Season 2011-2012

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Thursday, April 19, at 7:00

Beyond the Score®: Pure Melodrama?

Jaap van Zweden Conductor
Fred Child Narrator
Leonard C. Haas Actor

A multi-media exploration of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4

Intermission

Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36
I. Andante sostenuto—Moderato con anima
II. Andantino in modo di canzona—Più mosso—Tempo I
III. Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato (Allegro—Meno mosso—Tempo I)
IV. Finale: Allegro con fuoco—Andante—Tempo I

This program runs approximately 2 hours.

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Gerard McBurney, Creative Director, Beyond the Score
Martha Gilmer, Executive Producer, Beyond the Score
Caroline Moores, Production Stage Manager

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Amsterdam-born Jaap van Zweden has been music director of the Dallas Symphony since 2008 and is also honorary chief conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic and Radio Chamber Orchestra (having been chief conductor and artistic director from 2005 to 2011). In January 2012 he was announced as music director designate of the Hong Kong Philharmonic; he will take up the post of music director in September 2012. Appointed at age 19 as the youngest concertmaster ever of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, he began his conducting career in 1995 and held the positions of chief conductor of the Netherlands Symphony (1996 to 2000), chief conductor of the Residentie Orchestra of the Hague (2000 to 2005), and chief conductor of the Royal Flemish Philharmonic (2008 to 2011). In November 2011 Mr. van Zweden was named Musical America’s Conductor of the Year for 2012.

Mr. van Zweden’s recent highlights have included debuts with the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra and the Boston Symphony (at the Tanglewood Festival) and his BBC Proms debut conducting the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic in Bruckner’s Eighth Symphony. Highlights of the 2011-12 season and beyond include subscription debuts with the New York Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony, and the Boston Symphony, and return visits to the Orchestre National de France, the Chicago and Saint Louis symphonies, and the Rotterdam, Monte Carlo, and London philharmonics. He made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2009.

Mr. van Zweden has made numerous recordings, including Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring and Petrushka, and the complete Beethoven and Brahms symphonies. He is currently recording a cycle of Bruckner symphonies with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic for Octavia Records. He has recorded Mahler’s Symphony No. 5 with the London Philharmonic, and his performances of Wagner’s Lohengrin, Die Meistersinger, and Parsifal are also available on CD and DVD. For the Dallas Symphony’s own record label he has released recordings of Tchaikovsky’s Fourth and Fifth symphonies and Beethoven’s Fifth and Seventh symphonies. In 2010 he recorded Mozart piano concertos with the Philharmonia Orchestra and David Fray.
Fred Child, who is making his Philadelphia Orchestra debut tonight, is the host of American Public Media’s Performance Today, the most-listened-to classical music radio show in the country. He is also the commentator and announcer for Live from Lincoln Center on PBS, the only live performing arts series on television. This season he is hosting American Public Media’s Carnegie Hall Live, a dozen live national broadcasts from New York City. Mr. Child was also host for NPR's Creators @ Carnegie, a program of wide-ranging performers in concert at Carnegie Hall, from David Byrne and Brian Wilson to Senegalese singer Youssou N'Dour. Before going to NPR Mr. Child was music director and director of cultural programming at WNYC in New York, host of a live daily performance and interview program on WNYC, and for 10 years a host at Oregon Public Broadcasting. In recent years he has hosted a series of high-profile live national concert broadcasts from Los Angeles, New York, London, Boston, Miami, and elsewhere.

Mr. Child’s CD reviews have appeared on NPR’s All Things Considered, and his classical music reports have appeared on NPR’s Morning Edition and Weekend Edition. He’s been a contributor to Billboard magazine and a commentator for BBC Radio 3. He made his acting debut in 2011, collaborating with composer Philip Glass and violinist Timothy Fain in a live performance and video project called Portals.

While growing up in Portland, Oregon, Mr. Child studied classical piano. He also dabbles in guitar, percussion, and bagpipes. His percussion band opened for the Grateful Dead at the Oakland Coliseum. He has narrated works at the Aspen Festival, with the Virginia Symphony, and with Musicians from Copland House in New York. His public performances include percussion with guitarist Sharon Isbin and piano four-hand duets with André-Michel Schub.

Mr. Child loves baseball (throws right, bats left) and is an avid hiker, climber, skier, runner, and a licensed private pilot.
Leonard C. Haas is returning to Beyond the Score having appeared in last year’s program about Holst’s *The Planets*. Mr. Haas has acted at many theaters in the Philadelphia region, including the Arden Theatre, the Wilma Theater, 1812 Productions, Bristol Riverside Theare, Act II Playhouse, Luna Theater Company, Mum Puppettheatre, Hedgerow Theatre, Cape May Stage, and People’s Light & Theatre, where he has performed in over 30 productions as a member of its resident acting company.

