The Nutcracker Suite

Simplified for Piano

by Richard Bradley

Contents

Overture 4

March 8

Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy 10

Russian Dance 14

Arabian Dance 18

Chinese Dance 22

Dance of the Reed-Flutes 28

Waltz of the Flowers 34

Story of The Nutcracker Suite 2

Art: Judith Ann Benedict

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Story of The Nutcracker Suite

Based on
THE NUTCRACKER AND THE MOUSE KING
by E. T. A. Hoffmann

It was a snowy Christmas Eve in Nuremberg, many, many years ago. Following local custom, the Stahlbaum family gave their gifts on this night before Christmas, rather than waiting for the day itself.

Fritz, the older child, was thrilled with his gift of a squadron of red-coated soldiers on white horses. Marie, his beautiful sister, loved her large new doll.

One strange-looking figure beneath the candle lit tree caught Marie's attention. It was a man made of wood, with a body too long for his thin short legs, and a head too big for his body. A piece of wood, which extended from the back of his neck, gave the look of a long narrow cape.

Marie became more and more attracted by the kind and gentle feeling that flowed from the odd looking man. Her father picked up the funny man and lifted his wooden cape. As he did, the man's lips parted, showing two rows of sparkling white teeth. Her father asked Marie to place a nut between the teeth and press the cape. When she did, the mouth closed and cracked the nut. Marie laughed. She took another nut and cracked it between the nutcracker's teeth.

Fritz took the wooden man from her and began cracking nuts himself. As he did, the nutcracker's jaw cracked and several of his white teeth fell to the floor.

Marie cried for the broken nutcracker. She said she would ask her godfather, the inventor Herr Drosselmayer, to fix it, and she carefully laid the nutcracker to rest in the small bed which was to have been for her doll.

It was late. The children were told to go to bed. Marie begged for a few more moments with the nutcracker. Her parents gave her permission, then they and Fritz went upstairs to their rooms. Marie stood by the small bed. Tenderly, she drew-up the covers to the nutcracker's chin.

The big clock, which had a large owl on top, struck midnight. As it rang its eerie chime, the owl took the shape of Herr Drosselmayer. Then a hissing sound began to come from all sides of the room. Marie heard tiny feet scamper behind walls. She saw sinister little eyes look out through cracks. An army of mice marched toward Marie! The Mouse King, a bold and menacing creature, suddenly appeared before her.

Magically, the nutcracker sprang to life. He leaped from the small bed, drew a sword, and took command of the army of toy soldiers which had also come to life. They fought bravely, but they were no match for the enormous army of mice.

The Mouse King forced the nutcracker back against the wall. Marie pulled off her slipper and hurled it at the Mouse King, stunning him with surprise. The nutcracker swiftly lanced him with his sword, and the battle was won.

Quickly, the army of mice disappeared into the walls. The nutcracker began to grow, and as he grew, he changed into a handsome prince.

The Nutcracker Prince reached for Marie's hand. Taking it, the two glided off to the Kingdom of Sweets, past the Orange River, where the houses are made of candy and cake. There they were met by the Sugarplum Fairy, who ruled the kingdom. She gave them gifts of candy boxes filled with chocolates, coffee and tea sweets, and candy canes. She congratulated the Nutcracker Prince on his victory, and allowed him and Marie to sit on the royal candy thrones.

