Rimsky-Korsakoff SCHEHERAZADE, Op. 35 (Symphonic Suite)

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1. The Sea and the Vessel of Sinbad.

As the music begins, we perceive the menacing figure of the stem Sultan, grimpl determined upon his sanguinary method of insuring "fidelity" in his wives. The bold phrase, given in unison by trombour, buth, horns, and the woodwind and strings in their lower range at the very beginning of the Sulte represent the severe monarch. There is a little interlule, rather tentative in clusacter, and then the volint, trembling and difficient, yet acceptance of the contraction of the contraction of the the lovely little song that typifies Scheherazade, the narrator.

Now we feel the long swell of the sea; we hear the strange, mysterious sounds of water lapping at the smooth sides of the vessel; we see the bending mast, the white-capped blue of deep water, and the brazen sun hancing in a brazen sky.

The music has the long rolling motion of a deep-sea comber. Strings maintain the thread of the story of Sinbad . . . underneath, always, moves the sea-rhythm. Presently we hear the string motif transferred to the dreamy voice of the horn, and decorated with polished tones of the flute as glittering as a dash of sea-spray in sunlight. There is a recurring phrase in woodwind that is almost articulate . . . almost says "Once upon a time ..." and it is by no means difficult to feel toward the music precisely the attitude the composer wished to create. A fabulous story is being told . . . "a painted ship upon a painted ocean" . . . and not only the story, but the storyteller and the listener are suggested to us. Strange birds fly overhead . . . awful shapes move dimly in the green deeps . . . a shadow runs swiftly across the sunlit decks though there is no shape between ship and sun . . . a short, fierce storm rages invisibly in the infinite blue depths of the tropic sky . . . the sea heaves up like a weary giant. . . . Suddenly it is not a picture but a story . . . the stern voice of the Sultan is heard again (the same theme as at the opening of the movement) and the tremulous accents of Scheherazade go bravely on . . . and in the calm that closes the movement we have assurance that for one day, at least, she has postponed her terrible fate.

2. The Tale of the Prince Kalender.

The motif of Scheherausde opens the second movement of the Suite, a tenuous shining thread of tone, changing in expressiveness as the disity Sultana's face must have altered to meet the smile or frown of her lork. Eading a stereor to meet the smile or frown of her lork. Eading in a codenas of extreme brilliance and difficulty, it leads us into the main theme of the movement, assigned to the baseoon. Here is a golden opportunity for "the clown of the orchestra" (the baseoon, lot turn pathetic, awk-

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ward, grave, jocose, this strange and amusing subject might well be taken as significant of the Prince Kalender himself. ... dignity in rags, pompousness in poverty, clowning in a courtier. We have no means of knowing what story the fakir-prince tool in word and gesture, but we cannot escape the conclusion that it runs the gamut of human emotion.

After a space the tearful voice of the oboe takes up a little song derived from that of the bassoon... a brightness comes over the music... the violins join in a livelier rhythm... and toward the close of the first section of the music we hear what might be the accompaniment to a wild exotic dance.

The placid opening of the second section is deceptive, for suddenly we are in the midst of a seeme of with barbaric splendor. Fanfares of the brass, flying phrases of string and woodwind are combined in swhirting, glow-ing flux of tone; incandecent masses of color are thrown out like bright plowed from the weird garments of some dancer of the Orient. Commanding phrases are uttered builty by the trombones, and echoed in the myself with the contraction of the original contraction of the original contraction of the original contraction placked and musted strings; that tragi-concediant, the baseous, mutters strangely to itself.

The Young Prince and the Young Princess.

What a delightful contrast in these naïve melodies! Here the significance of the music is not Oriental but simply human. It sings of love—love of the idylike kind; not without passion but without the fierce selfish hunger of passion; not without cestasy but with the cestasy of love fulfilled and not satiated.

The Prince speaks first, and to him is assigned the tender melody of the violins at the very beginning of the movement. Presently the Young Princess herself speaks, in the reedy sweetness of the clarinet—a tender little song, with repturous lights of tone and arch pharases. Letter we hear for accompanied in the song by surer later with the control of the control of the control of the The Young Prince sings again his amorous by . . . and thee, near the end, we remember that it is a picture, a story, as the shy and lissome figure of Scheherazade appears.

4. The Festival at Bagdad. The Sea.

Once again the stern-voiced Sultan is heard in his dreadful resolution . . . but Scheherazade hastens on with her stories, diverting him with a glowing description of a Bagdad festival. A brief but brilliant violin cadenza leads us to this lively and colorful scene. Wild dancers weave sinuously in strange arabesque figures, gayly colored draperies stiffen in the breeze, the hubbub of the market place runs like a powerful under-current beneath the more assertive sounds of the festival . . . snake charmers pipe magic tunes to their hooded and venomous charges . . . Jakirs cry their wares and perform strange feats of thaumaturgy before a thousand curious eyes . . . ivory-skinned girls peer seductively from shadowy shelters of richest rugs and rare fabrics . . . imperious camels carry some lordly satrap and his train through the scurrying, chattering crowds . . . rare perfumes, mingled with the penetrating odors of spices and the unforgettable scent of the streets and the crowds . . . it is the Orient, the Orient with all its brilliantly glowing life and sound and color.

Once again the ominous accents of the Sultan are heard while Scheherazade bravely continues with her tale, desperately achieving new climaces. And suddenly we are once more on the sea... on the broad decks of Sinbad's ship.

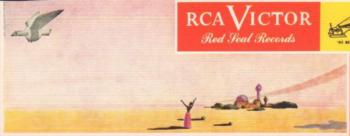
But it is not the quiet ocean we have known. Rather to gigantic surges heave themselves up to terrifying heights. the vessel trembles to its very keel. . the sails reach kile giant pistols under the impact of sudden ferere gasts from the empty skies . . masts bend and strain. . the sailors turn ashes feces toward a great rock, surmounted by a warrior of bronze. . and toward the rock he ship turns, too, drawn trensitibly by some

A heaver-splitting crash . . . and the ship is gone, her proud hull splintering and grinding against the refractory rock . . . and only the wandering winds to mourn for her. Now Scheherasade rehearses the little, almost articulate phrase (woodwind) with which she prefaced her stories . . . and presently we hear her own lovely motif, as before, in the voice of the violin.

monty, as perore, in the voice of the vision.

The Sultan finally speaks . . . but now gently, amorously, and the violin rises to an incredible triumphant height against the glowing harmonies that end the





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