

# 1812 Overture

## Pytor Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky  
1812 Festival Overture, Op. 49

### Flöte I

**Largo** 13

Vol. I

25 *p* *più f* *cresc.*

32 *f* *ff* *f*

46 *mf* *f* *mf*

53 *f* *f* *cresc.*

58 *ff* *fff* *fff*

62

66

70 *fff* **Andante** *kl. Tr.* **C** 16

By Andrew Oxley

Music 1010 Semester Paper

- Born May 7, 1840
- Died November 6, 1893



# Background & Family



# Education & Life After School

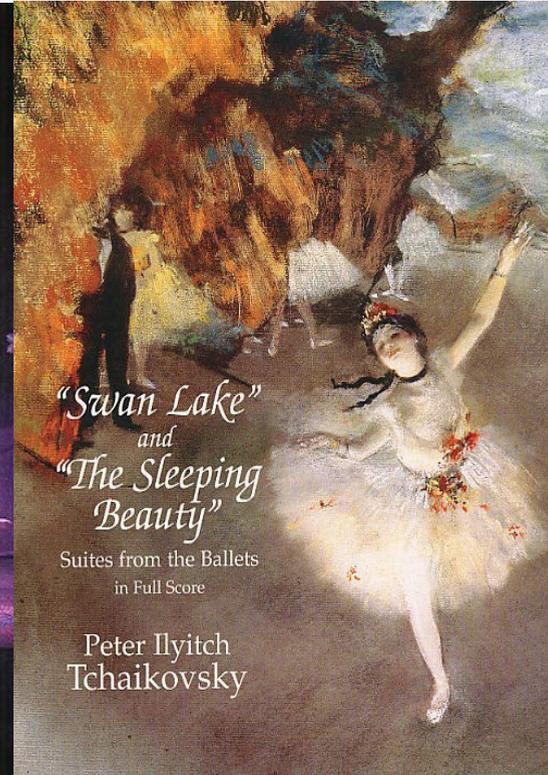
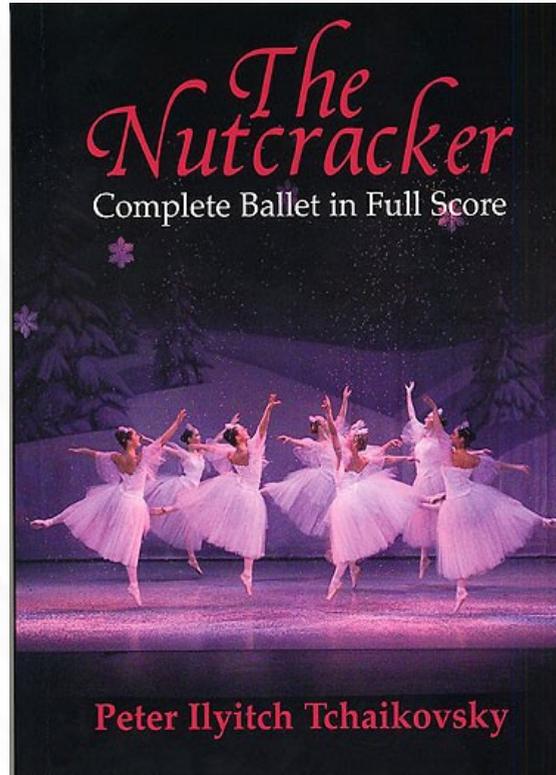
- Civil Services
- Music Professor
- Composer



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# Popular Works

- The Storm
- Marche Slave
- 1812 Overture



# 1812 Overture

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbxgYlcNxE8&feature=kp>



# Listening Guide

0:00 – 0:30 The intro to this marvelous song begins with strings, my guess would be mostly just violins right now as I don't here a ton of tenor or baritone tones in the music. We begin with a slow tempo playing at about piano with a smooth swell upward, which then falls off 15 or so seconds in. The strings then go back down to piano and begin a slow crescendo reaching what I would call mezzo-piano by about 30 seconds in.

0:31 – 1:00 The slow tempo continues as the strings melodically meld together, slowly continuing to swell and fall away, sticking to a piano or mezzo-piano volume. At about 0:40 to 0:48 the strings repeat the same note before bouncing down to what sounded like a flat and then dieing off volume wise. After a brief silence at the :52-:53 mark, the strings continue providing a slow melodic melody seeming to have dipped down to piano. This helps to provide a sense of foreboding or possible danger around the corner, possibly to portray how Russia felt in the war as Napoleons large army started to sweep across Russia's borders.

