

## Mastering Equipment Used In Our Recordings

Digital: Cranesong Hedd 192 Analog to Digital Converter

Lynx AES16 used for digital I/O

Antelope Audio Isochrone OCX Master Clock

Weiss Saracon Sample Rate Conversion Software

Weiss POW-r Dithering Software

Analog: Studer 810 Reel to Reel with JRF Magnetics Custom Z Heads & Siltech wiring

Aria tape head pre-amp by ATR Services

Manley Tube Tape Pre-amps Modified by Fred Volz of Emotive Audio

Cables: Purist Audio Design, Pure Note, Siltech

Power Cords: Purist Audio Design, Essential Sound Products

Vibration Control: Symposium Acoustics Rollerblocks, Ultra platforms, Svelte shelves

Sonic Studio CD.1 Professional CD Burner using Mitsui Gold Archival CD's

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## Facts about this Recording

**Tchaikovsky Sym. No. 4 Recorded by Command Classics  
Recorded 1961**

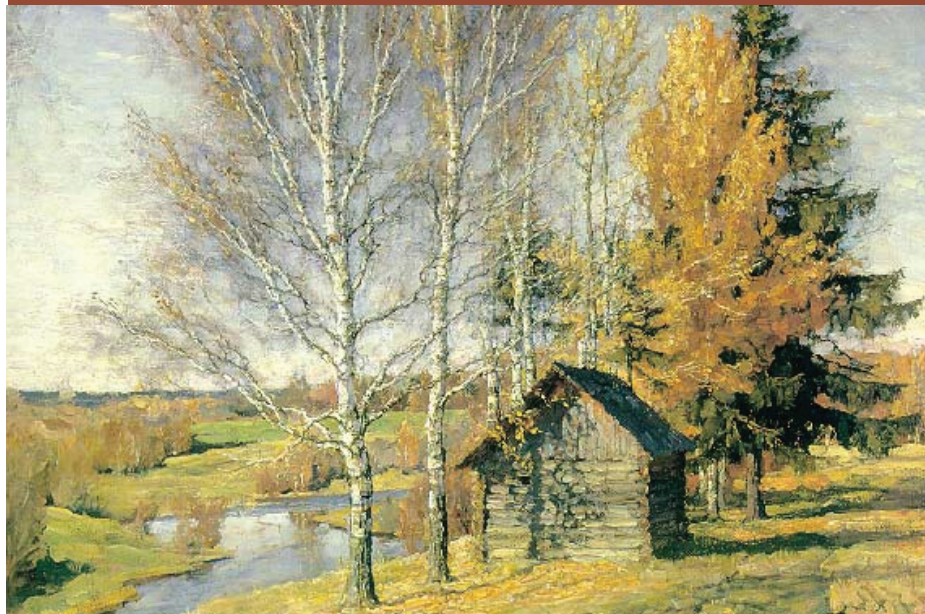
**Engineer Mastering - George Piros • Engineer Recording Chief - Robert Fine  
Producer - Enoch Light**

**Nutcracker: Recorded 09/1956 Venue: London, Walthamstow Assembly Hall**



# Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4

William Steinberg • Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra



**Music from the Nutcracker**  
**Artur Rodzinski • Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**

## Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Tchaikovsky's Fourth symphony was written between 1877 and 1878, during the most turbulent year of Tchaikovsky's life and is closely associated with two women — one whom he married that year, and the other, whom he never met in person. In the tradition of the romantic excesses of his time, his wife cast a demonic shadow over his life, while the other woman remained an angelic presence.

In late March of 1877 Antonina Miliukhova wrote Tchaikovsky a letter, confessing her love for him. She was a former student whom he did not remember meeting twelve years earlier when she was 16. Tchaikovsky's response to her letter was similar to that of Onegin to young Tatiana in Pushkin's famous novel-in-prose. Tchaikovsky stated clearly that the feeling could not possibly be mutual and that their life together would be a domestic nightmare. To this, Antonina requested he grant her one meeting, just one meeting before she would end her life which would be impossible and meaningless without Pyotr Ilyich.

