

Reviews for Stravinsky's Complete FIREBIRD reduced orchestration by Jonathan McPhee

## [“Firebird” from Orchestra Wellington an incendiary experience](#) (New Zealand)

By [Peter Mechen](#), 13/05/2017

Orchestra Wellington presents:

BEETHOVEN – Symphony No.1 in C Major Op.21

JOHN ELMSLY – Concerto for Violin and Orchestra

STRAVINSKY – The Firebird – (Ballet Suite 1911 – arranged by Jonathan McPhee)

Jun Hong Loh (violin)

Marc Taddei (conductor)

After the interval came the Stravinsky work, here performed in a “reduced” version by the conductor/composer Jonathan McPhee. There’s obviously a demand world-wide for such versions, as I was able to read various on-line testimonials of praise for McPhee’s work made by artistic directors in various far-flung places. Usually the situation was that, without using McPhee’s “reductions”, these groups wouldn’t have been able to afford to hire extra players to be able to perform works like “Firebird” and “Le Sacre du Printemps” both of which are scored for larger-than-usual orchestras.

I was hard-pressed to notice much difference between the original and McPhee’s edition as performed here, even after my having heard several previous performances of the former “live” as well as a number of recordings. I hadn’t picked up from the programme anything concerning the “edition”, the only thing surprising me being the appearance of the spectacular brass glissandi during the “Infernal Dance of Kastchei’s Subjects”, which wasn’t in the original ballet score but which Stravinsky himself had added for one of the “suites” – but it could well be in the McPhee edition anyway. Obviously, when a performance is as intensely-focused and fully-committed as was this one, whatever reductions of numbers there are to orchestral personnel makes little or no difference to the outcome!

## [Carmen & The Firebird, Queensland Ballet](#)

Posted on [May 29, 2018](#) (Australia)

[deborah jones: FollowSpot](#)

Writing on dance, musical theatre, theatre and opera in Sydney ... mostly

**Queensland Performing Arts Centre, May 26.**

(Liam) Scarlett’s success with narrative ballets has been somewhat patchy but Stravinsky’s music and the original libretto give him the best of roadmaps. Scarlett uses the 50-minute version of the score from 1910, played blazingly by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra with Nigel Gaynor at the helm. Jonathan McPhee’s arrangement is for orchestral forces rather smaller than those asked for by Stravinsky – he wrote for quadruple woodwinds and three harps – but it gets the job done impressively.