

GEBRÜEDER BEETZ FILMPRODUKTION

THE TCHAIKOVSKY FILES – CONFESSIONS OF A COMPOSER

Based on letters and diaries of Peter Iljitch Tchaikovsky

On the occasion of his 175th birthday in May, 2015

A film by Ralf Pleger

In co-production with ZDF / ARTE

52 min

The film radically transfers Peter Tchaikovsky into the present time and draws an emotional psychological portrait. Tchaikovsky's fate, being at the mercy of a homophobic environment as a gay man, comes up for current discussion. Additionally, renowned international artists and experts reveal their very personal approach to Tchaikovsky and his music.

Tchaikovsky is regarded as Russia's most famous composer. Works like "Swan Lake", "Eugene Onegin" and the Symphony no. 6 "Pathétique" are among his global triumphs. He is celebrated as a national hero. And Tchaikovsky was gay - then as now a taboo in Russia.

With a radical cinematic artifice Tchaikovsky's adventures are translated into the here and now. The composer's struggle with his homosexuality, the serious consequences of his crisis, the fusion of life and work and the mysterious circumstances of his death are retold within modern scenarios. Not only Tchaikovsky's fate, but also his artistic legacy is confronted with the present. The contemporary relevance of his case is taken into account as well as the – often underestimated – avant-garde quality of his music.

The film is based on interviews with leading international artists and experts, including the Russian ballet star Vladimir Malakhov, the American organ virtuoso and eccentric Cameron Carpenter. The dance and musical creations of these artists stand for a very original and contemporary treatment of Tchaikovsky's works. In the interviews the protagonists reveal their personal and sometimes very emotional access to Tchaikovsky and his music. Supported by the biographer Philip Bullock and the Tchaikovsky researcher Kadja Grönke, the film initiates an exciting and insightful debate on Tchaikovsky's topicality.

Director Ralf Pleger is one of the most prominent German directors in the field of classical music. He has been honored for his work with numerous awards. Most recently, he has realized the films "The Beethoven Files" and "The Wagner Files" with the gebrueder beetz filmproduktion. „The Wagner Files“ won the Audience Award at the World Film Festival in Montreal and was nominated for the International Emmy Award in 2014.