

©Susanne Reichardt



Dance Theatre Heidelberg & Dance Forum Taipei &
CHIEN Wen-pin & Evergreen Symphony Orchestra

Firebird & Rite of Spring

2024.5.4 Sat. 14:30

2024.5.5 Sun. 14:30

Weiwuying Opera House

Duration is 65 minutes without intermission.



National Kaohsiung
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

WEI WUYING

衛武營 國家藝術文化中心
國家表演藝術中心 National Performing Arts Center

Synopsis

The Firebird and *The Rite of Spring* have been “outliers” of the art since their creation in the twentieth century. *The Firebird* is the ultimate expression of late-Romantic orchestral style; Igor STRAVINSKY unconventional choices in harmonization and instrumentation quickly gained him remarkable success. The accompanying choreography by Michel FOKINE, in the form of the firebird and evil sorcerer, retains the commonly seen division of good versus evil characters in story ballets. However, it no longer follows the traditional four-act form, or demands that dancers showcase impeccable skills with formal classical ballet turns and jumps; rather, it allows the characters to be fully absorbed in emotions depicted in the music. STRAVINSKY’s *The Rite of Spring*, moreover, was an eye-opener into a brand-new music horizon. Its vibrant orchestra timbres and spectacular sound effects were unprecedented, earning the acclaim as “one of the most important works of the twentieth century” from conductor Leonard BERNSTEIN. Vaslav NIJINSKY’s choreography closely reflects Stravinsky’s vision, but the folkloric costumes and ritual dances with knock-kneed stomping were so unexpected, they caused much controversy and even physical altercations among the audience members who found the performance surprising or abhorrent.

Such extreme reactions to “the other” a century ago sparked the creative inspirations of Iván PÉREZ. Setting the precedent of connecting the two pieces, Pérez used *The Firebird* as an overture, devising a widely ostracized yet perhaps desirable character, before the idealistic world is eventually demolished in *The Rite of Spring* by collective antagonism between the “self” and the “other”. Unlike most works, which cast female characters as the sacrificial victims, Pérez’s production chooses a male dancer for the role. The reversal of gender roles displays the transformations in human society over the past century, attaching contemporary significance to the work.

Iván PÉREZ is a Spanish choreographer who began his dancing and creative career in the Netherlands. He now resides in Germany and has accepted invitations to perform his works at prominent theaters in London, Paris, and other cities. Through the journey of touring and creating, Pérez gained a deep understanding of the wonders and sorrows of being a “foreigner”. He said, “In my works, I enjoy exploring the societal effects of humanity and the state of the individual when facing loneliness. These are based on my long-term observations as a foreigner, and in this process, I have also learned to become a foreigner.”

In celebration of Dance Forum Taipei’s 35th anniversary, Pérez visits Taiwan with Dance Theatre Heidelberg. They will be accompanied by the live performance of Evergreen Symphony Orchestra, conducted by CHIEN Wen-pin. How will these 99 artists placidly address the relationship between the “collective” and the “other” on the stage? In addition to being featured over a compelling 65-minute performance, this will also be an intriguing issue to explore for life.

Words from Choreographer and Director

By Iván PÉREZ

I had the honour to work with Dance Forum Taipei in 2015 with *Hui* and 2018 with *BECOMING* during TIFA, Taiwan International Festival for the Arts. In 2021 when I created *Firebird & Rite of Spring* with the dancers of the Dance Theatre Heidelberg (DTH) in Germany, I could not have imagined that a new version with Dance Forum Taipei (DFT) would mark our third collaboration, and the company's 35th anniversary. We are also here to celebrate two great artists that joined me in DTH after departing from DFT--LO Yi-wei and SU Kuan-ying. They were part of the original creation and are responsible for its transmission to DFT. Together, they will all perform on these incredible stages, the National Theater and Concert Hall and the National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts (Weiwuying). The honour continues as CHIEN Wen-Pin will conduct the Evergreen Symphony Orchestra.

When Michel FOKINE premiered *The Firebird* in Paris in 1910, the main character, which also gives the piece its name, attracted enormous public interest due to its exotic attributes. This history inspired me to question what this figure could mean today, which for me embodies contradictory qualities. Its exotic character marked by both sensuality and power provoke not only attraction but also rejection. This is regarded as "different", as "the other one", and exposes our ambiguous social tendencies. In this interpretation, we get to know the firebird by revealing its different facets: mythical, enigmatic and wild. As a result, we want to possess this being, and at the same time, we want to eliminate it. This contradictory feeling remains an essential part of our struggle to understand it well.

