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## Sergei Prokofiev - Cinderella Suites (1957)



Suite no.1, op.107 Introduction ~ Pas de Chat ~ Quarrel ~ Fairy Godmother & Fairy Winter ~ Mazurka ~ Cinderella goes to the Ball Suite no.2, op.108

Cinderella Dreams of the Ball ~ Dancing Lesson & Gavotte ~ Fairy Spring & Fairy Summer ~ Bouree ~ Cinderella at the Castle ~ Galop

Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden Hugo Rignold - conductor

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.

The "Introduction" presents two themes which will come to be associated with differing aspects of the title character's persona -- one a melancholy but hopeful idea, and the other a happier singing melody. The two step-sisters are depicted by clarinets in "Pas de Chale." Other extracts included in the first suite include the "Quarrel" between Cinderella and the family, and a lively "Mazurka" from Act Two. Cinderella meets and dances with the prince in the "Grand Waltz" from Act Two. In the concluding excerpt, "Midnight", the conflicting "Cinderella" themes (introduced in the "Introduction") appear simultaneously as the clock strikes twelve and her regal attire vanishes. The suite (as well as Act Two of the actual ballet) ends as Cinderella flees the ballroom, dropping, of course, the one slipper.

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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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