



PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
MANFRED HONECK, MUSIC DIRECTOR

TCHAIKOVSKY

SYMPHONY NO. 6



DVOŘÁK

RUSALKA FANTASY

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TCHAIKOVSKY SYMPHONY NO. 6 - MYSTERY IN MUSIC



Over the course of his 35 years, W. A. Mozart composed over 600 pieces spanning different genres, but when he died in 1791 while working on a Requiem, many theories arose: perhaps Mozart had written his own Requiem or had been poisoned. Similar speculation took place when P. I. Tchaikovsky died only nine days after the world premiere of his Sixth Symphony. Rumors abound, even to this day, suggesting that he had been judged by a secret St. Petersburg law court, had been poisoned by arsenic or had written his last

symphony knowing he would soon die. Though even today we cannot determine the exact circumstances of his death, the original and official version seems most plausible to me: that Tchaikovsky carelessly drank a glass of unclean water. Furthermore, one of Tchaikovsky's friends, Nikolai Kashkin, mentioned that the composer had planned several journeys abroad, including to South America, Stockholm Sweden and Australia. Additionally, the Norwegian composer, Johan Severin Svendsen, received a letter from Tchaikovsky right before he learned of his death in which Tchaikovsky revealed plans to travel to Denmark. Doctor Bertenson, who watched over the sick Tchaikovsky, mentioned a cholera infection in a letter to Tchaikovsky's brother, Modest. Modest, who stood with others around Tchaikovsky's deathbed, all wearing white aprons in fear of the danger of infection, reported on his part, "(...) in the night to the 24th [of October 1893], the situation

seemed not yet hopeless, but non-functioning kidneys worried the doctors. Pyotr Ilyich slept more, his sleep was heavy and unrestful: he hallucinated and continuously repeated the name of Nadezhda Filaretovna, furiously and reproachfully. This was the only word we could hear clearly.”

Despite all speculation, one thing is clear: there is not an immediate connection between the composition of the Sixth Symphony and Tchaikovsky's death. Further evidence to support this is the timeline—the Symphony was written between February 4–March 24, 1893, more than half a year before Tchaikovsky's death on October 25, 1893. All biographical details aside, there is no doubt that the subject of death is a dominant theme in the Symphony. One year before Tchaikovsky began writing the Sixth Symphony, he intended to compose yet another symphony with the following programmatic titles: “Death,” “Love,” “Disappointment,” “Dying.” He ultimately refused the project in the end, instead using some of the material for the sketch of the first movement of his Third Piano Concerto. On February 11, 1893, in a letter to his beloved nephew, Vladimir Bobik Davydov, to whom the Sixth Symphony would later be dedicated, Tchaikovsky wrote, “You know I destroyed a symphony I had been composing and only partly orchestrated in autumn. During my journey I had the idea for another symphony, this time with a programme, but such a programme that will remain an enigma to everyone—let them guess; the symphony shall be entitled: *A Programme Symphony* (No. 6); *Symphonie à Programme* (No. 6); *Programm-Symphonie* (No. 6). The programme itself will be suffused with subjectivity, and not infrequently during my travels, while composing it in my head, I wept a great deal. Upon my return I sat down to write the sketches, and the work went so furiously and quickly that in less than four days the first movement was completely ready, and the remaining movements already clearly outlined in my head. The third movement is already half-done. The form of this symphony will have much

that is new, and amongst other things, the finale will not be a noisy Allegro, but on the contrary, a long drawn-out *Adagio*. You can't imagine how blissful I feel in the conviction that my time is not yet passed, and to work is still possible. Of course I might be mistaken, but I don't think so." It is clear that Tchaikovsky wrote the Sixth Symphony, called "*Pathétique*," in a truly inspired intoxication, quickly re-awakening the creative power that he had believed was lost.

