged my troth to Lady Jane.”) The musical arrangement intensifies this sense of a composite bygone age, with Brian Jones playing the melody on a dulcimer (the earliest references to the instrument are from the 15th century) and keyboard player Jack Nitzsche accompanying the second half of the song on a harpsichord (an instrument from the baroque era).

The dance takes its cue from these lyrical and musical references, with its initial illusion of a courtly dance focused on the central couple. It opens with the man offering his hand and bowing to Lady Jane in a traditional display of courtship. The central couple dance the minuet-style steps but the apparently chivalrous illusion is broken as the man proceeds to lick his lips, glare at her suggestively and push his pelvis forward. The way the woman moves with her arms crossed over her body, only momentarily accepting his invitation to sit on her knee and swiftly withdrawing her hand from his kiss at the close of their graceful and ballet-influenced duet all indicate she is initially unconvinced by his approach.

In the second verse of the song, the central man rejects Lady Anne, another woman he has been involved with previously. The choreography suggests this has been more of a casual sexual encounter, as the man pulls her onto her back, strokes her slowly downwards from her chest to her inner thighs and leaves her lying prone on the floor – as another man slaps Lady Jane on the buttocks.

This gesture catches the central man's attention and he quickly repeats his bowing gesture to Lady Jane. But Lady Anne lunges forward while grabbing his hand as he attempts to walk away ("I must take my leave"). While he continues to dance with Lady Anne, her movements are much more flirtatious and sensual but his focus often drifts elsewhere. After first attempting to remove Lady Anne from the playing space, when she returns to protest, he hands her on to a trio of men, one of whom patronisingly pats her on the wrist.

When Lady Jane returns for the musical interlude, she appears more confident and aware of her sexual prowess, finishing the duet lying down in front of the man in a delicate mermaid-like position and staring alluringly into his eyes. When three men lift her away, she holds her hand under her chin with a smug expression that could suggest she has succeeded with a plan.

When Marie takes her place, her duet with the central man is different in character from the duets with Lady Jane and Lady Anne. While she approaches the central man confidently, Marie's movement is neither fiery like Lady Anne's nor playful like Lady Jane's has become but more restricted and geometrical and she does not protest when the man re-connects with Lady Jane. At the end of the final verse, as the dancers link hands in a circle, all the men lift their partners into a tight circle. In the final tableau, the women are all holding different positions: Lady Jane looks triumphant and endearing while the others look sensual, coy or posed like puppets. The men surround the women in a circle in a bow presenting their hands.

Although the full company is on stage throughout the dance, for much of the time the other four couples shuffle in a more contemporary social dance at the back or side of the stage from which some of them emerge briefly. Only at the end, when they come together in a circle, do they all fully participate rather than provide an animated background.

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

ACTIVITY

Casual sexual encounters are seen throughout this section. How does this link to the social, cultural and historical context of the 1960s?

PSHE Discuss the three relationships. What signs of emotional, physical or sexual abuse can be seen in this dance? Are there any other signs of abuse that you can think of (that maybe are not shown in this dance)? How could someone seek help if they were experiencing abuse today? How would they have done this in the 1960s?

ACTIVITY

- Discuss the body language of the women in their pursuit or neglect of the man. How do you interpret their character and intentions? How can you see this in the movement?

- Discuss what the impact would be on the choreography if the gender roles were reversed. Would this be more suitable for a present-day revival?

5.3 NOT FADE AWAY

Norman Petty/Charles Hardin
Two dancers: one man, one woman.
Running time 1’48”

Beginning with the final tableau from the previous song, Lady Jane claps to signal the group to disperse, leaving only one couple on stage. Their duet is based on social dancing and features many moves specific to the 1950s and 1960s and even earlier. The man twists his legs and hips ferociously from side to side in a move that resembles the early ’60s dance, the twist. The woman’s movement includes placing her hands on her knees and crossing her arms as she inverts her knees back-and-forth – a feature of the Charleston created in the 1920s. The man uses a rock’n’roll lift to swing the woman around his back.

The man begins by displaying energetic rooster movements that channel the dominating energy of the lyrics: “I’m gonna tell you how it’s gonna be / You’re gonna give your love to me.” While he shows off, the woman initially expends only a minimum sense of energy, sometimes stopping dancing altogether to stare at him over her shoulder as if she does not appreciate his peacocking. But she also appears flirtatious, leaning towards the man and making direct eye contact with him. And when they are embraced in close proximity, she will often swing her hips in time with the music suggestively to which he responds enthusiastically, leaping into the air like a rooster trying to take flight.