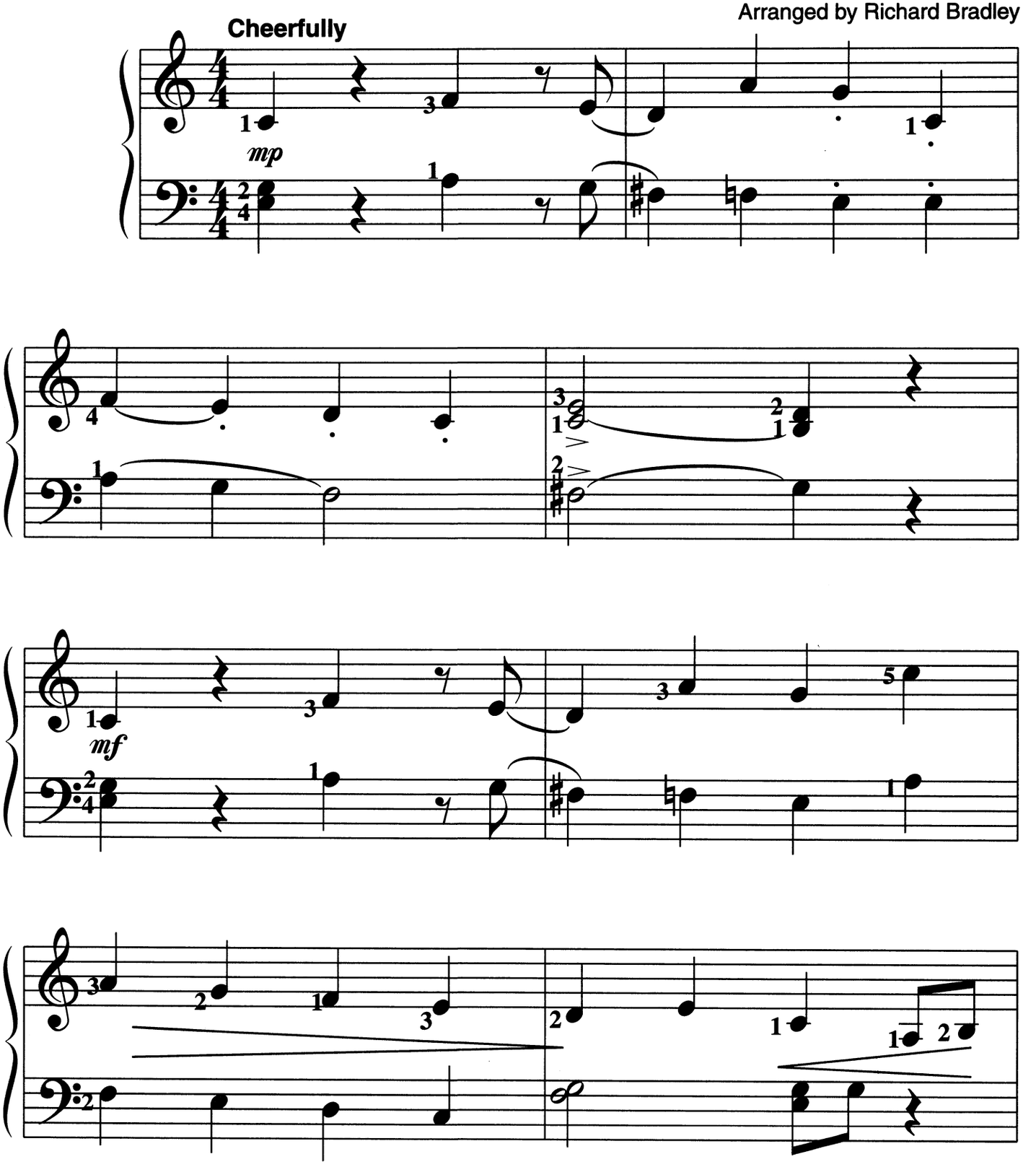
Marie felt dizzy. Her head began to spin. Suddenly, she was back in her living room with the Christmas tree and toys, and the nutcracker was in the small bed with the blanket still drawn-up to his chin. Feeling sad that this was just a dream, Marie kissed the nutcracker, then went upstairs to bed.

In the morning, when she came downstairs, Marie found that Herr Drosselmayer had come by early and fixed the nutcracker's teeth. He brought his young nephew with him. To Marie's surprise, he looked just like the prince the nutcracker had become in her dream.