One must wonder what Tchaikovsky refers to when speaking about a secret program. It is important to remember that during this time, it was not necessarily unusual to have a program, as it was around this very same period that Strauss composed *Till Eulenspiegel*, and, one year later, *Death and Transfiguration*, both of which are inspired by colorful narratives. Additionally, Mahler (who incidentally considered Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony to be his most beloved piece) worked on his epic Second Symphony between 1888 and 1894, also clearly informed by a program. But what is truly meant by Tchaikovsky's reference to a secret program? Is the Sixth Symphony a Requiem? Grand Duke Constantine had tried to convince Tchaikovsky to write a Requiem based on a text by the poet and the former's law school friend, Aleksey Apukhtin. Tchaikovsky refused, as his recently finished symphony would be imbued of the same spirit "of which the (Apukhtin's) Requiem would be filled with and thus closely related. I believe that this symphony succeeded and I fear I could repeat myself, if I started right away on a work which is in spirit and character the same as the one before." Nonetheless, as was previously mentioned, death is a dominant subject in the symphony. A chorale motive, inspired by the orthodox liturgy for the dead, appears in the first movement and similar elements are also found in the other movements. The choice of the key of b minor is perhaps characteristic and symbolic, as well, (think of Bach's Mass in b minor or Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony).

Without a doubt, it is clear, though, that the program of the Sixth Symphony is related to Tchaikovsky's personal life, famously rich in fatal disappointments,

desperation and mysterious, unusual events, for example his struggle with and repression of his homosexuality, the enigmatic marriage with Antonina Miliukova, which lasted for only a few weeks, and the following attempt at suicide. Additionally, Tchaikovsky's relationship to his pen pal, Nadezhda Filaretovna von Meck, whom he was never allowed to meet personally, is an episode hardly to be found in other vitae. It is no secret that her abrupt change of heart and subsequent discontinuation of his stipend was certainly a shock for Tchaikovsky and though he didn't need the money at the time, it was the manner in which the friendship ended that hit Tchaikovsky so hard. He had seen in von Meck the ideal of friendship and had also trusted her with very personal matters. On July 6, 1891, Tchaikovsky wrote to Wladyslaw Pachulski, "In Nadezhda Filaretovna I saw the ideal human being, maybe because I never met her in person. I couldn't imagine that such an ideal [person]—a semi-goddess—would change and turn her back on me. (...) It disturbs the peace of my soul and poisons the few moments of happiness fate has reserved for me. I never felt such humiliation, such hurt in my pride." In this light, could the mysterious program of the Sixth Symphony perhaps deal with this fracture? In one of his numerous letters to Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky wrote on February 19, 1881, " (...) a flood of feelings and thoughts has overwhelmed me. I am so happy and at the same time so sad. Why? Are there tears of emotion, of gratitude rising from my heart or do I regret something? Music alone is able to express this."

For Tchaikovsky, his great refuge was music. He celebrated wonderful successes, received honorary doctorates and traveled extensively, but the world where he could truly find real comfort and express himself completely was music. "I placed in this symphony—without exaggerating—my entire soul"—and his soul was a Russian soul, filled with passion, yearning, fervor and a great depth of feeling.

It is perhaps for this reason, that at times, Tchaikovsky has been reproached for being overly sentimental and for expressing emotions in an exaggerated manner. His music has sometimes been criticized for being *kitsch*, his critics further suspicious of the fact that such soul could be found within. And yet, this has also been the secret to Tchaikovsky's success, as Tchaikovsky's soul stands also for the soul of the listener. How simple, fast and convincingly could Tchaikovsky translate his soul into music, with an expert ability to describe even the most subtle and intimate of emotions. And it is in his Sixth Symphony that Tchaikovsky takes this to the utmost limit. One such example is the end of the exposition of the first movement where the clarinet line moves from *ppp* to *pppp* to *ppppp*, the phrase ultimately ending with a *piano* 6 times, *pppppp*. This is a most unusual marking, but also, somehow necessary in order to obtain the dramatic shock effect in the subsequent *fortissimo* (*ff*) start of the development section. While Tchaikovsky was most satisfied with the end result of the Sixth Symphony, the instrumentation that he began with on July 6, 1893 caused great concern. On August 2, 1893, he informed Vladimir Davydov that the Symphony was "coming along. I'm very pleased with its content, but dissatisfied, or rather not completely satisfied, with the instrumentation. For some reason it's not coming out as I intended. To me it would be typical and unsurprising if this symphony were torn to pieces or little appreciated, for it wouldn't be for the first time that had happened. But I absolutely consider it to be the best, and in particular, the *most sincere* of all my creations. I love it as I have never loved any of my other musical offspring."

