

Chandos

CHAN 8402



© 1985 Chandos Records Ltd. © 1985 Chandos Records Ltd.
CHANDOS RECORDS LTD, LONDON, ENGLAND.

Chandos

DIGITAL

Tchaikovsky
Symphony 1
in G minor Op.13

Winter Daydreams

Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra
Mariss Jansons, Conductor



Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

According to Tchaikovsky's younger brother Modest, no other work caused the composer such labour and suffering as his First Symphony, which occupied him through much of 1866, the year of his 26th birthday. In January he had moved from St Petersburg to Moscow, where Nikolay Rubinstein, Director of the newly-opened Conservatory of Music, had engaged him as Professor of Harmony, thereby alleviating the financial hardship that had beset him since he resigned a minor post at the Ministry of Justice three years earlier to devote himself to music.

He lodged in Moscow with Rubinstein, and it was probably at his suggestion that Tchaikovsky began a more extended work than anything he had previously attempted. He had revised a student composition, an Overture in F major, which Rubinstein conducted at a concert in March and brought the composer his first public success. Much encouraged, he began sketches for a symphony right away, working by night as well as by day in addition to teaching, until physical exhaustion set in. He was further cast down by a belated and scathing review in St Petersburg of his graduation composition, a cantata on Schiller's 'Ode to Joy' (the text set by Beethoven in his Ninth Symphony).

Very soon Tchaikovsky was on the verge of a nervous breakdown, forcing himself to continue working in spite of sleeplessness, persistent headaches, hallucinations and a recurring sense of dread that he would not live to finish the Symphony, all of which he mentioned in his letters. A doctor was called in and said his case was hopeless, which did not exactly help matters. In fact, most of the Symphony was written by the Summer, when the composer showed it to Nikolay Rubinstein's brother Anton, his former teacher at St Petersburg, who advised some revision before he would consider it for performance.

Back in Moscow, Tchaikovsky eventually went along with the suggestions made to him, but then the work was first performed in a strangely piecemeal fashion. The Scherzo movement alone was played at a Moscow concert in December, without much success (according to Modest), but this and the second movement were more favourably received when Nikolay conducted

them at St Petersburg two months later. Another year went by before the Symphony was given in its entirety, at Moscow on 15 February 1868. Tchaikovsky then made more revisions and a few cuts before a first edition was published in 1874. The version now heard was not performed until 1886, and a corrected printed edition eventually appeared in 1888, 22 years after it was begun.

Tchaikovsky's publisher, Jürgenson, had brought out the first Russian editions of some German symphonic classics in the early 1860s, and we know that the composer enjoyed playing through the symphonies by Mendelssohn and Schumann. His own first essay in the form owes something in style to both these models, as in the use he made of descriptive titles and in his method of reconciling the disciplines of symphonic form with his own romantic imagination and developing technique. After his later revision he wrote in a letter: 'Despite its deficiencies I have a soft spot for it. It is a sin of my sweet youth'.

He also referred to it when writing to his longtime patroness, Nadezhda von Meck, the wealthy widow of a railway engineer who virtually financed him for some 15 years out of admiration for his music, but on condition that they never met. 'Although it is immature in many respects', he told her, 'it is essentially better and richer in content than many other, more mature works'. In giving it the title of *Winter Daydreams* he was no doubt copying Mendelssohn's practice as well as seeking to define his own approach.

Tchaikovsky then bestowed separate titles on each of the first two movements. The opening *Allegro tranquillo* he called 'Dreams of a Winter Journey', but this seems to have no specific relevance to anything in the music, which is a sonata-type structure of two contrasting ideas. Both the main themes are introduced by the woodwind, the first by flute and bassoon playing two octaves apart, the second by a solo clarinet. In general it is the movement's melodic charm and instrumental detail that is more engaging than the modest though skilfully adapted symphonic development.

The second movement he inscribed 'Land of desolation, Land of mists'. It is certainly a mood-picture, a decidedly Russian landscape of the mind through which musical images are brought into focus. The implications of

the subtitle are somewhat contradicted by an opening phrase now known to have come from Tchaikovsky's earlier Overture on Ostrovsky's drama, *The Storm*, where it had different emotional connotations. However, the folklike song of an oboe is extended and elaborated as it travels from one instrument to another, the varied orchestration and counterpoint doing duty for musical development.

The other movements have no more subtitles, we do not know why. The third movement Scherzo was more or less ready made, being taken over from a Piano Sonata in C-sharp minor he wrote the year before, transposed to a new key and reworked to take more advantage of orchestral colour (the original keyboard work was subsequently published posthumously). Mendelssohn again comes to mind in the elegance of phrase and graceful manner, but it is the newly-written trio section in waltz-time that acquires a special significance as the progenitor of all the later and much-loved orchestral waltzes.

The finale, although again in sonata form with two subjects, derives most of its character from a single Russian folksong, which Tchaikovsky also later arranged as one of a published collection. Its melody provides the basis for both the slow introduction and the jaunty second theme of the movement, as well as serving to some extent in shaping the movement's sturdy first subject. By way of development, Tchaikovsky here parades his contrapuntal skill in a fugal passage with entries in different keys, while generating an energetic rhythmic impetus that carries the movement through with a flourish.

