

London Philharmonic Orchestra

JUROWSKI CONDUCTS STRAVINSKY VOL. 2

TCHAIKOVSKY (ARR. STRAVINSKY)

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY (EXCERPTS)

STRAVINSKY THE FAIRY'S KISS

VLADIMIR JUROWSKI conductor

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY (EXCERPTS), ARR. STRAVINSKY

BLUEBIRD PAS-DE-DEUX (ACT III):

- ① ADAGIO
- ② VARIATION I – TEMPO DI VALSE
- ③ VARIATION II – ANDANTINO
- ④ CODA – CON MOTO
- ⑤ VARIATION D'AUORE (ACT II)
- ⑥ ENTRACTE (ACT II)

For most of the 20th century's leading modernists, Tchaikovsky was an embarrassment. He was the embodiment of luscious, escapist old-world romanticism, the very thing the progressives were striving to get away from. Hard-line revolutionaries like Arnold Schoenberg turned the full force of their scorn on him – and yet he remained so infuriatingly popular! So there was some astonishment when, in the 1920s, Igor Stravinsky, creator of one of music's most notorious shock-successes with his ballet *The Rite of Spring* (1913), came out in public as a 'heartfelt' admirer of Tchaikovsky's 'wonderful talent'. The ultimate fruit of that admiration was to be his ballet *The Fairy's Kiss* (1928), but before that, in 1921, Stravinsky orchestrated two numbers from Act II of Tchaikovsky's *The Sleeping Beauty*, at the request of the great ballet impresario

Serge Diaghilev. Tchaikovsky had cut these two items from the ballet after its premiere in St Petersburg, and his own orchestrations were lost. Later, in 1941, Stravinsky made a version of the famous Act III 'Bluebird Pas-de-Deux' for reduced orchestra for the New York Ballet Theatre – wartime austerity meant that a full orchestral version was just too expensive.

Practical necessity may have prompted Stravinsky to make these arrangements, yet they are equally acts of homage, lovingly recreating Tchaikovsky's unique soundworld. As Stravinsky later confessed, it was a sound that always took him back to St Petersburg, the beloved city of his childhood, and to Russia itself, from which he was to remain painfully exiled until the last years of his long life.

IGOR STRAVINSKY

THE FAIRY'S KISS: BALLET IN FOUR SCENES

7 SCENE 1: PROLOGUE – THE LULLABY IN THE STORM

8 SCENE 2: A VILLAGE FÊTE

9 SCENE 3: AT THE MILL

PAS DE DEUX:

10 ENTRÉE (MODERATO)

11 ADAGIO

12 VARIATION (ALLEGRETTO GRAZIOSO)

13 CODA (PRESTO)

14 SCÈNE: ANDANTE NON TANTO – PIÙ LENTO

15 SCENE 4: EPILOGUE – LULLABY IN THE LAND OF ETERNITY

Stravinsky loved making provocative statements about music – especially when it came to the subject of emotion in music: ‘Music of itself can express nothing’; ‘Music is far closer to mathematics than to literature’. In performances of his own music he was quick to condemn anything that smacked of ‘interpretation’. Remarks like these have led to a widespread misconception that Stravinsky was a cold or clinical musician. Privately he seems to have seen it differently. ‘Passionate emotion’, he said, could also be expressed within the most ‘limiting conventions’, and he praised the

medieval Persian miniaturists who, despite being forbidden to show facial expressions, still managed to convey intense feelings through the positioning of hands or the tilt of a head.

But this advocate of extreme self-discipline also loved the music of his great fellow Russian, Tchaikovsky – surely one of the most passionate and self-revealing of all composers. Tchaikovsky’s ‘Pathétique’ Symphony (No. 6) made a terrific impression on him as a boy, and years later, when he knew he was dying, Stravinsky

found he was unable to listen to it on the radio – it stirred him too deeply. When the dancer Ida Rubinstein came to Stravinsky in 1927 with the suggestion that he compose a ballet inspired by the music of Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky did not hesitate. ‘It would’, he said, ‘give me an opportunity of paying my heartfelt homage to Tchaikovsky’s wonderful talent’. Stravinsky made a selection of melodies and motifs from Tchaikovsky’s solo piano pieces and songs, which he then reworked – sometimes completely transforming their character in the process – as the basis of his ballet score. For the story he turned to Hans Christian Andersen’s fairytale *The Ice Maiden*, about the Swiss boy, Rudy, who as a baby is claimed by the Ice Fairy with a magic kiss, and later carried off by her forever on the eve of his wedding. The story, said Stravinsky, became an allegory of Tchaikovsky’s own destiny: ‘the Muse having similarly branded Tchaikovsky with her own fatal kiss, whose mysterious imprint made itself felt in all this great artist’s work.’

As to the specific nature of that ‘fatal kiss’, Stravinsky seems to have been reluctant to go further. Whatever the motivation, it is remarkable how lovingly Stravinsky treats many of the Tchaikovsky themes he uses in *The Fairy’s Kiss*. However brilliant and subtle his reworking, there is little of the ironic distortion one finds in the Pergolesi-based ballet *Pulcinella* or the Grand

Opera parodies of *Oedipus Rex*. Often Stravinsky finds orchestral colours that sound distinctly Tchaikovskian, though Stravinsky’s own voice, crisp and clear as ever, is also hard to miss. Most surprising is the ardent full-orchestral climax at the end of Scene 3, based on the melody of Tchaikovsky’s famous song ‘None but the lonely heart’. One may feel that Stravinsky comes very close to baring his own heart at this point – little sign of ‘limiting conventions’ here.

