

Tschaikowsky

Oh! Chante encore!
Piano Music

Lev Vinocour

Piano

Peter Tschaikowsky (1840-1893)

Oh! Chante encore!

Piano Music

Musique pour piano

Klaviermusik

- | | |
|--|------|
| [1] Polonaise
de / from / aus „Eugen Onegin“
arr. Franz Liszt (1811-1886) | 6'11 |
| [2] Berceuse / Lullaby / Wiegenlied op. 16, 1
arr. Paul Pabst (1854-1897) | 4'55 |
| [3] Oh! Chante encore! op. 16, 4
arr. P. Tschaikowsky | 4'04 |
| [4] Qu'importe op. 16, 5
arr. P. Tschaikowsky | 3'31 |
| [5] Perpetuum mobile
Carl Maria von Weber, Sonata op. 24, Rondo
arr. P. Tschaikowsky | 4'37 |

Les Saisons / The Seasons /

Die Jahreszeiten op. 37^{bis} 42'43

- | | |
|--|------|
| 12 Morceaux caractéristiques / Character
Pieces / Charakterstücke (1875/76) | |
| [6] No. 1: Janvier / January / Januar
Au coin du feu / At the Fireside / Am Kamin
Moderato semplice ma espressivo
la majeur / A major / A-Dur | 5'29 |
| [7] No. 2: Février / February / Februar
Carnaval / Carnival / Karneval
Allegro giusto
ré majeur / D major / D-Dur | 2'58 |

- | | |
|--|------|
| [8] No. 3: Mars / March / März
Chant de l'alouette / The Lark's Song /
Lied der Lerche
Andantino espressivo
sol mineur / G minor / g-Moll | 2'02 |
| [9] No. 4: Avril / April
Perce-neige / Snowdrop / Schneeglöckchen
Allegretto con moto e un poco rubato
si bémol majeur / B flat major / B-Dur | 3'04 |
| [10] No. 5: Mai / May / Mai
Les nuits de mai / White Nights /
Weisse Nächte
Andantino
sol majeur / G major / G-Dur | 4'19 |
| [11] No. 6: Juin / June / Juni
Barcarolle / Barkarole
Andante cantabile
sol mineur / G minor / g-Moll | 4'36 |
| [12] No. 7: Juillet / July / Juli
Chant du faucheur / Song of the Reaper /
Lied des Schnitters
Allegro moderato con moto
mi bémol majeur / E flat major / Es-Dur | 1'52 |
| [13] No. 8: Août / August
La moisson / The Harvest / Die Ernte
Allegro vivace
si mineur / B minor / h-Moll | 3'23 |

- [14] No. 9: Septembre / September 2'46
 La chasse / The Hunt / Die Jagd
 Allegro non troppo
 sol majeur / G major / G-Dur
- [15] No. 10: Octobre / October / Oktober 4'55
 Chant d'automne / Autumn Song /
 Herbstlied
 Andante doloroso e molto cantabile
 ré mineur / D minor / d-Moll
- [16] No. 11: Novembre / November 2'43
 Troïka
 Allegro moderato
 mi majeur / E major / E-Dur
- [17] No. 12: Décembre / December / 4'31
 Dezember
 Noël / Christmas / Weihnachten
 Tempo di Valse
 la bémol majeur / A flat major / As-Dur
- [18] **Doumka op. 59** 10'23
 Scène rustique russe
 C minor / ut mineur / c-Moll

Total Time: 77'09

Lev Vinocour, piano
 Steinway 1901

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Dabringhaus und Grimm Audiovision GmbH,
 Bachstr. 35, D-32756 Detmold
 Tel.: +49-(0)5231-93890
 Fax: +49-(0)5231-26186
 email: info@mdg.de
 Internet: <http://www.mdg.de>

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»I am very much in the mood for working on piano pieces now.«

