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Guest Artist Ilya Yakushev (center), Piano Virtuoso from St. Petersburg, Russia, conducted a Masterclass Sponsored by Panama City Symphony in January 2025. Selected students were Nikita Attari, Roman Massey, Samuel Bailey, Jaimeson Echavia, and Jackie Sternlicht.

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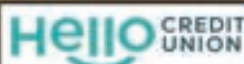
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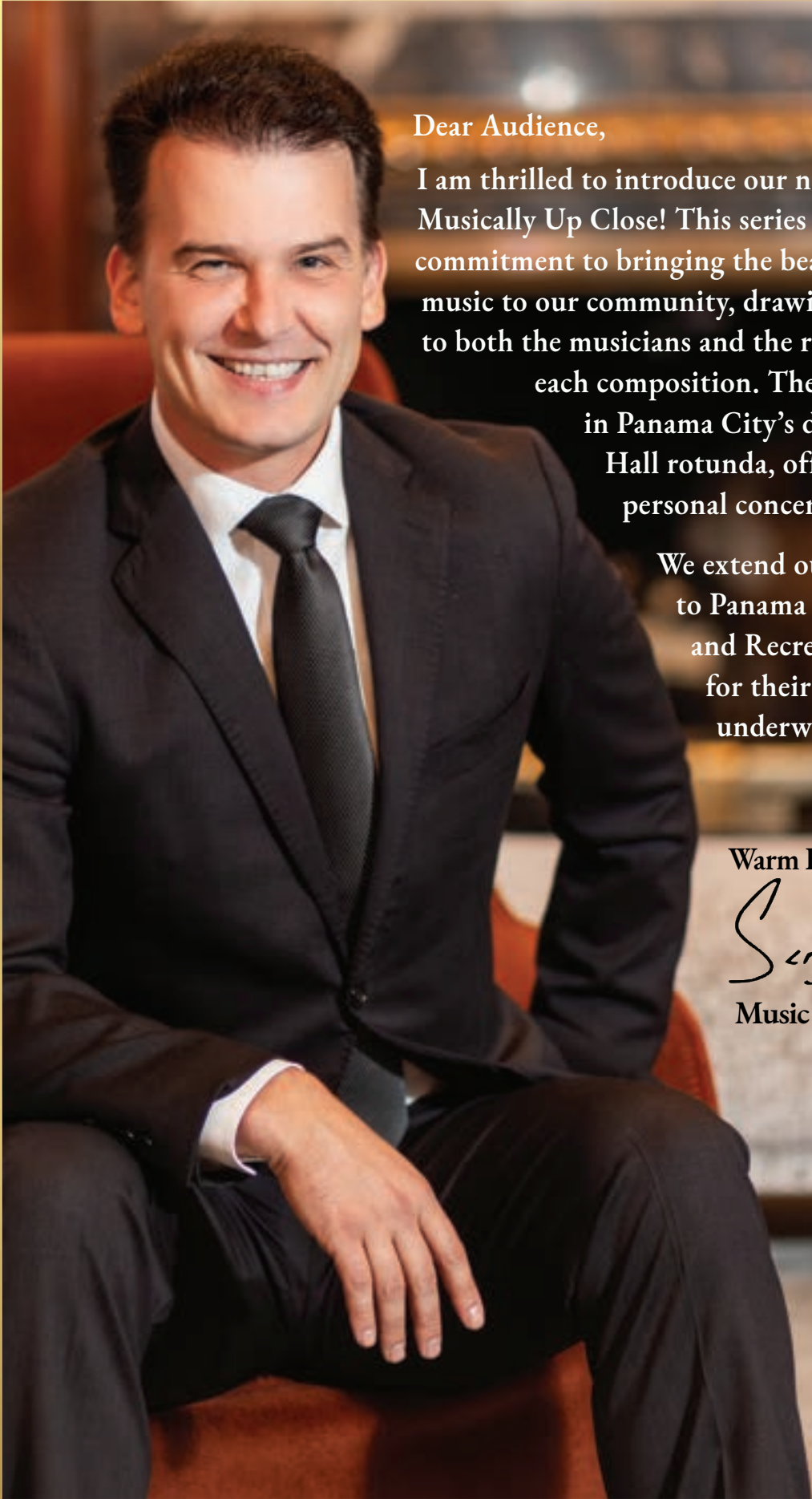
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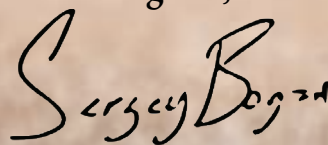


Dear Audience,

I am thrilled to introduce our new music series, Musically Up Close! This series reflects our commitment to bringing the beauty of chamber music to our community, drawing audiences closer to both the musicians and the rich stories behind each composition. These events take place in Panama City's downtown City Hall rotunda, offering a unique and personal concert experience.

