

TCHAIKOVSKY EDITION *Liner notes and sung texts*

Liner notes

A RICH, HUMANE LEGACY: THE MUSIC OF PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

As Julian Barnes so elegantly demonstrated in his novel *Flaubert's Parrot*, you can provide a number of selective, conflicting biographies around a great creative artist's life, and any one of them will be true. By those standards, one could counter Harold C. Schonberg's thumbnail sketch of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky as 'a nervous, hypochondriacal, unhappy man – unhappy at home, unhappy away from home', with a portrait of the composer as an older man: confident, healthy, a keen traveller, a generous spirit who had come to terms with his demons even if they occasionally popped up to haunt him, and a lover of the Russian landscape who was very much at peace with the natural beauty of the country surroundings he had chosen as his dwelling.

Neither image is, of course, the whole story, and it is only slowly that the public is learning, thanks to a wider retrospective on Tchaikovsky's genius in the round, to balance the tabloidised first portrait with the less sensationalised second. Perhaps it was his friend, the critic Herman Laroche, who summed up most eloquently shortly after the premiere of his most comprehensive good-and-evil score, *Sleeping Beauty*:

An elegist by nature, inclined to melancholy, and even a certain despair, he has shown in those kinds of composition officially labelled 'serious' a seriousness of another kind, a seriousness of thought, a frequent sadness and melancholy, not infrequently a nagging feeling of spiritual pain, and this, if one may so express it, minor [key] part of his being ... has been more grasped and understood. But alongside this there is another Tchaikovsky: nice, happy, brimming with health, inclined to humour.

So there are two lines in his music. One runs from the doom-laden 1864 overture to Alexander Ostrovsky's *The Storm*, a tale of persecution-mania better known to us through Janáček's operatic incarnation of its heroine Katya Kabanova, to the 'Pathétique' Symphony and the very last song of 1893, 'Again, as before, alone'. The other takes us from the early miniatures and nationalist flourishing to the exquisite delight of *The Nutcracker* in 1891 and the 18 piano pieces of the final year.

There is also the necessary counterbalance that so many Romantic masters found healing: the refuge of Mozart's genius. As a child raised in Votkinsk, 600 miles east of Moscow, but regularly taken to see operas in St Petersburg, where he was soon to settle, Tchaikovsky found that *Don Giovanni* 'was the first music to have a really shattering effect on me'. In fact it was the prettier side of this multifarious masterpiece which he initially encountered – Zerlina's 'Batti, batti' and 'Vedrai, carino' mechanically reproduced on the home orchestrion, a kind of portable organ which also played Bellini, Donizetti and Rossini. But Mozart was the one he loved, and it was to the brighter side

of Mozart's spirit that he later paid homage in so many works which turned out to be neo-Classical *avant la lettre*.

Even this is to limit the sheer encyclopaedic breadth of Tchaikovsky's composing genius. He wrote in every medium conceivable at the time, and if not every opus can possibly be at his highest level of inspiration, there are masterpieces in each genre: opera, song, symphonic music, occasion-pieces (which includes the '1812 Overture' – much-maligned, but does what it says on the tin), chamber works and choral settings of the Russian Orthodox service, which it was then regarded as pioneering to even attempt to promote.

His first fully fledged steps in composition contradict one perceived dichotomy: between his association with the Germanically motivated founder-brothers of Russia's two academic institutions – the St Petersburg Conservatoire founded by Anton Rubinstein in 1862, and its Moscow counterpart instigated four years later by sibling Nikolai – and the antagonistic nationalists or 'free school' of Russian music under Mily Balakirev. It was as if Tchaikovsky, one of the first Russian musicians to gain a formal education at the St Petersburg institution once he had decided he was not cut out to be the civil servant of his initial training, was destined forever to have 'westerniser' branded on his forehead while the members of the circle gathered around Balakirev and known as the 'mighty little heap' (*moguchaya kuchka*) – Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky, Borodin and Cesar Cui – remained the torchbearers of the Slavic tradition.

Tchaikovsky himself eloquently tried to clear up the journalistic black and white in this perception as late as 1892, when Rimsky-Korsakov remained the only supposed 'competition', along with a younger generation which included Glazunov and Lyadov:

According to the accepted view of the Russian musical public, I belong to that party which is hostile to the Russian composer whom I love and admire more than any other, Rimsky-Korsakov. He is the finest ornament of the 'New Russian School', but I belong to the old, retrograde school. Why? Rimsky-Korsakov has been subject to the influences of his time to a greater or lesser extent, and so have I ... In short, despite all the differences of our musical natures, we are, it would seem, travelling along the same road; and, for my part, I am proud to have such a companion on the journey. And yet I am supposed to belong to the party which is opposed to Rimsky-Korsakov. There is a strange misunderstanding here which has had, and still has, regrettable consequences ... it accentuates the extremes at both ends and ultimately it compromises us, the musicians, in the eyes of future generations.

By the time he wrote that, Tchaikovsky was pursuing his own path. But in the 1860s and early 1870s, he was proud to be associated with the 'nationalists'. Most famously, he played

through the finale of his Second Symphony, based on a Ukrainian folk song, 'The Crane' at a soirée chez Rimsky-Korsakov, 'and the assembled company nearly tore me to shreds in their rapture'. Little wonder: the variation technique as applied to a simple traditional melody dated back to *Kamarinskaya*, a seminal piece by the founding father of a Russian tradition, Mikhail Glinka, which Tchaikovsky feted in the immortal remark that all Russian music was in it 'just as the oak is in the acorn'.

Folk themes, or the composer's own version of them, are as abundant in Tchaikovsky's early music as they are in Mussorgsky. The Rubinstein were none too supportive of the First Symphony, which caused Tchaikovsky so much stress and nearly led to a breakdown as he burned the candles at both ends to finish it in 1866; but the composer's judgement in 1883 that 'it has more substance and is better than many of my other mature works' is reasonably sound. The young Prokofiev, almost the same age when he came to know the work as Tchaikovsky was when he composed it, exclaimed in his diary for January 1916 'what a delight the first movement is!'.

Perhaps the second is even more original. Despite the folk song that is interestingly treated in the finale, it's the spirit of Russia we hear in the Adagio cantabile, Tchaikovsky's first great melody, which is truly remarkable. This is endless song, launched by oboe with flute arabesques and reaching its climax in fullthroated unison from the four horns, which embraces the familiar melancholy contours of the folk tradition. And although the first total masterpiece, the fantasy overture *Romeo and Juliet*, contained nothing Russian about it in its first version of 1869, it was thanks to the guidance of Balakirev himself that Friar Laurence's opening music changed from a placid benediction to a Russian orthodox hymn (though Liszt's chorales also seem to have been a model).

Nationalism is also strong in the first opera Tchaikovsky tried to destroy, *The Voyevoda*, based like *The Storm* on Ostrovsky, and in his second, *The Oprichnik* (1870–72), about the iron guard set up by Ivan the Terrible. The Ukrainian enchantment he knew so well from idyllic summers on his sister's and brother-in-law's country estate at Kamenka found its way into the fairytale drawn from Russian fantasist Nikolai Gogol's *Christmas Eve*, *Vakula the Smith*; with heartfelt arias for its simple blacksmith hero and capricious heroine, it still makes rewarding inroads into the repertoire of more adventurous companies. The magic is there, too, in Tchaikovsky's incidental music for Ostrovsky's *The Snow Maiden*, a subject which he considered turning into an opera; Rimsky-Korsakov famously got there first.

The supernatural strain which was to keep Tchaikovsky company for the rest of his life reaches its first high water mark in the ballet *Swan Lake* (1875–6), whose bird-maiden is descended, in one theme especially, from the water-nymph in his discarded opera *Undine* (the famous Pas d'action with its great violin and cello solos originally featured there as a duet for soprano and tenor). What possessed Tchaikovsky to lavish so much attention on a full-length ballet? The only predecessor of quality he would have known at the time of composition was Adam's *Giselle*, a pale shadow of the robust drama he was working on, though when he discovered Delibes's *Sylvia*, he remarked that had he known it earlier, he would not have written *Swan Lake*.

What gives the musical narrative its extraordinary charge, quite apart from the string of distinguished variations and especially the cornucopia of waltzes, is the doomed love of the heroine Odette and Prince Sigmund. Such literary images of Tchaikovsky's own frustrated feelings had already found their outlet in the poignant violas-and-cor-anglais love theme of *Romeo and Juliet*, and were about to flourish again in the tempest-tossed tone poem *Francesca da Rimini* – a work which, the composer admitted, showed the influence of his visit to Bayreuth to write about the first performances of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in spite of his antipathy to Wagner's subject matter.

Though Tchaikovsky was not a frustrated homosexual – he hardly needed to repress his sex drive given the fairly high profile of what we would now call the 'gay scene' in Russian artistic circles – the sense of unquenchable yearning in so many of his greatest themes can partly be explained in an elliptical conversation with the woman who became his patroness in the late 1870s, Nadezhda von Meck. When she asked him if he had known 'non-Platonic love', his answer was 'yes and no'. He clarified eloquently:

If we put the question in a different way and ask whether I have known complete happiness in love, then the answer is No, no and no again. In any case the question is answered in my music. If you were to ask me whether I understand the full force, the immeasurable power of this feeling, I would answer Yes, yes and yes again and I would say yet again that my repeated efforts to express in music the torments and, at the same time, the bliss of love have themselves been efforts lovingly made.

Art and life became precipitously intertwined in 1877, the crisis year of Tchaikovsky's life. It was then that the homosexuality to which he had many times given free rein became a torment to him, and he told his similarly oriented brother Modest that 'we must fight our natures to the best of our ability'. His solution was to seek a wife. The unfortunate candidate was a former conservatory student, Antonina Milyukova. She had written him a love letter which he initially rejected, but as he began work on an opera based on Pushkin's novel in verse *Eugene Onegin*, he became so involved in the lovable heroine Tatyana's candid confession of love and the hero Onegin's fateful rejection of it that he determined to behave otherwise.

The result was great music: the Letter Scene in which Tatyana pours out her feelings to the dandy Onegin contains yet another of Tchaikovsky's most poignant melodies, introduced by oboe and horn before the voice takes it up. This is the composer identifying with his heroine, as he does shortly afterwards with the hero who declares – far from coldly, as has often been claimed – that he can only love Tatyana as a brother. It would have been wiser if Tchaikovsky had done the same with Antonina. But in July 1877 he married her, fled from her shortly after the honeymoon and tried to commit suicide by submerging himself in the freezing waters of the Moskva River, which only served to improve his health. The already unbalanced Antonina, who was to spend the rest of her life in mental institutions, blankly accepted a separation, and in order to avert a scandal Tchaikovsky left immediately for southern Europe.

Autobiography had not yet run its course: the Fourth Symphony, begun in 1877, needed to be orchestrated in Italy, and it was

from there that Tchaikovsky outlined for von Meck a programme of ‘Our symphony’, noting that ‘for the first time in my life I have had to recast my musical ideas and musical images in words and phrases’. Doubt has been shed on whether the money-dependent composer was as honest to the wealthy woman he never spoke to as he always was in epistolary form to his brothers, but he hardly seems to have been falsifying the record in describing the fierce horn and bassoon fanfares as ‘Fate, that inexorable force which prevents our aspirations to happiness from reaching their goal, which jealously ensures that our well-being and peace are not complete and unclouded, which hangs over our head like the sword of Damocles’. Clearly there’s some kind of battle, too, between ‘grim reality’ and ‘evanescent visions and dreams of happiness’.

Yet despite the return of the ‘Fate’ motif at the heart of the peasant rejoicings in the finale, the Fourth Symphony is not as straightforward as it seems; nor is it, as Tchaikovsky’s brilliantly gifted protégé Sergei Taneyev thought, ‘a symphonic poem to which three other movements have been fortuitously attached to form a symphony’. The ‘ballet music’ that Taneyev so objected to in a symphony, which Tchaikovsky so vigorously defended, can indeed be detected behind the first movement: the fanfare is in polonaise rhythm, the main idea is a limping 9/8 waltz and the ‘evanescent visions’ take the form of a mazurka. In terms of the more far-flung contrasts which throw up the dazzlingly original orchestration of the scherzo – pizzicato strings, rustic woodwind and distant military band – this is something towards which Tchaikovsky had already been aiming in the five-movement Third Symphony.

Here far-flung contrast is the essence of the covertly extraordinary first movement, linking together a funeral march, court ceremonials straight out of the ‘royal’ acts of *Swan Lake*, a plaintive oboe melody which sounds like another portrait of *Odette*, and a high-kicking folk dance. Once away from Russia in 1878, and having completed the Fourth Symphony, Tchaikovsky told von Meck that he needed ‘a good rest from symphonic music’ – and this is where one of the most original and underrated periods of his creativity begins. He composed, in reasonably close succession, three orchestral suites in which the only rule seems to have been an inversion of the one expressed by Lewis Carroll’s Duchess in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*: Tchaikovsky’s motto is ‘take care of the sounds, and the sense will take care of itself’.

This means that anything goes with anything else, and fresh sonorities abound: take for instance the Lilliputian march of the First Suite, anticipating the weightless high sonorities of *The Nutcracker*’s miniature overture, or the two chords shared by four accordions in the Scherzo burlesque of the Second Suite.

The apogee is reached in the Third Suite. Its unusually poignant opening Elegy was written under stressful circumstances; autobiography threatened to rear its head again as Tchaikovsky’s private diary reveals his infatuation with his 13-year-old nephew Bob Davydov and his attempts to master the demons of desire (‘Bob will drive me out of my mind with his unspeakable fascination’). That may account for the bittersweet quality of this movement (which replaced a movement called ‘Contrasts’). But aristocratic restraint keeps the final Theme and Variations on course, a seeming prophecy of the triumphant 1885 premiere,

Tchaikovsky’s greatest public success to date. His variations progress cannily from neo-Classicism to character pieces, Russian genre numbers and ballet music, culminating in a grand Polonaise fit to lay at the feet of an already well-disposed Alexander III. How far Tchaikovsky had come, in less than a decade, from the polonaise rhythms of an implacable fate in the Fourth Symphony. This was a work that was the true herald of the ‘imperial style’ that younger Russians as unlikely as Stravinsky and Diaghilev were to find so appealing.

Experiments in form are also a part of the Concert Fantasy, which is exactly contemporary with the Third Suite. Only the colossal demands of the piano role and the quirky balance between soloist and orchestra can account for its lack of popularity compared with the still innovative First Concerto, and even the Second, which is making something of a comeback – albeit not always with the full roles apportioned to solo violin and cello in the extraordinary slow movement. In its first movement, the Concert Fantasy cordons off its orchestra from the pianist, who executes a huge central cadenza of great emotional power (Prokofiev probably took note in his even more monumental Second Piano Concerto). In terms of the suites, though, Tchaikovsky now turned course and made the first a sequence of arrangements of Mozart – piano pieces in the first, second and final movements, the celebrated ‘Ave verum corpus’ in Liszt’s transcription in the third.

It was time for Tchaikovsky to give his love of his hero free musical rein. The Mozart vein had never been far from Tchaikovsky’s thinking since the three string quartets composed in fairly close succession in the 1870s. Although the celebrated Andante cantabile of the first, which reduced the cantankerous Tolstoy to tears when he heard it, fuses a Ukrainian folk song with Haydnesque turns of phrase, and the slow movements of the two successors touch on the more subjective vein of pathos in Tchaikovsky’s music, the elegance is very much Tchaikovsky-Mozart. As it is, too, in the glorious Serenade for Strings and the Variations on a Rococo Theme, although the way that Tchaikovsky veers into a more Romantic 19th-century vein may have given Stravinsky the cue for his chameleonic neo-Classicism, which he claimed to have invented with the Pergolesi-based ballet *Pulcinella*. Prokofiev pooh-poohed that by pointing out that he got there first with the ‘Classical’ Symphony in 1917; but Tchaikovsky was already way ahead of both of them.

No doubt it was the Mozart streak that persuaded Tchaikovsky to move the action of Pushkin’s masterly little horror story *The Queen of Spades*, or *Pique Dame*, back from 1825 to the time of Catherine the Great when he came to set it as an opera in 1890, and to indulge his penchant for Mozartian pastiche in the Act 2 intermezzo-ballet of the faithful shepherdess. But this was also part of the lavish ethos of the imperial theatres in the late 19th century. Tchaikovsky’s attitude to opera had, in any case, changed since he first entrusted the ‘lyrical scenes’ of *Eugene Onegin* to students from the Moscow Conservatoire.

Quite apart from the fact that *Onegin* was relaunched in grandiose splendour under the extravagant eye of the new intendant Ivan Vsevolzhsky, the operas composed after it all cater to various degrees for a more conventional public spectacle. As Tchaikovsky wrote at the time of *Mazeppa*’s premiere in 1884 – the rare brutality of its Cossack theme (the work is based on

another Pushkin subject, his narrative poem *Poltava*) is reflected in some of the composer's blackest, most sadistic music – he now found opera to be 'a lower form of art than either symphonic or chamber music ... opera has the advantage of making it possible to influence the musical sensitivities of the masses, whereas the symphonic composer deals with a small and select public'.

This accounts for the Meyerbeerian ceremonial processions and static ensembles of *The Maid of Orleans* (1878–9), the crowd scenes of *Mazeppa* and the melodrama of *The Sorceress* (1885–7). Yet in each case there was a key scene which appealed to Tchaikovsky personally: in *The Maid of Orleans*, it was the scene where Joan of Arc is burned at the stake, which made him 'wail horribly' when he read about it; in *Mazeppa*, the May-September relationship of greybeard Mazeppa and the young Maria; and in *The Sorceress* the scene where Kuma – the 'loose woman with a beautiful soul' – and Prince Yuri fall in love. All three situations stimulated fine music, though many may argue that *The Sorceress's* most memorable theme occurs in another duet, between mother and son.

Yet none was as remarkable as the key to *Pique Dame*, the scene in the elliptical short story in which antihero Hermann, desperate to gain the mysterious secret of three cards which will bring him gambling success, visits the enigmatic, ancient Countess, who knows it, in her bedchamber and frightens her to death. As Tchaikovsky worked on it in Florence in 1890, he wrote that he 'experienced such a sense of fear, dread and shock that the audience is bound to feel the same, at least to some degree'. With its unerring sense of pace and shadowy atmosphere, this is the scene that points the way forward in music-theatre, as Janáček noted in praising Tchaikovsky's 'music of horror' in 1896.

The bedchamber scene has its direct correspondence in another work for the theatre which is more closely connected with *Pique Dame* than might seem to be the case at a glance. Tchaikovsky's most opulent ballet, *Sleeping Beauty*, was premiered at the Mariinsky just under a year before the opera and it is perhaps his most rounded master-score; Stravinsky certainly thought so when he had to orchestrate a couple of lost numbers for Diaghilev's labour-of-love revival in 1921. One of several numbers which is rarely heard to its full advantage in any choreography is the 'symphonic entr'acte' in which Tchaikovsky depicts Aurora's sleep with exactly 100 bars of high string tremolo – the counterpart to the nagging viola ostinato in *Pique Dame* – while the themes of the good lilac fairy and the evil Carabosse fight it out in shadowplay. This is minimalist genius pure and simple – and yet only 40 or so 'years' of Aurora's sleep are usually played in the ballet theatre.

As in *Pique Dame*, too, the imperial theatre brief for opulence gave Tchaikovsky a chance to revisit the past: Vsevolozhsky wanted the Perrault fairy tale to evoke the court of Louis XIV before speeding forward to the 18th-century entourage of Aurora's rescuer, Prince Desire. That meant a Sarabande for the reawakened old-timers as well as minuets and gavottes for the hunting party in Act 2. These are often cut; so, perhaps because the dancers have difficulty with it, is the minute-long variation for the Sapphire Fairy in the metre of 5/4, apparently to represent a pentagram; so much for the idea that the lopsided waltz in the 'Pathétique' Symphony was Tchaikovsky's first use of that metre. And among the extraordinarily wellcharacterised fairy tale

characters who come to the Act Three wedding, one lives in hope of seeing Hop-omy-Thumb and his brothers escaping the ogre. Shostakovich especially admired this for the way in which 'the theme is broken up and scattered among various instruments at wide intervals of the register'.

No such cuts usually disfigure the more concentrated world of *The Nutcracker*, composed two years after *Sleeping Beauty*. We get a sense here of Tchaikovsky maybe running lower in the melodic stakes, but more than compensating with a new-found gift for haunting figures and minimalist ideas. There's a careful symmetry, too: the portions of the rising scale which see the Christmas tree transformed in the party-room of a well-ordered German household and the walls melting away to take Nutcracker-saving Clara on her journey in Act One are counterbalanced by the descending major and minor scales of the great Pas de deux in Act Two. This genius for extracting real magic from simple ingredients did not go unnoticed by Benjamin Britten. And the selective, brilliant orchestral refinements of both ballets surely paved the way for the Stravinsky of *Petrushka*.

Despite this underestimated futurism in Tchaikovsky's approach to instrumental colour, his essential operatic outlook remained conservative, as we find in the succession of strong set-pieces that grace *Iolanta*, the one-act opera which was premiered in an 1892 double-bill with *The Nutcracker*. Just imagine if Tchaikovsky had died then rather than – equally fortuitously – a year later; the radiant happy ending which celebrates the light to which the blind princess of the title is restored would then be seen as the true finale to a life fluctuating between sun and shadow. In any case it is a joyous, even a naive coda to a distinguished line of operas.

As it turns out, of course, the myth of a doomed composer and a tragic symphony is bound to prevail. Yet the fact is that as Tchaikovsky worked on his Sixth Symphony, dubbed the 'Pathétique' by his brother Modest, in the early part of 1893, he was in a 'happy frame of mind' about this 'Programme' Symphony, as he told its dedicatee, adored Bob Davydov:

The programme is so intensely personal that as I was mentally composing it on my travels I frequently wept copiously. When I got back I settled to the sketches and I worked with such fervour and speed that in less than four days I had completely finished the first movement ... How glorious it is to realise that my time is not yet over and that I can still work.

After the interlude with the orchestral suites, the symphonic picture had become fiercely autobiographical again. There can be no doubt that Tchaikovsky saw himself in Byron's Manfred, haunted by an illicit, incestuous love, and that in 1885 he poured all the resources of an orchestration influenced by Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* into the *Manfred Symphony's* first movement. The Fifth Symphony, soon to become a vehicle for his new-found confidence as a conductor, marries a certain Germanic school of symphonic thinking to a programme which sees fate more benignly as providence, capable of change from ill to good (as the motto theme eventually is in the triumphant finale). But in the Sixth the outcome was to be unequivocally pessimistic: 'the finale, incidentally, will not be a noisy Allegro', he told Bob, 'but on the contrary, a very unhurried Adagio'. A lamenting one, too, he might have added, its descending patterns taken directly from

the tragic Introduction to *Swan Lake* and its conclusion a death, life ebbing away on pulsing double basses in the same darkness which begins the symphony. This was a unique cue which other symphonists, chiefly Gustav Mahler, would adopt. Yet as in Mahler all human life is here, too, and the March-Scherzo need not be falsely euphoric in the right conducting hands.

Tchaikovsky conducted the premiere in St Petersburg on 28 October 1893. Nine days later he was dead. How senseless, how untimely, is all we can say. He had found a measure of contentment in his life, though Modest questioned whether the writing-out of all his sufferings in the Sixth Symphony had put only a temporary stop to his periodic depressions. Tchaikovsky was certainly more settled: his Manfred-like wanderings abroad came to an end when he made several homes in the Russian countryside he adored, finding his last haven in a handsome dacha north of Moscow in Klin. It is now one of the most beautifully preserved and presented house-museums anywhere in the world. The help he had received throughout the years of struggle he would frequently give back to young composers and charitable causes. The conductor Alexander Mackenzie, who met him when he travelled to Cambridge to receive an honorary doctorate in June 1893, wrote how 'his unaffected modesty, kindly manner and real gratitude for any trifling service rendered contributed to the favourable impression made by a lovable man.'

How is it, then, that such a lovable man should become embroiled in speculations of a much darker nature? Despite assertions to the contrary, the truth about his end is simply not known, and never will be. In a painstaking postscript to her excellent assembly of writings by Tchaikovsky about himself, Russian curator Alexandra Orlova discredited the widely accepted theory that the composer had simply died of cholera after drinking a glass of unboiled water (she was not the first; Rimsky-Korsakov questioned the kissing of the dead composer's face in his catafalque). She raised the comment of Tolstoy about his great fellow-artist's end – 'sudden and simple, natural and unnatural' – before contradicting the cholera theory on the advice of two experts in tropical diseases. Then she produced a not unimpressive array of witnesses testifying to the theory that a court of honour was convened by Tchaikovsky's fellow former students at the School of Jurisprudence, following the outraged plaint to the Tsar by one Count Stenbock-Fermor that the composer had been paying 'unnatural' attentions to his nephew. The decree: suicide by poisoning. Others have suggested that Tchaikovsky drank the unboiled water in a game of Russian roulette, which is a rather romanticised view of his attitude to Fate.

Whatever the case, there is no indication that during that year, or indeed at any point after 1877, did Tchaikovsky think of suicide. The myth of the 'Pathétique' as a prophecy of doom is as alluring, and as false, as the legend that Mozart knew he was writing his own Requiem. What had certainly lowered Tchaikovsky's spirits that summer were the deaths of several close friends, commemorated in the symphony's quotation from the Russian Orthodox funeral service. True, his very last song was a despairing one, too, but the piano pieces of 1893, though essentially salon numbers written in many cases for pianists of limited abilities, show all the usual grace and charm.

It is impossible to predict what kind of boundaries Tchaikovsky would have broken had he lived longer. Might he have taken the art of the symphony to even greater heights and depths after the 'Pathétique'? Despite the well-made symphonic specimens of Alexander Glazunov there were no towering successors in the Russian repertoire, with the possible exception of the lugubrious First Symphony by the young man in whom Tchaikovsky saw such promise, Sergei Rachmaninov. Might Tchaikovsky have gone on to tackle *King Lear*, as Verdi had once thought of doing? His *Hamlet* music suggests he would have been capable. It is tempting to hazard a guess that Tchaikovsky, had he been granted an old age, might have turned his back on the 'Pathétique' vein and created more of the 'gentle, happy music' Laroche loved so much. Speculation is useless, perhaps, when his rounded, humane legacy, embracing every sphere, is so rich and when so much more of it remains to be properly appreciated.

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COMPLETE SYMPHONIES (CD1-7)

Symphony No.1 Op.13 'Winter Dreams'

If Tchaikovsky had chosen a godfather for his first symphony, the selection likely would have fallen upon Nikolai Rubinstein. The great Russian pianist, conductor and pedagogue was Tchaikovsky's first employer in the musical field; it was Rubinstein who offered the 25-year-old former law clerk a position as a professor of harmony at the Moscow Conservatory. Gratified that one so prominent would have faith in one so little known, Tchaikovsky accepted the offer and in January 1866 moved from St. Petersburg to Moscow to begin teaching.

It was a difficult transition. Tchaikovsky felt himself ill-prepared for the assignment, and was unnerved by Rubinstein's domineering personality. Yet a man unconvinced of his own skills often puts forth his best effort when a more confident man drives him onward, and such was the case with Tchaikovsky. Not only did he settle into the obligations of teaching, he also began composing works grander and more ambitious than any he had previously attempted. His First Symphony, begun early in this same year, was undertaken at Rubinstein's specific urging. The mental strain of writing the piece brought Tchaikovsky to the verge of a nervous breakdown, and harsh criticisms of colleagues led him to doubt the excellence of his effort. His crippling uncertainty delayed the score's completion until November, but once the symphony was finally finished, Tchaikovsky dedicated it to Rubinstein.

Although the young composer had produced a standard four-movement symphony, early audiences might have been unaware of the fact, for over a year passed before the composition was heard in its entirety. In December 1866, Rubinstein conducted a premiere that comprised only the third movement scherzo. Two months later, the second and third movements were heard, but it was not until 3 February, 1868 that the entire work was performed. The piece was well received at that time, but Tchaikovsky, setting a pattern that he would follow with many later works, decided that the audience was mistaken, that the symphony was not particularly well crafted and that it needed further work. He set about revising the score and did not allow its publication until 1875. But through all those years and even afterward, Tchaikovsky retained a measure of fondness for the piece, describing it as 'a sin of my sweet youth'. He once

observed, 'although it is immature in many respects, it is essentially better and richer in content than many other, more mature works.' Tchaikovsky's Symphony No.1 carries the subtitle 'Winter Dreams', a theme carried onward by its first two movements, which the composer labelled 'Dreams of a Winter Journey' and 'Land of Desolation, Land of Mists'. Yet there is nothing cold-hearted about the work. Those seeking the 'misty desolation' of a winter on the steppes will not find it here, for of all Tchaikovsky's symphonies, this one bears the aura of optimism. Listen particularly to the exuberance of the final movement: if this is a Russian winter, then it must be a winter carnival, with boisterous crowds skating and laughing as the sunshine sparkles on the snow.

1812 Overture Op.49

In 1880 Tchaikovsky was asked to write a festival piece commemorating the Battle of Borodino, the burning of Moscow and Napoleon's retreat from the self-sacrificed city. The occasion was the consecration of the Cathedral of the Saviour, and the new work was to be performed in the Cathedral Square, with cannon firing in the final section signifying the Russian triumph. At about the same time, Nikolai Rubinstein offered Tchaikovsky a commission for a similar work to be performed at the Moscow Exhibition of Art and Industry. Apparently Tchaikovsky felt he was not a composer of 'festival pieces' and could not be persuaded in time for the Cathedral ceremony. He did accept a definite commission for the Exhibition, for he wrote to Nadezhda von Meck on 22 October, 1880, to advise that he was composing a 'big, solemn overture for the Exhibition... very showy and noisy, but it will have no artistic merit because I wrote it without warmth and without love.' In any event, the consecration of the Cathedral passed without the music, which was performed at the Exhibition on 20 August 1882.

Symphony No.2 Op.17 'Little Russian'

Tchaikovsky's Second Symphony was premiered in 1873 by Rubinstein, who also undertook the first performances of the First, Third and Fourth Symphonies, and other important Tchaikovsky compositions from these early years. The symphony is, in part, a nod to popular trends of the day, trends that encouraged the use of indigenous folk music in serious concert works. This tendency is particularly notable in compositions by the Hungarian Franz Liszt, the Norwegian Edvard Grieg and the Bohemian Antonín Dvořák. Tchaikovsky's countrymen Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov were also drawn to folk music, and he himself was not immune. Curiously, though, the songs quoted in this symphony are not strictly Russian in origin; they are Ukrainian songs, featured at three moments in the work: the introduction to the first movement, the main theme of the second movement, and the introduction to the final movement. This would not be Tchaikovsky's only musical visit to Ukraine. The First Piano Concerto, which would be his next major composition, also includes a Ukrainian theme. Because Russians of Tchaikovsky's time referred to Ukraine as 'Little Russia', the Second Symphony has since become known as the 'Little Russian' Symphony, a nickname not chosen by the composer himself.

Francesca da Rimini Op.32

Francesca da Rimini, written at the height of the composer's orchestral mastery in 1876, is the most powerfully dramatic of Tchaikovsky's symphonic poems. The score is prefaced by a quotation from the Fifth Canto of Dante's *Inferno*. This describes

the punishment of those who succumbed to sensual desires in their earthly lives, and whose fate was to be tormented in Stygian darkness, buffeted by violent, tempestuous winds. never to find peace. Among those so tortured was Francesca da Rimini, who comes forward to tell her story. As with the heroine of his early masterpiece *Romeo and Juliet*, and with Tatiana in his opera *Eugene Onegin*, Tchaikovsky identified completely with Francesca, and he portrays her with one of his loveliest melodies. But first he sets the scene, and in the introductory Andante lugubre creates an ominously powerful sense of foreboding. Then in the Allegro which follows, with shrieking woodwinds, pungent brass and whirling strings, he achieves a formidable evocation of the tempestuous *Inferno*. Finally the gales subside and Francesca is introduced alluringly with a limpid clarinet solo. Her melody is restated in different orchestral guises as she tells of her love for Paolo, and later Tchaikovsky introduces another theme, of gentle ecstasy, played by the cor anglais against warmly romantic harp roulades. But the illicit lovers are discovered by Francesca's husband and there is a great polyphonic climax in the strings, with the bass adding to the emotional turmoil, before the vividly depicted moment of their murder.

Francesca steps back and disappears into the *Inferno*, and Tchaikovsky's dramatic reprise of the setting of her eternal punishment leads to a searing final climax, when the sense of an irreversibly tragic destiny is hammered out in violent dischords, with great clashes on the orchestral tam-tam adding to the sense of utter despair.

Symphony No.3 Op.29 'Polish'

The premiere of Tchaikovsky's Third Symphony took place in 1875, a year that had not begun well for the composer. After months of effort, he completed his First Piano Concerto and played it for Rubinstein, who, contrary to his usual effusive support, found nothing kind to say. It was the first major conflict between mentor and protégé, and Tchaikovsky was deeply hurt by Rubinstein's cold words. He spent his summer vacation licking his wounds at the Kamenka estate belonging to his sister and her husband. There, he found the spirit to compose again, and in less than two months, wrote a symphony from start to finish. This was the first of his symphonies to entirely meet his own approval, the first that he did not judge to need extensive revision. Rubinstein, too, thought highly of the new score. Forgetting his cruel reception of the piano concerto, he agreed to give the new symphony its premiere and conducted the work in Moscow that autumn.

This symphony carries the nickname 'Polish'. The name was not chosen by Tchaikovsky himself, but rather by the English conductor Sir August Manns, who led the work in a London performance. Manns was inspired in his choice of labels by the Polish dance rhythms of the final movement, but in fact, those rhythms are not to be found elsewhere in the work. One might just as well have called the symphony 'German' for its *alla tedesca* second movement, or 'Russian' for the composition's various other themes. Rather than imagining that the Third Symphony speaks of this or that nationality, a listener would be better served to view the piece as representative only of Tchaikovsky himself and of the way in which he was able to synthesise the finest elements of a wealth of styles so as to produce a voice that was uniquely his own.

Hamlet – Fantasy Overture

Shakespeare's present reputation as one of the greatest authors ever dates from the early days of Romanticism. Before that he didn't fit into the aesthetic principles of Classicism. Romanticism, in a sense an anti-Classical movement, adored his work for the unpredictability of his characters, the non-schematic approach to form, the impossibility of knowing a person completely and the difficulty for man to make and defend decisions. Shakespeare's Hamlet was the archetypical romantic persona and consequently brought to life in many art forms. When Tchaikovsky outlined the piece (1888–1891), he also explained that he was inspired by the character Fortinbras in the play. Three years later he wrote some incidental music for a performance of the play in Paris. Afterwards he revised his *Hamlet Overture* and included material from the incidental music. Maybe the mix of an older form with new added elements explains the difficulty contemporaries had in explaining the structure of this music.

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Symphony No.4 Op.36

Nearly every major composer has endured a watermark year in which personal crises affected the future development of his music. For Beethoven, that year was 1802, when encroaching deafness drove him to the verge of suicide. For Wagner, it was 1848 when the Dresden Revolution forced him to rethink his political convictions. For Tchaikovsky, the year of turmoil was 1877. Though his greatest masterworks still lay in the future, the composer had already proven his mettle with three symphonies, several operas, the *Rococo Variations* and the ballet *Swan Lake*. He was also benefiting from the recent acquisition of a patron, Madame Nadezhda von Meck, whose financial support had allowed him to concentrate more fully upon composition. All of those aspects were positive influences upon Tchaikovsky's life; the crisis lay in a sudden and very ill-considered marriage. A former student of the composer's had become deeply infatuated with him, and swore that, if he did not marry her, she would take her life. Concerned for the girl's well-being, Tchaikovsky agreed to the marriage, even though taking a woman into his home was the last thing his own inclinations would have led him to do. They married in the summer. His nervous breakdown came in the fall, at which point his doctors recommended that he never see the young woman again. Soon, the composer and his brother Anatoly had left Russia for Switzerland in hope of finding solace for poor Peter's battered spirit.

As so often happened, Tchaikovsky sought consolation in composition, plunging back into his sketches for the opera *Eugene Onegin*, and beginning the orchestration of his new symphony, the fourth of what would ultimately be six works in the genre. By late in the year, he was able to give an optimistic report to Madame von Meck, writing, 'Never yet has any of my orchestral works cost me so much labour, but I've never yet felt such love for any of my things ... Perhaps I'm mistaken, but it seems to me that this symphony is better than anything I've done so far.' Such enthusiasm was rather unusual for the composer, who more often expressed a loathing for his works, but here, it seems, he knew that he had exceeded even his own demanding standards. He completed the new symphony on Christmas Day, by the Russian calendar, in 1877 (7 January 1878 by the Western calendar). The piece bore a dedication 'to my best friend', a

reference to Madame von Meck, who agreed to accept the honour only on the grounds of anonymity.

The Fourth Symphony premiered in Moscow that same winter with the composer's mentor Nikolay Rubinstein conducting. A few months later, a colleague of Tchaikovsky's, the composer Sergei Taneyev, criticized the piece for being programmatic, that is, for having a narrative or plot. Tchaikovsky defended his creation, declaring, 'I don't see why you consider this a defect. On the contrary, I should be sorry if symphonies that mean nothing should flow from my pen, consisting solely of a progression of harmonies, rhythms and modulations ... As a matter of fact, the work is patterned after Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, not as to musical content but as to the basic idea.' Tchaikovsky's statement begs a question as to what this 'basic idea' might be. After all, the answer to that question would not only help us to interpret the Russian master's creation; it would also shed light on what Tchaikovsky saw as the central concept of the Beethoven piece. Fortunately, Tchaikovsky provides us with an answer in a letter to Madame von Meck in which he outlined what he viewed as the program for his Fourth Symphony. According to the composer himself, the ominous opening theme for horns and bassoons represents fate hanging over one's head like a sword. This all-consuming gloom devours the few, brief glimpses of happiness, appearing mostly in the form of waltz themes. The second movement, Tchaikovsky asserted, expresses the melancholy felt at the end of a weary day. Then, in the third movement, he imagined what he called 'fleeting images that pass through the imagination when one has begun to drink a little wine'. The fourth movement holds Tchaikovsky's prescription for happiness. Here's how he described it: 'If you cannot find reasons for happiness in yourself, look at others. Get out among the people ... Oh, how gay they are! ... Life is bearable after all.' And so, to summarize Tchaikovsky's view, this is a symphony that brings us from gloom to melancholy to slow recovery to life-affirming energy. It is a progression from darkness to light, a progression that we can sense in Tchaikovsky's Fourth as well as in Beethoven's Fifth.

Marche Slave

The *Marche Slave* (1876) is one of Tchaikovsky's few musical comments on actual events. After Montenegro and Serbia declared war on Turkey because of the Turkish atrocities against Christians, a wave of religiously-inspired nationalism went through Russia, Serbia's ally. Tchaikovsky responded to this climate by writing a march which includes three Serbian folk melodies plus the national Russian anthem. The composer didn't like the piece but didn't say why; perhaps it was because he was not a fan of pomp and circumstance in bombastic form and he preferred to present existing melodies in a much more stylised form. The audience at the premiere on 17 November 1876 in Moscow had a totally different view. The piece was a tremendous success, the march had to be encoed and many in the hall wept.

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Symphony No.5 Op.64

If Tchaikovsky's talent had been no better than his own assessment of himself, his music would have turned to dust a century ago, dismissed as the mediocre scribbles of a man with nothing to say, for such was his usual view of his own creations. Surviving letters and diaries attest that he rarely had faith in his own abilities. The composer's own words prove to modern

observers his personal conviction that his finished compositions were worthless and future ones might never come to life. In the spring of 1888, Tchaikovsky wrote to his brother about a seemingly insurmountable dry spell. 'Have I written myself out?' he laments. 'No ideas, no inclination?' Even months later, once he had spent his summer vacation at work on a new symphony, he remained despondent, proclaiming to his patron Madame Nadezhda von Meck, 'There is something repellent about it ... This symphony will never please the public.' But Tchaikovsky was wrong. That symphony, that 'repellent' work, was his Fifth Symphony, today one of his most-performed compositions, an epic expression of musical energy and anxiety.

This was, for Tchaikovsky, his second consecutive symphony to be based on a central, programmatic theme, a theme that in both cases he imagined as representing Fate. Why the composer found the concept of Fate to be worthy of repeated musical exposition is a question best left to psychologists; musicologists content themselves with a study of how Tchaikovsky, having resolved for whatever reason to explore Fate, goes about that exploration. In his Fourth Symphony, he chose a brass and bassoon motto of frightening intensity, like the sudden appearance of a formidable foe. By contrast, his Fifth Symphony is more evocative of the distant rumble of a funeral march, as the clarinets intone a low and sombre theme. As the symphony progresses, the theme returns in various guises, sometimes wistful, at other times imposing, but the general motion is toward an increasing mood of optimism, until, in the finale, Tchaikovsky transforms his Fate theme into a triumphal march. This, one feels, is how life truly should be: Fate yielding to mankind's yearning for a happy ending.

Capriccio italien Op.45 (1880)

A virtuoso showpiece in the *pot-pourri* style of Glinka, anticipating the picture-postcard Italy of Richard Strauss and Respighi. 'I believe a good fortune may be predicted,' Tchaikovsky wrote. 'It will be effective, thanks to the delightful [folk] tunes which I have succeeded in assembling partly from anthologies, partly through my own ears on the streets'. Reportedly the opening fanfare was based on a trumpet call from the barracks next to the hotel in Rome where Tchaikovsky was staying. Critics have judged the piece harshly, but its popularity has never waned – a rousing arsenal of tricks and orchestral effects gleamingly polished.

Symphony No.6 'Pathétique'

Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony is forever associated with the tragedy of his sudden death. In the last year of his life, 1893, the composer began work on a new symphony. Sketches dated from as early as February, but progress was slow. Concert tours to France and England and the awarding of a doctorate of music from Cambridge cut into the time available for composition. Thus, though Tchaikovsky could compose quickly when the muse was with him, it was not until the end of August that he was able to complete the Sixth Symphony. Its premiere, with the composer himself on the podium, was given in St. Petersburg two months later, on 28 October. The work seemed unusually sombre, particularly in its finale that, both in tempo and dynamics, fades into nothingness. Tchaikovsky's brother Modest suggested at the time that the work ought to be called by the French word 'pathétique', meaning melancholy, and Tchaikovsky supposedly agreed, but if Modest or anyone else

bothered to ask the reason behind the symphony's gloomy mood, Tchaikovsky's answer is lost to time. His only remembered comment about the new piece is, 'Without exaggeration, I have put my whole soul into this work.'

Nine days later, on 6 November, the composer was dead. His family blamed cholera, but physician's statements were contradictory and friends were skeptical. Cholera, they insisted, was a poor man's disease, almost unheard of amongst the upper classes. Surely Tchaikovsky would have known how to prevent exposure. In addition, as the composer's friend and colleague Rimsky-Korsakov commented in his own memoirs, cholera would have precluded the open-casket ceremony that actually occurred. Why, Rimsky asks, were mourners allowed to kiss the departed goodbye? On that question, Tchaikovsky's family remained determinedly silent.

At the time, the mystery remained unresolved. However, evidence that came to light in 1978 suggests that Tchaikovsky spent his last months distraught over a barely concealed scandal in his personal life. The homosexuality that he had fought throughout adulthood to conceal was about to become public knowledge. Did he commit suicide in the hope that ending his life would also silence the rumors? It is entirely possible, for deep depressions were common to him. Furthermore, he had attempted suicide at least once before. Perhaps this was another attempt that was also meant to fail, but instead tragically succeeded.

Musicologists with psychological leanings have tried to associate the possibility of suicide with the fact of the sombre symphony. They see parallels between the composer's increasing despair and the symphony's fading conclusion. Certainly, other composers have written minor key symphonies without taking their own lives, but the usual expectation was that a symphony, even one in a minor key, would end with energy, if not with optimism. Yet Tchaikovsky's final symphonic statement slowly dissipates into ever-deepening gloom. It is, some suggest, the musical voice of suicidal depression. However, such an analysis ignores an historical fact. Tchaikovsky began work on the piece nearly a year before its premiere, long before the rumors started. At that time, he wrote to his nephew that the new symphony would conclude with what he called 'an adagio of considerable dimensions', which is certainly the manner in which the work ultimately concludes. If this composition is evidence of a troubled mind, then that mood had persisted for many months. What is more likely is that the symphony was simply the ultimate expression of Tchaikovsky's lifelong obsession with dark emotions.

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The Storm

The Storm (1864) is one of Tchaikovsky's first orchestral efforts. Although later generations tended not to give it the recognition accorded to the mature, last three symphonies, this early work already reveals many aspects of the fully matured musician. First, the desire to give the piece a programmatic content, if not programmatic character. The form is determined by the content – in fact Tchaikovsky reproached Brahms for restricting the drama of life into the confines of sonata form. In this case the inspiration came from a novella by Alexander Ostrovsky, which also inspired Leos Janáček to write *Kat'a Kabanová*. When a man leaves for

business reasons, his wife succumbs to her passion for another man. When her husband returns, a storm breaks out with fatal consequences. Secondly, in terms of musical style Tchaikovsky is heavily influenced by Berlioz, especially as far as instrumentation is concerned. And finally his love for French elegance, charm and ballet, even when it is disguised by drama.

