



Igor Stravinsky

# THE RITE OF SPRING

Scenes from Pagan Russia

Part 1: The Adoration of the Earth

Part 2: The Sacrifice



Conductor: Adrian Brown

## Introduction to Part 1

A folk melody on high bassoon presages the arrival of Spring, *the rebirth of nature after its death-like winter sleep.*

## Prophecies of Spring (Dances of the Young Girls)

A crunching dissonance hammered out by strings and horns captures Stravinsky's description of *the violent Russian spring that began in an hour and was like the whole earth cracking.*

Lyrical horn and flute solos recall the opening folk melody, but the underlying pulse grows again to a relentless climax.

## Ritual of Abduction

Bass drum beats start the chase, marked by shivering string tremolo. Hunting calls in the horns add to the drama.

## Round Dances of Spring

Flute trills over a plaintive clarinet duet lead to the sombre Round dance, at first hypnotic, then blazing with passion and energy. The plaintive duet returns with alto flute and clarinet.

## Ritual of the Rival Tribes

Horns and bass instruments take on the rest of the orchestra!

## Procession of the Sage

Horns and Tubas mark the pace as the wise elder is carried in stately procession from the village to the sacred hill.

## Adoration of the Earth

After a hushed pause, the sage descends to plant *a sacred kiss on the new flowering earth.*

## Dance of the Earth

*The crowd is seized with a mystic terror and celestial joy.*

## Introduction to Part 2

Subdued but glowing orchestral colours introduce the *celestial mystery of The Sacrifice*.

## Mystic Circles of the Young Girls

Horns pass the melody to a host of string soloists as the *young virgins dance in circles on the sacred hill*. A shriek, then a repeated hammered chord announces the choice!

## Glorification of the Chosen One

A wild dance honours the sacrificial victim.

## Evocation of the Ancestors

A tympani strike and a low note held by the basses signals the next ritual. *The elders, clad in bearskin, evoke man's ancestor, the bear*.

## Rite of the Ancestors

A steady pulse from strings and drums mark the entrance of the Cor Anglais. The tension builds and there are bursts of terror from the brass as the bear stalks around the crowd. As the hubbub subsides, clarinet and bass clarinet solos lend an edge of panic to the steady pulse of the strings.

## Sacrificial Dance (the Chosen One)

The frenzied, stuttering rhythms express the desperation of the young girl as she dances herself to death to propitiate the god of spring.



---

2007-2008 concert season

**17th November 2007:**

- Delius:** The Walk to the Paradise Garden  
**Bloch:** Schelomo. (*Cello soloist, Alice McVeigh*)  
**Elgar:** Symphony No.2

**19th January 2008:**

- Schubert:** Rosamunde Overture  
**Strauss:** Duet Concertino  
*Soloists: Massimo Roman (Cl), Stephen Fuller (Bsn)*  
**Bruckner:** Symphony No.7

**8th March 2008:**

- Dvorak:** The Noonday Witch  
**Mendelssohn:** Violin Concerto  
**Tchaikovsky:** Symphony No.4

**17th May 2008:**

- Bax:** Tintagel  
**Arnold:** Inn of the Sixth Happiness  
**Holst:** The Planets

Seat prices:

£7.50 (stalls). Season tickets £22.50 (stalls), £27 (balcony, if available).

Cheques should be made payable to Bromley Symphony Orchestra, and sent with a self-addressed envelope to

Ticket Manager, 2 Scotts Avenue, Bromley BR2 0LQ,  
or phone (020) 8464 5869.