

# Season 2016-2017

**Thursday, October 20,**  
at 8:00

**Friday, October 21, at 2:00**

**Saturday, October 22,**  
at 8:00

## The Philadelphia Orchestra

**Stéphane Denève** Conductor  
**Denis Kozhukhin** Piano

**Tchaikovsky/** Andante cantabile, from String Quartet  
**arr. Stokowski** No. 1 in D major, Op. 11  
*First Philadelphia Orchestra performances of  
this arrangement*

**Tchaikovsky** Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor, Op. 23  
I. Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso—  
Allegro con spirito  
II. Andantino semplice—Prestissimo—  
Tempo I  
III. Allegro con fuoco

### Intermission

**Musorgsky/Boris Godunov: A Symphonic Synthesis**  
**arr. & orch.**  
**Stokowski**

**Tchaikovsky** Solemn Overture, 1812, Op. 49

This program runs approximately 2 hours.

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# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Jesse Griffin



The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the preeminent orchestras in the world, renowned for its distinctive sound, desired for its keen ability to capture the hearts and imaginations of audiences, and admired for a legacy of imagination and innovation on and off the concert stage. The Orchestra is inspiring the future and transforming its rich tradition of achievement, sustaining the highest level of artistic quality, but also challenging—and exceeding—that level, by creating powerful musical experiences for audiences at home and around the world.

Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin's connection to the Orchestra's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics since his inaugural season in 2012. Under his leadership the Orchestra returned to recording, with two celebrated CDs on the prestigious Deutsche Grammophon label, continuing its history of recording success. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of listeners on the radio with weekly Sunday afternoon broadcasts on WRTI-FM.

Philadelphia is home and the Orchestra continues to discover new and inventive ways to nurture its relationship with its loyal patrons at its home in the Kimmel Center, and also with those who enjoy the Orchestra's area performances at the Mann Center, Penn's Landing, and other cultural, civic, and learning venues. The Orchestra maintains a strong commitment to collaborations with cultural and community organizations on a regional and national level, all of which create greater access and engagement with classical music as an art form.

The Philadelphia Orchestra serves as a catalyst for cultural activity across Philadelphia's many communities, building an offstage presence as strong as its onstage one. With Nézet-Séguin, a dedicated body of musicians, and one of the nation's richest arts ecosystems, the Orchestra has launched its **HEAR** initiative, a portfolio of integrated initiatives that promotes **Health**, champions music **Education**, eliminates barriers to **Accessing** the orchestra, and maximizes

impact through **Research**. The Orchestra's award-winning Collaborative Learning programs engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members through programs such as Play!Ns, side-by-sides, PopUP concerts, free Neighborhood Concerts, School Concerts, and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, presentations, and recordings, The Philadelphia Orchestra is a global ambassador for Philadelphia and for the US. Having been the first American orchestra to perform in China, in 1973 at the request of President Nixon, the ensemble today boasts a new partnership with Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts and the Shanghai Oriental Art Centre, and in 2017 will be the first-ever Western orchestra to appear in Mongolia. The Orchestra annually performs at Carnegie Hall while also enjoying summer residencies in Saratoga Springs, NY, and Vail, CO. For more information on The Philadelphia Orchestra, please visit [www.philorch.org](http://www.philorch.org).

# Music Director

Chris Lee



Music Director **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** is now confirmed to lead The Philadelphia Orchestra through the 2025-26 season, an extraordinary and significant long-term commitment. Additionally, he becomes music director of the Metropolitan Opera beginning with the 2021-22 season. Yannick, who holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair, is an inspired leader of the Orchestra. His intensely collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The *New York Times* has called him “phenomenal,” adding that under his baton, “the ensemble, famous for its glowing strings and homogenous richness, has never sounded better.” Highlights of his fifth season include an exploration of American Sounds, with works by Leonard Bernstein, Christopher Rouse, Mason Bates, and Christopher Theofanidis; a Music of Paris Festival; and the continuation of a focus on opera and sacred vocal works, with Bartók’s *Bluebeard’s Castle* and Mozart’s C-minor Mass.