Manfred – Symphony in four scenes after Byron Op.58 (1885)

Dedicated to Balakirev and premiered in Moscow by Max Erdmannsdörfer at a Russian Musical Society concert in memory of Nikolai Rubinstein, 11/23 March 1886, *Manfred* was Tchaikovsky's programmatic epic. The spirit, if not always incident, of Byron's Faustian poem of 1816–17 inspired it. Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* and *Harold in Italy*, Liszt's *Faust* and *Dante*, cyclic motto and *idée fixe*, influenced it. The notion of such a work, to the point of mapping out a dramatic design, key and orchestration plan, was Balakirev's; he got the idea from the critic Vladimir Stasov around 1867–68, fired by Berlioz's second visit to Russia. Tchaikovsky wasn't enthusiastic. 'A design to imitate Berlioz [...] at the moment it leaves me absolutely cold, and when imagination and the heart are unwarmed, it is hardly worth trying to compose. To please you I could, to use your expression, exert myself to screw out a whole series of more or less interesting episodes, including conventionally gloomy music to indicate Manfred's hopeless disillusionment, lots of effective spangles of instrumentation for the "Alpine fairy" scherzo, high violins for sunrise, pianissimo trombones for Manfred's death. I would be able to furnish these episodes with harmonic curiosities and piquances, and then send them out into the world under the high-flowing title Manfred: Symphonie d'après, etc. I might even receive praise for the fruits of my labours, but such writing doesn't attract me in the least' (12/24 November 1882). Once committed, he was in two minds about the result. 'I may be wrong but it seems to me to be the best of my compositions' (1885). 'This production is abominable. With the exception of the first movement, I deeply loathe it' (1888).

Each movement is prefaced by a scenario.

I. B minor/D major: 'Manfred wanders in the Alps. Tormented by the fatal anguish of doubt, torn by remorse and despair, his soul is the prey of sufferings without name. Neither the occult sciences, whose mysteries he has fathomed, and by means of which the powers of darkness are subject to his will, nor anything in the world can bring to him the forgetfulness which alone he covets. The memory of the beautiful Astarte [Milton's 'queen of heaven, with crescent horns'], who he has loved and lost, gnaws at his heart [second subject, change of tempo and metre]. Nothing can lift the curse which lies heavily on Manfred's soul, and which unceasingly and without truce delivers him to the tortures of the most grievous despair.'

II. B minor/D major: 'The Fairy [Byron's Witch] of the Alps appears to Manfred under the rainbow of the mountain torrent' (Act II/ii).

III. G major 'Pastorale: The simple, free and peaceful life of the mountaineers.'

IV. B minor/Astarte's phantom – D flat major/Requiem – C major–B major: 'The subterranean palace of Arimanes [the Zoroastrian demon-spirit 'who walks the clouds and waters', Act II/IV, enemy of light and good']. Manfred appears in the midst of a bacchanale

[not in Byron]. Invocation of the phantom of Astarte. She predicts the end of his earthly misery. Manfred's death ['Old man! 'tis not so difficult to die']. For the closing pathétique pages, Tchaikovsky specifies a harmonium (not organ).

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Romeo and Juliet – Fantasy Overture after Shakespeare

Mily Balakirev, besides being a remarkable composer in his own right, was one of the most important figures in Russian music in terms of his influence on his fellow composers. During the summer of 1869 Balakirev suggested to Tchaikovsky that he compose a concert piece on *Romeo and Juliet* and by November Tchaikovsky completed it. The piece was performed the following March under Nikolai Rubinstein's direction and made a depressingly poor impression in Moscow. A revised version was presented in 1870 but fared no better abroad. Finally, in 1880, with the Fourth Symphony successfully making its way through the world Tchaikovsky returned to *Romeo and Juliet* and prepared the version we know today, which he designated not simply 'Overture', as he had the two earlier versions, but 'Fantasy Overture'. This time there was no question of the work's success, and when Tchaikovsky undertook conducting tours in Europe and America he was virtually compelled to include *Romeo and Juliet* on every programme.

FESTIVAL OVERTURE & HAMLET (CD8)

Festival Overture on the Danish National Hymn, Op. 15

Tchaikovsky's first public commission in 1866 was for the occasion of a Moscow visit by the Tsarevich and his new Danish bride, Princess Dagmar. Although the Festival Overture was never heard by them as the visit was postponed, Nikolai Rubinstein premiered the work at a charity concert instead. The music incorporates elements from both Danish and Russian anthems, separately at first and then skilfully married in counterpoint, before a rousing, percussionladen coda. Correcting it for publication in the last year of his life, Tchaikovsky declared it was 'far better as music than 1812' (the overture), but it remained little known until the present recording in 1981.

Hamlet: Overture and incidental music, Op.67bis

The idea of writing a three-part work based on *Hamlet* was first suggested in 1876 by Tchaikovsky's brother Modest, during a fallow period for the composer. 'The notion', Tchaikovsky wrote back, 'pleases me greatly, but it's devilishly difficult'. No more was heard of it until 1888, when the French actor Lucien Guitry, who led his own Frenchspeaking troupe in St Petersburg, asked the composer for an overture or entr'acte to go with scenes from the play which they planned for a charity performance. In the event, that performance was never given, but the seed bore musical fruit as another Fantasy-Overture on similar lines to *Romeo and Juliet*. Tchaikovsky himself conducted its premiere at a St Petersburg concert on 24 November 1888, just a week after his Fifth Symphony was also first heard. Two years later Guitry chose to perform the full play as his farewell to the Russian stage. This time he extracted a promise from the composer to write incidental music for it to add to the Overture.

Tchaikovsky felt obliged to keep his promise, albeit with reluctance, as he felt that his Overture already embraced all he had to say. Its overall view of the tragedy is expressed in terms of

a sonata-structure enclosed within a sombre introduction and a sorrowful epilogue. The main *Allegro* makes stormy and violent use of the introduction theme, and contrasts with it a plaintive oboe solo suggesting Ophelia, an unmistakably lyrical love theme, and the flourish of a distant march indicating Fortinbras: all of these are developed and repeated before becoming overwhelmed by the brass and dirge-like coda.

For the purposes of the stage production Tchaikovsky kept this Overture but in a severely modified form, making several cuts and re-scoring it for the smaller theatre orchestra as well as simplifying some passages. He then added sixteen more pieces, some very short, comprising four entr'actes, three melodramas, three vocal pieces, five fanfares and a concluding march. Ophelia's two songs - the second a poignant 'mad scene' incorporating some spoken words - and the Gravedigger's cheerful ditty are set in French translation, the play being performed by Guitry's French troupe in St Petersburg.

Tchaikovsky resorted to other previously composed music for three of the Entr'actes, and shortened the *Alla tedesca* waltz from his Third Symphony for the Entr'acte before Act II. The two following Entr'actes are for strings; that for Act III coming from *The Snow Maiden* incidental music of 1873, and that for Act IV from a haunting *Elegy* of 1884 composed in memory of a celebrated Moscow actor, LV Samarin. For Act V Tchaikovsky wrote a Funeral March much approved at the time and sometimes heard separately since. He was agreeably surprised at the general reaction to the play: 'Guitry was superb', he wrote, 'and everybody liked the music'. In this recording listeners can rediscover that music in its fullest form.

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THE SNOW MAIDEN (CD8)

The Russian playwright Alexander Ostrovsky, born in Moscow in 1823, is generally considered the most important figure in the Russian theatrical tradition between Gogol and Chekhov. He studied Law at University but was forced to give up the course after a disagreement with one of the Professors, and started his career as a legal clerk, a job which gave him insights into the social interaction of the Russian merchant class and civil service; these he made use of in his first comedies. Later he turned to more serious drama, for example the tragedy *Groza* (1859) portraying the predicament of the young wife of a despotic merchant. Though some of his works were initially banned by the authorities, he prospered under the more liberal reign of Alexander II and enjoyed the patronage of Alexander III. In addition to his literary work he became an important administrator of the Russian stage. He became the director of the famous Maly Theatre in Moscow; interested in music, he also founded the Society of Russian Dramatic Art and Opera Composers.

Ostrovsky's *Snegoruchka – Vesennyya Skazka* (The Snow Maiden – a Spring Fairy Tale), to give it its full title, stands rather apart from his more realistic works. The Maly Theatre was closed for renovation in early 1873 and its dramatic troupe had to work at the neighbouring Bolshoi Theatre, which housed the opera and ballet companies. The Bolshoi management put it to Ostrovsky that he should create a spectacle involving all three arts – acting, dancing and music. *The Snow Maiden* was the result, and in it he

drew upon a wide range of Russian folk-tales to create a sparkling mythic synthesis. For the first production, which took place on 11 May 1873, an important score of incidental music was commissioned from the 32-year-old Tchaikovsky, who was still in the process of establishing his reputation as a composer. Although he was teaching 27 hours a week at the Moscow Conservatoire, it took him just three weeks to write the music, which he composed as soon as he received each fresh batch of text from Ostrovsky, completing it in early April.

In the event it turned out to be Tchaikovsky's contribution, more than Ostrovsky's, which impressed the play's first audiences. The gorgeous production was mounted at a cost of 15,000 roubles, but was judged to be rather static, without much dramatic action. *The Snow Maiden* had four performances in the spring season of 1873, and four more in the winter season of 1873-4. After one further performance, however, it disappeared from the repertoire, probably because of the expense of using all three performing companies. Tchaikovsky's friend and mentor Nikolai Rubinstein, who admired the score, conducted it in concert, and it has occasionally been revived without Ostrovsky's play.

Tchaikovsky himself had great affection for this music. For some years after the production he planned to expand the incidental music into an opera, and he was highly incensed when he found that Rimsky-Korsakov had written an opera of his own on Ostrovsky's play. He wrote to his brother Modest '... it's as though they've taken from me by force something that is innately mine and dear to me, and are presenting it to the public in bright new clothes. It makes me want to weep!' Much later, in 1891, he would re-use some of the music of *The Snow Maiden* in his incidental music to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

The story of *The Snow Maiden*, which has some similarities to that of Hans Christian Andersen's 'The Little Mermaid', deals with the opposition of eternal forces of nature and involves the interactions of mythological characters (Frost, Spring, the Wood-Sprite), real people (Kupava, Mizgir, Brussila), and those in-between beings who are half-mythical, half-real (the Snow Maiden, Lel the Shepherd, and Tsar Berendey). The Snow Maiden can only live if her heart remains cold, unwarmed by love. But wishing to experience a life like other girls, she enters the world of human beings and innocently ruins a wedding when the bridegroom sees her and falls in love with her. Accused by the bride, of seducing her intended husband, the Snow Maiden is brought before the Tsar, Berendey, for judgement, and she decrees that she must marry the man – with whom she has meantime fallen in love. But love's warmth has made her vulnerable to the rays of the Sun God, and when exposed to them she melts away to nothing. Tchaikovsky composed a large quantity of music to accompany Ostrovsky's play. Much of it is vocal and choral, including songs for Lel and the peasant Brusilo, and a monologue for Frost. The choral contributions include such attractive inspirations as the chorus of shivering birds, the chorus of flowers, and the choral carnival procession, a picture of Russian peasant life. All the dances are attractive and in fact give a hint of the great ballet composer Tchaikovsky would soon become. In composing this score for a play based on Russian fairytale, Tchaikovsky made more lavish use of Russian folksongs than in any previous work there are about a dozen of them, which he placed in colourful settings. The Introduction, however,

is borrowed from his earlier, unsuccessful opera *Undine*, which also provided the material for *Lel's* first song.

In a letter of 1879 to his patroness Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky wrote that *The Snow Maiden* was 'one of my favourite offspring. Spring is a wonderful time; I was in good spirits, as I always am at the approach of summer and three months of freedom. I think this music is imbued with the joys of spring that I was experiencing at the time'.

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ORCHESTRAL SUITES 1–4 (CD 10 & 11)

Orchestral Suite No.1 in D minor Op.43 (1878–9)

Tchaikovsky remarked of his First Orchestral Suite that it was 'composed in the style of Lachner', who published seven such (1861–81). Inscribed cryptically to *** – Tchaikovsky's patroness in absentia Nadezhda von Meck – it dates from the period of *The Maid of Orleans* and the premieres of *Eugene Onegin* and the *Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*. Nikolai Rubinstein directed the first performance in Moscow, 8/20 December 1879. 'On Saturday, the Suite was played with great success,' reported Tchaikovsky's publisher, Pyotr Jurgenson. 'The [fugal] first movement did not arouse any particular enthusiasm on the part of the audience. The second [B flat major – written last, in August 1879] was liked. The Andante pleased very much, and the March [A major – which Tchaikovsky had wanted to discard on grounds of 'doubtful merit'] drew applause which wouldn't stop until it was repeated. The Scherzo [B flat major] was very well received. But by the time the Gavotte was played, interest flagged and the one thought in the mind of the audience was to leave as soon as possible.'

'Rooted primarily in the decorative world of the ballet divertissement [incidental scores, too, *The Snow Maiden* for instance] and not concerned with major expressive issues' (David Brown), the D minor Suite is finer than many commentators would lead us to believe. Its orchestration, including triangle and glockenspiel, transforms simple ideas and cadences into an atmospheric carnival of costumes and 'lighting' angles.

Orchestral Suite No.2 in C Op.53 'Suite caractéristique' (1883)

Dedicated to Tchaikovsky's sister-in-law, Praskovya (who lived until 1956), the Second Suite was first heard under Erdmannsdörfer in Moscow, 4/16 February 1884. Tchaikovsky himself directed the Petersburg premiere on 5/17 March 1887. To von Meck he generalised the genre: 'for some time [the suite form has] been particularly attractive to me because of the freedom it affords the composer not to be inhibited by any traditions, by conventional methods and established rules' (16/28 April 1884). Of the four examples he put together, the first three glow in vibrant images, eternal phrases (did Tchaikovsky ever write a bad tune?), and intricately detailed orchestral glamour and surprise.

Orbiting the note E (pivotaly linking the keys of the five moments), No.2, as Tchaikovsky himself realised, impresses chiefly for its third and fourth movements, both originally longer: 'I am almost certain that the Scherzo (with the accordions [four of the diatonic button variety: an extraordinary folk timbre]) and the Andante (Child's Dreams) will please' (to his younger brother Modest, 26 September/8 October 1883). Writing of the E major Scherzo, a thrilling chase, cinematically prescient, Brown suggests

it 'crosses into the musical territory of the Russian supernatural'; of the A minor Andante, that it 'contains both the most conventional and the most original music in the whole suite [...]. Even within the enchanted music of *Sleeping Beauty*, which it clearly presages, there is rarely quite the same disquieting sense of shapes indefinable and forces unknown.' The 'Little Russian' finale, 'Wild Dance in the style of Dargomyzhsky', pays homage to Alexander Dargomyzhsky's *Kazachok* fantasia which Tchaikovsky had arranged for piano around 1868.

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Orchestral Suite No.3 in G Op.55

The Third Orchestral Suite shows the extent to which dance rhythms were the foundation of much of Tchaikovsky's orchestral music. In this work, the basis is always refined, but never obscured by a strong need for charm and elegance. Although the four movements have titles intended to clarify their own character, the mood on the surface in one movement is an undercurrent in another. The 'Élégie' is full of major-key moments and the 'Valse mélancolique' is, like a Schubertian waltz, always two coins of the same medal. In the Scherzo, the dance rhythm always competes with the desire for refinement. No wonder Stravinsky admired Tchaikovsky's art of orchestration. The finale was not meant to be understood as ballet music, but Tchaikovsky's intention to let the music glitter and scintillate makes the listener wonder why this piece is not more often heard.

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Orchestral Suite No.4 in G Op.61 'Mozartiana' (1887)

In 1886 Tchaikovsky confided to his diary: 'Mozart I love as a musical Christ [...] Mozart was a being so angelic and childlike in his purity, his music is so full of unattainably divine beauty, that if there is someone you can mention in the same breath as Christ, then it is he. [...] Mozart is the highest, the culminating point which beauty has reached in the sphere of music [...] In Mozart I love everything because we love everything in a person whom we truly love'. The 'Mozartiana' suite adapts four short Mozart originals (according to Tchaikovsky 'minutely enhanced and harmonically modified'), using a comparatively modest orchestra but including cymbals, glockenspiel and harp. 'For around an hour each day I'm occupied with orchestrating piano pieces by Mozart, which by the end of the summer I should have turned into a suite of novel character (the old given contemporary treatment)' (24 June / 6 July 1887). Tchaikovsky directed the first performance in Moscow, at a Russian Musical Society concert on 14/26 November 1887.

I. Gigue: Gigue K574 (Leipzig, 16 May 1789), G major.

II. Menuetto: Minuet K355 (Vienna, ?1786–87), D major. Trio section by Maximilian Stadler (1748–1833).

III. Pregheira: Ave verum corpus K618 (Baden, 17 June 1791), from Liszt's organ transcription (*Evocation à la Chapelle Sixtine*, c.1862), B flat major.

IV. Thème et variations: Unser dummer Pöbel meint, after Gluck (1714–87) K455 (Vienna, 25 August 1784), G major.

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SWAN LAKE - SLEEPING BEAUTY - THE NUTCRACKER (CD 12- 17)

Tchaikovsky the ballet composer

According to his brother Modest, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, much drawn to ballet in his youth, was fond of imitating the dancers and could do so proficiently. As late as 1875, when Camille Saint-Saëns was making his Moscow debut as composer, pianist and conductor, the two men were reportedly to be found larking about on the stage of the conservatoire performing a little 'Galatea and Pygmalion' ballet together with Nikolay Rubinstein at the piano. However the mature composer would have been surprised to find himself held up as a key figure in the history of classical dance. (Closer to our own time, Sergey Sergeyevich Prokofiev likewise preferred to think of himself as a purveyor of opera, notwithstanding Serge Diaghilev's outspoken views and his own successes with full-length ballets in the Tchaikovsky tradition.)

It is hardly surprising that early spectators of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* (1875–76), accustomed to the subservient scores of Cesare Pugni (1802-1870) and Ludwig Minkus (1826–1917), should have felt puzzled by its symphonic proportions and depth of feeling. Only two orchestral rehearsals and a poor production scarcely helped. Even *The Sleeping Beauty* (1888–89), one of Tchaikovsky's great masterpieces, staged with the resources of the Imperial Ballet in St Petersburg, enjoyed only a *succès d'estime* during his lifetime. His last work in the form, the two-act *Nutcracker* (1891–92), secured its popular reputation through the prerelease of a suite showcasing its glittering themes.

Tchaikovsky's balletic significance became much more obvious after his death, part of a process that saw the form perfected and renewed by such practitioners as the French-born choreographer Marius Petipa (1818–1910) and the Russian Mikhail Fokine (1880–1942). *The Sleeping Beauty* was commissioned by Ivan Vsevolozhsky (1835–1909), then Director of the Imperial Theatres, who had abolished the post of staff ballet composer with a view to engaging musicians of greater distinction. The scenario and designs were prepared by Vsevolozhsky while Petipa mapped out the sequence of dances. Without subverting traditional imperatives of clarity, harmony, symmetry and order, the bold invention and perfect alignment of music and choreography had the capacity to affect audiences in a new way. Tchaikovsky's three mature ballets were chiefly responsible for this generic transformation, for all that he once described *Swan Lake* as 'poor stuff compared with [Delibes's] *Sylvia*.'

Public acclaim notwithstanding, many academic commentators have found Tchaikovsky an uncomfortable figure whose symphonic music could be stigmatized as 'balletic' as if that epithet in some way invalidated it. With the effortless extension of a single melodic line held to be in some way suspect – although Tchaikovsky's tunes can run the gamut from elegance and charm to uninhibited eroticism and passion – it proved easy to overlook the incredible craftsmanship of the ballets, their mastery of form, harmony, momentum and orchestration. Tchaikovsky is rarely given credit for the discipline and professionalism of his creative life. Whatever the propensity within to violent agitation, he delivered on time and was quite prepared to submit to the exacting and precise demands of his collaborators. The expressive certainty of his invention has allowed more recent choreographers to experiment with stance and movement, often

radically, confident that a firm musical narrative is permanently encoded in the notes.

In the summer of 1871 Tchaikovsky had arranged a family entertainment based on the tale of *Swan Lake*, but the impulse to take up the subject as a full-length ballet came from Vladimir Begichev (1828–1891), the theatre director whose stepson was a pupil of the composer. Julius Wenzel Reisinger choreographed the first production unveiled at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre on [20 February] / 4 March 1877. Tchaikovsky, who had hoped that his initial attempt at ballet music would be enthusiastically received, died in 1893 believing it to be a failure. It was not until 1895 that Petipa and Lev Ivanov (1834-1901) created the masterpiece which for many ballet enthusiasts has made their names synonymous with *Swan Lake*. With Modest's approval, the score was partly reworked by Riccardo Drigo (1846-1930).

The story in brief: Prince Siegfried is expected to choose a bride from among the guests at the forthcoming ball. He and his companions embark on a hunt for a flock of swans which they soon discover to be beautiful maidens bewitched by the evil magician, Rothbart, and who revert to human form between midnight and dawn. The Prince falls in love with Odette, the Swan Queen, and invites her to the ball intending to make her his wife. At the ball many seek the Prince's hand, performing a series of national dances (bringing a *divertissement* element structurally into the drama), but the Prince is faithful to Odette. The magician has appeared, accompanying his daughter Odile, transformed into a twin of Odette. A single ballerina usually takes both parts, making it among the most challenging, as well as the most sought after, roles in the entire classical repertory. Siegfried declares that he will marry her, discovering too late that Rothbart has tricked him. He rushes to the forest and proves (variously, according to the whims of the production team) his fidelity to Odette as the waters rise to engulf the lovers. The swans may be freed from the spell but the music, having achieving a B major climax signifying the triumph of the swan theme over malign Fate, ends equivocally with an ambiguous open B. In some presentations, the spirits of the lovers are seen soaring heavenwards together, a subtler resolution than the happy ending grafted on in 1895. Ansermet's long-esteemed recording is based on the Drigo edition.

Traditionally the setting is literal and representational. Siegfried celebrates his birthday in the palace garden, he discovers Odette at a forest-ringed lake, and columns, drapes and chandeliers adorn the ballroom. However more radical interpretations are possible in which Siegfried, like Tchaikovsky himself perhaps, is stifled in his aristocratic cocoon and seeks solace in the real, wilder world. Erick Bruhn's *Swan Lake* for the National Ballet of Canada (1966) recasts the evil sorcerer as a female figure implying that our hero is the victim of an Oedipus complex. *Illusions – Like Swan Lake*, which John Neumeier choreographed for Hamburg Ballet in 1976, weaves the narrative into the history of King Ludwig of Bavaria who had his own obsession with swans. For *Adventures in Motion Pictures* in 1995 Matthew Bourne created a revisionist *Swan Lake* in which the decorative and vulnerable *corps de ballet* is replaced by aggressive, potentially violent males, their feral freedom irresistible to a prince chafing against constraints.

The Sleeping Beauty was adapted from Charles Perrault's well-known fairy story, *La Belle au bois dormant* (1697). Tchaikovsky took special pains over the orchestration, achieving an unprecedented precision of effect, assisted by his recent experiences as a conductor. The story goes that at the gala rehearsal before the Maryinsky première which took place on [3 January] / 15 January 1890, the grandeur and novelty of the conception left Tsar Alexander III bemused. He summoned up only a lukewarm 'Very nice!' when the composer was called to the royal box. 'His majesty treated me with distant hauteur' noted the composer in his diary.

The ballet's prologue depicting the christening of the baby Princess Aurora contains a variation for each of the six fairies come to bestow gifts upon the infant. In the midst of the excitement the wicked fairy, Carabosse, casts a spell over Aurora, promising that she will prick her finger and die. Intervening to save her, the Lilac Fairy (originally played by Petipa's daughter, Marie) mitigates the curse from death to sleep. Many years later the royal family is celebrating Aurora's birthday. The choreographic highpoint is the Adagio maestoso or 'Rose' Adagio which she dances with her princely suitors, the steps revealing her growing confidence. Since her christening the King has attempted to ban all sharp objects from the kingdom but when a disguised Carabosse presents Aurora with a spindle, sometimes a bouquet of flowers or a beautiful tapestry with embedded needle, she pricks her finger and she and the court fall deeply asleep.

One hundred years later in a dark forest a Prince is hunting with his friends. The Lilac Fairy conjures up an irresistible apparition of Aurora and he instantly falls in love. Led to the castle to rescue her and put an end to the evil Carabosse, one kiss and the spell is broken. Princess Aurora and her entire family awaken from their slumber and the couple's wedding is celebrated in Act 3 with a divertissement involving a cornucopia of fairytale characters including Puss in Boots, Cinderella, the Bluebird, Little Red Riding Hood and Tom Thumb. In the grand pas de deux Aurora is presented musically and choreographically as a woman in full bloom, rejoicing in true love. Initially performed abroad in abbreviated form, Diaghilev and his Ballets Russes brought the first full-length *Sleeping Beauty* to the UK in 1921. The countless stagings since have tended to remain close to the Russian original rather than imparting layers of psychological meaning.

After Tchaikovsky's qualified success with *The Sleeping Beauty*, in February 1891 he was invited to compose the music for a new ballet. The scenario was based on Alexandre Dumas père's adaptation of a story by the German writer E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Nussknacker und Mausekönig*. From the outset, *The Nutcracker* had its critics, none more trenchant than the composer himself. He wrote to his beloved nephew, Vladimir (Bob) Davydov on 7 July: '...I finished the sketches of the ballet yesterday. You will remember that I boasted to you when you were here that I could finish the ballet in five days, but I have scarcely finished it in a fortnight. No, the old man is breaking up ... he loses bit by bit the capacity to do anything at all. The ballet is infinitely worse than *Sleeping Beauty* – so much is certain ... If I arrive at the conclusion that I can no longer furnish my musical table with anything but warmed up fare, I will give up composing altogether.'

At its St. Petersburg première on [6 December] 18 December 1892 *The Nutcracker* formed half of a double bill with the darker operatic component, *Iolanta*, generally thought superior. Posterity has reversed this judgement. It is true that hardly any story survives in the ballet's voyage from the (mimed) semi-reality of an idealized family Christmas to the land of eternal sweetmeats (and nothing but virtuoso dancing). Yet the score itself is brilliantly alive with no hint of time-serving tinsel. Tchaikovsky's exploitation of his unmatched gift for melody was never more audacious.

The miniature overture opening the work sets the fairy mood by employing only the orchestra's upper registers. The first act is divided into two scenes. It is Christmas Eve and little Clara is playing with her toys. At midnight they come to life. Led by the Nutcracker, her special present, they overwhelm some marauding mice, after which he is transformed into a Prince. Clara and her Prince travel through a snowy landscape where they are greeted by waltzing snowflakes. Ivanov's original choreography, in which the dancers evoked the movements of windswept snow, was much admired by the cognoscenti who climbed up to the cheaper seats in order to appreciate the patterns created.

In Act 2 the Sugar Plum Fairy and the people of the Land of Sweets proffer a lavish gala of character dances. There follows a magnificent pas de deux for the Prince and the Sugar Plum Fairy, the latter's own variation realising the composer's desire to showcase the celesta, a new instrument he had heard in Paris. Its unique timbre is here famously complemented by little downward swoops from the bass clarinet. Elsewhere Tchaikovsky incorporates several children's instruments including a rattle, pop-gun, toy trumpet and miniature drum. After the festivities Clara wakes up under the Christmas tree, the Nutcracker toy in her arms, although, in some versions she rides off with her Nutcracker Prince as if the dream has happened in reality q.v. Hoffmann's original story.

Radical modern interpretations include Mark Morris's *The Hard Nut* (1991), set in the Swinging Sixties but faithful to the original score, and Donald Byrd's *Harlem Nutcracker* (1996), danced to Duke Ellington's jazz adaptation and set in an African-American household where Clara, the little girl, has become clan matriarch. That Tchaikovsky's invention should present such riches to plunder, given the slight, somewhat incongruous scenario with which he had to work, says much about the nature of his genius.

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PIANO CONCERTOS (CD 18 & 19)

Piano Concerto No.1 in B flat minor Op.23

(1874–75, third edition 1888–89)

Underlined by overt folksong references (Ukrainian in the outer movements, French in the D flat middle one) and covert Schumannesque cipher identities, this 'battle charger' endures as a blazing, impassioned witness to an emotion of race and individual born as much out of Slavic 'ancient voices' as Romantic dream. It was the first concerto to be performed at Carnegie Hall, by the German Liszt pupil Adèle aus der Ohe under the composer's direction on 9 May 1891.

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Piano Concerto No.3 in E flat Op.75/79

In May of 1892 Tchaikovsky began sketches for a symphony in E flat major – it would have been his sixth – but hints of trouble appeared. He wrote to a friend, ‘... it doesn’t go as smoothly as I might wish’. By October he finished the rough sketch of this symphony, and the orchestration remained to be completed. By December he found he was not satisfied with it as symphonic material and decided to scrap it. After second thoughts he realized the material was too good to discard and therefore (after setting this aside for a while to write his ‘Pathétique’ Symphony) rewrote the first movement for piano and orchestra. It is this single movement which is known as the Piano Concerto No.3 in E flat Op.75. It is dedicated to Louis Diémer (1843–1919), the French pianist who popularized Tchaikovsky’s music in France. The first performance of this third concerto took place in St Petersburg in January 1895. The score was first published by Jurgenson in 1894.

The noted English critic, Eric Blom, once wondered, ‘Why this concerto should never be performed passes comprehension.’ Only occasional performances are heard nowadays, although this single movement has been successfully utilized since 1956 in the New York City Ballet Company’s production, *Allegro Brillante*, choreographed by George Balanchine.

Of the two remaining (discarded) movements of the proposed symphony, Tchaikovsky left these in short score. Serge Taneiev (1856–1915), the great Russian pianist-composer-teacher, took up the task of orchestrating (and reconstructing where necessary) these two movements, based on Tchaikovsky’s piano scores and rough manuscript drafts. These two movements are entitled *Andante* and *Finale* Op.79. They were first performed in St Petersburg in February 1896. The score was first published by Belaieff in 1897 and was later reprinted in the *Collected Works of Tchaikovsky* Vol. 62 (Moscow, 1948).

Taneiev was the ideal man to complete Op.79: at the Moscow Conservatory he studied piano with Nicholas Rubinstein and composition with Tchaikovsky; he played the solo part in the first Moscow performances of Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto in B flat minor; he became one of the chief exponents of Tchaikovsky’s music; and he developed a great friendship with the composer. In fact, Tchaikovsky encouraged Taneiev’s severe criticism of his music. Taneiev scores the *Andante* and *Finale* in characteristic Tchaikovsian manner – woodwind, horns and strings in the *Andante*; and full orchestra in the *Finale* with drum and cymbals added in accord with enhancing its martial character. The arranger also furnishes many variant readings of piano passages. The piano makes an arresting entrance stating the main theme of the first movement (4/4, *Allegro brillante*) in double octaves. A lyrical second subject (G major cantabile ed espressivo) and a hopping, dance-like subsidiary theme (*Allegro molto vivace*) and contrast. The long solo cadenza is based mostly on a three-note pattern repeated in many modulations. The material of the coda (*Vicacissimo*) is a slight transformation of the main theme, building in increasingly higher pitches. In the *Andante* movement (3/4, B flat major), the orchestra commences the main theme simply, which is then restated by the piano. A lush cello solo introduced (G flat major, *Più mosso*). After a short cadenza, the first theme recurs in an overlapping dialogue between soloist and cello. The short finale movement (4/4, *Allegro maestoso*) ranges through E flat, G and C with fiery interlocking chords and octaves, rapid scalar passages and strong orchestral punctuation. About

30 years ago the Russian composer, Semyon Bogatyryev, restudied all these scores. He reconstructed them and reorchestrated sections. He also added a fourth movement by orchestrating a piano scherzo from Tchaikovsky’s Op.72, and entitled the whole thing *Symphony No.7*. Although the three movements presented here were performed (by Taneiev) before the turn of the century as noted above, to date we have located no record of performance of all three movements played in succession and thus forming a logical, complete three-movement concerto.

© Donald Garvelmann

Concert Fantasy for piano and orchestra Op.56

The famous work in B flat minor known universally as ‘the’ Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto (Op.23) is almost certainly the most popular concerto ever placed before the public. Since that is so, since it bears designation ‘No.1’, and since Tchaikovsky is one of the most beloved of all composers, it is surprising, to say the least, that the public which has so adored that work for over a hundred years has not shown more curiosity about Tchaikovsky’s other works for piano and orchestra. Curiously, the Second and Third Concertos, while they have never become concert favourites, have become quite familiar to balletomanes, for George Balanchine choreographed both of them with notable success – No.2 (Op.44) in 1941 as *Ballet Imperial* and the one-movement No.3 (Op.75) 15 years later as *Allegro Brillante*.

The three concertos were not Tchaikovsky’s only works for piano and orchestra. In 1884, after completing the *Suite No.3* for orchestra (which Balanchine also choreographed), he produced the single-movement *Concert Fantasy* Op.56, which is still less known than any of the concertos. It is interesting, perhaps, to note that this concerted work which is not a concerto was composed just prior to the huge programme symphony *Manfred*, which Tchaikovsky did title a symphony but did not include among those he enumerated as such (chronologically, *Manfred* and all four of the suites fall between the Symphonies Nos. 4 and 5); this may indicate he was casting about for new forms – or simply that he decided these works did not meet the formal requirements for being called, respectively, Concerto and Symphony.

The history of the *Concert Fantasy* has a curious parallel with those of the First Piano Concerto and the Violin Concerto in the matter of its dedication. The Piano Concerto, as is well known, was originally dedicated to Nicholas Rubinstein, whose abusively hostile reaction to the work led Tchaikovsky to change the dedication, inscribing it to Hans von Bülow, who premiered the work in Boston. When Leopold Auer, to whom the Violin Concerto was originally dedicated, protested that it was too difficult, Adolf Brodsky won himself a place in musical history – and the rededication of the Concerto – by introducing it in Vienna. The *Concert Fantasy* was also published with a dedication different from the one originally intended by Tchaikovsky. Both the original and final dedicatees were women, and their own biographies reveal three striking similarities: both were celebrated performers, both were professors at the St Petersburg Conservatory, and both were married to famous virtuosi whom they divorced after a dozen years or so.

Anna Nikolayevna Essipova (1851–1914), for whom Tchaikovsky actually composed the *Fantasy*, toured Europe and America with great success; she was a pupil of Leschetizky, whom she married

in 1880 and divorced in 1892. She joined the Conservatory faculty in 1893, the year of Tchaikovsky's death, and taught there for nearly twenty years, numbering Sergei Prokofiev and Alexander Borovsky among her pupils. When that lady found the Concert Fantasy not to her taste. Tchaikovsky found another who was eager to take it up: Sophie Menter (1846–1918), daughter of a celebrated German cellist, pupil of Tausig, protégée of Liszt, and from 1872 to 1886 wife of the cello virtuoso David Popper. She was in Russia as a professor at the St. Petersburg Conservatory from 1883 to 1887, and gave the first performance of the Concert Fantasy in Moscow on 6 March 1885. Tchaikovsky's regard for her is shown further in his having orchestrated her own *Hungarian Gypsy Airs* for piano and orchestra, which she performed under his direction in Odessa on 4 February 1893.

The Concert Fantasy is in two movements, the first of which is labelled Quasi rondo – though it really doesn't come close to being a rondo. It is gracefully constructed, if hardly profound, and offers a rare example of Tchaikovsky's attempting the manner of Liszt, in the form of a section for solo piano both too long and too elaborate to be described as a cadenza. The second movement, headed 'Contrasts', opens with a slow theme played by the soloist (with an attractive counterpoint by a solo cello), which is forthwith 'contrasted' with an effective but conventional *molto vivace* section which brings the unusual work to a satisfying conclusion.

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COMPOSITIONS FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA (CD 21)

Tchaikovsky's reputation after his death is very different from the one he experienced while he was alive. During his lifetime, much of his popularity was due to his 'salon' works: songs, piano pieces and chamber compositions. The pieces on this CD (with the partial exception of the Concerto) belong to this group; almost all began as compositions for violin and piano and were so well loved that they were arranged for violin and orchestra (*Souvenir d'un lieu cher* was orchestrated by Alexander Glazunov). The works share an emphasis on melody, with long, eloquent, sometimes slightly sentimental lines and clear rhythmic patterns, and often have a traditional form, irrespective of length. Virtuosity – if present – is an ornament, never a goal.

These traits are also partly true of the Violin Concerto (1878). Already popular during his lifetime (in spite of some reviews), it became even more famous after Tchaikovsky's death, when the composer's long and dramatic works were in vogue, among them the last symphonies (the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth), his three ballets, orchestral poems (mainly *Romeo and Juliet* and *Francesca da Rimini*), several operas and his concertos for violin, cello and piano. His biographical upheavals were presented in great detail, and the Violin Concerto was scrutinised by those who wanted to relate his life to his music. Tchaikovsky wrote it immediately after the collapse of his disastrous marriage, a brief union that was intended to silence those who suspected that he was homosexual and to convince Tchaikovsky himself that he was prepared for 'a standard life'. Within a few days the marriage appeared to be a failure, and the composer subsequently fled from his native Russia to Italy.

In the context of these personal troubles, the Violin Concerto is, however, a rather sunny event. If Tchaikovsky had ever intended to project his personal emotions into his art, then it was achieved

in a very disguised manner. What is more, the Concerto is essentially an enlargement of the salon-like pieces he had written up to this point, one which deliberately evades the standard German concerto structure with carefully organised developments; no wonder the famous critic Eduard Hanslick detested the work for being formless. Just as in his 'salon music', there is a strong distinction in this composition between the violin's beautiful melodies at the piece's centre (with virtuosity an important embellishment) and the orchestra making wonderful bridges between the sections. Tchaikovsky's model was Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole*, which he had heard a few years before. 'Lalo, just as Léo Delibes and Bizet before him, doesn't strive for thoroughness, carefully avoids any routine, searches for new forms and thinks more about musical beauty than about obeying established traditions, in contrast to the Germans,' Tchaikovsky wrote to his patron, Nadezhda von Meck.

The presence of French names in this quotation is revealing; Tchaikovsky adored French culture and wanted to bring the elegant refinement he so cherished in ballet and opera into instrumental and nonnarrative music. In this attitude towards the arts, he was a true member of the Russian aristocracy. A regular guest in Paris, he included French dance-like elements in his own music and believed that sophistication and grace were more important than complex philosophy.

Originally the *Méditation* (note the French title), now the first movement of *Souvenir d'un lieu cher*, was intended as the middle movement of the Concerto. The similarities between this and the Andante are indeed strong; melody is much more important than motivic development. A melody played by the oboe, softly accompanied by the insecure harmonies of the strings, indeed opens the Andante, and the finale is a jubilant outburst of orchestral colour and virtuosity. Although Tchaikovsky enjoyed the company of great musicians who wanted to play his music, he almost never revised a score after their criticism.

The *Valse-scherzo* (1877) for violin and orchestra was written a few years before the Violin Concerto. It has the pattern of an extended *divertissement* and resembles a rondo form. The violinist is in the centre and the orchestra is, at best, an enthusiastic supporter. Tchaikovsky was not, unlike his countrymen Mussorgsky, Balakirev and Rimsky-Korsakov, much influenced by folk music, but he gave this composition a gypsy flavour and a strong rhythmic pulse.

In spite of the presence of an orchestra, the quiet *Sérénade mélancolique* (1875) is first and foremost a chamber piece. The melody has a vocal character and in the first few bars Tchaikovsky quotes a motif from his opera *Vakula the Smith*. Rather than developing a given theme, just as in his Concerto, Tchaikovsky instead presents a series of beautiful melodies in related keys. The closeness between the Serenade and the First Piano Concerto, written shortly afterwards, explains some similarities in harmony and phrasing, and this is no accident. Even in his most expansive moments Tchaikovsky maintained his classical restraint; refinement was his first concern, and he adored Mozart for his grace and simplicity.

The *Souvenir d'un lieu cher*, composed in 1878, is a good example of this refinement. Although the first movement was intended as the central movement of the Violin Concerto, it transfers easily to

a chamber context, and just as in the central movement of the Concerto a long, beautiful melody is here developed with ornamentation and delicate harmonic elaboration, with a restrained tension. By contrast, the Scherzo is a kind of *perpetuum mobile* for the violinist, although the many accents in the solo part do not disturb the ongoing movements in the outer sections. Between those episodes, subtle and energetic at the same time, is a slow passage in which the soloist can demonstrate his or her gift for expressivity.

The *Mélodie* of *Souvenir d'un lieu cher* is the clearest example of Tchaikovsky remaining 'a salon composer' at heart, even when composing outside the realm of chamber music, for it is in this movement that intimate and strong expression is presented through small and subtle gestures; no great finale, but a beautiful phrase, which communicates many things. When Glazunov orchestrated *Souvenir d'un lieu cher*, he wanted the orchestral part to be more than mere accompaniment. He therefore created brief dialogues between soloist and orchestra, and by doing so he gave the work a concerto-like character, especially in the first and third movements. Glazunov followed Tchaikovsky's style of orchestration and undoubtedly contributed towards the immense popularity that the piece later acquired.

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MUSIC FOR CELLO AND ORCHESTRA (CD 22)

This consists of two original compositions, the Variations on a Rococo Theme and the *Pezzo Capriccioso*. Several other pieces that are rather frequently played and that appear on this recording are actually transcriptions, made by Tchaikovsky himself, of the Nocturne from Op.19 and the Andante from his First String Quartet.

The Variations on a Rococo Theme were written during the winter of 1876–1877. Tchaikovsky had already written two concertante works, the First Piano Concerto and the *Sérénade mélancolique* for violin. The Variations are dedicated to the German virtuoso, Wilhelm Fitzenhagen, who gave their first performance in Moscow on 18 November 1877 under the direction of Nikolai Rubinstein. But this 'Fitzenhagen version', the only one that was published and performed until the publication of the original version in the 20th century, subjected the score to a reshuffling that completely upset the initial order of the variations. The rights and wrongs of this interference have been hotly disputed, one argument being that in the original version the cadenza comes after the second variation, in other words, much too early in the cycle. The attitude Tchaikovsky adopted towards Fitzenhagen's initiative was more passive than consenting. It is the original version that is to be heard on this recording. The orchestra in the Variations corresponds to the small formation of the 18th century: two parts for each of the woodwinds and horns and strings. The theme, hinted at in the short introduction, is stated in full by the soloist. It is followed by eight variations, alternately virtuosic and lyrical, most of them in dialogue with the timbres of the woodwinds, while the function of the strings is essentially limited to that of an accompaniment. The variations form a link between two periods, the gallant 18th century which Tchaikovsky so admired, and the romantic, virtuosic 19th century. After Fitzenhagen, the remainder of Tchaikovsky's production for the cello is associated with the name of another cellist, Anatoly Brandukov, one of the most

eminent of the Russian school. It was for him that in the second half of the 1880s Tchaikovsky made the transcription of the Nocturne from the six piano pieces, Op.19 (1873) and the Andante cantabile from the First String Quartet, based on a Russian folk-song that brought tears to the eyes of Leo Tolstoy. Two melodic pieces, one of them quietly elegiac, the other of a more expansive and noble lyricism, both of them exploiting the singing qualities of the instrument.

The *Pezzo Capriccioso* dates from the same period as the two transcriptions. It was composed in August 1887 under distressing circumstances during a stay in Aachen where Tchaikovsky had gone to bed-side of his gravely ill friend, Nikolai Kondratyev. The piece was clearly composed as a distraction. 'It is all my inspiration has produced during the whole of this summer,' he admitted in a letter of 30 August 1887 to his publisher Jurgenson. It was first played in Paris by Tchaikovsky and Brandukov in a version for piano and cello on 28 February 1888. The *Pezzo Capriccioso* opens with an Andante con moto introduction whose tone of ardent mournfulness soon makes way for the more playful, animated principal subject. The middle section is particularly spectacular and perilous, with a headlong charge of staccato demisemiquavers. A succession of trills leads back to the initial theme. The coda contains a few references to the virtuosic figures.

Some of the most beautiful pages in Tchaikovsky's ballets are those for solo violin or cello. The Andante cantabile in the second act of *The Sleeping Beauty* (No.15 in the ballet) unfurls a superb cantilena while the Lilac Fairy grants Prince Désiré a glimpse of the vision of Princess Aurore in a blending of reverie, love and hope.

The Serenade for Strings was written in September–October 1880. At first Tchaikovsky hesitated between a symphony and a quintet. Opting for a string orchestra, his thinking was that of a symphonist, as is borne out by the inscription on the manuscript: 'The larger the number of strings, the more it will correspond to the composer's wish.' The Serenade was first heard at a private concert in the Moscow Conservatory on 21 November 1880. In the same way as the Variations on a Rococo Theme it demonstrates the need felt by a romantic composer to regenerate himself by a return to the classical sources. But even more than that, it constitutes a synthesis of the fundamental aspects of Tchaikovsky's art. The *Pezzo* in forma di Sonatina begins with a solemn introduction before slipping into a Mozartian lightness and transparency. The Valse is a moment of perfect musical felicity. It is followed by an Elegie, which alternates between a contemplative, almost religious gravity and moments of more relaxed lyricism. And the Finale, used on two folksongs, celebrates his return to his native soil. Classical, dance-like, elegiac, nationalistic – summarized in four words, this is the musical portrait of Tchaikovsky.

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LITURGY OF ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (CD 22)

'I attend Mass frequently. The liturgy of St John Chrysostom is one of the most exalted works of art. Anyone following the liturgy of the Greek Orthodox service attentively trying to comprehend the meaning of each ceremony will be stirred to the very depth of his being. I am also very fond of evening prayers. There is nothing

like entering an ancient church on a Saturday, standing in the semi-darkness with the scent of incense wafting through the air, lost in deep contemplation to find an answer to those perennial questions: wherefore, when, whither and why? Startled out of my pensive mood by the singing of the choir, I abandon myself entirely to the glowing fervour of this enthralling music when the Holy Door opens and the tune "Praise ye the Lord" rings out. This is one of the greatest pleasures in my life.' Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky wrote these lines to his patroness, Nadezhda von Meck, a woman he never met. He continued: 'As you can see, I am still bound to the Church by strong ties, but on the other hand I have long ceased to believe in the dogma ... This constant inner struggle would be enough to drive me out of my mind were it not for music, that great comforter, the most exquisite gift Heaven has bestowed on a mankind living in darkness ... Music is a loyal friend, a source of strength and solace, something worth living for.'

