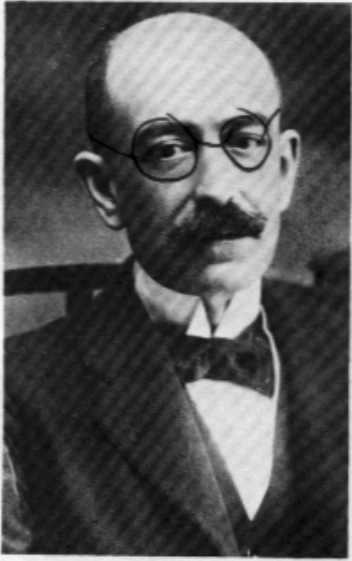


The Ritual Fire Dance by Manuel de Falla



Falla was born in the town of Cadiz, on the southern coast of Spain. This part of Spain is called Andalusia. Many years ago, gypsies settled there after travelling great distances from central Europe. This is why the folk music of Andalusia often has the colourful sounds of Spanish gypsy music.

Falla became very interested in this folk music. Sometimes in his compositions, he used the exciting rhythms of Spanish songs and dances. But he usually made up all the tunes himself.

The Ritual Fire Dance is the most exciting part of a ballet called 'Love, the Magician'. The music for this ballet was written by a Spanish composer called Manuel de Falla.

A ballet is a story which is set to music, and then danced. Usually, when someone tells you a story, they use words to tell you what happens. But in a ballet, no words are spoken at all. Instead, the story is told through the dancing, and the music.

Falla's ballet called 'Love, the Magician' takes place in Spain. It tells a story about Spanish gypsy folk. It is also about a ghost!

Falla's ballet tells the story of a beautiful young gypsy girl called Candélas. Her husband has recently died. But Candélas is far from unhappy about this, since he was often very cruel to her. Besides, she has now fallen in love with a handsome young gypsy named Carmelo. Unfortunately, each time the lovers meet, Candélas is haunted by the jealous ghost of her dead husband.

Candélas and Carmelo decide upon a plan. They will try to get rid of the ghost by means of witchcraft and magic. Midnight will be the best time. And all their gypsy friends must help them. This is what will happen:

At midnight, all the gypsies must make a large circle around the fire which burns in the centre of the gypsy camp. Inside this circle, Candélas will perform the mysterious Ritual Fire Dance. This will cause the ghost to appear, and then she will make him dance with her. Faster and faster they will whirl, round and round the fire -until, by the magic of the Ritual Fire Dance, he will be drawn into the flames, and vanish for ever.

Answer questions in full sentences

- Q1. Who is Manuel de Falla and where does he come from?
- Q2. What is 'Andalusia'?
- Q3. Why did Falla use sounds from gypsy music?
- Q4. Where does *The Ritual Fire Dance* come from?
- Q5. In your own words explain what a ballet is.
- Q6. Who are the main characters in Falla's ballet 'Love, the Magician'?
- Q7. Why do Candélas and Carmelo make a plan and what is it?
- Q8. What happens at midnight?
- Q9. How do they make the ghost disappear?

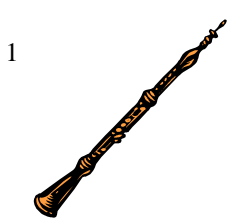
The music opens with lots of mysterious buzzing sounds, which rise and fall.

The dance begins to weave its magic. The first tune is played by an oboe and then by the violins.

The buzzing sounds are heard again. They are followed by a soft drumming rhythm. Then suddenly a new tune is played, first very loudly by the horns, then very quietly by a flute.

The third tune is played by violins, with a rhythm crashed out on the kettle drums.

Which instruments are these? Each of them plays an important part in the music of *The Ritual Fire Dance*.



- A. Which of these instruments belongs to the strings section of the orchestra?
- B. Which of them is a percussion instrument?
- C. Which TWO instruments belong to the same section of the orchestra? Which section is it?
- D. Which instrument is a woodwind instrument with a double reed?
- E. Draw and colour a picture, showing what happens during the scene in Falla's ballet when *The Ritual Fire Dance*