

THE NUTCRACKER

PYTOR TCHAIKOVSKY

THE COMPOSER

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)



Pytor

- ❖ Born into a **military family**
- ❖ Family is **musical**: Tchaikovsky begins studying piano when he is 5
- ❖ Parents were **supportive** of his music, but wanted him to have a “real job”

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)



- ❖ Educated to be civil servant at **Imperial School of Jurisprudence** in St. Petersburg (in 1850 when he ten years old) since being a musician was considered a very low social position

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)



- ❖ **Separation from his mother** was traumatic
- ❖ She **dies from cholera** 5 years later when he is 15

Tchaikovsky's mother
Olga Nápravnik

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)



- ❖ Tchaikovsky studies **music** with friends as an **extra-curricular activity**
- ❖ Graduates from the School in 1859 and **joins the civil service but...**
- ❖ Starts to attend music theory classes of the new **Russian Musical Society** (1859)

Tchaikovsky
at 19

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

- ❖ Begins to attend the **St. Petersburg Conservatory** (1862) run by Anton Rubenstein



Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

- ❖ The **music conservatory system** is new in Russia
- ❖ Until the St. Petersburg Conservatory, there is **no organized music education in Russia**, either private or public
- ❖ The St. Petersburg Conservatory is considered both **“Western” and Germanic**” by Russians interested in promoting their native culture



Imperial Russia

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

- ❖ Tchaikovsky **enrolls**, but continues in his civil service job for a year, “just in case...”
- ❖ Conservatory gives him **professional music training**, unlike some of his self-trained musical contemporaries, such as **Modeste Mussorgsky**
- ❖ Also gives him a **broader “worldview” of music**, and encourages him to **mingle European and Russian styles**

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

- ❖ Graduates in 1865
- ❖ Combines **Russian emotionalism** with **Western Forms and practices** (i.e. sonatas, symphonies, concertos, etc.)
- ❖ Reaction of his contemporaries reveals a Russian **inferiority complex** towards Western European culture
- ❖ Does the incorporation of European forms and styles **negate** or **develop** Russian styles?

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

- ❖ A group of Russian composers called the “**The Five**,” who include **Modeste Mussorgsky** and **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov**, attacked the Conservatory (and composers with conservatory training) as “**too Western**”
- ❖ Tchaikovsky became a **target**

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

- ❖ Russians felt his music **not representative of Russian Culture**
- ❖ Russians also felt his music successful in the West because of its **Western elements**
 - ❖ On the other hand...
- ❖ Europeans felt that his music, while “**colorful**” (i.e. Russian) **lacked serious depth** and took too many liberties with Europeans forms, such as in his symphonies

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)



- ❖ Tchaikovsky, however, **negotiated a middle path** between “The Five” and the Conservatory factions, and remained on friendly terms with both

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)



- ❖ Today he is considered one of the **most popular** of the “classical” composers and one of the most “Russian” of composers for his:
- ❖ **Six Symphonies**
- ❖ Tone poems, such as *Romeo and Juliet* and the *1812 Overture*
- ❖ And...

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)



- ❖ His 3 ballets:
- ❖ *Swan Lake* (1875-76)
- ❖ *Sleeping Beauty* (1889)
- ❖ *The Nutcracker* (1892)

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

- ❖ In Tchaikovsky's time, ballet music is written by **specialist composers** who worked with the requirements for theatrical dance music, or "**musique dansante**"

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

- ❖ Some of these composers were:



Adolphe Adam



Léo Delibes

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

- ❖ When Tchaikovsky gets the chance to write ballets, he patterns his dance music after these **two successful ballet composers**, but...
- ❖ The writing of music for the ballet, which is run by the Imperial court, is a **closed** to those without an court position...
- ❖ Until the “**Golden Age of Russian Ballet**” opens up opportunities for new composers

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

- ❖ **Russian tsars** lavished money on the **Imperial Ballet**, its theaters, and its training school, the Imperial Theatrical School



The Mariinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg



Interior of the Mariinsky Theatre



The Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow



Interior of the Bolshoi Theatre

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)



- ❖ Overseeing and creating the lavish productions for these theaters are
- ❖ The Director of the Imperial Theatre in St. Petersburg, **Ivan Vsevolovsky**

Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

- ✦ And French ballet choreographer **Marius Petipa**



THE CHOREOGRAPHER

Marius Petipa (1818-1910)

