

Seasons. January

When I was asked about six months ago to be a monthly columnist for Creative Keyboard, I got very excited. The chance to be heard on a regular basis is rare and extraordinary in contemporary music life. So when it happened, I started to think about all the people I know who did similar things. There was a music critic for New York Times I have met, interviewers from the Russian Music Paper, Nashville Banner, Moscow Pullman News, and my amazing music history teacher Ekaterina Tsareva, who wrote program notes for the Grand Hall of Moscow Conservatory.

However, the first person who came to mind was Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky, who in 1876 was commissioned by St. Petersburg magazine, *Nouvelliste*, to write one piano piece per month. The twelve-piece cycle represents the never-ending reappearance of life. Moscow Conservatory as well as Moscow Conservatory School from which I graduate, is named after Tchaikovsky. The two largest Moscow concert halls are the grand hall of Tchaikovsky Conservatory and Tchaikovsky Hall, and Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow is the greatest competition in the world that started the careers of such pianists as Barry Douglas, Mikhail Pletnev and Van Clibern.

As far as I know the writing of a twelve-piece monthly piano composition for a publication has not been repeated yet, and the idea of following in Tchaikovsky's footsteps sounds simply too fantastic to resist. So, here is the first piece from my cycle *The Seasons* op. 104:

January: New Year's Day

The Gregorian Calendar we are using was designed by Aloysius Lilius and was made official in 1582 by the pope Gregory XIII. Romans called winter a season without months, with March being the first month of the year. Therefore January was one of the last months to be added to the calendar. January is named after Janus, the Roman god of gateways and has 31 days. New Year's Day is celebrated at different times by different cultures. Julius Ceasar moved the New Year's celebration to January. Before that, the Romans started New Years in March, as did the Babilonians. Celts and Egyptians celebrated New Years in autumn, while Chinese have theirs between January and February. Japan celebrates New Years on January 1st. In Islam, New Year's Day moves 11 days each year, being the 10th of February in 2005. Most people celebrate New Years Day by eating holiday foods, singing and visiting with friends and family.

♩ = 96

The first system of musical notation consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The music begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with a long slur over the first four measures. The left hand provides a simple harmonic accompaniment. Below the staff, the word "Led." is written under each of the four measures.

The second system continues the piece. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures, followed by a rest. The left hand continues with a steady accompaniment. The word "Led." is written below the first three measures of the system.

The third system concludes the piece. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur over the first four measures. The left hand continues with a steady accompaniment. The dynamic is mezzo-forte (*mf*). The word "Led." is written below the first measure and the last two measures of the system.

First system of musical notation. The treble clef staff begins with a *trio* marking. The bass clef staff contains a melodic line with a *ped.* marking under the first measure.

Second system of musical notation. The treble clef staff starts with a *f* dynamic marking. The bass clef staff has a *ped.* marking under the first measure.

Third system of musical notation. The bass clef staff has a *ped.* marking under the first measure.

Fourth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff starts with a *mf* dynamic marking. The bass clef staff has a *ped.* marking under the first measure.

Musical notation for the first system, featuring a treble and bass clef with chords and a melodic line. The word "Led." is written below the bass line.

Musical notation for the second system, continuing the piece with similar chordal and melodic structures. The word "Led." is written below the bass line.

Musical notation for the third system, including a dynamic marking "f" and a sharp sign in the bass line. The word "Led." is written below the bass line.

Musical notation for the fourth system, featuring dynamic markings "rit.", "mf", and "a tempo", and a star symbol. The word "Led." is written below the bass line.

First system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line with a long slur over the first four measures. The bass clef staff contains a rhythmic accompaniment. The word "Ped." is written below the bass staff in measures 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Second system of musical notation. The treble clef staff continues the melodic line with a slur. The bass clef staff continues the accompaniment. The word "Ped." is written below the bass staff in measure 1.

Third system of musical notation. The treble clef staff features a complex melodic line with slurs and ties. The bass clef staff features a complex accompaniment with many notes. The word "Ped." is written below the bass staff in measures 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Fourth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff features a complex melodic line with slurs and ties. The bass clef staff features a complex accompaniment. The word "rit." is written in the first measure of the treble staff. The word "mp" is written in the fourth measure of the treble staff. The word "Ped." is written below the bass staff in measures 1, 2, and 3.