

## Stravinsky: Symphony of Psalms - Le Baiser de la Fée (2001)



Le Baiser de la Fée (The Fairy's Kiss), ballet in 4 scenes for orchestra 1 Scene 1. (Pologue) Berceuse Dans La Tempete 9:23 2 Scene 2. Une Fete Au Villag 13:00 3 Scene 3. Pres Du Moulin 6:41 4 Pas De Deux - Entree 1:47 5 Adagio 4:06 6 Variation 1:26 7 Coda 2:30 8 Scene 4:34 9 Berceuse Des Felicites Eternelles (Epilogue) 6:41  
Symphony of Psalms, for chorus & orchestra  
10 Prelude 3:52 11 Double Fugue 5:38 12 Allegro 12:39  
Russian State Symphony Orchestra Evgeny Svetlanov – conductor

**Le baiser de la fée (The Fairy's Kiss)** is a ballet in one act and four scenes composed by Igor Stravinsky in 1928 and revised in 1950 for George Balanchine and New York City Ballet. Based on Hans Christian Andersen's short story, *lisjomfruen* (English: *The Ice Maiden*), it is an homage to Tchaikovsky, making use of several melodies from his early works. Stravinsky elaborated melodies from early piano pieces and songs by Tchaikovsky. Ida Rubinstein commissioned the work and Bronislava Nijinska choreographed the 1928 Paris premiere.

Balanchine made a full-length ballet to the music on his American Ballet. The premiere took place April 27, 1937, at the Old Metropolitan Opera House, New York City. The NYCB premiere was November 28, 1950, at City Center of Music and Drama, New York, at which time it was presented under the English translation of the title, *The Fairy's Kiss* (the original French title has since been restored.)

**The Symphony of Psalms** by Igor Stravinsky was written in 1930 and was commissioned by

Serge Koussevitzky to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. This piece is a three-movement choral symphony and was composed during Stravinsky's neoclassical period. The symphony derives its name from the use of Psalm texts in the choral parts. The commission for the work came about from a routine suggestion from Stravinsky's publisher that he write something "popular" for orchestra without chorus, but Stravinsky insisted on the psalm-symphony idea, which he had had in mind for some time. The choice of Psalm 150, however, was in part because of the popularity of that text. The symphony was written in Nice and Echarvines, which was Stravinsky's summer home in those years. The three movements are performed without a break, and the texts sung by the chorus are drawn from the Vulgate versions in Latin. Unlike many pieces composed for chorus and orchestra, Stravinsky said that "it is not a symphony in which I have included Psalms to be sung. On the contrary, it is the singing of the Psalms that I am symphonizing."

Although the piece was written for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the world premiere was actually given in Brussels by the Société Philharmonique de Bruxelles on December 13, 1930, under the direction of Ernest Ansermet. The American premiere of the piece was given soon afterwards by Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, with the chorus of the Cecilia Society (trained by Arthur Fiedler) on December 19, 1930. The first recording was made by Stravinsky himself with the Orchestre des Concerts Straram and the Alexis Vlassay Choir at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris on February 17 and 18, 1931. "The choir, throaty, full-blooded, darkly, inwardly passionate, sing with liturgical conviction and intensity in a memorable performance."

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