



THE  
**Fire  
bird**  
WITH PAQUITA

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**THE FIREBIRD**

29 JULY – 2 SEPTEMBER 2021

# CURRICULUM LINKS

## In this unit you and your students will:

- Learn about the elements that come together to create a theatrical ballet experience.
- Identify the processes involved in making a theatre production.

## CURRICULUM LINKS IN THIS UNIT

### Values

Students will be encouraged to value:

- **Innovation**, inquiry and curiosity, by thinking critically, creatively and reflectively.
- **Diversity**, as found in our different cultures and heritages.
- **Community and participation** for the common good.

## KEY COMPETENCIES

- **Using language, symbols and text** – Students will recognise how choices of language and symbols in live theatre affect people's understanding and the ways in which they respond.
- **Relating to others** – Students will develop the ability to listen actively and share ideas regarding theatrical ballet performances.
- **Participating and contributing** – Students will be actively involved in their cultural community, understanding the importance of creative environments.
- **Thinking** – Students will reflect on their own thinking and learning after the personal experience of attending a live theatre show.

## WORKSHOP LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR LEVELS 3 & 4

### Level 3 students will learn how to:

#### Develop practical knowledge

- Use the dance elements to develop and share their personal movement vocabulary.

#### Develop ideas

- Select and combine dance elements in response to a variety of stimuli.

#### Communicate and interpret

- Prepare and share dance movement individually and in pairs or groups.
- Use the elements of dance to describe dance movements and respond to dances from a variety of cultures.

### Level 4 students will learn how to:

#### Develop practical knowledge

- Apply the dance elements to extend personal movement skills and vocabularies and to explore the vocabularies of others.

#### Develop ideas

- Combine and contrast the dance elements to express images, ideas, and feelings in dance, using a variety of choreographic processes.

#### Communicate and interpret

- Prepare and present dance, demonstrating an awareness of the performance context.
- Describe and record how the purpose of selected dances is expressed through movement.

# THE FIREBIRD

**Music** Igor Stravinsky

**Choreography** Loughlan Prior

**Set and costume design** Tracy Grant Lord

**Lighting design** Jon Buswell

**Animation / visuals** POW Studios

**The Royal New Zealand Ballet**

**Artistic Director** Patricia Barker

**Executive Director** Lester McGrath

**Ballet Masters** Clytie Campbell,  
Laura McQueen Schultz, Nicholas Schultz

## THE CHARACTERS

### THE FIREBIRD

A fertility goddess and guardian of the natural world. The Firebird has a command over earthly elements and shifts between many forms.

### ARROW

A young scavenger, Arrow is kind-hearted and compassionate. He represents the hope of change and new ways of thinking.

### NEVE

Bright, like the meaning of her name, Neve possesses determination and a strong willed temperament. She cares deeply for the survival of her people and has wisdom beyond her years.

### THE BURNT MASK

A cruel and brash dictator. The Burnt Mask is a self-serving and greedy tyrant who rules over the Wastelanders with force, representing human exploitation over the natural world.

### ELIZAVETA

Serpent like and cunning, Elizaveta is allied with The Burnt Mask. As his lover and disciple, she acts as a spy. Together they control the Wastelanders.

### THE SCAVENGERS

A pack of Wastelanders who travel the desert in search of food and water to bring back to The Settlement.

### WASTELANDERS

A community of people working to survive in harsh conditions.

### THE INFERNO

The physical embodiment of infernal rage.

