



London Philharmonic Orchestra

STRAVINSKY

PETRUSHKA

SYMPHONIES OF WIND INSTRUMENTS

ORPHEUS

VLADIMIR JUROWSKI *conductor*

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

IGOR STRAVINSKY

PETRUSHKA (1911 version)

Petrushka is the central panel in the great triptych of large-scale ballets on Russian subjects that Stravinsky composed in the years before the First World War. It was first performed by Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris in June 1911, and soon became one of the most successful pieces in the company's repertoire. The score had begun life the previous year as a sketch for a concert piece for piano and orchestra, already inspired by the ballet's central idea of a puppet endowed with life. Diaghilev seized on the theatrical possibilities of the subject, and encouraged Stravinsky to develop the work as a ballet, set at the Shrovetide Fair in the home city of both men, St Petersburg. The detailed scenario was drawn up by the composer in collaboration with the artist and designer Alexandre Benois, another native of St Petersburg and a lover of the puppet theatre. The choreographer was Mikhail Fokine, and the title role was danced by the legendary Vaclav Nijinsky.

The score is one of Stravinsky's most colourful and wide-ranging. It incorporates several Russian folk songs and a French music-hall tune in the outer scenes, and two waltz melodies by the Viennese composer Joseph Lanner in Scene III. These give the work a distinctively popular flavour, without

compromising Stravinsky's individual style at the time. Formally, the most remarkable feature of the work is its continuity, which imitates the then new medium of film in its use of musical 'jump cuts' and 'dissolves'.

The first of the four scenes is set on Admiralty Square in St Petersburg on a bright winter's day in the 1830s. The Shrovetide Fair is in full swing, with merry-makers moving tipsily among the crowds. Two rival street musicians, each accompanied by a dancer, set up in competition, one playing a barrel organ and the other a music box. The revelry is interrupted by thunderous drumming from a little theatre booth, heralding the entrance of an old Showman. He plays a magical flute cadenza which brings to life his three puppets, the sad-faced *Petrushka*, a *Ballerina* and a *Moor*. After performing a 'Russian Dance' in their booth, they step out into the crowd, to general amazement.

More drumming, offstage in the theatre, links the scenes – the second of which is set in the modest cell occupied by *Petrushka*. Having been given human feelings by the Showman's magic, he is bitterly aware of his ugliness and his dependence on his master. He has feelings of love for the *Ballerina*; but when she comes into the cell, she is dismayed by his uncouth

SYMPHONIES OF WIND INSTRUMENTS (original 1920 version)

behaviour, and soon leaves. In despair, he curses the Showman. The third scene is set in the much more luxurious quarters of the stupid and self-satisfied Moor. He in turn is visited by the Ballerina, who dances alone, cornet in hand, and then waltzes with him. The jealous Petrushka interrupts their love scene, and is unceremoniously thrown out by the Moor.

The final scene takes place at the Shrovetide Fair on the evening of the same day. Among the crowds are a group of wet-nurses, a peasant playing a shrill pipe for a performing bear, a rich merchant who accompanies two dancing gypsy girls on the accordion, a group of coachmen and stable-boys, later joined by the wet-nurses, and a party of masqueraders, who induce the crowd to dance with them. The dance is interrupted by a scuffle breaking out behind the scenes of the Showman's booth; the Moor chases Petrushka out into the open and strikes him down with his scimitar. Petrushka dies in the midst of the astonished crowd. A policeman fetches the Showman, who reassuringly demonstrates that Petrushka is a mere thing of wood and sawdust. But as night falls and the crowd disperses, the Showman is startled to see the ghost of Petrushka mocking him from the roof of the booth.

Stravinsky described his *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* as 'an austere ritual which is unfolded in terms of short litanies between different groups of homogeneous instruments'. The closing chorale, arranged for piano, was published in December 1920, in a special edition of the magazine *La Revue Musicale* called 'Tombeau de Claude Debussy'. But by the time this appeared, Stravinsky had already completed the parent work, dedicated 'to the memory of Claude Achille Debussy'. It was first performed in London the following June under Serge Koussevitzky.