As soon as his movements become stylized and technical again, she joins him as if to say she approves of that behaviour. Among the complexity of the complementary choreography, her influence and control over him are quite subtle. She performs a fan kick that prompts him to fan his arms. And she swipes her arms towards him, which initiates him throwing his arms into a circular motion. But there is other movement that more clearly

indicates her power: she stands with her back to him and flicks her hip to send him falling to the floor in a tantrum and then pulls him back up and pushes him into his solo during the instrumental section.

At the end of the dance, his movements lose technical form and appear to be improvised, euphoric and carefree as if he is ‘love drunk’. The four other men appear to lift him up and carry him off, still dancing euphorically while they hold him. Left alone, the woman traces a hand-waving gesture as she slowly drops to the ground before smartly standing up and walking off.

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

ACTIVITY

Would the narrative be perceived differently if the gender roles were swapped? Why? Consider the moment when the woman kicks the man and compare it to the moment when the reverse happens in Little Red Rooster.

What animalistic movements can you see in this section? How do they differ from the animalistic movements seen in Little Red Rooster? Why is this?

Research key movements from 1960s social dance and this section and create a short routine using ‘chance method’.

5.4 AS TEARS GO

Mick Jagger / Keith Richards / Andrew Loog Oldham
Eight dancers: Four men, four women.
Running time: 2’45”

One man (who appears to be primarily an observer, watching and walking naturally through the action) and one woman stand outside same-sex groups of friends who want nothing to do with either of them. The scene resembles a childhood playground (“I sit and watch the children play”), where groups of boys and girls rarely interact with each other and both groups seek to exclude individuals perceived to be uncool or different.

While the women seem intrigued by the outsider man, neither clique is interested in the excluded woman. For example, when the three women link outstretched arms in a circle as if going into folk dance, the use of contact and circular formation prevents the female soloist from joining in and acts as a physical and visual metaphor of her social isolation.
Meanwhile, the men are repeating motifs from previous sections that display their strength and camaraderie. Between falls, they are learning and practising their movements; essentially, moulding themselves into their predetermined gender roles and expectations of the time. This heightens the soloist’s loneliness – his performance is minimalist, delicate and sensitive as he gazes around the stage.

From his experience of the 1960s, Bruce uses movement to referencing the expectations of preconceived gender roles. For example, towards the end of the final verse, when the three men lunge in a kneeling position offering their hands, the three women run over and lie on their backs with their heads in the men’s hands, as if enacting the patriarchal ideas of the era that dictated men offered support and women offered their submission.

Each couple then performs a mini duet to show how their relationship has become established. Throughout the song, the excluded woman seems completely oblivious to the relationships happening around her. Indeed, all her skips, turns and little runs emphasise her child-like qualities. While she shows some interest as she occasionally goes to investigate, it seems she doesn't know how to conform to social norms since she appears to do the opposite of what is expected – when the women run forward, she walks backward; when the outsider man roughly helps her up from the floor, she slaps his face.

Still keen to seek female friendship, the outsider woman joins the end of the women's linear formation but drops away when the other three glare at her. These women also reject the outsider man by peeling away from their formation in canon as he walks toward them. At the end of the song, the outsider women is left crouching centre-stage and attracts his attention by waving her arm. He rolls his eyes, pulls her up and carries her off over his shoulder.

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

ACTIVITY

Revisit and discuss the traditional patriarchal gender roles and social values of post-war society. Where can this be seen in the movement and narrative of this dance?

PSHE

Consider social dynamics in your own school. Do cliques exist? Are friendship groups defined by gender? Is this the same in primary school? Are there modern expectations on socially acceptable behaviour? What would cause someone to be outcast today? Is this exclusion? What defines bullying? How free are people to express their sexuality and / or gender identity in schools? Does sexuality influence one's social circle?

ACTIVITY

Despite addressing adolescent and adult themes such as courtship, why do you think a nostalgic playground scene and preadolescent movements of the excluded woman were used to help aid the narrative?

Why do you think this section holds relevance and importance to the overall work?

5.5 PAINT IT BLACK

Mick Jagger / Keith Richards
Four dancers: One man, three women.
Running time: 3’10”

After the male soloist, wearing a red formal shirt, pink tie and black jeans, backs into the space, three women in short black mod box dresses with red scarves around their necks assertively strut across the stage before turning abruptly towards the audience. They slowly and seductively walk downstage before performing their signature sensual motif: they circle their hands around their head, invert their knees, stroke the side of their face, presenting an extended leg and arching their back.

