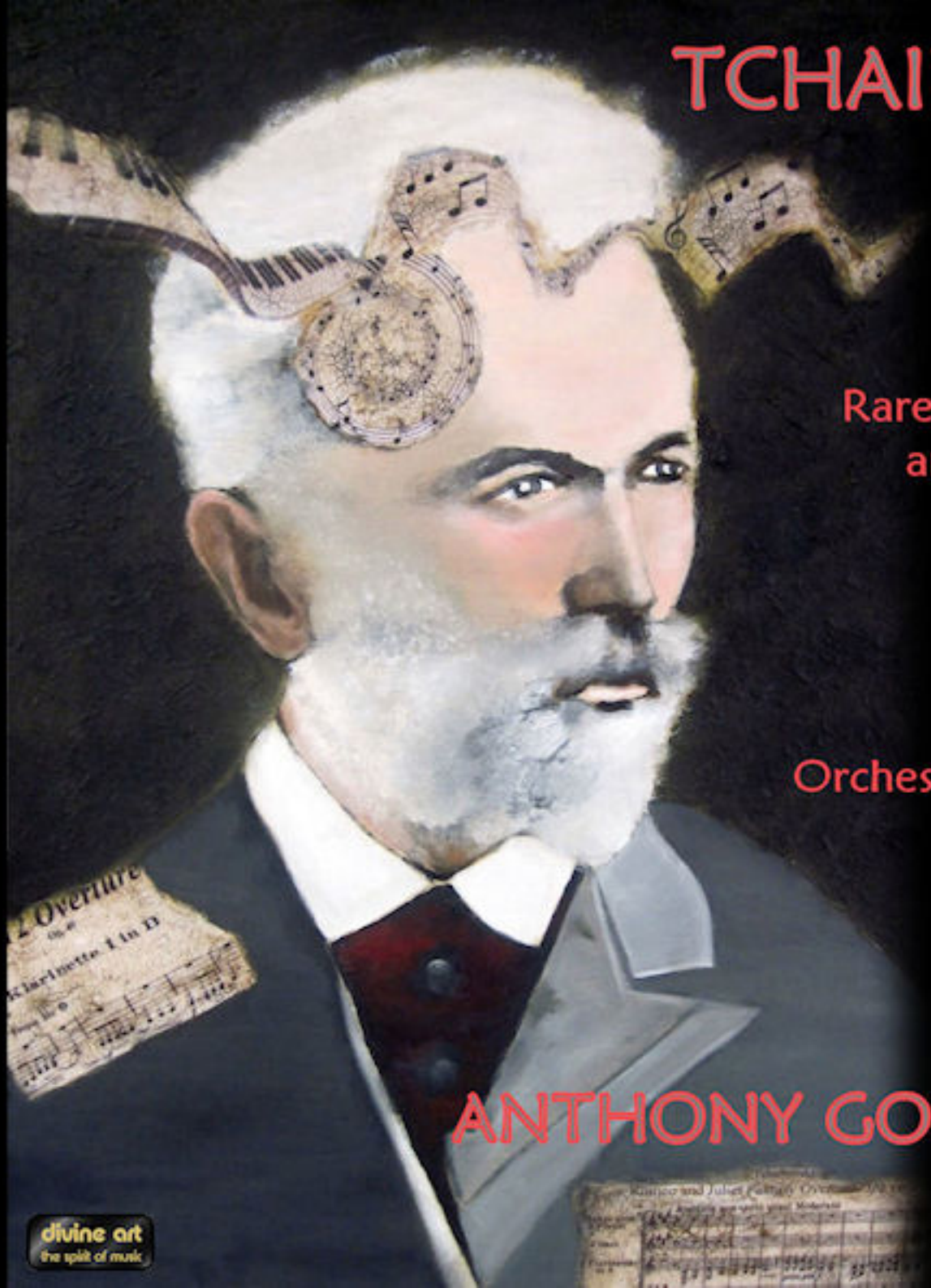

TCHAIKOVSKY

Rare Transcriptions and Paraphrases

Volume 1
Orchestral and Opera

ANTHONY GOLDSTONE
piano

divine art
the spirit of music

TCHAIKOVSKY rare transcriptions and paraphrases vol. 1

1	**Marche slave, Op. 31** * transcribed H. Hanke		11.17
2	**Potpourri on Themes from the Opera *The Voyevoda*** 'H. Cramer' (Tchaikovsky himself)		13.51
	Theme and Variations from Orchestral Suite No. 3 in G major, Op. 55 * transcribed Max Lippold and Anthony Goldstone		19.07
3	Theme and Variations 1-3	3.19	
4	Variations 4-5	2.22	
5	Variations 6-8	2.03	
6	Variations 9-11	4.47	
7	Variation 12: Finale (Polacca)	6.36	
	Serenade in C major for String Orchestra, Op. 48 * transcribed Max Lippold and Anthony Goldstone		29.00
8	1: Pezzo in forma di Sonatina	9.18	
9	2: Valse	3.42	
10	3: Élégie	8.18	
11	4: Finale (Tema russo)	7.42	
	Total CD duration		**73.17**

*=première recording

ANTHONY GOLDSTONE piano solo

This recording is the first in a two-volume series of transcriptions and paraphrases for solo piano of music by Tchaikovsky, most of which are receiving their first recordings; volume one concerns orchestral concert works and operatic music; the second is of his ballets. He himself has long been recognised as a master of piano writing, the most famous example being his Piano Concerto No. 1 in B flat minor, Op. 23, famously pronounced unplayable (and worthless) by the great pianist Nikolai Rubinstein but which has become one of the best loved and most performed of all piano concertos. Tchaikovsky himself made piano versions of his own works, mostly for four hands, and approved paraphrases of his works by an admired piano virtuoso such as Paul Pabst (see volume 2 – divine art dda25106).

The occasion for which the **Marche slave, Op. 31 [1],** was written was a concert promoted in November 1876 by the Russian Musical Society in aid of the victims of, and to equip Russian volunteers in, the war between Serbia and Turkey that had broken out a few months earlier. Following official Russian intervention the following year, the Turks suffered a crushing defeat in 1878, with the Ottoman Empire being repelled from large areas of central and eastern Europe.

