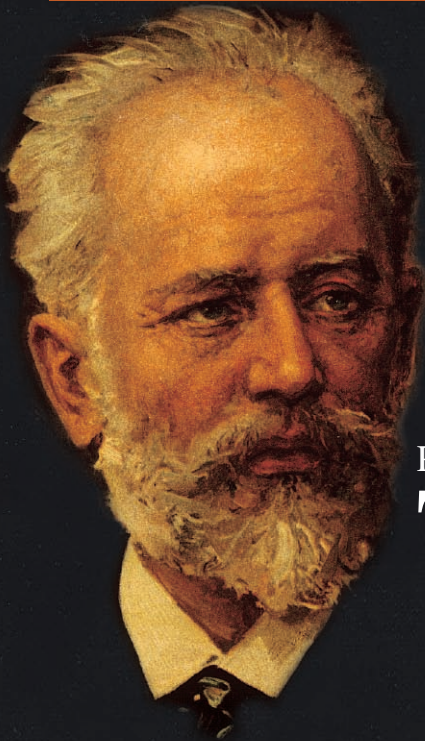


L I F E A N D W O R K S



Pyotr Il'yich

Tchaikovsky

Written and narrated by

Jeremy Siepmann

with **Malcolm Sinclair** as Tchaikovsky



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Pyotr Il'yich
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The full spoken text can be found at:

www.naxos.com/lifeandworks/tchaikovsky/spokentext

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Cast

Jeremy Siepmann – Narrator

Malcolm Sinclair – Tchaikovsky

Other parts read by Karen Archer, Teresa Gallagher, Stephen Thorne and David Timson

Jeremy Siepmann

Though long resident in England, Jeremy Siepmann was born and formally educated in the United States. Having completed his studies at the Mannes College of Music in New York, he moved to London at the suggestion of Sir Malcolm Sargent in 1964. After several years as a freelance lecturer he was invited to join the staff of London University. For most of the last 20 years he has confined his teaching activity to the piano, his pupils including pianists of worldwide repute.

As a writer he has contributed articles, reviews and interviews to numerous journals and reference works (including *New Statesman*, *The Musical Times*, *Gramophone*, *BBC Music Magazine*, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*), some of them being reprinted in book form (Oxford University Press, Robson Books). His books include a widely acclaimed biography of Chopin (*The Reluctant Romantic*, Gollancz/Northeastern University Press, 1995), two volumes on the history and literature of the piano, and a biography of Brahms (Everyman/EMI, 1997). In December 1997 he was appointed editor of *Piano* magazine.

His career as a broadcaster began in New York in 1963 with an East Coast radio series on the life and work of Mozart, described by Alistair Cooke as “the best music programme on American radio”. On the strength of this, improbably, he was hired by the BBC as a humorist, in which capacity he furnished weekly satirical items on various aspects of American life.

After a long break he returned to broadcasting in 1977, since when he has devised, written and presented more than 1,000 programmes, including the international award-winning series ‘The Elements of Music’. In 1989 he was appointed Head of Music at the BBC World Service,

broadcasting to an estimated audience of 135 million. He left the Corporation in Spring 1994 to form his own independent production company.

Malcolm Sinclair

Malcolm Sinclair has worked extensively for the National (*Racing Demon*, *Richard III*). His most recent London appearances include *Hay Fever* (Savoy), *Uncle Vanya* (Young Vic/RSC), *Heartbreak House* (Almeida), and the title role in *By Jeeves* (Duke of York). On television he was in four series of *Pie In The Sky*. He has narrated Schoenberg's *A Survivor In Warsaw* for the Boston Symphony and the LPO, and Bliss's *Morning Heroes* for the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic.



Karen Archer

Karen Archer has worked for the Royal Shakespeare Company in *Nicholas Nickleby* and as Mrs Erlynne in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, as well as across the UK in plays such as *Ghosts*, *She Stoops to Conquer* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Her television appearances include *The Chief*, *Ruth Rendell Mysteries*, *Casualty* and *Chancer* and she has been seen in the films *The Secret Garden* and *Forever Young*.



Teresa Gallagher

Teresa Gallagher has performed in many leading roles in both plays and musicals across the country, London's West End and Off Broadway. In addition, she is a well-known voice to listeners of BBC Radio Drama. Her work on film includes *The Misadventures of Margaret* and Mike Leigh's *Topsy-Turvy*.



Stephen Thorne

Stephen Thorne has made over 2,000 broadcasts for BBC Radio as well as theatre and television appearances. He has recorded over 100 audiobooks, mostly unabridged, including *The Sheep Pig* and all the *Brother Cadfael* novels and works by Dickens and Hardy. He performs on the talkies award 1996 winner for best unabridged novel – *Enigma* by Robert Harris.



David Timson

David Timson trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, as both actor and singer. He has performed in modern and classic plays in the UK and abroad, and is a leading voice actor on radio and audiobook. For Naxos AudioBooks he has recorded volumes of Sherlock Holmes stories, and has directed *Twelfth Night* in which he also plays Feste.



1 The Western Background

The 19th century, especially in Europe and North America, was an era of unprecedented change, peppered, inevitably, with wars and revolutions of almost every kind and at every level of society. The continuing advance of the Industrial Revolution, while far from abolishing poverty, brought new wealth to an ever-expanding middle class. Factories proliferated throughout Europe, soon exceeding the supply of indigenous raw materials and thereby intensifying the impulse towards colonization. The British Empire increased its dominions dramatically, Africa was carved up by Britain and other European colonists, and despite increasing unease, the slave trade continued, though its days were numbered. It was outlawed throughout the British Empire in 1807, but it wasn't until 1870 that the last slave was shipped to the Americas. Alarmed by European expansionism, China and Japan attempted to shut out the West altogether. But empire-building went on apace within Europe itself, never more dramatically than during the Napoleonic Wars (1799–1815), which had the incidental effect of igniting in countries from Italy to Russia a fervent nationalism which became a running feature of the century as a whole. In 1848, revolutions broke out all over Europe, and Marx and Engels published their epoch-making *Communist Manifesto*. Revolutions in Latin America resulted in a spate of new countries whose territorial disputes led to wars with each other. Of more lasting significance, in world terms, were the Crimean War (1853–56), in which Russia, Turkey, France, Austria and Piedmont Sardinia scrambled for territory as the Ottoman empire began to collapse; the American Civil War (1861–65), which

brought slavery to an end in the United States; the Austro-Prussian War (1866) following Bismarck's dissolution of the German Confederation and leading to the creation of the modern German state and the Austro-Hungarian Empire; the series of conflicts which led to the establishment of modern Italy in 1871; the Franco-Prussian War over European leadership (1870–71); and the Russo-Turkish War over control of the Balkans in 1877. In 1837, Queen Victoria began her 63-year reign in Britain, presiding over the most far-flung empire ever known (encompassing more than a quarter of the world's lands and people) while seeing the monarchy itself steadily reduced to a merely symbolic significance as increasing numbers became educated and acquired the right to vote.

By the time of Victoria's death in 1901, the world had changed more dramatically than in any previous century. Absolute monarchies had become the rare exception rather than the rule, workers in many countries had achieved conditions and rights beyond the dreams of their grandparents, literacy rates had quadrupled, trades unions were established and recognized in Germany, Britain and France, the Civil Rights Act had made citizens of all American blacks, socialist parties had been formed and recognized in many countries, child labour had been largely eradicated, women's rights had become a front-line issue, and more than 28 million people had cut their links with Europe and emigrated to America, contributing to the emergence of the United States as one of the world's greatest industrial and political powers.

Science and technology, as in the previous century, had expanded human knowledge to an unprecedented degree. When Joseph Lalande published his catalogue of 47,390 stars in 1801, he heralded a century of astronomical discovery both literal and figurative, not least on the medical front. The single greatest advance in medicine was undoubtedly the discovery by Pasteur and Koch that bacteria and viruses lead to infection, and the consequent mass immunizations against more than 20 diseases, including such rapacious killers as smallpox, tuberculosis and cholera (the last having claimed more than 16,000 people in London alone in 1849). Other landmarks include

the discovery of quinine as a cure for malaria, the introduction of ether as an anaesthetic in 1847, which with increased use of antiseptics resulted in unprecedented advances in surgery, and the invention of the X-ray in 1895, which revolutionized the diagnosis of illnesses and injuries, thereby saving and prolonging millions of lives.

Also belonging to the 19th century are the invention of steel; the birth and development of railways, both above and below ground, with incalculable effects on almost every branch of civilization (and warfare); the discovery and widespread dissemination of electricity as a major power source; the advent of the telephone, the bicycle, the washing machine, the typewriter, the gramophone, the transmission of radio waves, the oil drill. Indeed, towards the end of the century, electricity and oil were challenging the supremacy of coal and steam as the principal power sources of machines, leading to the internal combustion engine (hence also the motor car and the manufacture of plastics and artificial rubber).

Arms, as ever, played a key part in most economies. By the mid-century, the Krupp works at Essen, in Germany, had become the world's leading arms manufacturers, producing the first all-steel gun as early as 1850. In 1853, Samuel Colt, inventor of the single-barreled pistol, revolutionized the small-arms business in the USA, working also on submarine mines and telegraphy; Richard Gatling, a trained physician, contributed to death and destruction in the American Civil War with his monstrous ten-barreled gun, firing 1200 shots a minute (a precursor of the Maxim machine gun of 1882). But ploughshares flourished too.

Agriculture, easily sidelined by the achievements of the Industrial Revolution, experienced revolutions of its own, with breeding experiments leading to ever bigger crops and fatter animals. Cyrus McCormick invented his reaping machine in America in 1831, heralding a new age of mechanized harvesting. Justus von Liebig's *Chemistry in its Application to Agriculture* inaugurated the age of scientific farming and the use of artificial fertilizers in 1855. Agricultural colleges began to proliferate around the middle of the century, and by the last quarter of the century

refrigerated ships began plying the Atlantic, leading to worldwide food markets (long before the establishment of domestic refrigerators).

Trade. In the 1840s, Britain's adoption of a free-trade policy (abolishing customs duties) helped to establish London as the centre of world trade, with the pound sterling as the dominant currency. By the 1870s, many other countries had introduced import levies as a means of protecting their own industries from economic imperialism. Regular steamship services were established between California and the Far East, and gun-running became a worldwide industry. On the domestic front, the invention of tinned foods and the advent of department stores in the second half of the century transformed the daily lives of countless housewives and domestics.

Ideas. As might be expected in a time of such ferment, the century was rich in philosophers, though the ideas which had, and continue to have, the most impact came from other quarters. Philosophically, the high ground was held by the Germans, much as the French had held it in the previous century. The great names are Hegel (1770–1831), Schopenhauer (1788–1860) and Nietzsche (1844–1900), all of whom were much concerned with music in one way or another. Nor should one forget the Danish Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855). Hegel argued that consciousness and the world of external objects were inseparable aspects of a single whole, and that truth is discoverable only through a dialectic process of contradiction and resolution – a thoroughly rationalist idea with clear parallels in the concept of sonata form [see *Glossary*]. Schopenhauer took a more pessimistic view (and one more in keeping with the preoccupations of the Romantics), in which the irrational will is seen as the governing principle of our perception, dominated by an endless cycle of desire and frustration from which the only escape is aesthetic contemplation. His thinking had a powerful effect on both Wagner and Nietzsche, who rejected established concepts of Christian morality, Nietzsche proclaiming that “God is dead” and postulating the ideal of the *Übermensch*, or ‘Superman’, who would impose his self-created will on the weak and the worthless – a view fully in keeping with the gargantuan nature of the

Romantic ego, with its roots in the controlling powers of the Industrial Revolution and the spate of scientific discoveries which granted man an ever greater mastery of his environment.

Kierkegaard, the founder of 'existential' philosophy, was fundamentally out of step with these ideas, taking what was in many ways a specifically Christian stance and arguing that no amount of rational thought could explain the uniqueness of individual experience or account for the existence of God, which could be understood only through a "leap of faith". Needless to say, his suggestion that not only God but exceptional individuals stood outside the laws of morality didn't endear him to the established church.

The man who did more than anyone else, however, to undermine the basic tenets not only of Christianity but of all 'creationist' religions was neither a philosopher nor a theologian but a scientist. Charles Darwin's theories of evolution, first set out in 1859 in *The Origin of Species*, have never lost their explosive power. Less revolutionary, but also explosive, were the ideas of Sigmund Freud (1865–1939), widely known as "the father of psychoanalysis". Although his greatest influence and fame belong to the 20th century, the essence of his approach was defined in the 19th, when he first developed his theories of the unconscious and infantile sexuality. His basically anti-religious stance, treated in his book *The Future of an Illusion*, was distinctly a product of 19th-century trends. The third most far-reaching idea of non-philosophical 19th-century thought (non-philosophical in a strictly academic sense) arose from an increasingly widespread concern with natural justice. The Quakers were the first European community which formally espoused the notion of sexual equality, but it was such pioneering individuals as Mary Wollstonecraft, Emmeline Pankhurst and Susan B. Anthony who really put the issue of women's rights on the political agenda.

The Arts. In the realm of literature it was the century of the novel, in which such writers as Dickens, Zola, Hugo, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky managed both to absorb and entertain, and to lay bare the realities of life for the mass of society who suffered rather than benefited from the effects

of the Industrial Revolution. Others, like Thackeray, Austen, Stendahl, George Eliot and Flaubert, dealt in various ways with the lives, fantasies and pretensions of the upwardly-mobile middle class. Timeless issues of love, death, disappointment and adventure were memorably explored by Sir Walter Scott, the fantastical E.T.A. Hoffmann, the three Brontë sisters, Joseph Conrad, Mark Twain, Thomas Hardy and Robert Louis Stevenson. Hoffmann, Conrad, Chekhov, Andersen and Maupassant proved themselves masters of the short story, and Wilkie Collins introduced a new genre, the detective novel. Meanwhile, dramatists like Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov and Shaw brought a new realism to the theatre. It was also the century of the great romantic poets: Goethe, Wordsworth, Heine, Byron, Keats, Shelley, Coleridge and Pushkin. Of these, Goethe, Byron, Heine and Pushkin had the greatest impact on composers, prominent amongst them Schubert, Schumann, Liszt, Berlioz and Tchaikovsky. Later poets of importance include Baudelaire, Verlaine, Tennyson and Gerard Manley Hopkins.

In the world of painting and sculpture, the greatest figures in the earlier part of the century included Goya, Constable (heralding a new wave of landscape painters), Ingres (who as a natural classicist born into a century of Romanticism, had much in common with Chopin, though not friendship), the arch-romantics Géricault and Delacroix, whose obsession with the distant past arose from a characteristically Romantic distaste for the present, and the staggeringly original J.M.W. Turner, whose work foreshadowed the development of the French Impressionist school in the latter half of the century: Monet, Degas, Manet, Renoir, all of whom strove to represent nature, and to capture the changing effects of light and movement, mixing their colours on the canvas rather than on the palette. They were succeeded by the so-called post-Impressionists (Cézanne, van Gogh, Gauguin, Seurat), who subscribed to no particular school or technique but sought a more objective, less spontaneous and evanescent style than the Impressionists. Among sculptors, Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) stood in a class of his own – a Romantic, a realist and a master of his craft with few rivals. The largest sculpture in the world, however, was the Statue of Liberty, presented by France to the United States in 1884. At the end of the century came a new

family of styles known as Art Nouveau, of which Aubrey Beardsley, Toulouse-Lautrec and Gustav Klimt were prominent though very different exponents. Equally influential in the realm of architecture, it largely rejected traditional western notions of symmetry, drawing much of its inspiration from the prints and buildings of Japan and reflecting a widespread hunger among western artists for a fundamental regeneration of the creative impulse.

