

Pletnev documentary (2007), dedicated to his 50th anniversary

Filmdirector and producer: Juriy Borisov

Part I (26 min)

00:00 (A flight on a superlight plane, hang glider). 02:11 **M. Pletnev: This is Burgstadt, it's a great place! One needs just to go there to visit. Beethoven had a lot of Alpine nature in his music, the same mountains, the same feelings. I adore mountains! Tchaikovsky didn't like mountains. He called them 'petrified convulsions of Nature'.**

03:22. **P.: I do not like cold.** (P. was born in the north of Russia, in Archangelsk. He doesn't like cold but likes the woods. He finds nature in Sweden, Finland attractive because of its grandeur. He mentions Syberia's beautiful lakes and woods , 'taiga'. He loves all that very much.)

04:34. P. conducts the Swan by Sibelius in Moscow, 2004.

05:07 **His mother** is being shown and **P. talks very warmly about her**, saying that his mother is a unique person. He often feels that she is younger than himself. His mom is a pianist. P. was saying that she didn't give him any piano lessons, but at the same time, she always gives him lessons. (The young P. plays The Album for the Young by Tchaikovsky.)

05:50 **His mother tells the story** how she ended up in Arkhangelsk. It was during the (Second world) war. Her mother died, father had died before, as a victim of Stalinist repressions. Thus she became an orphan, and was adopted by her aunt and brought to Arkhangelsk. Her cousin was in the military, but also very artistic and once danced in the ballet.

06:37 **P.: My father was a very good musician. He played Bajan (bottom accordion) (1) and has devoted all his life to this instrument and the music.**

07:14 His father had endured some hardship in his youth: he had to walk a long distance in order to learn the instrument and the theory of music. It all took place in the rural area near the city of Yaroslavl.

07:21 Bach/Busoni Chacone was played in New-York, 2000. P. continues to recall how he grew up listening to his father's music and solo concerts.

08:39 His father considered Bach/Busoni Chacone to be very special in his life, a piece of big importance. Included it in his every concert, kept working on it, changing or editing it continuously. The family photo. His father was a modest man, even uneasily shy, but his talent was a real one.

09:20 P. plays the 5th Piano Concerto of Beethoven with his orchestra.

10:12 **P. tells how his father** was invited to the Kazan State Music Conservatory and the whole family moved to the Kazan-city on the Volga-river.

10:28 There are photos of a very young P. with various musical instruments. His **mother says** that from the age of 9 months her baby-son was already reacting to the sounds of music.

11:14 P. plays the 3rd Piano Concerto of Beethoven in Montreal, Canada 2006. P. as a child literally lived in the Conservatory of Kazan. Every day he would roam its corridors, could enter any room, listen and observe a rehearsal of an orchestra etc.

13:02 **Young P.: A genius must cultivate a donkey in himself!** (By that, he means a constant work with a donkey's stubbornness to improve one's own performance.) **Without such a capacity no great achievement in music will be possible!**

15:10 **Mother** shares her memories as to how difficult it was for them to relocate from Kazan to the Moscow region (which is nothing new to the Russia's provincials, as Moscow was the unattainable capital city of USSR, and now is of Russian Federation. Its population amounts to 12-15 million. It always was a very desirable place to stay, people were trying to settle there permanently, in spite of many restrictions. And it was denied unless you were born there or had an apartment.) **Mother: It was very difficult to get to live in Moscow, and we were (and still are) such naïve people.** The reason of moving closer to the capital was that the talented boy was accepted to the Central Moscow Music school, very elitist, because thousands of young talents have to compete for the honour to be accepted there. After graduation one would go right to the Moscow State Conservatory, one of the top music colleges of the world.

15: 38 The video shows the centre of Moscow, the parade on the Red Square.

16:00 There is a photo of the pupils of this school. **P. says that his class** belonged to the piano tradition of Igumnov, which would get down directly to Beethoven himself. Beethoven had taught Carl Cherny, that one in his turn taught France Liszt, who taught Zilotti, who taught Igumnov. The last one taught Glier and Timakin (whom he made assistant in the class). And, finally, Prof. Timakin was P.'s teacher.

16:27 **P.: Evgeny Michailovich Timakin** (on the screen) **was a remarkable person. Everything he was teaching was explained in a simple way, but was authentic, true. "Music is being born right here on the top of the fingers, as a flower growing at the top of a plant, - Timakin liked to say.**

17:12 P. plays Sonata C-Major of Mozart, Moscow 2006. **P.: There are people who stay students for ever, they study and study. And there are Teachers, who never stop teaching, like gurus in India. Timakin belongs to this category of Teachers, and P. continues to learn from him even now. His main principle was to have the same approach to all music pieces from the most simple ones to the complicated virtuosity, at each and every step up to the mastership. As a result, Timakin's students got from him the gift of free, seemingly effortless piano playing.**

19:41 P. plays the Kreisleriana by Schumann, Moscow 2006.

21:10 **P. discusses** the possibilities to build a Perpetual Mobile. He had a hobby in his early youth of drawing sketches of various machinery, he was interested in engineering of the future and enthusiastic reader of science fiction, his favourite: 'Hyperboloid of engineer Garin' by A.Belyaev.

22:02 P. conducts the 9th Symphony of Beethoven for Deutsche Gramophone company (German recording label).

25:27 **P. has always been interested** in maths and, even more in physics, and wondered how can man combine Einstein's relativity with Quantum mechanics. **However: 'What is divided by God is difficult to put together' (Albert Einstein).**

Notes:

1. Pletnev's father played bayan [https://nl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bajan_\(accordeon\)](https://nl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bajan_(accordeon))
2. Pletnev's professor Yakov Flier https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yakov_Flier
3. Italian conductor Arturo Toscanini https://nl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arturo_Toscanini
4. Pianist Svyatoslav Richter https://nl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Svjatoslav_Richter
5. Vladimir Horowitz
<https://www.google.com/gasearch?q=horowitz&tbm=&source=sh/x/gm2/5>
6. Soviet Patriotic Song 'Wide Is My Motherland' 1936
https://youtu.be/waZhr3Rk1mQ?si=n06ugmcNslw6_v9g
7. Legendary bas Feodor Chaliapin https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feodor_Chaliapin

Additional material:

1. Wiki over Pletnev

https://nl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michail_Pletnjev

2. July 2010 incident in Thailand

<https://amp.theguardian.com/world/2010/jul/07/mikhail-pletnev-child-molesting-thailand>

3. "Who starts wars" Pletnev's interview September 2, 2022

<https://www.riorchestra.org/news/pletnev-interview>