1: 01 – 1: 30 Continuing with the string introduction which does seem a little long, but when you consider the full song is 15 minutes long it makes plenty of sense. The strings hold a steady melody at about piano till 1: 17 doing a swell slightly up to that point before dropping off yet again. However when they return at 1: 22 where they are finally starting to venture beyond the realm of piano to a more mezzo volume level.

1: 31 – 2: 00 At the 1: 34 mark we're introduced to a new section playing the melody which sounds like the woodwind section, specifically the flutes, who alone have the melody for a few measures matching the strings at about a mezzo level and then passing it back to the string for a few measures before coming together melding the melody between flute and violin. They begin to grow in strength as well at the 1: 50ish mark feeling like were finally moving out of the introduction.

2: 01 – 2: 30 At this point the violins fall back to a more supporting line as the flutes take over swelling up with the melody till about 2: 13, where we're introduced to the percussion section, with a hard base drum hit for their entrance. The build up to that drum hit may also have been accompanied by some brass, though it's hard for me to tell. After the vibration from the base drum wears off the flutes or possibly the piccolo's pick up, with a new melody that has more urgency to it resulting in a faster tempo and slightly louder dynamic.

2: 31 – 3: 00 This is the point in the song where I really start to pick out the more tenor and baritone level strings such as the cello and bass, I'm not sure if they have anything earlier that in this particular recording but if they did this is the most easily audible point. Providing a strong base line to support the rising and falling melody of the more energetic violins/viola, yet does an excellent job of not over powering them. The violins also do a lovely series of rising notes that I can only describe as sort of a slash or very quickly played note. (Having never played a string instrument with a bow I'm not sure what you'd call it if there even is a name.) That continue to crescendo, reaching their peak and then falling away to allow the listener to reconnect to the supporting base line.

3: 01 – 3: 30 Suddenly the brass (trumpets) come in with notes rapidly played along the rapidly playing strings (violins) providing a level of chaos that knowing the history of this song, is no doubt portraying the chaos that Russia felt from the invading French army or possibly one of the many battles. How ever at about 3: 10 the brass complete over powers the strings and almost seems to yank the melody away from them as we loose the strings, with the melody being played now by what sounds like trumpets and trombones and the bass line being provided by tuba or baritone horn. The brass unlike the strings hold nothing back with their section, playing it at least a forte and really kick the tempo up a notch injecting the song, which had been melodic to this point, with powerful energy. They also provide us with great crescendo swells accented by cymbal crashes.

3: 31- 4: 00 The energy of the now in control brass and the rising volume continues to an urgent tempo and strong forte, though not what I would call fortissimo yet. They continue their rise with several more cymbal crashes finally passing off back to the strings at about 3: 35, while the brass and percussion via the cymbals provide a sort of chaotic battle panic feel, the strings provide a yank back to reality reminding the listener of a sense of foreboding introduced at the start of this song. However this time it's not the violins and/or viola who take over, but instead the cello and bass who dip deep into their instruments abilities to play very low ground shaking tones that when beautifully executed in this song cannot be matched for their sense of dread. They stay in their lower register and play at about a mezzo which is a rapid and drastic change from the bright and sharp brass playing at forte that had just been telling the story, as if a dreadful calm had entered the story of this song. Near the end though a jaunty melody by the flutes/piccolos/clarinets and a faint trumpet enters and acts like a beam of light piercing the darkness of the chaotic battle and dreadful calm that had over taken the song playing at about a mezzo-piano by 4: 00.

4: 01 – 4: 30 The hopeful tune starts to slowly switch from the woodwinds listed just above to that faint trumpet who slowly gains volume which gives the listener a sense of growing hope and strength. The trumpet continues to ever so gently rise accompanied by a snare drum playing at about a pianissimo, just barely audible behind the rising trumpet. Next the strings who I believe are the violins and/or viola this time provide a gentle second layer of support neither of them coming close to overpowering the trumpet though. The snare drum and strings fall away and let the trumpet stand alone again for a few seconds before the strings return seeming to do a call and answer with the trumpet at around 4: 15 – 4: 20, at about 4: 22 more of the brass section in that of the baritone horn or tuba provides a deeper almost flat or minor sound to the trumpets triumph and hopeful major sound, and the trumpet starts to fade away entirely again by 4: 30.