Shortly after receiving Antonina's first letter, Tchaikovsky started his work on the opera Eugene Onegin. Tatiana's famous letter to Onegin plays a central role in Pushkin's novel and in the opera. Clearly, both Pushkin and Tchaikovsky sympathized with Tatiana. After receiving Antonina's first letter Tchaikovsky was shocked by the parallel to Tatiana. "It seems to me as if the power of fate has drawn to me that girl," Tchaikovsky wrote to Nadezhda von Meck — his patron, his muse, his best friend and confidant someone he never met face to face, but with whom he exchanged over 1000 letters and to whom the Symphony No. 4 is dedicated.

There was one more reason for marrying. Shortly before Antonia's letter, Tchaikovsky wrote to his brother, Modest, that he had made a decision to get married soon, although he did not yet know to whom. He felt he needed to acquire the status of a married man in order to stifle the scandalous rumors about his numerous homosexual encounters. Homosexuality was considered a dishonorable crime in the Tsarist Russia and was punished by arrest and exile to Siberia. Tchaikovsky hoped that by marrying Antonina, he would appear "normal" and all talk about his homosexuality would stop.

The wedding took place on July 6th and a few weeks later Tchaikovsky ran away to his sister's estate in Ukraine, where he composed like a madman for six weeks. After returning to Moscow to his eager and bewildered wife, he suffered a panic attack and eleven days later attempted suicide by throwing himself into the river at night. He was hoping to catch pneumonia. He did not even catch a cold.

Divorce in Russia was possible to obtain only on the grounds of infidelity. Tchaikovsky was afraid that a trial in court could potentially expose his homosexuality. Besides, Antonina did not wish to get divorced from her famous husband and for the rest of his life blackmailed him for financial support which he diligently and generously supplied on the promise that she leave him alone. What happened to this real-life Tatiana? Antonina Miliukhova gave birth to three children from unknown fathers and abandoned all three, leaving them at an orphanage, where all three died. She spent the last twenty years of her life in a psychiatric asylum where she died in 1917, eight months before the Bolshevik Revolution, from which Rachmaninoff and other numerous Russian artists fled to the West.

Tchaikovsky wrote to his brother Anatol about that turbulent time of his marriage: "There is no doubt that for some months I was insane, and only now, when I am completely recovered, have I learned to relate objectively to everything which I did during my brief insanity. That man, who in May took it into his head to marry Antonina Ivanovna, who during June wrote a whole opera as though nothing had happened, who in July married, who in September fled from his wife, who in November railed at Rome and so on — that man wasn't I, but another Pyotr Ilyich."

The Fourth Symphony is dedicated to "my best friend" — the other woman in Tchaikovsky's life, his supporter, patron and commissioner — Nadezhda von Meck. She believed in Tchaikovsky's talent and made it financially possible for him to resign from teaching, enabling him to dedicate himself fully to composing. She supported him from the time he was 38 years old to age 49. We all should be forever grateful to Nadezhda von Meck — without her, Tchaikovsky's greatest works might not have been born.

At von Meck's request Tchaikovsky wrote an explanation, something similar to program notes about the symphony, which greatly harmed the reception of the symphony. For

generations, music critics argued over his words instead of listening to his music and understanding its scope and impact.

There is a monumental, larger-than-life breadth to this symphony. It is similar to an epic, where all essential questions of human existence are brought forth and examined with a life-or-death intensity.

The first movement, *Andante sostenuto* — *Moderato assai*, quasi *Andante* — *Allegro vivo* lasts as long as the remaining three movements together and draws a parallel to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, forming a musical dialogue between two great symphonists. The fanfare, representing Fate, creates a memorable terrifying opening. The emotional openness and daring intensity of this music are incredible. Music and emotion are inseparable, but only a few have dared to be so vulnerably open in their art. The form of the first movement is not typical — it is a curious blend of a formal structure with the freedom of a tone poem. Tchaikovsky had trouble with structural canons. His thematic material doesn't lend itself naturally to development. He was a great melodist and his melodies are so complete and emotionally full within themselves that the only natural way to develop them is to repeat in different ways. This is why there are so many repeats and sequences in Tchaikovsky's music instead of actual developmental material, as in the Germanic tradition.