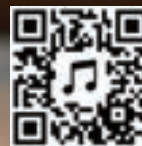
We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Panama City's Parks, Culture and Recreation Department for their generous support in underwriting this series.

Warm Regards,



Music Director & Conductor

*Scan QR code for information
about Musically Up Close*



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Sergey Bogza

Music Director and Conductor

Sergey Bogza, described as "a charismatic conductor whose passion radiates from the podium" (*The Virginian-Pilot*), is known for his unique approach to working with orchestras and engaging audiences on and off the podium. In his third year as the Music Director of the Panama City Symphony, he leads masterworks and holiday concerts, curates a monthly chamber music series, and serves as the Director of Music Education. In 2024, he was named the Music Director and Conductor of the Youngstown Symphony Orchestra and has made his professional debut with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra and the Alabama Ballet. Bogza has previously held Music Director roles with orchestras such as the Millikin-Decatur Symphony Orchestra, Willmar Symphony, and Heartland Symphony Orchestra.

Equally comfortable leading productions of opera, ballet, and concert repertoire, Bogza's energy and artistic integrity are highly regarded by audiences and musicians alike. He has been awarded top prizes at international conducting competitions and is an active composer of symphonic and chamber music. Combining the roles of a conductor and a composer, the premieres of his works are enthusiastically received by audiences and musical ensembles across the United States and Europe.

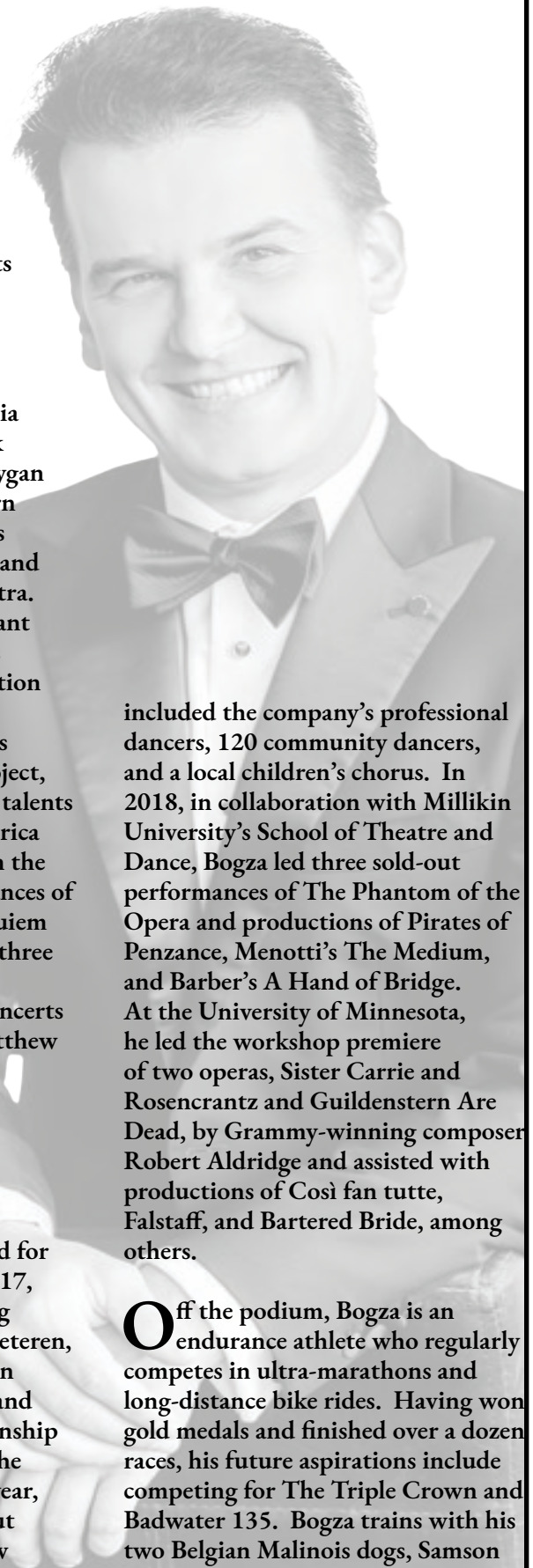
As a guest conductor, Bogza cultivates a burgeoning international presence that

