

Program 5

Nocturnes

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Composed in 1897-1899.

Premiered on December 12, 1900 in Paris, conducted by Camille Chevillard.

The origin of Debussy's *Nocturnes* is cloudy. It is possible that he may have conceived the three movements of the work, and perhaps made some sketches, as early as 1892, when he was considering a tour to the United States proposed by one Prince Poniatowski. He informed the Prince that a piece called "Trois Scènes au Crépuscule" ('*Three Scenes at Twilight*'), [was] almost finished, that is to say that the orchestration is entirely laid out and it is simply a question of writing out the score." This work, if it ever came into existence, seems to have completely disappeared, though it is rumored that a fragment has been locked away in private hands for years. The inspiration for this music was a set of ten poems (published in 1890) by Henri de Régnier, a symbolist poet and close associate of Mallarmé. (It was Régnier who approached Mallarmé with Debussy's request to base a work on his *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*.) Régnier's verses, collectively titled *Poèmes anciens et romanesques*, are, according to Edward Lockspeiser's study of Debussy, "the product of an imaginary theatre of the mind in which action is sacrificed to poetic associations." The images evoked are dream-like and ritualistic and were well suited to Debussy's ideal of a music "made up of colors and rhythms . . . [rather than] something that can be poured into a tight and traditional form." Debussy's "Scenes at Twilight" have apparently faded into darkness, though they were the earliest evidence of the thoughts that eventually became the *Nocturnes*.

On December 29, 1893, the Ysaÿe Quartet introduced Debussy's String Quartet in G minor in Paris. The Belgian musician Eugene Ysaÿe was one of the great violinists of the time, and Debussy was impressed with his abilities and flattered by his interest in the young composer's music. In September 1894 Debussy wrote to Ysaÿe offering him a three-movement piece for solo violin and orchestra, recast from the earlier "Scenes at Twilight," which was "an experiment with the different shades that can be obtained from one color — like a study in gray in painting." Debussy specified that "the orchestration of the first movement is for strings, the second for flutes, four horns, three trumpets and two harps, while the third combines both these groupings." Debussy was also busy at the time with the composition of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and it was two years before he was again able to approach Ysaÿe, imploring him to accept the concerted piece for his exclusive performance. Though the work for Ysaÿe never reached final form, Debussy remained interested in such a composition, and was still considering a "Poème" for solo violin and orchestra as late as 1914.

The final shaping of the *Nocturnes* began in 1897. The influences of Régnier's symbolist poetry and the orchestral sonority of the music intended for Ysaÿe melded with yet another one, recorded by Léon Vallas in his biography of the composer: "One day, in stormy weather, as Debussy was crossing the Pont de la Concorde in Paris with his friend Paul Poujaud, he told him that on a similar kind of day the idea of the symphonic work *Nuages* ['*Clouds*'] had occurred to him: he had visualized those very thunder-clouds swept along by a stormy wind; a boat passing, with its horn sounding. These two impressions are recalled in the languorous succession of chords and by the short chromatic theme on the English horn." Debussy went on to explain to Poujaud that *Fêtes* ("Festivals") had been inspired by a recollection of merry-making in the Bois de Boulogne, with noisy crowds watching the drum and bugle corps of the Garde Nationale pass in parade. The finale (*Sirènes* — "*Sirens*") derives from Régnier's poem *L'Homme et la Sirène*. The title of the entire cycle — *Nocturnes* — and the idea for its tone-color painting may have been taken from the work of James McNeill Whistler, the American-born artist who lived in Paris and London for most of his life and whose best-known work, a portrait of his mother, was formally entitled by him *Arrangement in Gray and Black, No. 1*. All of these streams — poetic, visual, sensual, sonorous — flowed into the three *Nocturnes*.

Debussy worked for two years finishing the *Nocturnes*. On September 16, 1898 he wrote to the publisher Georges Hartmann that these three orchestral pieces were giving him more trouble than all the five acts of *Pelléas*. He wanted to follow the sensation created in 1894 by his *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* with an equally stunning orchestral work, but one that would also fulfill his grand, *avant-garde* view of the art. "I love music passionately, and because I love it I try to free it from the barren traditions that stifle it," he proclaimed. "It is a free art, gushing forth — an open-air art, an art boundless as the elements, the wind, the sky, the sea! It must never be shut in and become an academic art." Even after Hartmann published the work in 1899, Debussy continued to refine his vision by touching up the orchestration in his personal copy of the score for years thereafter. These changes were incorporated into the definitive version of the work issued in 1930.

