Anton Arensky’s String Quartet in A minor, Op. 35, for Violin, Viola, and Two Celli

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The Graduate Center, City University of New York
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by

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music
in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of
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Part I

Abstract

ANTON ARENSKY’S STRING QUARTET IN A MINOR, OP. 35 FOR VIOLIN, VIOLA, AND TWO CELLI

by

Miho Zaitsu

Advisor: Professor Philip Ewell

My dissertation consists of an in-depth analysis and study of Anton Arensky’s Quartet in A minor, op. 35, for violin, viola, and two celli. It also includes a short biography, a historical background of the work, and an exploration of thematic material. Perhaps the only piece written for this unique combination of instruments, the Quartet in A minor, published in 1894, was written in the months following Tchaikovsky’s death. It was first premiered on January 20, 1894, at the Imperial Music Society, Moscow, in remembrance of Arensky’s great friend and mentor. The unusual instrumentation was a curious attempt to bring out darker string sonorities as a somber requiem to commemorate Tchaikovsky.

Although relatively unknown in the United States, Arensky (1861-1906) was one of the most successful composers in imperial Russia. He had an extensive career as a pianist, conductor, and composer, but is best known for teaching some of Russia’s elite composers — Alexander Scriabin and Sergei Rachmaninov — at the Moscow Conservatory, where Arensky was a professor of composition and theory for thirteen years. He left Moscow only upon receiving the prestigious position of music director at the imperial chapel in his hometown of St. Petersburg, a position long held by Mily Balakirev.
Arensky is best known for his miniatures and vocal works, insofar as his beautiful, lyrical thematic material compels the listener to be thoroughly engaged. In the United States, the Piano Trio in D minor, op. 32, written in the same year as the quartet, is probably his most performed work along with the string-orchestra arrangement of the second movement of the quartet, Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky. Arensky’s publisher was concerned how the atypical quartet instrumentation might affect sales, and convinced Arensky to arrange the piece for standard string quartet soon after its publication. Therefore, both versions bear the same opus number — the original quartet is 35 and the standard quartet is 35a. The string-orchestra arrangement of the second movement, Variations on a Theme of Tchaikovsky, was also assigned the same opus number as the standard quartet arrangement (op. 35a), and came into fruition after much acclaim and popularity arose for the original quartet, op. 35.
Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank my adviser, Dr. Philip Ewell for his guidance throughout this long process. He allowed for a free creative environment, shaping and guiding the ideas and questions that came to my mind. Dr. Ewell was able to give me access to materials from the Russian State Library in Moscow. I would not have been able to do research for the score without it or have been given permission to have that kind of access without his assistance. His critiques, although daunting at times, helped improve my writing and clearly set a path for what needed to be achieved. With these goals in mind, this dissertation came into fruition.

Also, I would like to thank Dr. Richard Kramer for the incredible amount of knowledge and advice he has provided during the final stages of dissertation writing as my first reader. His attention to detail is unlike anyone’s. As a student of Dr. Kramer’s Schubert class at the Graduate Center, I learned so much by example and knew he would have exceedingly high expectations as the first reader. My objective through this process is that he realizes how much I valued his tremendous guidance and that the dissertation met his expectations.

I am greatly indebted to Dr. Norman Carey, the music performance department head and chair of the dissertation committee, who has given inspiration and support throughout my years at the CUNY Graduate Center. He understood the needs of a performer and why more biographical information about Arensky was necessary and important to all chamber musicians performing his works. From the day the topic arose, he campaigned for the notion and continued to answer the many questions I had regarding how to make a logical and clear score and biography from the little information there is available in the United States about Arensky.

Without Professor Marcy Rosen’s encouragement and excitement for the dissertation, I would not have realized how important a score and context would be for a performance of the
op. 35 quartet. Besides her incredible feats as a pedagogue, I have learned so much from watching her play. That is why it was meaningful when she spoke of the frustration she and her colleagues faced when trying to rehearse the work. Her belief was that there would be more performances of the work if a score existed. This is also my hope in writing about this work, to give clarity to a much loved and lost work of Arensky’s.

I would like to thank my family and friends for their support and patience, particularly in the latter stages of the dissertation when time became scarce to pay attention to every detail of a hectic life in New York. Last, but not least, my very special husband, Jon, provided an immense amount of encouragement and support during the last year, which happened to overlap with preparations for our wedding in May.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Anton Arensky lived a complicated life. It unfolded as it did with many other prodigies, quickly and extravagantly, which perhaps led to his early demise. His music, on the other hand, neither daring nor distinctive, was purely “music for music’s sake.” With the exception of his operas and ballets, it remained absolute music for the audience to enjoy. All of his music was filled with beautiful themes and, generally, audiences responded favorably to his music. A novel piece that, regrettably, has been forgotten, the Quartet in A minor, op. 35, is one of a kind for more reasons than its instrumentation of violin, viola and two celli. The quartet was published in 1894, written in the months following Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s death. It first premiered on January 20, 1894, at the Imperial Music Society, Moscow, in remembrance of Arensky’s great friend and mentor. The unusual instrumentation was a curious attempt by Arensky (see Figure 1) to bring out darker string sonorities as a somber requiem to commemorate Tchaikovsky.

Although relatively unknown in the United States, Arensky (1861-1906) was one of the most successful composers in imperial Russia. He is best known today for teaching some of Russia’s elite composers — for example, Alexander Scriabin and Sergei Rachmaninov — at the Moscow Conservatory, where he was a dedicated professor of composition and theory for thirteen years. In the United States and Western Europe, Arensky is known merely as the teacher of these famous composers, but in Russia, he was sought after as a composer, pianist, and conductor as well.

Arensky’s lyrical thematic material compels the listener to be thoroughly engaged; this is particularly true in his miniatures for piano and his vocal works. In the United States, the Piano Trio in D minor, op. 32, written in the same year as the quartet, is probably his most-performed
work, along with the string-orchestra arrangement of the second movement of the quartet, entitled “Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky.” His publisher was concerned how the atypical instrumentation of the quartet would be received by the public and how that might affect sales, so he convinced Arensky to arrange the piece for standard quartet soon after its publication, in addition to the string-orchestra arrangement. Arensky inevitably surrendered to his publisher’s request and made some changes to the string-orchestra version of the second movement, which I will discuss in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

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Arensky composed the quartet during a period of great compositional and personal success. The quartet represents Arensky at his best; he is comfortable in his own style of creating beautiful themes that are relatable to the audience for their distinctive characters. Nonetheless he is still able to remain loyal to the Russian nationalist music of the time and give homage to the late Tchaikovsky, while remarkably evoking the homophonic texture of the Russian Eastern Orthodox chants heard in Russian churches. His adaptability, aside from his association with beautiful melodies, is perhaps what is most noteworthy about his compositional style. It is, however, the most-criticized aspect of his writing. He often changed with current trends to favor his audience, instead of sticking to one definitive style.

In the last several years, there has been a great increase in performances of the quartet in the United States and Europe, but little has been written about the work or its composer aside from a few reviews and some program notes. Only recently, with 2011 being the 150th anniversary of his birth, has there been more discussion about Arensky. On National Public Radio in March 2011, in an episode of the Fishko Files featured Arensky and offered a sampling of some of his most important music, as well as some lesser known works. It held a valid discussion with Richard Taruskin regarding the tragic details that led to Arensky's early death and the reasons why he is not known by more of the public today. A similar show was featured on BBC Radio 3, with Arensky as “Composer of the Week.” It is curious to note that in both cases, the hosts seemed mystified that, for the likeability of his music, Arensky was not better known and appreciated by the average classical music listener. Could it have been his short career as a composer? Was he overshadowed by Rimsky-Korsakov and Tchaikovsky? Were critics and their negative opinions enough to change others’ opinions? One can only guess why this may be the case. I will discuss an assortment of possibilities in the chapters that follow.
The main component of my dissertation will be how the quartet came into being, with the focus on the various editions of the piece, including his string-orchestra arrangement and standard string-quartet arrangement. I will also consult the original printing of the score published in Moscow by Jurgenson (no date of publication given on copy), which was found in the Russian State Library, Moscow and is also now available on IMSLP or the Petrucci Music Library. The biographical portion of the dissertation will expand on the meager information given in most standard resources on Arensky. On the basis of two sources in particular, a biography by Tsypin (1966) and letters and documents compiled by Wehrmeyer (2001), I will try to reconstruct information and give a detailed account of his life. I will address the possible reasons for Arensky's lack of notoriety as a composer in America and Western Europe. I will also discuss his deep admiration of Tchaikovsky and its effect on Arensky. Some describe Arensky’s relationship with Tchaikovsky as a great friendship, while others believe Arensky’s feelings toward Tchaikovsky bordered on obsession. Both possibilities are discussed in the biographical section, as is the hypothesis that his close acquaintance with Tchaikovsky may have ruined his relationship with his teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov.

I will do a musical analysis of the first theme of the first movement and show how it is transformed throughout the movement and again when it returns in the second movement. The analysis will be beneficial to performers and will guide them through the unique harmonic range of the piece, which includes traditional tonality, church modes, and a fair amount of chromaticism. The analysis will also delve into whether Arensky’s music was neutral for the time or if in fact it was innovative in harmonic writing. I will also include a discussion on interpretation, which will clarify performance decisions and help to understand the work in

greater depth. This interpretative discussion will also take into account recordings of the quartet and will compare the decisions made by the performers to reflect the structure of the piece.

