Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky Essay, Research Paper

“Tchaikovsky is not only one of the corner stones of Russian musical culture and world music?. It’s at the same time creative and technical encyclopedia to which every Russian has reference in the course of his own work” (Cross and Ewen, 1025), said Dimitri Shostakovich. Peter Iltich Tchaikovsky is considered one of the best composers of all time. In this paper you will see how Tchaikovsky’s life was difficult and memorable.

Peter Tchaikovsky was born in Votinsk, in the district of Viatka, Russia on May 1, 1840. “His father, Lieutenant colonel Ilya Petrovich Tchaikovsky (a well-to-do engineer who was the principle inspector of Government Mines and Metallurgical works), and mother, Alexandra Andreuevna (of French ancestry) had seven children, of whom Peter was third” (Cross and Ewen, 1027). Peter’s first musical expression came whine he was three, upon hearing one of Mozart’s great aria’s, Don Giovanni. He demonstrated extaordinary sensitivity for music early in life. As a child he was fascinated y a little mechanical instrument called an “orchestrion”. When he was five he took piano lessons form Kundnges. Life passed and when he was ten he and his family moved to St. Petersburg where he was enrolled in preparatory classes for the school of jurisprudence. Nicholas Zaremba was a big inspiration, helping him to over come his natural tendencies toward indolence. And he worked hard and well. Another of Tchaikovsky’s teachers was Gabriel Lomankin. Tchaikovsky’s mother died of cholera when he was 14. He finished school when he was 19. For a year he worked as a clerk in the Ministry of Justice a job he hated, but devoted himself to completely. Tchaikovsky’s first 20 years were very hard. Working to survive in a world was there is no help. (Scionti, 375, Cross and Ewen, 1027-1028, Ewen, 375).

Tchaikovsky’s early works were technically sound, but unappreciated. I always thought that his music was always greatly appreciated in his time along with ours. He started composing in 1860 and completed an Italian Song, which was published. “He soon met the Rubinstein brothers, Anton and Nickolai; both were composers, and Anton was a pianist second only to France Liszt in technical brilliance and fame. In 1862 Anton opened Russia’s first conservatory, under the sponsorship of the Imperial Russian Music Society (I.R.M.S.); in St. Petersburg, and Tchaikovsky was its first composition student” (Ewen, 375). In 1862, Tchaikovsky left the government service and enrolled in the then Newly founded Conservatory. He combined his studies with Zaremba, a member of the Conservatory Faculty, and Anton Rubinstein with lessons in harmony, counterpoint, and orchestration. “Do not for one moment think that I expected to be a great artist.’ He wrote to his sister. ‘Whether I become a famous composer or a poor music teacher is a matter of indifference to me. At all events, my conscience will be clear and I shall no longer have thought to complain about my lot” (Cross and Ewen, 1028). Now when he was writing full time and some of his music was getting performed. “Characteristic Dances, for orchestra, was introduced by Johann Strauss II during the summer season in Povlovsky in 1865 a String Quartet and an Overture in F, for orchestra, where heard at students concerts at the Conservatory in 1865 and in 1866 respectively. A Cantata, ode to Joy (written-as a graduating exercise to Schiller’s words, the same text used by Beethoven in the Ninth Symphony), won for him a silver medal and inspired his young friend Hermann Laroche, later a famous critic, to say “You are the greatest music talent of contemporary Russia, more powerful than Balakirev, more creative than Serov, infinite more cultivated that Rimsky-Korsakov. In you I see the greatest, or rather the one hope of our musical future” (Cross and Ewen, 1028-1029).

Upon graduating in 1865, Tchaikovsky had the problem of supporting himself. However, in 1866 Nickolai Rubinstein, brother of Anton, invited him to Moscow to be a professor of harmony; despite the meager salary of fifty rubles a month, Tchaikovsky accepted. Gradually, he became accustom to his new teaching duties at the conservatory. “Much to my surprise,’ he wrote to his sister on February 19, 1866, ‘my course is very successful. My nervousness has completely vanished, and I am gradually acquiring the proper professional demeanor. My hypochondria are also disappearing. But Moscow is till a strange town for me, and it will be a long time before I will be able to think without dread of having to stay here for years, perhaps forever” (Cross and Ewen, 1029). Soon after he started to work on his first symphony, subtitled “Winter Dreams”. Worry, lack of confidence, and dissatisfaction with his writing caused him to have mental breakdowns and he suffered form insomnia. He was sure that he would die before he finished; he worked frequently through the nights. A nervous breakdown followed. A simmer holiday at a country house brought relief and he was able to finish the Symphony that people might not have liked. He was very lucky to have a chance to reverse the damage that he had caused. Tchaikovsky showed the score to Anton Rubinstein. He was not impressed with it and refused to conduct the premiere performance. On the other hand, Nickolai agreed to conduct it in Moscow on February 15, 1868. It was a resounding success. “The warm reception of the symphony exceeded all expectations even of Tchaikovsky’s friends’ wrote Kashkin” (Cross and Ewen, 1029). Tchaikovsky’s nest work, the opera “The voivode”, was also introduced in Moscow on February 11, 1869. Sixteen days after the performance Nickolai conducted the premiere of the orchestral Fatum.