Mr. Haas has also appeared in two independent films (*cellar* and *Lebanon, PA*), played Norman in *The Dresser* and the title role in *Hamlet*, and received a Barrymore Award for the role of Henry in People’s Light’s production of *The Fantasticks*. He is the proud parent of two beautiful children.
BEYOND THE SCORE

Begun in 2005 the Chicago Symphony’s Beyond the Score® seeks to open the door to the symphonic repertoire for first-time concertgoers as well as to encourage an active, more fulfilling way of listening for seasoned audiences. The lifeblood of Beyond the Score is its firm rooting in the live tradition: musical extracts, spoken clarification, theatrical narrative, and hand-paced projections on a large central screen are performed in close synchrony—an arresting and innovative approach that illuminates classical music more idiomatically than other methods (program notes, pre-concert lectures, filmed documentary, etc.). After each 60-minute program focusing on a single masterwork, audiences return from intermission to experience the piece performed in a regular concert setting, equipped with a new understanding of its style and genesis.

This format’s potential was quickly recognized by orchestras in the United States and abroad; a rapidly expanding licensing program has since brought Beyond the Score to audiences throughout the United States, as well as in Canada and Holland, presented by organizations of many sizes. Recognizing that a large population is economically or geographically unable to attend these performances in person, the Chicago Symphony also offers digital video downloads of selects programs from its website at www.beyondthescore.org.

In September 2008 the Chicago Symphony released Shostakovich’s Fourth Symphony, led by its then-principal conductor, Bernard Haitink, on its CSO Resound label. Accompanying this Grammy Award-winning recording of the Symphony is a free bonus DVD video of the Beyond the Score production examining Shostakovich’s controversial and powerful work—the first commercially released video from this acclaimed concert series.

For more information on Beyond the Score, including video downloads, please visit www.beyondthescore.org.
Pure Melodrama?

The most shattering personal crisis of Tchaikovsky’s life—his ill-conceived marriage to a young student in 1877—coincided with one of the greatest periods of his composing career. Over a mere two years, he poured out a stream of masterpieces, culminating in his Fourth Symphony, a 19th-century Russian music drama to rival the great literary dramas of Pushkin and Tolstoy. In an eruption of purely orchestral sound, Tchaikovsky makes instruments speak with the theatrical vividness of characters in a play or a novel. The result is a flawless work, and at the same time a portrait of a society in ferment and the loneliness of individuals struggling to comprehend historical events that swirl around them. The young Russian knew he had achieved something extraordinary, calling his symphony “better than anything I’ve done so far.”

Parallel Events

1877
Tchaikovsky
Symphony No. 4

Music
Brahms
Symphony No. 2

Literature
Ibsen
*The Pillars of Society*

Art
Rodin
*The Age of Bronze*

History
First public telephones (U.S.)
Symphony No. 4

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Born in Kamsko-Votkinsk, Russia, May 7, 1840
Died in St. Petersburg, November 6, 1893

The genesis of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony is intimately linked to the composer's relationships with two infatuated women, one of whom he never met, but became deeply attached, the other whom he precipitously married but never loved and lived with only briefly. In December 1876 a remarkable woman, Nadezhda von Meck, recently widowed, began an extensive correspondence with the composer that would last for nearly 14 years; during that time she offered him friendship, emotional support, and considerable financial assistance.

An important piece of information that Tchaikovsky did not immediately confide to her was his intention to marry Antonina Milyukova, a former student of his at the Moscow Conservatory. There are no simple answers, only simplistic ones, as to why he decided to make the ill-considered engagement in May 1877, just as he was sketching the Fourth Symphony, and then go through with the ill-fated marriage itself in July. Tchaikovsky generally did little to hide his homosexuality and commented in a letter to his brother Modest that he was “guilty of nothing!” He was nonetheless sensitive to public perception and to any embarrassment he might cause his family and friends; in the same letter to Modest he said that he felt marrying would “shut the mouths of various contemptible creatures whose opinion I do not value in the least but who can cause pain to the people close to me.” In any case, the marriage lasted just a few weeks before Tchaikovsky fled Moscow for the rest of the summer.

