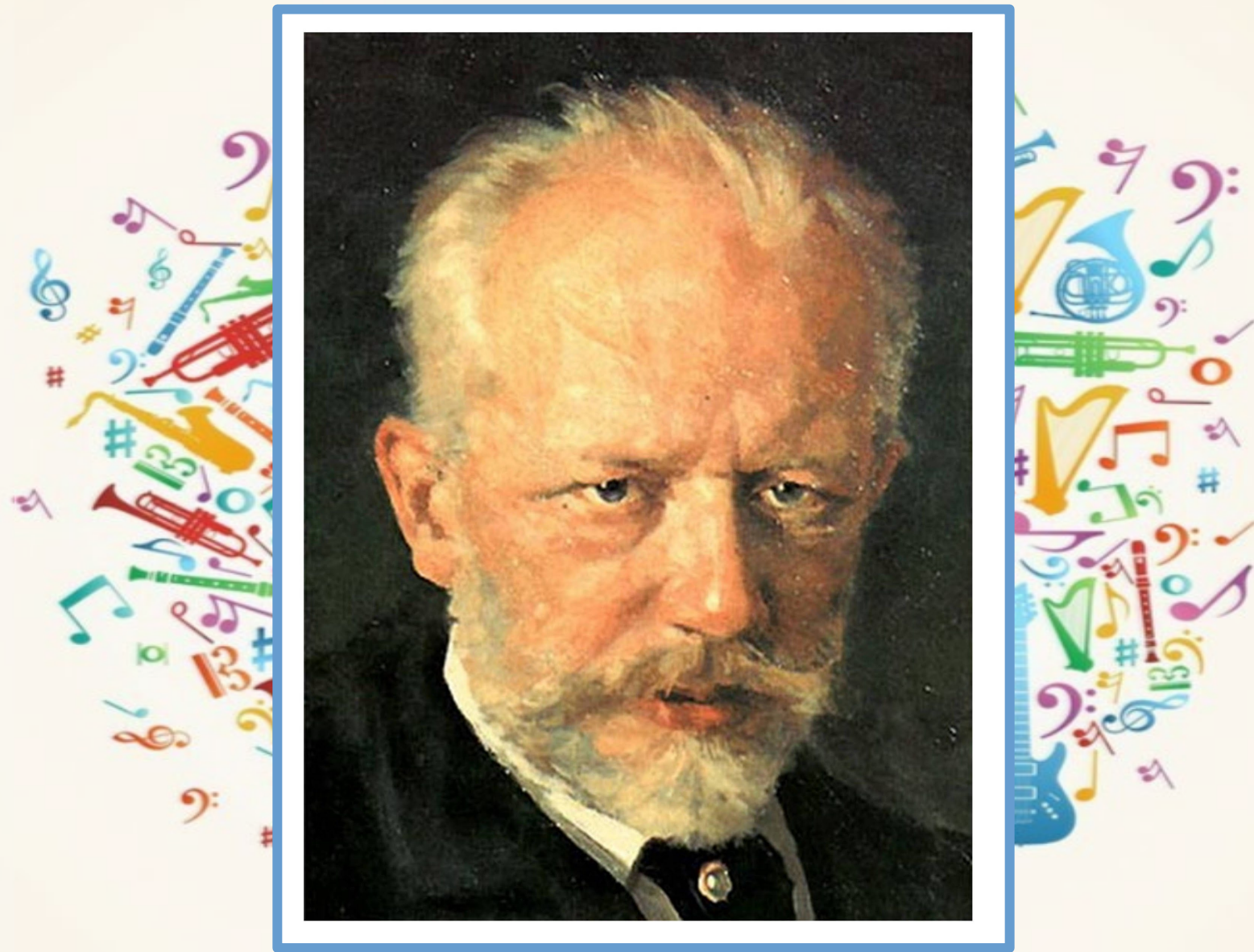




Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Composer of the Week



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky





Born in **Votkinsk,**
Russia on **7th May,**
1840



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Died in **St
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on **6th November**
1893



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Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky is the the most well-known Russian composer to have lived. A composer of the **Romantic Period**, he made Russian music famous all over the world.