This rousing work, which – unbelievably – was completed in five days, is laid out for large orchestra including an impressive battery of percussion and might be described as a propaganda piece; it certainly pulls no punches but is assembled with all the skill and craftsmanship of the mature Tchaikovsky. It was described on the title page of the manuscript as “Serbo-Russian March on Slavonic Folk Themes”: he included Serbian tunes and employed, not for the first or last time, the Russian national anthem “God Save the Tsar”, which had been written in 1833 by Alexei Lvov (1799-1870) and remained in use until the Revolution of 1917.

When the Soviets republished the Marche slave in the mid twentieth century as part of Tchaikovsky’s complete works, all reference to the Tsarist anthem was expunged, making a mockery of the piece. One can hear the anthem in this recording at 5’19” and, triumphantly, at 8’48”. It may be of interest also to identify the Serbian source melodies: “The Sun Does Not Shine Brightly” at 0’13” and subsequently; “The Kind Serb’s Doorstep” at 3’48” and subsequently; and “Their Guns Do Not Make Him Afraid” at 4’27”. The martial section that begins the *più mosso* at 8’15” is original, combining brilliantly with the Tsarist anthem. At 10’42” the climactic coda somewhat improbably contains the seed of the delicate Chinese Dance from *The Nutcracker*, composed fifteen years later.

Conducted by Nikolai Rubinstein, the Slavonic March was encored, inspiring what the composer described as “a whole storm of patriotic enthusiasm”. In the words of an eyewitness, “The whole audience rose to its feet, many jumped on to their seats… Many in the hall were weeping.” Tchaikovsky arranged the work for solo piano in the same year, but the result seems to indicate that this was more for study purposes than for public performance, being fairly basic. The “transcription de concert” recorded here is by one H. Hanke and was published in Russia in about 1904. I have

searched for information about this person but to no avail, not even discovering his (or, less probably, her) first name; the American pianist-composer Brian Hanke disclaimed any known family connection. H. Hanke must have been well versed in pianistic virtuosity and has not spared the performer in any way: the difficulty and the stamina required are enormous.