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most thrilling talents of his generation. He has been music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic since 2008 and artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal’s Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000. He was also principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic from 2008 to 2014. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world’s most revered ensembles and has conducted critically acclaimed performances at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Deutsche Grammophon (DG) enjoy a long-term collaboration. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with two CDs on that label. He continues fruitful recording relationships with the Rotterdam Philharmonic on DG, EMI Classics, and BIS Records; the London Philharmonic for the LPO label; and the Orchestre Métropolitain for ATMA Classique. In Yannick’s inaugural season The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to the radio airwaves, with weekly Sunday afternoon broadcasts on WRTI-FM.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at Montreal’s Conservatory of Music and continued his studies with renowned conductor Carlo Maria Giulini; he also studied choral conducting with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick’s honors are an appointment as Companion of the Order of Canada, *Musical America’s* 2016 Artist of the Year, Canada’s National Arts Centre Award, the Prix Denise-Pelletier, and honorary doctorates from the University of Quebec in Montreal, the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, and Westminster Choir College of Rider University in Princeton, NJ.

To read Yannick’s full bio, please visit [www.philorch.org/conductor](http://www.philorch.org/conductor).

# Principal Guest Conductor

Jessica Griffin



As principal guest conductor of The Philadelphia Orchestra, **Stéphane Denève** spends multiple weeks each year with the ensemble, conducting subscription, Family, and summer concerts. His 2016-17 subscription season appearances include a Rachmaninoff Festival; performances of John Williams's iconic score to *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* while the movie is shown in its entirety; and a tour to Florida, his second with the ensemble. Mr. Denève has led more programs than any other guest conductor since making his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2007, in repertoire that has spanned more than 100 works, ranging from Classical through the contemporary, including presentations with dance, theater, film, and cirque performers. Mr. Denève is also chief conductor of the Brussels Philharmonic and director of its Centre for Future Orchestral Repertoire. From 2011 to 2016 he was chief conductor of the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra and from 2005 to 2012 music director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

Recent engagements in Europe and Asia include appearances with the Royal Concertgebouw and Philharmonia orchestras; the Orchestra Sinfonica dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia; the Vienna, London, Bavarian Radio, and NHK symphonies; the Munich and Czech philharmonics; and the Orchestre National de France. In North America he made his Carnegie Hall debut in 2012 with the Boston Symphony, with which he is a frequent guest. He appears regularly with the Cleveland Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the San Francisco and Toronto symphonies. He made his New York Philharmonic debut in 2015.

Mr. Denève has won critical acclaim for his recordings of the works of Poulenc, Debussy, Ravel, Roussel, Franck, and Connesson. He is a double winner of the Diapason d'Or de l'Année, was shortlisted in 2012 for *Gramophone's* Artist of the Year award, and won the prize for symphonic music at the 2013 International Classical Music Awards. A graduate of, and prizewinner at, the Paris Conservatory, Mr. Denève worked closely in his early career with Georg Solti, Georges Prêtre, and Seiji Ozawa. He is committed to inspiring the next generation of musicians and listeners, and works regularly with young people in the programs of the Tanglewood Music Center and the New World Symphony. For further information please visit [www.stephanedeneve.com](http://www.stephanedeneve.com).

# Soloist

Felix Brodeur



Russian pianist **Denis Kozhukhin's** Philadelphia Orchestra debut was in Saratoga in 2014, and he makes his subscription debut with these current performances. He returns in February 2017 to tour Florida with the ensemble and to perform at McCarter Theater in Princeton, both with Stéphane Denève. Since winning First Prize at the 2010 Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels, he has established a formidable reputation and has appeared at many of the world's most prestigious festivals and concert halls.

