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TCHAIKOVSKY

COMPLETE WORKS FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA



JENNIFER KOH

ALEXANDER VEDERNIKOV
ODENSE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CEDILLE
9

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TCHAIKOVSKY

COMPLETE WORKS FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)

- ① Sérénade mélancolique, Op. 26 (10:32)
- ② Valse-Scherzo, Op. 34 (6:20)

Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35 (38:06)

- ③ I. Allegro moderato (19:54)
- ④ II. Canzonetta: Andante (7:20)
- ⑤ III. Finale: Allegro vivacissimo (10:47)

Souvenir d'un lieu cher, Op. 42* (18:55)

- ⑥ I. Meditation (10:37)
- ⑦ II. Scherzo (3:52)
- ⑧ III. Melodie (4:19)

TT: (74:20)

*orchestration by Alexander Glazunov

JENNIFER KOH
ALEXANDER VEDERNIKOV
ODENSE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PERSONAL NOTE

Recording Tchaikovsky's complete works for violin and orchestra with Alexander Vedernikov and the Odense Symphony has been a wonderful circular process and an important part of my personal history that began nearly 25 years ago. I first met Maestro Vedernikov in 1992, when I was only 15 years old, as my conductor in the last round of the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians. I first played with the Odense Symphony in 1992, and made my first recording (ever) with the orchestra in 1996, performing the Nielsen Violin Concerto under Osmo Vänskä.

Fast forward to 2011, a partnership was formed when I performed with Mo. Vedernikov and the Odense Symphony together; and finally, in 2014, the circle was complete when I performed the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto with Mo. Vedernikov — for only the second time — and the NHK Symphony.

Tchaikovsky's music has been in my life since I was a child, and I am pleased to reconnect with these musical partners who have also been a part of my life from before I began my professional career as a musician.

Jennifer Koh

TCHAIKOVSKY: WORKS FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA

Program notes by Patrick Castillo

Tchaikovsky's music for violin and orchestra spans just three years of his prolific career. Yet in both substance and circumstance, these few works capture an essential part of the composer's vita. Certainly, they contain the hallmarks of Tchaikovsky's language — above all, melodic and dramatic instincts that shake the listener to the core — that have enshrined him among the repertoire's most cherished voices (and, among his countrymen, as the most revered composer bar none). They moreover nod to various important figures in his life and chronicle a period marked by personal turmoil and artistic triumph.

Tchaikovsky's first essay for violin and orchestra, the *Sérénade mélancolique* in B minor, Op. 26, dates from early 1875. The work was intended for Leopold Auer, whose later criticism of the Violin Concerto stung the composer and cost Auer the Concerto's dedication. This went instead to Adolph Brodsky, who

premiered both works. The *Sérénade* manifests Tchaikovsky's melodic gift not in soaring lyricism, but in pithy stoicism. The soloist's tearful first utterances, played on the dark-hued fourth string, chasten the deceptively idyllic introduction. Even as the music quickens and delves into a major key, its melodic profile remains tautly contained; the prevailing melancholia precludes any indulgence in rhapsodic flow (as we encounter later in the Concerto). On the reprise of the opening section, a quiet oscillating patter in the flutes, like a wispy gauze surrounding the melody, illustrates Tchaikovsky's ear for orchestral color, an under-recognized facet of his artistry.

The *Sérénade* marked the end of Tchaikovsky's first decade in Moscow, where he had taken up a position at the newly opened Conservatory following his studies in St. Petersburg. This was a formative period, during which he became a prominent figure among Moscow's cultural elite, rubbing shoulders with the literati and other sophisticates.

As he gained in social celebrity, his horror at the prospect of public gossip about his sexual inclinations intensified. In 1877, Tchaikovsky married Antonina Milyukova, “a woman with whom I am not the least in love” (and, according to his brother Modest, “a crazed half-wit” to boot). The couple separated after two torturous months, though never divorced. Later that year, Tchaikovsky began his curious relationship with Nadezhda von Meck, the eccentric millionaire widow of a railroad tycoon and mother of eleven. Meck, ten years Tchaikovsky’s senior and moonstruck by his music, became his patroness for the next thirteen years. By her own request, the two never formally met — yet through their constant written correspondence, they developed a strong bond.