In 1867-8 Tchaikovsky collaborated with the Russian playwright Alexander Ostrovsky (1823-1886) on an opera – his first – based on Ostrovsky's 1865 play *A Dream on the Volga*. The opera, called *The Voyevoda* and given the opus number 3, has no connection with the composer's much later "symphonic ballad" of the same name, Op 78, dating from 1890-1. (A voyevoda, originally meaning war leader, was a governor or princely ruler.) The opera was beset with problems, including Tchaikovsky's mislaying a large portion of the libretto, which had to be rewritten, Ostrovsky's tardiness due to other projects ("when he returns from St. Petersburg I shall pounce on him," Tchaikovsky wrote to his brother Anatoly), and the postponement of the première due to lack of preparation time.

Eventually there were five performances at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow between February and March 1869. Although Tchaikovsky reported that at the première "it had a brilliant success; I took fifteen curtain calls, and I was presented with a laurel wreath," *The Voyevoda* fell into obscurity and he, in his disappointment, later destroyed the manuscript of the full score. However most of the orchestral parts and other material survived and the work was reconstructed by Yuri Kochurov (1907-1952) in the nineteen-forties. Tchaikovsky himself arranged the Entr'acte and Dance of the Chambermaids from Act II for piano duet, and a **Potpourri on Themes from the Opera *The Voyevoda* [2]** was published shortly afterwards in 1868 by the same firm, Jurgenson, under the name of H. Cramer. This is universally accepted as having been written by Tchaikovsky, but why he chose to use a pseudonym on this occasion is unclear. It may be that he was uncomfortable with the idea of loosely connected excerpts strung together for the commercial purpose of popularising or exploiting an opera.

Oddly, many piano concoctions of themes from operas were published in the nineteenth century mainly in France, but also in Germany, ostensibly written by Henri Cramer, a name strangely absent from reference books. There may have been one or two people of that name, or even perhaps none, as publishers sometimes used an invented catch-all nom de plume as the attribution for works from different sources. (One such example is G.W. Marks for composers including Brahms.) Not much needs to be said about the music of the Potpourri itself, except that several of the themes are Russian folk songs contained in the collection of fifty that Tchaikovsky arranged for piano duet at around the same time.

Of Tchaikovsky's four orchestral suites the third in G major, Op. 55, and the fourth, based on works by Mozart ("Mozartiana"), Op. 61, are most often heard. The former, written in April-July 1884 in the Ukraine, consists of four sections, of which the **Theme and Variations [3-7]** is frequently performed separately; this is the final movement and by far the most substantial, consisting of an original theme and twelve variations, the last of which is an extended polonaise finale. According to the composer's diary, he composed the finale on 27 May, and "a whole four variations" on another single day, 2 June. Meanwhile he was also making a version of the work for piano duet.

It is not surprising that on 30 May he noted, “I am working too hard, as though I am being driven on. This straining is unhealthy, and it will probably show in the poor suite,” but in the event the suite, and in particular the theme and variations, did not suffer. The first performances, in St. Petersburg and Moscow in January 1885, were a great success. Tchaikovsky wrote of the former, “I have never before experienced such a triumph… These moments are the finest adornment of the artist’s life.”

Information is sketchy about Max Lippold, who made several arrangements of Russian orchestral music for piano solo and duet for Jurgenson and apparently died in 1934. In many places I have elaborated the textures of, and restored orchestral strands to, both of his transcriptions in this recording, as well as correcting numerous divergences from Tchaikovsky’s original.

The theme **[3]** is formal and in clear-cut ternary form, with a characteristic rhythm and an easily memorised opening phrase, which becomes particularly prominent later in the work. In Variation 1 the entire theme is given to pizzicato strings, while flutes and clarinets play descants above it. (As Tchaikovsky’s colourful orchestration has informed both the creation and the performance of the transcription, I feel it is pertinent to refer to it in these notes.) Variation 2 is a hair-raising *moto perpetuo* for the first violin section, but the woodwinds then return with their own intricately contrapuntal variation rather in the manner of a mechanical organ. For Variation 4 **[4]** the key shifts to a solemn B minor, demonically interrupted by a brassy Dies Irae. A busy *fugato* follows, perhaps a knowing parody of worthy academicism, while the brief sixth variation **[5]** is a spiky scherzo in which clarinets, bassoons, violas and ’celli are asked to play *ffff* against their better nature.