The first two of the *Nocturnes* were given in Paris at the Lamoureux concert of December 9, 1900. Though they were unanimously hailed in the press, the critics were hard put to offer much technical explanation of this music in such an unprecedented style. Pierre de Bréville's comments for the *Mercure de France* were typical: "It is *pure music*, conceived beyond the limits of reality, in the world of dreams, among the ever-moving architecture that God builds with mists, the marvelous creations of the impalpable realms." Later writers have continued trying to describe this

ineffable music. Among the most pointed observation is Olin Downes' summation that "Debussy was supremely the artist capable of selecting the instant of pure beauty and transfixing it on his tonal canvas for eternity."

Debussy himself caught the delicate blending of reality and imagination in the poetic description of his *Nocturnes* that he provided for the work's first complete performance, on October 27, 1901:

"The title *Nocturnes* is intended to have here a more general and, more particularly, a more decorative meaning. It is not meant to designate the usual form of a nocturne, but rather all the impressions and the special effects of light that the word suggests.

"*Clouds*: the unchanging aspect of the sky and the slow and solemn march of clouds fading away in gray tones slightly tinged with white.

"*Festivals*: vibrating, dancing rhythm, with sudden flashes of light. There is also the episode of a procession (a dazzling, fantastic vision) passing through the festive scene and becoming blended with it; but the background remains persistently the same: the festival with its blending of music and luminous dust participating in the universal rhythm of things.

"*Sirens*: the sea and its endless rhythms; then amid the billows silvered by the moon, the mysterious song of the Sirens is heard; it laughs and passes."

The Red Violin: Chaconne for Violin and Orchestra

John Corigliano (born in 1938)

Composed in 1997.

Premiered on November 26, 1997 in San Francisco, conducted by Robert Spano with Joshua Bell as soloist.

John Corigliano, one of today's most prominent and frequently performed American composers, was born in New York City on February 16, 1938, and raised in a family rich in musical talent — his father, John, Sr., was for many years the concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic and his mother was an accomplished pianist and teacher. He first studied piano with his mother, and later took up the clarinet and was briefly a pupil of Stanley Drucker, longtime principal clarinetist of the Philharmonic, for whom he was to write a superb concerto in 1977. Though he early evidenced considerable musical talent, Corigliano's interest in becoming a composer was not ignited until he discovered a recording of Copland's *Billy the Kid* during his years at a Brooklyn high school. (His earlier ambition had been to become a cartoonist.) His father's performance of the Walton Violin Concerto added further to his fascination with contemporary music, as did frequent attendance at rehearsals and concerts of the Philharmonic.

From 1955 to 1960, Corigliano studied at Columbia University with Otto Luening, who did much to encourage his student's talent for creative work, and at the Manhattan School of Music with Vittorio Giannini. After graduating with honors from Columbia, Corigliano worked for three years as a programmer and writer for New York radio station WQXR; from 1961 to 1963, he was music director of station WBAI, also in New York. He served as associate producer at CBS for the New York Philharmonic's televised Young People's Concerts from 1961 to 1972, producer for Columbia Masterworks recordings in 1972-1973, and music director of the Corfu Music Festival in 1973-1974. He served as Composer-in-Residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 1987 to 1990, and has taught at the Manhattan School of Music and at Lehman College of the City University of New York, which recently established a composition scholarship in his name; he has also been on faculty of the Juilliard School of Music since 1991.

Corigliano's works have been recognized with many prestigious awards. His First Symphony, inspired by friends he lost to AIDS, was unanimously hailed at its 1990 premiere by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Daniel Barenboim, and received the Grawemeyer Award and two Grammy Awards (for Best Contemporary Composition and Best Orchestral Performance of the Year) in 1991. Following the Boston Symphony Orchestra's performance of the work in March 1993, the BSO presented Corigliano the Horblit Award for a Distinguished Composition by an American composer. In April 2001, his Symphony No. 2 for String Orchestra received the Pulitzer Prize in Music; in March 2002, the National Arts Club in New York City honored him with their Gold Medal. Corigliano's 1980 score for Ken Russell's film *Altered States* was nominated for an Academy Award, and his second film score, for Hugh Hudson's 1985 motion picture *Revolution*, received the Anthony Asquith Award for Outstanding Achievement in Film Music from the British Film Institute. In 2000, he won an Academy Award for his score for François Girard's film *The Red Violin*. The "grand opera buffa" *The Ghosts of Versailles*, based on the third book of Beaumarchais' *Figaro* trilogy, was commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera and premiered with outstanding success by that company in New York on December 19, 1991. *Ghosts* subsequently was broadcast nationwide on PBS, and received the 1992 Composition of the Year Award from the first International Classical Music Awards. Also in 1992, *Musical America* named John Corigliano that publication's first "Composer of the Year." Corigliano's many other awards and honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and membership in the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

