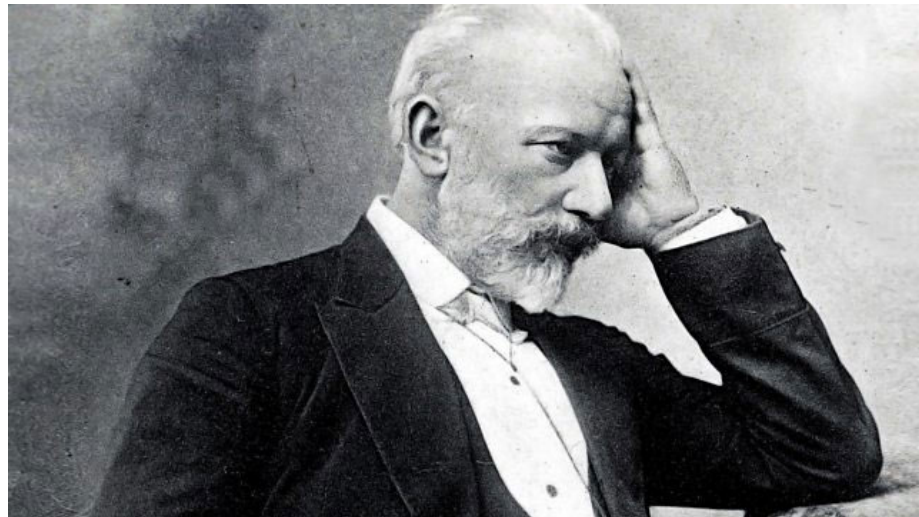


The quasi-scherzo third movement is a waltz in A major out of Tchaikovsky's top balletic drawer, with a trio in F sharp minor plus a long coda that reprises the motto, now in 3/4 time. Germanic academics were scandalized by the presence of a waltz in a numbered symphony, but not Brahms, who stayed over in Hamburg to hear a rehearsal, and during a bibulous lunch with Tchaikovsky the day after praised the first three movements.

The motto launches the last movement as it did the first, but now in E major, Andante maestoso, leading to another sonata-allegro construct -- this one vivace rather than moderato, with an alla breve meter that keeps it moving. At the end of the reprise, Tchaikovsky writes six B major chords -- a false cadence that invariably provokes applause -- before the motto, now bedecked in alb and fanon, launches a major-key coda as long as the entire development section. It quickens to a Presto dash for the double bar before broadening at the very end for a triumphantly sonorous tetrad of "end-of-file" chords.

TCHAIKOVSKY FIFTH SYMPHONY

Lorin Maazel The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra



Tchaikovsky composed this work between May and the end of August 1888, and conducted its premiere at St. Petersburg on November 17 of that year. Eleven years separated the "fateful" Fourth Symphony of 1877 from the Fifth, about which Tchaikovsky expressed ambivalent feelings both during its composition and later on. To his patroness, Nadezhda von Meck, he wrote in August 1888 that "it seems to me I have not failed, and that it is good." After conducting it in Prague, however, he wrote "...It is a failure; there is something repellent, something superfluous and insincere that the public instinctively recognizes." Yet by March he could write: "I like it far better now."

By no means did Tchaikovsky neglect the orchestra between 1877 (when he committed, in his words, the "rash act" of marriage) and 1888. He composed four wholly charming and fanciful suites, of which the second and third could have passed as symphonies had he chosen to call them that. Furthermore, he wrote the unnumbered but inspired Manfred Symphony in 1885. Yet Tchaikovsky never found symphonic structure as congenial as opera or ballet. His method was closer to Liszt's tone-poem procedure than to the Austro-German heritage, continued by Brahms and Bruckner among his contemporaries. Tchaikovsky favored sequences (in his

case, the iteration and reiteration of four-bar cells) over enharmonic evolution. Listeners who've sometimes found his music as irritating as he found Brahms' tend to do so because of sequence overload, finding that such repeated gestures result in an overblown effect. His greatest gifts were melody and orchestration: witness the popular songs plagiarized from his music, such as "Moon Love," cribbed from the slow movement of Symphony No. 5.

Like the Fourth, the Symphony No. 5 is unified by a six-measure "Fate" motto, heard straightaway in a darkly colored Andante introduction until, after a pause, the body of the opening 4/4 movement becomes a sonata-form Allegro con anima (with "soul" as well as spirit). It builds to a ferocious fortissimo climax before ending gloomily. Tchaikovsky marked this melodically rich slow movement Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza (songfully unhurried, with some freedom). In D major basically, it is a 12/8 sonatina (exposition and reprise), with an elaborate three-part song structure replacing the development section. Its special glory is the solo-horn arietta looted by "Moon Love", although the ominous motto theme from the first movement interrupts twice -- like the Commendatore's Statue answering Don Giovanni's invitation to dinner.



TCHAIKOVSKY FIFTH SYMPHONY

Lorin Maazel The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra

1 Andante, allegro con anima 14:25

2 Andante cantabile 12:56

3 Allegro moderato 5:35

4 Andante maestoso, Allegro vivace 12:16

John Culshaw Engineer Gordon Parry

Recorded by Decca 13-14 Sep 1963 Sofiensaal, Vienna



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