Throughout, one of the biggest challenges for me was to shape the musical lines homogenously. The above-mentioned descent of the clarinet which is continued by the bassoon in the original, is traditionally transcribed for bass clarinet (bar 160 or 9:36"). This makes good sense because a bassoon is hardly able to play the same quiet dynamic (*pppppp*) as a bass clarinet. Instead, one might hear a significant fracture in sound and dynamic.

It is fascinating, as well, that Tchaikovsky orchestrates the opening of the first movement for mostly lower voices alone (there are no violins here), as he also did in the Fifth Symphony. Both here and there he sets a gloomy, general undertone and as this mood in the Sixth Symphony is similar to one of a Requiem, it is not surprising that there must be a dark color in the low strings before the basic motive of sorrow and sigh is introduced by the solo bassoon and violas, later repeated throughout the whole symphony. The Sixth Symphony is full of heavy descending lines, evoking sadness, regret and depression, surely an echo to some of the moments and sentiments of Tchaikovsky's own life. In contrast to Tchaikovsky's Fourth and Fifth Symphonies, one can hardly find elements of Russian folklore music.

When interpreting Tchaikovsky, I am aware of three potential dangers: first, exaggeration; second, excessiveness; and third, impatience. Examining each of these in more depth and starting with the first, it is important to note that Tchaikovsky's music in itself is deeply emotional. Therefore, it is not only unnecessary, but actually dangerous to boost that which is already there. This could lead to distortion of the general mood and music that is potentially unbalanced. My predecessor at the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, former Music Director Mariss Jansons, for whom I hold great esteem once said, "It is not necessary to add sugar to honey"—and I likewise believe this to be very true. Regarding the second pitfall, excessive and sustained dynamic levels without moderation, within the numerous risings and eruptions that are directly indicated by Tchaikovsky, one must be careful not to always play the written *fff*. Otherwise, this could lead to the "Tchaikovsky noise" as Tchaikovsky himself spoke about with the "noisy Allegro." It is also necessary, in my opinion, to intervene at times, in favor of clear phrasing. I did, for example, ask for variety in the endless lines in the third movement, all indicated in a continuous *fff*. Instead, I reduce the volume at the beginning in an effort to make the rising dynamics possible and audible (bar

267 or 6:48"). Finally, regarding impatience, it is important that the dynamic risings are realized in a precisely moderated sequence that ultimately serves the music. One can often find long risings that reach the end-dynamic much too early, thus losing the desired overall musical effect.

When examining the Sixth Symphony, it is interesting to note the rather unusual sequence of movements that Tchaikovsky chose: the first movement is long, slow in the beginning, and fast in the middle; the second and the third movements are both scherzo-like, and the third could easily be seen as a triumphant finale. The fourth, an *Adagio*, is a farewell and an epilogue. Again, while we do not know the origins of the mysterious program, from the very start of the Symphony, the music's atmosphere is definitely clear. I would like to emphasize two particular moments in the first movement where I have asked for specific nuances in sound and color, inspired by the overall feeling and mood. It is entirely possible that the violas could play the first bars of the *Allegro* on the A-string and this would, of course, give a rather bright sound. Taking into account, though, the rather gloomy mood, I decided to let them play this passage on the D-string, creating a softer and slightly darker sound (bar 19 or 1:58"). A particularly beautiful moment can be found in the transition to the second theme which appears out of a breathless violoncello phrase passed on to the violas. The phrase grows ever quieter and ends on an F sharp, followed by a short pause. Next, the first violins and the violoncelli, now muted, begin again on the same F sharp and make a link between the end of the viola tone and their entrance, despite the general pause. I know, it's a small detail, but here the pause is music and the thread of the F sharp sound connects the two sections in an important way (bar 88 or 4:27").