Canadian director François Girard gave evidence of his insight into musical subjects with the remarkable *Thirty-Two Short Films about Glenn Gould* in 1993, and subsequently filmed a live concert by Peter Gabriel (1994) and a segment of Yo-Yo Ma's video based on Bach's six Cello Suites (1997). Girard's *The Red Violin* (1998) tells the story of an extraordinary instrument made by a violinmaker in 17th-century Cremona. The violin's haunting tone and

expressive power, according to the tale, arise from its unique varnish, which the maker formulated with the blood of his beloved and recently dead wife, Anna, to preserve her spirit and allow it to sing forever in the voice of the instrument. The film is structured as a number of episodes set across three centuries in Vienna, Oxford, Shanghai and Montreal that trace the subsequent history of the violin. Girard approached John Corigliano about writing the music for the film; Joshua Bell agreed to participate as the all-important violin soloist.

“I was delighted to accept when asked to compose the score for Girard’s fascinating new film *The Red Violin*,” Corigliano said. “How could I turn down so interesting and fatalistic a journey through almost three centuries, beginning as it did in Cremona, home of history’s greatest violin builders? I also welcomed the producer’s offer to create separately a concert piece for violin and orchestra freely based on motives from the film. I’d assumed that, as usual in film, I wouldn’t be required to score the movie until it was completed, except for a number of on-camera ‘cues,’ or occasions on which the film’s characters themselves perform; such cues, of course, would need to be created first. So I then composed a singable theme, hummed by the violin master’s wife, Anna, which mutates into a solo violin melody when, after Anna’s death, her spirit enters the violin of the title. As its underpinning, I wrote an inexorable seven chord chaconne [an ancient variations form in which a short, repeated chord pattern is decorated with changing figurations and elaborations], evoking the Tarot reading [that foretells Anna’s death] and the fate it signals. Then plans changed. Filming, meant to conclude in the summer of 1997, was pushed back until early fall. Performances of the concert piece, however, remained set for late November. So the present Chaconne was built just on the materials I had already completed, a good thing, as it turns out, because I then had the freedom, as well as the need, to explore these materials to a greater extent than I might have had I tried to condense an hour’s worth of music into a coherent single movement. So, in a curiously backwards way, the film’s underscoring drew much of its inspiration from the concert work you hear tonight.” In 1999, Corigliano also derived a concert suite from his score for *The Red Violin*.

The weighty, slowly rising, dotted-rhythm chaconne theme is hinted by the double stops of the violin that emerge amid a luminous mist of swirling sound at the outset. The bassoons and then the trombones, low in their registers, state the seven-chord chaconne theme in full. The violin sings Anna’s poignant melody above the solemn, rising chords of the chaconne, and the rest of the work comprises mutations of both these two thematic elements, sometimes strict, sometimes free, sometimes tense and unsettling, sometimes introspective and nostalgic.

Act I from *The Nutcracker*, Op. 71

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Composed in 1891-1892.

Premiered on December 18, 1892 in St. Petersburg, conducted by Riccardo Drigo.

By 1890, Tchaikovsky was one of the most famous composers in the world, universally regarded as the greatest musician in the history of Russia. He was the author of symphonies, concertos, operas, quartets and occasional pieces, but some of his best successes had come with that most characteristic and beloved Russian art form, the ballet. *Swan Lake* (1876) and, especially, *The Sleeping Beauty* (1889) had proven his mastery of the medium. Late in 1890 he was approached by Prince Ivan Vselvolozhsky, director of the Imperial Theater in St. Petersburg, and Marius Petipa, the French dancer and choreographer who created an unprecedented standard of ballet production and execution after settling in Russia in 1847, to compose a full evening’s entertainment — a one-act opera and a ballet. The subject for the opera was to be of Tchaikovsky’s choice (he picked *King René’s Daughter* by the Danish dramatist Hendrik Herz, which the composer’s brother Modest turned into a libretto titled *Iolanthe*), but that for the ballet was specified as E.T.A. Hoffmann’s story of *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, one of the most popular tales in Russia at the time. Tchaikovsky had read Hoffmann’s *Nutcracker* in 1882 “with great pleasure,” and accepted the commission.