has brought him engagements in the USA and Europe with orchestras, ballet companies, and festivals. He has guest conducted musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra, Virginia Beach Symphony, Pazardzhik Symphony Orchestra, Sheboygan Symphony Orchestra, Auburn Symphony Orchestra, Illinois Valley Symphony Orchestra, and Gwinnett Symphony Orchestra. Bogza also served as an assistant conductor for Joffrey Ballet's 100-year anniversary production of *The Rite of Spring*, and the University of Minnesota's Benjamin Britten's Peace Project, which combined the musical talents of students from North America and Germany, culminating in the critically acclaimed performances of Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* in the USA and abroad. For three consecutive summers, he was selected to conduct public concerts of the B-Minor Mass, St. Matthew Passion, and the Christmas Oratorio at the Oregon Bach Festival.

Bogza is responsible for a number of successful collaborations and is regarded for his sensitive approach. In 2017, he engaged an award-winning choreographer, Roger Van Fleteren, to present an abridged version of Prokofiev's ballet *Romeo and Juliet* and the fruitful relationship led to future projects with The Alabama Ballet. That same year, Bogza conducted two sold-out performances of The Moscow Ballet's *The Great Russian Nutcracker*, a production that

included the company's professional dancers, 120 community dancers, and a local children's chorus. In 2018, in collaboration with Millikin University's School of Theatre and Dance, Bogza led three sold-out performances of *The Phantom of the Opera* and productions of *Pirates of Penzance*, Menotti's *The Medium*, and Barber's *A Hand of Bridge*. At the University of Minnesota, he led the workshop premiere of two operas, *Sister Carrie* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, by Grammy-winning composer Robert Aldridge and assisted with productions of *Così fan tutte*, *Falstaff*, and *Bartered Bride*, among others.

Off the podium, Bogza is an endurance athlete who regularly competes in ultra-marathons and long-distance bike rides. Having won gold medals and finished over a dozen races, his future aspirations include competing for The Triple Crown and Badwater 135. Bogza trains with his two Belgian Malinois dogs, Samson and Stella, and is an avid chef of Slavic cuisine.



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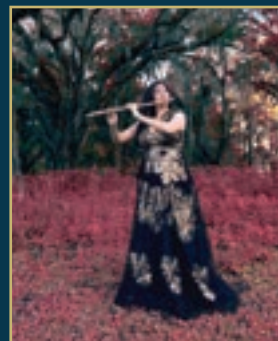
March 7, 2025, 2:30 pm
Teddy Branson & French Horn
Free Admission



April 4, 2025, 2:30 pm
Jim Colvin & the Bass Trombone
Free Admission



Thursday, April 17, 2025, 6 pm
Mary Matthews, Flutist
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May 2, 2025, 2:30 pm
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MUSIC EDUCATION

The Heartbeat of Panama City Symphony



Panama City Symphony offers innovative, interactive music education programs to all ages to foster music appreciation, build confidence, and nurture talent.

Enjoy photos & learn more
about our music education programs
on the next two pages! →

Make Music Magic

Kindergarten - 2nd Grade

Designed for our youngest audiences, Make Music Magic creates awareness and appreciation for the 'language' of music. This program guides students as they listen and share



their thoughts associated with a variety of music genres. The program includes interactive singing, clapping to various beats and melodies,

imaginative exercises, and discovering how music can express emotion and connect them to others.

Guest Artist Outreach & Masterclasses

In addition to being world-class performers, the Symphony's guest artists are educators and community builders. Throughout the season, the Symphony's guest artists teach masterclasses in local high schools and colleges, perform for students, and play a vital role in the community leading up to their concert appearance with



the Symphony. Artists perform recitals at Musically Up Close events, retirement communities, high schools and colleges.