The lyrical second theme section that follows appears four times, each time with different instrumentation and specific intention, furthering the emotional and

dramatic line. Throughout, Tchaikovsky indicates specific tempi and expression marks: *Andante-Incalzando-Ritenuto* (Walking-Forward pressing-Held back). Here, as well, he asks for accentuations that could easily become exaggerated, but in my view, it is more important that they correspond to the lyrical character. I want to particularly highlight the third appearance of the second theme section where Tchaikovsky changes the instrumentation yet again, now with the violoncelli and bassi playing the accompanying phrases at different paces, thus creating a somehow foggy atmosphere (bar 305 or 14:30"). Additionally, the oboes, clarinets and bassoons overlay a counter melody. This time, the *Incalzando* is played with a fast run only once at the very end, but with 14 rushing notes. Here, it is a great temptation to forget the *Incalzando* for technical reasons, but the effect of the many notes played quickly actually significantly intensifies the character of the *Incalzando* (bar 313 or 15:09"). The horns also play a big role, now with the counter melody for the first time, so I bring them to the forefront and also ask for *rubato* (push and pull), as the direction towards the *ffz* occurs for the last time (bar 313-316 or 15:10"-15:30"). The final chorale-like theme (bar 336 or 17:21") is still hopeful, were it not for the descending *pizzicati* (plucked notes) of the strings alluding to something perhaps fatal. (It is interesting to note that the end of the first movement of the Fifth Symphony similarly has a descending motive, but less hopeful). Here, now, the first movement ends peacefully.

Beginning with the first movement and subsequently throughout the Symphony, it was important for me to work on the extreme dynamic levels, ranging from *pppppp* to *ffff*, in order to make them supportive of the sense and character of the music. The first *fff* appears in bars 187-189 and reaches a truly dramatic intensity with the entrance of the brass and timpani (bar 189 or 10:33"). Here, it is interesting to also note that all of these *fff* entrances are on

the fourth beat, i.e. a syncopation. These syncopations must be clearly perceived as distinctive elements, thus accentuated, although this is not explicitly written in the music. Shadings within the marked dynamics are particularly crucial, as well, as so much of the Symphony is built on long, extensive phrases (I call them waves) so characteristic of all of Tchaikovsky's music. The last Tchaikovsky wave of this section (from bar 277 or 13:02") can hardly be realized with enough intense desperation. The *fff* in bar 284 (or 13:25") marks the peak of the ascending line, but the final goal is really the *ffff* (4fs) in bar 299 (or 14:11"). For me, this is the most dramatic moment which leads directly into the catastrophe, so to speak. Achieving this effectively is a real challenge for every orchestra and while it is a true art to play extremely quietly, it is also an equal challenge to attain real intensity. Here, Tchaikovsky demands an extraordinary sound mass in order to sustain the energy throughout the wave.

Even though the second movement is written in 5/4, one can perceive it almost as a waltz. Similar to Tchaikovsky's ballets, the highest degree of elegance is required here. Still, the Trio echoes somehow a darker Requiem mood—even the world of dance is not safe. The timpani, bassoon and bassi impose a knocking quarter note rhythm and I have asked the orchestra to play it while thinking of a heartbeat. For the repetition, I have taken the liberty to have the *lamentos* (plaintive) main theme sound like an echo and even a double echo, all the while with the knocking quarter notes audible at the same continuous volume (bar 57 or 2:49"). By simply lowering the dynamic level here of the main theme, a premonition of death can be felt. Nothing additional is needed, as the tempo of the trio is already just a bit slower, as is mostly the tradition with dance movements. With the return of the waltz theme in bar 82 (4:09"), now here and in the following bars, we have two alternating tempi. Of course, the original waltz theme needs to be played in the first tempo, while the fragment from the trio remains in the slower tempo, thus revealing the interesting contrast of a safe, yet broken world. From

bar 152 onward (6:39"), I have asked for the accentuations to be played quite lyrically, as embedding them within the four bar phrase and preserving the line was important to me. The movement ends quietly, somehow almost fainting, although I let the waltz theme in the first violins (bar 172 or 7:35") flow more in contrast to the previous trio motive in the winds. Only two bars later, at the very end, the waltz theme fades into the morbid tempo of the trio, this final act uniting sorrow and happiness once more.

