

Tchaikovsky 5

Kevin Kauffman

Music 318

November 5, 2018

Abstract

The fifth symphony of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was written in 1888. Here we present an analysis of mm. 58-172 of the fourth movement, including the biographical context of the passage, the context within the symphony, as well as examples of how it is interpreted in practice. We show this passage, and the symphony as a whole, serves as a depiction of triumph over death by demonstrating the fifth was an effort to emulate the fourth, the fourth was in fact biographical in nature, and that the composer struggled with finding happiness in life at the time of the earlier symphony's composition.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born in 1840 in Viatka, Russia [1]. Despite studying piano at age 5, practicality forced Tchaikovsky to train as a civil servant. In 1861, at the age of 21, Tchaikovsky began attending classes taught by the Russian Musical Society, founded just two years earlier, and the next year, he joined the inaugural class of the Saint Petersburg Conservatory. Tchaikovsky studied there until 1865, at which time he took the role of Professor of Music at the Moscow Conservatory. It was during these four years Tchaikovsky began

to seriously compose, leading to his first symphony in the latter half of 1866. Tchaikovsky later said of the work:

...despite all its huge shortcomings, I still nourish a weakness for it because it was a sin of my sweet youth. [2]

Tchaikovsky atoned for such a *sin* producing six more symphonies over the course of his life.

10 Years Earlier: Understanding the Fourth

While his remaining symphonies are all part of the standard repertoire [3], there is a decided shift in the nature from the simple structure and tone of his second and third to the more complex of his latter four¹. A maturation in style would be expected with age, but Tchaikovsky's copious trove of preserved letters exposes a change in mental state which contributes significantly to the shift.

The contrast, beginning with the fourth symphony, must be viewed in the context of Tchaikovsky's present. From December 1876 to December 1877, the months during and preceding the writing of the fourth, two life changing events occurred:

1. Tchaikovsky married and separated (July 1877) [4, 5]
2. Tchaikovsky began a correspondence with Nadezhda von Meck (December 1876) [6]

A marriage is generally considered cause for celebration in one's life, however Tchaikovsky's union was not bound for happiness:

I again explained to her that I felt for her nothing except a simple liking...And so, one fine evening I went to my future spouse and told her frankly that I did not love her, but that I would be, in any event, her devoted and grateful

¹including Manfred

friend. I described to her in detail my character, my irritability and unevenness of temperament, my unsociability and, finally, my circumstances. After this I asked her. The answer, of course, was positive...Our wedding will take place in a few days' time. What will happen after that, I do not know. I doubt if I shall be able to take the cure. [6]

His lack of attraction and reluctance to marry undoubtedly stem from his now-well-accepted homosexuality [1]. Tchaikovsky was able to share the burden of this circumstance with his fortunately timed, not yet six months old acquaintance with von Meck. In such a short time, von Meck became a confidant of Tchaikovsky's (receiving about a dozen letters) as well as a patroness (raising his income considerably in just their fourth exchange [7]). Tchaikovsky valued their relationship so, despite only having corresponded for a few months and never having met, he dedicated the fourth to her, a high honor [8].

Tchaikovsky confided the outline was completed in May [9], however the bulk of the work was orchestrated later in the year [10]. During the period when the doomed marriage occurred Tchaikovsky's mindset can only be deemed suicidal. He wrote from July to October:

But to pretend one's whole life is the greatest of tortures. How could I even think now of my work? I fell in deep despair, the more terrible in that there was no one to support and reassure me. I started passionately, eagerly to long for death. [11] The deep and interminable melancholy it is imbued with resounds in perfect unison with the state of mind in which I have found myself from my departure from Kamenka and which today is inexpressibly, unspeakably, and infinitely heavy. In the end, death is truly the greatest of blessings, and I call to it with all the powers of my soul...God, how hard and bitter life is, and what price one pays for the few happy moments! [12] I fell into despair. I looked for death; this seemed to me the only way out. I began to be overcome by moments

of madness, during which my soul was filled with such fierce hatred [5]

While the stormy nature of the fourth could be reasonably attributed to coincidence, the composers own program notes on the work remove any doubt.

This is Fate... which jealously assures that peace and happiness must not be complete... It is an invincible force that can never be overcome, but endured, hopelessly. The bleak and hopeless feelings... Oh joy! Out of nowhere a sweet and gentle day-dream appears. Some blissful, radiant human image hurries by and beckons us away... No! These were daydreams, and Fate wakes us from them. And thus all life is an unbroken alternation of harsh reality with fleeting dreams and visions of happiness... No haven exists. [13]

The tone of his writing about the work mirrors very closely the descriptions of his own emotions; the work must be considered autobiographical in nature. When viewed in conjunction with his exclamation of '*Let this music, so closely connected with the thought of you (von Meck), tell you that I love you with all my soul*' [14], the '*blissful radiant human*' staying the depression can only refer to the dedicatee herself.

