

The Year 1812

Festival Overture

Peter Tchaikovsky

1840–1893

Op. 49

Arranged by L. P. Laurendeau

Edited by Loras John Schissel

SCORE

Instrumentation

1 Full Score	1 E \flat , Contra Alto Clarinet (opt.)	2 Trombone 1
3 Flute 1	1 B \flat , Contrabass Clarinet (opt.)	2 Trombone 2
3 Flute 2	2 E \flat , Alto Saxophone 1	2 Trombone 3
1 Flute 3/Piccolo	2 E \flat , Alto Saxophone 2	2 Euphonium B.C.
1 Oboe 1	2 B \flat , Tenor Saxophone	1 Euphonium T.C.
1 Oboe 2/English Horn	1 E \flat , Baritone Saxophone	4 Tuba
1 Bassoon 1	1 B \flat , Cornet 1	1 String Bass
1 Bassoon 2	1 B \flat , Cornet 1	1 Timpani
1 E \flat , Clarinet	1 B \flat , Trumpet 2	2 Percussion 1 (Snare Drum, Triangle, Tambourine)
4 B \flat , Clarinet 1	1 B \flat , Trumpet 2	2 Percussion 2 (Crash Cymbals, Bass Drum)
4 B \flat , Clarinet 2	1 F Horn 1	2 Percussion 3 (Orchestra Bells, Chimes*)
4 B \flat , Clarinet 3	1 F Horn 2	
1 E \flat , Alto Clarinet	1 F Horn 3	
2 B \flat , Bass Clarinet	1 F Horn 4	

**Composer's note: "The bells should be large and all of the same pitch; they should be struck in the manner of celebratory ringing."*

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ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (May 7, 1840–November 6, 1893) was a Russian composer of the Romantic era. His wide-ranging output includes symphonies, operas, ballets, instrumental and chamber music and songs. He wrote some of the most popular concert and theatrical music in the classical repertoire, including the ballets *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*; the *1812 Overture*; his *Piano Concerto No. 1*; his last three numbered symphonies; and the opera *Eugene Onegin*.

Born into a middle-class family, Tchaikovsky was educated for a career as a civil servant, despite his obvious musical precocity. He pursued a musical career against the wishes

of his family, entering the Saint Petersburg Conservatory in 1862 and graduating in 1865. This formal, Western-oriented training set him apart from the contemporary nationalistic movement embodied by the influential group of young Russian composers known as The Five, with whom Tchaikovsky's professional relationship was mixed.

Although he enjoyed many popular successes, Tchaikovsky was never emotionally secure, and his life was punctuated by personal crises and periods of depression. Contributory factors were his suppressed homosexuality and fear of exposure, his disastrous marriage, and the sudden collapse of the one enduring relationship of his adult life, his

13-year association with the wealthy widow Nadezhda von Meck. Amid private turmoil Tchaikovsky's public reputation grew; he was honored by the Tsar, awarded a lifetime pension and lauded in the concert halls of the world. His sudden death at the age of 53 is generally ascribed to cholera, but some attribute it to suicide.

Although perennially popular with concert audiences across the world, Tchaikovsky's music was often dismissed by American critics in the early and mid-20th century as being vulgar and lacking in elevated thought. Nevertheless, by almost any standard, Tchaikovsky's music remains some of the most popular and played music of all time.

ABOUT THE ARRANGER

Louis-Philippe Laurendeau was born in 1861 in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec. His early studies in music were extensive and he became conductor at the École Militaire of Saint-Jean in Montreal. Following this period, Laurendeau became editor and arranger at the Carl Fischer Music Publishing Company in New York, where his output as both arranger and composer numbers

well into the thousands. Because of the large number of works within the catalogue, Laurendeau began using pseudonyms, including G. H. Reeves and Paul Laurent. His book, *The Practical Band Arranger*, was published by Carl Fischer in 1911 and remained one of the most-used band instruction books for many years. Very little is known of Laurendeau's personal life. He died in Montreal

on February 13, 1916, and his funeral was attended by a large number of musicians—including members of Local 406 of the American Federation of Musicians, of which Laurendeau was an honorary life member. In 1931, a street in Montreal was named for him. Laurendeau's artistry lives on in his many arrangements, which are still played by bands throughout the world.

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Loras John Schissel (b. 1964) is the senior musicologist at the Library of Congress and a leading authority on American music and the music of Percy Aldridge Grainger, Aaron Copland, Victor Herbert and Boston Symphony Orchestra conductor Serge Koussevitzky. He co-authored *The Complete Literary and Musical Works of John Philip Sousa* with the distinguished Sousa biographer Paul E. Bierley. In 2012, Loras John Schissel co-authored *John Philip Sousa's America – A Patriots Life in Images and Words* with John Philip Sousa IV, the great-grandson and last namesake of the famous composer and conductor.

