

Mastering Equipment Used In Our Recordings

Digital: Digital Audio Denmark AX24 Analog to Digital Converter

RME HDSPe AES used for digital I/O

Weiss Saracon Sample Rate Conversion Software

Weiss POW-r Dithering Software

Analog: Studer 810 Reel to Reel with JRF Magnetics Custom Z Heads & Siltech wiring

Turntable: VPI Classic with Benz Wood Phono Cartridge

Phono Pre-Amp: Emotive Audio Custom

Aria tape head pre-amp by ATR Services

Cables: Purist Audio Design, Pure Note, Siltech

Power Cords: Purist Audio Design, Essential Sound Products

Vibration Control: Symposium Acoustics Rollerblocks, Ultra platforms, Svelte shelves

Sonic Studio CD.1 Professional CD Burner using Mitsui Gold Archival CD's

For the Stravinsky omni KM83s across the front of the orchestra

Used for transfer is the original 16 bit master on Betamax converted to analog using a Sony PCM501ES Digital processor feeding a Digital Audio Denmark analog to digital converter and converted to 24/192 resolution.

Recorded at Jones Hall, Houston, Texas, 1987

For the Messiaen original broadcast mastered on analog 1/2 track tape, 15 ips, with dbx type I encoding (Original analog tape no longer available)

Four microphones were used 2 Neumann KM83s and 2 Neumann KM84s.

Used for transfer is the archive 16 bit backup on Betamax converted to analog using a Sony PCM501ES Digital processor feeding a Digital Audio Denmark analog to digital converter and converted to 24/192 resolution.

Recorded at Jones Hall, Houston, Texas 1979

Stravinsky Le sacre du printemps

Houston Symphony Orchestra

Christoph Eschenbach Conducting

Live Recording

Messiaen L'Ascension

Houston Symphony Orchestra

Erich Bergel Conducting

Live Recording



Stravinsky's ground-breaking ballet describes primitive fertility rites that ultimately call upon an initiate to dance herself to death as a sacrifice to Nature and renewal. The music's innovative complex rhythmic structures, timbres, and use of dissonance have made it a seminal Twentieth Century composition. In 1973, composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein said of one passage, "That page is sixty years old, but it's never been topped for sophisticated handling of primitive rhythms...," and of the work as a whole, "...it's also got the best dissonances anyone ever thought up, and the best asymmetries and polytonalities and polyrhythms and whatever else you care to name." In two parts, *The Adoration of the Earth* and *The Exalted Sacrifice*, Stravinsky ballet utilizes an interlocking system of harmony, demanding that asymmetrical diatonic elements be juxtaposed against symmetrical non-diatonic elements, creating a fascinating sound web of exotic tension and primal energy. Stravinsky also asked his chosen instruments to play well out of their normal range, beginning with the bassoon solo that plays in an extremely high register. In his 1951–52 Charles Eliot Norton lectures, composer Aaron Copland characterized *The Rite of Spring* as the foremost orchestral achievement of the 20th century. Certainly, the work accrued a degree of popular fame—in spite of critical protests from Stravinsky himself—when Disney utilized an abridged version with Stokowski conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra for the volcanoes and dinosaur sequences of the 1940 animated film classic *Fantasia*.

Recorded live by Christoph Eschenbach in 1987, Stravinsky's still-daunting masterpiece has the Houston Symphony Orchestra displaying the full regalia of its color prowess, vibrant and impassioned, wild and frenzied. The Houston brass and battery, particularly, rise to spectacular heights of instrumental virtuosity to realize Eschenbach's driven account.

Olivier Messaien's *The Ascension* falls into four brief sections:

Majesté du Christ demandant sa gloire à son Père ("The majesty of Christ demanding its glory of the Father")

Alleluias sereins d'une âme qui désire le ciel ("Serene alleluias of a soul that longs for heaven")

Alleluia sur la trompette, alleluia sur la cymbale ("Alleluia on the trumpet, alleluia on the cymbal")

Prière du Christ montant vers son Père ("Prayer of Christ ascending towards his Father")

An organist and ornithologist, Olivier Messaien (1908-1992) was also confirmed in his faith as a Catholic, though his musical influences derived from exotic sources, like Hindu melodies and early Greek scale systems. His attempt to represent the numinous ecstasy of his religious fervor found a complement in his physical ability to equate sounds with specific colors and aural synesthesia. We can distinctly hear the influence of bird calls and musical representations of exalted radiance, as though St. Francis of Assisi were receiving God's immutable message through Nature's simple creatures and the Divine Light.

Romanian conductor Erich Bergel (1930-1998), like Christoph Eschenbach, enjoyed the tutelage of Herbert von Karajan. If Maestro Bergel's reading *The Ascension* (rec. 1979) does not bask in religious sentimentality, it certainly affords us the luxury of inward mystery as well as those brass expletives of confirmed revelation. Rhythmically complex, colorist and fascinating, the score achieves a consistent level of exaltation, whether pantheistic or personally sublime. Messaien's setting of the first and last movements within the context of Christ's high-priestly prayer from St John chapter 17 reminds us that the process of *Ascension* began with the climbing of the hill of Golgotha and the soldiers' raising Christ on the Cross (And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men into me). And by the last movement, we feel as though the force of gravity itself has been vanquished by faith.

Stravinsky

Le sacre du printemps

Houston Symphony Orchestra/Christoph Eschenbach Conducting/Live Recording

First Part: Adoration of the Earth

- 1) Introduction
- 2) The Augurs of Spring: Dances of the Young Girls
- 3) Ritual of Abduction
- 4) Spring Rounds
- 5) Games of the Two Rival Tribes
- 6) Procession of the Oldest and Wisest One
- 7) The Kiss of the Earth
- 8) The Dancing Out of the Earth

Second Part: The Exalted Sacrifice

- 9) Introduction
- 10) Mystic Circle of the Young Girls
- 11) The Naming and Honoring of the Chosen One
- 12) Evocation of the Ancestors OR Ancestral Spirits
- 13) Ritual Action of the Ancestors
- 14) Sacrificial Dance

Messiaen L'Ascension

Houston Symphony Orchestra/Erich Bergel Conducting/Live Recording

- 15) Majesté du Christ demandant sa gloire à son Père
- 16) Alleluias sereins d'une âme qui désire le ciel
- 17) Alleluia sur la trompette, alleluia sur la cymbale
- 18) Prière du Christ montant vers son Père

Please Note: In the interest of preserving the superb sound quality of these historic recordings, they have been preserved in their original, pristine state for maximum fidelity. Transferred from commercially released, analog reel-to-reel tapes (some of which are more than 50 years old), the recordings themselves can be subject to certain "artifacts" which are an inseparable part of the original analog recording process, such as tape "hiss" or other defects, and these may be audible on certain music tracks.

Because your CD or DVD-A was individually "burned" in order to realize superior sound quality to stamped, mass-produced versions, microscopic cosmetic blemishes may be visible. Please regard these tiny marks as evidence of the "human touch" in the care and individual attention that each and every HDTT disc receives during its very demanding manufacturing process.

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