Understanding the Fifth

10 years after the composition of his last numbered symphony, Tchaikovsky finally fashioned to revisit the form². His letters no longer portray a depressed and broken man, but one who is awed and humbled by the life and success he's had.

The monetary reward that he offers seems to me somewhat fantastic: \$25,000!!!

Or Mr. Cet is too carried away, or the American is mistaken in his calculations,

²While Manfred was interleaved, he was provided an explicit program prior to its writing, which he explained, differentiated it from his other works [15, 16]

and it's hard for me to believe that such money could be bailed out. [17] I somehow feel ashamed of my successes. [18]

Perhaps it was the presumed unjustified acclaim that drove Tchaikovsky to undertake the new project; perhaps he thought a new great symphony would make his success feel earned. '*I do absolutely nothing, I do not even try to start any work...I again will hunt for a work. I dream of a new symphony.*' he wrote in April 1888 [18], and the next month, he had settled on executing [19].

Despite this resolve, the composer still had reservations on his ability to deliver.

I will now work hard; I really want to prove not only to others, but to myself, that I have not exhausted myself yet. I often doubt myself and ask the question: is it not time to stop, did I always strain my imagination, did the source run out? [20]

As he strove for inspiration for his fifth symphony, his attachment to the fourth drew heavy on his mind. In the weeks between declaring to von Meck his intention to compose the the work³ and claiming to have found the inspiration⁴, he reviewed the parts of the earlier symphony, describing to von Meck on May 30th that the work stood out among his others.

For me it was a great and very pleasant surprise that I, it turns out, not only did not cool to her, as I am getting cold to most of my old compositions, but, on the contrary, I felt very strong and alive sympathy for this child. I do not know how it will be later, but now it seems to me that this is my best symphonic work. It is worthy of the person to whom it is dedicated. [21]

Based on this letter alone, it may seem presumptuous to claim the fourth as his inspiration,

³May 6 [19]

⁴June 22 '*now inspiration seemed to descend*' [20]

however his comparison of the two in December of that year, just a month after the premiere [22], indicate the intention of thematic similarity.

Have I really already, as they say, and now I can only repeat myself and pretend to my former manner? Last night I was watching the 4th symphony, ours! What's the difference, how much higher and better! Yes, it's very, very sad! [23] it's unfortunate that the symphony written in 1888 was worse than the one written in 1877. And that our symphony is infinitely better than the latter, I am absolutely convinced of this. [24]

Tchaikovsky is explicit, claiming the intention (or at least the outcome) of the fifth was a reprisal of the fourth. He feels, however, he failed in accomplishing this, claiming the work is 'insincere,' 'unsympathetic,' and 'pretend' [23, 24]. He closed his review of his own symphony with a most tragic thought: '*Is it already started le commencement de la fin*' [24].

The Symphony Itself

Do not say that everything in this world is sad. Joy is a simple but powerful force. Rejoice in the rejoicing of others. To live is still possible. [13]⁵

Tchaikovsky's fifth symphony follows thematically from the fourth and seeks to illustrate the belief that happiness can triumph over sorrow. Like the fourth, the fifth is cyclic. The theme for former work is inspired by Schumann's first and Beethoven's fifth [1, 25]. The theme for fifth draws instead from Russian roots, coming from Glinka's opera *A Life for*

⁵This quote refers to the fourth symphony. The belief is the fifth conveys the same. The only known composer's notes explicitly on the fifth say '*Introduction. Complete resignation before Fate, or, which is the same, before the inscrutable predestination of Providence. Allegro. (I) Murmurs, doubts, complaints, reproaches against XXX. (2) Shall I throw myself into the embraces of faith??? A wonderful programme, if only it can be fulfilled.*'

the Tsar [1]. Here we see a comparison of the opening bars of the symphony along side the relevant passage of the opera (transposed to the same key): [26, 27]



The context of the passage is the lamentation of suitor after his intended bride's father has refused consent until a new tsar is in chosen. The exact quote appears each of the three times along with the text, 'не своди на горе' [28], which roughly translates to, 'Don't turn the time of our meeting into tragedy' [29, 30]. A variation of the quote is found later in the opera following a similar text, 'сколько горя,' meaning, 'how much sorrow has this day brought?' The context is similar as well: the now-married bride is lamenting the same father forcing her son to war.



