*Rite of spring: A Musical Odyssey* Synopses

50-Word Pitch

Greg Anderson and Elizabeth Joy Roe, Juilliard alumni and Billboard chart-topping pianists, tread uncharted territory with their cinematic reimagining of one of history's most monumental compositions. *The Rite of Spring: A Musical Odyssey* fuses a ferocious dueling piano performance with an epic tale of soul-searching and survival, culminating in the sacrificial destruction of a 140-year-old organ.

120-Word Synopsis

Part music video, part tale of soul-searching and survival, *The Rite of Spring: A Musical Odyssey* is a boundary-breaking film that culminates in the sacrificial destruction of a piano. The film weaves together a ferocious dueling piano performance of Igor Stravinsky's 35-minute masterwork with a narrative of existential awakening. Starting from traditional concert trappings, the protagonists are gradually sucked into a ritualistic spiral among dancers, insects, and hallucinatory worlds until they are faced with a naked reckoning in the ocean and an ancient piano ablaze in the desert.

The music at the heart of the film is 'The Rite of Spring,' Igor Stravinsky’s ballet that radically transformed the face of twentieth-century culture with its savage sounds and controversial narrative depicting a pagan tribe's ritualistic sacrifice of a young virgin. Anderson & Roe bring Stravinsky’s watershed creation to new life, pianistically and cinematically, with a visionary interpretation that pays homage to the modernism and primordiality of the music.

Conceived, produced, directed, performed, and edited by Greg Anderson and Elizabeth Joy Roe, 31-year-old Juilliard alumni and world-renowned pianists, Billboard chart-topping artists, and Emmy-nominated pioneers of the classical music video genre.

250-Word Synopsis

Part music video, part tale of soul-searching and survival, *The Rite of Spring: A Musical Odyssey* is a boundary-breaking film that culminates in the sacrificial destruction of a piano. The film weaves together a ferocious dueling piano performance of Igor Stravinsky's 35-minute masterwork with a narrative of existential awakening. Starting from traditional concert trappings, the performers become gradually sucked into a ritualistic spiral that sets them immersed in a troupe of dancers, crawled on by insects, and lost in a hallucinatory world; the film reaches a terrifying climax with the pianists drowning and burning a 140-year-old piano in the Pacific Ocean and California desert. Filled with imagery representing fear, ritual and renewal, this film examines the connection between the outside world and the inner life of the protagonists, as they seek to shed their exterior identities, merge with nature, and uncover their true selves.

The music at the heart of the film is 'The Rite of Spring,' Igor Stravinsky’s ballet that radically transformed the face of twentieth-century culture with its savage sounds and controversial narrative depicting a pagan tribe's ritualistic sacrifice of a young virgin. Anderson & Roe bring Stravinsky’s watershed creation to new life, pianistically and cinematically, with a visionary interpretation that pays homage to the modernism and primordiality of the music.

This film was conceived, produced, directed, performed, and edited by Greg Anderson and Elizabeth Joy Roe, 31-year-old Juilliard alumni and world-renowned pianists, Billboard chart-topping artists, and Emmy-nominated pioneers of the classical music video genre.

1000-word synopsis:

Part music video, part tale of soul-searching and survival, *The Rite of Spring: A Musical Odyssey* is a boundary-breaking film that culminates in the sacrificial destruction of a piano. The film weaves together a ferocious dueling piano performance of Igor Stravinsky's 35-minute, epoch-defining masterwork with a narrative of existential awakening. Conceived, produced, directed, performed, and edited by Greg Anderson and Elizabeth Joy Roe, 31-year-old Juilliard alumni, Billboard chart-topping pianists, and Emmy-nominated pioneers of the classical music video genre, this film celebrates the 100th anniversary of Stravinsky’s seminal masterwork.

The music at the heart of the film is *The Rite of Spring*, Igor Stravinsky’s monumental ballet that radically transformed the face of twentieth-century culture with its savage sounds and controversial narrative depicting the rituals of a pagan tribe and eventual sacrifice of a young virgin. Anderson & Roe bring Stravinsky’s watershed creation to new life, pianistically and cinematically, with a visionary interpretation that pays homage to the modernism and primordiality of the music. Instead of taking a literal approach, the filmmakers were inspired to explore the symbolic connotations of spring, sacrifice, and rites of passage: the resurgence of the earth in all its elemental glory, the poignancy of discovery, the loss of innocence, the heated eroticism of primal urges, and the reclaiming of personal liberation.