My primary purpose in undertaking this dissertation is to introduce the musical community to a unique piece, but also to invite musicians and listeners to seek out other music by Arensky, and to provide a useful and much needed guide to the study and performance of the op. 35 String Quartet in depth. The frustration I felt firsthand in learning and performing this piece without a score was one that I shared with my colleagues in the quartet and also heard about from many other respected chamber musicians. I believe if a score were commercially available that this piece would be performed more often, rather than just being chosen as a piece to complement a concert program involving a quartet and guest cellist or other unique instrumentation. As professionals, it is a beleaguered effort not only to be limited by a general shortened timeframe of rehearsals, but also to try to learn a new piece without a score and successfully know what the other members of the group are doing alongside one another. It is a shame that the original printing of the score is no longer available in the United States. With the accessibility of a score online within the last couple of years, there has been a surge in performances of the work. Hopefully the publication of this dissertation will create a newfound curiosity for the quartet and, perhaps, more so in Arensky’s music. The story of Arensky’s life and the history of the thematic material in the quartet will give the music context so musicians can delve into the work with a deeper understanding of what the composer may have been thinking.

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3 I had not yet procured the abovementioned score by the time of my performance.
Chapter 2: The Life of Anton Arensky

Considered one of the most talented Russian composers of the 19th Century, few details are known about Anton Arensky today outside of his professional life as a musician. He did manage to move within the top social circles of artists and was one of the most highly respected musicians of his generation. For all of his fame in Russia during his lifetime, only a few of his many works are regularly performed in the United States. So why did Tchaikovsky believe he was “a man of remarkable gifts” and Lev Tolstoy think his music was one of the “best, simple and melodious”?4

Arensky was born in Velikii Novgorod on July 12, 1861. He was a multi-talented musician, as a composer, pianist, and conductor. Most of his initial training was from his mother, a talented amateur pianist. This training was fully supported by his father, a doctor and amateur cellist. A young musical prodigy, Arensky exhibited many skills unique to his age. He was already composing by the age of nine and, following studies with his mother, turned to Karl Karlovich Zikke for guidance. His family moved to St. Petersburg in 1879 to enable him to study composition with Rimsky-Korsakov and counterpoint and fugue with Julius Johansen at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Zikke would later become a professor at the Rousseau School of Music at the conservatory. Arensky’s career began at a time of change in Russia, when for the first time composers and musicians were making their income solely from their professions in music. In the past, touring musicians from western Europe often dictated the music being performed in most concert venues. Like many other prodigies, things came very easily to him; perhaps this may explain the extravagant lifestyle he chose to lead in the years before his death. Ironically,

4 Donald Macleod- Composer of the Week (BBC); available from http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0132p6t.
Arensky’s nature to do everything in the extreme was evident more in his personal life than in his music, which remained more subtle and reserved.  

Shortly after entering the Conservatory, Rimsky-Korsakov handpicked Arensky to assist him in preparing the vocal score to his opera *The Snow Maiden*. He was one of the top students at the conservatory, receiving high marks throughout his three years there. Graduating in 1882 with a gold medal in composition, he immediately received an offer to become Professor of Harmony and Counterpoint at the Moscow Conservatory, becoming one of the youngest to receive such a position. It is in this role that he is best known today, as the teacher to many of Russia’s elite composers, such as Scriabin, Rachmaninov, Glière, and Gretchaninov (see Figure 2). Arensky invested an enormous amount of time into his teaching and enjoyed guiding his students at the conservatory. He was known to be strict and often impatient with his students, but it was usually with their best interest in mind.

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During his tenure, he published two books on music theory, *A Collection of 1000 Lessons for the Practical Study of Harmony* (Arensky 1897) and *Handbook of Musical Forms* (Arensky 1899). Even though, it was published after his time as a student in St. Petersburg, Arensky must have been aware of the *Practical Manual of Harmony*, which was written by Rimsky-Korsakov. Published in 1885, Rimsky-Korsakov was dissatisfied by the other pedagogical books of the time and wanted to have a better resource to teach from. It was dedicated to Anatoly Lyadov, who was well-connected in social circles and helped guide much of Rimsky-Korsakov’s pedagogical philosophy. Lyadov was a composer of his own right, yet eventually settled into a role as professor at St. Petersburg Conservatory. The *Practical Manual of Harmony* was meant to create a foundation of tonal harmony for students. Another source of insight for Arensky was Tchaikovsky’s *Guide to the Practical Study of Harmony*, which was written in 1871. Much like Rimsky Korsakov’s *Practical Manual*, there is a great deal of prose along with examples, which gives a thorough introduction on harmony and lends advice to composers. Both books are still

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available today and are useful guides both in the classroom and for the individual wanting to learn the rules of voice-leading and harmonization.

Arensky’s *Collection* was really meant as a teaching aid for the classroom. In the preface to *Handbook for the Study of Forms of Instrumental and Vocal Music*, Arensky had an apt observation that, “despite the fact that this course [Counterpoint] had existed almost since the founding of the conservatory itself [Moscow Conservatory], that is, for 25 years, up until now not a single textbook was written that contained in itself the complete content of the course […] this circumstance led me to compile the proposed handbook with the purpose of making more accessible the study of musical form to those studying at the Conservatory.”

The Collection contains 1000 exercises otherwise known as “partimenti,” melodic (bass) lines for teaching harmony, counterpoint, and improvisation. Yet Arensky’s *partimento* has very little writing compared to those of Rimsky-Korsakov and Tchaikovsky, only titles for each section, which are minimal descriptions of what follows. It is full of over a thousand lines of melodies and bass lines to show the many possible ways of writing compositionally. These exercises are based on those he would improvise in his classes.

It is then not surprising that he, Taneyev, Rachmaninov, and Glazunov would often meet for dinner and play a game of composing a character piece that would have to be continued by the other composers in the room, and then finished by the original composer, a game of musical chairs focusing on style and harmony. The piece was usually a character piece for piano since it could be easily performed. Each composer would compose the first phrase of the piece and then when everyone was ready, hand the beginnings of their composition to the person seated next to

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him, and so on, until the piece returned to its original owner. In a few short phrases, the piece would be completed by the original composer and performed for one another.⁸

Figure 3. Arensky with Zvantsev and Taneyev at the Moscow Conservatory.⁹

There are conflicting stories whether his addictions to alcohol and gambling had its effects on his teaching. Arensky was known to be hot-tempered, often inciting arguments with students and other teachers. Scriabin graduated in 1892 with a gold medal in piano performance, but could not finish his composition degree due to a conflict with Arensky. He chose to challenge Arensky, whose signature was required for him to graduate. The argument resulted from Scriabin’s unwillingness to finish assignments, because they were musical forms that did not interest him. One of the few Scriabin did complete was an E minor fugue, which became a

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notorious requirement for future generations of composition students at the Moscow Conservatory. ¹⁰

A similar situation seemed to have occurred in the late 1880’s with Gretchaninov (see Figure 4), whom Arensky accused of being a hopeless musician. After a final falling out with Arensky, Gretchaninov went to St. Petersburg to study with Rimsky-Korsakov. Arensky did seem, for the most part, to have positive relationships with his students, many of whom became the next generation of elite composers. He also inspired those who later became famous for musicology and theory, including Georgi Conus, who gained notoriety for his theories on the symmetry of meter and structure in music and the ability to analyze music by metric units. Conus’s beliefs were not accepted by the traditional school of thought in Russia, but were widely valued in Western Europe.

Figure 4. Alexander Gretchaninov.¹¹

Others on the other hand spoke of Arensky’s great aptitude as a pedagogue, speaking highly of his awareness and thoughtfulness as a teacher. Rachmaninov later dedicated his first tone poem for orchestra, *Prince Rostislav* (1891), to Arensky. Rachmaninov felt greatly indebted to Arensky, having won a gold medal for his early opera *Aleko* at the young age of 17, which helped launch his own career.⑫ Arensky helped Rachmaninov overcome serious emotional issues and overwhelming doubts in his own compositions. Much of Rachmaninov’s later success would not have been possible without Arensky’s support.

Arensky eventually quit the position at the conservatory in part because Vasily Safonov, his superior, refused to move him up in rank to full professor. Nikolai Kashkin, a friend of Arensky’s and theory professor at Moscow Conservatory, said it well, “Arensky was the nicest and most delicate person by nature. But in class, he was nervous and irritable (Bowers 1996, 152).” Scriabin’s wife, Vera, would later describe in a letter how even four years later, there was discomfort at a party between Arensky and Kashkin (Bowers 1996, 263).

During his time as professor at the Moscow Conservatory, Arensky made his most influential and close musical friendships, first with Tchaikovsky, whom he met in 1883, and then with Sergei Taneyev, with whom he corresponded from 1882. Arensky was now part of an inner circle of Russian artists and musicians in Moscow. Tchaikovsky was one of his closest confidants and supporters. He stated in a letter to Madame von Meck that Arensky was “a man of remarkable gifts” with great insight into technique and beauty in his music and “deserves unqualified praise.” Madame Nadezhda von Meck was a patroness and close friend of Tchaikovsky. With her husband’s fortune, she provided financial support to the Russian Musical Society and young musicians particularly of Russian descent. Although Tchaikovsky was critical

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and honest with Arensky about his works, even disapproving of some of his choices of libretto, he did endorse Arensky to his publisher, Jurgenson. Notably, one of the librettos Arensky did successfully use, *Mahabharata*, was written by Tchaikovsky’s brother, Modeste. It would be for the last of Arensky’s three operas, written in 1903. It is clear though that Tchaikovsky himself was conflicted about Arensky, writing to Madame von Meck as early as 1890, “Arensky’s a man with an enormous talent, but there is something strange, unstable, unhealthy nervous and slightly as it were, not quite normal mentally.” This opinion did not seem to challenge or conflict with his support of Arensky or his talent.