The *Valse-Scherzo* in C major, Op. 34, was completed in this consequential year. Tchaikovsky dedicated the score to violinist Iosif Kotek: his former composition student; the intermediary in his initial correspondence with Meck; and, for a time, likely his lover.

Tchaikovsky confided to Modest, “When he caresses me with his hand, when he lies with his head inclined on my breast, and I run my hand through his hair and secretly kiss it ... passion rages within me with such unimaginable strength.”

The delicately scored *Valse-Scherzo* combines forms emblematic of distinct eras. Tchaikovsky infuses the old-world salon elegance of the waltz with the more modern scherzo’s devilish mischief, churned by impish repeated notes and fiendish double-stops in the solo part. Like the *Sérénade* before it, this modestly scaled score would not be out of place as the inner movement of a larger concerto. (A cadenza even appears, bridging the work’s soulful middle section to the reprise of the opening.)

Such was the origin of *Souvenir d’un lieu cher*, Op. 42. Over the course of three days in March 1878, Tchaikovsky wrote a *Méditation* in D minor, originally intended as the slow movement of his Violin Concerto

but quickly discarded. He returned to the work in May, now envisioning it as the first movement of a three-movement work for violin and piano. On May 25, Tchaikovsky traveled to Brailov, Meck’s estate where he was welcomed at a guesthouse (so long as their agreement to avoid personal contact remained in effect; during one stay, while the composer was out for a walk and Meck was running late for a social appointment, the two inadvertently came face to face for the only time). His retreat to Brailov provided much-needed catharsis in the wake of the marriage crisis, which, in addition to the psychological trauma it caused, had moreover halted Tchaikovsky’s creativity.

At Brailov, rejuvenated, he added a *Scherzo* and *Mélodie* to the *Méditation*. The resultant *Souvenir d’un lieu cher* — “memory of a beloved place” — bears an enigmatic dedication to “B*****.” The dedicatee is Brailov itself; Tchaikovsky made a gift of his manuscript to Meck. Glazunov later orchestrated the *Scherzo* and *Mélodie* to prepare

an arrangement of *Souvenir d’un lieu cher* for violin and orchestra, in which incarnation it is commonly heard.

The *Méditation* opens with an introduction of searching poignancy. The music is set in D minor, but chromatic turns and sighing appoggiaturas shroud the harmony in an enigmatic haze. The music settles unequivocally into somber D minor as the violin enters, issuing the melancholic theme. A second theme appears in B-flat major, graceful and elegant. Tchaikovsky marks the accompaniment *dolce* as the violin takes a fanciful turn, marked by dancing triplets and decorative trills. Although the music’s character has changed, a sense of nostalgia continues to permeate the movement. As the *Méditation* approaches its close, the violin shows flashes of virtuosity, reflecting Tchaikovsky’s original intention for the work

The remainder of *Souvenir* echoes Mendelssohn. The blistering *Scherzo* recalls that composer’s signature

Midsummer Night's Dream scherzo, just as the concluding *Mélodie* evokes his *Lieder ohne Worte*; indeed, Tchaikovsky alternately described this movement as a "chant sans paroles." It likewise harkens back to Schubert in its uncannily expressive melodic sensibility. Particularly in its lighthearted *grazioso scherzando* moments, this delightful finale strongly suggests the composer's fond appreciation of his benefactress's hospitality.

The jewel among Tchaikovsky's music for violin and orchestra, the Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35, is also one of his most rapturous creations. Its composition was contemporaneous with that of *Souvenir*: Tchaikovsky completed the Concerto in an astonishing twenty-five days over March and April of 1878. Kotek served as muse to the composer, offering instrumental insights and feedback. "How lovingly he's busying himself with my concerto!" Tchaikovsky wrote to his brother Anatoly. "It goes without saying that I would have been able to do nothing without

him. He plays it marvelously." The same anxiety over whispers about his sexuality that drove Tchaikovsky to marry likely precluded the Concerto's dedication to Kotek.

