NAXOS

STRAVINSKY

The Firebird

(Complete original version)

Petrushka

(Revised 1947 version)

Philharmonia Orchestra

Robert Craft

THE ROBERT CRAFT COLLECTION

THE MUSIC OF IGOR STRAVINSKY Vol. 2

Philharmonia Orchestra • Robert Craft, Conductor

THE FIREBIRD (1910)

BALLET IN TWO SCENES

First Recording of the Complete Original Version

1	Introduction	2:34
2	Scene I. Night. Kastchei's Enchanted Garden	1:40
3	The Firebird enters, pursued by Ivan Tsarevich	2:16
4	The Firebird's Dance	1:20
5	Ivan Tsarevich captures the Firebird	0:55
6	The Firebird begs to be released	5:27
7	Entrance of the Thirteen Enchanted Princesses	2:17
8	The Princesses play with the golden apples (Scherzo)	2:31
9	Ivan Tsarevich appears	0:59
10	The Princesses' Khorovod (Round Dance)	4:37
11	Daybreak	1:28
12	Ivan Tsarevich, entering Kastchei's palace, sets off its Magic Carillon, alerting Kastchei's Monster-Guardians, who capture him	1:35
13	The entrance of Kastchei the Immortal	1:08
14	Dialogue between Kastchei and Ivan Tsarevich	1:03
15	The Princesses plead for mercy	1:04
16	The Firebird enters	0:36
17	Dance of Kastchei's retinue under the Firebird's magic spell	0:49
18	Infernal Dance of Kastchei and his subjects under the Firebird's magic spell	4:38
19	The Firebird's Lullaby	2:29
20	Kastchei awakens	1:09
21	Kastchei's death	1:20
22	Scene II. Kastchei's spell is broken, his palace disappears, and the Petrified Knights return to life. General Thanksgiving. The Marriage and Coronation of Prince Ivan as Tsar and of the Princess of Unearthly Beauty as Tsarina.	2:55

PETRUSHKA (1911, Revised 1947)

A BURLESQUE IN FOUR SCENES

23	**First Tableau: The Shrove-Tide Fair**	**5:12**
24	**The Mountebank (Flute solo) [58]**	**1:49**
25	**Russian Dance [64]**	**2:42**
26	**Second Tableau: In Petrushka's Cell [93].** ***Impetuoso***	**4:24**
27	**Third Tableau: The Blackamoor [120]**	**2:26**
28	**The Ballerina (Cornet solo)**	**0:45**
29	**Valse: Ballerina and Blackamoor.** ***Lento cantabile***	**3:12**
30	**Fourth Tableau: The Shrove-Tide Fair [161]**	**1:09**
31	**The Dance of the Wet-Nurses [170]**	**2:33**
32	**Peasant with Bear (Tuba solo) [188]**	**1:23**
33	**Gypsies and a Rake Vendor [196]**	**1:10**
34	**Dance of the Coachmen [213]**	**2:02**
35	**Masqueraders [234]**	**1:35**
36	**The Scuffle: Blackamoor and Petrushka**	**0:51**
37	**Death of Petrushka [258]**	**0:44**
38	**Police and the Juggler [260]**	**1:13**
39	**Vociferation of Petrushka's Ghost [265]**	**0:51**

The Firebird (1910)

For the first performance of *Firebird,* June 25th, 1910, the Ballets Russes programme of the Théâtre National de l'Opéra, Paris, published the following synopsis:

> *The Firebird,* one of the most popular Russian folktales, begins when Ivan Tsarevich, the crown prince, sees a marvellous bird of flaming gold. He pursues but fails to catch it, and only succeeds in snatching one of its glittering feathers. The chase has taken him into the domain of Kastchei the Immortal, demi-god of evil, who attempts to capture him and, as he has already done with many valiant knights and princes, turns him to stone. Kastchei's daughters and thirteen princesses intercede for Ivan Tsarevich and try to save him. Finally the Firebird appears, breaks Kastchei's spell, and rescues everyone. Ivan Tsarevich and the knights, delivered from their fate, seize the golden apples from Kastchei's garden.

This neglects to say that the ballet concludes with the coronation and wedding of Ivan Tsarevich, which was Stravinsky's idea, and it does not explain that the Firebird's supernatural powers are stronger than the demonic powers of Kastchei.