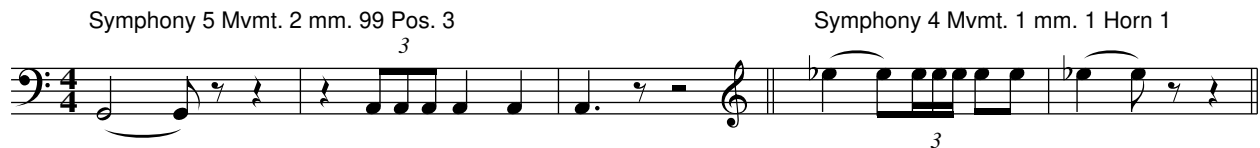
The theme which draws the two passages together is a loss of love. In the former case, it is due to a refusal of consent, and in the latter, it is due to a son being taken from his mother. Such a theme would resonated during the writing of the fourth for several reasons:

1. the failed marriage
2. the agreement to never meet von Meck, to whom he had expressed love
3. his homosexuality

It is thus not surprising that Tchaikovsky chose this specific passage around which to mold the fifth as he was sought to emulate the mindset of the fourth.

Like the fourth, the main theme of the symphony is not necessarily the focus of any particular movement. Unlike the fourth, however, the theme is used in all movements with varying purpose. It introduces the first movement⁶ - and thus symphony - as a quiet clarinet solo in E-minor, as if to be a funeral march.

It is not heard again until well into the second movement, where it is used twice as a harmonic transition, the first time outlining an A⁷ chord⁷, and the second time, a D^{o7} chord⁸. The appearances here introduce a triplet figure interspersed with the melody. It functions musically as a device to cement the tonality, but on a larger scale, it is a quote from the main theme of the fourth symphony. The instances are in third inversion with the second root and seventh adjacent in the bass, a non-standard harmonic choice that becomes critical later in the symphony.



The third movement sees only a small snippet in A-major near the end⁹. It serves as a segue from the meandering, melancholy third movement to the triumphant introduction of the finale. Here we have a recapitulation of the start of the symphony, but harmonized in the parallel major of E¹⁰. The theme has a major presence in the final movement, serving as introduction to the movement, the development¹¹ and the coda^{12 13}.

A more subtle variation of the theme is used frequently throughout the work. The final four notes of the theme constitute the first four notes of the Dies Irae, made famous by Hector

⁶Mvmt. 1 mm. 1

⁷Mvmt. 2 mm. 99

⁸Mvmt. 2 mm. 158

⁹Mvmt. 3 mm. 241

¹⁰Mvmt. 4 mm. 1

¹¹Mvmt. 4 mm. 172

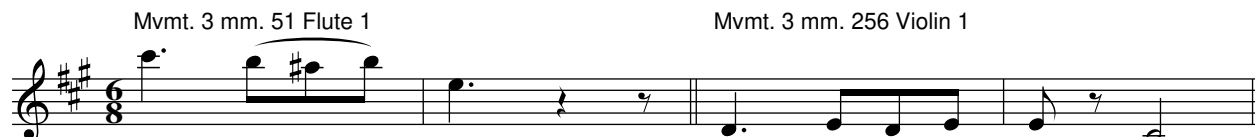
¹²Mvmt. 4 mm. 426

¹³Mvmt. 4 mm. 472

Berioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* in 1830, just 6 years prior to the opera's composition [31]. Whether Glinka intended as such, Tchaikovsky reinforces the pattern many times over in his work, leaving no doubt to his own intent. The four note pattern first stands alone in the horn at mm. 140 of the first movement, and is repeated later by the trumpet in the recapitulation¹⁴. Most memorably, it closes the movement in the bass clarinet.



The third movement sees similar usage. The quote is used to end a variation of the melody in the woodwinds¹⁵. Like the first, it also closes the movement, this time in the violins¹⁶.



Fourth Movement Exposition

When viewed aside from the interleaved main theme, the fourth movement is a modified sonata form. After the introduction, the exposition is comprised of mm. 58-172. The first theme is introduced at mm. 58 in E-minor, and the second, at mm. 128 in the less-standard D-major. The main theme introduces the development, after which the recapitulation begins at mm. 296 in the proper key of E-minor. The second theme again uses a non-standard key, this time being placed in F#-major¹⁷. The coda follows with content from the main theme

¹⁴Mvmt. 1 mm. 397

¹⁵Mvmt. 3 mm. 51 mm. 196

¹⁶Mvmt. 3 mm. 256

¹⁷Mvmt. 4 mm. 378

as well as themes from the first¹⁸ and fourth¹⁹ movements.