With Auer demurring to play it, the Concerto received its premiere only three years later, in Vienna, conducted by Hans Richter, with Brodsky as soloist. The Concerto fared poorly among Viennese audiences (who were generally hostile to new music) and was infamously derided by Eduard Hanslick as "long and pretentious ... [The Concerto] brought us face to face with the revolting thought that music can exist which stinks to the ear." Its enormous popularity over the following century and into the present day have, of course, overruled Hanslick and vindicated Tchaikovsky. Straightforward in form, the Concerto holds tremendous appeal for its melodic content and virtuosic flair.

The work betrays a debt to Édouard Lalo, whose *Symphonie espagnole* Kotek and Tchaikovsky played

together in an arrangement for violin and piano around the time of the Concerto's composition. Tchaikovsky praised the *Symphonie* to Meck in terms that would equally well describe his forthcoming score: "It has a lot of freshness, lightness, of piquant rhythms, of beautiful and excellently harmonized melodies. ... [Lalo] does not strive after profundity, but he carefully avoids routine, seeks out new forms, and thinks more about *musical beauty* than about observing established traditions."

The opening *Allegro moderato*'s pleasing melodic character suggests Tchaikovsky's contentment in Kotek's company with the anguish of his marriage to Milyukova behind him. The unforgettable tune with which the soloist first enters is initially one of easy gracefulness; this is steadily transfigured by means of dazzling virtuoso writing into an expression of euphoric ecstasy. As in *Souvenir d'un lieu cher*, Tchaikovsky recalls Mendelssohn, placing the cadenza before the movement's recapitulation, as Mendelssohn does in his own violin concerto.

The integration of Western models and his own Russian cultural identity was an aesthetic balancing act throughout Tchaikovsky's career. While the Concerto's first movement relates strongly to the German Romantic tradition, the composer's mother tongue permeates the second and third. The *Canzonetta* begins as a hymn suffused with Slavic harmonies, soon giving way to the violin's plaintive melody. The rollicking rondo finale answers the mournful *Canzonetta* with an irresistible folk dynamism, the soloist firing a steady fusillade of gypsy pyrotechnics. Noteworthy here is a tender episode, introduced as a duet between oboe and clarinet and redolent of Tatyana in Tchaikovsky's opera *Eugene Onegin* — a fleeting but earnest moment of introspection before the Concerto races to its exultant conclusion

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Patrick Castillo leads a multifaceted career as a composer, performer, writer, and educator.

JENNIFER KOH

Violinist Jennifer Koh is recognized for her intense, commanding performances, delivered with dazzling virtuosity and technical assurance. An adventurous musician, she collaborates with artists of multiple disciplines and curates projects that find connections between music of all eras from traditional to contemporary. She believes that all the arts and music of the past and present form a continuum and has premiered over 50 works written especially for her.

Musical America's 2016 Instrumentalist of the Year, Ms. Koh's most recent projects involve commissions by today's foremost composers. *Shared Madness* comprises short works for solo violin that explore virtuosity for the violin in the 21st century by more than 30 of today's most celebrated composers, all of whom gifted their music for the project. *Shared Madness* premiered over two recitals in May 2016 at National Sawdust as part of the New York Philharmonic's Biennial. Ms. Koh's *Bridge to Beethoven* recital series, performed with pianist Shai

Wosner, explores the impact and significance Beethoven has had on a diverse group of composers and musicians. Pairing Beethoven's ten sonatas for violin and piano with new works by composers Vijay Iyer, Andrew Norman, and Anthony Cheung over four programs, the project seeks to ignite creative conversations around Beethoven not only as a cornerstone of classical music but as a universal source of inspiration. *Bach & Beyond* is a three recital series that traces the history of the solo violin repertoire from Bach's Six Sonatas and Partitas to composers ranging from Bartók, Berio, Carter, Salonen, and Ysaÿe with commissions and world premieres by composers John Harbison, Phil Kline, Missy Mazzoli, Kaija Saariaho, and video artist Tal Rosner. *Two x Four* explores mentorship and collaboration between teacher and student and features double violin concerti by Bach, Philip Glass, Anna Clyne, and David Ludwig — performed with Koh's former teacher, violinist Jaime Laredo — and shows how performance traditions and composition practices are passed

from generation to generation. *Bach & Beyond Parts 1 and 2* and *Two x Four* have both been released on recordings by Cedille Records.