The second movement, *Andantino in modo di canzone*, is of a reflective, melancholic nature. Tchaikovsky recreates the feeling of a Russian landscape. The material he uses is original, but inspired by Russian folklore — a technique later adopted by Igor Stravinsky. The writing for solo woodwinds is vocal, almost operatic. Tchaikovsky admired Rossini and was influenced by Rossini's vocal writing. Tchaikovsky's music combines elegance and power with great attention to detail.

The third movement is *Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato* — *Allegro*. It resembles a painting, an arabesque, a dance of shadows. In 1877, shortly before the creation of the 4th symphony, Tchaikovsky's first ballet *Swan Lake* premiered. Imagine the world before *Sleeping Beauty* or *Nutcracker*. Tchaikovsky, with his creation of *Swan Lake*, brought ballet music to an entirely new level. He adored dancers and greatly enjoyed writing for the ballet. Much of his music lends itself naturally to dance. The third movement of the symphony shows an unprecedented 97-note-long pizzicatti passage for the string basses and one of the world's shortest, but most nightmarish, solos of exceptional difficulty for piccolo.

Finale: *Allegro con fuoco* — is full of excitement and intoxication with life — a rush of energy beyond control, suggesting that life is worth living in spite of all the struggle and tragedy. This music takes virtuosity to the edge of what is possible. Tchaikovsky uses a well-known Russian folk-tune, "In the Field Stood a Birch Tree", as one of the themes. He also re-introduces the material of the first movement, although its appearance seems to be a calculated (or miscalculated) dramatic device rather than an organic development.

This music of great emotional contrasts, so essential for the Romantic era, is in striking contrast to all the known portraits of Tchaikovsky, in which he always appears looking like a clerk or a banker, someone who could hardly be suspected of harboring any passion at all, not to mention suffering the great turmoil of Tchaikovsky's life. It is as if everything that he tried to conceal from prying eyes, he turned into music, where it flourished freely and burned with painful honesty.

Tchaikovsky conducted at the opening of Carnegie Hall. Although in his younger years he suffered from terrible stage fright, later in life he enjoyed success as a conductor of his music. Tchaikovsky's symphonies are an important chain in symphonic development. He draws a bridge between Beethoven and Mahler. He dares not to turn away from any emotion, but instead magnifies it to symbolic and epic proportions. His music is so personal that it becomes universal.

I cannot finish this essay without mentioning Tchaikovsky's death. For many years it was attributed to cholera. During Soviet times, all the materials relating to his last days were censored and concealed. Latest findings show that Tchaikovsky died nine days after the premiere of his 6th symphony by an enforced suicide — he was sentenced so by a "Court of Honor" which consisted of Tchaikovsky's fellow alumni from the St. Petersburg Imperial School of Jurisprudence. If he failed to succeed with suicide, his homosexuality would be exposed to the tsar and to the Russian public along with the evidence they had gathered.

If indeed true, and I believe it is, this is one of the most tragic deaths in the history of Western Music and one of the greatest losses for humanity as Tchaikovsky died at the very height of his artistic power. He was 53.

# **Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4**

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## **Music from the Nutcracker**

**Artur Rodzinski • Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**

### **Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4**

1-Andante sostenuto - Moderato con anima 17:57

2-Andantino in modo di canzona 8:24

3-Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato 5:33

4-Finale: Allegro con fuoco 9:06

Total Time 41:00

5-**Nutcracker Music Includes:** Overture, The Christmas Tree, March,  
The Childrens Galop and Dance, Arrival of Drosselmeyer & Distribution of Presents 17:40

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Please Note: In the interest of preserving the superb sound quality of these historic recordings, they have been preserved in their original, pristine state for maximum fidelity. Transferred from commercially released, analog reel-to-reel tapes (some of which are more than 50 years old), the recordings themselves can be subject to certain "artifacts" which are an inseparable part of the original analog recording process, such as tape "hiss" or other defects, and these may be audible on certain music tracks.

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