Immediately preceding the exposition, the transition from the main theme consists of a three note figure repeated in the flute, oboe and violin²⁰. In the context of the previous parts of the symphony, it is simply another nod to the main theme. However, once the exposition commences, it is clear that those three notes are intended as part of the Dies Irae, on which the first theme is based. This theme jumps off that figure with a subito rise in tempo (quarter = 80 to half = 120, dynamics (pp to f), and intensity (slurs to consecutive downbows).²¹

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is in 4/4 time, marked with a tempo of quarter = 80 and dynamics *pp*. It contains a 3-note figure (E4, F#4, G4) followed by a rest. The bottom staff is in 2/2 time, marked with a tempo of half = 120 and dynamics *f*. It begins with the same 3-note figure (E4, F#4, G4) followed by a rest, then continues with a melodic line. A slur connects the first three notes of the second staff to the first three notes of the first staff, indicating a thematic link.

The three note figure is apparent as the first three notes of the new theme. We also see similarities to the Dies Irae arise twice:

1. The first four notes of the melody
2. The end of the melody, starting at the last full measure

In the former case, just those four notes are reinforced rhythmically in the woodwinds, and melodically in the first clarinet. The entire 8 bar phrase is repeated at mm. 66 with a more full voicing, the addition of the brass, a higher dynamic, and less eighth note embellishment.

¹⁸mm. 551-554 are taken from Mvmt.1 mm. 42-43

¹⁹mm. 504 from mm. 82, mm. 518 from mm. 128

²⁰mm.51

²¹The first theme is modified here for conciseness. In the score, the two pairs of bars are each repeated.

Significantly, the harmony has also changed. Starting in mm. 71 all D's are natural, contrasted with the D#'s as seen above, changing the tonality from harmonic to natural minor. The importance of the D natural is initially unclear, but it is the first sign of a gradual move towards a new tonality.

The second piece of thematic material begins at mm. 82: theme 1a. The volume is instantly reduced as the instrumentation is significantly shrunk. The effect is fortified by a move from unison rhythm to separate rhythmic figures. The oboes, clarinet, and bassoon play figures which only differ by the placement of an eighth note, however the phrasing, three beats vs two, cements the independence of the lines. This sudden contrapuntal-like writing does not lead to a drop in intensity, as the strings drive incessant repeated eighth notes throughout the section.

Theme 1a mm. 82

The image shows a musical score for three parts: Oboe 1, Bassoon 1, and Strings. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/2. The Oboe 1 part starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a dotted quarter note A4, and a half note B4. The Bassoon 1 part starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G3, a dotted quarter note A3, and a half note B3. The Strings part starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G2, a dotted quarter note A2, and a half note B2. The score is written on three staves with a double bar line at the end of the first measure.

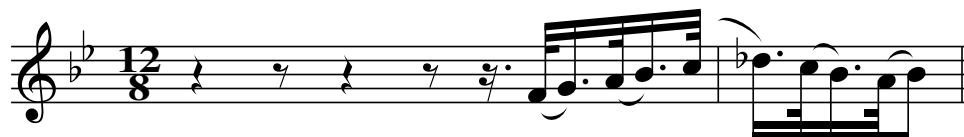
This short quote demonstrates three important important facts.

1. Both lines feature further allusions to the Dies Irae. It is most clear in the bassoon, whose first 7 notes are nearly identical to the reference passage. The Oboe features a similar pattern starting in mm. 83. Both instances exhibit a continuation of the line: the bassoon with only one extra descending interval (the A makes for a third consecutive descending third), and the oboe with three. This continuation lends meaning to other passages of descending intervals which may not contain the initial three note

turn, such as the bassoon melody containing descending sevenths,²² and the running 16th notes in the outlining descending fifths.²³

2. The tonality is vague. Depending on which notes are evaluated against the G and B in the strings, different potential chords arise. When the bassoon finishes its line, however, the arpeggio in the strings pulls the passage to A⁷, and finally to a definite arrival at D-major. This stability is fleeting and has dissolved before the next measure. Despite its brevity, it is, like the D natural in theme 1, a hint of a coming tonicization of D-major.
3. Tchaikovsky continued to draw inspiration from his fourth symphony. The oboe line here is a variation on a theme heard in the first movement of that work. The rhythm is identical (though adjusted for the tempo), and the rising and falling motion is strikingly similar.

Symphony 4 Mvmt. 1 mm. 15 Clarinet 1



The third piece of thematic material begins at mm. 98: theme 1b. Here, all melodic material is moved into the realm of the strings, and the winds and brass take ownership of the incessant eighth notes.