Mr. Kozhukhin's upcoming engagements include performances with the Toronto, Chicago, Houston, Frankfurt Radio, and RTE National symphonies; the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin; the Luxembourg and Netherlands philharmonics; and the National Arts Centre Orchestra. Recent performance highlights include appearances with the Royal Concertgebouw and Mariinsky orchestras; the San Francisco, Pittsburgh, BBC, São Paulo, and Stuttgart Radio symphonies; the Philharmonia; the Orchestre National de France; and the Brussels Philharmonic. He has toured China with the BBC Scottish Symphony and recently made his debut with an ensemble comprised of soloists from the West Eastern Divan Orchestra under Daniel Barenboim at the Salzburg Festival and at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. Recent recital highlights include returns to the Concertgebouw's Master Pianists Series, the Cologne Philharmonie, Wigmore Hall, the Auditorium du Louvre in Paris, and London's International Piano Series, as well as debuts at the Lucerne Festival, Vienna Konzerthaus, and the Boston Celebrity Series.

In September 2015 Mr. Kozhukhin signed an exclusive recording contract with Pentatone. His first recording, of Tchaikovsky's Concerto No. 1 and the Grieg Concerto with the Berlin Radio Symphony and Vassily Sinaisky, was released in April 2016. Future releases include a solo recital disc of works by Brahms. His debut recording in 2013 featured Prokofiev's piano sonatas No. 6, 7, and 8, followed by a CD of Haydn sonatas, both for Onyx Classics. Born into a family of musicians in Nizhni Novgorod in 1986, Mr. Kozhukhin began his piano studies at the age of four with his mother. From 2000 to 2007 he was a pupil at the Reina Sofia School of Music in Madrid where, upon graduating, he received his diploma personally from the Queen of Spain.

# Framing the Program

## Parallel Events

**1868**  
**Musorgsky**  
*Boris Godunov*

**Music**  
 Grieg  
 Piano Concerto

**Literature**  
 Alcott  
*Little Women*

**Art**  
 Degas  
*L'Orchestre*

**History**  
 Revolution in  
 Spain

**1874**  
**Tchaikovsky**  
 Piano Concerto  
 No. 1

**Music**  
 Verdi  
 Requiem

**Literature**  
 Hardy  
*Far from the  
 Madding Crowd*

**Art**  
 Renoir  
*La Loge*

**History**  
 First American  
 zoo established  
 in Philadelphia

**1880**  
**Tchaikovsky**  
*1812 Overture*

**Music**  
 Dvořák  
 Symphony No. 6

**Literature**  
 Dostoyevsky  
*The Brothers  
 Karamazov*

**Art**  
 Cézanne  
*Château de  
 Medan*

**History**  
 NY streets first  
 lit by electricity

The program today presents two great Russian composers, exact contemporaries, who held very different views about music and aesthetics. Tchaikovsky was traditionally trained, consummately professional, and became an international celebrity. During his lone trip to America in May 1891, to inaugurate Carnegie Hall, he conducted his First Piano Concerto in Philadelphia at the Academy of Music. Modest Musorgsky, on the other hand, was a self-taught radical whose magnificent *Boris Godunov* is one of the most innovative operas of the 19th century.

Leopold Stokowski, The Philadelphia Orchestra's legendary music director for over a quarter century beginning in 1912, championed both composers. The concert opens with his luxurious string orchestra arrangement of the Andante cantabile from Tchaikovsky's String Quartet No. 1. The beloved First Piano Concerto, the piece Tchaikovsky conducted here, follows with the young Russian pianist Denis Kozhukhin making his Philadelphia Orchestra subscription debut.

When Stokowski conducted the 1929 American premiere of the original version of *Boris Godunov* here a critic hailed the event as "the most monumental achievement in the history of the Philadelphia Orchestra." As part of his sustained advocacy of the opera and of Musorgsky's music more generally, Stokowski later crafted the "Symphonic Synthesis" we hear today. He chose six moments from the opera to construct a continuous orchestral web, ingeniously weaving into the instrumental fabric what were originally sung arias and choruses.

The concert concludes with the rousing *1812 Overture*, which Tchaikovsky composed to mark the consecration of a cathedral in Moscow. As the cathedral was built to commemorate Russia's victory over Napoleon in 1812, Tchaikovsky wrote a celebratory orchestral work incorporating Russian and French anthems, cannons and bells, and ending triumphantly with "God Save the Tsar!" Although The Philadelphia Orchestra has performed the piece for decades almost annually on Fourth of July programs, this is its first appearance on a subscription concert in 87 years.