Tchaikovsky, the Russian composer who gave the world fate-laden symphonies, ballets and ten operas, accepted a commission in 1878 from his friend and publisher, Petr Ivanovich Jurgenson, to provide a setting for the liturgy of St John Chrysostom, which became his Op.41. But who was the originator of that liturgy?

St John, Patriarch of Constantinople (344–407 A.D.), was a man of great eloquence, which earned him the nickname Chrysostom (golden-mouthed), translated literally into Russian as *zlatoust*. Before assuming his high office, this Doctor of the Church was a monk and bishop in Antioch, where he became acquainted with the form of liturgical chant that he subsequently took to Constantinople and that was to remain closely associated with his name well into the 14th century. The liturgy of St John Chrysostom was the direct counterpart of Gregorian chant in the Western Church, which also harked back to the early Christian period, but continued to be elaborated and generalized until the age of Palestrina. Before St John reformed the rite, the Orthodox Church employed the more 'opulent' liturgy which St Basil (329–379 A.D., known as 'The Great') had introduced and which is now used only occasionally (e.g. during Lent).

In a more narrow sense, the liturgy of St John Chrysostom is the Orthodox equivalent of the Eucharist office in the West. It has always been celebrated in Church Slavonic, the lingua franca of the Eastern Churches. In practice, the first part of the liturgy, the Proskomide (consecration of bread and wine) takes place at the altar before the beginning of the service while the second part, which is open to the faithful, involves an extensive chanted dialogue between the priest and the body of believers, interrupted by troparions (hymns) and litanies, songs of praise and verses from the Psalter. The high point of the ceremony is the administration of the Eucharistic gifts.

Tchaikovsky gave the following account of the premiere at the Moscow Conservatory: 'The choir was in excellent form, and I witnessed one of the happiest moments of my career as an artist ... A decision has been made to repeat the Liturgy in a public concert.' The first public performance took place in Moscow in December 1880, but met with a mixed response. In marked contrast to the plaudits of the music critics, Bishop Ambrosius wrote in a letter to the periodical *Rus* that Church music was out of place in a concert hall and did not lend itself to applause, but admitted that the music had intrinsic value: 'Fortunately, the

liturgy has found its way into the hands of a gifted composer ... After all, the task might have been entrusted to a musician of lesser standing. Perhaps we must now brace ourselves for a Holy Mass by some Rosenthal or Rosenblum, which will be then be greeted with boos and catcalls.'

Apart from its unmistakably anti-Semitic overtones, the Bishop's comment made it clear that the Orthodox Church was not prepared to budge an inch from its time-honoured traditions even though Tchaikovsky had made a deliberate effort to create a kind of musical iconostasis (the icon-decorated screen separating the sanctuary from the nave) and give musical expression to the aura of timeless spirituality emanating from the icons. This explains why he adopted a very cautious approach to some authentic melodies, making only the most sparing use of the expressive resources at his command. So it must have been all the more painful for him to learn that the Church withheld its consent because of the place chosen for performance. This notwithstanding, he responded favourably when the new Tsar, Alexander III (crowned in 1883) suggested that he write further Church music. He proceeded to compose three Cherubical Hymns (1884), a Hymn to the Apostles of the Slavs, St Cyril and St Methodius, and Six Ecclesiastical Songs (1885). All the while, he was keenly aware of his responsibility to provide a new musical garb for the ancient rite without any loss of reverence or piety. 'This is a challenging, but difficult task. The main point is to preserve these old chants in their original form. Should I succeed in coping with this difficult job, I could pride myself on having been the first to help restore the original character and style of our Church music.'

The Vespers (agrypnia, vigilia) is an ancient Christian evening service, the earliest evidence of which dates as far back as the 4th century; it was the Spanish pilgrim Egeria who described for the first time a solemn night service in the Temple at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. According to the Jerusalem Typikon, established since the 14th century onwards and presently acting in the Orthodox Churches, the Vigil serves as a link between the Holy Evening Service and the Solemn Morning Service. It is observed on the eve of great Gods', Theotokian and Saints' holidays as an expression of reverence. In our modern times night-long vigils are served in all monastery centres of the Orthodox East – in Russia, in the Balkans, on Mount Athos, where the mysticism of the Orthodox liturgical service stands out with a particular power of its own. Starting a little after sunset and ending at sunrise, the continuous service possesses a complex symbolism which unites all the aspects of the evening, midnight, and morning services.

The evening service contains episodes from the Old Testament, presenting pictures of world history, revealing the image of the coming Messiah and His kingdom, and narrating of God's endless love, shown to people through the gift of the Redemption. The midnight service reminds man of death, of the hour when the dead will be resurrected, of Christ's second coming. The morning service is an act of thanksgiving to God for having preserved us through the night. It extends a prayer to Him to transfigure our hearts with his creative breath and to lead us to the eternal light of Christ who won over death through His resurrection. Basic symbols of the vigil are the light signifying the glory of God and the incense – symbol of the Holy Spirit, transferring God's mercy and sweetness.

SECULAR CHORAL WORKS: NEGLECTED TCHAIKOVSKY? (CD 23)

In the field of choral music Tchaikovsky is known above all as the first Russian composer to have composed cycles of the Liturgy and the Vespers. But as a composer who mastered every musical genre of the time, he also left a considerable output of secular choral music, a genre that had been curiously neglected by professional Russian composers and which Sergei Taneyev, a pupil of Tchaikovsky's was to raise to a peak of perfection in the succeeding decades. Tchaikovsky's secular choral works were written for various types of choir, male, female, and mixed (in which order they figure on this recording), sometimes with one or more soloists, usually a cappella, but in some cases with piano accompaniment. Several of the works to be heard here were originally written for a solo voice or for a vocal duet, but Tchaikovsky himself realised that they worked better as choruses. This is the case in *Autumn*, *Child's Song* and *A Legend*, taken from the 16 Children's Songs Op.54 (1881), and in *Dawn*, a duo for soprano and mezzo, and *Night*, a vocal quartet with piano.

Evening, dated 1881, was written at the request of Karl Albrecht for a volume of choruses for male voices. It is a three-part choral fugato (two tenors and a bass), filled with nobility and peace. The anonymous text might be by the composer himself. *Autumn* and *Child's Song*, both of which introduce a tenor solo, are in marked contrast to each other: a misty autumnal poem of lethargic melancholy and a comical, playful little ditty.

It was to a poem by Grand Duke Konstantin Romanov that Tchaikovsky wrote the four-part chorus *Blessed is he who smiles* in 1887, the same year as the Six Songs Op.63 to words by the same poet. 'K.R.', as he signed his collections of verse, was the most talented and cultivated member of the Imperial family and Tchaikovsky was on particularly cordial terms with him. The poem in question is of a rather naive and banal philosophical-moral cast and its musical setting is of an appropriately serene ingenuousness.

Why does the merry voice grow silent? (Pushkin) forms a little triptych with the female chorus *Much too soon in the season* and the mixed chorus *It is not the cuckoo*. The three choruses were written in 1891 in response to a commission from the singer Ivan Melnikov (who created the role of Boris Godunov) for his vocal ensemble class. The first is vigorously optimistic with a more meditative middle episode. The second (Tzyganov) is an elegy that grows progressively more animated and ends on a fortissimo chorale. The third (Tzyganov) could belong to the type of urban folk song much used by many Russian composers, great and small, during the 19th century. The Old French Air is a melody of melancholy and timeless charm which, after having been one of the piano pieces in the Children's Album (1878), passed into the opera *The Maid of Orléans* (1879), where it became a minstrel's song. This is the version heard here.

Dawn is one of the six vocal duets with piano Op.46 written in 1880. As has been mentioned above, it may be performed just as effectively by two soloists as by a two-part women's choir. Short vocal phrases are interspersed with psalmodies recited on one note. It's essentially contemplative character is that of a pastoral.

The relatively large scale *Nature and Love* was composed in 1870 for Bertha Walseck's singing class at the Moscow Conservatory. It is a trio for soprano, mezzo and contralto, three-part female

chorus and piano. Tchaikovsky himself wrote the somewhat exalted and sentimental words of this pantheistic credo. The form is that of two alternating Andantes and Allegros, with the choir entering in the latter. The music, in keeping with the text, radiates unclouded happiness.

Before Sleep is one of the youthful works Tchaikovsky composed in 1863–64 during his student years at the Conservatory. It is a kind of peaceful, meditative nocturne comparable to a canticle. It exists in two versions: a cappella and with orchestra.

In *The golden cloud had slept*, the famous poem by Lermontov (*The Rock*) here takes the form of a meditation, once again imprinted with a religious cast, although this is not what the poem is about. The writing, very simple and vertical, is that of a chorale. It is dated 5 July 1887.

The Greeting to Anton Rubinstein is a piece written especially for the 50th anniversary of Rubinstein's musical career, celebrated on 18 November 1889. There are passages in which the choral parts are doubled to as many as seven, which effectively enhances the brilliance of the panegyric.

Both the words and the music of *The Nightingale*, without a doubt Tchaikovsky's finest achievement in choral music, were written in 1889. It is magnificent reconstruction of a folk song scrupulously observing all of its musical properties: the solo singer introducing the chorus, the modal and melodic turns, the fullness and the density in the treatment of the vocal parts, here, too, as many as seven real parts. The vocal quartet with piano accompaniment, *Night*, written in March 1893, is Tchaikovsky's final tribute to Mozart, whom he had always idolised. It is an arrangement of the middle section of Mozart's Fantasy in C minor for piano. The words, written by Tchaikovsky himself, are once again serenely contemplative and this time are clearly determined by the original music. It is a composition that belongs in the same category as the Prayer (*Ave, verum corpus*) of the 'Mozartiana' Suite.

The next two choruses have a religious connotation. The Hymn to St Cyril and St Methodius is a harmonisation of an old Slav melody; the words, originally in Czech, were translated into Russian by the composer. The chorus is a tribute to the two saintly brothers, masters of the Slavonic language in the 9th century, and was written in 1887 on the occasion of the millennium of the death of St Methodius. A Legend ('The infant Jesus had a garden') belongs to the cycle of Children's Songs Op.54 already mentioned. Tchaikovsky's choral arrangement became extremely popular as a 'spiritual song' and was absorbed into the repertoire of the sacred folk songs so widespread in Russia. And finally, this programme concludes with a little choral divertissement in the form of the Neapolitan Air whose tune was derived from *Swan Lake*. It is a later adaptation for chorus without words that is sung here, in the manner of an encore.

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PIANO TRIO (CD 24)

To Vasily Yastrebtsev, writing in 1899, Tchaikovsky was a man of his time. 'When Mussorgsky and Dargomizhsky were forging an extreme naturalism and a genre that was not always artistic – when Borodin was submerging himself in a prehistoric epoch ... when Rimsky-Korsakov has been drawn into his own personal, clearly individual, pagan, fairy-tale ... and when Cui ... flies off into a Scotland that is alien to us – Tchaikovsky has been filled totally with the spirit of his age, and with all the highly strung fervour of his deeply sensitive and impressionable nature [...] has "depicted us ourselves alone", with our unresolved doubts, our sorrow and our joys.'

STRING QUARTETS (CD 25 & 26)

Apart from youthful essays Tchaikovsky wrote little chamber music: three string quartets, a piano trio, three pieces for violin and piano, and the string sextet *Souvenir de Florence* (for two violins, two violas and two cellos). The three string quartets: in D Op.11 (1872), in F Op.22 (1876) and in E flat minor Op.30 (1876) – all published before he was 40 – were preceded by a quartet in B flat, of which only the first movement survives (it is placed last on this CD1 of this set). Tchaikovsky wrote it in 1865 and it was performed for the first time on 12 November that year, towards the end of his studies at the Conservatoire in St Petersburg, by four of his fellow students. The main body of the piece, in sonata form and marked *Allegro con moto*, has, as its first subject (begun by the viola), an engaging folk tune that he had heard sung by the gardeners at Kamenka, the home of his brother-in-law Lev Davidov and sister Sasha, near Kiev in the Ukraine. (He had hoped to collect Ukrainian folk songs, while staying at Kamenka, for future use in his own compositions, but was disappointed by those he heard, finding them artificial and inferior to White Russian melodies; this was one of the few he used, in the quartet movement and again in the *Scherzo à la russe* for piano Op.1 No.1, composed in 1867). There is a rather nervous second subject in C, begun by eight repeated notes on the first violin; both themes are used in the substantial development section, and in the recapitulation the second subject reappears in C *sharp*! The movement is framed by a solemn, chorale-like *Adagio misterioso* in 3/4; in its preludial role it ends with cadential flourishes on all four instruments in turn (second violin, viola, first violin, cello); in its postludial role these are replaced by a hushed reminiscence of the folk tune on the cello and, briefly, the first violin.

The first of Tchaikovsky's quartets that has survived complete (it is not known whether the isolated first movement in B flat ever had its other three, or if these were subsequently lost or discarded), in D, was written, very quickly, early in 1871, for a benefit concert devoted entirely to his own compositions that he put on in Moscow on 28 March that year. The artists who took part in it included Nikolay Rubinstein and the contralto Elizaveta Lavroskaya; and the novelist Ivan Turgenev (and the work's dedicatee, the botanist Sergey Rachinsky) were in the audience.

The high point of the occasion was, however, the performance of the quartet: the first important work of its kind by a Russian composer. It was given by the Russian Music Society's Quartet, whose leader, the Czech violinist Ferdinand Laub, and cellist, the German Wilhelm Fitzenhagen (for whom Tchaikovsky was to write his *Variations on a Rococo Theme* for cello and orchestra in

1877) had been the composer's colleagues on the professorial staff of the Moscow Conservatoire since its foundation in 1866.

Both of the first movement's main themes are enlivened by rhythmic irregularities: the first (underpinned by tonic and dominant pedals) by syncopations, the second (in A and the more 'melodic' of the two) by the insertion of a bar in 12/8 into the movement's basic 9/8 metre; and both are discussed in the busy (and, it must be said, rather repetitive) development. Apart from an elaborated return of the first subject the recapitulation is remarkably exact, except for its coda in quicker tempo. As Tchaikovsky's biographer David Brown perceptively puts it: 'Much of the movement's richness comes from the abundant contrapuntal decoration of fundamentally simple harmonies, with Tchaikovsky amply exploiting that facility he had always shown for devising fertile counterpoints of running semiquavers.' The slow movement in B flat is better known in its transcription for string orchestra. It is based on another folk tune Tchaikovsky had heard in Kamenka, sung by a carpenter ('Upon the divan Vanya sat/and filled a glass with rum;/before he'd poured out half a tot/he ordered Katenka to come.') and had included in his *Fifty Russian Folksongs* arranged for piano duet (1868–9). Introduced *con sordini* and with its 2/4 metre twice broken by a bar in 3/4, it is alternated with a subsidiary theme of his own, in D flat and with a pizzicato accompaniment. When Tolstoy heard the *Andante cantabile* five years later he was moved to tears; presumably he was unaware of the banality of the words.

Both the *Scherzo* (in D minor and with only its second section repeated) and the *Trio* (in B flat and with no repeats) are strongly rhythmic and syncopated; the latter has a wavering cello ostinato for much of the time. In the reprise of the *Scherzo* the concluding bars are to be played with a gradual diminuendo. The predominantly jocular, breezy spirit of the sonata-form finale, whose main theme is almost as remarkable for its silences as for the notes that they separate, is set off by an expansive second subject (in the distant key of B flat). The development is based entirely on the first subject, with persistent running semiquavers; to compensate for this the recapitulation begins with the fortissimo statement of this theme, with the first violin and viola in close canon (as in bar 51 of the exposition): the second subject reappears in D and on the cello. The movement ends with an emphatic coda.

Tchaikovsky began work on the Quartet in F early in 1874 and finished it on 30 January. As he wrote to his brother Modest: 'None of my pieces has ever flowed out of me so easily and simply; I wrote it almost in one sitting.' It was performed for the first time a fortnight later, by the R.M.S. Quartet at a musical soirée in the house of the conductor Nikolay Rubinstein in Moscow. It appears that Rubinstein himself was not present, but his elder brother, Anton, the pianist, was, and having listened to the quartet with evident displeasure declared with characteristic discourtesy that it was not true chamber music at all and that he could not understand it (although the four players and other members of the audience were obviously delighted with it). Nevertheless it seems probable that Tchaikovsky made some adjustments before the second performance, which was given in public on 22 March – with universal approval. The score was dedicated to Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich.

The first movement begins with a chromatic and impassioned

slow introduction featuring two cadenza-like flourishes for the first violin. The winding first subject, introduced straightaway by the first violin, is also chromatic and rather melancholy in character, but the compact second subject (in G), approached by way of a bustling and syncopated transition, is suggestive of a robust Russian folk tune; its subsequent treatment offers the first of many instances in the quartet of a positively orchestral style of writing for the four instruments. The development makes use of both themes and is followed by a recapitulation that is regular but for the fact that it begins with the fifth bar of the first subject, and by a substantial coda that is really an extension of the development. The Scherzo, in D flat, is in a metre of 6/8, 6/8, 9/8, which produces an attractively lopsided 7/4 rhythm that is characteristic of many Russian folk tunes; it encloses a waltz-like Trio in A. There are no formal repeats in either section of the movement, but the reprise of the Scherzo is extended with a coda.

The slow movement, in F minor, is in ternary form, with an expressive introductory passage preceding the presentation of the main theme, in which the interval of a falling fourth is a prominent feature. There is a very active and syncopated middle section beginning in E major, with further use of quasi-orchestral effects, followed by a reprise which begins with a shortened version of the introduction, an enriched and elaborated treatment of the 'fourths' theme, and a powerful coda which includes a retrospective glance at the music of the central episode. The finale is a rondo based on a vigorous refrain with a persistent dactylic rhythm, and with a broad subsidiary theme in D flat which, like the one in the last movement of the contemporary Piano Concerto in B flat minor, returns triumphantly (and in the 'home' major key) in the final pages of the movement. There are two main episodes, the first in parallel semiquavers, and the second beginning in the style of a rather angular fugue.

The third and last quartet was begun during a brief stay in Paris in January 1876, where he was profoundly moved by a performance of Bizet's *Carmen* at the Opéra Comique. The quartet was completed within a month or so, and was first performed at a soirée given by the pianist Nikolay Rubinstein on 14 March. The audience was enthusiastic but Tchaikovsky was less certain of its quality. 'I think I have rather written myself out,' he said to his brother Modest, 'I am beginning to repeat myself and cannot conceive anything new. Have I really sung my swan song, and have nowhere further to go? It is terribly sad. However, I shall endeavour to write nothing for a while but try to regain my strength.' Two weeks later, on 28 March, the quartet was performed at the Moscow Conservatoire in honour of Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich and two more public performances were given within less than a week. Tchaikovsky dedicated the quartet to the memory of his friend, the Czech violinist Ferdinand Laub (1832–1875), who had led the first performances of his first two quartets, in 1872 and 1874.

The first movement begins with a substantial slow introduction (Andante sostenuto), solemn and elegiac in mood, and clearly meant as an affectionate tribute to the quartet's dedicatee. It prefaces an even more substantial Allegro moderato with two distinct subjects and a coda in 6/8 and marked (like the introduction) Andante sostenuto; it has aptly been described as a huge *valse triste*. The second movement is a lively scherzo in B

flat major, which provides brief but welcome relief between the weighty first movement and the grief-laden Andante in E flat minor, with its telling use of discreet pizzicato; there is a brief but powerful episode in B major, marked *con dolore*. The vigorous finale is marked *risoluto*, as though Tchaikovsky has realised that he had expressed enough grief and should end his funeral tribute and crown it with a positive note, as a salute to a fine musician.

The string sextet *Souvenir de Florence* was begun on 13 June 1890 (a week after the completion of Tchaikovsky's first full-length opera, *The Queen of Spades*) and sketches for it were finished on 30 June; its title refers to the composer's stay in Florence between 30 January and 7 April the same year, during which most of the work on the opera was done, and the sextet does not reflect the nature of the music, which can hardly be described as Italianate. On 12 July he wrote to Nadezhda von Meck, the wealthy and generous Russian patroness whom he never actually met: 'Scarcely was the opera finished before I took up a new work, the sketch of which is already completed. I hope you will be pleased to hear that I have composed a sextet for strings. I know your love of chamber music, and I am glad you will be able to hear my sextet; that will not necessitate your going to a concert as you can easily arrange a performance of it at home. I hope the work will please you; I wrote it with the greatest enthusiasm and without the least exertion.'

To his brother Modest, however, he wrote: 'I am writing under unusual strain, I am embarrassed not by any lack of ideas, but by the novelty of the form. I need six independent and at the same time similar voices. This is incredibly difficult. Haydn could never conquer this difficulty and never composed any but quartet chamber music.' Tchaikovsky's misgivings were echoed by the small audience (which included Glazunov and Liadov) present at a private performance of the sextet in St Petersburg in November, and it was as a result of this that he made some revisions before having the score published in 1892 – though he does not appear to have hit on the most satisfactory way of performing the *Souvenir de Florence*; with a string orchestra.

The sextet was dedicated to the St Petersburg Chamber Music Society and first performed, in its revised form, at one of their concerts, on 7 December 1892. The first movement (in D minor) has a vigorous, swinging first subject, and a sustained, lyrical second subject that makes a feature of contrasting triple and duple metre; there is an ingenious development section based mostly on the first subject and its offshoots, leading to a dramatically prepared recapitulation, and the movement ends with a coda in quicker tempo. The Adagio cantabile (in D major) is in ternary form, its opening and closing sections featuring an eloquent theme presented by the first violin and first cello in dialogue against a pizzicato triplet accompaniment, framed (but in the varied reprise only concluded) by a solemn chordal passage. There is a colourful middle section in D minor, much more orchestral than chamber-musical in conception, based entirely on quick repeated-note triplets played at the point of the bow. The third movement (in A minor) is a sort of intermezzo, consisting of different settings of its main idea: an emphatic tune of marked Russian flavour. The brilliant, showy finale, which begins in D minor but changes to D major about two-thirds of the way through, is also based on a theme that owes much more to Russia than Tuscany and proves to be aptly suited for contrapuntal treatment.

Between 1863 and 1864 Tchaikovsky wrote a handful of short pieces for various small instrumental combinations and all are melodious and attractive. This recording features an Allegretto moderato in D for string trio, and three pieces: an Allegretto in E, an Allegro vivace in B flat, and an Andante molto in G, for string quartet.

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PIANO MUSIC (CD 27 - 31)

Unlikely as it may seem, there had been no large-scale, comprehensive recorded collection of Tchaikovsky's piano music until the appearance in 1970 of Michael Ponti's first three-disc Vox album (digitally remastered for CD on VoxBox CD3X 3025). That included complete performances all of the relatively early works (Opp. 1,2,4, 5 , 7 , 9 , 10, 19, and 21), plus –from the composer's middle period – the Op.37 sonata, the Op.40 collection of 12 pieces, and the Op.59 *Dumka*. Yet, even as extensive a program as this (one including several pieces never before recorded and many recorded for the first time in stereo) covered barely half of the Tchaikovskian piano-solo repertory.

The present volume of Ponti performances not only complements the first volume but completes his task of recording this repertory in its entirety. Besides the once very popular *Album for the Young* and *The Seasons* series and the less familiar musical portraits of six fair ladies of Op.51, this set represents the fascinatingly contrasted earliest and last Tchaikovskian compositions for piano: the student Sonata in C sharp minor (bearing a high opus number only because it was published posthumously) and the inexplicably neglected eighteen pieces of Op.72 that were written a bare half-year before Tchaikovsky's untimely death. And although there are only five works with opus numbers, plus five miniatures without such designations, the present recording includes – if one counts the individual pieces in the collections – no fewer than sixty-one to be added to the forty-five in the first volume – for a grand total of 106.

Why has such a substantial contribution to the keyboard literature remained so little known and appreciated (apart of course from the half-dozen 'hit' pieces ironically most often heard in transcriptions)? There are several plausible answers: the near extinction of the amateur pianists for whom so many of Tchaikovsky's (and his contemporaries') salon pieces were primarily intended ... the scarcity of representative individual recordings resulting from the going-out-of-print of so many fine 78-rpm and mono-LP exemplars ... the mid-twentieth century taste-revulsion against the Romanticism dominant for so many previous years ... the generally low evaluation of Tchaikovsky's piano music, a supposedly authoritative depreciation that – just or unjustly – has damned most of it to institutional, at least, neglect...

The first answer is unquestionably a valid one. The second surely represents more of a consequence than a cause. The third has been powerfully valid for several decades, but it is now becoming far less influential; indeed there seems to be at least the beginnings of a complete taste reversal and a revival of a vogue for Romanticism both in music and elsewhere. The fourth answer also may have been valid for some years, but the chances are good that it carries little weight with most of today's younger

listeners insistent on the right to make up their own minds and form their own judgments. Whatever their eventual verdict, they must surely relish the present opportunity of hearing, for the first time, all Tchaikovsky's piano music speaks as it can more eloquently than any surrogate, however 'expert' – for itself.

Since the published scores are likely to be unknown to most present-day music-lovers, and because it is difficult for listeners who are not musicians to differentiate clearly a considerable number of short pieces heard in immediate succession, the present annotator has endeavored to provide as much detailed factual information as possible – dates, key and time signatures, tempo and performance specifications, etc. I have appended a chronology intended to ease the task of placing each piano work (listed in bold face type) in its proper relation to Tchaikovsky's compositions in other media and to the principal events in the composer's all too-short life.

The Seasons Op.37a

There seems to be no rational explanation for using 'The Seasons' as a title for a series of twelve pieces captioned separately by the names of the months; nor is there any reason (except publishing confusion) for assigning Op.37a (or Op.37 bis) to this collection after Op.37 already had been attached to the Piano Sonata in G. But instead of trying to clear up these mysteries, Tchaikovskian commentators have been more often fascinated with the probably not entirely apochryphal anecdote of its compositional circumstances. The work was commissioned for serial publication in the St. Petersburg musical magazine *Nuvellist* during 1876. Tchaikovsky wrote the first piece in December of 1875, but, fearing that he might forget the later monthly deadlines, took the precaution of instructing his servant to remind him. So, just before each duedate, the servant would dutifully warn: 'Pytor Ilyich, it's about time to send something off to St. Petersburg', and, no less dutifully, Tchaikovsky would drop whatever else he was working on to dash off a short piano piece that would be more-or-less appropriate in character for the month in which it was to be published. Slight enough as most of the *morceaux* may be, they not only serve their purpose admirably but they include a couple of those charismatic inspirations that somehow achieve and hold world-wide popularity. And like those other Tchaikovskian hits (*Song Without Words* Op.2 No. 3; *Romanze* Op. 4; *Humoresque* Op.10 No.3; and *Chanson triste* Op.40 No.2), the present June and November pieces – and, for that matter, others in *The Seasons* series too – are far more often heard in transcriptions than in their original form.

The January piece, subtitled *By the Hearth*, in A, *Moderato semplice, ma espressivo*, 3/4, is characterized by a wistfully feminine Erst section, a graceful if languishing middle section (*Meno mosso with leggierissimo arpeggios*), and, after the repetition of Part I, a morendo coda with reminiscences of both themes. For February there is a dashing *Carnival*, in D, *Allegro giusto*, 2/4, with some mood changes but no loss of vigor in the plunging *Istesso tempo* middle section. For March there is a quiet, delicately rhapsodic *Song of the Lark*, in G minor, *Andantino espressivo*, 2/4, later *un pochettino più mosso* – a hauntingly evocative miniature tone-poem only two printed pages in length. And for April there is a brisk but lyrical *Snow-Drop* (or *Lily of the Valley*), in B-flat, *Allegretto con moto e un poco rubato*, 6/8, with a graceful, more improvisatory middle section, *Con grazia e poco meno animato*.

Summer begins with May, a tenderly expressive *Starlight Nights*, in G, *Andantino*, 9/8, opening with rolled chords. The middle section is a markedly contrasting, rather Schumannesque *Allegro giocoso*, 2/4; but the calm *Andante* returns cantabile and the piece closes quietly, ppp. June is one of Tchaikovsky's happiest inspirations, a *Barcarolle* in G minor, *Andante cantabile*, common time, with an enchantingly lovely melody over a rocking accompaniment. The middle section in the major mode, *Poco più mosso*, works up to a rolled-chord climax before the G minor theme returns and the piece ends *morendo* with repeated rolled tonic chords. For July there is a folkish *Song of the Reapers*, in E-flat, with a decisive main theme, *Allegro moderato con moto*, common time; a brisker, staccato middle section and a return to Tempo I, now with accompanying and decorative triplets. And for August there is a zestfully vivacious *Harvest Song*, in B minor, *Allegro vivace*, 6/8, with an effectively contrasting, tenderly songful middle section.

Autumn begins with September's *Hunting Song*, in G, *Allegro non troppo*, common time, featuring double-dotted fanfares and triplet hunting calls. The middle section eases off a bit, but is still brisk and staccato; and the reprise of Part I winds up with great energy and gusto. Next is October's *Autumn Song*, in D minor, appropriately nostalgic with a main theme marked *Andante doloroso e mollo cantabile*, common time. Its gently rhapsodic right-hand soliloquy is carried on without marked change of mood through what is more an interlude or variation than a true middle section; then a left-hand recitative leads back to Tempo I and eventually to a ppp ending.

Like the June *Barcarole*, the November *Troika en traineaux* has achieved world-wide popularity, if more in transcription than as a piano solo. It is in the key of E, *Allegro moderato*, common time, with a wayward yet irresistibly catchy main theme, and an even snappier middle section, *Grazioso*, which has been variously interpreted as depicting jingling sleigh-bells or a Russian peasant dance. The return of Part I is followed by a coda with dying echoes of the main theme under more florid right-hand decorations (the three-horse sleigh vanishes in distant snow-flurries?). Finally, the year-end December piece, *Christmas*, begins with a fleetly flowing, very Tchaikovskian waltz in A-flat, *Tempo di Valse*, 3/4, with an easier but still very graceful middle section in E that features a cute little four-note turn figure. A tiny cadenza leads back to Tempo I, and reminiscences of the main theme continue into the coda, appearing for the last time in lefthand octaves just before the quiet ending.

Six Pieces Op.51

According to some accounts, the six pieces of Op. 51 were written at Kamenka in August 1882 in response to a request by Jürgenson, Tchaikovsky's principal publisher, who wanted more piano solos for his catalog (there had been no new ones since 1878). But it's significant that earlier, in February, Tchaikovsky had futilely requested Jürgenson's permission to accept a 600-ruble commission - from the editor of the Nuvelest who had commissioned *The Seasons* - for six more short pieces. It was perhaps to calm Tchaikovsky's annoyance over the loss of those tempting 600 rubles that Jürgenson himself asked for six pieces. But what he offered for them seems to have escaped the notice of the biographers. More to the point: three of the Op.51 pieces are waltzes and all of them are dedicated to women, of whom only one is likely to be generally familiar by name: Mme. Vera

Rimsky-Korsakov, not the composer's wife but Tchaikovsky's niece, née Davidov, who married a relative of Rimsky-Korsakov the composer. Op.51 No.1 is a waywardly rippling, quite bravura *Valse de salon*, in A flat, *Allegro*, 3/4, with a hesitant, chordal, more episodic middle section and a quasi-cadenza leading to the return of Tempo 1. No.2 is a piquantly rhythmized *Polka peu dansante*, in B minor, *Allegro moderato*, 2/4, with a quieto middle section featuring a songful alto melody that is quite emotional. After the repetition of the A section, the B section's broken-chord accompaniment reappears, but now under a different alto melody, in the coda. No.3 is a fanciful *Menuetto scherzoso*, in E flat, *Moderato assai*, 3/4, with a chromatic and intricate quasi-improvisatory main section, and a brief middle-section with right-hand phrase-bits followed by little left-hand runs, later with more florid right-hand responses.

No.4, the *Natha Valse*, in F sharp minor/A major, *Moderato*, 3/4, is so gentle, hesitant, and ultra-feminine that it surely must be a tone-portrait of Natha Plesskaya to whom it is dedicated. The middle section is a more skittish and vivacious *Animato glimpse* of Natha in a livelier mood. Probably No. 5, a richly songful yet also very gracefully feminine *Romance*, in F, similarly portrays Tchaikovsky's niece, Vera Rimsky-Korsakov, who was to die tragically young only a few years later. Its quintessentially romantic main section, *Andante cantabile*, common time, is followed by an effectively contrasting *Molto più mosso* with a more florid, sometimes syncopated righthand melody featuring a distinctive five-note turn phrase, and after a *stringendo* climax a quasicadenza recitative leads back to Tempo I (Not surprisingly, this *Romance* has been fitted out with German words and was once popular, in Europe at least, as a song). No. 6 concludes Op. 52 with its third waltz, a *Valse sentimentale*, in A-flat, *Tempo di Valse*, 3/4, which begins with a smoothly rippling Chopinesque flow, *con espressione e dolcezza*, that gives way to a *Tranquillo* middle section (with a briefly more pressing, *più presto*, middle section of its own). After the repetition of Part I, an *ad libitum cadenza* prefaces the last few ritenuto bars. This piece, too, has frequently been transcribed, most successfully perhaps for violin and piano.

Album for the Young Op.39

The model for Tchaikovsky's *Album for the Young* probably was the Op.68 *Album für die Jugend* (1848) of Schumann rather than the latter's more famous Op.15 *Kinderszenen* (1838), since this collection compromises a considerable number of very short pieces (although far fewer than Schumann's) that are intended to be played by - rather than to - youngsters. This Op.39 collection was planned early in 1878 during a visit to Florence, completed a few months later at the Kamenka estate of his sister and brother-in-law, the Davidovs, and dedicated to their son 'Bobyk'. This was a period of great creative activity on Tchaikovsky's part: the batch of new manuscripts he sent to Jürgenson in August of 1878 included, beside Op.39, the Op.37 sonata, Op.40 set of piano pieces, Op.41 *St. John Liturgy*, Op.38 set of songs, and Op.42 set of violin pieces (In addition, the Op.37a *Seasons* series had been completed in April). Tchaikovsky valued his children's pieces at only ten rubles each as contrasted with the twentyfive rubles each he asked for the longer pieces in Op.40. Only two of the Op.39 pieces run well over a minute in duration, and most of them around only half-a-minute; in print, nine of them require two pages, most of the rest only a page or less. More significantly, only one of them (the rhapsodic No.22) makes any special

technical demands on its players and even these are relatively slight, while nearly all the others are digitally, at least, quite easy. The collection begins appropriately with a tenderly earnest *Morning Prayer* in G, *Lento*, 4/4. Nos. 2 and 3 are livelier, respectively a crisp *Winter Morning* scene, in B minor, *Andante*, 2/4, and a briskly cantering *Little Horseman*, in D, *Vivo*, 3/8, staccatissimo the mood shifts back and forth again in Nos. 4 and 5: first in a tender apostrophe to *Mama*, in C, *Andante espressivo*, 3/4 (with *legatissimo* lefthand accompaniment and frequent melodic doubling), then to a prancing *March of the Wooden Soldiers*, in D, *Tempo di marcia*, 2/4.

Nos. 6 and 7 bring tragedy in microcosm: first in the pathos of *The Sick Doll*, in G minor, *Lento*, 2/4, then in the ceremonial gravity of *Dolly's Funeral*, in C minor, *Grave*, 2/4. But life goes on, even in the nursery; No. 8, a piquantly rhythmed, catchily tuneful *Waltz*, in E flat, *Vivace*, 3/4, prefaces a zestful arrival of *The New Doll* (No. 9), in B flat, *Andantino*, 3/8. Then, No.10 is a toe-tickling *Mazurka*, in D minor, *Tempo di Mazurka*, 3/4, No.11 is a simple *Russian Folksong*, in F, *Comodo*, 3/2 (2/4), only 10 bars in length (used earlier in Tchaikovsky's piano duet arrangements of fifty Russian folksongs of 1868–9); and No.12 is a *Peasant's Song* in B flat, *Andantino con molto sentimento*, 2/4. This last bears the German note: '*Der Bauer spielt Jarmonika*', which is incomprehensible if one expects to hear the imitation of a mouthharmonica (a semantic trap into which even the great Grove's Dictionary carelessly stumbles). What is meant is a *Ziehharmonika*, i.e. a concertina with what Edwin Evans cites as the 'monotonous alternation of two chords, characteristic of that arch-enemy of Russian folk-music, the accordion'.

Nos. 13 through 18 are dominated by folksong influences and dance rhythms. No.13 is *Folk Song (Russian Dance)*, in D, *Comodo*, 2/4, which will sound familiar to everyone who knows Glinka's more elaborate use of the same tune in his *Kamarinskaya*. No. 14 is a delectably piquant and irresistibly toe-tickling *Polka*, in B flat, *Allegretto*, 2/4; and No. 15 is nearly as sprightly, an *Italian Ditty*, in D, *Vivo*, 3/8 (6/8), with a *sempre staccato* oom-pah-pah lefthand accompaniment. This tour continues with No.16's calm, antiquecolored *Old French Melody*, in G minor, *Andantino*, 2/4; No.17's amusing, quasi-yodeling *German Song*, in E flat, *Tranquillo*, 3/4; and No.18's bouncy, high-spirited *Neapolitan Dance Tune*, in E flat, *Comodo*, later *Piú mosso*, 2/4. This last is sure to be identified by balletomanes as a simplified version of the First two sections with cornet solo, of the Neapolitan Dance in Act IV of *Swan Lake*, written some three years earlier.

Next, No.19 proves to be perhaps the most remarkable of all the twenty-four pieces: a *Nursery Tale* (or *Old Nurse's Song*), in C, *Con moto*, 2/4 – a light but vivid evocation of some kind of dramatic events that powerfully remind us of Tchaikovsky's exceptional gift for 'theatrical' music-making. No.20, however, and despite its vigor, portrays a scarcely very menacing *Witch* (or *Baba-Yaga*), in E minor, *Vivace*, 6/8. No.21, *Sweet Dreams*, in C, *Andante*, 3/4, is the longest and most hauntingly melodic of the entire set; while No.22, *Song of the Lark*, in G, *Lentamente*, 3/4, provides the most (at least relatively) bravura writing in its floridly rhapsodic right-hand anbesques and grace notes. The penultimate No.23, *The Organ Grinder* (or *Hurdy-Gurdy Man*), in G *Moderato*, 3/4, is especially interesting for its use of the popular Venetian tune that made such an impression on the composer when he first heard it on his 1877 visit to Venice that he wrote it down and later sent a

copy to Mme. Von Meck, telling her how pleased he had been with the 'pretty voice' and 'innate rhythmic sense' of the street-singer who, accompanied by his little daughter, used to appear every evening outside the composer's hotel. This is the same tune he also used in the 'interruption' section of *Rêverie interrompue*, Op.40, No.12. Finally, the Op.39 collection concludes (appropriately balancing its devotional beginning) with No.24's gravely chanting *In Church*, in E minor, *Largo*, 2/4 – a piece particularly notable for the deep-bell tolling effect of the pedal-point low E throughout the last 21 of the 52 bars overall.

Sonata in C sharp minor Op.80 (Posthumous)

For many years Tchaikovsky was credited with only one piano sonata, that in G, Op.37, of 1878, since his first attempt remained obscure even after Jürgenson published it as Op.80 in 1900. Some of the experts think it never should have been published at all, but most of them agree that it – considered as no more than a student work – is of considerable interest for the flashes of promise it shows, along with obvious signs of technical immaturity. The MS is dated 1865, Tchaikovsky's last year as a student, and it was completed before he graduated from and left the St. Petersburg Conservatory to take up a post as teacher in the Moscow Conservatory. Thus it predates any of his other surviving solo piano music except for the F minor *Scherzo*, also of 1865, which was later revised and published as No.2 in Op.2.

The sonata begins *Allegro con fuoco* in common time with a first theme featuring a *marcata* five-times repeated chord motive, the emphatic nature of which is somewhat weakened by a couple of more tentative *Andante* bars before the work picks up momentum in a ballade-like flow. The second theme, arching over a pedal-point B for its first four bars, provides effectively lyrical ('Brahmsian', according to Dickinson) contrast even though its later embellishments are not particularly imaginative. However, there are more imaginative touches, along with considerable repetition, in the development and recapitulation sections, which are followed by a ten-bar *Andante* coda with thematic reminiscences.

The slow movement is a calm *Andante* in A, 3/4, mildly Schumannesque in character, but somewhat tentative and naive both in the *semplice* theme itself and its four mostly brighter but rather pretentiously climaxed variations.

The following scherzo, back in the tonic C sharp minor, *Allegro vivo*, 3/8, is much more distinctive with an ingeniously contrived, zestfully snappy nervously rhythmed main theme that the composer himself evidently relished, for he made use of it again for his first symphony, begun the next year, completed in 1868, and later published as Op. 13. The sonata's gracefully swaying, soon more floridly arabesqued, trio is not the same as that in the symphony however. Then, after the repetition of the restless first section, there is an epilogue (*Quasi adagio*, *Adagio*, *Presto*, *Adagio*) that prepares the way for the *Allegro vivo*, *alla-breve* finale with a rather tumultuous but forceful First theme and a more romantic, sonorously chordal second (correctly if paradoxically marked *Tranquillo ma energico*). 'The development and recapitulation are indefatigably vigorous and the sonata ends rousing in the major mode, but – curiously – in the tonic key's enharmonic equivalent, D flat.

Pieces Op.72

In April/May of 1893, the last year of the composer's life, Tchaikovsky wrote (or in some cases perhaps revised earlier sketches) what is over all his most substantial work for piano solo, Op.72. Most of its eighteen pieces are relatively short (four of them decidedly so) and only two (Nos. 7 and 10) run as long as five minutes or more. The familiar ternary, or A–B–A, form (favored in so many of Tchaikovsky's, and other composers', shorter compositions) predominates, of course, but there is more marked variety in mood and style than in earlier collections. Most strikingly, each of these pieces is distinguished not only by polished craftsmanship but also by the magisterial assurance of the craftsman himself. One significant tribute to the varied appeal of these pieces: each of three leading commentators selects a different one for his highest praise: No.18 is the 'most satisfactory' for Dickinson; for Evans many are 'gems' but No.2 is an 'inspiration'; and for Weinstock No.5 'is perhaps the best of all [Tchaikovsky's] compositions for solo piano'. The composer's American biographer also notes in some of the 'discarded fragments' from the *Pathétique* Symphony, which had been sketched earlier in the year although it was not to be orchestrated until August. Each of the eighteen pieces is dedicated to a friend, men as well as women, but again the names are likely to be unfamiliar to presentday American music-lovers except for the conductor-propagandist for so many of Tchaikovsky's orchestral works, Vasily Ilich Safonov, and for two pianistic giants, Alexander Siloti and Vasily Sapelnikov.

Op.72 No.1 is an *Impromptu*, in F minor, *Allegro Moderato e giocoso*, 3/4, with a skittishly bouncing and running right-hand part above an accompaniment marked *sempre staccato in la mano sinistra*. The musicbox *poco meno* middle-section is easier and more melodious; and the repetition of Part I works up *poco accelerando* and *più allegro* before the last appearance of the main theme and a quiet ending.

No.2 is a gently atmospheric *Berceuse*, in A flat, *Andante mosso*, common time, with a rocking accompaniment figure that may remind some listeners of a similar one in Borodin's orchestral tone poem *In the Steppes of Central Asia* (1880). The middle section is so brief as to be more than an interlude before the main theme returns, for a time in flowing triplets, with the ostinato left-hand accompaniment figure persisting until just before the *pppp* ending.

No.3 is more vivacious than its title, *Tender Reproaches*, might suggest. It is in C sharp minor, *Allegro non tanto ed agitato*, 2/4, that broadens *poco meno animato* to an *allargando* climax followed by running passages before both the first and second themes return and the piece ends with quiet reminiscences of the second theme's dotted-rhythm motive.

No.4 is more frankly bravura *Danse caractéristique*, in D, *Allegro giusto (sempre staccatissimo)*, 2/4, with several *quasi-glissando* run-passages. The middle section is marked *Pochissimo meno allegro* with a righthand melody in octaves that works up *stringendo* before the return to Tempo I and a dashing *martellato* conclusion.

No.5 changes the mood abruptly to the serenity of a *Méditation*, in F sharp minor, *Andante mosso*, 9/8, (dedicated to Safonov), with a *cantabile* melody that gives way to a more animated

middle section that is worked up somewhat pretentiously before the first theme returns, now more floridly elaborated. No.6 is a brusquely rhythmized *Mazurka pour danser*, in B flat, *Tempo di Mazurka*, 3/4, with a quite brief middle section that features an oddly original melody in the tenor register.

No.7, one of the two longest pieces in the set, is a 'grandly striding' *Concert Polonaise*, in E flat, *Tempo di polacca*, 3/4. Its *molto brillante* main theme is a rambunctious one, but the easier, tuneful middle section has a more delicately articulated polonaise rhythm, and the repetition of Part I is worked up with considerable virtuosity to a breathless *Presto – Prestissimo* conclusion.

No.8 shifts the mood back again to a calm *Dialogue*, in B, *Allegro Moderato*, 3/4, with nostalgic *quasi parlando* melodic bits in the right-hand and grave left-hand response. The middle section begins *Un poco sostenuto (dolce espressivo)*, but soon works up to a *Poco sostenuto (appassionato e un poco rubato)* before the return of the quiet opening dialogue and a *ritenuto molto* ending.

