

MASTERING EQUIPMENT

*Merging Technologies Pyramix Digital Workstation
Antelope Audio Isochrone 10M Rubidium Atomic Clock
Hapi Digital Converter*

Weiss Saracon Sample Rate Conversion Software

Weiss POW-r Dithering Software

*Analog: Studer 810 Reel to Reel with
Custom by JRF Magnetics & Siltech wiring
Nagra 4S custom by JRF Magnetics*

*Aria tape head pre-amp by ATR Services
Dehavilland Tape Head Pre-amp
Retro Instruments 2A3 Dual-channel tube program equalizer*

*Power Sources: PS Audio P10 Power Plant
and Power Plant 300*

*Power Cords: Purist Audio Design, Essential Sound Products,
Speltz Anti-Cables*

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

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



HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS

Stravinsky conducts The Firebird Ballet (Complete)

IGOR STRAVINSKY / COLUMBIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Facts about this Recording

Transferred from a Columbia 4-track tape

Date of Recording: 1961

Producer, Mixed By – John McClure



The Firebird ballet was the first of Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes productions to have an all-original score composed for it. Alexandre Benois wrote in 1910 that he had two years earlier suggested to Diaghilev the production of a Russian nationalist ballet an idea all the more attractive given both the newly awakened French passion for Russian dance and also the ruinously expensive costs of staging opera. The inspiration of mixing the mythical Firebird with the unrelated Russian tale of Koschei the Deathless possibly came from a popular child's verse by Yakov Polonsky, "A Winter's Journey" (Zimniy put, 1844), which includes the lines:

And in my dreams I see myself on a wolf's back
Riding along a forest path
To do battle with a sorcerer-tsar (Koschei)
In that land where a princess sits under lock and key,
Pining behind massive walls.
There gardens surround a palace all of glass;
There Firebirds sing by night
And peck at golden fruit.

Benois collaborated with the choreographer Michel Fokine, drawing from several books of Russian fairy tales including the collection of Alexander Afanasyev, to concoct a story involving the Firebird and the evil magician Koschei.

Diaghilev approached the Russian composer Anatoly Lyadov (1855-1914) to write the music. There is no evidence, however, despite the much-repeated story that Lyadov was slow to start composing the work, that he ever accepted the commission to begin with. There is evidence to suggest that Nikolai Tcherepnin had previously started composing music for the ballet—music which became *The Enchanted Kingdom*—but that Tcherepnin, for reasons unexplained, withdrew from the project after completing only one scene. Diaghilev eventually transferred the commission to the 28-year-old Stravinsky.

The ballet was premiered by the Ballets Russes in Paris on 25 June 1910, conducted by Gabriel Pierné. Even before the first performance, the company sensed a huge success in the making, and every performance of the ballet in that first production, as Karsavina recalled, met a "crescendo" of success. The critics were ecstatic, praising the ballet for what they saw as an ideal symbiosis between decor, choreography and music: "The old-gold vermiculato of the fantastic back-cloth seems to have been invented to a formula identical with that of the shimmering web of the orchestra" enthused Henri Ghéon in *Nouvelle revue française* (1910). The scenery was designed by Alexander Golovine and the costumes by Léon Bakst.

For Stravinsky, it was a major breakthrough both with the public and with the critics, Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi in particular hailing Stravinsky as the legitimate heir to The Mighty Handful. The Firebird's success also secured Stravinsky's position as Diaghilev's star composer, and there were immediate talks of a sequel, leading to the composition of *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring*. "Mark him well—said Sergei Diaghilev to Tamara Karsavina, who was dancing the title role—he is a man on the eve of celebrity..."

Stravinsky used several ideas from works by Rimsky-Korsakov in his score. Koschei's "Infernal Dance" borrows the highly chromatic scale Rimsky-Korsakov created for the character Chernobog in his opera *Mlada*. The *Khorovod*, meanwhile, uses the same folk tune Rimsky-Korsakov presented in his *Sinfonietta*, Op. 31.

The Firebird has been restaged by many choreographers, including George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins (co-coreographers), Graeme Murphy, Alexei Ratmansky, and Yuri Possokhov.

The ballet was revived in 1934 by Colonel Wassily de Basil's company, the Ballets Russes de Monte-Carlo, in a production staged in London, using the original decor and costumes from Diaghilev's company. The company subsequently performed the ballet in Australia, during the 1936-37 tour.

The work was staged by George Balanchine for the New York City Ballet in 1949 with Maria Tallchief as the Firebird, with scenery and costumes by Marc Chagall, and was kept in the repertory until 1965. The ballet was restaged by George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins in 1970 for the New York City Ballet with elaborated scenery by Chagall, and with new costumes by Karinska based on Chagall's for the 1972 Stravinsky Festival that introduced Gelsey Kirkland as the Firebird.



Stravinsky, sketched by Picasso

Stravinsky conducts

The Firebird Ballet (Complete)

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Introduction
Kashchei's Enchanted Garden
Appearance of the Firebird Pursued By Ivan Tsarevich
Dance of the Firebird
Ivan Tsarevich Captures the Firebird
Supplication of the Firebird
Game of the Princesses With the Golden Apples
Sudden Appearance of Ivan Tsarevich

Round Dance of the Princesses
Daybreak
Magic Carillon, Appearance of Kashchei's Guardian Monsters and Capture of Ivan Tsarevich
Dance of Kashchei's Retinue Under the Spell of the Firebird
Infernal Dance of All Kashchei's Subjects
Lullaby of the Firebird
Collapse of Kashchei's Palace and Dissolution of All Enchantments -
Reanimation of the Petrified Prisoners - General Rejoicing

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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