# The Music

Andante cantabile, from String Quartet No. 1 (arr. by Leopold Stokowski)



**Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**  
**Born in Kamsko-Votkinsk,**  
**Russia, May 7, 1840**  
**Died in St. Petersburg,**  
**November 6, 1893**

Not until the 20th century did Russian composers much cultivate chamber music. Orchestral pieces—be they symphonies, concertos, or tone poems—received the most attention, complemented by stage works, notably operas and ballets, and keyboard and vocal music. Yet Tchaikovsky excelled in all of these areas, winning international fame with pieces of every kind, including chamber music. Particularly notable in this regard are his Piano Trio in A minor, Op. 50, and music for strings: three quartets and the Sextet in D minor, Op. 70, known as *Souvenir de Florence*.

Today we hear Leopold Stokowski's string orchestra arrangement of the second movement from Tchaikovsky's String Quartet No. 1 in D major, Op. 11. Tchaikovsky composed the piece, considered the first prominent Russian quartet, at age 30, when his career was somewhat stalled. The prominent Russian musician Nikolai Rubinstein, director of the Moscow Conservatory where Tchaikovsky taught, asked him to give a concert in March 1871 devoted entirely to his own works. It would feature leading performers—singers, instrumentalists, and Rubinstein as pianist—who would attract an audience and provide Tchaikovsky a spotlight and income. Since most of the pieces to be performed were already known, Rubinstein requested a new composition as well. Performing forces for the concert were limited, and it was decided that a string quartet should open. The piece was very well received, providing Tchaikovsky his first real success with a multi-movement composition. (By this point he had produced just one symphony and no concertos.)

The real sensation was the Quartet's second movement, the *Andante cantabile*, which has captivated audiences ever since. Its popularity soon led to many arrangements, including Tchaikovsky's own in 1888 for solo cello and string orchestra. Stokowski's version is a rather straightforward enlargement for the full orchestra string section, thus adding double bases; he also indicates in the score greater details of dynamic and expressive markings.

*Tchaikovsky composed his First String Quartet in 1871.*

*These are the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the Andante cantabile in Stokowski's arrangement. The Orchestra has performed the piece on three occasions, in an arrangement by Frost: in January 1930 with Ossip Gabrilowitsch, in November 1946 with Eugene Ormandy, and in January 1948 with Alexander Hilsberg.*

*The Orchestra recorded the Stokowski arrangement of the Andante cantabile in 1995 with Wolfgang Sawallisch for EMI.*

*The work is scored for strings only.*

*Performance time is approximately seven minutes.*

Tchaikovsky came to resent somewhat the extraordinary success the Andante enjoyed, as composers often feel about particularly popular pieces overshadowing their more substantive achievements. Yet he remembered fondly when the great Russian writer Tolstoy heard a performance in 1876: "Perhaps I was never so flattered in my life, nor my pride as a composer so stirred as when Leo Tolstoy, sitting beside me listening to the Andante of my First Quartet, dissolved in tears."

The Andante begins by using a folksong entitled "Sidel Vanya" (Vanya Was Sitting) that Tchaikovsky had heard two summers earlier at his sister's Ukrainian estate of Kamenka. This haunting hymn-like melody with changing meters alternates over the course the movement with a minor key original theme.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

# The Music

## Piano Concerto No. 1



**Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**

Two of the most influential performers of the latter half of the 19th century, both eminent pianists as well as conductors, initially held diametrically opposed views concerning Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1. First came the celebrated Russian, Nikolai Rubinstein, who had founded the Moscow Conservatory where Tchaikovsky taught. It was with this generous colleague in mind that Tchaikovsky wrote the Concerto in 1874, relatively early in his career, situated between his Second and Third symphonies.

The composer later recalled how a few days after completing the piece in December he played it through for his friend, who promptly exploded that it was "impossible to play, that the passages were commonplace, clumsy, and so awkward that there was no way even to correct them, that as a composition it was bad, vulgar." Tchaikovsky declared he would "not change a single note," and published the Concerto the next year as it stood. (He did in fact later revise the piece twice, in 1879 and 1889.)