²²Mvmt. 3 mm. 60

²³Mvmt. 3 mm. 73

The theme consists of the same four bar phrase repeated at a measure offset. The first and last four notes mimic the two melodies of theme 1a, making this theme a sort of merger. In contrast to the vague harmonies of the previous theme, however, theme 1b is anchored by a drone E in the bassoon. The drone with the accompaniment in the other winds establishes a definite base of E⁷. This represents the first time (since the main theme introducing the movement) that we have any sort of concentraion around a *major* tonality. Despite this, we have two factors preserving the instability:

1. The D-E major second in both the horns and clarinets clearly establishes it as a dominant-7 chord
2. The moving notes in measures 3 and 4 above are coupled with changes in the eighth note ostinato, creating but a moment of temporary harmonic confusion

The theme is repeated²⁴ at the fourth over A⁷: this would be the perfect place to finally tonize D and establish major as the prevailing mood. The listener is left unfulfilled, however, as the orchestration thickens, becomes more dissonant and unstable, and finally in mm. 118 lands on a first inversion E-minor chord. The failure to establish D-major, and the descent back to E-minor, is reinforced by the orchestration. The flutes, oboes, horns, and low brass outline descending E's and B's. The trombones and tuba finally land on a fortissimo E²⁵ while an ominous alternation between G and A is played in the other low instruments.

If there was a metaphorical bottom of the symphony, it would be at this moment: a failure to escape from the minor, the ultimate culmination of the Dies Irae driven melodies, perhaps Hell even.²⁶ Even if only believing it in imitation, this might be the lowest of the lows of Tchaikovsky's struggle with depression and wish for death. Everything fades to

²⁴mm. 106

²⁵mm. 122

²⁶While Tchaikovsky struggled with his beliefs, he remained an avid observer and admirer of religion.

is a rising A-major arpeggio. This figure is not new either, being alluded to in both the third movement³⁰ as well as previously in the fourth³¹. The use of an A⁷ chord in third inversion was alluded to earlier: the main theme at Mvmt. 2 mm. 99 exhibits the identical G-in-the-bass inversion seen here. In both cases, it maintains a touch of uncertainty about the direction, keeping the tension. The listener remains on edge for another two measures until D-major is finally achieved.

Despite being solidly in D, two factors conspire to prevent a total stability.

1. Neither the tonic or dominant chords are in root position but for one beat after a suspension.
2. The melody both begins and ends on the dominant 7 chord. The melody in the horns, second winds, first winds, and dynamics all rise up to the tonic D, before falling away.

As such an instability would forbode, the D major does not last, and we end up in C major at mm. 148 with a variation on theme 2, played as a kind of round between the strings, and winds. The tonality again ends up vague at mm. 184 as a second variation on theme 2 is played. Both the melody and the bassline are continually rising with a dynamic increase as the running eighth notes, not seen since theme 1b, return to heighten the tension. After moments of unease, the main theme arrives triumphantly³² in C-major³³ to indicate the conclusion of the exposition and the start of the development.

³⁰mm. 73 Bassoon 1

³¹mm. 85 Violin 1

³²mm. 172

³³In the recapitulation, Tchaikovsky confirms the listener had reason for the unease by arriving in a minor key before finally arriving, again triumphantly, in the coda in E-major.

Interpretations

This Author

Aside from the crescendo in the bass, the intensity must increase starkly and suddenly. The tempo selected here is critical as it should be maintained throughout the exposition. While some parts, especially theme two, might lend themselves to a mild stretching of the tempo, the rhythmic undercurrent demands it remain steady throughout. A slight decrease may be used nearing the return of the main theme (mm. 170-171) both to ensure the extreme consonances are well weighted, and perhaps more importantly, to clearly distinguish the material of the exposition from that of the cyclic theme.

One of the challenges in just the second bar of theme 1 is to ensure the intensity of the first bar does not flag. Two things are conspiring against that:

1. The passage is descending
2. The reinforcement in the winds is removed

The melody must drive all the way to the downbeat of mm. 60. One strategy to combat this might be to conduct the opening bars as 4/2, meaning the culmination of the melody coincides with a down beat, and is thus visually reinforced. This also aids the horns in their note placement.

Something must be held back, however, as the repeat at mm. 66 bumps the dynamic to the fullest. With tutti quarter notes, maintaining intensity should not be an issue, and this might be an opportunity to move back into the marked time. The critical issue here is keeping the notes short. Despite the intended mood, each individual need not play the notes heavily; the weight will derive naturally from the density of the orchestration. To help reinforce the slight rhythmic contrast, a change from a 4/2 pattern to 2/2 may be advisable.