The scenario devised for the new ballet by Petipa, who had also choreographed the premiere of *The Sleeping Beauty*, was based not on Hoffmann’s original story, however, but rather on a French adaptation by Alexandre Dumas père that considerably softened the grotesque elements and erotic undertones of the German Romanticist’s narrative. Petipa and Vselvolozhsky further diluted the tale by discarding the “sub-plot” of Princess Pirlipat, which justifies dramatically the battle scene in Act I of the ballet, and making Act II simply a *divertissement* — a series of character dances without dramatic continuity. Tchaikovsky objected to the lack of faithfulness to Hoffmann’s original, much of whose interest for him lay precisely in its juxtaposition of the naive, idyllic images of youth with moments of *grotesquerie*, but resigned himself to his contractual agreement, and told Modest shortly after starting composition in February 1891 that “I am beginning to be reconciled to the subject.”

Early in 1891, just as he was undertaking *The Nutcracker*, Tchaikovsky was invited to the United States to conduct his music at the inaugural festivities for the opening of Carnegie Hall in New York City. He agreed to go, and in March set out on a concert tour that took him en route across Germany and to Paris, where his music was given on programs of the famed Concerts Colonne. Always interested in novel sounds, Tchaikovsky heard in Paris a recent invention of the celebrated harmonium builder, Victor Mustel — an instrument that the composer described to his

publisher, Jurgenson, as “something between a piano and a glockenspiel.” This was the celesta, patented as recently as 1886 by Victor’s son Auguste. Tchaikovsky realized that the ethereal tone of the celesta would be perfect for his new ballet, and urged Jurgenson to obtain one immediately. “Have it sent directly to St. Petersburg,” he wrote, “but no one there must know about it. I am afraid Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov might hear of it and make use of it before I do. [*The Nutcracker* was the instrument’s first use in an orchestral score.] I expect it to make a tremendous impression.” This encouraging discovery in Paris, however, was vitiated by another, tragic, one. From an imported Russian newspaper he chanced to read, Tchaikovsky learned of the death of his beloved sister, Alexandra Davidov, news of which Modest was trying to keep from him until he returned from the New World. “For God’s sake, send all the details to New York,” he pleaded in a letter to Modest just before embarking from Le Havre. “Today, even more than yesterday, I feel the absolute impossibility of depicting in music the Sugar-Plum Fairy.”

The trip in April 1891, his only visit to America, was probably the best antidote for Tchaikovsky’s grief. He was surprised and pleased to find in the United States so many admirers and such wide knowledge of his music, which he conducted in four concerts in New York and one each in Philadelphia and Baltimore. He also visited Washington, D.C. and Niagara Falls, and expressed admiration of the cities’ skyscrapers while venting his amazement that anyone could live at the dizzying height of the thirteenth floor. “Amazing people, these Americans!” he reported. “The frankness, sincerity and generosity of this country, its hospitality without hidden motives and its eagerness to oblige and win approval, are simply astonishing and, at the same time, touching. This, and indeed American customs, American manners and habits are generally attractive to me, but,” he added, with his characteristic melancholy, “I enjoy all this like a person sitting at a table set with marvels of gastronomy, devoid of appetite. Only the prospect of returning to Russia can awaken an appetite within me.”

Tchaikovsky was home by May, and resumed work on *The Nutcracker*. He finished sketching the score by the end of the following month, but not without hints of the biting self-deprecation that sprang from his frequent bouts of depression. After lamenting to his nephew Vladimir Davidov that it now took him a fortnight to accomplish what he had previously done in five days, he continued, “No, the old man is breaking up. Not only does his hair drop out, or turn as white as snow; not only does he lose his teeth, which refuse to do their service; not only do his eyes weaken and tire easily; not only do his feet walk badly, or drag themselves along, but he loses bit by bit the capacity to do anything at all. The ballet is infinitely worse than *The Sleeping Beauty*, that much is certain; let’s see how the opera will turn out.” Like the true professional composer he had become, he labored on despite his misgivings, working on *Iolanthe* during the fall, and completing the orchestration of *The Nutcracker* by the following February.