Ms. Koh has been heard with leading orchestras around the world including the Helsinki, New York, and Los Angeles Philharmonics; the Cleveland, Mariinsky, Minnesota, Philadelphia, and Philharmonia (London) Orchestras; and the Atlanta, Baltimore, BBC, Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, National, New World, NHK, RAI (Torino), and Singapore Symphonies. Conductors she has worked with include John Adams, Marin Alsop, James Conlon, Gustavo Dudamel, Christoph Eschenbach, Carlos Kalmar, Lorin Maazel, Sakari Oramo, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Juraj Valčuha, Osmo Vänskä, Alexander Vedernikov, and Edo de Waart. A prolific recitalist, she frequently appears at major music centers and festivals, and played the role of Einstein in the revival of Philip Glass's *Einstein On the Beach* from 2012–2014.

Tchaikovsky: Complete Works for Violin and Orchestra is Ms. Koh's eleventh recording for Cedille. In addition to her *Bach & Beyond* and *Two x Four* albums, her discography on Cedille Records also includes *Signs, Games + Messages*, a recording of violin and piano works by Janáček, Bartók, and Kurtág with Mr. Wosner; *Rhapsodic Musings: 21st Century Works for Solo Violin*; the Grammy-nominated *String Poetic*, featuring the world premiere of Jennifer Higdon's eponymous work, performed with pianist Reiko Uchida; Schumann's complete violin sonatas, also with Ms. Uchida; *Portraits* with the Grant Park Orchestra under conductor Carlos Kalmar with concerti by Szymanowski, Martinů, and Bartók; *Violin Fantasies*: fantasies for violin and piano by Schubert, Schumann, Schoenberg, and saxophonist Ornette Coleman, again with Ms. Uchida; and Ms. Koh's first Cedille album, from 2002, *Solo Chaconnes*, an earlier reading of Bach's Second Partita coupled with chaconnes by Richard Barth and Max Reger.

Ms. Koh is the Artistic Director of *arco collaborative*, an artist-driven nonprofit that fosters a better understanding of our world through a musical dialogue inspired by ideas and the communities around us. The organization supports artistic collaborations and commissions, transforming the creative process by engaging with specific ideas and perspectives, investing in the future by cultivating artist-citizens in partnership with educational organizations.

Born in Chicago of Korean parents, Ms. Koh began playing the violin by chance, choosing the instrument in a Suzuki-method program only because spaces for cello and piano had been filled. She made her debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at age 11, first performed Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto conducted by Alexander Vedernikov in the final round of the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians in 1992, and went on to win the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow in 1994,

as well as the Concert Artists Guild Competition and an Avery Fisher Career Grant. Ms. Koh has a Bachelor of Arts degree in English literature from Oberlin College and studied at the Curtis Institute, where she worked extensively with Jaime Laredo and Felix Galimir.

For more information, jenniferkoh.com



ALEXANDER VEDERNIKOV

Alexander Vedernikov's international reputation has gone from strength to strength over the past decade and he is in high demand as a guest conductor. He works regularly with a list of orchestras that includes the Orchestre de Paris, BBC Symphony, Orchestra Verdi Milan, NHK Symphony, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, City of Birmingham Symphony, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana (with Martha Argerich at the Martha Argerich Project in Lugano), Netherlands Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Gothenburg Symphony, Danish National Symphony, Bergen Philharmonic, and Czech Philharmonic. He has also worked with the Sydney Symphony, Bayerischer Rundfunk Symphony, China Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Dresden, Montreal Symphony, Tokyo Philharmonic, and National Symphony Orchestra in Washington DC, among many others.

Currently Chief Conductor of the Odense Symphony Orchestra in Denmark, Alexander Vedernikov has brought this orchestra to a new level of international recognition and is currently working on a three-year project to perform Wagner's *Ring Cycle* in concert.

In the field of opera, Alexander Vedernikov has frequently conducted at Berlin's Komische Oper and has worked throughout Italy at La Scala in Milan, La Fenice in Venice, Teatro Comunale in Bologna, Teatro Regio in Turin, and Opera di Roma. He has conducted productions at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Bastille Opera in Paris, Finnish National Opera, Zurich Opera, Frankfurt Opera, Royal Stockholm Opera, and Danish National Opera.

