

Flying Dreams

Marc Chagall (1887-1985)



Where it all began

Marc Chagall was born **Moishe Shagall** in a [Lithuanian Jewish Hassidic](#) family in [Liozna](#),^[10] near the city of [Vitebsk](#) ([Belarus](#), then part of the [Russian Empire](#)) in 1887. He was the eldest of nine children. His parents were humble merchants, very religious with no art in their home. At the time of his birth, Vitebsk's population was about 66,000, with half the population being Jewish. It was a picturesque city of churches and synagogues. As the city was built mostly of wood, little of it survived years of occupation and destruction during World War II. Most of the local Jews perished in the [Vitebsk Ghetto](#) massacre of October 1941.

Hassidic Roots—a recurring dream

At the age of 57 while living in the United States, Chagall published an open letter entitled, "To My City Vitebsk"

Why? Why did I leave you many years ago?You thought: "I can see, I am etched in the boy's heart, but he is still 'flying,' he is still striving to take off, he has 'wind' in his head." ... I did not live with you, but I didn't have one single painting that didn't breathe with your spirit and reflection.





































An Artist's Dream

First in Russia and then again in the United States, Chagall was commissioned to create the sets and costumes for ballets and operas—an artist's dream! He created an entire dreamworld that was animated by music and dance. For dreams are not static; they fly, float and sing. To my mind, this is the pinnacle of Chagall's magic.

<https://www.pointemagazine.com/marc-chagall-ballet-costumes-2498578907.html>

<https://www.scenographytoday.com/marc-chagall-fantasies-stage-lacma/>























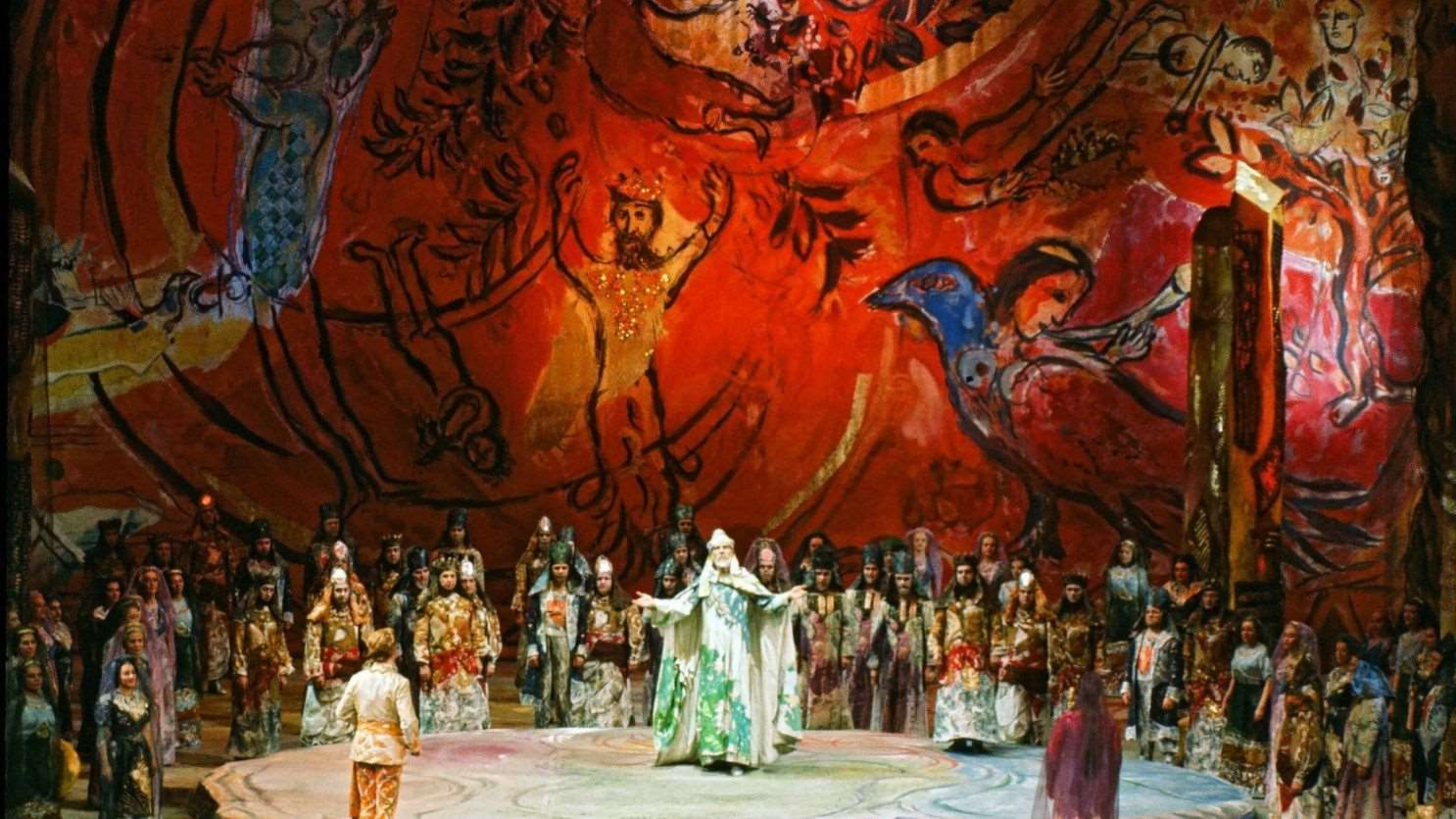














Background

Overview of the LACMA exhibit:

<https://www.lacma.org/art/exhibition/chagall-fantasies-stage>

Martha Hellion has been the sole restorer and installer of Chagall's Aleko costumes:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xq_N1z41DA

Good overview of Chagall's life and work (except for costumes!):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zz2f8xBWxD0>

<https://www.pointemagazine.com/marc-chagall-ballet-costumes-2498578907.html>

<https://www.scenographytoday.com/marc-chagall-fantasies-stage-lacma/>

<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-chagall-koons-7-artists-designs-halloween-costume-shame>

Marc Chagall's autobiography of his early life:

<https://www.amazon.com/My-Life-Chagall-Modern-Classic/dp/0720613566>

Meyer's biography of Chagall and Music in Art :

https://www.amazon.com/Marc-Chagall-Life-Franz-Meyer/dp/B001B4XU7Y/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=chagall+work&qid=1592956048&s=books&sr=1-3

https://www.amazon.com/Chagall-Music-Ambre-Gauthier/dp/207270118X/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=chagall+LACMA+book&qid=1592956114&s=books&sr=1-2

Assignment: Design a Costume

- Design a costume for yourself, a favorite character from a book, your child or grandchild
- Capture the inner spirit of the character and magnify it
- Exaggerate--Imagine that the costume telegraphs the essence of the character from 30 feet away
- Think about texture and movement—How will the costume move? What will it feel like? How will the wearer breathe and see?
- Do a series of sketches or watercolors
- Make the costume if you are inspired to do so!