

London Philharmonic Orchestra



**Key Stage 2
BrightSparks Concert**

May 2023

Teachers' Pack

lpo.org.uk/brightsparks

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This pack was produced by:

London Philharmonic Orchestra
Education and Community Department
89 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7TP

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This pack and all learning audio resources are available on the
Watch, Listen, Learn section of the London Philharmonic Orchestra's
website along with many other resources for schools.

<https://lpo.org.uk/watch-listen-learn/>



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Introduction

This pack is designed to help you and your class prepare for the London Philharmonic Orchestra's BrightSparks Key Stage 2 Concert featuring *The Firebird Suite* by Igor Stravinsky. *The Firebird* was Stravinsky's first score for the Paris-based Ballet Russes dance company. It propelled him to fame and began a series of very successful collaborations between the young composer and the famous theatre impresario Sergei Diaghilev, which led to Stravinsky becoming one of the most famous composers of the 20th century.

Stravinsky selected all the best bits of the ballet to create the orchestral suite which we will perform during the concert. The music breaks down into bite-sized chunks and the whole thing is based on a great Slavic folk story.

It will really help your children's understanding and enjoyment if you explore the music a little before you visit us. This pack is designed to help you do this and features two composing projects that we strongly urge you to undertake in the run up to the concert. We've also included some background information on Stravinsky and his music, and a new song for you to teach to your class.

Meet the presenter



Our concert will be presented by composer and animator Rachel Leach. Rachel was born in Sheffield and studied composition with Simon Bainbridge, Robert Saxton and Louis Andreissen. She has won several awards including, with ETO, the RPS award for best education project 2009 for *One Day, Two Dawns*.

Rachel has worked within the education departments of most of the UK's orchestras and opera companies. The majority of her work is for the London Philharmonic

Orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra. Rachel has written well over twenty pieces for these orchestras and fifteen community operas, including seven for English Touring Opera. Alongside this she is increasingly in demand as a concert presenter. She regularly presents family and schools' concerts as well as pre-concert events for LPO, LSO, BBC Proms, RCM & Wigmore Hall. She is also the presenter of the LSO St Luke's lunchtime concert series.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra

One of the finest orchestras on the international stage, the London Philharmonic Orchestra balances a long and distinguished history with its reputation as one of the UK's most forward-looking ensembles. It was founded in 1932 by Sir Thomas Beecham, and since then has been headed by many great names in the conducting world.



The Orchestra regularly record for film. Amongst the many soundtracks they have recorded are:

- ★ The Lord of the Rings Trilogy
- ★ The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey
- ★ Thor: The Dark World

The London Philharmonic Orchestra has been performing at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall since it opened in 1951, becoming Resident Orchestra in 1992. It also has residencies in Brighton, Eastbourne, Saffron Hall and Glyndebourne, and performs around the UK and the world.

The LPO Education and Community department maintains an energetic programme for young people and families. Our **BrightSparks** schools' concert series provides orchestral experiences for students from primary to secondary level, providing analysis of set works at Key Stage 4. **FUNharmonics** family days provide interactive concerts and music-making experiences for the whole family at the Royal Festival Hall. Other projects work with young people with special educational needs and disabilities through our **Open Sound Ensemble**. We also run the **LPO Junior Artists** programme, a free orchestral experience scheme for talented young musicians from backgrounds currently under-represented in professional UK orchestras, and **LPO Junior Artists: Overture**, free immersive events for young people which take a hands-on, behind-the-scenes look at the world of a professional orchestra. The **Watch, Listen, Learn** section on our website hosts resources for teachers to build confidence in leading music in school and provides music lesson plans featuring a variety of different topics. The department also caters for early-career professionals – the **LPO Young Composers, Foyle Future Firsts** and our new **Conducting Fellowship schemes** look to support players, composers and conductors at the start of their careers.

The LPO is proud to be a member of the South Riverside Music Partnership (SRMP) which comprises the LPO, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, and the Music Education Hub leads of Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark and Royal Greenwich.

For more information about the London Philharmonic Orchestra, you can visit our website or social media.