This ranged from the highly decorative to the boldly simple. In the realm of dance, ballet underwent some important transformations, including the introduction of tights, calf-length white dresses and toe-shoes. The technique of female dancers was developed at the expense of the male, who was reduced to a largely supporting role. In the modern repertoire, the most typical examples of Romantic ballet at its best are *La Sylphide* (1832) and *Giselle* (1841).

Architecture. 19th-century architecture in Europe and America reflected both the Romantic obsession with the past and the industrialists' concerns with practicality and economy. Public buildings tended for most of the century toward an ever more massive grandiosity, drawing on a wide variety of styles ranging from the distant to the recent past, often within a single building. A famous example, from 1835, is the neo-Gothic Houses of Parliament in London. Housing for the working class, however, bore many of the hallmarks of present-day factory-farming, consisting in the main of terraced brick houses – small, crowded, lacking in facilities which today we take for granted and of a soul-numbing sameness. With the advent of steel, property developers discovered that a high density of housing, office and work space could be achieved by building upwards instead of outwards, thereby economising on land and cost to themselves. Thus the skyscraper began its dominance of the urban landscape. The most famous of all, however, the Eiffel Tower in Paris (built for the great Paris Exhibition of 1889), had no practical function whatever, beyond being a tourist attraction and a demonstration of modern building technology.

Music. Never has an art known greater changes in so relatively short a time than music in the

19th century. When the century began, Beethoven was only 30, Schubert only 3. Haydn (68) was still at the height of his powers. When it ended, Debussy's revolutionary *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune*, often cited, even today, as "the beginning of modern music", was already 7 years old, and Schoenberg (26), Ives (also 26), Bartok (19) and Stravinsky (18) were all fully active. In between, the end of the Classical era and the dawning of Romanticism could be seen in the maturest works of Beethoven and Schubert (whose symphonies, sonatas and chamber music reached previously undreamt-of proportions and expanded classical forms to their outermost limits), harmony underwent unprecedented transformations, including the progressive dissolution of traditional tonality by Liszt, Wagner, Debussy, Mahler and Ives [for more on 'tonality', see *Glossary*], the piano attained its full maturity and became the world's most popular and commercially successful instrument, the art of orchestration became a front-line issue, thanks to the pioneering work of Berlioz, Liszt and Wagner, nationalism became a driving force, especially in Russia (Glinka, Mussorgsky, Borodin, Balakirev), Bohemia (Dvorak, Smetana), Spain (Albéniz, Granados), Scandinavia (Grieg, Sibelius), Poland (Chopin), Hungary (Liszt), Italy (Verdi) and America (Gottschalk, Ives). There was a major shift from the relative 'objectivity' of the Classical era to the intensely emotional and formally self-generating outpourings of the Romantics. Illustrative, 'programme' music achieved a popularity never approached before or since, and the cult of virtuosity became a dominant feature, thanks largely to Paganini and Liszt. The specialist (i.e. non-composing) performer became the rule rather than the exception (such figures were scarcely to be found in the previous century), and musical schools and conservatories became commonplace. Despite this, the discipline of counterpoint, hitherto amongst the most highly prized of musical attributes, fell into widespread disuse, though it plays an important part in the music of Liszt, Wagner, Brahms and Richard Strauss. In the works of Schubert, Lanner, Weber and the Strauss family, the waltz became the most popular form of the century, closely followed by the Victorian after-dinner ballad. Forms in general polarized, from the millions of piano 'miniatures' and 'character pieces', to the gargantuan music dramas of Wagner, the

sprawling symphonies of Bruckner and Mahler, and the extravagantly coloured symphonic works of Richard Strauss. And quite apart from Wagner, it was the century of Grand Opera. Long (five acts), spectacularly staged, complete with ballet and special effects, its most prominent exponents were Meyerbeer, Auber, Halévy, Massenet, Spontini and Verdi. It was also the century of comic operetta, exemplified by the entertainments of Gilbert and Sullivan, Offenbach and Johann Strauss. Late in the century came the sometimes grimly realistic 'verismo' school of opera, foreshadowed by Bizet's *Carmen* but most famously manifested in the works of Puccini, Mascagni and Leoncavallo.

The Russian Background 2

It would be exaggerating to say that when Tchaikovsky was born, Russian music was in crisis, but it was certainly in the throes of major change. It's rare in musical history that an epoch-making watershed can be traced to a specific date and to a single composer, but the story of Russian music as we know it is one of those exceptions. It begins, to be precise, on the evening of 9 December 1836, with the premiere in St Petersburg of Mikhail Glinka's opera *A Life for the Tsar*. The composer himself was a wealthy ex-civil servant, not your normal, fire-in-the-belly revolutionary, but from that day to this he has been popularly known as "the father of Russian music". What he did, in that one opera (so goes the folklore) was to provoke a national identity crisis which was to rumble on throughout the rest of the century. It was true, but he didn't rest content with a single opera. In works like his second, *Ruslan and Ludmilla*, and the purely orchestral *Kamarinskaya*, he focused attention on an already existing problem with such force and brilliance that no-one after him could afford to ignore it.

It's a strange but fundamentally important fact that before Glinka, as his unofficial title suggests, there was really no such thing as Russian music (except, of course, for folk music: no country lacks that). There was music by Russian composers, yes, but that's hardly the same thing. The fact is that, prior to Glinka, such cultural traditions as existed at all in Russia were not only recent but borrowed almost entirely from elsewhere, most notably from the West. While Europe basked in the glories of Byrd and Palestrina, and later of Schütz and Monteverdi, and later still of

Bach and Handel, Russia was still effectively mired in the Middle Ages. In the 13th century, when the austerities of Gregorian chant began in the West to give way to the worldly and fascinating miracles of harmony and counterpoint, Russia was to all intents and purposes frozen off from the rest of the world by a social and political cataclysm whose repercussions can still be felt today. She was overrun, and effectively imprisoned for some three centuries, by invading hordes of Tartars who belonged originally to the marauding armies of Genghis Khan. Having been, to all appearances, on the brink of a Renaissance akin to Europe's, Russia was reduced to a smouldering hulk, her wealth destroyed, and all physical evidence of her culture obliterated. Nor, in the 15th century, when the princes of Muscovy finally expelled the invaders, did things improve much. The Tartars were replaced by a Tsardom which was partly oriental, partly Byzantine, and which amounted to a system of despotism more repressive than anything ever seen in the West. With the imposition of serfdom on the peasantry, the picture of a potentially great nation in a state of semi-barbarous isolation was all but complete.

There was still another factor, though, which aggravated Russia's increasingly chronic cultural backwardness, and that was the extreme dogmatism of the Eastern Orthodox Church. It wasn't until well into the 17th century – the century which saw the birth in Europe of Bach, Handel and Scarlatti – that secular music even gained a foothold in Russia. This it did thanks largely to the efforts of Tsar Alexis, the father of Peter the Great, who had the audacity to summon to Moscow a group of foreign musicians whose brief was specifically to instruct the Russians in the playing of western instruments. The reaction of the Church was swift and savage. It issued an order commanding “that all musical instruments be broken up and burnt, and all mountebanks and jugglers (i.e. musicians) be whipped for plying their godless trade – with rods for the first offence and with a knout for the second.” The knout was an instrument of punishment whose use frequently resulted in the death of the victim.

The elders of the Church, though, were fighting a losing battle. When Peter the Great came to the throne, he determined to drag his suffering and retarded country into the modern world, by the

heels if necessary. And like his father, he did it by looking to the West. In the space of a generation he attempted to import directly the science, industry, art and manners of Europe. To this end he brought into Russia thousands upon thousands of scholars, craftsmen, engineers, musicians and artists. In the century and a half which followed, Peter's reforms were carried on and modified by his successors, and Russian cultural life became ever more indistinguishable from that of Italy, France, or Germany. Musical life in particular was controlled almost entirely by aristocratic amateurs – a tradition which continued virtually unbroken until the emergence, far into the 19th century, of Tchaikovsky.

It was against this background of imported splendour and dilettantism, which took no notice either of the peasantry or of the indigenous music which flourished amongst them, that Glinka's first opera caused such a sensation. Not only did it have a Russian plot, it openly glorified Russian folk music and suggested for the first time the real possibility of a genuinely national and unmistakably Russian *art* music. From that point onwards, 'Russianness' became a burning musical issue. But since it had never existed before, where was it to come from? And how was it to be defined and recognised?

For Glinka, as for all realists, the solution was a compromise. He himself had naturally been trained according to European traditions, and his music is a sometimes curious blend of Italianate technique with the typical contours, rhythms and harmonies of folk music. Part of his Russianness, derived from the peasantry, is deliberately naïve, and part of it is extremely sophisticated, revelling in vivid orchestration which veers from the lush, almost purple, to the dazzlingly bright. And this feature of musical Russianness is among the most obvious qualities in the work of virtually all the Russian composers whose music we know today: Balakirev, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Rachmaninov, Shostakovich, Kabalevsky and so on. But even by the time Tchaikovsky came to maturity, around 1865, the defining of Russianness had become a very complicated and contentious business.

Following Glinka's death, the torch of musical nationalism in Russia passed into the hands of

an unlikely bunch of amateur composers, including an internationally renowned Professor of Chemistry (Borodin), an army officer and sometime civil servant (Mussorgsky), and a naval officer (Rimsky-Korsakov). But the guiding light of this motley crew was an ex-railway official, Mily Balakirev, a protégé of Glinka's whose genius wasn't matched by anything like his mentor's learning. According to one colleague, Balakirev didn't own a single book on harmony, orchestration or theory. But under his determined guidance, the members of the group, which came to be known as 'the Mighty Handful' (though their 'might' was sometimes debatable) learned from each other. They may have lacked Glinka's training but if anything they were even more fervently nationalistic.

In describing their operations, Rimsky-Korsakov incidentally highlighted one of the most significant differences between Russian and Western European thought. "For the most part," he wrote, "a work was criticised by its separate elements; the first four bars were excellent, the next eight weak, the following melody was valueless, but the transition to the next phrase was good – and so on. *A composition was never considered as an aesthetic whole.* Accordingly, Balakirev usually introduced new works to the circle fragmentarily; he used to play the end first, then the beginning, and so it went." [Italics mine] This intense concentration on the experience of the moment is an essential feature of musical romanticism, but it's also fundamentally Russian. You find the same thing in literature. Progressive, *organic* thinking, the evolution of ideas through logical development, is not a feature of Russian art in general. But all this posed sometimes severe psychological problems for a composer like Tchaikovsky, who felt his own Russianness very deeply yet revered the Western classical tradition. In the last analysis, he found the price of nationalism too high, because it was too limiting. All the greatest music is universal, and reflects universal experience. And Tchaikovsky, at his best, aspired to nothing less. But the greatest drama of his creative life was his unending quest to reconcile these two powerful and often conflicting aspects of his musical personality.

Tchaikovsky's popularity is beyond argument, but in the view of many western musicians his

lifelong quest was never resolved. For them, he was ultimately too Russian to make a wholly acceptable European. Too Russian to be truly universal. Ironically, his weakness as a quasi-European stems directly from his strengths as a Russian: He feels, by western academic standards, too passionately too often; he expresses his feelings, generally, in the concise and self-contained spirit (though seldom in the style) of folksong; and he displays an almost promiscuous gift for continuous melody. Maybe. But he also perfectly demonstrates what Glinka glimpsed at the beginning: that the true Russian is neither Western nor Eastern but, uniquely, both at once.

3 The Major Works and their Significance

Tchaikovsky was first and foremost a man of the orchestra, and secondly a man of the theatre (both opera and ballet). If we knew him only by his chamber music, songs and solo piano music, it's unlikely that the adjective 'great' would ever have become attached to his name.

Orchestral concert works. Unlike Mozart, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Brahms and Bizet, Tchaikovsky was something of a late starter, not beginning to compose until he was nearly 14, and not undertaking any serious study of harmony until he was 21 (Mozart, Schubert and Mendelssohn had written great masterpieces when they were 16). At 22 (an age at which most music students are finishing their formal studies) he entered the St Petersburg Conservatory, and produced his first substantial work, an overture to Ostrovsky's play *The Storm* [Naxos 8.550716] at the age of 24. It's some measure of the speed at which he progressed that only a year later he was invited to become a Professor of Harmony at the newly opened Moscow Conservatory. And it was there that he composed his First Symphony (subtitled 'Winter Daydreams') in 1866 [Naxos 8.550517]. Using a number of folk-like themes, plus one authentic folksong (which leads to the finale), it has at times an almost 'operatic' feel to it, which was to become a characteristic of his symphonies as a whole, especially, perhaps, the early ones.

Between this and the composition of his Second Symphony six years later, Tchaikovsky wrote his first orchestral masterpiece, the Fantasy-Overture *Romeo and Juliet*, which remains one of the

most popular of all orchestral works, Russian or otherwise. The richness of the orchestration, the abundance of beautiful, soaring melodies (particularly the great love theme), the vividness of the characterisation and the structural integrity of the work mark him out immediately as one of the major Russian composers of the time, if not indeed the finest of them all. His only serious rivals were the self-styled nationalists Mussorgsky, Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov, members of the 'Mighty Handful', whose talent (in Mussorgsky's case, whose genius) wasn't generally matched by a comparable degree of self-discipline and craftsmanship. In the case of Balakirev, whose bullying of Tchaikovsky played a major part in the ultimate success of *Romeo and Juliet*, it was rather the other way round. And as a composer, Anton Rubinstein (perhaps second only to Liszt amongst 19th-century pianists) was nowhere near Tchaikovsky's match when it came to sheer creative genius.

In the earlier part of his career, Tchaikovsky felt his essential Russianness every bit as fervently as the 'Mighty Handful', but had none of their principled disdain for the highly schooled (what they regarded as stultifyingly 'academic') traditions of European music. Ironically, however, it was precisely in his attempts to emulate the European symphonic ideal (Mozart was his favourite composer) that Tchaikovsky demonstrated his greatest weaknesses as a composer. Yes, he was a man of the orchestra, but he was not naturally a man of the symphony. Speaking very generally, his finest orchestral works are his ballets, his varyingly-programmatic overtures and tone poems, his incidental music for the theatre, his Serenade for Strings. His symphonies, especially the last three, certainly contain great music, even, in the latter case, *much* great music, but this in itself doesn't make them great symphonies. How so?

