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### **Screening Musical Rites**

From the earliest days of television broadcasting critics were concerned that images could be detrimental to the musical experience. The apparent purity of music was pitted against a visceral reaction to the physical appearance of musicians and was wrapped up in a pseudo-Benjaminian discussion about reality and its representation. There has, however, been scant research on the influence of strategies used in the visualisation of orchestral concert music. Nicholas Cook suggested that musical enjoyment is spoiled by the ‘monstrous close-up’ and Keith Negus explained that broadcasters believe that viewers will direct their attention to whatever instrument is most noticeable to the ear, ‘as if music audiences are similar to those following the ball in a tennis or football match.’

While Cook and Negus identify an important potential problem they do not correctly identify why it exists. The obsession with the close-up is not solely about chasing action it is also the primary device in narrative filmmaking and is central to the continuity editing system. Using televised concert performances of Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*, I will consider the potential impact of visual narrative ‘scene’ construction on musical attention. Just as particular musicians have interpretative strengths so do outside-broadcast directors. The importance of the visual style in shaping the appreciation of the music should not be underestimated. As well as highlighting some of the analytical and methodological challenges that this kind of research presents, I will also build towards some foundational principles of orchestral visualisation.