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TCHAIKOVSKY
SYMPHONY NO. 6 “PATHÉTIQUE”
IN B MINOR, OP. 74
BERLIN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
CONDUCTED BY WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER

- 1 1st mvt. - Adagio - Allegro non troppo (19:57)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Allegro con grazia (8:36)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Allegro molto vivace (9:10)
- 4 4th mvt. - Adagio lamentoso - Andante (10:15)

Recorded in Berlin, October-November 1938, issued as HMV DB 4609-14
and Victor N 553; Matrix nos. 2RA 3345-56

Transfer from Japanese Nipponophono pressings and initial restoration and remastering by Dr. John Duffy
Additional restoration and XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, October 2008
Cover artwork based on a photograph of Wilhelm Furtwängler

Total duration: 47:58 © 2007 Pristine Audio.

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TCHAIKOVSKY: SYMPHONY No. 6

FURTWÄNGLER, BERLIN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The Symphony No. 6 in B minor, *Pathétique*, Op. 74 is Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's final symphony, written between February and the end of August 1893. The composer led the first performance in St. Petersburg on October 28 of that year, nine days before his death. The second performance, under Eduard Nápravník, took place 20 days later at a memorial concert.

The Russian title of the symphony, *Патетическая* (*Patetičeskaja*), means "passionate" or "emotional", not "arousing pity". Tchaikovsky considered calling it *Программная* (*Programmaja* or "Programme Symphony") but realised that would encourage curiosity about the programme, which he did not want to reveal. According to his brother Modest, he suggested the *Патетическая* title, which was used in early editions of the symphony; there are conflicting accounts about whether Tchaikovsky liked the title, but in any event his publisher chose to keep it and the title remained. Its French translation *Pathétique* is generally used in French, English, German and other languages.

1. Adagio - Allegro non troppo (B minor - B major)

The first movement is cast in a modified Sonata-allegro form with an introduction (m.1-18), an exposition consisting of two theme groups (m.19-88 and m.89-160), a development section (m.161-304), a recapitulation in which only the second theme group is repeated (m.305-334), and a coda (m.335-354). The movement opens with a slow bassoon solo, stating a motif that will become the first theme, accompanied by low strings. A romantic theme occurs 89 bars in. After some development, it fades away in a bassoon passage marked *ppppp*, followed (at bar 161) by a sudden tutti fortissimo and an agitated passage. A brief trombone chorale based on an Orthodox hymn is heard after a climax represented by descending trumpet scales. A restatement of the romantic theme in B major is heard this time darker in mood. Lastly, a wind chorale plays over descending pizzicato B major scales.

2. Allegro con grazia (D major)

The second movement takes the form of a lively dance. Its unusual 5/4 time signature is the subject of much speculation, most of which claims that the movement acts as a stretched or limping waltz.

3. Allegro molto vivace (G major)

The third movement is again upbeat. In common time, it adheres to much more of a standard form than the rest of the work. The movement revolves around two themes, a nervous, jittery motif in the woodwinds and a majestic march originating in the brass. As a march, it is very un-military. Its harmonic structure is based on the tonic and subdominant rather than the more common tonic and dominant. The jittery theme completely gives way to the march theme at the short development. Eventually, the orchestra launches into a full, triumphant chorus of the brass theme at the movement's end, often leading many people to believe that the symphony is over.

4. Finale: Adagio lamentoso (B minor)

The final movement immediately returns to the darkness of the first with its brooding tone and slow tempo. The opening is scored unusually, the first and second violins taking turns to play the notes of the main "desperation" theme, meaning neither actually plays the melody as heard, and the same is done with the other parts. During the second "consolatory" theme, a slow crescendo builds up to a fortissimo of wailing strings accompanying a fanfare for the brass and drums. The first movement's bassoon theme reemerges briefly before the recapitulation. The main theme is built upon, switching to its tonic major; after much development the movement, without ever quickening, again climaxes with a fff drumroll, brass knell, and a resurgence of the first string theme. The second theme, now in its tonic minor, reemerges and then meanders off into a quiet ending.

NOTES FROM WIKIPEDIA - FULL NOTES ON THIS RECORDING CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM