

THE NUTCRACKER

INTRODUCTION

The Nutcracker is a two-act ballet, originally choreographed by Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov with a score by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The libretto is adapted from E.T.A. Hoffmann's story "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King." It was given its premier at the Marinsky Theater in St. Petersburg on Sunday, December 18, 1892, on a double-bill with Tchaikovsky's opera, Iolanta. Although the original production was not a success, the 20-minute suite that Tchaikovsky extracted from the ballet was. The Nutcracker's score has become one of Tchaikovsky's most famous compositions, in particular the pieces featured in the suite. The Nutcracker has been performed by countless ballet companies, most often during the Christmas season since the late 1960's. There have been various alternative endings created in productions subsequent to the original.

MUSIC: CHARACTERISTICS

1. Advanced harmonies
2. Much melodic invention not found in prior ballet music
3. The death of his sister before The Nutcracker was composed influenced him to compose a melancholy, descending scale melody for the adagio of the Grand Pas de Deux
4. Use of the celesta because of its "sweet" sound
5. Use of toy instruments in the Christmas party scene

MUSIC: STRUCTURE

Within the two acts, there are three tableaux, and sixteen musical numbers, excluding the "Miniature Overture." The acts, scenes (and tableaux), musical numbers and tempo indications are as follows:

Scene	No	English Title	Tempo Indication
Act 1			
		Miniature Overture	Allegro giusto
Tableau 1	1	Scene (The Christmas Tree)	Allegro non troppo – Piu moderato – Allegro Vivace
	2	March	Tempo di marcia viva (very march tempo)
	3	Children's Gallop and Dance of the Parents	Presto – Andante – Allegro
	4	Dance Scene (Arrival of Drosselmeyer)	Andantino – Allegro vivo – Andantino sostenuto – Piu andante – Allegro molto vivace – tempo di Valse – Presto
	5	Scene and Grandfather Waltz	Andante – Andantino – Moderato assai – Andante – L'iestesso tempo – Tempo di Gross-Vater – Allegro – Vivacissimo
	6	Scene (Clara and the Nutcracker)	Allegro semplice – Moderato con moto – Allegro Giusto – Piu Allegro – Moderato Assai
	7	Scene (The Battle)	Allegro vivo
Tableau 2	8	Scene (A Pine Forest in Winter)	Andante
	9	Waltz of the Snowflakes	Tempo di Valse, ma con moto - Presto
Act 2			
Tableau 3	10	Scene (The Magic Castle in the Land of Sweets)	Andante

	11	Scene (Clara and Nutcracker Prince)	Andante con moto – Moderato – Allegro agitato – Poco piu allegro – Tempo precedente
	12	Divertisement a. Chocolate (Spanish Dance) b. Coffee (Arabian Dance) c. Tea (Chinese Dance) d. Candy Canes (Russian Dance) e. Dance of the Reed Flutes f. Mother Ginger and the Polichinelles	a. Allegro brillante b. Commodo c. Allegro moderato d. Tempo di trepak, molto vivace e. Andantino f. Allegro giocoso – Andante – Allegro vivo
	13	Waltz of the Flowers	Tempo di Valse
	14	Pas de Deux 1. Intrada (Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier) 2. Variation I: Tarantella 3. Variation II: Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy 4. Coda	1. Andante maestoso 2. Tempo di Tarantella 3. Andante ma non troppo – Presto 4. Vivace assai
	15	Final Waltz and Apotheosis	Tempo di Valse – Molto meno

MUSIC: INSTRUMENTATION

The instrumentation for The Nutcracker is as follows (orchestral groupings in **bold**):

<p>WOODWINDS</p> <p>3 Flutes (2nd & 3rd doubling on piccolo) 2 Oboes Cor Anglais (English Horn) 2 Clarinets in B-flat and A Bass Clarinet in B-Flat and A 2 Bassoons</p> <p>STRINGS</p> <p>2 Harps First and Second Violins Violas Violoncellos (Cellos) Double Basses</p>	<p>BRASS</p> <p>4 French Horns in F 2 Trumpets in A and B-flat 3 Trombones (2 tenor, 1 bass) Tuba</p> <p>PERCUSSION</p> <p>Timpani Snare Drum Cymbals Bass Drum Triangle Tambourine Castanets Tam-Tam Glockenspiel “Toy Instruments” (rattle, trumpet, drum, cuckoo, quail, cymbals and rifle)</p>
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The Nutcracker also uses a celesta and SA Chorus (Soprano, Alto: higher and lower female singing voices)

MUSIC: PERFORMANCE

A typical performance of The Nutcracker lasts about 85 minutes, without applause or an intermission. Some performances have changed the musical “numbers” which adds more confusion as to the order of the suites.

Nearly all of the CD and LP recordings of the complete ballet present Tchaikovsky's score exactly as he originally conceived it.

CONCERT EXCERPTS AND ARRANGEMENTS

Three excerpts and arrangements of The Nutcracker Suite have been made:

1. Tchaikovsky: Suite from the ballet "The Nutcracker": This suite includes the following:
 - a. Miniature Overture
 - b. Danses caractéristiques
 - i. March
 - ii. Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy (ending altered from ballet-version)
 - iii. Russian Dance (Trepak)
 - iv. Arabian Dance
 - v. Chinese Dance
 - vi. Dance of the Reed-Flutes
 - c. Waltz of the Flowers
2. Grainger: Paraphrase on Tchaikovsky's Flower Waltz, for solo piano
3. Pletnev: Concert suite from The Nutcracker, for solo piano:
 - a. March
 - b. Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy
 - c. Tarantella
 - d. Intermezzo (Journey through the Snow)
 - e. Russian Trepak
 - f. Chinese Dance
 - g. Andante maestoso (Pas de Deux)