The enthusiastic response, in contrast, came from the great German pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow, to whom the Concerto was ultimately dedicated. Bülow told Tchaikovsky that "the ideas are so original, so noble, so powerful; the details are so interesting, and though there are many of them they do not impair the clearness and unity of the work. The form is so mature, ripe, and distinguished for style." Bülow was soloist at the premiere in October 1875, which took place in far off Boston, Massachusetts, and sent Tchaikovsky a telegram informing him of the enthusiastic response the piece received, so much so that he had to encore the final movement.

**Divided Opinions Resolved** And it no doubt gave Tchaikovsky enormous satisfaction that Rubinstein very soon came around as well and became a staunch advocate of the Concerto. Just a month after the Boston premiere he conducted the first performance in Moscow and later played it as piano soloist as well, including giving the Paris premiere. (On a later occasion he served as both soloist and conductor.) The Concerto quickly entered the international repertory and it was one of the works

*Tchaikovsky composed his Piano Concerto No. 1 from 1874 to 1875.*

*Ossip Gabrilowitsch was pianist and Fritz Scheel was conductor in the first Philadelphia Orchestra performance of the First Concerto, which took place on November 16, 1900, the Orchestra's very first concert. Since then nearly all the great pianists have performed the work here, including Olga Samaroff, Vladimir Horowitz, Artur Schnabel, William Kapell, Claudio Arrau, Emil Gilels, Van Cliburn, André Watts, Garrick Ohlsson, and Lang Lang. Most recently on subscription, Stephen Hough played the work in January 2014 with Robin Ticciati conducting.*

*The Philadelphians have recorded the Concerto three times, all with Eugene Ormandy: in 1947 for CBS with Oscar Levant; in 1959 for CBS with Gary Graffman; and in 1965 for CBS, again with Graffman.*

*Tchaikovsky scored the work for solo piano, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and strings.*

*Performance time is approximately 35 minutes.*

Tchaikovsky chose to feature when he conducted concerts in New York marking the inauguration of Carnegie Hall in May 1891.

Two weeks later Tchaikovsky conducted the Concerto at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, with Adele aus der Ohe as soloist. A critic for the *Philadelphia Press* reported that “audience, orchestra, and soloist seemed to realize that they were in the presence of genius”; another critic called the piece “a colossal composition, enormously difficult, full of poetry and passion; made continually striking by bizarre effects, displaying a perfect mastery over the modern orchestra and strangely moving the imagination with its melodic beauty and rich, resounding harmonies. It is great music of the most modern school and spirit.”

**A Closer Look** It is perhaps understandable how musicians, critics, and audiences could either be baffled or entranced by the Concerto, which, in addition to its remarked upon difficulty, has various features that made it seem at the time unusual and modern. The piece famously begins with four French horns blaring out a falling four-note motive in unison, punctuated by mighty orchestral chords (**Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso**). The piano soloist boldly enters with rich chords that span most of the range of the instrument against which unfolds a sweeping string melody. After this extended introduction, the tempo quickens (**Allegro con spirito**) for the heart of the movement. Tchaikovsky included a number of borrowed melodies in the Concerto, beginning with a Ukrainian folk tune he had heard sung by a blind beggar (“O caw, caw, black raven”).

An operatically lyrical flute melody opens the second movement (**Andantino semplice**), in which Tchaikovsky uses a popular French song, “One must have fun, dance, and laugh,” during the fast middle section, creating an overall ABA form. The brilliant finale (**Allegro con fuoco**) is a rondo with two contrasting themes, the first of them derived from another Ukrainian melody (“Go on, go on, Ivan”), the other one more relaxed.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

# The Music

*Boris Godunov: A Symphonic Synthesis* (arr. & orch. by Leopold Stokowski)



**Modest Musorgsky**  
**Born in Karevo (Pskov district), March 21, 1839**  
**Died in St. Petersburg, March 28, 1881**

As in many matters, Russia looked to Western Europe during the rule of Catherine the Great. As a result, prominent 18th- and 19th-century composers and performers spent extended periods of time in Russia, particularly in St. Petersburg, where opera was presented by Italians in Italian. The turning point came in 1836 with Mikhail Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar*, considered at the time and ever since the first great opera by a Russian in Russian. We have to fast forward nearly four decades for the next Russian opera that both made history and remains within history, the enormously influential *Boris Godunov* by Modest Musorgsky. Here is the first Russian opera that is a staple of the international repertory and, together with Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, one of the few survivors of the 19th century.

