Introductory Note

Tanagra figurines or Tanagraeae (sing. Tanagraea) are called those delicate little terracotta statuettes, chiefly of the 4th cent. B.C., found near the ancient town of Tanagra, in east Beotia, Greece. They mostly represent young women in costumes with fine drapery, holding a fan or a mirror, or wearing on their head broadrimmed hats, called "skiàdion", which served also as umbrellas or parasols. Some of these women are seated, in a pensive or dreaming attitude. Some others are dancing or playing, alone or in company.

The "Tanagraea" Suite op. 17, written in November 1957 originally for two Pianos and Percussion, and later scored for full orchestra, is inspired from these ancient terracotta masterpieces. It relates the tale of the young Tanagraea, whose beauty and grace were eventually envied by the ugly witch who, tranformed into a big spider, petrified her by throwing over her shoulders its terrible web.

Y. S.
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