Alexander Vedernikov was Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Bolshoi Theatre from 2001 until 2009 and has been credited with rebuilding the Theatre's historical reputation for artistic excellence. He led many productions at the Bolshoi,

including a new production of *Boris Godunov* in the original Mussorgsky orchestrations (2007); Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* (2006); Puccini's *Turandot* (2002 and 2006); Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel* (2004), *Cinderella* (2006), and *War and Peace* (2005/06); Leonid Desyatnikov's *The Children of Rosenthal* (world premiere, commissioned by the Bolshoi Theatre); Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* (2004); Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmilla* (2003); Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina* (2002); and Cilea's *Adriana Lecouvreur* (2002).

Vedernikov was also responsible for developing the Bolshoi's program of symphonic concerts, and has featured very broad repertoire, including Prokofiev's *Cinderella*, Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust*, Verdi's Requiem, scenes from the operas of Wagner, and music by Richard Strauss, Alban Berg, Dmitri Shostakovich, and Georgy Sviridov. Under his direction, the orchestra of the Bolshoi toured extensively, including to Athens, Hamburg, and Paris in February 2008 and a season

of opera and ballet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in July 2006 (including *The Fiery Angel* and *Boris Godunov*) where the orchestra was singled out for its exceptional playing. Opera and symphonic performances at La Scala were equally successful.

Alexander completed his musical studies at the Moscow Conservatory in 1990 and from 1988–1990, he worked at Moscow's Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Music Theatres. From 1988–1995, he was assistant to the chief conductor and second conductor of the Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra (formerly Gosteleradio's Bolshoi Symphony Orchestra), whom he accompanied on many tours in Russia, Austria, Germany, Greece, Turkey, and Great Britain. In 1995, he founded the Russian Philharmonia Symphony Orchestra and was Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of this orchestra until 2004. He has conducted Russia's State Symphony Orchestra and the Academic Symphony Orchestra of the St Petersburg Philharmonic.

Since 2003, he has been a member of the conductors' collegium of the Russian National Orchestra, with which he has toured in France, Germany, and the United States. In January 2004, as part of the Russian National Orchestra's tour of nine cities, Alexander Vedernikov made his debuts in New York's Carnegie Hall and Washington's Kennedy Center.

Russia's great institutions of music and theatre and their distinctive traditions have played a decisive role in shaping Alexander Vedernikov's artistry in many ways. Born in Moscow in 1964, he was raised in a musical family. His father, also named Alexander, was famed throughout the Soviet Union and beyond for his interpretations of such roles as Boris Godunov and Kutuzov in Prokofiev's *War and Peace*; his mother, Natalia Gureyeva, was a professor of organ at the Moscow Conservatory. His deep commitment to Russian repertoire reaches far beyond the central range of romantic and 20th-century masterworks by Mussorgsky,

Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Prokofiev, and Shostakovich. He is a tireless champion of the work of Georgy Sviridov, Mieczysław Weinberg, and Boris Tchaikovsky and has also cast fresh interpretive light on substantial compositions by Taneyev and Glinka.



Photo: Mischa Blank

ODENSE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Odense Symphony Orchestra — one of Denmark's five regional orchestras — was founded in 1946, but its roots go back as far as circa 1800. With 73 musicians from 17 different nations, and an International Carl Nielsen Competition and Festival, the Odense Symphony Orchestra is a cultural dynamo that plays a crucial role in Denmark's classical music scene. The Odense Symphony Orchestra's engagement of Alexander Vedernikov as Principal Conductor in 2009 put Denmark firmly on the symphonic world map.

The orchestra, which is based in the Odense Concert Hall, has an annual audience of 95,000 people. The core of the Odense Symphony Orchestra's activity is symphonic concerts. In addition, they play in school and family concerts, church and chamber concerts, opera performances, and on CD recordings. Their discography is extensive and comprises over 60 releases, including several award-winners — and more are on the way.

Also by Jennifer Koh on Cedille Records



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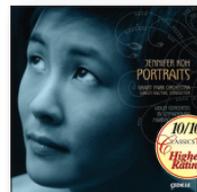


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