

Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Op. 27 **Симфонию № 2 ми минор**

Written in 1906 - 1907.

On Feb 8 1908, the premiere was conducted by the composer himself in Saint Petersburg.
Dedicated to Sergei Taneyev, Russian composer, music theorist, author, pupil of Tchaikovsky.

[8][13]

· Background Information

- already recovered from depression
- already had two successful seasons as the conductor of the Imperial Opera in Moscow
- had the enthusiasm to compose and considered the performance schedule distracting
- even though already gained success from his second piano concerto, still shattered by the failure of the first symphony

· Time

- 12 years since the release of his first symphony
- composed during the time he moved with his wife to Germany
- the tone poem Isle of the Dead was composed at the same time
- displeasing about the first draft, so premier after several months' revision

· After Releasing

- as one of his best known compositions
- earned great triumph and a Glinka Award that helped him regain the confidence
- revised during 1940s that shorten the time from an hour to a half
- often omit a repeat in the first movement.

· Genre

- the late romantic
- the main characteristics of this genre to expect is big orchestras, lyrical melodies, chromatic harmonies, and full of emotions.
- deeply influenced by Tchaikovsky, Korsakov, and Richard Strauss
- not influenced by the 20th century modernism, as he already established his music voices around the age of 20
- reflect his internal complexity with conflict and struggle

Instrumentation

Full Orchestra

3 flutes (Flute III doubles piccolo)

3 oboes

english horn

2 clarinets in A and B♭,

bass clarinet in A and B♭,

2 bassoons,

4 horns in E,

3 trumpets in A, B♭,

3 trombones,

tuba,

timpani,

glockenspiel,

snare drum,

cymbals and bass drum,

violin I, II,

violas,

cellos,

basses

The scoring is typical of other works dating from the same time period like the Sibelius *Symphony No.3*. The use of percussion like the glockenspiel also appears in other works during that time such as Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* and Tchaikovsky's *the Nutcracker*. However, in the third movement, only timpani from the percussion instruments is used.

Movements

Four movements [7]

- **Largo — Allegro moderato (E minor)**
 - sonata form
 - the color is depressed and dark.
 - the lower strings bring the slow introduction and the violin part settles down the motif.
 - the long introduction is like the cold long winter in Russia, expressing a melancholy personal emotion
 - the first theme is brought by the strings expressively and lyrically, accompanied by the rhythmic background of the winds section.
 - In the middle of the movement, the color becomes brighter introduced by the oboe line, while the somber introduction melody appears again at the ending.

- **Allegro molto (A minor)**
 - scherzo form.
 - The first theme is fast and vivid.
 - Introduced by a elliptical oboe melody, the long and tempestuous second theme was expanded.
 - The shifts between themes express a restless and disturbed feeling.

- **Adagio (A major)**
 - broad three-part form
 - has a colorful harmonies and a song-like melody.
 - introduced by the strings, the oboe theme is beautiful as well as sentimental.

- **Allegro vivace (E major)**
 - sonata form
 - a typical fourth movement similar to some of Beethoven's symphonies
 - with a bright color showing that there are always hopes that conquer the darkness
 - similar to a march, the theme is derived from the second movement and settle down with a mixture of some previous motives.
 - the development is brought by the variations of woodwinds, along with the percussion and a dense texture, expressing the acclaiming and celebration of the hero's triumph.

Table 1: form analysis [6]

	phrase	form	key
A	5+6+10+7+8+5	broad round three part	A major
B	4+4+4+4+2+4+4+13+8	expansion with first movement material	e-d-e-G
C	2+2+2+2+2	transition	C-A-E
D	5+6+10+6	A's variation and recapitulation	A major
E	56	epilogue	A major

Movement 3 in A Major

The third movement consists with long and constantly developing scenes.

The melodies are passionate and continuous.

The phrasing is expressive.

The harmonies are large and colorful.

All of the elements together contributes to a consistent unity of this movement.

This movement feels like it is a natural consequence of what is preceding both logically and emotionally, because lots of parts are variations and developments of previous motives, like the introduction of the first movement, that have been heard multiple times. Moreover, the third movement is poetic, melodic, retrospective, and meditative. those characteristics makes it function as a transition emotionally between the vivid but restless second movement to the fourth movement that is full of openness and the glory of the triumph

Deeply influenced by Tchaikovsky, the beginning's harmonization and instrumentation sound similar to Tchaikovsky's Romeo and Juliet [11], while the lush strings texture, woodwinds solo, and complex accompaniments derived from chord arpeggios distinguish Rachmaninoff second symphony's third movement.