All subsequent variations are continuous; a slightly religiose chorale on the woodwind leads directly into a soulful, intensely Russian-sounding cor anglais solo, set off by tremulous violins. A surprising twist at the very end ushers in A major for a wild Russian or Ukrainian dance **[6]**, which culminates in a sudden break and a cadenza by the leader of the orchestra, becoming more thoughtful. Variation 10 continues the violin solo as a nostalgic *valse triste* in B minor punctuated by solo woodwind interjections, with a middle section over a drone pedal note, A.

Another pedal note, this time B, pervades the following heart-tugging major-key eleventh variation, paving the way for the dramatic introduction of the polonaise rhythm of the massive finale **[7]**, which alone is of the same duration as the whole of the second movement of the suite. The proud polacca theme is related to the main theme only in its upbeat bar of semi-quavers, and there are two episodes, the second, lyrical one being developed from the opening of the first, more rhythmic one. The coda quickens the tempo and as one would expect there is a resounding, emphatic close.

The ever popular **Serenade for String Orchestra [8-11]** was written in September-October 1880, also in the Ukraine, overlapping with the “1812” Overture, which could hardly be more different. The bombastic Overture was the result of Tchaikovsky’s reluctant acceptance of a ceremonial commission, whereas the Serenade, according to the composer, arose from his “intrinsic need to work”: “I composed the Serenade … from inner conviction. It is a heartfelt piece.” He wrote to Pyotr Jurgenson, “I love this Serenade terribly” and urgently requested its early publication. It was performed very shortly afterwards as a special surprise for Tchaikovsky in the St. Petersburg Conservatoire and in just over a

year had been given its first public performances in St. Petersburg and Moscow. It was enthusiastically received, particularly the Valse. Even his grudging former teacher, Nikolai Rubinstein, became a proselytiser for the work.

Though the title Serenade might suggest a lax approach, the four movements seem to hark back to a more ordered age, where form was regular and symmetry the goal. Scalic themes are intrinsic to every movement, by design. The broad, noble introduction to the Pezzo in forma di Sonatina **[8]** begins with four descending notes, the raison d'être for which will be revealed only near the end of the finale. Soon afterwards there is a linking upward scale of an octave, which anticipates the openings of the second and third movements. A half close in A minor, repeated three times ever more thoughtfully, is followed by a pause, during which time the music has unexpectedly decided to return to the home key of C major. The main body of the movement is in abridged sonata form – i.e. lacking a development – also known as sonatina form, which explains the title.

The first subject group is predominantly lyrical and the second, in the key of the dominant, garrulous, a reversal of the more usual classical model. The exposition begins again note for note, causing uncertainty as to whether this may be a repeat of the exposition until the second subject group enters in the home key and we know we are in the recapitulation. After what could have been the end, a shortened reminiscence of the introduction concludes the movement.

Tchaikovsky brought his flair for writing adorable waltzes to the compact second movement **[9]**, which could be said to perform the function of a sorbet intermezzo between main courses. The weighty Elegy **[10]** begins by cleverly counterpointing a descending bass against an ascending scale that is stated four times with differing resolutions and turns out to be preliminary to the main theme, a lovely melody with an *arpeggiando* accompaniment that sits very comfortably on the piano. The music develops with considerable passion; a recitative-like passage is followed by a pause after which the opening idea returns, muted, leading eventually to an exquisitely affecting coda and hushed close.

The D major tonality of the Elegy becomes the dominant of G major as the Finale **[11]** opens gently with one of the fifty Russian folk songs mentioned above in connection with the Potpourri, set almost exactly as Tchaikovsky had done more than a decade earlier. Four descending notes of a scale end this song, and the music meditates on these; after a pause these same four notes become the outline of the first two bars of another, dance-like tune from the same collection, at once returning the tonality to C major as required and serving as the first subject of this sonata-form movement.