The left hand can be used to cue the trombones and basses, who are playing on alternate measures.

At mm. 70, two new ideas are introduced, namely the horn upbeats and the string flourishes. Individual notes in the string passage are unlikely to be heard due to the speed and number of players, so the focus should be on the horns bringing out the *sforzando* notes on the upbeats.

At mm. 75, we return to tutti with the quarter note pattern as before, with the caveat that it is written as quarters instead of eighths. Here the players may play a little longer and heavier to contrast the earlier passage, so long as it does not lead to a drop in tempo. The interesting development here is not necessarily the melodic line, but how the rhythm becomes broken up among the accompanying instruments starting in mm. 77. With three distinct entrances, the left hand can be used solely to cue the horns on beat one of mm. 77 and 80 and beat two of mm. 78. The baton hand can focus on the entrances in the other brass instruments. Whichever cues are provided, the downbeat of mm. 81 should be large as we are tutti by beat two.

At mm. 82, we have to make a sudden change in volume, and this, perhaps, should be overexaggerated even though the dynamic change is only to *mezzo-forte*. We have a further choice to make as we grow suddenly lyrical: should we remain beating in two, or move towards a one pattern (2/1). While both are defensible, there are reasons to lean towards remaining in two:

1. The dotted rhythm may be difficult to line up easily in the elongated beat
2. The more punctuated arpeggios played in the strings still demand a more driving beating pattern

Regardless which is chosen, the differing phrasing of the two melodies demands the focus of both hands. In the opening bars, the baton hand can show the decrescendo in the oboe,

starting on beat one of mm. 83, and the off hand can show the continuing crescendo in the rest of the ensemble. At mm. 84, a sweeping motion of the left hand can cue the celli and violins, as their accompaniment line should be brought out. The next phrase differs slightly in that the dynamics are blocked. This aligns with the aforementioned D-major consonance, so it is important to ensure the orchestra is unified in their crescendo and subsequent decrescendo. The arpeggio in the winds can be cued as before. The third phrase is similar to the first but for the accent on the downbeat of mm. 91. As there is no crescendo, this can be punctuated with the left hand before again cueing the strings. The last bar is perhaps the simplest, again having block dynamics though at a higher dynamic. The *sforzando* to *piano* transition in mm. 97 must be heard.

At mm. 98, the shift to lyricism is even stronger, and if wasn't already, should be beaten in 2/1 to accentuate the melodic lines, which now contain quarters and halves instead of eighths and quarters as before. The dotted rhythms in mm. 101 should not pose a problem as they are several bars after the initial pattern change and still accompanied by quarters. As with the previous section, the two melodic lines contain differing climaxes which can be shown by the two hands. Out of function, the right hand should take the secondary melody while the left, the primary. Clear cues should be given at the repeat of each phrase also indicating a return to the *piano* dynamic. This pattern can be largely repeated through mm. 114, ensuring the overall increasing dynamic is maintained. Eye contact with the winds in mm. 106 can also ensure they are entering correctly.

Mm. 114 brings a necessary return to a 2/2 pattern as the driving quarter notes reappear. The primary focus is to drive the crescendo, so along with the use of hands, a suitably enraged facial expression is absolutely necessary. A secondary requirement is the trumpet line be heard. In contrast to the rest of the orchestra, the trumpet line contains a non-steady rhythm. The left hand can be used to cue the downbeat of both mm. 114 and 116. This works out well, as after the second cue, the left hand can be used to reinforce the crescendo,

which is accelerating.

As the descending arpeggio occurs in mm. 119 and 120, it is important to ensure that the full intensity is maintained through the low brass in mm. 122. The low note should be loud and raw, perhaps cued with a fist, or even with both hands. The quarter notes ought to be easily kept on their own. The further bass notes should still maintain the raw feeling despite the diminished volume; perhaps using the facial expression to maintain the feeling while using pattern size to indicate the dynamic change. At mm. 126, the baton hand should begin cueing the string entrances and subsequent crescendo while the left hand cues the last trombone notes and subsequent falling off before readying to cue the winds. The notes in the strings here should remain intense as the joyous conclusion of the line is not yet known.

While the entrance at mm. 128 calls for a joyous expression, this transition should be delayed as long as possible to maintain suspense. The change in expression should be mirrored by a change back to 2/1. While 4/1 is a possibility here, 2 allows the realization of the accent on the downbeat of mm. 130. The melody will be heard due to its tripling in the winds, but of equal importance is the entrance and arpeggio in the horns, cued by the left hand. As the horns sustain, the next important piece is the rising line in the second winds. Given the thesis of this resolution on D-major being the climax of the development, hearing this rising scale is almost more important than the repeated G in the melody. The left hand can both cue and aid in showing the rising and falling phrasing. The Second coming of the melody starts similarly, but changes in the fourth bar, where we need to show the entrance and crescendo in the low brass and winds. A decrease to lower than a *mezzo-forte* here might be advisable to amplify the effect of the crescendo.

