



DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

**THE TCHAIKOVSKY VIOLIN CONCERTO:
VIOLINISTIC INFLUENCE ON PERFORMANCE TRADITION**

RECITAL RESEARCH PAPER

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Introduction

The Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto is one of the most recognized and celebrated works ever written for the violin. Student violinists grow up listening to countless performances of this masterpiece and some consider performing the concerto as the pinnacle of a performance career. When one imagines the compositional process of any great work it is easy to think that the music simply came to the composer's mind in its perfect form and that it was quickly written down as if taking dictation. The reality is that many masterpieces are the result of a long, strenuous compositional process, and often the composer is not the only individual with influence on the final product. The Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto is no different. Through composition, editing, and performance practice, this famous concerto was altered and shaped by several well-known violinists.

Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto was greatly affected by violinist Iosif Kotek during the compositional process. Kotek worked side by side with Tchaikovsky in the earlier stages of composition and there is also some evidence to suggest that Kotek was the inspiration for the conception of the piece.¹ Adolf Brodsky was the violinist who performed the concerto in public for the first time. Reviews and reactions to the premiere were only the beginning of an intriguing performance history of Tchaikovsky's now loved work.

The editing of the concerto by violinist and teacher Leopold Auer arguably had the greatest and most lasting influence on the concerto as it is performed today. Auer's edits, made years after the concerto's completion, include cuts, octave transpositions, passage modifications, and even complete re-writes of a few select sections.² Examining these passages reveals potential reasons for the changes that Auer made. The edits could have been initiated to simplify

¹ Leslie Kearney, *Tchaikovsky and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 94.

² Peter Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, ed. David Oistrakh and K. Mostras (New York: International Music Company, 1956).

the performance of difficult passages, to remove repetitive material, or they may have been changed purely as a matter of personal aesthetic preference.

Additionally, Auer's changes were likely passed down to his famous students which solidified current performance practice. Auer taught the virtuosos Mischa Elman, Jascha Heifetz,³ and Nathan Milstein⁴ all of whom gave many successful performances of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto. David Oistrakh and Joseph Szigeti, who were not educated in the Auer tradition, also had a relationship with the famous concerto, though their performances and experiences with the work were different in many ways from those of Auer's students. Finally, many of today's famous violin players have upheld the performance practice set by Heifetz, Elman and Oistrakh. Still others have rebelled and selected to start new traditions of performing the great concerto.

Each violinist involved in the rich history of the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto brought his or her own perspective and experience to the piece. The cumulative influence of these individuals form a history that has affected the way that modern performers learn and play the famous work. To what extent can the history of this, or any piece, determine a performer's interpretation of it? Research into every aspect of the compositional process along with an understanding of the performance practice of this concerto will give insight into how today's artists can best represent the integrity of one of the most famous pieces of music ever written for the violin.

The Influence of Iosif Kotek

The first violinist of interest is Iosif Kotek. Kotek, born in Moscow in 1855, was a Russian violinist and composer. He studied the violin with Jan Hrímalý, but also took theory

³ Boris Schwarz, "Auer, Leopold," *Grove Music Online*, accessed June 27, 2012, *Oxford Music Online*.

⁴ Nathan Milstein and Solomon Volkov, *From Russia to The West* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1990), 13.

lessons with Tchaikovsky at the Moscow Conservatory. Although Kotek was a successful performer and composed a few duets and solo violin works, he is most recognized for his partnership with Tchaikovsky in the writing of the Violin Concerto.⁵ By the time Kotek graduated from the Moscow Conservatory in May of 1876, Tchaikovsky had become very fond of him.⁶ The relationship between the two men was not typical of most student-teacher relationships. Their fondness for each other developed into a friendship, and the friendship ignited deeper feelings on Tchaikovsky's part. Correspondence with Tchaikovsky's younger brother Modest gives a more complete picture of their relationship. In a letter dated January 19, 1877 Tchaikovsky writes:

I am *in love*, as I haven't been in love for a long time. Can you guess with whom? . . . I have known him for six years already. I always liked him, and on several occasions I have felt a little bit in love with him. That was like a trial run for my love. Now I have momentum and have *run right into him* in the most decisive fashion. I cannot say that my love is completely pure. When he caresses me with his hand, when he lies with his head on my chest and I play with his hair and secretly kiss it, when for hours on end I hold his hand in my own and tire in the battle against the urge to fall at his feet and kiss these little feet, passion rages in me with unimaginable force, my voice shakes like that of a youth, and I speak some kind of nonsense. However, I am far from desiring physical consummation. I feel that, if *that occurred*, I would cool toward him. I would feel disgusted if this *wonderful youth* stooped to sex with an aged and fat-bellied man. How horrible this would be and how disgusting I would become to myself! It is not called for.⁷

Clearly Tchaikovsky had strong feelings for Kotek. What is unclear, however, is how Kotek felt toward Tchaikovsky. Kotek was not unaware of Tchaikovsky's feelings toward him. In fact, the same letter goes on to detail the occasion when Tchaikovsky confessed his love in person.

Tchaikovsky writes,

I made a *full* confession of love, begging him not to be angry, not to feel constrained if I bored him, etc. All these confessions were met with a thousand various small caresses, strokes on the shoulder, cheeks, and strokes across my head. I am incapable of expressing to you the full degree of bliss that I experienced by fully giving myself away.⁸

⁵ Friedrich Baser and David Brown, "Kotek, Yosif," *Grove Music Online*, accessed June 27, 2012, *Oxford Music Online*.

⁶ Roland John Wiley, *Tchaikovsky* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 94.

⁷ Kearney, *Tchaikovsky and His World*, 66-67.

⁸ Kearney, *Tchaikovsky and His World*, 68.

Although Kotek considered himself a heterosexual and had many relationships with women, it is possible that Kotek and Tchaikovsky had an intimate connection.⁹ There is no evidence to confirm a consummated affair, but what is certain is that the two men had more than a purely working relationship.

One reason this relationship was so important to the writing of the concerto is because of another statement that appears in the same January 19 letter. Tchaikovsky writes, “We spoke of the piece that he *ordered* me to write for his Lenten concert. He repeated over and over that he would get angry if I didn’t write this piece.”¹⁰ Knowing that Kotek helped Tchaikovsky work on the Violin Concerto a short time later, it is possible that the concerto was the work Tchaikovsky referenced in this letter. In her 1998 book, *Tchaikovsky and His World*, Leslie Kearney supports the idea that the concerto was in fact the piece in question. She writes that Tchaikovsky fulfilled Kotek’s compositional request in the completion of the violin concerto a year after the dated letter.¹¹ However, Roland John Wiley disagrees in his 2009 book entitled *Tchaikovsky*. Wiley believes that the piece written for Kotek was the *Valse-scherzo*, op. 34. The *Valse-scherzo* was written in early 1877 and a manuscript copy bears a dedication to Eduard Kotek. Wiley suggests that *Eduard* may have been Kotek’s real first name.¹² This theory is also plausible because the piece was written prior to the Violin Concerto. Although either author could be correct, Wiley’s information is more recent; therefore, it is likely the more reliable source. Even if the Violin Concerto is not the piece Tchaikovsky referenced in his letter, his friendship with Kotek could have easily inspired him to consider writing a work in this genre.

⁹ David Brown, *Tchaikovsky: The Man and His Music* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2007), 177.

