

**ARRANGERS:** Duke Ellington Orchestra's Nutcracker: Arranged by Billy Strayhorn (1915 – 1967) and Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington (1899 –1972)

**ARRANGEMENT :** "Toot Toot Tootie Toot – (Dance of the Reed Pipes)"

**The Arrangers:** Duke Ellington's real name was Edward Kennedy Ellington. He was born in Washington, DC in 1899 and died in 1972. Many consider him the greatest composer and bandleader in the jazz idiom. He collaborated with Billy Strayhorn on many of his greatest compositions, including this one. Billy Strayhorn joined the Ellington band in 1939 and immediately his arranging talents were apparent. Duke and "Sweet Pea," as the baby faced Strayhorn was called, were inseparable. When Strayhorn died of cancer in 1967, Ellington missed him deeply. Some of the greatest names in jazz played together in the Ellington Orchestra for over 30 years. Like Tchaikovsky, who was an expert at using the tone colors of the orchestra, Ellington and Strayhorn were known for using each instrument, and even each musician for the sounds they made best.

**The Music:** Ellington was the master of SWING. The most basic element in swing is the accent of the offbeat, in this case accenting the second beat instead of the first.

**QUESTIONS:** What instruments does Ellington substitute? [string bass for *pizzicato* strings, clarinets and saxes (the great Paul Gonsalves and Harry Carney) for flutes, trombones with mutes for English horn and muted trumpets and a clarinet improvising for the trumpets]

Are the instruments Ellington uses as appropriate as Tchaikovsky's?

Does the SWING change the mood? How? What else changes?

Does the music go with the story (if you've read it)?

Would Tchaikovsky like Ellington's version? Why or why not?

**SOME POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:**

1. Try conducting in 2 as for Tchaikovsky. Can you feel the accent on the 2 rather than the 1 as above?
2. Before or after listening to the selection, try counting aloud – first: **1 2 1 2** etc. then: **1 2 1 2**. The second example gives the swing feel that is JAZZ. (Duke wrote a song called "It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing.")