

# Albert Coates Tchaikovsky Glinka

## Albert Coates conducts

### Tchaikovsky & Glinka

#### Tchaikovsky

Symphony No. 6 "Pathétique"  
Romeo & Juliet Fantasy Overture  
Marche Slave

#### Glinka

Ruslan and Ludmila Overture

London Symphony Orchestra

Transfers by Ward Marston

Electric HMV recordings 1926-1930

"It seems to me to be opportune to give a few particulars of Mr. Coates' earlier career, and to put these remarks, if possible, somewhere in the body of my article. A little doubt exists in some quarters as to exactly what is Mr. Coates' rational rating as a musician. There are the facts: He was born in St. Petersburg (later Petrograd and now Leningrad) in 1882 of English parents, and spent his early childhood in Russia. At the age of 12 he was sent to England, receiving most of his education at the Liverpool Institute. At the age of 18 he returned to his home in Russia, where he was placed in his father's office at the Thornton Woolen Mills. Young Albert spent his time writing music, and his father wondered why the office accounts were so often unfinished and why Albert did so little work. He discovered the lad writing part of a violin sonata in the pages of a ledger, and decided to allow him a musical education. Young Albert went to Leipzig for piano, 'cello, and composition. In 1904 the famous conductor Nikisch opened a class for conducting. Young Coates soon became his favourite pupil. The young man already showed his volcanic style with the baton, for Nikisch said to him, "The conducting stick seems insufficient for your feeding. Coates, you'd better take a whip." This certainly indicates the Coates whom we see in public to-day. Nikisch engaged the young man as his junior conductor at the Leipzig opera. In 1909 the Director of the St. Petersburg Imperial Opera heard Coates conduct Die Walkure, and offered him a senior post in St. Petersburg. Coates accepted, and soon became one of the most popular conductors in Russia. In 1914 he conducted in London at Covent Garden during the Wagner season. In 1917 the Revolution broke out in Russia. The Tsar's operatic director resigned and the artists of the Theatre formed a non-political committee and unanimously elected Coates as president. The Bolshevik party came into power and confirmed the independence of the opera. The artistic flag was kept flying, but it was beaten by a terrible enemy. One morning Coates asked the orchestra to repeat a passage, but the men answered him, "We cannot. We're too hungry!" One after another the men failed to appear at succeeding rehearsals, and Coates was told that they had died of starvation! The same tragedy was going on among the chorists. Coates was deeply attached to his forces, and their daily sufferings broke his health. Blood poisoning set in, and for two months he lay at death's door. Mrs. Coates managed to persuade the authorities that his life was in danger, and at last she was able to take him out of the country. That is the true story which I am asked to relate."

From *Gramophone Celebrities XX*, Albert Coates by John F. Porte, *The Gramophone*, December 1927

#### Producer's Note

The Pathétique symphony is transferred from quiet Italian pressings, the only set of quiet pressings I have ever seen - late 1930s Italian VDP pressings which yield far quieter surfaces than domestic HMV pressings. This recording has wonderfully ambient sonics but very little low frequency content. The reason being that the performance was transmitted over phone line from Kingsway Hall to Small Queen's hall. I did what I could to boost the lower frequencies. One can hear that sides 2 and 5 were recorded under different conditions than the rest of the recording. One can also hear some low frequency electronic noises during the final side.

The Romeo and Juliette, with the Glinka files, was only issued on Czech HMV. I have only seen 3 sets in 30 years and my set is the only one of the three that has no blasting on the loud passages. VDP numbers AW-46-48 are listed in Alan Kelly's compilation files, but I have not heard of a copy in circulation. The Marche Slave is also very scarce. WM

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## Coates Tchaikovsky & Glinka

### TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74 *"Pathétique"*

- 1 1st mvt. - Adagio - Allegro non troppo (17:47)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Allegro con grazia (7:32)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Allegro molto vivace (7:59)
- 4 4th mvt. - Adagio lamentoso - Andante (8:52)

5 TCHAIKOVSKY March Slave Op. 31 (8:33)

6 TCHAIKOVSKY Romeo and Juliet *Fantasy Overture* (20:04)

7 GLINKA Ruslan and Lyudmila *Overture* (3:59)

**London Symphony Orchestra Albert Coates**

### Transfers by Ward Marston

Cover artwork based on  
photographs of **Albert Coates**

### Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 6

Recorded 15 September 1926 & 6  
January 1927. Issued on HMV D1190-94

### Tchaikovsky Romeo and Juliet

Recorded 11 October 1928  
Issued on HMV ES481-3

### Tchaikovsky Marche Slave

Recorded 14 October 1930  
Issued on HMV D1933

### Glinka Ruslan and Lyudmila

Recorded 17 October 1928  
Issued on HMV ES483

All recordings: Kingsway Hall, London  
Total duration: **74:46**

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