Eight letters survive between Tchaikovsky and Arensky, dating from 1884 to 1891. In 1890, Tchaikovsky wrote to Arensky about his opera, *A Dream on the Volga*, “a letter of praise so warm and unqualified that the overwhelmed composer rushed from Moscow to Tchaikovsky's home at Frolovskoye to express his thanks” (Brown 1992, 107). Tchaikovsky had a keen awareness that this opera would become one of Arensky’s greatest successes. It is no wonder that Tchaikovsky’s sudden death in 1893, attributed to cholera but often considered a suicide, affected Arensky greatly. Too many of his close friends and relatives had passed away in the years prior and he found that the only way to keep the memory of Tchaikovsky alive was through composition. In 1894, he decided to compose the Quartet in A minor, op. 35, in dedication to his mentor and friend. It was received well at the premiere on January 20, 1894, at the Imperial Music Society in Moscow.

The years Arensky spent as a professor at the Moscow Conservatory (1882-1895), were also his most prolific in terms of compositional output. He completed most of his larger works during this period, including his Piano Concerto (1882) and both his Symphony in B minor (1883), which uses the cello for much of the melodic material, and Symphony in A major (1889).
In 1890, his first opera, *Son na Volge* (A Dream on the Volga) was premiered to great success in Moscow. He had been working tirelessly on this opera since his days as a student and it finally received the recognition it was meant to have. His next opera, *Rafael*, proved to be an utter failure among the audiences of the time. In 1893, he premiered his cantata for the tenth anniversary of the coronation of Tsar Alexander III, scored for soprano, baritone, and large orchestra with a text by Kryukov. It called upon the same Slavic thematic material used by Mussorgsky in the coronation of *Boris Godunov* and is the same theme utilized by Arensky in the final movement of the op. 35 quartet. During this same period, he was the Director of the Russian Choral Society in Moscow (1888-1895) and, not surprisingly, his success came mostly from his operas and choral works. He emerged as a favorite amongst conductors of many symphonic concerts and was selected to be a part of the council of officials at the Synodal School of Church Music, in 1889, where he would remain until 1893 (Brown, Grove Music Online 2007-2012).

Like many other historians, I believe his concerti are some of his weaker compositions. The Piano Concerto, op. 2, was his graduation piece and may have influenced Rachmaninoff to write more elaborate orchestral tuttis in his Piano Concerto no. 1. Unfortunately, Arensky uses too much of the higher register of the piano and tries too hard to replicate Chopin. The final movement of the piece has the most interesting compositional writing of the three movements, being more Russian and folk-like in character and having the unusual time signature of 5/4. Tchaikovsky criticized Arensky’s use of unusual meters in other compositions as well, one most famously being his piano pieces *Essais sur les rythmes oubliés*, op. 28, based on the unconventional meters of ancient poetic forms. The Fantasia on Themes of Ryabinin, op. 48, for piano and orchestra (1899), is based on the tradition of bilina, or folk songs from Northern
Russia, which were taught orally among fishermen. Tchaikovsky clearly changed his opinion regarding unusual meters because he uses 5/4 to great extent in his Pathétique Symphony. His Violin Concerto, op. 54 (1891), is a mature work which lingers between lyricism and virtuosity, but somehow lacks fluidity. His most beautiful piano pieces are the four Suites for Two Pianos, which exhibit the miniaturist character for which he became famous. This may be why his critics speculated that he wrote remarkable melodic material, yet was never able to develop them to create a cohesive larger-scale work, making him the ideal miniaturist.

This highly creative period was also when he first met Djelisaveta Latshchinova, a voice student at the conservatory. They were engaged in 1884 and married in 1886. Unfortunately, only a year into their marriage, Arensky fell into a severe depression. Trying several possible treatments and finding no other solution, he was placed into a special clinic in Kazan and later relocated to St. Petersburg for the birth of his son, Pavel. In 1889, they welcomed another child into the family, a daughter named Nadezhda. He composed very little during this period. The two children helped distract Arensky and it seemed as though he was getting better. He dedicated himself to the publication of his book on harmony, in 1891, and to his teaching, but once again, he was derailed by news of his father’s death.

Many biographical studies focus on Arensky’s early success as a musical prodigy. For all of the musical talent he exhibited as a young student, it was difficult for him to discover his own personal compositional style once he graduated from the conservatory. Perhaps it was easier for him to be told what to do, making him the ideal student for some professors. He often mimicked other famous composers, like Chopin, Mendelssohn, and Tchaikovsky. In his op. 35, he remarkably balances the pomp and circumstance of the Russian Orthodox Church, Tchaikovsky’s unique style, and his own style. Arensky was not an innovator, nor did he care
what critics said; however, what he did care about was his audience. He did not want to be an innovator and only wanted to write music that would affect the listener. This may be why he is not better known today.

The appointment as director of the Imperial Chapel brought prestige and financial stability to Arensky’s life, unlike anything he had experienced beforehand. This meant a departure from Moscow, back to his hometown of St. Petersburg. Upon his return to St. Petersburg in 1895, he did not adapt quickly to the predictable social circles for artists. In fact, he did not attend Mitrofan Belyayev’s musical soirees, at least not initially. Belyayev (see Figure 5) was a highly admired patron of the arts, particularly of music. He was the son of a successful wood dealer, and eventually became the head buyer of the company. During the turn of the century, he also was a well-known philanthropist and interest in the arts led him to become the founder of the Belyayev Circle. The group, which often met for musical evenings included textile manufacturer Pavel Tretyakov and railway entrepreneur Savva Mamontov, and spanned artists like Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Anatoly Lyadov, and Ilya Repin. Belyayev did not come from wealth and was a deep believer in national pride, a rising movement favoring and enjoying only things from Russia. Belyayev is a good example of the transformation Russia was going through at the time, culturally, economically, and politically. Instead of idealizing music from the west, this group wanted to advocate for artists in Russia.
Belyayev was also a good friend of Rimsky-Korsakov, set up the Glinka Prize in 1884, and became a music publisher. This was not taken lightly by the public, and was thought of as a conflict of interest, not only to have artists involved in politics, but for such friendships to develop between a publisher and a composer.

It is unclear when the relationship between Rimsky-Korsakov and Arensky went awry. There are many theories regarding the estrangement between the two. Rimsky-Korsakov is quoted as saying of Arensky, “According to all testimony, his life had run a dissipated course between wine and card playing, yet his activity as a composer was most fertile...He had been a victim of a nervous ailment...He will soon be forgotten (Bowers 1996, 66).” In his own memoir, *A Musical Life*, Rimsky-Korsakov was not as kind. There is documentation of a conversation right after Arensky’s death, however, of Rimsky-Korsakov saddened that someone so talented

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had died so young (Yastrebstev 1985, 384). At least in earlier years, it seems that he saw a true
talent in Arensky. It is perhaps in 1883, when Mily Balakirev took over the directorship of the
Imperial Chapel and Rimsky-Korsakov became his assistant, that things became strained. In
November 1893, Rimsky-Korsakov resigned from his position at the Imperial Chapel, seemingly
fed up with the stress of working for the very demanding Balakirev. With his daughter’s death
and stress in his professional life, it became one of the worst periods of depression for Rimsky-
Korsakov. Only a year later, Balakirev retired from the position and recommended that Arensky,
not Rimsky-Korsakov, be offered the highly regarded position of director. To fully comprehend
what this meant, one would have to know what kind of impact this betrayal had on Rimsky-
Korsakov, not to mention the distinction the position garnered socially. From this point on it
seems that Rimsky-Korsakov had no pleasant words regarding Arensky. In a similar vein, he also
did not have any kind words for Balakirev. I believe Arensky’s close ties with Tchaikovsky also
did not help the situation. There had long been tension between the Mighty Five\(^{19}\) and
Tchaikovsky due to his cosmopolitan approach to music. The fact that Tchaikovsky was Anton
Rubenstein’s prized student also did not help. Rubenstein’s western views on composition went
against the Five’s. Balakirev was an avid supporter of Tchaikovsky, especially earlier when he
was being criticized profoundly by the Five. Balakirev told Tchaikovsky he was a “full-fledged
artist,” and not to lose hope in his art. Their professional relationship helped gain support for his
first work, *Romeo and Juliet*, which was the first work accepted by the Five. It is clear that
although Rimsky-Korsakov and Tchaikovsky kept a facade of friendship in later years, Rimsky-
Korsakov was becoming more and more jealous of Tchaikovsky’s popularity in Belyayev’s
circle and felt the difference in their musical philosophies acutely. Arensky was no longer just a

\(^{19}\) (1856–1870) Mily Balakirev (the leader), César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, and
Alexander Borodin.
student of Rimsky-Korsakov. As late as August 11, 1891, Arensky, was still questioning his ability to compose great music in a letter to Tchaikovsky’s brother, Modeste. Yet he had achieved more success than his teacher as a performer and pedagogue. In spite of the great admiration that Arensky held for Rimsky-Korsakov, it was Tchaikovsky’s influence that had a much greater impact on his writing and decision-making. I believe it was this sequence of events that led to their eventual conflict, with Balakirev’s acknowledgement of Arensky’s talent and Arensky’s admiration for Tchaikovsky, a competitor of Rimsky-Korsakov, which further strained their relationship.

Arensky worked at the Imperial Chapel for six years and, in 1901, upon his retirement, he was given an unusually high pension of 6,000 rubles a year. For the time and place, it was thought of as extraordinary, and far greater than what the average person received. He retired in part to dedicate more of his time to performing and conducting, since at this point in his career there was less interest in his compositions. He spent the rest of his life in high demand as a performer concertizing with the Duke of Mecklenburg Quartet. Unfortunately, his ambition was cut short by his lifestyle. His addiction to drinking and gambling finally caught up with him during a vacation in Nice, where he sought to recover through the medical care available. He lived his final years in a sanatorium in nearby Finland. It is a shame that his addictions resulted in his early death at age 44. On February 25, 1906, Arensky died in Terioki, Finland. Although it was tuberculosis that killed him, it was really brought on by consumption, which was connected to his profligate lifestyle. He is buried at the Alexander Nevsky Monastery in St. Petersburg.