It was with his operas, ballets, orchestral works, concertos and chamber music that Tchaikovsky earned his prominent place in the musical history of late nineteenth-century Europe. On the other hand, his songs and piano compositions (about a hundred works in each category) are barely known in the West, although they have always been very popular in Russia. Tchaikovsky composed for both genres throughout his career, from the *Scherzo à la russe* op. 1/1 and the Six Songs op. 6 (published in 1868 and 1870) to the Eighteen Pieces op. 72 and the Six Songs op. 73 (both 1893). Outside of Russia they are all too often lumped together as »salon music« while, for all their technical mastery, the piano works in particular tend to be viewed as mediocre and idiomatically arbitrary by less tolerant scholars, who almost apologetically explain that the compositions were intended for domestic use by accomplished amateurs. That is to overlook the special stylistic place both genres have in Russian music and their eminent social function. Tchaikovsky's striving for musical »beauty«, the decisive criterion of his art, is expressed at various levels of style and communication. The eternal themes of the human condition pervade his late »fate« symphonies and stage works, while the

light and generally understandable tone of the songs and piano pieces make them agreeable and entertaining; always, however, the honesty of his language and the »emotional nuances of his lyricism« (Boris Asaf'yev) are indebted to his unfashionable ideal of beauty. (Musorgsky - Tchaikovsky's aesthetic opposite - bitingly made fun of Tchaikovsky's quest for beauty in a letter to his friend Vladimir Stasov, the literary spokesman of the »Mighty Handful«. Could there be two more directly opposed contemporaries than the composer of *Boris Godunov* and that of *Eugene Onegin*?)

Tchaikovsky originally intended very few of his piano compositions for concert performance (the piano sonatas op. posth. 80 and op. 37 and the *Dumka* op. 59 are among those few). Most of the others - lyrical, humorous, serious and sentimental character pieces, mainly in ternary form - address themselves in the first instance to amateur musicians. They were welcomed by Tchaikovsky's publisher P. I. Jürgenson, for they were far easier to sell than orchestral scores and piano reductions of orchestral and stage works. The composer naturally also profited from them.

After the delightful twenty-four piano pieces »à la Schumann« in the *Album for the Young* op. 39, *The Seasons* is Tchaikovsky's most popular piano cycle. It originated from a fine idea on the part of

the St Petersburg publisher Nikolay Bernard. In November 1875 he asked Tchaikovsky to compose a piano piece to suit the season in each of the twelve issues of his periodical *Nouvelliste* for the year 1876. Tchaikovsky, lured by the attractive remuneration and »very much in the mood for working on piano pieces« (letter to Bernard of November 24), wrote the pieces between the end of 1875 and May 1876. Bernard published them also as a complete collection with the subtitle *Twelve characteristic pictures* in 1876, while Tchaikovsky's main publisher Jürgenson in Moscow had them newly engraved and published them as *12 Morceaux caractéristiques* op. 37b in 1886. (Jürgenson had assigned the opus number 37 twice, the first time to the *Grande Sonate* in 1879.)

Tchaikovsky deliberately composed *The Seasons* to meet the expectations of a wide-ranging, educated and music-loving group of subscribers. As he wrote to the publisher Bernard on December 13, 1875: »If the second piece appears unfit [...] and if] you want me to revise the 'Butter Week' [Carnival or *Maslenitsa* in February], please do not hesitate to say so and rest assured that I will write another piece for you in good time, that is for January 15. You are paying me such an enormous amount that you have every right to demand changes, supplements and abridgements, or even that I recompose pieces.« Bernard, who

in 1873-75 had already published four of Tchaikovsky's songs without opus numbers as supplements in the *Nouvelliste*, naturally did not deem that necessary.

Bernard had himself not only prescribed the name of the work and the individual titles, but had also prefaced each piece with lines by well-known Russian poets on themes which relate more or less to the titles. (These verses are given here in the German translation by Professor Reinhard Lauer of Göttingen.) However, Bernard obviously chose the poetry after Tchaikovsky had composed the pieces, so that they may not be seen as the literary basis for the compositions or as their programme. The »characteristic pictures«, according to the Soviet musicologist Boris Asaf'yev in his history of Russian music (Leningrad, 1930), represent »a poetic depiction of the Russian outdoors and everyday rural life ... regarded from the point of view of 'life in the manor-houses'«. In the first edition, both the publisher and the illustrator seem to have seen this in a very similar way, for the title pages preceding each of the pieces display corresponding genre pictures (engravings). (There are similar illustrations in Jürgenson's original editions of the *Album for the Young* op. 39 and the *Sixteen Children's Songs* op. 54.)

It is easy to speculate about the figurative or poetic associations Bernard's prescribed titles could have evoked in

Tchaikovsky and about the musical »tone-painting« equivalents he found for the lively celebration in »Carnival« (February), for the chirping (spring) »The Lark's Song« (March), the imposing »Hunt« (September) and the jingling ride on the »Troika« (November). Like the charming miniatures of the *Album for the Young*, however, they are character pieces in the Schumannesque sense, poetic tone pictures; »Harvest« (August) is indeed »absolute music« (it is called *Scherzo* in the autograph), while »Christmas« (December) is a dance in the form of a catchy waltz.