# THE STORY

## SYNOPSIS

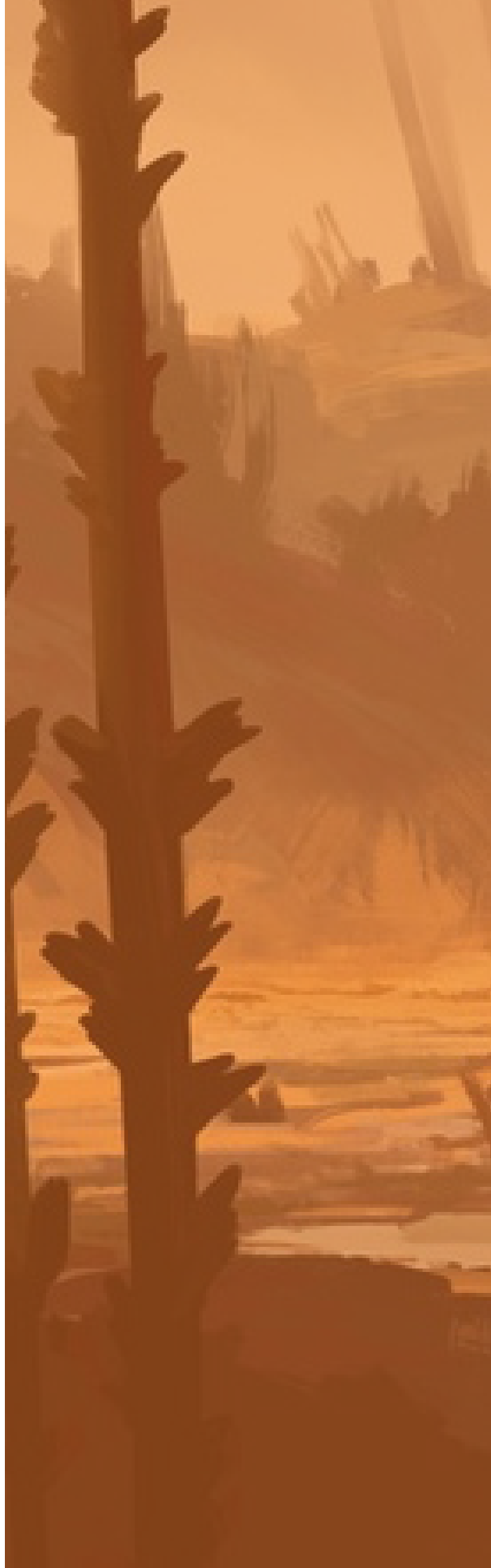
### The Wasteland

A harsh sun sets over a hostile landscape. The area is ravaged by a sandstorm as a group of Scavengers navigate their way across the dry terrain in search of water. The pack has travelled far. The last water canteen runs out... Arrow, exhausted from the journey, collapses. The group push on and leave the fallen traveler behind.

As night falls, the Firebird, a fertility goddess possessing magical properties, appears, wreathed in flame. She dances in starlight - sparks fly from her body and turn into desert flowers.

Startled, Arrow wakes. He can't believe his eyes... is this a mirage or a trick of the light? The Firebird nuzzles Arrow, comforting the frightened traveller. With the powers that exist in her plumage, she creates a pool of water and he drinks deeply. The Firebird gives Arrow one of her precious feathers which has the ability to pull water from deep below the dry earth.

The Scavengers return, drawn back to the scene by the glow of the Firebird. Brandishing their weapons they attempt to capture this magical beast. Arrow stands in the way as she escapes. The Burnt Mask is furious and quickly leaves with his pack to go in search of The Firebird. Alone again, Arrow looks down at the precious feather.



## The Settlement

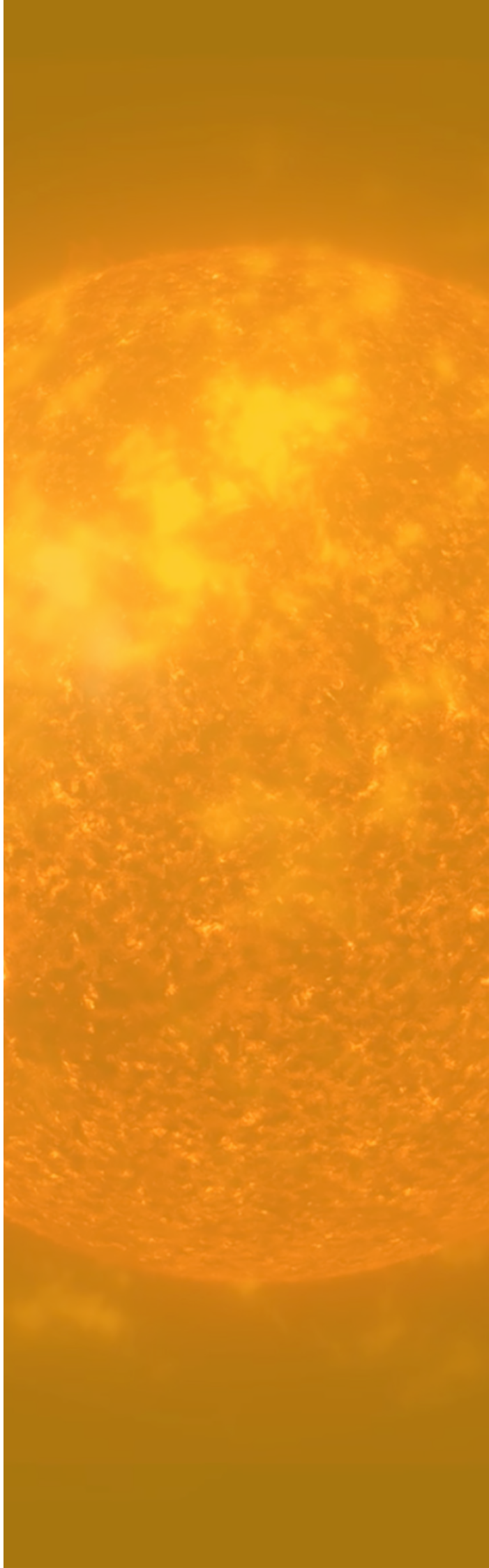
The swollen sun rises lighting the Settlement, the rusted carcass of an old ship. We are introduced to Neve sitting alone and deep in thought. She is worried about the very possible starvation of her people. As the inhabitants go about their morning duties Elizaveta starts a fight over the last reserves of food and water. A huge commotion breaks out amongst the Wastelanders as Neve intervenes to broker peace.

