



He shoots, he squaws How the ballet dancers looked at the 1913 premiere of 'The Rite of Spring'. Inset: composer Igor Stravinsky

Critic's choice



Jonathan Lennie picks the best events to see this week



'GABRIEL'

Trumpeter Alison Balsom joins a cast of actors to recreate the sound world of the seventeenth century in a new play by Samuel Adamson, directed by Dominic Dromgoole. Shakespeare's Globe. Fri Jul 12 ▶ Aug 18.

'THE CANTICLES'

Countertenor Iestyn Davies, tenor Ian Bostridge and baritone Benedict Nelson perform a staged version of Britten's five musical jewels. With horn player Richard Watkins, harpist Sally Pryce and pianist Julius Drake. Linbury Studio Theatre. Wed Jul 10 ▶ Fri Jul 12.

FAURE'S REQUIEM

JAM (John Armitage Memorial) presents the Mousai Singers, instrumentalists and organist Matthew Jorysz under Daniel Cook in Gabriel Fauré's beautifully gentle and popular mass. St Bride's Church, Fleet St. Thu Jul 11.

FIRST NIGHT OF THE PROMS

The world's biggest music festival gets underway with pianist Stephen Hough (below) playing Rachmaninov and Lutoslawski. With the BBC SO under its new conductor Sakari Oramo, which also plays works by Julian Anderson and Britten. (See feature on p27.) Royal Albert Hall. Fri Jul 12.



Listings, reviews and the full interview at timeout.com/classical

THE RITE OF SPRING: BBC/NICK BRIGGS; IGOR STRAVINSKY: ROGER VIOLETTE/GETTY IMAGES; STEPHEN HOUGH: SIM CANETT-COARKE

Getting it Rite

François-Xavier Roth is set to conduct Stravinsky's 'The Rite of Spring'. He tells Jonathan Lennie why his recreation of its 1913 premiere will shock us all again

The impact of certain works of art have often been exaggerated, but Stravinsky's ballet score 'The Rite of Spring' really did occasion a riot at its 1913 Paris premiere. The extraordinary piece about the savagery of nature is the seminal orchestral work of the twentieth century, and yet, according to 41-year-old French conductor François-Xavier Roth, none of us has ever heard this masterpiece as its Russian composer conceived it.

While World War I delayed the publication of the score, Stravinsky simplified it, as musicians had been struggling with his new musical language, full of universal virtuosity and shifting polyrhythms. The Orchestre des Ballets Russes, who gave the premiere, may have been the best band at the time, but they definitely were not ready for this game-changing

work. 'The players were very good, for sure,' says Roth, 'but it was a shock – like a cold shower, the shock of the radicality of this modern music.'

The original is darker and wilder

Now, exactly a century since its premiere, Roth and his talented period-instrument ensemble Les Siècles are more than capable of doing it justice and have been permitted by publishers Boosey & Hawkes to perform the first edition, which they will do on instruments from 1913.

So what's so different about the original? 'The complexity of rhythmical language is still there,' says Roth, 'but the orchestration is much richer and the virtuosity of the players is pushed even further. The sound is also completely different – there's much more colour and articulation. For loud instruments like the brass, he asks for mutes, then there are gut strings... So it gives it this darkness and wildness, which maybe we have lost today with the modern instruments.'

François-Xavier Roth conducts Les Siècles in Stravinsky's 'The Rite of Spring' at the Royal Albert Hall on Sun Jul 14 as part of the BBC Proms.

Wigmore Lates @36 Friday 12 July 10.00 pm & 11.15pm
10.00 pm THE PRINCE CONSORT
11.15pm DORIAN FORD TRIO

WWW.WIGMORE-HALL.ORG.UK/LATES
020 7935 2141 | Tickets £12/£10

WIGMORE HALL
36 WIGMORE STREET
LONDON W1U 2BP