Yet the path to fame for *Boris* was not easy. Musorgsky composed it in 1868-69 as a work in seven scenes but he could not get the Imperial Theaters to produce it. He undertook extensive revisions, cutting one scene, radically altering the six others, and adding three more. The second version finally premiered in 1874 in St. Petersburg. As is the case with other works for which Musorgsky is now best remembered, notably *Pictures from an Exhibition*, it is not music in the form he actually composed it that is usually performed. *Pictures* was originally a piano suite, but we hear it most often in Maurice Ravel's dazzling orchestration. For most of the 20th century *Boris* was presented not in Musorgsky's original orchestration but in the more colorful one by his colleague Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, which premiered in 1898.

**From Opera to Symphony** Leopold Stokowski was greatly attracted to Musorgsky's music, which he often conducted and tried to make more familiar to audiences. In 1929 he gave the American premiere with The Philadelphia Orchestra of the original 1868 version of *Boris*, to which he added some scenes from the revision. A local critic called the event "the most monumental achievement in the history of the Philadelphia Orchestra."

Stokowski made arrangements of *Pictures, A Night on Bald Mountain*, and an excerpt from Musorgsky's second opera, *Khovanshchina*. In 1936 he produced the "Symphonic Synthesis" of *Boris Godunov* we hear today, which he premiered and recorded with the Philadelphians. The last time he conducted the work here was at age 86 on his final appearance at a Pension Fund Concert in February 1969. He likened the Synthesis to "a free modern symphony, which in this form is available to music lovers who otherwise rarely hear this music of power and imagination and genius. Musorgsky paints richly in tone the Russia of Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, and life which few other peoples have approached in pageantry, cruelty, and sensitive perception of the beauty and horror of which life is capable."

Stokowski decided to use Musorgsky's original, starker orchestration rather than Rimsky-Korsakov's technicolor one. He commented that although the two were close friends "as creative musicians they were at opposing poles. Their approach to music was totally different." Although done with good intentions, Stokowski felt that Rimsky had moved "far from the spirit of Musorgsky."

**A Closer Look** *Boris Godunov* is based on events in Russian history as told by Alexander Pushkin, the country's greatest writer. It tells the story of Tsar Boris coming to power after murdering the rightful heir to the throne, Dmitri. Boris is hounded by guilt and worried about the rise of a pretender who claims to be the slain Dmitri. Eventually Boris dies after bidding farewell to his son. Stokowski chose six moments from the opera to construct a continuous instrumental web, ingeniously weaving into the orchestral fabric what were originally sung arias and choruses.

"Outside the Novodievichi Monastery" comes from the opera's prologue where the people plead for Boris to become tsar. The "Coronation of Boris" captures the great crowning ceremony in a square in the Kremlin; the pealing bells of nearby St. Basil's are heard along with the choral hymn "Glory to God in Heaven! Glory!" (Beethoven had earlier used this famous melody in his "Razumovsky" String Quartet No. 2.) "Monks Chanting in the Monastery of Choudov" offers a brief and solemn interlude before the "Siege of Kazan," associated in the opera with the drunken comic character Varlaam, who recounts the story of a battle. Stokowski particularly admired his part, which he called "in spirit a fantastic scherzo ... a masterpiece of orchestration, especially that variation which describes

*Boris Godunov was composed from 1868 to 1869 and was revised from 1871 to 1872.*