¹⁰ Kearney, *Tchaikovsky and His World*, 69.

¹¹ Kearney, *Tchaikovsky and His World*, 94.

¹² Wiley, *Tchaikovsky*, 145.

In between Tchaikovsky's confession of love to Kotek and their start on the concerto, Tchaikovsky went through one of the most trying times in his life. Despite his affections for Kotek, Tchaikovsky wished to be married like most men his age. After numerous correspondences Tchaikovsky found his opportunity and wed Antonina Milyukova on July 6, 1877, with both Kotek and Tchaikovsky's brother Anatoly as witnesses.¹³ The marriage was short-lived and ended in disaster. After only two months together, the two separated.¹⁴ A resolution was reached a year later on July 24, 1878. The two agreed to not divorce, as neither planned to remarry, but they would have no further communication.¹⁵ Through this entire experience Kotek's friendship with Tchaikovsky remained constant, and the two began work on the violin concerto in March of 1878.¹⁶

Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto was written for, "solo violin, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings."¹⁷ During composition Kotek gave ideas, suggestions, and regularly played through the piece with Tchaikovsky to iron out details. It is likely that bowings, dynamics, and phrasing marks were all the result of Kotek's influence.¹⁸ The orchestra score was not created until Kotek and Tchaikovsky had worked out the violin part in its entirety.¹⁹ The piece took only eleven days to draft in piano reduction and nine days to score.²⁰ Included in this time frame is a complete rewrite of the second movement. When Tchaikovsky's brother Modest heard the original second movement he felt that it did not

¹³ Wiley, *Tchaikovsky*, 149.

¹⁴ Roland John Wiley, "Tchaikovsky, Pyotr Il'yich," *Grove Music Online*, accessed June 27, 2012, *Oxford Music Online*.

¹⁵ Wiley, *Tchaikovsky*, 188.

¹⁶ Wiley, *Tchaikovsky*, 193.

¹⁷ Michael Steinberg, *The Concerto: A Listener's Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 484.

¹⁸ Polina Vajdman, "Preface," in *Tschaikowsky Violinkonzert D-dur, Opus 35, Urtext* (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2005), IV.

¹⁹ Frederic B. Emery, *The Violin Concerto*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 255.

²⁰ Wiley, *Tchaikovsky*, 193.

fit into the context of the concerto and suggested a change.²¹ Tchaikovsky himself was not satisfied with this movement either. In an April 3 letter to his brother Anatoly, Tchaikovsky wrote,

Kotek has copied out the violin part of the concerto and we played it through before lunch. It was a great success both for the author and for the performer. Kotek actually played it in such a way that he could have immediately played it in public. . . . In the evening he played the *Andante*, which pleased a lot less than the first movement. And I myself am also not particularly satisfied with it.²²

So, Kotek and Tchaikovsky decided to begin composing a new second movement. The new movement, also called *Andante*, was composed in only one day. The original movement was renamed *Meditation* and was used instead as the first movement of *Souvenir d'un lieu cher* for violin and piano.²³

The full score was completed by April 20, 1878.²⁴ This was the first piece that Tchaikovsky had completed since the end of his marriage.²⁵ Though the concerto was finished, the Kotek-Tchaikovsky partnership did not end here. In addition to compositional help, Kotek also played a very large role in the editing and proofing of the score for publication. As he did with many of his other works, Tchaikovsky sent the concerto to Russian publisher Pyotr Ivanovich Jürgenson.²⁶ Jürgenson's publishing business was rapidly growing in Moscow and Tchaikovsky was one of his most frequent clients.²⁷ Tchaikovsky and Kotek exchanged many letters while the piece was being prepared. Much of the detail work in the editing and proofreading of the concerto was passed to Kotek. In Kotek's May 16, 1878 letter to Tchaikovsky, Kotek comments, "I have sent Jürgenson the score, and the piano reduction will

²¹ Emery, *The Violin Concerto*, 255.

²² Vajdman, "Preface," IV.

²³ Julian Herbage, "Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)," in *The Concerto*, ed. Ralph Hill (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978), 230.

²⁴ Emery, *The Violin Concerto*, 255.

²⁵ Wiley, *Tchaikovsky*, 193.

²⁶ Vajdman, "Preface," V.

²⁷ Carolyn Dunlop and Geoffrey Norris, "Jürgenson [Yurgenson], Pyotr Ivanovich," *Grove Music Online*, accessed October 4, 2012, *Oxford Music Online*.

follow tomorrow morning as intended. The copyist brought it yesterday . . . there were a fearful number of mistakes. But I hope that they have all been removed; slurs and markings are at least notated correctly.”²⁸ The violin part and piano reduction were published in November of 1878. Following this publication the two began work on the orchestral parts, which progressed slowly. The parts were completed and published in August of 1879. Unfortunately, more problems with the complete score remained and it was not released until almost ten years later in April of 1888.²⁹

Of Kotek’s contribution to the compositional and publication process Tchaikovsky said, “There is no denying that without him I could not have done anything.”³⁰ Tchaikovsky’s gratitude toward Kotek for his help was great. However, his close partnership with Kotek in the writing process makes it difficult to determine what, if any, musical passages Kotek may have changed or suggested. Regardless, it is obvious that Kotek’s influence on the final product was considerable.

Although Kotek had a large part in the creation of this piece, Tchaikovsky was hesitant to dedicate it to his former student. Tchaikovsky worried about how a dedication would appear to the public, not wanting any rumors about his relationship with Kotek to spread. As a result, Tchaikovsky wrote to Jürgenson saying, “I would gladly dedicate the Concerto to Kotek[,] but to avoid people talking I will probably opt to dedicate it to Auer. . . . I really do like Auer, both as an artist and as a person.”³¹ Thus, the first published edition of the piano reduction is dedicated to Leopold Auer.³²

²⁸ Vajdman, “Preface,” V.

²⁹ Vajdman, “Preface,” V.

³⁰ Wiley, *Tchaikovsky*, 193.

³¹ Vajdman, “Preface,” V.

³² Vajdman, “Preface,” V.

Adolf Brodsky and the Concerto's Public Debut

Although composition of the violin concerto was relatively quick, the first public performance did not happen right away. In fact it was not performed until several years after its completion.³³ Finding a violinist to premier his concerto proved to be more difficult than Tchaikovsky might have hoped. Although it is unclear why, Kotek did not give the concerto's first performance, which was his original intent. Instead, Tchaikovsky turned to a violinist and teacher who he had become familiar with and very much respected: Leopold Auer. Auer was a renowned Hungarian violinist who relocated to St. Petersburg to play with the Imperial Orchestra. Although critics of his playing complained that he was not virtuosic enough to stand up to the great violinists of the day, he still received acclaim from many.³⁴ Auer had established himself in St. Petersburg as a performer in the Imperial Orchestra and teacher at the St. Petersburg Conservatory.³⁵ Tchaikovsky hoped dedicating the piece to Auer would prompt him to be the first to perform the work. Auer's response to the dedication was not what Tchaikovsky expected. The two met to review the work. Auer described their meeting saying:

I thanked him warmly (for the dedication) and at once had him sit down at the piano while I, sitting myself beside him followed with feverish interest his somewhat awkward piano rendering of the score. . . . When I went over the score in detail, however, I felt that, in spite of its great intrinsic value, it called for a thorough revision, since in various portions it was quite unviolinistic and not at all written in the idiom of the strings. I regretted deeply that the composer had not shown me the score before having sent it to the engraver, and I determined to subject it to a revision, which would make it more suited to the nature of the violin, and then submit it to the composer. . . .³⁶

Auer was not in a hurry to submit his edits to Tchaikovsky and although a premiere was planned with Auer as the soloist for March 1879, it was cancelled. Tchaikovsky was devastated and even suggested that Auer might have had a hand in convincing Kotek to refuse public performance as

³³ John Warrack, *BBC Music Guides: Tchaikovsky Symphonies & Concertos* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), 50.