In a shoot that crossed the United States and saw its protagonists—portrayed by Anderson & Roe—filmed, variously, from an airplane in the desert and naked in the ocean at night, there has rarely been a classical music film that has gone to such extreme lengths to capture the composer's own shockingly vivid creation. Executed on a shoestring budget, the film nonetheless delivers a startlingly visceral viewing experience, containing imagination, action and emotional intensity in spades.

*The Rite of Spring: A Musical Odyssey* examines the connection between the outside world and the inner life of the protagonists, as they embark on a pilgrimage of self-discovery. Starting from traditional concert trappings, the performers become gradually sucked into a ritualistic spiral that sets them immersed in a troupe of dancers, crawled on by insects, and lost in a hallucinatory world; the film reaches a harrowing climax with the pianists drowning and burning a 140-year-old organ in the Pacific Ocean and Californian desert. These evocative images are seamlessly woven into Anderson & Roe’s ferocious four-hand piano performance of Stravinsky’s legendarily arduous score.

I. The opening presents two outsiders who embark on an epic journey of risk, sacrifice, and renewal. The magnificence and violence of the outside world mirror the inner conflict and gradual awakening of these individuals, as they seek to shed their exterior identities and merge with nature.

II. Tension begins to build amid the interplay of contrasting phenomena: the wild and cultivated, desolate and congested, rustic and ornate, earthy and ethereal. The journey gains momentum in the brilliance of daylight, yet omens lurk.

III. In the blazing heat of the sun, reality starts to bend. As the wanderers continue to drift through the urban jungle, their inner alienation is reflected by the scorched wasteland of the desert. The strain of the journey mounts to a pivotal breaking point.

IV. In the aftermath of their combative confrontation, the journeyers diverge. Their rivalry escalates—both narratively and pianistically—until the quest takes a mysterious turn with the emergence of masked idols, demons of psychological oppression.

V. After being pushed to the brink in body and spirit, the wanderers discover an object that brings about an eerie benediction. One taste opens up a mind-bending realm, a new earth that bursts forth into a swirling dance of delirium, harmony, and ecstasy.

VI. The journey has entered a new dimension: the alien landscape of the mind. As the seekers proceed inward, they begin to detach from the world around them. In the gloaming, they face the murky unknown.

VII. As darkness falls upon the earth, the wanderers weave in and out of a fever dream that is part primordial remembrance, part futuristic mirage. This time-bending dance eventually spirals into no-man's land, triggering the journeyers to snap back to reality: the hand of fate has irrevocably assigned them to complete their mission.

VIII. The journeyers return to their mission with a newly sharpened focus and even greater urgency, transformed by the revelations of their hallucinatory flashback. Yet this resurgence of resolve is threatened by the attachments, doubts and fears that persist within. To overcome these dark forces, the seekers must summon their latent, untapped power—the inviolable wisdom of the ages.

IX. Upon grappling with their inner demons, the journeyers emerge even stronger and more vigilant. This newfound awareness shakes the foundation of their egoic attachments and material trappings. The degeneration of these worldly fetters opens the pathway to their final, inevitable task.

X. The quest lunges toward its conclusion, as the journeyers conquer their deepest fears and embrace their destiny. What once was an instrument of apocryphal meaning is now one of imperative sacrifice. In the baptismal flames and waters of consecration, the journeyers purge themselves of their false selfhood and experience a powerful renewal.

Anderson & Roe’s 'Rite' takes the viewer on an epic journey, one that ultimately mirrors the primeval nature of Stravinsky's work itself. Theirs is a strikingly original and strident view of music that ripped apart the culture of its time, and this film proves it can still unsettle and thrill us today, 100 years after its composition.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS:

Greg Anderson and Elizabeth Joy Roe have been reinventing the art of the classical music video since 2007, building a nine million-strong following on YouTube and winning an Emmy nomination (with their version of Franz Schubert's 'Erlkönig') through their bold and wildly creative imaginings. 'The Rite of Spring: A Musical Odyssey' marks their most ambitious film undertaking to date; it is a passion project in which they were wholly involved, as performers and directors, from the drawing board to the editing room.