

Boris
TCHAIKOVSKY

Piano Quintet • The War Suite

Olga Solovieva, Piano • Maxim Anisimov, Clarinet
Ioana Petcu-Colan, Violin • The Vanbrugh Quartet



Boris Tchaikovsky (1925-1996)

Piano Quintet • The War Suite

The name of Boris Tchaikovsky is revered in Russian music circles as one of the most original composers of the post-Shostakovich generation. His music is known for its formal innovation and robust lyricism, both of which are guided by an impeccable internal logic and a strong sense of purpose. In a relatively long creative life he amassed a formidable catalogue of works that includes four symphonies, four concerti, six string quartets, a variety of chamber and orchestral music for various instrumental ensembles, piano and vocal music, and numerous film scores.

The two works presented on the current disc, both dating from the 1960s, hold a special place in the Tchaikovsky catalogue. The *Piano Quintet* (1962) has been called Tchaikovsky's finest chamber work, and it also marks an important transition in his stylistic evolution. *The War Suite* (1964/2011), here in its première recording, derives from one of the composer's film scores, and provides, in turn, the principal material for another notable work in the composer's oeuvre, the *Third String Quartet*. The two near contemporaneous works make compatible disc mates in that the string quartet forms the instrumental basis of each, with the addition of a fifth instrument, a piano in the case of the *Quintet*, and a clarinet in *The War Suite*.

The *Piano Quintet* is a work of great depth and beauty, an outstanding example of Tchaikovsky testing his newly evolving language in the pursuit of formal innovation. The opening movement, *Moderato*, captures the power and confidence of Tchaikovsky's lyrical writing. The entire movement is anchored in a steady rhythmic pulse established by the solo piano's long introductory paragraph in parallel octaves. It is from this dignified introduction that all the subsequent material will derive. The steady metric of four quarter notes per measure is occasionally offset with a triplet or a dotted half, providing moments of flexibility that sow the seeds for subsequent lyrical expansion. This embryonic material is cast into relief by the strings in short defining phrases that are then

strung together, broken apart, and then reunited in broad eloquent phrases. The sublime, songful dialogue between piano and strings builds to a passage of stirring intensity, after which the music quietly subsides.

The second movement, *Allegro*, is a rondo whose mercurial episodes of alternating mood, tempo, and texture, feature Tchaikovsky's mosaic approach to composition at its most colourful. The lyrical material primarily belongs to the strings while the piano provides the rhythmic element. The muted violin introduces a breathless succession of short phrases that play hide-and-seek with each other as the music progresses. The solo piano places a momentary halt to the momentum with the first of five short contemplative passages marked *Largo* that will serve as points of repose; it then prods the tempo back to *Allegro* with an invigorating motif that ushers in the last new element to the proceedings. The thematic elements take turns, react to one other, and only momentarily engage in a developmental confrontation, turning out one melodic blossom after another.

The third movement, *Allegro*, takes the form of a theme and variations. The strong features of the short, four-bar theme, introduced by the piano, allow a wide range of possibilities as the theme undergoes a rugged course of alteration, distortion, and deformation. The turns of phrase, in their aggressive and ironic demeanor, may bring to mind some of Shostakovich's scherzo movements. As one often finds in Tchaikovsky's music, the rhythmic element provides the driving force of the music.

The final *Adagio* is one of Tchaikovsky's isorhythmic constructions in which a movement is entirely built on thematic material carved out of the successive iterations of a single rhythmic pattern. We find the same approach, for example, in the outer movements of his 1971 *Piano Concerto* (Naxos 8.557727). Here, the rhythmic kernel is a double iambic foot, the short-long/short-long tattoo heard at the outset. Given this formidable constraint, the music is taken through a surprisingly rich lyrical trajectory and brings the *Quintet* to a tenderly expressive conclusion.

The War Suite is based on the music Tchaikovsky wrote for the film *While Defending the Front Line* (Lenfilm, 1964), directed by Yuli Fait. The work stands out among Tchaikovsky's film music in its being scored modestly for string quartet, as per the director's original request, with the addition of a solo clarinet, at the suggestion of the composer [in three movements of the film score (corresponding to movements II, VII, XI of the *Suite*) a guitar is used instead of the second violin. In the *Suite* the guitar is replaced by the violin]. Slim in its instrumentation, the music forms an evocative part of the film, a wartime drama about heroism, friendship, and lost love.

Shortly after the release of the film, the score went missing and was assumed forever lost. A full decade after the composer's death, and after much searching, the Boris Tchaikovsky Society located the manuscript in the Central Archive for Literature and Arts in St Petersburg. *The War Suite* was then compiled and edited by two of Tchaikovsky's former composition students, Elena Astafieva (the main editor) and Stanislav Prokudin.