- ❖ Born in **Marseilles, France**
- ❖ Father a ballet master,
Mother an actress
- ❖ Worked as a dancer all
over Europe, before
settling in Russia
- ❖ Wife Maria, a *prima
ballerina*



Marius Petipa (1818-1910)

- * Becomes *Premier Maître de Ballet* [First Master of the Ballet] in 1871 and dominates the world of Russian Ballet
- * Choreographs over **50 ballets**, many of which are still performed



Marius Petipa (1818-1910)

- ❖ As a choreographer, Petipa would give his composers **very detailed instructions**, including:
 - ❖ A **scenario** [story] for the ballet
 - ❖ Instructions for each individual dance, including **length in measures and tempo**

Marius Petipa (1818-1910)

- ❖ His general instructions for Tchaikovsky for the opening of the ballet *Sleeping Beauty* look like this:

No.1a: Introduction

No.1b: Marche de salon

No.2a: Entrée des fées

No.2b: Scène dansante

No.3: Grand pas d'ensemble (Pas de six)

a. Grand adage; Petit allégro

b. Variation 1: Candide

c. Variation 2: Coulante

d. Variation 3: Miettes

e. Variation 4: Canarie

f. Variation 5: Violente

g. Variation 6: La Fée des lilas

h. Coda générale

Marius Petipa (1818-1910)

- ❖ Ballet dancing developed at the **French Court** in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries
- ❖ Terminology of Ballet--and much of formal Western theatrical dance--is **FRENCH**

Five Positions in Ballet



1



2



Text

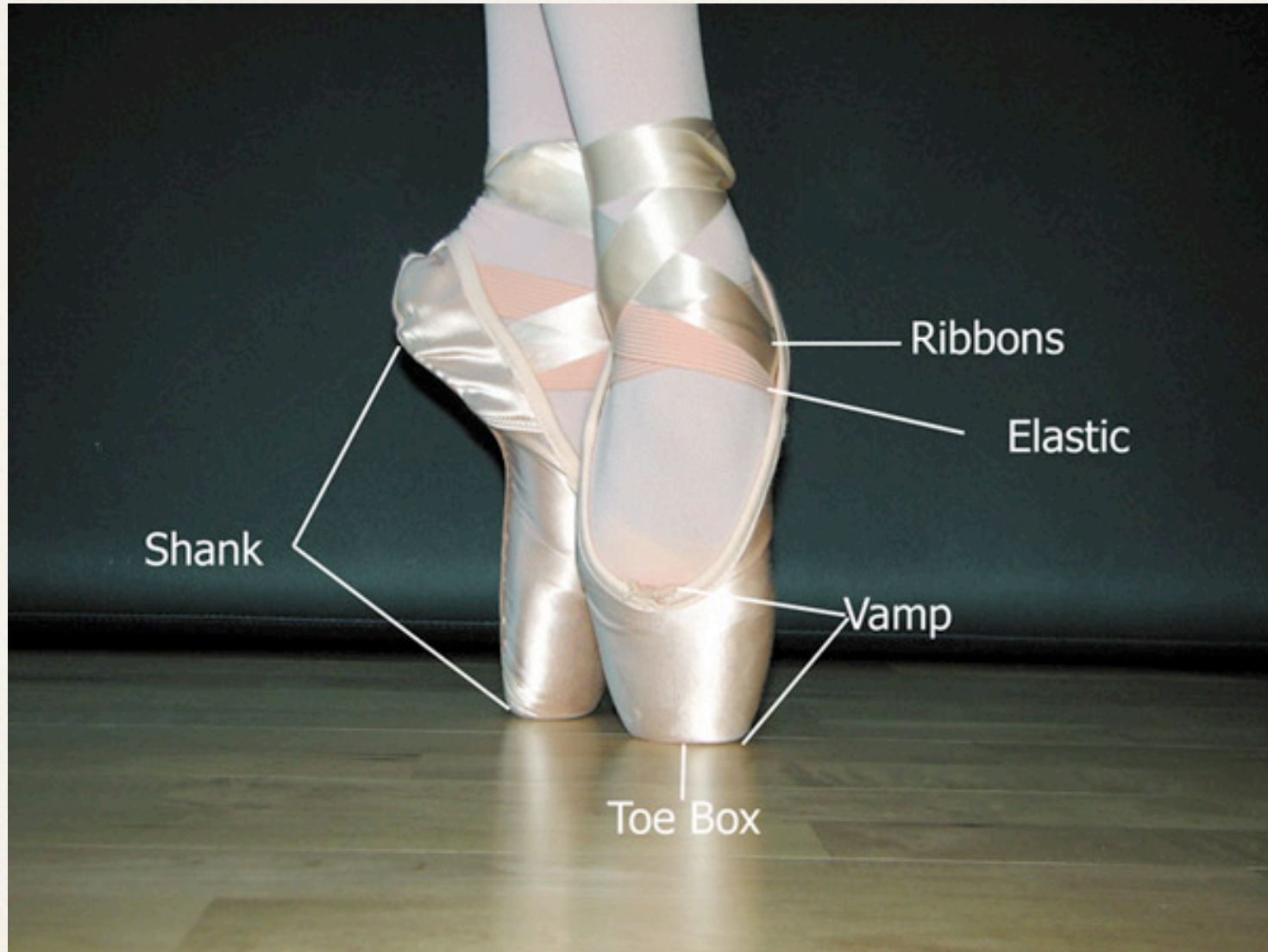
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4



