

# Folk Song: The Little Birch Tree

The folk song "Little Birch Tree" has a charming history that stretches back through time. This sweet melody has its roots in traditional Russian folk music, where it has been cherished for generations.

The song tells the story of a little birch tree standing in the meadow. The lyrics describe the tree's slender branches and delicate leaves swaying gently in the breeze. The narrator of the song cuts down some branches to make wooden flutes and a *balalaika*, a traditional Russian string instrument. Whenever they play their new instruments, they think of the birch tree they created them from. It paints a picture of nature's beauty and the simplicity of rural life.

One interesting aspect of "Little Birch Tree" is its connection to Russian culture. In Russia, the birch tree holds a special place in the hearts of the people. It symbolizes purity, spring, and beauty, and it is widely celebrated in their art, music, and poetry. The folk song captures the essence of these sentiments, celebrating the qualities of the birch tree and its Russian ties.

Tchaikovsky paid tribute to "Little Birch Tree" by including it in his famous *Symphony No. 4*, and you can hear the distinctive melody woven throughout. The simplicity of this folk song's tune and lyrics contribute to its enduring popularity, evoking a sense of nostalgia for the people of Russia.

# The Little Birch Tree

Duration: ca. 1½ minutes

Russian Folk Song  
arranged by Mary Goetze

Flowing  $\text{♩} = 60$

Voices

1. See the lit - tle  
2. From the lit - tle  
(second time only)

Recorder  
or  
Flute

*sempre legato*

Piano

6

birch in the mead - ow. See the leaves a - danc - ing when the  
tree take three branch - es. Make three sil - ver flutes from sil - ver

10

wind blows. Loo - li loo, when the wind blows. Loo - li  
branch - es. Loo - li loo, sil - ver branch - es. Loo - li

15

loo, when the wind blows. *mf*  
 loo, sil - ver branch - es. 3. From a branch I'll

20

carve a ba - la - lai - ka, With the flutes I'll play my ba - la - lai - ka.

25

Loo - li loo, ba - la - lai - ka. Loo - li loo, ba - la -

30

lai - ka.

\* Use optional lower notes as needed for better intonation on the decrescendo.

\*\* Ossia: