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Prokofiev's ballet *Cinderella* was completed in 1941, and is one of the last works he composed before falling into official disfavor with Soviet authorities. Prokofiev's life-long admiration for Tchaikovsky is evident in the work, and *Cinderella* is in fact dedicated to that master of Russian ballet music. In 1946 he compiled three orchestral suites from the ballet, basing his work on transcriptions he had earlier made for piano; the eight numbers that comprise the first suite from *Cinderella* offer a taste of the first two acts of the ballet.

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Sergei Prokofiev - Cinderella Suites (1957)

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Unlike Prokofiev's (much earlier) opera *The Love For Three Oranges*, which met with little theatrical success but flourished in the guise of an orchestral suite, his 1941 ballet *Cinderella* was not helped greatly by the creation of three instrumental suites drawn in 1946 from the ballet -- neither the ballet nor its suites have won places in the repertoire that would befit works of this quality. The composer indicated that these suites were not mere transcriptions of the music from the ballet, but rather thorough reworkings of the material into a symphonic context. The second suite from the ballet presents a hodge-podge of music (seven separate numbers), mostly from the first two acts of the work. We open with "Cinderella's Dreams", in which themes representing the realities of Cinderella's life at home are mingled with waltz rhythms. The following "Gavotte" is strikingly reminiscent of the March from *The Love for Three Oranges*, and is perhaps an effort on the composer's part to recreate the great success enjoyed by that earlier piece. Also contained in the second *Cinderella* suite are musical depictions of the "Spring and Summer Fairies", as well as a "Bourée" in which the Prince's four companions dance themselves silly. The concluding "Galop" is the only music taken from Act Three of the ballet' it is a wild romp depicting the Prince's journey to find the owner of the slipper dropped by Cinderella. ---Blair Johnson, Rovi

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