

Brief Bio and Introduction to 6th Symphony , 4th Movement

Peter Tchaikovsky was born in 1840 in, a town in Russia's Ural Mountains. When he was 8 years old, his family moved to the St. Petersburg. Even though Tchaikovsky was a good musician as a kid, music wasn't considered an "acceptable" profession, so his parents made him study law instead.

For years, Tchaikovsky honored his parent's wishes and pursued a law career, but when he was 21, he enrolled at the St. Petersburg Conservatory – becoming one of its first composition students. In addition to studying for himself, he taught lessons and eventually became a professor.

For years, Tchaikovsky had a patroness named Nadezhda von Meck -- a wealthy widow who was a big fan of Tchaikovsky's music. She regularly sent him money so that he could concentrate on composing without having to worry about making a living. But part of her arrangement to send him money was that they could never meet.

Tchaikovsky traveled all over Europe for performances of his music. In 1891, he even came to America for the opening of Carnegie Hall in New York, where he was invited to conduct his music. His collective body of work includes 169 pieces: he wrote some of the most recognized melodies in all of classical music, including The Nutcracker, Swan Lake and Romeo and Juliet.

The piece we are going to listen to is Tchaikovsky's 6th Symphony, the final movement. It was first performed in 1893 just a week before Tchaikovsky died. He was miserable, lonely and depressed for much of his life. This piece is viewed as his soul's lament. Giving up on life – having lost the will to live. (**Adagio lamentoso**: Slow Lament)

At several places in the music you'll hear a: (**Descending Scale**: consecutive notes from high to low)

It is in a minor key. Listen for the 4-note theme starting on the second line of the listening map @ 2:27. This is in a major key. Then at: 4:42 the same theme changing into a minor.

As this piece comes to a close, listen for the swirling (**Fortissimo**: Very, very strong;) climactic of the strings... (**Crescendo**: Growing) in emotional torment. Then, the music descends into depression/exhaustion and slowly, quietly just falls and stops.