The essence of symphonic thought is organic. Developmental. It has everything to do with the relationship of the proverbial acorn to the proverbial oak. Of the seed in the soil to the flower in sunlight. The most important thing about a theme in a symphony, as opposed to the melody of a folksong or an operatic aria, is not what it is, but what it can become. Now you *can* argue that an acorn is a thing of beauty in itself – a perfect whole, perfectly balanced; a beautiful shape,

enhanced by its contrasts of colour and texture, its three-dimensionality and its very roundness. But could anyone seriously argue that the theme which opens Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (and which is the source of much of the movement) is a thing of beauty? Ta-ta-ta DOMMMM; ta-ta-ta DOMMMM. One of the most fundamental properties of a symphonic movement, indeed of any piece in so-called 'sonata form', is its capacity for suspense. What's going to happen next? Where is this going to take us? How do we get out of here? When (and how) will we get home? Every question begs an answer. Everything is focused on the future. This is the engine that drives the very concept of the symphony. This and the impulse toward symmetry. Tchaikovsky's symphonies are largely fuelled by emotion and the senses. His themes are often far more beautiful than anything in countless 'impeccable' symphonies by lesser men. And his use of the orchestra leaves most of his rivals at the starting gate. But so far from being seeds, his themes are often fully bloomed flowers: delectable, enveloping, seductively fragrant, and hopelessly self-sufficient. They leave nothing to be desired.

No-one was more aware of these 'limitations' than Tchaikovsky himself. "All my life," he wrote to a friend, "I have been much troubled by my inability to grasp and manipulate form in music. ... What I write has always a mountain of padding: an experienced eye can detect the thread in my seams, and I can do nothing about it." Part of his problem (though by no means all musicians see it as one) lay in the very nature of his national heritage, enshrined in the traditions of Russian folk music. One of the principal hallmarks of Russian folksong is its reliance on numerous repetitions, each one varied in some (usually *very*) small way. But this very gradual, decorative process bears little relation to the form of organic evolution required in a symphony.

Tchaikovsky's Second Symphony, sometimes called the 'Little Russian', was composed when he was already 33, and is largely based on Ukrainian folk tunes. But in the last movement he carries repetition to near-suicidal extremes, giving us the same theme fully 18 times before introducing any variation at all. Nevertheless, the symphony has many very attractive features and scored a great success at its first performance.

Again, the gap between symphonies is filled, more comfortably, by works of non-specific form: some very substantial incidental music to Ostrovsky's fairy-tale *The Snow Maiden*, in which his powers of characterisation and atmosphere are to the fore, and an orchestral fantasy on a 'programme' derived from Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*. But virtually eclipsing both these works in popularity and durability is the Piano Concerto No.1 in B flat minor, from the same period. Initially scorned as "unplayable" by Nikolai Rubinstein (brother of Anton), the work was triumphantly unveiled, in Boston, Massachusetts, of all unlikely places, by the great German pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow. Since then it has enjoyed a popularity rivalled only by Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor. Long, big-boned and intentionally difficult to play, it combines dazzling bravura, high drama and sheer entertainment with a charming lyricism and a raft of good tunes, the first of which was hijacked and recycled as an American popular song, *Tonight We Love*. Another major work begun before the Third Symphony is what many people regard as Tchaikovsky's greatest ballet, *Swan Lake*. Here again, the episodic nature of the plot combines with Tchaikovsky's genius for mood-setting, his gift for characterisation, his wizardry as an orchestrator and his deeply intuitive understanding of the dance, to produce an example of musical theatre at its most richly satisfying.

The Third Symphony, from 1875, finds Tchaikovsky drawing back from the folk-oriented styles of the first two and turning to European models (Schumann, in particular, is a strong influence), but even here he lapses into Russian repetitiousness. Far more successful, in every sense, are the intense, even melodramatic 'symphonic fantasia' *Francesca da Rimini* and its polar opposite, the lightweight and charming *Variations on a Rococo Theme* for cello and orchestra. Both works date from 1876, the year in which Tchaikovsky made his near-fatal decision to marry. *Francesca da Rimini* is a hyper-romantic tone poem, based on Dante's *Inferno*, and for all its orchestral brilliance it finds Tchaikovsky at his most recklessly emotional. His abiding problem as a composer, perhaps especially in his orchestral works, wasn't in fact his self-confessed inability to master form but a tendency to let his emotions run riot. In *Francesca* he only just manages to keep them in check.

With his Fourth Symphony, though it certainly isn't without its problems, Tchaikovsky first really hit his stride as a symphonist. His emotions are completely his own, they're both eloquently expressed and well-disciplined, and are kept within the proportions of his chosen medium. The fact that there's an underlying programme, divulged to Mme von Meck (see p.143) but not to the listener at large, probably tells us more about his psychology than about the actual music. It served to defuse the feelings of intimidation which he felt in the face of a 'pure' symphony, and it enabled him to 'feel' it more like an opera or a ballet. The themes are always well characterised and the orchestration is masterly from start to finish. The most famous movement is the exhilarating and high-spirited Scherzo, where Tchaikovsky had the inspired and unprecedented idea of scoring it entirely for *pizzicato* (i.e. plucked) strings, with the exception of the central 'trio' section, which he gives to the winds. He may have picked up the idea from the *Pizzicato* in Delibes' ballet *Sylvia* (which he certainly knew) or from Glinka's imitation of balalaikas in his opera *A Life for the Tsar*, but no-one had ever thought of doing this kind of thing in a symphony, let alone on this scale. Despite the self-consciously fate-laden seriousness of the first movement and the poignant melancholy of the second, both the Scherzo and the finale are immensely enjoyable. The finale may sound more like a ballet than a symphony, despite the brief and unexpected reappearance of the 'fate' motif from the first movement, but with music of such freshness and charm and delectable colour, who's to complain? Many have, actually, but to what end? They've certainly not detracted one whit from the work's enduring popularity.

Before tackling his next symphony, Tchaikovsky turned once again to the form of the concerto, this time for the violin. And here, particularly in the first movement, his supposed inability to master form goes out of the window. As Edward Garden has remarked, "even Mozart might have approved". The reckless emotionalism and sometimes gaudy orchestration which mar *Francesca da Rimini* are nowhere to be found here. Nor is there any trace of the extreme trauma of his marriage, from which he seems to have emerged with a renewed, even enhanced joy in living and a mastery of his craft which could almost be described as serene (not a word that crops up very

often in discussions of Tchaikovsky's music). In his life, there was still much trauma to come, but this ebulliently lyrical work is at the very least an invigorating vision of what life *might* be. In its breadth and scope it bears comparison with the single violin concertos of Beethoven and Brahms, both also in D major (the Brahms, interestingly, was written at exactly the same time as Tchaikovsky's). Just as Nikolai had pronounced Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto 'unplayable', so history repeated itself when the original dedicatee of the Violin Concerto, Leopold Auer, refused to play it on the same grounds. Thus Tchaikovsky's two greatest concertos both received their first performances outside Russia. Adolf Brodsky premiered the Violin Concerto in Vienna, after which the critic Eduard Hanslick delicately ascribed to Tchaikovsky the invention of music which "stinks to the ear". Tchaikovsky's other concerto works (including his second two piano concertos, various movements for violin, and the *Pezzo capriccioso* for cello) are of very secondary importance.

All major works require major work, and after the exertions of the Fourth Symphony and the Violin Concerto, Tchaikovsky the orchestral composer needed to relax. All of his orchestral works between the Fourth and the so-called *Manfred* Symphony of 1885 are relatively lightweight and of generally minor importance. Most of them are suites, in effect if not always in name. The fourth of the suites so called is actually an arrangement of piano pieces by his beloved Mozart. All of the suites are attractive works, and his orchestration is a joy in all of them, but their shortish movements rarely attempt to plumb any great depths. The most popular works of this period are the brilliantly orchestrated and high-spirited *Capriccio Italien* (based on the popular music of Italy, as its name suggests), and the so-called *1812 Overture*, whose noisy battles require everything but actual bombs. Many recorded versions do indeed marshal a battalion of cannons, complemented by the loudest church bells available. The work was an embarrassment to the composer, but the fact is, it's his absolute, number one, Top of the Pops hit.

The most substantial orchestral work of this interim period between symphonies, and one of Tchaikovsky's own special favourites, is the Serenade for Strings. It arose not from a commission

nor for any specific occasion but 'from inner compulsion', and while it began life as a symphony it probably owes much of its quality precisely to the abandonment of that idea, with all its underlying baggage of intimidation, self-consciousness and self-doubt. Yet it has a greater degree of cohesion between movements and a more satisfying overall balance of ingredients than any of his formally designated symphonies so far. Among its cleverest strokes is the revelation, in the finale, of the Russian folksong on which the entire work has actually been based. Like so many of Tchaikovsky's most memorable themes, it consists largely of a simple descending scale, as does the very opening of the work as a whole, which returns near the end of the finale to confirm its true paternity. Here again, Mozart might very well have approved. Tchaikovsky was now ready to embark on his most powerful symphonic work to date.

Perhaps because of its very specific literary programme, based directly on Lord Byron's poetic tragedy, Tchaikovsky didn't include the *Manfred* Symphony in the numbered sequence of his other symphonies, which is perhaps the only reason why it remains so much less well known. No other composition cost Tchaikovsky so much labour or left him so exhausted. Conceived on a massive scale (it runs to just under an hour), its powerfully gloomy outer movements frame a scherzo, which depicts with extraordinary delicacy the Fairy of the Alps glimpsed in a rainbow through the spray of a waterfall, and a beautiful, idyllic pastorale, evoking the simplicity of rural Alpine life. The orchestration is unobtrusively virtuosic, and the cohesion of all four movements is remarkably self-assured. Balakirev, among others (including the composer), regarded this as Tchaikovsky's greatest work yet.

Far more familiar, however, is the Fifth Symphony, which followed three years later. Again there is an underlying programme, but nothing as specific as in *Manfred*. Nevertheless, it follows the example of *Manfred* in introducing its 'motto' theme into each of its four movements, but with far more pervasive effect. There have always been critics to state that the work is more like a cyclical opera than a symphony, and that its finale is misconceived and dramatically hollow, but even if these things are true, the power of Tchaikovsky's music seems to transcend its limitations

and the symphony has been a staple of the central concert repertory from his time to our own.

Happily, most commentators agree with Tchaikovsky himself that his last symphony, the Sixth, nicknamed 'Pathétique', is the greatest as well as the last of his works, and many would add, notwithstanding the operas, the most dramatic. In terms of its instrumentation alone, it's the summation of everything Tchaikovsky had learned about the orchestra, applied so perfectly to its expressive purpose that it's impossible to separate one from the other. Structurally, it's as unconventional as anything he ever wrote, including a waltz with five beats to the bar instead of three, and ending with a long slow movement of almost unmitigated tragedy, yet nothing he did was ever more convincing. Or more extreme. The dynamic range goes from the almost inconceivably soft (*pppppp*) to the almost intolerably powerful. The range of emotions is authentically terrifying yet deployed with unerring control and dramatic conviction. There's not a wasted note or a misjudged chord from first to last. The sense of inevitability is achieved with an economy of means which is in no way ascetic, and the characterisation of themes is sometimes almost cruel in its intensity. In addition to its intrinsic quality, Tchaikovsky's last symphony, which was also his last work, has had a crucial influence on such disparate composers as Mahler, Berg, Sibelius, Puccini and Stravinsky.

Theatrical works. Tchaikovsky wrote ten operas, spanning almost his entire career, from *The Voyevode* of 1867–8 to *Iolanta* in 1891. Of these, only two, *Eugene Onegin* (1877–8) and *The Queen of Spades* (1890) have survived in the mainstream repertoire. Both are derived from works by the greatest of all Russian poets, Alexander Pushkin. *Eugene Onegin*, generally felt to be Tchaikovsky's finest opera, succeeds almost entirely on the intrinsic quality of the music and on the sympathy and insight of his characterisation. As musical theatre, it leaves rather a lot to be desired, since dramatic action and scenic contrasts are minimal. Apart from the tragic duel and the ballroom scene, the plot is often static and the focus is almost entirely on the emotions of the main characters. It was precisely for this reason that Tchaikovsky didn't actually call the work an

opera at all, but rather 'Lyric Scenes in Three Acts'. *The Queen of Spades* is more conventional but also more uneven in its musical quality. Tchaikovsky's brother Modest [mod'yest] was responsible for the libretto, which was a travesty of Pushkin's original, and the opera suffers accordingly, but again it's the musical characterisation and the vivid orchestration that make it memorable.

The most enduringly popular of all Tchaikovsky's stage works are his three great ballets, *Swan Lake* [Naxos 8.550246-47], *The Sleeping Beauty* [8.550490-92] and *The Nutcracker* [8.550324-25]. Apart from the entrancing music, rich in melody, orchestral colour and rhythmic variety, they redefined the nature of ballet music in Russia, which had previously been regarded as little more than background music to the dancing, and was traditionally provided by resolutely second-rate composers. Ironically, *Swan Lake* was originally attacked by the critics because the music was too good. *The Nutcracker Suite*, through which millions of music-lovers have first discovered Tchaikovsky, was compiled from the score of the complete ballet in 1892.

Chamber music. Tchaikovsky's chamber works are very much fewer and undeservedly less popular than his orchestral ones. All three of his fully-fledged string quartets are very considerable works, showing from the very beginning a highly idiomatic understanding of the medium. The slow movement of the First Quartet moved Tolstoy to tears, and many less celebrated listeners have been similarly moved (however, Tolstoy's musical judgements must be evaluated cautiously in view of his magnificent pronouncement that Beethoven had no talent!). The expansive Trio for piano, violin and cello, written in 1881 as a kind of personal requiem for Nikolai Rubinstein, is rather harder to love, and very much less idiomatically written than the three quartets. The over-long first movement (close to 18 minutes in most performances) is lopsidedly piano-heavy, and the massively sprawling Theme and Variations (clocking in at 30-minutes-plus) almost suggests a guilty conscience at the fact that Tchaikovsky's dread of the funeral arose "not so much from a sense of fearful, irretrievable loss as from the fear of seeing

poor Rubinstein's body". Far more rewarding, indeed highly enjoyable, is the original string sextet version of the also-orchestral *Souvenir de Florence*, composed near the end of Tchaikovsky's own life.

Piano music. This is extensive but generally negligible. There are some charming miniatures here and there, and some genuinely poignant ones too, but few of them rise above the level of garden-variety salon music. The Grand Sonata, Op.37, composed almost in tandem with the great Violin Concerto, has its champions, some of them very distinguished indeed, but its general neglect by pianists is easy to understand.

Vocal music. Unsurprisingly, given his abundant gift for melody, Tchaikovsky wrote a great many songs, and many of them are very beautiful. Few of them, however, are generally acknowledged as great (though the most famous of them all, *None but the Lonely Heart*, has at times approached pop song status) and only the most fervent Tchaikovskians would claim that he ranks as a songwriter with the likes of Schubert, Schumann, Wolf and Brahms. Of his 24 choral works, the most considerable is the *Liturgy of St John Chrysostom* of 1878, not least for its very moving simplicity. It's hard to believe that this and the *1812 Overture* came from the mind of the same man.