With the premiere of the new ballet and opera delayed until December 1892, Tchaikovsky decided to display some of his new music at a concert he was scheduled to conduct in St. Petersburg on March 19th. He extracted from *The Nutcracker* a suite of eight numbers, and led the Russian Musical Society in a performance of the music that was so successful, five of the movements had to be immediately encored. The premiere of the full ballet on December 18th, though lavishly mounted, fared less well: Petipa, claiming indisposition, passed final preparations for the production to his protégé, Lev Ivanov, a capable workman, but lacking his master’s fiery genius; the role of the Sugar-Plum Fairy was played by a ballerina of memorable homeliness; and the sophisticated audience was miffed that the precise movements of the *crack corps de ballet* to which they were accustomed were replaced in the first act by a group of scurrying children. Modest rated the evening as only a *succés d’estime*. “The delicate beauty of the music did not appeal to the public at first hearing,” he wrote. However, casting changes and the public’s increasing familiarity with subject and score soon led to *The Nutcracker*’s wide acceptance, and it has remained one of the most popular of all ballets.

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Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann (he changed his third named from Wilhelm for love of Mozart), born in 1776, was a German writer, painter and musician whose life and works were enflamed by the ardent spirit of Romanticism. As a young man, he studied law, and held positions in the Prussian bureaucracy until Napoleon overthrew the government in 1806. Thereafter he served as an opera conductor in Bamberg, Dresden and Leipzig, and took up musical composition, producing a symphony, a ballet, some sacred works, a few chamber pieces and twelve operas. He returned to government service in 1816, as a justice of the supreme court in Berlin, a post he retained until his death in 1822. Hoffmann turned to writing late in his career, after he had moved to Berlin. He produced two novels and a treatise on the problems of theater direction, but he is best known for his collections of short stories that explore the fantastic, grotesque and even sinister aspects of the imagination, often with sharp wit and deep psychological insight. (A talented artist, he also illustrated several of his own books.) Hoffmann was a strong influence on Edgar Allan Poe and other 19th-century writers of fantasy, and his tales served as inspiration for such composers as Wagner (*Die Meistersinger*, *Tannhäuser*), Offenbach (*The Tales of Hoffmann*), Delibes (*Coppélia*) and Tchaikovsky.

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Though Tchaikovsky was immediately drawn to E.T.A. Hoffmann’s fantastic tale as the subject for a ballet, he had serious misgivings about the scenario that Petipa had derived from it for their collaboration. In his theatrical

works, Tchaikovsky felt the necessity for a strong, clear narrative with logical dramatic motivations — a “through-line,” as he called it. He found Petipa’s scenario almost overly simple:

At a Christmas party given by their parents, Clara (Marie in Hoffmann’s original story) and Fritz receive gifts from the eccentric Drosselmeyer which include a grotesque Nutcracker. Much to Clara’s distress, Fritz breaks the Nutcracker. The children are sent to bed. Later, after the guests have left and the rest of the family retired, Clara sneaks into the darkened room to see the broken Nutcracker. Magically, the Christmas tree begins to expand to an enormous size; mice appear from the corners of the parlor and challenge a company of toy soldiers, led by the Nutcracker, in battle. Just as the soldiers are about to lose the fight, Clara hurls her shoe at the Mouse King, the invaders flee, and the Nutcracker is transformed into a handsome Prince. The Prince invites Clara to journey to his kingdom. On the way, they stop in a snow-bound pine forest (Act I, Scene 2), and then (Act II) go on to the Kingdom of Sweets (in the Sendak/Stowell production, a seraglio), where Clara is feted with a banquet and an entertainment comprising a series of character dances.

This scenario presented Tchaikovsky with two dramatic problems: 1) the battle in Act I had no compelling motivation, and 2) the story was really finished before the intermission. Since solutions to these problems could not come from the stage, Tchaikovsky turned instead to the orchestra, relying on the mastery of emotional expression and instrumental color that he had developed during his thirty years of experience as a composer.

The extended Scene 1, comprising the party and the battle, is divided into two distinct musical chapters. The first is sweet, sunny, and filled with light and laughter — exactly the kind of music that a young girl on her best behavior might choose to represent herself to her parents and their friends. Only the ominous strains accompanying the entrance of Drosselmeyer bring a darker expressive quality to this portion of the ballet. They are essential to the structure of the ballet, however, because they are used to create a strong emotional and musical link between the opening scene and the dramatic events that follow.

