



TRIBUNE DE GENÈVE
FRIDAY NOVEMBER 24TH, 2000
CULTURE

***The Firebird* puts Children on Cloud Nine**

CLASSIC

Students discover Stravinsky with the OSR, directed by Philippe Béran.
FRANÇOISE NYDEGGER

"It sends shivers down my spine...." Igor Stravinsky would have been delighted to hear the thoughts of this third-grade student caught up in the claws of *The Firebird*, just like the 980 other children brought together at the Bâtiment des Forces Motrices, imagine the auditorium packed to the rafters with the orchestra on the stage, and nearly one thousand people standing, chanting the final measure. In these few seconds, there is a rare energy, a certain jubilation, and a deep commonality of the kids with the symphonic music. A very beautiful moment.

For the second concert of the Youth series, organized by the OSR and the Department of Public Instruction, 5880 students from elementary, junior high, and high schools were able to attend six presentations given by the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande between Wednesday and Friday. They were the lucky ones, when you realize that there are a lot more requests than offers for these concerts. The students who did find a spot, came prepared. The music teachers or the instructors worked with them using a well-organized educational curriculum, a story to present the composer to them, the Russian tale at the origin of this suite for ballet, and the characteristics of the work.

Measuring out words and music

You feel that the young audience "is familiar with the music". They react immediately when Philippe Béran, orchestra leader and MC, requests it. The young conductor's performance is in the image of his *Firebird*, shining. The man loves leading the orchestra with the baton while commenting on the piece. He has been doing this for about ten years and he does it well. He knows how to measure out words and music, looking for the right tone to speak to the children.

When he gets involved, he is as enthusiastic as a radio sports commentator calling a football game. It's a shame that the man sometimes swallows his words, hurried to get out everything he has to say in the time allotted. But, the conductor's real surprise is in the confidence that he accords his listeners. Philippe Béran is not afraid of getting the children involved. He has them softly launch into the lullaby. Then, he ups the intensity by asking them to "sing and make the walls of the auditorium shake" to celebrate the marriage of the protagonists. "Sing standing up like all of the singers in the world. But, shhhhhh, you have to listen to the orchestra..."

One small disappointment; by limiting the concert to 45 minutes, the orchestra doesn't have time to play the piece in its entirety, which is a bit frustrating. "In any case," Philippe Béran points out, "we do play the last ten minutes of *The Firebird*", a little exhausted coming out of the second performance of the morning. "We cannot present the main parts of the work and then play it in its entirety. I believe that the listening capacity of this audience should not be overestimated." When the listening isn't top level, chattering and whispers overtake the rows when the orchestra goes off into the details.



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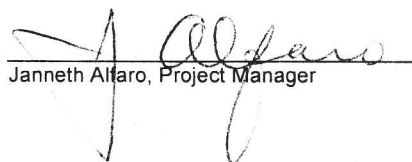
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When it scratches, rumbles, and releases all of its power, the kids are, on the other hand, dumbstruck with admiration.

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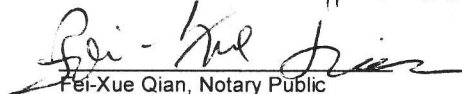
The Firebird, as seen by Olivier [illegible]. Our colleague has just received an award for his work at Patéo (see below).

Michael Kowalewski, a professional translator of French into English, has translated the attached document under contract to 1-800-Translate, an American Translators Association (ATA) corporate membership company. We have examined the document and have found it to be a complete and accurate translation of the original provided to us.


Janneth Alfaro, Project Manager

State of New York, County of New York

Sworn to me before me this 17th day of Oct. 2007


Fei-Xue Qian, Notary Public

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