

London Philharmonic Orchestra

TCHAIKOVSKY

SYMPHONY NO. 4

SYMPHONY NO. 5

VLADIMIR JUROWSKI *conductor*

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA





# TCHAIKOVSKY

## SYMPHONY NO. 4 IN F MINOR

Tchaikovsky wrote most of his Fourth Symphony in 1877, the year of his greatest emotional crisis, unresolved and intensified by his impossible marriage, and culminating in a suicide attempt. In a letter to his patroness Nadezhda von Meck, which he was at pains to point out was written after the Symphony, he described the work as dominated by the idea of Fate, which ‘hangs above your head like the sword of Damocles, and unwaveringly, constantly poisons the soul’.

This notion is embodied in the stern fanfares of the introduction to the first movement – after which the main theme of the ensuing *Moderato con anima* (‘with soul’) depicts the resulting ‘cheerless and hopeless feeling’ which ‘grows yet stronger and more burning’, and the waltz-time second-subject group represents a retreat from reality into a world of daydreams. The ‘Fate’ theme recurs three times amidst the mounting excitement of the development section, and then again after the very free, truncated recapitulation and in the much faster coda. ‘Thus’, in Tchaikovsky’s words, ‘all life is an unbroken alternation of hard reality with swiftly passing dreams and visions of happiness.’

The two middle movements are more straightforward in form and expression. The description *in modo di canzona* in the heading of the B-flat minor slow movement indicates a song-like style, exemplified in the oboe’s first long melody, and also the ‘song form’ of A–B–A – though this is complicated by the fact that there are two alternating principal themes

in the outer sections, the second beginning with the opening phrase of the first turned upside-down. Tchaikovsky said that this movement suggested ‘that melancholy feeling which comes in the evening when, weary from your labour, you are sitting alone’, reflecting on a host of distant memories: ‘happy moments, when the young blood boiled, and life was satisfying ... painful moments, irreparable losses’.

The *Scherzo*, the composer went on, ‘expresses no definite feeling’, but ‘is made up of capricious arabesques, ... fleeting images’, including ‘a picture of drunken peasants and a street song’, and later, ‘somewhere in the distance, a military procession’. But this unusual duple-time movement is chiefly concerned with what Tchaikovsky called in an earlier letter ‘a new instrumental effect of which I have great hopes’. The strings play pizzicato throughout the movement: the scherzo sections are for them alone. The trio is in two sections, the first for woodwind and the second for the brass and timpani. And in a tailpiece to the trio, and again in a coda to the whole movement, the three elements, and their different tempi and thematic ideas, are ingeniously combined.

The finale could be analysed in terms of variation and sonata forms, but it is most likely to be perceived as a kind of rondo, in which statements of the brilliant opening flourish in F major – joined later by a march-like idea in the same key – alternate with a subsidiary theme in various minor keys. This subsidiary theme, a Russian folksong called ‘In the

fields there stood a birch tree', also forms the basis of two developmental episodes. The second of these culminates in the return of the 'Fate' theme from the first movement – after which the two major-key themes return in reverse order to launch a triumphant coda. Tchaikovsky's programme here speaks of finding joy amidst the merry-making of the people, who 'have not noticed that you are solitary and sad'. 'Rejoice in others' rejoicing', he wrote to Madame von Meck, but really to himself. 'To live is still possible!'

*Programme note © Anthony Burton*

## TCHAIKOVSKY

### SYMPHONY NO. 5 IN E MINOR

Like Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony, the Fifth begins with what is clearly a 'Fate' motif and which returns to haunt all three later movements. After Tchaikovsky's disastrous attempt to conquer – or at least conceal – his homosexuality by marrying one of his students in 1877, he became increasingly convinced that his life was directed by some kind of dark, implacable force. The Fifth's fateful motto theme however enters on low clarinets (a colour Tchaikovsky often used to great effect) singing a mournful, funereal theme, while low string chords underscore the sense of heavy, funereal tread. Then the string chords set out at a livelier pace, and a new theme – melancholic but with a new dancing momentum – emerges on clarinet and bassoon. This *Allegro con anima* has its exhilarating highs and stark lows, but the end echoes the beginning: a bassoon subtly recalls the outline of the original 'Fate' theme before descending to a cavernous low B, as timpani and double basses close the movement unambiguously in the minor.

Sombre low string chords begin the slow movement, but now they climb towards the light, which dawns fully in a wonderful long horn melody. If the first movement's motto theme represents Fate, then this is almost certainly a 'Love' theme. Eventually the music grows agitated, and the first movement's 'Fate' theme storms in on trumpets, bringing the music to a dead stop. Tentatively at first, the 'Love' melody returns (now on violins with oboe countermelody) and the mood grows more ardent – until again Fate intrudes, still

more aggressively, on trombones. This time there is no return of the 'Love' theme, but a tender, possibly resigned coda.

The following waltz movement is in striking contrast. Its elegant, lilting dance tune could have come straight from a ballroom scene in one of Tchaikovsky's operas or ballets. But just before the end, Fate returns again, this time quietly on low clarinets and bassoons – a dim but ghostly presence amid colourful merriment. Then Tchaikovsky begins his finale by transforming the 'Fate' theme into a resolutely major-key march tune. Before long the resolve seems to falter and a turbulent *Allegro vivace* explodes onto the scene.

At length this comes to a big expectant pause, then the major-key version of the Fate theme marches back in on strings to launch Tchaikovsky's most positive symphonic conclusion. Eventually the coda races to the finish post with memories of the first movement's dancing *Allegro* theme shining out on trumpets and horns. Not every listener finds this final affirmation entirely convincing – but that may have been Tchaikovsky's point. After all, how often in life do we experience unequivocal triumph?