Since the battle scene occurs without explanation in the original ballet, Tchaikovsky chose to release the episode from reality and depict it as Clara’s personal fantasy. It is as though he had waited until the adults were safely gone before allowing the young girl’s deepest thoughts and feelings to be reflected in the music. Not only does the richly expressive quality of this music hark back to that associated with Drosselmeyer, but the stage picture also reinforces the connection, since the grandfather clock, which strikes twelve just after Clara enters the darkened room, takes on the facial features of the eccentric old man. The highly charged musical language of the “Pathétique” Symphony, composed only a year after *The Nutcracker* was finished, is presaged by this tempestuous music swirling through Clara’s mind. She quells the maelstrom by slaying the Mouse King; the Nutcracker is transformed and carries her away — a concise, yet powerful allegory of maturation from childhood to first love, and the feelings thereby engendered.

Following the battle victory, Petipa’s story is essentially over, and the ballet thereafter is not dramatic but cathartic. The opulent, ice-bound tableau of Act I, Scene 2 and the whole of Act II are little more than a series of independent dances — a *divertissement* — that could have been dropped happily into virtually any ballet on a fantastic subject. It was in Act II that Tchaikovsky was most hard pressed to carry on the musical continuity of the work, so, lacking dramatic impetus, he devised as a substitute a breathtaking succession of movements that is one of the greatest exercises in orchestral tone color and melodic fecundity produced during the 19th century, a blazing display of compositional virtuosity. Through dint of sheer talent, Tchaikovsky rose above the original difficulties of *The Nutcracker* to create one of the most enduring and beloved of all musical theater works.

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The elfin *Overture*, ethereally scored only for woodwinds, horns, triangle, violins and violas, precedes the opening curtain.

Act I, Tableau 1

The Christmas Tree. The ballet begins with the happily bustling music depicting the comfortable home, splendidly decorated for a Christmas party, of the President of the Town Council. The President and his wife are putting the finishing touches on the Christmas tree when the door bursts open, and Clara and Fritz, the President’s children, run in, accompanied by some of their playmates. The children stop suddenly, amazed by the brilliant scene of lights and gifts before them.

March. The President suggests that the children have a parade. They don paper hats and march about the room.

Children’s Galop and Arrival of the Guests. The children join in a lively dance, after which the newly arrived adult guests perform a stately polonaise. The vivacious children’s dance resumes with music that quotes the French nursery song “Bon voyage, cher Dumoulet.”

Arrival of Drosselmeyer. The dance breaks off suddenly as the mysterious Councillor Drosselmeyer enters. The frightened children are reassured by their parents that he is harmless and, indeed, has brought them some lovely gifts — but Clara receives only a large cabbage and Fritz, a pie. However, Drosselmeyer presses a secret catch and a

beautiful doll pops from the cabbage; a similar action produces a splendid toy soldier from the pie. Drosselmeyer sets the mechanisms of the new toys in motion, and they dance a waltz and a spirited *Presto*.

Scene and Grandfather Dance. Clara and Fritz are ordered to bed, without their doll and soldier. Clara begins to cry, and Drosselmeyer draws from his pocket a large Nutcracker with a huge, grotesque head to console her. Fritz takes it from her, and breaks the Nutcracker in trying to crack open an overly large nut. Fritz, unconcerned, leads his friends around the room in another march, sounding a noisy toy trumpet and drum as they go, while Clara carefully gathers up the pieces of the broken Nutcracker. The party ends with a rendition of the *Grandfather Dance*, a 17th-century German tune traditionally used to signal the conclusion of an evening's festivities. Schubert and Schumann quoted the melody in their piano music.

The Magic Spell Begins. The guests leave, the children are sent to bed; the President turns out the lights and retires. Clara steals back into the living room, lit only by the candles on the tree, to look again at her broken Nutcracker. Midnight strikes, the clock's face having taken on the features of Drosselmeyer. Mice scurry out from the corners of the room. Clara, terrified, climbs into a chair, only to see the Christmas tree grow magically to an enormous size.

The Battle Between the Nutcracker and the Mouse King. The gingerbread men left over from tea suddenly spring to life as soldiers to battle the mice. They are being beaten (and eaten) by the mice, when the Nutcracker jumps up to become their leader. He is confronted by the Mouse King himself, and appears about to meet his fate when Clara hurls her slipper at the rodent-monster and kills him. The mice, leaderless, flee, and the Nutcracker is transformed into a gallant Prince. As reward for saving his life, he invites Clara to visit his kingdom. She accepts.

Act I, Tableau 2

Scene in the Pine Forest (Journey Through the Snow). Clara and the Prince travel through a dense, snow-covered forest, guided by gnomes bearing torches.

Waltz of the Snowflakes. The travelers are met by the King and Queen of the Snowflakes, who dance a splendid waltz with their subjects, to the wordless accompaniment of a choir of treble voices, to end Act I.

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