Discovering Music

3rd Grade - 5th Grade

Featuring musician ensembles, Discovering Music helps students explore the 'ingredients' of music. To engage curious young



minds, the Panama City Symphony conductor and musicians demonstrate distinctive attributes of musical

instruments and convey how these unique attributes provide the 'recipe' for creating a full musical performance. Students actively listen to discover how music is built, observe individual instrument demonstrations, learn how melody connects the senses, and interactively learn through narrated stories.

Moments with the Maestro

Hosted by the Panama City Center for the Arts, the interactive lectures take place from 4:00-5:00 pm on the Friday before each Masterworks concert. The Maestro and guest artists share thoughts behind the selections, history of the composers and their works, and the nuances to listen for during the concert.



*Music is a more potent instrument than any other for education
because rhythm and harmony find their way
into the inward places of the soul.*

– Plato (Source: *The Republic*)



MUSIC EDUCATION

The Heartbeat of Panama City Symphony

Panama City Symphony aims to inspire the next generation of musicians!

Panama City Symphony Mentoring Program

The Panama City Symphony's Mentoring Program places advanced musicians (9th grade and beyond) with a mentor who guides and serves as an intermediary between the conductor and the orchestra. Mentees shadow experienced musicians during rehearsals and concert performances, receiving high-level orchestral training in a nurturing and professional environment. Panama City Symphony often invites mentees to participate in community outreach performances. Since 2009, forty (40) students have been mentored representing homeschools, public and private high schools in Bay and Walton counties, and Gulf Coast State College. Taliah Bohlen will continue as a mentee in 2024-25.



Pictured are the 2023 - 2024 mentees (L to R) with Music Director Sergey Bogza: Emily Kent (violin), Taliah Bohlen (violin), and Sarah Vaden (french horn).

The talent you attracted with the competition was incredible!

~Ben Keating

I'm eternally grateful to all who made Emerging Artists Competition an enjoyable and wonderful experience.

~Sam Vaillancourt

I want to send my warmest thank you to everyone who has helped me grow into a better musician for the past two years. I am not sure where I would be without all your support, love, and guidance. You have taught me not to be afraid of new challenges but to instead face them with courage. You have pushed me to be better and more importantly, strive for greatness. I am so grateful for the opportunities provided by you and the wisdom imparted on me along the way. Thank you, thank you. I hope to see you all again soon!

*My best wishes,
Emily Kent*

Emerging Artists Competition

The inaugural Emerging Artists Competition was held in June 2024 at Gulf Coast State College Amelia G. Tapper Center and will return bi-annually. Winners receive exciting cash prizes and awards and perform with various Panama City Symphony events and recitals in the year following a competitions.

Judges were Maestro Sergey Bogza, Music Director and Conductor, Panama City Symphony; Dr. Gregory Jones, Associate Dean of Engagement, College of Music – FSU; and Erika Sciascia, Panama City Symphony Concertmaster. Sharing the stage as accompanists for the finalists at Panama City Symphony's Emerging Artists Competition were Valerie Trujillo and Mikayla Rogers.



Grand Prize Winner - High School Division
Croft "Didi" Stone, violin



Grand Prize Winner - College Division
Victor Shlyakhtenko, piano



College Division - Second Place
Sam Parrini, violin



College Division - Third Place
Antonio Jarvey, saxophone

Symphony organizations have long noted the need to have music education specific to early education, effecting improved math and language skills, improved test scores, heightened listening skills and increased creativity.



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"It's Opening Night!"

Expressing heartfelt appreciation to the orchestra musicians, *It's Opening Night* is a donated art piece created by local glass artist Dr. Marlene East, President, Panama City Symphony Board of Directors.

Getting ready for the season opener, the violinist ponders honoring the leadership of Maestro Bogza and the composers of the pieces to be performed by Panama City Symphony in the 24/25 season.

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It's Opening Night is displayed in the foyer on concert nights.
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The winner's name will be drawn at the season finale on April 12, 2025.
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My Favorite Things

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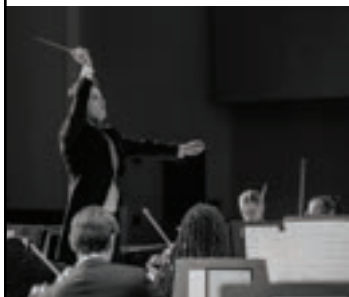
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Presents

TRIBUTE TO TCHAIKOVSKY

Saturday, February 8, 2025, 7:00 pm

Barbara W. Nelson Fine Arts Center
Bay High School, Panama City, Florida

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840–1893)

Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor, Op. 23

- I. Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso – Allegro con spirito
- II. Andantino semplice – Prestissimo
- III. Allegro con fuoco

Soloist: Victor Shlyakhtenko



Intermission



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840–1893)

Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64

- I. Andante - Allegro con anima
- II. Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza
- III. Valse: Allegro moderato
- IV. Finale: Andante maestoso - Allegro vivace

Guest Artist, Victor Shlyakhtenko



Winner of the Panama City Symphony's inaugural 2024 Emerging Artist Competition, Victor Shlyakhtenko has been praised for his *"varied orchestral sound contrasted with beguiling lightness."* Born in Los Angeles, he is a fourth-year student at the Oberlin Conservatory in Ohio, studying solo piano and orchestral conducting.

Last year, Victor traveled to Zlín (Czech Republic) to participate in the International Conducting Institute's annual workshop. This season, Victor performs a series of solo recitals, including the Palm Springs International Piano Competition; as well as for the Grand Piano Series in Naples, Florida, where he partnered with renowned pianist Konstantin Soukhovetski. Later this spring, Victor looks forward to collaborating with the South Coast Symphony, playing Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 1 and conducting Borodin's Polovtsian Dances.

As a pianist, Victor made his orchestral debut at the age of 12 with the Orange Coast Symphony. Since then, he has performed with over a dozen orchestras in concerti by Beethoven, Chopin, Grieg, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, and Clara Schumann, performing at venues such as Carnegie Hall, JB Pritzker Pavilion, Walt Disney Concert Hall, and Leipzig Gewandhaus. Victor was a recipient of the U.S. National Chopin Foundation Scholarship from 2016-2019 and a Young Scholar of the Lang Lang International Music Foundation from 2018-2020.



Victor has performed in masterclasses for pianists such as Fabio Bidini, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, and Marios Papadopoulos; he also participated in conducting workshops with Donald Schleicher, Kirk Trevor, and Diane Wittry. Victor studies piano with Stanislav Ioudenitch and orchestral conducting with Raphael Jiménez; he also currently serves as assistant conductor for the Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra (NOYO).



Finalists in Panama City Symphony's Emerging Artists Competition, June 2024

Tribute to Tchaikovsky

Program Notes

Compiled by Sergey Bogza

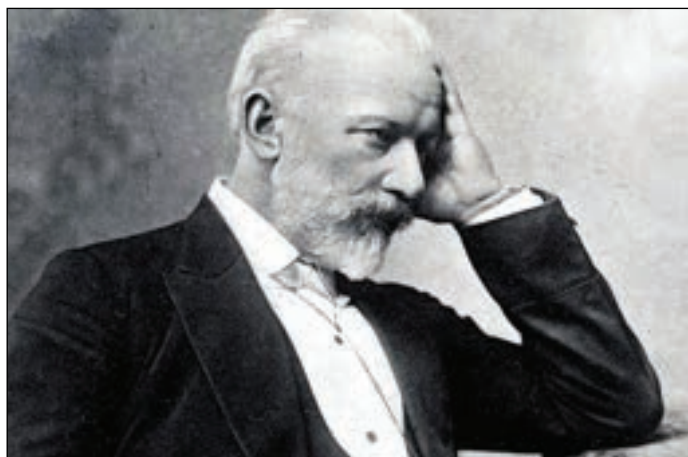
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor, Op. 23

estimated duration: 35 minutes

ONE MINUTE NOTE

Pyotr Illich Tchaikovsky has been celebrated for his deeply personal music and masterful compositional style. His brilliant First Piano Concerto exemplifies characteristic writing for solo piano and an acute sense of balance between soloist and orchestra, elevating it to a pinnacle of Romantic-era expressivity.



COMPOSITIONAL HISTORY

Composed during his first decade as a music theory and composition professor at the Moscow Conservatory, Tchaikovsky sought to write a piano concerto that captured the idiomatic character of the instrument. Upon completing a first draft in late 1874, Tchaikovsky played the composition for his pianist colleagues, Nikolai Rubinstein and Nikolai Hubert, with hopes of receiving technical advice. Yet the response they offered was famously unfavorable.