*Programme note © Stephen Johnson*

## VLADIMIR JUROWSKI *conductor*



© Karen Robinson

Vladimir Jurowski was born in Moscow, but in 1990 moved with his family to Germany, where he completed his musical studies at the High Schools of Music in Dresden and in Berlin. In 1995 he made his international début at the Wexford Festival, where he conducted Rimsky-Korsakov's *May Night*. The same year saw his brilliant début at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in *Nabucco*. In 1996 he joined the ensemble of Komische Oper Berlin, becoming First Kapellmeister in 1997 and continuing to work at the Komische Oper on a permanent basis until 2001.

Since 1997 Vladimir Jurowski has been a guest at some of the world's leading musical institutions including the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Teatro La Fenice di Venezia, Opéra Bastille de Paris, Théâtre de la Monnaie Bruxelles, Maggio Musicale Festival Florence, Rossini Opera Festival Pesaro, Edinburgh International Festival, Dresden Semperoper and the Teatro Comunale di Bologna (where he served as Principal Guest Conductor between 2000 and 2003). In 1999 he made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera New York with *Rigoletto*.

In January 2001 Vladimir Jurowski took up the position of Music Director of Glyndebourne Festival Opera. He also holds the titles of Principal Artist with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Artistic Director of the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia, and from 2005 to 2009 served as Principal Guest Conductor of the Russian National Orchestra. In September 2007 he became the London Philharmonic Orchestra's twelfth Principal Conductor.

Vladimir Jurowski is a regular guest with many of the world's other leading orchestras including the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Staatskapelle Dresden, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and the Chicago Symphony, Cleveland and Philadelphia orchestras.



# LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The London Philharmonic Orchestra is known as one of the world's great orchestras with a reputation secured by its performances in the concert hall and opera house, its many award-winning recordings, its trail-blazing international tours and its pioneering education work. Distinguished conductors who have held positions with the Orchestra since its foundation in 1932 by Sir Thomas Beecham include Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt, Franz Welser-Möst and Kurt Masur. Vladimir Jurowski was appointed the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor in March 2003 and became Principal Conductor in September 2007. The London Philharmonic Orchestra has been Resident Symphony Orchestra at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall since 1992 and there it presents its main series of concerts between September and May each year.

In summer, the Orchestra moves to Sussex where it has been Resident at Glyndebourne Festival Opera for over 40 years. The Orchestra also performs at venues around the UK and has made numerous tours to America, Europe and Japan, and visited India, Hong Kong, China, South Korea, Australia, Oman, Russia, South Africa and Abu Dhabi.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra made its first recordings on 10 October 1932, just three days after its first public performance. It has recorded and broadcast regularly ever since, and in 2005 established its own record label. These recordings are taken mainly from live concerts given by conductors including LPO Principal Conductors from Beecham and Boult, through Haitink, Solti and Tennstedt, to Masur and Jurowski. **[lpo.org.uk](http://lpo.org.uk)**



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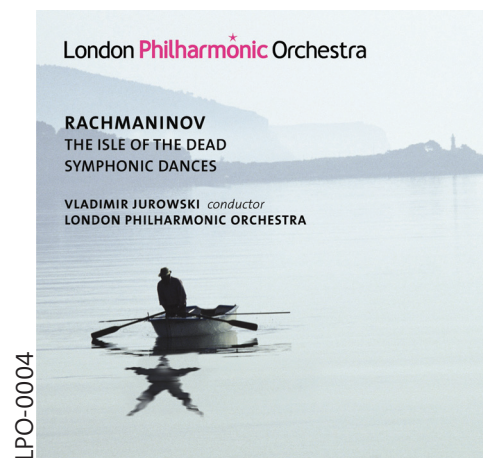
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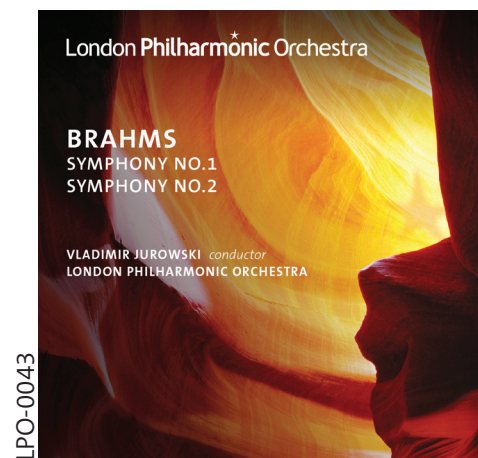
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**PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–93)**

**43:17     Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36**

- |    |       |   |
|----|-------|---|
| 01 | 19:04 | Andante sostenuto — Moderato con anima — Moderato assai, quasi Andante — Allegro vivo |
| 02 | 9:44  | Andantino in modo di canzona  |
| 03 | 5:50  | Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato — Allegro   |
| 04 | 8:39  | Finale: Allegro con fuoco   |

**41:30     Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64**

- |    |       |                                       |
|----|-------|---------------------------------------|
| 05 | 13:22 | Andante — Allegro con anima           |
| 06 | 11:38 | Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza |
| 07 | 5:34  | Valse: Allegro moderato               |
| 08 | 10:56 | Finale: Andante maestoso              |

**VLADIMIR JUROWSKI** *conductor*

**LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**

**Pieter Schoeman** *leader*

Recorded live at Southbank Centre's **ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL**, London