Website: lpo.org.uk

Twitter: [LPOrchestra](https://twitter.com/LPOrchestra)

Facebook: [londonphilharmonicorchestra](https://www.facebook.com/londonphilharmonicorchestra)

Instagram: [londonphilharmonicorchestra](https://www.instagram.com/londonphilharmonicorchestra)

TikTok: [LPOrchestra](https://www.tiktok.com/@LPOrchestra)

The orchestra

An orchestra is a large group of musicians and their instruments. It is divided into different sections:

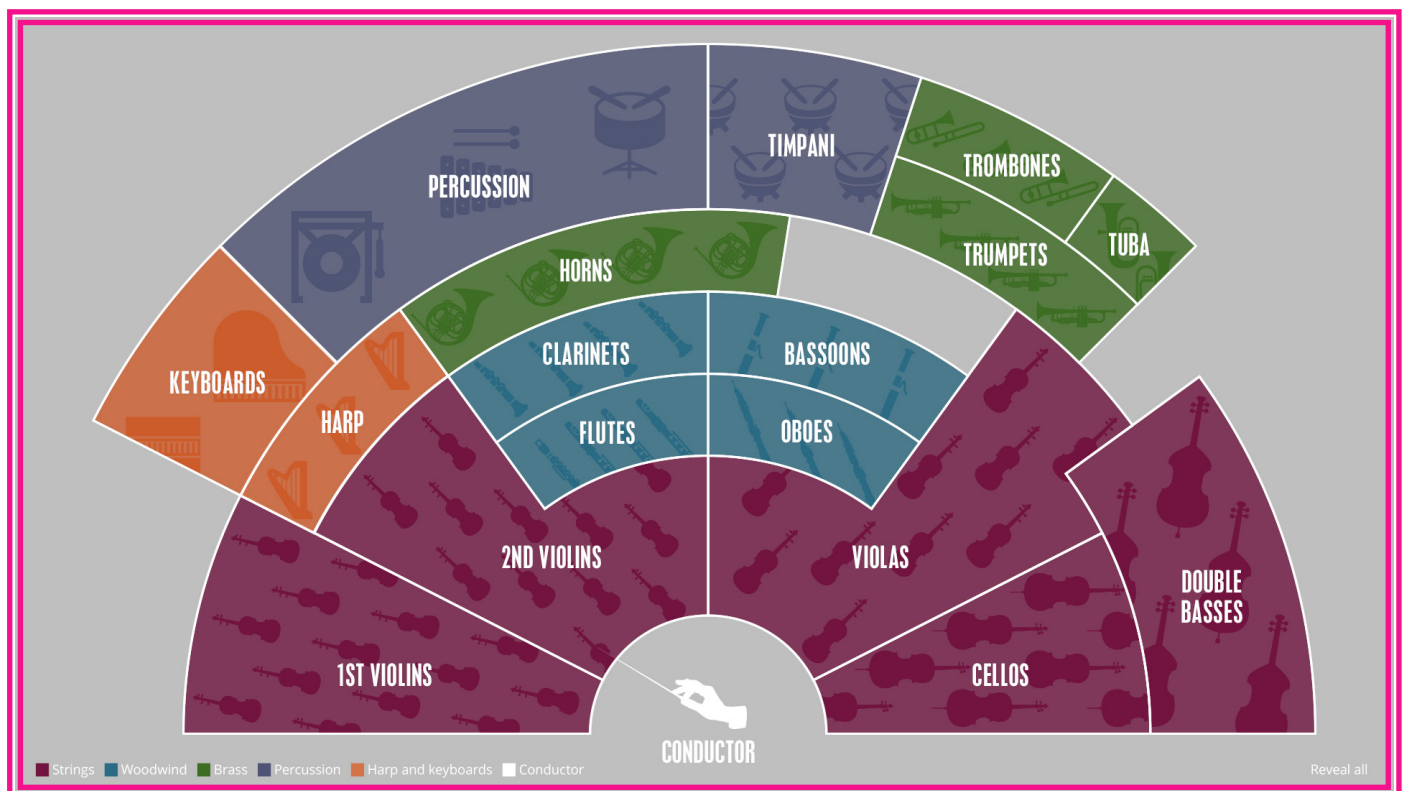
Woodwind: flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons (the piccolo will also feature – this instrument is the little sibling of the flute, which is smaller and plays higher notes)