The ballet score of *The Fairy’s Kiss* is laid out in four scenes. In Scene 1 a mother is separated from her child in a mountain storm. The Ice Fairy finds him and kisses him. Later he is rescued by a group of villagers. Scene 2 shows the child now grown to a young man, enjoying the village fête with his fiancée. The Ice Fairy approaches disguised as a gypsy and tells him his fortune, promising him great things. Bridal dances begin Scene 3 as the young man prepares for his wedding, but the Ice Fairy disguises herself as his fiancée and spirits him away to her everlasting dwelling place. There, in Scene 4, she now claims him forever by kissing him on the sole of his foot. The music at the close is hushed and restrained, but – despite the presence of the Ice Fairy – far from cold.

Programme notes © Stephen Johnson

VLADIMIR JUROWSKI CONDUCTOR



© Drew Kelley

Vladimir Jurowski became the London Philharmonic Orchestra's Conductor Emeritus in September 2021, following 14 years as Principal Conductor, during which his creative energy and artistic rigour were central to the Orchestra's success. At the BBC Proms concert with the LPO in August 2021 – his final official concert as Principal Conductor – he received the Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal, one of the highest international honours in music.

In September 2021 Vladimir became Music Director at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. Since 2017 he has been Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra. He is also Principal Artist of

the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and in 2021 stepped down from his decade as Artistic Director of the Russian State Academic Symphony Orchestra to become its Honorary Conductor. He has previously held the positions of First Kapellmeister of the Komische Oper, Berlin (1997–2001); Principal Guest Conductor of the Teatro Comunale di Bologna (2000–03); Principal Guest Conductor of the Russian National Orchestra (2005–09); and Music Director of Glyndebourne Festival Opera (2001–13).

Vladimir enjoys close relationships with the world's most distinguished artistic institutions including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Leipzig Gewandhausorchester, the Cleveland and Philadelphia orchestras, the New York Philharmonic and the Chicago and Boston symphony orchestras. A committed operatic conductor, highlights have include semi-staged performances of Wagner's *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall; Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in Berlin and Bucharest with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra; *Wozzeck*, *Der Rosenkavalier* and Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel* at the Bavarian State Opera; and Henze's *The Bassarids* and Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* at the Komische Oper Berlin.

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The London Philharmonic Orchestra is one of the world's finest orchestras, balancing a long and distinguished history with its present-day position as one of the most dynamic and forward-looking ensembles in the UK. This reputation has been secured by the Orchestra's performances in the concert hall and opera house, its many award-winning recordings, trailblazing international tours and wide-ranging educational work.

Founded by Sir Thomas Beecham in 1932, the Orchestra has since been headed by many of the world's greatest conductors, including Sir Adrian Boult, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt and Kurt Masur. In September 2021 Edward Gardner became the Orchestra's Principal Conductor, succeeding Vladimir Jurowski, who became Conductor Emeritus in recognition of his transformative impact on the Orchestra as Principal Conductor from 2007–21.

The Orchestra is based at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall in London, where it has been Resident Orchestra since 1992. Each summer it takes up its annual residency at Glyndebourne Festival Opera where it has been Resident Symphony Orchestra for over 50 years. The Orchestra performs at venues around the UK and has made numerous international tours, performing to sell-out audiences in America, Europe, Asia and Australasia.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra made its first recordings on 10 October 1932, just three days after its first public performance. It has recorded and broadcast regularly ever since, and in 2005 established its own record label. These recordings are taken mainly from live concerts given by conductors including those with LPO Principal Conductors from Beecham and Boult, through Haitink, Solti, Tennstedt and Masur, to Jurowski and Gardner.

lpo.org.uk



PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–93)

- 12:20** **The Sleeping Beauty (excerpts), arr. Stravinsky**
01–04 05:25 Bluebird Pas-de-Deux (Act III)
05 01:08 Variation d'Aurore (Act II)
06 05:47 Entr'acte (Act II)

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971)

- 43:07** **The Fairy's Kiss: Ballet in Four Scenes**
07 08:19 Scene 1: Prologue – The Lullaby in the Storm
08 10:39 Scene 2: A Village Fête
09 06:23 Scene 3: At the Mill
Pas de Deux:
10 01:28 Entrée (Moderato)
11 03:37 Adagio
12 01:23 Variation (Allegretto grazioso)
13 02:16 Coda (Presto)
14 04:29 Scène: Andante non tanto – Più lento
15 04:30 Scene 4: Epilogue – Lullaby in the Land of Eternity

Recorded at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall on 17 March 2018

Producer Andrew Walton, K&A Productions **Engineer** Deborah Spanton, K&A Productions

Executive Producers Elena Dubinets, David Burke, Graham Wood

Publishers Tracks 1–4: © 1953 Schott Music GmbH worldwide except UK, Ireland, Australia, Canada, South Africa and all so-called reversionary territories which are © 1996 Schott Music GmbH & Chester Music Limited jointly

Tracks 5–15: Boosey & Hawkes Ltd