No.9 is a tribute to one of the composer's idols: *Un poco di Schumann*, in D-flat, *Moderato mosso*, 2/4 – a sprightly little piece, if only mildly Schumannesque in character, with less a true middle section than an interlude featuring an insistent five-note motive for a few bars before the return to Tempo I.

The last half of Op.72 begins with the second of its two longest and most virtuosic pieces: No.10 (dedicated to Alexander Siloti), the *Scherzo-Fantasie*, in E flat minor, *Vivace assai*, 12/8. Its sparkling if somewhat insistent A section is followed by an effectively contrasting, easier B section notable for an odd *ostinato* figure rumbling in the bass under florid right-hand arabesques. The repetition of A works up in bravura fashion and there are reminiscences of B before the end.

No.11 reverts to the shittish femininity of most of the Op.51 dances in a rippling *Valse blquette*, in E flat, *Tempo di Valse*, 3/4. The middle section begins a bit languishingly but soon becomes more florid in its turn, working up to a little cadenza just before the return to Tempo. No.12 is titled *L'Espégle*, a French equivalent of the German *Eulenspiegel*, i.e., a rogue or jokester, like the one to be made famous only a few years later by Richard Strauss in his 1895 tone poem *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*. Tchaikovsky's musical portrayal (in E, *Allegro moderato, con grazia, in modo di Scherzo*, common time) seems to be more one of an impish youngster, with the sparkling runs and passage-work of the first section giving way briefly to a more hesitant *Poco piu tranquillo*, before the return of the high-jinks and a gay rush to the end.

No.13 is another short piece, *Echo rustique*, in E flat, *Allegro non troppo*, 2/4, in which, after a dotted rhythm prelude, glittering *quasi campanelli* or music-box passages in a high register alternate with a bluffly straightforward folkish tune – a fascinating contrast that Dickinson finds akin to that of Debussy's wellknown prelude *Minstrels*, written seventeen years later.

From anticipating Debussy, Tchaikovsky turns immediately to echoing Liszt. For No.14, the *Chant élégiaque*, in D flat, *Adagio (cantando quanto possibile)*, common time, strongly reminds one of the earlier composer's fanious (or notorious) *Liebestraum*,

No.3, in A flat, of c.1850. The hauntingly romantic main theme gives way for a time to a more animated, questing *Piú mosso*, *moderato assai (dolcissimo)* middle section with soprano/tenor responsive phrases. The more rippling elaborated return of the main theme includes a *quasi cadenza* before the piece's *pppp* ending.

No.15, like No.9, is a tribute to one of the composer's pianistic idols: *Un poco di Chopin*, in C sharp minor, *Tempo di Mazurka*, 3/8. It's a sprightly, elastic piece, if neither markedly Polish nor Chopinesque, with a crisp first section followed by a more floridly running middle section marked to be repeated (as indeed it is by recording pianist Ponti) before the return to Tempo I.

No.16 is a fascinating *Valse á cinq temps* (i.e. Five-Beat Waltz), in B minor, *Vivace*, 5/8, with no true middle section although there is a brief interlude of *leggiero* left-hand/right-hand chord alternations before the main theme returns. But the piece is so catchily appealing as a whole that it must be ranked – despite its smaller scale – with the more famous Tchaikovskian utilization of quintuple meter in the second movement of his sixth symphony, which had been sketched out only a month or so. before this piece was composed.

No.17 also may be somewhat reminiscent of that symphony, but it is the somberness of the *Pathétique* that colors this evocation of the *Distant Past*, in E flat, *Modesto assai, quasi andante*, common time. The grave opening soliloquy (*cantabile con noblezza e intimo sentimento*) is succeeded for a time by a mildly agitated *Piú mosso* middle section, but this soon relaxes and leads back via a recitative to Tempo I.

No.18 is a *Scène dansante (Invitation au Trépak)*, in C dedicated to the piano virtuoso Sapelnikov, which begins, *Allegro non tanto*, 2/4, with firmly declamatory phrases alternating with faster passages leading to the Trépak itself, *Allegro vivacissimo* – a characteristically Russian dance that is worked up with dazzling éclat to provide an appropriately brilliant conclusion both to the Op.72 collection and to Michael Ponti's collection of Tchaikovsky's complete piano works.

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SONGS (CD 32 - 36)

Volume 1

During the course of his life Tchaikovsky wrote a hundred or so songs, the first before his entry to the Conservatory and the last in 1893, the year of his death. *Pesnya Zemfiri* (Zemphira's Song), a setting of dramatic words from Pushkin's poem *The Gypsies*, retains elements of dramatic dialogue, as Zemphira rejects her stern old husband in favour of her lover. The Italian *Mezza notte* (Midnight), was written in the same period, during the years between 1855 and 1860. This song, gently lilting as a girl sings of night as a time of love, was published in St Petersburg in 1865.

Zabít tak skoro (To forget so soon), was written in 1870 and first performed in the following year at a concert in Moscow devoted to Tchaikovsky's work. The singer on this occasion was the contralto Elizaveta Lavrovskaya. The words of the song, a poignant reminiscence of past love, were by Tchaikovsky's near contemporary and class-mate at the School of Jurisprudence, Alexey Nikolayevich Apukhtin.

The Six Romances, Opus 16, of 1872 start with a setting of words by Apollon Nikolayevich Maykov from his cycle of New Greek Songs. This lullaby, *Kolibel'naya pesnya*, was arranged for piano in 1873. It is dedicated to Nadezhda Rimsky-Korsakov and is followed by *Pogodi* (Wait), dedicated to her husband.

The words by Nikolay Perflyevich Grekov urge patience, as life moves on. The setting of *Unosi moyo serdtse* (Carry my heart away), appeared in the periodical *Nouvelliste* in October 1873. The text is by Afanasy Afanasyevich Fet, a leading Russian lyric poet of the century whom Tchaikovsky eventually met in 1891, and deals with a mysterious and ethereal love.

The six songs that form Opus 25 were written between the autumn of 1874 and early 1875. The second of the set, *Kak nad goryacheyu zoloy* (As when upon hot ashes), takes words by Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev, a former diplomat and Pan-Slavist who had recently died.

1875 brought a further set of six songs, Opus 27, continuing to serve a satisfactory market for works of this kind. These were dedicated to Elizaveta Lavrovskaya. The third of the group, *Ne otkhodi ot menya* (Do not leave me), is a setting of words by Fet from his cycle *Melodies*. Tchaikovsky's Opus 28, with six more songs, was published in 1875. The fourth of these, *On tak menya lyubil* (He loved me so much), sets a translation of a poem by Girardin, translated by Apukhtin. It is dedicated to Ekaterina Massini. Tchaikovsky wrote the seven songs of Opus 47 in the summer of 1880 at his sister's house at Kamenka and at Brailov, the Ukraine estate of Nadezhda von Meck. He dedicated them to the soprano Alexandra Panayeva, on whom his brother Anatoly had unsuccessfully set his heart. The first song, *Kabí znala ya* (If I had known), sets a poem by Alexey Konstantinovich Tolstoy and tells of the girl whose lover rides by to the hunt and how she might have awaited him in the evening, by the well. It is followed by *Gornimi tikho letala dusha nebesami* (A soul floated gently up to Heaven) by the same poet. Here a soul, released from the body, longs for the earth again, the song's inspiration, it seems, the duet between Christ and Mary Magdalene in Massenet's sacred drama *Marie-Magdeleine*. The third, *Na zemlyu sumrak pal* (Darkness has fallen over the Earth), takes N. Berg's version of words by Mickiewicz, a sad meditation that has much to say in its prelude and postlude. *Den li tsarit?* (Whether in the realm of day), Opus 47, No.6, a poem by Apukhtin, expresses the single-mindedness of one in love, her thoughts centred on her lover. *Ya li v pole da ne travushka bila?* (Was I not a blade of grass?), the seventh song, takes a version of Shevchenko's Ukrainian song by Ivan Zakharovich Surikov and treats it in a very Russian manner. The words express the sad despair of a young girl, married off by her parents to an old man for whom she has no love.

The last three songs included here are taken from the Twelve Romances, Opus 60, published in 1886. The sixth of the set, *Nochi bezumniye* (Wild nights), with words by Apukhtin, is in a sombre G minor and reflects the weariness of one sleepless through love. It is followed by *Pesni tsiganki* (Gypsy's song), with words by Yakov Petrovich Polonsky, the librettist of the opera *Vakula the Smith*. Here there is the necessary element of exoticism in the music. Opus 60 ends with a setting of Alexey Nikolayevich Pleshcheyev's *Nam zvezdi kotkiye siyali* (Gentle stars shone for us). Pleshcheyev's verses had provided much of the substance of

Tchaikovsky's *Children's Songs* of 1883. Here the text offers a poignant memory of the past and young love.

Volume 2

Russia's contribution to European song during the second half of the 19th century and the early years of the twentieth is of considerable importance and interest. With little or no tradition of their own, apart from a very distinctive folk-song literature, Russian composers inevitably turned to other Continental models – to Germany in particular, and to Italy – but quickly evolved a national school that may be said to have produced some of their country's finest music. The greatest Russian song composer of the 19th century is, without doubt, Mussorgsky, closely followed by Balakirev and Borodin, but close behind them comes Tchaikovsky, whose qualities as a lyricist are understandably overshadowed by his stature as an opera composer (just as his many pieces for solo piano are by his concertos).

Between 1869 and 1893 Tchaikovsky composed just over a hundred songs, most of them published in sets of six and settings of words by second-rate Russian poets. A change from the pervading drawing-room sentiment is offered by the group of sixteen *Children's Songs*, Op.54, which were composed between 1881 and 1883. Like the Schumannesque *Children's Album*, Op.39 for piano of 1878, the collection reflects his spontaneous love of children; he had none of his own, of course, since his disastrous marriage of 1877 was never consummated and lasted barely three months, but his nephews, nieces and their offspring gave him great joy.

The words of all but two of the *Children's Songs* are by Alexey Nikolayevich Pleshcheyev (1825–1893), a minor poet whom Tchaikovsky had known since he first went to Moscow in 1866, and two of whose lyrics he used for the Romances composed in 1869 (Op.6 No.2) and 1872–3 (Op.16 No.4). In January 1881 he had made a setting of Konstantin Sergeyevich Axakov's *A Little Children's Song*, and it was apparently the appearance of this some weeks later in the monthly periodical *Recreation* for Children that prompted Pleshcheyev to send Tchaikovsky a copy of his anthology for children *The Snowdrop*, inscribed 'as a mark of affection and gratitude for his beautiful music to my poor words'. On 5th November 1881 Tchaikovsky wrote to his brother Modest: 'I have set about composing children's songs and am writing one regularly every day ... this is very light and pleasant labour, for as my text I am taking Pleshcheyev's *The Snowdrop*, where there are many delightful things.' On 15th November he sent fifteen songs to his publisher Jurgenson, saying 'If you like, you can add *A Little Children's Song* to it' – which Jurgenson did.

Most of the songs last less than three minutes, and nearly all of them are technically undemanding; Nos. 6, 14 and 16 are strophic. Children naturally feature prominently, most touchingly in *A Legend* (No.5), where the Christ-child is crowned with thorns by children who have picked all the roses in his garden (the theme, based on a well-known carol, was used in 1894, the year after Tchaikovsky's death, by Arensky as the basis for a set of variations for string quartet and for string orchestra). No.1 is a dialogue between a small boy and his grandmother (each in a different key); *On the River-bank* (No.6) is about a fisherman's anxious family; *A Winter's Evening* (No.7) depicts a mother telling her children a story and playing the piano for them to dance; and No.10 is a lullaby. Animals feature in *The Little Bird* (No.2), in

which God's bird intercedes with the Almighty on behalf of the poor ploughman; in *My Little Garden* (No.4), with its buzzing bees; in the hilarious *The Cuckoo* (No. 8); and in *The Swallow* (No.15, to words by Ivan Zakharovich Surikov). Seasons are referred to in Nos. 3, 9 and 13 (Spring), 14 (Autumn), and 7 and 12 (Winter); and flowers and gardens in Nos. 4, 5, 11 and 13. *A Little Children's Song* (No.16), a delightful piece of nonsense verse, which started the whole process, appears as a gentle epilogue.

In August 1892 an amateur versifier, Danil Maximovich Rathaus (1868–1937) sent Tchaikovsky six of his poems, and having immediately sketched the voice-part of the first verse of *We Sat Together* and part of *The Sun Has Set*, Tchaikovsky promised to set the whole group. He did not begin work in earnest on them until 5th May 1893, however, finishing them on the 17th. The cycle (if that is not too grand a word) was Tchaikovsky's last completed work; he dedicated it to Nikolay Figner, the tenor who had created the part of Herman in *The Queen of Spades* in 1890. In the words of Tchaikovsky's biographer David Brown, 'Rathaus offered simply schemed verses, descriptions based on stock imagery but prettily picturesque, and feelings uncomplicated and familiar. Sentimentality reigned supreme and pointed a clear expressive path through verse which never encumbered the music.' In the slow-moving *We Sat Together* (No.1) a couple sit sadly by a river, unable to resolve their unhappiness by talking; in the closing bars the voice and the piano quote one of Tchaikovsky's familiar 'Fate' motifs. Similarly, the melancholy descending phrases in *Night* (No.2) recall the closing bars of his Symphony No.6. A livelier musical note is struck in *This Moonlit Night* (No.3), but although the song expresses a declaration of love it is tinged with sadness and resignation. In *The Sun Has Set* (No.4) the mood is one of unclouded rapture, matched by a lilting accompaniment, but unrest returns in *On Gloomy Days* (No.5), with its memories of happier times underpinned by the agitated piano part; and the peace achieved in *Once More, As Before* (No.6) is that of resignation and solitude.

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Volume 3

The earliest of Tchaikovsky's songs to be heard here is *Moy geni, moy angel* (My genius, my angel), a setting of a poem *To Ophelia* by the lyric poet Afanasy Fet, composed in 1857 or 1858. The song is of interest as evidence of the composer's early abilities, before his formal study at the Conservatory.

The six songs that make up the Six Romances, Opus 6, were written between 27th November and 29th December 1869. The first of the set, *Ne ver, moy drug* (Do not believe, my friend), with words by Alexey Konstantinovich Tolstoy, is dedicated to Alexandra Menshikova, who had created the part of Mariya in Tchaikovsky's opera *The Voyevoda* in February 1869. The song is one of dramatic intensity. The second song, *Ni slova, o drug moy* (Not a word, O my friend) sets a translation by Alexey Pleshcheyev of a poem by the radical Austrian writer Moritz Hartmann. It is dedicated to Tchaikovsky's first Moscow friend, Nikolay Kashkin, who also taught at the Conservatory there, and with its short phrases, conveys an even greater feeling of drama. *I bol'no, i sladko* (Both painfully and sweetly), the third of the set, uses a text by Evdokiya Rostopchina in an operatic setting. The fourth song is not included here and the fifth, *Otchevo?* (Why?) sets a translation by Lev Alexandrovich Mey of Heine's poem

Warum denn sind die Rosen so blass? (Why then are the roses so pale?), its questioning short phrases leading to a final climax. It is dedicated to Tchaikovsky's close friend, the architect Ivan Klimenko. The group ends with a setting of Mey's version of Goethe's *Mignon* song, *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt* (Only he who knows longing) from Wilhelm Meister, in the Russian translation *Net kolkto tot, kto znal*, familiar in English as *None but the lonely heart* and the best known abroad of all Tchaikovsky's songs.

From the Six Romances, Opus 28, of 1875 comes a setting of Lev Mey's *Zachem?* (Why did I dream of you?), the third of a set written for the publisher Jorgenson. The sixth song, *Strashnaya minuta* (The fearful minute), with words by the composer himself, is a foretaste of operatic success to come.

Pimpinella, Opus 38, No.6, written in 1878, a Florentine song, is an arrangement of a song Tchaikovsky had heard in Florence from a street-singer, Vittorio, by whom he was completely captivated. Various changes were made to the original song, as he had first transcribed it, a version preserved in a letter to Nadezhda von Meck. He dedicated it to his brother Anatoly, who had done much to shelter his brother from the effects of his marital separation and had earlier accompanied him abroad to avoid the immediate consequences. They had briefly visited Florence together and heard the eleven-year-old Vittorio, the apparent reason for Tchaikovsky's return to the city.

From the Seven Romances, Opus 47, of 1880 comes the fourth song, *Usni, pechalniy drug* (Sleep, poor friend), with words by Alexey Tolstoy and dedicated, with the others of the set, to the singer Alexandra Panayeva. As a lullaby it is disturbing in its melancholy.

Four songs are included from the Six Romances, Opus 57 of 1884, put together during a visit to Paris. The second of these, *Na niv' zhyoltiye* (On the golden cornfields), with words by Alexey Tolstoy and dedicated to the singer Bogomir Korsov, the original Mazeppa in Tchaikovsky's opera of that name. The following song, *Ne sprashivay* (Do not ask), a Russian version by Alexander Strugovshchikov of Goethe's *Mignon* song *Heiss mich nicht reden* from Wilhelm Meister, is dedicated to Emiliya Pavlovskaya, the first Mariya in the same opera, and is a more dramatic treatment of the mysterious gypsy waif than other composers had imagined. *Usni* (Sleep) and *Smert* (Death), with words by the young symbolist poet Dmitry Merezhkovsky and dedicated to Vera Butakova, who had once shown partiality to the composer, and to the singer Dmitry Usatov, who had created the role of Andrey in Mazeppa. The set ends with Pleshcheyev's *Lish ti odin* (Only you alone), leading to a final climax of intensity.

The Six Romances, Opus 63, of 1887 are all settings of verses by the Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich, to whom they are dedicated. *Ya snachala tebya ne lyubila* (I did not love you at first) is relatively conventional in its strophic setting; *Rastvoril ya okno* (I opened the window) makes similar use of melodies relying heavily on the scale; *Ya vam ne nravlyus* (I do not please you) has poignant short phrases, leading to the melancholy final warning and moving postlude; *Pervoye svidaniye* (The first meeting) provides a lively and lilting contrast; *Uzli gasli v komnatakh ogni* (The fires in the rooms were already out) has the lovers sitting

alone in the darkening room, and the group ends with *Serenade*, a song with a gentle lilt to it.

Volume 4

The earliest of Tchaikovsky's songs to be heard here is *O, spoy zhe tu pesnyu* (Oh, sing that song), a setting of a poem by Aleksey Pleshcheyev, based on a poem by the once fashionable early 19th-century English poet Felicia Hemans, remembered now principally as the author of *Casabianca* ('The boy stood on the burning deck'). It is the fourth of Six Romances, Op.16, published in March 1873. Tchaikovsky's opera *The Oprichnik* had been accepted by the Imperial Theatre, to which it had been submitted in December 1872, and the same month had brought approval of his Second Symphony 'The Little Russian' by Rimsky-Korsakov and his friends in St Petersburg. The song, dedicated to Tchaikovsky's Conservatory friend Nikolay Hubert, asks a mother to sing again the song she used to sing, a sad song the meaning of which the mother has now come to understand. *Tak chto zhe?* (So what can I say?), the fifth of the set, has words by Tchaikovsky and was dedicated to Nikolay Rubinstein. The singer declares that the angelic image of the beloved is with him day and night, the secret of this love concealed from the cruel ridicule of the beloved; the singer begs the beloved to kill him, but to love him. *Glazki vesni golubiye* (The eyes of spring are blue) takes a translation by Mikhail Mikhailov of a poem by Heine, 'Die blauen Frühlingsaugen', from the latter's *Neuer Frühling*. The violets, the eyes of spring, appear in the grass and are picked for the poet's beloved. Nightingales sing, telling of the poet's secret dreams, so that the whole grove learns the writer's secret love. This song was written in 1873 as a supplement for the January 1874 issue of the periodical, the *Nouvelliste*.

The Oprichnik was staged in St Petersburg in April 1874. Tchaikovsky had been working on his First Piano Concerto, dismayed at Nikolay Rubinstein's immediate and strongly stated disapproval. By early 1875, however, Tchaikovsky had completed the orchestration of the work and turned to the composition of a series of songs, in response to requests from his publishers. The first set of these was published in 1875 as Six Romances, Op. 25. The opening song of the set, *Primiren'ye* (Reconciliation) was dedicated to Aleksandra Krutikova, who had sung the part of Boyarina Morozova in *The Oprichnik*. The text is by Nikolay Shcherbina and bids the heart sleep and not try to awaken what is past; to try to forget in winter the roses picked in spring, and not to try to bring back what has gone, an elegiac reflection on the irretrievable past. *Pesn' Min'oni* (Mignon's Song), the third of the set, is a translation by Fyodor Tyutchev of 'Kennst du das Land', from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, a text familiar from settings by various other composers, from Schubert to Wolf. It will be recalled that Tchaikovsky had already won considerable success with his 1869 setting of Lev Mey's version of *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt*, the Harper's Song from *Wilhelm Meister*, known in English as 'None but the lonely heart', published as Op.6, No.6, a song with which it cannot easily stand comparison. It was dedicated to Maria Kamenskaya, a young singer who had already bravely performed 'None but the lonely heart' at a St Petersburg Conservatory concert. *Kanareyka* (Canary), the fourth song, sets an orientalist poem by Lev Mey. It is dedicated to another singer from *The Oprichnik*, Wilhelmina Raab, who sang the part of Natalia. In the song, matched by an attempted oriental element in the setting, the sultan's wife asks her caged canary whether its life is better singing to her or flying in freedom to the West. The

canary replies, telling her that he is homesick, and that she cannot understand that a song has a sister, which is freedom. The sixth and last of the set is *Kak naladili: Durak* (They said: You fool, do not go), a song in a very much more Russian idiom. The verse by Lev Mey is in the words of a drunkard, told to bow down to the river depths and drink water, which he thinks might distract him from the lure of vodka, a procedure that is more likely to end in his drowning.

Khotel bi v edinoye slovo (For one simple word) is one of two songs provided for Nikolay Bernard's *Nouvelliste*, where it was issued as a supplement to the September 1875 issue. The text, by Lev Mey, is a translation of Heine's 'Ich wollt', meine Schmerzen ergössen / Sich all' in ein einziges Wort' (I would pour out my sorrows all in a single word, and let the wind carry them away). The second song for the *Nouvelliste* was *Ne dolgo nam guiyat* (No time to take a walk), with words by Nikolay Grekov, translator of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Here the lovers have only a short time to walk together, in the implied transience of life and happiness.

Two other sets of songs were completed and sent to publishers in 1875. From the Six Romances, Op.27, comes the fourth of the group, *Vecher* (Evening), a setting of words by the Ukrainian Taras Shevchenko, translated by Lev Mey, in which he recalls the women returning to the village from the fields in the evening, to be welcomed by their families at the evening meal, before the children are put to bed, while the young women and the nightingale are still heard. The idyllic picture is depicted in the music, with the humming of insects in the first stanza and the song of the nightingale. The songs of Op.27 were dedicated to the contralto Yelizaveta Andreyevna Lavrovskaya.

The Six Romances, Op.38, were written after the disaster of Tchaikovsky's marriage, his escape abroad and return in 1878 to stay at Nadezhda von Meck's estate in the Ukraine, in its owner's absence. The second of the set, *To bilo rannayu vesnoy* (It was in early spring) takes a poem by Aleksey Tolstoy, a text among those suggested by Madame von Meck. The Russian poem is based on Goethe's *Mailed* and describes the early spring, with the beloved standing in front of the poet, smiling, an answer to the poet's love, now recalled in joy and sorrow. In the third song, *Sred' shumnoy bala* (Amid the din of the ball), a poem also by Tolstoy, the poet catches sight at a ball of the one he will love, admiring her voice, her figure, her look and her laughter, and recalling these alone at night, imagining that now he is in love. The Op.38 Romances were dedicated to Tchaikovsky's brother Anatoly, who had been of considerable support during the difficulties of the past year.

From the Seven Romances, Op.47, of 1880 comes the fifth song, *Blagoslavlyayu vas, lesa* (I bless you, woods), the words taken from an extended poem by Aleksey Tolstoy on the solemn pilgrim journey of St John Damascene.

The remaining songs are all taken from the Twelve Romances, Op.60, published in 1886, and dedicated to the Empress Maria Fyodorovna. The first song, *Vcherashnyaya noch'* (Last night), with words by Aleksey Khomyakov, echoes in its text the idyllic scenery that Tchaikovsky now enjoyed in his country house at Maidonov. The second song, *Ya tebe nichevo ne skazhu* (I don't tell you anything), a setting of words by Aleksey Fet, has the poet

keeping his feelings to himself, a love beyond words. The third, *O, esli b snali vi* (Oh, if only you knew) takes words by Aleksey Pleshcheyev, a translation of Sully Prudhomme's *Prière*, dwelling on love that cannot be expressed in the writer's loneliness. The fourth, *Solovey* (Nightingale), is a setting of a version by Pushkin of a Serbian folk-song in which the singer has three sorrows: too early a marriage, a weary horse, and the loss of his beloved, now only to seek a grave. The fifth song, *Prostye slova* (Simple Words), with words by the composer, praises the beloved, that he can only express in simple words. *Prosti* (Excuse me), the eighth of the set, with words by Nikolay Nekrasov, seeks forgiveness for fears of jealousy and a revival of the memory of early love. It is followed by *Noch'* (Night), praise of the beauty of the night by Yakov Polonsky, and *Za oknom v teni melkayet* (In the shadow outside the window) by the same poet, has the lover, outside, calling to his beloved to join him. The eleventh song, *Podvig* (The exploit) is a second setting of words by Aleksey Khomyakov, calling for heroism in battle and in love, in prayer and in life.

Volume 5

The earliest of Tchaikovsky's songs to be heard here is *Poymi khat' raz* (Hear at least once), a setting of a poem by Afanasy Fet, based on Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte* (To the Distant Beloved). It is the third of Six Romances, Op.16, published in March 1873. Tchaikovsky's opera *The Oprichnik* had been accepted by the Imperial Theatre, to which it had been submitted in December 1872, and the same month had brought approval of his Second Symphony, 'The Little Russian' by Rimsky-Korsakov and his friends in St Petersburg. The song *Novogrecheskaya pesnya*, Op.16, No.6 (New Greek Song), dedicated to Tchaikovsky's Moscow Conservatory friend, the cellist Konstantin Albrecht, is a translation by Apollon Maykov of a Greek folk-song. Marked *Moderato lugubre*, it begins with the familiar notes of the *Dies irae*, from the Latin Requiem Mass, a fitting element in a song about the souls of the dead.

Ya s neyu nikogda ne govoril, Op.25, No.5, (I never spoke to her) is one of Six Romances that Tchaikovsky handed to his publisher in 1875, after he had completed his orchestration of his First Piano Concerto, to which Nikolay Rubinstein had proved so disappointingly hostile. Like three others in this group of songs, it was dedicated to one of the singers in *The Oprichnik*, successfully staged in April 1874, the baritone Ivan Melnikov. The words, taken from a longer poem by Lev Mey, suggest a youthful love song.

The Six Romances, Op.27, published in 1875, are all dedicated to the contralto Yelizaveta Lavrovskaya. The first song, *Na son gryadushchiy* (Before sleep), a prayer at bed-time, has words by Nikolay Ogaryov, a political idealist, first set by Tchaikovsky for unaccompanied chorus during his days as a student at the St Petersburg Conservatory. The second song, *Smorti: von oblako* (Look: there is a silver cloud) is a setting of words by Nikolay Grekov. The first verse compares the passing cloud and the brightness of the sky to the beauty of the beloved, with a second verse that brings a sadder aspect, as rain clouds gather. The fifth of the set, *Ali mat' menya rozhala* (Had my mother borne me) has words by Lev Mey, based on a translation from the Polish ballad by Teofil Lenartowicz. A girl laments the departure of her lover for the wars, leaving her only in sorrow at his absence. The last song, *Moya balnovitsa* (My mischief), also has words translated

from Polish by Lev Mey. The original poem is by Adam Mickiewicz and is set by Tchaikovsky in the tempo of a mazurka. It praises the beauty and vivacity of the beloved, longing for her kisses.

The Six Romances, Op. 28, date from the same period, the songs now dedicated to singers who were to take part in the Moscow premiere of *The Oprichnik*. The first of the set, *Net, nikogda ne nazovu* (I will never name her), has a text by Nikolay Grekov based on a poem by Alfred de Musset, *Chanson de Fortunio*, from the latter's play *Le chandelier*. The lover declares that he will not name his beloved or do anything against her wishes, hiding his own feelings. It is dedicated to Anton Nikolayev. The second song, *Korol'ki* (A String of Corals), takes a translation by Lev Mey of a ballad by the Polish writer Wladyslaw Syrokomla. Dedicated to the tenor Aleksandr Dodonov, the song tells of a man who rides away with the Cossacks, takes part in the capture of a town and seizes a string of coral beads to take back to his beloved Hannah; on his victorious return, however, he finds Hannah dead, and leaves the beads on a holy icon. The fifth song, *Ni otziva, ni slova, ni priveta* (No reply, no word, no greeting), dedicated to the baritone Bogomir Korsov, is a setting of words by Aleksey Apukhtin, with the lover left without any answer, his past love now seemingly forgotten.

The Six Romances, Op.38, were written after the disaster of Tchaikovsky's marriage, his escape abroad and return in 1878 to stay at Nadezhda von Meck's estate in the Ukraine. The first of the set, *Serenada Don Zhuana* (Don Juan's Serenade), a text among those suggested by Madame von Meck, is taken from Aleksey Tolstoy's play on the subject of Don Juan, and echoes the well-known mock serenade in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, here calling on Nisetta, a woman of the town, to appear on her balcony. The fourth song, *O, esli b ti mogla* (Oh, if you could), another poem by Tolstoy, calls on the beloved to forget her troubles and recapture their former happiness. The fifth song, *Lyubov' metvetsa* (Love of a dead man), with words by Lermontov, is in the voice of a dead man, who even from the grave still feels love and jealousy. It is based on a French original. The Op.38 Romances were dedicated to Tchaikovsky's brother Anatoly, who had been of considerable support during the difficulties of the past year.

In 1886 Grand Duke Konstantin Konstantinovich Romanov, a grandson of Tsar Nikolay I and a young man of wide cultural interests, had a small volume of his poems privately printed, for presentation to his friends. He had known Tchaikovsky since 1880 and held him in high respect, sending him a copy of the poems, of which Tchaikovsky set a group of six as Six Romances, Op.63, published in 1887. Two other settings remain as sketches dating from the same period, *Tebya ya videla vo sne* (You were in my dream) and *O net! Za krasotu ti ne lyubi menya* (Oh no! Do not love me for my beauty).

In Berlin in 1888, during a concert tour in which he introduced his own work to audiences outside Russia, Tchaikovsky met again the mezzo-soprano Désirée Artôt, whom he had twenty years before thought of marrying. It was for her that he set a group of six French poems, to be published, in Russian translation, as Opus 65. The first, *Serenada* (Serenade), takes a poem by Edouard Turquéty, *Où vas-tu, souffle d'aurore*. The second song sets Paul Collin's *Déception*, translated as *Razocharovanie* (Disillusionment). Here the lover visits again the woods where once he had been happy. This is followed by Collin's *Serenada*

(Serenade) in which the lover finds his beloved in nature. *Puskay zima* (Let the winter) translates Collin's *Qu'importe que l'hiver éteigne les clartés*, in which the poet knows where to find light and beauty, in spite of the season. *Slyozi* (Tears), setting a poem by Augustine Malvine Blanchecotte, bids the lover's tears not to fall and to let him die. The group ends with *Charovnitza* (Enchantress), a translation of Collin's *Rondel*, praise of the beloved's power of conquest.

It was with some reluctance that Tchaikovsky, in 1891, turned his attention towards fulfilling an undertaking he had made to Lucien Guitry to provide incidental music for a staging in St Petersburg of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, to be given in French translation. For this purpose he adapted some earlier compositions, raiding, in particular, his *Hamlet* fantasy overture of 1888. Among the seventeen pieces Tchaikovsky set two songs for Ophelia and one for the gravedigger.

The first song is from Ophelia's first mad scene, after her father's death, 'Where is the one who loved me so much? How will I recognise him? ... His face will be covered with the hat of a pilgrim', and the second when she returns, observed now by her brother Laertes, 'He lay with his face exposed. ... We cried, and lowered him into the grave'. The first of the two seems to draw on English folk-song. The third song is from the graveyard scene, where the gravedigger sings, 'I was a nice chap, chasing girls as much as I could, ... And my days and nights were jolly', an episode of comic relief before the final tragedy.

© Keith Anderson

OPRICHNIK (CD 37 - 39)

Melodies and colours from the land of the Czars: Tchaikovsky's opera *Oprichnik*

Considering that *Voevoda* (taken from Ostrovskij's *A dream on the Volga*), staged in Moscow in 1869, was rejected after a few performances by Tchaikovsky himself and that his following attempt, *Undina* (from the novel by La Motte Fouqué), was left in a fragmentary state, *Oprichnik* ought to be considered the Russian composer's first, real, convincing step of his theatrical career. Moreover, before destroying the score of *Voevoda* (which was reconstructed from the orchestral parts after the composer's death), Tchaikovsky took some passages from it and re-used them for his *Oprichnik*, composed between the summer of 1870 and the 1st of April 1872, and first staged at the Mariinskij theatre in St. Petersburg on the 12th (24th) April 1874.

Fourteen performances during the course of two seasons and generally positive appraisal in the music world close to the composer bear witness to this work's success, for which also the conductor Eduard Napravnik is to be credited, from 1869 permanent conductor at the Mariinskij's. Of the same age as Tchaikovsky and a friend of his, he put his experience at the composer's disposal from the early stages, suggesting modifications and corrections to the orchestral and vocal parts, some cuts, and many changes in the choice of the cast; and, naturally, he conducted as befitted him the first performances in the spring of 1874. At that time Tchaikovsky was mainly known for *Romeo and Juliet* (1869), the overture-fantasia that had spread his fame throughout the Russian music world. A young teacher at the Moscow Conservatory, he kept good relations both with the academic societies of Anton and Nicola Rubin'tein

(under whose wings his *First Symphony* had been born, not yet published), and with the Group of Five, devoted to the rediscovery of the Russian national roots and lead by Balakirev (to whom he had dedicated the symphonic poem *Fatum* in 1868). The would-be contrast between a 'westernised' Tchaikovsky and the 'Russian national' Group of Five – which is at best superficial – was totally inexistent at the time of *Oprichnik*, when Tchaikovsky was still fully in agreement with some of the Group's positions: the unconditional worship of Glinka, the gathering of popular melodies, regarded as 'sacred relics', the full immersion in Russian historic and popular subject-matters; three elements which, blended with others, are at the core of *Oprichnik*. The libretto of this opera was written by Tchaikovsky himself, who took it from the homonymous drama by Ivanovich Lazechnikov rejected by the censors in the 1840s but republished in 1867 and staged in the Alexandrinski theatre of St. Petersburg and in the Malj of Moscow. In *Oprichnik*, more than the predictable plot, it is the atmosphere which counts, an atmosphere laden with the admiration and fear inspired by the Czar Ivan the Terrible and his praetorian guard, the *oprichnika*. This corps, under the Czar's direct orders, was formed in 1565 and dissolved after seven years of intimidations and atrocities, leaving, in the literary tradition, an image of unrestrained youth, given to revelries and bloody deeds: sometimes described as a gang of bandits, sometimes as a monastic community devoted to the Czar.

Oprichnik, as we already mentioned, pleased many people. Not its author though, who, after working at it with enthusiasm, when he saw the first rehearsals found it 'without action, without style and inspiration' and despite its numerous performances in Moscow, Odessa and Kiev (where it was received triumphantly), delayed as far as possible its publication. It is not easy to understand the motives of such a drastic view, which today, really, cannot be endorsed. Wanting to use in his new work many passages from *Voevoda*, in his libretto Tchaikovsky took quite a few liberties with respect to the drama. The result is a work consisting more of situations, of dramatic circumstances than of well-rounded characters. There is one character, actually, which could have provided a strong core: that of Andrej. The son of a boyard, reduced to poverty by a wicked prince who killed his father, he wants to join the corps of the oprichniks so that he can revenge himself on the prince and marry his daughter, with whom he is in love; the youth, however, feels also a strong bond with his mother, who seeks revenge too but, as the one-time noble wife of a boyard, is opposed to the oprichniks, the new militiamen who are coarse and godless. Andrej, torn as he is between his filial duty and his loyalty to the oprichniks, could have been a neat, Schiller-like character. But neat, Schiller-like characters were not for Tchaikovsky, who gave Andrej a pale role and focussed more on the atmosphere of loneliness and submission hovering around the female characters, Natal'ja and, in particular, Andrej's mother, Morozova, who is entrusted with the highest passages of the opera.

Most of the first act's music is taken from *Voevoda*: the duet of Zemchuznyj and Mi'kov; the episode of Natal'ja with her nurse and friends; the duet of Andrej and Basmanov. In the first case the union between pre-existing music and new text produces a curious yet interesting incongruence: the music flows away light and witty, and the two characters would appear like two old rascals talking of their escapades, except that one is giving his own daughter away to the other for profit; Verdi would have

commented: 'we are out of tone'. This discrepancy, however, has an interesting aspect: while savouring the music in itself, with its masterly features, and bubbly and pleasant atmosphere, we discover Tchaikovsky's modern temperament, his 20th-century disposition of lucid contriver, which Stravinskij had perceptively guessed. The other passages taken from *Voevoda* show no such inconsistencies; in the following number, with the chorus of girls and the entrance of Natal'ja, we plunge into a genuine Russian music tableau; the desolate touch of the 'little duck song', the duckling that strives in vain to fly off the sea, calls to mind a comment of Alberto Savinio (written, actually, for Stravinskij's *Sacre*): 'such melancholy, such resignation, such horizontality make of Russian music an endless and aimless wandering'. Natal'ja is a sentimental girl, a little scatter-brain, she cannot compare with the Tat'jana of *Onegin*, who develops from a romantic girl into an experienced (and disenchanted) woman.

In a rather mechanical, juxtaposed way, Natal'ja's rural tableau is immediately followed by a passage of soaring lyricism; after Andrej and Basmanov leave the garden where they have been made to turn up rather artificially, Natal'ja, thinking she has heard some voices, comes back on stage; as she notes the loneliness of the place, a theme emerges in the orchestra ('largamente, con passione'), then picked up by the voice, in which a loan from Meyerbeer has been recognised, the last act love duet from *Les Huguenots* ('Tu l'a dit: oui, tu m'aime!'). But the lyrical power that dominates the episode has something also of Verdi, calling to mind, for example, *Un ballo in maschera* ('Ebben sì, t'amo', in the second act duet), a work which Tchaikovsky knew well and esteemed. Lyricism of this kind would of course provide the raw material for the 'letter scene' of *Evgenij Onegin*, whereas here it appears even a little out of place; *Onegin* comes to mind also right after, when Natal'ja, weary after her passionate outburst, sits down absorbed in her thoughts while her friends return singing the previous chorus: her character is, in fact, engulfed by the collective emotion, heedless of individual situations, just like in the scene of the chorus of girls picking blackberries after Tat'jana's bitter disappointment.

The instrumental passage introducing the second act, a bravura piece rich in harmonic nuances, is not by Tchaikovsky but by his friend and pupil Vladimir Cilovskij, the younger brother of that Kostantin who would collaborate to the writing of *Onegin*'s libretto. The practice of sharing the responsibility of a composition with friends and colleagues was a characteristic of Balakirev's group, and this entr'acte is another tangible sign that the Tchaikovsky of the 1870s was indeed supportive of their poetics. The second act features the entrance of the most successful character – perhaps the only real character – of the opera: Morozova. The scent of Russian musical themes and of orthodox liturgy which this woman carries with her isolate her into her ancient nobility of widow; tightly connected to this atmosphere, which is expressed through a wide-ranging lyrical declamato, is her motherly pride, which embraces feelings of (ill-concealed) resignation, revenge, fear that God might not forgive her hatred and punish her through her son Andrej, the object of her overprotective love. Morozova's first aria, at the opening of the act, and then the duet with her son immediately reveal her authority and shades: the bassoon theme introducing the duet is enough to brand her with the feeling of sadness that oppresses her and of her foreboding worries.

The fragility of Andrej's character is the pivot of the long second act finale, taken entirely by the scene of the oath, a Grand Opéra scene that is clearly inspired by Meyerbeer's *Huguenots* (Gerald Abraham went as far as defining *Oprichnik* 'Meyerbeer translated into Russian'). Basmanov introduces Andrej to the assembled praetorian guards, but the boy cannot make himself pronounce the ritual oath; choruses come in impetuous succession, the oprichniks surround him stretching their blades above his head ('Are you ready to swear?') and warn him that the oath is totally binding and will sever any other bond, be it with family or friends, and that whoever breaks it is punished with death; a pressing 'swear, swear, Andrej Morozov!' echoes all around the poor Andrej, who no longer feels so determined and begins to weep. Finally, realising there is no other way out, he utters the fatal words; a chorus in praise of the Czar ends this finale, which is more impressive than convincing.

The third act opens with an intense and restless chorus of people who invoke the protective help of the Czar; but even more remarkable is the following chorus, the brief but unforgettable one of the boys who insult Morozova in the street: the darting melodies of the wood instruments, the simple incisiveness of the boys' voices, calling to mind the rascals who rob the Innocent in *Boris*, the chorus of people who chase them away, create a realistic tableau of unforgettable vigour. Re-enters Morozova, with her power to spread her emotions around: this time it is Natal'ja that benefits by it. The girl has run away from home and rushes into the arms of Morozova, her beloved Andrej's mother. Though Morozova loves her like a daughter, she invites her to return to her father, causing the girl's beautifully lyrical reaction: she is set in her decision to face real life, away from the suffocating terem. Their duet is admirable for the use of solo instruments which, emerging from the orchestra, create a feeling of imminent drama. Emotions do not ooze, Tchaikovsky keeps cool and firmly holds the reins of the composition; yet the result is one of great effectiveness in portraying Natal'ja's ripening in preparation of her highest moment, when she faces the prince her father ('Father! I am here before you and before the Lord'), who has come to retrieve her: the slight syncopation of the strings, the clarinet supporting the voice, the melody that is one with the accents of the words, all points to the fact that we are entering the kingdom of psychological introspection, in which Tchaikovsky was a master. Rising against her father, the girl attains her musical character, anticipating what Tat'jana would fully develop in *Onegin*.

The prince, however, is not to be persuaded and orders his servants to seize his daughter; at this point of utmost tension the opera turns to the so-called 'pièce à sauvetage', typical of the French musical theatre after Cherubini's *Lodoïska*: it is a passage of adventurous music, with "the saviours" bursting onto the scene forwarded by explicit offstage shouts of 'make way'. Andrej and Basmanov rush in with the oprichniks and free the girl; the youths are overjoyed but Morozova, shocked at the sight of her son wearing the praetorian uniform, curses him in front of everyone. The curse sets the 'doubt ensemble' moving, another characteristic feature of French opera: everyone is bewildered at the point things have come to and each expresses his/her thoughts on a long harmonic D pedal. Tchaikovsky here shows all his writing skills and pays a devout tribute to Glinka, recalling the ensemble that follows the abduction of Ljudmila.

The fourth act opens with the marriage of Andrej and Natal'ja, featuring the last passages of the opera inspired by folklore. Andrej's farewell to the oprichniks clearly echoes the theme of the 'duckling song' at the beginning of the opera: once again material from *Voevoda* is employed, notably the farewell of Bastrikov from the first act finale. From his symphonic poem *Fatum* Tchaikovsky took, instead, the beautiful lyrical theme which comes in the middle of Andrej and Natal'ja's only love duet ('My light, my life'): in it the French-like charm of the theme, close to Gounod, blends in with the countermelody of the clarinet which, using its dark and gloomy register, lets foresee the precariousness of the newlyweds' happiness. After this, the opera rushes to its tragic conclusion: among coups-de-scène and cruelties, Andrej is made to fall into a trap and Morozova is forced to witness the beheading of her son, cursed yet loved dearly. Broken-hearted, she falls dead to the ground while, offstage, a sombrely triumphant chorus of oprichniks sings in praise of the Czar. It is a peak of evilness, of exaggerated violence; Tchaikovsky would turn away from it in his later masterpieces: *Evgenij Onegin* and the *Queen of Spades* will have neither good nor evil characters; at most it will be life itself to be evil, and destiny, preventing people from enjoying the good things of this world, which a youthful false hope had thought easily accessible.

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Synopsis

Act I

Prince Zemchuznyj's garden, at nightfall.

Zemchuznyj, the boyard, receives the visit of Molchan Mit'kov, who has come to ask for the hand of his beautiful daughter Natal'ja. The prince accepts, in spite of the suitor's age, but warns him: the girl won't have any dowry.

Enter Natal'ja, accompanied by a procession of handmaids and by Zachar'evna, the nurse. The young princess is listless and bored of the monotonous life she leads in the terem, the high rooms of the noble residence assigned to the women; displeased with the song intoned by her friends, she suggests another, melancholy song, telling the story of a girl died of grief because she was forced to marry an old man. Then, at the nurse's reproaches, she asks her to tell them a love story. Playfully, the girls run off, scattering among the bushes.

Andrej Morozov, his friend Basmanov and a group of Oprichniks (Ivan the Terrible's praetorian guards) arrive. Andrej has come to see his beloved Natal'ja, who is secretly engaged to him, and Basmanov and the guards want to help him fulfil his dream. Left alone with Basmanov, the young man reveals to his friend that he thinks of joining the Oprichniks to obtain by the Czar justice for the wrongs he suffered in the past. Zemchuznyj, in fact, killed his father and pillaged his family's properties, reducing them to poverty. Basmanov exhorts him not to waste any time and go to his mother in order to get her blessing for the enlistment. Before Andrej leaves, he gives him some money to help him out. Natal'ja, hidden behind the bushes, has overheard their dialogue; distressed, she invokes her beloved, while her nurse and handmaids try to entertain her with some dances.