Brass: French horns, trumpets, trombones, tuba

Percussion: timpani (large kettle drums) and other types of drums, xylophone, shakers, triangles and lots more

Strings: violins, violas, cellos, double basses

Other: harp, piano and celeste (a piano-like instrument that makes a sound like a bit like a music box / bells)



The music

Igor Stravinsky (1882 – 1971)

Stravinsky was born in Russia in 1882. His dad was a bass singer with the St Petersburg Opera and from a very young age Igor knew he wanted to be a musician when he grew up. Stravinsky in fact grew up to be one of the most important and influential composers of the 20th century. He was also a bit of a musical chameleon, changing his musical style every few years to fit each new challenge.

He first became famous in Paris in the 1910s for writing vivid and exciting ballets, one of which caused a full-scale riot in the audience on opening night and catapulted him to fame. Later in his life he wrote music that sounded like it had come from centuries before (neo-classical) and at the end of his life in 1971 he was in Hollywood and writing the occasional film score whilst living the life of a celebrity.

The Firebird (1910) was Stravinsky's first major success. It was written for Sergei Diaghilev and his very famous Ballet Russes company and is based on a clever combination of two unrelated Slavic folk tales. Stravinsky's music was so exciting and so different from anything the audience had ever heard before that the ballet made him an overnight sensation. He immediately set to work on two further pieces – each one was more famous than the last, and ballet became a central part of his composing life for the rest of his long career.



© Richard Avedon

The Firebird – The Story

In 1919 Stravinsky selected highlights from the original ballet to create a shorter orchestral suite, which is what you will hear in the concert. The music breaks down into bite-sized chunks and the whole thing is based on themes and characters from traditional Slavic folk tales. It will really help your children's understanding and enjoyment if you explore the music a little before the concert.

Here is an outline of the story of *The Firebird* and how the music fits in:

Introduction, the Firebird and her dance

Brave Prince Ivan is wandering through the gardens of the evil King Kastchei. Everything in the gardens – the creatures, the trees, the flowers and the plants – have been turned into stone statues. Only one thing is alive: the wonderful, flying Firebird.

The Firebird's Variation

Prince Ivan chases and catches the Firebird. Begging for her release, the Firebird offers to stay with Prince Ivan until he needs her help. When she has helped him, she will be released.

The Round Dance of the Princesses

Ivan sees 13 beautiful princesses. They have been captured by the evil king and turned into stone statues. All they can do is blink and cry. He falls in love with one of them.

Infernal Dance of King Kastchei

The evil king comes along – he and Prince Ivan argue and fight. King Kastchei tries to capture the Prince. (This is one of the most famous bits of *The Firebird* and is largely responsible for Stravinsky's success. It is exciting, scary and extremely loud).

Berceuse (Lullaby)

True to her promise, the Firebird comes to the Prince's aid. She makes the king fall asleep and, whilst he is sleeping, tells the Prince that the only way to escape is to break the golden egg that contains his soul. After he has done so the king will die and all the magical creatures of the garden and the princesses will be free. Quietly, the Prince sneaks up on the king and breaks the egg.

Finale

All the creatures, trees, flowers and princesses are freed. Slowly they emerge from their stone statues. Everyone celebrates.



Ideas for creative work in the classroom

Music Project 1 – The Characters

This simple project will help your children to get to grips with the characters featured in Stravinsky's folk tale, and their distinctive music.

There are four main characters in *The Firebird*:

- **Prince Ivan** we first encounter him creeping through the King's magical garden
- **The Firebird** clever and magical
- **The Princesses** noble but sad, having been captured by the King
- **Evil King Kastchei** the baddie!

This project is based on the first three characters. To make music for King Kastchei go to Project 2, which you can find on page 11.