His birthplace in **Votkinsk, Udmurtia**, is now a museum.



Romantic composers wrote music that was emotional, dramatic, individual and often **programmatic** – it told a story.

Romanticism was a movement in art, music, literature, poetry and philosophy during the **19th Century**.



This painting is by the **English Romantic** painter **John Constable** and is called **The Hay Wain**.

Tchaikovsky's family had a history of serving in the Russian army. His grandfather was born in **Ukraine** and his father was the manager of the local ironworks.

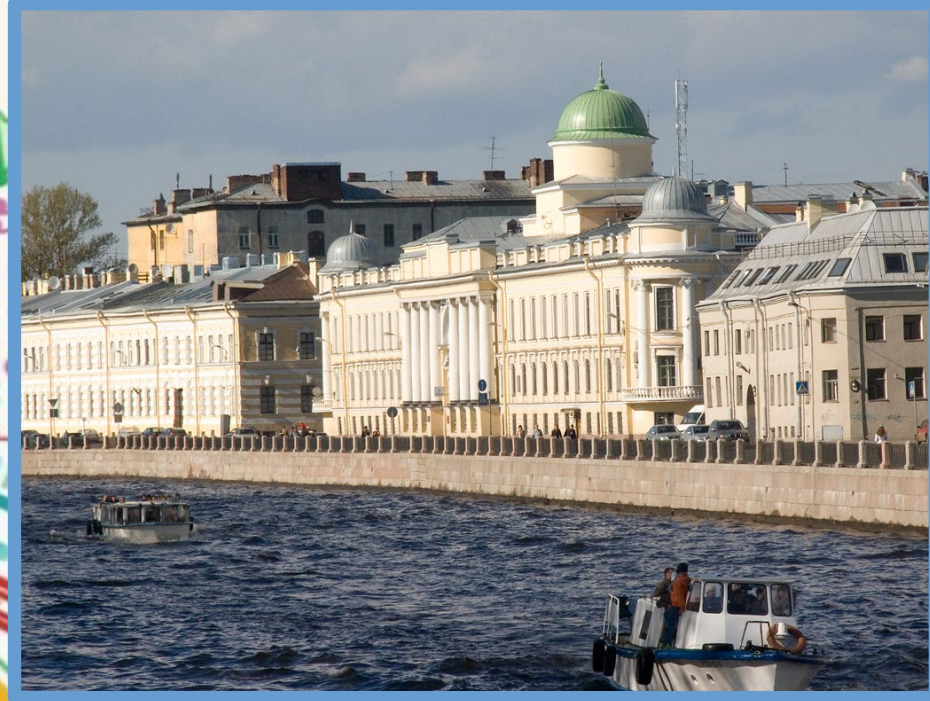
The family were fairly well-off and the children had a French governess.

By the age of 5 Tchaikovsky was fluent in French and German, was able to play the **piano** and had written his first **composition**.



Although Tchaikovsky was obviously musically talented, his parents thought that music was not a suitable career. Indeed, at that time, it was impossible to study music in Russian colleges and universities.

So, at the age of 10, Pyotr left home to study at the **St Petersburg Imperial School of Jurisprudence** and, after 9 years there, began work as a **civil servant** in the **Ministry of Justice**.

