

Montgomery Philharmonic 2013 - 2014 Concert Season – A Confluence of Culture Russians in Many Coats – December 15, 2013

Rimsky-Korsakov | Glazunov | Tchaikovsky

Pytor Ilych Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893) – *The Nutcracker Suite, Opus 71a (1892)*

About Tchaikovsky

Tchaikovsky was the first Russian composer/conductor to make an internationally lasting impression. Although he was educated as a civil servant and obtained a job at the Ministry of Justice in St. Petersburg, he could not get music out of his head. After 4 years at the Ministry of Justice, Tchaikovsky failed to get a promotion and resigned. Anton Rubenstein, pianist and composer, became the first director of the then new St. Petersburg Music Conservatory. Recognizing Tchaikovsky's talent, Rubenstein invited him to become a student at the Conservatory. Tchaikovsky supported himself by giving music lessons on the piano, organ, and flute and joined the Conservatory Orchestra. His style, while still studying at the Conservatory, showed glimpses of what was to come in later works with extensive orchestral colors and lots of drama.

Upon graduation, Rubenstein's brother, Nikolai, offered Tchaikovsky a post at the Moscow Conservatory. After 10 years at the Moscow Conservatory, Tchaikovsky began corresponding with an admirer of his composition, Nadezhda von Meck. Although it was her wish that they would never meet, Von Meck was his benefactor for many years, enabling him to quit his professorship and dedicate himself to composing.

Eventually, Tchaikovsky's compositions and conducting became very popular both in Russia and abroad. In 1888, he went on an important international tour, conducting his works in Leipzig, Hamburg, Berlin, Prague, Paris, and London. In 1889, he toured in the United States and London, conducting his famous Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor, Opus 23, and in 1893, he returned to the United Kingdom with his Fourth Symphony to accept an honorary doctorate from Cambridge University.

His mental state was deteriorating at this time, however, due in part to the fact that von Meck had ended her annuity in 1890. Tchaikovsky wrote his last composition, Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Opus 74, in August 1893 and conducted it on October 28. The audience response was not great and, devastated, he passed away on November 2, 1893, only 6 days after the premiere.

- **Born:** May 7, 1840, Votkinsk, Russia
- **Died:** November 6, 1893, Saint Petersburg, Russia
- **Spouse:** Antonina Miliukova (m.1877 -1877)
- **Compositions:** The Nutcracker, Swan Lake, 1812 Overture, The Sleeping Beauty, Eugene Onegin, Violin Concerto, 3 – Piano Concerti, 6 – Symphonies, The Queen of Spades, Romeo and Juliet, The Seasons, Serenade for Strings, Iolanta, Marche Slave, Manfred Symphony, Capriccio Italien, Variations on a Rococo Theme, Mazeppa, The Enchantress, Souvenir de Florence, The Maid of Orleans, Souvenir d'un lieu cher, Cherevichki, Francesca da Rimini, Piano Trio, The Voyevoda, Pezzo capriccioso, Orchestral Suite No. 4 "Mozartiana", The Oprichnik, Undina, The Tempest, None but the lonely heart, String Quartet No. 1, Fatum, Hamlet, Vakula the Smith, Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, Danse des petits cygnes, Orchestral Suite No. 3, Cello Concerto, Concert Fantasia, Valse-Scherzo, Souvenir de Hapsal
- **Siblings:** Modest Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Aleksandra Ilinichna Tchaikovskaia, Nikolai Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Ippolit Tchaikovsky, Zinaida Ilinichna Tchaikovsky, Anatoly Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Tchaikovsky's two-act *Nutcracker Ballet* is one of most endearing and enchanting works ever written. Based upon E.T.A. Hoffman's story *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, it premiered unsuccessfully on Sunday, December 18, 1892, at the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg. It was criticized for featuring children in too prominent a role for the ballet and the libretto was criticized for not being faithful to Hoffman's original story. Although the dancing and story line were criticized, Tchaikovsky's score was praised for being detailed, beautiful, melodious, and original.

After the premiere in 1892, it was re-staged in 1919 and 1934 with more adults in the children's roles and an adjusted libretto. An abridged version of the ballet was staged in New York City in 1940, and the San Francisco Ballet performed the first complete version in the United States in 1944. The now famous George Balanchine staging was by the New York City Ballet in 1954; this was the beginning of the tradition of the *Nutcracker Ballet* being performed at Christmas throughout the United States.

The ballet's first act takes place at Christmas in the Silberhaus Home and moves to the Land of Sweets in the second act. The fantasy that Tchaikovsky creates in these two acts enchants both children and adults alike.

Instrumentation – 3 flutes with part 3 doubling piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 bassoons, 4 horns in F, 2 trumpets in A, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, snare drum, cymbals glockenspiel, celesta, harp, violins 1, violins 2, violas, celli, double basses

Artifact –

[Andre Kostelanetz' conductor score](#)

[The history of Nutcracker Ballet performances](#)



1. Tchaikovsky Ballet Suites: Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty & The Nutcracker - Wiener Philharmoniker
2. Tchaikovsky: The Nutcracker Suite & Swan Lake Suite - Royal Philharmonic Orchestra & Yuri Simonov
3. Tchaikovsky: Nutcracker Suite - Berliner Philharmoniker & Mstislav Rostropovich
4. Tchaikovsky: Ballet Suites: Swan Lake - Sleeping Beauty - the Nutcracker - The Russian Philharmonia & Alexander Vedernikov
1. Tchaikovsky: Ballet Suites - Swan Lake; Sleeping Beauty; The Nutcracker
2. Tchaikovsky: The Nutcracker - Complete Ballet
3. Tchaikovsky
4. Tchaikovsky: The Nutcracker
5. Tchaikovsky: Nutcracker
6. Tchaikovsky: The Nutcracker - featuring The Royal Ballet
7. Nutcracker [Blu-ray]
8. Tchaikovsky: A Biography