³⁴ Schwartz, "Auer, Leopold," *Grove Music Online*.

³⁵ Michael Steinberg, *The Concerto: A Listener's Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 484.

³⁶ Boris Schwartz, Liner Notes, *Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto, Meditation, Op. 42, No. 1*, Isaac Stern (violin), National Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Mstislav Rostropovich, Columbia Records, 1979, phonorecord.

well.³⁷ Thus, Tchaikovsky's requests for a premiere were denied by not one, but by two different violinists. The concerto was still left unheard by the public.

The first performer to play the concerto in front of an audience was violinist and conductor Leopold Damrosch. His 1879 concert in New York was performed with piano accompaniment only. The absence of an orchestra, however, makes it impossible to consider this performance the premiere.³⁸ Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto had its official premiere performance in Vienna almost two years later on December 4, 1881 given by Russian violinist Adolf Brodsky and the Vienna Philharmonic under the direction of Hans Richter.³⁹

Circumstances for this performance were far from ideal. The first challenge was that only one rehearsal with the orchestra was held prior to the performance. The next difficulty was the orchestral parts. As a result of the single rehearsal the orchestra musicians allegedly decided to play everything *piano* so that the audience would not notice how many mistakes were in the parts. One rehearsal was not enough time to correct all of the inconsistencies. Questions of editing and cuts to the work were brought up even at this, the first performance. Although pressured to make cuts and changes, Brodsky would not hear of altering Tchaikovsky's work and insisted on performing the piece as written.⁴⁰

Tchaikovsky did not know that Brodsky had decided to perform the concerto. In fact, he did not find out that his work had been premiered until after the performance had already taken place. Tchaikovsky happened upon a review of the performance in a Vienna newspaper shortly

³⁷ Schwartz, Liner Notes, *Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto*.

³⁸ Vajdman, "Preface," V.

³⁹ Edward Downes, *Guide to Symphonic Music* (New York: Walker and Company, 1981), 957.

⁴⁰ Emery, *The Violin Concerto*, 255.

after.⁴¹ The review, by Austrian music critic and historian Eduard Hanslick,⁴² was far from complimentary:

For a while the concerto has proportion, is musical, and is not without genius, but soon savagery gains the upper hand, and lords it to the end of the first movement. The violin is no longer played. It is yanked about, it is torn asunder, it is beaten black and blue. I do not know whether it is possible for anyone to conquer these harassing difficulties, but I do know that Mr. Brodsky martyred his hearers as well as himself.⁴³

The review goes on to give some halfhearted compliments to the second movement only to highly criticize the concerto's final movement and suggest that it was "music that stinks in the ear."⁴⁴ Obviously Tchaikovsky would not have been happy to hear these comments about his work.

Though Tchaikovsky was disappointed with the reactions to the performance, he was grateful to Brodsky for his bravery in tackling the difficulties of the work. Tchaikovsky wrote to his publisher saying:

If you know Brodsky's address, please write to him that I am moved deeply by the courage shown by him in playing so difficult and ungrateful a piece before a most prejudiced audience. If Kotek, my best friend, were so cowardly and pusillanimous as to change his intention of acquainting the St. Petersburg public with the concerto, although it was his pressing duty to play it, as he is responsible for the matter of ease of execution of the piece; if Auer, to whom the work is dedicated, intrigued against me, I am doubly grateful to dear Brodsky, in that, for my sake he must stand the curses of the Viennese journals.⁴⁵

Tchaikovsky was so thankful that Brodsky took on the premiere performance, despite its reception, that he chose to remove the dedication to Auer and rededicate the concerto to Adolf Brodsky.⁴⁶ This dedication appears on scores published even today.⁴⁷

Kotek eventually did perform the concerto in public on October 30, 1882 in Moscow. Jürgenson attended the performance and wrote to Tchaikovsky about it saying,

⁴¹ Emery, *The Violin Concerto*, 255-256.

⁴² Thomas S. Grey, "Hanslick, Eduard," *Grove Music Online*, accessed October 4, 2012, *Oxford Music Online*.

⁴³ Emery, *The Violin Concerto*, 256.

⁴⁴ Emery, *The Violin Concerto*, 256.

⁴⁵ Emery, *The Violin Concerto*, 256.

⁴⁶ Schwarz, "Auer, Leopold," *Grove Music Online*.

⁴⁷ Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, 1.

Kotek played your concerto well, but he cannot compare with someone like Brodsky. Despite the perfect technical performance there was no passion, neither on the part of the artist nor on that of the audience. . . . Kotek is exactly like his playing, that is, he is extremely proper, even elegant, but there is a touch of triviality in his elegance. There is also a hint of triviality with Brodsky but at the same time there is fire, energy and natural intuition.⁴⁸

Although Jürgenson was not entirely impressed with Kotek's performance, it was fitting that Tchaikovsky's good friend had an opportunity to play the work that he had such a large part in creating.

The Influence and Editing of Leopold Auer

With the first performance completed, the doors were opened to other performers who wanted to learn the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto. This is also when people began to consider editing and changing the work. Fritz Kreisler was one of the violinists who made an attempt at editing. In his book *From Russia to the West*, Nathan Milstein discusses Kreisler's work on the Violin Concerto and recounts two stories he was told by Kreisler. Both stories were based on alleged conversations that Kreisler had with people who were close to Tchaikovsky. Both individuals told Kreisler that Tchaikovsky wanted to rewrite and edit his violin concerto, but that he "simply hadn't gotten around to it."⁴⁹ Milstein seems skeptical of Kreisler's stories expressing some frustration with his claims. Milstein comments that, "Either way, the story wasn't very convincing, but I had no intention of arguing about it with the adorable maestro."⁵⁰ Regardless of Milstein's feelings about his edits, Kreisler's edition of the concerto was not widely used and is now virtually obsolete. Although Kreisler and other violinists made edits to the concerto, none were as drastic or as lasting as those made by Leopold Auer. Why might one violinist's edition catch on and not another's? A look at Auer's life and influence on the performance community reveals why his editions may have gained so much momentum.

⁴⁸ Vajdman, "Preface," V.

⁴⁹ Milstein, *From Russia to the West*, 175.

⁵⁰ Milstein, *From Russia to the West*, 175.