To set up this project, make sure you have a selection of classroom percussion instruments available. You will need a mixture of tuned (xylophones, glockenspiels) and untuned percussion (shakers, triangles). You will need to set up some of them to have the seven notes for **Prince Ivan** (see step 2), and some with the notes for the **Princesses** (see step 7). If your xylophones have some missing notes, then just use as many of the suggested selection that you can.

Ground rules

Firstly, you will need to establish some ground rules for working with instruments:

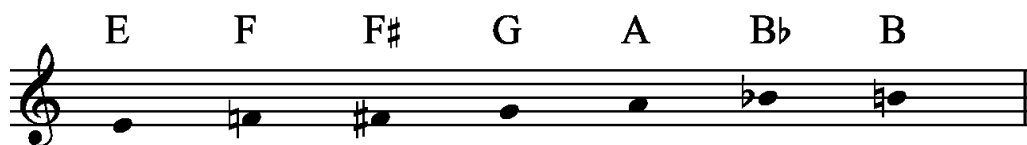
- **A signal for silence.** Choose one signal and stick to it. The signal could be holding your hand in the air and waiting, counting down from 5, putting your hands on your head – anything you like. Insist that everyone puts instruments down when this signal is given. All instruments and beaters should be on the floor – this will remove the temptation to play. Practise this and make sure all children understand.
- **Respecting the instruments.** Playing loudly can be exciting, but if instruments are bashed in an unconsidered way then they might break. This will mean a broken instrument that can't be used anymore, or worse, injury to another person in the room.

It is likely that your children will want to play the more 'glamorous' instruments like xylophones and large drums. Let them know that all the instruments are equally important, and try and ensure that instruments are circulated between different projects/activities.

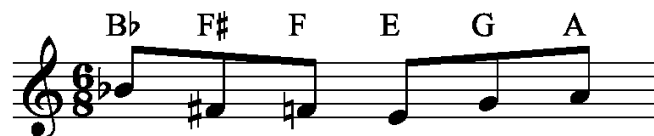
- **Respecting each other.** As well as respecting your signal for silence, children need to respect each other and work as a team: taking turns, not playing if someone else is talking/giving their idea, and focusing on their own contribution and not micro-managing others.

Once you feel that your class has understood these rules, you can begin the project. Sit in a big circle with most of your percussion instruments at the side of the room, but with a few instruments in the centre of the circle (including pre-prepared xylophones) for demonstrating each character's music before splitting in to groups. You are ready to get started!

1. Tell your class the story of *The Firebird* (use the story on page 8) and explain that you are going to make some short fragments of music to describe the different characters, just as Stravinsky does.
2. Begin with **Prince Ivan**. Explain that the whole piece begins with the sound of him creeping through King Kastchei's enchanted garden. To make the sound of his creeping you'll need to adapt a xylophone or metallophone to have these notes available:

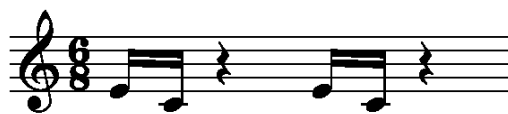


3. Explain that Stravinsky uses a slow 6-note pattern to describe **Prince Ivan's** steady footsteps and the pattern moves slowly downwards and then back up again. Challenge members of your class to come forward to try to make a creeping pattern on your adapted xylophone using these rules.
4. This is what the real pattern looks like:



Can your children create a similar pattern and fix it so that it is the same every time?

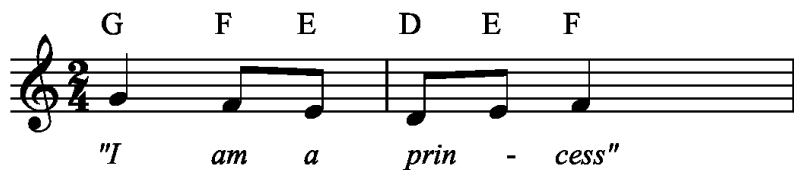
5. Every now and again the creeping stops and we hear a short two-note idea that could represent the blinking eyes of the many statues in the enchanted garden. Like this:



Can you add that onto the end of your piece?