Arrow arrives back at the Settlement to be reunited with Neve. He reveals the Firebird's feather and Neve places it over the dry earth. A pool of water appears. The Wastelanders crowd around and drink from the spring. Gentle rain begins to fall as Neve and Arrow embrace.

The Burnt Mask enters the settlement having captured The Firebird and bound her wings. Ecstatic, Elizaveta joins the Burnt Mask as they gloatingly parade their weighty prize around the Settlement. Horrified, Arrow fights back to defend the captive creature. In all the commotion, Neve manages to release The Firebird from her restraints.

Angered, The Firebird summons the dark side of her powers and generates a ferocious inferno, engulfing her surroundings. The inhabitants of the Settlement are caught in the chaos and seek refuge in the hull of the ship. The Burnt Mask is destroyed in the swirling blaze of anger. The desert is flooded as The Firebird uses the last of her powers to extinguish the inferno.

With her powers drained, The Firebird collapses in Arrow's arms. As she is laid to rest against the earth, her body bursts into flame. From her ashes new life begins. The immense heat has provoked the germination of dormant seedlings, and the rain storm has watered the land. The environment blooms into an oasis of colour and fragrance and there is a celebration as The Firebird appears reborn. Hope is rekindled.



# THE CREATIVES

## IGOR FYODOROVICH STRAVINSKY – COMPOSER



Igor Stravinsky was a Russian composer whose work had a revolutionary impact on musical thought in the early 20th century.

Stravinsky's father was one of the leading Russian operatic basses of his day, and his family were deeply involved with the arts, however he was encouraged to study law and philosophy at St Petersburg University, rather than music. His

serious study of composition only began when he met the composer Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov, who encouraged him and took him on as a private pupil.

As well as teaching Stravinsky, Rimsky-Korsakov used his influence to get his pupil's music performed. In February 1909 at a concert in St Petersburg the impresario Serge Diaghilev heard Stravinsky's work, and being very impressed, commissioned some orchestral arrangements for his company, the Ballets Russes, in Paris. This was the beginning of a highly successful collaboration which saw the creation of some of Stravinsky's best-known works. The first of these was *The Firebird*, which premiered in 1910.

The premiere at the Paris Opéra on June 25, 1910, was a dazzling success, making Stravinsky a star overnight. *The Firebird* was the first of a series of spectacular collaborations between Stravinsky and Diaghilev's company. These include *Petrushka* (1911) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913).

While Stravinsky's wife and family joined him in Paris in 1910, they were unable to return to Russia because of the First World War and the Russian Revolution in 1917. Having

lost his property in Russia as a result of the revolution, Stravinsky earned his living as a performer, and many of the works he composed during the 1920s and 30s were written for his own use as a concert pianist and conductor.

In his later years Stravinsky's musical style changed, becoming more restrained, but his music was still vibrantly rhythmic. Elements of traditional Russian folk music, together with ragtime and other style models from Western popular or dance music were incorporated into his works.

Stravinsky continued to collaborate with Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes during the 1920s, although their relationship was not as close as it had been. He composed *Pulcinella* in 1920 and his final ballet for the company, *Apollon musagète* in 1928.

After World War II a new musical avant-garde had emerged in Europe. These composers embraced the serial, or 12-tone, compositional techniques of the Viennese composers Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and especially Anton von Webern. (Serial music is based on the repetition of a series of tones in an arbitrary but fixed pattern without regard for traditional tonality.) This was extremely challenging for Stravinsky but he embraced the new compositional style and went on to create his own works using serial techniques including the ballet *Agon* (completed 1957) and the choral work *Canticum Sacrum* (1955) and the choral work *Threni* (1958).

Stravinsky continued to compose right up until his death in 1966. His last major work, *Requiem Canticles* combines modern serial techniques with ideas deeply rooted in his Russian past.

Stravinsky died in New York City on 6 April 1971 at the age of 88.

## LOUGHLAN PRIOR – CHOREOGRAPHER



Described by Dance Aotearoa New Zealand as ‘a creative tour de force’, Loughlan Prior is a multi-award-winning choreographer of stage and screen works in New Zealand and internationally. He is the Artistic Director of Lo|Co Arts, Choreographer in Residence at the Royal New Zealand Ballet and Creative Director of Prior Visual, a project-based film collective.

After graduating from the New Zealand School of Dance in 2009, Loughlan joined the Royal New Zealand Ballet and rose to the rank of Soloist. He began creating small works alongside his performance career and became the first recipient of the Ballet Foundation of New Zealand’s Harry Haythorne Choreographic Award in 2015. He was awarded Creative New Zealand’s Tup Lang Choreographic Award in 2016 and travelled to Toronto to stage his work at the Assemblée Internationale. He was appointed as RNZB Choreographer in Residence in 2018.