The final scene of Vaslav NIJINSKY's *The Rite of Spring* has become iconic in dance history for showing a brutal human sacrifice. This caught my attention as collective behaviour has been a recurring theme through most of my work. In this case, I am interested in the origin of violence in our nature. We discovered, for instance, there is a sense of how imitation leads to dehumanization, chaos, and alienation. In the search for salvation, sacrificing a "chosen one" is supposed to restore peace in this community on the stage. However, I ask myself. How can this cycle of violence come to an end? Thus, as an attempt to offer hope to humanity, the group deviates from its fate and joins the victim in the sacrificial dance in an act of empathy.

Choreographically, the dancers and I were interested in the creation of folklore, and together we created an original language for this particular community. We dived in Stravinsky's music and its rich compositional structures, in which rhythms based on irregular patterns form a spectacular tribal environment. For me, music and dance intertwine in a conversation between form and content, between musical composition and physical dramaturgy. Complex choreographic passages intercept with dramatic and expressive moments full of tension, rhythm, and energy, performed by a group of 22 performers who literally just met. One could say, it is a sort of social experiment, unfolding in front of our eyes.



Choreographer and Director

Iván PÉREZ

Born in Spain in 1983, Iván PÉREZ began his career as a dancer with the Netherlands Dans Theater (NDT). He created and set work for international companies such as BalletBoyz, Ballet Moscow, Compañía Nacional de Danza and Dance Forum Taipei, amongst others. Since 2018, he is the Artistic Director of Dance Theater Heidelberg.



Conductor

CHIEN Wen-pin

CHIEN Wen-Pin, General and Artistic Director of the National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts (Weiwuying), was born in 1967, graduated from the National Taiwan Academy of Arts and awarded with Master degree at the National University for Music and Performing Arts Vienna. CHIEN joined the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in 1996 and served as "Kapellmeister" for 22 years. He was Resident Conductor of the Pacific Music Festival in 1998-2004 and was Music Director of NSO between 2001-2007. CHIEN was Artistic Advisor of the NTSO in 2014-2016 and has received the National Award for Arts in 2014.



Dance Theatre Heidelberg (DTH)

Since its founding in September 2018, the newly established dance company has won the trust of audiences and critics with its high-quality productions and contemporary dance aesthetics. The DTH has an international ensemble with dancers from Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, France, Spain, Taiwan and Martinique. It is committed to an inclusive environment and promotes dialogue and exchange between artists.

The DTH's fringe programme, which aims to reach out to all audiences, reinforces the troupe's commitment to developing communities around dance and in the city.



Dance Forum Taipei (DFT)

Dance Forum Taipei is the representative of contemporary dance in Taiwan. Led by PING Heng as Founder and Artistic Director, the Company has presented 91 productions collaborating with 58 choreographers and 186 designers since its inception in 1989. It has toured close to 1,000 performances, throughout the island of Taiwan as well as 40 major cities in Asia, Europe and North America. DFT received the Taipei Culture Award in 2019 for the unique and indispensable cultural value created from her comprehensive perspective in depth and breadth of performing arts.



Evergreen Symphony Orchestra (ESO)

Founded and supervised by the Chang Yung-Fa Foundation, the Evergreen Symphony Orchestra is exceptional in being the only professional orchestra in Taiwan overseen by a private foundation, and one of but a few of its kind on the international stage. Established in 2001 and led by Prof. Gernot SCHMALFUSS as music director and chief conductor from 2007 to 2023. ESO has collaborated with many well-known international musicians including the World Three Tenors.

Creative and Production Team

Choreographer and Director | Iván PÉREZ
Music | Igor STRAVINSKY
Musical Direction(HD) | Elias GRANDY
Conductor | CHIEN Wen-pin
Costume Designer | Sofie DURNEZ
Costume Consultant | LIN Ching-ju
Costume Maker | HUANG Yu-cong
Original Lighting Designer | Tanja RÜHL
Lighting Designer | Channel HUANG
Choreographic Assistance | Jorge Soler BASTIDA
Rehearsal Director | CHEN Kai-yi
Rehearsal Assistants | LO Yi-wei, SU Kuan-ying
Dramaturgy | Marcos MARIZ
Artistic Collaborator | Renan MARTINS
Tour Manager | Adrián CASTELLÓ
Production Team | PING Heng, YEH Chiung-fei,
Channel HUANG, LEE Yi-hsuan,
SUNG Yu-ching, HUANG Jia-hui,
LEE Ting-yu
Technicians | Sharon WANG, CHU Wei-ting, YU
Zu-ying, LIN Wei-chen, HSU Che-sheng,
YAP Siew-yin, CHAN Chun-ju