He immersed himself in completing two great compositional projects: the Fourth Symphony and his new opera, Eugene Onegin. Upon returning to Moscow in September to teach, Tchaikovsky joined Antonina and realized once again that their marriage would not work. Severely depressed, he was later rumored to have thrown himself into the Moskva River, although suicide does not really seem to have been a serious option. Instead, he decided to leave Russia. He never divorced Milyukova, and helped to support her for the rest of his life. Tchaikovsky retreated to Switzerland, France, and Italy, barely working on the Symphony again before arriving in Venice in December. He put the finishing touches on the work in San Remo around the turn of the new year. Nikolai Rubinstein conducted the premiere in February 1878 in Moscow to rather tepid response, although Tchaikovsky declared that “in my inner soul I am still certain that this is the best of all that I have written.” A performance in St. Petersburg later that year proved a great success.

The Story Behind the Work Tchaikovsky secretly dedicated the Symphony to Madame von Meck, hiding her identity with the words: “To my best friend.” In their many letters about this work—what they both called “our symphony”—Tchaikovsky kept her apprised of its progress, completion, performance, and ultimately, at her request, of its supposed meaning. In one of the most famous letters the composer ever wrote, he laid out for her a story behind the work. After making the usual artistic disclaimers about how it is impossible in words to express what music means, he said that the symphony “was the musical confession of a soul in which many
things have welled up and which by its very nature is poured out in the form of sounds.” The analysis that followed was quite specific and even included written-out musical examples of the principal themes:

The introduction is the kernel of the whole symphony, without question its main idea: [opening brass fanfare example]. This is Fate, the force of destiny, which ever prevents our pursuit of happiness from reaching its goal, which jealously stands watch lest our peace and well-being be full and cloudless, which hangs like the sword of Damocles over our heads and constantly, ceaselessly poisons our souls. It is invincible, inescapable. One can only resign oneself and lament fruitlessly [another example].

This disconsolate and despairing feeling grows ever stronger and more intense. Would it not be better to turn away from reality and immerse oneself in dreams? [second theme example.] O joy! A sweet tender dream has appeared. A bright, beneficent human form flits by and beckons us on: [another example]. How wonderful! How distant now is the sound of the implacable introductory theme! Dreams little by little have taken over the soul. All that is dark and bleak is forgotten. There it is, there it is—happiness!

But no! These are only dreams, and Fate awakens us from them: [opening fanfare example again]. And thus, all life is the ceaseless alternation of bitter reality with evanescent visions and dreams of happiness. … There is no refuge. We are buffeted about by this sea until it seizes us and pulls us down to the bottom. There you have roughly the program of the first movement.

Tchaikovsky goes on at great length about the Symphony and concludes by saying that before sending the letter he reread it and was “horrified at the obscurity and inadequacy of the program. For the first time in my life I have had to put into words and phrases musical thoughts and musical images.” Those words and images, in fact, are familiar—other composers had expressed similar thoughts before, especially in relation to the theme of “Fate.”

Although we can never know whether Tchaikovsky really had this all in mind while he was writing the Symphony or made it up afterwards to please his dear friend and patron, he did express similar comments to an esteemed colleague. The composer and teacher Sergei Taneyev, who eventually wrote a piano reduction of the Symphony, criticized the “disproportionate length of the first movement,” which he felt was more like a symphonic poem. He also noted the striking opening brass fanfare that returns at crucial moments in the first and last movement, and the frequent changes in tempo, all of which led him to think the work must have some kind of program. Tchaikovsky responded:

Of course, my Symphony is program music, but it would be impossible to give the program in words; it would be ludicrous and only raise a smile. … I must tell you that in my simplicity I imagined my plan for the Symphony to be so obvious that everyone would understand its meaning, or at least its leading ideas, without any
definite program. … In reality my work is a reflection of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony; I have not copied his musical contents, only borrowed the central idea. … Let me add that there is not a single measure in this Fourth Symphony of mine that I have not truly felt and which is not an echo of my most intimate spiritual life.

A Closer Look  

Tchaikovsky opens the first movement (Andante sostenuto—Moderato con anima) with the “Fate" fanfare that leads directly into one of the many dance-like themes in the work. Taneyev had complained that “in every movement there are phrases that sound like ballet music" and indeed the spirit of dance dominates the entire Symphony. Music historian Richard Taruskin has observed that even the rhythm of the opening fanfare alludes to the polonaise, the majestic Polish dance, and has pointed to its “operatic behavior" in this most dramatic symphony.