The third movement is another miracle of composition, revealing the pure genius of Tchaikovsky as he masterfully creates the impression of a scherzo from the opening bars, finally revealing the main march theme no less than 70 bars later. Here, Tchaikovsky composes a virtual Shakespearean world: everything is in motion and the spirits move. Shreds of motives can be heard and eighth notes march continuously (there is no single moment within the first 76 bars where there is not the motion of eighth notes). Ease, fluency and liteness are essential, although small markings such as the horns' *crescendo* (bar 22 or 0:38") are important to further the flowing energy. Extreme attention to detail helps here, for example, highlighting the third and fourth horns to make them more audible (bar 74 or 1:50"). In this instance, it is necessary for them to play louder than the *pp* indicated. As mentioned above, I have asked for a drop in dynamic, (bars 267 or 6:48" and 304 or 7:45") even if it is not overtly indicated by Tchaikovsky, as it is important for each wave to continually build. In bar 279 (7:06"), there is the half-tone interval of the main theme hidden in the horns which signifies the *lamentoso* (plaintive cry) and general mood of the Symphony—and here Tchaikovsky writes *marcato assai* (very marked), to bring forth this small detail which serves to cast an almost invisible shadow of doom on this otherwise triumphant movement.

The final movement, *Finale*, came as a total surprise to the world of music. The audience expected a furious finale or as Tchaikovsky himself put it, "a noisy Allegro," but instead, Tchaikovsky delivers a lengthy Adagio. A few days after the

premiere, Tchaikovsky wrote to his nephew that the fourth movement had somehow caused confusion. It became an *Adagio lamentoso* (a chant of mourning). Most of the phrasing moves downwards and throughout, there is deep sorrow and desperation. The beautiful and touching *Andante* (bar 37 or 2:37") that follows has a descending line expressing hopeful melancholy and is marked "*con lenezza e devozione*" (with smoothness and devotion). There is still life, but it is almost as if the dying soul looks back one final time. Here, the horns correspond to the rhythm of the coda, now extremely tender and later, assertive and forte (bar 147 or 8:53"). A rise, which would have led to triumph in other symphonies, now leads to collapse and catastrophe. Interestingly, at the peak of the rise, Tchaikovsky introduces another descent and I have decided to play this passage with *rubato*, alluding to despair (bar 72 or 4:46"). The repetitions of the theme are now, in contrast to the beginning, really *ff* and I have asked that the final repetition be played with a dramatic accent, signifying the extreme desperation felt when confronting an unavoidable end (bar 106 or 6:43"). Once this last rise collapses, Tchaikovsky depicts the anatomy of death agony. Tchaikovsky marks here for the horns to be played (with hand in bell), in bar 126 (7:30"), eliciting an almost unnatural sound. At this moment, I have asked our horn players to depict the extreme desperation experienced when facing the most hurtful pain imaginable, sounding ultimately almost like a distorted human voice. One can truly be amazed by the way that Tchaikovsky captures the last moments of a dying human. The tam-tam is heard, traditionally symbolizing death, remarkably only once throughout the entire symphony. Its sound is mystical and once struck, the sound resonates for a long time before slowly fading away (bar 137 or 8:05"). At this special moment, before the chorale begins, I allow for a bit of time to let it ring. The chorale of sorrow, orchestrated naturally in the trombones, then descends. The last coda is a mourning *lamentoso* and I have asked the horns to play with more accents on the descending main motive interval, (bar 152 or 9:14"), illustrating a definitiveness and finality while also reminding us of the "stopped" horn sound color. The last pizzicatti of

the bassi are symbolic of fading heartbeats and it seems here that not only does the music grow softer and softer as it comes to a close, but that a physical life has come to end now, as well. Throughout, it is undoubtedly clear that Tchaikovsky truly put all of his soul into this unique masterpiece. I dare to say that in a way, Tchaikovsky experienced his own death through the music. One can be sure that only somebody who is deeply empathetic about both life and death can be capable of creating such an atmosphere and I am deeply grateful for the great musicians of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra who went with me on this journey, requiring the utmost technical perfection to reach such a level of expression.