While *The Seasons* were primarily addressed to middle-class Russian amateurs, the *Dumka* op. 59 (Tchaikovsky also spoke of it as »Rhapsody« in his diaries) was a virtuoso piece »à la russe« for the concert hall and was so to speak a product intended for export. The original French title was *Doumka: Scène rustique russe* - a »Russian rustic scene«. Tchaikovsky composed it in a few days in February 1886 at the request of his Parisian publisher Félix Mackar; for the outer sections he fell back on a six-bar thematic sketch he had jotted down on a sheet of blotting paper several years previously. In 1885 Mackar had acquired the French and Belgian rights to Tchaikovsky's works from Jürgenson and set great store by having a piece composed especially for his firm. The *Dumka* was published by both Mackar and Jürgenson in 1886. The composer dedicated it to the influential

French pianist Antoine François Marmontel, whom Tchaikovsky had got to know in Paris in 1886 and met again on later visits, along with other »heavyweights« of the Parisian music scene. Marmontel was, as Tchaikovsky relates in his diary, »touchingly kind« to him, inviting him to his home and to observe examinations in his piano class at the Conservatoire.

The dumka originates from a Ukrainian ballad form. It is melancholy in character, having an introductory section made up of short, plaintively ornamented melodic phrases and a second, more recitative-like section. In the nineteenth century it became a common element in Slavonic art songs and instrumental music. Tchaikovsky, who frequently visited the Ukraine, might have modelled his work on compositions by Mykola (Nikolai) Lysenko (1842-1912), especially the Second Rhapsody for Piano (1877), in which a slow introduction (»dumka«) leads into a fast »shumka«. (Dvořák later also used that contrasting form in his six Dumky op. 90 for piano, violin and cello.) In Tchaikovsky's op. 59, the elegiac dumka (*Andante cantabile*) frames a fast middle section (*Con anima*). The work uses brief stereotyped ideas presented in ever new variants and climaxing virtuosically to produce a firework display of pianistic brilliance. The poetic subtitle *Scène rustique russe* was obviously a concession to the French audience, for the composition contains no typical, genuine Russian »local

colour«. In this effective big seller, the composer seems rather to have aimed not only at pleasing piano virtuosos, but also at pandering to the stereotyped expectations his western audiences had with regard to exotic, semi-barbaric composers from Moscow.

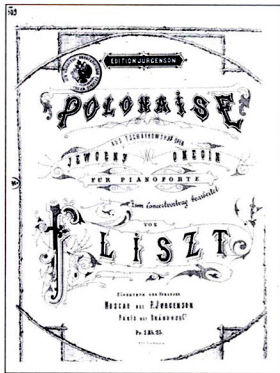
At a time when experiments with sound recording were only beginning, piano scores and arrangements of every kind for all sorts of instrumental combinations played a role similar to that of recordings in that they served to disseminate musical works. Tchaikovsky himself was not above creating piano scores of many of his operas and orchestral works, although it did hurt him to know that all the subtle hues contained in his lavish orchestral palette were being lost. And so he arranged his own compositions and those of other composers, sometimes for special technical reasons. An example of the latter case is the final Rondo from Weber's Piano Sonata op. 24. Brahms had already rewritten it (explicitly as a »joke«) in 1852, and at the beginning of 1871, when still a professor at the Moscow Conservatory, Tchaikovsky arranged it »for the left hand« on the same principle. That meant giving the original finger-breaking semiquaver chains of the right hand to the left hand and giving the original left-hand accompaniment to the right hand - with all the necessary harmonic and compositional changes. Nikolay Kashkin, a friend of Tchaikovsky's at the

Conservatory, told the story that Nikolay Rubinstein, overrating his piano students' knowledge and abilities in matters of harmony, set them the task of transforming the Weber Rondo in the described manner. The unsatisfactory results had prompted Tchaikovsky, then professor of harmony and composition, to take up the challenge and write an arrangement of his own. Like the *Polka de salon* op. 9/2 of 1870, it is dedicated to the young Moscow pianist Alexandra Zograf (Zoographe), and was published in 1871, the year Tchaikovsky composed it.