The eleven movements of the *Suite* do not follow the same order as the film's cues, but rather follow a separate logical sequence intended for concert performance. The *Suite* leads with the film's motto theme, the sentimental waltz heard when the two lovers, Rusanov and Katya, meet for the last time. The central movement, IV, is based on the same theme, and is drawn from an earlier passage when the two have their first intimate conversation. The theme, which is heard with every appearance of the clarinet, again returns in the *Suite*'s final movement, when Rusanov learns of the death of Katya. The emotional arc of the film, featuring love's bloom and eventual destruction, is thus recapitulated in these key moments in the *Suite*. In its entirety, the music of *The War Suite* is about the travails of war, its battles and losses, successes and failures, the experiences and individual feelings of the combatants. All this is masterfully created by Boris Tchaikovsky.

The first concert performance of *The War Suite* took place in October 2012 at the Irish-Russian Chamber Music Festival, held in the Concert Hall of the Moscow Conservatory Central Musical School. The performers

were the same as those heard on this recording – The Vanbrugh Quartet and clarinetist Maxim Anisimov.

Three years after the release of *While Defending the Front Line*, in 1967, Tchaikovsky composed his *Third String Quartet*, drawing on the music he composed for the film in four of the Quartet's six movements. The *Third Quartet* was praised by Shostakovich, and some scholars pointed the links between Tchaikovsky's *Third Quartet* and Shostakovich's last, *Fifteenth Quartet* (1974).

The following indicates where Tchaikovsky's music is used in the film.

The screenplay of *While Defending the Front Line* is based on two novels, *The Battle for Control of the Heights* (the film's initial title) and *Pavlik*, by the famous Russian writer Yuri Markovich Nagibin [1920-1994]. Before becoming a war correspondent for the newspaper *Trud*, Nagibin served on active duty during World War II at the Volkhov Front, south east of Leningrad, the setting of the film.

It is the winter of 1942. During a bombing raid, a young political officer, Rusanov (Igor Kosukhin), finds himself huddled in a trench next to a signalwoman, Katya (Svetlana Svetlichnaya). We hear the sentimental waltz played by the solo clarinet in the *Suite*'s movement IV (*The Trench* in the original film score). The two become further acquainted while traveling together toward the front line, where they've been dispatched, along with Captain Shaternikov (Victor Avdyushko), who will become good friends with Rusanov. In the third movement of the *Suite*, *The Road*, the long, yearning notes of the upper strings are played against an icy carpet of eighth notes played *col legno* and then *spiccato* on the cello. Later that evening, the three comrades take refuge in a large country house. Here Rusanov rescues Katya from the unwanted attention of drunken officers who are also quartered there. Stepping out on the porch of the house, they enjoy a few moments of solitude with each other. At this point we hear the sentimental waltz played by the clarinet, adorned by the occasional strumming on the strings in the seventh movement, *Country House*.

The next morning Rusanov and Shaternikov head toward the front lines to join the military unit's

preparations for battle. The strings reflect the escalating tension with muted pizzicato and scurrying *glissandi* in the tenth movement, *The Battle*. When the commander of the unit is killed, Captain Shaternikov takes charge and leads the troops forward. The German tanks roll into view, as we hear the trudging gait of the *Suite's* fifth movement, *Tanks*. While the unit takes the offensive, Shaternikov and Rusanov steal closer to enemy lines by way of an arduous swamp passage. We hear the solo cello's stressful exhortations in the *Suite's* eighth movement, *The Swamp*.

In the evening, Rusanov has misgivings when he learns that the older officers intend to distribute propaganda leaflets with false information to the Germans. He decides to contact command headquarters to urge them to prohibit this action. While he drives to the contact point to send the intended telegram, his vehicle is attacked by German soldiers. During the exchange of gunfire, we hear the tense lyrical strains and rhythmic punctuations of the second movement of the *Suite*, *Bolshak*, or *High Road*.

Arriving at the contact point, he meets up with Katya, who dispatches the telegram. She urges Rusanov to stay until morning. But the officer feels his place is with his troops back at the camp. Before he departs, the two lovers again step out on the same porch where they had previously met. They now fall into a wordless embrace. It is the last time they will see each other alive. This scene was a favourite of director Fait's, who confesses to having removed the original dialogue of the script to allow

Tchaikovsky's waltz to capture, unimpeded, the tenderness of the moment. It is at this point we hear the waltz theme played on the cello and then clarinet in the *Suite's* first movement, *Farewell*.

Departing, Rusanov embarks upon a daring mission of infiltrating the enemy lines and broadcasting a propaganda message from a lorry outfitted with a loudspeaker. In the course of the mission, Rusanov's team manages to escape a barrage of enemy gunfire. In the sentimental scene that follows, Shaternikov and Rusanov bid a final farewell to each other over the wistful strains of the ninth movement of the *Suite*, *Divarication*.