4 A Graded Listening Plan

Tchaikovsky is so popular that this might seem unnecessary if not downright irrelevant, but the fact is that many of his major works are relatively unknown to the general musical public. If you're coming to his music for the first time, or have only recently started to explore it, I'd recommend that you put the really big, serious works fairly far down on your list. For some reason, many pundits are curiously snooty about *The Nutcracker Suite*, but it made a delightful introduction for me, and I don't see why it shouldn't for you. In fact any of the three great ballets is a treasure trove of nicely self-contained and relatively brief pieces which are hard to resist, be they delightful, poignant, frightening, thrilling or downright magical, as in the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy from *The Nutcracker*. Then move on to *Romeo and Juliet*, Tchaikovsky's first irresistible masterpiece. You can dip into the songs at any time, and the four orchestral suites are unfailingly welcoming, though not generally giving us Tchaikovsky at his best. More immediately winning is the delightful *Capriccio Italien*. Despite its well-established popularity, the piece is still underrated in some quarters, and as well as being great fun, it's one of Tchaikovsky's most polished and sophisticated works, displaying a near-perfect balance of style, proportion and content. For a spectacular example of musical slumming, and as an introduction to Tchaikovsky at his bombastic best (or rather his best in bombast), you can turn to the almost shamefully enjoyable *1812 Overture*, despite his own description of it as artistically worthless. As you move into the larger works, try the Serenade for Strings as a starter, and then go on to the

two great concertos (my instinct is to try the Violin Concerto first, and then the First Piano Concerto, but you can just as fruitfully go the other way). To leaven the orchestral brew you could now switch over to chamber music, beginning with the string sextet *Souvenir de Florence*, and then trying the three string quartets (in the order 1, 3 and 5). Of the symphonies, the first three all have something to offer, but it's the last three that really count, and I'd recommend following Tchaikovsky's own sequence, starting with the Fourth and Fifth, but then turning to the unnumbered *Manfred* Symphony before moving on to the despairing Sixth. From now on, the Tchaikovskian world is your oyster and can be interestingly explored in any way you see fit.

5 Recommended Reading

Given his huge popularity and the fascination of his often-bizarre life, it's surprising how few currently extant books on Tchaikovsky are directed at the general reader. Edward Garden's *Tchaikovsky*, in the admirable 'Master Musicians' series [Oxford University Press, 2000, ISBN 0198164742], is mostly devoted to a discussion of the music, and while it does give one the bare bones of Tchaikovsky's life, there's frustratingly little exploration of the man behind it.

No more absorbing, authoritative, thought-provoking or well-written one-volume biography of Tchaikovsky has come my way than Alexander Poznansky's *Tchaikovsky: The Quest for the Inner Man* [Schirmer Books, 2000, ISBN 0825672325]. At over 650 pages, it justifies its bulk and the absence of musical pontification is a welcome bonus. As well as portraying the composer and his friends and contemporaries, the book gives a vivid picture of the times, places and cultural milieus in which he lived. No account of the composer's mysterious death is more exhaustively or knowledgeably researched or more fairly presented, except in the same author's *Tchaikovsky's Last Days: A Documentary Study* [Oxford University Press, 1996, ISBN 019816596X]. Poznansky is also a key contributor to a first-rate symposium, *Tchaikovsky and His World*, edited by Leslie Kearney [Princeton University Press, 1998, ISBN 0691004307]. Some of the essays are perhaps a little too technical and scholarly for the general reader, but the biographical sections are fascinating and very readably written. Poznansky again turns up trumps in *Tchaikovsky Through Others' Eyes* [Indiana University Press, ISBN 0253335450], an especially cherishable volume in

view of the inexplicable deletion of David Brown's excellent *Tchaikovsky Remembered* [Faber; Amadeus, 1994, ISBN 0931340659].

A similar but more wide-ranging anthology is *Tchaikovsky and His Contemporaries*, edited by Alexander Mihailovic [Greenwood Publishing Group, ISBN 031330825X]. Slighter, copiously illustrated and exclusively concerned with biography is Simon Mundy's very readable *Tchaikovsky*, in the 'Illustrated Lives' series published by the Omnibus Press [1998, ISBN 0711966516]. Also fascinating is *To My Best Friend: Correspondence Between Tchaikovsky and Nadezhda von Meck, 1876-1878* [Clarendon Press, 1993, ISBN 0198161581] edited by Nigel Gotteri, if only because you can't get the full measure of this unique love story without von Meck's contributions as well.

At the time of writing, that completes the list of recommended books about Tchaikovsky still in print, but the following are certainly worthwhile borrowing or ordering from your local library.

Readers who really want to get in deep should not be deterred by the bulk of David Brown's four-volume *Tchaikovsky: a biographical and critical study* [ISBN 0575024542] – a monumental achievement, well written and frequently absorbing. A more lightweight but highly readable undertaking is Alan Kendall's *Tchaikovsky: A Biography* [The Bodley Head, 1988, ISBN 0370310918], though its evident reliance on secondary sources precludes the stimulus of scholarly discovery or authoritative reassessment.

More recent, and considerably bulkier, but also written for the layman, is Anthony Holden's *Tchaikovsky: A Biography* [Bantam Press, ISBN 0593041607]. A good, efficient journalist's-eye view, it tells the story fairly but opts perhaps a little too easily for the 'Court of Honour' version of Tchaikovsky's death [see Spoken Text, p.175]. A more ambitious, and indeed compulsively absorbing, book is *Tchaikovsky: A Self-Portrait*, edited by Alexandra Orlova [Oxford University Press, 1990, ISBN 019315319X], a compendium of the composer's letters, diary entries etc. with brief linking passages by Orlova, which brings you as close to the man himself as it's possible to get, outside the music itself.

6 Personalities

Artôt, Marguerite Josephine Desirée (1835–1907), Belgian operatic mezzo-soprano singer, daughter of a professor of the horn at the Brussels Conservatoire, but born in Paris. Pupil of Pauline Viardot-Garcia, she first sang at concerts in Belgium, Holland and England, but joined the Paris Opera in 1858. Later appeared in Italy, Germany and Russia. Married the Spanish baritone Padilla in 1869.

Auer, Leopold (1845–1930), Hungarian violinist settled in Russia until the Revolution, when he went to the USA. A pupil of Joachim and professor of the St Petersburg Conservatoire from 1868, he was the teacher of many eminent violinists. The original dedicatee of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, he pronounced the work 'unplayable'.

Balakirev, Mily Alexeyevich (1836/7–1910), Russian nationalist composer, named by Glinka as his 'successor'. Self-taught, but a great inspirer of others. The most important members of his circle were Borodin, Cui, Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. Collectively they were known variously as 'The Mighty Handful' and 'The Five'.

Bessel Vassily Vassiliyevich (1843–1907), Russian music publisher, fellow student of Tchaikovsky in St Petersburg, where he founded a publishing firm in 1869.

Borodin, Alexander Porfirevich (1833–87), Professor of Chemistry and Russian nationalist composer, much influenced by Balakirev and one of ‘the Mighty Handful’. Among his chief works are the opera *Prince Igor*, three symphonies (one unfinished) and a dozen masterly songs.

Brodsky, Adolf (1851–1929), Russian violinist, pupil of Hellmesberger in Vienna; successively conductor at Kiev, professor at the Leipzig Conservatoire, leader of the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester and Principal of the Royal Manchester College of Music. Gave the first performance of Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto.

Bruch, Max (1838–1920), German composer, professor of composition in Berlin, 1892–1910. Best known for his Violin Concerto No. 1 and *Kol Nidrei*, for cello and orchestra.

Bülow, Hans von (1830–94), German pianist and conductor. His wife, Liszt’s daughter Cosima, left him for Wagner. He gave the first performance of Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1.

Cui, Cesar Antonovich (1835–1918), Russian composer, critic and authority on fortifications, of French descent and born in Poland. Studying military engineering in St Petersburg, he became intimate with Balakirev and was numbered among ‘the Mighty Handful’ chiefly because he supported its ideals by his writings. His compositions in the early days were thought highly of by Balakirev, who later revised his opinion of them.

Glinka, Michael Ivanovich (1803–57), Russian composer, often called the ‘father’ of Russian music. His only professional musical studies were with Dehn at Berlin in 1833. Most 19th-century Russian composers acknowledged their debt to him, and in the 20th century Stravinsky among others has done the same. Two of the most important facets of his influence are the nationalist tendencies in his two operas, *A Life for the Tsar* (1836) and *Ruslan and Ludmilla* (1842).

Hanslick, Eduard (1825–1904), music critic in Vienna, lecturer on musical history, he was a highly opinionated critic who ascribed to Tchaikovsky the discovery of music that “stinks to the ear”.

Jurgenson, Peter Ivanovich (1836–1903), started a publishing house in Moscow in 1861 with the help of Nikolai Rubinstein, whom he assisted in the foundation of the Moscow Conservatoire. Besides publishing Russian editions of standard classics, he issued much music by contemporary Russian composers, including most of Tchaikovsky’s.

Kashkin, Nicholas Dmitriyevich (1839–1920), Russian music critic and professor at the Moscow Conservatoire from its foundation in 1864 until 1896. Author of reminiscences of Tchaikovsky.

Kotek, Joseph Josephovich (1855–84), originally a pupil of Laub and Tchaikovsky, became resident violinist in Nadezhda von Meck’s household, and together with Nikolai Rubinstein, introduced his employer to Tchaikovsky’s music. He gave valuable technical advice to Tchaikovsky when he was composing his Violin Concerto.

Laroche, Herman Augustovich (1845–1904), Russian music critic, fellow-student of Tchaikovsky at the St Petersburg Conservatoire. Professor at the Moscow Conservatoire.

Laub, Ferdinand (1832–75), Czech violinist. He became principal violin professor at the Moscow Conservatoire in 1866.

Mussorgsky, Modest Petrovich (1839–81), Russian nationalist composer, pupil of Balakirev and one of the ‘the Mighty Handful’. Also much influenced by Dargomizhsky and to a certain extent by Meyerbeer. His finest works include the opera *Boris Godunov*, the original score of

which is startlingly innovatory and reveals more deeply than any other work the true nature of the Russian national consciousness as displayed in the folk idiom; the *Pictures from an Exhibition* for piano; some strikingly original songs, and the orchestral tour de force *Night on the Bare Mountain*. With the possible exception of Borodin, none of the members of Balakirev's circle really understood the importance of these compositions. Tchaikovsky was similarly sceptical.

Ostrovsky, Alexander Nicholayevich (1823–86), Russian dramatist, first practised as a lawyer and later became famous as author of many historical and sociological dramas.

Padilla y Ramas, Mariano (1824–1906), Spanish baritone singer, studied in Italy and toured Europe extensively. Married Desirée Artot in 1869.

Petipa, Marius (1819–1910), dancer and choreographer, born at Marseilles, made his debut at Rachel's benefit with Carlotta Cristi at the Comedies Francaise. Went to St Petersburg in 1847 and became ballet-master at the Maryinsky Theatre.

Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolai Andreyevich (1844–1908), Russian composer who began his career in the navy, but took to music after meeting Balakirev, whose circle he joined. Became professor of composition at the St Petersburg Conservatoire in 1871. A member of 'the Mighty Handful'. The transparency of his orchestration derives from Glinka and his late music influenced his pupil Stravinsky. He wrote many operas, of which the best known is *The Golden Cockerel*, and a number of brilliant orchestral works, as well as numerous miscellaneous compositions including some beautiful songs.

Rubinstein, Anton Grigorevich (1830–94), Russian pianist and composer, made public appearances from his ninth year and became one of the greatest pianists of his day. As a

composer, though immensely prolific he is now almost entirely forgotten. He founded the St Petersburg Conservatoire in 1862 and was Tchaikovsky's principal composition teacher.

Rubinstein, Nikolai (1835–81), Russian pianist and conductor, brother of Anton. Studied in Berlin, founded the Russian Musical Society at Moscow in 1859, and the Moscow Conservatory five years later. He befriended and championed Tchaikovsky, but dismissed his First Piano Concerto as 'unplayable', though he later became one of its most famous exponents.

Stassov, Vladimir Vassiliyevich (1824–1906), Russian critic and author, and champion of the nationalist school represented by 'the Mighty Handful', a term he himself coined in 1867. He had many ideas which he passed on to Balakirev, Mussorgsky, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov and Tchaikovsky about opera libretti, descriptive symphonic works or the use of folk-tunes. Balakirev's programme for Tchaikovsky's *Manfred* Symphony originated with Stassov, as did the programme for the symphonic fantasia *The Tempest*.

Taneyev, Sergei Ivanovich (1856–1915), Russian pianist and composer, student of Tchaikovsky at the Moscow Conservatoire, succeeding him there in 1878.

Zaremba, Nikolai Ivanovo (1821–79), professor of theory at the St Petersburg Conservatoire from its foundation in 1862, he taught harmony to Tchaikovsky.

7 A Calendar of Tchaikovsky's Life

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1840	0	Schumann's miraculous 'year of song'; receives honorary doctorate from the University of Jena and marries Clara Wieck despite strenuous objections of her father; Mendelssohn composes and conducts his <i>Lobgesang (Hymn of Praise)</i> ; Donizetti's <i>La fille du Régiment</i> staged in Paris; first harmonium constructed; births of Monet, Renoir and Rodin in France; Lermontov writes <i>The Demon</i> and <i>A Hero of our Times</i>
1841	1	Schumann completes his First Symphony ('The Spring'); Chopin composes his Fantasia in F minor, Op.49; Mendelssohn writes <i>Variations sérieuses</i> ; Wagner composes <i>The Flying Dutchman</i> ; Rossini's <i>Stabat Mater</i> premiered in Paris; saxophone invented; births of Chabrier and Dvorak; Dickens publishes <i>The Old Curiosity Shop</i> ; first edition of the humorous periodical <i>Punch</i> published in London

Historical Events

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert are married; Afghan War ends with surrender to British; Lower and Upper Canada united by Act of Parliament; end of transportation of English criminals to New South Wales; moves to limit hours of child labour in England and America; Darwin publishes his *Zoology of the Voyage of the Beagle*; invention of artificial agricultural fertilizers; first surviving photograph taken; Nelson's Column built in Trafalgar Square

British proclaim sovereignty over Hong Kong; New Zealand becomes British colony; Lajos Kossuth becomes nationalist leader in Hungary; American slaves revolt en route to Louisiana and sail to Nassau and freedom; founding of *The New York Tribune*; first university degrees granted to women in America; discovery of hypnosis; first popular book on astronomy for the layman published

Tchaikovsky's Life

Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky born, 25 April/7 May, at Votkinsk

Tchaikovsky's sister Alexandra (Sasha) born

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1842	2	Glinka follows success of <i>A Life for the Tsar</i> with second nationalist opera <i>Ruslan and Ludmilla</i> ; Schumann writes Piano Quintet and the lesser-known Piano Quartet; Mendelssohn completes <i>Scottish Symphony</i> and founds Leipzig Conservatory; Wagner's <i>Rienzi</i> staged in Dresden births of Boito and Massenet; New York Philharmonic founded
1843	3	Donizetti's <i>Don Pasquale</i> produced in Paris; Mendelssohn writes incidental music for Shakespeare's <i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> ; Schumann's secular oratorio <i>Das Paradies und die Peri</i> performed in Leipzig; Dickens writes <i>Martin Chuzzlewit</i> and <i>A Christmas Carol</i> ; William Wordsworth appointed Poet Laureate
1844	4	Schumann composes his <i>Scenes from Goethe's Faust</i> ; Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto in E minor; Chopin: Sonata in B minor, Op.58; Berlioz publishes his treatise on orchestration; Verdi: <i>Ernani</i> ; births of Rimsky-Korsakov and Sarasate; Dumas (père): <i>The Count of Monte Cristo</i>

Historical Events

Tchaikovsky's Life

Riots and strikes in northern England; Boers establish Orange Free State; Opium War between Britain and China ends with Treaty of Nanking; rail link built between Boston and Albany in USA; Queen Victoria makes her first rail journey from Windsor to Paddington; first use of ether for surgical anesthesia; the term 'dinosaur' coined in England