4: 31 – 5: 00 The trumpet and its accompanying bass and string section fade away entirely as if swallowed up by some darkness and then for about ten seconds we're left with complete silence as if to contemplate the meaning of what just happened, the silence lasts from 4: 38 to 4: 48. At 4: 49 the strings suddenly burst back in, playing at about mezzo-piano again but with a very fast tempo that portrays a true sense of panic or urgency in the story.

5: 01 – 5: 30 It seems that at this point is when the song really kicks it into gear so to speak as if this was the final stand or final battle of the story just starting to begin to determine the fate of many. The string section rises dynamically and continues it's frantic high tempo all the way to about 5: 22 joined along the way by the medium-lower pitched brass at around 5: 16 who rise with them and then dive down with an accent from the bass drum and a cymbal crash. Though they don't dive in volume, simply tension, playing a descending scale to re-leave some of that building tension, yet keeping the energy going through their volume and tempo, which is handed off to the brass who take over.

5: 31 – 6: 00 The brass continue to hold the spotlight at this point with the higher pitched bass, trumpets, joining in and piercing through the volume and frantic tempo at around 5: 33. It seems that the brass are handing the main melody of this part back and forth between high pitched instruments and low pitched instruments with the strings providing support and sort of chaotic feeling in the background. The tempo continues to hold strong at it's much faster pace as well as the volume with a large rise at 5: 55 accented by the percussion again.

6: 01 – 6: 30 For the moment the brass share attention with the percussion with several bass drum accented hard hitting notes, drum rolls, and cymbal crashes. It's here that I feel we start to get the full assembly all at once, (though the woodwinds, if there, are awfully overpowered) the drums providing colorful accent where needed, while the brass and strings play melody and counter melody respectively in some sort of struggle. At around 6: 20 the brass reach a fortissimo level filling our ears with the previously heard triumphant melody while the strings do another descending scale sort of sound almost as if they had been defeated. This triumphant melody is echoed several times through the different instrumental pitches the brass section can provide.

6: 31 – 7: 00 Here we get a brief taste of woodwind I think as that triumphant victory melody is handed to the flutes momentarily before returned to the brass for a few more echos and then the energy and volume begin to die off once again from about 6: 38 to 6: 43. The strings return to the front only instead of filling the air with a foreboding sound they now seem to playing an almost joyful or hopeful tune. As if a moment of victory or respite had been grated.

7:01 – 7:30 We continue along with the strings with their hopeful melody rising in our ears, gaining strength and volume from their soft mezzo-piano entrance rising as we go to at least mezzo possibly mezzo-forte. This happy tune stands alone provided only by the strings who had previously seemed to only provide dread in the song, it's a nice change of pace for this section.

7:31 – 8:00 The strings previous swell dies off some in this section going back down to mezzo-piano from about 7:30 to 7:45 before continuing to duck into full piano at about 7:50 and down to pianissimo from 7:55 to 8:00. Their tempo also seems to slow some as if the euphoria that had previously been felt was starting to fade away perhaps.

8:01 – 8:30 The soft playing by the string section continues almost starting to become mournful or regretful, at least to me. They almost seem to die off complete at 8:10 leading us to think we'll be trapped in silence again but they continue to faintly play their now more sorrowful melody as if desperately trying to hold on. In the back I can barely make out the soft fluttering of what I would guess to be a piccolo though the mournful tones of the violins make it very hard to make out.

8: 31 – 9: 00 We continue with our pianissimo level sorrowful tones from the strings who feel as if they're going to finally fail at any moment and abandon us in silence once again. At about 8: 48 the violins do seem to finally fall off leaving us with what sounds like a bass barely audible, yet acts almost as a sort of bridge as the violins return at 8: 56 with a faster tempo, still in the pianissimo range, but it feels as if we make encounter hope or chaos again, it's hard to tell in only a few seconds.

9: 01 – 9: 30 As the violins return so does the trumpet very shortly after, both rising off of each other, and then more and more of the sections of brass and strings join in with building energy and tempo. The brass remind us of that hopeful melody that continues to be thrown out like a life raft to help us continue to trudge on. How ever even with this raft the strings respond not letting us forget the sense of danger and foreboding we've received from them through out this song, having dropped their previous playful and hopeful melody for something more serious again. And then the drums and cymbals crash and the energy builds even more from their power.