6. Next, move on to the **Firebird**. Explain to your class that the Firebird's music is a very magical shimmering sound. Stravinsky uses the string instruments of his orchestra and asks the players to lightly slide their fingers over the strings to create harmonics (ghostly, 'false' notes). He also gives the woodwind instruments very high, spiky sounds. When making the Firebird's music your children must select carefully the most magical sounding instruments and make an amazing shimmering sound.

7. Finally, talk a little about the **Princesses**. There are 13 captured princesses in King Kastchei's garden. They all have beautiful but sad little fragments of melody like this one:



The 13 princesses often overlap their melodies as if they are competing to be heard.

8. Split your class into three teams: a **Prince** team, a **Firebird** team and a **Princess** team. Their task is to create a short piece of music to describe their character using the ideas you've outlined above.
9. When this is achieved, bring the groups back together and ask each to perform their piece. As a full class, can you re-tell the story of *The Firebird* using these short pieces to illustrate it? How will the music change to represent a conversation between the **Firebird** and the **Prince**, or the **Prince** chasing the **Firebird**, or the **Princess** falling in love? Challenge your class to make the whole story using their short pieces and a tiny bit of narration.

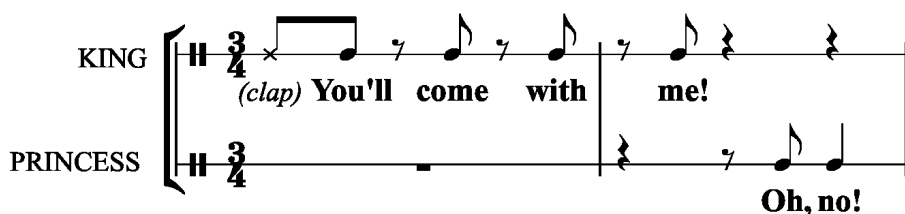
To fully tell the tale you'll need to make some evil **King Kastchei** music this is outlined below in project 2.

Music Project 2 – King Kastchei's Infernal Dance

This project is based on one section from Stravinsky's ballet *The Firebird*, The Infernal Dance of King Kastchei. In the plot, the evil King Kastchei captures princesses and turns them into stone statues, rooted in his garden forever. This piece describes his angry character.

1. Tell your class the story of Stravinsky's *The Firebird* and explain that the evil King Kastchei 'collects' princesses in his castle. Ask your class to stand in two lines, facing one another. Name one line 'the king' and the other 'the princess'.

Teach the following two rhythms:



This is a heavily syncopated rhythm (i.e. it is mostly 'off-the-beat'). The words are essential when teaching it. You could encourage your class to tap along with the pulse and say the words on top which will help with the syncopation. If you have a recording of the *Infernal Dance*, these rhythms are heard at the very beginning on low brass instruments.

- Next try practising these rhythms with the words until they are strong and confident. Practise performing the pattern back and forth three times in a row. When this is strong, add the following rhythm on to the end.

or rumble for 6

- Finally, try the rhythms without the words. Use body percussion instead. The whole pattern looks like this:

- Split the class into groups and ask them to make a piece using these rhythms and choosing their instruments carefully to represent the characters.
- When this is achieved, hear the group pieces separately and ask the class how they might put them together to make one piece.
- Making a Rondo:** A Rondo is a musical shape featuring a recurring theme (A) and other contrasting ideas in between each occurrence (B, C, D, etc.)

Rondo form therefore looks like this:

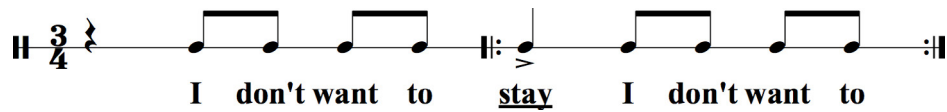
A B A C A D etc.

Stravinsky's piece is a Rondo – the section you've just made keeps returning but alternates with shorter contrasting sections called 'Episodes'.