In spite of a successful performance career, Auer is most recognized for his teaching as the violin professor at the St. Petersburg Conservatory from 1868-1917. While there Auer taught many famous violinists and solidified his position as one of the most sought-after teachers in Russia.⁵¹ Despite his initial refusal to perform Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, Auer's interaction with the work did not wane, but only intensified in later years. On January 30, 1893 Auer relented and publicly performed the concerto in St. Petersburg using his own cuts and alterations. Later that same year, in October, Auer performed the concerto at Tchaikovsky's funeral when the great composer died from cholera.⁵²

Despite the fact that Auer changed his mind about performing the concerto, he still received some criticism for his early comments and initial refusal to play it. In an effort to justify his reasoning, Auer combated the rumor that he called the concerto "unplayable." In the January 12, 1912 edition of the *Musical Courier* Auer wrote:

It is incorrect to state that I had declared the concerto in its original form unplayable. What I did say was that some of the passages were not suited to the character of the instrument, and that, however perfectly rendered, they would not sound as well as the composer had imagined. From this purely aesthetic point of view only I found some of it impracticable, and for this reason I re-edited the solo part.⁵³

Although Auer's early feelings about the concerto seemed unfavorable and he insisted on the use of his own edition in lieu of Tchaikovsky's, his respect of the work increased as time went on.

In his book *Violin Playing as I Teach it* copyrighted in 1921, Auer recognized the merits of playing the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto, among others.⁵⁴ Additionally, in his 1925 book *Violin Masterworks and their Interpretation*, Auer refutes Hanslick's terrible review and instead calls Tchaikovsky a "genius." He goes on to say that, "the great Russian composer's Concerto in D major has held its own in all the concert halls of the cultured world, and in every studio where

⁵¹ Schwartz, "Auer, Leopold," *Grove Music Online*.

⁵² Vajdman, "Preface," VI.

⁵³ Steinberg, *The Concerto: A Listener's Guide*, 485.

⁵⁴ Leopold Auer, *Violin Playing As I Teach It* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1975), 93.

rational violin-playing is taught.”⁵⁵ Clearly, as the years passed Auer changed his mind about the concerto and became one of its greatest advocates.

As stated earlier, Auer’s revisions were made before his 1893 performance. Although Auer claims otherwise,⁵⁶ there is no indication that the changes were made after consulting Tchaikovsky or with his approval. Even so, Jürgenson released a version of Auer’s edited solo part to the public in 1899.⁵⁷ Many editions of the concerto today are published as Tchaikovsky wrote it. The International Music Company edition edited by David Oistrakh shows Tchaikovsky’s original music juxtaposed with Auer’s alterations so that the performer can select which version to use. For this reason, the International version will be referenced in the analysis below.

The first movement, the longest of the three, remains mostly intact with only two cuts of 16 measures each. These cuts only involve a shortening of orchestral material, thus the violin part is unaffected. The first cut happens in between the violin’s completion of the exposition and subsequent entrance during the development section. Example 1.1 shows the cut between measures 141 and 156 indicated by the coda signs.

⁵⁵ Leopold Auer, *Violin Master Works and their Interpretation* (New York: Carl Fischer, Inc., 1925), 133-134.

⁵⁶ Auer, *Violin Masterworks*, 137.

⁵⁷ Vajdman, “Preface,” VI.

Example 1.1

Peter Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, mm. 139-159

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a key signature of two sharps (D major). Measure numbers 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, and 147 are indicated above the staves.

- System 1 (Measures 139-141):** The piano part features a complex, arpeggiated texture. A box labeled 'F' is placed above the treble staff in measure 141. A dynamic marking 'p' (piano) is present in measure 141. A rehearsal mark 'стр. 16' is also visible.
- System 2 (Measures 142-144):** The piano part continues with a similar arpeggiated texture. A dynamic marking 'f p' (forte piano) is present in measure 143.
- System 3 (Measures 145-147):** The piano part continues with a similar arpeggiated texture. A dynamic marking 'f mf' (forte mezzo-forte) is present in measure 145. A crescendo marking 'cresc.' is present in measure 147.

Example 1.1 continued

This musical score is for a piano piece in D major, spanning measures 148 to 159. The notation is arranged in four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Measure numbers 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, and 159 are printed above the treble staves. The piece features a complex texture with many chords and rapid sixteenth-note passages in the bass. Dynamic markings include *f* (forte), *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *cresc.* (crescendo). A fermata is placed over the final chord in measure 156. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#).

The second cut shown in Example 1.2, between the violin's exit in the development and the beginning of the cadenza, removes material between measures 195 and 202.

Example 1.2

Peter Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, mm. 194-204

The musical score for measures 194-204 of Tchaikovsky's Concerto in D Major, Opus 35, is presented in three systems. Each system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is D major (two sharps). The time signature is 2/4. Measure numbers 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, and 204 are indicated above the staves. Dynamics include 'mf' (mezzo-forte) at measure 195 and 'crescendo' (cresc.) at measures 196, 200, and 203. The score shows complex piano textures with many chords and moving lines in both hands.

Although Auer never indicated why he made these alterations, analysis reveals potential reasons for the changes. The most obvious reason for the first two cuts is to shorten transitional material between sections and return focus to the soloist in a more timely fashion.

The next revisions to the first movement affect the violin part only. The first of these occurs in measures 111-113 shown in Example 1.3. Tchaikovsky's version is on the top staff, and Auer's on the bottom.

Example 1.3

Peter Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, mm. 111-119

The image displays a musical score for measures 111 through 119 of the first movement of Tchaikovsky's Concerto in D Major, Opus 35. The score is presented in two staves: the top staff represents Tchaikovsky's original version, and the bottom staff represents Auer's revision. The key signature is D major (two sharps), and the time signature is 4/4.

- Measure 111:** Tchaikovsky's version is marked *Poco più lento*. Auer's revision includes a *cresc. poco a poco* marking.
- Measure 112:** Continuation of the melodic line.
- Measure 113:** Continuation of the melodic line.
- Measure 114:** Tchaikovsky's version includes a *cresc.* marking. Auer's revision includes a *f* (forte) marking.
- Measure 115:** Continuation of the melodic line.
- Measure 116:** Continuation of the melodic line.
- Measure 117:** Continuation of the melodic line.
- Measure 118:** Continuation of the melodic line.
- Measure 119:** The final measure shown, marked *[E] [poco] più mosso* and *tr tr tr tr* (trills).

The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. The Auer revision often shows more complex fingerings and articulation compared to the original.

This revision is an obvious simplification of Tchaikovsky's original passage. The melodic line remains intact, but the removal of the double stops makes this passage significantly easier to perform for the left hand. The bowing also becomes simpler, requiring the performer to play only one string at a time.

Also altered in this excerpt is measure 116, which is transposed down an octave. It is possible that Auer chose this octave transposition so that there would be a larger melodic build-up to the next section of the movement. Tchaikovsky's edition does not leap down in register until the next measure leaving only two measures of a rising melodic line to the arrival point at measure 119.

Measures 123-126 are edited even more drastically and are shown in Example 1.4. Tchaikovsky's part has simple chord arpeggiations rising in melodic range to the arrival point at measure 127. Although Auer keeps the harmonic and stylistic characteristics constant, the notes, execution, and articulations have changed dramatically. This passage is not a simplification, but an embellishment of the original. From the rising double stops in measures 123 and 124, to the tenths in measure 126, the execution of this passage is significantly more challenging than the original. The result is a more virtuosic lead-in to the orchestra's entrance that follows. In the recapitulation, these same alterations occur in the respective sections of the solo part. Measures 287-294 are edited to correspond to measures 111-116, and measures 299-302 are edited to correspond to measures 123-126.

