

Waltz from Act I of the Ballet “Sleeping Beauty,” Op. 66 (1888)
Peter Il’yich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)

Together with “Little Red Riding Hood” and “Cinderella,” the “Sleeping Beauty” story was written in 1697 by the French author Charles Perrault and published under the collective title “Tales of Mother Goose.” Many composers have written music to these stories; Tchaikovsky’s ballet, commissioned by the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, is assuredly among the most famous and beloved. The story concerns Princess Aurora and a classic struggle between good and evil. Outraged at being excluded from celebrations marking the birth of Princess Aurora, the wicked fairy Carabosse gatecrashes the party and curses Aurora; on her sixteenth birthday, she will prick her finger and die. The Lilac Fairy commutes the sentence to 100 years’ sleep, and she will awake to a prince’s kiss. From Act I of the ballet comes one of Tchaikovsky’s best-known waltzes, in which everyone celebrates Princess Aurora’s 16th birthday by dancing with garlands of flowers.

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