Story adapted and condensed by
Bill Radics

Overture

TCHAIKOVSKY
Arranged by Richard Bradley



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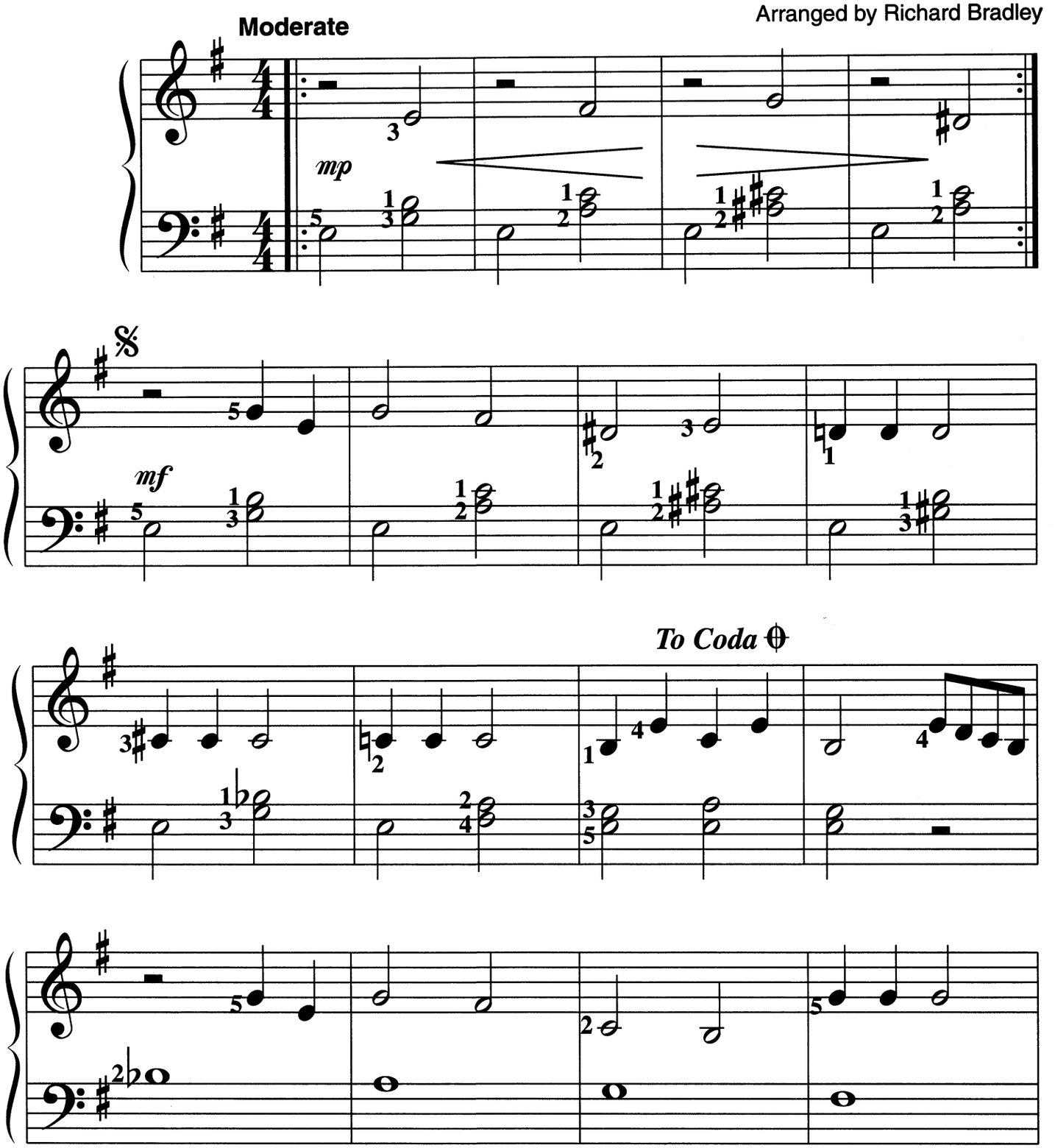
Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy

TCHAIKOVSKY
Arranged by Richard Bradley



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