Example 1.4

Peter Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, mm. 122-127

The image displays a musical score for measures 122 through 127 of Peter Tchaikovsky's *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*. The score is written for violin and piano in D major (two sharps). Measures 122 and 123 show the violin playing a series of trills (tr) and the piano providing a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes. Measure 124 features a piano part with a crescendo (cresc.) and a violin part with a trill. Measure 125 shows a piano part with a trill and a violin part with a trill. Measure 126 is marked *ff* (fortissimo) and features a piano part with a trill and a violin part with a trill. Measure 127 is marked *Moderato assai* and features a piano part with a trill and a violin part with a trill. The score includes various musical notations such as trills (tr), dynamics (p, ff), and tempo markings (Moderato assai).

The recapitulation exhibits one additional change. Example 1.5 shows measures 55-58 from the exposition followed by measures 239-241 from the recapitulation. In the recapitulation

example Auer alters the octave placement of the passage so that it mirrors the melodic line established in the exposition.

Example 1.5

Peter Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, mm. 55-59, 238-243

The image displays two excerpts from the Violin part of Tchaikovsky's Concerto in D Major, Opus 35. The first excerpt, measures 55-59, is marked with a 'B' box and a 'cresc.' marking. The second excerpt, measures 238-243, is marked with a 'K' box and a 'f' marking. Both excerpts show complex melodic lines with many accidentals and fingerings. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 2/4.

Example 1.6 shows Auer's changes in the development section. In measures 166 and 167 he omits the lower note in a few chords. Although this is a simplification, the audible result is insignificant. In contrast, the edits in measures 169-173 are an embellished version of the

original. A few octave transpositions throughout and a scalar sweep added in measure 169 change the passage so that it is not simply a repetition of what happened in measure 162. Though once again these changes are nominal, the small embellishments in this section add contrast that was not present before.

Example 1.6

Peter Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, mm. 162-175

162 molto sostenuto il tempo, moderatissimo 163

164 165

166 167

168 169

170

171 172 173

174 175

The last two changes to the first movement occur at the end. Example 1.7 shows measures 303-312.

Example 1.7

Peter Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, mm. 303-312

303 Allegro giusto 304

305 306

307 308

309 310

311 312

In measures 306-308 Auer changes the melodic figuration of the sixteenth notes. In this section ease of performance is not an issue, and there are not substantial changes to increase the virtuosity of the passage. This suggests that maybe Auer favored the sound of the rising melodic line of the sixteenth notes in the second half of each measure as opposed to the falling line, although there is no way to know for sure.

Example 1.8 shows the final revisions in this movement. Study of Tchaikovsky's version reveals that he repeated the same pattern twice in a row from measure 316 to 317 and measure 318 to 319. Auer may have chosen to alter the part so that the feeling of repetition would be lessened by an octave transposition the second time through the passage. Additionally, Tchaikovsky's arpeggiated chords in measures 317 and 319 were simplified for ease of execution.

Example 1.8

Peter Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, mm. 316-320

The image displays a musical score for measures 316 through 320 of Tchaikovsky's Concerto in D Major, Opus 35. The score is written for violin and piano. Measure 316 begins with a 'Stringendo' marking and a piano (p) dynamic. Measures 317 and 318 feature a crescendo (cresc.) and a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. Measure 319 also features a crescendo (cresc.) and a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. Measure 320 ends with a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as sixteenth notes, arpeggiated chords, and fingerings.

As stated earlier, reasons for Auer's specific edits to Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto are not recorded, so analysis and speculation are the only possible way to understand Auer's changes. Auer did, however, provide a few comments about Tchaikovsky's first movement in his book *Violin Master Works and their Interpretation*. The book contains one chapter written about several of Tchaikovsky's works for violin. The first piece that is addressed is the Tchaikovsky concerto. Of the first movement Auer offers some suggestions on phrasing, tone, and coordination with the orchestra.⁵⁸ Although a reason for the change is not given, Auer does point out his revised part in measure 126 saying:

We have a triplet-passage in thirds, ending in thirty-second sextolets which are not found in the original edition of the concerto and which, naturally, are missing in the orchestra score as well. This passage is one which I have changed. In order that the solo player may not lose touch with the orchestra it is most important that he play the passage in question in the *strictest time and rhythm*.⁵⁹

Auer goes on to offer some new suggestions for minor embellishments to the cadenza. These suggestions are given with the caveat that the cadenza "should be played as the performer's own taste and judgment suggests."⁶⁰ Unfortunately, Auer does not reveal any more information about changes that he chose to make.

Following a substantial amount of part revisions in the first movement it is surprising to see that the material in the second movement remains largely untouched by Auer. His only alteration is a transposition of one two-bar and one eight-bar phrase. Each of these short excerpts is raised one octave simply to add intensity and contrast. The transposed parts can be seen in Example 2.1 and 2.2.

⁵⁸ Auer, *Violin Master Works and their Interpretation*, 134-136.

⁵⁹ Auer, *Violin Master Works and their Interpretation*, 134-135.

⁶⁰ Auer, *Violin Master Works and their Interpretation*, 135.

Peter Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, mm. 66-69



Peter Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, mm. 75-85

Finally, in the third movement Auer made seven short cuts of only a few bars each. The individual cuts remove repetitive material in both the violin and orchestra parts. The first cut is shown in Example 3.1 from measures 69-80 between the coda signs. As seen in the piano reduction, both the orchestra and the violin have the exact same part three times in succession. Auer made this same cut two more times in each return of the ‘A’ section theme in measures 259-270 and measures 476-487.

Example 3.1

Peter Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, mm. 61-87

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a Violin staff (top) and a Piano staff (bottom). The key signature is D major (two sharps). Measure numbers 61 through 87 are indicated above the Violin staff. Measure 65 includes a \flat accidental on the G note. Measure 69 features a Φ symbol above the staff. Measure 79 includes an \times symbol above the staff. Measure 80 features a Φ symbol above the staff. Dynamic markings include *p* (piano), *f* (forte), *dim.* (diminuendo), *cresc.* (crescendo), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The score shows a variety of musical textures, including rapid sixteenth-note passages in the Violin and sustained chords in the Piano.

Two additional short cuts were made in measures 295-298 and measures 305-308. These cuts are displayed in Example 3.2. Once again, this example shows that Auer removed sections of repetition for both the orchestra and the soloist.

Example 3.2

Peter Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, mm. 293-312

The next cut Auer suggests is from measures 421-430 shown in Example 3.3. However, David Oistrakh and K. Mostras, who edited this edition, suggest moving the beginning of the cut

two measures later to measure 423 due to the movement in the bass part.⁶¹ The eliminated section is repetitive harmonically even though the violin part is slightly more varied.

Example 3.3

Peter Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, mm. 162-175

The musical score for measures 162-175 of Tchaikovsky's *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35* is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 162 through 168, and the second system contains measures 169 through 175. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The violin part (top staff) features a melodic line with grace notes and slurs. The piano accompaniment (bottom staff) consists of a right hand with chords and single notes, and a left hand with a more varied bass line. A 'NB' (Nota Bene) marking is placed above measure 163 in both the violin and piano staves, indicating a specific performance instruction. The piano part shows a repetitive harmonic pattern in the right hand across the measures.

The final cut shown in Example 3.4 and extending four measures from 580-583 is an exact repetition of the previous four measures.

⁶¹ Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*.

