

Set 1. Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

<p>The Composer's Life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russian composer, polyglot, bibliophile (1840 – 1893) • <u>Born:</u> Votkinsk, (Udmurtia), <u>died:</u> St. Petersburg • <u>Education:</u> Started composing at 4, had piano lessons at 5; 1850 -1859 the Imperial School of Jurisprudence in St. Petersburg; 1861 Russian Musical Society classes in music theory, 1862 St. Petersburg Conservatory studying with Zarembo and with Rubenstein. • <u>Career:</u> 1859 civil service titular counselor at the Ministry of Justice; 1865 Professor of Music Theory at Moscow Conservatory (Music was his 2-nd career) • Promoted Russian music as a conductor in Russia, Europe, the USA, though had stage fright • Nadezhda von Meck, a railway magnate's widow, who never met him, was his best friend and patroness for 13 years • Tsar Alexander II, his admirer, in 1884 honored Tchaikovsky with the Order of St. Vladimir, later granted him a lifetime pension and gifted him an expensive ring
<p>Essential Pieces</p>	<p>The most prominent Romantic composer, Tchaikovsky displayed a wide stylistic and emotional range, from light salon works to grand symphonies. Best known for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballets (<i>Swan Lake</i>, which was a flop at the premiere), <i>The Nutcracker</i>, <i>The Sleeping Beauty</i> • Symphonies (<i>The 3rd</i>, <i>The 4th</i>, <i>The 5th</i>, <i>The 6th 'Pathétique'</i>) • Overtures (<i>1812 Overture</i>, <i>Romeo and Juliet Fantasy - Overture</i>) • Operas (<i>Eugene Onegin</i>, <i>The Dame of Spades</i>) • Concerts (<i>Piano Concerto No.1</i> , <i>Violin Concerto in D Major</i>)
<p>Music Style</p>	<p>Tchaikovsky's Romantic music combines beautiful melodies, impressive harmonies and colorful orchestrations. "Sweet, inexhaustible, supersensuous fund of melody" ensured success with audiences (Harold Schonberg, American music critic). He used both Western-style melodies and original Russian folk song melodies. His recognizable melodies demonstrate perfect technique in composition.</p>
<p>Cultural Recognition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tchaikovsky was a pioneer in several ways. Thanks to his patroness he became the first full-time professional Russian composer, which allowed him freedom to consolidate the Western compositional practices he had learned at the St. Petersburg Conservatory with Russian folk song and other native musical elements to fulfill his own expressive goals and forge an original, deeply personal style. • He made an impact in not only absolute works such as the symphony but also program music and transformed Liszt's and Berlioz's achievements into matters of Shakespearean elevation and psychological import. • Tchaikovsky produced music that reflected Russian national character in accordance with the highest European standards of quality. • Tchaikovsky was inspired to reach beyond Russia with his music. This mindset made him think seriously about Russia's place in European musical culture. • The first Russian composer to acquaint foreign audiences personally with his own work. • The composer's achievements, his music in historical perspective, could be compared to the sole bridge connecting different cultures.