Although Rubinstein typically praised Tchaikovsky's work, on this occasion, he is said to have sharply criticized the concerto for being worthless and "uneven," with passages either too challenging for even the most skilled virtuoso or which would be rendered inaudible when accompanied by full orchestra. The incident was so distressful to Tchaikovsky that he rejected Rubinstein's comments, orchestrated the piece the following month and dedicated it to German pianist, Hans von Bülow. In addition to being one of the first classical pieces to sell one million recordings,

the concerto has been performed countless times by prestigious soloists, notably including Nikolai Rubinstein himself, as well as his brother, Arthur, Vladimir Horowitz, and Martha Argerich.

LISTENER'S GUIDE

This three-movement composition fills a multi-movement formal shell that would have been considered traditional by the end of the nineteenth century, yet it still exemplifies Tchaikovsky's innovative style. The first movement follows Sonata-Allegro form, but it begins with an unusual introduction containing material famously known for being "in the wrong key" that never returns, remaining independent from the rest of the composition. Listeners are invited to find hidden motivic relationships between this introduction and the two main themes for the rest of the first movement: a Ukrainian folk theme Tchaikovsky is said to have heard in a market near Kiev, and a more contemplative theme. The second movement combines both the traditions of lyrical and scherzo interior movements through contrasting tempi between a slower, flowing melody played first in the flute juxtaposed by another folk-inflected theme. The energetic final movement maximizes the repetition and contrasts of Rondo form, mixing a march-like, Ukrainian-folk-inflected first theme with a tranquil second theme that together set up an exhilaratingly virtuosic grand finale by the solo pianist.

Although his contemporaries tended to emphasize soloistic displays, Tchaikovsky sought to maximize the orchestra's expressive potential by alternating accompanying roles between it and the solo piano. Yet even when the orchestra has the melody, the solo piano's part remains insistently vigorous and virtuosic. Listen for driving harmonic progressions, graceful melodies, and fast scalar runs in the solo piano that render this concerto romantic and memorable.

Listen for driving harmonic progressions, graceful melodies, and fast scalar runs in the solo piano that render this concerto romantic and memorable.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64
estimated duration: 45 minutes

ONE MINUTE NOTE

Pyotr Illich Tchaikovsky remains one of the most celebrated composers of the Romantic era. He is known for his deeply expressive music and mastery of orchestration. His Symphony No. 5 in E Minor is a poignant exploration of fate, resilience, and triumph. Through its cyclical structure and emotionally charged themes, this symphony stands as a quintessential example of Romantic symphonic writing, embodying Tchaikovsky's gift for melding personal expression with universal appeal.

COMPOSITIONAL HISTORY

Tchaikovsky composed his Fifth Symphony in the summer of 1888 during a period of self-reflection and renewed confidence in his craft. Written after a 10-year hiatus from symphonic composition, this work marked his return to the symphony with a sense of purpose. During this time, Tchaikovsky was also conducting extensively across Europe, which may have influenced the bold, dramatic nature of this work.

Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony is often described as a *"fate symphony,"* as it explores the philosophical theme of confronting and ultimately overcoming destiny. In his sketches, Tchaikovsky noted a program for the symphony: *"Complete submission before fate, or, what is the same thing, the inscrutable designs of Providence."* The cyclical use of a recurring *"fate"* motif, which undergoes transformation throughout the symphony, mirrors this thematic journey.

*The movement drives to a great climax,
then breaks off in silence.
This is a trap, and it often tricks the
unwary into premature applause, for
the symphony is not yet over.*

LISTENER'S GUIDE

The symphony unfolds in four movements, unified by the recurring *"fate"* theme, introduced by the clarinet in the opening bars and reappearing in various guises throughout the symphony:

Andante – Allegro con anima:

Deep string chords at the opening of the Andante cantabile introduce one of the great solos for horn, and a few moments later, the oboe has the graceful second subject. For a movement that begins in such relaxed spirits, the return of the motto theme, which blazes out dramatically in the trumpets, twice shatters the music.

II. Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza:

Tchaikovsky springs a surprise in the third movement—instead of the expected scherzo, he writes a lovely waltz. He rounds the movement off beautifully with an extended coda based on the waltz tune, and in its closing moments the motto-theme makes a fleeting appearance, like a figure seen through the mists.

III. Valse: Allegro moderato:

In contrast to the weighty previous movements, the third movement is a graceful waltz, showcasing Tchaikovsky's mastery of dance forms. Despite its elegance, subtle hints of melancholy occasionally surface, maintaining a connection to the symphony's overarching emotional narrative.