Starting at mm. 148, we again have a choice to make: whether to remain in 2/1, or move back to 2/2. Again, both are valid, but several factors lean towards moving back to two:

1. The driving quarter note rhythm becomes more prominent again

2. The entrances in the round all land on downbeats
3. The rising eighth notes in mm. 159 and 163 fall much more naturally, rising with the upbeat in the 2/2 pattern
4. The syncompated rhythms in mm. 157 and on would be difficult without the more fine grained pattern

At this transition, the dynamics are largely blocked again. As such, the left hand can focus on shaping the phrase while the baton and eyes guide the entrances. At mm. 157, the pattern may become a bit more pointed to aid placement of the offbeats before returning to a smoother pattern for the flourish of rising eighths two bars later.

At mm. 164, we must cue the tubas, and after, the left hand can focus on the flourishes in the bassoon and the accompanying horn entrance. Following this, the focus needs to be on the tutti crescendo and, in this interpretation, ritardando, before landing in mm. 172. In order to aid both, one might even subdivide the final two beats of mm. 171. Unlike the earlier arrival at mm. 128, the build up here for the prior two measures betrays an arrival at C-major. The expression can anticipate this triumphant conclusion to the exposition.

Leonard Bernstein

In this performance³⁴ we see several differences in interpretation [32]. Bernstein approaches the exposition at a very slow tempo, really building up the contrast. He starts at a tempo of 130 bpm³⁵, and instead of maintaining a consistent tempo throughout, moves up to a tempo closer to 145 at theme 1a. The commencement of theme 2 starts at closer to 150 before settling back at the same 140-145. Bernstein does take the main theme at mm. 172 at a slightly reduced tempo, but it is subito. Interestingly, this is major deviation to a recording

³⁴BSO, 1974. Though not cited, visibly in the shed at Tanglewood

³⁵slower than this authors interpretation at closer to 145

done by Bernstein with New York in 1960 [33], in which he started at 145 bpm, moved to closer to 160 bpm at 1a³⁶, and then settled back closer to 145 at theme 2. In this recording he does ritard before the main theme.

In a major difference in style, instead of moving towards longer phrasing in theme 1, Bernstein instead conducts in 1/2, giving every halfnote a downbeat. Even further, he conducts each eighth note. This gesticulation, which almost appears wild, is a definite way to ensure the intensity endures. The bars before mm. 82, are left unadorned until mm. 81, when the emergence of left hand signals the final tutti and preparation for the arrival.

The conductor's stance here might be described as a *power* stance. His legs are spread more than shoulder width, and at times angled significantly with respect to the orchestra. Combined with his arm positioning above his head, Bernstein presents an imposing figure which can only be countered with a complementary power from the instrumentalists.

Similar to the above suggestion, Bernstein does make a significant change at theme 1b. Whereas he was subdividing the earlier sections, here he only beats the written pulse. Given the intensity of his subdivision, he is able to convey the lyric change while still beating in 2/2. Unfortunately we cannot see his pattern in the 1a section³⁷. Bernstein's interpretation of this section is nearly identical to the authors, using the two hands to indicate the separate phrasing before reaching up to signal the entrance of the rest of the brass at mm. 114.

The low note at mm. 123 is driven home with two hands and fists, and further reinforced with an incredible facial expression. The diminuendo is indicated both with the baton as well as the melting of the face into something that might be labeled as demonic. Just moments before theme 2, Bernstein bursts into a jubilant brightness, welcoming the emerging wings.

Similar to the earlier contrast, Bernstein does not beat in 1 here, but again in a subdivided 2. This leads to a more prominent hearing of the quarternotes in the low strings. We do

³⁶poor horns mm. 98

³⁷an attempt to examine the shadows was inconclusive

see a beat of 1, however, in mm. 146 and 147 as this theme ends. While perhaps due to mixing, the focus is on the flute melody, and it is difficult to make out the horn. The push for volume from the flute is extreme from Bernstein's left hand, and leads to a sound which is almost strained with joy.

