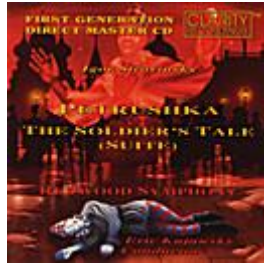


Mp3 Redwood Symphony Orchestra - Petrushka



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Stravinsky's theater pieces "Petrushka" and "The Soldier's Tale," a.k.a. L'Histoire du soldat." 13 MP3 Songs in this album (63:33) ! Related styles: CLASSICAL: Orchestral, CLASSICAL: Stravinsky People who are interested in Igor Stravinsky should consider this download. Details: The score was begun in Lausanne, Switzerland, in August 1910, and completed in Rome in May of 1911. Stravinsky was 28. Petrushka opened in Paris on June 13, 1911, with Vaslav Nijinsky in the title role. It was a smash success, with general agreement that the music, though perfectly suited for stage action, was too ugly and coarse to survive on its own merits. Time has decisively reversed that judgment. The First Tableau is set in the Shrove-tide Fair in 1830's St. Petersburg, on a winter day. Crowds of merrymakers mill about. An organ grinder competes with a music-box man. The crowd grows more and more exuberant. Suddenly two drummers silence the crowd and a Magician appears from behind a curtain. The impression his hocus-pocus makes on the gullible crowd is reflected in the mysterious mutterings of the orchestra. Then the Magician plays an insipid tune on his flute, and touches it to three puppets (Petrushka, the Ballerina and the Blackamoor) who have been revealed from behind a curtain. To everyone's astonishment, they begin to cavort without strings (the Russian Dance). The drums roll again, and there is a change of scene. In the Second Tableau, the setting shifts from the real world to the fantasy world of the puppets, all of whom have been endowed by the Magician with emotion. Petrushka feels and suffers the most. We see him kicked into his bare, prison-like room. At this point his despondent wail, the "Petrushka chord," is heard as an arpeggio in two clarinets. He curses and paws the walls, hoping to escape. The door opens and the vacuous Ballerina dances in. Petrushka, ugly and unwanted, has fallen in love with her, but she is repulsed by his grotesque antics and flees. In despair, Petrushka hurls himself at a portrait of the Magician, but only falls through a hole in the wall. The Third Tableau is the luxurious room of the

Blackamoor, who is lying on a divan playing with a coconut. He performs a posturing dance. The Ballerina enters playing a trumpet, and finds the brutal Blackamoor very romantic. The empty-headed banality of the music and of their mutual enchantment makes the tragedy of Petrushka all the more poignant. Consumed with jealousy, Petrushka bursts into the room, heralded by the screaming of muted trumpets, but is driven out by the Blackamoor. The scene returns to the festive crowd outside for the Fourth Tableau. Various dances overlap. A peasant plays a pipe and leads a bear walking on its hind legs. At the climax of the gaiety, Petrushka dashes from behind the curtain of the puppet theater, the Blackamoor in hot pursuit with his scimitar. Once again the worlds of reality and fantasy have merged. There is a fatal blow, and Petrushka falls with a broken skull (accompanied by the sound of a dropped tambourine). A policeman arrives with the Magician, who demonstrates that Petrushka was, after all, only made of wood and sawdust. The crowd disperses in the snowy dusk as the Magician drags off the lifeless puppet. Suddenly Petrushka's ghost appears above the theater, taunting and threatening (muted trumpets). The Magician drops the puppet in terror and flees into the darkness. Petrushka is a most remarkable theater piece, for seldom has music been wedded so completely and logically to dramatic action. The harmonic vocabulary of the work is highly complex, with the frequent simultaneous use of clashing triads a tritone apart (the "Petrushka chord") -- very revolutionary in 1911. While the Firebird ballet was still largely Rimskian in idiom, Petrushka is Stravinsky's first mature work, in which his style for the first time came to fruition. It is also one of the great musical works of the twentieth century. Dr. Eric Kujawsky

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