

The Nutcracker Suite

For Intermediate to Late Intermediate Pianists

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Arranged by Gayle Kowalchyk and E. L. Lancaster

Foreword

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893), a Russian composer, finished the Nutcracker ballet in 1892. It was based on Alexandre Dumas's adaptation of E.T.A. Hoffman's story *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*. The first performance of the ballet was at the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg on December 18, 1892. Tchaikovsky arranged selections from the ballet as an orchestral suite as well as for solo piano. The orchestral version is widely considered to be a masterpiece of orchestration. After Tchaikovsky first used the celesta in this work, it became a standard instrument in many orchestral scores.

The story of the Nutcracker begins at a Christmas party given by Clara and Fritz's parents. Herr Drosselmeyer brings gifts for both young children, Clara and Fritz. Clara's gift is a Nutcracker which, unfortunately, is broken during the party. After the party is over and everyone is asleep, Clara sneaks back into the room to find the injured Nutcracker. Suddenly, the Christmas tree magically expands to an enormous size and an army of mice appear from the corners of the

room. The mice, led by the Mouse King, challenge a company of toy soldiers, led by the Nutcracker, to battle. Just as the soldiers are about to lose the battle, Clara throws her shoe and hits the Mouse King. The mice flee and the Nutcracker is transformed into a handsome prince, who invites Clara to visit his kingdom. On the way, they are met by the King and Queen of Snow and then go to the Kingdom of Sweets. The Sugarplum Fairy greets them and leads them into the palace where a number of dances (Russian Dance, Arabian Dance, Chinese Dance and Dance of the Reed Flutes) are presented for them. The entire company joins in the final waltz and Clara dreams of living happily with the prince in the enchanted kingdom for the rest of her life.

Since its first performance in the United States in 1940, the Nutcracker continues to captivate audiences each Christmas season. These arrangements will delight intermediate to late intermediate pianists as they recreate scenes from the ballet at the piano.

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Miniature Overture

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Arr. by Kowalchuk/Lancaster

Allegro giusto

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is **Allegro giusto**. The first measure starts with a *pp* dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 3, 1, 3, 1, 2). The left hand provides harmonic support with chords and single notes, including a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure. Fingerings for the left hand are 3/5, 1, and 1.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. Measure 5 is marked with a box containing the number 5. The right hand continues the melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 3, 1, 2, 1, 4, 2, 1, 1). The left hand accompaniment includes chords and single notes with fingerings 3/5, 1, 4, 3, 1/2, and 1/2.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. Measure 9 is marked with a box containing the number 9. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 3, 1, 2). The left hand accompaniment includes chords and single notes with fingerings 3/5 and 2/4.

Musical notation for measures 13-16. Measure 13 is marked with a box containing the number 13. The right hand continues the melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 3, 2, 1, 4, 2, 1, 1, 4). The left hand accompaniment includes chords and single notes with fingerings 3, 1, and 1/2.

Waltz of the Flowers

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Arr. by Kowalchuk/Lancaster

Tempo di valse

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The first system shows the right hand with a melody starting in measure 3, marked *p*. The left hand provides a bass line with chords, marked *pp*. Fingerings are indicated: 5, 1/3 in the left hand; 1, 2, 3, 4 in the right hand. A slur covers measures 3 and 4 in the right hand.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The right hand continues the melody with a slur over measures 5-8, marked *mf*. The left hand continues with chords. Fingerings: 1, 2, 3 in the right hand; 5, 1/3 in the left hand.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The right hand features a more active melody with slurs and accents, marked *p* and *cresc.*. The left hand continues with chords. Fingerings: 1, 3, 1, 2 in the right hand; 5, 1/3, 5, 1/2/3, 5, 1/2/3 in the left hand.

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The right hand has a complex melodic line with many slurs and accents, marked *mf*. The left hand continues with chords. Fingerings: 1, 3, 1, 2, 4, 3, 2, 1, 4, 4, 2, 1, 2, 1, 3, 1, 3, 1, 2 in the right hand; 5, 1/2, 5, 1/2, 1/5 in the left hand.