Except for his First Piano Trio and the “Variations on a Theme of Tchaikovsky,” Arensky’s music, like the man himself, is relatively unknown. During his lifetime he was well known for his miniatures, particularly his short character pieces for the piano, his suites for
piano, and songs for voice and piano. His piano trio shows an influence from Mendelssohn, especially in its piano writing and, coincidentally, is set in the same key of D minor, as Mendelssohn’s most famous trio. Much like Mendelssohn, Arensky’s compositional strengths lie in his striking melodic material. Sadly, sometimes he is unable to develop the elegiac themes into anything more substantial. The piano trio and string quartet are the most convincing of his larger works. Written in the same year as the op. 35 quartet, the piano trio was dedicated to another friend who had recently passed away, the cellist Karl Davidov (1838-1889), who was the principal cellist of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra for many years. The melodies in the piano trio are reminiscent of Tchaikovsky’s music, nostalgic and melancholic, especially in its slow movement, an elegy. His piano quintet, op. 51, and the latter piano trio of 1905 are hardly ever performed. His string quartets, second piano trio, and piano quintet all have a theme-and-variations movement, which he uses to great effect. It is a medium that he clearly felt comfortable with, creating charming vignettes that individually told a story within a larger structure. Besides these chamber works, he wrote a Serenade, op. 30, no. 2, for violin and piano, and Four Pieces, op. 56, for cello and piano. The Serenade is played more frequently as a showpiece; Mischa Elman, for example, championed this piece, playing it regularly. There is also an arrangement for violin and chamber orchestra. The Four Pieces (1902), on the other hand, are hardly ever played, which is a shame because they are charming. This may be because they lie very high on the instrument and are especially challenging for the cellist, often utilizing octaves and a great extent of the music in thumb position. This may be a result of Arensky’s friendship with Davidov and the extent of Davidov’s outstanding technical abilities on the cello.

Many of those who criticize Arensky argue that, although his themes are beautiful, they never move beyond a simple statement to develop into a cohesive work of music. That may be
true with some of his earlier works, but the op. 35 does manage to engage and captivate the audience by going through an array of emotions while still connecting material to the purpose of the music as a requiem. It is likely that that is partly the reason his music was neglected in the past, but it is difficult to judge based on the meager number of his works performed in the United States. Recently, there has been a revival of his music in New York, and more widely in the United States, through performances, a large number of recordings, and radio programs dedicated to the 150th anniversary of his birth. The Ying Quartet has released an all-Arensky chamber music CD to mark the anniversary. It includes the op. 35 quartet in its version for standard quartet, the earlier op. 11, and the piano quintet. In an article for the City Newspaper, David Ying, the cellist of the quartet, says he believes that Arensky is lesser known because he lived such a short life. Ying states, “as a writer of counterpoint, Arensky was superior to Tchaikovsky, at least as to his chamber music.”

It will be interesting to see if a full-fledged revival of his music will flourish in the years to come.

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Notably, Arensky has not been forgotten by his compatriots. The Antarctic Arensky Glacier was named after the Russian composer by the USSR Academy of Sciences in 1987. It lies 71° 39′ 0″ S, 72° 15′ 0″ W, south of the Beethoven Peninsula, Alexander Island, into the north end of Boccherini inlet. Maybe someday he will be appreciated in the same light as his contemporaries are. It took one person, Pablo Casals, to revive the Bach Suites, which were hardly played until 1890, when a young thirteen-year-old Casals encountered them in a secondhand shop in Barcelona after years of collecting dust. Idealism and a love for Arensky’s music allow me to hope that my work will stimulate a revival, perhaps to a smaller degree, but nonetheless of his compositions in the near future.

Arensky’s publisher, Jurgenson, was concerned how the atypical quartet instrumentation might affect sales, and convinced Arensky to arrange the piece for standard quartet soon after its publication. Therefore, both versions bear the same opus number — the original quartet is 35 and the standard quartet is 35a. “Variations on a Theme of Tchaikovsky” was also assigned the same opus number as the standard quartet arrangement, and came into fruition after much acclaim and popularity arose for the original quartet. It was not unusual for Jurgenson to capitalize as much as possible on a work. Arensky’s first quartet was also published as a piece for piano four hands. The op. 35 quartet is full of unusual sonorities that the later, standard quartet version lacks; richness is captured in the original, which can only be pronounced by the doubling of the celli. At certain focal points, Arensky chooses to use both celli as bass instruments, while at others the higher register of the cello 1 part is utilized, exhibiting the brightness of a solo voice within the quartet. This brightness is somehow diminished by the viola’s middle register in the standard quartet version. Perhaps that is the reason Arensky maintained a similar balance of instruments for the string orchestra version. There is no reason to believe that he chose the instrumentation out of the lack of violists to perform the work. The two bass instruments are somehow able to create a variety of colors, including a hollow, transparent quality, rarely made by a standard quartet. By creating unique timbres through the use of chordal and double-stop material in all instruments, and in particular the two celli, the unusual quartet adeptly evokes the homophonic texture of the Russian Orthodox chants heard in Russia’s enormous chapels. Some also say he liked to use the cello to refer back to his father. It would be fitting to use the cello as a medium to remember Tchaikovsky since he was a musical father figure to Arensky. He was not bound to a
specific instrumentation by a commission or performers set for its first concert. It is still not completely clear why he chose this unusual setting and, most likely, it will never be clarified. The first movement consists of an introduction using a psalm of the Russian Orthodox Church, which functions as a cantus firmus for the thematic material of the movement (see Example 1). The repeated notes mimic chant and the use of the two celli reinforces the bass line. The first theme is somber and elegiac, while the second theme is more optimistic and reflective. The material of the first theme returns throughout the piece in a haunting manner.

Example 1. First theme, in Cello 1, using cantus firmus material from the Russian Orthodox Church.

The second movement is a set of variations based on a theme from Songs for Children by Tchaikovsky, entitled “Legend.” The original song by Tchaikovsky is in E minor, but the theme for the second movement by Arensky is set in A minor. There are three versions of the song in various arrangements, which will be addressed later in this chapter. It is based on a translation of
an English poem, *Roses and Thorns*, by Richard Henry Stoddard. The variation movement is the most dramatic of the movements. Arensky is trying to reach the limits of emotion in this music. It is sentimental at times, but for the most part virtuosic and celebratory. The coda connects back to the original thematic material from the first movement, ending the movement in a sobering way.

The third movement, the shortest of the three, takes the theme of the Russian requiem mass from the liturgy and uses it as an introduction. The viola and cello 2 begin the movement together in octaves, giving it a hollow affect and a sense of great loneliness. The muted strings are all marked forte marcato, which gives it a harrowing affect, an agony that is kept under lock and key. The violin is put in a very low register, while cello 1 is put in a high register of the instrument, creating a sense of trouble and urgency. This is followed by the *Slava* theme, taken from the Russian coronation hymn. A popular theme, it was also used by Beethoven in the trio of the scherzo from op. 59, no. 2, and by Mussorgsky in *Boris Godunov*. Arensky uses it as a partial fugue, but quickly returns to a somber mood briefly in the adagio section, before continuing to accelerate to a triumphant ending.

The Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky, or op. 35a, is one of the few easily recognizable pieces by Anton Arensky and is often played by chamber orchestras all over the world. Yet most musicians do not know its origins or its connection to the op. 35 quartet. It is based on a theme from the fifth of the sixteen *Songs for Children* by Tchaikovsky, entitled “Legend.” It includes seven variations and a coda, which is consistent with the second movement of the op. 35 quartet and also uses material from the first movement. The original Tchaikovsky song was set for voice and piano in 1884. The second version—for soprano, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, and strings—was published in 1890. The third version is for
chorus and was also published in 1890. The three versions of the song are varied, with the second version in F minor and only 67 bars in length, while the other two versions are in E minor and 80 bars in length (see Example 2).

There are varying dates regarding the first publication of Arensky’s work, ranging from 1894, the same year as op. 35, to 1904, by Jurgenson. Many accounts, attributing the earlier date, state that the second movement of the op. 35 quartet was received with great excitement, and Jurgenson urged the composer to create a string orchestra version soon after the first performance. The original song is based on of the English poem, “Roses and Thorns” (1857) by Richard Henry Stoddard:

The young child Jesus had a garden,
    Full of roses, rare and red:
And thrice a day he watered them,
    To make a garland for his head.

When they were full-blown in the garden,
    He called the Jewish children there,
And each did pluck himself a rose,
    Until they stripped the garden bare.

"And now how will you make your garland?
    For not a rose your path adorns."
"But you forget," he answered them,
"That you have left me still the thorns."

They took the thorns, and made a garland,
    And placed it on his shining head;
And where the roses should have shone
    Were little drops of blood instead!

Figure 7. “Roses and Thorns” by Richard Henry Stoddard.
The poem was translated by Aleksey Pleshcheyev for Tchaikovsky’s version. Pleshcheyev was a radical poet in his youth, but later became known more for his translations of western poetry. Many composers set his poetry to music, most famously with Romances by Arensky, Cui, Rachmaninoff, and Tchaikovsky. Fourteen of the sixteen songs from the *Songs for Children* were settings of poetry by Pleshcheyev. In “Legend,” the crown of thorns was worn by Jesus leading up to the crucifixion. It symbolizes a sacrifice, which would be made in the future, foreshadowing his ability to find the good in everything even after a great loss, while the roses symbolize his flock of disciples who avenged him. Tchaikovsky’s version for high voice and chamber orchestra uses the winds as one unit and strings as another, weaving around the voice and often moving in parallel motion to create the feeling of a death march. Looking at the scoring of the original, many of the motives used in the variations are prominent, including the use of Rhythmic Motive 1, the three lilting slurred eighth notes following an eighth rest and Rhythmic Motive 2, the eighth, dotted quarter.
Example 2. An excerpt from Tchaikovsky’s “Legend” in E minor for voice and piano.

