

ST. PETERSBURG MUSICAL ARCHIVE

Dvořák Cello Concerto
Tchaikovsky
Rococo Variations

Northern Flowers



Marina
Tarasova

Orpheus Radio
Symphony Orchestra,
Moscow

Sergey
Kondrashev

МУЗЫКАЛЬНЫЙ АРХИВ ПЕТЕРБУРГА

Piotr Ilich Tchaikovsky

Variations on a Rococo Theme, Op. 33

1	Moderato quasi Andante	0:53
2	Thema: Moderato semplice	1:27
3	Variation 1: Tempo della Thema	0:45
4	Variation 2: Tempo della Thema	1:21
5	Variation 3: Andante sostenuto	3:46
6	Variation 4: Andante grazioso	1:47
7	Variation 5: Allegro moderato	3:17
8	Variation 6: Andante	2:15
9	Variation 7 e Coda: Allegro vivo	2:12

Antonín Dvořák

Concerto for Cello in B Minor, Op. 104

10	I. Allegro	15:22
11	II. Adagio ma non troppo	10:40
12	III. Allegro moderato	12:05

Marina Tarasova, cello

Radio Orpheus Symphony Orchestra Moscow

Sergei Kondrashev, conductor

Recorded Sept 2025 at Palace on the Yauza Studio, Moscow
Recording, mixing and mastering: **Alexander Volkov**

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Antonín Dvořák's (1841-1904) first essay in the concerto genre was a *Cello Concerto* sketched in 1865. *Concertos for Piano* (1876-ALC 1460) and *Violin* (1879-OCD 1024) followed and finally came the *Cello Concerto in B minor*, composed November 1894 - February 1895, towards the end of Dvořák's stay in the United States. It is widely assumed that Dvořák had doubts concerning the use of the cello as a concerto instrument but changed his opinion following a concert in Manhattan in 1894 in which Victor Herbert (at that time a cellist at the Metropolitan Opera, but soon to make his name in operetta) premiered his own *Second Cello Concerto*. In 1892 Dvořák had become friendly with the famous Bohemian cellist Hanuš Wihan (1855–1920), a founder member of the Bohemian String Quartet and upon his return to Europe he showed his new concerto to Wihan who irritated the composer by making alterations to the cello part. Dvořák wrote to his publisher Simrock, instructing him not to accede to any of Wihan's changes, including the insertion of a cadenza in the final movement since it 'closes gradually, like a breath, with reminiscences of the first and second movements; the solo dies away to a *pianissimo*, then there is a *crescendo*, and the last bars are taken up by the orchestra, ending stormily. That was my idea and from it I cannot recede'. The 'reminiscences' of which the composer spoke are quotations from a song *Lasst mich allein* which had been a favourite of his beloved sister-in-law Josefina Kaunitzová who had recently died. This melody had been incorporated into the concerto's slow movement as Dvořák became aware of her serious illness. After her death he altered the work's ending to recall the theme she loved.

Wihan did not perform the concerto until 1899 when he played it with the Concertgebouw Orchestra under Mengelberg. The actual premiere was given by Leo Stern in a concert conducted by Dvořák himself in London in March 1896. Although composed in America, it has always been considered to be one of Dvořák's most Bohemian works; whilst in America he never lost touch with his homeland and he often used to relax in Spillville, Iowa where there was a large Bohemian community.

When suffering from stress **Pyotr Tchaikovsky** (1840-93) often looked back to an idealised former era. 1876 had begun encouragingly for Tchaikovsky: his *Piano Concerto* had been well received, and a trip to Paris which included seeing *Carmen* set his mind racing as to the kind of direction his work might take. Later that year he saw *The Ring* at the first

Bayreuth Festival and the experience gave him further pause for thought. It was at this time that he decided that marriage could provide the only solution to his tortured sexuality. As he struggled to make sense of his personal life he began work on the neurotic symphonic poem *Francesca da Rimini*, doubtless seeing parallels between Francesca and Paolo's giving way to the 'tempest of sensual lust' and his own urges. As an antidote to depression Tchaikovsky composed in December 1876 his **Variations on a Rococo Theme** for his German friend Professor W Fitzenhagen who, in addition to being a director of the Russian Musical Society, also taught cello at the Moscow Conservatory. *Variations on a Rococo Theme* seeks to reproduce the atmosphere, if not the style, of what Tchaikovsky believed to be a less complicated age. Other instances of Tchaikovsky finding inspiration from the 18th century include the *Fourth Orchestral Suite* (in which he arranged Mozart's music) and his opera *The Queen of Spades*.

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NOTES ON THE ARTIST

For many years **Marina Tarasova** has been one of the most renowned Russian cellists; a winner of International Competitions in Prague, Florence and Paris and a laureate of Moscow's Tchaikovsky International Competition. Having performed on the concert platform since the age of 16, she has many top-selling discs in Concertos by Myaskovsky, Kabalevsky, Davidoff, Khachaturian, as well as collections by Rachmaninov and Cassado (all ALTO), and newer ones on *Northern Flowers* of Weinberg (three discs), Davidoff and Tcherepnin, plus Sonatas of Shostakovich, Prokofiev and Khachaturian, as well now as Levitin, Komarov and Roslavets.