5



Ballet Pointe Shoe



Classical Tutu



Romantic Tutu

Marius Petipa (1818-1910)

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“Introduction” is
the instrumental
overture

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h. Coda générale

A “scène” is a
mimed scene

Marius Petipa (1818-1910)

“Pas” is the ballet term for a dance, in this case, a dance for six dancers
“Pas de six”

- No.3: Grand pas d'ensemble (Pas de six)
- a. Grand adage; Petit allégro
 - b. Variation 1: Candide
 - c. Variation 2: Coulante
 - d. Variation 3: Miettes
 - e. Variation 4: Canarie
 - f. Variation 5: Violente
 - g. Variation 6: La Fée des lilas
 - h. Coda générale

Marius Petipa (1818-1910)

“Pas” is the ballet term for a dance, in this case, a dance for six dancers
“Pas de six”

Pas seul = 1
Pas de deux = 2
Pas de Trois = 3
Pas de Quatre = 4

- No.3: Grand pas d'ensemble (Pas de six)
- a. Grand adage; Petit allégro
 - b. Variation 1: Candide
 - c. Variation 2: Coulante
 - d. Variation 3: Miettes
 - e. Variation 4: Canarie
 - f. Variation 5: Violente
 - g. Variation 6: La Fée des lilas
 - h. Coda générale

Marius Petipa (1818-1910)

A “Grand Pas” usually starts with a **SLOW SECTION**--the **ADAGE**--for all the dancers

No.3: Grand pas d'ensemble (Pas de six)

- a. Grand adage; Petit allégro
- b. Variation 1: Candide
- c. Variation 2: Coulante
- d. Variation 3: Miettes
- e. Variation 4: Canarie
- f. Variation 5: Violente
- g. Variation 6: La Fée des lilas
- h. Coda générale

Marius Petipa (1818-1910)

The group adage is then followed by sections--called **VARIATIONS**--for the individual dancers

- No.3: Grand pas d'ensemble (Pas de six)
- a. Grand adage; Petit allégro
 - b. Variation 1: Candide
 - c. Variation 2: Coulante
 - d. Variation 3: Miettes
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 - h. Coda générale

Marius Petipa (1818-1910)

No.3: Grand pas d'ensemble (Pas de six)

- a. Grand adage; Petit allégro
- b. Variation 1: Candide
- c. Variation 2: Coulante
- d. Variation 3: Miettes
- e. Variation 4: Canarie
- f. Variation 5: Violente
- g. Variation 6: La Fée des lilas
- h. Coda générale

The pas is concluded with all the dancers in a CODA

Marius Petipa (1818-1910)

- ❖ **Scène** = mimed scene, often taking up a considerable portion of the first act
- ❖ **Pas** = dance for one - six dancers
- ❖ **Adage** = slow group section of a pas
- ❖ **Variation** = solo dance in a pas
- ❖ **Divertissement** = group [suite] of dances

Marius Petipa (1818-1910)



- ❖ Petipa works with “musique dansante” specialist ballet composers such as **Léon Minkus**, who has the position of “Ballet Composer of the St. Petersburg Imperial Theatre”
- ❖ Minkus retires in 1886

Marius Petipa (1818-1910)



- ❖ Theater Director Ivan Vsevolovsky retires the “**Ballet Composer of the St. Petersburg Imperial Theatre**” position to open composition commissions to a **wider variety of composers--including Tchaikovsky**

Yea!