The silences are also used in a similar fashion, often prolonged by fermatas. The choices in articulation remain consistent, as well as the use of pizzicato for texture and color changes. The slurs are not always replicated, but that may be due to the differences of the voice as opposed to a bowed instrument. During this chapter, I would like to discuss how Arensky uses these motives and transforms them within each variation of his quartet, while still retaining a connection to Tchaikovsky’s “Legend.” After doing so, I plan on illustrating how Arensky’s version for string orchestra version differs from the op. 35 quartet.
Example 3. Original thematic material by Tchaikovsky (above) and in Variation 1 given to cello 2.

Example 4. Tchaikovsky's original theme, given to Cello 2 in the first variation.

The second movement of the op. 35 quartet begins with a full statement of the theme by Tchaikovsky. Arensky retains the voicing used in the original song (see Example 3). The violin is given the thematic material of the voice in the same register. He also remains true to the theme in Variation 1, using the theme in canon, rather than straying too far from the original. Interestingly the theme is first given not to the highest voice, but to the cello 2 and then answered by the rest of the quartet (see Example 4). This is an unusual decision by Arensky, and it happens repeatedly throughout the movement. The fragmented portions of the theme tend to return in one of the cello parts, perhaps to lend a darker quality. He does use chromatic motion in the viola and ends the first section in G major (see Example 5), with no fifth of the chord, instead of E minor. The second and third sections are more straightforward and similar to the original theme. In the
third section, the cello 2 and viola begin the theme in thirds and the violin continues with the tail-end of the phrase (see Example 6).

It is not until the second variation (Example 7) that we see what Arensky is capable of compositionally. The cello 2 remains in 2/4 with the thematic material, while the rest of the quartet is in 12/16. Ironically, Tchaikovsky had scolded Arensky for his use of this technique in

Example 5. mm. 34-38 in Variation 1.

Example 6. mm. 50-54 of Variation 1.
the past, and perhaps it was with a sense of humor that he used it in the second movement. The tempo change to an allegro non troppo allows the violin, viola, and cello 1 to wander quickly through many keys, questioning and answering one another in dramatic fashion. Although the theme in the cello 2 remains somber in its undertone, the rest of the quartet is fleeting, making sudden dynamic changes, and only coming to a resting point at the end of the variation.

Example 7. mm. 53-63 from Variation 2.
This is in stark contrast to the following variation, Variation 3, an andantino tranquillo with its lilting lullaby-like quality. This is highlighted by the change to E major and a return to 2/4 for the entire quartet. The off-beat eighth has now been transformed to an off-beat sixteenth note passage, Rhythmic Motive 2 as sixteenths. The accented notes also add to the lilting of the phrase. The viola has the thematic material. It is the first time Arensky has fully altered the theme composed by Tchaikovsky. Instead of showcasing the change, he does it with great subtlety, keeping it hidden within the textural sixteenth notes in the other voices (see Example 8).

In Variation 4, a vivace, the music quickly returns to E minor with a sense of urgency. The off-beats are now in the violin and viola. The only instrument playing on the strong beats is the cello 1, emphasized by accents on the weaker beats. The cello 1 eventually joins the off-beats, leaving cello 2 as the only defining beat. Only a fragment of the theme remains as a connection to the theme (Example 9). Arensky alternates between extremes in tempo, character,
and dynamics seamlessly between variations, to make each new variation a surprising change to another musical world. Even the smallest fragments are a reminder of the original and tie the variations together.

Example 8. Beginning of Variation 3.

Example 9. Musical fragment of original theme in Variation 4, mm. 103-118.
Example 10. Variation 5.
Example 10. Variation 5 (continued).
Example 10. Variation 5 (continued).

In Variation 5, Arensky changes the meter to 4/4, making the overall feeling of the movement slower, augmenting the rhythms originally used by Tchaikovsky. At the same time, the andante tempo allows for the same off-beat sixteenths used in Variation 3, to create a charming, lilting Viennese secondary theme. He continues to use Rhythmic Motive 1 as an accompaniment to the main theme and secondary theme. Although Arensky was a traditionalist
and never ventured to great extremes, this variation is the most daring harmonically. In mm. 164-184, cello 2 states the entire theme underneath the singing second theme. Even though, he does seem to use more chromaticism in this movement, it is always within the guidelines of the harmony presented by the theme, often acting as a seventh of a chord or used in passing motion.

Example 11. mm. 185-191 from Variation 6.

Variation 6 returns back to 2/4 and once again to an allegro in a spirited rendition. This movement is the most intricate rhythmically. It is one of the few variations when all four instruments share the same rhythm for most of the movement, with consistent sixteenth notes
accentuated by accents on every beat (Example 11). The theme is not introduced until well into the movement, 21 measures after it has begun, and is only a partial statement of the second phrase (Example 12). By this point in the piece, it seems that Arensky only wanted these fragments to have a haunting quality, no longer in the foreground, but to be heard as a faint memory.

Example 12. Theme fragment in Variation 6 in cello 1.

The last variation before the coda is completely muted (Example 13). The inner voices have Rhythmic Motives 1 and 2, while cello 2 has a simple bass line. The violin has the thematic material for the entire variation. It has now been transformed, from E minor to G major, an optimistic rendering, the theme inverted (Example 14). Unlike Variation 3, the relative major has a feeling of content, with no sense of agitation. In the E major variation, there was something unsettling about hearing the established theme in its parallel major so early in the movement. In the G major rendition, though, the thematic material has been established and transformed into a complete form from the music and style of Tchaikovsky to what is clearly the music of Arensky, a simple folk-like rendition that is not complicated compositionally, but it is emotionally affective. After all of the quick mood changes in the movement, this last variation, although the simplest, has the most jarring and touching effect.

Example 14. Violin theme from Variation 7.
The coda presents a full statement of the theme, sounded as harmonics and articulated pizzicato (Example 15). Until this point, Arensky used a limited amount of harmonics, never artificial, and only used pizzicatos in louder dynamics. The color of the harmonics gives it an unforgettable quality, like a shadow from the past. As haunting as that statement is, suddenly out of nowhere, the chant theme from the first movement of the quartet returns, this time in E minor, only to be brought back to the Tchaikovsky theme by an augmented declamatory version in the cello 2 (Example 16). All of the instruments share a statement of the theme one last time accompanied by pizzicato, this time surrendering and giving up in a final cadence.

Example 15. Harmonics and pizzicatos in mm. 259-266 of coda.
Example 15. harmonics and pizzicatos in mm. 259-266 of coda (continued).

Example 16. Return of first movement theme with augmented Tchaikovsky theme.
In choosing to set the variations for string orchestra differently from his quartet, was Arensky motivated by artistic design or was he simply playing along with his publisher to make more money? Surveying the beginning theme and first two variations, I believe this is a difficult question to answer. Arensky may have used this as a challenge in an attempt to write in a different way while composing for a separate genre or purely for acoustical purposes, to have a larger group that could provide more variety dynamically. For the most part, he chooses to set it the same way as the quartet, giving the viola part to the second violin, the cello 1 part to the viola, the cello 2 part to the cello, and doubling the bass with the cello. In Variation 2, he does split the viola part between the second violin and viola and gives the cello 2 material to the viola, but chooses to divide the celli and have the top celli play the same material as the viola, doubling the melodic line (Examples 17 and 18). This may have been merely an acoustical choice, so that it is audible above the flourish of notes in the violins. It may also be to retain the character of the melody.

Example 17. mm. 55-62 from Variation 2 of op. 35a.
Example 18. mm. 53-63 from Variation 2 from op. 35.
In mm. 69-71, the cello shares the viola material with the second violin, alternating between pizzicato and arco (Examples 19 and 20).

Example 19. mm. 69-71 in op. 35a.

It is not until Variation 3 that we see the more complex musical choices Arensky made in reorchestrating this piece for a larger ensemble. This time, he gives the bass the cello 2 part (for the most part an octave lower than the original), the celli cover both cello 1 and 2 material, the second violin takes over the violin part, and the viola is basically filling out the harmony with occasional fragments from the cello 1 part an octave higher. Having the bass play an octave lower and a standard bass line changes the feeling of the movement because the exchange between the two celli of the original no longer exists (Examples 21 and 22).
Example 20. mm. 69-71 in op. 35.
Unlike the quartet, the first violin has taken over the thematic material. The viola is no longer in charge of the melody. Even though it is played in the same register, the color is different. In the quartet, Arensky’s instrumentation for the melodic material from variation to variation, allowing each of the members of the quartet an opportunity. He does less of this, in the string orchestra
version. Perhaps he knows that there would be very little rehearsal time dedicated to a string orchestra rendition, and a section of violas playing in such a high register would not be the best choice. The most different is m. 80 and also in mm. 94-101 of Variation 3 (Examples 23 and 24), with the viola an octave higher than the original celli parts. The bass being an octave lower does create an ominous character, but the sweeping nature of the cello is missed. These are all small changes, but they do alter the nature of the piece and the way it develops.

Example 23. mm. 98-101 of Variation 3 of op. 35a.
Example 24. mm. 94-101 of Variation 3 of op. 35.

Although Variations 4 and 5 have more specific dynamics than in the original quartet, it is once again a bit more predictable in terms of instrumentation, with the viola taking the cello 2 part and eventually the entire melody of cello 1 in m. 121, while the second violin takes over the viola part and the bass shadows the celli (Example 25).
Example 25. mm. 103-120 of Variation 4 from op. 35a.

It is not until bar 172 of Variation 5 that Arensky gives the cello 1 part to the second violin and retains the viola part in the viola (Example 26). Much of the harmonic material is played by the inner voices one octave higher than in the original, lightening the texture. This change is favorable because the interaction between the top three voices can be heard as can the theme in the cello and bass. This is a challenge in performing the quartet. Also, with the theme doubled between the cello and bass, it is a much more prominent part of the movement.
Example 26. mm. 171-178 of Variation 5 of op. 35a.