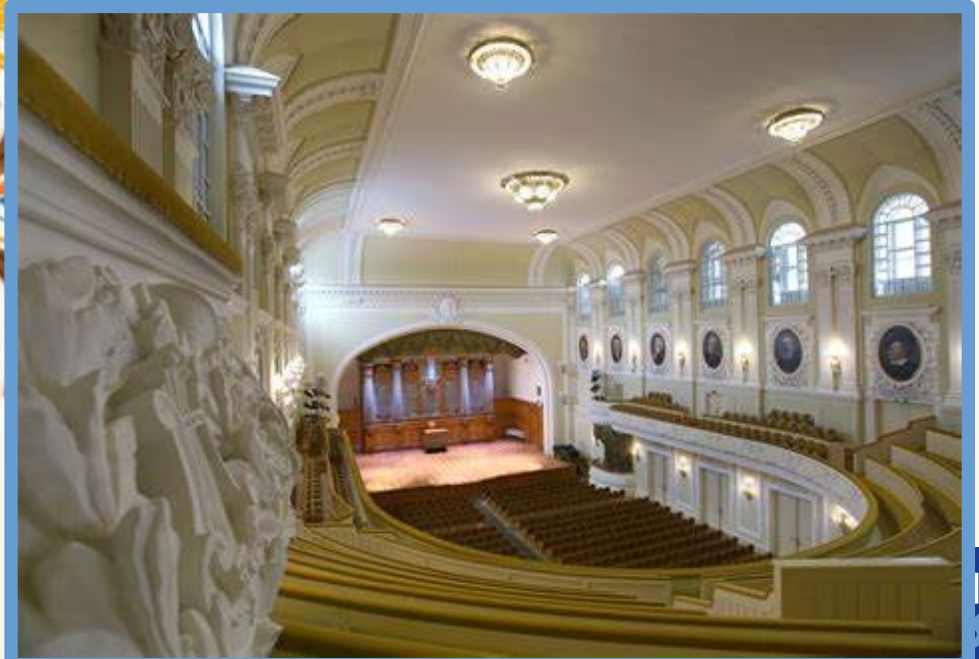


A **civil servant** works for the government, usually in an office, and administers its policies.

Tchaikovsky realised however that Music was still important to him. He travelled to Europe in **1861** visiting **France, Germany** and **England** and when the **St Petersburg Conservatory** opened, the following year, Pyotr became one of its first students, studying **composition**.



After he graduated Pyotr moved to **Moscow** and began teaching at the **Moscow Conservatory**. This meant that Tchaikovsky's music followed the **Western-European traditions** of **Beethoven**, **Haydn** and **Mozart**. Even though he used traditional Russian **melodies** (tunes) and stories for his compositions, some other Russian **composers** criticised him for not being Russian enough.





Tchaikovsky's early compositions soon became successful, especially his **Piano Concerto**, which we have already heard.

He composed 11 operas, the most famous being **Eugene Onegin**, the story of a Russian aristocrat. It is based on a novel of the same name by the famous Russian author **Pushkin**.