Act II

First tableau, A farmer's hut.

Princess Morozova, Andrej's mother, sadly recollects the wrongs she suffered from the wicked Zemchuznyj. But she is willing to accept her sad lot, bearing her suffering in silence and forgetting

the proud life she led as the wife of the wealthy Prince Morozov, so long as God will protect her son. Enter Andrej, who exhorts her to forget the past and gives her a purse full of money, a sign that things have taken a turn for the best; it is a gift from Basmanov, the Czar's favourite. Morozova is horrified at the sight of the money and warns her son against getting close to Basmanov, for – she says – the terrible sovereign's seneschal is made of the same stuff as the Czar. Andrej reassures her and reveals that the money had been entrusted to the seneschal by his father when they were comrades-in-arms. The princess desperately tries to dissuade him again, but all she can do is beg him not to stain his father's honour and give him her blessing.

Second tableau,

The Czar's quarters in the town of Aleksandrovskij.

Around a sumptuously laid table the Oprichniks are singing the Czar's praises when prince Vjaz'minskij comes to interrupt their revelry, lest they disturb the sovereign's rest. Basmanov announces that the Czar has accepted Andrej Morozov's request to enter the Praetorian corps. Vjaz'minskij is furious: he can't accept the son of his fierce enemy to become one of them. Basmanov tries to quench his anger by reminding him that a father's faults should not be on a son's head and that they cannot disobey a royal order; then he leaves to fetch Morozov, while Vjaz'minskij secretly hopes for revenge. In front of the Praetorians, Andrej must take the oath: he must swear to be loyal to the Czar, attend no other duty than the service of his sovereign, forget his blood-ties and his love. The young man proclaims that he is ready, but when Vjaz'minskij reminds him of the terrible punishment that would befall him in case of treachery, he hesitates at the thought of leaving his beloved and denying his mother and father. He has no choice, however: either he joins the Praetorians or he won't have any chance to redeem the wrongs his family suffered. To back out now, moreover, would mean death: urged by Basmanov, Andrej swears.

Act III

A square in Moscow.

The people of Moscow give vent to their despair for having lost the Czar's loving guidance: the sovereign, in fact, has moved away from the city. Morozova, suffering from loneliness and fearing for her son's destiny, decides to go and pray in the nearby church; as she walks towards it, a group of boys insult her – while people chase them away, Natal'ja arrives at a run and throws herself into her arms. The girl has fled from her father's home, where she was kept like a captive awaiting the forced wedding, and is looking for her help and protection. The woman warns her: it is useless and dangerous to struggle against her powerful, wealthy and determined father. But Natal'ja is prepared to die: life without Andrej would be meaningless.

Enter Zemchuznyj, accompanied by his retinue. The girl throws herself at her father's feet, begging for mercy, but at the mention of Andrej's name he reacts harshly and even Morozova's attempts to make him change his mind are all in vain. While Natal'ja is being seized by Zemchuznyj's servants, Basmanov and Andrej arrive with some Praetorians. Morozova immediately realises that her son has joined the Oprichniks.

Aware that he is in danger, Basmanov wants to drag Andrej away, but he refuses to go and tries to explain to his mother that he has become a Praetorian for a noble purpose, to gain money and avenge his father. All in vain: Morozova curses her son and falls to the ground, crushed by grief. Basmanov convinces Andrej that

the only way he can regain his mother's blessing is to ask the Czar to release him from the oath. So they gallop away towards the royal palace, hoping for the Czar's mercy.

Act IV

The Czar's quarters in the town of Aleksandrovskij.

Natal'ja and Andrej's wedding banquet is under way. Morozov is happy because his request to be released from the oath has been granted and he was able to marry his Natal'ja, rescuing her from Zemchuznyj's clutches. But it grieves him to know that he must leave the Praetorians, his friends, for he would have wanted to serve his sovereign loyally; then he reaffirms his devotion to the Czar and proclaims that he is ready to defend him always and everywhere. Basmanov reminds him that till the end of the banquet, till midnight, he is still an Oprichnik, owing total obedience to the Czar. Andrej drinks light-heartedly to the Czar's health, but Natal'ja is troubled, she has an unpleasant presentiment and is impatiently awaiting the end of the party. Suddenly a very upset Basmanov arrives and warns Andrej that he is in great danger because of his senseless behaviour. The young man, however, does not seem conscious of the risks he is running.

Enter Prince Vjaz'minskij, who announces that the Czar wants to see Andrej's beautiful bride. At first Morozov is proud of such a request, but when he learns that Natal'ja must go alone, he refuses to let her leave without him. The Oprichniks remind him that he must obey or he will infringe the oath that binds him till midnight, while Basmanov tries to convince him that this is nothing but an innocent prank; Vjaz'minskij secretly rejoices, feeling that his revenge is near. Natal'ja and Andrej stand firm in their decision: they prefer to face death than obey. While the girl falls unconscious and is dragged away by the Praetorians, Andrej is arrested and taken to the scaffold, where he is executed under the eyes of Morozova, forced by the wicked Vjaz'minskij to witness her son's death. The opera ends with the woman falling heartbroken to the ground, while the Oprichniks sing the Czar's praises.

EVGENY ONEGIN (CD 40 & 41)

The moderate success of the premiere of Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, performed for the first time in March 1879 by students of the Moscow Conservatory, did not deter its conductor, Nicolai Rubinstein, Tchaikovsky's pupil Sergei Taneyev or the influential critic Hermann Laroche from predicting the work's considerable future significance in opera repertoire worldwide. This prognosis was later confirmed at its performance in St. Petersburg in 1884 and still remains valid today, even though the piece is not actually an opera in the accepted 19th-century sense: with the subtitle 'lyrical scenes', Tchaikovsky indicates the work's elegiac mood from the very beginning, a mood which dispenses with overt drama. He commented on this in a letter to Taneyev (1878): 'I couldn't care less about how it works on the stage [...] I couldn't care less about special effects [...] I don't need Czars and Czarinas, revolutions, battles, marches – to be brief, anything which is considered Grand Opéra. I was looking for an intimate and yet shocking drama – based on conflicts which I myself have experienced or witnessed, which are able to move me profoundly.' For these reasons, Tchaikovsky concentrated less on the political plot motivations in the opera's literary model, the eponymous verse novel by Alexander Pushkin, and was more concerned to set the nuances of the characters'

emotional world to music. Thus the melancholy proceeding from the drama's tragic events becomes thoroughly personal: parallels between Tatyana, the protagonist of the opera, and Tchaikovsky's admirer Antonia, to whom he was married for only a few unhappy months, also between Eugene Onegin, who (at least to begin with) shows so little interest in a 'bourgeois' (marriage) relationship, and Tchaikovsky himself, are clamorously apparent. However, it was not just the associations with Tchaikovsky's personal life which made the subject matter close to the composer's heart; the constellation of contrasting and conflicting characters described here also gave him the opportunity to develop his 'musical personality' (Tchaikovsky): his wide-ranging cantilenas constitute a melodic richness in which elegiac sorrow alternates with dreaminess. The creative power of the orchestral writing, characteristic of Tchaikovsky, illustrates the inner psychology of the events, as is the case with Tatyana's leitmotif, a descending lament already to be found in the orchestral prelude, and which then returns many times in the course of the work. The choruses of farmers and maidservants in the first and third scenes as well as folkloristic songs and dances lend stylised Russian national colour – by contrast, the balls of noble Russian society feature waltz, mazurka and polonaise with which Tchaikovsky-contrary to the efforts of the supporters of Russian national music – professes his adherence to western (musical) tradition and convention. It is no surprise, in conclusion, that this opera by the composer of *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker* was also a triumphant success in its adaptation as a ballet.

© Stephanie Schroedter, translation: Deborah Holmes

Synopsis

Act I

Eugene Onegin is set in Russia in the early years of the 19th century. The beginning of the opera, set on Lady Larina's manorial lands, opens with an exchange of reminiscences between Larina and her nurse Filipyevna of the former's happy girlhood. Farmers present Larina with a harvest wreath and break into a merry folksong. Olga, Larina's younger daughter, likes nothing better than to join in the festivities, whereas her sister Tatyana remains aloof from the action, engrossed in a sentimental novel. Lensky, a neighbouring squire, Olga's swain, arrives with his friend Onegin. The coolness of Onegin's blasé attitude impresses Tatyana deeply, she hangs on his every word as he recounts anecdotes of his earlier life. Later in her bedroom, Tatyana cannot sleep; to her, the new arrival is like a hero from one of her novels. She makes a passionate confession of her feelings to Filipyevna and in a state of high excitement writes Onegin a letter telling him all. The next day, the pair meet in the garden. Onegin explains to her in a formal and haughty manner that although he found her confession moving, he is unable to love her and is not the type of man to marry. Tatyana is disappointed and deeply insulted.

Act II

The next act opens with a ball held by Larina on her estate to celebrate Tatyana's name day. Onegin dances with Tatyana, which causes much speculation among the other guests. Annoyed that he allowed Lensky to talk him in to attending the ball, Onegin begins to flirt with Olga. Olga's ready response worsens the situation by putting Lensky out of sorts. Triquet, an elderly neighbour, has written a short verse in Tatyana's honour; the quarrel between Lensky and Onegin comes to a head as Olga

chooses Onegin as her partner for the cotillon, to punish Lensky for his jealousy. Lensky challenges his friend to a duel. As the day breaks, Lensky waits pensively for Onegin. Both parties ultimately appreciate the nonsensical nature of the duel as they face each other as enemies, however neither takes the first step towards reconciliation. Onegin shoots first and kills his friend.

Act III

The third act takes place years later in an elegant St. Petersburg salon. After a long absence Tatyana, now married to Prince Gremin, meets Onegin again by chance. The Prince enthuses over his married bliss to Onegin and introduces him to Tatyana, who greets Onegin coldly and immediately dismisses him. Onegin is suddenly struck with the realisation of his repressed love for Tatyana and wants to see her again. Tatyana awaits Onegin's visit at home but rejects his passionate pleas that she should come away with him, citing his previous heartless behaviour as a reason. Had he not rejected her, she would not have married Gremin. In a moment of weakness, Tatyana confesses her undiminished love to Onegin but also informs him of her intention to remain true to her husband. Onegin is thus forced to relinquish his hopes and rushes from the house in despair.

THE MAID OF ORLEANS (CD 42 - 44)

Synopsis

Act I

A rural square

Joan – a peasant girl – is urged by her father to marry so that she will have a protector in times of war. She refuses and refers to instructions from heaven. Her angry father calls them instructions straight from hell. The warring factions approach the village. Joan admonishes the despairing villagers to show courage and to trust in God. Then she hears angelic voices, telling her to renounce marital love, take up the sword, liberate France and to crown the King.

Act II

Royal encampment near Chinon

Charles is downcast and desperate. His last liegeman, Dunois, endeavours to persuade him to combat the enemy but he fails in this and leaves him. The archbishop announces that God is on Charles' side: Joan has worked a miracle before the gates of Orleans and has beaten back the enemy. Dunois returns. After having been blessed by the archbishop, Joan is welcomed by Charles, the populace cheers and Joan calls on the blessed Virgin to assist in the liberation of France.

Act III

Scene 1, A battlefield

Joan defies instructions from heaven to kill the traitor Lionel. Struck by his good looks and his youth she spares his life. Lionel falls in love with Joan and returns to the service of France. Joan is perturbed by her disobedience to heaven's command.

Scene 2, A square before Reims cathedral

Charles is crowned King. The crowd is jubilant. Joan's father, Thibaut, accuses his daughter of having liberated France with the aid of the devil. Everyone is horrified and urges Joan to justify herself. She refuses to reply. Dunois sides with her. Instead of an answer a clap of thunder is heard. Heaven itself seems to speak

out against Joan. Everyone except Lionel leaves her. She curses him and flees. Lionel follows her.

Act IV

Scene 1, A forest

Joan tries to overcome her passion for Lionel. The populace turns away from her. Lionel finds Joan and they confess their love for each other. English soldiers kill Lionel and seize Joan.

Scene 2, A square in Rouen

Joan is tied to the stake. Cheering and expressions of sympathy from the crowd. The pyre is lit. Joan hears angelic voices and thus her pangs of conscience are finally assuaged.

IOLANTA (CD 44 & 45)

Nowadays *Iolanta* is quite unknown. It is rarely performed and hardly recorded, especially outside Russia. At the premiere however, in December 1892 in St Petersburg, as part of a double-bill with the premiere of *The Nutcracker*, it was highly successful and often repeated over the following years, while *The Nutcracker*, today very popular, received its first western performance only after almost two decades. This difference in reception exemplifies the change in perception of Tchaikovsky's music in general. During his lifetime and shortly afterwards he was most famous for his short, often unpretentious and uncomplicated compositions, mainly composed or arranged for a group of musicians at home. Although *Iolanta* is an opera lasting about 100 minutes, it consists of short pieces that could easily be seen as independent compositions. The opera is a drama, not a tragedy: in fact it has a happy ending with triumphant music. And although the composer was very sophisticated and refined in his dealing with motifs and instrumentation, even without these aspects the opera contains music which strongly resembles Tchaikovsky's songs and piano compositions whose form is often conventional. The moral of the opera (love is a healing force) certainly strikes a chord. And as ever Tchaikovsky is unsurpassed in his portrayal of human emotions, especially those of young people.

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MAZEPPA (CD 46 & 47)

Tchaikovsky always thought of himself as a composer of operas. He worked hard at his chosen field, producing in his 54 years eight full-length works, all in the mainstream of the Russian opera style. With his opera-writing countrymen, he shared a love of Pushkin, whose epic poem, *Poltava*, furnished the plot for *Mazeppa*. Unlike the refined, courtly atmospheres of *Eugene Onegin* and *The Queen of Spades*, *Mazeppa* is a blood-thirsty tale of crazy love, abduction, political persecution, execution, and vengeful murder. *Mazeppa* was composed during one of the perennial low-points in the composer's life. Worry about the failure of his previous operas, *The Maid of Orleans* and *Eugene Onegin*, to remain in the repertory and nervousness about the favoured treatment of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Snow Maiden* at the hands of theatre directors preyed on Tchaikovsky's mind. To his patron, Mme. von Meck, he wrote, 'Never has any important work given me such trouble as this opera. Perhaps it is the decadence of my powers – or have I become even more severe in self-judgement? Even the scoring of the work, an activity in which he usually took pleasure, proceeded 'at a snail's pace'.

Yet the Tsar's recent 3000 ruble patronage and a ready-made libretto written by Viktor Burenin in 1881 for the Director of the St. Petersburg Conservatory – who hadn't the time to work on it – were certainly not unwelcome. In another letter, Tchaikovsky eagerly wrote of his work on the overture: 'The introduction, depicting Mazeppa and his famous mad gallop, will be wonderful!'

Work on the opera began in Summer of 1882 and constituted the composer's chief activity – and concern – until his return to St. Petersburg from the country in December. His annual trip to Europe cheered him up somewhat, and the opera was finally completed in May of 1883. Jurgenson, his publisher, offered 1000 rubles for the work, to which Tchaikovsky, always hard-up, countered: '*Mazeppa* contains hundreds of songs, a whole symphonic tableau, and another symphonic number which is not without merit. If consistency is to be respected, *Mazeppa* should bring me at least ten times as much as ten songs...' The good news was that Moscow and St. Petersburg were both vying for the opportunity to stage the work.

Mazeppa was first performed at the Bolshoi Theater on 15 February, 1884 and then repeated four days later at the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg. At both performances, the work was brilliantly staged but marred by the uneven vocal and acting abilities of the cast. Still, audiences responded warmly and the critical notices, in Moscow at least, were kind. Brother Modest hid the truth about the critical roasting the opera got in St. Petersburg; when he finally learned the truth, Tchaikovsky wrote to thank him: 'You did well, the truth might have killed me.'

Synopsis

Act I

Scene 1

The garden of Kochubey, a rich Cossack. His daughter Maria leaves her girlfriends, who are telling fortunes, to sing of her love for the family's elderly guest, Mazeppa. Andrey, a young Cossack who has loved Maria since childhood, enters and declares his love for her. Kochubey enters, accompanied by his wife and Mazeppa. Against a background of singing and dancing, Mazeppa asks for Maria's hand and is refused; he is too old, and in any case, he is her godfather. Maria confesses her love for Mazeppa, claiming she loves him more than she does her own parents. He and his retainers carry her off.

Scene 2

After the flight of Maria and Mazeppa, the Kochubey family and Andrey are both saddened and enraged. The wife, Lyubov, desires revenge, and Andrey eagerly volunteers to report Mazeppa's intrigues with the Swedes to the Tsar.

Act II

Scene 1

The dungeon of Belotserkovsky Castle, in which Kochubey is kept prisoner, victim of Mazeppa's charges, before Andrey could work his own revenge. One of Mazeppa's henchmen demands Kochubey's treasure; refused, Orlik calls for a torturer.

Scene 2

Orlik reports on Kochubey's lack of compliance to Mazeppa, who orders the Cossack's execution. Maria appears, knowing nothing

of her father's fate. In the ensuing love scene, Mazeppa details his plan to create a separate Ukrainian state with himself as head. After he leaves, Maria's mother enters and reveals the truth about Kochubey, whom they both resolve to save.

Scene 3

The populace is gathered around the place of execution. A drunken Cossack's dance is the prelude to the execution of Kochubey, whom the women are unable to save in time.

Act III

After a symphonic sketch, 'The Battle of Poltava', the curtain rises on the deserted garden of the Kochubey's. Andrey, in pursuit of the Swedes, pauses in the garden. Mazeppa and Orlik appear on horseback. Andrey reproaches them but is shot by Mazeppa. Maria, who has lost her reason, wanders in and, seeing Andrey's body, refuses to leave with Mazeppa. He abandons her with no remorse, leaving her to sing a lullaby to her dead and rejected lover.

CHEREVICHKI (CD 48 - 50)

Cherevichki (The Little Shoes) is the eighth complete opera by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, a composer who devoted a great deal of attention to opera, and, probably, more time than to any other musical genre (including symphonies and ballets). Yet among all his operas only two enjoy any degree of popularity outside Russia: *Eugene Onegin* and *The Queen of Spades*. Tchaikovsky composed theatrical works throughout his short and tormented musical career. His first opera, *The Voyevoda*, was written in 1867/68 when he was twenty-eight years old; his last, *Yolantak*, was staged at the Marynsky Theatre in St Petersburg on 18th December 1892, about a year before the composer's death. *Cherevichki*, however, cannot be considered a wholly original opera; it is a revision of another opera which Tchaikovsky wrote some ten years earlier, *Vakula the Smith*, first staged at the Marynsky Theatre in St Petersburg on 24th May 1876, received with indifference by the public of the capital city.

Vakula the Smith is based on a libretto by Y.P. Polonsky originally written for Alexander Nikolayevich Serov, who died in 1871 without completing his projected opera. The libretto in turn is based on one of Nicolai Gogol's most famous short stories, *Christmas Eve*, which was to provide the inspiration for Rimsky-Korsakov's opera of the same name almost twenty years later. The Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna originally commissioned Serov to write the opera. Pavlovna was a well-known patron of the arts in St Petersburg and an admirer of Serov; the composer's death convinced her to arrange a competition to set the libretto to music in Serov's memory. When the Grand Duchess herself died in 1873, the Russian Music Society took up the organisation of the competition and set the first of August 1875 as the closing date for the presentation of the scores and a public performance at the Imperial Opera in St Petersburg as the prize for the winner.

We do not know for what reasons Tchaikovsky decided to take part in the competition. We know, however, that he was convinced that the closing date was the first of January 1875. In June 1874 Tchaikovsky set to work with such mounting enthusiasm that he finished the first draft of the entire opera in about six weeks; three weeks later he completed the orchestration. At that point the composer finally realised that he

had been working towards an incorrect closing date. Convinced of the quality of the opera and certain that it would be accepted by the Imperial Opera, even without winning the competition, Tchaikovsky tried in vain to withdraw his candidature from the competition. Then, prey to his customary lack of self-confidence, he tried to use some rather irregular tricks to make sure that the score he had sent, which according to the conditions of the competition was to be anonymous, would be easily recognised as his. The competition was held and Tchaikovsky, as predicted, won it on his own merits.

At its first performance *Vakula the Smith* was received, as we have seen, with a certain coolness. The opera was staged again in the following three seasons, but never won the public's favour. Convinced that his opera was basically sound, Tchaikovsky took up the score again in 1885, cut some pieces, added others and simplified several scenes in order to make them more theatrical. The opera, in its new version with its new title *Cherevichki*, was given its first performance at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow on 31st January 1887, directed by the composer himself. Once again, however, the audience's reaction was cold, and the opera was never staged again in Russia or abroad. Yet Tchaikovsky still thought *Cherevichki* one of his best compositions for the theatre. In 1890 he wrote: 'I have no reserve in seeing *Cherevichki* as part of opera repertoire in future, and in musical terms consider it my finest work'. His confidence in the opera's musical quality was undoubtedly just and reasonable but *Cherevichki* was never to realise his hope and become part of opera repertoire.

The plot of the opera offers a strange mixture of folk and fable elements: Vakula the smith, a spirited young man, has painted a caricature of the devil on the door of the village church. The devil decides to take his revenge: working with Vakula's mother, the witch Solocha, he steals a quarter of the moon on the night of Christmas Eve in order to cause a snowstorm that will prevent Vakula from courting his beloved Oksana, daughter of Cub. Oksana will give her love to Vakula in exchange for the Czarina's shoes. The devil offers Vakula a pact: the shoes for his soul. Vakula, however, outsmarts the devil and obliges him to take him to the Czarina. At the palace, the Prince, delighted with the victory that the Russian army has won over its enemy, gives Vakula the shoes without any diabolical intervention. When he returns to the village with the shoes, Vakula at last can marry his beloved Oksana.

On this subject with all its various moods – popular, realistic and grotesque – and its fantasy elements drawn from the rich heritage of Russian legend, Tchaikovsky wrote music which many critics of his time felt had not succeeded in capturing the thousand facets of Gogol's story. As Aldo Nicastro so rightly notes, in his decisive work on the Tchaikovsky opera, Tchaikovsky lacks that 'biting desire for laughter' which animates Gogol's story. Cesar Cui, one of Tchaikovsky's adversaries in the 'Mighty Handful', noticed immediately – correctly though not without a certain amount of malignity – that 'apart from the Devil and Solocha the others do nothing other than complain'. Tchaikovsky's propensity for the elegiac, the melancholy and the sentimental is again clear in *Cherevichki*, but the composer had his trump cards to play too, and he played them with matchless skill and acumen. All the folk elements suggested by the story, its popular dances (the *Polonaise* in the third act especially) and the Christmas carols are underlined and highlighted by Tchaikovsky

with a taste for colour and a tender, spontaneous manner that have led many a critic to talk about a declared tribute to the father of Russian national opera, Glinka: not, of course, the Glinka of *A life for the Czar*, but the Glinka of the more fairy-tale country story of *Ruslan and Ludmilla*. Then, in the third act, when the action moves to the apartments of the Czarina, Tchaikovsky is quite at ease in his evocation of a lost world of elegance and delicacy that he loves so dearly. All the scenes in which lyricism prevails are magnificent, like for example Vakula's monologue in Act III, in which the young man, despairing over Oksana's indifference, bemoans his unhappy lot.

Tchaikovsky's attitude to the comic and the fantastic, on the other hand, has won various judgements; though he did not have that 'biting desire for laughter' he did underline gracefully if not forcefully a number of comic situations in the opera. Delightful examples of this are found in all the scenes between the devil and Solocha, and the characterisation of the various characters, even the minor roles, is consistently masterly. Though we might not fully agree with the definition of 'formidable comic gift' that the *Viking Opera Guide*, perhaps unduly optimistically, attributes to the composer in this opera, we agree totally with the British editor when he states at the end of his article on the opera: 'Vakula the Smith/Cherevichki is unique among Tchaikovsky's operas – the most heart-warming, the most unclouded, and still the most sadly neglected'.

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Synopsis

Act I

Solocha, an attractive woman who would like to look younger than her years, confesses to the moon that she would like to have fun and spend a carefree Christmas Night. The inhabitants of Dikan'ka do not consider her a normal person: they all think that she is a witch and is capable of doing magic and casting spells. Bes has his eyes on Solocha and pays court to her: he wants to take revenge on her son, the smith Vakula, who in church dared to paint such a ridiculous picture of him that all the other devils in hell laughed and mocked him. On Christmas Night Vakula will go to see his girlfriend Oksana, while her father, the Cossack Cub, has been invited to the deacon's house in the village. Bes lays his plan: he will kidnap the moon and whip up a snowstorm so that Cub will be forced to go back home. Old Cub will keep the irreverent Vakula away from his beautiful daughter and so the smith will be punished for his misdeed.

In the dark night icy winds blow unleashing a terrible snowstorm. Cub and his friend Panas are forced to seek shelter at an inn. When the storm eases, the old man sets off for home again, now quite drunk.

In her little house, Oksana is waiting for her fiancé in her best dress. She has prepared sweets and wine for the group of youngsters who will pass under her windows singing the *koljadki*, the traditional Ukrainian Christmas carols, but she is in a bad mood. She feels abandoned and thinks that no one will ever marry her. When Vakula arrives, Oksana treats him unkindly, reminding him that his mother is a witch and that Cub will soon marry her. Vakula is thunderstruck by her words.

Meanwhile the old Cossack, covered in snow and completely drunk, has made his way back home. He knocks at the door, but

Vakula, in a rage, does not recognise him and refuses to let him in, sending him away in a rough manner. Oksana is offended by the way her boyfriend has dared to treat her father and punishes him by exciting his jealousy, telling him that she loves another boy. When the young man leaves crestfallen, Oksana regrets having been so impulsive. She can only think about Vakula and not even the merry band of festive youths can cheer her up and help her forget her remorse.

Act II

Solocha and Bes dance the *gopak* together, but then somebody knocks at the door. It is Pan Golova, the elder of the village, who is also in love with Solocha. Bes just manages to hide in a sack before the man comes in and starts talking to Solocha. Another knock: Golova has to hide in another sack, and another awkward suitor appears, the schoolmaster who tries in vain to seduce Solocha. There is one last sack left for him when Cub enters and is received most affectionately by the beautiful witch. Finally Vakula comes back home and Solocha can find no better solution than to get old Cub to hide in the same sack as the schoolmaster. The woman then suggests that her son should go and sleep in his workshop. Vakula tries to drag the sacks away; he has to struggle to carry the heavy load out of the house and thinks that his unhappy love has sapped his strength.

The youngsters are singing *koljadki* in the snow-covered road. Oksana joins them and seeing an unhappy Vakula amongst them decides to humiliate him again by recounting what has just happened to her father. Wishing to tease the boy, Oksana now sings the praises of the shoes worn by one of the girls, Odarka. Oksana sighs, saying that no one ever gives her such lovely presents. To win her back Vakula now promises to bring her an even more precious pair of shoes, the Czarina's shoes. Oksana is flattered but keeps on tormenting the smith; laughing, she promises to marry him if he brings her the Czarina's shoes. Vakula moves off, leaving all of the sacks but one which he has on his shoulder. The young singers think the heavy sacks are full of food collected with the *koljadki* and are surprised to see Golova, Cub and the schoolmaster come out of them.

Acts III–IV

Vakula is desperate now, thinking that he has been abandoned for ever by Oksana, and decides to commit suicide. Suddenly, in the icy night, Bes leaps out of the sack and jumps onto his back: he tells Vakula that he will have his beloved girl if he gives the devil his soul in exchange. The smith is craftier still: pretending to sign the dreadful pact with his blood, he grabs the devil by his tail and jumps onto his back, deaf to Bes's pleas to let him go. Now it is Vakula's turn to ask for something very important: he wants the Czarina's shoes, and to get them Bes will have to fly him to the sumptuous palace in St Petersburg. The tricked demon and crafty smith enter the magnificent palace. Vakula joins the Cossacks of Zaporoz'e who have defeated their enemy and are about to be received by the Czarina. When it is their turn to be introduced the Cossacks are received in a grand hall where a dancing feast is being held. Vakula makes his request and the Prince, charmed by his simplicity, delights Vakula by giving him the shoes he asks for. The young man gets back onto the devil's back and returns to his village.

The sun is shining in the little square in Dikan'ka but darkness reigns in the spirits of Solocha and Oksana who are now

desperate since nothing has been heard of Vakula for days. When the smith returns at last everybody rejoices. The young man wants to make up for his mistakes: he begs the pardon of âub who is touched and willing now to give Vakula his daughter's hand. Vakula has the shoes to give Oksana but modestly she refuses them, happy to have found her beloved again. The whole village now celebrates the happy couple.

CHARODEIKA (51 - 53)

Despite the triumphs of orchestral and chamber music that graced Tchaikovsky's creative career, he was irresistibly drawn to writing for the stage, where he applied his talents with great felicity to no less than nine operas. Thus, it is something of a puzzle that Tchaikovsky's operatic masterpieces have not received the attention they deserve, a fact only partially explained by the early pre-eminence of his symphonies and by the notorious problems of mounting unfamiliar operas to please a reluctant public.

The Sorceress (or *The Enchantress* as *Charodeika* is sometimes called) is the seventh of Tchaikovsky's operas, coming after *Mazeppa* and before *The Queen of Spades*. The composer worked on it through the years 1885 to 1887 and conducted the first performance at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, November 1, 1887. During this time he had been living in seclusion at a country house in Maidanovo where his long walks through woods and flowery retreats added to a feeling of contentment. Just as an earlier sojourn in Italy had interested him in Italian style, so was his residence at Maidanovo the occasion for this step in the direction of purely dramatic and national opera. Upon the theme of *The Sorceress* Tchaikovsky projected a vigorous and forthright musical conception.

Although the libretto of Shpazhinsky has the fairy-tale quality of an ancient chronicle of love and intrigue, Tchaikovsky found in it a universal theme. He had long desired to express in music the meaning of the famous concluding words from Goethe's *Faust*: 'Das Ewig-Weibliche zieht uns hinan' ('The ever-womanly draws us on'). The plot of *The Sorceress* was well suited to demonstrate musically the irresistible witchery of woman's beauty. From the very first, the spell of feminine enchantment is manifest in the lilting chorus of Kuma's maidens, and around the appealing figure of Kuma, whose only magic is her personal charm, the musical characterizations of the opera move irretrievably to a fateful denouement.

Synopsis

Nastasia, usually called 'Kuma', is entertaining visitors at her resort in a wooded spot where the Oka River flows into the Volga, not far from Nizhni Novgorod in the latter part of the 15th century. Among the guests are citizens of the town, enjoying drink and dice, and a wandering monk, Paisi, who scorns the merriment and warns of trouble: the townspeople have become aroused over reports of revelry at Kuma's place and will induce the regent, Prince Nikita, to close it down. Paisi is ignored as a hunting party comes down the river, lead by Yuri, the Prince's son. Yuri is greeted heartily by all except Kuma, who in her agitation does not invite him to stop. Soon the crowd of visitors is thrown into dread and confusion as Prince Nikita himself, is seen coming with the old secretary Mamyrov. Kuma subdues the disorder and calmly prepares to face her royal guest. Mamyrov at

once begins his accusations and urges the Prince to wipe out this nest of lewd speech, indecent songs and dancing. Kuma quietly answers the charges, and graciously offers the Prince a goblet of wine. Impressed by her courage and charmed by her beauty, the Prince tosses his golden ring into the drained goblet as a sign of approval and joins in the merriment, even ordering the sour old Mamyrov to dance with the mummers.

The Princess has heard of this first visit, and of the Prince's later visits, to Kuma's resort. Darkly suspicious of her husband, the Princess asks Mamyrov, an eager bearer of tales, to find out what takes place there, for she has vowed to destroy Kuma. The young Prince Yuri, finding his mother in emotional distress, senses that something is gravely wrong, but she affects gaiety and will tell him nothing. With the Prince, however the Princess is not so reticent. She indignantly accuses him of his visits to Kuma and swears she will have the enchantress put away. The Prince angrily declares he will force his wife to stop this talk about Kuma. Outside the garden fence a crowd riots in indignation over the robbery and injustices by the Prince's retainers. Young Prince Yuri, whom they like and respect, confronts the mob and they disperse.

Paisi, the wandering monk, returns from a mission on which Mamyrov has sent him and whispers that the Prince has gone to see Kuma. The Princess in a frenzy declares that she will go herself to break their embraces. Yuri is so moved by his mother's anguish and humiliation that he sets out at once to kill Kuma. The Prince, meanwhile, arriving at Kuma's house does not have the reception imagined by the Princess. Kuma firmly rejects his advances, even though he pleads his passionate love for her. Piqued and jealous, he demands to know who her beloved is. Kuma will not yield, and seizing the bread knife threatens to kill herself. The Prince departs. When Kuma is alone, she sings of her love for young Prince Yuri, whom she has never met face to face. Two friends of Kuma rush in with the news that Yuri is coming to kill Kuma, but she refuses protection and they leave. Soon Yuri and his companion Zhuran burst into the room. Kuma quietly greets them without fear, and Yuri, taken aback, drops his dagger. He then dismisses Zhuran and asks to know just what transpired between Kuma and the Prince. Kuma swears that she is guiltless, that she repulsed the Prince even with the threat of killing herself. Kuma then confesses that she deeply loves Yuri himself, and Yuri, touched by her tenderness and sincerity finds that he has fallen in love with Kuma.

Yuri has made preparations to take Kuma out of the country and marry her. He waits for her to meet him in a dark glen on the banks of the Oka, a lonely spot near a cave where the magician Kudma lives. Meanwhile Paisi, the monk, and the Princess, disguised as a pilgrim come in the darkness to Kudma's cave and obtain from him a potion to destroy Kuma. When the boat bringing Kuma lands at the bank, the Princess is the first to see her, and pretending friendship gives her the poison in a drink of water. Yuri, appearing over the hill rushes eagerly to Kuma in raptures of joy. Then the poison begins to take effect. As Kuma dies, Yuri sees the Princess standing at the entrance of the cave. To the horrified Yuri she admits having poisoned Kuma 'to wash away my family shame'. When the distraught Yuri is not looking, the Princess orders Kuma's body to be dropped into the river. The Prince arrives in a boat and encounters his son Yuri, whom he accuses of abducting Kuma, pointing to her belongings on the

ground as proof. 'For the last time', he demands, 'give up Kuma to me'. Yuri accuses the Prince himself of being the killer of Kuma. In his fury the Prince stabs Yuri. As thunder and lightning envelop the scene, the Prince bewails his tragic crime.

PIQUE DAME (CD 54 & 55)

Pique Dame is one of Tchaikovsky's six operas and one of the two (beside *Evgeny Onegin*) that have kept their place in the western repertoire. It has all the hallmarks of a classical opera and the inevitable victory of fate, combined with a Russian flavour both in libretto and music. In order to emphasise this fate, the composer changed the original text by Pushkin and removed the more happy episodes. Tchaikovsky was obsessed by fate and love, a combination with problematic consequences. Like Hermann in the opera, the composer believed the ideal beloved only exists in the imagination and reality is cruel. Consequently the escape from reality into a dream world is a regular phenomenon in Tchaikovsky's music.

Although his reputation during his life in Russia was mainly due to these aspects, other aspects may explain his fame in the West. The opera is both a collection of separate items plus an ongoing drama, mainly because Tchaikovsky let motifs return in later movements. Harmony and instrumentation are decisive factors in the development of the drama. In these respects Tchaikovsky was heavily influenced by Wagner, whose *Ring des Nibelungen* he attended at its premiere in Bayreuth in 1876.

Tchaikovsky was quite confident about his work. After accepting his brother's libretto based on Pushkin in accordance with the composer's wishes, he finished the music within 44 days in March 1890 and the premiere in December 1890 in St Petersburg was an enormous success, so great that the composer even feared he would be unable to repeat this feat. Fortunately for us he was wrong.

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Sung texts

COMPLETE SONGS (CD32 - 36)

CD32

1 Pesn Zemfori

Stariy muzh, grozniy muzh, rezh menya,
Stariy muzh, grozniy muzh, zhgi menya:
Ya tverda, ne boyus ni ognya, ni mecha.
Rezh menya, zhgi menya!

Nenavizhu tebya, prezirayu tebya;
Ya drugovo lyublyu, umirayu lyubya.

On svezheye vesni,
zharche letnevo dnya;
Kak on molod i smel!
Kak on lyubit menya!

2 Mezza notte

Poco è l'ora ormai lontana,
Palpitando il cor l'aspetta,
Già rimbomba la campana...
E tu dormi, o mia diletta?
Ti fuggi forse del cor:
Mezza notte è il nostro amor,
Notte è il nostro amor.

Pari a nota di liuto
Nel silenzio di quest'ora
Odo il timido saluto
Di colei che m'innamora
E ripeto a quel tenor:
Mezza notte è il nostro amor,
Notte è il nostro amor.

Amor misero e verace
Delle tenebre si giova,
Tace il mondo ed ei non tace,
Ma il suo gemito rinnova
Fin che spuntò il primo albor:
Mezza notte è il nostro amor,
Notte è il nostro amor.

3 Zabìt tak skoro

Zabìt tak skoro, bozhe moy,
Vse schast'ye zhizni prozhitoy!
Vse nashi vstrechi, razgovori
Zabìt tak skoro, zabìt tak skoro!

Zemphira's Song

Old husband, harsh husband, stab me,
old husband, harsh husband, burn me;
I am strong and fear neither fire, nor blade.
Stab me, burn me!

I hate you, I despise you;
I love another, and I die still loving.

He is fresher than spring,
warmer than a summer's day;
he is so young and brave!
How he loves me!

Midnight

The hour is not yet come,
my heart beats in expectation,
the bell has already rung...
Are you sleeping, my darling?
Can you escape my heart:
Midnight is our love,
night is our love.

A lute seems to sound
in the silence of this hour
or it is a timid greeting
from her who fascinates me,
and someone repeats:
Midnight is our love,
night is our love.

Unhappy and all-consuming love
rejoices in twilight,
the world is silent but the heart is not,
its cries renew all the time
until the first dawn:
Midnight is our love,
night is our love.

To forget so soon

To forget so soon, oh God,
all the happiness of life!
All our meetings and conversations,
to forget so soon, forget so soon!

Zabìt volnen'ya pervikh dnei,
Svidan'ya chas v teni vetvey!
Ochey nemie razgovori
Zabìt tak skoro, zabìt tak skoro!

Zabìt, kak polnaya luna
Na nas glyadela iz okna,
Kak kolikhalas tikho shtora...
Zabìt tak skoro, zabìt tak skoro,
Tak skoro!

Zabìt lyubov, zabìt mechtì,
Zabìt te klyatvi, pomnish ti,
Pomnish ti, pomnish ti,
V nochnuyu pasmurnuyu poru,
V nochnuyu pasmurnuyu poru?

Zabìt tak skoro, tak skoro!
Bozhe moy!

4 Kolibel'naya pesnya

Spi, ditya moyo, spi, usni!
Sladkiy son k sebe mani.
V nyanki ya tebe vzyala
Veter, solntse i orla.

Uletel orel domoy;
Solntse skrilos pod vodoy;
Veter posle trekh nochey
Mchitsya k materi svoey.

Sprashivala vetra mat:
"Gde izvolil propadat?
Ali zvezdi voeval?
Ali volni vse gonyal?"

"Ne gonyal ya voli morskikh,
Zvezd ne trogal zolotikh;
Ya ditya oberegal,
Kolibelochku kachal!"

Spi, ditya moyo, spi, usni!
Sladkiy son k sebe mani.
V nyanki ya tebe vzyala
Veter, solntse i orla.

To forget the excitement of the first days,
rendez-vous in the boughs' shade!
Silent conversations with our eyes.
To forget so soon? Forget so soon!

To forget how the full moon
beamed upon us from the window,
how the blinds fluttered softly...
To forget so soon, forget so soon,
so soon!

To forget love, forget dreams,
forget promises, do you remember,
do you remember, do you remember,
in the cloudy night,
in the cloudy night?

To forget so soon, so soon!
Oh God!

Lullaby

Sleep, my babe, go to sleep!
Bid sweet slumber come to you.
To be your nurses I asked
the wind, the sun and the eagle.

The eagle has flown home;
the sun has hidden beneath the water;
after three nights, the wind
flies off to its mother.

The wind's mother asks:
'Where did you vanish to?
Were you waging war with stars
or chasing waves?'

'I was neither chasing the ocean waves
nor disturbing the golden stars;
I was protecting a child,
and rocking a cradle!'

Sleep, my babe, go to sleep!
Bid sweet slumber come to you.
To be your nurses I have asked
the wind, the sun and the eagle.

5 Pogodi

Pogodi! Dlya chevo toropitsya!
Ved i tak zhizn nesetsya streloy!
Pogodi! Pogodi! Ti uspeesh prostitsya,
Kak luchami vostok zagoritsya,
No dozhdemsa l mī nochi takoy?

Posmotri, posmotri, kak chudesno
Ubran zvezdami kupol nebesnī!
Kak mechtatelno smotrit luna!
Kak temno v etoy seni drevesnoy,
I kakaya vezde tishina!

Tolko slishno, kak sheptut berezi,
Da stuchit serdtse v pilkoy grudi...
Vozdukh ves polon zapakhom rozi...
Miliy drug! Eto zhizn, a ne grezi!
Zhizn letit... Pogodi!
Zhizn letit! Pogodi!...

6 Unosi moe serdtse...

Unosi moe serdtse v zvenyashchuyu dal,
Gde, kak mesyats za roshchey, pechal;
V etikh zvukakh na zharkie slezi tvoi
Krotko svetit ulibka lyubvi.

O ditya! Kak legko sred nezrimikh zibey
Doveriyatsya mne pesne tvoey!
Vishe, vishe plivu serebristim putem,
Budto shatkaya ten za krilom.

Vdaleke zamiraet tvoj golos, gorya,
Slovno za morem noch'yu zarya.
I otkuda-to vdrug, ya ponyat ne mogu,
Gryanet zvonkiy priliv zhemchugu.

Unosi zh moe serdtse v zvenyashchuyu dal,
Gde krotka, kak ulibka, pechal,
I vse vishe pomchus serebristim putem
Ya, kak shatkaya ten za krilom.

7 Kak nad goryacheyu zoloy...

Kak nad goryacheyu zoloy
Dimitsya svitok i sgoraet,
I ogn, sokpitiy i glukhoy,
Slova i stroki pozhiraet, –

Wait!

Wait a moment! What is the hurry?
You know life flies like an arrow from a bow.
Wait a moment! You have time to say goodbye,
how the east burns with the sun's rays,
and how long might we wait for such a night?

Look, look how magnificent
is the wonderful dome of the sky, adorned with
stars!
How dreamily the moon looks down!
What darkness there is in this hall of trees,
what silence everywhere!

All we hear is the birches whispering,
and the heart pounding in the ardent breast...
The air heavy with the smell of roses...
Sweet friend! This is life, not a dream!
Life is flying... Wait a moment!
Life is flying! Wait a moment!...

Carry my heart away...

Carry my heart away into the echoing distance,
where sorrow is like the moon seen through a
grove;
in the echoes, upon your hot tears
a smile of love gently shines.

Oh, child! How easy it is among the unseen ripples
to trust in your song!
Higher and higher I float upon a silvery path,
as if each flickering shadow were a wing.

In the distance your voice dies away,
shining like sunset across the sea.
And suddenly, I cannot understand whence,
there bursts forth a ringing surge of pearl.

Carry my heart away into the echoing distance,
where sorrow is gentle as a smile,
and I shall soar ever higher upon the silvery path,
flickering shadows serving me as wings.

As when upon hot ashes...

As when upon hot ashes
a scroll smoulders and is consumed,
and when the fire, latent and dull,
devours words and lines, –

Tak grustno tlitsya zhizn moya
I s kazhdim dnem ukhodit dimom;
Tak postepenno gasnu ya
V odnoobraz'ye nesterpimom...

O nebo, esli bi khot raz
Sey plamen razvilsya po vole,
I, ne tomyas, ne muchas dole,
Ya prosiyal bi i pogas!

8 Ne otkhodi ot menya

Ne otkhodi ot menya,
Drug moy, ostansya so mnoy!
Ne otkhodi ot menya:
Mne tak otradno s tobey.

Blizhe drug k drugu, chem mi, –
Blizhe nelzya nam i bit;
Chushche, zhiveye, sil'yney
Mi ne umeyem lyubit.

Esli zhe ti – predο mnoy,
Grustno golovku sklonya, –
Mne tak otradno s tobey:
Ne otkhodi ot menya!

Mne tak otradno s tobey...
Ne otkhodi ot menya!
Mne tak otradno s tobey,
Mne tak otradno s tobey!

9 On tak menya lyubil

Net, ne lyubila ya! No strannaya zabota
Tesnila grud moyu, kogda on prikhodil;
To vsya krasnela ya, boyalasya chevo-to, –
On tak menya lyubil, on tak menya lyubil!

Chtob nraivsya emu togda, tsveti i te naryadi
Ya beregla, chtο on po serdtsu nakhodil;
S nim govorila ya, ego lovila vzglyadi, –
On tak menya lyubil, on tak menya lyubil!

No raz on mne skazal: "V tu roshchu, v chas
zakata
Pridesh li?" "Da, pridu" No ne khvatilo sil.

Ya v roshchu ne poshla, on zhdal menya naprasno!

So my life smoulders on in sorrow
and day by day passes like smoke;
Thus little by little I am sinking
into intolerable monotony...

Oh Heaven, if only one day
this flame could burn freely,
and without languishing, without torment
I could blaze and die forever!

