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THE  TIMES

Conductor hopes that re-run of Stravinsky will leave out the riot



François-Xavier Roth prepares Les Siècles for tomorrow's performance Jean Radel

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The first attempt to recreate the original version of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* since its premiere 100 years ago has been designed to be faithful in all but one detail. François-Xavier Roth, who will conduct the work at the Albert Hall tomorrow, will seek to avoid inciting a riot.

Igor Stravinsky's masterpiece was considered so outrageous when it received its premiere in Paris in 1913 that the audience revolted, first attacking one another and then the musicians, who had to play under a barrage of vegetables. As a result the piece has never been played the same way since. Under pressure from musicians, who found the work's eccentric rhythms and register almost impossible to play, Stravinsky agreed to sweeping changes that persist in the official published version.

Plucked strings were replaced by bowed ones, trombone parts were beefed up and the bassoon was adjusted to make it easier to perform. These changes will be reversed when the work is performed as part of the Proms by Roth and his Les Siècles orchestra, which will use instruments from the early 20th century to mimic the sound.

Roth said that the performance would include a bassoon that is thought to have been played at the premiere. He said the principal bassoon player had a particularly hard time. "He said the piece was impossible to perform. The register was too high for the instrument, but Stravinsky wanted it to have this fragile sound, at the very top of its register." The conductor said that the original version was too complex and subtle for most orchestras of the period. "Many people wanted to perform it, but as the first performance in Paris was so complicated Stravinsky was pushed by conductors to simplify the music. It is difficult to say if the corrections came from Stravinsky himself. Some of them are sure to have come from conductors.

"The first version is much more adventurous. It gives the music a little bit less impact than the original."

The performance will be a rare airing. Boosey & Hawkes, the music publishers, granted permission for the concert, but most performances must use the authorised edition published in 1967.

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It is the most brilliant piece of music, wish I could be there to see it performed.

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John Newbery

1 hour ago

Interesting - but what caused the riot? Was it really the music or were the theatre-goers more outraged by a totally different style of ballet? So the proms will only be half of the original staging..... and the musicians have adopted their customary role of being top dogs instead of accompanying dancers from the orchestra pit!

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