Musicians | Evergreen Symphony Orchestra
Performance Group | Dance Theatre Heidelberg,
Dance Forum Taipei

Dancers

Dance Theatre Heidelberg

Inés Belda NÁCHER, Thamiris CARVALHO,
Jochem EERDEKENS, Marc GALVEZ, LO Yi-wei, Andrea
Muelas BLANCO, Lucía Nieto VERA, SU Kuan-ying,
Mathias THEISEN, Adrien URSULET, Julia KOSAŁKA

Dance Forum Taipei

HUANG Yen-chieh, CHANG Tai-hsin, CHEN Pei-chi, LIU
Yen-pei, LIN Si-qi, TSAI I-hsuan, CHANG Chi-wu, YANG
Min-hsuan, YEN Chia-cheng, LO Ting-wei, WU Kuan-i

Evergreen Symphony Orchestra Musicians & Staff

Founder | CHANG Yung-fa
Executive Director | CHUNG Teh-mei
Director | CHANG Yih-shih
Chief Artistic Adviser & Conductor Laureate | Gernot
SCHMALFUSS
Resident Conductor | CHUANG Wen-chen

Administration Section

Vice President | CHEN Pei-chi
Junior Vice President | SHEN Su-chu, FU Tzu-chien
Manager | CHANG Chang
Deputy Manager | YEH Hsueh-chun
Staff | IOU Wei-pyng, WANG Chung-chien,
LAN Hsiu-chen, SU Kuei-pin

Guest Concertmaster | CHANG Ching-ting
Associate Concertmaster | LIN Shyh-hsin
Assistant Concertmaster | HONG Hsang-chu
First Violins | CHEN Chih-chien, CHU Ching-chia,
LIN Yi-ming, CHANG Yi-ruo, LI Nien-tzu,
MO Shu-han, YANG Wan-chien,
JENG Chen-you, YEN Yu-kuang

Second Violins

Principal | LIN Guan-ru
Co-Principal | CHIEN Shao-yu
KUO Chi-wen, WANG Chung-kai, HSUEH Yuan-yun,
KAO Wei-nung, LIU Ying-hsiu, CHEN Chun-chih,
LIN Pei-ying, HUANG An-rou

Violas

Principal | HSIAO Yu-pei
HSIEH Ting-yu, LU Chia-min, CHEN Ko-ni,
CHEN Jo-fan, CHIANG Yen-hsin

Cellos

Co-Principal | TSENG Yun-cheng
WANG Wan-yi, LIU Hui-fen,
CHUEH Wan-ting,
LIN Chun-han, LIAO Hsi-chiao

Double Basses

Principal | WU Zi-an
Assistant Principal | HUANG I-jan
LO I-chun, CHIU Hsin-yi,
LAI Wen-jyun, WANG Hsing-yu

Flutes

Principal | HSU Yu-cheng
LIN Ching-min

Piccolo | Yuka TSUTSUMI

Oboes

Principal | TSAI Chai-hsusn
KAO Wei-chien

English Horn | LIU Ya-lan

Clarinets

Principal | CHUANG Hui-chu
Assistant Principal | SU Yi-fang

Bass Clarinet | LIN Yen-liang

Bassoons

Principal | HSU Chia-hua
WU Wan-ching

Contrabassoon | LIN Yen-chung

Horns

Principal | LIN Shiao-ling
CHUNG Yi-ting, WU Chien-ying,
CHEN Chin-yang, HUANG Chia-i

Trumpets

Principal | Kaoru SUGUKI
HO Chung-mom, KAO Hsin-tan, LAI Yi-chien

Trombones

Principal | LIU Yu-nan
HSIEH Wen-shuo

Bass Trombone | MA Wan-chuan

Tuba

Principal | TSAI Meng-hsin

Timpani /Percussion

Principal | CHENG Ya-chi
JIA Wen-hao, CHEN Chang-chia

Guest Players

Violas | HSU Yi-hsin, TSENG Hua-yen

Harp | HSU Su-ting

Piano | TSENG Ching-i

Percussions | WU Yi-hsien, TAI Chien-yu

Cultural Development Partner



Weiwuying Online Questionnaire



The performance of The Firebird is given by permission of Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

The performance of The Rite of Spring is given by permission of Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Limited.