

Les Ballets Russes Vol. 1 (2004)



Stravinsky - Le Sacre du Printemps - Tableaux de la Russie païenne en deux parties 1.1 Part one Introduction 03:32 1.2 Part One The Augurs of Spring 03:34 1.3 Part One Game of Abduction 01:23 1.4 Part One Spring Round Dances 03:53 1.5 Part One Games of the Rival Tribes 02:02 1.6 Part One Procession of the Sage 00:46 1.7 Part One The Sage 00:27 1.8 Part One Dance of the Earth 01:14 1.9 Part Two Introduction 04:59 1.10 Part Two Mystical Circles of the Young Girls 03:34 1.11 Part Two Glorification of the Chosen One 01:32 1.12 Part Two Evocation of the Ancestors 00:44 1.13 Part Two Ritual of the Ancestors 04:04 1.14 Part Two Sacrificial Dance 04:40 1.15 Debussy - Jeux - Dance Poem 18:46 1.16 Dukas - Fanfare pour précéder "La Péri" 02:35 1.17 La Péri - Dance Poem 19:00
SWR-Sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden und Freiburg Sylvain Cambreling – conductor

The Ballets Russes was established in 1909 by the Russian impresario Serge Diaghilev. The Ballets Russes created a sensation in Western Europe because of the great vitality and creativity of Russian ballet compared to what was current in France at the time. It became the most influential ballet company in the 20th century, and that influence, has lasted to this day. Featuring sets and costumes designed by such artists as Braque, Picasso, Dali, and Utrillo and music by composers that included Debussy, Milhaud, Poulenc, Prokofiev, Ravel, Satie, Respighi, Richard Strauss, and, most notably, Igor Stravinsky, whom Diaghilev spotted when he was virtually unknown and whose career he launched - the Ballets Russes became the most influential ballet company in the 20th century, and that influence, has lasted to this day.

Hänssler Classic is proud to present the first in a series of recordings dedicated to the music composed for the Ballets Russe in performances under the expert musical direction of Sylvain Cambreling. --- haenssler-classic.de

The first volume of Hänssler Classic's series Les Ballets Russes commences with music from three of the legendary company's most famous productions -- Igor Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps*, Claude Debussy's *Jeux*, and Paul Dukas' *La Péri* -- though these may not be everyone's idea of legendary performances. Sylvain Cambreling and the SWR Sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden und Freiburg give fairly imprecise readings of these scores, yet with intermittent sections of energy and vitality, so the album is a mixed bag. The most disappointing selection has to be *Le Sacre du printemps*, which has been played much more tightly and with better sound by many other conductors and orchestras, so Cambreling's interpretation was already up against tough competition before he even lifted his baton. All the same, there is no excuse for the loose rhythms and sluggish tempos that dominate this slack run-through, especially since the orchestra demonstrates it has the chops to play accurately and aggressively in the *Glorification de l'Élué* and *Danse sacrée* sections. Debussy's impressionistic *Jeux* seems somewhat better suited to the vague and dreamy treatment that didn't work in *Le Sacre*, so it fares best of the pieces here. Dukas' *La Péri* is similarly suited to the fluid style of playing used in *Jeux*, but its sound is somewhat murky and in and out of soft focus, so the performance seems to lack clarity. With these problems in mind, the listener should choose this disc only in the interest of collecting the series. Otherwise, superior performances of all three works are available on other labels. ---Blair Sanderson, Rovi

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