

PROGRAM NOTES

Symphony No. 4 in F minor

Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony was written between 1877 and 1878, one of the most personally turbulent years of the composer’s life. On one side Tchaikovsky began his famous relationship with Nadezhda von Meck who was to become his patron and confidant for several years although the two supposedly never met, communicating only through numerous letters. On the other side, Tchaikovsky married Antonia Miliukhova, supposedly a former student from twelve years prior. Tchaikovsky consented to marry Antonia for several reasons, one of which was the hopes that he would stop rumors of his homosexuality, a severely punishable offense in Tsarist Russia. While his relationship with Madame von Meck flourished and helped Tchaikovsky in his musical endeavors, his relationship with his new wife was nothing short of disastrous, ending after only nine weeks and causing Tchaikovsky to have a nervous breakdown. Because a divorce in Russia at that time was only allowed due to infidelity (which neither side committed), the couple remained officially married until Tchaikovsky’s death in 1893, although they never lived together again.

The Fourth Symphony is dedicated to Madame von Meck, marked in the score as “My Best Friend” and referred to the piece as “our symphony,” emphasizing not only the equality of patrons and artists in Russia at this time, but also the genuine partnership Tchaikovsky felt with von Meck. Although Tchaikovsky hated the concept of programs for his symphonies, at Madame von Meck’s request he did include a program for this symphony in a letter to his patron not long after the completion of the symphony. According to Tchaikovsky the symphony centers on Fate “the inexorable power that hampers our search for happiness . . .” Tchaikovsky’s program notes generated some controversy among scholars for many years who chose to quibble over his words instead of focus on the music itself, creating a negative impact on the symphony for several years.

The first movement opens with the powerful Fate fanfare in the horns and bassoons and oscillates between the darker motives of the opening – in which the Fate motive returns – and a lighter, almost dream-like waltz. In Tchaikovsky’s words “A sweet and tender dream enfolds me, a serene and radiant presence leads me on, until all that was dark and joyless is forgotten . . . But no, these are but dreams. Fate returns to waken us, and we see that life is an alternation of grim reality and fugitive dreams of happiness.” The movement is a testament to Tchaikovsky’s difficulties with traditional form. Instead of taking his luscious melodies and developing them as in the German symphonic tradition, he simply moves from melody to melody, allowing the music to express a variety of emotions.

Where the first movement expresses the starkness of Fate, the second is more muted, a deliberate exploration of melancholy. The movement begins with a plaintive oboe solo that is picked up and passed around the orchestra, interrupted in the middle by an almost cheerfully dance-like interlude before returning to the theme from the beginning of the movement.

The third movement seems almost out of place in its playfulness. The strings are pizzicato throughout, framing the first the woodwinds then the brass in different dance-like motives. Listening to this movement it is easy to hear the parallels to Tchaikovsky’s ballet music, especially Swan Lake which was premiered not long before the Fourth Symphony was written.

The final movement begins explosively, a triumphant testament that life is indeed worth living. Partway through the movement, however, the paralyzing theme from the first movement returns, a stark reminder that Fate cannot be fully escaped. The opening motive again takes over, Tchaikovsky’s way of telling us that “If you find no joy in yourself, look around you. Go to the people: See how they can enjoy life and give themselves up to festivity . . . There is still happiness, simple and naïve; rejoice in the happiness of others and you can still live.”

It is important to remember, however, that despite the program written by Tchaikovsky to his patron, he still felt that words were a poor representation of the true meaning of this work:

Of course my symphony is programmatic, but this program is such that it cannot be formulated in words. That would excite ridicule and appear comic. Ought not a symphony – that is, the most lyrical of all forms – to be such a work? Should it not express everything for which there are not words, but with the soul wishes to express, and which requires to be expressed?

Notes by Christy Muncey

Colorado
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UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Meet Me at the UCA

CSU SYMPHONY PERFORMANCE FOR THE
2012 ALL-STATE ORCHESTRA

February 10, 2012 • Griffin Concert Hall, UCA

CSU Symphony Orchestra

Wes Kenney, Director

Symphony No. 4 in F minor, op. 36 Pytor Ilyitch Tchaikovsky
(1840 – 1893)

- I. Andante sostenuto – Moderato con anima
- II. Andantino in modo di canzona
- III. Scherzo; Pizzicato ostinato: Allegro
- IV. Finale: Allegro con fuoco

CSU Symphony Orchestra

Wes Kenney, Director and Conductor

Violin I

Hannah Barnes, *Concertmaster*
Juliana Byess, *Asst. Concertmaster*
Lydia Demi-Smith
Nicole Fassold
Natalie Jones
Kathryn Kieffhaber
Rachel Napper
Allison Rickel
Jaclyn Salts
Patrick Weseman