Expand your piece into a Rondo by asking each group to create their own contrasting episode. Perhaps they could use some of the ideas from Project 1 (above) to do this or they might want to make a piece to describe other elements of the story, e.g.

- The shimmering, frozen garden
- The Firebird's magic
- The Prince's fighting
- The Princesses' pleading
- The King's anger

7. **Making a Coda (ending):** Teach the class the following rhythm and explain that this comes at the very end of the piece and could represent the princess's pleading:

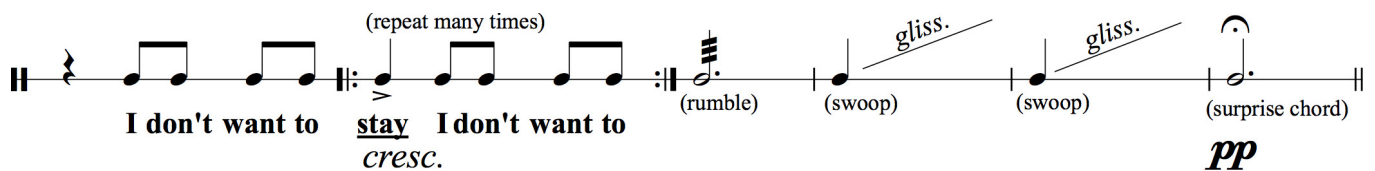


(Note that the beat with the word 'stay' is always accented or emphasised)

This should be repeated several times getting louder and louder (crescendo) until it explodes!

Decide how many repetitions you need and how to achieve a crescendo (should you start group by group or all together?).

The real ending has this structure:



Can you add this onto your piece to make an exciting ending?

We love hearing what you get up to in the classroom!

**If you would like to share your musical creations with us
please get in touch with education@lpo.org.uk**

The song – ‘The Deal’

We'd like you to teach our participation song, 'The Deal', to your children so that they can sing along with the Orchestra in the concert. This song describes the conversation between the Prince and the Firebird during which the Firebird comes up with a clever plan for escape.

We will project the lyrics onto our big screen so there is no need for lyric sheets on the day. We suggest you make up some simple actions or gestures to go with the words: this will help with memory and make your pupils' performance much more energised. We're not looking for perfect singing, but for volume and enthusiasm!

The words to the song are on page 17 and the piano score is printed at the back of this pack. You can also access a [recording of the song and its piano accompaniment](#) (opens in Soundcloud).

Warming up

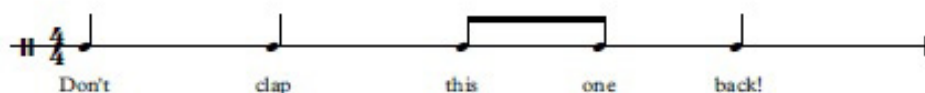
It's really important that you warm up your class before you start learning the song. Doing so will gather focus, get everyone relaxed and energised, protect their voices and help them to sound their best. Below we've suggested some warm ups written by Lucy Hollins that you might want to try.

Focus

Start by doing an activity that gets everyone focused. You may have your own ways of doing this, but here are a few ideas of how to do this in a musical way:

Don't clap this one back

This is a call and response clapping game. You clap a four beat rhythm and the children clap it back. The only twist is that if you clap the following rhythm, they don't clap it back:



Physical warm up

Now, a physical warm up. This can be anything that gets your young singers moving and feeling energised, making sure every part of the body is relaxed.

8-4-2-1-HEY

Put your right hand in the air and shake it 8 times, counting the numbers out loud as you do. Now do the same in the left hand, then the right foot and the left foot. Repeat this pattern but now with 4 shakes in each hand and foot, then 2 in each, then 1 in each. To finish, jump up in the air and all shout HEY!

Breathing

Next, do some work on breathing...

Bubble Gum

Ask the children to get an (imaginary) piece of bubblegum out of their pocket, unwrap it and pop it in their mouths. Now tell them it's really, really sticky and ask them to have a good chew. They might need to use their tongues to get it off their teeth!

