

IGOR STRAVINSKY

Born June 17, 1882, Oranienbaum. Died April 6, 1971, New York.

The Firebird, Suite from the Ballet (1919)

Infernal Dance of Kastchei

Berceuse

Finale

The music for the ballet *The Firebird* was the work which made Stravinsky internationally famous. It was composed in St. Petersburg between November, 1909, and May, 1910. The story of the ballet was adapted by Michel Fokine from the Russian fairy tale. The story is concerned with the green-taloned ogre Kastchei, who captures maidens and turns to stone the gentlemen who seek to rescue them.

The youthful Prince Ivan pursues the elusive Firebird and finds himself at night in the magic garden of the evil King Kastchei. There, the Prince discovers the Firebird beside a tree of magic golden apples and he captures her. For the price of a single magic feather the Prince releases the Firebird. As the Prince wanders about the garden he comes upon thirteen maidens who all are Princesses under the evil spell of Kastchei; they have a moment of freedom only in the darkness of night. He falls in love with one of the Princesses. As dawn breaks and the Princesses are required to return to the palace of Kashchei, the Prince tries to follow them.

You will hear the orchestra play the music when Ivan is captured by Kastchei's guards and is about to be turned into stone. At the crucial moment he waves the magic feather from the Firebird, who comes to his rescue and puts the sorcerer and his slaves to sleep. She tells Ivan the secret of life of Kashchei: it rests in the egg in the casket. Ivan destroys the egg and Kashchei dies along with all his magic power. The Princesses are free and Ivan and his chosen Princess are united.