Example 3.4

Peter Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, mm. 576-585

The musical score for Example 3.4 consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 576-577) shows the violin part with a half note and a quarter note, and the piano accompaniment with a half note and a quarter note. The second system (measures 578-583) shows the violin part with a series of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, and the piano accompaniment with a series of chords and arpeggios. The third system (measures 584-585) shows the violin part with a half note and a quarter note, and the piano accompaniment with a half note and a quarter note. The score is in D major and 3/4 time.

One additional section of the third movement contains changes made by Auer. This is the only change in the movement that affects just the violin part. Example 3.5 shows the passage that Tchaikovsky wrote, and below it, Auer's revision. Auer's material would be inserted by the performer beginning at the *) in Tchaikovsky's edition. In this case, Auer was apparently trying

to make the passage more virtuosic. The passage went from a motive that was repeated over and over to an ascending passage that keeps the audience engaged.

Example 3.5

Peter Tchaikovsky, *Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 for Violin and Piano*, mm. 446-462

446 447 448 449 450 451 452 poco

453 a poco stringendo 454 455 456 457

458 459 460 Tempo I 461 462

^{*)} L. Auer poco stringendo

Auer changed each of these passages for one of several reasons. Many of the cuts were made to remove repetitive material, whereas the edited passages were changed to simplify, intensify, or add interest.

Establishment of Modern Performance Practice

What is the current performance practice of the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto? Whose version is used today: Tchaikovsky's or Auer's? How did the performance practice of this great work become such a tradition? To determine what lead to today's traditions, the history of this piece and its performances must be addressed. Many famous violinists have performed the work

throughout history. While all of the famous performances cannot be dissected, the performances of several revolutionary violinists can be studied. First are previous students of Leopold Auer: Mischa Elman, Jascha Heifetz,⁶² and Nathan Milstein.⁶³ Second, are contemporaries of these virtuosos who were not educated in the Auer tradition including David Oistrakh and Joseph Szigeti. Discovering how each artist performed the concerto leads to a greater understanding of the history and performance practice of this piece.

Auer's cuts and alterations were, and still are, used by many performers. Why did these changes become part of the Tchaikovsky tradition? Since Auer was such a prominent violin teacher it is likely that he taught the piece to his students with his revisions. These violinists who were, by many accounts, considered revolutionary performers familiarized the next generation with the Auer edition. Violinists that followed wished to perform the Tchaikovsky like the great artists before them. As each performance was witnessed, the tradition grew stronger.

One of Auer's first most accomplished students was Mischa Elman (1891-1967) who was born to a Jewish family living in Russia. Elman's earliest violin lessons came from his father, but at the age of six he began studying at the Imperial Music School. There he studied with Alexander Fidelman who was a former pupil of both Leopold Auer and Adolf Brodsky. Several years later, Auer heard Elman perform in Odessa, and he decided to take the boy on as a student at the St. Petersburg Conservatory.⁶⁴ By age thirteen, Elman had begun a full-fledged performance career, and as a result, formal training with Auer became significantly less regular. In fact, by age fourteen, Elman had completed his violin instruction entirely.⁶⁵

⁶² Schwartz, "Auer, Leopold," *Grove Music Online*.

⁶³ Milstein, *From Russia to The West*, 13.

⁶⁴ Henry Roth, *Master Violinists in Performance* (Neptune City: Paganiniana Publications, Inc., 1982), 135.

⁶⁵ Roth, *Master Violinists in Performance*, 136.

Although their time together lasted only a few years, Auer was Elman's last teacher and most certainly had a hand in shaping the way the young man performed many of the famous works for violin. In her book *The Great Violinists*, Margaret Campbell retells a story about Auer and Elman working on the Tchaikovsky together. According to Auer, he worked with Elman in preparation for a public examination when Elman was only twelve years old. Auer remarked that his student was having some difficulty with one of the passages in the cadenza. Auer asked Elman to repeat the passage several times to no avail. Auer then told Elman that he obviously was not able play the concerto correctly and that he would have to select another piece to play for the examination. Auer reported that, "with eyes filled with tears, and a voice full of determination, he assured me that at the examination the passage would go well." A short time later Elman performed it perfectly at the dress rehearsal.⁶⁶ This story reveals not only the determination and drive of the young Elman, but more importantly it confirms that the two men worked on the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto together.

Elman was arguably one of the concerto's most famous performers. Henry Roth said it best in his book *Master Violinists in Performance*:

Before the appearance of Heifetz, the Tchaikovsky concerto was synonymous with the name Elman. In the first decade of the century the work was considered to be tremendously difficult, and only a limited number of artists performed it in public, unlike today, when it is a repertorial standard played by innumerable violinists of all nationalities. In those years one did not go to hear the Tchaikovsky concerto as such. One went to hear an *Elman* or a *Huberman* or a *Zimbalist* play the Tchaikovsky concerto. Each interpretation was vastly different from the other, and when the votes on the Tchaikovsky were counted, Elman, at that time, *owned* the concerto.⁶⁷

Elman had a large part in shaping the public's early impressions of what the Tchaikovsky Concerto should be. As Roth states, the music community came to associate the concerto with Elman and his interpretation. The success Elman had with this piece solidified not only Elman's

⁶⁶ Margaret Campbell, *The Great Violinists* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1981), 156.

⁶⁷ Roth, *Master Violinists in Performance*, 143.

popularity, but also the concerto's popularity. How did Elman perform the concerto? Was it with the edits or without?

According to James Creighton's *Discopaedia of the Violin: 1889-1971*, Elman was recorded playing the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto on two occasions. The first was made in 1929 with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by John Barbirolli. The second was a recording with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult in 1954.⁶⁸ The earlier performance is arguably the more famous of the two. In this 1929 performance Elman did indeed perform every single cut, revision, and alteration made by Auer.⁶⁹ This is quite significant because of how famous Elman had become for the performance of this very piece.

As renowned as Elman's version of the concerto was, it was soon eclipsed by a version performed by the younger Jascha Heifetz (1901-1987). Heifetz, like Elman, was born to a Jewish-Russian family. He began playing the violin at age three under the direction of his father. Two years later he started taking lessons with Ilya Davidovitch Malkin at the Vilna Royal School of Music.⁷⁰ Like Elman's early violin teacher, Malkin was also a previous student of Auer. When Heifetz graduated just before age eight, Malkin helped him prepare to take an audition with Auer. After hearing him play, Auer immediately enrolled him in the St. Petersburg Conservatory.⁷¹ Between the ages of ten and sixteen Heifetz was Auer's pupil. During this time Heifetz reported that they did not work on exercises and rudiments, but only concert and recital repertoire.⁷² Heifetz remembers, "Auer was a wonderful and incomparable teacher. I do not

⁶⁸ James Creighton, *Discopaedia of the Violin: 1889-1971* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 175.

⁶⁹ Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *Violin Concerto in D major, op. 35*, Mischa Elman (violin), London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by John Barbirolli, Pearl GEMM CD 9388, 1989, compact disc.

⁷⁰ Roth, *Master Violinists in Performance*, 160-161.

⁷¹ Roth, *Master Violinists in Performance*, 160-161.