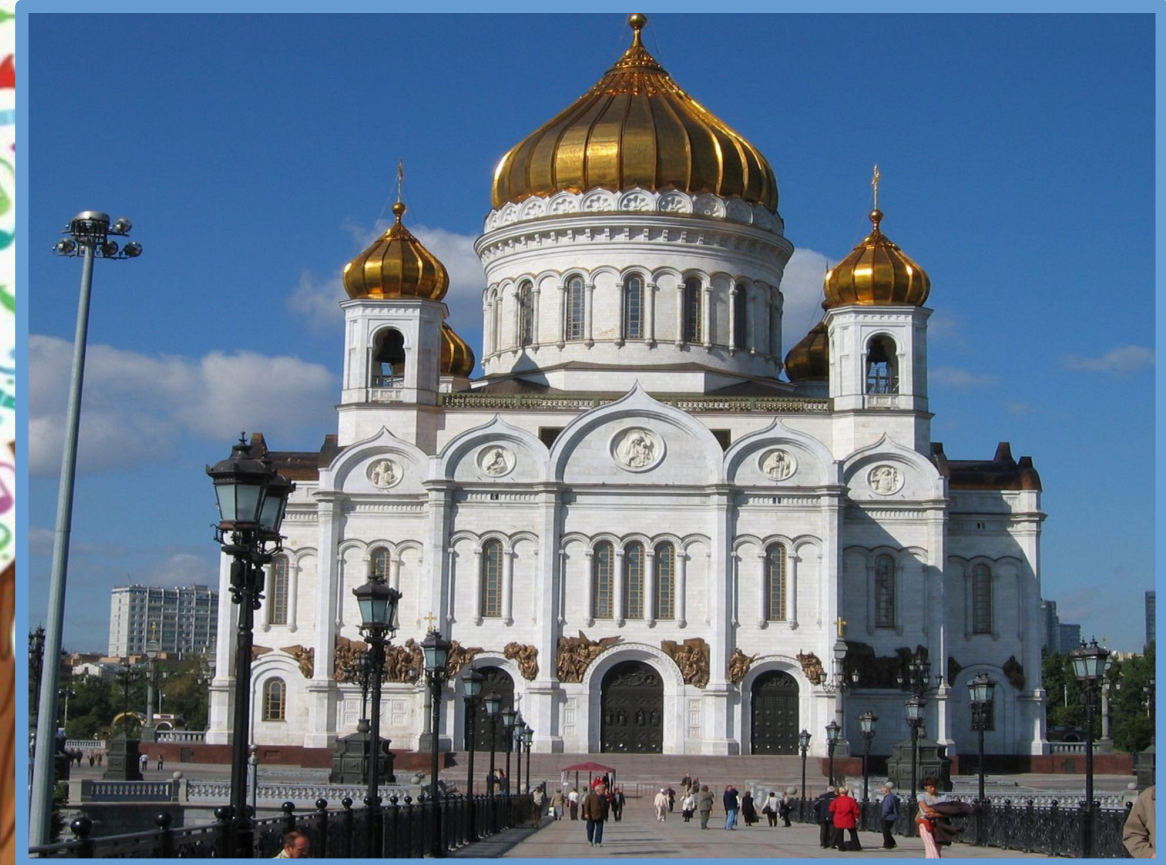


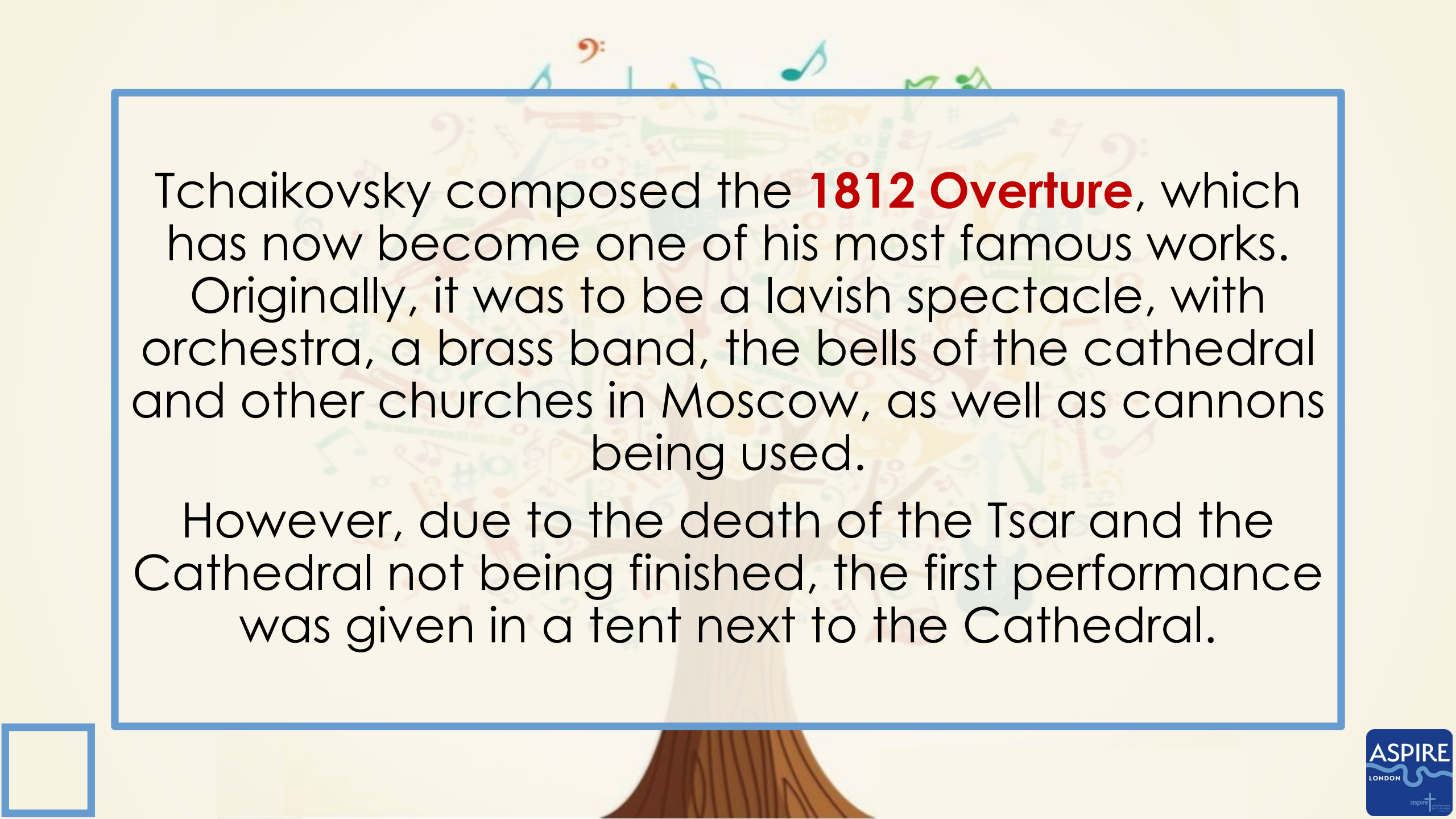
Can you remember another
composer who wrote many
Polonaises?