In 2019, Loughlan premiered the highly acclaimed *Hansel and Gretel*, his first full length production. The ballet included designs by stage and screen legend Kate Hawley and a specially commissioned score by composer Claire Cowan, co-creator of LoCo Arts and Prior’s long-time artistic partner. In the same year, Loughlan created *The Appearance of Colour* for Queensland Ballet’s Bespoke programme and delivered creative masterclasses to dance communities across New Zealand and Australia.

## TRACY GRANT LORD – DESIGNER



Tracy Grant Lord is described as a leader of her industry for her scenographic skills as designer for ballet, opera and theatre. Based in Auckland, New Zealand she has worked with the major performance companies throughout the region including Melbourne, Sydney, Queensland and Auckland theatre companies, Queensland Ballet, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, Australian Ballet, Opera Australia and New Zealand Opera. Tracy made her North American debut in 2017 with Lindy Hume’s *The Barber of Seville* for Seattle Opera and in 2019 premiered two new international ballet works: Liam Scarlett’s *Dangerous Liaisons* for Queensland Ballet and Texas Ballet Theatre and Ma Cong’s *Tchaikovsky: The Man Behind the Music* for Tulsa Ballet Theatre alongside *The Turn of the Screw* for New Zealand Opera. In 2020 Tracy designed New Zealand Opera’s site-specific production of *Semele* at Holy Trinity Cathedral alongside her 2021 preparations for a new *Nutcracker* for Tulsa Ballet and (m)*Orpheus* for New Zealand Opera. Her design for Lindy Hume’s new *Le Nozze di Figaro* for NZO premiered in June 2021 to outstanding reviews and her highly successful collaboration with the legendary Liam Scarlett for *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* returns to the RNZB later this year. This production alongside several other works has been toured to critical success throughout China, South East Asia, Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Scotland including both Christopher Hampson’s *Cinderella* and *Romeo and Juliet* which received an Olivier Award Nomination for Best New Dance Production in the UK. Career highlights include two Helpmann Award Nominations for the Sydney Theatre Company’s production of *In the Next Room* and the Melbourne Theatre Company’s production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Tracy is a Winston Churchill Fellow, has a Bachelor of Spatial Design and her work has been shown at both the Prague Quadrennial and World Stage Design exhibitions.



## JON BUSWELL – LIGHTING DESIGNER



Jon Buswell has designed lighting for well over 100 productions in the UK, Europe and Australia. A graduate of Croydon School of Art in the UK, Buswell initially worked for the Royal Shakespeare Company before becoming a freelance designer in 1997, working across all disciplines of the performing arts.

Jon was Technical Director of West Australian Ballet from 2008 – 2015 and is currently the Technical Director at The Australian Ballet. He designed set and lighting for the Helpmann Award-winning *Aurum* for The Australian Ballet. Recent lighting designs

include *The Nutcracker* and *Romeo and Juliet* for the Royal New Zealand Ballet and *Dracula*, *The Nutcracker*, *La Bayadère*, and *La Sylphide* for West Australian Ballet.

His most recent engagement with West Australian Ballet for *La Bayadère* was described in *Limelight* magazine as 'a backdrop of a seemingly three-dimensional sunset through which light bursts out into the theatre – is indescribably beautiful'.

In 2019, in addition to his commitments as Technical Director at The Australian Ballet, Jon returned to the Royal New Zealand Ballet to light *Hansel and Gretel* and re-designed lighting for Sir Peter Wright's *The Nutcracker* for The Australian Ballet.



## POW STUDIOS

POW Studios is a sound editorial house and production studio located in Wellington, the heart of New Zealand's creative industry. POW works across a wide range of genres and productions, from shorts and television to documentary and large-scale feature films.



## FINAL PROPS DESIGN

### Handheld props



### Show palette



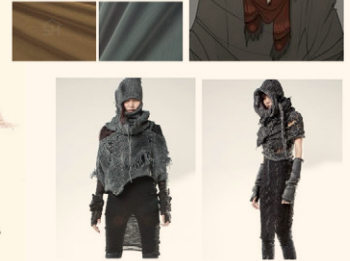
# FINAL COSTUME DESIGN

**Note from the designer Tracy Grant Lord**

Please note that all the photographic images are intended as references only and all the intended designs are as per the designer's original sketches included in the documents.