Military revolt in Spain; Maori revolt against Britain; Morse builds first telegraph system from Washington to Baltimore; first propeller-driven crossing of the Atlantic; world's first nightclub, *Le Bal des Anglais*, opened in Paris; advent of skiing as a sport; first tunnel under the Thames built

Treaty of Tangier ends French war in Morocco; military revolts in Mexico; birth of Nietzsche; USA-China peace treaty; weavers revolt in Silesia; YMCA founded in England; James Knox Polk elected President of the United States

Tchaikovsky starts regular, though not musical, lessons with his elder brother Nikolai's governess, Fanny Dürbach; his brother Hippolyte is born

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1845	5	Wagner's <i>Tannhäuser</i> performed at Dresden; Mendelssohn composes his Piano Trio in C minor; Schumann completes Piano Concerto in A minor; first artistic photographic portraits taken; births of Gabriel Fauré and Charles Marie Widor; Prosper Mérimée writes <i>Carmen</i> (on which Bizet's opera was to be based; Balzac begins <i>Les Paysans</i> ; Poe publishes <i>The Raven, and Other Poems</i>
1846	6	Mendelssohn's <i>Elijah</i> premiered at Birmingham Festival in England; Berlioz composes his dramatic oratorio <i>La Damnation de Faust</i> ; Schumann completes his Symphony No.2 in C; Lortzing's opera <i>Der Waffenschmied</i> produced in Vienna; electric arc lighting introduced at Paris Opéra; Balzac publishes <i>La Cousine Bette</i> ; Edward Lear produces his <i>Book of Nonsense</i>
1847	7	Mendelssohn dies at 38; Verdi's <i>Macbeth</i> produced in Florence; Schumann begins opera <i>Genoveva</i> and composes his piano trios; Flotow's opera <i>Martha</i> opens in Vienna; Charlotte Brontë writes <i>Jane Eyre</i> , Emily Brontë, <i>Wuthering Heights</i> ; William Makepeace Thackeray's <i>Vanity Fair</i> published; Heinrich Hoffmann, a doctor from Frankfurt, publishes his classic cautionary tale <i>Struwwelpeter</i>

Historical Events

Tchaikovsky's Life

Swiss Sonderbund for the protection of Catholics established; Maori uprising against British rule in New Zealand; new constitution drafted in Spain; Texas and Florida become states in the USA; future King Ludwig II of Bavaria born; Anglo-Sikh War breaks out; first submarine cable laid across English Channel; birth of Russian physiologist Ilya Ilich Mechnikov; USA Naval Academy established in Annapolis, Maryland; Friedrich Engels publishes *The Condition of the Working Class in England* in Leipzig; James K. Polk inaugurated as 11th President of the United States

Begins having piano lessons but soon overtakes his teacher

Russian and Austrian troops invade Krakow in Poland; Austria annexes Krakow; Louis Napoleon escapes to London; USA declares war on Mexico, invading Santa Fe and annexing New Mexico; First Sikh War in India ends with the Treaty of Lahore; Evangelical Alliance formed in London; Sewing machine patented by Elias Howe; famine in Ireland follows failure of potato crop; *The Daily News*, Britain's first cheap newspaper, launched with Charles Dickens as editor; Zeiss optical factory founded in Germany

USA captures Mexico City; Sonderbund War breaks out in Switzerland as Catholic cantons defend their union; Swiss railway opened between Zurich and Baden; first Roman Catholic working man's club established in Germany; British Factory Act sets ten-hour maximum on working day of women and children; Mormons found Salt Lake City in USA; discovery of evaporated milk

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1848	8	Schumann completes <i>Genoveva</i> , Op.81, begins incidental music for Byron's <i>Manfred</i> , and the <i>Album for the Young</i> ; Wagner composes <i>Lohengrin</i> ; Donizetti dies insane at 51; births of Duparc, Parry and Gauguin; founding of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; Grimm publishes his <i>History of the German Language</i> ; Alexandre Dumas (fils): <i>La Dame aux Camélias</i>
1849	9	Chopin dies at 39; Meyerbeer's <i>Le Prophète</i> produced at Paris Opéra; Otto Nicolai's opera <i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i> premiered in Vienna; Johann Strauss I dies at 45; Dickens publishes <i>David Copperfield</i> ; Edgar Allen Poe dies at 40
1850	10	Foundation of Bach-Gesellschaft to publish the complete works of J.S. Bach in 46 volumes (a project not completed until 1900); Schumann's <i>Genoveva</i> produced in Leipzig and is poorly received; composes Cello Concerto and many songs; death of Wordsworth; Alfred, Lord Tennyson succeeds him as Poet Laureate; Turgenev writes <i>A Month in the Country</i>
1851	11	Schumann completes Fourth Symphony and many songs; Verdi's <i>Rigoletto</i> staged in Venice; Gounod's <i>Sappho</i> produced in Paris; death of J.M.W. Turner; Herman Melville publishes <i>Moby Dick</i> ; Nathaniel Hawthorne: <i>House of the Seven Gables</i> ; John Ruskin: <i>The Stones of Venice</i>

Historical Events

Tchaikovsky's Life

Revolutions in Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Milan, Venice, Rome, Parma, Prague; serfdom abolished in Austria; Marx and Engels write *The Communist Manifesto*; Switzerland becomes federal union; Wisconsin becomes a state; Gold Rush in California; first convention for women's rights held in New York; first successful appendectomy performed; safety matches invented

British defeat Sikhs in India; Venice surrenders to Austria; Britain annexes Punjab; Livingstone crosses the Kalahari Desert; Fizeau measures the speed of light; Amelia Bloomer sets out to revolutionise women's dress

Liberal constitution drafted in Prussia; Anglo-Kaffir War erupts; Taiping Rebellion in China; Austro-Hungarian customs union founded; insurance for the aged established in France; Royal Meteorological Society founded in London; University of Sydney established in Australia; invention of the Bunsen Burner; first cast-iron railway bridge built in England

German Confederation recognised by Prussia; Cuba declares independence; coup d'état of Louis Napoleon; Great International Exhibition held in London; first double-decker bus; Singer patents his continuous-stitch sewing machine; first appearance of the *New York Times*; gold discovered in New South Wales, Australia

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1852	12	Schumann's <i>Manfred</i> performed in Leipzig; Irish composer-conductor Charles Villiers Stanford born; Dickens publishes <i>Bleak House</i> ; Alexandre Dumas (fils) bases play on his earlier <i>La Dame aux Camélias</i> ; Harriet Beecher Stowe writes American classic <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> ; Thackeray publishes his <i>History of Henry Esmond</i> ; Paddington Station in London designed by Brunel and Wyatt
1853	13	Brahms (20) publishes his three piano sonatas; Wagner (40) completes the text for his great tetralogy <i>The Ring of the Nibelungs</i> ; Verdi's <i>Il Trovatore</i> and <i>La Traviata</i> staged in Venice; founding of Steinway's piano firm in New York; Matthew Arnold publishes <i>The Scholar Gypsy</i> , Charlotte Brontë, <i>Villette</i> , and Nathaniel Hawthorne, <i>Tanglewood Tales</i>
1854	14	Schumann attempts suicide and is thereafter confined in Eendenich mental asylum; Brahms composes his <i>Four Ballades</i> , Op.10; and the first version of his Piano Trio in B minor, Op.8; Berlioz's <i>L'Enfance du Christ</i> performed in Paris; birth of German composer Engelbert Humperdinck; Tennyson writes <i>The Charge of the Light Brigade</i> ; Henry David Thoreau: <i>Walden</i>

Historical Events

Tchaikovsky's Life

Second Empire begins in France (to 1870); Louis Napoleon pronounces himself Emperor Napoleon III; Second Anglo-Burmese War breaks out; foundation of South African Republic; new constitution drafted for New Zealand; Duke of Wellington dies; Wells Fargo Company founded in USA; America imports sparrows from Germany as defence against caterpillars; first salt water aquarium opened in London

Crimean War begins; Anglo-Burmese War ends; Britain annexes Mahratta State of Nagpur in India; telegraph network established in India; first railroad through the Alps; invention of hypodermic syringe; German family magazine *Die Gartenlaube* founded in Leipzig; Samuel Colt revolutionizes the small arms business; largest tree in the world discovered in California

Siege of Sebastopol begins in Crimean War; first American-Japanese treaty; founding of Republican Party in USA; Pope Pius IX declares dogma of Immaculate Conception an article of faith; *Le Figaro* begins publication in Paris; Turin-Genoa railway opened; Heinrich Goebel invents first form of domestic electric light bulb

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1855	15	Berlioz's <i>Te Deum</i> performed in Paris, six years after it was written; Verdi's opera <i>Sicilian Vespers</i> produced in Paris; Wagner conducts a series of concerts in London; Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard dies aged 42; Charlotte Brontë dies at 39; Tennyson publishes <i>Maud</i> and other poems; Walt Whitman writes <i>Leaves of Grass</i> ; Longfellow writes <i>The Song of Hiawatha</i> ; Dickens starts serialisation of <i>Little Dorrit</i>
1856	16	Schumann dies insane at 46; Alexander Dargomijsky's opera <i>Russalka</i> produced in St Petersburg; Flaubert writes <i>Madame Bovary</i> ; births of George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde and Norwegian composer Christian Sinding; Carl Bechstein founds his piano factory; death of Heinrich Heine
1857	17	Charles Hallé founds the Hallé Concerts in Manchester, England; birth of Edward Elgar; Victoria and Albert Museum founded in London; death of Glinka at 54; Trollope publishes <i>Barchester Towers</i> ; Charles Baudelaire: <i>Les fleurs du mal</i> ; George Borrow: <i>Romany Rye</i> ; Joseph Conrad born

Historical Events

Tchaikovsky's Life

Accession of Tsar Nicholas II in Russia; Russians surrender at Sebastopol; end of Taiping rebellion in China; cholera outbreak leads to modernisation of London sewers; bubonic plague breaks out in China; invention of printing telegraph; first iron steamer crosses Atlantic; tungsten steel developed; World Fair held in Paris; *Daily Telegraph* begins publication in London

Austrian amnesty for Hungarian rebels of 1848; Britain establishes Natal as Crown Colony; Anglo-Chinese and Anglo-Persian wars begin; Britain grants self-government to Tasmania; invention of cocaine; Neanderthal skull found in cave near Düsseldorf; 'Big Ben' cast in London; Black Forest railway opens with 40 tunnels; longest bare-knuckle boxing match in history (6 hours 15 minutes)

End of Anglo-Persian war; Indian mutiny against British rule; siege of Delhi; Garibaldi forms National Association for the unification of Italy; Tsar Alexander II begins emancipation of serfs in Russia; foundation of Irish Republican Brotherhood; transatlantic cable laid; speculation in American railroad shares triggers economic crisis in Europe; invention of the passenger lift

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1858	18	Berlioz completes his epic opera <i>The Trojans</i> ; Offenbach's <i>Orpheus in the Underworld</i> produced in Paris; Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, opened in London; New York Symphony Orchestra gives its first concert; Puccini born; Wilhelm Busch creates <i>Max und Moritz</i>
1859	19	Verdi's <i>Un Ballo in Maschera</i> produced in Rome; Gounod's <i>Faust</i> staged in Paris; Brahms completes Piano Concerto No.1 in D minor and Piano Quartet No.1 in G minor; Dickens publishes <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> ; Tennyson writes <i>The Idylls of the King</i> ; George Eliot: <i>Adam Bede</i> ; Edward Fitzgerald translates <i>Rubáiyat of Omar Khayyám</i> ; births of Seurat and Arthur Conan Doyle (creator of Sherlock Holmes)
1860	20	Brahms writes String Sextet in B flat; Franz von Suppé writes first-ever Viennese operetta, <i>Das Pensionat</i> ; first modern Eisteddfod held in Wales; George Eliot writes <i>The Mill on the Floss</i> ; Alexander Ostrovski, <i>The Storm</i> ; Wilkie Collins, <i>The Woman in White</i> ; <i>Cornhill Magazine</i> founded in England under editorship of W.M. Thackeray; births of Mahler, Wolf, Paderewski, Chekhov and James M. Barrie (author of <i>Peter Pan</i>)

Historical Events**Tchaikovsky's Life**

Prince William of Prussia becomes regent for insane Frederick William IV; Anglo-Chinese War ends; Britain declares peace in India; Ottawa becomes Canadian capital; Suez Canal Company formed; first electrical lighthouses built; Minnesota becomes American state

Franco-Austrian War in Italy; German National Association formed, aimed at uniting Germany under Prussia; Bismarck becomes Prussian Ambassador to St Petersburg; Suez Canal begun; Charles Darwin publishes *On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection*; Anthropological Society founded in Paris; steamroller invented; Charles Blondin crosses Niagara Falls on a tightrope

Garibaldi takes Palermo and Naples and proclaims Victor Emmanuel II King of Italy; Abraham Lincoln elected President of the United States; South Carolina secedes from Union; Second Maori War breaks out in New Zealand; Lenoir constructs first practical internal combustion engine; first horse-drawn trams; British Open Golf Championships founded; advent of skiing as competitive sport

He graduates from the School of Jurisprudence and takes employment at the Ministry of Justice

He becomes regular visitor to opera, concerts and the theatre

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1861	21	Wagner's <i>Tannhäuser</i> causes scandal in Paris; Brahms writes <i>Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Handel</i> , Op.24; Royal Academy of Music founded in London; Dickens publishes <i>Great Expectations</i> , Dostoevsky <i>The House of the Dead</i> , George Eliot, <i>Silas Marner</i> , Vladimir Dahl, <i>Dictionary of the Living Russian Tongue</i> ; births of Nellie Melba, and Indian philosopher-poet Rabindranath Tagore; death of Elizabeth Barrett Browning
1862	22	Berlioz's <i>Béatrice et Bénédicte</i> staged in Baden-Baden; Verdi's <i>La Forza del Destino</i> premiered in St Petersburg; Ludwig Köchel begins his monumental <i>Catalogue of Mozart's Works</i> ; Turgenev: <i>Fathers and Sons</i> ; Flaubert publishes <i>Salammbó</i>
1863	23	Berlioz's <i>The Trojans at Carthage</i> and Bizet's <i>The Pearl Fishers</i> staged in Paris; Brahms appointed conductor of the Singakademie in Vienna; births of Pietro Mascagni (<i>Cavalleria Rusticana</i>) and the painter Lucien Pissarro; Manet paints <i>Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe</i> and <i>Olympia</i> ; deaths of Eugène Delacroix and W.M. Thackeray; University of Massachusetts founded in USA

Historical Events

Frederick William of Prussia succeeded by William I; emancipation of Russian serfs; start of American Civil War; Garibaldi triumphs at Gaeta; Italy declared a kingdom, with Victor Emmanuel II at its head; Polish demonstrators massacred by Russian forces in Warsaw; USA introduces passport system; Mrs Beeton publishes *Book of Household Management*; linoleum invented; daily weather forecasts established in Britain

Bismarck becomes Prime Minister of Prussia; Abraham Lincoln issues *Emancipation Proclamation*, freeing all American slaves; military revolt in Greece topples Otto I; Foucault measures speed of light; ten-barrel Gatling gun invented

French capture Mexico City and declare Archduke Maximilian of Austria emperor; Lincoln delivers Gettysburg Address; civil war breaks out in Afghanistan; first railroad in New Zealand opens; roller-skating introduced in America; Football Association established in London; construction of London Underground railway begun