Frederic Chopin

Tchaikovsky was now famous. In **1880** he was asked to write a piece for the opening of **The Cathedral of Christ The Saviour** in **Moscow**. **Tsar Alexander** had commissioned the building of this cathedral in **1812** to commemorate the victory of the Russian army over Napoleon and the French at the Battle of Borodino.



The background of the slide features a light beige color with a faint, artistic illustration of a tree trunk at the bottom center. Scattered throughout the background are various musical symbols and instruments in soft colors like blue, green, and orange, including a bass clef, a trumpet, a saxophone, and musical notes.

Tchaikovsky composed the **1812 Overture**, which has now become one of his most famous works. Originally, it was to be a lavish spectacle, with orchestra, a brass band, the bells of the cathedral and other churches in Moscow, as well as cannons being used.

However, due to the death of the Tsar and the Cathedral not being finished, the first performance was given in a tent next to the Cathedral.



It tells the story of the battle. A traditional Russian **melody** (**O Lord Save Thy People**) is used, at the beginning to show the Russians praying for the war to be over quickly.





Then the **French National Anthem** is heard as the battle continues.



At the end of the piece we hear snippets of the French National Anthem, accompanied by **descending scales** as the French run away, the opening **melody** is then used again, to signify prayers being answered, the **Russian National Anthem** of the time (**God Save the Tsar**), church bells and cannon shots are then heard, to signify the Russian victory.



Tchaikovsky is also famous for three Ballet Scores.