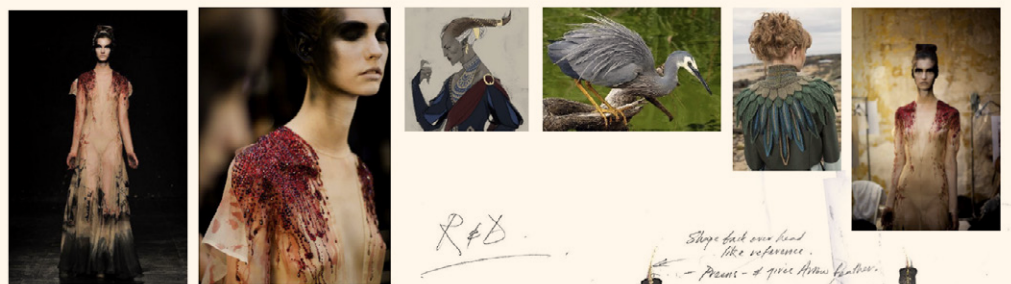


**Neve**

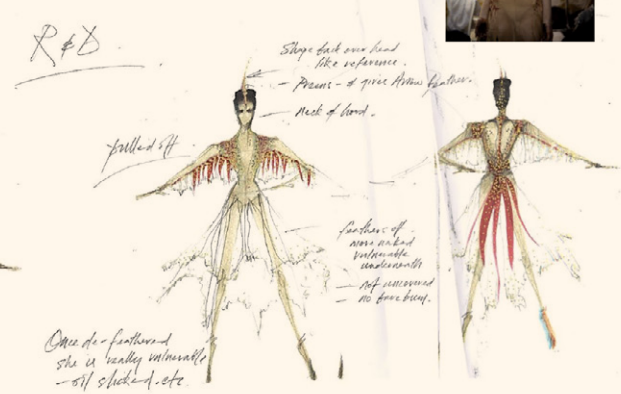


**Wastelanders**

**Arrow**



**Firebird**



# Q&A WITH LOUGHLAN PRIOR



**Alongside the original version of *The Firebird* there have been others such as the one by Maurice Béjart in which the ballet's protagonist is a young man who rises from the ranks of the revolutionaries to become their leader. You have chosen a post-apocalyptic world as your setting - how did you come up with this?**

It is a real privilege to be working on this adaptation of *The Firebird*. Adding to the enduring legacy of Stravinsky's iconic score, alongside the numerous choreographic interpretations developed since the original production of 1910, is such a gift.

Our vision for this production was inspired by the mythology of the phoenix and how the legend of the fantastical creature appears in many ancient cultures as a symbol of hope and cyclic rebirth. We have fused this with modern times and the ecological crisis facing the planet, asking 'what would a future world, ravaged by harsh weather, in which water was a scarce resource, look like?'

The Firebird takes on the form of a natural goddess (Mother Nature) a guardian of the natural world who strives to bring balance to the dying earth.

**The characters in your story have very individual personalities. Tell us about how the characters evolved.**

The Firebird is central to our show and we have built the production around her character. The other characters in the story

were developed as a response to the musical language in the score and how they each interact with the Firebird in their special way. Each character has a distinct way of moving in accordance with the themes and instrumentation within the score.

**Can you tell us something about the creative process? For instance, at what stage did you start working with Tracy Grant Lord, the designer?**

Tracy and I started talking about the journey we could take the show and our audience on, in mid-2020 via Zoom. We worked very collaboratively to build the world our characters live in. I am most proud of the way we have imagined gritty, narrative scenarios unfolding to Stravinsky's music; a score which he originally wrote to tell the Russian folk tale of *The Firebird*, Prince Ivan and the evil wizard Koschei. The design language and the choreographic language of this production marry the epic and fantastical nature of the score to create a cohesive new take on the legend of *The Firebird*.

**We saw how wonderfully you created lightness and positivity despite the darker aspects of the *Hansel & Gretel* story in 2019. What would you think audiences will take away from *The Firebird*?**

I would like our audience to be transported and fully immersed in the world we have created on stage. The equilibrium between light vs dark, cruelty vs kindness and despair vs hope is central to the message of our story and presented itself as a fine balancing act when designing the show. I would like

audiences to sympathise with the Firebird and her journey for survival. I hope audiences will leave the theatre feeling uplifted and inspired to take better care of the natural world around us.

**Stravinsky's score is full of memorable themes, especially the Finale, but do you have an absolutely favourite moment in the score?**

The entire score is so beautifully balanced and woven with narrative themes which develop to vividly depict the story. It's incredibly difficult to choose a favourite piece. If I had to choose just one it would be the Finale, running a close second with the Dance Infernal. Iconic, uplifting and powerful.

**This production will have recorded music rather than a live orchestra. Will the music be recorded especially by a New Zealand orchestra or will you use an existing recording? Can you tell us something about the differences between having to work with an existing recording and the flexibility of live music?**

For this production I worked closely with Christine Pearce, RNZB Music Librarian, and together we have chosen a beautiful recording of the score by the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. The live elements of the show (the dance and scenic changes) are presented with digital film backgrounds and animated special effects (projected overlays). For this reason, we have chosen to use pre-recorded music so both audio and visual elements sync up perfectly. The gift of live music is second to none, however the particular filmic language of this show lends itself to a pre-recorded soundtrack.



# THE HISTORY OF THE FIREBIRD

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FIREBIRD – THE STORY AND THE BALLET

As all things Russian were very popular in Paris in the early 20th century, the impresario Serge Diaghilev decided to commission a ballet with a strong Russian nationalist flavour incorporating a mixture of the mythical story of *The Firebird* and the Russian tale of the evil magician Koschei.

After approaching the composers Anatoly Lyadov and later Nikolai Tcherepnin, Diaghilev finally decided to commission a young, fairly unknown composer whose work he heard at a concert in St Petersburg in 1909. It was to prove to be the beginning of a very fruitful working relationship between Diaghilev and the young composer, Igor Stravinsky.