He eventually finished his first masterwork in 1870. It was the orchestral Fantasy-Overture Romeo and Juliet, written on the advice of Balakirev. I was introduced in Moscow on March16, 1870, it was received apathetically. Tchaikovsky wrote: “My overture had no success at all here, and was wholly ignored?During the whole evening no one spoke a word to me a word about it” (Cross and Ewen, 1030). He then rewrote the fantasy completely in 1870 and revised it again in 1879 to produce the now familiar version. In the fall of 1868 Tchaikovsky fell in love with a rather unattractive opera singer named Desiree Artot. “Desiree Artot has conquered hearts by her charm rivaling the great beauties.’ He wrote his father, ‘and mutual declarations to that to that effect were exchanged. Naturally, the question of marriage came up. We both desire it very much, and if nothing interfaces we will be married in the summer” (Cross and Ewen, 2030). This never happen though. Desiree Artot married the Spanish baritone Mariono Padillo. There were seceral other women Tchaikovsky’s life. One was Antonina Miluikova, a highly emotional in-balanced student, during which she fell to her knees and asks him if she could serve him for the rest of her life. He married her on July 18, 1877. The marriage didn’t last very long. He soon ran out on her to live his own life. After, leaving he was soon drawn toward another person who played a very important and curious role in his life: the patroness Nadezhda Filaretovna von Meck. He learned of Tchaikovsky and his works through Rubinstein and became an immediate enthusiast. She wrote him a letter expressing how much she liked him, and he wrote her a formal letter of thanks. This was the beginning of a great relationship between the two. She supported him for thirteen years, the two never met. Why the two never asked to meet is beyond me. Why would von Meck have tried to contact her because she was a friend and that she was taking care of all expenses? Von Meck sent him 6,000 rubles a year with whatever bonuses he could manage. It is surly no coincidence that he wrote some of the best and the most memorable pieces. To see a list, of Tchaikovsky’s works see Appendix A.

HE never worked in the evening. He always went to concerts and the theater. His favorite past time was to mushroom on Sunday afternoon. In 1877 Tchaikovsky dedicated his 4th Symphony to von Meck. He accomplished a lot of great things during this, the prime of his life. (Cross and Ewen, 1028-1034, Ewen, 376-377)

Between 1881 and 1888 Tchaikovsky did more traveling than composing; and what he wrote was of no particular importance, but in 1885 he went Klin where he spent the next few years in isolation. He hung a sign on his door warning people to stay away. He took long walks in the country, did a good deal of reading, drank considerably, and devoted himself systematically to composition. In 1887 he directed a performance of one of his opera’s. Previously, he had avoided conduction. In 1890 Tchaikovsky heard news that disturbed him quite a bit. Madam von Meck was bringing her annual subsidy to an end. He no longer needed her money; but that she could end a friendship that meant so much to him, he was shattered. After returning from America he sank deeper in depression. He wrote his lost symphony called the Symphony Pathetique. Its premiere was October 28, 1893, the composer conducting. Five days after the premiere Tchaikovsky drank a glass of unboiled water and contracted Cholera. Many people thought that he was trying to commit suicide. When he was child, and his mother died he knew that one day he would die from Cholera when he got older. However there was no convincing evidence to substantiate such a contention. Tchaikovsky died November 6, 1893. He was a well-missed soul. He did many great things in his lifetime. He was and will be missed.

In this paper you read Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky’s life was memorable and difficult. I learned a lot of interesting things while researching this paper. For instance Tchaikovsky was a bisexual who was scared of these bisexual tendencies. He also worked on a lot of other people’s music. He was a great man with a lot of problems in his life. In the time of the great composer’s their music was considered “What was the best”