Michel Fokine, who choreographed the ballet, gave a greatly amplified summary of the plot, from which we learn that Ivan first sees the Firebird at moonlight, is blinded by her lucency, prepares to shoot her (!), and on second impulse to take her alive. She flies to the tree with the golden apples in Kastchei's garden, where Ivan captures her. She pleads with him, and he releases her, whereupon she gives him one of her fiery feathers, telling him that it will prove useful to him. He places the talisman in his tunic and starts to leave. The door of Kastchei's castle opens and twelve beautiful princesses, followed by the Princess of Unearthly Beauty, steal out and into the garden where they play with the golden apples. Unearthly Beauty's apple rolls into a bush, where Ivan is hiding. He retrieves it, bows to her, and returns the apple. The frightened princesses, though attracted by his beauty, modesty, and gallant manners, shyly withdraw. Unearthly Beauty falls in love with him and he with her.

The approaching dawn warns the princesses to return to Kastchei's palace. Ivan follows but Unearthly Beauty stops him, saying that it would mean his death. Outside the wall, he realises that he cannot live without her and returns to search for her. Hacking at the gate with his sword, he sets off the magic carillon, Kastchei's alarm, whereupon fiendish *bolibotchki* and *kikimoras* stream out of the castle and capture him. Kastchei appears and questions his prisoner, who respectfully doffs his hat, then, on beholding the sorcerer's hideous visage, spits at him. Ivan is placed against the wall, constructed of petrified knights, and Kastchei begins the incantation that will turn him to stone as well. Suddenly Ivan remembers the Firebird's feather. He waves it and she appears, casting a spell over Kastchei and his demons and forcing them to dance until they fall exhausted to the ground. Meanwhile, Ivan tries to rescue Unearthly Beauty, but the Firebird leads him to a chest concealed in a tree stump. This contains an egg that represents Kastchei's soul and the secret of his immortality. When Ivan squeezes the egg, Kastchei squirms. When Ivan tosses it from hand to hand, Kastchei flies from side to side of the stage. When Ivan smashes it on the ground, Kastchei falls dead. His kingdom of evil disappears and is replaced by a resplendent city. Ivan and Unearthly Beauty are married and crowned Tsar and Tsarina.

The ballet world is indebted to Sergey Dyagilev above all for discovering Stravinsky's genius and, on the strength of the young composer's three-minute *Fireworks* (1908), entrusting him with the commission

for this first modern ballet. Stravinsky began the composition in December 1909, interrupting work on his opera *The Nightingale*. The sketch-score was finished in March, the reduction for piano two-hands on 3rd April, the full score on 18th May.

To create advance publicity for the Paris première, Dyagilev invited the French critic R. Brussel to an audition of the score in St Petersburg, played by Stravinsky at the piano. Brussel wrote that:

> *We all sat in the little ground-floor room on Zamiatin Perenlok [Dyagilev's St Petersburg apartment] … The composer, young [27], slim, and uncommunicative, with vague, meditative eyes, and lips set firm in an energetic-looking face, was at the piano. But the moment he began to play, the modest, dimly lighted room glowed with a dazzling radiance. By the end of the first scene, I was conquered: by the last I was lost in admiration. The manuscript on the music-rest, scored over with fine pencillings, revealed a masterpiece.*

Tamara Karsavina, who danced the title rôle at the première and for many years subsequently, recalled that:

> *Stravinsky often came early to the theatre before a rehearsal began in order to play for me, over and over again, some specially difficult passage. I felt grateful, not only for the help he gave me, but for the manner in which he gave it. For there was no impatience in him with my slow understanding; no condescension of a master of his craft towards the slender equipment of my musical education. It was interesting to watch him at the piano. His body seemed to vibrate with his own rhythm; punctuating staccatos with his head, he made the pattern of his music forcibly clear to me, more so than the counting of bars would have done.*

Stravinsky arrived in Paris for rehearsals on 7th June. During them, he revised and corrected extensively, leaving only a few pages without his red ink, or pencil, changes. During one of the rehearsals, Dyagilev was heard to say: "Mark the young composer well; he is a man on the eve of celebrity." The prediction proved true. The première, at the Paris Opéra, was an enormous success. Extra performances had to be scheduled and the season extended into the summer. Stravinsky became an international figure overnight. Claude Debussy praised the music and invited him to lunch with Erik Satie, who photographed the two of them together. But before many years Stravinsky was suffering from the universal popularity of the piece, and its use all his life as a stick with which to beat his newer, ground-breaking later music.