THE FIREBIRD 1910 TAMARA KARSAVINA

*The Firebird* premiered at the Opéra de Paris on 25 June 1910 and was an immediate success, catapulting Stravinsky to international fame. The ballet's success also secured Stravinsky's position as Diaghilev's star composer, and he went on to create several scores for the Ballets Russes, including *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring*.

Since its highly successful premiere *The Firebird* has been restaged by many prominent choreographers in many parts of the world, some using the original story and others creating new ones such as the 1970 version created by the French choreographer

Maurice Béjart in which the ballet's protagonist is a young man who rose from the ranks of the revolutionaries and became their leader.



The ballet was revived in 1934 by Colonel Wassily de Basil's company, the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo, in a production staged in London, using the original decor and costumes from Diaghilev's company. The company subsequently performed the ballet on their tour of Australia in 1936-37.

*The Firebird* has also been part of The Royal Ballet's repertoire for a long time. The great Margot Fonteyn was the first English dancer to dance the role of the Firebird, in 1954. She was coached by Karsavina, who had originally created the role for Fokine. The Royal Ballet production is closest to the Ballets Russes original, with designs by Natalia Goncharova dating from 1926 – less wild than the Bakst original, but still with plenty of Slavic fire. The Royal Ballet have kept the production in their repertoire ever since.

Later, George Balanchine choreographed a new version of *The Firebird* for the New York City Ballet in 1949, and in 1970, in collaboration with Jerome Robbins, for the New York City Ballet. Both productions used scenery painted by the well-known painter Marc Chagall.

The National Ballet of Canada created a version of the Firebird for television, occasionally rebroadcast, in which special effects were used to make it appear that the Firebird is in flight.

And in July 2021, the story of *The Firebird* will be re-told in a new and innovative way by the Royal New Zealand Ballet.

## THE FIREBIRD IN POPULAR CULTURE

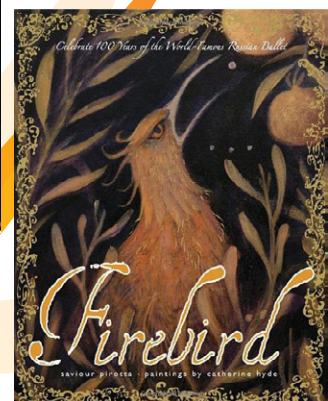
Excerpts from *The Firebird* were used in Bruno Bozzetto's animated film *Allegro Non Troppo* and in *Fantasia 2000*.

Saviour Pirotta and Catherine Hyde's picture book, *Firebird*, is based on the original stories that inspired the ballet and was published in 2010 to celebrate the ballet's centenary.

Stravinsky was an important influence on Frank Zappa, who used the melody from the *Berceuse* in his 1967 album *Absolutely Free*, in the *Amnesia Vivace* section of the "Duke of Prunes" suite.

Prog rock band Yes has regularly used the ballet's *Finale* as their "walk-on" music for concerts since 1971. During the 1980s and 1990s, the chord which opens the *Infernal Dance* became a widely used orchestra hit sample in music.

Extracts from *The Firebird* were used in the opening ceremony of Sochi 2014 during the *Cauldron Lighting* segment.



# DANCE ACTIVITIES

In The Firebird, our dancer uses lots of different movements with her neck and arms to show her bird-like movements. She is the guardian of the natural world with command over the Earth, using strong and graceful movements that incorporate her powers.

Using inspiration from different native New Zealand birds, come up with some movements that imitate their personality, their appearance and even their sounds!

## Things to think about:

- Special feathers that could be the focus of movement
- Are the wings big/small, does the bird fly?
- How would it behave towards others?
- Dynamics – are the movements soft and slow, or strong and fast?
- How can you show the personality traits through movement?

## TUI:

Tui have iridescent blue green feathers and a famous white tuft under their throat. They are boisterous, and sing their melody loudly throughout New Zealand.



## KEA:

Kea are olive green parrots with orange feathers underneath their wings and a black beak. They are known to be one of the most intelligent and feisty birds in the world.



## KERERU:

With purple, green and blue feathers the Kereru is a very relaxed bird that you will often see hanging out on the tops of trees. Whilst performing their aerobatics diving through the sky, they make a noisy beat with their wings that fills the bush.



## PIWAKAWAKA:

Even though they are small, the Piwakawaka is a friendly and confident bird. Their famous tail of feathers opens out to look like a fan and they fly fast and energetically.





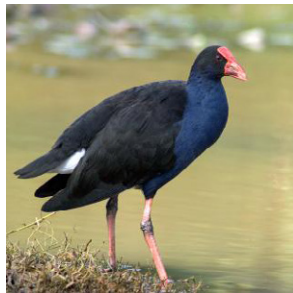
## WEKA:

Weka are large, brown flightless birds that have a feisty and curious personality. They are charismatic and fast runners, with an interest in human objects.