⁷² Roth, *Master Violinists in Performance*, 162.

believe that there is any teacher in the world who could possibly approach him. Don't ask me how he did it, for I would not know how to tell you, for he is completely different with each student.”⁷³

Heifetz gave his first European performance at age twelve with the Berlin Philharmonic playing the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto.⁷⁴ His experience with the work began early, and his performance of it would become a favorite worldwide. Throughout his career Heifetz performed this concerto many times. As a result there are many audio and video recordings of him playing it. Creighton sites one recording of the second movement only, along with three recorded performances of the concerto in its entirety.⁷⁵ The performance referenced here is from 1957 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner. Study of the recording confirms that just like Elman, Heifetz follows virtually every cut and alteration made by Auer. The only exception is in measures 123-126 and the respective spot in the recapitulation. For the first two measures Heifetz follows Auer's alterations. For the second two measures, Heifetz plays a different part entirely, still rising in melodic line, but a version that is his own.⁷⁶ Once again, a student of Auer stays true to his teacher's editing.

Another famous Auer student is Nathan Milstein (1904-1992), born in Odessa. Milstein began playing the violin at age seven under the direction of Pyotr Stolyarsky who was also David Oistrakh's teacher. Soon after beginning lessons with Stolyarsky he moved on to study with Auer at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Milstein made his public debut performance in 1920 and made three recordings of the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto over the course of his career.

The first was with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the second was with the Boston Symphony

⁷³ Julian Haylock, "Great Violinists Part 1: Jascha Heifetz," *Strad* 120, no. 1430 (June 2009), 34.

⁷⁴ Roth, *Master Violinists in Performance*, 155.

⁷⁵ Creighton, *Discopaedia of the Violin*, 326-327.

⁷⁶ Pyotr Tchaikovsky. *Violin Concerto in D major, op. 35*, Jascha Heifetz (violin), Chicago Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Fritz Reiner, BMG Classics 74321-63470-2, 2000, compact disc.

Orchestra, and the last was with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra under the direction of William Steinberg.⁷⁷ Listening to this last recording reinforces the tradition of performances given by Auer's students. Milstein takes all cuts and alterations made by Auer with only one exception. Once again this exception occurs in measures 123-126 and its mirrored part in the recapitulation. Here Milstein chose to adhere to the original part written by Tchaikovsky.⁷⁸

In his book *From Russia to the West* Milstein gives some comments and opinions on how the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto should be performed in conjunction with a critique of a performance by David Oistrakh. Milstein remarks:

I wasn't fully satisfied with Oistrakh's Tchaikovsky. The Russian soul is good up to a point, but Tchaikovsky, especially, can suffer from an excess of emotion . . . and then, Oistrakh played the Tchaikovsky concerto without the cuts. That's a mistake! Auer made certain very reasonable cuts. The main one was twelve measures in the third movement. Tchaikovsky has a short refrain repeated seven times there. If you're listening to a recording, you might think it was stuck.⁷⁹

Milstein goes on to detail a discussion that he had with Oistrakh regarding his performance of the work. When Milstein visited Oistrakh after the performance, he questioned Oistrakh about his decision to play Tchaikovsky's original edition. Milstein reports that Oistrakh responded with a patriotic remark and didn't wish to discuss the topic further. Although Oistrakh did not give Milstein an explanation for making the performance decision, in his book Milstein expressed his own opinions about why Oistrakh may have chosen to go with Tchaikovsky's original version. Milstein speculates that Oistrakh's decision might have been a result "of the pressure of the totalitarian state on artists. In the Soviet Union in those days Tchaikovsky, whose music Stalin liked, was being proclaimed a 'realistic' composer for the masses, while Auer's revision was considered 'bourgeois,' a hostile attempt to deform the great classic. Oistrakh must have felt he

⁷⁷ Creighton, *Discopaedia of the Violin*, 512-513.

⁷⁸ Pyotr Tchaikovsky. *Violin Concerto in D major, op. 35*, Nathan Milstein (violin), Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, conducted by William Steinberg, EMI Records 0724356903555, [n.d.], compact disc, accessed June 30, 2012, *Naxos Music Library*.

⁷⁹ Milstein, *From Russia to the West*, 214-215.

had no choice.”⁸⁰ Of course, this comment is speculation on the part of Milstein; however, it does seem probable that patriotism could have been a factor in Oistrakh’s decision. A look at Oistrakh’s education on the violin shows that unlike Elman, Heifetz, and Milstein, Leopold Auer did not have a part in his development. Although Milstein and Oistrakh shared an early violin teacher, Oistrakh did not go on to study with Auer. His technical education came from another source.

David Oistrakh (1908-1974) was born in Odessa. His father was a musician and gave him his first real violin at the age of five. Shortly after he began lessons with Pyotr Stolyarsky at the Music School of Odessa and later moved onto the Conservatory in Odessa.⁸¹ Thus, Stolyarsky was Oistrakh’s most lasting and influential teacher. There are a significant number of recordings of David Oistrakh playing the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto. Creighton cites six recordings of the work up to 1971.⁸² At least one other known recording exists after 1971. Although Milstein clearly witnessed a performance of Oistrakh playing Tchaikovsky with no alterations, the 1960 recording with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Norman Del Mar shows otherwise,⁸³ as does his 1968 live performance with the Moscow Philharmonic.⁸⁴ In both recordings Oistrakh plays every alteration by Auer with the exception, once again, of measures 123-126 and the mirrored recapitulation where he adheres to Tchaikovsky’s original.

⁸⁰ Milstein, *From Russia to the West*, 215.

⁸¹ Campbell, *The Great Violinists*, 213-214.

⁸² Creighton, *Discopaedia of the Violin*, 555.

⁸³ Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *Violin Concerto in D major, op. 35*, David Oistrakh (violin), Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Norman Del Mar, BBC Legends BBCL4102-2, 1960, compact disc, accessed June 30, 2012, *Naxos Music Library*.

⁸⁴ Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *Violin Concerto in D major, op. 35*, David Oistrakh (violin), Moscow Philharmonic Symphony, conducted by Gennady Rozhdestrensky. Capitol Records, 1968, phonorecord.

There is no way to know Oistrakh's experience and artistic journey with this piece without him sitting down and discussing it. However, it appears that Oistrakh changed his mind about adhering to Tchaikovsky's original composition. Maybe he had once thought that performing the piece with Auer's changes was a sign of disrespect to Tchaikovsky, but then over time, he grew fond of the changes and embraced them. Still another possibility is that the world was getting so used to the Heifetz rendition that Oistrakh's uncut performances were not granted with favor. We cannot know for sure, but the evidence suggests that Oistrakh began performing the piece uncut and unedited, but by the end of his career chose to adhere to Auer's changes instead.

Another prominent performer who did not take lessons from Leopold Auer was Joseph Szigeti (1892-1973). Szigeti was born in Budapest, Hungary. His earliest violin instruction came at age seven from his uncle. A few years later Szigeti began lessons with an unknown teacher until he was accepted as a student of Jenő Hubay. Szigeti studied with Hubay until the rise of his career.

Although Szigeti was never recorded playing the Tchaikovsky, he did play and perform the work in front of an audience. He was very familiar with the piece and he expressed some of his thoughts and opinions about the editing in his 1969 book *On the Violin*. This book addresses technical challenges and interpretations of many significant pieces in violin performance repertoire. About the Tchaikovsky Szigeti writes:

There are, however, signs that the process of making daring passages 'safe' (safe for microphones!) is now being abandoned for more faithful adherence to the original text. For instance at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Competition, where the Tchaikovsky Concerto is of course obligatory, only the original version by the author may be used. Thus the simplification of the redoubtable passage in triplets (in sixths) by L. Auer (who reduced it to single notes) is no longer admitted and we now hear it in the exiting dry *spiccato* or else '*fouette*' *detache* double-stop original version, the way Huberman (and before him Brodsky and others) used to play it. I too adhered to the original in my time. I ceased to play the Concerto in 1925.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Joseph Szigeti, *On the Violin* (Washington: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1961), 98.

