

## Mastering Equipment Used In Our Recordings

Digital: Digital Audio Denmark AX24 Analog to Digital Converter

Lynx AES16 used for digital I/O

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Weiss Saracon Sample Rate Conversion Software

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Analog: Studer 810 Reel to Reel with JRF Magnetics Custom Z Heads & Siltech wiring

Aria tape head pre-amp by ATR Services

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Cables: Purist Audio Design, Pure Note, Siltech

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Vibration Control: Symposium Acoustics Rollerblocks, Ultra platforms, Svelte shelves

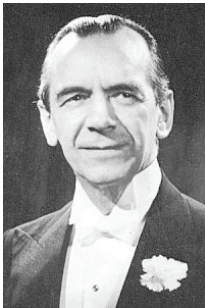
Sonic Studio CD.1 Professional CD Burner using Mitsui Gold Archival CD's

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*Sir Harold Malcolm Watts Sargent (29 April 1895 – 3 October 1967) was an English conductor, organist and composer widely regarded as Britain's leading conductor of choral works. The musical ensembles with which he was associated included the Ballets Russes, the Royal Choral Society, the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, and the London Philharmonic, Hallé, Liverpool Philharmonic, BBC Symphony and Royal Philharmonic orchestras. Sargent was held in high esteem by choirs and instrumental soloists, but because of his high standards and a statement that he made in a 1936 interview about musicians' rights to tenure, his relationship with orchestral players was often uneasy. Despite this, he was co-founder of the London Philharmonic, was the first conductor of the Liverpool Philharmonic as a full-time ensemble, and played an important part in saving the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra from disbandment in the 1960s.*

*As chief conductor of London's internationally famous summer music festival the Proms from 1948 to 1967, Sargent was one of the best-known English conductors. When he took over the Proms from their founder, Sir Henry Wood, he and two assistants conducted the two-month season between them. By the time he died, he was assisted by a large international roster of guest conductors.*

*At the outbreak of World War II, Sargent turned down an offer of a major musical directorship in Australia and returned to the UK to bring music to as many people as possible as his contribution to national morale. His fame extended beyond the concert hall: to the British public, he was a familiar broadcaster in BBC radio talk shows, and generations of Gilbert and Sullivan devotees have known his recordings of the most popular Savoy Operas. He toured widely throughout the world and was noted for his skill as a conductor, his championship of British composers, and his debonair appearance, which won him the nickname "Flash Harry."*



# Prokofiev Symphony No. 5



Sir Malcolm Sargent  
conducts the  
London Symphony Orchestra

# Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5

***The Prokofiev Fifth Symphony*** was composed in short score at lightning speed within a single month in 1944, though Prokofiev admitted collecting material for the work for some time on the sketch pads he always carried to job down ideas as they occurred to him. This Symphony, his first work in the form since he had written the Fourth for the 50th anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1930–1931, was composed at a retreat in Ivanovo, some distance east of Moscow. The Soviet Composers' Union provided this country house as a peaceful refuge for musicians in which to gather and share their ideas, as well as for a quiet place to work. Gliā Āre, Shostakovich, Kabalevsky, Khachatryan and others were already in attendance there when Prokofiev arrived early in the summer of 1944. These others were content to take advantage of the restful nature of the surroundings, but Prokofiev was not, and Khachatryan recalled, "The regularity with which he worked amazed us all!" Prokofiev was never late for breakfast, always went promptly to his studio at ten, observed a strict schedule for his walks and tennis matches, and, at day's end, insisted that the inmates show each other exactly what they had accomplished that day. It is not difficult to imagine a certain relief among his fellows when Prokofiev chose to finish the orchestration of the Fifth Symphony in Moscow.

Prokofiev never hinted that there was a program underlying the Fifth Symphony except to say that "it is a symphony about the spirit of man." During the difficult war years, Soviet music, according to Boris Schwartz, "was meant to console and uplift, to encourage and exhort; nothing else mattered." Though some, like Martin Bookspan, find "ominous threats of brutal warfare" lurking beneath the surface of Prokofiev's music, there is really nothing here to match such symphonies born of the violence of war as Shostakovich's Seventh or Vaughan Williams' Fourth. Rather it is a work that reflects the composer's philosophy after he returned to Russia in the 1930s from many years of living in western Europe and America. In his 1946 autobiographical sketch, he wrote, "It is the duty of the composer, like the poet, the sculptor or the painter, to serve his fellow men, to beautify human life and point the way to a radiant future. Such is the immutable code of art as I see it." The Fifth Symphony is therefore addressed to the wide masses of the Soviet public, but couched in the venerable terms of the classical symphony, as was Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5 of 1937. Both of these well-known works look back to the formal models of Beethoven and the grand style of Tchaikovsky for their musical inspiration, but both also speak with the distinctive modern voices of their creators.

Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony is characterized by a rich vein of melody combined with his distinctively pungent harmonic palette in full, sturdy scoring. The opening movement is a large sonata form in moderate tempo that begins without introduction. The wide-ranging main theme is presented simply by flute and bassoon before being taken up by the strings. An arch-shaped complementary idea is given by tuba and other low instruments, and is combined with the main theme. The flute and oboe sing the lyrical second theme above a trembling, arpeggiated accompaniment in the strings. Two brief motives close the exposition. One, characterized by its dotted rhythms, arrives on the crest of the movement's first climax; the other is an angular, skittish fragment tossed off by high woodwinds, violins and cellos. The development, which rises from the low strings through the entire orchestra, gives prominence in its first portion to the opening theme and the skittish motive from the end of the exposition; it later focuses on the second theme and the arch-shaped complementary melody. The recapitulation is heralded by the stentorian sounds of the brass choir announcing the main theme. The movement is capped by a majestic coda that grows from the low summons of the trombones and tuba, buttressed by the rumbling of the bass drum and timpani, to an overwhelming wave of sound in its final measures. It was this section of the Symphony that most moved the audience at the work's premiere, prompting the composer's biographer, Israel Nestyev, to write, "It is perhaps the most impressive episode of the entire Symphony for it embodies with the greatest clarity the work's highest purpose āē glorification of the strength and beauty of the human spirit." The second movement, the Symphony's scherzo, is one of those pieces that Prokofiev would have classified as "motoric": an incessant two-note rhythmic motive drives the music forward through its entire first section. The principal theme arises from the solo clarinet, and much of what follows is a series of loose variations on this cheeky melody. The movement's central section is framed by a bold, strutting phrase from the woodwinds adorned with the piquant "wrong notes" that spice so much of Prokofiev's quick music. The clarinets and violas play the main theme of this middle section over another mechanized rhythm that gives these pages, despite their triple meter, the nature of a propulsive march. The strutting phrase reappears. The following section begins slowly, and, like the stoking of some giant engine, gradually gains momentum until the opening scherzo returns to bring the movement to a riveting close.

The brooding third movement is in a large three-part design. The outer sections are supported by the deliberate rhythmic tread of the low instruments used as underpinning for a plaintive melody initiated by the clarinets. A sweeping theme begun by the tuba serves as the basis for the middle section. An extended, searing climax links this section with the return of the plaintive melody high in the strings. The touching coda is suspended in the piccolo and strings high above a shimmering string accompaniment.

The finale opens with a short introduction comprising two gestures based on the main theme of the first movement: a short woodwind phrase answered by the strings, and a chorale for cellos. The main body of the movement is a sonata-rondo propelled by yet another insistent rhythmic motive. The movement accumulates a large amount of thematic material as it progresses, though it is the solo clarinet playing the main theme which begins each of the important structural sections of the form. A furious, energetic coda ignites several of the movement's themes into a grand closing blaze of orchestral color to conclude one of the supreme orchestral works of the 20th century.

***Tchaikovsky*** was never able to maintain his self-confidence for long. Not infrequently, his opinion of a new work fluctuated between the extremes of satisfaction and denigration. The unjustly neglected Manfred Symphony of 1885, for example, left his pen as "the best I have ever written," but the work failed to make a good impression at its premiere, and Tchaikovsky's estimation of it tumbled. The lack of success of Manfred was particularly painful because he had not produced a major orchestral work since the Violin Concerto of 1878, and the score's failure left him with the gnawing worry that he might be "written out." The three years after Manfred were devoid of creative work.

It was not until May 1888 that Tchaikovsky again took up the challenge of the blank page. On May 27th he wrote to his brother Modeste, "To speak frankly, I feel as yet no impulse for creative work. What does this mean? Have I written myself out? No ideas, no inclination! Still, I am hoping to collect, little by little, material for a symphony." Though he was unusually secretive about the progress of this new work, he must have begun it as soon as this letter was written, since he sketched out the complete score within just six weeks. He wrote to his benefactress, Nazehda von Meck, "I am exceedingly anxious to prove to myself, as to others, that I am not played out as a composer." Tchaikovsky worked doggedly on the Symphony, ignoring illness, the premature encroachment of old age (he was only 48, but suffered from continual exhaustion and loss of vision), and his self-doubts. He pressed on, and when the orchestration was completed, by the end of August, he said, "I have not blundered; it has turned out well." His happiness in having overcome his lethargy and doubt to produce another important orchestral work was so great that he even forgot his physical ailments for a time.

Tchaikovsky's satisfaction was soon mitigated, however, by the work's premiere in St. Petersburg in 1888. Though the Symphony was applauded by the public, he felt that it was a failure; that the reaction was for his earlier pieces rather than for this new one; that the whole affair was caused for "a deep dissatisfaction with myself." Though brother Modeste was convinced that any negative reaction to the Fifth Symphony — and the critics had some — could be traced to an inadequate performance, Tchaikovsky could not be persuaded of the work's value until a performance in Hamburg early in 1889, when musicians, critics and audience were all enthusiastic about the music. Even the venerable Johannes Brahms, who was not strongly drawn to the music of his Russian colleague, made a special effort to attend the performance on a visit to his home town. Tchaikovsky was buoyed by his reception in Hamburg, and his estimation of the Fifth Symphony (and of himself) shot up once again. The work has remained among the staples of the concert repertory.