IV. Finale: Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace:

However misty that theme may have seemed at the end of the third movement, it comes into crystalline focus at the beginning of the finale. Tchaikovsky moves to E major here and sounds out the motto to open this movement. The main body of the finale, marked Allegro vivace, leaps to life, and the motto theme breaks in more and more often as it proceeds. The movement drives to a great climax, then breaks off in silence. This is a trap, and it often tricks the unwary into premature applause, for the symphony is not yet over. Out of the ensuing silence begins the real coda, and the motto-theme now leads the way on constantly-accelerating tempos to the (true) conclusion in E major.





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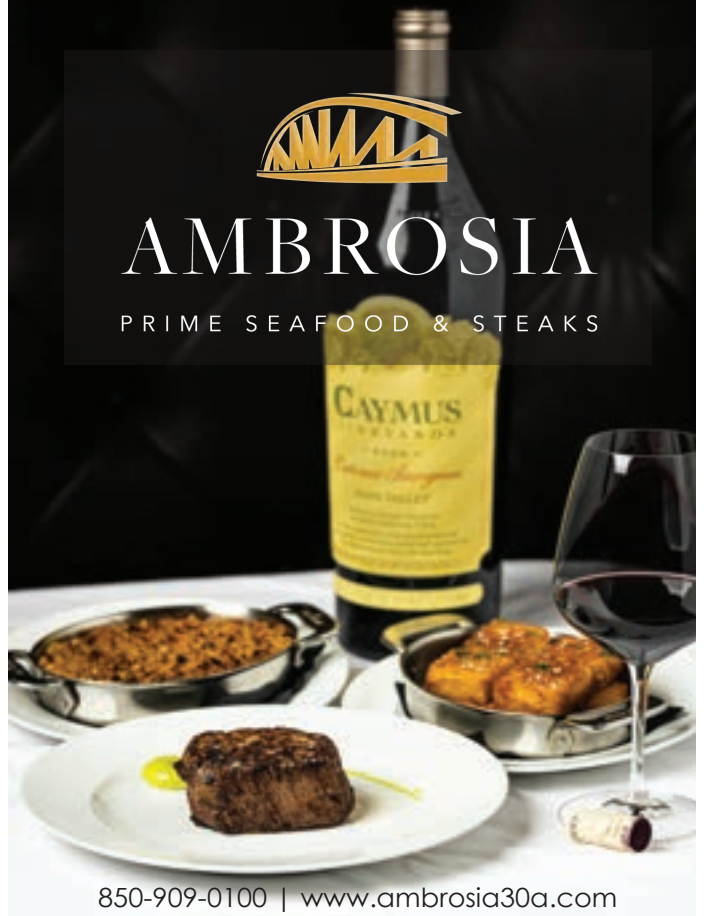


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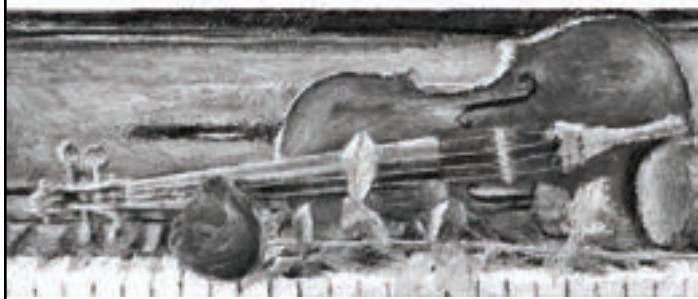
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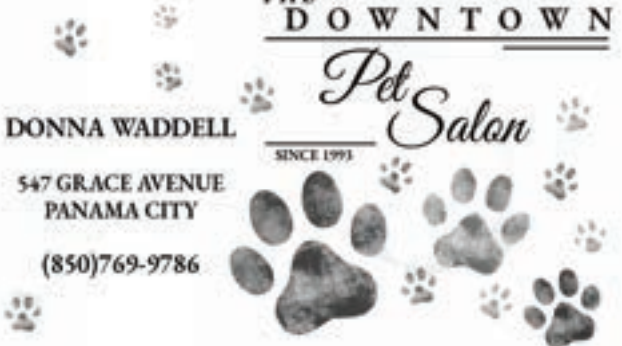
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