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Welcome back, music-lovers, to the final installment of our journey through the musical world of Sergei Prokofiev. Today is the third of our 3-part series on the musical maestro. In our first episode, we learned about his life and musical style, and in the last episode we learned about his children's symphony, "Peter and the Wolf". I'll place links to both of those episodes in the show notes in case you need to catch up on them.

In this episode, we're diving into the enchanting world of one of Prokofiev's ballet masterpieces. Sergei Prokofiev's legacy in the world of ballet is nothing short of remarkable, as he completed a total of eight ballets throughout his illustrious career. His ballets showcase his unparalleled creativity, innovation, and mastery of musical storytelling. Each ballet is a testament to Prokofiev's ability to evoke emotion, capture the imagination, and transport audiences to fantastical worlds filled with romance, adventure, and intrigue. With his unique blend of classical tradition and modern sensibility, Prokofiev redefined the art of ballet, leaving behind a rich and enduring legacy that continues to inspire dancers, choreographers, and audiences around the globe.

Today, we'll explore the enchanting world Prokofiev created with his music for the ballet "Cinderella", learning about the magical melodies, captivating characters and unforgettable moments that make this composition a timeless treasure.

"Cinderella" is a ballet in three acts, composed by Prokofiev between 1940 and 1944. Inspired by the classic fairy tale, the ballet follows the story of Cinderella, a kind-hearted young woman who dreams of attending the prince's ball and escaping her life of hardship. With Prokofiev's evocative music and choreography, the ballet brings this beloved tale to life in a way that captivates audiences of all ages.

One of the most famous pieces from "Cinderella" is the "Waltz-Coda," which serves as the grand finale of the ballet.

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This majestic waltz combines swirling strings, majestic brass, and delicate woodwinds to create a sense of enchantment and celebration. As Cinderella and the prince dance joyously together, listeners are swept away by the beauty and romance of this magical moment. What are some words that you would use to describe Prokofiev's music here?

Another iconic piece from "Cinderella" is the "Midnight" music, which accompanies the pivotal scene where Cinderella must flee the prince's palace before the clock strikes midnight. With its haunting melodies and ominous undertones, this music captures the tension and urgency of Cinderella's race against time. As the clock ticks away, listeners are drawn into the drama and suspense of this thrilling moment. Let's take a listen.

One of the most important musical elements of "Cinderella" is Prokofiev's use of leitmotifs, or recurring musical themes associated with specific characters or ideas. If you listened to our last episode about Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf", we talked about how different instruments represented different characters throughout the story. In Cinderella, he attaches these leitmotifs to characters as well as emotions. For example, listen to this beautiful, romantic melody from the ballet that Prokofiev called "Amoroso."

This melody is heard at the beginning and end of the ballet, but also emerges during moments of heartfelt connection between Cinderella and the Prince. It is written in the key of C Major because it is a very warm, lovely key and conveys a happy and loving emotion.

"Cinderella" made its debut on November 21, 1945, at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, with choreography by Rostislav Zakharov. Despite the challenging circumstances of World War II, the premiere was a resounding success, enchanting audiences with its rich music, dazzling costumes, and breathtaking choreography. Since then, "Cinderella" has become a beloved classic of the ballet repertoire, captivating audiences around the world with its timeless tale of love, hope, and transformation.

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As we conclude our exploration of Prokofiev's "Cinderella," I encourage you to check out the playlist at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/123. I've curated a collection of some performances from the ballet so that you can both hear Prokofiev's beautiful music and see the mesmerizing choreography. Imagine yourself dancing alongside Cinderella and the prince. Let the enchanting melodies and captivating rhythms transport you to a world of magic and romance. Again, you'll find that playlist at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/123.

I hope you've enjoyed learning more about Sergei Prokofiev during this 3-part series. I look forward to connecting with you again in two weeks when another brand new episode of Busy Kids Love Music airs. Bye for now!