



NEWS
FROM
WALT DISNEY
PRODUCTIONS

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"FANTASIA"

Production Notes

More than forty years after its original release, Walt Disney's classic "Fantasia" is once again revolutionizing motion picture sound. The first film to use stereophonic sound is now the first to be recorded, edited and dubbed in digital audio. This new process assures virtually no generation loss from the recording master to the film sound track.

Two-time Academy Award-winner ("West Side Story," "The Sound of Music") Irwin Kostal conducted "Fantasia's" new score based on the original sound track by the legendary Leopold Stokowski. Using the largest group of musicians ever brought together for a recording session, 125 hand-picked studio musicians in all, Kostal has created a new sound track that is both faithful to the Stokowski original and in keeping with the film's reputation as an innovator in recorded sound. Fourteen three-hour sessions were held at the CBS Studio Center scoring stage to accomplish this.

Whereas Stokowski had the freedom back in 1938 to conduct and arrange the music as he felt, "ghost conductor" Kostal was much more restricted.

"Stokowski's freedom became my straightjacket," explains the jovial, energetic maestro whose credits include more than 50 Broadway scores. Nevertheless Kostal took certain liberties in rearranging within the confines of Stokowski's original, and often erratic tempos. Particularly in the "Toccata and Fugue" and the "Night On Bald Mountain" sequences, Kostal's arrangements represent a return to the original composer's sketches.

Kostal considers rescoring "Fantasia" the most challenging work he has ever done. "Up till now," he says, "it's all been easy. This required literally every bit of background and training I've had."

"Fantasia" stands as one of the all-time classics, for not only did it establish animation as the true art form that it is, but it introduced stereophonic sound to motion pictures and also popularized classic music with moviegoing audiences. The collaboration between Walt Disney and Leopold Stokowski (and the Philadelphia Orchestra) proved fortuitous and revolutionary.

Although "Fantasia" was a box office disappointment in its initial release and did not return a profit to the studio until 1969, it is now the only Disney animated feature in continuous release.

In color by Technicolor and featuring a new digitally rerecorded Dolby (R) stereophonic sound track, "Fantasia" is re-released by Buena Vista. Irwin Kostal conducted, based on the original sound track by Leopold Stokowski.

THE PROGRAM

TOCCATA AND FUGUE IN D MINOR

BY

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Composed at Arnstadt, Germany, sometime between 1703 and 1717, Johann Sebastian Bach's (1685-1750) Toccata in Fugue in D Minor presented the greatest problem to the Disney staff. Its nondescript title evoked no definite picture, suggested no definite action, told no story. The artists' solution of the problem came in capturing the obscurity of the music in abstract images projected on the screen.

The Toccata is envisioned as a cacophony of reflections, represented by the different string instruments in the orchestra, flashing and darting in many vibrating colors across the screen as they take up the burden of the theme.

The Fugue opens with the images fading into an undulating, abstract sea of rolling and pitching colors dotted with gem-like sparkles. As the Fugue builds, the screen moves into swirling circles of vaporous clouds rising into pillars until the crescendo is hit against a red-fire sun outlining the silhouette of the conductor.

THE NUTCRACKER SUITE

BY

PETER ILICH TCHAIKOVSKY

The full length ballet "The Nutcracker" by Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) was composed for the St. Petersburg Opera House, where it was first performed in December, 1892. In the "Fantasia" version, the first two movements have been omitted and the original order of the

movements has been altered. In fact, the whole motif has been changed into a ballet of nature, divided into six scenes, danced by plants and flowers.

DANCE OF THE SUGAR PLUM FAIRIES

As dawn breaks over a meadow, tiny, heather winged fairies flit over the flowers with wands glowing like fireflies sprinkling crystal drops of dew on every flower and stem.

CHINESE DANCE

After vigorously throwing off the morning dew, mushrooms become the personification of a small group of mandarins, dressed in long robes and wearing chinese hats.

DANCE OF THE FLUTES

Multi-colored blossoms drift down upon the surface of a brook. As they touch the water, each takes the shape of tiny ballerinas pirouetting with the gentle current.

ARAB DANCE

Now in the depths of the stream, engulfed in a forest of water plants, beautiful filmy-tailed goldfish perform a graceful languid dance.

RUSSIAN DANCE

Scores of high-kicking thistles reminiscent of an energetic band of Cossacks complete with belted blouses, tall hats and boots are joined by lovely peasant girls, in quaint headdresses and bulging skirts, beautifully represented by clusters of orchids for a wild folk dance.

WALTZ OF THE FLOWERS

The autumn fairies appear weaving the browns and golds of fall on everything they touch. As they descend among the milkweed plant each pod opens to set free seeds, each a tiny ballerina. Now the frost fairies arrive, bringing a trail of snow which passes in an array of jewel-like patterns.

THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

BY

PAUL DUKAS

What has been heralded as Mickey Mouse's finest acting performance, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" by Paul Dukas (1865-1935) made its concert debut for the Societe Nationale de Musique in Paris in 1897.

His flippant management of power as he directs the stars in the firmament, his panic to destroy a renegade broom, his frantic underwater search for the sorcerer's magical antidote to thousands of brooms and buckets of water, and his woefully cheerful acceptance of the sorcerer's punishment; all stand as stellar examples of the fantastic art-music accomplishment that is "Fantasia."

RITE OF SPRING

BY

IGOR STRAVINSKY

A choreographic tableau by Igor Stravinsky, "The Rite of Spring," was composed in 1912. It was first presented in 1913 in Paris as a ballet presenting scenes from life in prehistoric Russia.

Walt Disney and his co-workers considered that Stravinsky's savage elemental and brutally magnificent music seemed to suggest a struggle far too gigantic to be expressed in merely human terms; rather it was more the drama of the earth, itself.

The drama begins with whirling white-hot gasses, from an explosion on the surface of the sun, spinning timeless eons in space until the gasses cool and solidify into a ball of fire. The ball is a hell of boiling seas, scalding fogs, smoking mud flats and blasting volcanos.

Then mysteriously life appears, out of the sea at first, then land and the age of the dinosaur. Finally, in a fit of disgust, nature destroys all that she has created and returns all life back to the sea to make a fresh start.

THE PASTORAL SYMPHONY

BY

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

The Disney artists selected a truly classic setting for Beethoven's (1770-1827) music, the beautiful slopes of Mount Olympus, traditional abode of the gods. Mischievous fauns, baby unicorns, winged horses; the magnificent black Pegasus and his snow-white mate are seen cavorting in complete bliss under the fabled mount. Cupid arrives to weave his magic gift of love over a group of beautiful centaurettes and noble centaurs.

~~In a fresh outburst of music, Bacchus, the god of wine, comes in~~ to spread a revelry of song and dance until interrupted by a rain storm. High above, Zeus finds sport in tossing lightning bolts at a dodging Bacchus. Soon tiring, Zeus gives up his game and falls into slumber on a cloud. The rain ceases and Iris streaks across the sky leaving a rainbow in her wake. Then high overhead, Apollo rides down in his golden chariot; the sun sets, and Morpheus, the god of sleep, falls upon us as Diana grasps the moon as if it were a bow and launches an arrow of fire into a cloud of stars.

DANCE OF THE HOURS

BY

AMILCARE PONCHIELLI

"Dance of the Hours" is a ballet from the opera "La Gioconda" (The Smiling One) by Amilcare Ponchielli (1834-1886), which was first performed at La Scala Opera House in Milan in April 1876.

In "Fantasia" this familiar music becomes a ballet like none other. The music expresses a pageant of the hours of the day. As the curtains rise, it is early morning in a formal garden. A fluffy pink form moves. It is an ostrich. With excruciating grace she pirouettes to other ostriches, and awakens them for breakfast.

From a pool, as Venus from the sea, comes the premiere danseuse, a hippopotamus. Her ladies in waiting, other hippos, assist her in her morning toilette, after which she dances an intricate routine until exhausted; she falls into slumber on a couch. Elephants appear, go to the pool and giddily dance until a strong wind frightens them away. In black capes lined with red, and black leotards, the alligators appear. It is night. The lead 'gator awakens the hippo ballerina, and they dance an adagio for a wild finale.

NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN

BY

MODESTE MOUSSORGSKY

A tone poem by Modeste Moussorgsky (1839-1881), "Night on Bald Mountain" was first sketched in 1860 for solo piano with orchestra, then rewritten three times but never performed during his lifetime.

The "Fantasia" conception takes place in a world plagued by hosts of demons, gruesome freaks and other macabre denizens of evil. It's the Witches' Sabbath. Spirits, witches, vampires and skeletons of all those not buried in consecrated ground rise to await Chernabog, lord of evil and death. Suddenly he appears and holds court over their frenzied dance until the evil one, tiring of their revel, condemns the friends to a fiery pit.

AVE MARIA

BY

FRANZ SCHUBERT

The music of this famous song is by Franz Schubert (1797-1828). The English text was translated from its original German form especially for "Fantasia" by Rachel Field.

As the bells, heralding the morning after the "Night on Bald Mountain," are heard, the "Ave Maria" segment begins. We see the Mount of Evil now wrapped in a drifting mist as hosts of faithful worshipers holding flickering tapers move in a slow procession. They advance across a meadow and over a bridge until they enter a vast forest. The branches of its trees interlace and curve into the likeness of mighty gothic arches as the morning becomes a blaze of light. Once again, the powers of life and hope have triumphed over the hosts of death and despair.

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