

Massenet - Ballet Suites (2012)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Le Cid*, opera: Ballet Suite: *Castillane* 2. *Le Cid*, opera: Ballet Suite: *Andalouse* 3. *Le Cid*, opera: Ballet Suite: *Aragonaise* 4. *Le Cid*, opera: Ballet Suite: *Aubade* 5. *Le Cid*, opera: Ballet Suite: *Catalane* 6. *Le Cid*, opera: Ballet Suite: *Madrilène* 7. *Le Cid*, opera: Ballet Suite: *Navarraise* 8. *Cendrillon*, opera in 4 acts: Ballet Suite: *Le Sommeil de Cendrillon* 9. *Cendrillon*, opera in 4 acts: Ballet Suite: *Les Filles de Noblesse* 10. *Cendrillon*, opera in 4 acts: Ballet Suite: *Menuet de Cendrillon* 11. *Cendrillon*, opera in 4 acts: Ballet Suite: *Les Tendres Fiances* 12. *Cendrillon*, opera in 4 acts: Ballet Suite: *Les Mandores* 13. *Cendrillon*, opera in 4 acts: Ballet Suite: *Le Florentine* 14. *Cendrillon*, opera in 4 acts: Ballet Suite: *Marche des Princesses* 15. *Thaïs*, opera in 3 acts: Ballet Suite: 1. *Andante - Allegro vivo - Largo - Allegro moderato - Lento - Presto vivace* 16. *Thaïs*, opera in 3 acts: Ballet Suite: 2. *Andante cantabile* 17. *Thaïs*, opera in 3 acts: Ballet Suite: 3. *Scherzetto molto vivace* 18. *Thaïs*, opera in 3 acts: Ballet Suite: 4. *Allegro moderato - Tres lent* 19. *Thaïs*, opera in 3 acts: Ballet Suite: 5. *Allegro maestoso* 20. *Thaïs*, opera in 3 acts: Ballet Suite: 6. *Andante religioso* 21. *Thaïs*, opera in 3 acts: Ballet Suite: 7. *Allegro vivace. Frenetico* 22. *Thaïs*, opera in 3 acts: Ballet Suite: 8. [Unspecified]
Academy of St Martin in the Fields Sir Neville Marriner – conductor

During the mid-19th century, it was traditional for all operas performed in Paris to have a ballet sequence inserted into one of their acts. One of the most prolific and celebrated opera composers of the era was Jules Massenet; this fantastic CD surveys ballet suites taken from three of his most popular works in the genre, all of which were written at the height of his career.

The release begins with one of Massenet's most highly regarded compositions, the *Le Cid* suite of 1885. Based on the story of the Castilian nobleman Rodrigo, who was responsible for saving Spain through his defeat of the Moors, the work comprises a series of picturesque movements brimming with dance rhythms drawn from different regions, and is followed by the composer's *Cendrillon* suite – a masterpiece of orchestral writing that draws its material principally from the Act 2 ball scene. In the concluding suite, we move from *Cendrillon*'s fairy-tale enchantment to

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the spiritual Thaïs, which takes as its basis the tragic legend of a courtesan- turned-saint and includes some of the French composer's most sombre music.

Although history has not taken kindly to all of Massenet's operas, the suites heard here have remained enormously popular as concert pieces, testament to their quality and appeal. With Le Cid's inventive use of percussion and Thaïs's religious treatment of the organ, this collection abounds in colourful orchestration that recalls the grandeur of 19th-century Parisian opera. It's an ideal purchase for the Romantic ballet connoisseur. ---arkivmusic.com

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