Tchaikovsky also created piano transcriptions of nos. 1, 4 and 5 of his Six Songs op. 16 (1872, published by Bessel in St Petersburg in 1873). This transformation into «songs without words» was probably carried out at the publisher's request; the writing and substance are largely retained and pianistic brilliance is avoided. In his recording, Lev Vinocour replaced Tchaikovsky's transcription of op. 16/1 with the piano version created by Pavel Pabst (1854-97), in order to show how painstakingly, finely and yet pianistically effectively a contemporary virtuoso pianist could treat the delicate original. Tchaikovsky knew and esteemed Pabst, a Russian pianist and composer of German descent who had been teaching at the Moscow Conservatory since 1878 (since 1881 as a professor), and dedicated the *Polacca de Concert* op. 72/7

to him in 1893. Pabst made a name for himself by writing very effective piano fantasias on three of Tchaikovsky's operas that other famous pianists of the time like Nikolay Rubinstein and Alexander Ziloti played in their concerts, notably the *Paraphrase de concert sur l'opéra »Eugène Onéguine«*, the *Grande Fantaisie* op. 83 *Réminiscences de l'opéra »Mazeppa«* (dedicated to Ziloti) and the *Illustrations de l'opéra »La Dame Pique«* (The Queen of Spades).

Elaborate and pianistically demanding »transcriptions« are a special musical genre of the nineteenth century, the era of the composing virtuoso. Liszt's numerous transcriptions are undoubtedly the most prominent examples. Liszt was personally acquainted with Tchaikovsky and also knew several of his compositions, including the *Variations on a Rococo theme* op. 33 (which he had called »real music again at last!« after hearing the cellist Wilhelm Fitzenhagen perform it in Wiesbaden in June 1879) and the »lyric scenes« of *Eugene Onegin*. The piano score of *Eugene Onegin* was published in October 1878 and the opera was premiered on March 17, 1879. In November 1879 Liszt wrote his grand arrangement (»dedicated to Karl Klindworth in friendship«) of the magnificent polonaise from *Eugene Onegin*. (The polonaise opens the third act: the hall in the stately home of Prince Gremin in St Petersburg.) It was published by Jürgenson



in Moscow in 1880 and later also by Rahter in Leipzig.

*Thomas Kohlhasse
Translation: J & M Berridge*

Lev Vinocour

Lev Vinocour began his musical training at the specialist music school at the Leningrad Conservatoire; he made his debut at the age of thirteen playing Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No. 2 with the Leningrad Philharmonic under Yevgeny Mravinsky. He continued his studies at the Moscow Conservatoire and passed the final exam with distinction. He then studied in England, at the Royal Northern College of Music in

Manchester, and in Italy at the Fondazione per il Pianoforte, Lago di Como.

Since then, Vinocour has worked with renowned orchestras and conductors including the WDR Symphony Orchestra, Cologne, the Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra, Moscow and the Czech Philharmonic, Prague and conductors like Eliahu Inbal, Semyon Bychkov and Vladimir Fedoseyev.

He has won prizes at various competitions including the Busoni Competition in Bolzano and the Clara Schumann Competition in Düsseldorf. Solo recitals, performances with orchestras and collaboration with the Tokyo String Quartet have brought him to stages of the Schleswig Holstein Music Festival, the MDR Summer Music Festival, the Rheingau Music Festival, the Schubertiade, the Festival of Flanders, the Carinthian Summer Festival and the Festival International de Luxembourg.

Lev Vinocour's partiality for systematic study of individual genres and composers has resulted in highly acclaimed recordings: Chopin's Etudes (1997), Prokofiev's piano transcriptions (1999), Strauss paraphrases (2001), and Schumann's Etude cycles (2003).

During the summer term of 2005 Lev Vinocour was a guest lecturer at the Hochschule für Musik »Franz Liszt« in Weimar where he gave an interdisciplinary master class aimed at both musicologists and pianists.



Lev Vinocour
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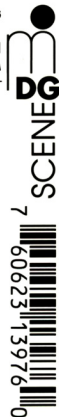
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English text enclosed • Texte en français inclus • Mit deutschem Text

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Peter Tschaikowsky (1840-1893)MUSIKPRODUKTION
DABRINGHAUS UND GRIMM

1 Polonaise	6'11	9 No. 4: Avril / April	3'04
2 Berceuse op. 16, 1	4'55	10 No. 5: Mai / May / Mai	4'19
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7 No. 2: Février / February / Februar	2'58	Dezember	
8 No. 3: Mars / March / März	2'02	18 Doumka op. 59	10'23
		Total Time:	77'09

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Musikproduktion Dabringhaus und Grimm, Bachstr. 35, D-32756 Detmold, Tel. +49-(0)5231-93890, Fax. +49-(0)5231-26186

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