There is a loose rondo structure to this song, with the choreography alternating between sections where the soloist dances separately from the trio of women and sections where the quartet is integrated. Initially, the man seems controlled and assertive, using movements that are expansive and graceful. His first solo builds in energy and power, increasing in intensity and tempo until his movements appear erratic and distressed by the second chorus. After thrashing around on his back and searching on his hands and knees, the man proceeds to perform an explosive traveling section to dominate the stage once again. Throughout all of this, the women have minimal interaction with the soloist as they link hands in a circle and perform a series of classic 1960s social dance moves that are lively and fun.

The role of the women changes when the male soloist falls to the floor in distress as he moves in and out of the foetal position (“No more will my green sea / Go turn a deeper blue”). The women leave their position upstage to pull him back on his feet, carry him and propel him back into motion, forcing him from one position / movement to the next until he can perform the original sequence that matches the reprise of the first two verses. This time

though he finishes in the middle of the trio of women, once again almost unable to support himself, reliant on the women to keep him from falling to the floor.

After his final, increasingly desperate solo, much of it spent travelling across the floor on his knees or rolling the entire length of his body, the women roughly interact with him before removing their scarves and using them to whip him before they walk off, trailing the scarves behind them, ignoring the man's outstretched arm, pleading for help.

The dark mood of this section is rooted in the lyrics, which feel oppressive from the opening lines: "I see a red door / And I want it painted black / No colours anymore / I want them to turn black." The third verse paints a picture of a funeral cortège ("I see a line of cars / And they're all painted black"), in which the hearse contains "flowers and my love / Both never to come back". Even though death is an inevitable part of life ("Like a newborn baby / It just happens everyday"), the protagonist notices how nobody wants to talk about it: "I've seen people turn their heads / And quickly look away". By the end of the song, the protagonist wants all colour to be removed from the world: "I wanna see the sun / Blotted out from the sky".

While the song can be interpreted to tell the story of someone bereaved by the untimely death of their lover, when it first appeared in 1966, many listeners connected its rage to the war in Vietnam. Thomas Bird, who fought as a US soldier in Vietnam from 1965 to 66, later told the broadcaster and author Peter Fornatale that Paint It Black "was the most compelling and relatable song that he listened to during his entire time in Southeast Asia" (quoted in 50 Licks: Myths and Stories from Half a Century of the Rolling Stones). Film-maker Stanley Kubrick later used it over the closing credits to his 1987 Vietnam war drama, Full Metal Jacket.

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

ACTIVITY

On YouTube, watch the opening of Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery. Pick six movements that are characteristic of the 1960s and create your own 1960s-inspired dance motif.

Analyse the lyrics alongside the breakdown of the rondo structure. What role do women play in the man's emotional struggles? What might be troubling him? Do social views of the 1960s play a part?

ACTIVITY

- Would the meaning of this section change if this section was set in modern times and not set in the 1960s?

- Do you think the men on stage know the three women on a personal level (as girlfriends, friends, colleagues, etc.)? Or do you think the three women represent women in general? Present evidence to support your argument.

- The women's body language is very dominant in this section. Using your knowledge of the contextual, social and historical context, what links and connections can you find to explain this?

ACTIVITY

What were the social and political views on sexuality at this time? What was life like for LGBTQ+ people in the 1960s? Discuss your findings with your group.

What connotations are associated with the colours red and black? How are these relevant to this section (and other sections within Rooster)?

5.6 RUBY TUESDAY

Mick Jagger / Keith Richards
Five dancers: initially a solo for a woman, later joined by four men.
Running time: 3’10”

Just as Paint It Black is primarily a solo for a man, this is a solo for a woman, although towards the end she is joined on stage by four men. They perform simple dance routines in unison or pairs giving the impression of the conventional movements of a standard vocal backing group. (A similar dance for a soloist and backing group in the Whispering Grass section of Richard Alston’s 1983 work Java has been described by its choreographer as a ‘microphone dance’.)

The choreography for the woman is very typical of Bruce’s style with a low centre of gravity and flowing movement. Yearning arabesques and off-balance turning movements propel the dance along. During the dance, the soloist twists her arms and hands, fiddles with her hair and picks something from the ground, faintly echoing gestures from the mad scene in Giselle (the Adolphe Adam ballet from 1841 that is considered part of the classical ballet canon).