Violin II

Karmen Mitchell, *Principal*
Royston Hunget, *Asst. Principal*
Jayme Cole
Melissa Gross
Haley Heer
Courtney Peterson
Brittany Schaeffner
Lucas Thompson
Olivia Trinko
Elizabeth Vega

Viola

Sabrina Romney, *Principal*
Chealsea Bernhardt, *Asst. Principal*
Margaret Babb
Kyle Caulkins
Chris Huang
Grayson Waldie
Andrew Zbryk

Cello

Kenneth Martin, *Principal*
Jake Thaler, *Asst. Principal*
David Bayless
Brighton Bledowski
Lauren Brissey
Emily Carpenter
Sara Espinosa
Kayla Hayes
Madeline Hayes
Shakira Johnson
Justin Kattnig
Sally Murphy
Matthew Snyder
Eric Sorenson
Whitney Stuberg
Rachel Wilson

Bass

Kenny Jones, *Principal*
Erik Deines, *Acting Principal*
Zachary Bush, *Acting Asst. Principal*
Evan Gohring
Marcus Heath
Brandon Katz
Andrew Miller
Crystal Pelham
Kurt Peterson

Flute

Brianne Little, *Principal*
Lindsey Noble, *Asst. Principal*
Sam Hood
Mando Surita

Piccolo

Sam Hood

Oboe

Caleb Bradley, *Principal*
Shane Werts, *Asst. Principal*

Clarinet

Tom Wilson, *Principal*
Nicole Jensen, *Asst. Principal*

Bassoon

Jessie Sawyer, *Principal*
Lynn Bonomo, *Asst. Principal*

Trumpet

Tony Whitehead, *Principal*
Scott Weber, *Asst. Principal*

Horn

Molly Salika, *Principal*
Christie Bass
Kevin Olson
Lindsey Poppe

Trombone

Dave Ellis, *Principal*
Logan Kingston, *Asst. Principal*

Bass Trombone

Jesse Sylvester

Tuba

Chris Krueger

Percussion

Mark Coup, *Principal*
Colin Constance, *Asst. Principal*
Brandon Arvay
Ben Justis
Anthony Lederhos
Colin Sitgreives

Graduate Teaching Assistants

Karmen Mitchell
Christy Muncey
Sabrina Romney
Lydia Demi-Smith

Graduate Conductor

Christy Muncey



Wes Kenney was named last November as the 2009 Outstanding Teacher by the Colorado American String Teachers Association. He was also awarded the Grand Prize in the Summer 2007 Varna (Bulgaria) International Conducting Competition. He traveled back to Bulgaria in March 2008 for concerts in Vidin and to conduct *La Traviata* in Stara Zagora. Mr. Kenney is Professor of Music and Director of Orchestras at Colorado State University where he conducts the CSU Symphony and Chamber Orchestra as well as CSU Opera productions. He is also currently in his ninth season as Music Director of the Fort Collins Symphony. In

the summer of 2004 he was named to an additional post of Music Director of Opera Fort Collins helping that organization establish a full season of three productions a season. This season he renewed a relationship with bands stepping in to conduct CSU's Wind Ensemble while a search for a permanent director begins.

Mr. Kenney is a frequent guest conductor of professional and educational ensembles. He has appeared in the past three seasons with the Virginia Symphony, the Symphony of Southeast Texas, the Vallejo (CA) Symphony and the New Mexico All-State Orchestra. Prior to that, Maestro Kenney has guest conducted at the Edinburgh Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland, the Buffalo Philharmonic, returned to the New Mexico Symphony for tours and performances of *The Nutcracker* and had debuts with the Williamsburg Symphonia (VA), and the Acadiana Symphony (LA). In six seasons as the Virginia Symphony's Associate Conductor, Mr. Kenney appeared more than 350 times with that orchestra. He was responsible for the programming and conducting of Subscription, Pops, Family and Young People's Concerts.

Mr. Kenney was Co-principal Conductor of the Oakland Lyric Opera for four seasons and Music Director of the Virginia Ballet Theater. Awarded the prestigious Carmen Dragon Conducting Prize in 1992, Wes Kenney served as Music Director of the Oakland Youth Orchestra for five seasons.

Mr. Kenney has also enjoyed success directing from the orchestra pit for opera, ballet, and musical theater. During the 2011-12 Season he will conduct productions of *Carmen*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Turn of the Screw*, and *Barber of Seville*. In the past five seasons he has conducted *Madama Butterfly*, *Cenerentola*, *Rigoletto*, *Tosca*, *Die Zauberflote*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *La Traviata*. *Il Trovatore*, *Street Scene*, *La Boheme*, *Pagliacci*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Falstaff*, *La Traviata*, *Turandot*. *Marriage of Figaro*, *The Merry Widow*, *Aida*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Tenderland*.

This past summer he was a guest lecturer at the Conductor's Institute held at Bard College in upstate New York, teaching alongside founder Harold Farberman and American Symphony Orchestra Music Director Leon Botstein.