

Les Siècles/Roth: The Firebird

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★★★★★

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This is fabulous: young French musicians performing Stravinsky's ballet on period instruments similar to those used by the Ballets Russes orchestra at the 1910 premiere in Paris. But it's no dusty academic exercise. Under François-Xavier, Roth's scintillating direction the playing is breathtakingly virtuosic and the timbres produced by the narrow-bore brass and antique woodwinds is entrancing. As a bonus the recording offers an entertaining reconstruction of *Les Orientales*, a ballet orchestrated by Stravinsky and presented as a prelude to *Firebird* on that historic night 101 years ago. **Harmonia Mundi; out Oct 24**