

TCHAIKOVSKY

4TH SYMPHONY



THE COMPOSER

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born on 7 May 1840 in Russia. Piotr is Russian for Peter.

On this old photograph, you can see the family in which he grew up. From left to right you see: Peter, his mother, Zinaida, Nikolai, Ippolit, his father, and in the centre at the bottom his sister Alexandra.

In his free time, Peter was happiest when he was playing piano, reading or writing poetry. He was a very important composer and is known mainly for his operas, symphonies and of course his ballets: Sleeping Beauty, The Nutcracker and Swan Lake.



SYMPHONY NO 4

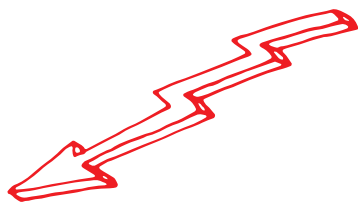
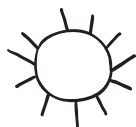
Tchaikovsky dedicated his *4th Symphony* to his best friend, Nadezhda von Meck, who gave him money so he could work on his music. They never met, but wrote more than 1000 letters to each other that have survived. In those letters, we can read about the ideas underlying his music. Will you come along on this discovery?

The symphony consists of 4 movements. Play each movement and do the activities.

ACTIVITY:

Listen and dream!

Turn on the music and close your eyes. In the beginning, you hear Fate menacing, but as the music calms down, you start to daydream. Imagine a situation where you are very happy. Where are you? Who is with you? What are you doing? The spell is broken by the melody of fate, which returns to haunt you. Will you be able to return to your daydream?

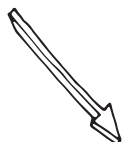


ACTIVITY:

Listen and feel!



Terwijl je naar de muziek luistert, bepaal je welk gevoel er bij hoort. Telkens je dit gevoel tegenkomt teken je een muziknoot bij het juiste woord.



happy

joyful

grateful

radiant

sorrowful

board

proud

depressed

lonely

sleepy

jealous



DID YOU KNOW THAT

... Tchaikovsky wrote an opera about a mermaid? He destroyed the entire work because he was not happy with it.



FIRST MOVEMENT

The first movement of the symphony begins with the woodwinds and brass, which sound like a blaring fanfare. With this opening melody, Tchaikovsky expresses Fate. He drew inspiration from Beethoven's *5th symphony*: Tatata taaa! This is Fate knocking on the door. In his letters, he wrote that Fate means you can never be completely happy. What we can do is escape from that menacing Fate by ... daydreaming!



This is the opening melody that Tchaikovsky noted in a letter to Nadezhda.

SECOND MOVEMENT

The second movement begins with the oboe. Tchaikovsky is reminiscing about his childhood days. Some of the memories make him happy, others sad. Sometimes he feels lonely and thinks about people he has lost, and sometimes he is joyful when he remembers something nice.

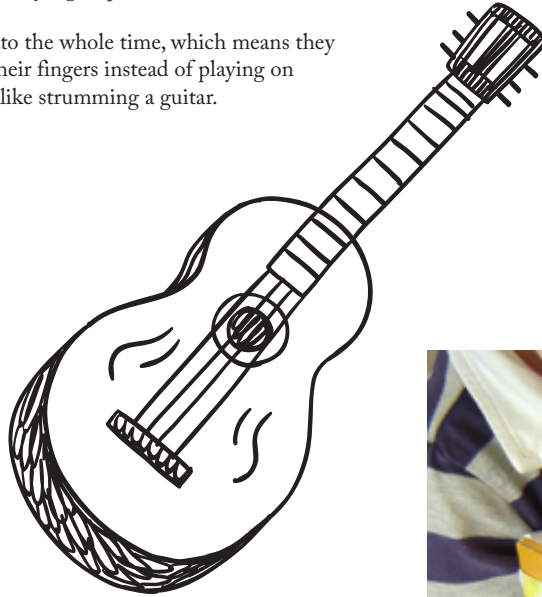




3RD MOVEMENT

In the third movement, Tchaikovsky continues to daydream. He gave his imagination free rein. A group of drunken peasants pass by, followed by a group of soldiers, and a street song is heard.

The strings play pizzicato the whole time, which means they pluck the strings with their fingers instead of playing on them with the bow. It's like strumming a guitar.



ACTIVITY: Take the QUIZ

Where was Tchaikovsky born??

.....

How many years ago was he born?

.....

What was the name of his youngest sister?

.....

How do you say Peter in Russian?

.....

How many movements are there in the 4th symphony?

.....

What is it called when strings pluck the strings instead of using the bow?

.....

Which instrument plays a solo in the second movement?

.....

ACTIVITY:

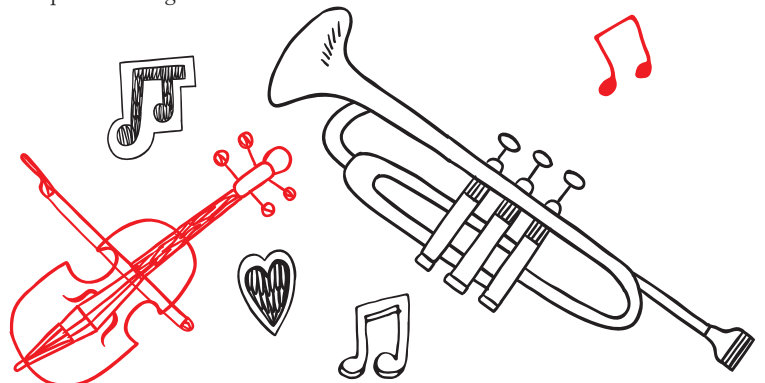
make an instrument and strum!

Take a shoe box or other cardboard box and make an opening in it. Stick a clothes pin next to the opening and stretch elastic bands across it. Practice your own pizzicato technique while imitating the rhythm you hear in the third movement.



4TH MOVEMENT

In the fourth movement, Tchaikovsky brings everything together. It sounds like a victory with many brass instruments and fiery strings. Tchaikovsky wrote about this: 'If you find no cause for joy within yourself, look for it in others. Go to the people around you. See how happy they are! Joy is a simple but strong force!'



WE HOPE YOU ENJOY DISCOVERING THIS BEAUTIFUL SYMPHONY!