In Variation 6, he again chooses to double the viola and top celli with the cello 1 material in bars 21-28 (Example 27). He also decides to simplify the difficult viola part that occurs with the violin part in the original, from sixteenths to a rhythmic pattern of eighth and two sixteenths. This is another example of Arensky’s awareness of orchestral playing. He knew that a section of violas playing such a virtuosic passage would not be successful. Also, instead of a crescendo over two bars and diminuendo over two bars, he does two-bar diminuendos throughout. In this movement the bass doublings of the cello act as a root of stability rhythmically in what would otherwise be a turbulent sweep of sixteenths.
Variation 7 (Example 29), most in the style of Tchaikovsky’s famous andante cantabile movement from his first string quartet, is a fond remembrance of his mentor, muted as in the original, but with different dynamics. The pizzicato in the bass adds a different feeling to the movement, although once again the basses double the celli in the same register. In the second half of the variation, the basses do double an octave lower, though this time playing arco. Arensky is cautious about thickening the texture here. Otherwise, the melody remains in the violin (this time in the first violin), with the second violin taking over the viola material, while the violas take over the cello 1 material at the same octave.
Example 28. mm. 203-210 of Variation 6 of op. 35.
Example 29. Variation 7 from op. 35a.

The rest of the piece remains almost identical to the original. The coda (Example 30) uses the bass sparsely and remains consistent with the reorchestration Arensky used previously.
Example 30. Coda of op. 35a.

It is clear that Arensky put great thought into rearranging this piece. He made specific changes in the more intimate variations to retain the flavor of the quartet with the two celli.
Otherwise, most of his changes fit a formula and were quite methodical. He also seemed to be aware that the viola part of the original was virtuosic and certain elements of that would not work in an orchestral setting. Putting much of the viola part in the second violin part shows that he knew the register and the technical demands were better left to violinists, who regularly play in the higher register, and even so he made deliberate changes to the second violin part to make it less demanding. It would be rash to claim that the purpose of this venture was purely for monetary reasons. The arrangement is very effective in its own right and has obviously stood the test of time. The orchestral arrangement has remained successful to this day and is perhaps even more so than the op. 35 quartet.
Chapter 4: The transformation of the first theme of the first movement of op. 35

The first movement begins with an introduction using a psalm theme of a famous Russian Orthodox chant (Example 31). This becomes the basis of the primary theme, which recurs throughout the movement in various guises and even returns briefly in the second movement. It was common during the nineteenth century for Russian composers to compose chant and for church modes to be used in secular music. Tchaikovsky was one such composer, along with Arensky, Balakirev, and Rachmaninov.

Example 31. Preface to the score of the Quartet illustrating four important themes of the work.  

\[\text{Example 31. Preface to the score of the Quartet illustrating four important themes of the work.}^{23}\]

\[\text{Example 31. Preface to the score of the Quartet illustrating four important themes of the work.}^{23}\]

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\[\text{Example 31. Preface to the score of the Quartet illustrating four important themes of the work.}^{23}\]

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Example 31 shows four themes that Arensky displays at the beginning of the score for the quartet, illustrating their importance within the work. Below the first one (I.), or the *religious theme* as he calls it, Arensky writes “Tserkovnyi obikhod, panikhida znamennogo raspeva,” which loosely translates as, “Church obikhod, panikhida of the znamenny chant.” According to Olga Bakulina of Yale University, “Znamenny is one of the Russian chant traditions, arguably the most widely used these days, and definitely the most well studied. Znamenny chant appeared somewhere between the 11th and 13th centuries. Obikhod is a traditional collection of chants--single-voice, harmonized, old, new, simplified--it can be anything, as long as it's been traditionally used in the Russian Orthodox Church. There are multiple obikhod collections published between the 18th century and now. The one presented in this example is typed in square notation, and it definitely belongs to the pre-revolutionary period (pre-1917, possibly late 19th century). I conclude this from the square notation and the text type with the "yat'." Yat is the thirty-second letter in the old Cyrillic alphabet. The word is no longer used in any of the Slavonic languages and is specific to Znamenny chant of the pre-revolutionary period. The original version of this chant, however, is most likely from an ancient rite. This is the theme used for the opening of the first movement of op. 35. It begins with two similar statements of the first theme (Example 32). The main difference between the two statements is in its dynamics and voicing. The first statement has the entire quartet play *con sordino*, starting *p* with three hairpins and returning back down to *pp*, while the second statement begins *pp* with three hairpins only increasing to *mp* and back down to *ppp*. 
Example 32. First statement of the first theme mm. 1-8.

The first statement begins with cello 1 having the melodic material, whereas the second statement is in the violin. The only difference between them is the softer dynamic in the second
statement (Example 33). It is interesting to note that Arensky does not choose to highlight which instrument has the melodic material by dynamic. With the cello 1 and violin swapping material, the viola takes over the violin’s role and cello 1 the viola’s. The cello 2 part hardly changes, with the exception of the end of the phrase where it has a less active role. This second statement acts as an echo of the first, never going above *mp* and has a simpler ending in *ppp*.

Example 33. Second statement of the first theme mm. 7-14.
The third time the theme returns, Arensky does make some very dramatic changes. It is now *senza sordino* and in a new faster tempo, “un poco piu mosso.” While the rest of the quartet has material relating back to the opening, the violin has new lyrical thematic material (theme A- see Example 34) flowing on top of the quartet (Example 35).

Example 34. Theme A in violin mm.15-21.

Arensky gives triplets only to the viola this time and leaves the celli in a homophonic rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The viola has the first theme in this occurrence with a slight alteration from the fifth bar of the theme. Arensky also alters the material harmonically, going down in stepwise motion to G major, instead of arriving in E major like the other two instances.

The “piu mosso” connects the “un poco piu mosso” to the next occurrence of the theme in m. 27 in the original key of A minor (Example 36). The viola now has theme A, while the two celli have the accompanying eighths from the first theme, occasionally as double-stops. The violin has off-beat sixteenth notes that act more as a response and are used for texture. By m. 31, all of the parts break away from the original theme with flourishing sixteenths and triplet
Example 35. Third statement of the first theme mm. 14-21.

sixteenths to a syncopated accented rhythm, going against the previous homophonic rhythm of the first theme (Example 36).
Example 36. mm. 22-31.
A further transformation occurs in m. 41 (Example 37), when cello 2 has the first theme in an augmented form, as quarter notes instead of eighths in what appears to begin in G major, but is in fact C major, the longest section in major thus far. The other three instruments have theme B, or really the second theme (with the violin having the primary melodic material). Although the first theme is augmented, it is the first full statement of the theme since the second statement (mm. 7-14), although eventually joining theme B to G major and eventually C major in m. 54.

Example 37. mm. 40-53.
Example 37. mm. 40-53 (continued).

The section between m. 54 and m. 63 is theme B in the violin (Example 38), with accompanying figures in the rest of the quartet.

Example 38. Theme B in violin mm. 54-63.
The piu mosso section connects to a longer development also in piu mosso, m. 66 to m. 102 (Example 39), which contains fragments of theme A in the violin. Harmonically this section quickly goes through many changes, consistently wandering away from C major (the relative major), returning back twice only to change to C minor. Eventually, the music modulates to the keys of F major and Bb minor before returning to G# major and C# major in m. 103 (Example 40).
Example 39. mm. 63-102 (continued).
Example 39. mm. 63-102 (continued).
The first theme returns in m. 103, only as a semblance, and is a deceptive return with the two celli having the same accompanying eighths, while the violin and viola have theme A in dialogue.

Example 40. mm. 103-106.

From m. 111 the violin has theme A’s complete melodic line, which builds up to the climax of the movement in mm. 124-128, in high fashion, the section most like a cadenza in a concerto, with each quartet member having a chance to indulge. The actual return arrives in m. 131 with the quartet in parallel eighth notes as chords, to resemble an organ, this time with the violin and cello 1 having the melodic material. The second time it is played in this section in m. 139, the violin has theme A on top, with the viola having the melodic material of the first theme, and the celli having the accompaniment eighths (Example 41).
Example 41. mm. 110-134.
Example 41. mm. 110-134 (continued).
The transition (mm. 146-150) to the return of the “poco meno mosso” section in m. 151 is this time in the parallel major key of A Major. The viola has the augmented version of the first theme in major, while the other three instruments have the theme B material (Example 42).

Example 42. mm. 151-165.
Example 42. mm. 151-165 (continued).

This corresponds with the section starting in m. 41, with the viola and cello 2 switching roles.

Theme B is developed in a similar vein, until the end of the section in m. 191-199, where the original off-beat eighths, which were used more as accompaniment or fragments of the theme are now important in connecting us back to A minor (Example 43). Parts of theme B, accompanying eighths, and the ending material from the first statement are used to bring us back to A minor.
Example 43. Transformation of a fragment used to connect back to A minor mm. 191-213.
Example 43. Transformation of a fragment used to connect back to A minor mm. 191-213 (continued).
Example 43. Transformation of a fragment used to connect back to A minor mm. 191-213 (continued).
This final statement of the theme is closest to the second statement earlier in mm. 7-14 (see Example 33). It starts almost identically, with the exception of starting at a softer dynamic of **ppp** and arching to a **mf**. The voicing and the distribution of the thematic material is the same with a final cadence in A minor. The music dies away, a quasi *ritardando* written into the music, like one last breath of life. The cello 1 is given the bass note of A in the last bar, instead of the cello 2, which has the third of the chord.