RUSALKA FANTASY

It was as a member of the Vienna Philharmonic that I first encountered this wonderful opera, *Rusalka*, at the Vienna State Opera. At the time, I played it under the great Music Director of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Maestro Vaclav Neumann and the fantastic ideas and melodies immediately set me on fire. It was at this same moment that I felt the desire to bring this music to the concert hall. Not being able to find an arrangement, I decided to create my own suite many years later, together with the young Czech composer, Tomáš Ille, who brilliantly carried out the technical work. Dvořák wrote the opera in 1900, which followed his time in New York and to no one's great surprise, one can find allusions to the New World in *Rusalka*.

Rusalka is probably the best known Czech opera besides *The Bartered Bride* by



Smetana. The melodies are so rich in number and beauty that they could have easily filled a larger suite and, at the same time, could have also been a part of Dvořák's most famous dances and symphonies. The opening music is taken from the Second Act's ball, and it is here that the Slavonic Dances come to mind (bar 20 or 0:36"). One can hear, naturally, the touching *Rusalka* motive (bar 93 or 2:58"), a *leitmotif* (recurring theme) in the opera and therefore incorporated throughout the Suite in multiple variations. The figure of the waterman, Vodník, appears in an almost mythical world right after the festive introduction. I have put the music that he sings in the timpani part (bar 82 or 2:31," then 422 or 17:44"), representing Vodník's recitative and the foreboding echoes of unsafe darkness.

Rusalka's mourning in the third act (bar 106 or 3:48") is beautifully expressed by Dvořák in the oboe, before turning to despair. One cannot miss the charming music accompanying the nymphs' scenes (bar 139 or 5:47"), nor the moment when the prince gets lost in the woods while looking for *Rusalka* (bar 177 or 7:37"). As the opera is placed in a fairytale world, there must be the witch Ježibaba (bars 195 or 8:40," 241 or 10:24" and 268 or 11:09"). The most famous piece, *Rusalka's* "Song to the Moon" (bar 288 or 11:49"), is interpreted by Concertmaster Noah Bendix-Balgley who plays the sung melody as a violin solo. This recording marks Noah's last with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra before he became First Concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic. All recurring themes (*leitmotifs*) appear several times, but always varied, as in the opera. Some moments might even recall the Ninth Symphony of Dvořák, for example in bar 385 (16:08"), where the *Rusalka* motive returns dramatically, perhaps insinuating the fourth movement of the Ninth Symphony. The changes in harmony in bars 412-413 (17:01") have similarities with the beginning of

the Ninth Symphony's second movement, as well. For the last time, you will hear the *Rusalka* theme in a deeply moving march of mourning, with the Vodník motive again in the timpani and the march's rhythm in the trombones (bar 428 or 18:10"). Everything culminates in a *Grandioso ed Appassionato*. For concert-hall use, I end the Suite with music of the opera's Second Act.

The Dvořák *Rusalka Fantasy* is the third opera for which I have conceptualized a suite, following first the Janáček *Jenufa Suite* and then the Strauss *Elektra Rhapsody*. For me, constructing a suite means attempting to transmit the atmosphere and scope of the opera—and it is for this reason that the result is not smaller single numbers, but rather, a through-composed and integral piece, almost akin to a tone poem. There is no question that any suite will forever remain incomplete. And yet, this very fact should not prevent us from breathing new life into these great works and giving the concert audience a colorful taste of this fantastic music.

—MANFRED HONECK

AUSTRIAN CONDUCTOR MANFRED HONECK, in high demand by the world's leading orchestras, has served as Music Director of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra since the 2008-2009 season. After two extensions, his contract now runs until the end of the 2019-2020 season. He and his orchestra present themselves regularly to European audiences to great acclaim. Since 2010, annual tour performances have led them to numerous European music capitals, including a week-long residency at the Vienna Musikverein, and major music festivals.

