

# 1460. Dance Of The Sugar-Plum-Fairy

## Backgrounds Of S. Radic

**Ray Conniff** (1916-2002) was an American composer, arranger, orchestra leader and trombonist. He was one of the few commercially successful musical geniuses of our time, who arranged and used voices and singing as part of the instrumentation. The "Ray Conniff Hi-Fi Companion" was originally released in 1958 and was re-released on Cherry Red Records in 2019. Among the highlights of the 24 song track list are titles like "Where Or When", "Easy To Love", "Volare", and many more.

**Special Volume Project.** With the first edited title of this CD "Dance Of The Sugar-Plum Fairy", the new Ray-Conniff-Companion-Project is introduced as a special band of the EASY PLAY sheet music series in my wish program. As always, we will accept suggestions for titles that require acceptance (<https://musikradic.de/Ray-Conniff-Companion.htm>)

The "**Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy**" is a dance for a ballerina. It is the third movement in Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite of 1892 and is danced by the main dancer. The choreographer Marius Petipa wanted the music of the Sugar Fairy to sound like "drops of water shooting out of a well". Tchaikovsky found the ideal instrument for this task in Paris in 1891. It was then that he came across the recently invented celesta. This instrument looked like a piano. It sounded like bells. Tchaikovsky wrote: "The celesta is halfway between a tiny piano and a glockenspiel, with a divinely wonderful sound". He wanted to use



the celesta in The Nutcracker and asked his publisher to buy one. Tchaikovsky didn't want other Russian composers "to get wind of it and... and use it for unusual effects in front of me"! Tchaikovsky introduced the Celesta to Russian music lovers on March 19, 1892, when the Nutcracker Suite was performed for the Russian Music Society in St. Petersburg. The instrument is forever identified with the sugar fairy.

Ray Conniff combined the high Celeste sound with the octave lower singing choir. In my MIDI version I took the "Fantasy" sound (GM89) and the "Duh" choir (GM54) as Celeste. Very interestingly, he created the N.C. passage in the middle section with a full-stopping choir and monophonic brass sound (trombones) with both hands in different split ranges!



Klassik-Beat, T=110

The musical score is presented in a multi-staff format. The top two staves are labeled 'Melodie' and 'Chor'. The 'Strings' staff is marked 'Advanced'. The 'Guitar' and 'Bass' staves show accompaniment. The 'Drums' staff includes 'small crash' and 'middle crash' effects, with 'BD' and 'DSD' labels below. Two vertical arrows on the right side of the score indicate 'Main 1' and 'Main 2' sections.

Programming instruction

I came up with the term "classical beat", because such a real classical work has "no drum rhythm", but at most here and there a few drum effects, which emphasize something in this music. Here, on the other hand, you can now hear an almost continuous beat rhythm with the 2-4 beat of the snare, whereby I have additionally emphasized all bar parts with small and middle crash. The bass is, according to the scheme above, even "three times" present, respectively the guitar and the strings play the conspicuously simple main bass, which is only focused on basic tones - however, some parts are designed with a thoroughly arranged bass accompaniment over other tones. The main rhythm is Main1 - in Main2 the two sounds "Fantasy" and "Duh-Choir" are played as short fill-ins, over two octaves.