Do not leave me

Do not leave me,
my friend, stay with me!
Do not leave me:
To be with you is such delight.

Closer to each other than we are, –
closer we could not be;
more purely, more keenly, more strongly
we could not love.

Even if you are before me,
your head bowed in sadness,
to be with you is such delight:
Do not leave me!

To be with you is such delight...
Do not leave me!
To be with you is such delight,
to be with you is such delight.

He loved me so

No, I did not love him! But a strange unease
stirred my breast when he arrived;
One moment I blushed, the next feared the least
thing, –
he loved me so, he loved me so!

To please him, I wore flowers and clothes
that were to his taste;
I talked to him, I tried to catch his eye, –
He loved me so, he loved me so!

But one day he said to me: 'Will you come to the
grove
at sunset?' 'Yes, I'll come!' But it was beyond my
powers.

I did not go to the grove, he waited for me in vain!

Togda uekhal on, serdyas na neudachu;
Neschastniy, kak menya proklyat on dolzhen bil!
Ya ne uvizhus s nim, mne tyazhelo, ya plachu...

On tak menya lyubil! on tak menya lyubil!
On tak menya lyubil! on tak menya lyubil!

10 Kabī znala ya

Kabī znala ya, kabī vedala,
Ne smotrela bī iz okoshechka
Ya na molodtsa razidalogo,
Kak on ekhal po nashey ulitse,
Nabekren zalomibshi murmolku,
Kak likhogo konya bulanavo,
Zvonkonogogo, dolgogrivovo,
Suprotiv okon na dībī vzdīmal!

Kabī znala ya, kabī vedala,
Dlya nego bī ya ne ryadilasya,
S zolotoy kaymoy lentu aluyu
V kosu dlinnuyu ne vpletala bī,
Za okolitsu ne speshila bī,
V rose nozhenki ne mochila bī,
Na proselok tot ne glyadela bī
Ne proedet li tem proselkom on,
Na ruzhe derzha pestra sokola?
Kabī znala ya, kabī vedala!

Kabī znala ya, kabī vedala,
Ne sidela bī pozdnim vecherom,
Prigoryunivshis, na zavaline,
Na zavaline, bliz kolodezya,
Podzhidayuchi, da gadayuchi,
Ne pridet li on, nenaglyadniy moy,
Ne pridet li on, nenaglyadniy moy?
Akh, ne pridet li on, nenaglyadniy moy,
Napoit konya studenoy vodoy!
Kabī znala ya, kabī vedala!
Kabī znala ya, kabī vedala!

11 Gornimi tikho letela dusha nebesami

Gornimi tikho letela dusha nebesami,
Grustniē dolu ona opuskala resnitsi;
Slezi, v prostranstvo ot nikh upadaya zvezdami,
Svetloy i dlinnoy vilisya za ney verenitse.

Vstrechniē tikho ee voprosnali svetiā:
“Chto tī grustna? I o chem eti slezi vo vzore?”

Then he went away, angry at his failure;
wretched man, he must have cursed me so much!
I shall never meet him, I am miserable, I weep...

He loved me so! He loved me so!
He loved me so! He loved me so!

If I had known

If I had known, if I had known,
I should not have looked through the window
at the handsome fellow,
as he rode along our street
his cocked hat aslant,
as his dashing dun horse
with ringing feet and long mane
reared up before my window!

If I had known, if I had known,
I should not have dressed up for him,
plaited into my long hair
a gold-bordered scarlet ribbon,
I should not have hurried to the edge of the village,
got my feet wet with dew,
I should not have gazed at the country road
in case he passed along that country road
with a falcon on his arm!
If I had known, if I had known!

If I had known, if I had known,
I should not have sat late in the evening,
becoming sad, on the bank,
on the bank, beside the well,
waiting, imagining my fate –
Is he not coming, my beloved,
is he not coming, my beloved?
Oh, is he not coming, my beloved,
To make his horse drink the cool water?
If I had known, if I had known!
If I had known! If I had known!

A soul floated gently up to Heaven

A soul floated gently up to Heaven,
its eyes were cast down with sadness;
tears fell from them into space like falling stars,
a long, bright trail of them streaming behind.

Welcoming beings quietly asked it:
‘Why are you sad? Why are you shedding those
tears?’

Im otvechala ona: “Ya zemli ne zabīla,
Mnogo ostabila tam ya stradan’ya i gorya.
Mnogo, mnogo stradan’ya, akh, mnogo
Ostavila ya tam stradan’ya i gorya.
Zdes ya lish likam blazhenstva i radosti vnemlyu,
Pravednikh dushi ne znayut ni skori, ni zlobi, –
O, otpusti menya snova, sozdatel, na zemlyu,
Bilo b o kom pozhalet i uteshit kovo bī”

12 Na zemlyu sumrak pal

Na zemlyu sumrak pal; ne shelokhnut kustī;
Svernulis liliī poblekshie listī
I tikho ozero pochilo.
Pod obayaniem volshebnoy krasotī,
Stoyu, zadumavshis. ‘Chto grusten nīnche tī,
I vse krugom tebya unīlo?’”

Poutru prikhozhu: ozhivlena rosoy,
Prosnulas liliya, blistaya krasotoy.
I, milaya, v blistayushchey odezhde
S ulibkoyu privet na nebo shlet ona,
I pleshchet v ozere veselaya volna...

A ya? Ya? Mne grustno, kak i prezhde!

13 Den li tsarit

Den li tsarit, tishina li nochnaya,
V snakh li bessvyaznikh, v zHITEYSKOY borbe, –
Vsyudu so mnoy, moyu zhizn napolnyaya,
Duma vse ta zhe, odna, rokovaya
Vsyo o tebe, vsyo o tebe,
Vsyo, vsyo, vsyo, vsyo o tebe!

S neyu ne strashen mne prizrak bilogo,
Serdtshe vospryanulo, snova lyubya...
Vera, mechtī, vdokhnovennoe slovo,
Vsyo, chto v dushe dorogogo, svyatogo, –
Vsyo ot tebya, vsyo, vsyo ot tebya,
Vsyo ot tebya!

Budut li dni moi yasni, unīli,
Skoro li sginu ya, zhizn zagubya!
Znayu odno, chto do samoy mogili
Pomīslī, chuvstva, i pesni, i silī –
Vsyo dlya tebya, vsyo dlya tebya.

It answered: ‘I have not forgotten the Earth,
much suffering and grief have I left there.
Much, much suffering, oh, much
suffering and grief have I left there.
Here I see only joyful and blissful faces,
righteous souls know neither sorrow nor malice.
Oh, Creator, let me return to Earth,
there are those there who may need pity and
consolation.’

Darkness has fallen over the Earth

Darkness has fallen over the Earth; bushes do not
stir;
the lily’s faded leaves have curled
and the lake quietly gone to rest,
Dazed by the enchanting beauty,
I stand, pensive. ‘Why are you so sad today,
and everything around you so cheerless?’

I come again in the morning: bright with dew
the lily is alive again, radiant with beauty.
And, lovely in its brilliant raiment,
it greets the sky with a smile,
And merry waves splash in the lake...

And I? I am sad, just as before!

Whether in the realm of day

Whether in the realm of day or in the dark of night,
in disjointed dreams or in everyday strife,
everywhere with me, filling my life,
is the same, single, fateful thought,
always of you, always of you,
always, always, always, always of you!

With it I do not dread the spectre of the past,
my heart is cheered once more by love...
Faith, hopes, an inspired word,
all that is precious and sacred in my soul, –
all is from you, all, all from you,
all from you!

Whether my days be bright or dismal,
If I go quickly – a wasted life!
I know one thing, that until the grave itself
thoughts, feelings, and songs and powers –
always will be for you, always will be for you!

14 Ya li v pole da ne travushka bila

Ya li v pole da ne travushka bila,
Ya li v pole ne zelenaya rosla!
Vzyali menya, travushku, skosili,
Na solnishke v pole issushili.

Okh, ti, gore moyo, goryushko!
Okh, ti, gore moyo, goryushko!
Znat, znat, takaya moya dolyushka!...

Ya li v pole ne kalinushka bila,
Ya li v pole da ne krasnaya rosla!
Vzyali kalinushku slomali,
Da v zhgutiki povyazali!

Ya l u batyushki ne dochenka bila,
U rodimoy ne tsvetochek ya rosla!
Nevoley menya, bednuyu, vzyali,
Da s nemilim, sedim povenchali.

15 Nochi bezumnïe

Nochi bezumnïe, nochi bessonnïe,
Rechï nesvyaznïe, vzorï ustalïe...
Nochi poslednim ognem ozarennïe,
Oseni mertvoy tsvetï zapozdali!

Pust dazhe vremya rukoy besposhchadnuyu
Mne ukazalo, chtô bilo v vas lozhnovo,
Vse zhe lechu ya k vam pamyat'yu zhadnoyu,
V proshlom otveta ishchu nebozmozhnovo.

Vkradchivim shepotom vi zagrushaete
Zvuki dnevnïe, nesnosnïe, shumnïe,
V tukhuyu noch vi moy son otgonyaete
Nochi bessonnïe, nochi bezumnïe!

16 Pesn tsïganki

Moy koster v tumane svetit,
Iskrï gasnut na letu...
Noch'yu nas nikto ne vstretit,
Mï prostimsya na mostu.

Noch proydet, i spozaranok
V step daleko, miliy moy,
Ya uydu s tolpoi tsïganok
Za kibtkoy kochevoy.

Na proshchan'ye shal s kaymoyu
Tï na mne uzlom styani!

Was I not a blade of grass

Was I not a blade of grass in the field,
did I not grow green in the field?
They took me, a blade of grass, struck me down,
and let me wither in the field under the sun.

Oh, you, my grief, sweet sorrow!
Oh, you, my grief, sweet sorrow!
To know, to know, such is my sweet fate!...

Was I not a guelder-rose in the field,
did I not grow fair in the field?
They took and crushed the guelder-rose,
and tied me into plaits!

Was I not my father's dear daughter,
did I not grow as my mother's little flower?
They took me, a poor, unwilling girl,
and married me to a nasty grey-haired man.

Wild nights

Wild nights, sleepless nights,
Incoherent speeches, weary eyes...
Nights, lit by the fire,
the belated flowers of a dead autumn!

Even though time's merciless hand
has shown me what was false in you,
none the less I fly to you in avid memory,
and seek impossible answers in the past.

You drown out with an ingratiating whisper
the unbearable, tumultuous daily sounds.
In the still night you drive away my sleep,
sleepless nights, wild nights!

Gypsy's song

My camp-fire gleams in the mist,
sparks die in the air...
In the night nobody sees us,
we say goodnight on the bridge.

The night is passing, and very soon,
for distant steppes, my dearest,
I am leaving with other gypsy women
following a nomad tent.

When we part, knot my bordered shawl
around me!

Kak kontsi ee, s tobouy
Mï skhodilis v eti dni.

Kto-to mne sudbu predskazhet?
Kto-to zavtra, sokol moy,
Na grudi moey razvyazhet
Uzel, styanutiy tobouy!

Vspominay, koli drugaya,
Druga milovo lyubya,
Budet pesni pet, igraya
Na kolenyakh u tebya.

Moy koster v tumane svetit,
Iskrï gasnut na letu...
Noch'yu nas nikto ne vstretit,
Mï prostimsya na mostu.

17 Nam zvezdï krotkie siyali...

Nam zvezdï krotkie siyali,
Chut veyal tikhiy veterok;
Krugom tsvetï blagoukhali,
I volni laskovo zhurchali
U nashikh nog.

Mï bili yunï, mï lyubili,
I s veroy vdal smotreli mï;
V nas grezï radizhnïe zhili,
I nam ne strashni v'yugi bili
Sedoy zimï.

Gde zh eti nochi s ikh siyan'yem,
S blagoukhayushchey krasoy,
I voli tainstvennim zhurchan'yem,
Nadezhd, vostorzhennikh mechtaniy
Gde svetliy roy, gde svetliy roy?

Pomerkli zvezdï, i uniïlo
Ponikli blekliï tsvetï...
Kogda zh, o serdtse, vsoy, chtô bilo,
Chto nam vesna s tobou darila,
Zabudesh ti, zabudesh ti?

Like its ends, so with you,
we have become close these last days.

Who can foretell my fate?
Someone may untie tomorrow,
my dear, the knot upon my breast,
tied there by you, my falcon!

Remember if ever another
in love with my darling
should play and sing songs
upon your knees.

My camp-fire gleams in the mist,
sparks die in the air...
In the night nobody sees us,
We say goodbye on the bridge.

Gentle stars shone for us

Gentle stars shone for us,
though a soft breeze blew;
flowers smelled sweetly all around,
and waves murmured softly
at our feet.

We were young, we were in love,
and we looked confidently to the future;
Happy dreams dwelt within us,
and we did not fear the blizzards
of grey winter.

Where are those nights of radiance,
with their fragrant charms,
and the mysterious murmuring of waves?
Of hopes, of rapturous dreams,
where is the bright swarm, where is the bright
swarm?

The stars have grown dim, and mournfully
the faded flowers have wilted...
When then, oh heart, will you forget
all that used to be, what spring gave to us,
when will you forget?
Translations: Wil Gowan

COMPACT DISC 33

Shestnadsat pesen dlya detey Op.54

1 Babushka i vnuchek

Pod oknom chulok starushka
Vyazhet v komnate uyutnoy
I v ochki svoi bolshiye
Smotrit v ugol pominutno.

A v uglu kudpyaviy malchik
Molcha k stenke prislonsiya
Na litse evo zabota,
Vzglyad na chto-to ustremilsya.

“Chto sidish vse doma, vnuchek?
Shyol bi v sad, kopal bi gryadki,
Ili kliknul bi sestryonku,
Pograd bi s ney v loshadki.”

Podoshyol k starushke vnuchek
I golovkoyu kurchavoy
K ney pripal.
On molchit, glaza bolshiye
Na neyo glyadyat lukavo...

“Znat, gostintsu zakhotelos? –
Govorit emu starushka. –
Vinnikh yagod, vinogradu,
Il tebe nuzhna igrushka?”

“Net, gostintsev mne ne nado!
U menya igrushek mnogo.
Sumku ti kupi, da v shkolu
Pokazhi-ka mne dorogu.”

2 Ptichka

Ptichka bozhiya prosnulasya s zareyu,
A uzh pakharya zastala za sokhoyu.
Poletit ona k lazurnim nebesam
I, chto vidit v syolakh, vse rasskazhet tam.

Skazhet ptichka Bogu, chto bednyak stradaet,
Chto krovavim potom nivu oroshaet.
Ne mila, kak ptichke, pakharyu vesna:
Ne nesyt s soboyu radostey ona...

Vstretil bi on solntse pesenkoy veseloy,
Da molchat zastavit gnet nuzhdi tyazheliy.

Sixteen Songs for Children Op.54

Grandmother and Grandson

Under the window an old woman
Is knitting a stocking in the cosy room
And through her big spectacles
Looks every now and then into the corner.

And in the corner a curly-headed lad
Leans silently against the wall.
Concern upon his face,
His eyes gazing at something.

‘Why do you always sit indoors, grandson?
You should go out into the garden, dig the beds,
Or call your little sister,
And play at horses with her.’

The grandson goes towards the old woman
And lays his little curly head
Against her.
He says nothing, but his big eyes
Look at her archly...

‘I suppose you’d like a sweetie?’
Says the old woman to him.
‘Some figs, or grapes,
Or do you want a toy?’

‘No, I don’t need sweeties!
I have lots of toys.
Just buy a satchel
And show me the way to school.’

The Little Bird

God’s little bird awakens with the dawn,
But already the ploughman is at his plough.
She flies forth towards the azure heavens
And up there recounts what she has seen in the villages.

The little bird tells God that the poor peasant
suffers,
That he’s washing the cornfield with blood.
For the ploughman spring is not sweet, as it is for
the bird: It does not bring joy...

He would greet the sun with merry song,
But is reduced to silence by need’s heavy yoke.

Na serdtse zaboti, kak svinets lezhat,
Ponevole pesnya ne poydyot na lad.

Skazhet ptichka Bogu, chtob evo ruka
Podderzhala v gorkoy dole bednyaka.
Chtob emu nesti svo y krest dostalo silii,
Chtob bez ropota dobryol on do mogili,

Chtob bez ropota dobryol on do mogili...

3 Vesna

Travka zeleneyet,
Solnishko blestit,
Lasktochka s venoyu
V seni k nam letit.

S neyu solntse yarche
I vesna miley...
Proshchebech s dorogi
Nam privet skorey,
Proshchebech s dorogi
Nam privet skorey.

Dam tebe ya zyoren,
A ti pesnyu spoy,
Chto iz stran dalyokikh
Prinesla s soboy...
Dam tebe ya zeren,
A ti pesnyu spoy,
Travka zeleneyet,
Solnishko blestit,
Lastochka s vesnoyu
V seni k nam letit.

S neyu solntse yarche
I vesna miley...
Proshchebech s dorogi
Nam privet skorey,
Proshchebech s dorogi
Nam privet skorey.

4 Moy sadik

Kak moy sadik svezh i zelen!
Raspustilas v nyom siren;
Ot cheryomukhi dushistoy
I ot lip kudryavikh ten...

Pravda, net v nem blednikh liliy,

Care lies on his heart like lead,
Like it or not, his song grows no more tuneful.

The little bird tells God its tale, so that His hand
May support the peasant in his cruel lot
So that his strength may suffice to bear his cross,
So that without complaint he may come to his
grave,
So that without complaint he may come to his
grave.

Spring

The grass grows green,
The sun is shining,
In spring the swallow
Journeys towards us.

With her come a brighter sun
And a sweeter spring...
Twittering on her way,
She hastens to greet us.
Twittering on her way,
She hastens to greet us.

I’ll give you grain,
But sing the song
You’ve brought with you
From distant lands.
I’ll give you grain,
But sing the song.
The grass grows green,
The sun is shining,
In spring the swallow
Journeys towards us.

With her comes a brighter sun
And a sweeter spring...
Twittering on her way,
She hastens to greet us.
Twittering on her way,
She hastens to greet us.

My Little Garden

How fresh and green my garden is!
There the lilac blossoms,
From the bird-cherry trees comes fragrance,
And from the limes curly shade...

There are no pale lilies

Gordelivikh georgin,
I lish pyostrie golovki
Vozvishaet mak odin.
Da podsolnechnik u vkhoda,
Slovno verniy chasovoy,
Storozhit sebe dorozhku,
Vsyu porosshuyu travoy...
No lyublyu ya sadik skromniy:
On dushi moyey miley
Gorodskikh sadov unilikh,
S set'yu pravilnikh alley.
I ves den, v trave visokoy
Lyozha, slushat bi ya rad,
Kak zabotliviye pcholyi
Vkrug cheryomukhi zhuzhzhat.

5 Legenda

Biil u Khrista mladentsa sad,
I mnogo roz vzrastil on v nyom.
On trizhdi v den ikh polival,
Chtob splest venok sebe potom.
Kogda zhe roz rastseveli,
Detey evreyskikh sozval on;
Oni sorvali po tsvetku
I sad bil ves opustoshyon.

"Kak ti spletesh teper venok?
V tvoyom sadu net bolshe roz!"
"Vi pozabili, chto shipi
Ostalis mne", skazal Khristos.
I iz shipov oni spleli
Venok kolyuchiy dlya nevo,
I kapli krovi, vmesto roz,
Chelo ukrasili evo.

6 Na beregu

Domik nad rekoyu,
V oknakh ogonyok,
Svetloy polosoyu
Na vodu on lyog.
V dome ne dozhdutsya
S lovli ribaka:
Obeshchal vernutsya
Cherez dva denka.
No proshol i tretiy,
A evo vsyo net.
Zhdut naprasno deti,
Zhdyot i stariy ded.
Vsekh neterpelivey

Or haughty dahlias,
And only one poppy
Raises its motley heads.
But the sunflower by the gate,
Like a faithful sentinel,
Keeps watch over the path,
All overgrown with grass...
But I love this modest garden:
It is dearer to my soul
Than cheerless town gardens,
Criss-crossed by regular paths.
I'd be happy to lie all day
In the tall grass, and listen
To the diligent bees
Buzzing around the bird-cherry trees.

A Legend

The infant Christ had a garden
Where He grew lots of roses.
He watered them thrice daily,
To weave garlands for himself later.
When the roses were blooming,
He invited the Hebrew children;
They levelled all the flowers to the ground
And the whole garden was devastated.

'How can you weave garlands now?
There are no roses left in your garden!'
'You've forgotten that I still have
The thorns,' said Christ.
And from the thorns they wove
For Him a spiny wreath,
And drops of blood, instead of roses,
Adorned His brow.

On the River-Bank

There's a little house
above the river.
Through its windows
There shone on the water
Bright bands of light.
In the house they waited impatiently
For the fisherman to return with his catch:
He had promised to be back in two days,
But the third had passed
And he still was not back.
The children waited in vain,
And the old grandfather.
Most impatiently of all,

Zhdyot evo zhena,
Nochi molchalivey
I kak kholst bledna...

Vot za uzni seli,
Ey ne do edi:
"Kak bi v samom dele
Ne bilo bedi".
Vdol reki nesetsya
Lodochka; na ney
Pesnya razdayotsya

Vsyo slishney, slishney.
Zvuki toy znakomoy
Pesni uslikhav,
Deti von iz doma
Brosilis stremglav.
Veselo vskochila
Iz-za pryalki mat,
U i deda cili
Vdrug nashlos bezhat.

Pesnyu zaglushaet
Zvonkiy krik rebyat,
Tshchetno unimaet
Stariy ded vnuchat.
Vot i vorotilsya
Tot chas pro ulov.

Dolgo razdavalysya
Smekh ikh nad rekoy,
Imi lyubovalysya
Mesyats zolotoy.
Laskovo mertsali
Zvyozdi s vishini;
Detyam obeshchali
Radostniye sni.

7 Zimniy vecher

Khorosho vam, detki
Zimnim vecherkom:
V komnate uyutnoy
Seli vi ryadkom.
Plamya ot kamina,
Osveshchaet vas...
Slushaete zhadno
Mami vi rasskaz.

Radost, lyubopitstvo

Waited the wife,
More silent than night,
And as pale as linen...

They sat at supper,
She could not eat:
'But he really can't
Have come to any harm.'
Along the river drifted
A little boat; from it
A song was heard,

More and more clearly.
Hearing those familiar sounds
Of singing,
The children rushed headlong
Out of the house.
From behind the spinning-wheel, mother
Leapt gaily,
And suddenly grandfather found
The strength to run.

The song was drowned
By children's ringing shouts,
Old grandfather tried in vain
To calm his grandchildren.
He had returned
safe and sound!

For a long time their laughter
Was heard above the river.
A golden moon
Looked down on them.
Twinkling gently
From on high, the stars
Promised the children
Happy dreams.

A Winter's Evening

It is pleasant for you, children,
Of a winter's evening:
In a cosy room
You sit side by side,
The flame from the chimney-corner
Illuminates you...
You listen avidly
To mamma's stories.

Joy and curiosity

Na litse u vsekhn,
Chasto nprerivaet
Mamu zvonkiy smekh.

Vot rasskaz okonchen,
Vse pustilis v zal...
“Poigray nam, mama”,
Kto-to propishchal.
“Khot uzh devyat bilo,
Otkazat vam zhal...”
I poslushno sela
Mama za royal.
I poshlo vesel’ye!
Nachalas voznya,
Plyaska, pesni, khokhot,
Vizg i begotnya.
Pust gudit serdito
V’yuga pod oknom.
Khorosho vam, detki,
V gnyozd’ishke svoynom!

No ne vsem takoe
Schast’ye Bog dayot.
Est na svete mnogo
Bednikh i sirot.
U odnikh mogila
Rano mat vzyala;
U drugikh net v zimu
Tyoplovo ugra.
Esli privedyotsya
Vstretit vam takikh,
Vi, kak brat’yev, detki,
Prigolubte ikh.

8 Kukushka

“Ti priletel iz goroda, kakiye
Skazhi, tam slukhi nosyatsya o nas?”
(Skvortsa kukushka sprashivala raz).
“Chto zhiteli tolkuyut gorodskkiye,
Khot, naprimer, o pesnyakh solov’ya?
Interesuyus etim ochen ya.”

“Ves gorod on privodit v voskhishchen’ye,
Kogda v sadu evo razdastsya trel.”
“A zhavoronok?” “I zhavoronka pen’ye
Plenyaet ochen mnogikh.” “Neuzhel?

Nu, a kakov ikh otziv o drozde?”
“Da khvalyat i evo, khot ne vezde.”

On all your faces,
Your ringing laughter
Often interrupts mamma.

Then, the story ended,
You all rush into the parlour...
‘Play for us, mamma,’
Somebody squeals.
‘Though it’s already struck nine,
It would be a shame to refuse.’
And, dutifully, mamma
Sits down at the piano
And the merriment begins!
The bustle starts –
Dancing, singing, laughing,
Squealing and running about.
Let the blizzard at the window
Angrily shriek.
You are fine, children,
In your cosy home!

But God does not grant
uch good fortune to everyone.
There are many in the world
Poor and orphaned.
The grave claims early
Some people’s mothers;
Others, in winter, do not have
A warm corner.
Should you, perchance,
Meet with such as these,
You, like brothers, children,
Take tender care of them.

The Cuckoo

‘You have flown in from the town.
What stories do they tell of us there?’
(The cuckoo once asked a starling).
‘What do the city-dwellers say,
For instance, of the nightingale’s songs?
I’m very interested in such things.’

‘The whole town goes into raptures
When his warbling is heard in the garden.’
‘And the lark?’ ‘And the lark’s song
Many find enchanting.’ ‘Really?

Now what is their opinion of the thrush?’
‘They praise him too, though not everywhere.’

“Eshcho khochu sprosit ya, mozhetsya,
I obo mne ti slishal koye-cto?”
“Vot pro tebya, sestritsa, tak priznatsya,
Ne govorit reshitelno nikto!”

“A! Esli tak”, – kukushka vozopila, –
“To o sebe, chtob lyudyam otomstit,
Sama ves vek, pokuda khvatit sil’,
Ne perestanu ya tverdit:
Ku – ku, ku – ku, ku – ku, ku – ku, ku – ku,
ku – ku, ku – ku, ku – ku, ku – ku, ku – ku,
ku – ku, ku – ku, ku – ku, ku – ku, ku – ku,
ku – ku!”

9 Vesna

Uzh taet sneg, begut ruch’i,
V okno poveyalo vesnoyu...
Zasvishchut skoro solov’i,
I les odenetsya listvoyu!

Chista nebesnaya lazur.
Tepley i yarche solntse stalo;
Pora meteley zlikh i bur
Opyat nadolgo minovala.
I serdtse silno tak v grudi
Stuchit, kak budto zhdyot chevo-to;
Kak budto schast’ye vpered, i
I usnesla zima zabot!

Vse litsa veselo glyadyat.
“Vesna!” – chitaesh v kazhdom vzore.
I tot, kak prazdniku, ey rad,
Ch’ya zhizn – lish tyazhkiy trud i gore.
No rezbikh detok zvonkiy smekh
I bezzabotnikh ptichek pen’ye
Mne govoryat – kto bolshe vsekhn
Prirod’i lyubit obnovlen’ye!

10 Kolibelnaya pesn v buryu

“Akh! Uymis ti, burya!
Ne shumite, eli!
Moy malyutka dremlet
Sladko v kolibeli.

Ti, groza Gospodnya,
Ne budi rebyonka!
Pronesites, tuchi
Chorniye, storonkoy!

‘Yet I wish to ask, could it be
That you have heard anything about me?’
‘About you, little sister, in tribute to you,
Nobody at all says anything!’

‘Ah! If that is what they think of me,’ cried the
cuckoo, ‘To take vengeance on the people
All my days, while I have strength,
I will not cease repeating over and over again:
Cuck-oo, cuck-oo, cuck-oo, cuck-oo, cuck-oo,
cuck-oo, cuck-oo, cuck-oo, cuck-oo, cuck-oo, cuck-oo,
cuck-oo,
Cuck-oo, cuck-oo, cuck-oo, cuck-oo, cuck-oo,
cuck-oo!’

Spring

Already the snow is melting, the brooks flowing,
At the window a breath of spring air...
The nightingale will soon be singing,
And the wood clothing itself in foliage!

The blue of the sky is clear.
The sun has become warmer and brighter;
The season of nasty blizzards and storms
Once more is over for a long time.
And the heart beats strongly in the breast
As if awaiting someone’s arrival,
As if happiness were ahead of us,
And winter’s cares behind!

There’s happiness on every face.
‘Spring!’ may be read in everyone’s eyes.
And he whose life is but hard toil and grief
Becomes glad, as if on holiday.
But gambolling children’s noisy laughter
And the song of carefree birds
Tell me who, more than anyone,
Delights in nature’s renewal!

Lullaby in a Storm

‘Ah! be still, you storm!
Make no noise, fir-trees!
My babe is slumbering
Sweetly in his cradle

You, Mistress Storm,
Don’t wake the child!
Rush on, dark clouds,
Away from us!

Byor eshcho ne malo
Vpered, biť mozhet,
I ne raz zabota
Son evo vstrevozhit.

Spi, ditya, spokojno...
Vot groza stikhaet;
Materi molitva
Son tvoy okhranyaet.

Zavtra, kak prosnyoshsya
I otkroesh glazki,
Snova vstretish solntse,
I lyubov, i laski!"

11 Tsvetok

Veselo tsvetiku v pole pestreyut;
Ikh po nocham osvezhaet rosa,
Dnyom ikh luchy blagodatniye greyut,
Laskovo smotryat na nix nebesa.

S babochkoy pyostroy, s glyashchey pcheloyu,
S vetrom im lyubo vesti razgovor.
Veselo tsvetikam v pole vesnoyu,
Mil im rodimovo polya prostor!

Vot oni vidyat v okne, za reshyotkoy,
Tikho kachaetsya bledniy tsvetok...
Solntsa ne znaya, pechalniy i krotkiy,
Viros on v mrachnikh stenakh odinok.

Tsvetikam zhal evo bednovo stalo,
Khorom oni k sebe brata zovut:
"Solntse tebya nikogda ne laskalo,
Bros eti steni, zachakhnesh ti tut!"
"Net", otvechal on, "Khot veselo v pole,
I naryazhaet vas yarko vesna,
No ne zaviduyu vashey ya dole,
I ne pokinu sirovo okna.

Pishno tsvetite! Svoey krasotoyu
Raduyte, brat'ya, schastlivikh lyudey.
Ya budu tsvest dlya tovo, kto sudboyu
Solntsa lishyon i poley.

Ya budu tsvest dlya tovo, kto stradaet,
Uznika ya uteshayu odin.

Rage not yet awhile –
A little later perhaps –
And not once will care
Disturb his sleep.

Sleep peacefully on, my child...
See! The storm abates;
A mother's prayer
Protects your dreams.

Tomorrow, as you awake
And open your little eyes,
Once more you'll meet with the sun,
And love, and caresses!"

The Flower

Gaily the little flowers bloom in the field,
By night refreshed by the dew,
By day warmed by the sun's abundant rays.
Heaven looks tenderly upon them.

With colourful butterfly, with buzzing bee,
With the wind, they enjoy pleasant converse.
The flowers revel in the springtime field,
The spaciousness of their native field is dear to them.

Now through the window, behind the grill,
A faded flower gently sways...
Unacquainted with the sun, grieving and meek,
It has grown up in the gloom of lonely walls.

The flowers feel pity for it,
In chorus, they call their brother to them:
'The sun has never caressed you,
Abandon those walls, where you'll wither away!'
'No,' he answers, 'Though you grow gaily in the field,
And Spring dresses you brightly,
I do not envy you your lot,
And will not leave the damp window.

Bloom on magnificently! With your beauty
Gladden, brothers, the fortunate folk.
I shall blossom for those who by fate
Are deprived of sun and field.

I shall bloom for those who suffer;
Alone, I shall console the prisoner.

Pust on, vzglyanuv na menya, vspominaet
Zelen rodimikh dolin!"

12 Zima

Ded, podnyavshis spozaranku,
K vnuchkam v komnatu speshit.
"Dobroy vestochkoy uteshit
Vas prishol ya", – govorit.
"Vsyo zimi vi zhdali, detki,
Nadoyela vam davno
Osen khmuraya s dozhd'yami;
Posmotrite-ka v okno!

Za noch vipal sneg gluboki,
I moroz, kak v dekabre.
Uzh vpryagli v salazki Zhuchku
Rebyatishki na dvore."
I tormoshit ded raskrivshikh
Glazki sonniye vnuchat;
No na starovo plutishki
Nedovyorchivo glyadyat.

Podnyal shtoru ded, – i tochno!
Sneg nod solnechnim luchom
Brilliantami sverkaet,
Otlivaet serebrom.
"Slava Bogu! Slava Bogu!",
Detki veselo krichat,
I v ume ikh voznikaet
Uzh kartin znakomikh ryad:

Na salazkakh s gor katan'ye,
I katan'ye na konkakh...
I rozhdestvenskaya yolka,
Sverkhu donizu ogn'yakh!

13 Vesennyya pesnya

V stariy sad vikhozhu ya. Rosinki,
Kak almazi, na list'yakh blestyat.
I tsveti mne golovkoy kivayut,
Razlivaya krugom aromat.

Vsyo vlechyot, veselit moyi vzori:
Zolotaya pchela na tsvetke,
Raznotsvetniye babochki kril'ya
I sineyushchiy les vdaleke.

Kak yarka eta zelen derev'yev,
Kupol neba kak chist i glubok!

May he who looks on me remember
The verdure of his native valleys!"

Winter

Grandad, rising very early,
Hurries to his grandchildren's room.
'I have come to cheer you
With some good news,' he says.
'All winter you have waited, children,
For a long time; gloomy autumn
Plagued you with its rains;
Just look out of the window!

Overnight deep snow has fallen,
With frost as in December.
Already the children have harnessed Juchka
to the sleigh in the yard.'
And grandad pesters the grandchildren
Who have opened sleepy eyes.
But the little rogues look at the old man
With distrust.

Grandad raises the blind, and, indeed!
Beneath the sun's beams
Snow sparkles like diamonds
Shot with silver.
'Thank God! Thank God!'
The children gaily cry,
And in their mind arises
A series of familiar scenes:

Tobogganning on the hills,
And skating on the ice...
And the Christmas fir
Ablaze from top to bottom!

Spring Song

I go out into the old garden.
Dewdrops sparkle like diamonds on the leaves.
And flowers nod their heads at me,
Spreading fragrance all around.

Everything attracts and cheers my eyes:
Golden bees on a flower,
Colourful butterflies' wings
And the distant forest tinged with blue.

How bright the greenery of the trees,
How clear and deep heaven's dome!

I brozhu ya, vostorgom obyatiy,
I sleza zastilaet zrachok!
Kak lyubov'yu i radost'yu dishet
Vsya priroda pod veshnim luchom!
I dusha blagodarnaya chuyet
Zdes prisutstviye boga vo vsyom!

14 Osen

Skuchnaya kartina!
Tuchi bez kontsa,
Dozhdik tak i l'yotsya,
Luzhi u kril'tsa...
Chakhlaya ryabina
Moknet pod oknom;
Smotrit derevushka
Serenkim pyatnom.

Chto ti rano v gosti,
Osen, k nam prishla?
Eshcho prosit serdtse
Sveta i tepla!
Vse tebe ne radi!
Tvoy unil'iy vid
Gore da nevzgodi
Bednomu sulit.

A teper navodit
Zholtikh list'yev shum
Na dushu bolnuyu
Roy zloveshchikh dum!
Rano, rano, osen,
V gosti k nam prishla...
Mnogim ne dozhdat'sya
Sveta i tepla!

15 Lastochka

Idyot devochka-sirotk,
Tyazhelo vzdikhayet,
A nad neyu goremichnoy
Lastochka letayet.

I letayet, i shchebechet,
Nad golovkoy v'yotsya,
V'yotsya, kroshka, i krilami
V kosu chut ne b'yotsya.

"Chto ti v'yosh'sya nado mnoyu,
Nad sirotkoy, ptashka?
Akh, ostav menya, i tak mne

And I wander, filled with delight,
A tear clouding my eye.
How lovingly and joyfully
All nature breathes beneath the vernal rays,
And a grateful soul feels here
The presence of God in everything!

Autumn

A sad picture!
Endless clouds
And teeming rain,
With puddles on the porch...
Sickly rowans,
Soaked, beneath the window;
The village seems
a grey spot.

Why did you come to us
So early, Autumn?
The heart still begs
For light and warmth!
There is no gladness in you!
Your cheerless aspect
Promises grief and misfortune
To a poor man.

Now the noise
of yellowed leaves
Brings to the sick soul
A swarm of ominous thoughts!
Early, early, Autumn,
You have come to visit us...
Many will be deprived
Of light and warmth!

The Swallow

Here comes a little orphan girl,
Sighing heavily
Whilst above this hapless one
There flies a swallow.

And it flies and sings
And twists and turns over her head;
The whirling little creature, with its wings,
Almost strikes her hair.

"Why do you whirl above me
Around an orphan, little bird?
Ah, leave me alone, to live

Zhit na svete tyazhko!"
"Ne ostavlyu, ne ostavlyu!
Budu ya kruzhitsya,
Shchebetat tebe pro brata,
Chto v tyurme tomitsya.

On prosil menya: Sletayka,
Ptashka, v kray rodimiya,
Poklonis moyey sestritse,
Goryachio lyubimoy.

Vsyo l menya ona, golubka,
Dobrom vspominayet,
vsyo l ona eshcho o brate
Slyozhi prolivayet?"

16 Detskaya pesenka

Moy Lizochek tak uzh mal, tak uzh mal,
Chto iz kril'yev komarishki
Sdelal dve sebe manishki
I v krakhmal, i v krakhmal!

Moy Lizochek tak uzh mal, tak uzh mal,
Chto iz gretskovo orekha
Sdelal stul, chtob slushat ekho,
I krichal, i krichal!

Moy Lizochek tak uzh mal, tak uzh mal,
Chto iz skorlup'i yaichnoy
Faeton sebe otlichniy
Zakazal, zakazal!

Moy Lizochek tak uzh mal, tak uzh mal,
chto iz skorlup'i rachonka
sshil chetire bashmachonka
I na bal, i na bal!

Moy Lizochek tak uzh mal, tak uzh mal,
chto iz listika sireni
sdelal zontik on dlya teni
i gulyal, i gulyal!

Moy Lizochek tak uzh mal, tak uzh mal,
Chto, naduvshi oduvanchik,
Zakazal sebe divanchik,
Tut i spal, tut i spal!

Moy Lizochek tak uzh mal, tak uzh mal,
Chto natkat sebe kholstini

My life in this painful world!
'I will not leave, I will not leave!
I will wheel around,
Singing to you of my brother
Who languishes in prison.

He asked me: little flier,
Little bird,
greet my beloved sister
Warmly in our homeland.

Is she, the little dove,
Always ready to remember me?
Does she still shed tears
For her brother?

A Little Children's Song

My Lizo is so small, so very, very small,
That from a gnat's wee wing
He made himself a false shirt front,
And starched it, he starched it!

My Lizo is so small, so very, very small,
That from a walnut shell
He made a chair, to hear the echo,
And shouted, he shouted!

My Lizo is so small, so very, very small,
That, from the shell of an egg,
A perfect phaeton for himself
He ordered, he ordered!

My Lizo is so small, so very, very small,
That from a little crayfish shell
He sewed two pairs of dancing shoes –
Come dancing, come dancing!

My Lizo is so small, so very, very small,
That from a little lilac leaf
He made himself a parasol,
And went strolling, strolling!

My Lizo is so small, so very, very small,
That, blowing on a dandelion,
He stuffed himself a little bed,
And slept there, he slept there!

My Lizo is so small, so very, very small,
That, to weave some linen for him,

Pauku iz pautinī
Zakazal, zakazal!

Shest romansov Op. 73

17 Mī sideli s toboy

Mī sideli s toboy u zasnushey reki.
S tikhoy pesney propīli domoy rībaki.
Solntsa luch zolotoy za rekoy dogoral...
I tebe ya togda nichevo ne skazal.

Zagremelo v dal... Nadvigalas groza...
Po resnitsam tvoyim pokatilas sleza...
I s bezumnīm rīdan'yem k tebe ya pripa...
I tebe nichevo, nichevo ne skazal.

I teper, v eti dni, ya, kak prezhdē, odin,
uzh ne zhdū nichego ot gryadushchikh godin...
V serdtse zhiznennīy zvuk uzhdavno
otzvuchal...
Akh zachem, ya tebe nichevo, nichevo ne
skazal!

18 Noch

Merknet slabīy svet svechi...
Brodit mrak unīliy...
I toska szhimayet grud,
S neponyatnoy siloy...

Na pechalniye glaza
Tikho son niskhodit...
I s proshedshim v etot mig
Rech dusha zavodit.

Istomilasya ona
gorest'yu glubokoy.
Poyavis zhe, khot vo sne,
O, moy drug dalyokiy!

19 V etu lunnuyu noch

V etu lunnuyu noch, v etu divnuyu noch,
V etot mig blagodatniy svidan'ya,
O, moy drug, ya ne v silakh lyubvi prevozmoch,
Uderzhat ya ne v silakh priznan'ya!

V serebre chut kolishetsya ozero glad...
Naklonyas, zasheptalisya ivi...

From its own cobweb, a spider
He ordered, he ordered!

Six Romances Op.73

We Sat Together

We sat together by a sleepy stream.
With a soft song, fishermen sailed past, heading
homeward.
The sun's light burned out across the water...
And I spoke not a word to you.

Distant thunder rolled... the storm drew nearer...
On your lashes a tear began to pearl...
And with mad sobs I pressed myself to you...
But nothing, nothing did I say to you.

And now, these days, as alone as before,
I expect nothing of the years to come...
In my heart, long since, that vital voice has
ceased...
Oh, why, oh, why did I say nothing, nothing to
you?

Night

The candle's faint light grows dimmer...
A cheerless gloom hovers...
And melancholy weighs upon the breast
With a strange force.

On sorrowing eyes
Sleep descends softly...
And this instant establishes
A soul's communion with the past

She is exhausted
By profound misfortune...
Come forth, then, be it but in dreams,
Oh, my distant dear one!

This Moonlit Night

On this moonlit night, this moonlit night,
In this rich moment of our meeting,
Oh, my dear, I am unable to vanquish love,
I am unable to hold back my avowal!

In the silvering, the glassy surface of the lake rocks
a little...
I stoop, in whispers we begin to talk...

No bessilnī slova! Kak tebe peredat
Istomlyonnovo serdtsa porīvī?

Noch ne zhydot, noch letit... Zakatilas luna...
Zaalelo v tayinstvennoy dali...
Dorogaya, prosti! Snova zhizni volna
Nam nesyt den toski i pechali!

20 Zakatilos solntse

Zakatilos' solntse, zaigrali kraski Lyogkoy
pozolotoy v sineve nebes...

V obayan nochi sladostrastnoy laski
Tikho chto-to shepchet zadremavshiy les...

I v dushe trevozhnoy umolkayut muki
I dīshat vsey grud'yu v etu noch legko...
Nochi divnoy teni, nochi divnoy zvuki
Nas s toboy unosyat, drug moy, daleko.

Vsya obyata negoy etoy nochi strastnoy,
Ti ko mne sklonilas na plecho glavoy...
Ya bezumno schastliv, o, moy drug prekrasniy,
Beskonechno schastliv v etu noch s toboy!

21 Sred mrachnikh dnei

Sred mrachnikh dnei, pod gnyotom bed,
Iz mgli tumannoy proshliikh let,
Kak otblesk radostnikh luchey,
Mne svetit vzor tvoyikh ochey.

Pod obayan'yem svetlikh snov
Mne mnitsya, – ya s toboyu vnov.
Pri svete dnya, v nochnoy tishi
Delyus vostorgami dushi.

Ya vnov s toboy! – moya pechal
Umchalas v pasmurnuyu dal...
I strastno vnov khochu ya zhit –
Toboy dīshat, tebya lyubit!

22 Snova, kak prezhdē

Snova, kak prezhdē, odin,
Snova obyat ya toskoy...
Smotritsya topol v okno,
Ves ozaryonniy lunoy...

But how weak are words! How to impart to you
The transports of a weary heart?

Night is not patient, the night flies... the moon is
setting...
A glow in the mysterious distance...
Dearest, forgive me! Once more life's current
Brings to us a day of gloom and sadness!

The Sun Has Set

The sun has set, its colours fading
To a light gilding in the sky's blue...

In the enchantment of night's voluptuous caress
The drowsy woods softly whisper something...

And in a troubled soul, the pangs abate,
And all breathe easily on this night,
The shades of glorious night, the sounds of glorious
night
Take you and me, my dear, far, far away.

All bound in bliss this passionate night,
You have rested your head on my shoulder...
I'm madly happy, oh, my beautiful love,
Infinitely happy with you this night!...

On Gloomy Days

On gloomy days, beneath misfortune's burden,
Out of the hazy mist of years past,
Like a reflection of joyful rays,
The look in your eyes shines upon me.

Under the spell of luminous dreams
It seems to me I am with you once more.
In the bright day, in the silent night,
I share the delights of the heart.

I am with you once more! My sadness
Whirls away into the cloudy distance...
And again, passionately, I want to live –
To breathe for you, to love you!

Once More, As Before

Once more, as before, alone,
Once more I am filled with anguish...
A poplar is reflected in the window,
All illuminated by the moon...

Smotritsya topol v okno...
Shepchut o chyom to listi...
V zvyozdakh goryat nebesa...
Gde teper, milaya, ti?

Vsyo, chto tvoritsya so mnoy,
Ya peredat ne berus...
Drug! pomolis za menya,
Ya za tebya uzh molyus.