The work is scored for enlarged orchestral woodwind and brass sections. In its original form, the scoring included alto flute and the rare alto clarinet. Stravinsky chose not to publish the score of this version during his lifetime. But in 1945, he made a radically revised version, among other things removing the alto flute and alto clarinet, and giving a much sharper edge to many of its attacks. This revision, published in 1947, became the standard version. But the original version remained available in sets of proof parts, and was preferred by several leading conductors; it eventually appeared in print in 2001.

The title of 'symphonies' does not refer to traditional symphonic procedures, but is used

ORPHEUS

in its older sense of 'sounding together'. The work is constructed in a series of short, intercut segments in different tempi and colours – a highly original procedure in 1920, which may have owed something to the art of film editing or 'montage', and which had a profound influence on many 20th-century composers. There are three related tempi, Tempo II half as fast again as Tempo I, Tempo III twice as fast. Tempo I has two different aspects: with a changing quaver beat, it is associated with an incisive bell-like figure dominated by high clarinets; with a more regular crotchet pulse, it is associated with slow-moving chord progressions for the full ensemble. Tempo II brings a series of winding, Russian-sounding melodies (reminiscent of Stravinsky's 1913 *The Rite of Spring*) for small groups of woodwind, punctuated by more energetic outbursts. Tempo III does not appear until about halfway through the piece, and is used chiefly in two episodes in rapidly changing metres – the first reminiscent of the orgiastic dances of *The Rite*, the second lighter on its feet. Meanwhile the slow-crotchet version of Tempo I disappears from the mix, except in two short interjections of brass chords; but these prove to be anticipations of the memorial chorale, which emerges at full length to bring the work to a solemn end.

Stravinsky composed *Orpheus* between October 1946 and September 1947 for the Ballet Society of New York (later New York City Ballet), which presented it in April 1948. The idea had been proposed by the Georgian-born choreographer George Balanchine, and the two men worked out the scenario together. It was based on the ancient Greek myth of the musician demi-god whose divine art enables him to bring his wife Eurydice back from the land of the dead, but whose human impatience in disobeying the instruction not to look at her brings about her second death. Elements of the scenario are borrowed from the operatic treatments of the myth by Monteverdi and Gluck. And Stravinsky's score echoes Gluck's in its Classical elegance and restraint. It is written for an orchestra of more or less Schubertian dimensions, but with a prominent part for harp, symbolising Orpheus's lyre.

The ballet is played without a break, but is divided into three scenes. At the start of the first, in the words of the scenario printed in the score, 'Orpheus weeps for Eurydice. He stands motionless, with his back to the audience ... Some friends pass bringing presents and offering him sympathy.' The harp is to the fore, in descending scale patterns against slow-moving strings; the wind enter with the

sympathetic friends. Orpheus dances a resolute solo 'Air de Danse', in operatic A–B–A form, with a prominent solo violin in the outer sections. The 'Dance of the Angel of Death', with baleful horns, introduces the guide who will lead Orpheus into the underworld; at the end, to the sound of trombone and trumpet over *tremolando* strings, 'the Angel leads Orpheus to Hades'. In an 'Interlude' of angular counterpoint, they 'reappear in the gloom of Tartarus'.

The second scene is set in Tartarus, or Hell, which is ruled over by Hades (here a person, not a place). It begins with a 'Dance of the Furies', in which 'their agitation and their threats' are expressed by restless strings. Orpheus pleads his cause in a second 'Air de Danse', this time in the form of a recitative with harp, and aria with solo oboes; the middle section of the aria is replaced by a brief 'Interlude' of dialogue between woodwind and strings in which 'the tormented souls in Tartarus stretch out their fettered arms towards Orpheus, and implore him to continue his song of consolation'. In the following 'Pas d'Action', 'Hades, moved by the song of Orpheus, grows calm. The Furies surround him [Orpheus], bind his eyes, and return Eurydice to him.' Then in a 'Pas de Deux', its outer sections for strings alone, Orpheus leads Eurydice out

of Tartarus, until 'Orpheus tears the bandage from his eyes. Eurydice falls dead' – a climactic moment marked only by a sudden crescendo and a two-beat silence. An 'Interlude', with minatory brass, precedes a 'Pas d'Action' in which the Bacchantes, frenzied female followers of the god Bacchus or Dionysus, 'attack Orpheus, seize him and tear him to pieces'.