The measures from 148 forward largely match the above interpretation³⁸, especially the accentuation and indication of the eighth notes in mm. 159 and the anticipation of the return of the main theme. Bernstein's energy preparing for that theme's return is extreme, leading to a visible bouncing off the podium, something that indicates how extremely emotional and in the moment this live performance is. One can't help be moved to understand what Tchaikovsky felt, as it seems Bernstein does, when watching this performance.

Han-Na Chang

Chang's performance³⁹ differs from Bernstein's from the very start [34]. Chang drives energy at the start of the passage at close to 170 bpm. The tempo slows at 1a to around 150, and then 145 in theme 1b. We accelerate around mm. 115 before settling at 150 for the rest of the exposition. The energy driven by the tempo is very present and the hectic feel is a major shift from Bernstein's interpretation. Also unlike Bernstein, Chang does not slow her tempo when reaching the main theme, instead choosing to keep pace or even increase it.

Chang chooses the 4/2 pattern to start the passage, using fast and drastic changes in baton angle to help drive intensity. At mm. 70 she really drives home the *sforzando* in the horns, individually emphasizing every note with her left hand in accordance with the above suggestion. The 4 beat pattern largely continues through the crescendo, which is accentuated by the addition of the left hand to aid both the crescendo and the cues in the brass.

While the baton movement is still large, the decreased volume at 1a is conveyed by more

³⁸aside from the aforementioned rit

³⁹Qatar Philharmonic, 2014 Proms. Royal Albert Hall

restricted arm movement. Chang largely uses her left hand to bring out the parts she wants to hear, keeping the right hand steady. We see clear cues for the arpeggios as well as, in major contrast to Bernstein, for the *sforzando* in the low strings. The wind sforzandi in mm. 95 and 97 are similarly accentuated. We also see the presentation of a smile to the orchestra which darkens as we get further into this theme.

Unfortunately Chang is not visible for much of 1b, but we do catch a glimpse of her execution of the phrasing, which involves using the left hand to shape the violins and the rest of her body to shape the low strings.

We are able to see the transition into theme 2, which like the Bernstein clip, involves a joyous smile. Chang, however, displays it while the strings are yet rising. We cannot see her face in the moments prior, but later passages, including the recapitulation, make it believable that she was presenting as stern just moments prior. Chang emphasizes the secondary lines, especially the arpeggio in the horns in mm. 129 far more than did Bernstein. Correspondingly, the flute is not pushed to its limit, leaving it to a much lighter and cleaner sound.

In the final views we have of Chang, we see her using her left hand to shape the eighth note phrases in mm. 153 and 154. Her movement to and from *piano* in the following measures is well done.

References

- [1] P. Huscher, “Program notes.”
- [2] P. I. Tchaikovsky, “Letter 2368.”
- [3] S. Music, “Standard orchestra repertoire.”
- [4] P. I. Tchaikovsky, “Letter 574.”
- [5] P. I. Tchaikovsky, “Letter 616.”
- [6] P. I. Tchaikovsky, “Letter 524.”
- [7] P. I. Tchaikovsky, “Letter 546.”
- [8] P. I. Tchaikovsky, “Letter 554.”
- [9] P. I. Tchaikovsky, “Letter 569.”
- [10] P. I. Tchaikovsky, “Letter 594.”
- [11] P. I. Tchaikovsky, “Letter 592.”
- [12] P. I. Tchaikovsky, “Letter 601.”
- [13] P. I. Tchaikovsky, “Letter 763.”
- [14] P. I. Tchaikovsky, “Letter 625.”
- [15] P. I. Tchaikovsky, “Letter 2822.”
- [16] P. I. Tchaikovsky, “Letter 2733.”
- [17] P. I. Tchaikovsky, “Letter 3605.”

- [18] P. I. Tchaikovsky, "Letter 3547."
- [19] P. I. Tchaikovsky, "Letter 3553."
- [20] P. I. Tchaikovsky, "Letter 3588."
- [21] P. I. Tchaikovsky, "Letter 3572."
- [22] P. I. Tchaikovsky, "Letter 3725."
- [23] P. I. Tchaikovsky, "Letter 3738."
- [24] P. I. Tchaikovsky, "Letter 3748."
- [25] K. Kauffman, "Program notes."
- [26] P. I. Tchaikovsky, "Symphony no. 5."
- [27] M. Glinka, "A life for the tsar."
- [28] E. F. von Rosen, "A life for the tsar."
- [29] N. Milovanov.
- [30] Anon.
- [31] H. Berlioz, "Symphonie fantastique."
- [32] B. Leonard Bernstein, "Tchaikovsky symphony no 5."
- [33] N. Leonard Bernstein, "Symphony no. 5."
- [34] Q. P. Han-Na Chang, "Tchaikovsky symphony no 5."