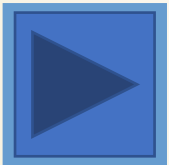
Swan Lake



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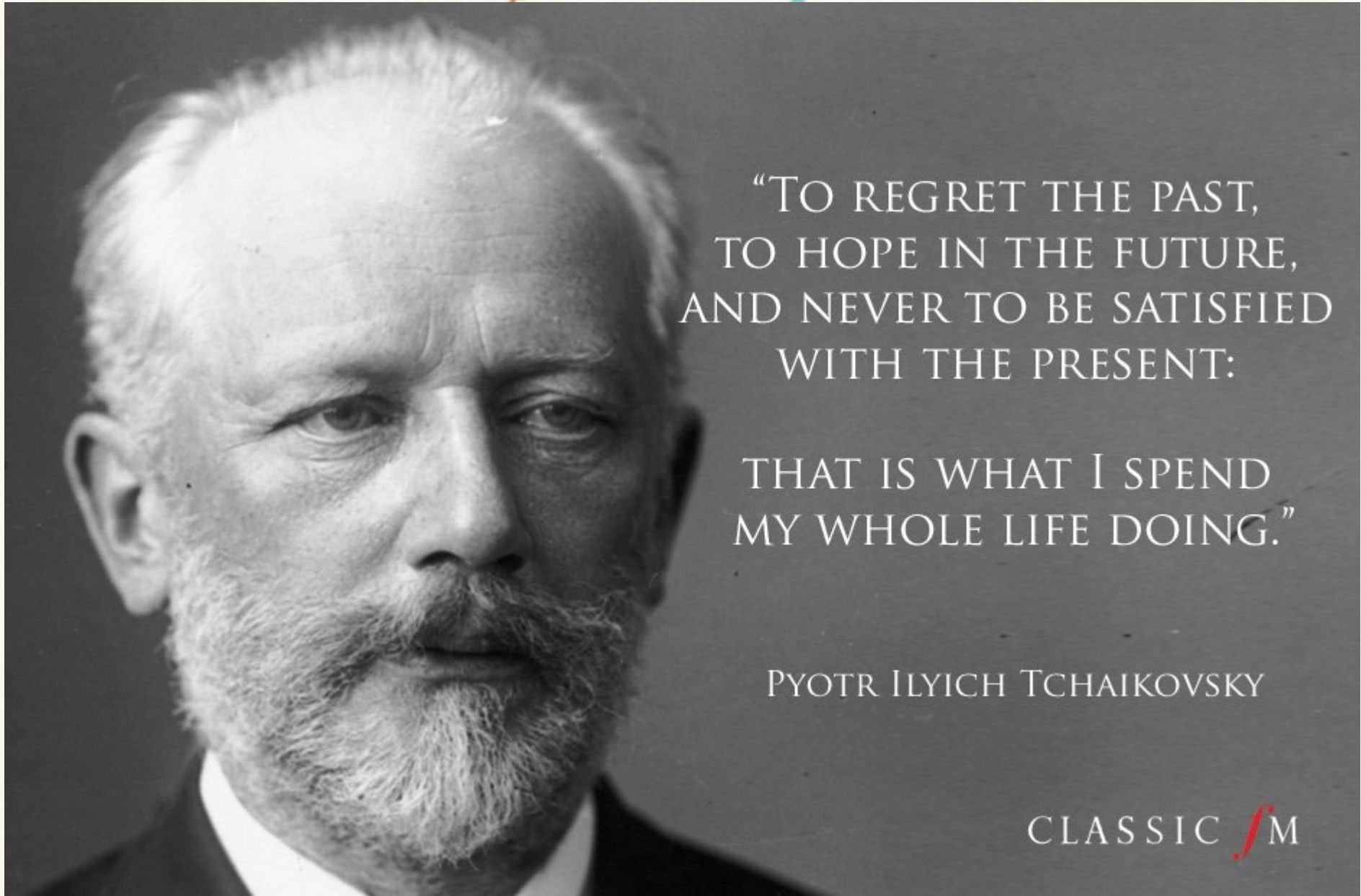
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Tchaikovsky is famous as a composer of **Symphonies**. His final **Symphony No.6**, called the **Pathétique**, was first performed in October 1893.

Pyotr conducted the concert in St Petersburg but 9 days later he died. It is said that he drank some unboiled water at a local restaurant and died of cholera but today scholars are unsure. He was buried at the cemetery in St Petersburg alongside other Russian composers.





“TO REGRET THE PAST,
TO HOPE IN THE FUTURE,
AND NEVER TO BE SATISFIED
WITH THE PRESENT:

THAT IS WHAT I SPEND
MY WHOLE LIFE DOING.”

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

CLASSIC / M