

# Stravinsky: Petrushka, The Rite of Spring review – Roth brings lithe transparency and subtle shading

Les Siècles/Roth

(Musicales Actes-Sud)

4 / 5



**Andrew Clements**

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One of François-Xavier Roth's first releases with the period instruments of his orchestra, les Siècles, was the complete Firebird ballet. Here they complete their trilogy of the great scores that Stravinsky composed for the Paris seasons of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes before the first world war, all played, as is the Siècles way, on instruments that come as close as is possible to those used at their first performances.

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Those who heard Roth and his orchestra perform The Rite of Spring at last year's Proms will remember the lithe transparency they brought to the score, the subtle shading and shifted emphases that dispel any hint of mechanistic brutality.

Sometimes, though, that is achieved at the expense of some of the work's feral intensity: Roth does tend to keep things on a tight rein. But it's the Petrushka that's the real revelation here. Roth's restraint, and the elegance his woodwind players bring to their contributions, pays real dividends. The score emerges as a more fascinating than usual intersection between Stravinsky's Rimsky-tinged Russian heritage, the groundbreaking modernism that he was establishing for himself, and the French refinement that he was absorbing in Paris.

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