Tchaikovsky's Ballets

- * Commissioned to write *SWAN LAKE* in 1875; premieres in 1877 at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow
- * Based on a entertainment Tchaikovsky wrote for a **family gathering** in 1871
- * Choreographed by **Julius Reisinger**, who gave Tchaikovsky a detailed scenario and requirements for each dance
- * First production **not successful**. Re-staged by Marius Petipa in 1895m and the work is very successful



Dancers from the original production of *Swan Lake*

Tchaikovsky's Ballets

- ❖ Ivan Vsevolovsky and Marius Petipa commission Tchaikovsky to write *SLEEPING BEAUTY*, which premieres in 1890 at the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg
- ❖ Based on classic fairytale by Charles Perrault
- ❖ Ballet very successful, and continues to be performed today



Dancers from the original production of *Sleeping Beauty*

Tchaikovsky's Ballets

- ❖ Ivan Vsevolovsky commissions Tchaikovsky for a **double bill**: a ballet based on E.T.A. Hoffmann's story *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, and an opera *Iolantha*
- ❖ Petipa again gives Tchaikovsky a list of detailed requirements, but **falls ill** during the rehearsal period
- ❖ The choreography is executed by Petipa's assistant **Lev Ivanov**



Tchaikovsky's Ballets

- ❖ Children's roles in the original production of *The Nutcracker* were performed by **child performers**
- ❖ The original production is **not a success**: many criticized the work for not having enough formal dance numbers until the second act
- ❖ *The Nutcracker* not really successful until it starts to be performed in the **U.S. as a part of the Christmas holiday season**

The Nutcracker story

- ❖ The story *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* written by **E. T. A. Hoffmann**
- ❖ Ernst Theodor [Wilhelm] **“Amadeus”**
- ❖ Works for many years as a **theater manager** and **journalist**



The Nutcracker story

- ❖ Wrote many **supernatural-themed** stories
- ❖ One of the most influential writers of the **Romantic movement**
- ❖ Hoffmann writes the story *Nussknacker und Mauskönig* [The Nutcracker and the Mouse King] in 1816



The Nutcracker story

- ❖ ACT I

- ❖ TABLEAU I

- ❖ Christmas festivities are being celebrated at the Stahlbaum house in Germany; guests arrive; the Christmas tree is lit and the children are allowed to enter
- ❖ The children given presents: the boy's march with their new guns, the girl's dance with their new dolls
- ❖ Herr Drosselmeyer, an inventor and the children's godfather, arrives and presents Clara and Fritz with lifelike dolls that dance

The Nutcracker story

- ❖ Drosselmeyer gives Clara a special gift--a **nutcracker**. Clara is immediately taken with the gift, but Fritz is jealous and breaks it. Drosselmeyer ties a bandage around the nutcracker
- ❖ The adults dance the “**Grossvater Tanz**” [Grandfather’s Dance] traditionally played at the end of celebrations, and the party ends.

The Nutcracker story

- ❖ After going to bed, Clara returns to see the nutcracker, and as the clock strikes midnight she sees the Christmas tree “grow” as she shrinks down to the size of the nutcracker
- ❖ Led by the Mouse King, mice stream out of the cracks in the wall for a battle with the Nutcracker
- ❖ Just as the Mouse King is about to defeat the Nutcracker, Clara throws her slipper at the Mouse King, allowing the Nutcracker to defeat him

The Nutcracker story

- ❖ TABLEAU 2
- ❖ The Nutcracker is revealed as a Prince--Clara has helped him break the curse he was under because she loved him in spite of his looks--and her requests to take Clara to his Kingdom
- ❖ Clara and the Nutcracker Prince travel through a winter landscape

The Nutcracker story

- ❖ ACT II
- ❖ TABLEAU III
- ❖ Clara and the Nutcracker Prince arrive in **Confiturembürg** [Sweet City] and are greeted by its people who arrange a celebration for their arrival
- ❖ All celebrate, and Clara and the Prince are crowned King and Queen