One of the many differences between the present recording and its predecessors is the restoration of two long, valveless trumpets *on stage,* each playing a single note. The clarion sonority of these instruments standing out above the entire orchestra, a thrilling effect in all likelihood heard for the first time since 1910 in this recording.

Petrushka (1911; revised 1947)

A cliché of Stravinsky criticism is that *Firebird,* Stravinsky's most popular work, is also his least characteristic. Already in *Petrushka* (1911) he turned against the heart-on-sleeve expressiveness and literary effusiveness of the earlier ballet (*"con tenerezza," "lamentoso," "timidamente," "dolente," "con maligna giola"*). But musical imagery is similarly tied to the storyline in *Petrushka,* and no less closely. The principal difference between the two pieces in theatrical terms is that *Firebird* remains a naive, sweet, childlike fairy tale, while *Petrushka* is a drama of great power and originality.

The Scenario

First Tableau. *The Admiralty Square, St Petersburg, in the 1830s, a sunny winter day during Carnival Week.*

The scene shows a segment of the Shrove-tide Fair. Crowds of people are strolling about the stage—common people, gentlefolk, a group of drunkards arm-in-arm, children clustering around the peepshow, women around the stalls. A street musician appears with a hurdy-gurdy. He is accompanied by a dancer. Just as she starts to dance, a man with a music-box and another dancer turn up on the opposite side of the stage. After performing simultaneously for a short while, the rivals give up the struggle and retire. Suddenly a Mountebank comes out through the curtains of a marionette theatre. The curtains are drawn back to reveal three puppets on their stands—Petrushka, the Ballerina, and the Blackamoor. The Mountebank charms them into life with his flute, and they begin to dance—at first jigging on their hooks in the little theatre, but then, to general astonishment, stepping down from the theatre and dancing among the public in the open square.

Second Tableau. *Petrushka's Cell. The black walls are covered with stars and a crescent moon. Devils painted on a gold ground decorate the panels of the folding doors that lead into the Ballerina's Cell. On one of the walls is a portrait of the Mountebank scowling*. While the Mountebank's magic has endowed all three puppets with human feelings and emotions, it is Petrushka who feels and suffers most. Bitterly conscious of his grotesque appearance, he feels himself to be an outsider, and resents his complete dependence on his cruel master. He consoles himself by falling in love with the Ballerina, but when she visits him in his cell, his uncouth antics frighten her and she flees. In his despair, he curses the Mountebank and hurls himself at his portrait, but succeeds only in tearing a hole through the cardboard wall of his cell.

Third Tableau. *The Blackamoor's Cell. The wallpaper is patterned with green palm trees and colourful fruits on a red ground. On the right, a door leads into the Ballerina's cell*. The Blackamoor, in a magnificent costume, is reclining on a divan and playing with a coconut, shaking it, then superstitiously kneeling before it. Though he is brutal and stupid, the Ballerina finds him attractive and quickly captivates him with her wiles. Their love scene is interrupted by the sudden arrival of the furiously jealous Petrushka. The Blackamoor kicks him out.

Fourth Tableau. *The Fair, as in the First Tableau*. The nighttime festivities of the Carnival are now at a peak. A group of wet-nurses dance together. A peasant playing a pipe crosses the stage leading a performing bear. A bibulous merchant, accompanied by two gypsies, scatters handfuls of banknotes among the crowd. A group of coachmen strike up a dance and are joined by the nurses. Finally, a number of masqueraders—devil, goat, and pig—rush onto the scene while Bengal flares are let off in the wings. At this moment there is a commotion in the Mountebank's theatre, the rivalry between the puppets having taken a fatal turn. Petrushka rushes out from behind the curtain, pursued by the Blackamoor, whom the Ballerina tries to restrain. The Blackamoor strikes down Petrushka with his scimitar. Snow begins to fall, and Petrushka dies, surrounded by the astonished crowed. The Mountebank appears and reassures the bystanders that Petrushka is only a puppet with a wooden head and body stuffed with sawdust. The crowd disperses as the night grows darker, and the Mountebank is left behind. But as he starts to drag the puppet off the stage, he is startled to see Petrushka's ghost appear on the roof of the little theatre, jeering and mocking at everyone whom the Mountebank has fooled.