*Leopold Stokowski conducted The Philadelphia Orchestra in his "Symphonic Synthesis" in November 1936, November/December 1937, and March/April 1939. It was not heard again until he returned in the 1960s, conducting it in November 1960 and on his final appearance with the ensemble, on a February 13, 1969, Pension Fund Benefit Concert.*

*The Orchestra recorded the work in 1936 for RCA, with Stokowski.*

*The score calls for four flutes (III and IV doubling piccolo), three oboes, English horn, three clarinets (III doubling E-flat clarinet), bass clarinet, three bassoons, contrabassoon, five horns, four trumpets, four trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, chimes, cymbals, glockenspiel, gongs, snare drum), two harps, and strings.*

*Performance time is approximately 24 minutes.*

how Ivan the Terrible lit the fires and exploded the mines under the walls of the Tartar fortress." "Outside the Church of St. Basil" is based on the plaintive song of the Holy Fool and leads to the sorrowful music connected with the "Death of Boris."

—Christopher H. Gibbs

# The Music

## *1812 Overture*



**Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**

Tchaikovsky composed some of his greatest pieces without immediate prospects for performance, but rather to pursue an inner need. He was confident that they would find an audience, as they almost always did. And yet, especially as he became ever more internationally celebrated, commissions for occasional pieces increasingly came his way, projects he undertook with some reluctance. In 1881 he was asked to write something for the upcoming Exhibition of Industry and the Arts to be held in Moscow. He was presented with three possibilities: write an overture, or something for the Tsar's silver jubilee, or a piece to mark the consecration of a new cathedral, "a cantata in whatever form or style you like but with a hint of church music that must certainly be Orthodox."

Tchaikovsky told his publisher how dimly he viewed such requests: "It is impossible without repugnance to set about music which is destined for the glorification of what, at bottom, does not delight me at all." He confessed that he did not much like the Tsar and was not at all fond of the new cathedral. He also wanted specifics—what exactly was required and how much would he be paid. The piece, he was informed, should last 15-20 minutes and could include chorus or not.

**The Making of a Popular Favorite** Tchaikovsky chose to pursue the option connected with the new Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow. As it was built to mark Russia's victory over Napoleon in September 1812, he decided to write a celebratory orchestral work, which he dispatched in just a little over a week's time. He continued to complain along the way, informing his generous patroness Nadezhda von Meck: "What can you write *on the occasion of the opening of an exhibition* except banalities and generally noisy passages?" He confessed "no warm feeling of love" for the project, in contrast to a work he was composing simultaneously, his *Serenade for Strings*, Op. 48 (The *Serenade*, together with his *First Piano Concerto* we also hear on the concert today, were what Tchaikovsky conducted during his appearance at Philadelphia's Academy of Music in May 1891.)

The official title of what is now popularly known as the *1812 Overture* is "Festive Overture for Large Orchestra, Composed

The *Overture* was composed in 1880.

The first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the 1812 *Overture* were in October 1908 with Carl Pohlig conducting. The work was frequently played on subscription concerts up until October 1929, with Leopold Stokowski, but then not again until these current performances. However, it continues to be heard regularly at summer concerts at the Mann Center and the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, as well as on Free Neighborhood Concerts.

The Orchestra has recorded the *Overture* five times: with Stokowski in 1930 for RCA; with Eugene Ormandy in 1951 and 1959 for CBS (the latter with the Valley Forge Military Academy Band and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir); with Ormandy in 1970 for RCA (with the Philadelphia Brass Bands and Temple University Choirs); and with Riccardo Muti in 1981 for EMI.

Tchaikovsky scored the piece for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, four trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cannon, chimes, cymbals, snare drum, tambourine, triangle), and strings.

Performance time is approximately 16 minutes.

for the Occasion of the Consecration of the Church of the Savior." It received its premiere in August 1882 in a new hall built for the Exhibition as part of an all-Tchaikovsky program that also featured the Russian premiere of his Violin Concerto. Over time the *Overture* emerged as one of the composer's most popular pieces, indeed as one of the most familiar works in the orchestral repertoire. It is usually heard in America on Fourth of July concerts or other pop events, which seems fitting given its genesis.