## PUKEKO:

Pukeko have long red legs and a red beak and are often seen in swampy grounds, lagoons and reeds. They have deep blue feathers on their body and white feathers underneath their tail.



## KIWI:

The Kiwi has brown loose, hair-like feathers, strong legs, no tail and a long beak. They are small, they cannot fly and only come out of their homes at night time!



## MOA:

Moa lived in New Zealand 500 years ago. They were a giant flightless bird that stood up to 3.6 metres tall!



## EXTENSION:

Have you ever looked into the sky and seen birds flying harmoniously with one another? Now it's your turn!

Get into a tight group all facing the same direction. Make sure you have enough room so you don't hit the person next to you

Pick a leader to stand in the front of the group

Starting off slowly, the leader will begin to move their arms in any way they wish, and the rest of the group imitates what that leader is doing

The end result should mimick a flock of birds flying through the sky

### Tips:

Everyone has a turn being the leader

Try not to directly watch the leader, use your peripheral vision to follow the shapes

As development, try having more than one leader. Each individual has the option of which leader they copy.

# CRAFTS AND PUZZLES

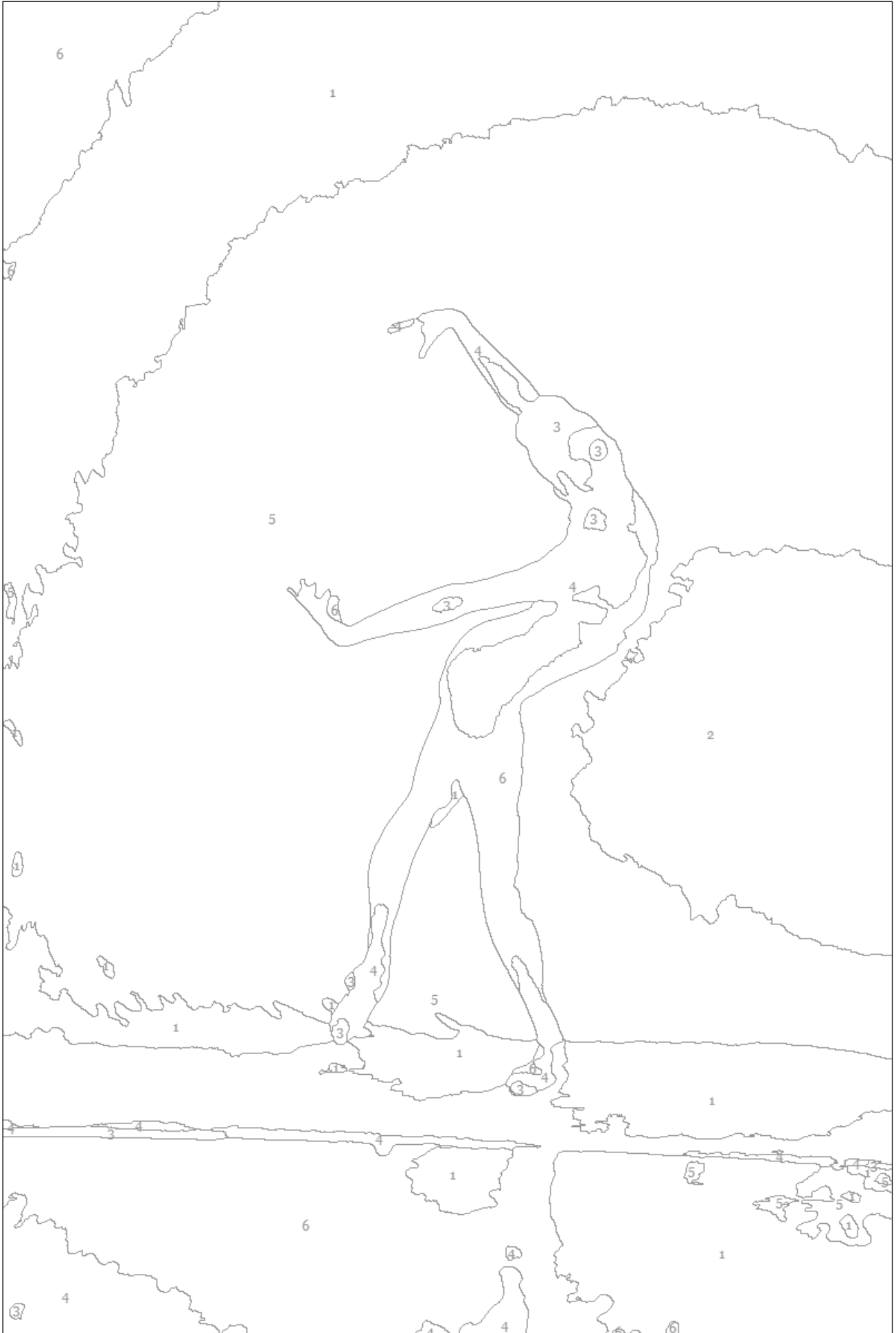
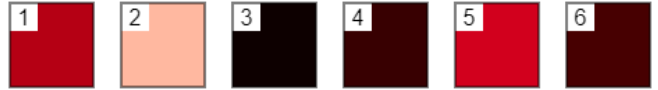
## WORD SEARCH