The long-breathed second subject makes its first appearance in the remote key of E flat major and fragments of the folk song round off the exposition in the same key. The complex development continues to explore this melody before merging imperceptibly into the recapitulation, and after this has run its course an inconclusive pause reintroduces the very opening of the Serenade. We now realise with glee that its first four descending notes are also the germ of the jolly folk dance. Tchaikovsky drives this home by accelerating and mutating them into the dance tune, closing the work exultantly.

recorded in St. John the Baptist Church, Alkborough, North Lincolnshire, England, in 2012
A Maxim digital recording
Piano technician: Benjamin E. Nolan
Re-mastering and post-production: Stephen Sutton (Divine Art)
Booklet and packaging design: Stephen Sutton
Cover image by Cheryl Dolby, used by kind permission. http:/healingwoman.blogspot.com
Traycard image: “Pyotr I. Tchaikovsky” (1893) by Nikolai Dimitriyevich Kuznetsov (1850 - 1929) – original in State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow

With grateful thanks to Geoffrey Walters

THE PIANIST

Described by *The New York Times* as “a man whose nature was designed with pianos in mind”, **Anthony Goldstone** is one of Britain’s most respected pianists. A sixth-generation pupil of Beethoven through his great teacher Maria Curcio, Anthony Goldstone was born in Liverpool. He studied with Derrick Wyndham at the Royal Manchester College of Music (which later honoured him with a Fellowship), later with Curcio in London.

He has enjoyed a career encompassing six continents, the Last Night of the Proms (after which Benjamin Britten wrote to him, “Thank you most sincerely for that brilliant performance of my Diversions. I wish I could have been at the Royal Albert Hall to join in the cheers”), very many broadcasts and seventy CDs (including the BBC issue of his London Promenade Concert performance of Beethoven’s fourth Piano Concerto). He has an adventurous approach to repertoire and has been praised by Vienna’s *Die Presse* for “his astonishingly profound spiritual penetration”.

In the last few years Goldstone has become known for his acclaimed completions and realisations of works for solo piano and piano duet by Schubert, and for two pianos and solo piano by Mozart, all of which he has recorded on Divine Art CDs as part of an astonishingly inventive discography which has attracted worldwide admiration.

He is also one half of the acclaimed and brilliant piano duo Goldstone and Clemmow with his wife Caroline. The duo has made many CDs for Divine Art as well as Toccata Classics and other labels, including one (Divine Art 25020) containing première recordings of two Russian masterpieces, Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 4 and *Romeo and Juliet*, in spectacular transcriptions for four hands by friends of the composer – Sergei Taneyev and Nadezhda Purgold (Mme. Rimsky-Korsakov) respectively. Goldstone is also making a substantial contribution to Divine Art’s new Russian Piano Music series, issued by its American branch.

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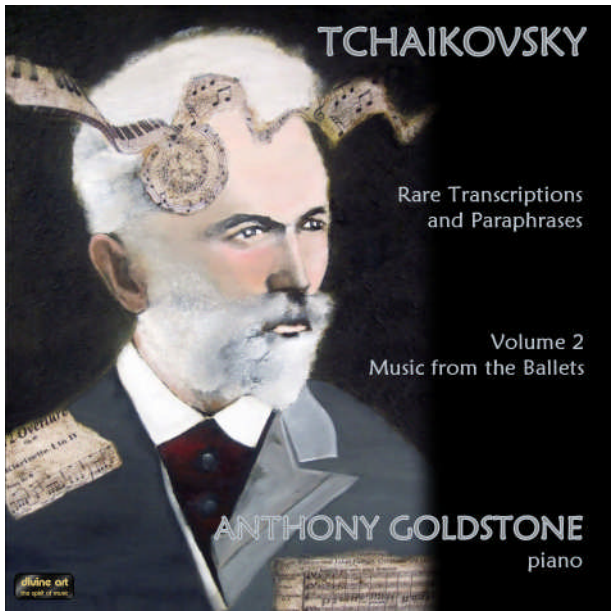

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