The Nutcracker Ballet

- ❖ **Overture Miniature** (instrumental introduction)
- ❖ Scène de Noël (mimed scene)
 - ❖ **Marche**
- ❖ Scène [Arrival of Drosselmeyer]
 - ❖ **Dance of the Dolls**
- ❖ Scène [including **Clara's Dance with the Nutcracker**]
 - ❖ **"Grossvater Tanz"**
- ❖ Scène [Guests leave]

The Nutcracker Ballet

- ❖ Scène [Clara comes to the Nutcracker; Midnight strikes; Clara shrinks]
- ❖ Scène [The battle between the Mouse King and the Nutcracker]
- ❖ Scène: “Journey through the Snow” [**Pas de deux**]
 - ❖ **Waltz of the Snowflakes**
 - ❖ 1. Waltz Tempo; 2. Presto

The Nutcracker Ballet

- ❖ Scène [Arrival of Clara and the Prince in Confiturembürg]

The Nutcracker Ballet

- ❖ **Grand Divertissement**
 - ❖ **Spanish Dance [Chocolate]**
 - ❖ **Arab Dance [Coffee]**
 - ❖ **Chinese Dance [Tea]**
 - ❖ **Russian Dance**
 - ❖ **Dance of the Mirlitons**
 - ❖ **Mother Goose and the Pulchinellas**
 - ❖ **Waltz of the Flowers**

The Nutcracker Ballet

- ❖ **Grand Pas de Deux** of the Sugarplum Fairy and her Cavalier
 - ❖ Grand adage
 - ❖ Cavalier's Variation
 - ❖ Sugarplum Fairy Variation [Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy]
 - ❖ Coda

The Nutcracker Ballet

- ❖ **Final Waltz**
- ❖ Apotheosis

Pieces to Know

- ❖ **Pytor Tchaikovsky, *The Nutcracker*.**
The Moscow RTV Symphony Orchestra
- ❖ Track 1. **Overture** (
- ❖ Track 3. **March**
- ❖ Track 13. Le Chocolat: Danse Espagnole [**Chocolate—Spanish Dance**]
- ❖ Track 15. Le Thé: Danse Chinoise [**Tea—Chinese Dance**]
- ❖ Track 16. Danse Russe [**Russian Dance**]
- ❖ Track 17. Danse Des Mirlitons [**Dance of the Mirlitons**]
- ❖ Track 18. Le Mère Gigogne Et Les Polichinelles [**Moother Goose and the Pulchinellas**]
- ❖ Track 19. Valse Des Fleurs [**Waltz of the Flowers**]
- ❖ Track 22. Variation II: Danse de la Fee Dragée [**Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy**]

The Nutcracker on Youtube

- ❖ The version of *The Nutcracker* watched in class can be found at:
- ❖ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rqu7SgzqQz0>

The Nutcracker on Youtube

- * **Overture** (00:00)
- * **March** (4:49)
- * **Le Chocolat: Danse Espagnole [Chocolate—Spanish Dance]**(47:40)
- * **Le Thé: Danse Chinoise [Tea—Chinese Dance]** (49:00)
- * **Danse Russe [Russian Dance]** (55:34)
- * **Danse Des Mirlitons [Dance of the Mirlitons]** (52:51)
- * **Le Mère Gigogne Et Les Polichinelles [Moother Goose and the Pulchinellas]** (50:07)
- * **Valse Des Fleurs [Waltz of the Flowers]** (56:32)
- * **Variation II: Danse de la Fee Dragée [Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy]** (1:04:11)

Terms to Know 1

- ❖ St. Petersburg Conservatory
- ❖ “The Five”
- ❖ *Musique Dansante* [theatrical dance music]
- ❖ “Golden Age” of Russian Ballet
- ❖ Mariinsky Theatre; Bolshoi Theatre
- ❖ Ivan Vsevolovsky
- ❖ Marius Petipa
- ❖ Ballet language = French
- ❖ Tutu; Pointe shoe

Terms to Know 2

- ❖ *Scène* = scene acted out in mime
- ❖ *Pas* = term for a ballet dance
- ❖ Adage = slow section of a *pas*
- ❖ Variation = individual section of a *pas* or *divertissement*
- ❖ *Divertissement* = group of dances
- ❖ *Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty*
- ❖ Lev Ivanov
- ❖ E. T. A Hoffmann
- ❖ *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*
- ❖ Drosselmeyer; Clara