9: 31 – 10: 00 The powerful energy the cymbals and drums provide continues to help drive the energy, volume and tempo up, almost into a dark craze. As again we're delighted with at least three of the sections all battling, though the brass also seems to have taken on darker tones. The melody getting tossed around like a hot potato from section to section, from pitch level to pitch level, all with the same tempo and volume though.

10: 01 – 10: 30 And then there it is again, the triumphant hopeful melody of the brass piercing through the dark chaotic craze that had been building, and with it new hope as several sections begin to fall away with descending scales vanishing into the silence. Again we're in the land of dynamic of piano and slower lower energy, yet in the background behind the main melody the cello and bass can be heard like a swarm starting build energy as if to rampage.

10: 31 – 11: 00 With a few last accented notes from the brass as if final shouts of goodbye shouted from a moving train the brass fall away and we're left once again with the strings who provide us with their seemingly rare hopeful melody. It flows out smoothly and calmly like a leaf on a gentle moving river simply enjoying the flow of the water, they rise and meld just like said river.

11:01 – 12:00 Continuing on with the strings who have yet to change their mood, but start to slowly fade away by about 11:10, gracefully falling into a new mood with a faster tempo and more energy. This new expression dips down into the pianissimo range from the previous piano area and again the violins seem to leave when dipping down this low, leaving it to their bass brothers to carry on. At about 11:27 very softly like it's coming out of the distance we hear the brass returning with their hopeful powerful melody. Yet behind them the violins begin to remind us of the despair and chaos as if they can't allow us to simply enjoy the victory or the hope. Again it seems that the violins and brass, most likely trumpet, will play a game of back and forth. The drums however enter swiftly and begin to support the brass more it seems who start to rapidly gain in dynamic thanks to the strength of the percussion. They reach a strong forte and exactly 12:00 they reach a peak accented by a well timed cymbal crash.

12:01 – 12:30 The well timed cymbal crash is immediately followed by this songs trademark feature, a series well time cannon blasts punctuating each measure from 12:01 to 12:07. At this point with the cannons, the brass and the percussion it seems that the victory has finally been won and a triumphant sound fills the air as the brass play several measures after the cannon blasts with every note accented by the percussion. The strings begin a series of descending scales as if they were all tumbling down from their defeat. This tumble continues well past 12:30.



12: 31 – 13: 00 Continuing with the tumble at about a mezzo-forte by the string section, apparently this was a very large defeat, they continue spiraling down to 12: 46 where baritone brass come in and begin to accent their fall as well. The tempo starts to slow as the brass join them coming almost to a halt at 12: 52. Then the brass return in full glorious strength at a fortissimo playing their melody of victory though at a slow, powerful, punctuated pace with the help of cymbals crashes and accent by the percussion.

13: 01 – 13: 30 The brass fill the room with their sounds of triumph supported by the percussion playing a very loud fortissimo. Rising behind them are the sounds of bells seeming to further confirm the sound and feeling of victory and hope. Every now and then through the powerful loud yet slow tempo of the brass another spiral downward by the strings can be heard as well as an occasional cannon blast as if to punctuate certain points.

13: 31 – 14: 00 The brass continue their loud powerful message repeating several notes over and over before backing off slightly so the full tone of the bells can be appreciated for a moment who were helped along by the percussion. They begin their more long drawn out notes filling the air with a sort of a “Dawn of a new day” feel.

14: 01 – 14: 30 At 14: 04 is when we begin to famous finale which kicks back into a high paced, loud tempo starting with the brass supported by snare and cymbal. They continue their fast pace victory tune and at about 14: 16 it becomes accented with cymbal crash and cannon fire. Adding a whole new dynamic to this sound of victory and power.

14: 31 – 15: 08 At this point we have the percussion, brass, bells, and cannons all doing their own part in a sort of wild frantic euphoria of victory as it washes over the masses. The trumpets playing probably at the highest tempo and volume with their tune of victory, the cannons firing off every measure if not more, the percussion providing cymbal crashes, snare rolls, and bass drum accents with the bells ringing their sounds of victory through the city streets in my mind as the full sound washes over me. Finally near the 15: 00 mark the cannons seems to stop and bells drop away leave the brass accented by several bass drum hits to provide the last few drawn on notes with the final accompanied by a snare drum roll signaling the end of this long yet wonderfully performed struggle.

## Works Cited Page

Andrew Oxley

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