



Dancing with the Tzars

KAREN KYRIAKOU

INSTRUMENTATION

- 1 Conductor
 - 8 1st Violin
 - 8 2nd Violin
 - 5 Viola
 - 5 Cello
 - 5 String Bass
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NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

Full of fun while very serious, this original piece also provides cool inter-disciplinary teaching opportunities and reproducible historical notes. From rags to riches, revolutions, glorious victories, the demise of empires, traitors, conspiracies, rebellions, suspicions, abominations, heroes and heroines, the history of Russian tzars is presented in three movements.

I. Reach for the Tzars ★ Catherine the Great (1729–1796)

This movement is to be played with a pompous and steady manner, to emulate the dignity that Catherine commanded. When playing the main theme, re-take the bow after the first beat and don't be afraid to land heavily on beat 2! At measure 30, make sure the upper strings remain steady and do not race the pizzicato. Keep the tremolo soft initially at measure 45, but play out when the theme returns after the violin solo. Feel free to really draw out the *molto* ralls when they occur.

II. Dark Tzar ★ Ivan the Terrible (1530–1584)

The initial impact of this piece is made by the immediate swell in bar 1. A gritty sound using the lower half of the bow is required for Ivan's theme at measure 9. All instruments play this theme at different times so it may be a good idea to rehearse the melodies in unison to practice this bowing technique. Although the dynamics can be quite loud at times, the bass line must always be heard. Unison rhythms at measure 33 and again at bar 57 need to be precise. At measure 50, play with as much *rubato* as you dare—but take a breather before returning to tempo!

III. Catch a Falling Tzar ★ Nicholas II (1868–1918)

The melody at measure 6 is to be played in a lyrical style. Ensure that dotted half notes are played to their full value. Let this melody swell but phrase off on the long notes—keep it classy! The upper strings need to be careful not to race at measure 22, letting the lower strings take over this melody. All gets more rigid at measure 39, however. Lower strings are to use short bows, on the string, maintaining this rhythm until measure 57. Violins and violas need to be delicate in their entry at measure 39, but everyone can go for it at measure 57 where chaos is about to unfold! Bars 66–77 may need to be rehearsed slowly. Enjoy the different textures of the music at bar 78 and use full bows with a rich and sustained sound.

At the website, www.inapiece.com.au, you will find teacher resources and warm up materials for this piece.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

All Belwin string parts have been carefully bowed and fingered appropriately by level. The Yellow Very Beginning series includes many bowings as well as reminder fingerings for first-time readers. The Red Beginning series includes frequent bowings to assist younger players. Fingerings for altered pitches are often marked. The Green Intermediate series includes appropriately placed bowings for middle-level students. Fingerings and positions are marked for notes beyond first position. The Blue Concert series includes bowings appropriate for the experienced high school player. Fingerings and position markings are indicated for difficult passages.

Bob Phillips
Belwin/Pop String Editor