Tchaikovsky never gave any indication that the Symphony No. 5, unlike the Fourth Symphony, had a program, though he may well have had one in mind. Years after its composition, some rough sketches that apparently refer to the Symphony No. 5 were discovered in his notebooks. They read, "Introduction. Complete resignation before Fate, or, which is the same, before the inscrutable predestination of Providence. AllegroMurmurs, doubts, pliancy against XXX.Shall I throw myself into the embrace of faith???" The "XXX" probably referred to Tchaikovsky's homosexuality, the only matter he concealed behind secret signs in his notes and diary. If this is so, the Fifth Symphony represents Tchaikovsky's resignation to his fate in the way he could best command — music. The workings of fate were an obsessive theme with him, and the program of the earlier Fourth Symphony portrays man's happiness crushed at every turn by this great, intractable power. In their biography of the composer, Lawrence and Elisabeth Hanson reckoned Tchaikovsky's view of fate as the motivating force in the Symphony No. 5, though they distinguished its interpretation from that in the Fourth Symphony. "In the Fourth Symphony," the Hansons wrote, "the Fate theme is earthy and militant, as if the composer visualizes the implacable enemy in the form, say, of a Greek god. In the Fifth, the majestic Fate theme has been elevated far above earth, and man is seen, not as fighting a force that thinks on its own terms, of revenge, hate or spite, but a wholly spiritual power which subjects him to checks and agonies for the betterment of his soul."

The structure of the Fifth Symphony reflects this process of "betterment." It progresses from minor to major, from darkness to light, from melancholy to joy — or at least to acceptance and stoic resignation. It is the same path Beethoven blazed in his Fifth Symphony, and the power of such a musico-philosophical construction was not lost on Tchaikovsky, or on any other 19th-century musician. The sense of a perilous obstacle surmounted through struggle energizes both works, and is the substance of any "message" that Tchaikovsky may have embedded in this Symphony. The Symphony's four movements are linked together through the use of a recurring "Fate" motto theme, given immediately at the beginning by unison clarinets as the brooding introduction to the first movement. The sonata form proper starts with a melancholy melody intoned by bassoon and clarinet over a stark string accompaniment. The woodwinds enter with wave-form scale patterns followed by a stentorian passage for the brass which leads to a climax. Several themes are presented to round out the exposition: a romantic tune, filled with emotional swells, for the strings; an aggressive strain given as a dialogue between winds and strings; and a languorous, sighing string melody. Again, the brasses are brought forth to dimax this section. All of the themes are used in the development. The solo bassoon ushers in the recapitulation, and the themes from the exposition are heard again, though with changes of key and instrumentation. After a final climax in the coda, the movement fades, softer and slower, and sinks, finally, to the lowest reaches of the orchestra.

At the head of the manuscript of the second movement Tchaikovsky is said to have written, "Oh, how I love... if you love me..." Indeed, this wonderful music calls to mind an operatic love scene. (Tchaikovsky, it should be remembered, was a master of the musical stage who composed more operas than he did symphonies.) The opening theme, hauntingly played by the solo horn, is one of the most famous melodies in the orchestral repertory. Its expressiveness is enhanced as the movement proceeds through enriched contrapuntal lines and instrumental sonorities. Twice, the imperious Fate motto intrudes upon the starlit mood of this romanza.

If the second movement derives from opera, the third grows from ballet. A flowing waltz melody (inspired by a street song Tchaikovsky had heard in Italy a decade earlier) dominates much of the movement. The central trio section exhibits a scurrying figure in the strings which shows the influence of Léo Delibes, the French master of ballet music whom Tchaikovsky deeply admired. Quietly and briefly, the Fate motto returns in the movement's closing pages.

The finale begins with a long introduction based on the Fate theme cast in a heroic rather than a sinister or melancholy mood. A vigorous exposition, a concentrated development and an intense recapitulation follow. The long coda uses the motto theme in a major-key, victory-won setting. This stirring work ends with a final statement from the trumpets and horns, and closing chords from the full orchestra.

# Prokofiev Symphony #5 in B-flat, Opus 100

## Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64

Sir Malcolm Sargent conducts the London Symphony Orchestra

### Prokofiev Symphony #5

1. Andante (in B-flat major) 13:40
2. Allegro marcato (in D minor) 8:29
3. Adagio (in F major) 10:15
4. Allegro giocoso (in B-flat major) 10:16

### Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5

5. Andante — Allegro con anima (E minor) 14:45
6. Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza (D major) 12:52
7. Valse: Allegro moderato (A major) 6:35
8. Andante maestoso — Allegro vivace (E major) 10:52

Transferred from Everest 4-track tapes  
Recorded 1959

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