© 1985 Noël Goodwin

The Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra can trace its roots back to the last century to the period of Edvard Grieg and Johan Svendsen. Grieg was actually one of the founders and first conductors of the orchestra, which was established in 1871. This was a period of cultural growth and activity in Norway, when the authors Henrik Ibsen and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson and the painters Adolph Tidemann and Hans Gude became well known and the first collections of Norwegian folk music were published.

The orchestra became permanently established as an independent organization in 1919, when its conductor was Georg Schneevoigt. Later artistic directors were Ignaz Neumark, Jose Eibenschütz, Issay Dobrowen, Odd Grüner-Hegge, Olav Kielland and Øivin Fjeldstad. Over the last 20 years the orchestra has gone through a tremendous artistic growth and achieved a particular reputation for the fine quality and tone of the wind and brass sections. A number of outstanding conductors have been instrumental in its development: Herbert Blomstedt (1962-68), Miltiades Caridis (1969-75), Okko Kamu (1975-79) and Mariss Jansons (from 1979). The working facilities have also been greatly improved with the completion of the Oslo Concert Hall in 1977, a multi-million dollar complex which is now the home of the orchestra and where it gives more than 60 concerts a year. It has made a number of recordings for various companies and been on tour in Europe, Britain and the U.S.A., receiving unanimous praise from major critics.

Mariss Jansons is chief conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra and under his leadership the orchestra has thrived greatly and reached a new artistic level and achieved some outstanding interpretations. In 1982 Jansons and the orchestra received the Norwegian 'Grammy' Award – Spellemansprisen – for their recording of works by Grieg and in 1983 Jansons received the Norwegian music critics' award for his interpretation of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 7.

Mariss Jansons was born in Riga in 1943 and trained at the Leningrad Music Conservatory, studying violin, viola, piano and conducting. After his graduation in 1969 he continued his studies at the Vienna Music Academy under Hans Swarovsky and also in Salzburg under Herbert von Karajan. He became internationally known when he was among the prize-winners in the Herbert von Karajan competition in Berlin in 1971. Later that year he was appointed assistant to the legendary Jevgeny Mravinsky of the Leningrad Philharmonic.

He is at present conductor of the Leningrad Philharmonic and he conducted the Moscow State Orchestra on its tour of England and Northern Ireland in Autumn 1983 as well as the Oslo Philharmonic on its English tour in the Spring the same year. He has also conducted the major orchestras of 22 different countries.

Also available:

Symphony No. 4 in F minor Op. 36

ABRD & ABTD 1124 LP & Cassette

CHAN 8361 Compact Disc

Symphony No. 5 in E minor Op. 64

ABRD & ABTD 1151 LP & Cassette

CHAN 8351 Compact Disc

The Compact Disc Digital Audio System offers the best possible sound reproduction – on a small, convenient sound-carrier unit. The Compact Disc's superior performance is the result of laser-optical scanning combined with digital playback, and is independent of the technology used in making the original recording. This recording technology is identified on the back cover by a three-letter code.

[DDD] : digital tape recorder used during session recording, mixing and/or editing, and mastering (transcription).

[ADD] : analogue tape recorder used during session recording; digital tape recorder used during subsequent mixing and/or editing and during mastering (transcription).

[AAD] : analogue tape recorder used during session recording and subsequent mixing and/or editing; digital tape recorder used during mastering (transcription).

In storing and handling the Compact Disc you should apply the same care as with conventional records. No further cleaning will be necessary if the Compact Disc is always held by the edges and is replaced in its case directly after playing. Should the Compact Disc become soiled by fingerprints, dust or dirt, it can be wiped (always in a straight line, from centre to edge) with a clean and lint-free, soft, dry cloth. No solvent or abrasive cleaner should ever be used on the disc.

If you follow these suggestions, the Compact Disc will provide a lifetime of pure listening enjoyment.

Recording Producer: Brian Couzens.

Co-Producer and Sound Supervision: Ralph Couzens.

Sound Engineer: Egil Damm.

Assistant Engineer: Dag Kristofferson.

Recorded in the Oslo Philharmonic Concert Hall,

April 25-30, 1985.

Front Cover painting 'A scene on the ice near Dordrecht'

by Jan Van Goyen, reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees,

The National Gallery, London.

Sleeve Design: Thumb Design Partnership

WARNING: Copyright subsists in all recordings issued under this label. Any unauthorized broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording thereof in any manner whatsoever will constitute an infringement of such copyright. In the United Kingdom, licences for the use of recordings for public performance may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd., Ganton House, 14-22 Ganton Street, London W1V 1LB.

TCHAIKOVSKY: SYMPHONY NO. 1 – Oslo Philharmonic/Jansons · Chandos CHAN 8402

Chandos

CHAN 8402

Tchaikovsky Symphony **1**

in G minor Op.13

Winter Daydreams

Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra

Mariss Jansons, Conductor

- ❶ I – Allegro tranquillo
(‘Dreams of a Winter Journey’) (11:45)
- ❷ II – Adagio cantabile ma non tanto
(‘Land of desolation, Land of mists’) (11:41)
- ❸ III – Scherzo: Allegro scherzando giocoso (7:32)
- ❹ IV – Finale: Andante lugubre –
Allegro maestoso (12:41)

TT = 43:57
DDD

© 1985 Chandos Records Ltd. © 1985 Chandos Records Ltd.
CHANDOS RECORDS LTD, LONDON, ENGLAND.

TCHAIKOVSKY: SYMPHONY NO. 1 – Oslo Philharmonic/Jansons · Chandos CHAN 8402