The growth of Stravinsky's musical imagination and technical mastery during the months following *The Firebird* is one of the wonders of twentieth-century music. *Firebird* revealed an original musical genius in the process of discovering itself, but the score is overtly influenced by the composer's teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov. In contrast, *Petrushka* is entirely new, harmonically, rhythmically, and instrumentally innovative on every page. Common to both ballets is the reliance on folk-music melody. The long-line tunes in the *Wet Nurses* and the *Dance of the Coachmen* come from even more popular sources than the *Ronde* and the

Berceuse in *Firebird*.

But considered as a theatre piece, *Firebird* is devoid of real characters and psychological dimensions, and its plot is the flimsiest of fairy-tales. Moreover, the time-scales of the two ballets are wholly dissimilar. The atmospheric Introduction to *Firebird* seems protracted in comparison to the *in medias res* beginning of *Petrushka,* and the dances in the earlier ballet are detachable set-pieces, or at any rate more so than in *Petrushka,* with the exception of the *Russian Dance* — which explains why Stravinsky was able to extract three suites from *Firebird,* but none from *Petrushka*.

The drama in *Petrushka* takes place in Tableaux Two and Three. The outer world, that of the stage spectators and, at the end, of the theatre audience, is conjured in the First and Fourth Tableaux. The interaction of the two at the dénouement reveals that the eternal triangle is the essential geometry of the puppet world as it often is of our own. While the Ballerina and the Moor are mechanical figments, however, Petrushka is more than that, though exactly what remains unresolved in the ironic ending.

Compared to the lush orchestra of *Firebird,* the sonorities of *Petrushka* are brittle (the *Russian Dance*) and evanescent (the Mountebank's music and the ending). Moreover, *Petrushka* annexes new harmonic territory. The famous "*Petrushka* chord," which combines the triads of C major and, remote from it, F sharp major, introduces bitonality, and though Stravinsky was not deeply interested in exploring its possibilities in his later music, he did make use of it on a small scale in, for example, *Circus Polka* and *Danses concertantes*. At the end of the Third Tableau, when the Moor evicts Petrushka, the music is in two keys, as it is again at the end of the ballet when the Moor pursues, and this time kills him.

The idea of an inner and an outer, binary world, of two existential prisons, is complemented in other aspects of the work. In the First and Third Tableaux, two melodies are juggled in two different meters simultaneously, first with the competing hurdy-gurdy and music-box, and second, in the Third Tableau, when the Ballerina's *Valse* and its bass accompaniment are in two different keys.

Robert Craft

Philharmonia Orchestra

The Philharmonia Orchestra, continuing under the renowned German maestro Christoph von Dohnanyi as Principal Conductor, has consolidated its central position in British musical life, not only in London, where it is Resident Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall, but also through regional residencies in Bedford, Leicester and Basingstoke, and more recently Bristol. In recent seasons the orchestra has not only won several major awards but also received unanimous critical acclaim for its innovative programming policy and commitment to new music. Established in 1945 primarily for recordings, the Philharmonia Orchestra went on to attract some of this century's greatest conductors, such as Furtwängler, Richard Strauss, Toscanini, Cantelli and von Karajan. Otto Klemperer was the first of many outstanding Principal Conductors throughout the orchestra's history, including Maazel, Muti, Sinopoli, Giulini, Davis, Ashkenazy and Salonen. As the world's most recorded symphony orchestra with well over a thousand releases to its credit, the Philharmonia Orchestra also plays a prominent rôle as one of the United Kingdom's most energetic musical ambassadors, touring extensively in addition to prestigious residencies in Paris, Athens and New York. The Philharmonia Orchestra's unparalleled international reputation continues to attract the cream of Europe's talented young players to its ranks. This, combined with its brilliant roster of conductors and soloists, and the unique warmth of sound and vitality it brings to a vast range of repertoire, ensures performances of outstanding calibre greeted by the highest critical praise.