The second movement (Andantino in modo di canzona) begins with a plaintive oboe solo. In his letter to von Meck he tells her it “shows another aspect of sadness. Here is the melancholy feeling that overcomes us when we sit weary and alone at the end of the day. The book we pick up slips from our fingers, and a procession of memories passes by in review. We remember happy times of youth as well as moments of sorrow. We regret what is past, but have neither the courage nor the will to begin a new life. … There is a bittersweet comfort in losing oneself in the past.”

The Scherzo (Pizzicato ostinato: Allegro) is a tour-de-force for the strings, plucked rather than bowed, that contrasts with woodwinds in a folk-like middle section. Von Meck asked Tchaikovsky at what point he had decided to have the strings play in this manner—was it simultaneous with or after writing the melodic material? He answered that he never composed in the abstract—musical ideas and orchestration were bound together: The scherzo “is unthinkable playing any other way than pizzicato. If you bowed it, it would lose absolutely everything. It would be a soul without a body; its music would lose all its attraction.”

The Finale (Allegro con fuoco) is based on a folk tune, “In the Field a Birch Tree Stood." The Fate theme returns once again, but as in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony struggles and challenges are eventually overcome and lead to triumph. Trying to find the right words to describe what his music does so much better, Tchaikovsky’s explanation to von Meck may in fact offer a more poignant commentary on his life at this time than it does on the final movement of their symphony: “If you find no joy in yourself, look around you. Go out among the people: see how they can enjoy life and give themselves up to festivity. But hardly have we had a moment to enjoy this when Fate, relentless and untiring, makes his presence known. In their revelry, the others take no notice. … There is still happiness, simple and naïve. Delight in the happiness of others. Life is still possible.”

—Christopher H. Gibbs

_Tchaikovsky composed his Symphony No. 4 in 1877._
The Fourth Symphony has been a staple of The Philadelphia Orchestra’s repertoire since Fritz Scheel conducted the first Orchestra performances of the work in November of 1905. Most recently on subscription, the Philadelphians played the piece in November 2009, with Stéphane Denève. Some of the conductors who have led the work with the Orchestra include Leopold Stokowski, Artur Rodzinski, Pierre Monteux, Eugene Ormandy, Seiji Ozawa, Daniel Barenboim, James Levine, Leonard Bernstein, Yuri Temirkanov, Leonard Slatkin, Riccardo Muti, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Charles Dutoit, and Christoph Eschenbach.

The Orchestra has recorded the work six times: in 1928 with Stokowski for RCA; in 1953 and 1963 with Ormandy for CBS; in 1973 with Ormandy for RCA; in 1990 with Muti for EMI; and in 2006 with Eschenbach for Ondine.

Tchaikovsky’s score calls for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, triangle), and strings.

The Fourth Symphony runs approximately 45 minutes in performance.

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GENERAL TERMS

Cadence: The conclusion to a phrase, movement, or piece based on a recognizable melodic formula, harmonic progression, or dissonance resolution

Cadenza: A passage or section in a style of brilliant improvisation, usually inserted near the end of a movement or composition

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

Coda: A concluding section or passage added in order to confirm the impression of finality

Counterpoint: A term that describes the combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines

Diatonic: Melody or harmony drawn primarily from the tones of the major or minor scale

Legato: Smooth, even, without any break between notes

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Minuet: A dance in triple time commonly used up to the beginning of the 19th century as the lightest movement of a symphony

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Op.: Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output. Opus numbers are not always reliable because they are often applied in the order of publication rather than composition.

Ostinato: A steady bass accompaniment, repeated over and over

Pizzicato: Plucked

Polonaise: A Polish national dance in moderate triple meter

Rondo: A form frequently used in symphonies and concertos for the final movement. It consists of a main section that alternates with a variety of contrasting sections (A-B-A-C-A etc.).

Scherzo: Literally “a joke.” Usually the third movement of symphonies and quartets that was introduced by Beethoven to replace the minuet. The scherzo is followed by a gentler section called a trio, after which the scherzo is repeated. Its characteristics are a rapid tempo in triple time, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts.

Sonata form: The form in which the first movements (and sometimes others) of symphonies are usually cast. The sections are exposition, development, and recapitulation, the last sometimes followed by a coda. The exposition is the introduction of the musical ideas, which are then “developed.” In the recapitulation, the exposition is repeated with modifications.

Tonic: The keynote of a scale

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Allegro: Bright, fast

Andante: Walking speed

Andantino: Slightly quicker than andante

Con anima: With feeling

Con fuoco: With fire, passionately, excited

In modo di canzona: In the style of a song

Meno mosso: Less moved (slower)

Moderato: A moderate tempo, neither fast nor slow

Più mosso: Faster

Sostenuto: Sustained