Rusanov makes his way back to the contact point where he hopes to reunite with Katya. He enters the same country house of their earlier encounters and approaches a woman, thinking she is Katya. We hear the final return of the waltz theme for clarinet and strings in the eleventh movement of the *Suite*, *Appointment*. The moment he realizes the woman is not who he thinks she is, the music stops. The woman informs Rusanov that Katya has just been killed by a stray bullet. In the final scene of the film, the heartbroken Rusanov stands outside the house in silence.

One movement of the *Suite*, the sixth, *Conclusion*, featuring a mournful variant of the waltz theme, had been originally intended for the final scene, but was not included in the film.

Louis Blois

Olga Solovieva

Photo: Nikolay Voitkevich



The pianist Olga Solovieva was born in Moscow, graduated from the Russian Academy of Music, and took a post-graduate course as an assistant to Professor Leonid Blok. In 1999 she was a prize-winner at the Open Taneyev Chamber Music Competition, and in 2000 she was a finalist at the XX Chamber Music Competition in Trapani, Italy. At the XII Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow she was awarded the Best Accompanist Prize. She is a Boris Tchaikovsky Society Award Winner (2010). She has performed in Russia and abroad, and collaborated with The Vanbrugh Quartet, Vilnius Quartet, Roel Dieltiens, William Dowdall, Tai Murray, Fanny Clamagrand, Julian Bliss, Mila Shkirtil, Sergey Kostylev and Ivan Podyomov. Her discography includes recordings for Toccata Classics, Albany Records, and Northern Flowers. For Naxos she has recorded music by Sergey Taneyev (8.557804), and Boris Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto* (8.557727). Since 2004 she has been a professor at the Gnessin Musical College, and has given master-classes in Ireland and Belgium. www.olga-solovieva.ru

Maxim Anisimov



The clarinetist Maxim Anisimov graduated from the Moscow Conservatory Music College (2001), and Russian Academy of Music (2006). In 2009 he completed the post-graduate course. He has taken part in many international competitions, with awards including first prize at the Wind Instruments Competition in Kiev, Ukraine, and at the Chamber Music Competition in Vilnius, Lithuania. From 2002 to 2010 he was a principal in the Moscow Conservatory Opera Orchestra. He has worked with many orchestras and conductors, including Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Timur Mynbaev, Sergey Skripka, and Anatoly Levin, and has given first performances of works by many contemporary Russian composers.

Ioana Petcu-Colan



Photo: Vincent Boiteau

The daughter of two professional violinists, Ioana Petcu-Colan gave her debut performance aged six and continued her musical education in France, the UK and Ireland. Ioana has performed many of the great violin concertos, virtuosic pieces and collaborative works for duo, trio and quartet with orchestra. Proficient in styles ranging from authentic period playing to the traditional music of South America, Petcu-Colan is a founder member of the piano trio Ensemble Avalon, Trinity College Dublin's first ever Ensemble-in-Residence. The group's debut recording was acclaimed by *The Strad* for their 'ravishing sensitivity' and 'sunlit playing'. Ioana has commissioned and premiered many contemporary works, edited the 'Violin Project' for Universal Edition and recorded for BBC Radio 3 and for the Naxos, Riverrun and RTE lyric fm labels. She has worked with Arvo Pärt and Pēteris Vasks and duetted with Philip Glass in concert. Ioana plays an Eberle violin and is Associate Leader of the Ulster Orchestra.

The Vanbrugh Quartet



Photo: Con Kelleher, courtesy of RTE

The Vanbrugh Quartet was founded in 1985 by Gregory Ellis (first violin), Elizabeth Charleson (second violin), Simon Aspell (viola), and Christopher Marwood (cello). Keith Pascoe has been playing second violin since 1998. The Vanbrugh Quartet's international career was launched when they won first prize at the 1988 London String Quartet Competition. Familiar visitors to UK festivals and music societies, The Vanbrugh Quartet also broadcasts frequently for BBC Radio 3 and performs regularly at London's Wigmore Hall. International appearances include concerts throughout Europe as well as tours of China, Japan and South America and numerous visits to Scandinavia. From 1986 to 2013 The Vanbrugh Quartet was Resident Quartet at RTÉ (Ireland's national broadcasting service). The members of the Quartet are Artists in Residence at University College, Cork, and founders of the West Cork Chamber Music Festival. Their extensive repertoire includes more than sixty Irish commissions and premières. The Quartet's thirty CD releases include recordings of quartets by E.J. Moeran and John McCabe which were nominated for *Gramophone* awards, and the same magazine featured CDs of music by C.V. Stanford and Boccherini as Editor's Choice. For Marco Polo The Vanbrugh Quartet has recorded works by Frederick May and Aloys Fleischmann (8.223888). Other CDs include a highly acclaimed set of complete Beethoven Quartets (Intim Musik), and works by Haydn, Schubert, Dvořák, Janáček, Dohnányi, Copland, Robert Simpson, John Tavener, and many contemporary Irish composers, issued by ASV, Hyperion, Chandos, Metronome, Black Box, NMC and other labels.