Szigeti points out that even though Auer's changes were widely used, there were a number of violinists, including himself, who favored Tchaikovsky's original work. He also highlights an important fact about the Tchaikovsky competition. In the year this book was written, 1969, there was already a rule that the original version of Tchaikovsky's concerto must be used for those who wished to participate in the competition. This is true today as well. The Tchaikovsky Competition website lists the complete repertoire requirements for each stage of the competition. In parentheses next to the title of the concerto, the text confirms that the competitor must play the version "edited by the author."⁸⁶ It is interesting that despite the established performance history of the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto using the Auer edition, one of the most prestigious international competitions specifically requests the original.

What about more recent performances of the work? Does the tradition remain the same? Performers seem divided on the subject. Violinist Isaac Stern (1920-2001) released a recording in 1979 with the National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Mstislav Rostropovich. Boris Schwartz wrote in the liner notes:

Auer's changes are neither good nor necessary, but the public accepted them as gospel truth. It is all the more commendable that Stern and Rostropovich decided to record the complete *Urtext* of Tchaikovsky – every note as the composer wrote it, except for omitting a few repetitive passages in the Finale. The Concerto emerges in all its pristine beauty and vindicates Tchaikovsky's faith in his own work.⁸⁷

Stern does play both the first and second movements using every note of Tchaikovsky's original part. The third movement, however, is a different story. In contrast to the first two movements, Stern takes all of the cuts suggested by Auer.⁸⁸ Although they admit to taking the cuts in the third movement in Schwartz's liner notes, one may wonder why Stern and Rostropovich felt that a "complete *Urtext*" version might not include Tchaikovsky's original text for *all* parts of the

⁸⁶ "Repertoire," XIV International Tchaikovsky Competition, accessed June 27, 2012, <http://www.tchaikovsky-competition.com/en/2011/violin/repertoire>.

⁸⁷ Schwartz, Liner Notes, *Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto*.

⁸⁸ Pyotr Tchaikovsky. *Violin Concerto in D major, op. 35*, Isaac Stern (violin), National Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Mstislav Rostropovich, Columbia Records 35126, 1979, phonorecord.

concerto. In addition to taking the third movement cuts, Stern also chooses to use Auer's revision shown in Example 3.5. Thus, this performance is not purely Tchaikovsky's original, but partly Auer's edition as well.

A number of years later in 1990, Itzhak Perlman recorded the Tchaikovsky with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra under Zubin Mehta. Perlman sticks mostly to Tchaikovsky's edition in the first movement, though not entirely. He chooses to play small sections of Auer's edits where he sees fit throughout the work. In the second movement Perlman plays the second octave transposition, but not the first, and plays all of Auer's changes in the third movement.⁸⁹ Joshua Bell's 1988 performance with the Cleveland Orchestra conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy is divided. Bell selects parts to use from each edition based on his preferences. In the first movement Bell stays true to Tchaikovsky's original until measure 306 where he adheres to Auer's version until the end. In both the second and third movements Bell uses all of the Auer cuts and edits.⁹⁰ Sarah Chang's 1993 performance with the London Symphony Orchestra directed by Sir Colin Davis is much the same. While she plays only Tchaikovsky's original text for the first movement, she plays every edit made by Auer in the second and third movements.⁹¹

An entirely different perspective comes from violinist, Hilary Hahn. She released a recording in 2010 with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra directed by Vasily Petrenko. Here Hahn chose to play only Tchaikovsky's original composition. In all three movements Hahn removes all cuts and edits suggested by Leopold Auer and plays only what Tchaikovsky

⁸⁹ Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *Violin Concerto in D major, op. 35*, Itzhak Perlman (violin), Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Zubin Mehta, EMI Records, 1990, MP3 file, downloaded July 27, 2012, *iTunes*.

⁹⁰ Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *Violin Concerto in D major, op. 35*, Joshua Bell (violin), Cleveland Orchestra, conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy, Decca Record Co. Ltd. 421 716-2, 1988, compact disc.

⁹¹ Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *Violin Concerto in D major, op. 35*, Sarah Chang (violin), London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Colin Davis, EMI Records CDC 54753 2 6, 1993, compact disc.

originally intended.⁹² This is a bold choice considering that throughout history, the most famous performances have used Auer's edition. A video made at the time of the album's release shows Hahn speaking about why she chose to play the work as she did. Though her comments are not specific, she expresses the value of her long break from playing the work so that she could return with a fresh perspective. She expresses the fact that there are strong traditions established about how the Tchaikovsky is most often played and taught, but that a break from the piece allowed her to reevaluate how she wanted to present the work to her audience.⁹³

The question for modern performers to answer is, should the cuts and changes be observed? If Tchaikovsky did not approve of them and did not intend that they would ever be written, is it offensive for performer after performer to take Auer's suggestions? Conversely, is adhering to the original text a rejection of the work of some of the greatest violinists of all time? Each artist at each performance must answer these questions for himself in order to decide how he will present the work to the public. There is no right or wrong answer. Honoring the original composition is a great sign of respect to Tchaikovsky and his original intent for the concerto. At the same time, although the changes made by Auer were not initiated by Tchaikovsky himself they are still part of the history of this piece. Every performer or artist puts part of himself into his performance. In the case of Auer, he put more of himself into the masterpiece than the average musician. While performing the changes may not be staying true to Tchaikovsky, it is staying true to a wonderful tradition of one of the most famous violin concertos ever written.

For my November 12, 2012 recital I will be performing the first movement of the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto. I have prepared a performance mostly following Tchaikovsky's

⁹² Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *Violin Concerto in D major, op. 35*, Hilary Hahn (violin), Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Vasily Petrenko, Deutsche Grammophon, 2010, MP3 file, downloaded July 27, 2012, *iTunes*.

⁹³ "Hilary Hahn: Tchaikovsky & Higdson Violin Concertos EPK," September 1, 2010, video clip, accessed July 27, 2012, YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4X8uZAwrQY>.

original text. I play Tchaikovsky's version until measure 306, then I play Auer's suggested changes through to the end (Example 1.7 and 1.8). This is possibly the most common performance practice for this movement. Additionally, the piano takes the suggested cuts in the transition material shown in Examples 1.1 and 1.2. Although I will not play the second and third movements in my recital, I have had the experience of learning and performing both of them. In both of these movements I performed all edits and revisions suggested by Auer. My work on the concerto began before I started research for this paper. After completing the research I see the merit in learning and performing the concerto in both forms and hope to have an opportunity to do so at a later date.

Individuals other than Tchaikovsky touched every aspect of this concerto. Although the majority of the work was obviously created and shaped by the infamous composer, it would be difficult to argue that the concerto would have ended up the same if it had not been for the violinist who inspired the writing of the work, the violinist who refused to play the work, the violinist who was brave enough to first perform the work, the violinist who edited the work of his own accord, and the many violinists who have performed this piece throughout the course of history.

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