

### Lecture 3: Art on Stage: Diaghilev & the Russian Ballet

This lecture aims to introduce the audience to Russian and twentieth century art through the work of Diaghilev and his internationally renowned ballet company the Ballets Russes. Diaghilev was a leading patron of the Russian avant-garde in the West who interacted with major artistic figures of the day. We will examine his use of the artist in ballet productions and thereby trace the Ballets Russes' role in the history of modernism.

Particular attention will be on the costumes and set designs by leading artists such as Bakst, Benois, Goncharova, Larionov, Matisse and Picasso. Seminal productions covered will include *Scheherazade* (1910), *The Golden Cockerel* (1914) *The Firebird* (1910) and *Parade* (1917). A specific case study will be *The Rite of Spring* (1913) whose revolutionary music by Stravinsky and violent and erotic version of a pagan Russia shocked Western audiences. The talk will focus closely on the visual and moving image; we will look at costume and set designs, photographs, printed ephemera and ballet film footage.

The lecture will include a general introduction to key themes and artists of the early twentieth-century avant-garde and trace their artistic development through their involvement with the Ballets Russes. Themes of emigration, exchange and the creation of a Russian cultural identity in the West will also be examined.



Leon Bakst, costume design for *The Firebird*, 1910



Sergei Diaghilev



Ballet Russes Programme, 1936-37