www.vanbrughquartet.com



The Boris Tchaikovsky Society, a public non-profit organization, was founded in Moscow in late 2002 and registered in 2003. Among the founders and members of the Society are composers, including pupils of Boris Tchaikovsky, musicologists and music enthusiasts. The composer's widow, Yanina-Irena Iossifovna Moshinskaya (1920-2013), was also a founder of the Society. The honorary members of the Society include Victor Pikaizen, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Edward Serov, and Andrei Golovin; and the activities are also supported by Andrei Eshpai, Roman Ledenyov, and Valery Kikta. The late Rudolf Barshai, Galina Vishnevskaya, Mstislav Rostropovich, Valentin Berlinsky, Karen Khachaturian, and Timur Mynbaev were also supporters of the Society. The Society is open to foreign members and boasts a number of members from Brazil, France, The Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Ireland, the United States and Great Britain. Among the Society's goals are the study of Tchaikovsky's legacy, the dissemination of his music and the support of events connected with his music. The Society has assisted in recordings and issues of many CDs on different labels, including world première recordings; assisted in the preparation of numerous orchestral and chamber performances in European countries, as well as in the USA, Brazil, and Japan. The Society welcomes everyone who admires the music of this great Russian composer. It will be delighted to answer any inquiries and to send scores.

Website: www.boris-tchaikovsky.com

These recordings were made during The Vanbrugh Quartet's trips to Moscow, supported by Culture Ireland (www.cultureireland.ie)



Thanks to Larisa Sergeevna Georgievskaya and Vitaliya Petrovna Yaroshetskaya (Central Archive for Literature and Arts in St Petersburg) for their help.

Special thanks to Urs Weber, Wolfram Burgert, Nigel Hirst, and to Haden Freeman Ltd., UK (www.hadenfreeman.com) for their generous support.



Special thanks also to Yuli Andreevich Fait, Francis Humphrys and Peter Bromley.

Boris Tchaikovsky is revered in Russian musical circles as one of the most original and innovative composers of the post-Shostakovich generation. A work of great depth and beauty, the *Piano Quintet* is considered his finest chamber work and a stylistic milestone which would influence aspects of the later *Piano Concerto* (8.557727). Based on the score for the 1964 film *While the Front is in Defence*, *The War Suite* is an evocative portrayal of the horrors of battle, but also of heroism, friendship and lost love, at the Volkhov Front, south east of Leningrad, during the winter of 1942.



Culture Ireland
Cultúr Éireann

Boris TCHAIKOVSKY (1925-1996)



Piano Quintet (1962)	36:35	7 III. The Road	3:12
1 I. Moderato	11:02	8 IV. Waltz Theme for solo clarinet (The Trench)	2:14
2 II. Allegro – Largo	8:40	9 V. Tanks	2:40
3 III. Allegro	5:14	10 VI. Mournful Waltz (Conclusion)	2:44
4 IV. Adagio	11:38	11 VII. Country House	3:09
The War Suite (1964/2011)* (ed. Elena Astafieva and Stanislav Prokudin)	30:12	12 VIII. The Swamp	2:21
5 I. Waltz (Farewell)	4:38	13 IX. Divarication	1:27
6 II. The Night Breakthrough (The High Road)	2:22	14 X. The Battle	3:37
		15 XI. Finale (Appointment)	1:50

* WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING

Olga Solovieva, Piano **1-4** • Maxim Anisimov, Clarinet **5 8 11 15**

The Vanbrugh Quartet

Gregory Ellis, Violin I **1-7 9-15**

Keith Pascoe, Violin II **5-7 9-11** • Ioana Petcu-Colan, Violin II **1-4**

Simon Aspell, Viola **1-7 9-15** • Christopher Marwood, Cello **1-7 9-15**

Recorded at Studio 1 of the Russian State TV & Radio Company KULTURA, Moscow, on 11th October, 2012 (tracks 5-15), and at Mosfilm Ton-Studios, Moscow, on 31st October, 2013 (tracks 1-4)

Production direction and coordination: Igor Prokhorov (The Boris Tchaikovsky Society)

Produced, engineered and edited by Ilya Dontsov • Publisher: The Boris Tchaikovsky Society

Booklet Notes: Louis Blois • Cover painting by clivewa (Fotolia.com)