COMPACT DISC 34

1 I bolno, i sladko Op.6 No.3 (1869)

Words by Evdokiya Rostopchina

Dedicated to Alexandra Kochetova

I bolno, i sladko,
Kogda pri nachale lyubvi
To serdtse zabyotsya ukradkoy,
To v zhilakh techet likhoradka,
I bolno, i sladko;
To zhar zaplyayet v krovi...
I bolno, i sladko!

Probyot chas svidanya,
Potupya predatelny vzor,
V volnenye, v tomnenye neznanya,
Boyishsya, zhelayesh priznanya,

I v muku svidanye!
Nachnyosh i prervyosh razgovor!
I v muku svidanye!
Ne vymolvish slova.
Nemeyesh, robeyesh, drozhish;
Dusha, proklinaya okovy,
Vsya v rechi izlitsya gotova.
Net sily, net slova,
I tolko glyadish i molchish!

I sladko, i bolno.
I trepet bezumny zatikh;
I serdцу legko i razdolno.
Slova polilis by tak volno,
No slushat uzh nekomu ikh.
I sladko, i bolno.

The poplar is reflected in the window...
Leaves are whispering of something...
The sky sparkles with stars...
Where are you now, my sweet?

Everything that happens to me,
I do not mind telling...
Friend! Pray for me,
I am praying for you...

Translations: Wil Gowans

Both painfully and sweetly Op.6 No.3

Both painfully and sweetly
At the start of love
The heart now beats stealthily,
Now fever flows in the veins,
Both painfully and sweetly
Now blood is on fire.
Both painfully and sweetly!

When the time of our meeting comes,
With downcast eyes,
Agitated and pining,
Afraid but ready to declare my love,

I start and stammer.
And the meeting becomes a torment!
I start and stammer!
I cannot say a word.
I tremble, I become timid and dumb;
My soul, cursing its chains,
Would find expression.
I have no strength, no words,
And only look at you and keep silence!

Both painfully and sweetly.
The mad fever is over;
My heart is light and free.
It would be so easy to find words
But there is now nobody to listen,
Both painfully and sweetly.

2 Moy geniy, moy angel, moy drug No.1

(c.1850–1859)

Words by Afanasy Fet

Ne zdes li ty lyogkoyu tenyu,
Moy geniy, moy angel, moy drug,
Beseduyesh tikho so mnoyu
I tikho letayesh vokrug?

I robkim darish vdokhnovenyem,
I sladkiy krachuyesh nedug,
I tikhim darish snovidenem,
Moy geniy, moy angel, moy drug.
Moy geniy! Moy angel! Moy drug!

3 Lish ty odin Op.57 No.6 (1884)

Words by Alexey Pleshcheyev (after A. Kristen)

Dedicated to Alexandra Krutikova

Lish ty odin v moyi stradanya veril,
Odin vosstal na lzhiy sud lyudskoy
I podderzhal moy dukh iznemogavshiy
V te dni, kak svet vo mne borolsya s tmoy.

Lish ty odin prostyor mne smelo ruku,
Kogda k tebe, otchayanya polna,
Prishla ya s serdtsem, krovyu istekavshim,
Bezchalostnoy tolpoju oskorblena.

Lish ty odin mne vzhizni ni mgnovenya
Ne otravlyal... Odin menya shchadil,
Odin bereg ot bur s uchastyem nezhnym,
I nikogda menya ty ne lyubil!
Net, nikogda, nikogda menya ty ne lyubil.

4 Ne sprashivay Op.57 No.3 (1884)

Words by Alexander Strugovshchikov (after

Goethe) Dedicated to Emiliya Pavlova

Ne sprashivay, ne vyzyvay priznanya!
Molchaniya lezhit na mne pechat;
Vse vyskazat – odno moyo zhelanye,
No vtayne ya obrechana stradat!

Tam vechny lyod vershiny pokryvayet,
Zdes na polya legla nochnaya ten:
S vesnoyu vnov istochnik zaigrayet,
O zareyu vnov proglyanet bozhny den,

My genius, my angel, my friend...

Is it you,
My genius, my angel, my friend,
Who as an elusive ghost talks with me so gently
And flies around softly?

You favour me with timid inspiration,
You heal a sweet sickness,
You give me soft dreams,
My genius, my angel, my friend.
My genius! My angel! My friend!

Only you alone Op. 57 No. 6

Only you alone believed my suffering,
You alone struggled with the false gossip
And supported my exhausted soul
When the good fought in me with the evil.

You alone offered me a helping hand
When the ruthless insulted me,
When I came to you in sadness
With bleeding heart.

You alone never poisoned my life.
You alone showed mercy to me,
You alone protected me with tender sympathy,
But you never loved me!
You never, never loved me.

Do not ask Op.57 No.3

Do not ask me, do not provoke the admission
I am forced to be silent:
My only wish is to speak out
But I am doomed to suffer secretly.

Mountain tops are covered with eternal ice,
Fields are in darkness every night:
Yet streams come to life every spring,
Day returns with every dawn.

I vsem, i vsem dano v chas skorbi uteshenye,
Ukazan drug, chtob serdtse oblegchit:
Mne s klyatvoy na ustakh dano odno terpenye,
I tolko bog, ikh mozhet razreshit!

5 Smert Op.57 No.5 (1884)

*Words by Dmitry Merezhkovsky
Dedicated to Dmitry Usatov*

Yesli rozy tikho osypayutsya,
Yesli zvyozdy merknut v nebesakh,
Ob utesy volny razbivayutsya,
Gasnet luch zari na oblakakh,
Eto smert, no bez borby muchitelnoy;
Eta smert, plenyaya krasotoy,

Obeshchayet otdyk upoyitelny,
Luchshiy dar prirody vseblagoy.
U neyo, nastavnicy Bozhestvennoy,
Nauchites, lyudi, umirat,
Chtob s ulybkoy krotkoy i torzhestvennoy
Svoy konets bezropotno vstrechat.

6 Net, tolko tot, kto znal Op.6 No.6

*Dedicated to Alina Khvastova
Words by Lev Mey (after Goethe)*

Net, tolko tot, kto znal
Svidanya, zhazhdu,
Poymyot, kak ya stradal
I kak ya strazhdu.

Glyazhu ya vdal... net sil,
Tuskneyet oko...
Akh, kto menya lyubil
I znal – daleko!

Akh, tolko tot, kto znal
Svidanya zhazhdu,
Poymyot, kak ya stradal
I kak ya strazhdu.

Vsya grud gorit – Kto znal
Svidanya zhazhdu,
Poymyot, kak ya stradal
I kak ya strazhdu

Everyone is consoled in grief,
Everyone has a friend to relieve his mind:
I have sworn to suffer,
God only can release me!

Death Op.57 No.5

If roses shed their petals,
If stars grow dark in the sky,
If waves break against rocks
If the rays of dawn are clouded over,
It is death but without agonising struggle,
This death captivates with its beauty,

It promises delightful rest
Which is the best gift of nature.
You people, let nature,
This divine mentor, teach you how to die
To meet your end with a gentle and solemn smile
And without complaint.

No, only he who has known Op.6 No.6

No, only he who has known the longing
For meeting
Can see how I suffered
And how I suffer.

I look into the distance; it is beyond my powers,
My eyes grow dim.
Ah, the one who loved me
Is so far away!

My breast is burning.
Ah, only he who has known longing
Can see how I suffered
And how I suffer.

My Heart speaks – only he
Who has known longing
Can see how I suffered,
And how I suffer

7 Otchego? Op.6 No.5

*Dedicated to Ivan Klimentko
Words by Lev Mey (after Heine)*

Otchego poblednela vesnoy
pyshnotsvetnaya roza sama?
Otchego pod zelyonoy
travoy golubaya fialka nema?
Otchego tak pechalno
zvuchit pesnya ptichki, nesyas v nebesa?
Otchego nad lugami visit
pogrebalnym pokrovom rosa?
Otchego v nebe solntse
s utra kholodno i temno, kak zimoy?
Otchego i zemlya vsya syra
i ugrayumey mogily samoy?
Otchego ya i sam vse grustney
i boleznenney den oto dnya?
Otchego, o, skazhi mne skorey,
ty, pokinuv, zabyla menya?

8 Pervoye svidaniye Op.63 No.4 (1887)

Words by Grand Duke Konstantin Romanov

Vot minovala razluka unylaya,
Probil svidaniya chas,
Svetloye, polnoye schastiye, milaya,
Vnov nastupilo dlya nas.

Dolgo tomilosya, polno stradaniya,
Serdtshe tvoyo, no pover:
Dni odinochestva, dni ispytaniya
My naverstayem teper.

Nezhnye rechi, lyubvi vyrazheniya
Vnov potekut bez kotsa,
I vo yedinoye snova biyeniye
Nashi solyutsya serdtsa!

Pust sochetayet sozvuchye yedinoye
Nashi dve dushi, i vnov,
Slovno vesennyya pesn solovynaya,
Nasha vospryanet lyubov!

9 Nislova, o drug moy Op.6 No.2

*Words by Alexander Pleshcheyev
(after Moritz Hartmann)
Dedicated to Nikolay Kashkin*

Why? Op.6 No.5

Why has the fine rose
Turned pale in spring?
Why has the blue violet
Become silent in green grass?
Why does the song of a bird
Sound so sadly in the sky?
Why are the meadows wrapped in fog
As in a shroud?
Why is the morning sun
Cold and sombre as in winter?
Why is the ground damp
And more dismal than the grave?
Why am I myself become
Sadder and more sickly with every passing day?
Why, oh, tell me quickly,
Did you leave me and forget me?

The first meeting Op.63 No.4

Cheerless parting is over,
The time of meeting has come.
Happiness, full of light,
Starts for us again, my dear.

Your heart suffered for a long time
But trust me:
We shall make up now
For the days of solitude, days of trial.

Tender conversations and expressions of love,
Will now be endless,
Our hearts will blend again
Into one heart-beat!

Let the same accord
Join our souls,
And our love will rise again
Like a nightingale's song in spring!

Not a word, O my friend Op.6 No.2

Ni slova, o drug moy, ni vzdokha.
My budem s tobey molchalivy.
Ved molcha nad kamnem, nad kamnem mogilnym
Sklonayutsya grustnye ivy.

I tolko sklonivshis, chitayut,
Kak ya, v tvoyom serdtse ustalom,
Chto byli dni yasnoy schastyu,
Chto etogo schastyu ne stalo!

Ni slova, o drug moy, ni vzdokha.
My budem s tobey molchalivy.
Ved molcha nad kamnem, nad kamnem
mogilnym Sklonayutsya grustnye ivy.

10 Pimpinella Op.38 No.6 (1878)
Song From Florence

Non contrastar cogl' uomini,
Fallo per carità.
Non sono tutti gli uomini
della mia qualità!
Io ti voglio bene assai, Pimpinella,
quanto per te penai solo il cuor lo sa!

Ti pregarò di festa, Pimpinella,
non ti vestir confusa,
non ti mostrar chiasosa, Pimpinella,
se vuoi portarmi amor!
Io ti voglio bene assai, Pimpinella,
quanto per te penai solo il cuor lo sa!

Dalla tua stessa bocca, Pimpinella,
attendo la risposta,
non fa soffrir, o bella Pimpinella,
e non mi dir di no!
Io ti voglio bene assai, Pimpinella,
quanto per te penai solo il cuor lo sa!

Ora che siamo soli, Pimpinella,
vorrei svelare il mio cuore,
languisco per amore, Pimpinella,
olo il mio cuore lo sa!
Io ti voglio bene assai, Pimpinella,
quanto per te penai solo il cuor lo sa!

Not a word, O my friend, no sigh.
We shall be silent.
As silent as sorrowful weeping willows
Bowing to the grave.

They only read bowed down
As I read in your tortured heart
That there were days of clear happiness
And that happiness disappeared.

Not a word, O my friend, no sigh.
We shall be silent.
As silent as sorrowful weeping willows
Bowing to the grave.

Pimpinella Op.38 No.6

Do not wrongly compare me
with other men, I beg you.
Not all men
are of my quality!
I love you very much, Pimpinella,
My suffering for you the heart alone knows!

I begged you on the holiday, Pimpinella,
not to dress immodestly,
not to appear gaudy, Pimpinella,
if you want to bring me love!
I love you very much, Pimpinella,
My suffering for you the heart alone knows!

From your own mouth, Pimpinella,
I await the reply.
Do not make me suffer, Pimpinella,
and do not say no!
I love you very much, Pimpinella,
My suffering for you the heart alone knows!

Now that we are alone, Pimpinella,
I would open my heart to you,
I languish for love of you, Pimpinella,
my heart alone knows!
I love you very much, Pimpinella,
My suffering for you the heart alone knows!

11 Usni, pechalny drug Op.47 No.4 (1880)
Words by Alexey Tolstoy
Dedicated to Alexandra Panayeva

Usni, pechalny drug, uzhe s gryadushchey troy
Vecherniy aly svet slivayetsya vse bole;
Bleyashchiye stada vernulisya domoy,
I uleglasya pyl na opustelom pole.

Da snidet angel sna, prekrasen i krylat,
I da pereneset tebya on v zhizn inuyu!
Izdavna byl on mne v pechali drug i brat,
Usni, moyo ditya, k nemu ya ne revnuyu.

Na rany serdtsa on zabveniye prolyet,
Pytlivuyu tosku ot razuma otymet,
I s goresnoy dushi na ney lezhashchiy gnet
Do novogo utra nezrimo pripodymet.

Tomimaya ves den dushevnoy borboy,
Ot vzorov i rechey vrazhdebnykh ty ustala;
Usni, moyo ditya, mezh nimi i tobey
On blagostnoy rukoy opustit pokryvalo.
Usni, moyo ditya! Usni, moyo ditya, ditya, usni!

12 Rastvoril ya okno Op.63 No.2 (1887)
Words by K. R(omanov)
Rastvoril ya okno, –
stalo dushno nevmoch, –
Opustilsya pred nim na koleni,
I v litso mne pakhnula vesennyyaya noch
Blagovonnym dykhanьем sireni.

A vdali gde –
to chudno zapel solovey;
Ya vnimal yemu s grustyu glubokoy...
I s toskey o rodine vspomnil svokey;
Ob otchizne ya vspomnil dalekoy, –

Gde rodnoy solovey pesn rodnuyu poyot
I, ne znaya zemnykh ogorcheniy,
Zalivayetsya tseluyu noch naprolyot
Nad dushistoyu vetkoy sireni...

13 Uzh gasli v komnatakh ogni Op.63 No.5 (1887)
Words by Grand Duke Konstantin Romanov
Uzh gasli v komnatakh ogni.
Blagoukhali rozy.
My seli na skamyu v teni

Sleep, poor friend Op. 47 No.4

Sleep, poor friend, the scarlet evening glow
Blends with the darkness,
The herds have returned home,
Dust has settled on the deserted fields.

Let the wonderful angel of sleep fly down
And carry you to the other world!
He was my friend and brother for a long time.
Sleep, my baby, I am not jealous of his love.

He treats the wounds of the heart with oblivion,
He takes melancholy away from the mind,
He saves the sad soul
From oppression till morning

You are tired of hostile looks and talk
After the whole day of struggle;
Sleep, my baby, he will hide you
Beneath a blessed coverlet.
Sleep, my baby! Sleep, my baby!

I opened the window Op.63 No.2 (1887)

I opened the window, –
it had become unbearably stuffy, –
And sank to my knees in front of it,
And upon my face the spring night wafted
The fragrant breath of lilac.

Somewhere in the distance –
a nightingale broke into song,
I listened with deep sadness...
And thought with yearning of my homeland,
I recalled my far-off native land, –

Where a nightingale of home sings a native song
And, unaware of earthly sorrow,
Sings merrily throughout the night
Above sweet-scented lilac boughs...

The fires in the room were already out Op.63 No.5

The fires in the room were already out.
Roses smelled sweet.
We sat down on a bench

Razvesistoy beryozy.

My byli molody s toboy!
Tak schastlivy my byli
Nas okruzhavsheyu vesnoy,
Tak goryachy lyubili!

Dvurogiy mesyats navodil
Na nas svoyo siyanye;
Ya nichego ne govoril,
Boyas prervat molchanye;

Bezmolvno sinikh glaz tvoyikh
Ty opuskala vzory:
Krasnorechivey slov inykh
Nemye razgovory.

Chego ne smel poverit ya,
Chto v serdtse ty taila,
Vse eto pesnya solovya
Za nas dogovorila.

14 Serenada Op.63 No.6 (1887)
Words by Grand Duke Konstantin Romanov
O ditya, pod okoshkom tvoyim
Ya tebe propoyu serenadu.
Ubayukana penyem moyim,
Ty naydyosh v snovideyakh otradu;
Pust tvoj son i pokoy
V chas bezmolvny, nochnoy
Nezhnykh zvukov leleyut lobzanya!

Mnogo gorestey, mnogo nevzgod
Tebya v zhizni, ditya, ozhidayot;
Spi zhe sladko, poka net zabot,
Poka serdtse trevogi ne znayet,
Spi vo mrake nochnom
Bezmyatezhnym ty snom,
Spi, ne znaya zemnogo stradanya.

Pust tvoj angel-khranitel svyatoy,
Mily drug, nad tobou letayet
I, leleya leleya son devstvenny tvoj,
Tebe rayskuyu pesn napevayet;
Pust toy pesni svyatoy
Otgolosok zhivoy
Tebe v dushu vselit upovanye.

Spi zhe, milaya, spi, pochivay

In the shade of a branching birch-tree.

We were young!
We were so happy
In spring;
We loved so passionately!

The crescent moon
Shone for us:
I said nothing
Not to interrupt the silence;

Your blue eyes
Looked down:
Silent conversations
Said more than words.

What I did not dare to tell you,
What you hid in your heart,
All that was told for us
By the nightingale's song.

Serenade Op.63 No.6

Oh, my baby! I shall sing a serenade
Under your window.
You will enjoy the dreams
Lulled by my singing;
Let the kiss of the gentle sound
Cherish your rest
In the silent night hours!

Many sorrows and misfortunes
Are in store for you;
So sleep calmly while you are carefree,
While your heart is free of troubles,
Sleep in peace
In the darkness of night,
Sleep free of worldly suffering.

Let your guardian angel
Come on wings,
To protect your innocent sleep,
And to sing you a song of paradise;
Let an echo
Of this holy song
Fill your soul with hope.

Sleep, my dear, sleep

Pod akkordy moyey serenady!
Pust prisnitsya tebe svetly ray,
Preyispolnenny vechnoy otrady;
Pust tvoj son i pokoy
V chas bezmolvny, nochnoy
Nezhnykh zvukov leleyut lobzanya!

15 Zachem? Op.28 No.3 (1875)

Words by Lev Mey
Dedicated to Maria Il'ina
Zachem zhe ty prisnilasya,
Krasavica dalyokaya,
I vspykhнула, chto v polyme,
Podushka odinokaya?

Okh, sgin ty, sgin ty, polunochnica!
Glaza tvoyi lenivye
I pepel kos rassypchaty,
I guby gordelivye
Vse nayavu mne snilosya,
I vse, chto gryoza veshnyaya,
Umchalosya, i na serdtse
Legla potma kromeshnaya!

Zachem zhe ty prisnilasya,
Krasavica dalyokaya,
Kol stynet vmeste s gryozoyu
Polushka odinokaya?
Zachem zhe, zachem zhe ty prisnilasya!

16 Ya vam nenravlyus Op.63 No.3 (1887)

Words by Grand Duke Konstantin Romanov
Ya vam ne nravlyus...Vy lyubili
Lish druzhbu – ne lyubov moyu;
Moi nadezhdy vy sgubili,
I vse – taki ya vas lyublyu!

Kogda zhe posle kak-nibud,
Poymete vy moi muchenya
I nezametno v vashu grud
Proniknet kaplya sozhalenya,

To budet pozdno... Rastsvetayut
Lish raz vesenniye tsvety;
Uzh serdtsa vnov ne prilaskayut
Perestradaivshiye mechtly.

To the music of my serenade!
Dream about bright paradise
Full of eternal delights;
Let the kiss of the gentle sound
Cherish your rest
In the silent night hours!

Why did I dream of you? Op.28 No.3

Why did I dream of you,
Unattainable beauty,
Why did my lonely pillow
Grow hot?

Oh, bird of night, out of my sight!
Your languorous eyes,
And your ash-grey plaits,
And your haughty lips
Appeared to me as a day-dream.
But all disappeared as a spring reverie,
And my heart
Plunged into pitch darkness!

Why did I dream of you,
Unattainable beauty,
If my lonely pillow
Grows cool again with the dream?
Why, why did I dream of you?

I do not please you Op.63 No.3 (1887)

I do not please you... you enjoyed
My friendship, not my love:
You have ruined my hopes
But I still love you!

When some time later
You understand my torments
And some regret lightly enters
Your heart

It will be too late...
The flowers of spring bloom only once:
Dreams that have passed
Bring no comfort to the heart.

17 Ne ver, moy drug Op.6 No.1 (1869)

Words by Alexey Tolstoy

Dedicated to Alexandra Menshikova

Ne ver, moy drug, ne ver, kogda v poryve gorya
Ya govoryu, chto razlyubil tebya.
V otliva chas ne ver, ne ver izmene morya,
Ono k zemle vorotitsya, lyubya.
Uzh ya toskuyu, prezhnay strasti polny,
voyu svobodu vnov tebe otdam.

I uzhe begut obratno s shumom volny
Izdaleka k lyubimym beregam.
Ne ver, moy drug, ne ver, ne ver,
Kogda v poryve gorya
Ya govoryu, chto razlyubil tebya.
V otliva chas ne ver, ne ver izmene morya,
Ono k zemle vorotitsya, lyubya.

18 Strashnaya Minuta Op.28, No.6 (1875)

Words by N. N (Pyotr Tchaikovsky)

Dedicated to Evlaliya Kadmina

Ty vnimayesh, vniz skloniv golovku,
Ochi opustiv i tikho vzdыхaya!
Ty ne znayesh, kak mgnoveniya eti
Strashny dlya menya i polny znacheniya,
Kak menya smushchayet eto molchaniye.
Ya prigovor tvoy zhdu, ya zhdu resheniya
Il nozh ty mne v serdtse vonzish,
Il ray mne otkroyesh.
Akh, ne terzay menya, skazhi lish slovo!

Otchego zhe robkoje priznaniye
V serdtse tak tebe zapalo gluboko?
Ty vzdыхayesh, ty drozhish i plachesh;
Il slova lyubvi v ustakh tvoyikh nemeyut,
Ili ty menya zhaleyesh, ne lyubish?
Ya prigovor tvoy zhdu, ya zhdu resheniya:
Il nozh ty mne v serdtse vonzish,
Il ray mne otkroyesh!
Akh, vnemni zhe molbe moyey,
Otvachay, otvachay skorey!
Ya prigovor tvoy zhdu, ya zhdu resheniya!

19 Usni Op.57 No.4 (1884)

Words by Dmitry Merezhkovsky

Dedicated to Vera Butakova

Usnut by mne navek v trave, kak v kolybeli,
Kak ya rebyonkom spal v te solnechnye dni,
Kogda v luchakh poludennykh zveneli

Do not believe me, my friend Op.6 No.1

Do not believe me, my friend,
Do not believe me when on an impulse of grief
I say that I ceased to love you;
Do not believe the sea's infidelity
When the tide is on the ebb.
The sea will return to the land still loving.

I am already sad and full of the old passion,
I want to give you my freedom back,
Do not believe me when on an impulse of grief
I say that I ceased to love you;
Do not believe the sea's infidelity
when the tide is on the ebb.
The sea will return to the land still loving.

The fearful minute Op.28 No.6

You are listening with bowed head,
Your eyes are cast down, you utter a gentle sigh!
You do not know that this moment
Is so fearful and so significant for me,
You do not know how your silence troubles me
I await your sentence, your decision
Either you thrust a knife into my heart,
Or you bring me into paradise.
Ah, do not torture me, give me a word!

Why did my timid declaration
Affect you so much?
You sigh, you tremble and weep;
Either the words of love freeze in your mouth,
Or you only feel sorry for me, not love?
I await your sentence, your decision
Either you thrust a knife into my heart,
Or you bring me into paradise.
Ah, hear my entreaty,
Answer me!
I await your sentence, your decision!

Sleep Op.57 No. 4

I would like to sleep on the grass for ever
As I slept in a cradle in my childhood
When in the midday sun

Veselykh zhavoronkov trel
I peli mne oni: "Usni, usni, usni!"

I krylya pestyrykh mukh s prichudlivoy okraskey
Na venchikakh tsvetov drozhali, kak ogni,
I shum derev kazalsya chudnoy skazkey;
Moy son leleya, s tikhoj laskoy
Bayukali oni: "Usni, usni, usni!"

I ubegaya v dal, kak volny zolotye,
Davali mne priyut v zadumchivoy teni,
Pod kushchey verb, polya moi, polya rodnye;
Skloniv kolosya nalivnye,
Sheptali mne oni: "Usni, usni, usni!"

20 Ya snachala tebya Ne lyubila

Op.63 No.1 (1887)

Words by Grand Duke Konstantin Romanov

Ya snachala tebya ne lyubila,
Ty trevozhl menya i pugal:
Menya novaya uchast strashila,
I nevedomy zhrebny smushchal.

Tvoyego ya boyalas priznaniya...
No nastal neminuyemy chas,
I, ne pomnya sebya, bez soznaniya,
Ya naveki tebe otdalas.

I rassayalis vnov opaseniya,
Prezhney robosti net i sleda:
Pod luchami zari vo mgnovenye
Tak tumannaya tayot gryada.

Slovno solnce, lyubov prosiyala,
I namerknushchiy den zablistal.
Zhiznyu novoyu serdtse vzygralo,
I svyashchenny ogon zaplyal.

22 Na nivы zhyol'tye Op.57 No.2

Words by Alexey Tolstoy

Dedicated to Bogomir Korsov

Na nivы zhyol'tye nishkudit tishina,
V ostyvshem vozdukhe ot merknushchikh
seleniy,
Drozha, nesetsya zvon... Dusha moya polna
Razlukoyu s tobey, i gorkikh sozhaleniy.

I kazhdy moy uprek ya vspominayu vnov,
I kazhdoye tverzhu privetlivoye slovo,

The lark's joyful song sounded
And told me: 'sleep, sleep!'

Quaint multi-coloured fly's wings
Trembled like tiny lights on the flowers,
The rustle of the trees seemed to me a fairy tale,
The trees nursed me tenderly
And sang me a lullaby: 'sleep, sleep!'

My native fields
Stretched afar like golden waves,
Willows gave me shadow
Ripe ears of corn
Whispered to me: 'sleep, sleep!'

I did not love you at first Op.63, No.1 (1887)

At first I did not love you,
You disturbed me, frightened me:
A new fate scared me,
And an unknown destiny confused me.

I feared your declaration...
But the inevitable moment came,
And, not understanding myself, all unaware,
I went away from you forever.

And once again my fears dispersed,
With not a trace of my former timidity:
Like a misty bank melting in a twinkling
Beneath the rays of dawn.

Like the sun, love shone forth,
And the day unfading sparkled.
My heart began to seethe with new life,
And a sacred fire blazed forth.

On the golden cornfields Op.57 No.2

Silence comes to golden fields,
A peal of bells comes from dark villages
Through the cold air. My soul is full
Of our parting and bitter regrets.

I remember my every reproach once more
I repeat every friendly word

Chto mog by ya skazat tebe, moya lyubov,
No chto na dne dush ya skhoronil surovo.
Dusha moya polna razlukoyu s tobroy!
Dusha moya polna
Razlukoyu s tobroy i gorkikh sozhaleniy!

CD35

1 Kak naladili durak Op.25 No.6

Lev Aleksandrovich Mey (1822–1862)

Kak naladili: “Durak, bros’ hodit’ v tsaryov
kabak!”

Tak i ladyat vsyo odno – “Pey ti vodu, ne vino;
Von hosh’ rechke poklonis’, hosh’ u bistroy
pouchis.”

Uzh ya k rechen’ke poydu, s rechkoy rechi povedu:

“Govoryat mne: ti umna, poklonyus’ tebe do
dna,
Nauchi ti, kak mne bit’, p’yanstvom lyuda ne
sramit’?
Kak v tebya, moyu reku utopit’ zmeyu-tosku;
A nauchish’ – vek togda ispolat’ tebe, voda,
Chto otbila duraka ot tsaryova kabaka!”

2 Ne dolgo nam gulyat’ (1875)

Nikolai Porfiryevich Grekov (1810–1866)

Ne dolgo nam gulyat’ ruka s rukoyu
V sadu gustom, po lipovim alleyam,
Pri bleske zvezd, vecherneyu poroy,
I zhizn’, I zhizn’ raznezhennoy dushoy
Blagodarit’ za vsyo, chto mi imeem.

Ne dolgo nam pod obayan’em snov,
Kak molodost’, igrivikh i letuchikh,
Sledya lunu v izgibakh oblakov,
Mechtat’ o tom, chemu net slov,
No chto zhivyot v dushakh, u nas kipuchikh.

O, miliy drug! Tsvesti ne dolgo nam
Blazhenstvom chuvstv! Za to mi dolgo budem
Za nikh sud’be stradan’em dan’ nesti
I slova, slova strashnogo: prosti!
Mi nikogda s tobroy, ne pozabudem.

3 Vcherashnyaya noch’ Op.60 No.1

Aleksey Stepanovich Khomyakov (1804–1860)

Vcherashnyaya noch’ bila tak svetla,
Vcherashnyaya noch’ vse zvyozdi zazhgla,

Which I could say to you, my love,
But which I buried deep in my soul
My soul is full of our parting!
My soul is full
Of our parting and bitter regrets!

They said: You fool, do not go Op.25 No.6

They keep saying: ‘Fool, stop going to the tsar’s
drinking house!’

They keep saying the same thing: ‘Drink water, not
wine;

If you want, go and bow to the river, and learn
from it.’

I will go to the river, I will say:

‘They tell me you are wise, I bow deeply to you.
Will you teach me how to stop embarrassing myself
with drink?
Maybe in you I can drown my sorrows?
If you teach me, river, then forever you shall know,
That you taught a fool how to stop going to the
tsar’s drinking house!’

No time to take a walk (1875)

We don’t have long to walk hand in hand
In overgrown garden, along linden alleys,
Under the sparkling stars at night,
And, with all our hearts, thank life
For all it has given us.

We don’t have long to live under the spell of
dreams, Which are playful and flighty like youth
And, tracing the moon in the clouds,
Dream about something we cannot express in
words, But that lives in our burning souls.

O, dear friend! We don’t have long to flourish
In blissful feelings! But our Fate will ask for
A lengthy payment. We will suffer,
And we will never forget those terrible words:
‘Forgive me!’

Last night Op.60 No.1

Last night was so light,
Last night was so full of stars

Chto, glyadya na kholmī i dremlyushchiy les,
Na vodi, blestyashchie byloskom nebes,
Ya dumal: o, zhit’ v etom mire chudes
Prekrasno!

Prekrasni i volni, i dal’ stepey,
Prekrasna v odezhdē zelyonikh vetvey
Dubrava;
Prekrasna lyubov’ s vechno svezhim venkom,
I družbī zvezda s neizmennim luchom,
I pesni vostorg s ozaryonnim chelom,
I slava!

Vzglyanul ya na nebo, tam tverd’ yasna:
Visoko, visoko vskhodit ona
Nad bezdnoy;
Tam zvyozdi zhivie katyatsya v ogne...
I detskoe chuvstvo prosnulos’ vo mne,
I dumal ya: luchshe nam v toy vishine
Nadzvezdnoy!

4 Ya tebe nichego ne skazhu Op.60 No.2

Afanasy Afanas’yevich Fet (1820–1892)

Ya tebe nichego ne skazhu,
Ya tebya ne vstrevozhū nichut’
I o tom, chto ya molcha tverzhu,
Ne reshush’ ni za chto nameknut’.

Tseliy den’ spyat nochnie tsveti,
No lish’ solntse za roshchu zaidet,
Raskrivayutsya tikho listi,
I ya slishu, kak serdtse tsvetyot.

I v bol’nuyu, ustaluyu grud’
Veet vlagoy nochnoy...Ya drozhu...
Ya tebya ne vstrevozhū nichut’,
Ya tebe nichego ne skazhu!

5 Prosti Op.60 No.8

Nikolai Alekseyevich Nekrasov (1821–1877)

Prosti! Ne pomni dney paden’ya,
Toski, unin’ya, ozloblen’ya,
Ne pomni bur’, ne pomni slyoz,
Ne pomni revnosti ugroz!

No dni, kogda lyubvi svetilo
Nad nami laskovo vskhodilo,
I bodro mi svershali put’ –
Blagoslavi i ne zabud’!

That, looking at the hills and the sleeping forest,
At the water, glistening with the light of the sky,
I thought: o, to live in this magical world
Is wonderful!

The waves and the far steppes are beautiful,
And the woods clothed in green are beautiful;
Love is beautiful, with its perpetually fresh wreath,
And the star of friendship, with its permanent ray
of light,
And the happiness of a song that lights up a face,
And glory – they are all beautiful!

I looked up at the sky:
It is very high, it dwells
Above a precipice;
There, the stars are alive with light...
A childlike feeling awoke in me,
And I thought: it would be better to live in that
starry sky!

I don’t tell you anything Op.60 No.2

I will say nothing,
I will not trouble you in any way,
And I will never tell you
What I am telling myself all the time.

The night’s flowers sleep all day,
But, as soon as the sun sets beyond the wood,
The leaves quietly open,
And I hear the beating of my heart.

And my ill, tired soul
Feels the night’s moisture... I shiver...
I will not trouble you in any way,
I will say nothing!

Excuse me Op.60 No.8

Forgive! Forget the fall of days,
Torment, sadness, anger,
Forget the storms, forget the tears,
Forget the jealous threats!

But the days when the light of love
Shone above us,
And when we were happy –
Bless them and do not forget!

6 Za oknom v teni mel'kaet Op.60 No.10

Yakov Petrovich Polonsky (1819–1898)

Za oknom v teni mel'kaet
Rusaya golovka.
Ti ne spish', moyo muchen'e!
Ti ne spish', plutovka!

Vikhodi zh ko mne na vstrechu!
S zhazhdoy potseluya,
K serdtsu serdtse molodoe
Plamenno prizhmu ya.

Ti ne boysya, esli zvyozdi
Sliskom yarko svetyat:
Ya plashchom tebya odenu
Tak, chto ne zametyat.

Esli storozh nas okliknet –
Nazovis' soldatom;
Esli sprosyat, s kem bila ti?
Otvechay, chto s bratom.

Pod nadzorom bogomolki
Ved' tyur'ma naskuchit,
A nevolya ponevole
Khitrosti nauchit.

7 Noch' Op.60 No.9

Yakov Petrovich Polonsky

Otchego ya lyublyu tebya, svetlaya noch'?
Tak lyublyu, chto, stradaya, lyubuyus' toboy!
I za chto ya lyublyu tebya, tikhaya noch'?
Ti ne mne, ti drugim posilaesh' pokoy!

Chto mne zvyozdi, luna, nebosklon, oblaka,
Etot svet, chto, skol'zha na holodniy granit,
Prevrashchaet v almaz rosiniki tsvetka,
I kak put' zolotoy cherez more bezhit!

Noch', za chto mne lyubit' tvoy serebryanni
svet?
Usladit li on gorech' skrivaemikh slyoz?
Dast li zhadnomu serdtsu zhelanni otvet?
Pazreshit li somneniy tyazhyolyi vopros?

Sam ne znayu, za chto ya lyublyu tebya, noch',
Tak lyublyu, chto, stradaya, lyubuyus' toboy!

In the shadow outside the window Op.60 No.10

In the shady window I see
You moving around.
You are not sleeping, my tormentor!
You are not sleeping, little mischief!

Come and greet me!
With the thirst of a kiss,
Our young hearts will embrace
In a passionate fire.

Do not be afraid if the stars
Are too bright:
I will cover you with my coat
So that no one will see you.

If the watchman calls us –
Tell him that you are a soldier;
If someone asks who you went out with,
Answer: with your brother.

Under the eye of a nun
You will feel trapped,
And the lack of freedom
Will teach you to improvise.

Night Op.60 No.9

Why do I love you, bright night?
I adore you even when I suffer!
Why do I love you, quiet night?
You send respite to others, and not to me!

What are to me the stars, the moon, the sky, the
clouds,
And this light that, shining onto the cold granite,
Turns the dew drops into diamonds,
And runs across the sea in a golden path!

Night, why should I like your silver light?
Will it sweeten the sorrow of hidden tears?
Will it give desired answer to the eager heart?
Will it resolve the heavy question of doubt?

I do not know why I love you, o night,
I adore you even when I suffer!

Sam ne znayu, za chto ya lyublyu tebya,
noch'...
Ot togo, mozhet bit', chto dalyok moy pokoy.

8 Solovey Op. 60 No.4

Aleksandr Sergeyevich Pushkin (1799–1837)

after Vuk Stefanovic Karadzic (1787–1864)

Solovey moy, soloveyko! Ptitsa malaya, lesnaya!
U tebya l', u maloy ptitsi nezamennie tri pesni,
U menyia li, u molodtsa, tri velikie zaboti!
Kak uzh pervaya zabota, rano molodtsa zhenili;
A vtoraya to zabota, voron kon' moy
pritomilsya;
Kak uzh tret'ya to zabota, – Krasnu devitsu
So mnoy razluchili zlie lyudi.
Vikopayte mne mogilu vo pole, pole shirokom,
V golovakh mne posadite ali tsvetiki-tsvetochki,
A v nogakh mne provedite chistu vodu
klyuchevuyu.
Proidut mimo krasni devki, tak spleut sebe
tsvetochki:
Proidut mimo stari lyudi, tak vodi sebe
zacherpnut.

9 Prostie slova Op.60 No.5

Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky

Ti zvezda na polnochnom nebe; ti vesenniy
tsvetok poley
Ti rubin il' almaz blestyashchiy, ti luch' solntsa
vo t'me svetyashchiy,
Charovnitza i tsaritsa krasoti!
Tak po strunam bryatsaya lirnim, t'mi pevtsov o
tebe poyut.
Slavi nektar toboy izvedan, mne zh dar pesen ot
Boga ne dan,
Ya prostie skazhu slova.
Ti moy drug, ti moya opora, ti mne zhizn', ti
mne vsyo i vsyo...
Ti mne vozdukh i khleb nasushchniy, ti dvoynik
moy edinosushchniy,
Ti otrada i uslada dney moikh!
Pust' po strunam bryatsaya lirnim, t'mi pevtsov
o tebe poyut...
Slavi nektar toboy izvedan, mne zh dar pesen ot
Boda ne dan,
Kak sumel, kak sumel, tak i skazal!

I do not know why I love you, o night...
Maybe because there is no peace for me.

Nightingale Op.60 No.4

Nightingale my, nightingale! Little woodland bird!
You, little bird have three songs, and
I have three great sorrows!
The first is that I was married too early;
The second is that my black stallion got tired;
And the third is that I was separated from my love
By evil people.
Prepare a grave for me in a wide field,
At the head plant red flowers,
At the base run a stream of pure water.
When pretty girls will pass, let them weave wreaths
from the flowers,
When old people will pass, let them have a
refreshing drink.

Simple Words Op.60 No.5

You are the midnight star; you are the spring field
flower,
You are the sparkling ruby or a diamond, you are
the ray of sunlight in the darkness,
Enchantress and the queen of beauty!
Thus, strumming on silver lyres' strings, crowds of
singers extol you.
You tasted the nectar of fame, but I have no gift for
a song,
And just say it in simple words.
You are my friend, my strength, you are my life, my
everything...
You are my air and bread, my double,
You are the joy and sweetness of my days!
Let the crowds of singers extol you strumming on
silver lyres' strings...
You tasted the nectar of fame, but I have no gift for
a song.
I said this as I could, said this as I could!

10 Khotel bī v edinoe slovo (1875)

*Lev Aleksandrovich Mey
after Heinrich Heine (1797–1856)*

Khotel bī v edinoe slovo
Ya slit' moyu grust' i pechal'
I brosit' to slovo na veter,
Chto b veter unyos ego vdal'.

I pust' bī to slovo pechal
Po vetru k tebe doneslos',
I pust' vseгда i povsyudu
Ono tebe v serdtse lilos'!

I esli b ustaliе ochi
Somknulis' pod gryozoy nochnoy,
O pust' bī to slovo pechali
Zvuchalo vo sne nad toboy!
Khotel bī v edinoe slovo...

11 Kanareyka Op.25 No.4

Lev Aleksandrovich Mey
Govorit sultansha kanareyke:
"Ptichka! Luchshe v tereme visokom shchebetat'
i pesni pet' Zuleyka,
Chem porkhat' na zapade dalyokom?
Sloy zhe, sloj zhe mne pro zamore, pevichka,
Sloy zhe, sloj zhe mne pro zapad, neposedka!
Est' li tam takoe nebo, ptichka,
Est' li tam takoy garem i kletka?
U kogo tam stol'ko roz bivalo?
U kogo iz shakhov est' Zuleyka
I podnyat' li tak ey pokrivalo?"

Ey v otvet shchebechet kanareyka:
"Ne prosi s menya zamorskikh pesen,
Ne budi toski moey bez nuzhdi:
Tvoj garem po nashim pesnyam tesen,
I slova iz odaliskam chuzhdi...
Ti v lenivoy droyme rastsvetala,
Kak i vsya krugom tebya priroda,
I ne znaesh' dazhe, ne slikhala,
Chto u pesni est' sestra svoboda."

For one simple word (1875)

In one simple word I would like to combine
My sorrow and sadness,
And let that word
Be taken away by the wind.

And let the wind
Bring it to you,
And let it always
Dwell in your heart!

And if your tired eyes
Close with a night's dream,
That sorrowful word
Would sound above you in your sleep!
In one simple word...

Canary Op.25 No.4

A Sultana said to a canary:
'Little bird! Is it better to sing your songs to
Zuleika in the lovely palace,
Than fly in the far West?
Sing to me about what lies beyond the sea,
Sing to me about the West!
Is there the same sky?
Are there the same harem and cage?
Who has many roses there?
Which shah has Zuleika,
And can she lift her veil just like me?'

The canary replied:
'Do not ask of me to sing,
Do not wake my sorrow without a need:
Your harem is too small for my songs,
And the songs' words are foreign to your
odalisques...
You blossomed in languorous daze,
Just as the nature all around you,
And you do not know, you have not heard,
That freedom is a sister to a song.'

12 Glazki vesni golubie (1875)

*Mikhail Larionovich Mikhailov (1829–1865)
after Heinrich Heine*

Glazki vesni golubie
Krotko glyadyat iz travī.
Lyubi vi miloy, fialki,
S polem rasstanetes' vi.

Rvu ya tsveti i mechtayu...
V roshche poyut solov'i...
Bozhe moy, kto rasskazal im i dum i groyzī
moi?
I dum i groyzī moi

Gromko oni raspevayut
Vsyο, chto na serdtse tayu...
Tselaya roshcha uznala nezhnuyu taynu moyu.
Tselaya roshcha uznala nezhnuyu taynu moyu,
nezhnuyu tainu moyu.

13 Tak chto zhe Op.16 No.5

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Tvoj obraz svetliy, angel'sky i denno i noshchno
so mnoy;
I slyozī, i groyzī, i zhutkie strashnie snī,
Ti vsyo napolnyaesh' soboy!
Ti vsyo napolnyaesh' soboy!
Tak chto zhe? Chto zhe? Chto zhe?
Khot' much', da lyubi!

Ya taini strasti pagubnoy gluboko horonyu, a ti
korish', stidom yazvish'!
Ti tol'ko terzaesh' menya
Bezzhalostnoy, gruboy nasmeshkoy,
Bezzhalostnoy, gruboy nasmeshkoy!
Tak chto zhe? Chto zhe? Chto zhe?
Terzay, da lyubi!

Tebe do groba veren ya,
No ti kazhdiy den', kazhdiy chas izmenoyu yad
v serdtse l'yosh',
Ti zhizn' otravlyaes' moyu!
Net, ya ne snesu etoy muki!
Net zhalosti v serdtse tvoyom!
Tak chto zhe? Chto zhe? Chto zhe?
Ubey! No lyubi!

The eyes of spring are blue (1875)

The blue eyes of spring
Meekly look from the grass.
My love likes you, violets,
You will have to part with the field.

I pick the flowers and dream...
In the forest nightingales sing...
My God, who told them about my thoughts and
dreams?
My thoughts and dreams?

They sing loudly
About everything that is hidden in my heart...
The whole forest now knows my secret.
The whole forest now knows my secret, my gentle
secret.

So what can I say? Op.16 No.5

Your angelic image is with me day and night;
My tears, dreams, and nightmares
Are full of you!
Are full of you!
So what? What? What?
Torment me, but love me!

I keep the secret of deadly passion deep inside; and
you reproach me and embarrass me!
You torment me
With heartless, brutal mockery!
With heartless, brutal mockery!
So what? What? What?
Torment me, but love me!

I will be faithful to you till death,
But every day, every hour you sting my heart with
your unfaithfulness,
And poison my life!
No, I will not survive this torment!
You have no pity in your heart!
So what? What? What?
Kill! But love me!

14 O, esli b znali vi Op.60 No.3

Aleksey Nikolayevich Pleshcheyev (1825–1893)

O, esli b znali vi, kak mnogo sloyz nezrimikh
Tot l'oyt, kto odinok, bez druga i sem'i,
Vi, mozhet bit', poroy, proshli bi mimo
Zhilishcha, gde vlachatsya dni moi

O, elsi b znali vi, chto v serdtse, polnom tainoy
Pechali, chistiy vzor sposoben zarodit',
V moyo okno, poroy, kak bi sluchayno
Vi, proodya, vzglyanuli mozhet bit'.