It is fascinating to compare the return of the first movement thematic material in the second movement (Example 44) to the original. Unlike its appearance in the first movement, there are minimal dynamics and no swells, as though it were coming out of nowhere, unprepared, and in a different color than before, like a faint memory. It is in E minor, but the cello 2 does not establish the key with its bass notes. Instead it has the fifth of the chord, leaving the viola with the E, but in a higher register. The cello 1 also holds a long B, so although we are in E minor, it is not until m. 278, that it is clearly established. The first statement (mm. 272-277) is also a truncated version of the original. In m. 278, he gives the cello 2 the second movement thematic material in **mf** with accents, while the other instruments remain **p** with the first movement thematic material. Although the other strings are **p**, they do not have slurs this time in mm. 280 and 281, unlike in mm. 3 and 4 of the original. The violin continues with the melodic material of the first movement, but it is now in the background and used as an accompaniment for the Tchaikovsky theme. It is incredible how Arensky manages to weave these two themes together to create one amazing phrase and a decisive moment in the movement. One has to wonder if he came up with this passage first or began with the first movement and managed to weave the two themes together with unbelievable ease.
Example 44. The return of the first movement thematic material in the second movement mm.

271-282, op. 35.
Chapter 5: Pomp and Circumstance, and the Grand Finale

Earlier in my dissertation, I mentioned the themes Arensky listed in the beginning of the quartet score. Two of the themes (III. and IV.), neglected thus far, belong to the third and final movement of the quartet (Example 45). Theme III derives from the Requiem Mass and is a somber beginning to the third movement. Theme IV, or the Slava theme, comes from one of the most famous Russian folk songs. It has been used in various contexts by other composers.

Between 1770 and 1774, Slava had already been published in the first anthology of Russian songs, Mikhail Chulkov’s Collection of Various Songs. It was also published many years later in Nikolai Alexandrovich Lvov and Johann Gottfried Pratsch’s very popular Collection of Russian Folk Songs with their Tunes (1790), which had several publications due to high demand outside of Russia. Its fame drew interest from many composers, both Russian and western, including Hummel, Rossini, Weber, and Beethoven. Originally Slava was a folk song about a maiden who had come across a trinket of great wealth. Somehow that song transformed into the theme meant for a king or tsar.

This transformation occurred in part due to a singspiel, The Old-Time Yuletide, by Franz Xaver Blyma, which premiered in 1800. Blyma was most likely Czech making his living in Russia as a conductor. The music of the singspiel remains available, but the libretto is lost. The songspiel captures an outsider’s meticulous knowledge of Russian folk song, including Slava. Blyma’s work became well-known outside of Russia through its performance in St. Petersburg in 1813. Slava was heralded by critics, and was used in the context, most likely for the first time as, “Glory, glory to our tsar.” One cannot assume how this music became the coronation theme of Russia, but one can see how it came to exemplify Russia to both western and Russian composers.
Beethoven used it in the third movement of his *String Quartet, op. 59 no. 2* (titled Theme Russe), Borodin in *Prince Igor*, Rachmaninoff in the sixth movement of *Six Morceaux* for piano duet, op. 11, Rimsky-Korsakov in the *Czar’s Bride*, Mussorgsky in *Boris Godunov*, and Stravinsky in *The Firebird* suite. From this list alone, one can see that it became highly popularized.

Example 45. The Requiem Mass theme and the *Slava* theme from the third movement.

Beethoven’s use of the *Slava* theme is the most interesting to share, as he was a westerner using the theme to commemorate the man who commissioned his op. 59 quartets, Count Andrey Razumovsky. Razumovsky was a Russian ambassador in Vienna and a patron of the arts. He had asked Beethoven to include Russian themes in each of the quartets. Beethoven chose to use Ukrainian themes in the others. In the case of the op. 59, no. 2, Razumovsky had handed Beethoven the music to *Slava*, having heard the Lvov and Pratsch version, and asked him to incorporate the folk song into the quartet. Beethoven was not pleased and as a musical joke, he harmonized the theme’s melody which was in the tonic with accompanying figures in the
dominant. This was hardly done before the turn of the century. The harmonic discord went against everything else in the scherzo movement that was strictly conventional.

Arensky’s final movement stretches his compositional style the most dramatically. Opening the movement, the adagio starts in darkness, and we are brought back to the Russian Orthodox Church, a reminder of the person the piece is dedicated to, Tchaikovsky. The funeral march has the strings muted with the viola and cello 2 in octaves with the odd marking, \textit{f marcato}. There is very little motion in the writing. The two voices eventually become three in unison or in thirds, going down dynamically to a \textit{p}, creating a hollow timbre. By m. 13 he gives the quartet double, triple, and quadruple stops in an attempt to amplify the sound, making it sound choral and symphonic at the same time. A drawn out E pedal in the cello 2 part (m. 16-25) is reminiscent of an organ pedal tone, until it is interrupted by dramatic silence.

The silence is broken by the viola which starts a brisk fugue on the \textit{Slava} theme. “Slava Bogu no nebe Slava” aptly means “Glory to the sun,” and is as patriotic as it is lively. The viola starts on the second beat in 3/4 (Example 46), like the original version and Beethoven’s. The fugal writing shows Arensky at his best, with a complete awareness of counterpoint while showing something he hardly ever displayed, his Russian nationalism. Arensky set the theme in A Major, whereas Beethoven did so in E Major. Arensky used accented quarter notes. Beethoven used staccato eighths (Example 46 and 47.) Both composers chose to use the viola as the first subject of the fugue. Interestingly, Arensky does not finish the \textit{Slava} theme in the viola or violin, his subject is always one bar shorter. He only does so in the cello 2.
Example 46. The *Slava* theme in the viola in the Arensky quartet.

Example 47. The *Slava* theme in the viola of the Beethoven op. 59, no. 2.

Perhaps by using this triumphant thematic material, Arensky was celebrating Tchaikovsky’s life as a composer and person. It is as if he was calling Tchaikovsky the tsar of music, celebrating his abilities as a composer and as a person. It would have been the perfect way for Arensky to commemorate the man he held so dear as a role model. It is no wonder, as Tchaikovsky was always his advocate, even to Rimsky-Korsakov in 1886, asking him to substitute one of his own pieces in an upcoming concert with one by Arensky. “I have a favor to ask,” Tchaikovsky said. “Arensky is now quite recovered, though I find him somewhat depressed and agitated. I like him so much and wish you would sometimes take an interest in him, for, as
regards music, he venerates you more than anyone else. He needs stirring up; and such an impulse given by you would count for so much with him, because he loves and respects you.” It shows how Tchaikovsky wanted a reconciliation to occur between Rimsky-Korsakov and Arensky and was actively pursuing it on Arensky’s behalf.

After the Adagio section returns for 8 bars in mm. 76-83, one expects the Slava theme to return immediately. Instead, Arensky uses the violin and viola in triplet sixteenth notes in unison in m. 84 in a dance-like rhythm for three bars before having the two celli enter with the theme in double and triple stops. The triplet sixteenth notes are almost always a part of the texture until the piu mosso in m. 99, which is followed by another piu mosso in m. 105, this time with a compressed version of the Slava theme both rhythmically and with segments of the theme. This gives the ending a whirlwind affect, seeming to get faster and faster not just because of the piu mosso, but rhythmically, from quarters to eighths to sixteenths.

One does wonder if Arensky had heard Beethoven’s quartet that used the same theme. Obviously, the Slava theme was popular amongst all of the Russian composers of the time. It is interesting to find in Tchaikovsky’s diary entry from 1886, where he referred to Mozart as his “musical Christ,” and Beethoven as God from the Old Testament. It would be fitting for Arensky to use the extremely Russian theme, the same one that Beethoven used, to exemplify Tchaikovsky as the person he put up on a pedestal as a musical god. In one of Tchaikovsky’s musical reviews, he refers to Beethoven as the "greatest of all composers" and notes the string quartets dedicated to Razumovsky and how they have transformed “humble” chamber music into something spectacular, due to his ability to develop rich polyphony. Whether Arensky had heard Beethoven’s op. 59, no. 2, he had undoubtedly read this review of the work.
Chapter 6: Conclusion: The Significance in looking back at Arensky and creating a Score

My initial struggle and eventual exploration into the Arensky quartet began on the journey to my first performance of the work. I was taking the Amtrak to the Point CounterPoint Festival in rural Vermont, outside of Middlebury, where there were more bears and campers than reliable internet access. I knew from previous years that it would be impossible to practice once we arrived, with long teaching days and other programs to rehearse, so as usual I began preparing the piece well before my arrival. Part of the preparation at home entails learning the notes, putting in fingerings and bowings that seem logical, and surveying a full score to write in cues. Cues help immensely for new pieces. Nothing helps me more in a situation like this than writing in who shares a similar phrase or motive. Unlike other chamber works, I did not have a recording to listen to or a score to consult at home or on the train. As much as we had prepared individually for the rehearsals, the odd instrumentation and lack of knowledge of the history of the piece posed a serious problem. We all loved the piece. That was without question, but we felt understandably underprepared. How does a quartet learn a piece without a score? That became a question we would continually return to on our quest to learn this challenging piece.

In any professional chamber music situation, one learns his or her part individually before setting foot in the first rehearsal. We all knew we were performing the piece months beforehand. Part of the process usually includes listening to a recording with a score, especially with a piece that is lesser known and played. More recently, I have been playing in an ensemble that primarily performs obscure chamber works without published scores or recordings, and it has given great insight into an approach or strategy to learn music without a pre-conceived notion. Much is based on listening and also looking at individual parts to create an intuitive sense of what the piece has to say, and gives the performer a greater sense of what parts to listen to.
Back in Vermont, however, not having a score posed a serious setback in what would have been easy preparation pre-rehearsal for each member. For many of us, it was the first time working on a piece without a full score. On a side note, I have been told that the viola part is particularly tricky due to its high register, which is often in parallel 3rds or 6ths with the violin. Intonation is a trying obstacle for the violist to sound like a violin at times in that register. Luckily, the violinist had played the work before, but had very little advice for all of us. At the time, it seemed odd. I could relate to this feeling, however, being in the same situation, a little over a year later.