Mr. Schissel has been conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra's Blossom Festival Band since 1998 and also conducts the Blossom Festival Orchestra. In May 2007, Mr. Schissel made his Cleveland Orchestra debut. In 2011 he was asked to conduct The Cleveland Orchestra in a special concert commemorating the tenth anniversary of the September 11th attacks on the United States. This multimedia concert was presented in downtown Cleveland at the foot of the Terminal Tower.

Mr. Schissel has traveled throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia, conducting orchestras, bands, and choral ensembles in a broad range of musical styles and varied programs. A native of New Hampton, Iowa, he studied brass instruments and conducting with Carlton Stewart, Frederick Fennell, and John Paynter. In the years since his studies at the University of Northern Iowa, Mr. Schissel has distinguished himself as a prominent conductor, orchestrator, and musicologist.

A composer and orchestrator, Mr. Schissel has created an extensive catalogue of over five hundred works for orchestra, symphonic wind band and jazz ensemble, which are published exclusively by LudwigMasters Publications. His musical score for *Bill Moyers: America's First River, The Hudson*, which first appeared on PBS in April 2002, received extensive coverage and critical acclaim. His other film scores include *America: the Forties for the National Geographic Channel*, and two films for the FDR Home in Hyde Park, New York.

In 1992, Mr. Schissel founded the Virginia Grand Military Band; it now performs

regularly in the Washington, D.C., area and has recorded extensively. His recordings with that ensemble have won numerous awards, including the Sudler Scroll for "outstanding musical excellence."

Mr. Schissel has appeared in the award-winning PBS documentary *If You Knew Sousa* for the American Experience series, as well as in Ben Wattenberg's *Think Tank*. He continues to serve as commentator on *Voice of America* and for the United States Information Service. In 2005, Mr. Schissel was elected to membership in the American Bandmasters Association.

Deeply committed to young musicians, Mr. Schissel has appeared at regional music festivals, all-state orchestra and band festivals, and summer music camps in more than thirty-two states. He has long been associated with the superb summer band camp at Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio, and enjoys working with musicians of all ages.

Mr. Schissel made his conducting debut with the Milwaukee Symphony in 2012.

PROGRAM NOTES

Tchaikovsky did not like his own celebrated **1812 Overture** very much. The work was suggested to the composer by his friend and mentor Nikolai Rubinstein and was to be performed in honor of the completion of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. The cathedral had been commissioned by Tsar Alexander I to commemorate the Russian battle with Napoleon's forces at Borodino (75 miles west of Moscow) on September 7, 1812. Neither side could claim victory, although it did ultimately lead to the defeat of France during its long and historic retreat.

In describing his new overture to Nadezhda vom Meck, Tchaikovsky wrote that he “was not a concocter of festival pieces,” and that the *1812 Overture* would be “very loud and noisy, with no artistic merit, because I wrote it without warmth and without love.”

That said, the work has become *the* American 4th of July piece. Strangely enough,

some Americans believe that it was written to commemorate the War of 1812! As far as my research has proven, the year of our bicentennial (1976)—when Arthur Fiedler performed the overture with the Boston Pops—was the first time the piece was even performed on the 4th of July!

The composition begins with the Slavic Orthodox *Troparion of the Holy Cross*, played (in the band arrangement) by the brass choir. As the work progresses, a greater feeling of agitation increases as the Russian people respond to the advancing French heard in the vividly picturesque battle music. Heard high above this tumult are fragments of the French *Marseillaise*. For the slow section (m. 164 and 278), Tchaikovsky borrows a motif from his opera *The Voevoda*. Later (m. 207 and 299), a tune of obvious Russian extraction appears: a folkdance from the region of Novgorod entitled *By the Gates*. As the composition builds to its climax, the

Marseillaise is gradually silenced by Russian cannons as Napoleon's army retreats. The victorious Russians rejoice, Moscow's bells peal forth gloriously in honor of Russian victory (pitched only in C per the composer's direction), and the noble theme of the Russian national hymn is thundered out triumphantly (*God, Save the Tsar* by Aleksei Lvov).

During Soviet times, *God, Save the Tsar*—remarkably—was replaced by a different motif, and was the only version authorized by the Soviet government.

The present edition was prepared by conductor and scholar Loras John Schissel, utilizing Tchaikovsky's original manuscript—a first edition Russian band arrangement prepared by Tchaikovsky's publisher with the composer's approval (observed on a recent trip to the Tchaikovsky House in Klin)—and the American band adaptation prepared by Louis-Philippe Laurendeau.

For conductors wishing to make a cut in the 1812 Overture, have the ensemble cut between measure 142/143 and measure 258.

PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS

This is a work we all know. Any number of fine interpretations have recordings available, and I invite you to listen to your favorite along with the score. In this essay, I would like to point out some interesting lines and some strategies in dealing with this venerable transcription of the *1812 Overture*.

Players should be told to trust their part. If they hear a crescendo and they don't have one marked—trust the part. Tchaikovsky's wonderful markings have been re-edited back into this edition. These marks were verified from the composer's original manuscript and the first edition. If successful, you will hear lines come and go as the composer scored them.

m. 1–22: The chorale. Make sure that the ensemble knows (and has marked in their parts) that the first two beats of the piece are silent.

Brasses should play at their maximum *legato* style here. The chorale in the orchestral version is for reduced violas and celli. If your players are strong, maybe one on a part would do well here. You could add

additional players as you build to the *crescendo* climax (eighth-note pickup to **m. 20**) and then continue with tutti brasses.

At **m. 20** (or so) get eye contact with your soon-to-be-playing woodwinds. If they aren't sure of the count, it can be deadly. (I've been there.) A clear cue at m. 23 will keep everyone on track. Percussion may want to mark that cue also for orientation.

m. 23–34: The wonderful back and forth between brass choir and woodwind choir should build in intensity in two-bar sections. The Timpani (hardest sticks/two-hands?) signals the new section at **m. 34**.

The quarter-note figures at **m. 34** to the downbeat of **36** should be full value and with the greatest possible intensity. I stretch a little going into **m. 36**.

m. 36–58: Horns and saxes should be light and balanced on the eighth-note figures here. The oboe is the star—occasionally antagonized by the low brass. This sort of dramatic back and forth between these voices can be maximized here. At **m. 46** the euphonium joins the oboe in the melody along with bassoon, alto clarinet, bass clarinet and baritone saxophone.

At **m. 48–50** (and **52–54**), the 2nd/3rd clarinets have a very important line which may take some time to get them to play through the band. The lower 1st clarinet notes here will be the hardest to project.

m. 54–58: These four bars take us into **m. 58** (marked *poco più mosso*). Rehearse the cornet/trumpet and horn fanfare for clean articulations and style here.

m. 58–71: I have the low brass play their line slightly detached. Don't let it get so heavy that it bogs down. Take note that the horn answers the low brass figure at their **m. 64**.

m. 71: I stretch these two wonderful chords here. Be careful that the low brass players know that **m. 72–77** is for celli, double basses, and bassoons in the orchestral version. I remind my players of this. It does no good, but I do remind them of it!

m. 77–96: The famous horn tune or perhaps the call to battle. One tricky spot in this section has to do with the transcription itself. When the woodwinds start their lovely line at **m. 81**, the clarinet part starts an octave lower than the original violin part (as it should)—but on beat 2

of **m. 83** they revert to the original violin scoring. I generally have the clarinets mark that second beat *pp* or even *ppp* so that it doesn't "jump out." Let the flutes help out here by increasing in sound. Note the often-unheard trombone chords starting in **m. 88**.

m. 96–164: I generally beat the three silent beats in **m. 96**—players should mark whatever your plan is here. The offbeat accents in **m. 98** should be strong (and each time it returns). Starting at **m. 98** and afterward, the three–sixteenth-note figure almost always is played as a triplet. Players will have to keep constant the sixteenth-note here; when they play it as a triplet it's going to rush even more than usual! Also, keep in mind that you have almost 100 measures of this episode before **m. 164**. Save some for the climax of this section at around **m. 149**. Before I get mail: Tchaikovsky's original manuscript has no offbeat accents at **m. 104**. I checked it carefully during a recent trip. Do I put them in? Yes.

Around **m. 111** the ensemble will want to rush like crazy. I asked Frederick Fennell about this section and what I might do to keep it steady. His response? "Pray."

At **m. 117**, don't forget that the bass drum and cymbal player have been counting rests since **m. 71**. Help them out.

The horns are the French at **m. 119**; the cornets/trumpets answer in kind at **m. 123**. At **m. 124**, the snare drum has a very dramatic *crescendo* roll to **m. 127**. The trombones become the French at **m. 153**. The chords at **m. 159–162** in the horns and trombones are the "tie that binds" here.