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NEVE  
ELISAVETA  
STRAVINSKY  
SCAVENGERS  
ARROW  
FIREBIRD  
FEATHERS  
RENEWAL  
MASK  
HOPE  
MAGIC  
WASTELANDERS  
BURNT  
BALLET  
FLAMES  
INFERNO



# PAINTING BY NUMBERS



**PAINTING BY NUMBERS – COMPLETE**



# WHAT TO DO AT A BALLET

Talk to your students in advance about how they are expected to behave at the ballet. This will ensure that everyone gets the most out of this wonderful experience.

We recommend that you provide your students with some guidelines about what to look for and listen to during the performance. You may also want to encourage your students to add to this list.

## PLEASE FEEL FREE TO:

- Watch the dancers – not just at the steps they are performing, but also their expressions, their actions and how they might show their character (if they have one)
- Listen to the music – see how it might compliment the performance or add to the atmosphere
- Look at the costumes, set designs and lighting used
- Have a great time – you can laugh if you see the dancers do something funny
- Show your appreciation by applauding when the dancing stops – this sometimes happens during the middle of the performance
- Don't worry if you feel like you don't understand what's happening in the performance. **Dance is for everyone to enjoy, even if you know nothing about it!**

## BUT ALSO REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING:

- Please go to the toilet before the show starts, or in the interval – moving around the theatre during the performance is disruptive to others.
- Unlike television or the movies, this is a live performance. Talking and other noise can distract the performers and spoil the experience for other audience members.
- Please do not eat or chew gum as this can be a distraction to others and create litter in the theatre.
- Using cell phones or other devices in the theatre is not permitted – please ensure they are switched off or on silent before the show begins.
- No photos or videos are to be taken during the show.
- Leaving your seat before the lights go on can be dangerous so stay seated until the lights come up.

## THINGS TO NOTE:

- All public performances will last approximately 2 hours.
- School matinee performances last approximately one hour.
- Please plan to arrive at the theatre at least 30 minutes prior to the performance as latecomers cannot be seated once the performance has begun.



# BALLET TIMELINE

**1653** Louis XIV dances the Sun God in *Le Ballet de la Nuit*. His teacher, Pierre Beauchamps, formalises the terms we use as vocabulary in ballet today.



LE BALLET DE LA NUIT

**1661** Louis XIV (Sun King) founds the Académie Royale de la Musique, later named the Paris Opera Ballet.

**1726–1727** Marie Camargo and her rival, Marie Salle, make debuts in London. Camargo shortens her skirt to show her feet, paving the way for the modern tutu.

**1789** Jean Dauberval produces *La Fille Mal Gardée*, making it the oldest ballet still extant in modern-day repertoire.

**1828** Marie Taglioni makes her debut at the Paris Opera, dancing on pointe for the first time.

**1890s** Marius Petipa (1818–1910) choreographs the great classics of ballet including *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890), *Swan Lake* (1895) with music composed by Tchaikovsky.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY  
MARIE PETIPA &  
LYUBOV VISHNEVSKAYA



**1900s** Ballet companies visited New Zealand through the first half of the twentieth century including Adeline Genée, Anna Pavlova, Covent Garden and Russian Ballet.

**1910** *The Firebird* is premiered in Paris by the Ballets Russes, marking the beginning of a great collaboration between composer Igor Stravinsky and the impresario Serge Diaghilev.



THE FIREBIRD 1910  
TAMARA KARSAVINA  
& MICHEL FOKINE

**1953**

Poul Gnatt (1923–1995) founds the New Zealand Ballet (now RNZB).

**1974** New Zealand Ballet performs *The Firebird* with choreography by Una Kai.

**1982** New Zealand Ballet performs *The Firebird* with choreography by Gray Veredon.

**1984** The New Zealand Ballet Company becomes the Royal New Zealand Ballet.

**1996** RNZB performs *The Firebird* with choreography by Krzysztof Pastor 1998. The St James Theatre becomes the home of RNZB.

**2013** Royal New Zealand Ballet celebrates its 60th anniversary.

**2017** Appointment of Patricia Barker, the RNZB's 12th Artistic Director.

**2019** The RNZB moves out of its home at the St James Theatre into the new, purpose built RNZB Dance Centre.

**2021** July Premiere performances of Loughlan Prior's new ballet *The Firebird*.

POUL GNATT  
PRESENTING  
KIRSTEN RALOV.  
PHOTOJOHN ASHTON



ROYAL BALLET – THE  
FIREBIRD, SYMPHONY  
IN C – LONDON



THE FIREBIRD 2018  
PRINCIPAL ARTIST  
LUCY GREEN.  
PHOTO DAVID KELLY



PATRICIA BARKER



THE FIREBIRD 2021.  
PHOTO ROSS BROWN