The one advantage we did have was the comfort of knowing that we had played together previously and knew each other’s playing very well. Still, in any quartet rehearsal there are moments when as a group one must decide how to voice things so certain lines come out clearly to the audience. It is easy in a standard string quartet to find the right voicing, which instrument to bring out more or which one to bring out less. With two celli, there is an added challenge, especially when both are in a similar register. This can create intonation issues for the group that would not occur in a standard quartet, especially when the viola is in a higher register. From the more technical question of bowings to knowing texturally what kind of role each instrument serves, each member may have a different viewpoint. Unlike typical quartets from the era, the viola often is treated like two instruments, both a viola and a supportive second violin, with a higher register and more virtuosic writing. Cello 1 is treated like a middle voice with textural filler material, given melodic material, or on occasion exchanges roles with cello 2 as an accompanying bass line. The thick texture, made naturally by the two cellos created acoustical challenges as well, often overwhelming the melodic material or making things bottom heavy. Without the help of a score, we realized how important it is to see all four parts linearly on one
page and wished we had one to work with. Constantly trying to look at all four parts at once was
dizzying and took time. Even when decisions were made, what one thought would work in
theory, did not work in context. If the piece had a more standard instrumentation, issues may
have been more easily solved. Progressively we began playing the piece more to discover what
we had to change, rather than consulting each other’s parts, which became too time-consuming.
Experimentation became imperative in the process of learning this piece, almost like the way one
would approach a contemporary piece, through some improvisation of what one sees on the
page. The instinctual reactions to dynamics and expression markings did not always work. It was
remarkable that even though the rehearsal process at times was daunting, the reaction of the
audience to the piece was very powerful, which made me wonder, how much more meaningful
could it be if the performers had the advantage of having a deeper knowledge of the score.

Months later in passing I mentioned about the Arensky concert to Prof. Marcy Rosen.
She sighed and sympathized with the situation. Jokingly she said, "if you ever compile a score,
please give me a copy." She recollected hearing one of her colleagues having a copy in his
possession, but could not remember who it was. Those words struck me somehow, as I had very
rarely heard her complain about learning a piece of chamber music. I started thinking, why not?

The rest of life consumed me, teaching and performing, and I quickly forgot this thought
until my final recital. Programming the recital, I immediately knew the quartet would be the
centerpiece. I wanted to have another chance to play it again with my good friends. Although the
rest of the quartet were different players from those in Vermont, all were seasoned chamber
musicians from New York City. For this performance, we had severe time constraints with only
a couple of rehearsals to put the quartet together due to scheduling conflicts. With the pressure of
learning it quickly the sentiments from Vermont were that much more exaggerated and when I
was thinking of possible dissertation topics, this instantly came to mind as a thought-provoking project and wonderful solution to all of the frustration felt in both situations. The only obstacle in my way appeared, at least initially, to be where to start.

In Vermont I used a Jurgenson edition found online on [http://imslp.org](http://imslp.org) because there were no other published parts readily available. These parts (Plate 19311) were evidently drawn directly from the Jurgenson score (Plate 19310), found later by my advisor, Philip Ewell, in the Russian State Library in 2012. They were both published in 1894 and one must assume by their

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plate numbers that they were published nearly simultaneously. Although they were not completely illegible, they were cumbersome. Bowings and slur markings were sometimes lacking clarity because of the density of the scan in the parts on http://imslp. org, but for the most part stayed true to those of the score. For my doctoral recital, I purchased the Wollenweber edition, published in 2006, hoping it would be easier to decipher, which in fact it was, making the rehearsal process less taxing. There are a few slur markings that differ from the original Jurgenson parts, and one note change in the violin, but otherwise, the Wollenweber is visually an easier set of parts to read from for the performer, with better notation and a clearer indication of bowings and dynamics. No editor is mentioned in this new version by Wollenweber. The standard quartet version was available through a

Figure 9. Dedication to Tchaikovsky from original publication of the score.  

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25 Arensky, Anton Stepanovich. *Quartet op. 35 for Violin, Viola, and Two Violoncelli* (Moscow: Jurgenson. 1894)
small publisher, Silvertrust\textsuperscript{27}, who showed some interest in having a score published.

These three editions were my starting point in compiling a score on Sibelius in 2010. Slowly, I made a full score of all three movements, sifting through the parts in various editions, compiling data and notes. The few differences between the editions were clear, although there were only small details regarding slurs, primarily where they began or ended, as well as a few notes in question. More than anything else, the compilation took time and patience. The biggest discovery came in the summer of 2012, when my advisor, Dr. Philip Ewell, found an original

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{jurgenson_rubenstein.jpg}
\caption{Pyotr Ivanovich Jurgenson (1836-1904), founder of Jurgenson publishing with Nikolay Rubenstein.\textsuperscript{28}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{27} http://www.editionsilvertrust.com.
Jurgenson publication of the score in the Russian State Library and brought it to my attention. Recently, a similar edition has been uploaded to imslp.org from the Russian State Library and Curtis Library. Neither have a date of publication, but both have a beautifully ornate dedication page to Tchaikovsky. I have done a comparison study between these scores and my own. Also the original publication of the score by Jurgenson of the Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky was very informative, as it was based on the second movement of the quartet. It was fascinating to compare the choices Arensky made depending on the instrumentation. Part of his decisions, may have been instinctual, but his awareness and regard to the strengths and weaknesses of each string instrument is clear. The scores are all old Jurgenson copies and are believed to date back to the first publication of the works, but neither scan has a definite date of publication. The Merton

Figure 11. Bust of Anton Arensky commemorating the renaming of the Novgorod Philharmonic in his name in 2011.\textsuperscript{29}

Music Company, like the Silvertrust publication, compiles editions of obscure music. I came across the Merton parts for the original and standard quartet version after 2012 when they became available online. For the most part, they follow the same markings as the Jurgenson score. Presently, there is no score in print available.

As soon as I decided to broach the subject of the quartet, I realized that I had very little knowledge about the composer, and began searching for biographical information about Arensky. Much of what I found online about him was incoherent. Consistently, he was recognized as a great pedagogue teaching the foremost Russian composers, but dates and details pertaining to his family life, performances, and relationships with students were not consistent. The only information in English was on Oxford Music Online\(^\text{30}\), but was mostly common knowledge. It simply gave a broad overview of Arensky’s life. Otherwise, more specific details came from concert reviews or program notes, some of which had fascinating anecdotes with very little bibliographic material to give them legitimacy. Even books in other languages were a rarity, with one biography in Russian and a set of letters in German.

With the 150th anniversary of Arensky’s birth year in 2011, there seemed to be more research into his lesser known works, with several recordings and performances of the quartet, as well as articles in journals regarding his role as a teacher and analyzing, radio programs about his life, and performances of his chamber music. The articles discussed his pedagogical techniques, social circles, and analyzed his works. They were the first detailed accounts of his daily life that I was able to find in English. Through their bibliographies and those in Oxford Music Online and Wikipedia, I was able to find more reliable source material other than those found online.

Through this process, what has become increasingly more compelling has been Arensky, the man, his role as a composer and teacher, and his mindset as he wrote this novel quartet. A frame of reference, or context, allows a performer to go beyond the page and invite the audience into the musical world the composer was trying to illustrate. Arensky had more to say than many gave him credit. If his addictions and depression had not hindered him, perhaps there would be more to tell. For a composer who was not the most influential or historically significant, there still is no other quartet quite like the Quartet in A minor, and there will likely never be.
Part II

Quartet in A Minor for Violin, Viola,
and Two Celli by Anton Arensky
Quartet in A Minor for Violin, Viola, and 2 Celli

Dedicated to the memory of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Anton Arensky

Moderato (\(\frac{q}{66}\))
Un poco più mosso ($\dot{=} = 88$)
Poco meno mosso (\( \mathcal{L} = 80 \))

p dolce e tranquillo

p dolce

f
Piu mosso (\( \cdot = 132 \))

\( \text{ff} \)

\( \text{f} \)

\( \text{p} \)

\( \text{cresc.} \)

\( \text{sfz} \)

\( \text{sfz} \)

\( \text{sfz} \)

\( \text{f} \)

\( \text{f} \)

\( \text{f} \)

\( \text{f} \)

\( \text{f} \)

\( \text{f} \)

\( \text{f} \)

\( \text{f} \)

\( \text{f} \)

\( \text{f} \)

\( \text{f} \)
Allegro non troppo

Var. II

p

mf

f

pizz.

f

p

mf
Allegro con spirito

Var. VI
Andante con moto

Var. VII

con sord.

pp
Moderato Coda

259
Moderato \q poco a poco rit. \q pizz.
III. Finale

Andante sostenuto

Violin I

Viola

Violoncello I

Violoncello II

con sord.

f marcato

f marcato

f marcato

f marcato

6

p

p

p

p

p

p

mf

p
Allegro moderato
senza sord.

senza sord.

mf

senza sord.

mf

senza sord.
senza sord.

ff

89
Appendix to the Score

First movement:

m. 15 accent missing in the violin, Wollenweber and Jurgenson edition, but in Jurgenson score. In similar instances, there is always an accent.

m. 26 cello 1, ppp is missing from the score

Third movement:

m. 67 f missing in score

m. 79 dim. missing in violin part
Primary Sources:


— — —. 1894. *Quartet op. 35 for Violin, Viola, and Two Violoncelli*. Moscow: Jurgenson.


— — —. 1894. *Quartet op. 35 arrangement for piano four hands*. Moscow: Jurgenson.

— — —. 1899. *Quartet op. 35a for Two Violins, Viola, and Violoncello*. Moscow: Jurgenson.


— — —. 1894. *Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky, op. 35a*. Moscow: Jurgenson.

— — —. 19__. *Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky, op. 35a*. New York: Broude Brothers.

— — —. 19__. *Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky, op. 35a*. New York: Kalmus.

Secondary Sources:


**Websites:**