The pyramids at **m. 163–164** may take some time. Each note is *f* but should *diminuendo* right away so that the next pyramid has room to be heard.

m. 165–207: Take a look at the half-note chords throughout this section. I have the players make a very slight *crescendo* to beat three here. The harmony seems to sing better if this is done. At **m. 177** I have the woodwind melody slightly accent (with the breath, not tongue) beats one and three. At **m. 186** (beat four) the cornets

and trumpets take over the tune; take care that the woodwind triplets are played as true triplets and that the euphonium sings with its added octave at **m. 191**.

m. 207–224: A light, skipping folk dance makes its entrance here: light, dance-like, delicate. The horns, low woodwinds, and saxes have a lovely "inner" part here that is rarely heard. The folk dance winds itself down to a new battle scene, which starts at **m. 224**.

m. 224–279: The low woodwind/brass line is often neglected at **m. 226–227**. The cornets/trumpets should be *molto marcato* at **m. 227–229** which transforms *subito* into the French national anthem. The anthem moves through various instruments throughout this section (players should know when they have this important tune). Reminder: "Trust your part, players." **Measure 240** has the low instruments supporting a very important line. At **m. 244**, the dotted quarter-note folks should sit heavy on that note (and at **246, 248, and 250–253**)—a good cue for your bass drum and cymbal players is helpful here also. At **m. 259**, a gentle reminder: three sixteenth-notes—not a triplet. Pickups to **m. 264:** French national anthem in cornets/trumpets and horns, then horns only, then trombones.

m. 279–307: I take this section just a little brighter in tempo to help "refresh" the material—just a very little bit. Take note of the lovely (and new) counter-melody in the euphonium, tenor sax, bass clarinet, and 3rd clarinet (it really should sound like a cello section).

m. 307–335: Take your time building in tone, volume, and intensity in this section. (We have a ways to go!) The French national anthem gets tossed about quite a lot on this section. Woodwind sixteenth-note figures should remain as light as possible even as everything around them seems to be in battle.

m. 335–358: This is the most unrewarding section of the entire piece for me. (Blame me. Not Tchaikovsky.) The main thing I try to do here is to keep the eighth-note

folks from "pinging" or accenting the top note of each four-note group. I have this entire section played without tonguing of any sort (until the articulated section begins at **m. 357**). You may also want to save your *rallentando* until just before **m. 357** (I start mine at about **m. 353** or so).

m. 358–380: The brasses have the great Russian melody here, and should play *tenuto, marcato*, and most importantly, majestically. Take note of Tchaikovsky's instruction that the bell (Chime) tones be on the same pitch—this is in the composer's original manuscript. At beats 2 and 3 of **m. 376** and the dotted quarter in **m. 377**, these are special notes—huge, round, fat. Take a little time for a few glorious seconds!

m. 380 to the end: Here, the French march away from Moscow in retreat! (I recall a recording of Willem Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw from the 1920s that was played in march tempo [in 4!] which was terribly effective and exciting—take a listen sometime.) At **m. 388** the triumphant Czar's hymn returns—the battle is won!

During Soviet times, all things related to the Czar were taboo. Some politician came up with the idea of substituting the Czar hymn with something else! The same thing was done in Tchaikovsky's *Marche Slave*. (See an excerpt of the "Soviet" tune on page 5.) Thank goodness that too was relegated to the dustbin of history. We have much to be thankful for!

I admit to a slight *accelerando* in **m. 400–404** as sort of a *stretto* to the finale.

I've probably said too much. I'm sure Tchaikovsky would be more surprised than anyone that this work would not only become one of his most popular, but that it would become the celebratory American Independence piece. Who am I to question this? Well, instead, I'll just sit back and enjoy the (musical) fireworks! Happy 4th of July!

Loras John Schissel (A.B.A.)
Capitol Hill
Washington, D.C.
April 1, 2011

388

fff

extension

etc.

During Soviet times, the above passage replaced God, Save the Tsar, and was the only version authorized by the Soviet government.



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky



Louis-Philippe Laurendeau



The Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, Russia, 1903.



Cover of the first edition of the four-hand piano arrangement.

The Year 1812

Festival Overture

Peter I. Tchaikovsky, Op. 49
arranged by L. P. Laurendeau
edited by Loras John Schissel (ASCAP)

Largo $\text{♩} = 60$

*See instrumentation note in preface.

12 14 23

Fl. 1 2

Picc./ Fl. 3

Ob. 1

Ob. 2/ E. Hn.

Bsn. 1 2

E♭ Cl.

B♭ Cl. 1 2 3

Alt. Cl.

B. Cl.

A. Sax. 1 2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Crt. 1 2

Tpt. 1 2

Hn. 1 2 3 4

Tbn. 1 2 3

Euph.

Tba.

St. B.

Timp.

Perc. 1 2 3

mf *ff* *p* *div.* *a2* *Play*

403

Fl. 1/2

Picc./ Fl. 3

Ob. 1

Ob. 2/ E. Hn.

Bsn. 1/2

E♭ Cl.

B♭ Cl. 1/2

3

Alt. Cl.

B. Cl.

A. Sax. 1/2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412

Crt. 1/2

Tpt. 1/2

Hn. 1/2

3/4

Tbn. 1/2

3

Euph.

Tba.

St. B.

Timp.

Perc. 1/2

3

Chimes *

50100016 *As before