O, elsi b znali vi, kak serdsu schast'ya mnogo
Darit drugogo serdtsa blizost', otdokhnut'
U moego vi seli bi poroga,
Kak dobraya sestra, kogda-nibud'.

O, esli b znali vi, chto ya lyublyu vas, znali.
Kak gluboko lyublyu, kakim svyatim ognym
Vi s davnikh por mne dushu sogrevali,
Vi, mozhet bit', mozhet bit', ko mne voshli bi v
dom!

15 O, spoy zhe tu pesnyu, rodnaya Op.16 No.4

*Aleksey Nikolayevich Pleshcheyev
after Felicia Hemans (1793–1835)*

O, spoy zhe tu pesnyu, rodnaya,
Chto pela ti v prezhnio dni,
V te dni, kak rebyonkom bila ya.
Ti pesenku vdrug zapevala,
I ya na kolenyakh tvoikh
Pod zvuki toy pesni dremala.

Ti pela, tomima toskoyu;
Iz temnikh, zadumchivikh glaz
Katilas' sleza za slezoyu...
Protyazhno i grustno ti pela...
Lyubila napev ya prostoy,
Khot' slov ya ponyat' ne umela...

O, spoy zhe tu pesnyu, rodnaya,
Kak pela eyo v starinu;
Davno eyo smysl ponyla ya!
I pust' pod znakomie zvuki,
Ubitaya gorem, zasnu
Ya snom, chto vrachuet vse muki.

Oh, if only you knew Op.60 No.3

Oh, if you knew how many unseen tears
Were shed by this lonely person, without a friend or
family,
Maybe you would pass by
This abode, where my days are lingering.

Oh, if you knew what your glance is capable of
arousing
In my heart, full of secret sorrow,
At my window sometimes, as if by chance
You maybe would look, while walking past.

Oh, if you knew how much happiness
Gives the closeness of one heart to another,
You would stop to rest on my doorstep
Sometimes, as a kind sister.

Oh, if you knew that I love you, if you knew
How deeply I love, with what sacred fire
You had warmed my soul for a long time,
Maybe, you would enter my home!

Oh, sing that song Op.16 No.4

O, sing that song, my dear,
The one you used to sing
When I was a child.
Suddenly, you would start singing,
And I would sit on your lap
And doze off to the sound of your voice.

You sung when you were sad;
From your dark, thoughtful eyes
A tear rolled after tear...
Slowly and sadly you sung...
I loved the simple tune,
Although I did not understand the words...

O, sing that song, my dear,
As you sang it in the past;
Long time ago I understood the meaning!
To the familiar sounds,
Overcome by grief,
I want to be overcome with the sleep that heals all
sorrows.

16 Primiren'e Op.25 No.1

Nikolay Fyodorovich Shcherbina (1821–1869)

O, zasni, moyo serdtse gluboko! Ne budi: ne
probudish', chto bilo,
Ne zovi, chto umchalos' daleko, ne lyubi, chto ti
prezhde lyubilo...
Pust' nadezhday i lzhevoy mechttoy ne smutitsya
tvoy son i pokoy.

Dlya tebya ne vozvratno biloe, na gryadushchee
net upovan'ya...
Ti ne znalo v blazhenstve pokoya, uspokoyasya
zh na lozhe stradan'ya
I staraysya ne pomnit' zimoy, kak srivalo ti rozi
vesnoy!

O, zasni, moyo serdtse gluboko!...

17 Blagoslavlyayu vas lesa Op.47 No.5

Aleksei Konstantinovich Tolstoy (1817–1875)

Blagoslavlyayu vas, lesa,
Dolini, niv, gori, vodi
Blagoslavlyayu ya svobodu
I golubie nebesa!

I posokh moy blagoslovlyayu,
I etu bednyuyu sumu,
I step' ot krayu i do krayu,
I solntsa svet, i nochi t'mu,
I odinokuyu tropinku,
Po koey, nishchiy, ya idu,
I v pole kazhduyu bilinku,
I v nebe kazhduyu zvezdu!

O, esli b mog vsyu zhizh' smeshat' ya,
Vsyu dushu vmeste s vami slit',
O, esli b mog v moi ob'yat'ya
Ya vas, vragi, druž'ya i brat'ya,
I vsyu prirodu, i vsyu prirodu
V moi ob'yat'ya zaklyuchit'!

18 Večer Op.27 No.4

*Lev Aleksandrovich Mey after
Taras Hryhorovyc Shevchenko (1814–1861)*

Vishnyoviy sadik voze khati,
Zhuki nad vishnyami gudyat,
Plug s niv pakhari tashchat,

Econciliation Op.25 No.1

O, sleep, my heart, with the deep sleep! Do not
wake: you cannot wake up the past,
Do not try to return what had gone, do not love
what you used to love...
Do not let hope and false dreams to disturb your
peaceful sleep.

The past will not return, and there is no hope for
the future...
You never knew peaceful bliss, but you will rest on
the bed of sorrow.
Try not to think in the winter how you picked roses
in the spring!

O, sleep, my heart, with the deep sleep!...

I bless you, woods Op.47 No.5

I bless you, woods,
Valleys, fields, mountains, and waters.
I bless the freedom
And blue skies!

And I bless my wanderer's staff,
And this threadbare rucksack,
And the vast steppe,
And the light of the sun, and the darkness of the
night,
And a solitary path,
Along which I, poor, travel,
And in the field I bless every blade of grass,
And every star in the sky!

O, if I could embrace all of life,
And merge my soul with yours,
O, if I could embrace
You, my foes, friends, and brothers,
And the whole of nature
Enclose with my embrace!

Evening Op.27 No.4

There is a cherry orchard near a dwelling,
Where the beetles buzz around the trees,
The ploughmen bring ploughs from the field,

I, raspevayuchi, devshati
Domoy na vecheryu speshat.

Sem'ya ikh zhdyot, i vsyo gotovo.
Zvezda vechernyaya vstayot,
I dochka uzhin podayot.
A mat' skazala bi ey slovo,
Da soloveyko ne dayot.

Mat' ulozhila vozle khati
Malyutok – detochek svoikh;
Sama zasnula vozle nikh...
Zatikhlo vsyo... odni devchaty,
Da soloveyko ne zatikh.

19 To bilo ranneyu vesnoy Op.38 No.2

Aleksei Konstantinovich Tolstoy

To bilo ranneyu vesnoy,
Trava edva vskhodila,
Ruch'i tekli, ne paril znoy,
I zelen' roshch skvozila.

Truba pastush'ya poutru
Eshche ne pela zvonko,
I v zavitkakh eshche v boru
Bil paporotnik tonkiy.

To bilo ranneyu vesnoy,
V teni beryoz to bilo,
Kogda s ulibkoy predo mnoy
Ti ochi opustila...

To na lyubov' moyu v otvet
Ti opustila vezhdī.
O, zhizn'! O, les! O, solntsa svet!
O, yunost'! O, nadezhdi!

I plakal ya pered toboy,
Na lik tvoy glyadya miliy –
To bilo ranneyu vesnoy,
V teni beryoz to bilo!

To bilo utro nashikh let!
O, schast'e! O, slyozhi! O, les!
O, zhizn'! O, solntsa svet!
O, svezhiy dukh beryozhi!

And the girls sing
While hurrying home.

The family awaits them, all is ready.
The night star is rising,
And the daughter serves supper.
The mother would say something to her,
But the nightingale would not stop singing.

The mother puts her children
To sleep;
And lies down next to them...
All is quiet... only the girls,
And the nightingale, are awake.

It was in early spring Op.38 No.2

It was in early spring,
The grass was barely growing,
The brooks began to run, the heat was not yet
heavy,
And the woods were newly green.

A shepherd's horn in mornings
Did not yet brightly sound,
And ferns in the woods
Were still in youthful curls.

It was in early spring,
In the shade of birch trees,
When with a smile before me
You lowered your eyes...

That was your response
To my love.
O, life! O, forest! O, sunlight!
O, youth! O, hopes!

I cried before you,
Looking at your dear face –
It was in early spring,
In the shade of birch trees!

It was the morning of our years!
O, happiness! O, tears! O, forest!
O, life! O, sunlight!
O, fresh scent of birch trees!

20 Sred' shumnogo bala Op.38 No.3

Aleksei Konstantinovich Tolstoy

Sred' shumnogo bala, sluchayno,
V trevoge mirskoy sueti,
Tebya ya uvidel, no tayna
Tvoi pokrivala cherti.

Lish' ochi pechal'no glyadeli,
A golos tak divno zvuchal,
Kak zvon otdalyonnoy svireli,
Kak morya igrayushchiy val.

Mne stan tvoy ponravilsya tonkiy
I ves' tvoy zadumchiviy vid,
A smekh tvoy, i grustniy, i zvonkiy,
S tekh por v moyom serdtse zvuchit.

V chasi odinokie nochi
Lyublyu ya, ustaliy, prilech':
Ya vizhu pechal'nie ochi,
Ya slishu vesyoluyu rech',

I grustno ya, grustno tak zasipayu,
I v gryozakh nevedomikh splyu...
Lyublyu li tebya, ya ne znayu –
No kazhetsya mne, chto lyublyu!

21 Podvig Op.60 No.11

Aleksey Stepanovich Khomyakov (1804–1860)

Podvig est' i v srazhen'i,
Podvig est' i v bor'be,
Visshiy podvig v terpen'i,
Lyubvi i mol'be.

Esli serdtse zaniło
Pered zloboy lyudskoy,
Il' nasil'e skhvatilo
Tebya tsep'yu stal'noy,
Esli skorbi zemnie
Zhalom v dushu vpilis',
S veroy bodroy i smeloy
Ti za podvig boris'.

Est' u podviga kril'ya,
I vzletish' ti na nikh,
Bez truda, bez usil'ya,
Vishe mrakov zemnykh,
Vishe krishi temnitsi,
Vishe zlobi slepoy,
Vishe vopley i krikov

Amid the din of the ball Op.38 No.3

At a noisy ball, by chance,
Among the mundane bustle
I saw you, but
Your face was covered.

And only the eyes looked sadly,
And your voice was divine,
As a sound of a distant pipe,
As playful waves of the sea.

I liked your thin stature
And your pensive look,
And I can still hear
Your laughter, both sad and loud.

During the lonely night hours
When I lie down to rest,
I see the sad eyes,
I hear the merry voice,

And sadly, sadly I fall asleep,
And dream...
I do not know if I love you –
But I think that I do!

The exploit Op.60 No.11

There are heroic deeds in battles,
And in resistance,
But the greatest bravery is in patience,
Love, and prayer.
If the heart is affected
By people's envy,
Or if the oppression gripped
You with its iron chain,
If this world's sorrows
Sting your soul,
Fight
With strong belief and bravery.
On the wings of heroism
You will fly,
Without difficulties,
Above all the grim earthly things,
Higher than the roof of a prison,
Higher than blind envy,
Higher than cries

Gordoy cherni lyudskoy!
Podvig est' i v srazhen'ii,
Podvig est' i v bor'be,
Visshiy podvig v terpen'ii,
Lyubvi i mol'be.

22 Pesn' Min'onī Op.25 No.3

*Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev (1803–1873) after
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832)*

Ti znaesh' kray, gde mirt i lavr rastyot,
Glubok i chist lazurniy neba svod,
Tsvetyot limon i apel'sin zlatoy,
Kak zhar, gorit pod zelen'yu gustoy?

Ti zhaesh' kray? Ti znaesh' kray?
tuda, tuda, tuda s toboy
Khotela b ya ukritya, miliy moy!
Ti znaesh' vis' s stezyoy po krutiznam,
Loshak bredyot v tumane po skalam,
V ushchel'yakh gor otrod'e zmey zhivyyot,
Gremi obval i vodopad revyot?
Ti znaesh' put'? Ti znaesh' put'?
Tuda, tuda i nam s toboy prolozhen sled.
Udydom, vlastitel' moy!
Ti znaesh' put'? Tuda, i nam sled prolozhyon:
Udydom, vlastitel' moy!

Ti znaesh' dom na mramornikh stolbakh,
Siyaet zal i kupol ves' v luchakh,
Glyadyat kumiri molcha i grustya:
"Chto, chto s toboy, bednoe ditya?"
Ti znaesh' dom?... Ti znaesh' dom?
Tuda s toboy udydom, roditel' moy!

Ti znaesh' kray, gde mirt i lavr rastyot,...

CD36

1 Net, nikogda ne nazovu Op.28 No.1

(N. P. Grekova)

Net, nikogda vam ne uznat',
Kogo lyublyu ya.
Za vsyu vselennuyu eyo
Ne nazovu ya.

Davayte pet'! I budet vam
Vtorit' moy golos,

Of proud people!
There are heroic deeds in battles,
And in resistance,
But the greatest bravery is in patience,
Love, and prayer.

Mignon's Song Op.25 No.3

Do you know a land where grow bay and mirth,
Where the sky is deep azure and pure,
Where blossoms of lemon and golden orange trees,
Like fire, burn under the dark green leaves?

Do you know of such land?
There, there I want to hide
With you, my love!
Do you know a mountain where, along
Narrow dangerous paths a donkey plods along,
In crevices of its rocks the vipers live,
And noise of waterfall and avalanches heard?
Do you know such path?
There, there we will go,
My master!

Do you know a home with marble columns,
With a dome and roof that shine in sunlight,
Where the idols look sadly in silence:
'What is the matter, poor child?'
Do you know such home?
There we will go, my love!

Do you know a land where grow bay and mirth,...

I will never name her

No, I will never name
The one I love.
For the whole Universe
I will not name her.

Let us sing! My voice
Will tell you

Chto belokuraya ona,
Kak zreliy kolos;

Chto voli ni za chto eyo
Ya ne narushu,
I, kol' zakhochet, otdam
Vsyu zhizn' i dushu.

Ya muki plamennoy lyubvi
Ot ney skrivayu:
Oni nesnosni, i ot nikh
Ya umirayu.

No kto ona... no kto ona...

Net, ya lyublyu eyo, lyublyu s takoyu siloy,
Chto pust' umru, chto pust' umru, no ne skazhu
Ya imya miloy, pust' umru, pust' umru, no ne
skazhu
Ya imya miloy.

Six French Songs Op.65 (A. Gorchakova)

2 1. Serenada (E. Turquéty)

Ti kuda letish', kak pitsa,
yuniy sin mladoy devitsi,
svezhiy, chistiyy veterok?
V dal' speshish', togo ne znaya,
chto, ot strasti zamiraya,
kazhdiy zdes' drozhit listok!

Il' v dolinu khochesh' mchatsya,
v tyomnikh ivakh pokachatsya,
gde spit sladko solovey?
Spit mezh vetvey?
Khochesh' k roze ti spustitsya,
s motil'kom li porezvitsya,
v mayskiy den', pod bleskom luchey?

Net, leti zaryoyu yasnoy
k toy, kogo lyublyu ya strastno,
k lozhu eyo ponesi:

zapakh roz i trav dushistikh,
potseluy moy nezniy, chistiyy,
kak dunoven'e vesni;
zapakh roz i trav dushistikh,
potseluy moy nezniy, chistiyy,
kak dunoven'e vesni.

That her hair is golden,
Like ripe wheat fields,

That I will never do anything
Against her wishes,
And, if she asks,
Will give her my life and soul.

I hide from her
The torments of fiery love:
They are terrible,
And I feel like I am dying.

But who she is... who she is...

No, I love her with such strength,
That even if I die, if I die, I will not utter
The name of the one I love, will not utter
The name of the one who is so dear to me.

Six French Songs Op.65

1. Serenade

Young maiden's son, like a bird or a fresh, pure
wind,
where are you flying?
You hurry without realising,
that every leaf here is trembling with passion!

Do you want to fly to a valley,
swing in the dark willows,
where a nightingale sweetly sleeps between
branches?
Do you want to descend to a rose,
or play with a moth,
on a May Day, in the sunshine?

No, fly in the dawn
to the one I passionately love,
and take to her bed

the scent of roses
and my gentle, pure kiss,
pure as a breath of spring.
Scent of roses
and my gentle, pure kiss,
pure as a breath of spring.

3 2. Razocharovanie (P. Collin)

Yarko solntse eshchyo blistalo,
uvidat' khotel ya lesa,
gde s vesnoyu vmeste lyubvi
i blazhenstva pora nastala.

Podumal ya: 'v lesnoy tishi
eyo naydu opyat', kak prezhdе,
i ruki podav mne svoi,
poydyot za mnoy polna nadezhdi.'
Ya naprasno ishchu... Uvi!
Vzivayu! Lish' ekho mne otvechaet!

O, kak skuden solntsa svet.
Kak pechalen les i bezglasen!
O, lyubov' moya, kak uzhasno
tak skoro utratit' tebya!

4 3. Serenada (P. Collin)

V yarkom svete zari, blistayushchem i yasnom,
otblesk vizhu divnykh ochey!
Mnitsya, budto zvuchit v pen'i ptits
sladkoglasnykh
lish' ekho tvoikh detskikh rechey!

V lilii nakhozhu tvoy pokoy bezmyatezhniy,
tvoyu chistotu v ney lyublyu!
Zapakh roz, kak tvoyo dikhan'e, sladko nezhen,
v rozakh ya lyublyu svezhest' tvoyu.

I lyublyu ya v volne v chas burniy eyo priliva
goryachnost' i vspishki tvoi,
Lyublyu tvoi ya vopli i gorya porivi
v sviste vetra, v shume grozi.

Strasti pilkoy tvoey ya lyublyu proyavlen'e,
zhzhyot ona, tochno solntsa luch;
Luna v svoey krasote stidlivoy – tvoyo
voploshchen'e
kogda blestit nam iz-za tuch.

V yunoy, svetloy vesne ya lyublyu vozrozhden'e
gryoz chistikh i nadezhd;
lyublyu ya tvoyu pechal' i strast' uedinen'ya
v tikhom mrake teney nochnikh,
v tikhom mrake teney nochnikh!

2. Disillusionment

The sun was still shining brightly,
and I wanted to see the forest
where the time of love and delight
came in spring.

I thought: 'In the quiet forest
I will find her again,
and she will give me her hand
and will follow me, full of hope.'
I am searching in vain...Alas!
I call out! There is only echo!

O, how dull is the sunlight!
How sad and quiet the forest!
O, my love, how terrible it is
to lose you so soon!

3. Serenade

In the bright light of dawn,
the reflection of your magical eyes is sparkly and
clear!
It seems that the sweet songs of birds
echo your sweet words!

In a lily I see your undisturbed peace,
and love your purity!
In roses I love your freshness:
their scent, like your breath, is sweetly gentle.

In a wave at the hour of full tide,
I love your passion,
And in gusts of wind and in roar of the storm
I love the expression of your sorrow.

I love to see your passion:
it burns me like a ray of sun.
The moonlight shining through clouds
is the expression of your beauty.

I love the awakening of pure dreams
and hopes in youthful, bright spring,
I love your sadness, and our passionate meetings
in quiet darkness of night,
in quiet darkness of night!

5 4. Puskay zima (P. Collin)

Puskay zima pogasit solntsta svetliy luch
i pokroet efir tsep'yu sumrachnykh tuch...
Znayuy ya, gde iskat' blesk sveta,
solntsa i luchey i rassveta
prekrasney zari v nebesakh.
O, dorogaya,
v tvoikh lish' glazakh!

Puskai zima pokroet snegom vse tsveti
i surovoy rukoy rasseet lepestki...
Znayuy ya, gde iskat' tsvet prekrasniy,
nesmotrya na holod dney nenastnykh,
Rozu v svezhey, pishnoy krase.
O, dorogaya,
v tvoey lish' dushe!

Etot luch, chto v glazakh tvoikh vsegda blestit,
kotorogo nicta ne mozhet pogasit',
tot tsvetok, chto dusha sokhranyaet,
chto nikogda ne uvyadaet,
perezviv vesennye dni.
O, dorogaya,
to blesk krasil!

6 5. Slyozī (A.M. Blanchecotte)

Esli pokoy dadite za vse trevolnen'ya
i smoete teper' dney minuvshikh tosku,
esli ranam moim nesyote oblegchen'e,
leytes', slyozī, ya vas molyu!
No, esli i teper' vi smert' s soboy nesyote,
esli vi razzhigat' plamya serdtsa dolzhni,
ne much'te zhe menya, zachem vsyu grud' mne
rvete:
O, slyozī, skroytes' vi!
Da, skroytes' vi: moya toska eshche uzhasney:
probudili vi vnov' gore proshlikh godov!
O, szhal'tes', o, szhal'tes' eshchyo i
dayte smert' moey dushe neschastnoy!
Slyozī, zastin'te vnov', zastin'te vnov'!
Da, da, zastin'te vnov'!

7 6. Charovnitza (P. Collin)

Ti soboyu voploshchaesh'
silu char i volshebstva:
radost', schast'e i toska
ot tebya pridut, ti znaesh',
no vsem tem, kogo plenyashe',
rabstva tsep' ne tyazhela.

4. Let the winter...

Let the winter dim the bright light of the sun
and cover the sky with a chain of dark clouds...
I know where to look for the light,
sun, and beauty that is more spectacular
than that of the sky.
O, my darling,
only in your eyes!

Let the winter cover with snow all flowers
and scatter their petals with its cold hand...
I know where to look for beautiful blossoms
and for a rose in fresh splendour,
Even in cold wintry days.
O, my darling,
only in your soul!

The light in your eyes
cannot be ever dulled,
That flower, kept safe in the soul,
will never wilt
at the end of the spring.
O, my darling,
this is the splendour of beauty!

5. Tears

If you grant me peace for all sorrows,
and wash away the sadness of bygone days,
if you take away the pain of my wounds,
then flow, tears, I implore you!
But if you carry death with you,
if you are meant to rekindle the fire in my heart,
Then leave me. Why do you torment me and tear
my soul apart?
O, tears, leave me!
Yes, leave me. You intensified my sorrow:
you awoke the sadness of the past!
O, have pity,
and send death to my poor soul!
Tears, freeze again, freeze again!
Yes, yes, freeze again!

6. Enchantress

You are the proof
of the power of magic:
you give happiness, delight,
and sorrow,
But to those you enchant,
the chain of slavery is light.

Ti soboyu voploshchaesh'
silu char i volshebstva!

Da, pobeda ne trudna:
vzglyadom, chto ti nam brosaesh',
ti, kak set'yu, obnimaesh'
i lovish' u vsekh serdtsa...
Ti soboyu voploshchaesh'
silu char i volshebstva.

8 O, esli b ti mogla Op.38 No.4 (A.K. Tolstoy)

O, esli b ti mogla, khot' na ediniy mig,
Zabit' svoyu pechal', zabyt' svoi nevgodi,
O, esli bi khot' raz ya tvoy uvidel lik,
Kakim ya znal ego v schastliveyshie godi!

Kogda v glazakh tvoikh zasvetitsya sleza,
O, esli b eta grust' mogla proyti porivom,
Kak v tyopluyu vesnu prolyotnaya groza.
Kak ten' oblakov, begushchaya po nivam!

O, esli b ti mogla, khot' na ediniy mig,
Zabit' svoyu pechal', zabit' svoi nevgodi,
O, esli bi khot' raz ya tvoy uvidel lik,
Kakim ya znal ego v schastliveyshie godi!

9 Ni otziva, ni slova, ni priveta Op.28 No.5

(A.N. Apukhtin)

Ni otziva, ni slova, ni priveta,
Pustineyu mezh nami mir lezhit,
I misl' moya s voprosom bez otveta
Isputanno nad serdtsem tyagotit!

Uzhel' sredi chasov toski i gneva
Proshedshee ischeznet bez sleda,
Kak lyogkiy zvuk zabitogo napeva,
Kak v mrak nochnoy upavshaya zvezda?

Kak lyogkiy zvuk zabitogo napeva,
Kak v mrak nochnoy upavshaya zvezda?

10 Novogrecheskaya pesnya Op.16 No.6

(A. N. Maykov)

V tyomnom ade, pod zemlyoy,
Teni greshnie tomyatsya;

You are the proof
of the power of magic!

Yes, victory is easy:
with your look
you embrace
and entrap hearts...
You are the proof
of the power of magic.

O, if you could Op. 38 No.4

O, if you could at least for a fleeting moment
Forget your sorrow, forget your unhappiness,
O, if only once more I could see your face
As I knew it in those happy years!

Tears glisten in your eyes.
O, if this sadness could end,
As a storm that quickly passes in spring,
As shadows of clouds that run across fields!

O, if you could at least for a fleeting moment,
Forget your sorrow, forget your unhappiness,
O, if only once more I could see your face
As I knew it in those happy years!

No reply, no word, no greeting Op.28 No.5

No reply, no word, no greeting.
The world stretches between us like a desert,
And a question without an answer
Lies heavily on my heart!

Is it really true, that after long hours of sorrow and
anger
The past will disappear without a trace,
As a brief note of a forgotten melody,
As a falling star in a dark night?

As a brief note of a forgotten melody,
As a falling star in a dark night?

New Greek Song Op.16 No.6

In the darkness of hell, in the depth of the earth,
The sinful shadows are suffering,

Stonut devī, plachut zhyonī,
I toskuyut, i krushatsya...
Vsyο, vsyo o tom, chto ne dohodyat
Vesti v adskie predeli – zhyonī plachut, stonut:
Est' li nebo goluboe?
Est' li svet eshchyo tam beliy?
Est' li v svete tserkvi Bozh'i
I ikonī zolotie,
I, kak prezhdē, za stankami
Tkut li devī molodie?
Tkut li devī molodie?

V tyomnom ade, pod zemlyoy,
Teni greshnie tomyatsya;
Stonut devī, plachut zhyonī,
I toskuyut, i krushatsya...

11 Moya balovnitsa Op.27 No.6 (L. A. Mey)

Moya balovnitsa, otdavshis' vesel'yu,
Zal'yotsya, kak ptichka, serebryannoy trel'yu,
Kak ptichka, nachnyot shchebetat', lepetat',
Tak milo nachnyot shchebetat', lepetat',
Chto dazhe dikan'em boyus' ya narushit'
Garmoniyu sladkuyu devstvennikh slov,
I tseliye dni, i vsyu zhizn' ya gotov
Krasavitsu slushat', i slushat',
i slushat', i slushat', slushat'!

Kogda zh zhivost' rechi ey glazki zazhzyot
I shchyoki silnee rumyanit' nachnyot,
Kogda pri ulibke, skvoz' aliye gubi,
Kak perli v korallakh, blesnut eyo zubi,
O, v eti minutī ya smelo opyat'
Glyazhu ey v ochi I zhdū potseluya,
I bolee slushat' eyo ne khochu ya,
A vsyo tselovat', tselovat', tselovat'!

Moyu balovnitsu vsyu zhizn' ya gotov
tselovat', tselovat', tselovat'.

12 Lyubov' metvetsa Op.38 No.5 (M.Y. Lermontov)

Puskay holodnoyu zemlyoyu
Zasipan ya,
O, drug! Vsegda, vsegda, vezde s toboyu
Dusha moya,
Dusha moya vsegda, vezde s toboy!

Maidens moan, wives cry and yearn
For everything that cannot reach them there.
The wives cry and moan:
Is there still a blue sky?
Is there still a bright light?
Are there still God's temples and golden icons,
And are young maidens still weaving with their
looms?
Do the young maidens still weave?

In the darkness of hell, in the depth of the earth,
The sinful shadows are suffering,
Maidens moan, wives cry and yearn...

My mischief Op.27 No.6

My mischief abandoned herself to fun,
And her silver laugh is like a little bird's trill.
When she, like a bird, starts to chirp
So sweetly and endearingly,
I do not even breathe,
Afraid to destroy the harmony of virginal words,
And I am prepared to listen to my beauty
For the whole day, even for the whole life!

When her eyes light up from her lively words,
Her cheeks blush.
When she smiles, her teeth glisten
Through her red lips like pearls between corals.
Oh, in those moments I bravely again
Look into her eyes and wait for a kiss,
And don't want to listen to her any more,
But only to kiss, kiss, kiss!

I am ready to kiss her all my life,
To kiss, kiss, kiss.

Love of a Dead Man Op.38 No.5

Even though I am lying
Under the cold earth,
Oh, my friend! My soul is always
With you,
Always with you!

Lyubvi bezumnogo tomlen'ya,
Zhilets mogil,
V strane pokoya i zabven'ya
Ya ne zabil.
Bez strakha v chas posledney muki
Pokinuv svet,
Otradi zhdal ya ot razluki –
Razluki net!

Chto mne siyan'e bozhey vlasti
I ray svyatoy?
Ya perenyos zemniye strasti
Tuda s soboy.
Laskayu ya mechtu rodnuyu,
Vezde odnu;
Zhelayu, plachu i revnuyu,
Kak v starinu.

Kosnyotsya l' chuzhdoe dikhan'e
Tvoikh lanit,
Moya dusha v nemom stradan'i
Vsya zadrozhit,
Sluchitsya l', shepchesh', zasipaya,
Ti o drugom –
Tvoi slova tekut, pilaya,
Po mne ognym!
Puskay holodnoyu zemlyoyu
Zasipan ya,
O, drug! Vsegda, vsegda, vezde s toboyu
Dusha moya,
Dusha moya vsegda, vezde s toboy!

13 Tebya ya videla vo sne (Konstantin Romanov)

Tebya ya videla vo sne, kak budto s nezumnoy
toskoyu
Sklonilsya na plecho ko mne ti belokuroy golovoyu.
I slyozī iz moikh ochey tikhon'ko na tebya katilis'
I, kapaya, oni struilis' po kol'tsam shyolkovikh
kudrey.
O chyom bila tvoya pechal', o chyom moi lilisya slyozī,
Ne ponimayu. I edva l' ponyat' vozmozhno eti gryozī.
Svoey lyubov'yu, miliy moy,
Ti schast'ya dal mne sovershenstvo:
Ne ot izbitka li blazhenstva
Vo sne grustili mī s toboy?

I dwell in my grave,
But I have not forgotten
Love's maddening longing
In the land of peace and renunciation.
In my last hour of suffering
I was not afraid to leave my life,
I expected relief from the parting,
But it never came!

What are to me the light of God
And heaven?
I took the earthly passions
Into my grave.
I have only one familiar
Dream; I want you,
I cry, I am jealous,
As before.

When another's breath touches
Your lips,
My soul trembles in
Silent suffering;
If you whisper in your sleep
Another's name –
Your words burn me
Like fire!
Even though I am lying
Under the cold earth,
Oh, my friend! My soul is always
With you,
Always with you!

You were in my dream

You were in my dream – with tender yearning
You leaned your blonde head onto my shoulder.
And the tears silently rolled from my eyes
And flowed on your silk curls.
What was your sorrow and why I cried,

I do not know. And it is not possible to
understand this dream.
With your love, my darling,
You gave me the perfection of happiness.
Could we have been overcome
By our overflowing bliss?

14 O net! Za krasotu ti ne lyubi menya

(Konstantin Romanov)
O net! Za krasotu ti ne lyubi menya
I ne lyubi menya za to, chto ya zhivu bogato:
Za krasotu siyan'e dnya,
A za bogatstvo srebro i zlato.
I ne lyubi menya za molodost' moyu.
Lyubi vesnu, ona vsyo ta zhe beskonecho.
Menya lyubi za to, chto ya lyublyu
I chto lyubit' tebya ya budu vechno.

Hamlet Op.67a (excerpts)

15 1. Pervya stsena Ofelii

Gde tot, kem ti tak lyubima, kak bi mne ego
uznat'? Ego litso pokrivat' budet shlyapa piligrima.
Snimi eyo! Sbro's' eyo skorey!
Vezde tsveti v grobe lezhali, kak gorniy sneg bil
savan bel, vse krugom ridali, i trup zemle predali, i on
pod zemlyoy kochenel.
Opyat' nastupil svyatoy Valentin, i prishla ya k
drugu.
On dver' otvoril, odin na odin tseloval podrugu.
Zhenitsya na mne ved' ti obeshchal, klyalsya v
tom kogda-to.
'Chto slova tebe tvoy drug ne sderzhal, ti zhe
vinovata!'

16 2. Vtoraya stsena Ofelii

S otkritim on lezhal litsom,
Mi slyozī lili i v mogilu potom ego opustili.
Net! Net! Ne govori! Ya ne sprashivayu.
Menya ne lyubyat, ya eto ochen horosho znayu.
Mne Robin miliy drug, v nyom radost' moya,
lish' v nyom odnom!
Zdes' pyostriye tsvetochki ne u mesta;
Lish' belikh dayte mne: ved' ya nevesta!
No ya sama teper' ne reshila:
Venchan'e zhdyyot menya ili mogila?
Ne pridyot on, ne vernyotsya,
Na vek skhoronili ego
I ot placha moego kholodniy trup ne
prosnuyotsya!

17 3. Pesnya mogil'shchika

Chto ya bil za slavnii maliy, volochilsya vo vsyu
moch'
I kak veselo bivalo prokhodili den' i noch',
Prokhodili den' i noch'.

Oh no! Do not love me for my beauty

Oh no! Do not love me for my beauty
And do not love me for my riches:
Love the day for its beauty,
And silver and gold for their wealth.
Do not love me for my youth.
Love the spring – it is always the same.
Love me for my love,
Love me because I will love you forever.

Hamlet Op.67a (excerpts)

1. Ophelia's First Scene

Where is the one who loved me so much?
How will I recognise him? His face will be covered
with a hat of a pilgrim. Take it off! Throw it away!
The flowers lay in the coffin,
and his shroud was white as mountain snow.
Everyone sobbed, and the body was laid in earth,
where it grew cold.
St. Valentine's arrived again,
and I came to see my friend.
He opened the door, and kissed me.
'You promised to marry me one day.'
'It is your own fault that your friend
did not keep his promise!'

2. Ophelia's Second Scene

He lay with his face exposed.
We cried, and lowered him into the grave.
No! No! Do not tell me! I am not asking.
I know very well that I am not loved.
Robin is my dear friend, he is my only delight!
This is not the right time for colourful flowers;
Give me only the white ones: I am still the bride!
But I cannot decide: Am I to wed or am I to die?
He will not come back,
He is buried for ever
And my tears will not bring his cold corpse back to
life!

3. Grave-digger's song

I was a nice chap, chasing girls as much as I could,
And my days and nights were jolly.
My days and nights were jolly.

No prishla koldun'ya starost', zamorozila vsyu krov',
Prognavshi smekh i shalost', kak rukoy snyala lyubov',
Kak rukoy snyala lyubov'.
Chto zhe? Fakel pogrebal'nii, iz shesti dosok larets,
Savan, krest da khor pechal'nii, vot i pesenki konets,
Vot i pesenki konets.

18 Poymi khot' raz Op.16 No.3 (A.A. Fet)

Poymi khot' raz tosklivoe priznan'e,
Khot' raz uslish' dushi molyashchey ston!
Ya pred tobou, prekrasnoe sozdan'e,
Bezvestnikh sil dikhan'em okrilon.

Ya obraz tvoy lovlyu pered razlukoy,
Ya polon im, nemeyu i drozhu,
I bez tebya, tomyas' predsmertnoy mukoy,
Svoey toskoy kak chast'em dorozhu.

Poyu eyo, vo prakh upast' gotoviy,
Ti predo mnoy stoish' kak bozhestvo.
I ya blazhen; ya v kazhdoy muke novoy
Tvoey krasī predvizhu torzhestvo.

19 Ya s neyu nikogda ne govoril Op.25 No.5 (L.A. Mey)

Ya s neyu nikogda ne govoril,
No ya iskal povsyudu s neyu vstrechi,
Bledneya i drozha za ney sledil.
Eyo dvizhen'ya, vzglyad, ulibku, rechi
Ya zhadno, ya vnimatel'no lovil,
A posle, ya ubegal ot vseh daleche,
Eyo v mechtakh sebe ya predstavlyal,
Grustil, vzdikhal, tomilsya i revnoval.
Grustil, vzdikhal, tomilsya i revnoval!

Ne rasskazat', chto delalos' so mnoyu.
Ne opisat' volshebnoy krasoti...
Volshebnoy krasoti ne opisat'!
S vesennim solntsem, s rozovoy zaryoyu,
S slezoy nebes, upavshy na tsveti.
S luchyom luni, s vecherneyu zvezdoyu
V moikh mechtakh siliis' eyo cherti...
V moikh mechtakh siliis' eyo cherti...
Ya pomnyu tol'ko svetloe viden'e,
Svetloe viden'e

But the witch of an old age came and cooled the blood,
Chased away laughter and mischief, and took away love,
Took away love.
So what is left? A burial light, a box built with six boards,
A shroud, a cross, and a lamenting choir; this is the end of the song,
The end of the song.

Hear at least once Op.16 No.3

Hear at least once my sad confession,
At least once listen to my soul's pleading moan!
I stand before you, beautiful creature,
With the wings given to me by unknown powers.

I try to hold onto your image before our parting,
I am filled with it, I shudder and freeze,
And in your absence treasure
My longing and suffering as a gift.

Ready to fall into ashes,
I see you standing before me as divine image.
And I am blissful; in every new suffering
I see the victory of your beauty.

I never spoke to her Op.25 No.5

I never spoke to her,
But, pale and trembling,
I followed her everywhere.
Her movements, look, smile, and words,
I hungrily, attentively caught,
And then ran away from the world,
And, imagining her in my dreams,
Sighed, suffered, was sad and jealous.
Sighed, suffered, was sad and jealous!

I cannot describe what I felt,
Cannot describe the magical beauty...
Cannot describe the magical beauty!
With the spring sun, with the rosy dawn,
With heaven's tears, fallen onto the flowers,
With the moonlight, with an evening star,
In my dreams her image merged.
In my dreams her image merged...
I remember only the heavenly image,
Heavenly image –

Moy ideal, otradu i muchen'e,
Moy ideal, otradu i muchen'e!

20 Na son gryadushchiy Op.27 No.1 (N.P. Ogaryov)

Nochnaya t'ma bezmolvie prinosit
I k otidkhu zovyot menya.
Pora, pora! Pokoya telo prosit,
Dusha ustala v vikhre dnya.

Molyu tebya, pred snom gryadushchim, Bozhe:
Day lyudyam mir; blagoslavi Mladentsu son,
I nishchenskoe lozhe,
I slyozī tikhie lyubvi!

Prosti grekhu, na zhguchee stradan'e
Uspokoitel'no dokhni,
I vse tvoī pechal'nīe sozdan'ya
Khot' snoviden'em obmani!

I vse tvoī pechal'nīe sozdan'ya
Khot' snoviden'em obmani,
Khot' snoviden'em obmani!

21 Smorti: von oblako Op.27 No.2 (N.P. Grekov)

Smotri: von oblako nesyotsya serebristoe;
Vezde vokrug nego siyaet nebo chistoe,
Kak molodost' prekrasnaya tvoya.
I utra blesk na nyom tak yarko otrazhaetsya;
Kak budto ulibaetsya,
Ono pokhozhe na tebya.
Ono pokhozhe na tebya.

Smotri: von tucha tam vikhodit odinokaya;
Ona temna, kak noch',
Kak grust' dushi glubokaya
Ne prosvetlit eyo siyan'e dnya
Bit' mozhet ot togo ona mrachna tak groznaya,
Chto svetlim oblakom dana stezya ey roznaya,
Ona pokhozha na menya,
Ona pokhozha na menya.

22 Ali mat' menya rozhala Op.27 No.5 (L.A. Mey)

Ali mat' menya rozhala
Na gore bol'shoe?
Ali ved'ma zachurala
Mne gnezdo rodnoe?
Naprolyot i dni i nochi

My ideal, happiness, and suffering,
My ideal, happiness, and suffering!

Before sleep Op.27 No.1

Dark night brings stillness
And calls me to sleep.
It is time! My body wants rest,
My soul is weathered by the storms of the day.

I pray to you, my God:
Give people peace, bless
The sleep of the Little one, a pauper's bed,
And quiet tears of love!

Forgive the sins, breathe relief
On burning suffering,
And distract all your poor creatures
With dreams.

And distract all your poor creatures
With dreams,
With dreams!

Look: there is a silver cloud Op.27 No.2

Look: there is a silver cloud,
And all around it the sky
Is brilliant and clear, just like your youth.
The morning light is brightly reflected in it
And, as if smiling,
It looks like you.
It looks like you.

Look: there is a lonely dark cloud,
It is as dark as night,
As a deep sorrow of a soul.
It won't be brightened by a day's shine...
Maybe it is so dark
Because its fate is different from that of the silver cloud?
It reminds me of myself,
It reminds me of myself.

Had my mother borne me Op.27 No.5

Had my mother borne me
For great sorrow?
Or a witch cast a spell
On my dear home?
All day and night

Plachu, kak rebyonok;
Svatī priydot – net mne mochi
Vistoyat' smotryonok.

Okh, uekhal da i sginul
Miliy za družinoy;
Ne sberyog – odnu pokinul
Pannochku s kruchinoy.

U podruzhek v tserkvi yasno
Svechka dogoraet;
U menya odnoy, neschastnoy,
Srazu pogasaet.

V pole osen'; list valitsya;
Pyos nash zemlyu roet,
Sich na krishu nam saditsya;
'Chto zh ti, skoro?' – voet.

Skoro ya s tobouy, znachit,
Svizhusya, moy miliy!
Ali mat' menya rozhala
Na gore bol'shoe?

Ali ved'ma zachurala
Mne gnezdo rodnoe?
Ali ved'ma zachurala
Mne gnezdo rodnoe?

23 Korol'ki Op.28 No.2 (L.A. Mey)
Kak poshyol ya s kazakami, Ganna govorila:
'Za tebya ya so slezami Boga umolila:
Ti vernyosh'sya s pervoy bitvi
Vesel i zdorov
Privezi zh mne za molitvi
Nitku korol'kov!'

Bog poslal nam atamana:
Srazu mi razbili
V pukh i prakh vsyo voysko khana,
Gorod polonili,
Sbili krepkie vorota
Pir, pir dlya kazakov!
U menya odna zabota:
Nitka korol'kov!

Vdrug sama v glaza blesnula
Znat', znat' pomog vsevishniy

I cry, like a child.
Match makers come – I cannot stand
Them appraising me as a bride.

Oh, my love left me,
Went to a battle and lost his life
Didn't protect me – left me alone
With my sorrow.

My girlfriends' candles
Burn brightly in church;
Mine alone
Goes out immediately.

Autumn is in the field; the leaves fall;
Our dog is digging the earth, and
Barn owl sits on our roof.
'How long will you be?' – he cries.

It means that soon
I will see you, my love!
Had my mother borne me
For great sorrow?

Or a witch cast a spell
On my dear home?
Or a witch cast a spell
On my dear home?

A String of Corals Op.28 No.2
When I was leaving with the Cossacks,
Hanna told me: 'I prayed to God for you, crying.
You will come back from the first battle
Happy and unharmed.
For my prayers
Bring me a string of corals!'

God sent us khan's army,
And we easily destroyed it,
And immediately
Took over the city,
Took off the big gates,
And had a great feast with the Cossacks!
But I had one worry:
A string of corals!

Suddenly, it glistened –
God must have helped me,

I sama mne v gorst' yurknula
Aloy, krupnoy vishney.

Ya dobichu krepko stisnul,
Da i bil takov:
Pryamo k Ganne step'yu svisnul
S nitkoy korol'kov.
I ne sprashival ya broda,
Gati il' mosta...
Zvon u nashego prikhoda;
Lyud valit s pogosta
I krichit mne vsya gromada
Sotney golosov:
'Ganna tam i ey ne nado
Nitki korol'kov!'

Serdtshe szhalos', zamiraya,
V grudi razdroblyonnoy,
I upal s konya, ridaya,
Ya pered ikonoy!

24 Serenada Don Zhuana Op.38 No.1 (A.K. Tolstoy)
Gasnut dal'ney Al'pukhari
Zolotistie kraya,
Na prizivniy zvon gitari
Viydi, milaya moyaya!
Vsekh, kto skazhet, chto drugaya
Zdes' ravnyaetsya s tobouy,
Vsekh, lyuboviyu sgoraya,
Vsekh, vsekh, vsekh zovu na smertniy boy!

Ot lunnogo sveta
Zardel nebosklon,
O, viydi, Niseta, o, viydi Niseta,
Skorey na balkon!
Ot Sevil'i do Grenadi,
V tikhom sumrake nochey,
Razdayutsya serenadi,
Razdayotsya stuk mechey.
Mnogo krovi, mnogo pesney
Dlya prelesnikh l'yotsya dam,
Ya zhe toy, kto vsekh prelesney, vsyo, vsyo,
Pesn' i krov' moyu otdam!

Ot lunnogo sveta
Zardel nebosklon,
O, viydi, Niseta, o, viydi Niseta,
Skorey na balkon!

And by itself it landed
Into my hands.

I clasped the find
Tightly in my fist,
And rode across the steppe
To Hanna with the string of corals.
I did not look for shallow waters,
Or bridges across rivers...
The bells were ringing by our parish;
People were coming back from the grave yard,
And hundreds of voices called out to me:
'Hanna is there, and she no longer needs
A string of corals!'

My heart sank
In my broken chest,
And I fell off the horse, sobbing,
Before an icon!

Don Juan's Serenade Op.38 No.1
The darkness falls
On the golden land of Alpujarras.
My love, come out
To the call of my guitar.
All who claim that
Your beauty has a rival –
All those
I challenge to the fight.

The moonlight
Lights up the sky.
O, Nisetta, come out
Onto your balcony!
From Seville to Granada,
In the quiet darkness of the night,
There are sounds of serenades,
And clashes of swords;
Much blood and many songs
Flow in honour of beautiful ladies,
But to the one who is the most beautiful
I will give my blood and my song!

The moonlight
Lights up the sky,
O, Nisetta, come out
Onto your balcony!