Tchaikovsky hoped it would also have a concert life, but it is rarely performed in more sober circumstances that allow audiences to appreciate its subtler features that are usually overshadowed by its spectacular effects. The Philadelphia Orchestra first performed the piece in a subscription concert in 1908 and the work appeared almost annually at the Academy of Music until 1929—and then it disappeared from the subscription repertory for 87 years, until this week.

**A Closer Look** As composers have known for centuries, certain subjects invite musical representation more than others. It is a simpler task to convey associations with birds, storms, water than it is abstract events and emotions. Battles have long proved especially inviting. Beethoven took contrasting approaches in two pieces. In his history-making Third Symphony, the mighty "Eroica," he grappled with issues of heroism, based on the figure of Napoleon. He also wrote a so-called "Battle Symphony," better known as *Wellington's Victory*, in which war between the English (represented by "Rule Britannia") and the French ("Marlborough s'en va-t'en guerre") also includes cannons and other effects, leading to the minor mode dissolution of the French music for their defeat and a final set of variations on "God Save the King" celebrating English victory.

Tchaikovsky probably had Beethoven's piece in mind when he was composing the *1812 Overture*. He also calls upon national themes, beginning with solo sextet violas and cellos intoning the Orthodox Russian chant "Save Us, O Lord," which is juxtaposed with the French national anthem, "La Marseillaise." Tchaikovsky brings in as well a Russian folksong "U Vorot" (At the Gate) and part of a duet recycled from his first opera, *The Voyevoda*. This all leads up to the grand finale making marvelous use of bells and cannons in combination with the Imperial Russian national anthem, "God Save the Tsar!"

—Christopher H. Gibbs

# Musical Terms

## GENERAL TERMS

**Aria:** An accompanied solo song, usually in an opera or oratorio

**Cadence:** The conclusion to a phrase, movement, or piece based on a recognizable melodic formula, harmonic progression, or dissonance resolution

**Cantata:** A multi-movement vocal piece consisting of arias, recitatives, ensembles, and choruses and based on a continuous narrative text

**Chord:** The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

**Dissonance:** A combination of two or more tones requiring resolution

**Divertimento:** A piece of entertaining music in several movements, often scored for a mixed ensemble and having no fixed form

**Harmonic:** Pertaining to chords and to the theory and practice of harmony

**Harmony:** The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

**Meter:** The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

**Op.:** Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position

of a composition within a composer's output

**Oratorio:** Large-scale dramatic composition originating in the 16th century with text usually based on religious subjects. Oratorios are performed by choruses and solo voices with an instrumental accompaniment, and are similar to operas but without costumes, scenery, and actions.

**Recitative:** Declamatory singing, free in tempo and rhythm

**Rondo:** A form frequently used in symphonies and concertos for the final movement. It consists of a main section that alternates with a variety of contrasting sections (A-B-A-C-A etc.).

**Scherzo:** Literally "a joke." Usually the third movement of symphonies and quartets that was introduced by Beethoven to replace the minuet. The scherzo is followed by a gentler section called a trio, after which the scherzo is repeated. Its characteristics are a rapid tempo in triple time, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts. Also an instrumental piece of a light, piquant, humorous character.

**Serenade:** An instrumental composition written for a small

ensemble and having characteristics of the suite and the sonata

**Sonata:** An instrumental composition in three or four extended movements contrasted in theme, tempo, and mood, usually for a solo instrument

**Suite:** A set or series of pieces in various dance forms. The modern orchestral suite is more like a divertimento.

**Tone poem:** A type of 19th-century symphonic piece in one movement, which is based upon an extramusical idea, either poetic or descriptive

## THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

**Allegro:** Bright, fast

**Andante:** Walking speed

**Andantino:** Slightly quicker than walking speed

**Cantabile:** In a singing style, lyrical, melodious, flowing

**Con fuoco:** With fire, passionately, excited

**Con spirito:** With spirit

**Maestoso:** Majestic

**Prestissimo:** As fast as possible

**Semplice:** Simply

## TEMPO MODIFIERS

**Molto:** Very

**Non troppo:** Not too much

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