Next tell them you're going to have a bubble blowing competition. On the count of three, everyone blows an imaginary bubble, using their arms to show how it is slowly expanding, until you shout 'POP!' and the bubbles all burst. You'll now need to roll it into a ball and start again.

Make some noise!

'Aha!'

This call and response exercise can follow on directly from the diaphragm kicks in the previous section. Take a simple word or sound, for example 'aha' or 'hello,' and ask the children to copy the way you say it. You might imagine a scenario, for example, in which you get angry, then despondent, then happy, then excited – but the whole story is told with this single sound. Make sure you use different parts of the voice from high to low, and don't be afraid of swooping and sliding to get a really good warm up.

**Now you've warmed up your body through rhythmic and physical activities,
and your voice through breathing and sound exercises,
it's time to learn the song!**

Thank you

We hope this pack will give you some suggestions to support Key Stage 2 provision in your school. For further ideas, don't forget to look at Watch, Listen, Learn on the LPO website, or book tickets to future BrightSparks concerts. We offer a Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 BrightSparks concert per year, each with associated resources and INSET sessions.

You can find out more at www.lpo.org.uk/create-take-part/

We'd love to hear from you about your school's musical activities! Please feel free to get in touch with us via email education@lpo.org.uk to find out more about our work here at the LPO, or if you'd like any guidance for musical work in the classroom.

The Deal

by Rachel Leach

Verse 1

Prince Ivan had captured the Firebird
He wanted to keep her as a toy
Magical feathers and beautiful song
He thought she would bring him great
joy

If she would...

Sing for him, dance for him
Do magic tricks for him
Fly high in the sky
And flick her wings for him

He wanted to impress his bride
So he didn't plan to set her free

She wiggled, wriggled
Shook and turned
Hummed, hawed
Twisted and gurned
"Let me go!" cried she
"No!" replied he
"I'll never set you free!"

Verse 2

So inside the prince's backpack
The Firebird hatched her plan
She popped her head out of the
opening
And whispered up to the man

"I won't...

Sing for you, dance for you
No magic tricks for you
No high in the sky
No flickering wings for you

When you need help I will save you
But only if you set me free"

He wiggled, wriggled
Shook and turned
Hummed, hawed
Twisted and gurned
"Let you go?" cried he
"Yes!" replied she
"I'll save you if you set me free"

"Deal!" said he
"Deal!" said she



The Deal

RACHEL LEACH

A Andante ♩ = 90

Voice *mf*
Prince I - van had cap-tured the

Piano *p* *f* *mf*

4

Voice
Fire - bird He wan-ted to keep her as a toy Mag - i - cal fea-thers and

Pno.

8

Voice *p*
beau - ti - ful song He thought she could bring him great joy If she would

Pno. *p*

11

Voice
sing for him, dance for him Do ma-gic tricks for him Fly high in the sky

Pno.

14

Voice *f*

and flick her wings for him He wan-ted to im-press his bride so he did-n't plan to set her free She

Pno. *f*

17 **B** Spoken (with actions!):

Voice *f*

wigg-led, wigg-led, shook and turned Hummed, hawed twis-ted and gurned "Let me

Pno.

21 **C**

Voice

go" cried she "No!" re-plied he "I'll ne-ver set you free"

Pno. *f* *p*

24 *mf*

Voice

So in-side the Prin-ce's back-pack The Fire bird hatched her

Pno. *f*

28

Voice

plan She popped her head out of the o - pen - ing and whis-pered up to the

Pno.

32

Voice

p man I won't sing for you, dance for you No ma-gic tricks for you No

Pno.

p

35

Voice

high in the sky no flick - er-ing wings for you When you need help I will save you but

Pno.

38

D Spoken (with actions!):

Voice

f on-ly if you set me free He wigg-led, wigg-led, shook and turned Hummed, hawed

Pno.

f

42 *f*

Voice

twis - ted and gurned "Let you go?" cried he "Yes!" re - plied she "I'll

Pno.

44

Voice

save you if you set me free" "Deal!" said he "Deal!" said she

Pno.