Robert Craft

Robert Craft, the noted conductor and widely respected writer and critic on music, literature, and culture, holds a unique place in world music of today. He is in the process of recording the complete works of Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Webern for Naxos. He has twice won the Grand Prix du Disque as well as the Edison Prize for his landmark recordings of Schoenberg, Webern, and Varèse. He has also received a special award from the American Academy and National Institute of Arts and Letters in recognition of his "creative work" in literature. In 2002 he was awarded the International Prix du Disque Lifetime Achievement Award, Cannes Music Festival.

Robert Craft has conducted and recorded with most of the world's major orchestras in the United States, Europe, Russia, Japan, Korea, Mexico, South America, Australia, and New Zealand. He is the first American to have conducted Berg's *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, and his original Webern album enabled music lovers to become acquainted with this composer's then little-known music. He led the world premières of Stravinsky's later masterpieces: *In Memoriam: Dylan Thomas*, *Vom Himmel hoch*, *Agon*, *The Flood*, *Abraham and Isaac*, *Variations*, *Introitus*, and *Requiem Canticles*. Craft's historic association with Igor Stravinsky, as his constant companion, co-conductor, and musical confidant, over a period of more than twenty years, contributed to his understanding of the composer's intentions in the performance of his music. He remains the primary source for our perspectives on Stravinsky's life and work.

In addition to his special command of Stravinsky's and Schoenberg's music, Robert Craft is well known for his recordings of works by Monteverdi, Gesualdo, Schütz, Bach, and Mozart. He is also the author of more than two dozen books on music and the arts, including the highly acclaimed *Stravinsky: Chronicle of a Friendship*; *The Moment of Existence: Music, Literature and the Arts, 1990–1995*; *Places: A Travel Companion for Music and Art Lovers*; *An Improbable Life: Memoirs; Memories and Commentaries*; and the forthcoming *Down a Path of Wonder: On Schoenberg, Webern, Stravinsky, Eliot, Auden, and Some Others (2005)*. He lives in Florida and New York.

NAXOS

STRAVINSKY: The Firebird • Petrushka

8.557500

This is the first recording of the Complete Original Version of Stravinsky's most popular work, *The Firebird*. Among the many differences between the present recording and its predecessors is the restoration of two long, valveless trumpets *on stage*, each playing a single note standing out above the entire orchestra. This is a thrilling effect in all likelihood heard for the first time since 1910 on this recording. Compared to the lush orchestra of *The Firebird*, the sonorities of *Petrushka* may seem brittle but harmonically, rhythmically, and instrumentally the work is innovative on every page, a drama of great power and originality.

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

Igor STRAVINSKY

(1882-1971)

The Firebird (1910)* — 44:52

Ballet in Two Scenes

1	Introduction	2:34
2-21	Scene I	39:22
22	Scene II	2:55

Petrushka (1911, Revised 1947) — 34:01

A Burlesque in Four Scenes

23-25	First Tableau	
26	Second Tableau	
27-29	Third Tableau	
30-39	Fourth Tableau	

Philharmonia Orchestra • Robert Craft

Recorded at Abbey Road Studios, London, England, on 27th & 29th November 1996 (Firebird) and 31st January & 1st February 1997 (Petrushka)
Producer: Gregory K. Squires • Engineers: Michael Sheady (Firebird) and Alex Marcou (Petrushka)
Editors: Richard Price (Firebird) and Wayne Hileman (Petrushka) • Booklet Notes: Robert Craft
Publishers: Schott Music International (Firebird)
Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd. (Petrushka)
Previously released on MusicMasters • *World première recording
Cover Picture: *Bird of Paradise (Jar-Ptiza), cover from a symbolist and artistic journal of Russian émigrés, published in Berlin, 1921-22 (colour litho)*
(Bibliothèque des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France / Bridgeman Art Library)

A full track list can be found on pages 2 and 3 of the booklet

NAXOS

DDD

8.557500

Playing Time
78:53

7 473313 25002 8

℗ 1997, 1998 & © 2005
Naxos Rights International Ltd.

Booklet notes in English
Made in Canada

www.naxos.com

NAXOS
STRAVINSKY: The Firebird • Petrushka
8.557500