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## STRAVINNSKY The Rite of Spring. Petrushka

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François-Xavier Roth and his highly responsive cohorts give us a strikingly fresh-faced, wonderfully vibrant Petrushka in its original 1911 guise, lent extra transparency and individuality by the deployment of French-made instruments from the era. For a taster of the intriguingly different colour palette on offer, beam to the 'Peasant with bear' episode in the final tableau, where clarinets and tuba howl in anguish over menacingly insistent cellos and basses (tr 22, from 2'28"). There's also a terrific rhythmic élan when required, most exhilaratingly evident during those boundlessly energetic measures that cap the 'Dance of the Coachmen' (tr 23, from 1'25" - I defy you to keep still!). Not only does Roth evince a sure dramatic instinct and considerable interpretative nous but he also distils a very real sense of pathos in the ballet's inspired closing pages.

The companion account of The Rite, too, brings much that is both enjoyable and stimulating. In the detailed booklet, the conductor describes the many hours of painstaking research that preceded the present recreation of what this trailblazing score might have sounded like at its scandalous Paris premiere on May 29, 1913. The hard work has certainly paid off, for Roth's is a lucid, bracingly agile and tastefully intelligent conception, studded with newly minted observation. If not always packing as visceral a wallop as some might wish (in the 'Danse sacrée' Roth shrewdly tempers the brutality), it's a reading with keen narrative flair as well as a most agreeable whiff of greasepaint to commend it - I for one appreciate its unstinting honesty and the total absence of slick

Author: Andrew Achenbach



STRAVINNSKY The Rite of Spring. Petrushka

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(The) Rite of Spring, '(Le) sacre du printemps'

Petrushka

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virtuosity or vulgar spectacle.

This admirably engineered coupling has been assembled from at least three different live performances and venues, though you'd never guess it. Summing up, an enormously invigorating pairing, guaranteed to stir the imagination.

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