The soloist wears clothing that is distinctively different from the women’s costumes in earlier sections. She wears a long-sleeved red dress with a full-bodied skirt. Her hair is long and loose, secured off her face with a half ponytail that is typical of hippie fashion.

She travels freely across the stage, frequently changing direction with a sense of spontaneity that suggests the carefree lifestyle identified in the lyrics (“She would never say where she came from ... Don’t question why she needs to be so free ... She just can’t be chained”).

Four men in black suits walk seriously across the stage in unison, contrasting Ruby Tuesday's carefree and spirited solo. Once on stage, they click their fingers towards the soloist but have their back to her for a majority of the time showing their lack of interest in her in comparison to women from previous sections who fell into the social 'norms'. Towards the end of the dance, the soloist throws herself into the men's arms and they manipulate her in more twists and turns, developing the material of her solo to blend into material of other women from previous sections.

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

ACTIVITY

What role do the men play in Ruby Tuesday? Does the soloist conform to their expectations or is she still free-spirited? Use movement evidence to support your answer.

Christopher Bruce blends ballet with modern dance techniques. Analyse the movement and create a list of balletic movements. Create a short technical exercise using these movements. To aid retrieval practice, these can be incorporated into future technique lessons. To stretch your knowledge further, only use the French terminology to describe the movement.

ACTIVITY

Create a ballet terminology revision resource. Include a picture, the spelling and the translation.

Using your knowledge of the social, historical and cultural context, remind yourself of the hippie lifestyle. Consider fashion, political and social views and their lifestyle as well as what they were rebelling against.

What effect is created by having all the men dressed in black suits?

5.7 PLAY WITH FIRE

Mick Jagger / Keith Richards
Two dancers: one man, one woman.
Running time: 2’ 10”

In some respects, like the ‘Not Fade Away’ duet, this section draws on social dance, with the man given the more flamboyant steps. The introduction of the red feather boa as a prop and more varied use of popular dance forms provides a contrast to the earlier duet. Once again animalistic movements such as the rooster strut feature in this section. The couple here are the same ‘rejected’ dancers from As Tears Go By. Both dancers appear to have grown in confidence as they seamlessly move through the movement using shoulder rolls and hip undulations.

Many elements of the man’s movement are rooted in the lyrics. In time with “Don’t play with me ’cause you’ll play with fire”, he points to himself with his thumb, flexes his muscles and then abruptly points toward the woman as if to warn her about something. Seemingly uninterested in her, he repeats the rooster motif as he struts away from her. While she pursues him in an attempt to tie him down with her feather boa, he continues to escape her grasp, repeating his warning motif to reinforce the message.

This warning creates a change in the woman’s mannerisms, which become increasingly flamboyant and suggestive as she draws the feather boa across her bottom while slowly descending into a deep plié. As she strikes the rooster’s attention, she holds the red boa to the side like the use of a cape paso doble or a matador for a bullfight. She places her foot between his legs, causing him to go weak at the knees, their dance from here appearing united. With linked arms, the couple perform several social dance movements.
But when the man takes control of the boa, he uses it to mock the woman, throwing it in her face and performing the warning motif one last time. The woman retaliates by thumping his finger.

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

ACTIVITY

The couple have changed dramatically since they were both rejected in As Tears Go By. What could have contributed to this development in their characters? Do you think puberty has played a role?

Learn an excerpt of the woman's movement from As Tears Go By followed by an excerpt from Play With Fire. What body parts are you using? What movements suggest her age?

Create a mindmap of the uses and significances of the feather boa.

ACTIVITY

What does the phrase ‘playing with fire’ mean to you? What could the man be warning the woman about?

Discuss the character development of the woman based on her interactions with the man.

Watch videos on Spanish matadors and the use of the red cape as well as the way men and women interact during a paso doble. What similarities can you identify and what relevance do they have to this section of the dance?

ACTIVITY

Discuss the symbolism of the feather boa.

In 2008, The Rolling Stones' music publishing company sued the rapper Lil Wayne for copyright infringement over the track Playing With Fire on his album Tha Carter III. However, The Rolling Stones have long been accused of cultural appropriation for adopting and commercialising the African-American R&B sound. Research and consider the arguments for and against the argument that The Rolling Stones are guilty of cultural appropriation.