Tchaikovsky's Life

First trips abroad; he visits Germany, Belgium, Paris and London; begins taking regular harmony lessons with Nikolai Zarembo while continuing his work at the Ministry of Justice

Although he retains his post at the Ministry, he enrolls in the newly established St Petersburg Conservatory and continues his studies with Zarembo

Resigns from the Ministry and begins composition studies with Anton Rubinstein; starts giving private lessons

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1864	24	Brahms composes Piano Quintet in F minor, Op.34; Bruckner writes his Symphony No.0; Offenbach's <i>La Belle Hélène</i> mounted in Paris; birth of Richard Strauss; Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft founded in Weimar; Dickens publishes <i>Our Mutual Friend</i> ; Tolstoy begins <i>War and Peace</i>
1865	25	Wagner's <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> staged in Munich; Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony premiéred 43 years after it was written; Meyerbeer's <i>L'Africaine</i> produced in Paris; Suppé's <i>Die Schöne Galathee</i> staged in Vienna; Brahms composes Horn Trio, Op.40; <i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</i> published; births of Dukas, Glazunov, Sibelius, Kipling, W.B. Yeats
1866	26	Smetana's opera <i>The Bartered Bride</i> staged in Prague; Offenbach's <i>La Vie Parisienne</i> and Ambroise Thomas's <i>Mignon</i> produced in Paris; Brahms composes <i>Variations on a Theme of Paganini</i> ; Dostoevsky publishes <i>Crime and Punishment</i> ; Degas begins painting his ballet scenes
1867	27	Verdi's <i>Don Carlos</i> , Bizet's <i>La Jolie Fille de Perth</i> and Offenbach's <i>La Grande-duchesse de Gérolstein</i> staged in Paris; Johann Strauss III writes <i>Blue Danube</i> Waltz; World's Fair in Paris introduces Japanese art to the West; Reclams Universal Bibliothek, first of all paperback book series, begins publication; Ibsen writes <i>Peer Gynt</i> ; Zola publishes <i>Thérèse Raquin</i>

Historical Events

Ludwig II crowned King of Bavaria; Karl Marx founds First International Working Man's Association; Denmark cedes Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenberg in Peace of Vienna; Geneva Convention establishes neutrality of battlefield medical facilities; Lincoln re-elected; Nevada becomes a state; *Neue Freie Presse* founded in Vienna

Lincoln assassinated; American Civil War ends; Bismarck and Napoleon III meet in Biarritz; first carpet sweeper comes into use; first railway sleeping cars; laying of transatlantic cable completed; founding of the Salvation Army; Mendel enunciates Law of Heredity; Massachusetts Institute of Technology founded in USA

Austro-Prussian War; Treaty of Vienna ends Austro-Italian War; Cretan rebellion against Turkish rule; 'Black Friday' on London stock exchange; dynamite and underwater torpedo invented; telegraph messages first sent over radio waves; Pierre Larousse publishes *Grand dictionnaire universel*

Karl Marx publishes Vol.1 of *Das Kapital*; Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy; Garibaldi begins march on Rome; USA purchases Alaska from Russia; Nebraska becomes a state in the USA; gold discovered in Wyoming; diamond fields discovered in South Africa; first bicycles manufactured; completion of railroad through Brenner Pass; invention of clinical thermometer

Tchaikovsky's Life

Continues studies at Conservatory and composes overture to Ostrovsky's drama *The Storm*

Makes his unofficial conducting debut, directing his Overture in F at the Conservatory; on graduating, he is offered a professorship in harmony at the newly opened Moscow Conservatory

He moves to Moscow; the composition of his First Symphony leads to a nervous breakdown

Begins his first opera, *The Voyevode*; composes his three-movement *Souvenir de Hapsal*, Op.2, for the piano; meets Berlioz and Balakirev; visits Finland

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1868	28	Wagner's <i>Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg</i> ; Brahms's <i>German Requiem</i> receives its first full performance; Mussorgsky begins <i>Boris Godunov</i> ; death of Rossini; French 'Impressionism' becomes a recognisable force in European art; Dostoevsky publishes <i>The Idiot</i> , Wilkie Collins, <i>The Moonstone</i> , Louisa May Alcott, <i>Little Women</i> ; birth of Maxim Gorky
1869	29	Wagner's <i>Das Rheingold</i> performed in Munich; Brahms publishes his <i>Liebeslieder Waltzes</i> ; death of Berlioz; Bruckner's <i>Mass in E minor</i> first performed; Flaubert publishes <i>L'Education sentimentale</i> , R.D. Blackmore, <i>Lorna Doone</i> , Mark Twain, <i>The Innocents Abroad</i> , Verlaine, <i>Fêtes galantes</i> , Matthew Arnold, <i>Culture and Anarchy</i>

Historical Events

Prussia confiscates territory of King of Hannover; Disraeli becomes Prime Minister of Britain, resigns and is succeeded by Gladstone; Shogunate abolished in Japan; impeachment of President Andrew Johnson in USA; skeleton of Cro-Magnon man found in France; invention of air brakes for steam locomotives; game of badminton invented

Ulysses S. Grant elected President of the USA; National Prohibition Party founded in Chicago; parliamentary system returns in France; Greece withdraws from Crete; Suez Canal opened; abolition of debtor's prisons in Britain; first postcards appear in Austria; Francis Galton publishes pioneering work on eugenics (the source of 'genetic engineering'); First Nihilist Convention organized in Switzerland

Tchaikovsky's Life

Balakirev invites him to visit St Petersburg, where he meets other members of 'The Mighty Handful'; visits Berlin and Paris; first rehearsals of *The Voyevode*; he announces his engagement to the singer Desirée Artôt; completes his Symphonic Fantasy *Fatum*

He seems secretly relieved by Artôt's sudden marriage to a Spanish baritone; *The Voyevode* is produced in Moscow; Balakirev conducts *Fatum*; composes his opera *Undine* and the Fantasy-Overture *Romeo and Juliet* (with much kibitzing from Balakirev); arranges 50 Russian folksongs for the piano

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1870	30	Wagner's <i>Die Walküre</i> produced in Munich; Brahms publishes <i>Alto Rhapsody</i> ; Delibes' ballet <i>Coppélia</i> staged in Paris; Russian novelist Ivan Goncherov publishes <i>The Precipice</i> ; Wagner marries Cosima von Bülow, daughter of Franz Liszt; Société Nationale de Musique founded in France; births of Russian poet Ivan Bunin and Charles Dickens born; Corot paints <i>La Perle</i> ; deaths of Alexandre Dumas père and Prosper Mérimée
1871	31	Verdi's <i>Aida</i> staged in Cairo; Brahms's <i>Schicksalslied</i> published; Saint-Saëns publishes his symphonic poem <i>Le Rouet d'Omphale</i> ; Royal Albert Hall opened in London; George Eliot publishes <i>Middlemarch</i> , Lewis Carroll, <i>Through the Looking Glass</i>
1872	32	Bizet writes incidental music to Alphonse Daudet's play <i>L'Arlésienne</i> ; Brahms appointed Artistic Director of Vienna's Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde; Franck publishes <i>Les Béatitudes</i> ; Nietzsche writes <i>The Birth of Tragedy</i> , Jules Verne, <i>Around the World in 80 Days</i>

Historical Events

Franco-Prussian War breaks out; revolt in Paris; proclamation there of Third Republic; Lenin born; Schliemann begins excavation of Troy; John D. Rockefeller founds Standard Oil Company in USA; Thomas Huxley publishes *Theory of Biogenesis*; doctrine of papal infallibility adopted at First Vatican Council

German Empire established under Wilhelm I; Paris Commune established; Jehovah's Witnesses founded; Pope granted possession of the Vatican by Italian Law of Guarantees; bank holidays established in Britain; Darwin publishes *The Descent of Man*; invention of the pneumatic drill; first large luxury liner launched; Great Fire of Chicago; Stanley meets Livingstone in Africa

League of Three Emperors established in Berlin; civil war in Spain; Jesuits expelled from Germany; Three-Emperors' League forms alliance of Germany, Russia and Hungary; former Confederates in American Civil War granted amnesty; Brooklyn Bridge opened in USA

Tchaikovsky's Life

Begins his opera *The Oprichnik*; Nikolai Rubinstein conducts *Romeo and Juliet* in Moscow; visits Mannheim, Wiesbaden and Paris; escapes to Switzerland with the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War; en route to Russia he visits Interlaken, Munich and Vienna; revises *Romeo and Juliet* as advised by Balakirev

Composes his First String Quartet, which is enthusiastically received; meets the writer Turgenev; spends summer holiday with his sister and her in-laws at Kamenka, where he is to spend much of his time over the next few years

Finishes *The Oprichnik* and composes his Second Symphony

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1873	33	Brahms publishes <i>Variations on a Theme of Haydn</i> ; Bruckner's Symphony No.2 performed in Vienna; Rimsky-Korsakov's opera <i>Ivan the Terrible</i> staged in St Petersburg; Carl Rosa Opera Company founded in England; births of Caruso, Chaliapin, Rachmaninov, Reger; John Stuart Mill's <i>Autobiography</i> published; Tolstoy begins <i>Anna Karenina</i>
1874	34	Verdi's <i>Requiem</i> performed in Milan; Mussorgsky's <i>Boris Godunov</i> produced in St Petersburg; Johann Strauss II writes <i>Die Fledermaus</i> ; Smetana completes his cycle of symphonic poems <i>Ma Vlast</i> ; Brahms's <i>Hungarian Dances</i> published; Paris Opéra completed; births of Schoenberg, Holst, Gertrude Stein and Robert Frost

Historical Events

Death of Napoleon III; Germans evacuate France after Franco-Prussian War; Germany adopts mark as unit of currency; financial panic in Vienna and New York; World Exhibition mounted in Vienna; the cities of Buda and Pest are merged to form capital of Hungary; famine in Bengal; first typewriters manufactured; early form of colour photography invented

Fiji Islands added to British Empire; first postal union established in Switzerland; pressure-cooking used for canning foods; first American zoo founded in Philadelphia; excavation of Olympia begun; civil marriage made compulsory in Germany; births of Churchill, Herbert Hoover, Weizmann, Marconi

Tchaikovsky's Life

Visits Germany, Switzerland and Italy; his Second Symphony is warmly received at its first performance; begins music for Ostrovsky's fairy tale *The Snow Maiden*; his Symphonic Fantasy *The Tempest*, derived from Shakespeare's play, is composed and performed

The Oprichnik is produced in St Petersburg; he composes his Second String Quartet, and another opera, *Vakula the Smith*; he visits Italy and composes his First Piano Concerto which is damned by its dedicatee Nikolai Rubinstein, but triumphantly unveiled by the great pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow in Boston, Massachusetts in the USA

Year **Tchaikovsky's Age**

Arts and Culture

1875	35	Birth of Ravel; death of Bizet at 36, not long after disastrous première of <i>Carmen</i> ; Bruckner composes his Third Symphony; Gilbert and Sullivan's first operetta produced in London: <i>Trial by Jury</i> ; Mark Twain publishes <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> ; births of Albert Schweitzer, Thomas Mann, Rainer Maria Rilke and John Buchan
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Historical Events

Bosnia and Herzegovina rebel against Turkish rule; rebellion in Cuba; Prince of Wales visits India; Public Health Act passed in Britain; religious orders abolished in Prussia; first swimming of English Channel; first roller-skating rink opened in London; Kwang Hsu becomes Emperor of China; Japanese law courts reformed; births of C.G. Jung, Thomas Mann, Rilke and Schweitzer

Tchaikovsky's Life

The ballet *Swan Lake* is commissioned; he composes his Third Symphony and takes well-earned pleasure in the great success of the First Piano Concerto on its first Russian performance in November, played not by Nikolai Rubinstein (who later ate his words and performed it widely) but Taneyev; meets Saint-Saëns in Moscow

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1876	36	Opening of Festspielhaus at Bayreuth with first complete performance of Wagner's <i>Ring</i> cycle; Brahms's First Symphony premiered at Karlsruhe; births of Manuel de Falla, Carl Ruggles, Pablo Casals and Bruno Walter; Mallarmé writes <i>L'Après-Midi d'un Faune</i> ; Henry James: <i>Roderick Hudson</i>

Historical Events

Serbia and Montenegro declare war on Turkey; new Ottoman constitution proclaimed; Korea becomes independent; invention of the telephone; World Exposition in Philadelphia, USA; founding of Deutsche Reichsbank in Germany; Schliemann excavates Mycenae; Johns Hopkins University established in Baltimore, USA; first Chinese railway completed

Tchaikovsky's Life

Third String Quartet composed; visits Vichy and Paris, where he is overwhelmed by the raw emotionalism of Bizet's opera *Carmen*; tormented by his 'secret' homosexuality, he makes the disastrous decision to marry; composes his near-hysterical Symphonic Fantasy *Francesca da Rimini*; his opera *Vakula the Smith* is produced in St Petersburg; begins his correspondence with the fabulously wealthy widow Nadezhda von Meck, who seeks to relieve him of financial worry – on the condition that they should never meet; *Rococo Variations* for cello and orchestra composed

Year **Tchaikovsky's Age**

Arts and Culture

1877	37	Brahms's Second Symphony composed; first publication of Mozart's complete works begun; birth of Ernst von Dohnányi; Saint-Saëns' <i>Samson et Dalila</i> composed; Rijksmuseum built in Amsterdam; Third Impressionist Exhibition mounted in Paris; birth of Raoul Dufy; Emile Zola publishes his <i>L'Assommoir</i> , Henry James, <i>The American</i>
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Historical Events

Russia declares war on Turkey and invades Rumania; crosses Danube and storms Kars; Bismarck refuses to intervene; Victoria proclaimed Empress of India; suppression of Satsuma rebellion in Japan; invention of the gramophone; first public telephones appear in USA; first All-England Tennis Championships held at Wimbledon; first observation of 'canals' on Mars

Tchaikovsky's Life

Swan Lake is produced; *Francesca da Rimini* performed in Moscow; he begins to compose an opera based on Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, which helps persuade him to marry an infatuated admirer, Antonina Milyukova; the marriage and its consequences plunge him into a depression which borders on insanity; leaves Russia for Switzerland, determined never to see his wife again. Nadezhda von Meck settles on him an annuity of 6,000 rubles, and their correspondence takes on an intimacy such as neither has ever known

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1878	38	George Grove begins his mammoth <i>Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> ; Gilbert and Sullivan: <i>H.M.S. Pinafore</i> ; Dvorak: <i>Slavonic Dances</i> ; William Morris publishes <i>The Decorative Arts</i> ; Thomas Hardy: <i>The Return of the Native</i> ; births of John Masefield, Carl Sandburg, Upton Sinclair
1879	39	Brahms's Violin Concerto premiered in Leipzig; Bruckner composes his String Quintet; Franck: Piano Quintet; Suppé: <i>Boccaccio</i> ; births of Frank Bridge, John Ireland, Ottorino Respighi and Siefried Karg-Elert; Henry James publishes <i>Daisy Miller</i> , Robert Louis Stevenson, <i>Travels with a Donkey</i>

Historical Events

Attempt to assassinate Emperor Wilhelm I of Germany; Anti-Socialist Law enacted in Germany; beginning of Irredentist agitation in Italy to obtain Trieste and South Tyrol from Austria; anti-Semitic movement formalized in Germany; invention of the microphone; first electric street lighting; World Exhibition mounted in Paris; repeater rifle invented