Manfred Honeck's successful work with the Pittsburgh Symphony is now captured on CD by Reference Recordings. 4 CDs including Strauss tone poems, works by Janáček and Dvořák, Bruckner's Symphony No. 4, and Beethoven's Symphonies Nos. 5 and 7 were released during the 2013-2015 seasons. All have received rave reviews, and several additional recordings are completed.

As a guest conductor Honeck has worked with the world's leading orchestras including the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris and Accademia di Santa Cecilia Rome. In the United States, he has conducted the New York Philharmonic, The Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra and Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Born in Austria, Manfred Honeck received his musical training at the Academy of Music in Vienna. Many years of experience as a member of the



Felix Broede

Vienna Philharmonic and the Vienna State Opera Orchestra have given his conducting a distinctive stamp. Honeck began his career as conductor of Vienna's Jeunesse Orchestra, which he co-founded, and as assistant to Claudio Abbado at the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra in Vienna. Subsequently, he was engaged by the Zurich Opera House, where he was bestowed the prestigious European Conductor's Award in 1993. From 1996-1999, Honeck was one of three main conductors of the MDR Symphony Orchestra in Leipzig. He served as Music Director of the Norwegian National Opera in 1997 and was also engaged as Principal Guest Conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra for several years. From 2000 to 2006, Honeck was Music Director of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and from 2007 to 2011, Music Director of the Staatsoper Stuttgart where he conducted numerous premieres. Since 2008, he has served as Principal Guest Conductor of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra.

Manfred Honeck has received honorary doctorates from St. Vincent College and, most recently, from Carnegie Mellon University. Moreover, he has been Artistic Director of the "International Concerts Wolfegg" in Germany for more than 20 years.



THE PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, known for its artistic excellence since 1896, is credited with a rich history of working with the world's finest conductors and musicians, and a strong commitment to the Pittsburgh region and its citizens. Past music directors have included Fritz Reiner (1938-1948), William Steinberg (1952-1976), Andre Previn (1976-1984), Lorin Maazel (1984-1996) and Mariss Jansons (1995-2004). This tradition of outstanding international music directors was furthered in fall 2008, when Austrian conductor Manfred Honeck became music director of the Pittsburgh Symphony. The orchestra has been at the forefront of championing new American works, and gave the first performance of Leonard Bernstein's *Symphony No. 1 "Jeremiah"* in 1944 and John Adams' *"Short Ride in a Fast Machine"* in 1986.

The Pittsburgh Symphony has a long and illustrious history in the areas of recordings and radio concerts. As early as 1936, the Pittsburgh Symphony broadcast on the airwaves coast-to-coast and in the late 1970s it made the ground breaking PBS series *Previn and the Pittsburgh*. The orchestra has received increased national attention since 1982 through network radio broadcasts on Public Radio International, produced by Classical WQED-FM 89.3, made possible by the musicians of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

With a long and distinguished history of touring both domestically and overseas since 1900—including 37 international tours to Europe, the Far East and South America—the Pittsburgh Symphony continues to be critically acclaimed as one of the world's greatest orchestras.

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*Italicized names
are substitute musicians*

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Heinz Hall for the Performing Arts, Pittsburgh, PA

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Recording Engineer: John Newton (Soundmirror, Boston)

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Technical Recording Notes

We at Soundmirror believe, that in a good and successful recording, the sound has to serve the music. While an important goal is to truthfully represent the acoustical event in the hall, another is to capture the composer's intention reflected in the score and its realization by the performer. To achieve these goals, extensive collaboration and communication between the artists and the recording team are of utmost importance.

Based on our long experience of recording the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in Heinz Hall, we chose five omnidirectional DPA 4006 microphones as our main microphone array. Supplementing those with "spot mics" to clarify the detail of the orchestration, we worked toward realizing above goals. Extensive listening sessions with Maestro Honeck and orchestra musicians were crucial in refining the final balance.

This recording was made and post produced in DSD256 on a Pyramix workstation to give you, the listener, the highest sound quality possible.

**We hope you will enjoy listening to this recording
as much as we enjoyed making it!**

For more information about Soundmirror: <http://www.soundmirror.com>



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