5.8 SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL

Mick Jagger/Keith Richards
Ten dancers: full company.
Running time: 7’ 20”

This is a fast and energetic dance with repeated entrances and exits for all the company although the focus is on the men who begin the number. It features elaborate bows of introduction and the placing of forefingers immediately above the head (to represent the horns of the devil of the title). Dancers enter and exit picking up movement material from one another, performing in unison both paralleling and reflecting one another’s gestures. Just as the words “Pleased to meet you” are illustrated by courteous bows so, for example, the words “made damn sure that Pilate washes his hands and sealed His fate” are depicted by a solo dancer washing his hands round one another.

The final section of this dance is a quick reprise of all the preceding numbers. Inevitably it opens with the rooster strut followed by a woman lifted by the two men at the end of Little Red Rooster. The dancers then perform in quick succession the minuet-style movement from Lady Jane; duet material from Not Fade Away; the face-slap from As Tears Go By; the man’s encounter with the women from Paint It Black; the woman’s leap into the arms of the four men from Ruby Tuesday; and duet material from Play With Fire. Finally, after a reprise of the elaborate introductions by the devil, the soloist of the first piece goes into the rooster strut and, as he adjusts his tie yet again, the lights snap to black.

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photos by Tristram Kenton

ACTIVITY

Create your own version of Sympathy For The Devil.

(a) Learning repertoire: You and your classmates can assign each other roles from different sections across the whole work. A teacher or rehearsal captain can help to direct transitions, interactions and moments of unison.

ACTIVITY

(b) Retrieval practice. Instead of learning movements individually or independently, you could create your own movement material to help memorize the stylistic features and choreographic style of Christopher Bruce. For each stylistic / choreographic feature, you could select two bars of eight to learn that embody that feature. Once you have created several phrases, accumulate them together to aid revision or use for your quartet performance assessment. For example:

Phrase 1 – ballet technique
Phrase 2 – Graham technique
Phrase 3 – folk or social dance
Phrase 4 – use of motifs and imagery
Phrase 5 – narrative and literal gestures.

ACTIVITY

Using the movement material from the previous task, experiment with developing the material with different choreographic devices, motif developments and relationships. These skills can be used for your A-level choreographic assessments.

EXAM PREPARATION: TOP TIPS

1) Past paper questions and assessment resources on Rooster are on the AQA website.

2) Practise your subject-specific vocabulary. If necessary, create a word bank of key movements to memorize. Correct and consistent use of ballet, jazz and modern dance terminology is linked to the grading criteria so should be a priority in your learning journey.

3) When analysing the work in sections, we recommend that you analyse in stages:

(a) Describe what you see and hear. Provide lots of detail, be specific and remember to include entrances and exits/ transitions. Where possible, use dance terminology accurately and as fluently as possible.

(b) In a different colour, add an interpretation to accompany your descriptions.

(c) In a third colour, add relevant contextual information to support your interpretations or conclusions. This should link to the syllabus requirements. Consider:

- social, historical and cultural significances
- where you can Bruce's influences?
- similarities and differences to other works from Bruce, Alston and North.

4) The A-level questions sometimes require you to be able to describe specific parts of the choreography from memory. When revising, practise describing the movement components and use of production elements out loud like a running commentary. It may be helpful to slow down the video to help you do this.

5) Organise your notes well. We recommend that you use a double-page spread divided into eight boxes with the following headers: actions and dynamics; space and relationships; physical setting; aural setting (including lyrics); contextual links; evidence of Bruce's influences; evidence of Bruce's stylistic features; and a final box for additional notes. This will help you to categorise your analysis through specific lenses and prompt the level of depth required.

6) One-minute marks. One of the hardest parts of the exam is time management under pressure. This should be something you factor into your revision. When using past paper questions, practise speaking the answers out loud. It may be challenging at first but by repeating the answer several times in a row, you will build your confidence in your phrasing as you refine your answer each time. If possible, ask for feedback from your teacher or peer between repetitions to help further improve your answer. Once you can explain the answer quickly, accurately and precisely, time yourself as you write it down. Check if you can match the target of one-minute marks – so, if a question is worth four marks, try and write your response in four minutes.

7) Read the mark scheme for the 25-mark question on Rambert Dance Company, which could be on either the company or Rooster. Knowledge and understanding of performance and choreography is worth 10 marks, whereas the critical appreciation and assessment of performance through making analytical, interpretative and evaluative judgements is worth 15 marks. Familiarise yourself with what they are looking for and use this as a checklist when proof-reading your essays.

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, photo by Tristram Kenton

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