

Jean Martinon was born in Lyon, where he began his education, going on to the Conservatoire de Paris to study under Albert Roussel for composition, under Charles Munch and Roger Désormière for conducting, under Vincent d'Indy for harmony, and under Jules Boucherit for violin. He served in the French army during World War II, and was taken prisoner in 1940, composing works such as *Chant des captifs* while incarcerated. Among his other compositions are four symphonies, four concertos, additional choral works and chamber music.



After the war, Martinon was appointed conductor of the Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire of Paris, and, in 1946, of the Bordeaux Philharmonic Orchestra. Other orchestras with which he was associated were the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as music director from 1963 to 1968; the Düsseldorfer Symphoniker, the French National Orchestra, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra, the Concerts Lamoureux and Het Residentie Orkest in The Hague.

Martinon's repertoire focused on the works of early twentieth century French and Russian composers. The premieres of his violin- and cello-concerti were given by Henryk Szeryng and Pierre Fournier respectively. He was a National Patron of Delta Omicron, an international professional music fraternity.

Martinon was diagnosed with bone cancer, not long after he guest conducted the San Francisco Symphony in their first complete performances of Deryck Cooke's orchestration of Gustav Mahler's tenth symphony. He died in Paris.

A large, detailed landscape painting in the style of J.M.W. Turner, showing a wide, open green field with a dirt path leading into the distance under a cloudy sky. The painting is the background for the right side of the page.

Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 6

In B Minor Op. 74 (Pathétique)

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra

Jean Martinon conducting

Tchaikovsky composed this music between February and August 1893, and conducted the first performance on October 28 of that year in St. Petersburg. Already in 1890 Tchaikovsky had written to his patroness of 13 years, Nadezhda von Meck, about a possible "program symphony." By 1893 he was ready to follow through on the idea, dedicated to his nephew Vladimir Davidov, the "Bobyk" (or "Bob") of many diary-entries and letters during the 1880s. After a successful premiere, however, he was not satisfied with Program Symphony (No. 6) on the title page. Several days later Modest suggested "patetichesky," which in Russian means "1, enthusiastic, passionate; 2, emotional; and 3, bombastic" (rather than "pathetic" or "arousing pity," as in English). Pyotr Il'yich was delighted by the suggestion: "Excellent, Modya, bravo, patetichesky!" He wrote this onto the score, and sent it the same day to his publisher, Jurgenson. Two days later, however, he had qualms and asked Jurgenson to suppress subtitles -- to issue the work simply as Symphony No. 6, dedicated to Bobyk. One week later, he was dead. As for Jurgenson, he could not resist the opportunity in 1893 to publish No. 6, in elegant *Lingua Franca*, as *Symphonie pathétique*. The sobriquet has stuck ever since.

During the work's incubation Tchaikovsky was in rare good spirits, pleased with his boldness and fluency, especially in the trailblazing finale, a drawn-out Adagio of funereal character. Where others still wrote conventional slow movements, he hit on the idea of "a limping waltz" in 5/4 time. And he made the scherzo a march that builds to such a pitch of excitement that audiences ever since, everywhere, applaud at the end.

A lugubrious Adagio prologue begins with a bassoon solo in E minor that makes its way upward through the murk of divisi string basses, followed by a nervous little motif that blossoms into the main theme of an Allegro ma non troppo sonata-structure in B minor. The memorably sighing, mauve-hued melody that dominates this movement is actually its secondary subject. A crashing orchestral tutti sets up the passionately agitated development section, followed by a condensed reprise and a brief, calmed coda.

Tchaikovsky's marking for this D major "waltz" movement is Allegro con grazia -- a song and trio with extended coda whose mood may be wistful, even melancholic midway, but whose spirit is balletic, to the extent of echoing Nutcracker's "Waltz of the Flowers," composed a year earlier.

The March-Scherzo, Allegro molto vivace in common time, has an elfin character at the start. It is a sonatina (exposition and reprise without development) that quick-steps to an explosive climax but always returns to tonic G major.

Another sonatina (symphonic developments were Tchaikovsky's *bête noire*) is anchored in B minor, although the tragic second theme enters in D major. The overall mood is inconsolably grieving, but not "pathetic." Ultimately, the music returns to those murky depths in which the symphony was born some 40 minutes earlier -- without, however, benediction or hope.

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1 Adagio - Allegro Non Troppo 18:33

2 Allegro Con Grazia 7:56

3 Allegro Molto Vivaco 8:46

4 Adagio Lamentoso 10:07

Total Time: 45:22

Transferred from a 15ips 2-track tape

Recorded by Decca 31 Mar-3 Apr 1958 Sofiensaal, Vienna

Producer Erik Smith Engineer Kenneth Wilkinson



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