British-Zulu War in South Africa; British forces occupy Khyber Pass; Alsace-Lorraine declared an integral part of Germany; Anti-Jesuit laws introduced in France; first telephone exchange opened in London; public allowed unrestricted entry to British Museum; births of Stalin, Trotsky and Albert Einstein

Tchaikovsky's Life

Recovering his equilibrium, he completes *Eugene Onegin* and his Fourth Symphony (dedicated to Mme von Meck), composes his sunny Violin Concerto, and his overblown 'Grand' Sonata for the Piano, Op.37, and begins both his First Orchestral Suite and a new opera, *The Maid of Orleans*; after an absence of almost one year, he returns to his duties at the Moscow Conservatory, but finds it intolerable and resigns

A largely fallow year; begins Second Piano Concerto; attends student production of *Eugene Onegin* in Moscow; summer spent at Mme von Meck's estate at Brailov, her smaller house at Simaki; accidentally meets Mme von Meck, but they pass each other by without a word; departs for Italy in November

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1880	40	Brahms: <i>Academic Festival</i> and <i>Tragic Overtures</i> ; Bruckner: Fourth Symphony; Gilbert and Sullivan: <i>The Pirates of Penzance</i> ; Guildhall School of Music established in London; Philip Spitta publishes his monumental biography of Bach; Dostoevsky: <i>The Brother Karamazov</i> ; Zola: <i>Nana</i>
1881	41	Brahms: Piano Concerto No.2; Bruckner: Symphony No.6; Offenbach's <i>Tales of Hoffmann</i> produced in Paris; Fauré: <i>Ballade</i> ; birth of Bartók; death of Mussorgsky; Flaubert: <i>Bouvet et Pécuchet</i> ; Henry James: <i>Portrait of a Lady</i> ; D'Oyle Carte opera company builds the Savoy Theatre in London; birth of P.G. Wodehouse

Historical Events

Cape Parliament blocks moves toward federation in South Africa; Transvaal declares independence of Britain; France annexes Tahiti; Pasteur discovers cholera vaccine; game of bingo developed from Italian 'tombola'; electric lighting of New York's streets; advent of commercial tinned foods; World Exhibition in Melbourne, Australia

Britain recognizes independent Transvaal Republic; Austro-Serbian treaty of alliance; President James A. Garfield of the USA assassinated; political parties established in Japan; anti-Semitic pogroms in Russia; Canadian Pacific Railway Co. founded; flogging abolished in British armed forces; *Chat noir*, first of all cabarets, founded in Paris

Tchaikovsky's Life

In Rome, he begins work on the *Capriccio Italien*; his father dies in January, but Tchaikovsky seems little affected and doesn't return to Russia for the funeral; spring and summer again spent at Brailov, Simaki and Kamenka, where he composes his *Serenade for Strings* and the bombastic *1812 Overture*

The Maid of Orleans produced in St Petersburg; Nikolai Rubinstein dies, and the directorship of the Moscow Conservatory is offered to Tchaikovsky, who declines it; summer at Kamenka; visits Italy and meets Liszt; Adolf Brodsky premieres Violin Concerto in Vienna, where the critic Hanslick savages it as music that "stinks to the ear"

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1882	42	Berlin Philharmonic founded; Debussy: <i>Le Printemps</i> ; Wagner: <i>Parsifal</i> ; Rimsky-Korsakov's <i>The Snow Maiden</i> staged in St Petersburg; Gilbert and Sullivan: <i>Iolanthe</i> ; births of Stravinsky, Kodály, Szymanowski, Grainger; Robert Louis Stevenson: <i>Treasure Island</i> ; Ibsen: <i>An Enemy of the People</i> ; births of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf
1883	43	Death of Wagner; births of Webern, Varèse and Bax; Bruckner completes his Seventh Symphony; Delibes' <i>Lakmé</i> produced in Paris; Chabrier composes <i>España</i> ; Metropolitan Opera House opened in New York; Royal College of Music founded in London; Nietzsche writes <i>Also sprach Zarathustra</i>

Historical Events

British occupy Cairo; Irish republicans carry out terrorist murders; hypnosis first used to treat hysteria; Edison designs first hydroelectric plant; triple alliance between Austria, Germany and Italy; three-mile limit for territorial waters agreed at Hague Convention; Bank of Japan founded; invention of the recoil-operated machine gun; World Exhibition held in Moscow

French capture Tunis; Britain withdraws from Sudan; reform of Civil Service in USA; Bismarck introduces sickness benefit in Germany; 'Buffalo Bill' Cody founds his 'Wild West Show'; first skyscraper built in Chicago; World Exhibition in Amsterdam; maiden run of the Orient Express; death of Karl Marx

Tchaikovsky's Life

Once again, he composes very little, apart from the sprawling Piano Trio dedicated to the memory of Nikolai Rubinstein; first performances of the Serenade for Strings and the inferior Second Piano Concerto – as well as the *1812 Overture*, at the consecration of the Cathedral of the Redeemer in the Kremlin (!)

Another 'Pushkin' opera, *Mazeppa*, is completed, as is the Second Orchestral Suite, but otherwise another lean year; he visits Berlin and Paris, remaining abroad until the spring, when he returns to Russia; summer again spent at Kamenka with the Davidovs

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1884	44	Bruckner composes his <i>Te Deum</i> ; Massenet's <i>Manon</i> staged in Paris; Mahler composes <i>Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen</i> ; first edition of <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> ; Mark Twain publishes <i>Huckleberry Finn</i> , Alphonse Daudet, <i>Sappho</i> , Ibsen, <i>The Wild Duck</i> ; birth of Sean O'Casey
1885	45	Brahms's Fourth Symphony performed at Meiningen; Dvořák composes his D minor Symphony, Op.70; Johann Strauss's <i>The Gypsy Baron</i> produced in Vienna; Gilbert and Sullivan write <i>The Mikado</i> ; Franck: <i>Symphonic Variations</i> ; Richard Burton translates <i>Arabian Nights</i> ; Maupassant writes <i>Bel Ami</i> , Zola, <i>Germinal</i> ; births of D.H. Lawrence, Ezra Pound, Sinclair Lewis

Historical Events

Germans occupy south-west Africa; Berlin Conference of 14 nations on African affairs; London Convention on Transvaal; Gordon reaches Khartoum; divorce re-established in France; first *Oxford English Dictionary* published; first practical steam turbine engine invented; tetanus bacillus discovered in Germany; birth of Harry S. Truman

The Mahdi captures Khartoum; General Gordon killed; Britain withdraws from Sudan; Germany annexes Tanganyika and Zanzibar; Congo becomes official possession of Belgian king; Britain establishes protectorate over North Bechuanaland, Niger River region and New Guinea; Cape Railroad reaches Kimberley; Benz builds single-cylinder engine for motor car; individuality of finger-prints established; Eastman manufactures coated photographic paper

Tchaikovsky's Life

Command performance of *Eugene Onegin* at the Imperial Opera House in St Petersburg; *Mazeppa* produced in both St Petersburg and Moscow; Third Orchestral Suite composed

Styling himself a reformed 'sponger', he rents a house at Maidanovo near the city of Klin; the year is dominated by his composition of the *Manfred* Symphony, which brings him near to collapse, but he rallies and in September begins another opera, *The Sorceress*

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1886	46	Richard Strauss composes <i>Aus Italien</i> ; Dvořák completes his oratorio <i>St Ludmilla</i> for performance at Leeds Festival in England; invention of the celeste; Henry James: <i>The Bostonians</i> ; Rimbaud: <i>Les Illuminations</i> ; Stevenson: <i>Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> ; Ibsen: <i>Rosmersholm</i> ; Frances Hodgson Burnett: <i>Little Lord Fauntleroy</i>
1887	47	Death of Borodin; birth of Heitor Villa-Lobos; Bruckner composes his Symphony No.8; First performances of Verdi's <i>Otello</i> , Karl Goldmark's <i>Rustic Wedding</i> , Gilbert and Sullivan's <i>Ruddigore</i> and Richard Strauss's <i>Aus Italien</i> ; Van Gogh paints <i>Moulin de la Galette</i> ; birth of Russian painter Marc Chagall; Strindberg's <i>The Father</i> produced; Thomas Hardy writes <i>The Woodlanders</i>

Historical Events

Death of Ludwig II of Bavaria; Gladstone introduces Bill for Home Rule in Ireland; Bonaparte and Orléans families banished from France; First Indian National Congress held; British School of Archaeology founded in Athens; hydro-electric installations begun at Niagara Falls; American Federation of Labor formed; game of golf introduced in America; Pasteur Institute founded in Paris

Triple alliance of Germany, Austria and Italy renewed for 12 years; Pan-German League founded; Queen Victoria celebrates her Golden Jubilee; 'Bloody Sunday' in London; beginnings of wireless telegraphy; telephones introduced for general use in Austria; Zamenhof devises the international language Esperanto; Herz demonstrates radio waves; Berliner patents his gramophone

Tchaikovsky's Life

Following the first performance, in March, of the *Manfred* Symphony, Tchaikovsky spends the spring and early summer in Paris, where he meets Fauré, Delibes, Lalo and Ambroise Thomas; returns to Maidanovo in late June

Reluctantly at first, Tchaikovsky embarks on a conducting career, with performances of his own works in St Petersburg and Moscow; he composes, or rather arranges, his Fourth Orchestral Suite *Mozartiana*; in St Petersburg, *The Sorceress* is poorly received

Year	Tchaikovsky's Age	Arts and Culture
1888	48	Death of Eduard Marxsen; birth of Irving Berlin; Erik Satie composes his <i>Gymnopédies</i> ; Rimsky-Korsakov: <i>Sheherezade</i> ; César Franck: Symphony in D minor; Gustav Mahler becomes musical director of Budapest opera; Gilbert and Sullivan's <i>Yeoman of the Guard</i> staged in London; Van Gogh paints <i>The Yellow Chair</i> ; Toulouse-Lautrec paints <i>Place Clichy</i>
1889	49	César Franck composes Symphony in D minor; Richard Strauss, <i>Don Juan</i> ; Gilbert and Sullivan's <i>The Gondoliers</i> produced in London; Dvořák writes his Eighth Symphony, Mahler his Third; Van Gogh paints <i>Landscape with Cypress Tree</i> ; Alexander Gustave Eiffel designs the Eiffel Tower; André Gide begins his <i>Journal</i> ; Mark Twain writes <i>A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court</i> ; Jerome K. Jerome writes <i>Three Men in a Boat</i> ; Anatole France publishes <i>Thais</i> ; death of English poet Robert Browning

Historical Events

Death of Emperor William I at the age of 91; Hamburg and Bremen join customs union with German Empire; Germany and Britain agree on Cameroons; Diesel patents his internal-combustion engine; first automatic telephone switchboard; aeronautical exhibition in Vienna; Suez Canal convention mounted

Suicide of Austrian Crown Prince, the Archduke Rudolf, at his hunting lodge at Mayerling; Milan Obrenovich abdicates Serbian throne in favour of his son; major dock strike at London; birth of Adolf Hitler; Benjamin Harrison inaugurated as 23rd President of the United States; Washington, Montana and the Dakotas become states of the USA; first May Day celebrations take place in Paris; London County Council formed

Tchaikovsky's Life

The year is dominated by highly successful conducting engagements in Leipzig (where he meets Brahms), Hamburg, Berlin, Prague (where he meets Dvořák), Paris and London. On returning to Russia in the spring, he buys a house of his own at Frolovskoye, where he completes his Fifth Symphony in August, and composes his fantasy-overture *Hamlet*

Further conducting tours only add lustre to his name, as he directs highly successful concerts in Cologne, Frankfurt, Dresden, Geneva, Hamburg, Paris and London; at Frolovskoye for the summer, he composes his ballet *The Sleeping Beauty*

Year **Tchaikovsky's Age**

Arts and Culture

1890	50	Borodin's <i>Prince Igor</i> completed by Rimsky-Korsakov and posthumously produced; Mascagni writes <i>Cavalleria Rusticana</i> ; Richard Strauss composes <i>Tod und Verklärung</i> , and Hugo Wolf his <i>Spanisches Liederbuch</i> ; births of Jacques Ibert and Frank Martin; deaths of César Franck and Vincent Van Gogh; Ibsen writes <i>Hedda Gabler</i> , Tolstoy <i>The Kreutzer Sonata</i> , Wilde <i>The Portrait of Dorian Gray</i> ; first moving-picture house established in New York
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Historical Events

Anglo-German treaty seeks to resolve colonial conflicts; anti-Socialist legislation expires in Germany; William II of Germany refuses to sanction Bismarck's repressive policies; world's first entirely steel-framed building erected in Chicago; first orchestral recordings come onto the market; William II of Germany and Tsar Alexander III meet at Narva

Tchaikovsky's Life

First production of *The Sleeping Beauty* in St Petersburg; Tchaikovsky goes to Italy, where he composes yet a third 'Pushkin' opera, *The Queen of Spades*; back at Frolovskoye in June, he composes the *Souvenir de Florence*; Mme von Meck abruptly terminates both Tchaikovsky's annuity and their correspondence, dealing him a blow from which he never altogether recovers; his mood is reflected in the dark symphonic ballad *The Voyevode* (unrelated to the earlier opera of the same name); the year ends with the brilliant success of *The Queen of Spades* in St Petersburg

Year **Tchaikovsky's Age**

Arts and Culture

1891	51	Birth of Prokofiev; death of Delibes; Fauré writes song cycle <i>La Bonne Chanson</i> ; Rachmaninov composes First Piano Concerto, Wolf, <i>Italienisches Liederbuch</i> ; Mahler completes First Symphony; Thomas Hardy writes <i>Tess of the d'Urbervilles</i> ; Sir Arthur Conan Doyle publishes <i>The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes</i> ; Kipling writes <i>The Light that Failed</i> ; deaths of Arthur Rimbaud and Herman Melville
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Historical Events

Widespread famine devastates Russia; Franco-Russian entente reached; construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway begun; Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria and Italy renewed for 12 years; William II of Germany visits London; suicide of General Boulanger in France; formation in Geneva of the Young Turk Movement; earthquake in Japan kills 10,000; invention of the zipper in the USA

Tchaikovsky's Life

Following the success of *The Queen of Spades*, the St Petersburg Opera commission a ballet (*The Nutcracker*) and a one-act opera (*Iolanta*); Tchaikovsky visits Paris en route to the USA for a major conducting tour which includes the inaugural concert at New York's Carnegie Hall; on the eve of his departure, he learns of the death of his sister Alexandra; in America he conducts concerts in New York, Baltimore and Philadelphia; visits Niagara Falls; his Symphonic Ballad *The Voyevode* is performed in Moscow

Year **Tchaikovsky's Age**

Arts and Culture

1892	52	Births of Darius Milhaud and Arthur Honegger; Dvořák composes <i>Te Deum</i> ; Leoncavallo writes <i>I Pagliacci</i> ; Massenet, <i>Werther</i> ; Nielsen writes his First Symphony, Rachmaninov the wildly popular <i>Prelude in C sharp minor</i> ; Sibelius composes <i>Kullervo</i> ; Toulouse-Lautrec paints <i>At the Moulin Rouge</i> ; Monet begins his series of pictures of Rouen Cathedral; Maeterlinck writes his drama <i>Pelléas et Mélisande</i> (later to become the basis of Debussy's only opera)
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Historical Events

Gladstone becomes Prime Minister of Britain; Witte appointed Minister of Finance in Russia; Giolitti becomes Premier of Italy, Prince Ito of Japan; Pan-Slav Conference held in Krakow, Poland; in Britain, Keir Hardie becomes first Labour member of parliament; Grover Cleveland is elected President of USA; iron and steel workers strike in USA; first tinned pineapples appear on the market

Tchaikovsky's Life

Gustav Mahler conducts *Eugene Onegin* in Hamburg; Tchaikovsky visits Vienna, Salzburg and Prague; meets Fanny Dürbach, his childhood governess, in Switzerland; *The Nutcracker Suite* is performed in St Petersburg, nine months prior to the first production of the ballet itself in St Petersburg; moves house yet again, this time at Klin; *Iolanta* and *The Nutcracker* both produced in St Petersburg

Year **Tchaikovsky's Age**

Arts and Culture

1893	53	A rich year for opera: Verdi's <i>Falstaff</i> , Puccini's <i>Manon Lescaut</i> , Humperdinck's <i>Hansel and Gretel</i> composed; Dvořák writes his 'New World' Symphony, Sibelius the <i>Karelia Suite</i> ; death of Gounod; birth of Cole Porter; Debussy writes his String Quartet; 'Art Nouveau' style begins in Paris; Anatole France writes <i>La Rotisserie de la Reine</i> , Oscar Wilde <i>A Woman of No Importance</i> ; death of Guy de Maupassant
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Historical Events

Franco-Russian alliance signed; Second Irish Home Rule Bill is passed by the House of Commons in London, but defeated in the Lords; Independent Labour Party formed at conference in Bradford, England; Hawaii proclaimed a republic; in Germany, Karl Benz makes his four-wheel car; first Ford car built in America; completion of Manchester Ship Canal in Britain; Corinth Canal opened in Greece; longest ever boxing match in New Orleans, USA, running to 110 rounds in seven hours and four minutes

Tchaikovsky's Life

Concerts in Brussels and Odessa; on his return to Klin, Tchaikovsky begins work on his Sixth Symphony (*Pathétique*); he conducts concerts in London and is given an honorary doctorate at Cambridge University, along with Saint-Saëns, Bruch and Grieg; in St Petersburg, he conducts the first performance of the Sixth Symphony; he dies, in still mysterious circumstances, in St Petersburg

8 Glossary

accelerando	getting faster
accidental	a flat, sharp or 'natural' not present in the prevailing scale
adagio	slow
agitato	turbulent, agitated
Alberti bass	a stylized accompaniment popular in the later 18th-century, it is based on the triad, 'spelled out' in the order bottom-top-middle-top (as in C-G-E-G etc.)
allegretto	moderately fast, generally rather slower than allegro
allegro	fast, but not excessively
allemande	traditionally the first movement of a Baroque suite – a dignified dance in 4/4 time, generally at a moderate tempo
alto	the second-highest voice in a choir
andante	slowish, at a moderate walking pace
aria	solo song (also called 'air'), generally as part of an opera or oratorio
arpeggio	a chord spelled out, one note at a time, either from bottom to top or vice versa (C-E-G-C; F-A-C-F etc.)
articulation	the joining together or separation of notes, to form specific groups of notes; when notes are separated, that is to say when slivers of silence

	appear between them, the effect is often of the intake of breath, and like the intake of breath before speech it heightens anticipation of what is to follow; when they are joined together, the effect is of words spoken in the expenditure of a single breath; see also 'legato' and 'staccato'
augmentation	the expansion of note-values, generally to twice their original length
bar, measure	the division of metre into regular successive units, marked off on the page by vertical lines; thus in a triple metre (the grouping of music into units of three, as in 3/4, 3/8 etc.), the three main beats will always be accommodated in the space between two vertical lines
bass	the lowest, deepest part of the musical texture
beat	the unit of pulse (the underlying 'throb' of the music)
binary	a simple two-part form (A:B), Part 1 generally moving from the tonic (home key) to the dominant (secondary key), Part 2 moving from the dominant back to the tonic
cadence	a coming to rest on a particular note or key, as in the standard 'Amen' at the end of a hymn
cadenza	a relatively brief, often showy solo of improvisatory character in the context of a concerto, operatic aria or other orchestral form. In concertos, it usually heralds the orchestral close to a movement, generally the first
canon	an imitative device like the common round (<i>Frère Jacques</i> , <i>Three Blind Mice</i> , <i>London's Burning</i>) in which the same tune comes in at staggered intervals of time
cantabile	song-like, singingly
cantata	a work in several movements for accompanied voice or voices (from the Latin <i>cantare</i> , to sing)
chorale	a generally simple (and usually Protestant) congregational hymn; almost

	all of Bach's many cantatas end with a chorale; chorales are also frequently used as a basis for instrumental variations
chord	any simultaneous combination of three or more notes based on a triad; chords are analogous to words, just as the notes which make them up are analogous to letters
chromatic	notes (and the using of notes) which are not contained in the standard 'diatonic' scales which form the basis of most western music; in the scale of C major (which uses only the white keys of the piano), every black key is 'chromatic'
clef	a symbol which indicates the positioning of notes on the staff; thus the C clef shows the placement of Middle C, the G clef (better known as 'treble clef') the location of G above middle C, and the F clef (bass) the positioning of F below middle C
coda	an extra section following the expected close of a work or movement by way of a final flourish
codetta	a small coda
concerto grosso	a popular Baroque form based on the alternation of orchestra (known in this context as the <i>ripieno</i> or <i>concerto</i>) and a small group of 'soloists' (<i>concertino</i>); the most famous examples are Bach's six <i>Brandenburg Concertos</i>
concerto	a work for solo instrument and orchestra, generally in three movements (fast-slow-fast)
continuo	a form of accompaniment in the 17th and 18th centuries, in which a keyboard instrument, usually a harpsichord, harmonizes the bass line played by the cello
contrapuntal	see 'counterpoint'

counterpoint	the interweaving of separate 'horizontal' melodic lines, as opposed to the accompaniment of a top-line ('horizontal') melody by a series of 'vertical' chords
counter-tenor	a male alto, using a falsetto voice which seldom bears any resemblance to the singer's speaking voice
crescendo	getting louder
cross-rhythms	see 'polyrhythm'
decrescendo	see 'diminuendo'
diminuendo	getting softer
development section	the middle section in a sonata form, normally characterized by movement through several keys
diatonic	using only the scale-steps of the prevailing key notes of the regular scale
diminution	the contraction of note-values, normally to half their original length
dotted rhythm	a 'jagged' pattern of sharply distinguished longer and shorter notes, the long, accented note being followed by a short, unaccented one, or the other way around. Examples are the openings of the <i>Marseillaise</i> and <i>The Star-Spangled Banner</i> ; better still, <i>The Battle Hymn of the Republic</i> : 'Mine eyes have seen the glo-ry of the com-ing of the Lord'
double-stopping	the playing of two notes simultaneously on a stringed instrument
duple rhythm	any rhythm based on units of two beats, or multiples thereof
dynamics	the gradations of softness and loudness, and the terms which indicate them (pianissimo, fortissimo etc.)
exposition	the first section in sonata form, in which the main themes and their relationships are first presented ('exposed')
fantasy, fantasia	a free form, often of an improvisatory nature, following the composer's fancy rather than any preordained structures. But there are some

	Fantasies, like Schubert's <i>Wanderer Fantasy</i> and Schumann's <i>Fantasia in C</i> for the piano, which are tightly integrated works incorporating fully-fledged sonata forms, scherzos, fugues etc.
finale	a generic term for 'last movement'
flat	a note lowered by a semitone from its 'natural' position, i.e. to its nearest lower neighbour
forte, fortissimo	loud, very loud
glissando	literally, 'gliding'; a sliding between any two notes, producing something of a 'siren' effect
Gregorian chant	see 'plainchant'
ground bass	a short bass pattern repeated throughout a section or entire piece; a famous example is 'Dido's Lament' from Purcell's <i>Dido and Aeneas</i>
harmony, harmonic	the simultaneous sounding of notes to make a chord; harmonies (chords) often serve as expressive or atmospheric 'adjectives', describing or giving added meaning to the notes of a melody, which, in turn, might be likened to nouns and verbs
harmonics	comparable to the falsetto voice of the male alto, or counter-tenor, the term refers to the production on an instrument, generally a stringed instrument, of pitches far above its natural compass. Thus the naturally baritone cello can play in the same register as a violin, though the character of the sound is very different
homophony	when all parts move at once, giving the effect of a melody (the successive top notes) accompanied by chords
interval	the distance in pitch between two notes, heard either simultaneously or successively; the sounding of the first two notes of a scale is therefore described as a major or minor 'second', the sounding of the first and third

	notes a major or minor third, etc.
key	until the 'modernism' of the century, all so-called 'classical' music, in the western tradition, was based (as most still is) on a particular scale, major or minor, which gives its name to the work or passage in question. Thus, a piece or passage based on the C major scale is said to be 'in the key of C major', a piece or passage based on the C minor scale is said to be 'in the key of C minor', and so on. The foundation tone (the 'keynote' or 'tonic') might be compared to the sun, and the remaining notes to planets in orbit around it
largo	slow, broad, serious
legato	smooth, connected, the sound of one note 'touching' the sound of the next; as though in one breath
major	see 'modes'
measure	see 'bar'
metre, metrical	the grouping together of beats in recurrent units of two, three, four, six, etc.; metre is the pulse of music
minor	see 'modes'
modes	the names given to the particular arrangement of notes within a scale; every key in western classical music has two versions, the major and the minor mode; the decisive factor is the size of the interval between the key note (the tonic, the foundation on which scales are built) and the third degree of the scale; if it is compounded of two whole tones (as in C–E [C–D / D–E]), the mode is major; if the third tone is made up of one and a half tones (C to E flat), the mode is minor; in general, the minor mode is darker, more 'serious', more moody, more obviously dramatic than the major; the so-called Church modes prevalent in the Middle Ages are made

	up of various combinations of major and minor and are less dynamically 'directed' in character; these appear only rarely in music since the Baroque (c. 1600–1750) and have generally been used by composers to create some kind of archaic effect
modulate, modulation	the movement from one key to another, generally involving at least one pivotal chord common to both keys
motif, motive	a kind of musical acorn; a melodic/rhythmical figure too brief to constitute a proper theme, but one on which themes are built; a perfect example is the beginning of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony: ta-ta-ta <i>dah</i> ; ta-ta-ta <i>dah</i>
natural	indicates a note that is neither 'sharpened' nor 'flattened'. As a notational sign next to a note, it in effect cancels the sharp or flat that would normally affect it
nocturne	'invented' by the Irish composer John Field and exalted by Chopin; a simple ternary (A-B-A) form, its outer sections consist of a long-spun melody of a generally 'dreamy' sort, supported by a flowing, arpeggio-based accompaniment; the middle section, in some ways analogous to the development in a sonata form, is normally more turbulent and harmonically unstable
octave	the simultaneous sounding of any note with its nearest namesake, up or down (C to C, F to F etc.); the effect is an enrichment, through increased mass and variety of pitch, of either note as sounded by itself
oratorio	an extended choral/orchestral setting of religious texts in a dramatic and semi-operatic fashion; the most famous example is Handel's <i>Messiah</i>
ostinato	an obsessively repeated rhythm or other musical figure
pedal point	the sustaining of a single note (normally the bass) while other parts move

	above and around it
pentatonic	based on a five-note, whole-tone scale, as in the music of the Orient (analogous to the black keys of the piano)
phrase	a smallish group of notes (generally accommodated by the exhalation of a single breath) which form a unit of melody, as in 'God save our Gracious Queen,' and 'My Country, 'tis of thee'
phrasing	the apportionment of the above
piano, pianissimo	soft, very soft
pizzicato	plucked strings
plainchant, plainsong	also known as Gregorian chant; a type of unaccompanied singing using one of the Church modes and sung in a 'free' rhythm dictated by the natural rhythm of the words
polyphony	music with interweaving parts
polyrhythm	a combination comprising strikingly different rhythms, often of two or more different metres
prelude	literally, a piece which precedes and introduces another piece (as in the standard prelude and fugue); however, the name has been applied (most famously by Bach, Chopin and Debussy) to describe free-standing short pieces, often of a semi-improvisatory nature
presto	very fast
recapitulation	the third and final section in sonata form, essentially a repeat of the exposition but without the contrast of two keys
recitative	especially characteristic of the eighteenth century in an oratorio or opera; it is a short narrative section normally sung by a solo voice accompanied by continuo chords, usually preceding an aria; the rhythm is in a free

	style, based on the natural rhythm of the spoken word
resolution	when a suspension or dissonance comes to rest
rest	a measured 'silence' (or to be more accurate, a suspension of sound) in an instrumental or vocal part
rhapsody	the name given to a number of highly disparate works in the 19th and 20th centuries comprising a single movement of a generally Romantic and mostly virtuosic character; the best-known examples are Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies and Gershwin's <i>Rhapsody in Blue</i>
rhythm	that aspect of music concerned with duration and accent; notes may be of many contrasting lengths and derive much of their character and definition from patterns of accentuation and emphasis determined by the composer
ripieno (concerto)	the orchestral part in a concerto grosso
ritardando, ritenuto	getting slower
ritornello	a theme or section for orchestra recurring in different keys between solo passages in an aria or concerto
scale	from the Italian word <i>scala</i> ('ladder'). A series of adjacent, 'stepwise' notes (A-B-C-D-E-F etc.), moving up or down; these 'ladders' provide the basic cast of characters from which melodies are made and keys established
sharp	a note raised by a semitone from its 'natural' position, i.e. to its nearest upper neighbour
sotto voce	quiet, as though in a whisper
staccato	separated, the opposite of legato
syncopation	accents falling on irregular beats, generally giving a 'swinging' feel as in much of jazz

tempo	the speed of the music
tonality	the phenomenon of 'key' (see entry above)
tone colour, timbre	that property of sound which distinguishes a horn from a piano, a violin from a xylophone, etc.
tonic	the foundation tone, or 'keynote' of a scale or key (see 'key' above)
tremolo	Italian term for 'trembling', 'shaking'; a rapid reiteration of a single note through back-and-forth movements of the bow; equally, the rapid and repeated alternation of two notes
triad	a three-note chord, especially those including the root, third and fifth of a scale (C-E-G, A-C-E etc.) in any order
triplets	in duple metre, a grouping (or groupings) of three notes in the space of two (as in 'One-two/Buckle-my-shoe')
una corda	literally, 'one string'; using the soft pedal on the piano
unison	the simultaneous sounding of a single note by more than one singer or player, as in the congregational singing of a hymn
vibrato	a rapid, regular fluctuation in pitch, giving the note a 'throbbing' effect
variation	any decorative or otherwise purposeful alteration of a note, rhythm, timbre, etc.
vivace, vivacissimo	fast and lively, extremely fast and lively
vocalise	a wordless piece for solo voice; the most famous example is Rachmaninov's
whole-tone	an interval comprising two semitones, as in C–D on the piano; much of the music of the Orient, as well as of numerous folk cultures around the world, is built on whole-tone scales (see 'pentatonic' above)

9 Discography

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