Her repertoire includes works by Russian and Western European composers from the 17th century to the 20th. She is among the first to have played works by other modern Russian composers such as Andrei Eshpai, Boris Tchaikovsky, Kirill Volkov, Shirvani Chalaev and Oleg Galahov. She has performed with many prominent musicians including Yuri Bashmet, Edward Grach, Frank-Immo Zichner, Pascal Devoyon and Christian Ivaldi, and with, among others, the conductors Mariss Jansons, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Kurt Masur, and Mikhail Pletnev.

Since 2005 she has been the President and a solo-cellist of the charity foundation known as the *International Classical Music Salon of Marina Tarasova and Alexander Polezhaev* and is also the director of *Santa*, an organization for the rescue of stray animals. In 2006 she promoted 120

concerts for the charity foundation *Stars of Russia and Europe*. In 2007, another 80 concerts (including international festivals) and the following year, 110 concerts of Russian music across Turkey and in Moscow. In 2009, 90 concerts in Russian cities, in memory of victims of terrorism and, in 2010, more charity concerts to help protect stray animals and the environment. In August 1995 Marina Tarasova was awarded the honorary title 'Meritorious Artist of the Russian Federation' and, in 2004, the charity *Benefactors of the Century* made her a member of the order *The Patrons of the Century* and, in 2007, this same fund awarded her the *Patron's Golden Certificate*. Also in 2007 she was awarded the *Order for the Revitalization of Traditions of Charity and Patronage*.

“Marina Tarasova symbolizes new thinking both in classical and modern music. A thinking often unusual, at times paradoxical but always convincing. When Marina Tarasova is on stage, the audience is never indifferent. She has a unique performing style which comprises the best traditions of the Russian cello school and her own bright personality – a bursting temperament and the tendency to explore the human soul. Marina Tarasova’s intricate and deep feeling of the wide emotional fabric of music helps her to strongly convey her sentiments to audiences. Critics have noted her extremely beautiful sound ... There seem to be no technical difficulties for her. Today Marina Tarasova occupies a position amongst the elite of world performers.”

Soloist also of the Moscow Philharmonic Society, Marina Tarasova graduated from the Moscow State Conservatoire in 1984 in the cello classes of Alexander Fedorchenko and Professor Natalia Shahovskaya. She was the prize-winner of the International Competitions listed above and she won the Grand-Prix in Paris. *“Yet the prizes in competitions are not the main thing in Marina’s creative life. That is a continuous drive for perfection and the possibility to utterly realize her own talent along with mutually enriching contact with her audience that she cherishes the most.”* [«Le Figaro», France]

— [Marina Tarasova’s Page \(Facebook\)](#)

“Orpheus” Radio Symphony Orchestra (ORSO), founded in 1998 and moving forward a tradition of former orchestras of Soviet TV & Radio, is the only radio orchestra in Russia to combine successful onstage concerts and theatrical appearances (eg. Kremlin Ballet Theatre is a long-lasting partner of the ORSO) with in-studio radio work in creating highly professional musical content for the special projects by “Orpheus” Radio and Russian State TV & Radio Music Centre (RSTRMC). Regarded as a radio orchestra to the full extent, ORSO appears on air daily, as well as in

thematic unique programmes and projects. Among the latest ones there is a project “the Revival of the legacy of Russian composers” which is destined to rediscover, reconstruct, perform, and record undeservedly forgotten musical pieces by Russian and Soviet composers like Anton Rubinstein, Anton Arensky, Anatoly Lyadov, Nikolaj Golovanov, Alexander Mosolov, Leonid Polovinkin, etc. This project includes also the research of priceless archives of the RSTRMC (former library of the Soviet Radio Network), where true musical and biographical rarities and manuscripts are stored.

Although Russian and European musical classics are in the core of the ORSO repertory, their educational mission is to perform newly written music by modern Russian composers that has been presented to the “Orpheus” Radio audience and within an International Rostrum of Composers by The International Music Council under UNESCO. As a part of “Orpheus” Radio (an active EBU member) the ORSO participates eagerly in various EBU projects like special anniversaries, Christmas and Easter Days, etc. The ORSO’s concert recordings, that are beautifully made and stylishly performed, came to be in great demand in EBU EURORADIO Network. In 2012 EBU named an ORSO recording the best to contribute to Claude Debussy’s 150 anniversary date. The ORSO performs regularly on the renowned Moscow concert stages. The ORSO’s permanent partners and friends are the internationally recognized artists like Maria Gulegina, Vladislav Pjyavko, Ennio Morricone, Makvala Kasrashvili, Elena Zarembo, etc.

Music performed by the ORSO can be heard not only on the radio station of the same name, but also on radio in Brazil, Indonesia, Malaysia, Costa Rica, Myanmar, the Central African Republic, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, Tunisia, Uruguay, and many other countries in Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia, as well as in Belarus.

Sergey Kondrashev, Artistic director & principal conductor of ORSO, graduated with honors from the Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory with a degree in the fields of choral conducting and opera and symphony conducting. He was in the class of outstanding musicians Mark Ermler and Gennady Rozhdestvensky. Sergey Kondrashev has been conducting the Orpheus Radio Symphony Orchestra since 2011.

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