In the short final scene, 'Orpheus's Apotheosis', Orpheus's father the sun-god Apollo appears. 'He wrests the lyre from Orpheus and raises his song heavenwards.' The descending harp scales of the opening return, now accompanying three-part counterpoint on horns and trumpet; but then the scales turn upwards, and the harp emerges briefly as a soloist. As Stravinsky commented to a friend, 'Orpheus is dead, the song is gone, but the accompaniment goes on.'

Programme notes © Anthony Burton

Petrushka [original version]

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Symphonies of Wind Instruments

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Orpheus

© 1948 by Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd

VLADIMIR JUROWSKI *conductor*

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One of today's most sought-after conductors, acclaimed worldwide for his incisive musicianship and adventurous artistic commitment, Vladimir Jurowski was born in Moscow

and studied at the Music Academies of Dresden and Berlin. In 1995 he made his international debut at the Wexford Festival conducting Rimsky-Korsakov's *May Night*, and the same year saw his debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, with *Nabucco*.

Jurowski was appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 2003, becoming Principal Conductor in 2007. He also holds the titles of Principal Artist of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Artistic Director of the Russian State Academic Symphony Orchestra and in 2017 becomes Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin. 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).

He is a regular guest with many leading orchestras in Europe and North America, including the Berlin and New York philharmonic orchestras; the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra; The Philadelphia Orchestra; The Cleveland Orchestra; the Boston, San Francisco and Chicago symphony orchestras; the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Leipzig Gewandhausorchester, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Staatskapelle Dresden and Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

His opera engagements have included *Rigoletto*, *Jenůfa*, *The Queen of Spades*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Metropolitan Opera, New York; *Parsifal* and *Wozzeck* at Welsh National Opera; *War and Peace* at the Opéra national de Paris; *Eugene Onegin* at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan; *Ruslan and Ludmila* at the Bolshoi Theatre; *Moses und Aron* at Komische Oper Berlin and *Iolanta* and *Die Teufel von Loudun* at Semperoper Dresden, and numerous operas at Glyndebourne including *Otello*, *Macbeth*, *Falstaff*, *Tristan and Isolde*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Peter Eötvös's *Love and Other Demons*, *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, which won the 2015 BBC Music Magazine Opera Award.

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, trail-blazing 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. Vladimir Jurowski was appointed the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor in March 2003, and became Principal Conductor in September 2007.

The Orchestra is based at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall in London, where it has been Resident Orchestra since 1992, giving around 30 concerts a season. 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 LPO Principal Conductors from Beecham and Boult, through Haitink, Solti and Tennstedt, to Masur and Jurowski. lpo.org.uk



IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971)

34:35

Petrushka: burlesque in four scenes (1911 version)

- 01 10:06 Scene I: The Shrovetide Fair
02 04:06 Scene II: In Petrushka's Cell
03 06:55 Scene III: In the Moor's Cell
04 13:28 Scene IV: The Shrovetide Fair (evening)

05 **09:04**

Symphonies of Wind Instruments (original 1920 version)

30:29

Orpheus: ballet in three scenes

- 06 02:42 Scene I: Orpheus weeps for Eurydice
07 03:13 Scene I: Air de Danse
08 02:13 Scene I: Dance of the Angel of Death
09 02:04 Scene I: Interlude
10 03:03 Scene II: Dance of the Furies
11 02:36 Scene II: Air de Danse (Orpheus)
12 01:05 Scene II: Interlude
13 01:41 Scene II: Air de Danse (conclusion)
14 05:04 Scene II: Pas d'action
15 01:26 Scene II: Pas de deux
16 02:18 Scene II: Interlude
17 03:04 Scene III: Orpheus's Apotheosis

VLADIMIR JUROWSKI *conductor*

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Pieter Schoeman *leader*

Recorded live at **SOUTHBANK CENTRE'S ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL, London**